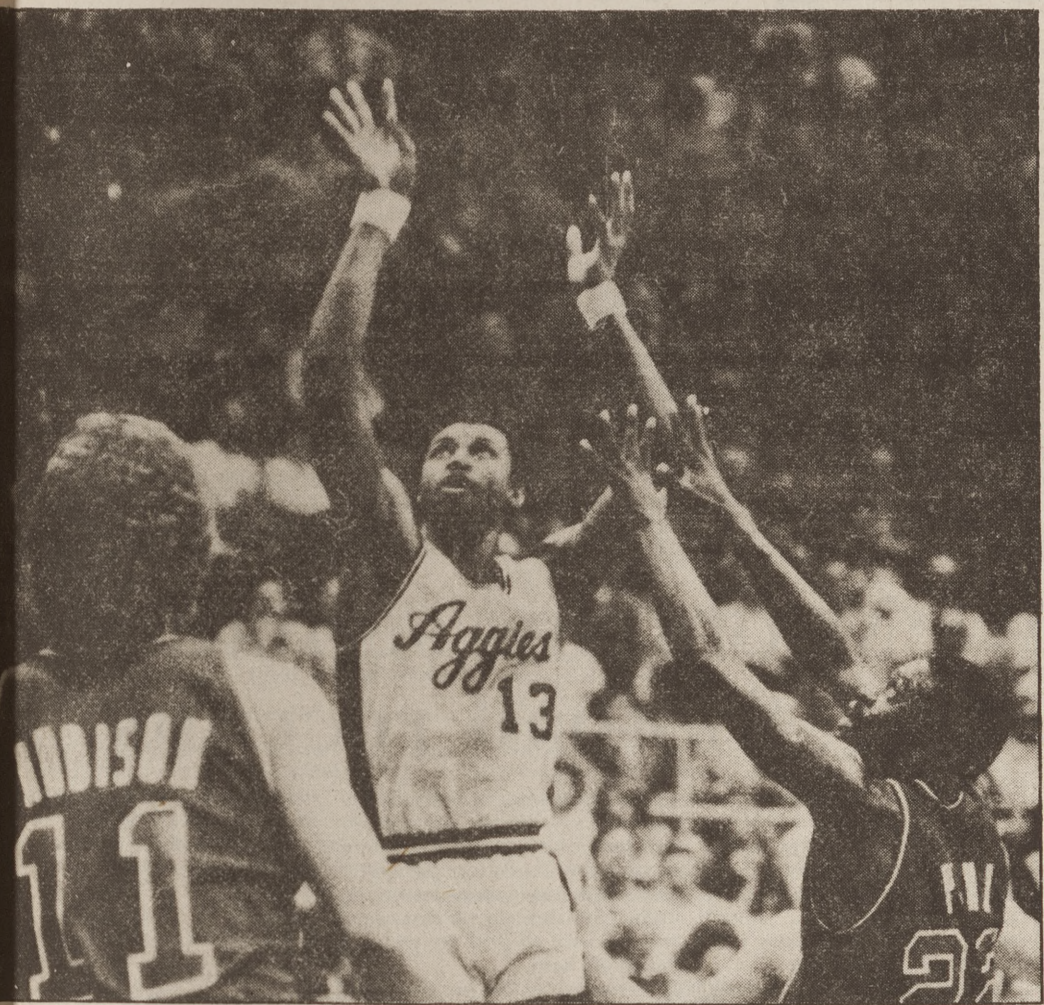


The Battalion Sports

February 11, 1982 Page 17



Mustangs' hard luck keeps coming; Aggies win 67-58

by Frank L. Christlieb

Sports Editor
When the SMU Mustangs came into G. Rollie White Coliseum for Wednesday night's game with the Texas Aggies, no one expected a close game.

Entering the contest with a 6-15 season record and a 1-10 Southwest Conference record, the Mustangs could have given up without a struggle. Add to that the fact that Texas A&M defeated SMU 81-55 in Dallas earlier in the season, and it wouldn't have been surprising to see the Mustangs play an effortless game.

SMU battled the Aggies with more intensity and showed more stability than they'll probably be given credit for. And although the Mustangs lost 67-58, Aggie coach Shelby Metcalf knows that his team didn't have an easy time.

"SMU has improved a lot since we saw them last," Metcalf said. "If they can get two more players, they may be a team of the future. What really impressed me was that Dave (Bliss, SMU coach) got his head up and his players got their heads up, too."

"They're a young team and a young team is going to improve. Another thing that impressed me about SMU is their enthusiasm. That makes me think Dave's doing something right up there."

Bliss said his team has continued to work hard, even though four of its conference losses have been by two points or less.

"I am proud of the way we keep battling," Bliss said. "Without exception, we've played

better and smarter against each conference team the second time around. Where we are right now, we have to derive our satisfaction from our improvement. The reward is going to come in the future from this hard work and no one has come from further down than we to achieve what I think these kids can achieve."

The Mustangs, led by the sharp passing and shooting of guard Dave Piehler, didn't let the Aggies build more than an eight-point lead in the first half. Texas A&M led by that margin, 38-30, at halftime, thanks to the outside shooting of guard Milton Woodley.

The 6-1 senior had 12 points in the first half, and finished the game with a team-high 15 points and eight assists. The Aggies' Reggie Roberts scored 15 points, while Tyren Naulls had 11, Rudy Woods had nine and forward Mike Thomas came off the bench to score eight points.

The Aggies shot 54 percent for the game and the Mustangs shot 51 percent.

Texas A&M took a 10-4 lead with 16:08 left in the first half, relying on three baskets by Woodley, one by Roberts, and one by Naulls. However, the Mustangs held the Aggies to two points during the next four minutes to achieve a 12-12 tie.

That was the last time SMU tied Texas A&M, as the Aggies scored six straight points to take an 18-12 lead with 10:01 left in the first half. The Mustangs narrowed the Aggie lead to three, 27-24, with 3:44 left in the half, but Woods, Woodley and Roberts

scored the rest of the first-half points to give Texas A&M its halftime lead.

Forward Claude Riley had nine of the Aggies' 13 rebounds in the first half. For the Mustangs, Piehler hit all four of his shots from the field, including two shots from 25 feet and one from 17 feet. The 6-2 junior handed out four assists in the first half, leaving the crowd of 4,324 staring in amazement at passes he whipped around his head to teammates breaking toward the basket.

The Aggies didn't score until the 16:20 mark of the second half, but the Mustangs scored only two points during that span. Texas A&M built its lead up to nine points, 51-42, with 12:13 left in the game on a dunk by Roberts after a backcourt steal by Naulls.

However, SMU cut the lead to 55-50 three minutes later on three straight baskets by freshman forward Larry Davis, who led the Mustangs with 18 points. The Aggies took a 65-52 lead with 4:19 left in the game, as Thomas scored six straight points on layups.

Although Texas A&M didn't hit any more field goals, Naulls and Woodley each hit a free throw to give the Aggies the nine-point victory.

Since entering the starting lineup after the season-ending injury to Roy Jones three weeks ago, Woodley has made the most of his playing time.

"I think the playing time has been a big factor," Woodley said. "You have to get out there and break a sweat and touch the ball a couple of times to really get into the games."

photo by Dean Saito
Texas A&M forward Claude Riley puts up a shot during the Aggies' 67-58 victory over the SMU Mustangs Wednesday night in G. Rollie White Coliseum. Defending on the play are the Mustangs' John Addison (11) and Reggie Pink (22).

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