

Clay Rasmussen
Assistant Sports Editor

Nyuck, nyuck: Stooges making mockery of SWC

Larry, Moe and Curly. In yesterday's Texas A&M-Texas men's basketball game they were known as Hooker, Williams and Shortnacy. I guess you could call them the new three stooges. New, but certainly not improved.

I thought the problems with Southwest Conference officiating ended with the controversial interference call on free safety Larry Horton in the A&M-Arkansas football game last November. You remember that call that took the SWC title and a Cotton Bowl trip away from the Aggies. I had just gotten over that one when SWC basketball got under way in January.

Then the cold, hard truth smacked me in the face like a toilet seat in the middle of the night. SWC officiating just sucks. Many will just call me a poor sport. Others will tag me as a biased sports writer. And while these accusations may or may not be true, the facts are irrefutable.

Too many cases

Just ask Texas Coach Tom Penders. Although he might not want to talk to you on the record, he'll certainly tell anyone interested that the officials in the SWC need a refresher course.

During a heated Texas-Arkansas game Feb. 4, Texas led Arkansas 84-83 when an intentional foul was called on Arkansas' Lee Mayberry with 14 seconds left in the game. Arkansas coach Nolan Richardson stormed out of Erwin Arena in protest.

The Razorbacks went on to tie the game with four seconds left after Mayberry hit a three-pointer. Richardson returned for the overtime and the Hogs beat Texas.

The problem: Richardson should have been slapped with a technical foul. It's in the NCAA rulebook.

Ed Steitz, the NCAA chief rules interpreter, agreed.

"The rule is clear," Steitz said. "I wrote it. If you're sick, you say, 'Hey ref, I'm doubling over with pain; I have to leave the game.' If (Richardson) was that sick, I think he should have got medical attention."

"But he was back in the overtime." Nyuck, Nyuck, Nyuck (insert eyepoke here).

And if that's not enough — take yesterday's game. Please.

A comedy of errors

All you had to do was look to the Aggies' bench and watch a livid John Thornton storm up and down, making mental notes not to criticize these three stooges, at least not publicly.

Fans saw an inconsistent team of officials blunder up and down the court.

At one point in the game, A&M guard Tony Milton and Texas forward Locksley Collie exchanged elbows. The blows were aimed at their faces and while Longhorn fans and Aggie fans screamed for the call, neither Larry, Moe nor Curley saw anything.

Even Penders raced onto the floor in disbelief. Penders made his point, and instead of any of the three being slapped with a technical foul, the referees let the whole thing slide.

Milton, Collie, Penders or any combination of the three should have been called for the foul.

Still need more evidence?

With one minute left in the game, Texas guard Lance Blanks drove into the lane only to come face-to-face with A&M guard Freddie Ricks. Both went up, Ricks blocked the shot, and came down with his fifth foul.

"I know I got all ball," Ricks said. "If you look at the instant replay you'd see I got all ball. In fact, if anything, he pushed off on me."

Maybe Ricks was wrong. Or maybe we can chalk up another lousy call on the stooges.

It pains me to see A&M basketball come so close to pulling off the win only to have the officials take it away. I know I shouldn't try to pin the Aggies' basketball woes on them, but it's hard.

I guess I'm looking for an answer, but there's not one to be found. A&M and other SWC schools will just have to play harder and try to overcome the "Three Stooges Syndrome."

Ags fade down stretch, lose to 'Horns

A&M plays inspired ball, but drops to 5-7 in conference standings

By RICHARD TIJERINA
Of The Battalion Staff

The Texas A&M men's basketball team's 79-73 loss Sunday accomplished more than just lower it in the Southwest Conference standings. It showed the Aggies definitely can play with the big boys.

A&M, which dropped a close 96-94 decision to Texas earlier in the season in Austin, led most of the game Sunday in front of 3,764 at G. Rollie White but fell apart in the final minutes.

Having a 71-69 lead with 4:57 left in the game, the Aggies were outscored 10-2 the rest of the way. Texas senior forward Lance Blanks had nine of the Longhorns' points during that stretch.

With the loss, the Aggies dropped to 12-14 overall, 5-7 in the SWC. The Longhorns improved to 18-6, 11-3.

Junior forward Locksley Collie led the Longhorns with 23 points — 11 points above his average. The Aggies held high-scoring senior guard Travis Mays, who had a 24.6 average going into the game, to 18 points.

A&M was led by senior guard Tony Milton's 26 points. Junior guard Freddie Ricks had 13 for the Aggies, and freshman guard Brooks Thompson added 12. Thompson made his first start of the SWC schedule against the Longhorns.

"Texas is the kind of team where you can't feel comfortable with a five-point lead," A&M Coach John Thornton said. "They'll explode on you if you're not careful."

