

SPORTS

Patient Aggies slam Coogs

By BRANDON BERRY
Sports Writer

HOUSTON — For the second time this season, Houston's Phi Slama Jama Cougars were fried, slammed and jammed by the Texas A&M Aggies, 81-77 Wednesday night in Hofheinz Pavilion.

The Ags rebounded from two close losses to Texas and Texas Tech to outscore the Cougars 43-34 in the second half and sweep Houston for only the second time since the Coogs joined the Southwest Conference.

"What was nice to see was that we showed patience," A&M Coach Shelby Metcalf said, "much more than we showed at Tech down the stretch. Not only patience, but we also showed some intelligence. We played almost mistake-free down the stretch. This is about as well as we've ever played down here."

"I really felt like we did everything well." The regular season comes to a close against Rice next Saturday in G. Rollie White Coliseum, but Aggie players were more interested in the upcoming SWC tournament.

"This was a big game, a real big game for us," said junior guard Don Marbury, who burned the Cougars for 30 points. "We lost a big game, a horrible game, to Texas that we never should have lost and then we lost to Tech in a game where Mr. (Winston) Crite and I fouled out."

"Now we're going into the tournament on a roll and anybody can win it."

"Personally, I think this was the biggest game of the season," said junior forward Al Pulliam, who hit the go-ahead jumper for the Ags from inside the lane with 35 seconds remaining.

"We had lost two straight and we hadn't lost two in a row all season."

"We've got some momentum going into the tournament now and I think we've got a real good chance to win it."

Metcalf agreed, "This has to help your momentum. But we could lose it all again Saturday against Rice. We lost so much against Texas, but now we got it back and we've got to sustain it."

After Marbury's 30, the Ags were

led in scoring by Kenny Brown and Crite, who had 15 and 12 points respectively. Junior center Jimmie Gilbert hit five of six free throws and Pulliam scored all eight of his points in the second half.

"It was just a good balanced effort out there," Metcalf said. "We shot 76 percent in the second half because we were taking good shots and they finally started dropping for us."

"What makes you feel good is that both teams played well. Houston played a good game out there, but we were just a little bit better tonight."

The Cougars were led by sophomores Rickie Winslow and Greg Anderson on the inside, and a pair of "streaky" guards, Alvin Franklin and Eric Dickens on the outside.

"He's a real integral part of their offense," Pulliam said of Anderson, who fouled out with 4:26 remaining. "When he fouled out, it made things a lot easier inside."

Anderson finished with 14 points and 13 rebounds and Winslow added 11 points.

But the Cougars started and finished

the game with big performances from their starting guards. Dickens finished with 17 points, 13 in the second half, and Franklin led the Coogs with 19 points, 13 of which came in the first half.

"When they start your fan club, you can count me in," Metcalf said to Franklin after the game.

"Those Aggies do a lot of good things out there," Franklin said. "They stopped my penetrating in the second half and I just tried to contribute. Their zone defense just keeps forcing you way outside."

"It's just frustrating, because every time we had a chance to get over the hump, we couldn't do it. We wanted to get some momentum to end the season and I hope we still can by just winning our last one (against SMU this Sunday). I really hope we can."

And for the first time in the last two weeks, the Aggies can sleep easy when they hear the word *momentum*.

