



Bring Out Your Best

Photo by GREG BAILEY

Members of the Texas A&M Rugby Club (horizontal stripes) reach for the sky to try and grab a loose ball during its match with the Alamo City Rugby

Club Saturday. Alamo City won the first side, 12-7, and A&M took the second side, 14-4. A&M hosts Corpus Christi Saturday at 1 p.m.

A&M men swimmers rip Rice in dual meet

By KEN SURY
Assistant Sports Editor

Texas A&M's men's swimming team won easily, while the short-handed women's team lost a close competition in a dual meet with Rice Saturday at the P.L. Downs Natatorium.

The Aggie men, who won 63-41, had at least a first-place win in every event except the diving competition because they don't have any divers.

The Ag women, meanwhile, were tied with Rice at 52 points going into the final event, the 400-yard freestyle relay.

But since the women's team has only five swimmers and a limit of three events each can swim in, A&M Swimming Coach Mel Nash said he bypassed the relay events to concentrate on individual swims.

Nash said he felt the Aggies swam well and competed as he expected they would — with one exception.

"Terri Hurley's loss to the Rice diver (Pam Berry) in the diving competition was totally unexpected," Nash said. "We've been having problems with our outdoor pool (including the diving area) and so Terri was unable to practice all week."

"We even had to send her to Rice for the diving competition. Last year she beat the Rice diver by over 60 points, but this time not being able to practice an entire week really hurt."

Each of the Ag women won her specialty events, as did the A&M men, who also did well swimming some of their weaker events.

Aggies Rachel Benzel and Suzanne Fiori scored a close 1-2 finish in the 1,650-yard freestyle, finishing 0.42 seconds apart.

A&M's Chris O'Neil, who has already qualified for the NCAA Championships in the 100-yard butterfly, won that event with a time of 48.83 seconds, nearly four seconds faster than A&M's Chris Kanning who finished second.

Saturday, A&M will take on perennial-powerhouse Texas in a dual meet at the P.L. Downs Natatorium starting at 2 p.m.

It will be the Aggies' last meet before the Southwest Conference Championships in Austin. The women compete Feb. 27-March 1 and the men on March 15.

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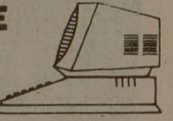
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Lady Ags still in SWC hunt after SMU win

By TOM TAGLIABUE
Sports Writer

The Texas A&M Lady Aggies used a pressure man-to-man defense and the inside scoring of Paula Crutcher, Nette Garrett and Lisa Jordan to defeat the SMU Lady Mustangs 78-68 Saturday night.

The three Aggie players combined for 52 of A&M's 78 points and helped keep the Ags in the hunt for a Southwest Conference tournament bid.

The Lady Ags won their third game in a row and upped their record to 13-9 overall, but more importantly took sole possession of fourth place in the SWC, with a 6-4 record.

Crutcher led the Ags with 19 points, eight assists and 17 rebounds — the most by a Lady Aggie this season.

Garrett came off the bench to score 18 points and pull down eight rebounds.

Jordan dropped in a career-high 15 points and grabbed nine rebounds, while Lisa Langston contributed 10 points to the Lady Ags' attack.

A&M Coach Lynn Hickey said the win was a team effort and helps keep the momentum going toward the tournament.



A&M's Nette Garrett



A&M's Paula Crutcher

"We put good pressure on the ball, we ran the ball well at times and we saw each other on the floor," Hickey said.

"(SMU) played a lot of multiple defenses. They played a box-and-one, all kinds of crazy stuff defensively. I think we adjusted to it pretty well because you don't see those things very often."

Hickey said if there was anything negative about the game, it would be turnovers — 21 of them for the Ags compared to 18 for SMU. The turnovers kept the game close as SMU fought back late in the first half.

The Ags at one point were held scoreless for nearly four minutes as

SMU tied the game at 26-26 with 4:33 to play before halftime.

SMU took the lead three times in the next minute before the Ags took the lead for good, scoring eight unanswered points to lead at the half 36-31.

