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**A&M defeats Rice with good offense**

By Hal L. Hammons  
 Sports Editor

The Texas A&M volleyball team rode an improved serving and attacking game to a four-set win over Rice Wednesday night at Autry Court in Houston.

Four Lady Aggies were in double digits in kills as A&M won 15-10, 15-13, 12-15, 15-3.

The Lady Aggies improved their record to 4-2 in Southwest Conference play and 15-11 overall.

Vivien Viera led the team with 18 of the team's 78 kills, while Cheri Steensma added 17.

Kelli Kellen contributed 16 with a team-high .464 hitting percentage, and Amy Cummings added 11 kills as well.

A&M Coach Al Givens said, "This was a must win for us. We knew coming in that Rice was a good ball club, because they had beaten Houston here at home last week.

"They just got beaten by a better ball club tonight.

"We let down a little bit in the third game. It seemed like we were waiting for

them to fold. But we came back and it gave us momentum going into the fourth game."

A&M hit .243 as a team with only errors in 202 attempts.

"We played extra aggressive," Givens said. "We blocked better tonight, and our service was much improved."

The Lady Aggies were down to 10 players after last weekend's Florida International, but Melanie Rother returned action against the Owls. Rother played all four games and contributed an 11 and seven digs.

Rice was led by Suzanne Zakreski, 15 kills in 28 attempts for a .500 percentage.

Overall the Owls hit for a .227 percentage with 61 kills and 19 errors in 202 attempts.

"I'm pleased with the win," Givens said, "and we're looking for the same kind of effort against Tech."

The Lady Aggies face Texas Tech Wednesday night at 7 in Lubbock.

**Highsmith vows to beat fumble rap**

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston Oilers fullback Alonzo Highsmith went into the 1987 off-season determined to come back this season as "hell on wheels."

But Highsmith's wheels were used for blocking until Sunday's 41-17 victory over Washington when the Oilers allowed Highsmith to run down the clock and protect their big lead.

Highsmith, who lost a fumble early in the game, responded with a career-best 75 yards on eight carries and had runs of 20, 21 and 27 yards.

Now the Oilers are preparing for a Monday night showdown in the Astrodome against the Cleveland Browns and Highsmith wants more.

"I think I can be a piece to the Super Bowl puzzle," he said. "I'm a 240-pounder, and I can pound on the line-backers all day and it doesn't wear me down."

Highsmith, the Oilers' No. 1 draft pick in 1987, missed part of his rookie year because of a lengthy contract hold-out and the NFL players' strike.

Highsmith signed his contract Oct. 28 and was activated Nov. 8 but lost a fumble in his first appearance against San Francisco.

He's fought the fumbling rap ever since.

"I've struggled all season and not very many people have been on my

bandwagon," Highsmith said. "I need everybody to have confidence in me."

Highsmith has received high marks for his blocking but he feels something is missing.

"I've struggled; it's been a long time coming," Highsmith said. "But I made a vow to myself last week that I was going to run the ball aggressively if I got a chance."

Highsmith got his chance in the first quarter Sunday against the Redskins.

"I just need the Houston Oilers to realize that Alonzo Highsmith can help the team other than just blocking," Highsmith said. "I need someone to say 'Let's go with Alonzo, give him the ball.'"

Highsmith made the most of his first quarter call and finished as the game's leading rusher, including a career-long 27 yard run.

"I'm glad Alonzo had some runs," Oilers quarterback Warren Moon said. "He was kind of down on himself because he hadn't gotten the ball yet."

"He's doing such a good job of blocking and the other little things that people don't see. Now he's starting to do some of the things that running backs want to do and that's run the football."

"I think the more opportunities he gets, the better he'll be," Moon said.

**Easy catching, eating make catfish popular**

HOUSTON (AP) — If a poll were taken, people might prove to be about equally divided regarding four-legged cats; we either love felines or hate them, with few voting-age folks undecided.

But on the issue of finned, freshwater cats (especially rolled in corn meal and fried golden brown), it's a favorable landslide.

