

Texas A&M The Battalion Sports

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Aggies turn 'Wacker woes' into victory

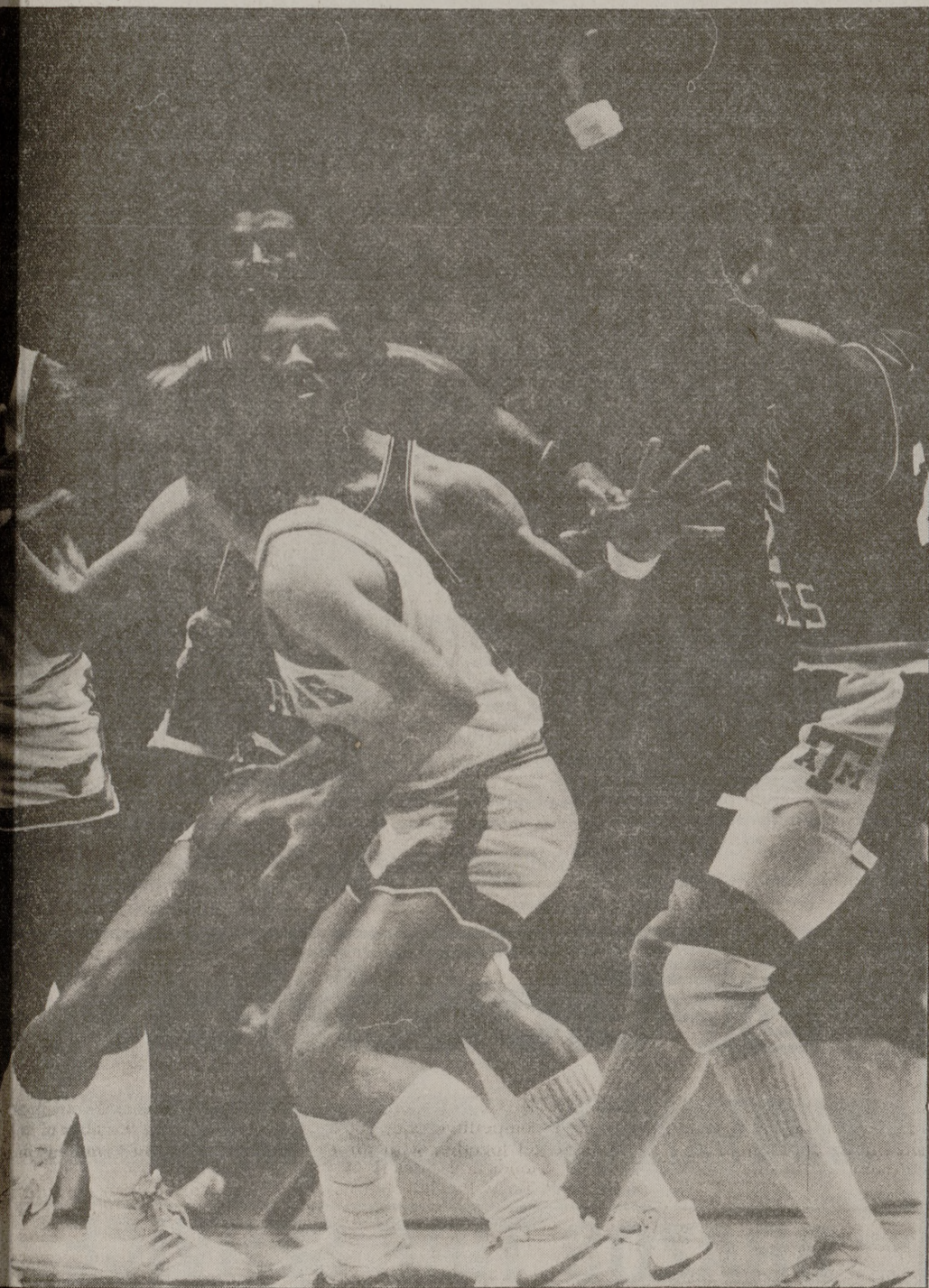


photo by Greg Watermann

University of Texas guard Ray Harper tries to pass around Texas A&M's Lonnie Bluntson (center) and Claude Riley (behind Bluntson), as Aggie guard Reggie Roberts applies pressure from behind. Texas A&M won 71-69 in overtime to raise its season record to 12-5 and conference record to 5-2.

A&M to face Houston tonight for 7:30 tipoff

by Frank L. Christlieb

Sports Editor

As Abe Lemons left his post-game press conference, his words to a passing spectator accurately described the Texas Longhorns' condition after Saturday's 71-69 overtime loss to the Texas Aggies. "You know that old song 'Time Changes Everything'?" Lemons asked.

The University of Texas basketball coach knew that his team's loss of sophomore forward Mike Wacker to a season-ending knee injury a few days before had drastically changed the Longhorns. Lemons made it clear that without Wacker's 16 points and 10 rebounds a game, the Longhorns weren't the same team that won its first 14 games of the season.

"It's all over for us ... from the standpoint of what happened before (Texas' two straight losses) and what's happening now," Lemons said. "The offense we've got does not fit the bunch we've got."

"We're going to be seeing a lot more of our people, because we've got to rest our freshmen. We need to find out what's out there. We're really getting pretty thin on our big guys."

In front of 16,251 fans in Austin's Frank C. Erwin Special Events Center, the Longhorns dropped into a second-place Southwest Conference tie with the Aggies, while the Arkansas Razorbacks have moved into first place. Arkansas' conference record is 6-2, and the Aggies and Longhorns are 5-2.

Texas A&M's season record is now 12-5.

The Aggies, after losing 64-63 Tuesday to the Razorbacks in G. Rollie White Coliseum, led throughout most of Saturday's game. Although the Longhorns' Ray Harper tied the game with a shot at the top of the key to send it into overtime, junior forward Claude Riley's shot from the left corner with five seconds remaining gave the Aggies the victory.

"I felt we could get a good shot off ... and that if I got downcourt by myself, I could score," Riley said. "I didn't want to go into another overtime — I wanted to get it over right then and there."

Lemons said he didn't agree with the officiating during the game, and that UT center LaSalle Thompson received more rough treatment than should have been allowed.

"We couldn't figure out what was a foul and what wasn't a foul," Lemons said. "LaSalle was getting bumped around too much in there. If that's the way it's going to be, we'd better just get used to it. I just can't see how they can allow all that contact."

Thompson led the Longhorns with 24 points and 14 rebounds, while Riley's 14 points and 11 rebounds led the Aggies. Guard Denard Holmes followed Thompson with 17 points, and Ken Montgomery finished with 10.

For Texas A&M, guard Reggie Roberts and reserve center Lonnie Bluntson had 12 points apiece, and guard Milton Woodley scored 11.

Thompson said the physical play didn't bother him, but that

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photo by Greg Watermann

Aggie guard Reggie Roberts (22) searches for someone to pass to as teammate Tyren Naulls watches the action during Texas A&M's overtime win Saturday at the University of Texas. The Aggies host the University of Houston tonight at 7:30 in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

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