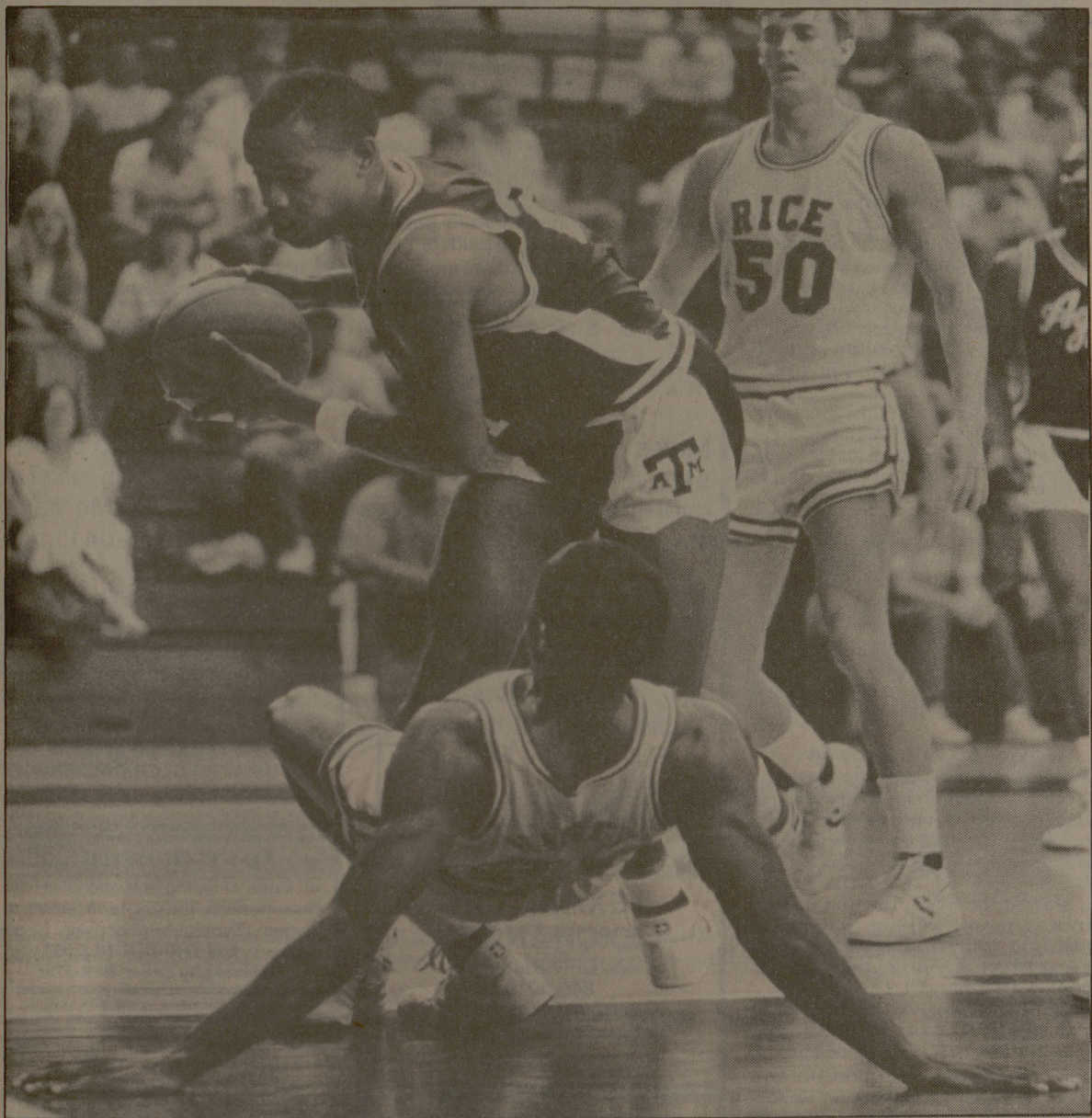


Sports



A&M's Winston Crite collides with Rice's Greg Hines Wednesday night at Autry Court in Houston. The Aggies downed the Owls 70-62, but remain in third place in the Southwest Conference.

Photo by DEAN SAITO

Aggies recover in time to roll over Owls 70-62

Aggies climb back into SWC title picture

By KEN SURY
Assistant Sports Editor

Men's Basketball

HOUSTON — Texas A&M did a lot of climbing before reaching a plateau from which it could look down upon the Rice Owls Wednesday night.

But reach it, the Aggies did, as they dealt the Owls a 70-62 loss at Autry Court.

"We're climbing, we're climbing," yelled A&M guard Don Marbury as the team headed into the locker room after the game.

