

Basketball season full of surprises

By RICHARD OLIVER
Sports Editor

All the basketball division tournaments are concluded and the winners will now disperse around the country to pursue that elusive national crown.

But, surprisingly, Texas A&M will be watching the final chase scene on television — a non-participant.

The 1980-81 season was a long one for the Aggies. From the opening tipoff when the Ags looked unbeatable to the final jump shot that ended it all a week and a half ago, the year brought many ups and downs.

The entire Southwest Conference race was turned upside down by such teams as TCU, Rice and Baylor, who knocked off conference powers and put in surprisingly good performances throughout the season.

Here is a review of the 1980-81 Texas A&M season:

Nov. 22 — Senior co-captains Rynn Wright and Vernon Smith pour in 35 points between them as the Aggies defeat Windsor Basketball Club of Canada, 84-51, in front of 5,646 at G. Rollie White.

Nov. 25 — The Ags traveled to the cold North to beat Maine, 66-57 in front of 4,500.

Dec. 2 — The Aggies opened their regular season with a 61-50 win over scrappy Texas Southern. Sophomore Claude Riley hits 14 and Smith added 13.

Dec. 8 — Texas A&M raised its record to 3-0 with a 75-68 thriller over Sam Houston State in G. Rollie White. Wright hits 20 points.

Dec. 12 — In the first game of the First Union Classic in Charlotte, N.C., Texas A&M knocked off host North Carolina-Charlotte, 75-64 behind Smith's 30 points and 13 rebounds. 4,619 looked on.

Dec. 13 — The Aggies trounced Davidson, 76-62, to win the title as Wright and junior Rudy Woods score 24 each. Smith is awarded tournament MVP award.

Dec. 19 — The Ags win their first tough test of the year, 51-47, over James Madison in front of 5,200 at the Virginia Tech Invitational at Blacksburg, Va.

Dec. 20 — Texas A&M defeats host Virginia Tech 55-52 to win the championship in front of 5,000 people.

Dec. 29 — The bottom starts falling out as the Aggies are smashed by California-Irvine 91-74 in the first game of the KOA Classic in Billings, Mont. The loss drops the Ags to 7-1.

Dec. 30 — Eastern Montana nips the Aggies in overtime, 39-35, to take the consolation trophy. The Ags shoot only 35 percent from the floor.

Jan. 3 — The woes continue as Texas A&M loses to tough TCU, 56-51 in Dallas' Reunion Arena. The largest crowd of the season, 12,231, looks on at the Ag loss.

Jan. 6 — The surprising Baylor Bears drop the Aggies, 53-44 in Waco. Texas A&M now is 7-4 and 0-2 in league play.

Jan. 10 — Texas Tech barely slips past the Ags, 72-70 in front of 8,300 in Lubbock.

Jan. 17 — Smith scores 17 and Wright 12 as the Aggies crush SMU, 71-51 in front of 7,009 G. Rollie White fans. It is the first home game in nine contests for Texas A&M. Woods is declared scholastically ineligible.

Jan. 20 — 7,049 turn out to watch the Rice Owls push past the Aggies, 54-50 at G. Rollie White. The Ags drop to 1-4 in league play. Reggie Roberts scores 14.

Jan. 24 — More than 9,200 rabid fans turn out to see the Arkansas Razorbacks down the Aggies, 52-47 at Barnhill Arena in Fayetteville. Roberts again leads the Aggies with 14.

Jan. 26 — The Texas Longhorns capitalize on some crucial passing mistakes by the Aggies in overtime to defeat Texas A&M, 67-63. 6,032 show up to watch the televised game at G. Rollie White. Roberts scores a career-high 18 to lead the Ag effort.

Jan. 28 — Red-hot Houston knocks off the slumping Aggies, 76-71 at Hofheinz Pavillion in Houston. Wright scores 18, and Roberts and Roy Jones add 15 each. More than 8,500 look on. The first half of the SWC schedule finds defending champion Texas

A&M at 1-7.

Jan. 31 — The Aggies finally come around long enough to crush Baylor, 84-59 at home in front of 6,955. Second guard Milton Woodley enters in the second half and ends up with six steals. Riley scores 15 for Texas A&M.

