

Aggies' successful season ends Friday

Louisville wins in overtime to knock Ags out of tourney

From Staff and UPI reports
The Texas A&M University basketball team fought to get to the top of the NCAA tournament — but the Aggies stumbled when they got to the Summit.

The Aggies lost to the eventual Midwest region champion Louisville Cardinals in overtime 66-55 in the regional semifinals in Houston Friday.

Texas A&M coach Shelby Metcalf said the opening minutes of the contest were the most important ones. Louisville jumped out to a quick 12-2 lead.

"The game started at 7:07," he said, "and we started about 7:10. We were a little tight to start the game."

"But this team has the finest record of any team that ever played at Texas A&M, and there is no way I'm going to say anything bad about this game or this team."

The Aggies compiled a 26-8 record for the year — best in Texas A&M history. The Ags lose starting guards David Britton and David Goff, but the three forwards — Vernon Smith, Rynn Wright and Rudy Woods — all will return.

After the slow start, the Aggies settled down and were only behind by two points — 35-33 — at the half.

At one point in the second half, the Aggies by four, 47-43, at one time. But all attempts to build a six-point lead failed.

"We got down by four late in the game," said Louisville coach Denny Crum, "but I thought we held our poise good. We are a young team, but we didn't panic. I was proud of them."

The Aggies — now 0-4 in the Sum-

mit — stormed so hard at the beginning of the second half, that Crum said he hoped the fast pace of the game would work to the Cardinals' advantage from a stamina standpoint.

"The reason we tried to push the tempo from the start," he said, "is they don't play at that pace. And we thought they would be a little bit more fatigued at the end of the game."

One person who never looked fatigued was senior Darrell Griffith, who is on every major All-America team. The 6-4 guard scored 24 points, and led the otherwise young and inexperienced Cardinals. Even though Griffith was the leading scorer he missed five out of his last 10 shots, including the potential winning shot at the end of regulation.

"Darrell got the shot we wanted at the end of regulation, but it just didn't go," Crum said.

Another key to the game — perhaps as important as Griffith himself — was the Cardinals' play on the boards. Louisville outrebounded the taller Aggies 39-35, which impressed Texas A&M's Vernon Smith — who himself had an impressive game.

"I thought they were the best rebounding team," Smith said. "But they had four guys going to the board and we had only three to block them out."

Senior guard David Britton led the Aggies with 16 points. Forwards Vernon Smith and Rynn Wright added 12 and 11.

Texas A&M climbed to the Midwest semifinals by winning two sub-regional playoff games the week before in Denton.

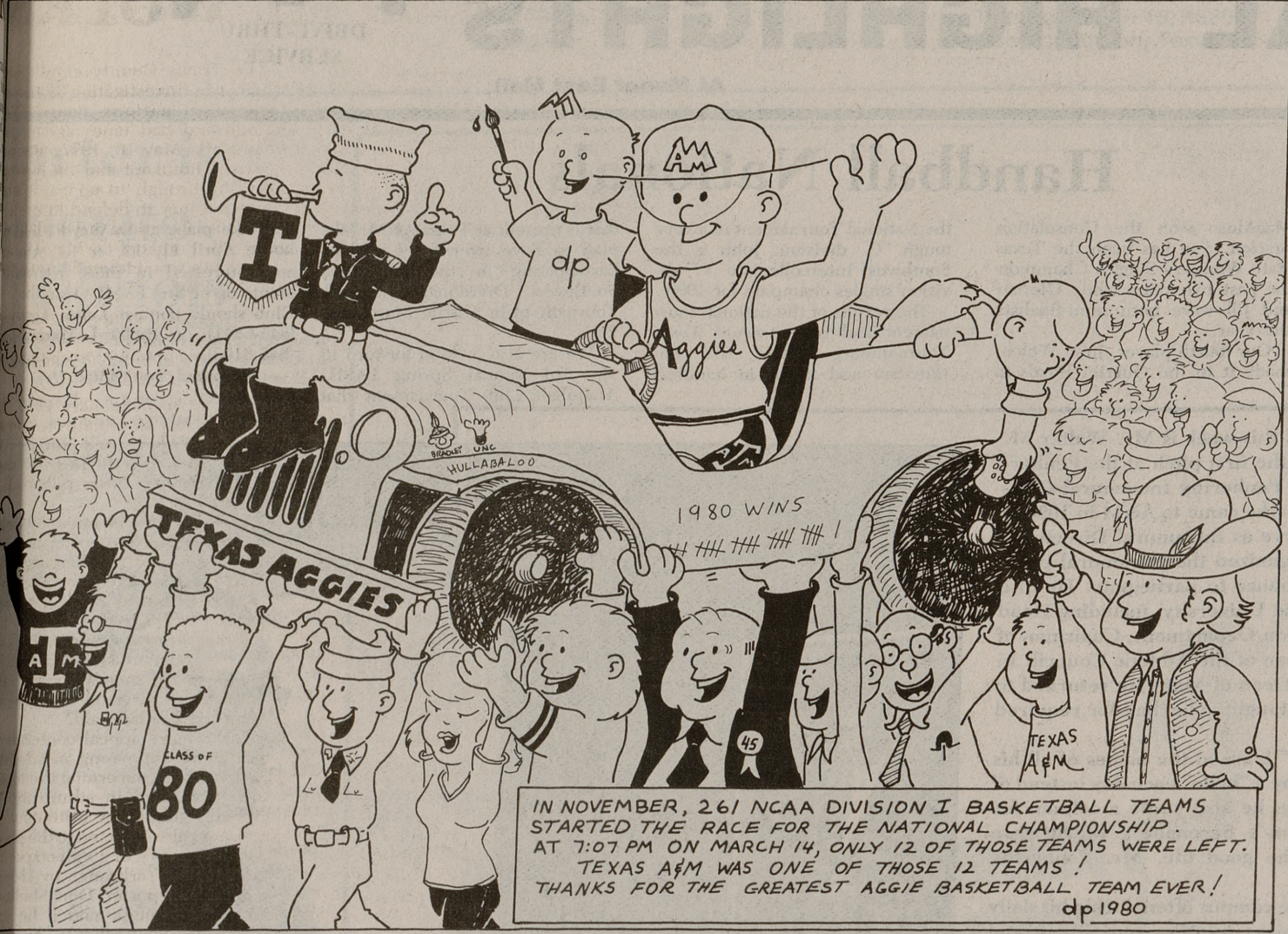
The Aggies slipped by the Missouri Valley Conference champion Bradley Braves in the subregional round of the tournament in Denton last Friday on two pressure free throws by Goff. With the score tied at 53, the 5-10 guard stole a Bradley pass with nine seconds left in the game, and was fouled going for a layup off the steal. Goff hit both free throws with one second on the clock.

