

# Sports

## Aggies get consecutive SWC storybook finishes

By CHAREAN WILLIAMS  
Assistant Sports Editor

When we last left the "Texas A&M Basketball Saga" in December, the Aggies had had some teeth knocked out and some embedded in their heads.

With half the team sidelined with injuries at one time or another, the Ags were fighting tooth and nail just to stay healthy.

Now one month later, the Ags are writing a new chapter to their book — just call this one "The Cardiac Kids."

The Aggies are sitting atop the Southwest Conference with a 5-0 record (11-6 overall), after two straight fantastic finishes.

Last Wednesday night, A&M faced Texas in the first of two battles involving SWC unbeatens.

The Ags trailed by four points with two minutes left. But two straight Horn turnovers knotted the game at 54-54 with just 1:10 remaining.

Then with two seconds on the clock, Todd Holloway hit a free throw to lift the Aggies to a 55-54 win and a share of first place with Texas Tech.

If that was exciting to A&M fans, the best was yet to come.

The Ags traveled to Lubbock to face the Red Raiders, the defending SWC Champions.

And when the final buzzer sounded, A&M had claimed yet another 1-point win, 58-57.

A&M Coach Shelby Metcalf was exuberant, "This was probably the greatest comeback I've ever seen and I've been coaching for quite a while. It was a tremendous basketball game."

What transpired in the final seconds can only be termed bizarre.

A&M's Don Marbury hit a five-foot jumper with 26 seconds left to pull the Ags to within 57-55.

But Tech's Ray Irvin, who was a perfect six-of-six from the free throw line on the day, was fouled and faced a one-and-one with only 22 seconds remaining.

The Aggies appeared dead.

Irvin missed the front end of the one-and-one, and the Aggies came down with the rebound.

Appearances are sometimes misleading.

As Aggie guard Todd Holloway reached midcourt,

Tech's Sean Gay stole the ball and passed to Dewayne Chism who was wide open under the bucket.

Close the casket on the Ags in this one.

But as Chism went up for a game-ending dunk, the ball slipped out of his hands and A&M guard Gary Lewis came down with the rebound.

Lewis passed to Holloway, who gave it to the big man, Jimmie Gilbert. Gilbert went down the lane, put the ball through the hoop and was fouled by Irvin with only five seconds left.

One free throw and five seconds later and the Aggies were the league's only unbeaten team.

"I don't believe I've ever been involved in a stranger game," Metcalf said. "It was fantastic."

So while A&M was struggling just a few weeks ago, most were busy writing the Ags out of the conference picture.

"I feel very fortunate right now," Metcalf said. "I think (the turnaround) was probably due to getting healthy. We're more healthy now than we have been all year. Al (Pulliam) is the last one and he played quite a bit in the Tech game."

While the experts were busy writing about what was wrong with Metcalf's Ags, A&M was practicing non-stop since Dec. 29.

"We have overcome a lot of adversity," he said. "We kept playing hard. People always say if you play hard, good things will come. I think that's what we've found out."

However, the Aggies are not dwelling on their accomplishment so far. Not with the Houston Cougars next on the schedule.

"It's still a wide open race," Metcalf said. "It's too early to be thinking about anything but Houston in Houston."

So Wednesday night at 7:30, A&M travels to Houston and the unfriendly confines of Hofheinz Pavilion.

"Houston is always tough," Metcalf said. "And they've won their last two ball games. (Greg) Anderson, (Rickie) Winslow and (Alvin) Franklin are as good as anybody in the league. All three have the potential to make all-conference. We have to shoot well. They play in that zone and really go to the boards. They have a lot of firepower."

