

Celtics take Rockets 109-80

United Press International
BOSTON — The Boston Celtics couldn't have picked a more opportune time to display the style that made them the scourge of the NBA during the regular season.

And now the Celtics are just one victory away from a 14th league championship — a title made more attainable with their overwhelming 109-80 victory Thursday night over the Houston Rockets in Game 5 of the NBA championship series.

The Celtics ran their vaunted fast break with patience and precision, rebounded voraciously at both ends and guarded the basketball as if it was a newborn. The result was a convincing triumph which gave them a 3-2 lead in the best-of-seven series.

"The way we played tonight, very few teams are going to beat us," said forward Cedric Maxwell, who had a sensational game with 28 points and 15 rebounds. "I feel we have the best team in the world. When this team is challenged, we usually respond with a good effort. If you don't win the championship, nothing else counts."

The Celtics took command of the game with a 19-1 spurt over a 4:32 span in the opening period. Maxwell and Robert Parish combined for 22 points in the period — three more than the Houston team — and also combined to out-rebound the visitors 9-7.

Parish had eight straight points during the run and keyed the final three points when he rejected a Bill Willoughby dunk attempt which sent the Houston forward careening into the corner.

Boston finished the period with a 34-19 lead and Houston, which shot 36 percent but lacked the rebounding to overcome its inaccuracies, never threatened the rest of the way, coming as close as 12 points only once.

"We got beat in all categories of the game — rebounding, ball-handling, everything," said Rockets' coach Del Harris. "It was a

complete disaster, a breakdown in our game and what we like to do. We have no excuses, we simply got whipped."

A sidelight to the devastation was the eternal optimism of Houston center Moses Malone, who led the Rockets with 20 points and 15 rebounds. Malone said after Game 4 that the Celtics were overrated and that he could gather four bodies from his hometown of Petersburg, Va., and give them a run. The blowout did little, if anything, to alter his opinion.

"I feel the same way, they're not that good a team," said Malone, whose words brought sighs of disbelief to Rockets' assistant Carroll Dawson. "They've got a good starting five and they hustle but they're not that good. They shouldn't have beaten Philadelphia and they won't beat us. They'll be drinking Gatorade, not champagne, after the next game."

Despite Malone's optimism, the Celtics for the second time in three games displayed resounding supremacy. They out-rebounded the Rockets 54-41, shot better from the floor and had two less turnovers. It was a marked turnaround from the play Sunday, when they lost 91-86.

Harris tried everything, substituting freely (after using six men Sunday), putting forward Robert Reid at guard and using a press in the second half. Indicative of the Rockets' misfortune were missed uncontested dunks by Willoughby and Reid and an air-ball over the backboard by Allen Leavell. Nothing worked and the Rockets also may have lost sixth man Calvin Murphy, who suffered a shoulder injury in a second-period collision with Rick Robey.

"Maybe tonight we had a little better of it, more of a Celtics game than a Houston game," under-

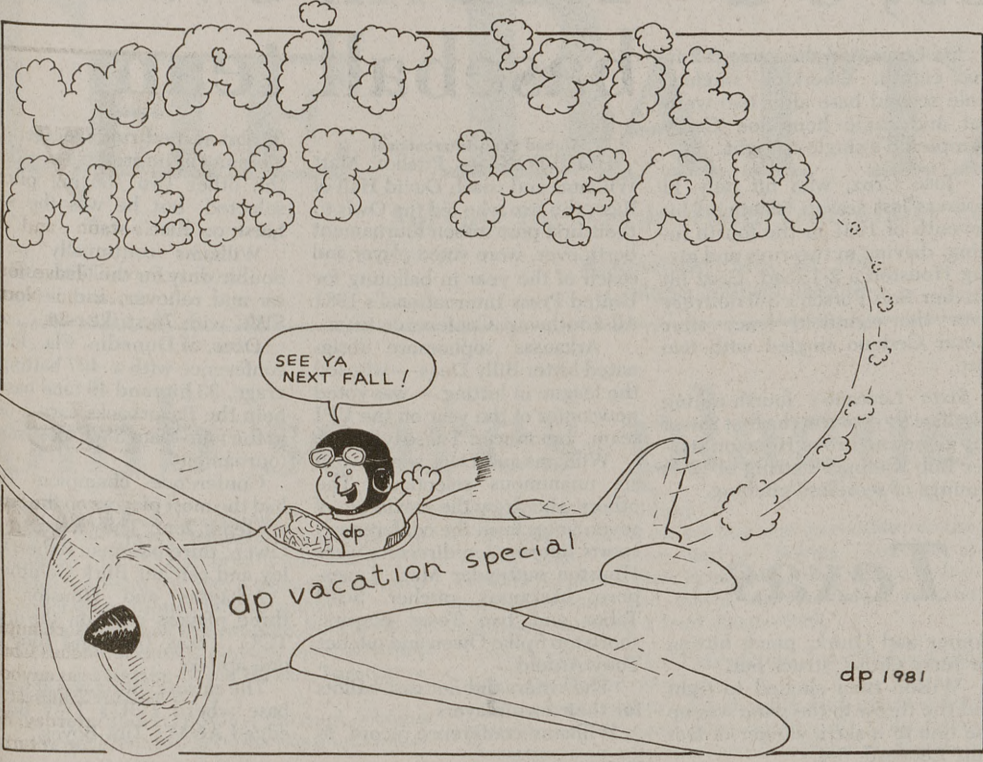
stated Boston coach Bill Fitch. "We bounced back. Our 19-1 spurt was something — any time you get something like that this late in the season is good. We were a little more patient on the fast break and we were able to get it inside more in our half-court offense."

