

Sports

A&M trips Tech 71-58 to break 3-game slump

By **KEN SURY**
Assistant Sports Editor

Although several times it looked like a three-ring circus out on the court, Texas A&M halted its three-game losing streak by pounding Texas Tech 71-58 Wednesday night in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

And, in the true spirit of P.T. Barnum, there were both acrobats and clowns to delight the crowd. For the first half, the Red Raiders were the clowns.

Tech shot a laughable 24 percent from the floor in the first period as almost every shot seemed to bounce off the rim time and time again.

Tech's Tony Benford, the game's leading scorer on the night with 20 points, hit just 2-of-8 shots in the first half.

While Tech (6-7 in the Southwest Conference, 11-13 overall) was flat on offense, A&M solidified its defense with Winston Crite grabbing five defensive rebounds and Jimmie Gilbert pulling down four.

A&M used good ball movement to get the ball inside to Gilbert, who scored 10 of his 16 points before intermission.

"We missed a lot of shots in the first half, too," Gilbert said. "But then we slowed it down and started working the ball and hitting the shots."

A&M hit on 13-of-26 from the floor in the first period to lead 31-13 at halftime.

But Tech wiped off its clown makeup in the second half.

The Red Raiders began hitting their outside jump shots and profited from several Aggie turnovers to whittle away at A&M's lead.

A&M Coach Shelby Metcalf questioned the officiating on two charging fouls called on Don Marbury early in the second half. The charges were Marbury's third and fourth fouls, so Metcalf had to bench him with 15:07 left.

"I felt the first call (Marbury's third foul) was just the opposite, and the second one was a no-call," Metcalf said.

The Aggies led 40-21 when Marbury sat down, but then the Red Raiders mounted a comeback. A&M didn't score for the next five minutes and Tech pulled to within seven at 40-33.

But shortly after Marbury, who led the Aggies with 19 points, was reinserted at about the 11-minute mark, A&M started rolling up the points.

And the game became a circus again, with the Aggies becoming the acrobats.

A&M's Todd Holloway was moved to the wing on offense, where Marbury usually plays, and began dishing off spectacular assists to Gilbert, Crite and Marbury, who were slamming high-flying dunks.

"Todd was the key to our win," Metcalf said. "I thought our salvation was when Todd was in the corner. We were getting Todd covered two-on-one and he got good passes in to Jimmie."

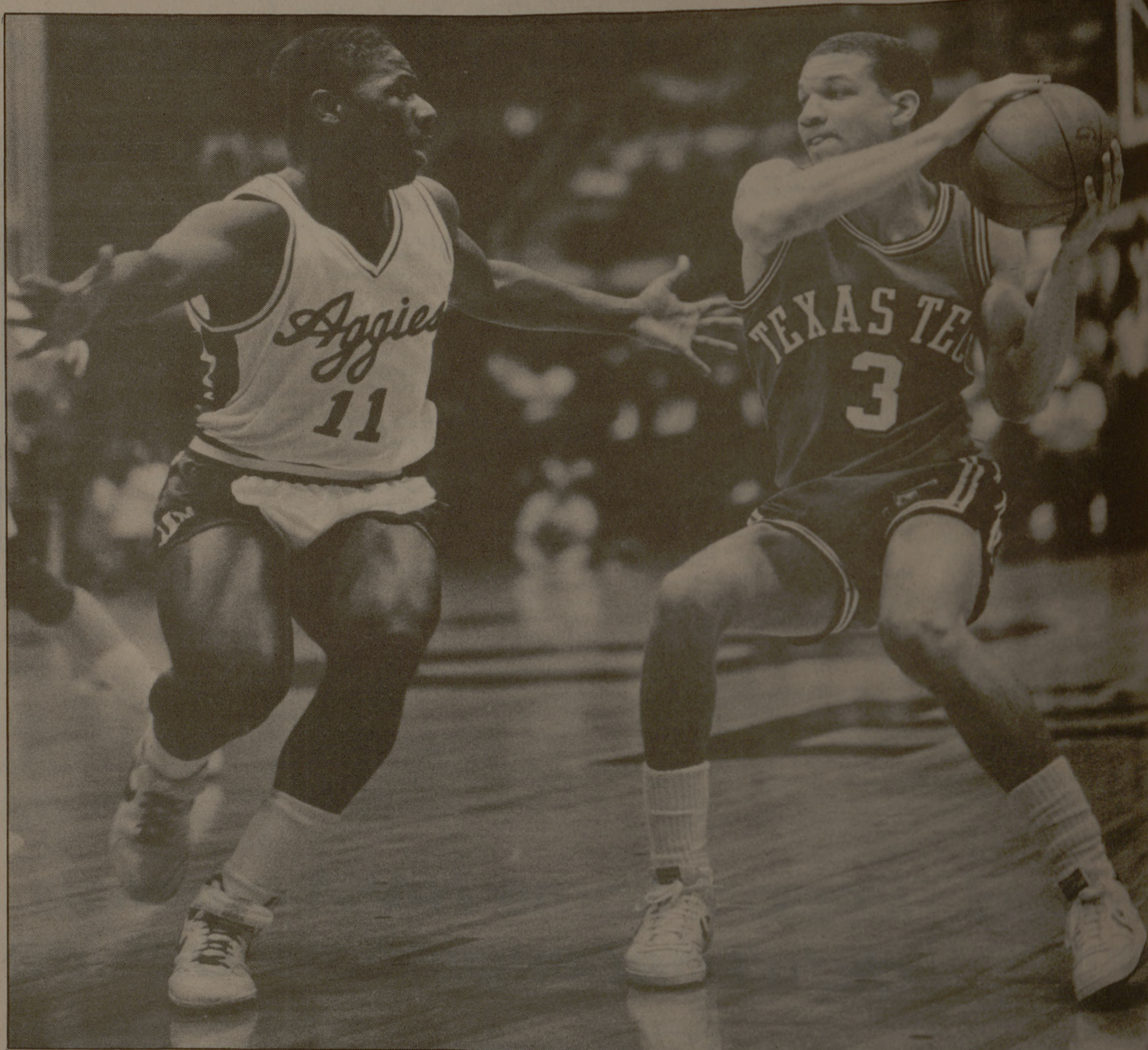
And when the Aggies weren't sailing through the air on dunks, Gary Lewis was ripping the net from the outside.

"I guess I was in the right place at the right time," Lewis, who ended with 11 points, said. "I really felt like I was contributing — and not just on defense. (Tech) backed off me a little and it allowed me to hit the shots. And, luckily, I was hitting."

With 3:43 left, A&M held a 61-51 lead, but then scored eight straight points to seal the game.

The Aggies also sealed their position in the SWC standings. Since SMU lost to Texas 58-57 Wednesday night, A&M (9-4, 15-10) is left in sole possession of third place.

"I just want to have success (from this point on)," he said. "I hope we're out of (our slump)."



A&M's Todd Holloway (11) puts defensive pressure on Texas Tech's Wendell Owens (3) Wednesday night in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

The Aggies routed the Red Raiders 71-58 to move into sole possession of third place in the Southwest Conference standings.

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