

Arkansas-A&M clash at 7 p.m.

Improved guards lead Aggies

By RITCHIE PRIDDY
Battalion Staff

The Texas Aggies return to the court tonight in what Coach Shelby Metcalf calls "the most important game of the year" against the Arkansas Razorbacks in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

The 17th-ranked Razorbacks carry a seven-game win streak into tonight's contest, while the revitalized Aggies will take a four-game streak themselves. The winner will own the longest continuing win streak in the conference and will definitely influence the final conference standings.

Metcalf is pleased with his team's recent performances and says the team has finally turned it around.

"We've put it together now," Metcalf said. "We're thinking basketball, making changes and executing. People are starting to fill their roles."

"The people playing fourth, fifth and sixth (Reggie Roberts, Milton Woodley and Roy Jones) were not even here last year," he said, perhaps indicating things to come.

Metcalf is confident in his starting lineup now, and rightly so as his team has been outscoring its opponents by an average of 10 points per game in their last four outings.

During the current win streak the Ags have scored 263 points to their opponents' 223 for an average of nearly 66 points per game to almost 56 points produced by opponents.

They are connecting on a respectable 48.9 percent of their shots while their adversaries are hitting only 43.5 percent.

Vernon Smith has led the way in the Aggie resurgence as he has collected 82 points (20.5 per game). Freshman sensation Roberts has come on strong with 59 points (14.8 per game). Claude Riley has pumped in 48 points (12 per game), Rynn Wright 46 points (11.5 per game) and Woodley 28 points (7 per game).

The Aggies lead their opponents in one of the most important

categories of the game — rebounds. A&M has pulled down 133 rebounds (33 per game) to 111 (27 per game) for opponents in the last four games.

Rebounds will play an important part of tonight's game, and Arkansas coach Eddie Sutton is wary of the Aggies' board strength.

"The biggest key will be defensive board play. Vernon Smith, Rynn Wright and Claude Riley really bang away on the boards, and if A&M gets a lot of offensive rebounds we're in trouble," he said.

Captains Wright and Smith have led the way with 39 and 36 rebounds, respectively. Riley has collected 30 rebounds in the four-game stretch.

"Smith is their career scoring leader. Claude Riley is a great athlete. And Rynn Wright is the

heart of their team. He makes the big plays when they need them," Sutton said of the Aggies.

Scoring and rebounding, however, are not all that makes a winning team successful. The last few weeks have seen the Aggies emerge as the team that everyone always thought they were capable of being. They are showing more leadership on the court than in weeks past, and that alone is probably more responsible for their recent successes than any other factor.

Sutton said he thinks the Aggies have turned around because of improved guard play.

"Reggie Roberts is their most consistent scorer, and he's not playing like a freshman. Milton Woodley isn't scoring much, but he's doing what it takes to win," Sutton said.

