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A&M's Mike Clifford (left) tries to strip the ball out of the hands of Houston's Renaldo Thomas during Monday night's 82-75 Aggie win. A&M travels to Houston tonight to face Rice at 7:30.

## A&M has more on its mind than traveling to play Rice

Aggies know chances slim for 3-way tie in SWC race

By KEN SURY  
 Assistant Sports Editor

What can you say about a game that matches a team which has just broken a three-game losing streak and one which seems to circle the wagons before the first shot?

Actually, plenty. A resurgent Texas A&M team (16-10 overall, 10-4 SWC) travels to Houston's Atrium Court for a 7:30 clash tonight with eighth-place Rice (9-16 on the season, 2-11 in the SWC).

The Aggies, who are nearly entrenched in third-place in the conference, still have an outside chance to be involved a three-way SWC championship tie.

But for that to happen, A&M needs Texas Tech to beat TCU (12-2) tonight and Texas (12-3) Sunday and Houston to knock off the first-place Horned Frogs Saturday.

A&M Coach Shelby Metcalf said he doesn't even want to think about the arithmetic.

"Sure, it's possible (to still win the SWC title)," Metcalf said, "but you're talking about applying logic to a conference that doesn't subscribe to it."

A&M senior center Jimmie Gilbert agrees with Metcalf.

"We're hoping for it to happen," Gilbert said. "But above all, we're determined to finish (SWC play) at 12-

4... (The SWC title) is a long shot."

Gilbert enters tonight's game after one of his best offensive performances at A&M.

The 6-9 Huntsville product scored 22 points Monday night as he and forward Winston Crite repeatedly hammered inside to lead the Aggies to an 82-75 home finale win

"Sure, it's possible (to still win the Southwest Conference title), but you're talking about applying logic to a conference that doesn't subscribe to it."

— A&M Coach Shelby Metcalf

over the Houston Cougars.

Crite, who led all A&M scorers with 24 points against UH, said he's also looking to end the season on a positive note.

"We just want to win our final two games and take some momentum into the (SWC postseason) tournament," Crite said. "We feel we have a good chance to win the tournament. We're not counting on anybody else

losing. We just want to make sure we win our last two games."

And that includes taking Rice seriously.

"We'll take Rice just like they've taken TCU or anybody else," Crite said. "We expect for them to give us a heckuva game."

The last time the Aggies faced the Owls, Rice did give A&M a tough game — at least for the first half.

A&M was in first place in the SWC with a 5-1 record, but the Owls won 13 offensive rebounds in the first half to forge a 32-30 halftime edge.

The Aggies caught fire in the second half, led by Crite and Gilbert, and broke the game open for a 55 victory.

A&M has history on its side against Rice. Metcalf's Aggies are 7-1 against the Owls and have won nine of the last 10 meetings.

**A&M BASKETBALL NOTES:** A&M senior guard Don Martin has 578 points for the year, which is third best in school history. Martin needs 32 points to move into second place past John Beasley's 1994-95 mark. His 277 SWC points this season are two short of his conference total last year. . . . Gilbert is in first place in A&M career rebounds with 759. He needs 25 rebounds to claim fifth place over Beasley.

## No. 1 Duke's priority still ACC title

Associated Press

Duke Coach Mike Krzyzewski said he's happy that his Blue Devils are ranked No. 1 in the nation in the Associated Press college basketball poll, but he's more concerned with his team staying No. 1 in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

"To have Duke No. 1, in anything, is nice," Krzyzewski said. "But we're much more concerned with what's going on in our conference this week. We're in first place in the ACC and that's the No. 1 we're concerned about."

Duke became the third team — all from the ACC — to hold the No. 1 spot in AP poll this season, as the Blue Devils jumped over North Carolina in the latest rankings released Tuesday.

Duke, 27-2, received 62 of the 64 first-place votes and 1,278 points from a nationwide panel of sports-writers and broadcasters. The Blue Devils joined Georgia Tech, which was No. 1 in the preseason poll, and North Carolina, which held the top spot each of the 13 weeks in the voting since the season began.

In four of the past five weeks, the Tar Heels were unanimous choices.

The Blue Devils posted two victories last week, beating Miami (Fla.), 104-82, and then-No. 10 Oklahoma, 93-84. Duke, which plays at Clemson Wednesday night, is 10-2 in the ACC — one game ahead of North Caro-

lina and Georgia Tech.

Kansas, 27-3, jumped from third to second in the poll with one first-place vote. The Jayhawks clinched the Big Eight regular-season title with an 84-69 victory over Kansas State Saturday. Monday night, the Jayhawks beat Oklahoma on the road, 87-80.

### AP Top 20

Here are the Top 20 teams in the Associated Press college basketball poll with first-place votes in parentheses and season record through Feb. 25:

1. Duke (62) — 27-2
2. Kansas (1) — 26-3
3. North Carolina (1) — 25-3
4. Georgia Tech — 21-4
5. Kentucky — 24-3
6. Syracuse — 22-3
7. Memphis St. — 23-3
8. St. John's — 25-4
9. Nevada-Las Vegas — 27-3
10. Michigan — 23-4
11. Bradley — 28-1
12. Notre Dame — 19-5
13. Louisville — 21-7
14. Oklahoma — 23-5
15. Georgetown — 20-6
16. Indiana — 18-6
17. Michigan St. — 18-6
18. North Carolina St. — 18-9
19. Navy — 23-4
20. Purdue — 21-7

North Carolina received the first-place vote and dropped to No. 3 after suffering two losses last week. The Tar Heels, 25-3, were beaten home by Maryland 77-72 in overtime and fell to then-No. 20 North Carolina State, 76-65.

North Carolina meets Duke Saturday at Durham, N.C.

Georgia Tech, 21-4, moved one notch from last week to fourth while Kentucky, 24-3 and winners of the Southeastern Conference regular-season title, reached its highest ranking of the season at No. 5, just behind the Wildcats is No. 6 Syracuse, 22-3, which held on Sunday to a 64-63 nationally televised victory over then-No. 13 Georgetown.

Memphis State, St. John's, Nevada-Las Vegas and Michigan rounded out the Top 10.

Memphis State, 24-3, fell three spots to No. 7 after losing its second game of the week, 82-80 at Florida State. St. John's, 25-4, dropped one place to No. 8 after the Redmen lost to DePaul, 81-72. Nevada-Las Vegas, 11th last week, improved one notch, but Michigan dropped three spots after losing 74-60 to Michigan State.

The Second 10 consisted of Bradley, Notre Dame, Louisville, Oklahoma, Georgetown, Indiana, Michigan State, North Carolina State, Navy and Purdue.

## A&M blanks Baylor in softball scrimmage

The No. 4-ranked Texas A&M softball team warmed up for the '86 season with a 9-0 win over Baylor in a scrimmage Tuesday at the A&M Field.

"We looked pretty good," A&M Coach Bob Brock said. "I think that's an indication of what's to come. We kind of quietly disposed of a good Baylor club."

Freshman pitcher Julie Carpenter pitched four innings of no-hit ball and third baseman Cindy Cooper smashed a three-run homer for the Aggies.

"Julie has one of the best change-ups around," Brock said. "I think we maybe need to throw it a little more than we did today."

The Aggies finished last season

with a 45-12 record and ranked No. 2 in the nation. However, A&M failed to reach the College World Series for the first time in seven years losing to Louisiana Tech in regional play.

A&M might get its first chance to revenge this weekend when it travels to Houma, La. for the Bayou Classic to begin the regular season.