

Ag basketball squad to play tonight at SMU

by Frank L. Christlieb
Sports Editor

The Texas A&M basketball team, tied for second place in the Southwest Conference with a 2-1 record, plays the Southern Methodist Mustangs tonight at 7:30 in Dallas' Moody Coliseum.

The Mustangs enter the game with a conference record of 1-3, with their only win coming over the struggling University of Houston Cougars 67-66 on UH's home court. Picked by many as league favorites, the Cougars have found their early SWC schedule a rough one after also losing to the front-running University of Texas. The Longhorns are 13-0 for the year and 5-0 in conference play.

The Aggies, 9-4 for the year, have been haunted by poor shooting during their first three conference games. Texas A&M has shot 44 percent in those outings, while its opponents have shot 49 percent.

The leading Aggie scorer in SWC play is forward Claude Riley, averaging 12.6 points a game, while guards Tyren Naulls and Reggie Roberts follow with 11.6 and 10 points a game. For the season, Riley is averaging 15 points a game.

Texas A&M Head Coach Shelby Metcalf has cited Riley's strong rebounding as one important factor so far this season. Riley, a 6-10 junior, has had double-figure rebound totals in 10 of the Aggies' 13 games.

Metcalf said the Aggies will have their hands full in playing the Mustangs.

"They'll be well-prepared for us," Metcalf said. "They're a strong team and they shoot the ball well. I have a lot of respect for (SMU) Coach Dave Bliss—he's done a real fine job with his team."

Here's a wrapup of the Aggies' games over the holiday break:

In the Sun Carnival Classic, held Dec. 18-19 in El Paso, the Aggies defeated Oklahoma State University 80-72. Texas A&M shot 53 percent from the field and the Cowboys shot 44 percent, as Riley scored 21 points and had 11 rebounds. Naulls scored 14 points and finished with eight rebounds. As a team, the Aggies had 48 rebounds, compared to 37 for the Cowboys.

In the tournament championship, the Aggies played their worst game of the season, losing 60-40 to the University of Texas at El Paso. Naulls led Texas A&M scorers with 11 points, as the Aggies shot only 35 percent from the field and the Miners managed 44 percent. UTEP outrebounded Texas A&M 42-29 in a physical game which found the Miners handling the Aggies easily. Riley and Naulls made the all-tournament team, while Fred Reynolds of UTEP was the Most Valuable Player, scoring 17 points against the Aggies.

In the Christmas Classic in Las Vegas, Nev., the Aggies defeated Miami of Ohio 73-53, as Roberts scored 22 points, hitting 10 of 14 from the floor. Center/forward Lonnie Bluntson made his first start of the year, replacing forward Roy Jones, who was suffering from the flu. Bluntson scored 18 points as the Aggies shot 57 percent from the field and Miami-Ohio shot only 37 percent.

In the tournament championship, the Aggies lost once again to the University of Nevada at Las Vegas 83-76 as Riley had 20 points, Naulls had 12 and center Rudy Woods had 10 points. Aggies shot 49 percent from the floor and the Runnin' Rebels finished at 60 percent.

The Aggies, down 48-37 at halftime, cut the lead to five points at 72-67 with about five minutes left in the game, but the Rebels pulled away. Forward Sidney Green led UNLV with 22 points, while guard Larry Anderson scored 20.

Following the game, Metcalf said he was pleased with the way the Aggies battled back, having been down by 18 at one point in the first half. He said Texas A&M gained more from the tournament than from either of the other two it had played in, describing the Aggies as "probably right on schedule."

Aggies returned home to face Stephen F. Austin University, and the Lumberjacks, entering the game with an 8-0 record, nearly caught the Aggies looking too far ahead to their conference opener with TCU. SFA shot 51 percent and Texas A&M shot 49 percent, as the Aggies ended the game with 27 rebounds to SFA's 24. Roberts had 21 points and Riley had 11 points and 10 rebounds.

Aggies entered Southwest Conference play against the Horned Frogs of TCU, and took a 60-54 win in Fort Worth in front of 7,166 fans. Texas A&M shot only 42 percent and TCU finished at 43 percent. Roberts was the leading scorer with 16 points, while Riley had 10 rebounds for his eighth double-figure rebounding game in the Aggies' first 11 games.

Aggies defeated the Baylor University 47-46 in G. Rollie White Coliseum, nearly losing on a last-second desperation shot by Bear forward Joe Copeland.

The Aggies lost to Texas Tech University 68-64 after leading 40-29 at halftime. Riley scored 12 points and grabbed 16 of Texas A&M's 42 rebounds, while Naulls scored 23 points for a season high.

Former Owl star to receive funds

United Press International
SEAGOVILLE — In four years, former all-pro, all-America receiver Billy Howton becomes eligible to receive \$375 a month from a National Football League Players Association pension fund he helped create.

But for right now, Howton spends his time in a federal minimum-security prison playing golf, racquetball and tennis. Howton was a founder and the first president of the National Football League Players Association, and now he works at Seagoville as a clerk in charge of inmates' food.

He was sentenced to five years in prison last August for bilking \$8 million out of companies for bogus guaranteed student loan packages. In the schemes that got him thrown in prison, Howton sold fake securities packages to the University of Pittsburgh, Blue Cross of Florida and several lending institutions.

In a series of stories published in a Houston newspaper, Howton said he regrets the fraudulent business activity that led to his imprisonment.

"I've felt remorseful about losing all the customers' money. My partners invested in gold futures and got demolished," he said.

"My personality is the same whether I'm here or in the street or selling life insurance in Hong Kong," he said. "Hopefully, I'll

get this thing rectified and get out of here. But the federal wheels turn slowly."

Howton was all-America with Rice in 1951 and a three-time all-star with the Green Bay Packers. Howton played in the pros for 12 seasons, also playing for the Cleveland Browns and Dallas Cowboys.

Howton helped organize the pro football players union in the late 1950s to form a pension plan and to force some NFL teams to provide insurance coverage and to stop taking advantage of players in making endorsements.

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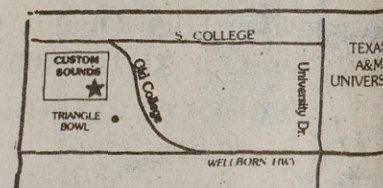
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