

**SPORTS**

**Ags can't take Rice too lightly**

Hickey hopes to put A&M over .500 mark

By CHAREAN WILLIAMS  
Assistant Sports Editor

Before Texas A&M's game against SMU on Feb. 13, Head Coach Lynn Hickey said it would be "our biggest game of the year." If the Aggies had lost to the Mustangs, their hopes of a post-season berth would also have been lost.

However, the Ags hung on for a 77-69 win and their biggest victory to that date.

Wednesday night, A&M topped the SMU win with a 74-67 upset of Houston.

"This was the biggest win we've ever had," said Hickey after the game.

With the upset of Houston, the Aggies clinched the sixth and final spot in the Southwest Conference.

The Aggies host the Rice Owls Saturday night at 5:15 in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

Will the game be just a formality before entering SWC tournament play?

According to the Ags it won't be. "We have got to take Rice to get our goal," said guard Beth Young.

"With a win we will be over .500 for the season (14-13). That was our big goal before the season started. A&M hasn't been over .500 in five years."

The last time the Ags played the Owls, only a late second half rally kept A&M out of Hickey's dog house. When Young hit a shot at the buzzer, the Aggies had pulled out a 70-68 win.

This time the Aggies say they won't let the Owls surprise them.

"If you take Rice for granted, they will beat you," Hickey said.

Forward Lisa Langston said, "We're just thinking about Rice right now. When we beat Rice, we will have our first winning season in five years."

Quite a step for Hickey's first year.

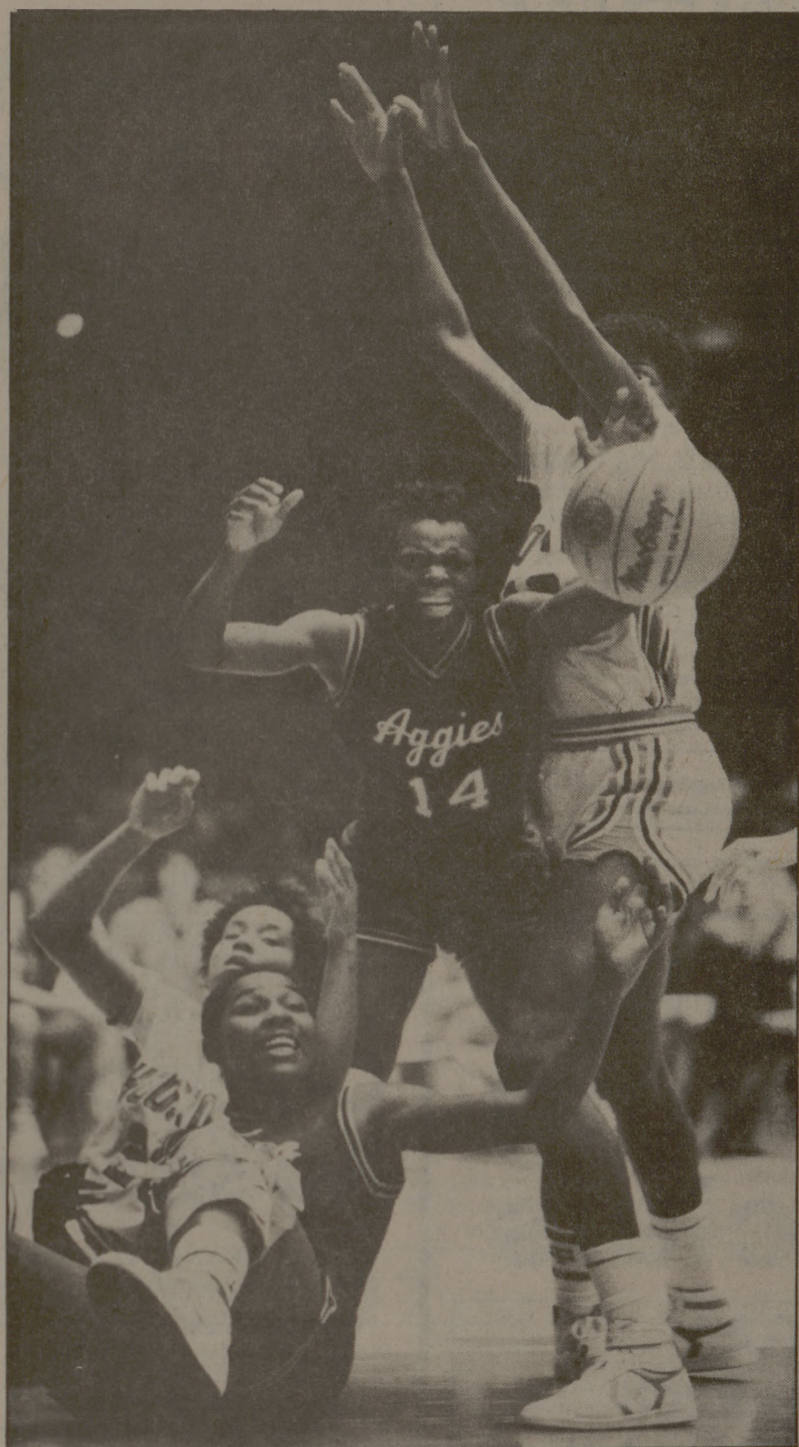


Photo by DEAN SAITO

A&M's Lisa Langston (14) battles for control of a loose ball with a Houston defender, while teammate Michel Tatum (bottom left) tries to lend a hand from the floor. A&M, who defeated UH 74-67 Wednesday, hosts Rice this Saturday.