The inside game was Boston's strength. Parish finished with 18 points, including 12 in the first quarter, while Robey added 14, 10 during waning minutes of the game and Larry Bird had 12. It was another poor shooting night for Bird, who hit only 5-of-16, but he more than made up for it with 12 rebounds and 8 assists.

"We just wanted to get the ball to the one who was going for us," Bird said. "Tonight it was Maxwell and Parish. When they play great inside, I'm going to keep giving them the ball. Reid stopped me offensively but I'm pleased with the other end of my game. My best rebounding has been in this series."

The 109 points marked the first time in the defensive-oriented series that either team has surpassed the 100-point mark.

Billy Paultz and Leavell each had 10 for Houston, the only Rockets besides Malone to reach double figures.



Ags head to Regionals

By RICK STOLLE
Battalion Staff

As if competing in the AIAW Regional Team Tournament in Denton is not enough, the Texas A&M women's tennis team will also be competing in an individual tourney immediately after the team meet.

Both tournaments will be held on the campus of North Texas State University. The winner of the team tournament will get an automatic invitation to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women tournament that will be held May 24-26 in Temple, Ariz.

Texas A&M coach Jan Cannon said she feels that there will be at least one more at-large bid for the National tournament and possibly two.

The regional meet involves 16

teams from Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana and Oklahoma. The Ags will play at 1 p.m. every day during the team competition but as yet do not know who they will play. The drawing will be held tonight.

Trinity University and the University of Texas have been seeded one and two respectively in the tournament.

"At least I know we will not have to play Trinity or Texas first," Cannon said, "they both have first round byes." Both Trinity and Texas have beaten the Ags during the season.

The line-up for the Ags will be: Lilianna Fernandez, Pam Hill, Amy Closs, Maylyn Hooton, Sonja Hutcherson and Laura Hanna. Cannon said Closs may move up to the second position for some of the team matches because Hill has

had tennis elbow for the past few weeks.

"The girls are in fine shape tennis wise," Cannon said. "Mentally, they're not doing so hot. Almost all of the girls had to take all their exams in two days. Right now they're mentally exhausted."

Invitations to the individual tourney were given based on the results of the State tournament that was played April 23-25. The Ags have all three doubles teams and three singles players entered in the meet.

Two doubles teams and Fernandez were given invitations following the state tournament. The other doubles team and singles players received at-large bids.

In singles, Fernandez, Hill and Closs will compete. The doubles teams of Hill-Hutcherson, Closs-Hanna and Fernandez-Judy Willard were chosen.

Cannon said she is hoping Hutcherson gets a bid at the team tournament. "Often, girls will have to pull out at the last minute when their coaches decide they have to leave," she said, "this leaves some openings and I want to fill as many openings with Aggies as I can."

The team left Tuesday night and will have a short practice today before the tournament is scheduled to begin Thursday.

Women prepare for national meet

The Texas A&M women's track team qualified for two more events last weekend in the SWC track meet for the upcoming National Women's Track and Field Championship meet in Austin.

Vickilee Cobern qualified for the meet in the discus with a throw of 159 feet, 9 inches. The qualifying distance was 158 feet. Although she finished second her throw set a personal and school record.

The 1600-meter relay team, made up of Sandra Cooper, Ellen Smith, Evelyn Smith and Jana Graves, also qualified for the meet by running a 3:42.93, a season best. The qualifying time for the relay was 3:43.00.

Head women's track coach Bill Nix said the team has three goals going into the May 28-30 meet: 1/To reach the finals in each event 2/To place somebody in the top six, and 3/To hit the best performance of season in each event. Only one woman from Texas

A&M has ever placed in the top six in the national meet and Nix hopes to change that this year.

"Only the very best get there, with the top eight in the finals and the top six receiving points," he said.

He said the qualifying standards are usually well-exceeded in the national meet.

The Aggies have now qualified five people in three events for the national tournament. Ellen Smith earlier qualified in the 400-meter dash.



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