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Fights mar ballgame

Aggies lose heated contest, 65-61

By RICHARD OLIVER
Sports Editor

"It doesn't make any difference where they are, they're going to get the calls."

Texas A&M basketball coach Shelby Metcalf looked worn. Minutes before, his team had staged a fine comeback before falling just short to the 17th-ranked Arkansas Razorbacks, 65-61, in G. Rollie White Coliseum in front of only 6,200 fans (capacity 7,500).

After falling behind by 11 with 3:15 left in the game, the Aggies outscored the Razorbacks 17-10 as time ran out. But the effort was just not good enough.

The game was punctuated by fights and controversial officiating against both sides, including one which may have been the turning point with 1:51 left.

Texas A&M, behind 57-49, instituted a full-court press to try and force a turnover. Hogs' guard

U.S. Reed, however, got behind the coverage and took a fast break pass over the head of Aggie Jay McHugh. McHugh chased down Reed at the free throw line and shoved him for an obvious foul. The Arkansas guard continued in for the layup, and the official called the basket good, giving the Hogs a crucial three-point play as Reed sank the ensuing free throw also.

Metcalf was bewildered as he faced an equally confused press corps.

"They don't have continuation in college ball, do they?" he said, referring to the NBA rule that allows a follow-through basket to count after a foul. "Hell, I learned something. I didn't even know it (the continuation rule) was in the game. It's in — you saw it — it's in. (SWC Commissioner Cliff) Speegle was down here. We shook hands before the game and he didn't even bother to tell me about it. Now that's communication."

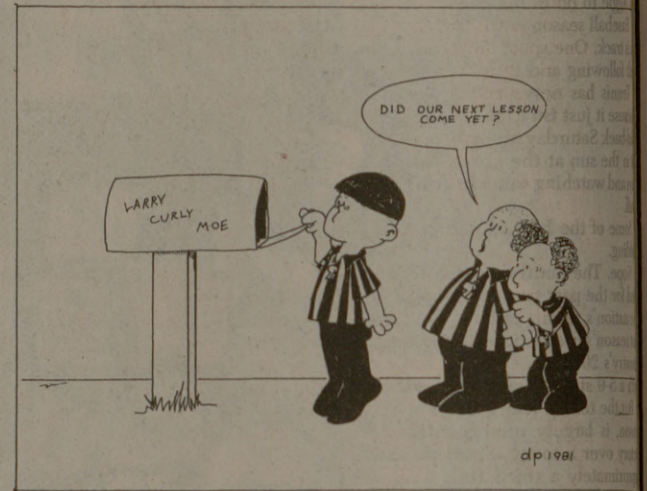
"I thought it was a smart foul." Despite the controversial call, the Razorbacks showed a regional television audience that they were not the same team that started off the year with three SWC losses in a row. The Hogs executed well, hit the buckets when they needed them, and shut down any Aggie fast breaks with an excellent full-court press and man-on-man defense. It was their eighth win in a row, raising their record to a league-leading 10-3.

Texas A&M fell to 5-8. The ballgame was physical from the start, as the players pushed and shoved. Soon, however, the officials let that pushing and shoving get out of control and fistfights erupted.

With 7:42 left in the first half, Arkansas guard Darrell Walker, who has recently been in hot water with Head Razorback Coach Eddie Sutton, took the pressing Reggie Roberts defense to heart and shoved the Texas A&M guard. A fight ensued which eventually drew coaches and players off the bench and onto the floor along with a few athletic officials.

Instead of penalizing the two players, the referees made the pair shake hands after pleas by Sutton and Metcalf aborted an initial inclination to throw them out of the game.

It took almost 10 minutes to restore order. Roberts, who even-



tually fouled out midway through the second half with only four points to his credit, was calm about the incident following the game.

"He (Walker) had been talking noise to me all during the game, he said, "and pushing me around. I'd had enough after awhile. He pushed me on the chest. I pushed him back. He started swinging so I started swinging. It had been going on all game. Then Hastings came up from behind and took a shot."

Hastings was a name brought up more than once by the Texas A&M players after the game. According to several of them, the junior center was "a pretty cheap guy."

"Most of it happened away from the ball," said Metcalf. "The best I can tell, it was more (that) things were being said. I've never seen them (Aggie players) react like that before. I've got to believe Hastings and Walker were in on it all."

With 11:47 left in the contest, Hastings became the target of another Aggies' wrath. Texas A&M center Claude Riley took a wild swing at the Hogs' center and was thus ejected for a flagrant foul.

With seven seconds left, Aggie Roy Jones fouled Hastings away from the ball, falling on top of him hard after a pass. As he got up, Jones was kicked by Hastings. No foul was called on the Arkansas center.

"Claude (Riley) was thrown out on a flagrant foul after a violation," said Metcalf. "It (the Jones inci-

dent) was a dead ball foul. When Hastings gets Roy there at the court, they (the referees) had there had already been a foul led. That's sort of a contradiction, isn't it? I mean, what's the difference? That's the only thing I can think of."

"Those are good officials. I don't get me wrong. I'll take them through the nights of the year. And they care who wins."

"I don't know why there was inconsistency."

The loss was a hard one for the Aggie coach. A regional tipped up. "This game'll make an old man out of you."

Metcalf looked down at the coke. "Yeah, it will."

"We had two crucial missed throws at the end of the game. I know one or two mistakes were the difference in the ballgame. We just don't have the depth. We had some players play tonight we didn't have to play in games. Rice where we won by as much as 15. When you look at it that you have to be real proud of the way we played. You just can't get 80 percent of the players you normally play (four of seven regulars.)"

Metcalf said the physical aspects of basketball are part of the game.

"The sign of a good athlete is to be able to retaliate and not be caught. We must not have good athletes."

The Aggies out-rebounded Arkansas, 31-25, as Smith pushed down 10. Keith Peterson led the Razorbacks with six.

Hastings led all scorers with points. Reed added 14 and Tom Brown 12.

For Texas A&M, Rynn Wright scored 17, Smith 16 and Jones 16. Wright, Woodley and Riley all fouled out and Riley was ejected.

The Aggies shot 46.6 percent from the floor while the Hogs shot 60 percent, including a fine percent in the second half.

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**Texas A&M
Arkansas
boxscore**

ARKANSAS (65) — Peterson 2-3, Brown 5-2-3-12, Hastings 6-7-9-18, Pe 2-3-14, Young 4-1-2-9, Freiss 0-0-0-0, 0-0-0, Skulman 1-0-0-2. Totals 25-15-21-42.

TEXAS A&M (61) — Smith 6-4-4, Wright 7-3-5-17, Riley 1-0-0-2, Roberts 4, Woodley 2-0-0-4, Jones 7-0-1-14, So 0-0-2, Brown 0-0-0, McHugh 1-0-0-2, 27-7-10-61.

HalTime — Arkansas 28, Texas A&M 20. Fouled out — Wright, Roberts, Wood. Total fouls — Arkansas 16, Texas A&M 14. Technicals — Riley (ejected), A — 6.

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