

SPORTS

Baylor's overtime bid fails; A&M escapes at the buzzer

By TRAVIS TINGLE
Sports Editor

Every once in awhile, there's a time when the outcome of a basketball game isn't reflected in the final score.

Texas A&M's 78-74 victory over Baylor Wednesday night was one of those times — the game was even closer than the four-point spread would indicate.

With :03 seconds left in the game and A&M leading 76-74, Carlos Briggs missed a wide open 20-footer off a designed play that Baylor Coach Jim Haller called simply "the box play."

A&M's Winston Crite, who was fouled during the play, added a pair of free throws with no time remaining on the clock. Thus, the Aggies disguised a true two-point win and handed A&M Coach Shelby Metcalf his 200th career Southwest Conference victory. Metcalf became the only SWC coach to reach that plateau.

"I think (Baylor) would take the same shot that they got again," Metcalf said. "It just didn't drop for them. I didn't want to foul because I knew the worst we would get was overtime. I'd rather have given them the shot."

What about the 200th win, coach?

By BRANDON BERRY
Sports Writer

He crouched next to the scorer's table and watched the final twelve seconds blink onto the scoreboard. Next, he stood up and clapped his hands together as his team readied to defend a narrow two-point lead. The ball was inbounded, the second-leading scorer in the conference was left open from 20 feet and his shot hit the rim and fell off.

With a shrug of his tie and a sigh of deep relief, Shelby Metcalf walked off a Southwest Conference basketball court for the 200th time as the winning coach.

"Boy, didn't Baylor play well," Metcalf said. "Gosh Dawg! That sure didn't come easy out there."

They rarely ever have.

"I said all along it would be a close ball game. I'll tell you, Baylor fans have got something to look forward to. They really played well. I was going to say they're a team of the future, but it looks like the future is now by the way they played tonight."

The Bears (8-12, 1-8 in SWC), who shot 59 percent from the field, were led by Briggs' 21 points and 19 from freshman guard Michael Williams out of Dallas Carter. The Aggies (15-6, 7-3 in SWC) shot 55.6 percent from the floor and received a 23-point night from Kenny Brown and 15 from Todd Holloway.

"Those guys (Briggs and Williams) are great athletes," said A&M's Crite, who led the Aggies with 12 rebounds. "They seem to be able to shoot from anywhere. They remind me of a lot of us last year. We were hungry for wins and we wanted some recognition."

Metcalf said Briggs and Williams won't need an American Express card the next time the Bears visit G. Rollie White Coliseum.

"Our biggest problem tonight was that we couldn't cover Michael Williams," Metcalf said. "What makes him so tough is that you can't foul him. It's just like giving him a field goal. Briggs was under control to-

night. Jim (Haller) has done a great job with and him and the whole team, really."

Haller said his team's performance was the best it's ever been, including last week's overtime loss to Arkansas.

"It's a shame that we can have four good games and two super games in a row without more to show for it," Haller said. "Overall, when you look at the team work, the defense and our offensive flow, it has to be our best game of the year. And if we were playing anyone but the second best team in the Southwest Conference, we would have won the ball game."

"I was expecting A&M to play well. I was expecting us to play well. The only thing I can't explain is how they (A&M) lost to Arkansas twice."

Metcalf took the praise from Haller, one of his former assistant coaches, humbly.

"I appreciate Jim saying that," Metcalf said. "I guess I just don't have the personal relationships with some people like (Arkansas Coach) Eddie (Sutton) does."