Sport fishing for black bass may be all the rage, but stringing a mess of catfish is a much straighter route to a satisfying family meal. Cats are fairly easy to catch, and cruise the bottom of almost every body of fresh water in the state.

The general daily sport limit on catfish is 25 per day, 50 in the aggregate, with a 9-inch minimum. There is an exception on Lake Livingston, however, where the limit is 50 fish per day.

Since catfish are primarily bottom-dwelling scent feeders, artificial lures rarely work. Now and then, a big cat will hit a spinnerbait or crankbait, but odoriferous natural baits are far and away the better choice.

Selecting a catfish bait is more a matter of personal preference than of effectiveness. Catfish will hit just about anything sooner or later, as long as they can smell it. And the more it smells (to the dismay of whoever does a catfisherman's laundry) the better it works.

Rod-and-reel fishermen do well with a wide variety of baits. Shad and night crawlers are top choices for those wishing to offer the fish a familiar meal. Prepared dough, cheese, blood and stink baits also are economical catfish-catchers, the best of which depends mostly upon who you ask. Many veteran catfishermen go so far as to mix up their own secret concoctions, which usually turn out to be a combination of some or all of the above.

Technique and equipment range from simple to simpler, there's no way to make catfishing as difficult or mind-boggling as bassing. On a good day, in the right spot, a plain old cane pole may catch just as many cats as the fanciest graphite rod and reel.

Terminal tackle for rod-and-reelers depends on the flow of water and attitude of the fish. Though they hit suspended baits at times, most cats are taken on or near the bottom.

In the still water of lakes and ponds, a small split shot or no weight at all will keep the bait down. If the water is moving or longer casts are required, rig an appropriate egg sinker to slip on the line so the fish feels no resistance when it hits.

Trotlines, multiple hook rigs left out

for several hours, are a fast way to catch more fish. Texas Parks & Wildlife Department regulations require that no more than 50 hooks be used, and that each hook be at least 3 horizontal feet from the next.

Trotliners often use the same baits as rod-and-reel anglers. But for bigger fish many switch to live bait and, according to Texas Parks and Wildlife state records, the tactic works.

The biggest cats take to date on rod and reel are a 98-pound flathead (William Stephens, June 1986) and a 71-pound (Sammie Roberson, March 1986). Trotline catfish records are considerably higher — a 116-pound blue (C.D. Martindale, April 1985) and a 114-pound flathead (Charles Booth, October 1976). The state record channel cat, a 361-pounder, was taken on rod and reel by Mrs. Joe Cockrell on March 7, 1965.

Numbers of catfish vary from lake to lake. According to Steve Gutreuter, a research specialist with TP&WD in Austin, Lake Conroe has the best catfish population among local impoundments.

"Gill net surveys are better for determining catfish populations," Gutreuter said, "but the most current data available comes from an electro-shocking survey. Lake Conroe produced 34 cats per hour. Lake Livingston was a close second with 33."

Gibbons Creek shocking raised 16 catfish each hour, while Sam Rayburn only produced eight. Zapping at Fayette County, which definitely has some good catfish on it, raised zero. That single statistic bears out Gutreuter's statement that electro-shocking is not the most accurate way to count catfish.

In Fayette County and Gibbons Creek Reservoirs, state law prohibits trotlines. In their place, fishermen set juglines, which are exactly what they imply — a hook and line attached to a floating jug.

One more way to catch catfish, popular in some parts of the country but not legal in Texas, is grabbling. Also called doodlelocking or noodling, the sport calls for the fisherman to reach into sunken logs or other hollow objects and grab the fish by whatever part is closest, hopefully the mouth.

Grabblers, as it seems they'd have to be called, sometimes also get a handful of snapping turtle or water moccasin. In most circles, grabbling is not considered the most rational way to go about catching catfish. Illegal it may be, but at the least a person accused of grabbling could plead insanity with reasonable expectation of sympathy from the judge.

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Other officials supporting Congressman Barton, but not pictured:  
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Paid for by the Congressman Joe Barton Committee