

Texas A&M The Battalion Sports

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staff photo by Octavio Garcia

Opening game of tourney

Ags to 'explore' LaSalle

by Frank L. Christlieb

Battalion Staff
The Texas Aggies will attempt to hinder the basketball exploits of the LaSalle Explorers when the two teams meet tonight at 6 in the first round of the Marshall Memorial Tournament in Huntington, W. Va.

The Explorers, 2-1 on the season, have utilized a starting team of three sophomores and two freshmen to defeat Bucknell 68-66 and Delaware 55-54. LaSalle's only loss of the season came Wednesday night by a score of 84-82 to Rhode Island.

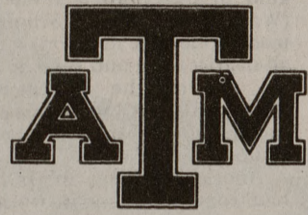
But on the other end of the court, the Aggies have relied on a lineup of three seniors and two freshmen during the first six games of their season. Texas A&M has defeated Alaska-Anchorage and Texas A&I and has lost to Clemson, Illinois, Marquette and LSU.

In losing to LSU 88-70 Wednesday night, the Aggies played their best all-around game of the season, shooting 58 percent from the field. However, Texas A&M committed 28 fouls, allowing the Tigers to shoot 46 free throws. LSU connected on 32 of those attempts, while the Aggies made 14 of 20 free throws.

Texas A&M had taken an early lead against the Tigers and still led 28-27 with 3:49 remaining in the first half. But sloppy passing and turnovers by the Aggies brought LSU into a 37-32 lead at halftime. The Aggies closed the deficit to 53-51 with 10:42 to play.

Coach Shelby Metcalf was called for a technical foul with the Tigers leading 65-61 at the 3:38 mark, and the Aggies could never rally after Steffond Johnson's three-point play and free throws made the score 70-61.

The technical was called when Johnson apparently made a basket after the shot clock had expired, but was awarded the



points by game officials. Texas A&M's Claude Riley was whistled for a foul, and Johnson made that free throw and the technical shots.

The result? A nine-point LSU lead late in the game — one from which the Aggies could never rebound.

In his post-game evaluation, Metcalf said: "I wished I hadn't got the technical, but that's just how I felt. Johnson caught the ball in the air and then put up the shot after time had expired. 'What are you supposed to do when you know you're right?'"

Metcalf, upset with some of the officiating, said: "I'll tell you what — I don't think we'll become pen pals."

From his hotel room in Huntington Thursday night, Metcalf said it's obvious that the official didn't make the right call on what seemed to be a shot-clock violation.

"Marty Blake, who's in charge of the officials for the NBA, came up to me afterward and told me it was a bad call by the official," he said.

Late in the game, junior transfer forward Lowell McHenry was whistled for a flagrant foul. Metcalf said that during an earlier play, McHenry had received a stiff hit from one of the LSU players.

"They'll talk about your mama down there in New Orleans," he said. "They've got some rough people down there."

The Aggies have learned a great deal during their first six games, Metcalf said, and the LSU game was no exception.

"We made some progress against LSU," he said. "If we can just start having some success now, we'll come on."

Metcalf said McHenry has been sent back to College Station for disciplinary reasons. McHenry, who has been hitting nearly 70 percent of his field goals as Metcalf's top big man off the bench, broke curfew Wednesday night while the team was still in New Orleans.

Metcalf said he doesn't know if McHenry will be allowed to play in the Aggies' next tournament — the Champion Holiday Classic in Missoula, Mont.

Metcalf, who was in good spirits as a result of the hospitality being given the players during their stay in Huntington, said LaSalle's youthful look may be deceiving.

"They've got two great freshman guards (Chip Greenberg and Gary Jones), and a really great ballclub. In the only game they've lost (to Rhode Island by two points), they were ahead by five points with 1:37 left and they ended up losing on four long bombers.

"The hotel had a banquet for us tonight, and we were sitting only two tables away from LaSalle, so at least we got to eyeball 'em."

Host school Marshall University plays Brown University at 8

tonight after the Aggie-Explorer game. The consolation game will be played at 6 Saturday night and the championship will be at 8.

Here are the starting lineups for the Aggies and Explorers, as well as their current scoring and rebounding averages:

TEXAS A&M:
Kenny Brown, freshman guard, 6-4, 195 — 18.1 ppg, 3.1 rpg

Tyren Naulls, senior guard, 6-4, 205 — 12.8 ppg, 3.0 rpg
Claude Riley, senior forward, 6-10, 215 — 15.1 ppg, 9.8 rpg

Roy Jones, senior forward, 6-7, 195 — 9.3 ppg, 3.8 rpg
Jimmie Gilbert, freshman center, 6-9, 200 — 2.3 ppg, 5.3 rpg

TEAM FIELD GOALS: 52.1 percent
TEAM FREE THROWS: 63.9 percent

REBOUNDS: 39 per game; opponents, 33.1 per game
LAST YEAR: 20-11
COACH: Shelby Metcalf

LASALLE:
Chip Greenberg, freshman guard, 6-4, 185, 13.7 ppg, 3.0 rpg

Gary Jones, freshman guard, 6-2, 175, 0.7 ppg, 2.0 rpg
Steve Black, sophomore forward, 6-3, 185, 18.7 ppg, 2.3 rpg

Ralph Lewis, sophomore forward, 6-5, 180, 13.7 ppg, 8.3 rpg
Albert Butts, sophomore center, 6-9, 215, 11.0 ppg, 10.7 rpg

TEAM FIELD GOALS: 41.8 percent
TEAM FREE THROWS: 72.3 percent

REBOUNDS: 34.3 per game
LAST YEAR: 16-13
COACH: Dave "Lefty" Ervin

AGGIE FACTS: Texas A&M has played LaSalle twice in the team's history, losing 59-57 in 1976 (when the Aggies finished

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Aggie assistant coach John Thornton contemplates a call during his team's victory over Texas A&I last week in G. Rollie White Coliseum. Texas A&M

plays LaSalle tonight at 6 in the first round of the Marshall Memorial Tournament in Huntington, W. Va. The Aggies are 2-4 and LaSalle is 2-1.

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