The Aggies tried to be careful down the stretch, but it didn't matter. The Longhorns exploded anyway.

With Texas holding a small 40-39 half-time lead, A&M came out in the second half ready to put the game out of reach. But as well as the Aggies executed in the second half, the Longhorns somehow kept pace.

A&M led 61-53 at the 11:42 mark on junior guard Lynn Suber's short baseline jumpshot. But one minute later, center Da-

vid Harris committed his fourth foul. It would prove costly, as the Aggies had to take him out and replace him with forward Ray Little.

Without Harris, who had four blocked shots, the Longhorns began to dominate the inside game. Thornton was forced to put the junior back in at the 7:10 mark.

His presence immediately was felt. After Ricks picked up his fourth foul on Mays, the Longhorns were up, 65-63. But Thompson drove into the lane and dished off to an open Harris under the basket, who tipped it in to tie the game.

After a Milton jumpshot, Collie hit a 17-foot shot from the left side to tie the game at 67-67. On the Aggies' next possession, Ricks missed an easy layup under the basket. However, senior forward Darren Rhea rebounded the miss in midair and jammed it back into the basket to give the Aggies a 69-67 lead.

A Milton jumpshot from the left baseline made it 71-69. Rhea then made a brilliant defensive play, as he dove to tip a pass out of bounds that the Longhorns had thrown the length of the court. Texas junior guard Joey Wright was alone under the basket.

But the end of the game was signaled for A&M as early as the 3:58 mark. Leading 71-69, Harris picked up his fifth foul when he tried to block forward Lance Blanks' shot.

After Harris fouled out, Thornton was faced with the same problem he's had all season: lack of depth on the Aggie bench.

"Losing David really hurt us," Thornton said. "Texas' inside game was tough. It carried them this game."

It was after Harris left the game that the Longhorns began their 10-2 run. Thompson missed a three-pointer with 3:30 left in the game, and Thornton replaced him with Suber at the 2:58 mark.

But Suber missed his first two attempts, a short jumpshot from the left baseline and a long jumpshot. Blanks hit an 18-foot jumpshot from the right side to put Texas

Lady 'Horns dominate Ags in 95-70 victory

By NADJA SABAWALA
Of The Battalion Staff

For the Texas A&M women's basketball team, defeat was right down the Hall Friday night.

University of Texas forward Vicki Hall connected for a career-high 32 points, including 13-of-19 from the field, to help the Lady Longhorns defeat the Lady Aggies 95-70 in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

In front of a crowd of 2,043, sixth-ranked Texas stayed undefeated in 182 consecutive Southwest Conference games and improved its record to 12-0 and 19-3 overall. A&M dropped to 7-5 in conference and 15-8 overall.

"I hate to get beat and I'm tired of getting beat by those people," Lady Aggie coach Lynn Hickey said. "But what I'm happy about is that we really played hard."

A&M stayed in the Lady Longhorns' shadow for the first five minutes of the game, emerging to tie with 15:06 left in the half.

A string of Lady Aggie fouls allowed Texas to slowly extend its lead. The Lady 'Horns then ran rampant, scoring 13 points to A&M's 2.

"The key was when we were keeping it even, we couldn't score," Hickey said. "We had the chance to have the lead, but we couldn't take it."

Texas continued to bat away the Lady Aggies, as Hall hit 15 points in the first half with junior guard Edna Campbell adding another seven.

The Lady 'Horns went into the locker room at halftime leading 39-25.

"We came out the second half and it was getting close to the end of the game," said A&M guard Lori Dillard, who led the team with 17 points. "We just wanted to win, and when you want to win, you try and give it your all."

Hall exploded in the second half, scoring 17 points including nine from outside the three-point line. She also had a career-high nine assists.

Texas took advantage of every free throw in the half, converting all 13, including senior forward Susan Anderson's seven-of-seven from the line.

A&M junior center Louise Madison went on a roll with 8:36 left in the half, scoring 12 of her 17 game points.