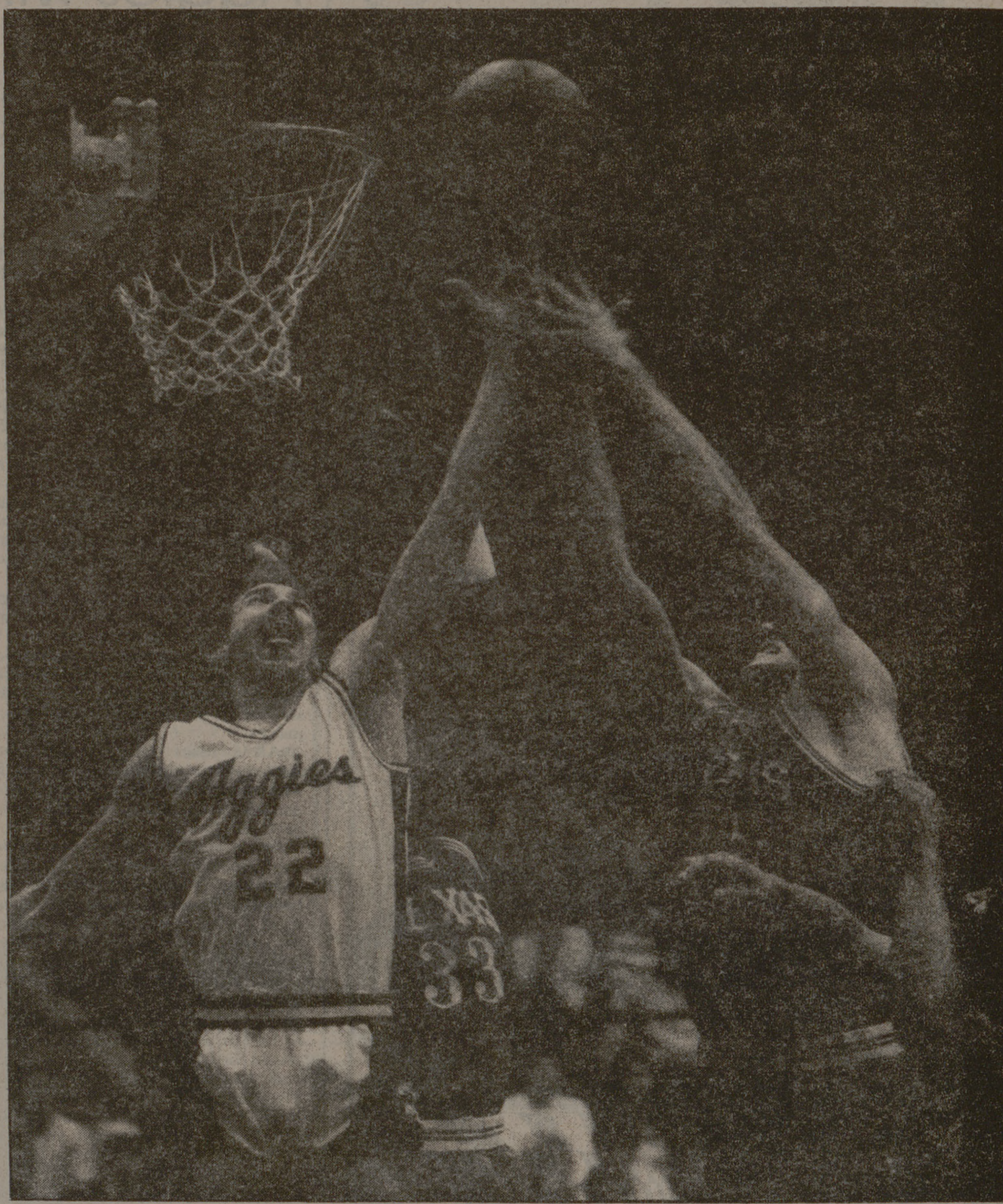


Photo by BILL HUGHES

A&M's Paul Crawford (22) fights Texas' John Brownlee (55) and Patrick Fairs (33) for the ball

during the Ags' 55-54 win. A&M won another 1-point game Saturday against Texas Tech, 58-57.

## Arkansas wins first SWC game

Associated Press

In other Southwest Conference games besides the exciting battle of the unbeatens in Lubbock, Arkansas gave Coach Nolan Richardson his first conference victory with a 58-50 verdict over Rice; Southern Methodist defeated Texas for the eighth consecutive time, 63-56; and Houston downed Baylor 79-58.

The victory was the first SWC win for preseason favorite Arkansas in six games.

The Aggies are 5-0 while Texas Tech drops into a second place at 4-1, tied with Texas Christian. The Horned Frogs had Saturday off.