The "climbing" Marbury was referring to was A&M's third consecutive victory after a three-game losing streak which dropped the Aggies from first place in the Southwest Conference race.

And when a sports writer told Marbury that Texas Tech had just defeated TCU 62-52 in Lubbock, Marbury smiled broadly, his eyes rolled skyward and he took a deep breath.

"I know it's tough to beat Tech at home," Marbury said. "I've got a lot of respect for (Tech) Coach Gerald

Myers. I felt like Tech could beat (TCU).

"That's what we needed to get in position to have a chance to tie for the (SWC) championship."

Marbury also reached a personal plateau against Rice. His game-high 22 points gave him 600 for the '85-86 season.

"It feels good," he said. "I wasn't looking to get (to) the 600-(point mark). I just wanted to win (tonight)."

But for most of the game, Rice made life difficult for A&M.

Despite a 39.2 shooting percentage in the first half, the Owls used 10 offensive rebounds and guard Greg Hines' shots from the perimeter to keep the game close.

The lead changed nine times in the first half without either team opening more than a four-point margin. But the Aggies shot 58 percent from the floor and 6-of-8 from the line to take command by half-time, 28-25.

A&M opened up a seven-point lead in the first five minutes of the second half to lead 37-30, but Rice stormed back with eight straight points to reclaim the lead, 38-37, with 11:52 remaining.

The Aggies outscored the Owls 13-1 to open up a 64-50 lead with just over a minute left to play.

Rice began fouling A&M guards Todd Holloway and Marbury to save precious seconds on the clock, but the duo hit both ends of three one-one attempts at the line to protect the Aggies' lead.

The victory gives A&M an outside shot to be in a three-way tie for the SWC regular season title. A&M is still in third place in the conference, a game behind new co-leaders TCU and Texas.

However, the Aggies must travel to the Ozarks Saturday to try to defeat Arkansas, a team they haven't beaten in Barnhill Arena since 1971.

"We have a chance to tie for the championship if things go our way and we take care of business in Arkansas," A&M Coach Shelby Metcalf said.



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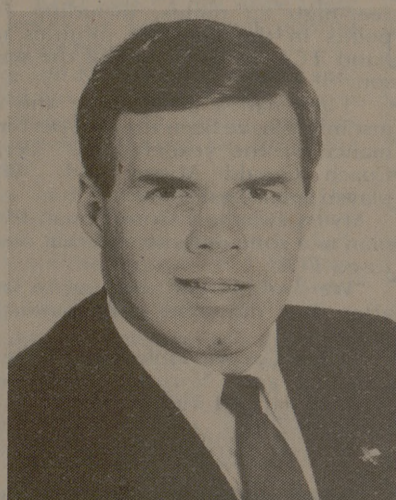
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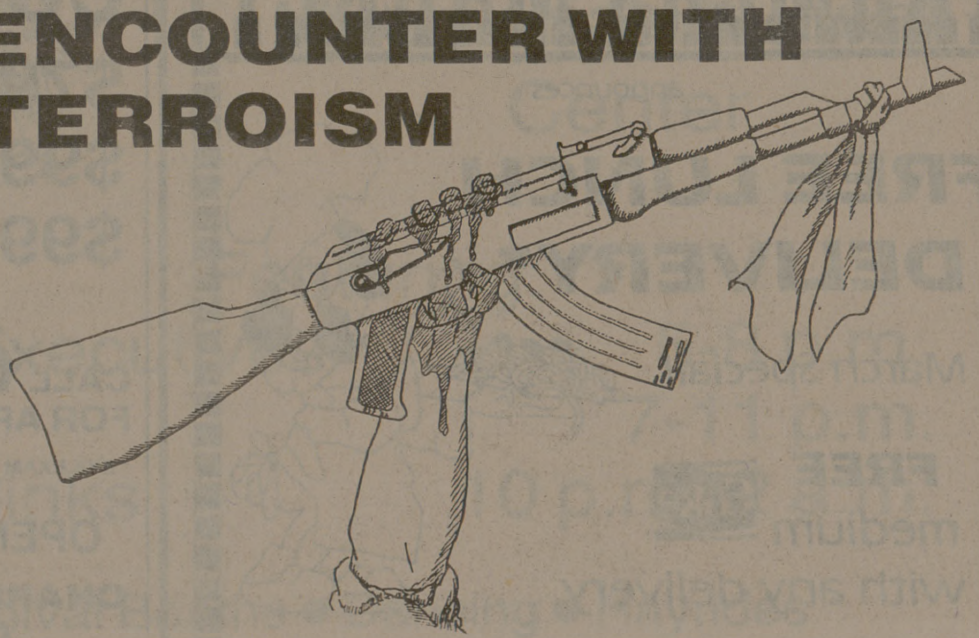
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