The Aggies opened up a 49-39 lead early in the second half on the inside play of Crutcher and Garrett.

Although SMU closed the gap to five points with 10 minutes left to play, the Aggies opened up their offense and took their biggest lead, 70-56, with 4:01 left.

SMU was led by Sheila Bryant, who had 19 points and nine rebounds coming off the bench.

Hickey said the key to the game was rebounding and scoring from a variety of players.

"The (girls) worked hard. We've been trying to it get across to them that they've got to keep going," Hickey said. "This is the time of the year in which you have to get better."

A&M's Lisa Langston was held to only 10 points in 38 minutes on the court, as SMU blanketed her all night.

"I think the big key tonight, is (SMU) played a box-and-one on Lisa Langston most of the game — they took her out and we still won the game," Hickey said. "That has got to start telling something to some other people. We've got some more people to go to."

The Aggies began the contest in their zone defense, but changed to the man-to-man, which they used throughout most of the game. The Ags' defense caused 18 SMU turnovers and limited the Ponies' field goal percentage to just under 40 percent.

The Aggies have six conference games remaining before the SWC tournament. This week they must take their three-game winning streak on the road against TCU and Texas, the No. 1-ranked team in the nation.

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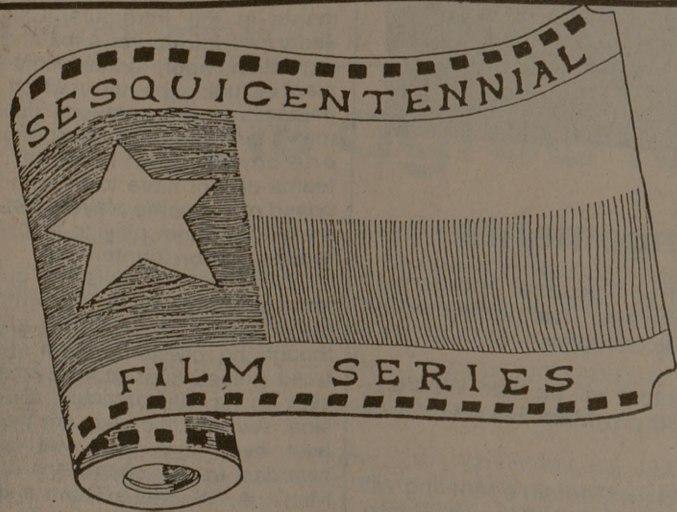
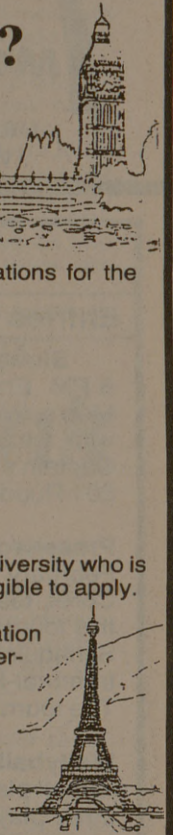
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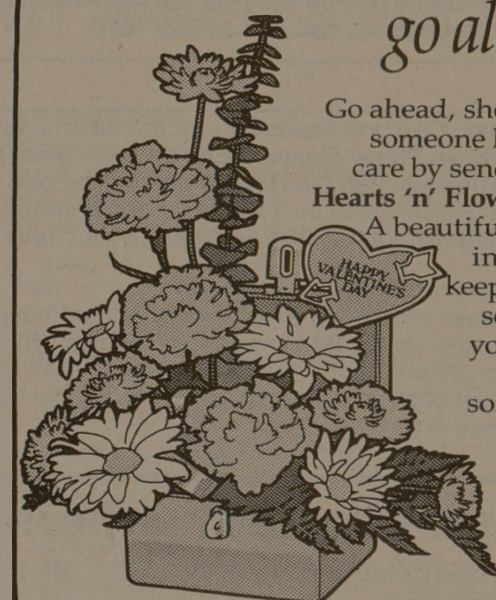
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