

Texas A&M
The Battalion Sports

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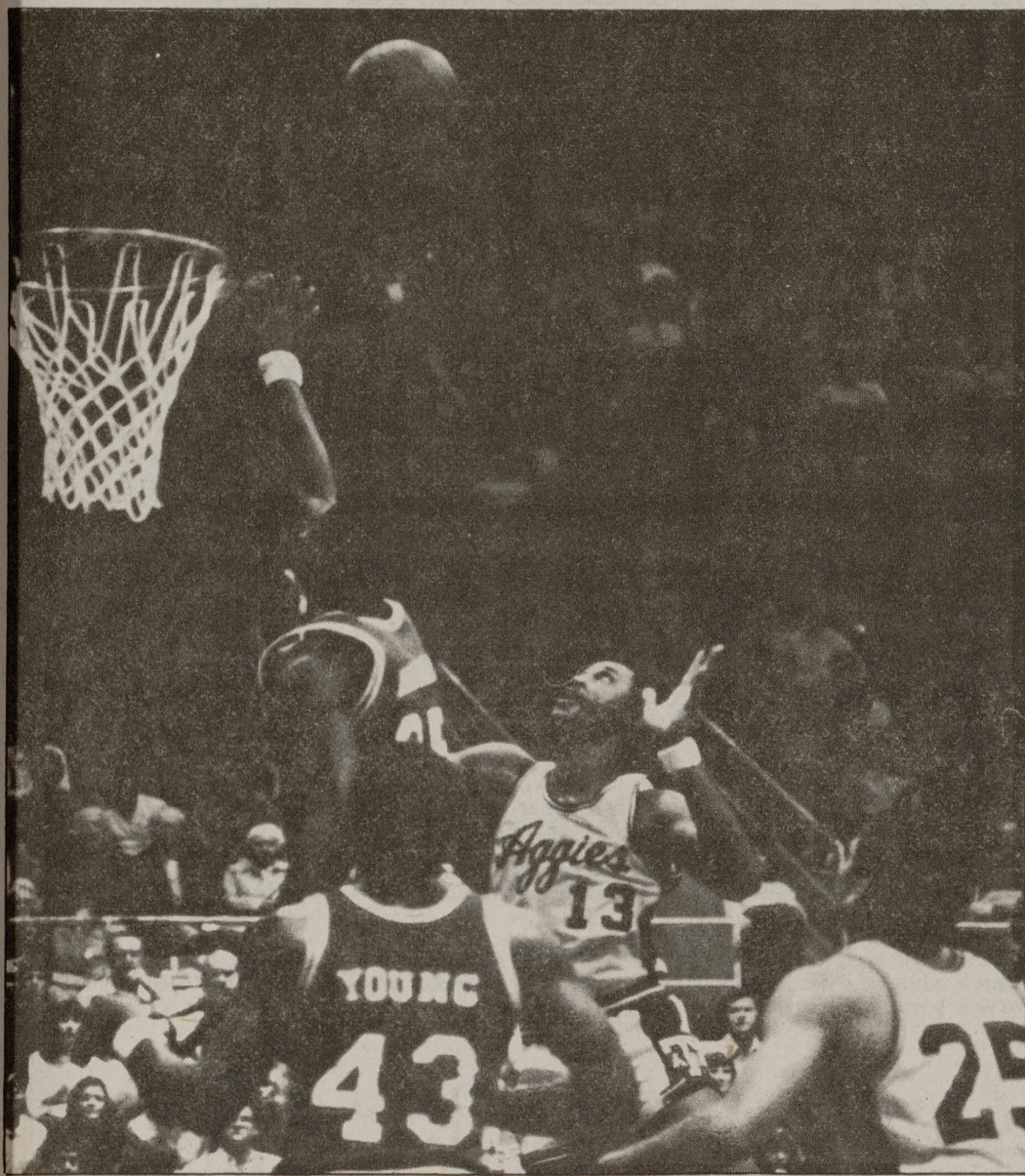


photo by Dean Saito

Aggie forward Claude Riley (13) shovels a shot over the outstretched arm of Houston Cougar center Akeem Abdul Olajuwon during Texas A&M's 95-77 victory Monday

night. UH's Michael Young and the Aggies' Milton Woodley (25) prepare to move in for the rebound.

Explosion

Riley's 38 points lead Aggies to victory

by Frank L. Christlieb
 Sports Editor

Claude Riley's satisfaction couldn't have been illustrated better in an artist's sketchbook.

When Riley left the game with 30 seconds remaining and the Texas A&M basketball team on its way to a 95-77 victory Monday night over the Houston Cougars, the deafening applause that arose from the 6,521 G. Rollie White Coliseum spectators added a finishing touch to a memorable night.

