

# 12th-ranked Aggs confident as they

By RICHARD OLIVER  
Sports Editor

Before one could say "12th-ranked," the Texas A&M University men's basketball team was on a plane heading for the East Coast Thursday.

The reason for the departure is the First Union Invitational in Charlotte, N.C., which will present the Aggies with their first real bump in a so-far very smooth road.

The tournament, which starts today, will have four teams competing: Texas A&M, Davidson University,

Wisconsin and the host, University of North Carolina-Charlotte.

The Ags, 3-0, meet N.C.-Charlotte at 8 p.m. (Texas time) tonight in the nightcap of a twin bill; Davidson and Wisconsin play in the tournament opener.

Today's losers play at 6 p.m. Saturday and the title game is set for 8 p.m.

The tournament will be the start of a strange early-season nine-day road trip stretched over five weeks. A&M will not be back home until Satur-

day, Jan. 17, at G. Rollie White against SMU.

Through the first three regular season games, the Aggies have shown why they are currently ranked 12th in the nation in both the AP and UPI polls as they rolled over Maine, 66-57; Texas Southern, 61-50; and Sam Houston State, 75-58.

In a preseason exhibition, the Aggies defeated the Windsor Basketball Club of Canada, 84-51.

Through three games, senior co-captains Rynn Wright and Vernon Smith are leading the Ags in scoring with 16.3 and 13.0 points a game respectively. The other three starters and their averages: sophomore Claude Riley, 10.0; junior Rudy Woods, 8.3; and senior Tyrone Ladson, 6.6 points a game.

But the biggest surprise for Aggie fans has been the success of the Aggies' bench, as freshman Reggie Roberts has netted eight points a game, junior Milton Woodley, four, and sophomore Roy Jones, one point.

The average point spread between the team scorers signifies the strength of the Aggies bench, which has proved instrumental in A&M's

early season victories by spelling the often inconsistent Woods and providing some four corners stall offense expertise.

After Monday night's win over Sam Houston State before a partisan Aggie crowd of 6,079, Head Coach Shelby Metcalf was a little happier about his team's defense, which had been a minor question mark before the season.

"I thought we showed some improvement on defense," he said. "We had a lot more intensity and hustle than in previous games. I thought Tyrone Ladson was outstanding and I was pleased with the play of Rynn Wright. Rynn rebounded well and he shot the ball well. Ladson really played tough on defense and he ran our offense effectively."

Ladson is a particularly pleasant development in the Aggies year thus far, due to his excellent ball maneuvering as guard. His job has been especially difficult since he has been forced to step in the shoes of former favorites David Britton and David Goff.

Britton now sits in New York City

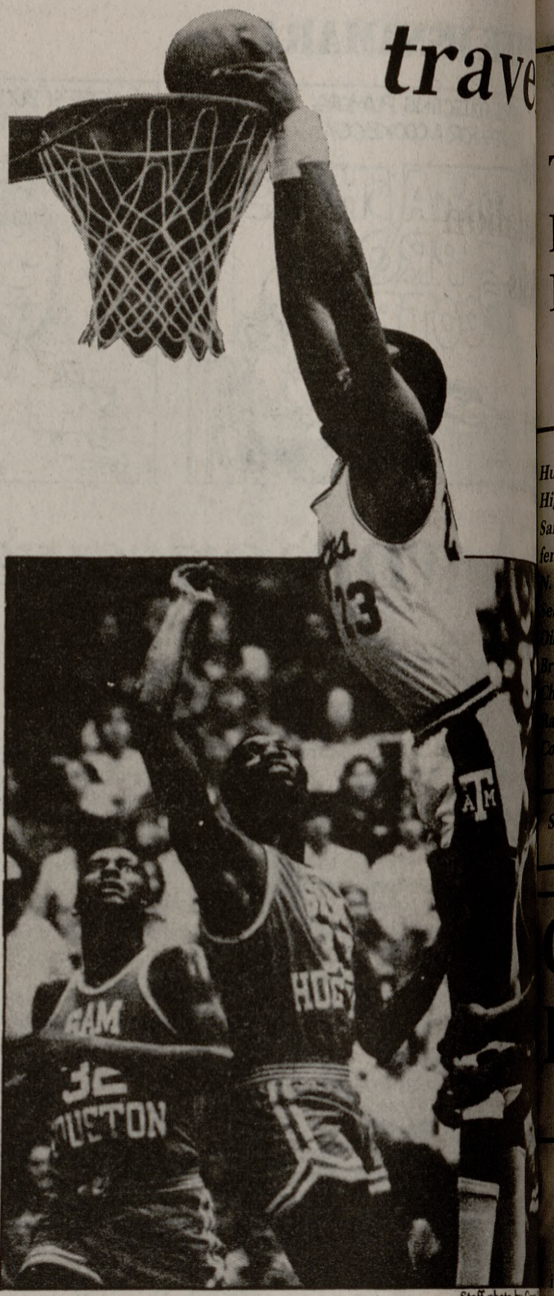
awaiting word on a pro career, and Goff is a graduate assistant coach with the Aggies.

Following this weekend's action in Charlotte, the Aggies go to the Virginia Tech Invitational in Blacksburg, Va. A&M plays James Madison in the opening game Dec. 19. Host Virginia Tech and Pittsburgh play in the other opening contest.

Then, after a week off for Christmas, the Aggies head to Billings, Mont. for the KOA Classic on Dec. 29-30. The University of Montana, Eastern Montana College and California-Irvine are the other three games.

Next comes three SWC road games. On Jan. 3, A&M plays TCU in the nightcap of an SWC twin bill in Dallas' new Reunion Arena, following the Arkansas-SMU opener. Then the Ags go to Waco to play Baylor on Jan. 6, and then to Lubbock to play Texas Tech on Jan. 10. Finally, it's back home Jan. 17 to G. Rollie and SMU.

All Texas A&M basketball games will be carried by radio stations KTAM (Bryan-College Station), KRLD (Dallas), KENR (Houston) and KMAC (San Antonio).



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## Kent gives rankings

Brian Joelson in singles and Tom Judson and Ron Kowal in doubles received No. 1 rankings by Coach David Kent for their performances during Texas A&M's fall campaign.

Behind Joelson in singles came Reid Freeman, Max King, Trey Schutz, Judson, Kowal and Leonard Smith.

Following the Judson-Kowal duo in doubles came Freeman-Joelson and Jim Grubert-Schutz.

Next action for the Aggies comes in the NCAA Indoor Singles Championships Jan. 21-25 in Houston. The next dual match isn't until Jan. 31 when Hardin-Simmons comes to A&M.

Texas A&M center Rudy Woods goes up for a slam against Sam Houston State in Monday's game, which Aggies won 75-58 to raise their record to 3-0. The Aggies hit the road today as they compete in the First Union Invitational in Charlotte, N.C.

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