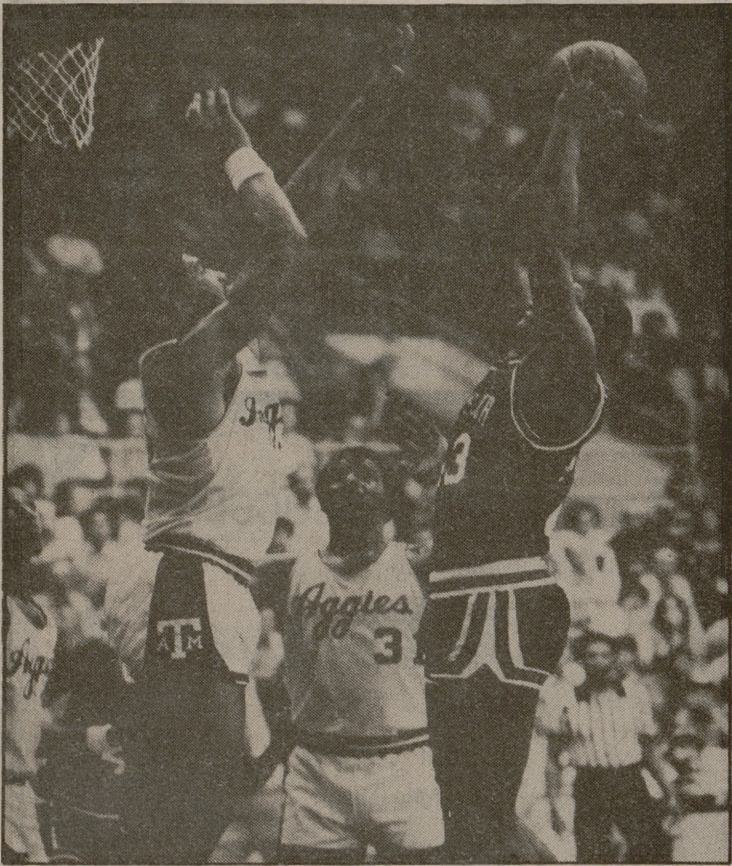


Scrapping Aggs look for revenge



Staff photo by Greg Gammon

Rynn Wright leaps to defend against a Texas Tech player's shot last Saturday while Claude Riley, left, and Vernon Smith watch. The Aggies won that game, 65-52. Texas A&M, 4-7, plays Rice, 6-5, Saturday at 7:30 p.m. on Autry Court in Houston.

Lady Aggies to play Tech in must game

By JON HEIDTKE

Battalion Staff

Texas A&M women's basketball team travels to Lubbock Saturday to take on Texas Tech at 5 p.m. in what Head Coach Cheri Rapp calls the "most important game of the season."

The importance stems from the fact that the game is the opening round of the state tournament. If the Aggies are to keep any post-season hopes alive, they must beat the Red Raiders, a team which has already beaten them three times this season.

The Aggie Ladies, 6-18 season, have lost to the Red Raiders by three in Lubbock, 63-60, by 11 in the Southwest Conference Tournament, 62-51, and by 17 last Saturday in G. Rollie White by the score of 80-63.

Though the Red Raiders have won all three contests this season, Assistant Coach Cindy Gough said that it might work in the Aggies favor. "It is tough to beat one team four times in a season," Gough said, "and I think they might be a little overconfident."

Gough said for the Aggies to win, they must shoot a good percentage and hustle on defense the entire 40 minutes. "I feel we have quicker guards and if we pressure their guards, we can force them into bad passes," she said.

Texas Tech's inside game has beaten A&M in the past, so the Aggies must shut down the trio of Gwen McCray, Tammy Anderson and Carolyn Thompson who have dealt the Aggies the most misery this season, if they are to win.

Gough said another key to A&M's success will be to get quick outlook passes and push the ball up and down the court all night. "We need to run to have a chance," she said.

On the season, Kelley Sullivan leads the team in scoring with an average of 9.1 points a game, while Trigg Crawford tops the team in rebounding with an average of six a game.

By RICHARD OLIVER

Sports Editor

Many label Jan. 20 as the day the Texas Aggies fell apart in the Southwest Conference race.

On that day, the Rice Owls slipped past sluggish Texas A&M, 54-50, in front of a spirited G. Rollie White crowd. The Ags had fallen to a 1-4 record and shot only a miserable 41 percent from the floor.

Instead of waltzing through the conference as the defending champions they were, the Aggies

should be ready. But so many good things have to go good for us."

For the most part, the Aggies' recent successes have been spurred by the return of senior Vernon Smith to regular form. Smith helped the Ags overcome a feisty Mustangs squad Tuesday night by scoring 21 points.

The team has also been controlling the boards, bringing down an average of 6.2 rebounds more than their opponents. Senior Rynn Wright is leading that charge with

8.4 caroms averaged a game.

The guard situation, a bit shaky as the Aggies faltered, has apparently been solved, as junior Milton Woodley and freshman Reggie Roberts have won starting positions and the hearts of Texas A&M fans.

Perhaps the most consistent Aggie, Claude Riley, has found his outside shooting touch but is still having some defensive struggles. Yet, his enthusiasm and leadership has been an obvious help.

Analysis

found themselves lying flat on their backs on their way to a 1-7 first half record, looking up at eight colorful tail ends above them on the SWC ladder.

Now, however, after that miserable start, the Owls find themselves flapping aimlessly while falling apart in the Twilight Zone that is the 1981 SWC race while Texas A&M, the "best seventh place team in the conference," is busy characteristically ambushing everyone as expected.

While the Aggies are enjoying a positive roll for a change, the memory of that Jan. 20 humiliation in front of 8,000 home fans lingers on.

"This is a pivotal game for us," Head Texas A&M Coach Shelby Metcalf said Thursday. "A success at Rice will help us with our confidence. Everytime you have success, it's going to reinforce you."

And that reinforcement has become especially important for the Aggies as the post-season tournament draws near. Each week, the pressure builds and the games are more important.

The Ags face Rice Saturday in a must game at 7:30 p.m. in Autry Court before returning to G. Rollie White Coliseum next Tuesday to take on the SWC's most improved team — Arkansas.

The 8-3 Hogs will face the 9-2 Houston Cougars in Fayetteville Saturday night in the game of the year. But, while most eyes will be turned north for that contest, the Aggies will be busy trying to continue a great comeback on the coast.

"I'm just not ready to concede that we're gonna get there yet (the post-season tournament's 'final four' in San Antonio)," said Metcalf. "Every game has become so important. We had to win some before they got important, you know."

The crazy way the conference is going this year, any team is capable of knocking off anyone, and Metcalf is more than aware of the upsets possible.

"I imagine everyone is just concerned about taking care of business," he said. "They're not going to be looking at anybody else much. We messed around — got bent out of shape a bit. But now we have a bunch of pressure games. If we do get to the tournament we

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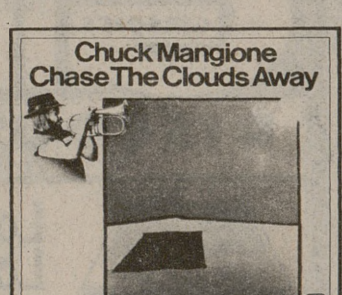
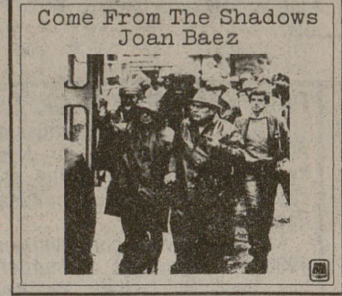
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