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Lady Ags avenge early loss

A&M whistles past Houston for 'ugly' win

By DOUG HALL
 Sports Writer

The ends justify the means. That's what the Texas A&M women's basketball team discovered in a 71-70 win over Houston Saturday night.

Considering the Lady Aggies 32 turnovers and 24 personal fouls, 16 in the whistle-prone first half that took almost an hour to complete, A&M Coach Lynn Hickey was happy to come away with her 15th victory of the season.

"At this point in the season, against a tough team like Houston, it's a big win — I'll take it," Hickey said. "It was just a sloppy game for both teams, but when you have two teams as evenly matched as these, it's going to be a dogfight."

At times, however, the game looked more like a horse race than a dogfight.

A&M's 32 turnovers and Houston's 30, could be attributed to the full-court pressure defense used by both teams.

"They sped the game up (late in the first half) and we tried to play with them," Hickey said. "We let the tempo get out of whack. I don't think we played real well, but I'm happy we won."

In the end, it was the Lady Ags' 25-14 defensive rebounding edge, as well as some key offensive rebounds by freshman center Lisa Jordan, that put A&M on top, avenging its 80-75 loss to UH earlier this season.

Jordan, who sat out 10 minutes due to foul trouble, led the Aggies with 16 points and a game high 11 rebounds. Freshman guard Donna Roper also contributed 14 points, including A&M's final three.

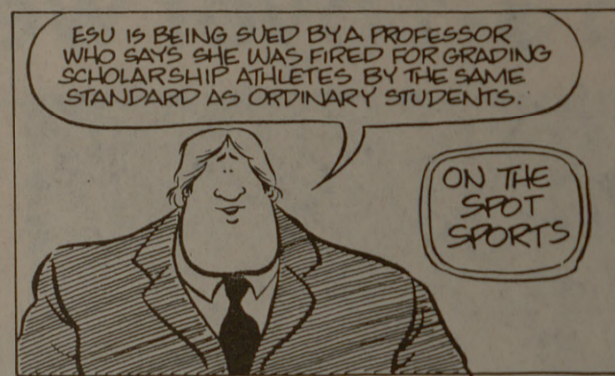
"Donna Roper did a really good job," Hickey said, "and Lisa Jordan and (senior forward) Lisa Langston did also — when they were in there."

Hickey was also pleased with the play of freshman Veronda Roundtree, who has averaged only four minutes and 2.5 points a game, but played a key roll for the Lady Ags Saturday.

"Veronda came off the bench at

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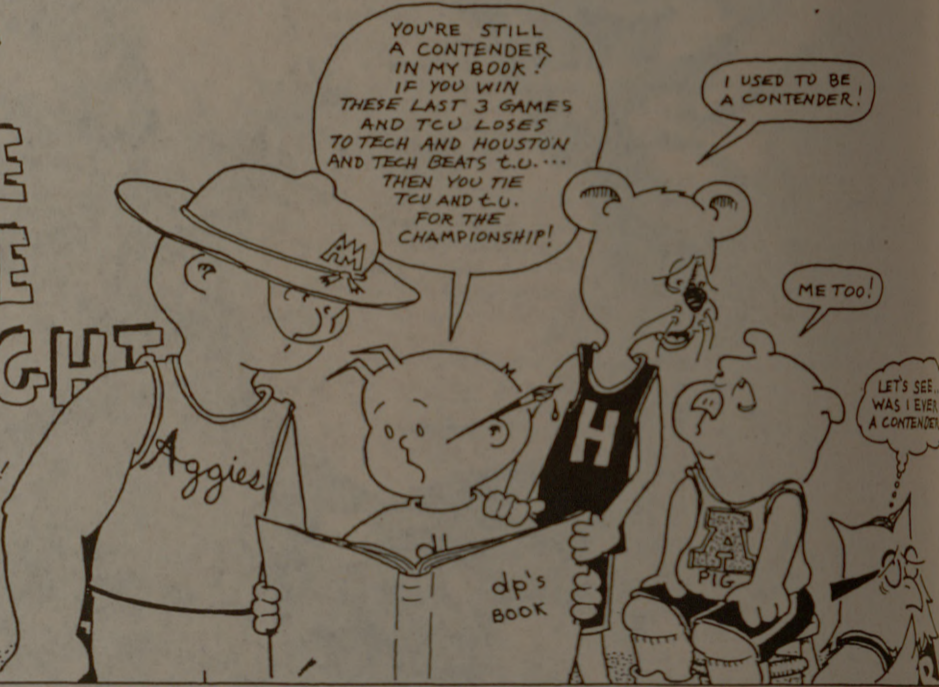
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some critical times and did some nice things for us," Hickey said.

Another key to handing the Lady Cougars their seventh Southwest Conference loss of the season was holding conference scoring leader Sonya Watkins scoreless for the first nine minutes of the game.

Although Watkins turned in a strong second half to lead all scorers with 24 points, the Lady Ags had built up a lead that they relinquished only twice before regaining the lead to stay with 8:56 to go.

Langston, playing in her final game at G. Rollie White Coliseum, was given a special introduction prior to the game.

Unfortunately, the two-time All-SWC performer, who is the all-time leading scorer in A&M history with over 1,550 points, spent much of the evening on the bench in foul trouble and scored only seven points.

Hickey attributed the excessive penalties to the officials, saying they were "trying to keep the game

from being a grudge match."

Like many of their games this season, the Lady Ags started the game strong, taking an 18-7 lead in seven minutes. The struggle came in the last five minutes of the half, allowing the Cougars to close to 53-47 after trailing 35-23 at the three-minute mark.

"We started off real well," Hickey said. "We had a big lead and everything going our way. We lost the momentum and Houston just went nuts."

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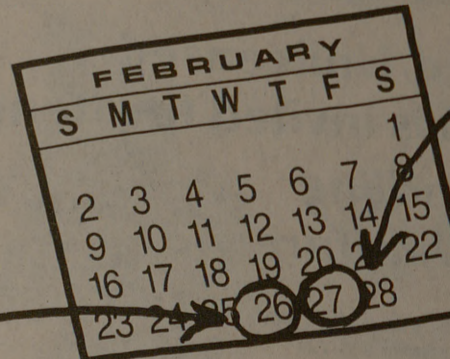
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