After watching the junior forward finish with career-high totals of 38 points and 18 rebounds, Aggie Coach Shelby Metcalf met an ecstatic Riley with a smile, a handshake and a pat on the back.

The victory concluded the first half of Southwest Conference play for the Aggies, whose 6-2 league record moves them into a first-place tie with the University of Arkansas. While the Razorbacks are 14-3 for the season, Texas A&M's overall record is 13-5.

The Texas Longhorns, whom the Aggies beat 71-69 in overtime Saturday, lost Monday night to the Rice Owls 80-49. After winning their first 14 games of the season, the Longhorns have lost three straight SWC games and have fallen into a second-place tie with the TCU Horned Frogs.

The Aggies never trailed the Cougars after the 13:28 mark of the first half, when the score was

14-14. During the remainder of the game, Texas A&M pushed its lead to as much as 18 points, then allowed the Cougars to trim the margin to only seven with 5:08 left in the game.

However, the Aggies maintained their lead until the final buzzer, when forward Mike Thomas hit a layup to give the Aggies the 18-point victory. Thomas scored eight points in a reserve role, hitting three of four field goal attempts and two of two free throws.

Metcalf, who was presented a special plaque after the game for recording his 300th career victory in the Aggies' defeat of UT, cited Riley, center Rudy Woods, and guards Milton Woodley and

Gary Lewis for their play against the Cougars. Woodley finished with 13 assists, while Lewis added seven of the Aggies' 27 assists.

"(Riley) thought he was playing outside in Crockett (his hometown)," Metcalf laughed. "Our guys played with a lot of intensity. We played about as well as we can play."

Riley said the Aggies' hard work through the first two months of the season finally paid off in Monday night's victory.

"I'm so excited — I feel like we've already won the conference," Riley said. "Some of the things we did tonight, we've been trying to do all year. I feel

See EXPLOSION page 11.

Coog loss a mystery to Lewis

by John Bramblett
 Battalion Staff

"Let's get dressed and get the hell out of here."

That was University of Houston basketball coach Guy Lewis' post-game locker room talk after the Cougars were soundly thrashed by Texas A&M, 95-77, Monday night in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

A crowd of 6,521 saw the Aggies turn in their third good performance in a row and their second straight victory. Lewis said his team looked asleep on the court. If they were, they were mesmerized by 6-10 Aggie forward Claude Riley.

The Rocket from Crockett connected on 60 percent of his field goal attempts, hitting 15 of 25, and all eight of his free

throws for a career-high 38 points. Playing 40 minutes, he also pulled down a career-high 18 rebounds. He scored 24 of his points and snatched 11 of his rebounds in the second half. Many of his points resulted from Milton Woodley's 13 assists.

"Houston didn't have anyone going across the lane with me, so I was open all night," Riley said. "We knew if we could win this game we'd be tied for first. We knew we needed it and we went out and got it."

Houston's All-American guard Rob Williams, who scored 25 points but hit only 45 percent of his field goal attempts, said the Cougars knew Texas A&M would be ready to play.

Williams, who got into foul trouble by picking up three fouls

in the first half, said the fouls did not affect his play.

"I don't think it really affected me, but I guess he (Lewis) did," he said. Williams did not start the second half. Lewis said he felt it best to keep Williams out early in the half, when the Cougars began using a full-court, man-to-man press.

"We stayed with basically the same game plan in the second half (as in the first half)," Williams said.

Asked if he could put his finger on what happened to the Cougars, Lewis said he really didn't know.

"We couldn't even get close enough to put a finger on it," he said. "We seem to bring the best out of everyone."

He said Houston's big men,

Akeem Abdul Olajuwon, David Bunce, Clyde Drexler and Larry Micheaux, looked intimidated throughout the game. Texas A&M out-rebounded the Cougars 48-33 and Aggie post Rudy Woods followed Riley's lead with 12 of his own rebounds and 15 points, including four points by alley-oop slam dunks.

The Aggies, who connected on 57 percent of their field goals, moved into a conference tie for first with Arkansas. They are now 6-2 in conference play and 13-5 for the year. Rice also won Monday night, defeating the Texas Longhorns 80-49 in Houston. The loss drops the Horns to 5-3 and into a third-place tie with TCU. The Horned Frogs defeated Baylor Monday night 83-80.

Rifle Team finishes fourth in El Paso invitational meet

The Texas A&M Rifle Team placed fourth at the Southwest Invitational, held the past weekend in El Paso.

