

Sports

Aggies to tangle with Frogs in 1st round of SWC tourney

By Doug Hall
Sports Writer

If you'll pull out your local sports page and scan the Southwest Conference Basketball standings, the team on top is No. 15-ranked Texas Christian University, whose 14-2 SWC record easily outdistanced second place Baylor.

Keep scanning that column, however, past Houston, Texas Tech, Arkansas, Texas, and SMU and you come to Texas A&M.

The Aggies, who have a 14-13 season record, stumbled to a 6-10 SWC mark and thus has the honor of playing TCU today at 2:38 p.m., in the second game of this weekend's SWC Post-Season Classic in Dallas.

It's not the most enviable position for Shelby Metcalf's Aggies, but one that holds a lot of opportunity for a team that has struggled through an up and down season, Metcalf said.

"It's a great opportunity for us," said Metcalf, whose 394 career wins lead all SWC coaches. "To knock off the Southwest Conference Champions in the tourney would give us an awful lot of satisfaction."

Don't count on the Horned Frogs to roll over and let the Aggies just steal one away, though.

SWC Coach of the Year Jim Killingsworth has a squad in Dallas that is packed with talent and post-season awards.

Carven Holcombe, the Frog's versatile forward/guard, who averaged almost 16 points and 33 minutes a game, was named SWC Player of the Year on Wednesday. In addition to Holcombe, TCU's 6-7 forward Larry Richard was named to the first team and also picked up the defensive MVP award.

Additionally, Guard Jamie Dixon, who set school records in assists this year, led the second team in balloting.

And if those three aren't enough to take on the rest of the SWC, don't forget 6-9 center Tony Papa who stung the Aggies for 16 points in the team's second meeting at G. Rollie White Coliseum and premier guard Carl Lott, who recently returned to the lineup from a hand injury.

But the Aggies are far from defenseless. Senior forward Winston Crite, who will play his final games in an Aggie uniform this weekend, also was named to the SWC second-team, and, according to Metcalf, plans on being heard from in Dallas.

"Winston's ability to score is down inside near the basket,"

Metcalf said. "But they will make it tough on him by packing their zone in tight."

Metcalf said for the Aggies to be successful against TCU, A&M's outside shooting will have to be on track.

"We've got to have some outside shooting to spread out their zone," he said. "Of course Todd (Holloway) is our most consistent shooter, but we also need (Keron) Graves to get hot. He hasn't been shooting that well lately, but he's certainly capable."

Looking around the conference, Metcalf said he considers SMU and Arkansas to be the two "dark horses" of the tourney.

"SMU is playing awfully well," Metcalf said. "And Arkansas has had a good second half also. They've got the depth to go through three days of rugged basketball."

No matter what the outcome of this weekend's post-season tourney, though, Metcalf said he is as proud of this year's team as any of the other 23 Aggie squads he has coached.

"The only thing I have to say is that I'm very proud of our seniors," he said. "It's been a frustrating season, but they still go out there and bust their rears every day."

SWC hoop classic dubbed 'Horned Frog Invitational'

DALLAS (AP) — Some are calling it "The Horned Frog Invitational."

The 12th annual Southwest Conference Post-Season Basketball Classic is expected to be a Texas Christian University showtime special. The 15th-ranked Horned Frogs claimed the regular season title by four games, the widest margin of victory in 20 years.

Colleagues of TCU Coach of the Year Jim Killingsworth weren't about to let the "Killer" off the hook at Thursday's tournament preview news conference.

"TCU should be the favorite because the team has great composure at money time," Texas A&M Coach Shelby Metcalf said. "They probably learned that from playing poker and shooting dice with their coach."

Metcalf's Aggies are the No. 8 seed and meet the top-seeded Horned Frogs today at 2:38 p.m. Fourth-seeded Texas Tech and No. 5 Arkansas tangle in the 12:08 p.m. quarterfinal opener.

Second-seeded Baylor meets No. 7 Southern Methodist at 6 p.m., while third-seeded Houston plays No. 6 Texas at 8:30 p.m.

The semifinals are set for 1 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. on Saturday with the finals at 1 p.m. on Sunday. The winner gets an automatic bid to the NCAA tournament.

"TCU is the favorite of everybody here," Texas Coach Bob Weltlich said.

"If you got rid of TCU then the tournament would be a tossup," Arkansas Coach Nolan Richardson said.

Southern Methodist Coach Dave Bliss would not back off his earlier prediction that TCU would be in the NCAA Final Four. "The Frogs are it," he said.

There seemed to be little optimism that some team would spring from the pack for an upset like last year's tournament victory by Texas Tech. Even Tech Coach Gerald Myers doused cold water on that idea, saying "nobody will take us lightly this year."



A&M to host tournament in softball

By Loyd Brumfield
Assistant Sports Editor

Three nationally-ranked teams will be in town this weekend when the second-ranked Texas A&M softball team hosts the Aggie Spring Invitational beginning today at the Southwood Valley Athletic Complex in College Station.

The tournament field includes No. 1-ranked Cal State Fullerton, the team that knocked off A&M in last year's NCAA championship game, ninth-ranked Louisiana Tech, 12th-ranked South Carolina, Oklahoma State, Sam Houston State and Baylor.

The tournament is being run on a round robin format, which allows every team to play each other once. Session one begins today at 11 a.m., when A&M, 23 faces Baylor on field two; the Lady Aggies will also be in action at 1 p.m., on field three to face OSU.

Tonight at 8 p.m., A&M will play South Carolina on field two and will return to action Saturday when session three begins at 1 a.m., to play Sam Houston State on field three and Louisiana Tech on field one at 5 p.m.

A&M will have a shot at revenge against 8-1 Cal State Fullerton at 7 p.m., on field one.

Admission is \$3 per session for adults and \$2 for senior citizens and students with I.D. Day passes may be purchased for \$5 and tournament passes for \$10. Children under 12 get in free.

"We're really excited about the tournament," A&M Coach Bob Brock said. "You don't usually find so many ranked teams playing each other so early in the season."

A&M rebounds to beat OSU in men's tennis

The Texas A&M men's tennis team came back Thursday to defeat Oklahoma State 5-1 after losing to Duke Wednesday in the opening round of the Corpus Christi Team Tournament.

The Aggies upped their spring record to 9-2 with the win.

"They (Oklahoma State) beat us earlier indoors," A&M Coach David

Kent said, "but we just killed them today."

The only defeat for A&M came when OSU's Frank Kaiser beat Dean Johnson 0-6, 7-5, 6-2.

In other action, A&M's Marcel Vos defeated Robin Scott 7-6, 6-2, and Dean Goldfine beat Grant Williams 6-3, 6-1.

"We really played well today," Kent said. "We needed this match after (losing to) Duke."

In other singles matches, A&M's No. 4 Shaun O'Donovan defeated Chris Schantz 6-1, 6-1, while No. 5 Brent Haygarth was victorious over OSU's Dean Rothe 6-2, 6-4, and A&M's No. 6 player, Steve Kennedy, beat Jack Salerno 6-0, 7-5.

"It's always good to beat someone who has beaten you earlier," Kent said. "It's good revenge for us."

The Aggies will take on Maryland today.

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