



staff photo by John Ryan

Aggie guard Reggie Roberts finds a fast-break lane to the bucket as he scores on a layup over Athletes in Action guard Steve Bontrager. Roberts and his Texas A&M teammates lost to AIA 59-57 Saturday.

Aggie comeback falls short, 59-57

AIA holds lead, wins by two

by Frank L. Christlieb
Sports Editor

The Athletes in Action used a disciplined ball-control offense and a leaping shot-blocking defense to defeat the Aggie basketball team 59-57 in an exhibition game Saturday night in front of 3,488 fans in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

Texas A&M, which opens the regular season Friday night against the Clemson Tigers at 11 p.m. CST in the Great Alaska Shootout in Anchorage, Alaska, took an early four-point lead at 6-2. But AIA jumped ahead 10-8 and never allowed the the Aggies to catch up.

AIA, a traveling ministry squad for Campus Crusade for Christ, opened up a 31-18 lead with 7:38 left in the first half, but the Aggies' Claude Riley, Tyren Naulls and Jimmie Gilbert found the basket to cut the lead to nine — 38-29 — at halftime.

Riley, the Aggies' preseason all-conference pick, scored seven points and had six rebounds in the first half to lead Texas A&M. Gilbert, the Aggies' starting freshman center had six points.

AIA guard Steve Bontrager had nine points to lead a 54-percent shooting effort from the floor.

Kenny Brown, the Aggies' 22-year-old freshman guard who's spent the past four years in the Army, sank jump shots of 20, 25 and 28 feet during the first half, and wound up the game with 10 points.

AIA's Dave Jennings opened the second half by sinking a jumper to move the lead to 40-29, but a steal by Naulls and a follow-up shot by Gilbert on a Reggie Roberts miss made the score 40-31.

After buckets by Bontrager and Wilbert Singleton, Riley and Roberts connected on consecutive possessions to make the score 44-37 in favor of AIA. Naulls came up with a steal moments later, but his missed fast break layup resulted in a rebound and a traveling call on Roberts.

Naulls then drove the length of the court after a Riley defensive rebound and was credited with two points when AIA was called for goaltending, making the score 44-39. Naulls finished the game with 12 points, four assists and four steals.

A long-range jumper by Brown made the score 44-41, and moments later, Riley missed a technical foul

shot after one of the AIA players grabbed the rim. After the Aggies scored to move within a point, AIA's Dan Henderson hit two free throws with 10:29 remaining to make the score 46-43.

Riley's two free throws made the score 46-45, but Jennings' field goal made it a three-point game once again with 7:30 left.

Two more free throws by Riley made the score 51-49. A rebound and outlet pass moments later from Riley to Naulls seemed looked like a possible two-pointer for the Aggies, but Naulls couldn't control the ball and lost it out of bounds.

Roberts' fifth foul of the game with 40 seconds left resulted in two free throws by Bontrager, who was nine-of-nine from the line. A dunk by Riley a few seconds later made the score 55-52, but Bontrager sank two more free throws with 23 seconds remaining to boost the lead to five points again.

A downcourt drive and short jumper by Naulls turned into a three-point play on Rick Swing's foul, making the score 57-55 with just 18 seconds left.

After an Aggie timeout, Coach Shelby Metcalf sent Riley, Naulls, Gilbert, Roy Jones and Gary Lewis back on the floor, and AIA's Singleton made two free throws after a foul by Naulls. The first attempt went through the rim, bounced about three feet into the air and finally came down to keep Singleton alive at the line. AIA came away with a 59-55 lead with 13 seconds left, and the Aggies called another timeout.

Brown's quick 20-foot jumper made the score 59-57, and when Swing missed the front end of a one-and-one attempt, the Aggies had a chance for one last shot. But Naulls' half-court shot, which hit the backboard inches to the right of the rim, came just after the buzzer had sounded.

Riley, picked by many as a preseason all-America, had 17 points and nine rebounds to lead the Aggies, and Gilbert ended the game with eight points and seven rebounds. Roberts and Jones had four points apiece.

AIA shot 46 percent and the Aggies connected on 42 percent of their shots for the game, while AIA outrebounded Texas A&M 29-28. Henderson and Swing each had two of AIA's amazing eight blocked shots. Brown, Naulls and Gilbert each had blocks for the

Aggies.

Metcalf, whose squad has been picked no higher than third and no lower than fourth in the Southwest Conference, said he liked what he saw in the Aggies' effort.

