

Monday, February 20, 1989

Aggies upset Arkansas; Lady Aggies lose close one

Thompson, Milton lead Ags to surprising 82-71 win over Hogs

By Jerry Bolz

ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

The Aggies held on to beat the Hogs 82-71 Saturday in the biggest win of A&M's season and of their current four-game win streak.

The win evened A&M's record at 12-12 and 5-7 in the Southwest Conference, while Arkansas, with a 17-6 overall mark and 10-3 in SWC play, retains a share of the conference lead with Texas.

The four wins in a row have come

after a five game losing streak. A&M senior forward Doug Dennis said the team is now playing to its potential.

"Right now we feel like we're playing the way we've been capable of all year long," Dennis said. "Anytime

Aggie Update

- Score: A&M 82, Arkansas 71
- Record: 12-12; 5-7 in the SWC.
- Next game: Wednesday v. Rice
- Standing: Tied for 6th place.

you can beat Arkansas it feels good. It makes it a lot easier when you go home."

Coach Shelby Metcalf said his team did what was necessary to beat Arkansas.

"I'd say we won it probably on the offense," Metcalf said. "The key to playing Arkansas is to handle the pressure and shut down their running game."

They thought about it several times, but the Aggies resisted letting the aura of the first-place Razorbacks overcome them.

Arkansas took its last lead of the game 55-53 on two free throws by Lee Mayberry with 10:26 left in the game. Dennis tied it on an eight-foot baseline jumper and Freddie Ricks

put the Aggies on top for good with a six-footer on a drive in the paint.

Ricks stretched the lead to 60-55 by hitting a 20-foot jumper from the right baseline.

Lenzie Howell, who led Arkansas with 18 points, brought the Hogs within two, 63-61, on a pair of free throws with 6:05 in the game. He was fouled by Thompson (his fourth) and it looked like fouls might upset the game for A&M. Ray Little had already fouled out and David Williams took a seat a few minutes later.

However, it ended up with A&M See Upset/Page 10

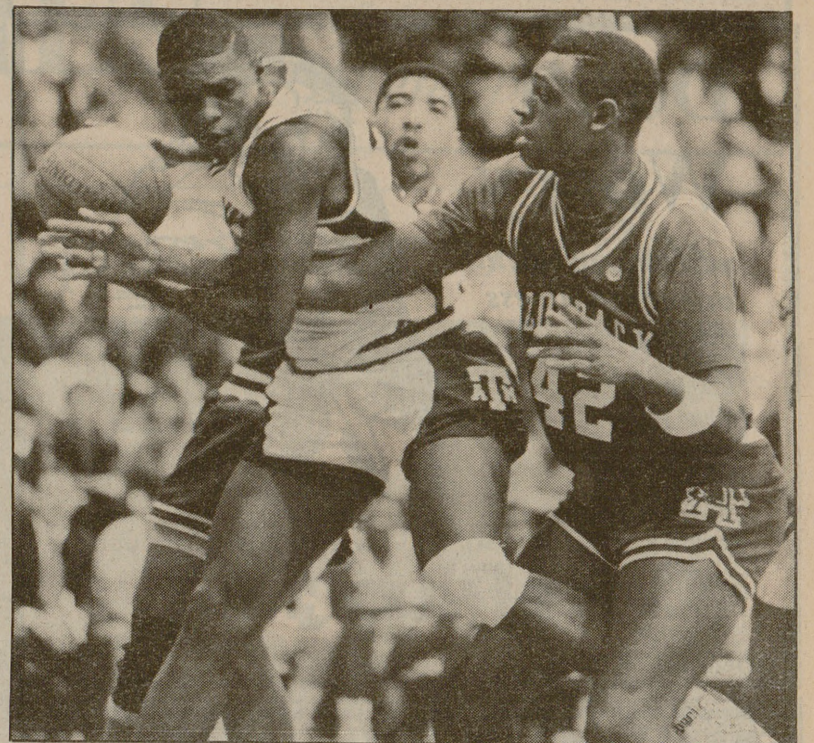


Photo by Dean Saito

A&M's Donald Thompson (left) is fouled by Arkansas' Larry Marks (42) during the Aggies' 82-71 upset of Arkansas.

Lady Ags blow 16-point halftime lead in upsetting 74-73 loss

By Stan Golaboff

SPORTS WRITER

day in G. Rollie White Coliseum. It was the best of halves; it was the worst of halves.

Lady Ag Update

- Score: Arkansas 74, A&M 73
- Record: 15-8; 7-5 in the SWC.
- Next game: Tuesday v. Rice
- Standing: Tied for 3rd place.