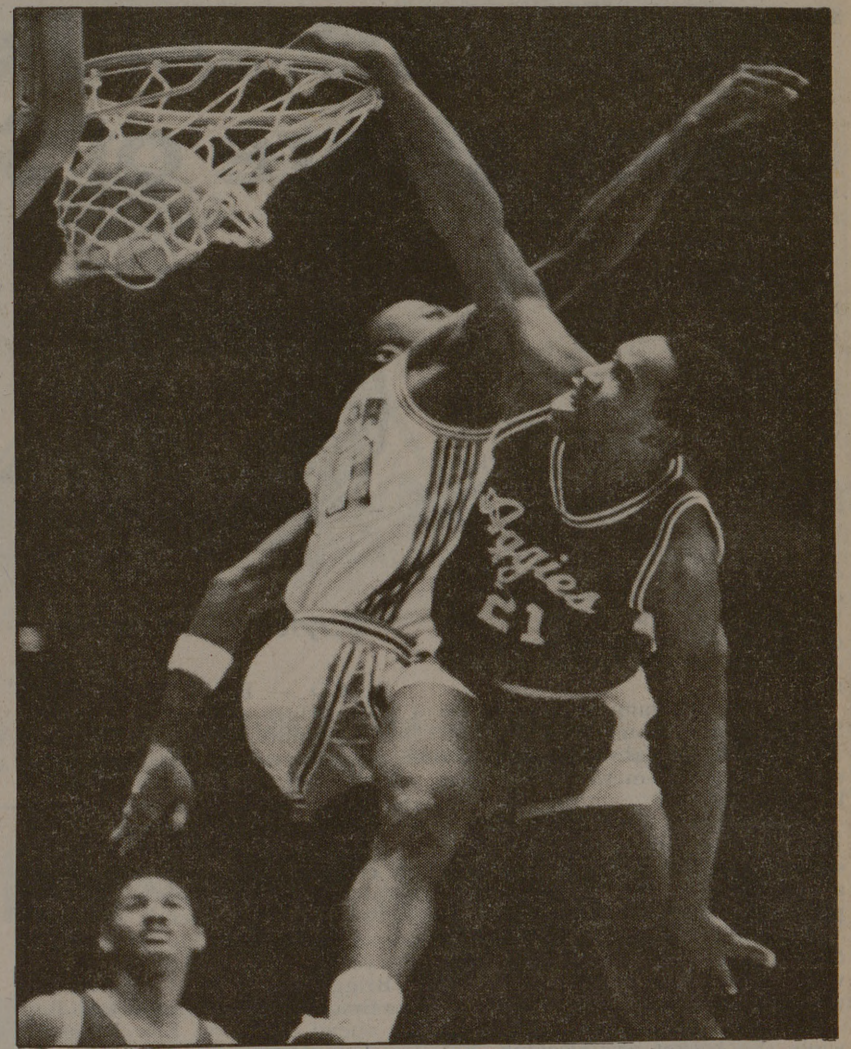


Photo by DEAN SAITO

Texas A&M forward Winston Crite (21) slams the ball with authority, despite the efforts of Houston's Rickie Winslow during the Aggies' 81-77 win over the Cougars Wednesday night in Hofheinz Pavilion. A&M hosts Rice this Saturday.

Ag Ladies get biggest win of year

By CHAREAN WILLIAMS
Assistant Sports Editor

HOUSTON — "This is the biggest win we've ever had," said A&M Coach Lynn Hickey as she left the floor of Hofheinz Pavilion after Texas A&M's 74-67 upset of Houston Wednesday night.

The win, the Aggie Ladies' second over the Cougars this season, was a milestone of sorts.

"We've had some big wins, but this win was the biggest," said guard Lisa Langston from a happy A&M locker room. "This marked the first time we have ever beaten a team like Houston twice in one season. When we beat Rice Saturday, it will be A&M's first winning season in five years. And this win also assured us of a playoff spot."

With last night's win, the Ags improved to 13-13 overall and 6-9 in the Southwest Conference. A win over Rice (5-19, 2-12 in SWC) Saturday night at G. Rollie White Coliseum would give A&M its first winning season since 1980.

"We had a real balanced attack. I can't remember any one player do all of our scoring. We tried a new offense tonight and it seemed to open things up. We played a good team game. It was a big, big win for our program." — A&M Coach Lynn Hickey

"This will be the first time in five years," said senior forward Jenni Edgar. "There's nothing like waiting 'til the last game of your last year to do something."

Texas Tech downed SMU by three points last night in Dallas, assuring A&M of the sixth and final spot in the SWC tournament next week.

"We have a chance for fifth place, but we have put ourselves in the playoffs," Hickey said.

At McDonald's drive-thru window, a voice over the speaker asks, "Would you like an apple pie with that?"

Houston asked A&M the same

question and the answer was a resounding yes. The Cougars gave the Ags 20 first half turnovers, plus 13 second half delights.

"We got a lot of breaks, but we took advantage of them," Hickey said. "We got all kinds of breaks. This is probably the first time this season for that to happen. Everything was in groove. If we play Houston again, and they cut out the mistakes, it might be a different game."

The Aggies seem to be finally transforming into the kind of team Hickey envisioned all season — balanced. Langston had her usual high scoring night with 25 points, but

Beth Young and Edgar each had 14 and Michel Tatum chipped in 11.

"We had a real balanced attack," Hickey said. "I can't remember any one player do all of our scoring. We tried a new offense tonight and it seemed to open things up. We played a good team game. It was a big, big win for our program."

Young played perhaps her best game of the year. She hit four of six shots, six of six free throws, had four rebounds, steals and assists.

Young played scared. And for good reason.

"We jumped on Beth yesterday," Hickey said. "We told her we thought she was getting complacent. We told her to show us what she could do."

Young said, "(Hickey) knows what gets to me. She told me I'd better watch out, or they (the coaches) were going to get me."

A&M's lead was as large as 16 points in the first half, and at half-time the score was 39-25.

Although Houston outscored A&M, 42-35 in the second half, it

was too little, too late. However, if the Ags hadn't come through at the free throw line in the waning minutes, the outcome could have been different. A&M hit 19 of 22 free throws in the second half.

"Our free throw at practice really paid off," Langston said. "Now we know why Coach (Hickey) makes us run sprints and then shoot freethrows while we're tired."