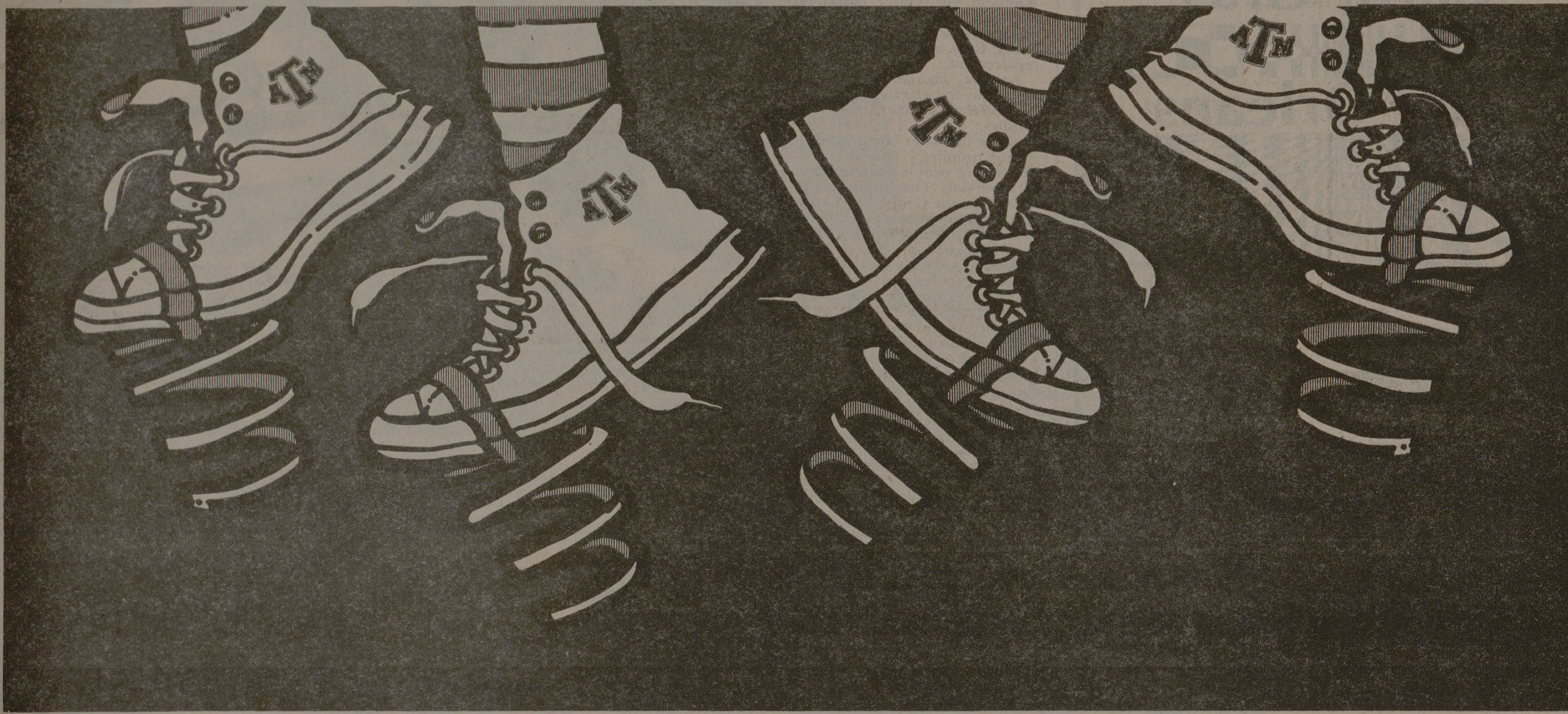
Texas is 4-2 followed by SMU at 3-2, Houston 2-3, Rice 1-4, Arkansas

1-5 and Baylor 0-6.

Richardson said he was relieved the Razorbacks finally won one.

"Our kids overcame adversity," he said. "I feel good about that."

SMU Coach Dave Bliss continued his domination of Texas Coach Bob Weltlich, who has yet to win a game against the Mustang mentor.



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