"We played great in the first half

and then we lost our composure," disappointed A&M Head Coach Lynn Hickey said. "Arkansas played well in the second half. We just can't seem to play 40 minutes of good basketball."

A&M (15-8 on the year and 7-5 in the Southwest Conference) jumped out to an early lead and dominated every aspect of the game in the first half.

"We played one of the best halves

we've played all year," Hickey said. "We passed the ball well. We communicated well and shot the ball well."

The Lady Ags shot 57 percent from the field in the first half, (compared to the Lady Hogs' 35 percent), and 77 percent from the line. Arkansas (17-6; 10-3 in the SWC) shot 45 percent from the line.

A&M led at half (46-30) and the See Lady Aggies/Page 10

Metcalf's resurgent Aggies are making basketball fun again

"You can describe this game in one word: Ya'neverknow."

—Joaquin Andujar, baseball player.

Good old Joaquin was, of course, talking about baseball. But he could just as easily have been talking about the current Aggie basketball team.

Shelby Metcalf's Aggies, given up for dead two weeks ago, have apparently struck up a deal with a higher power and put together a four-game winning streak which is threatening to take them into the Southwest Conference's upper echelon.

Okay, maybe Shelby didn't strike a deal with the almighty up above, but something very strange is going on here.

The Aggies look so vastly different than the team which was firmly entrenched at the bottom of the SWC standings recently



Doug Walker Sports editor

that they look like a group of imposters.

In the last four games, the Aggies have climbed back to .500 for the season and seemed to find an exciting style of play. But the real reason for the turnaround isn't mystical, religious or supernatural.

The Aggies have simply relaxed and

settled into an offense Metcalf and his coaching staff decided to go to following a loss to Texas Christian in the Aggies' second SWC game.

Metcalf decided to use an opportunistic offense which used the fast break when it was available and produced points from its defense. He was looking for aggressive play and hustle to shake the team out of its slump.

Their confidence was at an all-time low and things seemed to be crumbling around them as they suffered through a dreary 1-7 start in SWC play.

The first sign of life came in the seventh SWC loss in which the Aggies played a strong Texas team close in a 85-80 loss in Austin.

After weeks of feeling bad about themselves, the Aggies realized they could

play good basketball.

Metcalf's change in philosophy deserves much of the credit for the turnaround of his team. However, another reason, which won't leap out at you in the box score, has played just as big a role.

The Aggies have settled on a consistent starting five and found some offense off the bench from Lynn Suber in the last few games.

Ray Little, a junior forward, has made a big impression on his teammates and his coach in his six games as a starter. His constant hustle on defense has had a big effect.

Hustle is contagious. When Little is out there working so hard his teammates work harder so they won't look bad. Pretty soon, everyone on the team is getting after the opponent as hard as Little.

Freddie Ricks, a guard, also became a contributor in the Texas game. He scored 14 points in the loss and has teamed with fellow guards Tony Milton and David Williams to form a solid group which isn't afraid to drive inside or create something defensively.

Team captain Donald Thompson has seen his patience rewarded. After the disappointment of the slump, Thompson has found new vigor during the recent winning streak.

Times like these are what makes college sports so enjoyable. Not long ago, this looked like a season that couldn't end soon enough. Now, with the upset of Arkansas, this team looks capable of beating anybody in the league.

Stay tuned. Like Joaquin said: "Ya'neverknow!"

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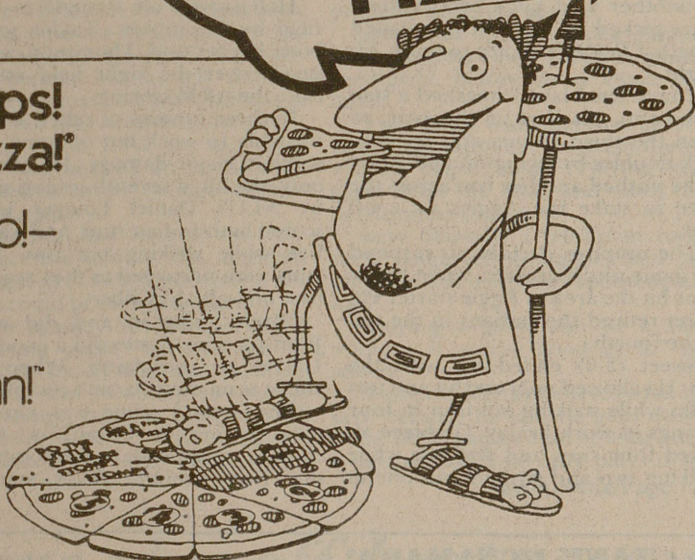
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