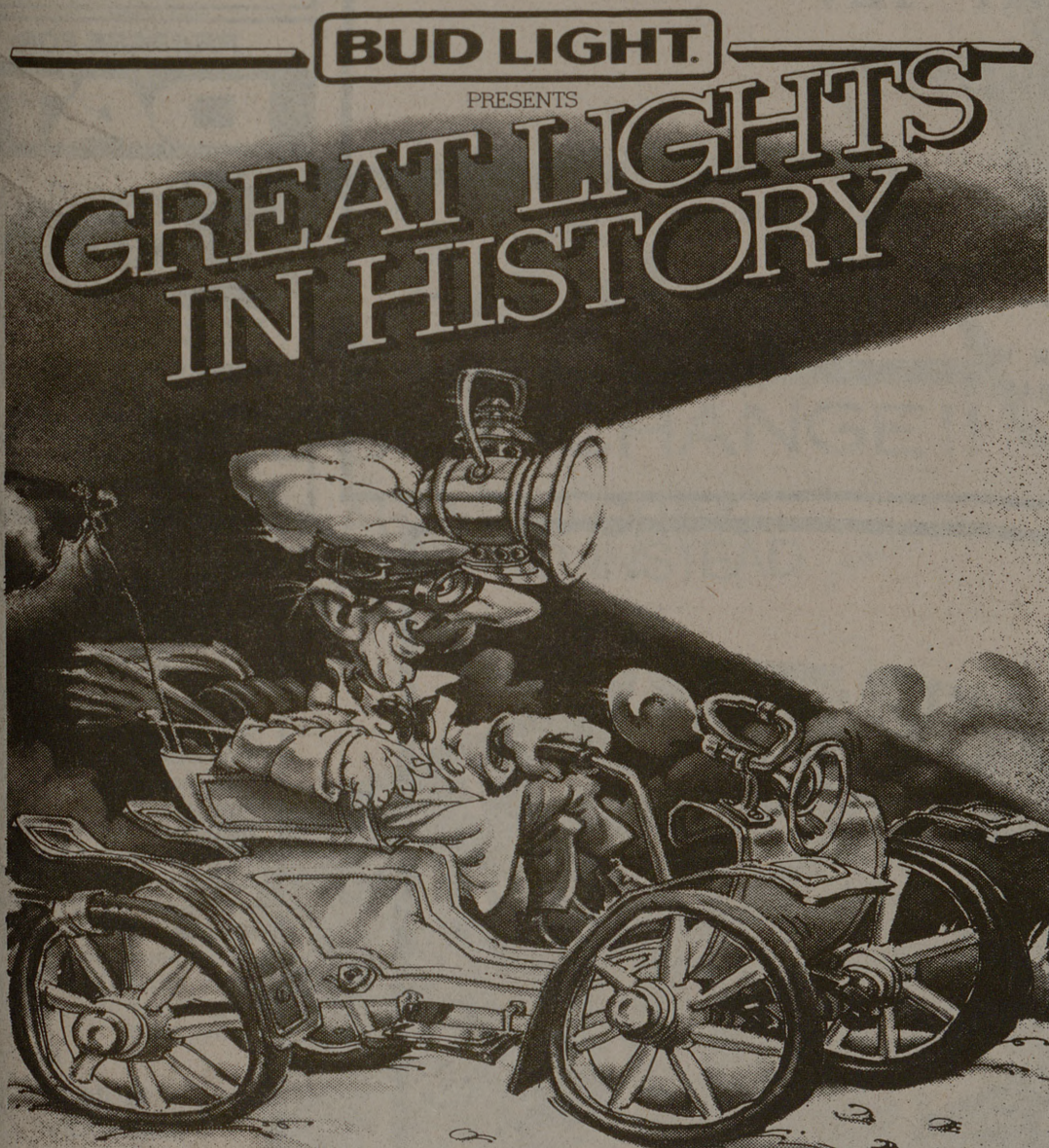
The Aggies end the regular season with Rice Saturday and then face either Arkansas or Houston Tues-

day in the first round of post-season play.

"I would rather play Arkansas now," Hickey said. "Houston is a good team. I will not look forward to

playing them if that's who we play." And the players' reaction?

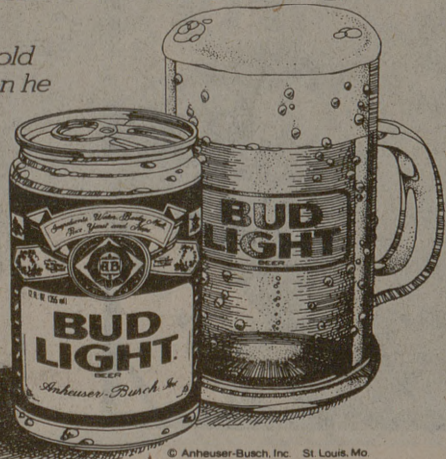
"We feel the same way we did tonight," Langston said. "We know what it takes to beat them. We will have to cut out some mistakes, like turnovers, but we can do it. Right now, we're just thinking about Rice."



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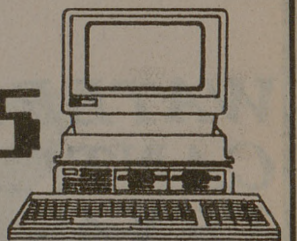
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