**A&M can't afford to gag on leftover Rice**

By CHAREAN WILLIAMS  
Assistant Sports Editor

Is the slump over? Is all well in Aggieland? It appears so.

The Texas A&M men's basketball team broke out of its two game slump Wednesday night in impressive style. A&M beat Houston 81-77. The Ags picked a great time to arrive back on earth since the Southwest Conference tournament is only a week away.

"It was a good win," said A&M Coach Shelby Metcalf. "I'm real proud of our team. This gives us a chance. If we win Saturday night against Rice, we will go to the tournament with some momentum."

The Ags (17-9, 9-6 in SWC) play Rice Saturday night at 7:30 in G. Rollie White Coliseum. Rice (10-15, 3-12 in SWC) lost to Baylor 97-78 Wednesday night, which means the Owls will be the only team not to participate in the SWC tournament.

*"A win Saturday would put us in good shape. We will probably be tied for third (with Arkansas) if we win." — Shelby Metcalf*

Metcalf said the Owls should play their hearts out since it will be their last game of the season.

"I think they will be really loose," Metcalf said. "They have nothing to lose. They have a good ball club."

"Rice will play well I'm sure. We'd better be ready to play."

Metcalf said he did all of the experimenting he intends to do Wednesday night.

"We found out Wednesday night what kind of team we have," Metcalf said. "Freddie (Burton) had been working hard in practice, so we wanted to see what he could do. I

felt like he came in and helped us. "Our team is starting to get healthy. Donnie (Marbury) is really coming on. He got to practice two days before the Houston game, so that helped him a lot. I feel like we're coming together."

Metcalf said the Owls have several players who are capable of keying a Rice upset on any given night, as Arkansas discovered last Sunday.

"(Tony) Barnett and Greg Hines have really come on," Metcalf said. "(Terrence) Cashaw has done a good job inside. We as a coaching staff don't take them for granted. I think the players realize how important it is. I sure hope they don't take Rice for granted."

"A win Saturday would put us in good shape. We will probably be tied for third (with Arkansas) if we win. We would probably play either Houston or TCU in the first round."

**Tech leads mob rule in SWC**

Associated Press

DALLAS — The form chart has taken a beating in the 1984-1985 Southwest Conference basketball season.

Southern Methodist was supposed to win the title and the Mustangs could still tie Texas Tech for the crown.

But the Red Raiders weren't supposed to challenge SMU and Arkansas were forecast to be the Mustang's roadblocks.

However, Texas Tech locked up the No. 1 seed in the SWC Post-Season Basketball Classic on Wednesday night with a 59-54 victory over SMU. The Red Raiders had beaten the Mustangs by a point earlier in the season.

The Red Raiders also earned their first piece of a Southwest Conference title since 1973. They can win the title outright Saturday in Fort Worth against Texas Christian.

Tech will play No. 8 seed Baylor

at 2 p.m. next Friday in the SWC tournament in Dallas. Baylor clinched the final spot by knocking off Rice 97-78 behind Carlos Briggs' 41 points. The Owls are out of the tournament.

The hero for Tech was reserve Tony Benford who beat the Mustangs in January and did it again in February.

Benford nailed three clutch free throws in the final 40 seconds to beat the Mustangs.

Benford's 15-foot jump shot in the final three seconds defeated SMU 64-63 in Lubbock in January.

"To be able to come in here and defeat an outstanding team like SMU is just exciting for us," said Tech Coach Gerald Myers.

"Benford did it again with some big free throws at the end. Who would have thought we would be playing in this game for this (the title) at the beginning of the year?"

Myers answered his own question, saying, "Nobody thought that we

would be here except those guys in there (the team)."

Bubba Jennings scored 23 points to pace the Red Raiders.

SMU Coach Dave Bliss gave the Red Raiders their due.

"Right now, they're the best team in the Southwest Conference," Bliss said. "We didn't pick a very good time to lose our first home game."

SMU was 15-0 in Moody Coliseum going into the showdown with the Red Raiders.

"It's hard to believe this has really happened," Jennings said. "It hasn't sunk in yet."

The Red Raiders are 19-7 overall and 11-4 in the SWC race.

SMU, with a game remaining on Sunday against Houston, is 21-7 and 10-5. The Mustangs will be the No. 2 seed in the tournament which begins in Dallas March 8th.

Four games will be played the first day. The semifinals are set for Saturday with the finals on Sunday.

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