

# Ags now playing as expected

**By RITCHIE PRIDDY**  
Battalion Staff  
The Texas Aggies carry a 13-11 season record and a 6-8 Southwest Conference mark into tonight's important basketball game with the TCU Horned Frogs in Fort Worth.

The Aggies are currently tied with the Frogs for sixth place in the conference and tonight's game will likely determine the home sites for next week's first round of the SWC post-season tournament.

The first and second place teams receive a bye into the semi-final (third) round of the tournament. The third place team receives a bye into the second round.

The fourth, fifth and sixth place teams will play at home next Monday (March 2) against the ninth, eighth and seventh place teams, respectively, in the first round of the post-season tournament.

The second, third and fourth rounds of the tournament will be played in San Antonio's HemisFair Arena.

The Aggies appear to have finally found themselves playing the kind of basketball they are capable of playing.

After a miserable 1-7 first-half SWC finish, the Aggs own a 5-1 second half mark with two games to go.

During the last six SWC games the Aggies have some very interesting statistics that show why they have made one of the biggest turnarounds in conference history:

The Aggies have been averaging 75 points per game while their opponents average 61.

They have been hitting a very respectable 56 percent from the field, their opponents 45.5 percent.

They have been out-rebounding their opponents by an average of 10.5 per game, averaging 39.3 per outing.

In one of the most important categories, Texas A&M has made better than 73 percent of their charity tosses, as compared to their opponent's 70 percent.

Leading the way are the men

responsible for the team's turnaround — Vernon Smith, Rynn Wright, Claude Riley, Reggie Roberts, Milton Woodley and Roy Jones.

The six have combined for 428 of the team's 450 points and 206 of their 236 rebounds over the six-game SWC stretch.

Smith is the leader in both categories as he has averaged 20.5 points (123) and 9.1 rebounds (55) per game in the six game stretch.

Wright is next with 13.5 (81) points and nine (54) rebounds per game.

Riley is next with 9.8 (59) points and six (36) rebounds per game.

Good guard play has played an extremely important part over the past six games and Roberts and Woodley have provided the bulk of that.

They have averaged 13.3 (80) and 7.3 (44) points per game respectively, and 3.1 (19) rebounds each per game.

They have also combined for a whopping 58 assists (26 and 32 respectively).

Because of this late-season rally, the Aggs have found themselves sitting in a dark horse position. If things go well for them in the post-season tournament (and by all indications they will) they could conceivably receive an NCAA playoff berth. But at 13-11, the Aggies would have to win the tournament to qualify for the NCAA.

Here's where the NIT (National Invitational Tournament) comes into view. A good showing in the SWC post-season tournament could very likely bring an invitation along with it to that tournament for the Aggies.

With continuing success (despite their record) the Aggies could surprise a few teams (and lots of people around the country, as well) and wind up winning some big games very soon.

Whatever the case may be, playing at the caliber they have been the Aggs may well be on their way to an exciting conclusion to an exciting season.



Staff photo by Greg Gammon

Texas A&M reserve guard Bruce Sooter looks for an open teammate during action last Saturday against Texas. The game, played in front of 9,500 in Austin, was completely dominated

by the Aggies, who blew out the Longhorns, 108-79 in front of a regional television audience. Tonight, the Aggs, 6-8, play TCU at 7:30 in Fort Worth in a crucial contest.

## Pierce given award as top player

United Press International  
DALLAS — Rice junior Ricky Pierce scored 51 points and collected 15 rebounds last week to gain the Southwest Conference Player of the Week honors in a vote of conference basketball coaches.

Pierce, the second leading scorer in the conference with 20.7 points per game, has been in double figures in all of his 23 games this year, scoring 20 or more in 11, including six of his last eight games.

The Garland forward hit 22 in Rice's win over SMU, and hit 29 in a loss to Arkansas, where he collected 11 rebounds. Texas A&M's Vernon Smith, with 25 points in the Aggies' 108-79 win over Texas Saturday, was second in the voting. Also receiving mention were Arkansas' Scott Hastings, Baylor's Terry Teagle, Texas' LaSalle Thompson, Baylor's Ronnie Blake and Houston's Larry Micheaux.

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