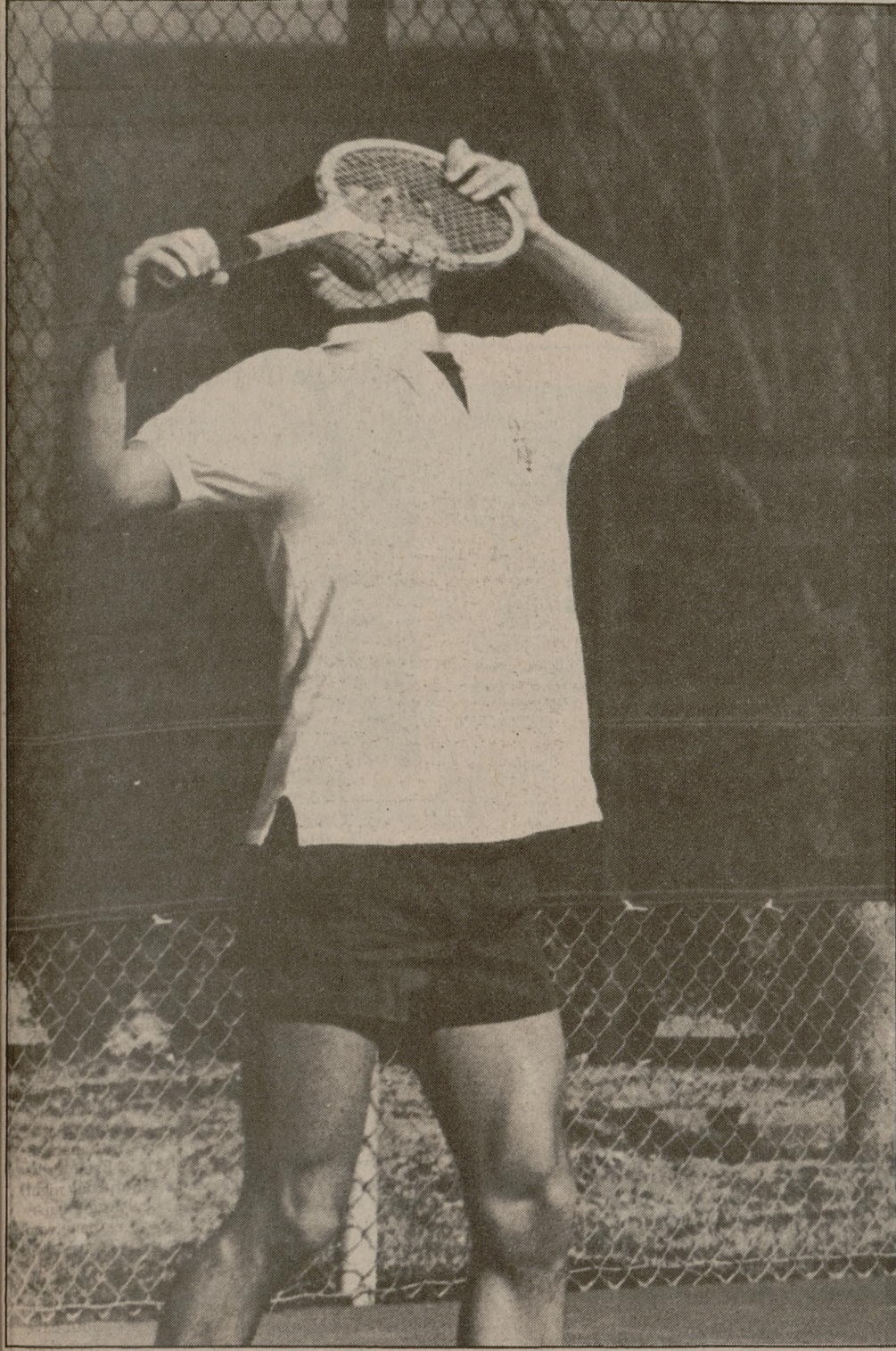
Arkansas' victory string began

Jan. 24 when they beat the Aggies (52-47) in Fayetteville and has extended through last Saturday in what was their most important win this season, a 70-55 victory over the first place Houston Cougars. The Razorbacks are now tied for the conference lead with a 9-3 record.

The Aggies are tied for fifth with the Texas Longhorns with identical 5-7 conference records. Texas and Texas A&M will meet Saturday in a regionally televised game in Austin.

"The two toughest places to win on the road are Barnhill and Texas A&M. The crowd is a participant," Sutton said.

"A&M is on an upbeat and it's playing like it had hoped to all year, but it wouldn't make any difference if they weren't playing well because the Arkansas-A&M games at College Station have always been close."



Staff photo by Brian Tate

The life of Brian

Brian Joelson, the number one seed on the Texas A&M tennis team, vents his frustration at losing a point during last Saturday's match against Tora Yonozewa of Southwest

Louisiana. Joelson won the match, however, 5-7, 6-2, 6-2, and the nationally ranked Aggies beat SWL, 6-3.

Ladies try to recover today

The Texas A&M women's basketball team returns to action today when it takes the court against Abilene Christian University in a prelude to the men's game.

The Ags take a 7-19 record in the game but Head Coach Cheri Rapp saw some good things from the much-improved A&M team that lost a heartbreaker Saturday to Texas Tech, 71-70.

In that game, a last second shot by Kelly Sullivan rolled around the rim before falling out. Sullivan finished the day with 24 points to lead the team.

"Kelly played really well, offensively and defensively. She's really come around the last few games," Rapp said.

Rapp was pleased with the second half effort of her team as it shot a strong 52 percent from the field. The Aggies were 12 points

behind at the half but outscored Tech in the second stanza by 11 to pull within one point.

"We played probably the best half we've played all year," Rapp said. "If we can shoot as well as we did the last half we would be in a lot better shape than we are now."

The Aggies played ACU earlier in the year but were defeated 108-86. However Coach Rapp feels that the team can beat ACU if they continue improving.

The loss to Texas Tech eliminated the Aggies from playoff contention in the state basketball tournament to be held this weekend in Denton.

The Aggies have three games remaining this season and hope to end the season on a positive note. They host ACU tonight, the University of Nebraska Feb. 27 and close out against the University of

Houston. All three are home games.

Game time for tonight's match is set for 4:30 p.m.
— Ritchie Priddy

Ags in 4th after 27 holes

The Texas A&M men's golf team is in fourth place after 27 holes of the Lamar Invitational in Beaumont, 20 strokes off the pace of first place Houston.

The Cougars currently have a 430 team total, followed by Oklahoma State, 434.

Golf team still first; Bauer top performer

The 10th-ranked Aggie women's golf team continues to dominate the Houston Baptist Invitational after two rounds.

Texas A&M has a 604 team total, 10 strokes ahead of runner-up TCU.

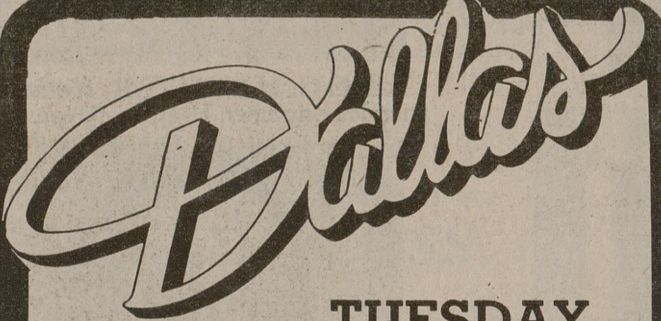
Leading the Aggies is current individual leader Kim Bauer, who after shooting a Conroe course record 71 Sunday followed Monday

with a 75 for a 146 total. In second individually is Susan Yantis at 149.

Other Aggie scores: Monica Welsh, 76-79, 155; Shirley Furlong, 77-78, 155; Jackie Bertram, 78-78, 156.

All five of the Texas A&M women are in the top 16 in individual totals, and there are approximately 60 golfers competing from 12 schools.

The tournament ends today.



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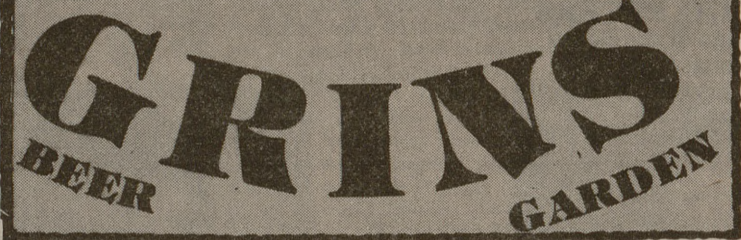
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On-Campus Interviews
Friday, February 20

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