



staff photo by David Fisher

Contact

Gay McNutt, catcher for the Texas A&M women's softball team, hits the ball into the infield during the Aggies' sweep of Oklahoma Tuesday, as OU catcher Wendy

Ford prepares to take the pitch. Texas A&M plays at the University of Texas at Arlington today in a double-header starting at 4.

Lemons defends his style after dismissal

United Press International
AUSTIN — Despite being fired by the University of Texas, the acid-tongued Abe Lemons with a reputation as college basketball's leading humorist has no apologies for his style.

Southwest Conference's basketball coaches said Wednesday that they were sorry to hear of Lemons' firing. Even Arkansas coach Eddie Sutton, involved in the most recent controversy stemming from Lemons' remarks, was sympathetic to Lemons' plight.

After learning Tuesday of his firing at the hands of the university's athletic council, Lemons was bitter about the council but defended his high-flung verbal form in his usual manner.

"I didn't get to talk to the ones who did it," Lemons told reporters. "The athletic director just came in and said 'I've got some bad news. You are fired.'"

"I am kind of crusty. What you need to do is keep your head down and keep your mouth shut and you will stay around a long time. Abe Lemons can't do that."

"It was a total shock to me. If they had told me I had been elected governor of Texas it couldn't have shocked me more."

After joking that he might change jobs and become an astronaut, Lemons vowed to remain in coaching.

Lemons said he had not been given an exact reason for his dismissal. Athletic director DeLoss Dodds said only that the Longhorns needed new leadership.

Dodds, who said that the final two years of Lemons' \$52,000-a-year contract would be honored, indicated that the firing was not precipitated by the unexpected collapse of the Longhorns' team this year, nor by Lemons' deteriorating relationship with the University of Arkansas.

Texas won its first 14 games and was ranked fifth in the country only to lose 11 of its last 13 after an injury to star forward Mike Wacker.

Southwest Conference coaches were surprised to hear Lemons had been fired and Sutton, though he said he had not talked to Lemons since a confrontation about one of his players, was extremely sympathetic.

Lemons and Sutton have been at odds for several years and their rivalry was intensified when Arkansas player Darrell Walker was kicked out of a game in Fayetteville for striking Texas guard Ray Harper.

Illinois shatters scoring record

United Press International
For 29 games, Long Island University proved it knew how to score points. But Wednesday night, the Blackbirds displayed a remarkable facility for giving them up.

Illinois shattered several scoring records, including the major college mark for most points by a team in post-season play, in crushing the Blackbirds, 126-78, in an opening-round game in the National Invitation Tournament.

"We live by the sword and we die by the sword," said LIU Coach Paul Lizzo, whose Blackbirds led the nation in scoring this season. "Illinois took us out of our game plan. We were awed. I hope we see Illinois in the Final Four."

So does senior guard Perry Range, whose career-high 28 points led six Illinois players in double figures.

"They were quick, but we can run too," Range said.

The previous Assembly Hall record for most points by an Illinois team was 121 in 1965, and the NIT record broken was held by Marshall, which scored 119 against Nebraska in 1967.

The 126 points also was the most by any major college team in post-season play, NIT or NCAA.

The Illini, 18-10, used a devastating fast-break and a decided height advantage to dominate the Blackbirds from the opening tip, opening a 65-29

halftime bulge. Following Range were Jay Daniels with 20 points, Craig Tucker with 16, Anthony Welch with 13, Derek Harper with 12, James Griffin with 11 and Quinn Richardson with 10.

Long Island, 20-10, was led by Riley Clarida's 14 points.

Elsewhere in the first round Wednesday night, Purdue beat Western Kentucky, 72-65; Dayton edged Connecticut, 76-75, in overtime; Texas A&M topped Lamar, 60-58, and Washington defeated Brigham Young, 66-63.

At West Lafayette, Ind., Big Ten scoring champion Keith Edmonson had 29 points as the Boilermakers, 15-13, beat a sloppy Western Kentucky team.

"It was shocking," said Purdue Coach Gene Keady about Western Kentucky's 24 turnovers.

At Dayton, Ohio, Roosevelt Chapman scored 21 points to lead the Flyers, 20-8, to a gritty overtime triumph. With one minute left and Connecticut leading 67-65, Dayton's Kevin Conrad fouled Karl Hobbs, who then turned around and hit Conrad. Hobbs was ejected, giving Dayton the chance to tie in regulation. Shawn McNally's layup put Dayton ahead for good in the overtime.

At Provo, Utah, guards Alvin Vaughn and Steve Burks combined for 27 second-half points in pacing Washington. The Huskies trailed by 16 points late

in the first half, but outscored BYU, 30-10, to grab the lead for good on a basket and two foul shots by Burks. Fred Roberts led BYU with 22 points.

In tonight's first-round games, it's Temple at Georgia, Iona at Rutgers, American at Bradley and Murray State at Nevada-Las Vegas.

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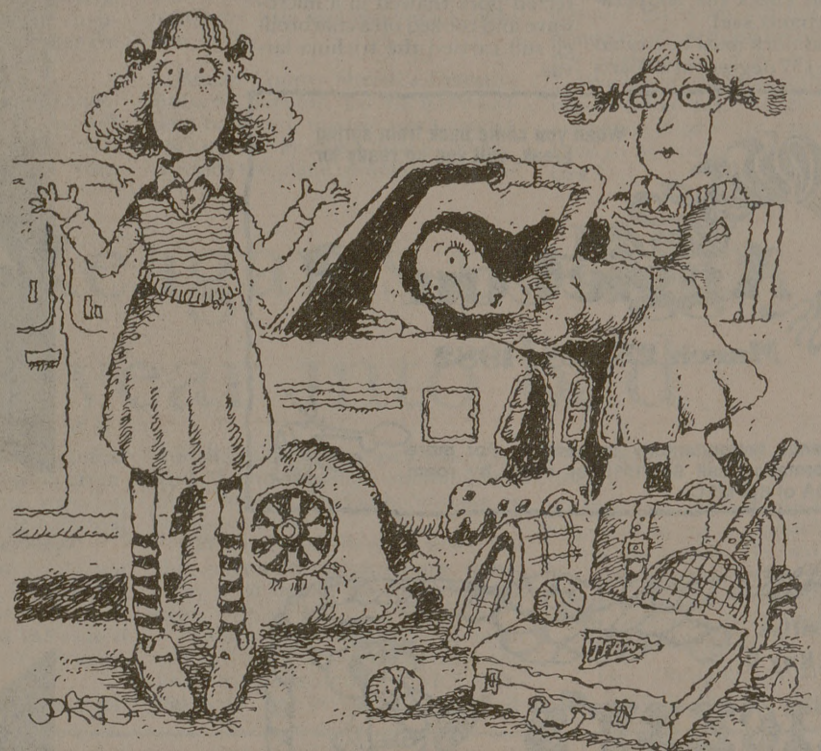
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