

sports

New Jersey falls to Celtics; Philadelphia topples Detroit

United Press International
The New Jersey Nets bowed to Larry Bird and the Celtics, 121-114, Monday night after topping the 76ers, 112-106, Sunday.

Bird scored 30 points, including 13 in the fourth quarter, and put the finishing touches on

with consecutive field goals for a 113-107 lead with 43 seconds remaining.

Albert King, who had 19 of his game-high 31 points in the second half, cut the lead to 98-96 before Bird hit a field goal, free throw and 3-pointer to give Boston a 104-98 edge.

Cedric Maxwell had 19 points

for Boston and Kevin McHale added 18. Buck Williams finished with 24 points for the Nets and Cook added 17.

In the only other NBA game, Julius Erving scored a 35 points and hit a jumper with 79 seconds remaining to help the 76ers to a 123-114 victory over the Detroit Pistons at Philadelphia.



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A&M ready for finals after passing mid-term

LUBBOCK — When test time rolls around, members of the Texas Aggie basketball team don't hesitate to give the answers they believe are correct.

And instead of taking their tests on economy-sized, time-saving Scan-Tron test forms, the Aggies like essay tests. In other words, Shelby Metcalf's players like to talk — especially when they're feeling confident and happy about winning.

That's how they felt Saturday in Lubbock after dropping a 93-70 bomb on the depleted eight-man roster of the Texas Tech Raiders. The Aggies, who came on strong by winning their final three games of the season to finish third in the Southwest Conference, enter the league tournament with visions of vengeance dancing in their heads and words of championship flowing from their mouths.

In a word, Texas A&M is confident. Incredibly confident. The Aggies are ready for the Russians, the Japanese, the Cubans, the Horned Frogs, the Razorbacks and the Cougars.

The Aggies are ready to take on the world. But back to tests. Instead of taking the time to voice lengthy, time-consuming answers to simple questions, some of the Aggies would rather get to the point.

Take long-range bomber Kenny Brown, who's averaged 9.9 points a game during the Aggies' 17-13 season. When it comes to answering questions about Texas A&M and its chances in the Southwest Conference tournament, Brown has his answers ready. He didn't have to study all night to figure out his response to this question:

Q. "Some of your teammates think you guys can beat the Razorbacks if you play them in the tournament. How about you?"

A. "Me, too."
Short, simple, to-the-point. What more need be said?

Q. "Why?"
A. "Because we're just as good as they are," Brown said with a grin. "They just have a better record."

Brown, Texas A&M's 23-year-old freshman guard, shares his teammates' belief that the Aggies can win their first-round game in this week's SWC tourney. After that, Texas A&M will play the second-place Arkansas Razorbacks, and after that ... well, that's too far ahead to worry about now.



frank I. christlieb

Brown's not the only player who's excited about the tournament. Senior forward Claude Riley sees great possibilities for the Aggies in the near future.

"I believe a lot of things can happen if we keep playing the way we're playing now," he said after the Aggies defeated the Raiders. "We've really improved our play a lot during the last few games. We feel really good and very comfortable with the team. We think that with our enthusiasm, we can go to the tournament and play well in it."

Riley's one of the players who likes to talk. Forget short answers to short questions:

Q. "What's the difference between the Aggies now and the Aggies earlier in the season?"

A. "We've really picked up our intensity a lot during the last few games, but since we played Arkansas in Fayetteville (losing 62-55), we've been controlling the tempo of every game. The key to the success we're having is the intensity, because I feel we were really lacking in intensity earlier in the season."

Q. "And what about Arkansas this week?"

A. "I feel like on a neutral court, we've got 'em. We played them tight in both games this year, so we know we can beat them anywhere we play. I think we realized at the Arkansas game up there that we could play together and compete with any team. So that game was really the turning point in the season for us."

Sorry about the repetition, but junior guard Reggie Roberts was posed the same question about the possibility of playing Arkansas. Like his teammates, Roberts made a prediction.

"Yes, we do feel we can beat them on a neutral court because we have the momentum, because we're winners and because we've got it in our heads that we

can be champions."

Brown said that Texas A&M overcame a difficult stretch, straight road games late in the season and early in January to clinch the title. "We've changed since it's 3-6 start."

"Over the season, we just became a team," he said. "Back then, we played together but we didn't play together. Now we know what we're doing, like when to pass to the open player and when not to take a shot."

Brown didn't concede the tournament title to the No. 1-ranked Cougars. He said the competition will be strong.

"Everyone's going to be playing as tough as they did during the Wednesday season," he said. "We're already looking like it's tournament time."

"We might win it. You never know. I can probably beat anyone there," he said. Yes, the Aggies are confident. They won't find a negative response to a question.

"Right now, we're just beginning to play with intensity and a lot of energy throughout the whole game," said forward Roy Jones said. "We're smart, smart and with a lot of confidence."

Jones put in his two cents' worth of the potential Aggie-Razorback match.

"Oh yeah, we're after 'em," he said. "The last time we played, it was a close game and we could have won."