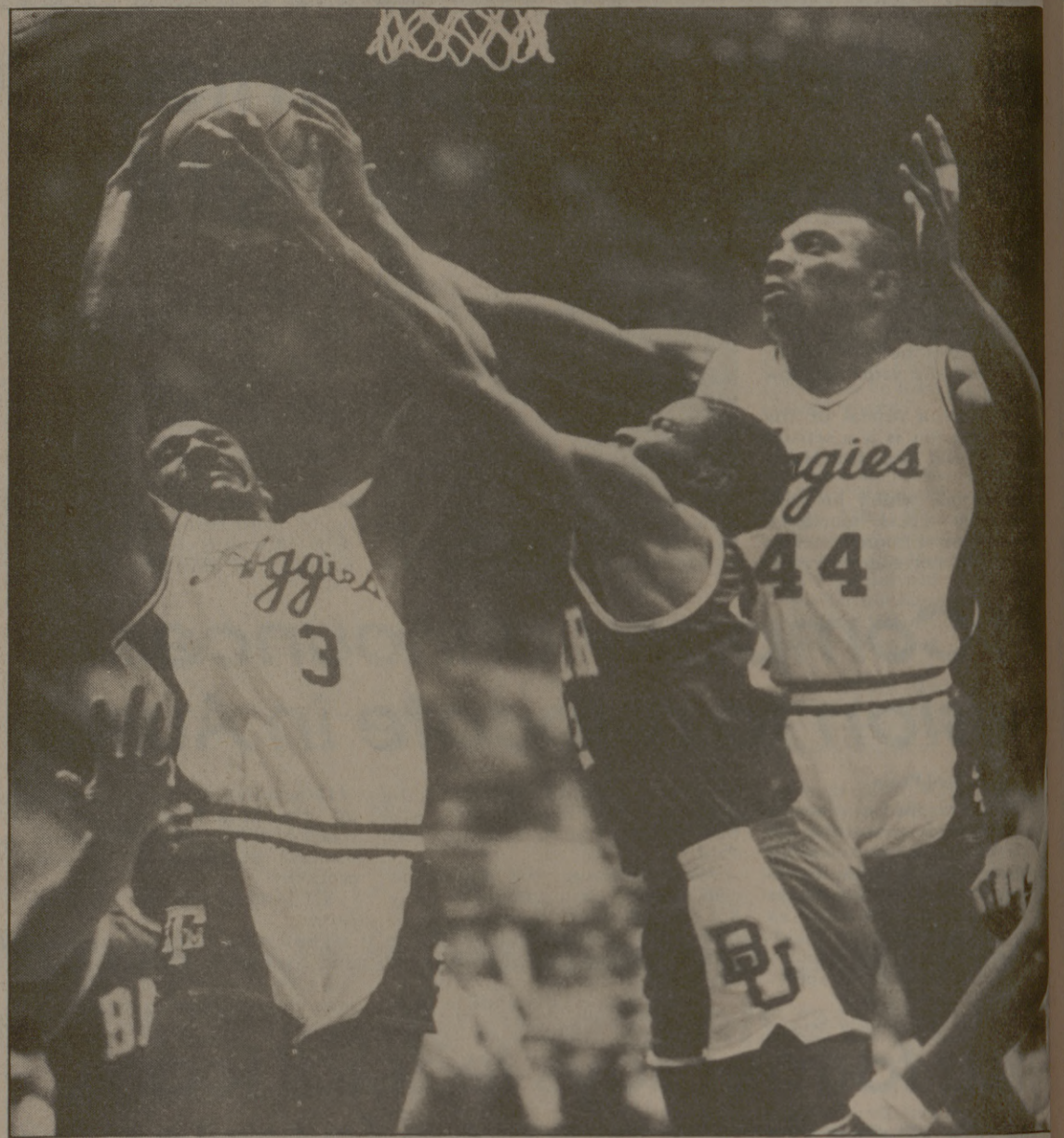
thing away from him."

But what about the record?

"Do you guys know anything about the score of the Arkansas-SMU game?" Metcalf asked a group of reporters. "And do you know who the officials are up there? I could tell you who'll win if I know who (Arkansas Coach) Eddie's (Sutton) pickin' on."

Metcalf's opponents sing his praises far louder than any voices likely to be heard on the second floor of G. Rollie White Coliseum.

"Coach Metcalf's record is truly an indication of what kind of a coach he really is," Baylor Coach Jim Haller said following Wednesday night's loss. "He is more than just a personal friend of mine — he's an excellent coach. You don't win five Southwest



Baylor's Robert McLennore (22) tries to outreach Texas A&M's Don Marbury (3)

and Al Pulliam (44) during the Aggies' victory over the Bears Wednesday night, 78-74.

Conference Championships without being an excellent coach.

"His contributions to basketball in this conference have just been tremendous. I'm very happy for him."

No happier than Metcalf himself. He has lost more than his share of close games.

Earlier this season, two and three-point losses to Wisconsin and Arkansas kept the Aggies from celebrating at the final buzzer, as did an overtime loss to Illinois State.

In 1980, a miraculous (some say contrived) comeback by the Arkansas Razorbacks spoiled an Aggie nine-game conference winning streak. And a last-second loss to eventual NCAA champion Louisville ended Metcalf's most successful year with a final buzzer and a missed opportunity.

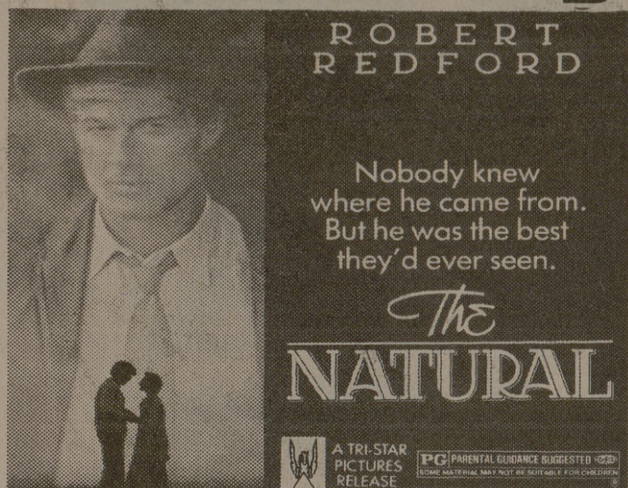
"The game is for the players," he said. "Those guys out there on the court may never get the chance to be the star again in their lives. We

coaches don't score the points. We've cost our teams many points, but we haven't scored many lately."

So what about the record, coach?

"It just means the players won 200," Metcalf said. "You find out how many we've lost and there are mine. I'll take credit for those."

Not a losing proposition, especially if he doesn't keep count.



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