

Sports

Tech 'taketh' SWC Classic title

Red Raiders swipe NCAA bid from Aggies with 67-63 win

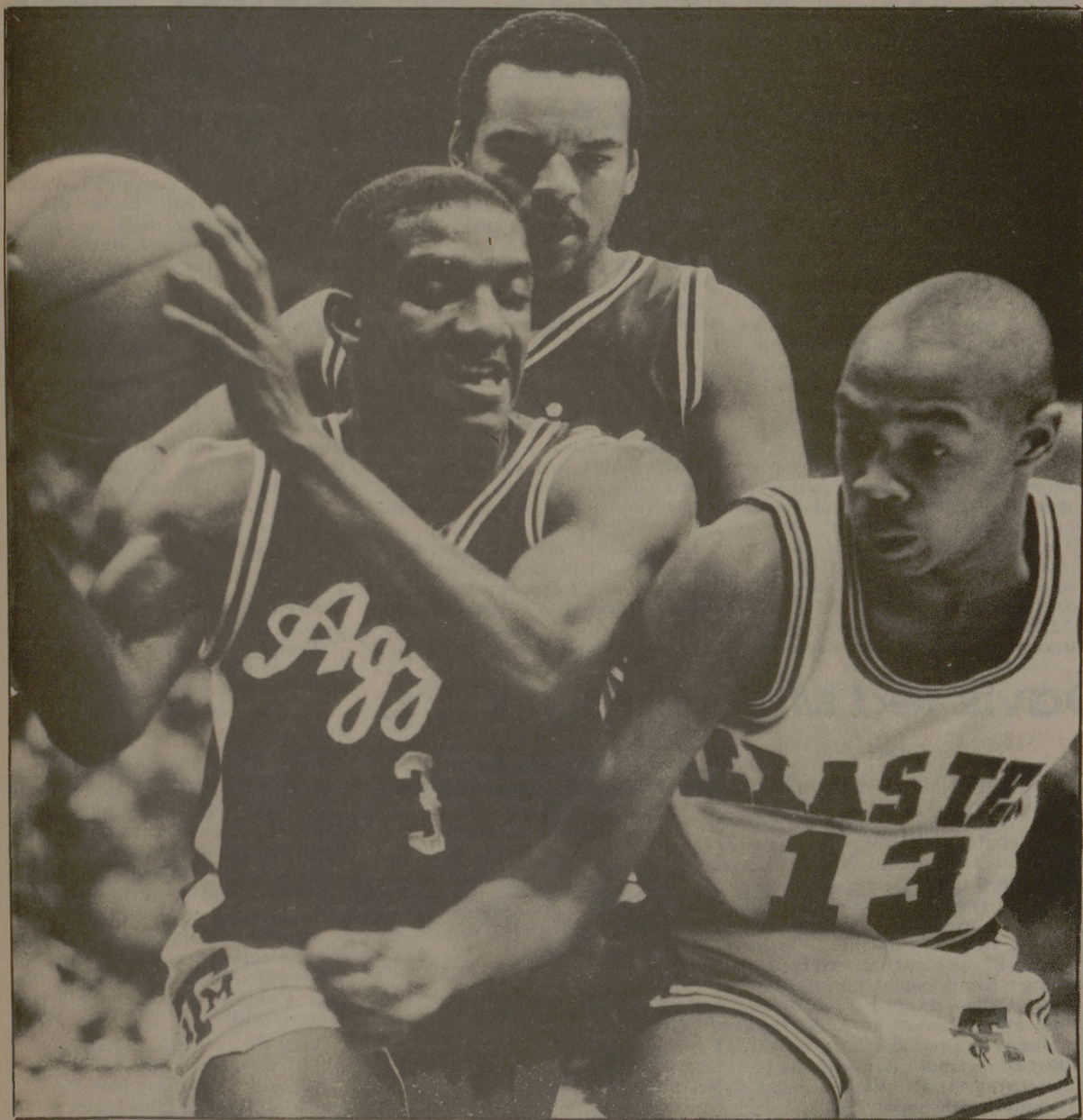


Photo by DEAN SAITO

A&M's Don Marbury (left) pulls the ball out of reach of Texas Tech's Sean Gay (right) as Aggie

Gary Lewis looks on. The Red Raiders upset the Aggies Sunday in Dallas' Reunion Arena, 67-63.

By KEN SURY
Assistant Sports Editor

DALLAS — Texas Tech giveth and Texas Tech taketh away.

But it was all *take* Sunday as the Red Raiders defeated Texas A&M 67-63 before 11,323 in Reunion Arena in the final of the Southwest Conference Post-Season Basketball Classic XI and earn an automatic bid to the NCAA **Basketball** Tournament.

A&M had to settle for an National Invitational Tournament bid.

The Red Raiders were kind to the Aggies as the SWC season ended. A&M made use of Tech's cold shooting at G. Rollie White Coliseum to snap a three-game losing streak and enter the tourney with the longest SWC win streak.

Then the Red Raiders gave the Aggies a third of the conference title as they knocked off Texas and TCU in the final week of regular season play.

But Tech's kindness ended Sunday as Tony Benford drilled shots from the outside and Dwayne Chism hammered away inside to defend its SWC tournament title.

The Red Raiders, the No. 5 seed in the tourney, had the majority of the Reunion Arena spectators rooting for them as they walked onto the court.

But second-seeded A&M silenced the Tech fans early on a Jimmie Gilbert dunk and Winston Crite's three-point play to open a 5-2 lead.

Aggie turnovers, however, and back-to-back jump shots by Benford gave the Red Raiders a 14-9 margin with 11:33 left in the first half.

A&M senior Al Pulliam, who sparked the Aggies to Friday's win over Arkansas, then came to life off the bench after missing a layup at the 13:55 mark and scored three straight baskets to cut the gap to 18-17 with 8:46 to go in the half.

A&M guard Don Marbury then added a 15-foot jumper and Crite dropped in a layup to boost the Aggies to a 21-18 lead with just over seven minutes remaining.

For the rest of the first half, the

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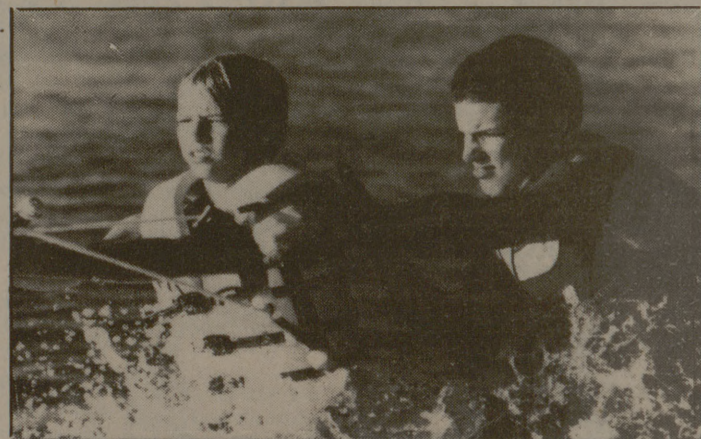
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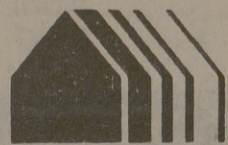
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