Feb. 7 — The Ags avenge the earlier Red Raiders loss by knocking off Texas Tech on a Saturday afternoon, 65-52 in front of 6,231 fans at G. Rollie White. Roberts scores 18 including two dunks after steals and Smith adds 17.

Feb. 10 — The Mustangs fall prey to the surging Aggies, 61-56, in Dallas. Smith scores 21, and Riley and Roberts add 13. The Aggies move to a 4-7 record.

Feb. 14 — Only 4,300 look on as Rice falls prey to Texas A&M, 71-56, at Autry Court in Houston. The fourth win in a row is led by Smith with 24 and Roberts with 18. The night before, Smith smashes an Autry Court backboard while warming up.

Feb. 17 — In a game marred by fights and bad officiating against both teams, the Aggies fall once again to the Arkansas Razorbacks, 65-61, to break a four-game win streak in front of a disappointing crowd of 6,200 at G. Rollie White. Wright scores 17 and Smith 16 to pace a fine Ag effort.

Feb. 21 — The Aggies hit the century mark by plastering Texas 108-79 in front of 9,501 at the Drum in Austin.

Feb. 22 — Nationally ranked Louisiana State beats the Ags, 67-57, in front of 11,750 Baton Rouge,

La. fans in a televised game. Smith manages 25 points and Wright 18.

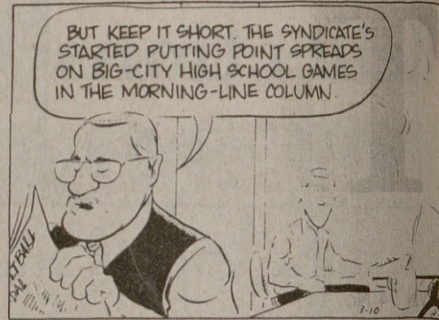
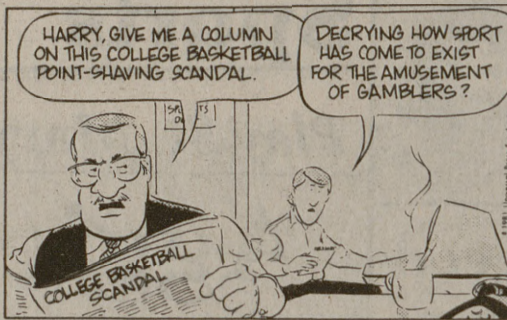
Feb. 24 — A TCU last-second shot falls just short as Texas A&M hangs on to beat the Horned Frogs, 59-57, in Fort Worth.

Feb. 28 — The Aggies once again let a lead slip away, but barely hang on to win as the Cougars are beaten in G. Rollie White, 78-77. The win finishes a turnaround for Texas A&M, which completes a 7-1 SWC second half. 6,819 watch the game. The Aggies finish tied with Texas Tech for fourth in the conference and get a home court berth in the post-season classic.

March 2 — Darrell Browder's incredible 38-foot jumper with time running out beats the Aggies and ends the 1981 season, 62-60. Incredibly, only 4,321 show up to watch the Aggies post-season effort at G. Rollie White. Smith scores 19 and Wright adds 13 in their last home game at Texas A&M.

TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



Ag swimmers 4th in SWC meet

After falling behind arch-rival SMU following the first day of competition, the Texas Longhorns finally got their act together and drowned the Mustangs this past weekend in the SWC Swimming Championships.

The Longhorns garnered 596 points, followed by the Mustangs' 504.5, Houston's 268.5, Arkansas' 264, Texas A&M's and TCU's 84, Texas Tech's 62 and Rice's 30.

Kris Kirchner won the 100-yard freestyle and anchored the winning 400-yard freestyle relay Saturday night in Austin to lead Texas, but the record-breaker was from Southern Methodist.

SMU's Steve Lundquist broke the U.S. Open American and collegiate record for the 200-yard breaststroke with a 1:58.18 finish. The previous record was 1:58.43 set by Bill Barrett in the 1978 NCAA Championships.

Texas gained first-place finishes Saturday from Kirchner with the 44.03 in the 100-yard freestyle and Clay Britt with a 1:48.30 in the 200-yard breaststroke. Kirchner also was on the winning relay team of Eric Finical, Andy Schmidt and Scott Spanna finished in 2:55.32.

The Aggies could do no better than place fifth in the 400-yard freestyle relay.

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NO REQUEST WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS DATE.

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