Sunday, the Aggies faced North Carolina, coached by Dean Smith — the man who invented the four-corner offense the Aggies use effectively to eat up the clock. The Aggies built up a big lead in the second half of that game, but faced a cold — frigid is more like it — spell and seemed lucky just to get out of regulation with a 53-53 tie.

Lovers of the stall game enjoyed the first overtime — the two teams four-cornered themselves out of scoring a single point. The Aggies came back in the second overtime and took a two-point lead, blowing North Carolina's stall strategy, and causing the Tar Heels to have to foul to try to get the ball back.

Tyrone Ladson, junior substitute guard from Brooklyn, N.Y., was the Aggies' key man in the second overtime. The Tar Heels tried to take advantage of Ladson's 57 percent free throw rate by fouling him, but Ladson caused Smith's strategy to backfire, hitting nine of the 11 shots he attempted.

It took more than 30 minutes for the two teams to finish the five-minute second overtime, as four North Carolina players fouled out attempting to get the ball.



Astros could capture West title with 'unparalleled' pitching staff

United Press International
COCOA, Fla. — Baseball addicts who get turned on by low-scoring games are about to encounter the perfect fix — the 1980 Houston Astros.

The Astros are a team with fewer stars than a Bela Lugosi movie, yet they hope to challenge for the National League West title because of pitching staff that is unparalleled in the league.

"Talk is cheap but I think and feel fine until 1982. The question of whether this is our division," says manager Bill Virdon.

The Astros gave it a good run last year before fading in the final week of the season. They ended up 1 1/2 games behind the division champion Cincinnati Reds and feel the off-season acquisition of fastball pitcher Nolan Ryan will make up the difference.

Ryan joins a starting rotation already including J.R. Richard, Joe Niekro and Ken Forsch. The Astros have two other good arms in Jon Andujar and Vern Ruhle plus one of the league's top relief men in left-hander Joe Sambito.

"Potentially we've got a real good staff," understates Virdon. "We've got to come up with a dependable right-handed reliever who can shut down the opposition in the late in-

nings. We'll be looking to find that among some of our young pitchers in spring training."

Scoring runs will be the Astros' biggest problem. The club averaged only a little over three runs a game last year and hit just 49 home runs.

STRENGTHS — Awesome pitching staff; good team speed (190 stolen bases).

WEAKNESSES — Not much hitting and virtually no power; little catching reserve; mediocre defense; no right-handed late inning reliever.

NEW FACE — Ryan joins starting rotation; Joe Morgan, signed as free agent, could start at second base.

OUTLOOK — They say pitching is 80 percent of baseball. If the Astros are to win the division title, it will have to be closer to 100 percent.

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Boxers who skipped trip feel fortunate but dejected

United Press International
In the past, fate may have only five amateur boxers from Michigan taken as anything more than the rest of the world.

They all could have been aboard the Poland-bound Lyushin-62 jetliner that slammed into an old fort near Warsaw airport Friday, killing more than 80 passengers — including 14 young American amateur boxers.

For different reasons, they were Tony Tucker, 21, of Grand Rapids, to fight Carter's shoulder in competition in Germany and left for home assignments on Darryl Chambers and Lionel Johnson, both 18, and Milton McCrory and Hurley Snead, all of Detroit, were kept home by their trainer to prepare for the impending Golden Gloves championships.

Tucker, a light-heavyweight expected to be a top contender for the U.S. Olympic team, didn't learn of the crash that killed his teammates until he arrived home on another plane unannounced.

Said Tucker: "I didn't know anything about the crash. I'm just dazed. I'm hurt over these guys. I had come real close with them," he said. "I ate, slept, argued, fought and played with those guys."

Tucker arrived in Grand Rapids about 9 a.m. Friday to surprise his family who had believed he was on the jetliner that went down en route to Warsaw.

The family earlier also thought Tucker's manager-father, Bob, was the European jetliner. However, Tucker had told his father he was turning home and the elder Tucker did not fly to meet him in Warsaw.

"When (his family) they saw me they started hugging and kissing me. I thought they were happy because they hadn't seen me in so long. It became they thought I was dead."

The scene was gloomy at the Recreation Center in Detroit, where the boxers were preparing for final bouts in the city Golden Gloves.

"It's tough in there sometimes. You're a little worried about maybe getting hurt," said Chambers, who fought in the past with

some of those killed in the crash. "But man, a plane. That's the last thing on your mind."

"We were all set to go to Poland. We got the letters asking us to fight. We decided if any of us were going to go, we all would. But then (trainer Emanuel) Steward said we had to

qualify for the Golden Gloves, so we stayed."

Johnson thought about his mother. She always worries about him when he fights on the road, he said.

"I know there are going to be a lot of parents praying tonight," he said.

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