

Sports

Metcalf unsure of Aggies' standing after loss



By FRANK L. CHRISTLIEB
Sports Editor

After watching his Texas A&M basketball team lose 68-64 to Texas Tech Monday night in G. Rollie White Coliseum, Coach Shelby Metcalf had no prophecies or predictions to make about the Aggies' outlook for the rest of the season.

Metcalf also had no excuses for the loss to the Red Raiders, which dropped the Aggies to a 2-1 Southwest Conference record and a 9-4 overall record.

"I really think we should have won the game," Metcalf said Tuesday. "We had some mental mistakes that hurt us. I've looked at the film five times now and we just made some key mistakes. We threw away some passes and that really hurt us."

Although Texas A&M took a 40-29 halftime lead over Texas Tech, the Raiders finally tied the game at 56 with 5:18 left in the game. The

two teams stayed close until Texas Tech took the lead for good at 62-60 when David Reynolds hit a jumper with 1:42 remaining.

Many of the Red Raiders' comeback points resulted from turnovers forced by their pressing defense. The Aggies, holding a 53-47 lead with 8:22 left in the game, tried to hold the ball with a passing game at their own end of the court. However, guard Joe Washington brought Texas Tech into the 56-56 tie by hitting several key free throws during the next three minutes.

Metcalf said the Texas Tech pressure wasn't an important factor in the Aggies' second-half breakdown.

"It shouldn't have bothered us at all, because we've played against more pressure than that. We beat them on the boards (42-23) we had more assists (13-11) and more field goals. We just didn't play real well down the stretch."

Guard Tyren Naulls had a sea-

son-high 23 points, while forward Claude Riley and guard Reggie Roberts each had 12 points. Leading the Aggies to the rebounding edge were Riley with 16 and center Rudy Woods with 10. Woods also had six points.

A key factor in Texas A&M's first three conference games, which include a 60-54 win at TCU and a 47-46 victory over Baylor, has been the Aggies' below-average shooting. Texas A&M has shot 42, 48 and 44 percent in the three games, compared to their opponents' 43, 56 and 51 percent.

Texas Tech, which raised its \$WC record to 2-2 and its overall record to 10-4, had lost to Texas and Houston after upsetting Arkansas in a conference opener.

Metcalf said: "I'd say the jury's still out on which way we're going to go. If I knew, I'd tell you. If we'd have finished up strong Monday night, I'd say we had gelled, but I can't say that."

Adding that the Aggies must be-

come more consistent as a team, Metcalf praised the individual performances of three players who have progressed since the start of the season.

"I think the most consistent thing has been Claude Riley's rebounding, and probably Roy Jones' defense has been as consistent as anything," Metcalf said. "Lonnie Bluntson (transfer center from Blinn Junior College) is really feeling more comfortable in our offense. He now understands the system and is really helping us this season. I think as a team, though, we need to get a lot more consistency."

Texas A&M plays its next two games Tuesday at SMU and Jan. 23 at Rice before returning home to host Arkansas Jan. 26. The Owls, who stunned basketball followers by defeating Hawaii, San Francisco and North Carolina State in the Rainbow Classic two weeks ago, have lost conference games to Houston and TCU.

Mr. New and Improved leads Texas to easy win over Coogs

United Press International
HOUSTON — The development of 6-9 sophomore forward Mike Wacker of Texas makes the Longhorns as forboding as the Houston Cougars when the two teams crash the basket for rebounds. However, Texas strength prevailed in Tuesday night's meeting of the two top-20 teams.

Texas, unbeaten and almost unnoticed, manhandled the physical Cougars 95-83 and the keys were Wacker's 32 points, most of them from inside 10 feet, along with the Longhorns' uncanny free throw shooting.

In the only other conference game, Terry Teagle hit an 18-foot jumper as the buzzer sounded, lifting the Baylor Bears to a 52-50 win over Southern Methodist University. Rice University's Ricky Pierce scored 24 points to send the Owls past Texas-San Antonio 83-51 in a non-conference game.

Texas was ranked 18th in the country entering the game and Houston was 12th. Both had won 10 straight games and the match drew a sellout crowd at Hofheinz Pavilion.

With the win, Texas raised its record to 11-0 for the season, moving to the top of the Southwest Conference with a 3-0 mark. It was Houston's first loss since the second game of the season.

Texas coach Abe Lemons said "Wacker was just uncanny" as he scored 10 more points than he had in any other game this year.

Wacker had seven rebounds to assist 6-10 LaSalle Thompson on the boards against the imposing front line of 7-foot Akeem Abdul Olajuwon, 6-9 Larry Micheaux, 6-

6 Clyde Drexler and 6-6 Michael Young.

"Once we got ahead like we did early in the game we just played relaxed and just did what we had to do to win," Wacker said. "We moved the ball around. Virdele (Howland) was shooting good outside like he always does and LaSalle got a lot of rebounds."

Wacker said the experience gained during his freshman season has paid off.

"We're more mature. Last year was a learning experience. It took a while to learn the system," he said.

Wacker and Thompson combined to limit Olajuwon to two points, and the Houston center missed all six of his free throw tries. Texas, on the other hand, made 33 of 41 free throws by drawing nine two-shot fouls and getting into the one-and-one penalty situation early in each half. The Longhorns made the first free throw in 11 of 12 one-and-one situations.

Wacker was 14 of 15 at the free throw line.

The victory for Texas against its stiffest opponent of the season came in the first week the team was ranked in the top 20.

"We surprised ourselves," Thompson said. "I didn't think we would be able to take the lead early like we did and hold it the whole game. It's our biggest win of the season. Everybody should know now that we're good. We should get a little more recognition."

Wacker and Thompson ganged up on Olajuwon under the basket and all of the Longhorns contributed to a staunch defensive effort

on guard Rob Williams, Houston's leading scorer. Williams scored 10 points and hit only four of 14 shots from the field.

In his three meetings with Texas last year, Williams scored 40, 32 and 37 points, and Wacker said holding him to 10 again would be difficult.

"Usually he will make the shots that he missed tonight. We'll have to be ready for him next time."

Texas A&M forward Claude Riley goes high to block a Texas Tech shot in the Red Raiders' 65-64 win over the Aggies Monday night in G. Rollie White Coliseum. Ready to retrieve the

ball are Aggie forward Roy Jones (44) and Texas Tech center Dwight Phillips, while Texas A&M guard Reggie Roberts watches the action during the first half of the game.

Photo by C. Michel Chang

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