Any thoughts about Houston? Texas has beaten Texas A&M soundly this year?

"If it comes down to a third game, it's a better game. It's hard to play with Houston, so if we play them, we have to get an early lead on them."

So much for test questions. The Aggies finished the exam and the basketball court starts Thursday at 7 p.m. in Reunion Arena when Texas A&M plays fifth-place TCU in the quarterfinal game. Aggie coach, the coach Bob Vint mapped the tournament step-by-step.

"The first thing we have to do is beat our opponent Thursday night," he said. "If we get past them, then we'll be able to come back and play a tough game."

"Anything can happen. We have a lot of confidence, but we have humility, too. We have to be confident but we have to respect our opponent."



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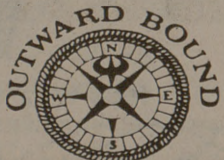
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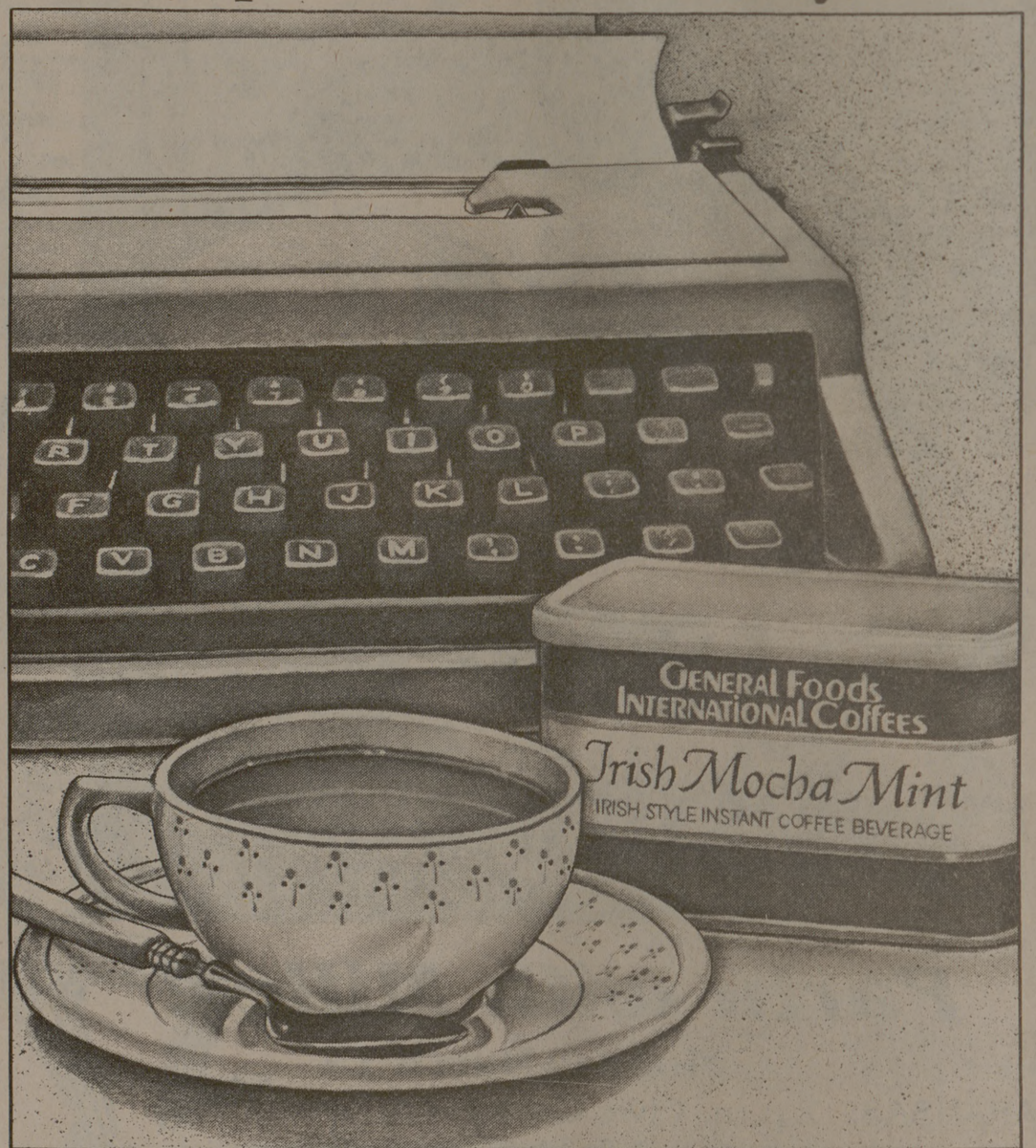


Correction

The Battalion incorrectly reported Monday that Aggie track team member Robert Windsor won the shot event at this weekend's Border Olympics competitor in Laredo with a toss of 56-11 1/2. Windsor's win-

ning toss was 60-13 1/2, which represents a season best for that event. Windsor's toss is 60-11 1/2. The Aggie Saturday's meet by the University of Texas 194.

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