Finishing behind the New Mexico Military Institute, the University of Texas and the Air Force Academy, Texas A&M compiled 2,143 points. The first-place NMMI team finished with 2,210 points.

Team co-captain John Heye

placed third in the standing competition with 174 points out of a possible 200, and took fourth in the kneeling event. Todd Woodard placed fifth with 199 points out of 200 in the prone shooting competition, losing in the tie-breaker for second place after tying four other participants.

Heye topped the Aggies in total points, ending the meet with 554 out of 600, while Kurt

Nauck had 536, Glenn Park had 531 and Woodard had 520.

Feb. 20-Feb. 21, the Aggies will compete in a national collegiate qualifying match, from which the participants for nationals will be chosen. During the fall, the team was given varsity status, enabling it to compete in the national event. The team receives no funds from the Athletic Department.

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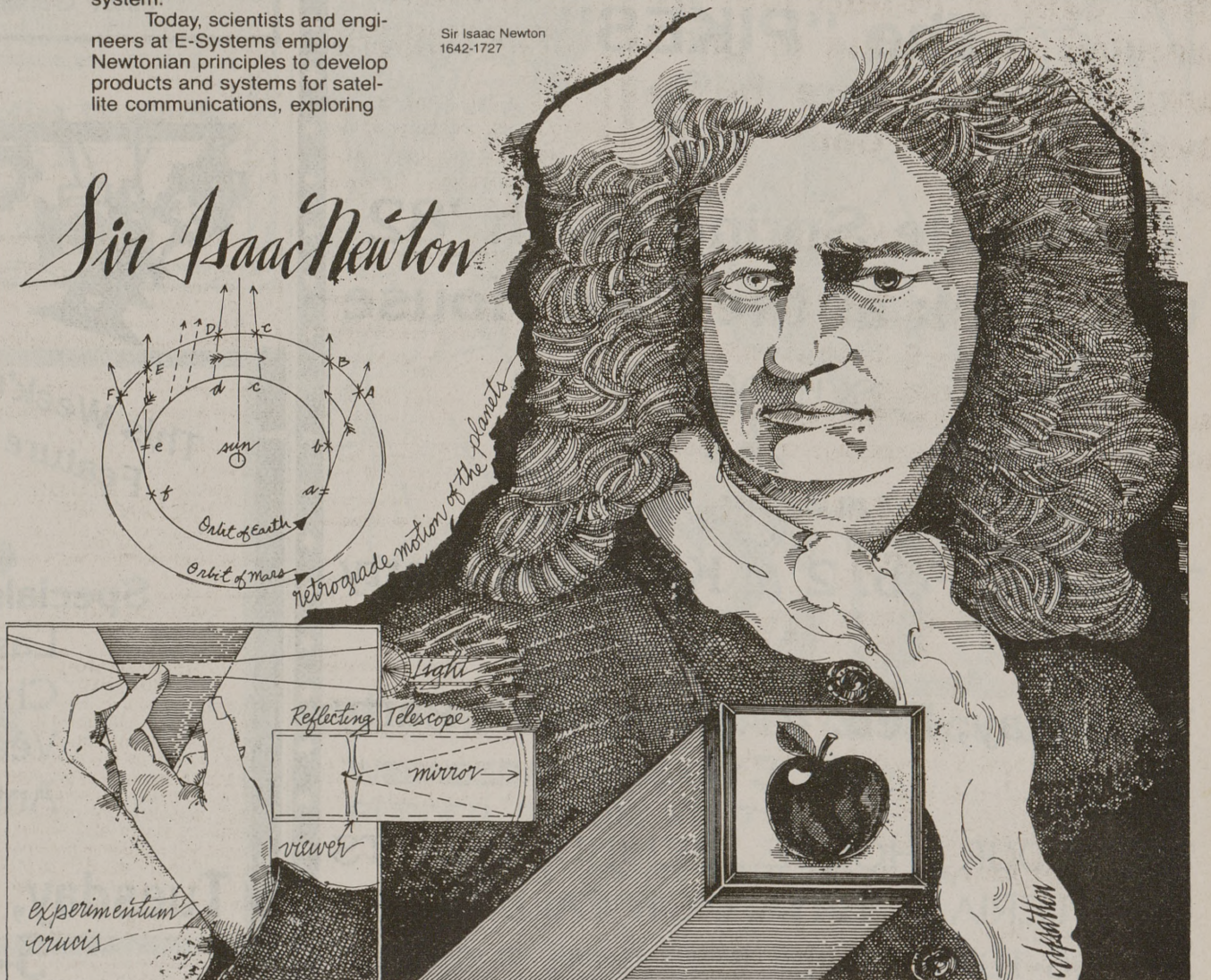
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