"I was pleased with our performance for it being the first time out of the blocks," he said. "It was a very good learning experience for us. We've got a little time now to work (before leaving for the Alaska tourney Tuesday) and I think we found enough things to keep us busy."

AIA, a squad made up of college graduates, now has a 6-3 record after defeating the Aggies, Drury College, Evangel College, Maryland, Penn State and Old Roberts. AIA has lost to Clemson 69-66, to UCLA 95-81 and to USC 76-72.

Metcalf credited AIA for its performance.

"They controlled the tempo the whole way," he said. "We just got too far behind to catch up. Every one of those guys were all-conference or something in college, so they're good competitors."

Wardell Jeffries, AIA's third-year coach from Old Roberts, said he saw talent in the Texas A&M team.

"It's really hard to make an assessment after seeing them once, but I think one of the differences is probably that we had played eight games and this was the Aggie's first," he said. "This is a good kind of game for a team to use as a barometer of what kind of team they'll have."

"I think A&M is a very talented team, and we've faced several very talented teams so far. They gave us some problems — it's the first time we've faced a 1-3-1 (zone defense) all year."

Roberts, Texas A&M's junior guard who averaged 11.7 points a game last season, said the Aggies shouldn't have allowed AIA to build up the early lead.

"They were pretty good competition and they were strong inside," he said. "We're going to learn from that, but I thought that we should have won the game. We rather play better teams, because it's going to make that much better. We like playing big-name teams like Marquette and LSU, because it helps us a lot more."

The Aggies will face the Marquette Warriors Dec. 1 in Milwaukee, Wis., at 8 p.m. and they'll go against the LSU Tigers Dec. 8 in New Orleans' Superdome at 8 p.m.

Cavaliers chosen preseason No. 1

United Press International
NEW YORK — The University of Virginia, looking to consummate the Ralph Sampson era with a national championship, Saturday was named college basketball's No. 1 team in preseason voting by the UPI Board of Coaches.

With Sampson, the two-time Player of the Year, returning for his final season, the Cavaliers received 23 first-place votes and 572 points from the 42-member board.

Defending NCAA champion North Carolina, with eight first-place votes and 502 points, was second followed by No. 3 Georgetown (seven first-place votes and 479 points), No. 4 Kentucky (one first-place vote and 397 points) and No. 5 Louisville (376 points).

Having spurned the pros three successive seasons, the Cavaliers' 7-foot-4 center has

made Virginia one of the nation's college basketball capitals. In his first year, he helped bring Virginia an NIT title. In his sophomore year the Cavaliers made it to the Final Four and last season Virginia finished with its best record (30-4) but was eliminated in the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

To complement Sampson, Coach Terry Holland has some fine guards in Othell Wilson and Rickey Stokes and able forwards in Craig Robinson and Jim Miller.

North Carolina loses all-America forward James Worthy and point guard Jimmy Black but comes back loaded with Sam Perkins in the middle, Matt Doherty at forward and Michael Jordan on the perimeter. Georgetown, runner-up to

North Carolina in the title game, features a fierce center in 7-foot Patrick Ewing and a lethal team defense.

Kentucky again begins its season with Sam Bowie sidelined with an injured leg but Coach Joe Hall has a sturdy pivot man in Melvin Turpin and one of the country's classiest backcourts in Jim Master and Dirk Minniefield. Louisville has a bruiser up front in Rodney McCray and an outstanding freshman forward in Billy Thompson.

No. 6 UCLA (one first-place vote) returns with guard Rod Foster and is eligible for the NCAA tournament; co-No. 7, Indiana (one first-place vote) has a smooth worker in forward Ted Kitchel; co-No. 7 Villanova (one first-place vote) looks to bull-like center John Pinone and

the deft touch of Ed Pinckney. No. 9 Memphis State has a gem in center Keith Lee, and No. 10 Oregon State expects good mileage from forward Charles Sitton.

Completing the Top 20 are No. 11 Houston, powered by Clyde Drexler and Akeem Ojuwon; No. 12 Iowa, with Michael Payne in the middle; No. 13 Alabama, featuring Ellis Whatley and Bobby Hurst; No. 14, Missouri, carried by Jon Sundvold and Steve Panovich, and No. 15 Tennessee, backed by gifted Dale Ellis.

No. 16 Marquette is spurred by guard Glenn Rivers and No. 17 DePaul turns this year to Bernard Randolph. Oklahoma, No. 18, St. John's is No. 19 and Arkansas is No. 20 with star man Darrell Walker.

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