

## Aggies build on skills during holiday break

By KAY MALLET  
Sports writer

The Texas A&M men's basketball team spent most of the Christmas holidays on the road, building its record to 8-6 for the season and 2-1 in the conference before the Houston game.

Coach Shelby Metcalf said the team used the pre-conference season to work on its man-to-man defense and to get in shape.

"We need to get fundamentally sound and then we can build on that," he said. "Regardless of what you end up with, you always rely on your bread and butter."

The Aggies travelled to Bloomington, Ind. for the Tenth Annual Indiana Classic on Dec. 16-17.

A&M lost the first game in the tourney against Indiana, but finished the tournament with a win over Utah State.

"Utah was probably the best game we played this year," Metcalf said. "Kenny Brown shot extremely well. He's not a streak shooter, but when he gets his rhythm, he can't miss."

Brown and Jimmie Gilbert led A&M in points and rebounds respectively and Brown received all-tournament honors.

The Music City Invitational Tournament in Nashville, Tenn., saw the Aggies experience another first-game setback with a loss to South Florida.

The Aggies finished that tournament with a win against Air Force. Brown was high point in both tournament games and was again elected all-tournament.

Southwest Conference competition began Jan. 4 against the Rice Owls in Houston.

A&M won its conference opener 52-47 with a game that was characterized by five lead changes in the first half. The Aggies led steadily throughout the second half.

The second conference game resulted in a 77-54 loss to the Arkansas Razorbacks in Fayetteville. Gilbert and Darnell Williams led the Aggies in scoring with 13 points each.

A&M played the first of five home games Jan. 9 in a non-conference match against Angelo State. The 2,000 plus fans were not disappointed as A&M leapt to a nine point lead late in the first half.

The Aggies upped their conference record to 2-1 with a 63-52 home court win over the Baylor Bears.

"It was a good win for us,"

Metcalf said. "Todd Holloway had his best game in a long time and Gilbert just keeps getting better."

Metcalf said the team had matured a lot in the last two weeks.

"I think we're probably ahead of the schedule to be honest," he said. Two weeks ago the Aggies wouldn't have been able to play the game against the Cougars that they played, Metcalf said.

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# Photo finish

## Less than inch splits top runners at marathon's controversial finish

United Press International

HOUSTON — English middle-distance runner Charlie Spedding ran down Italian Olympic marathoner Massimo Magnani in the final three miles and lunged ahead of him at the tape Sunday to win the 12th Houston Marathon in a close finish that Magnani disputed.

Race officials, who did not have an official camera to decide in such a case, huddled for 15 minutes before awarding the \$20,000 first prize to the Englishman. He was timed in 2:11:53 in the first marathon he has ever run.

Magnani was listed in a time of 2:11:54, but the distance between the two runners at the tape was no more than an inch, judges said.

Spedding said he could not say for sure who had won. Magnani said he knew.

"I hit the tape first and carried it on my chest," he said.

Magnani, a two-time Olympian who finished better than 14th at Montreal and Moscow, said he will protest the outcome to The Athletic Congress, which sanctioned the race, and the International Association of Athletic Federations.

Norway's Ingrid Kristiansen, running in 36-degree cold that she said reminded her of the weather at home, easily outdistanced the women in the 4,000-person field to win in a course-record 2:27:51, more than five

minutes better than the winning time she posted a year ago while three-months pregnant.

In the men's division, Mark Finucane of Johnson City, Ind., was third in 2:11:55 and John Wellerding of Bettendorf, Iowa, was fourth in 2:12:05. Three others runners beat 2:13:00.

From the mid-point of the race on, Magnani, a two-time Olympic marathoner, traded the lead with Wellerding. At the 23-mile sign, the two were 75 yards ahead of 15 runners.

From there, however, Spedding began making up ground. He blew past Wellerding and then in final 50 yards he made up three strides on Magnani. He did not lead until the final step.

"Four judges at the finish line saw Spedding the winner," race director David Hannah said. "They all said he lunged at the tape and hit it first with his chest."

Hannah's official statement came an hour after he met with judges. In the huddle where the winner was decided, UPI learned two judges closest to the finish said Spedding won but could not be sure. They said they would be satisfied to call the race a draw.

Moments later, an unidentified judge said he talked to two other persons right at the finish, and they said Spedding hit the tape first. That news changed the group's opinion, and Hannah awarded the race to Spedding.

A pleased Spedding, of Durham in northeast England, said his training as a 10-kilometer runner taught him at the finish to run through the tape and not just to it.

"I'm obviously very pleased with the way I ran. This race was an experiment with me just to see what I could do," he said.

"This convinces me I should try to make the Olympic team."

In 1982, Spedding won the British 10,000 meter championship. Until the final seconds Sunday, he never considered that he could win.

"I thought was running for third from about 18 miles on. The two guys were so far ahead," he said.

Of the finish, he said, "I didn't know who won. As I've been taught, you look straight ahead and run straight at the crowd. I didn't know where the finish line was. I wasn't looking for it."

He said in the moments after the race, he looked at Magnani and shrugged as if to say he did not know who won.

"I knew that I passed him, but I didn't know if it was in time. He thought he had won," Spedding said.

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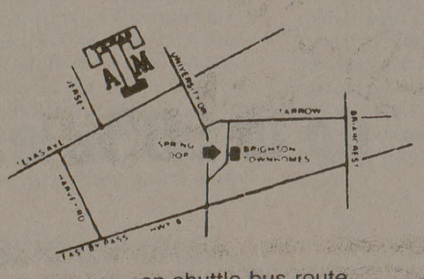
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