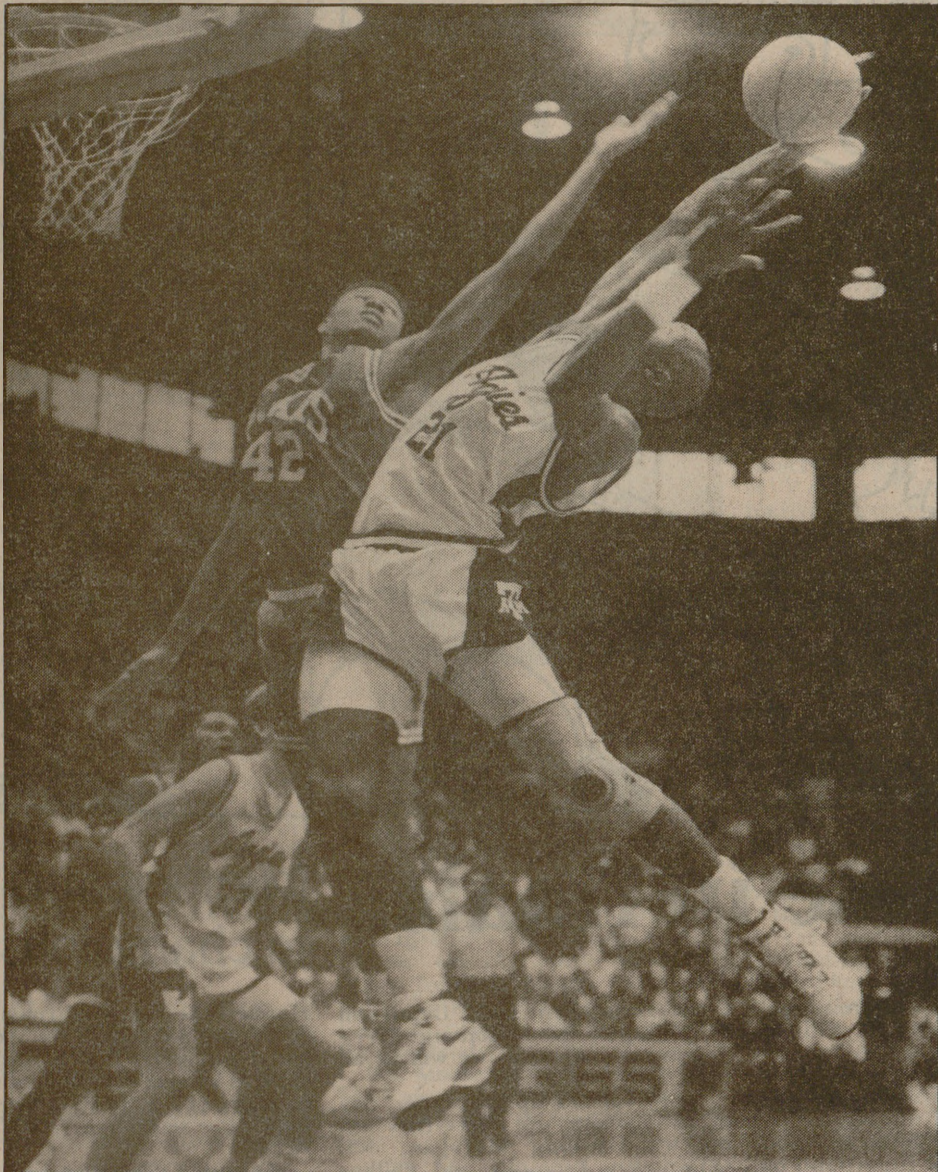
"As far as in effort tonight, we have a group of kids who really played hard," Hickey said. "I thought we did an excellent job about playing hard and that was the key that we wanted from this contest."

"If we'll play that aggressively against Arkansas, Houston and Texas Tech, then we're going to be very tough to beat," she said.

Texas coach Jody Conradt agreed.

"It was the kind of game that you never really felt comfortable because A&M has a very explosive team, and it was very physical," she said. "It was important that we kept our poise."

The Lady Aggies go on to face the Arkansas Lady Razorbacks tomorrow in Fayetteville, Ark. Tipoff is at 7 p.m.



A&M's David Harris outstretches Texas' Locksley Collie for a second-half rebound in Sunday's game. The Longhorns went on to win, 79-73.

Cold weather doesn't stop A&M

Team advances to 7-0 after weekend UT-Pan Am sweep

By ALAN LEHMANN
Of The Battalion Staff

Despite the cold weather, the Aggie baseball bats thawed Saturday. A&M beat Pan American 7-2 and 8-1 on the strength of excellent pitching and some nifty hitting.

Junior Dan Robinson's fourth inning grand slam, the Aggies' first of the season, highlighted Saturday's first game.

The nightcap featured 12 hits, the most A&M has managed this year, and the pitching of JUCO transfer Rich Robertson.

The Aggies won Friday's game, 3-1,

Lamar at Texas A&M

- Site: Olsen Field
- First Pitch: 1 p.m.
- Records: A&M (7-0)
- Last Action: The Aggies completed a three-game sweep of the University of Texas-Pan American last weekend, by scores of 3-1, 7-2, 8-1.

and swept the three-game series to improve to 7-0 on the season.

Coach Mark Johnson said he was pleased with the results produced thus far by the new Aggie lineup.

"I'm really pleased to be 7-0 right now with as many new guys as we have out there," Johnson said. "Our pitchers have dominated at times, and we've played good enough defense to keep us in there."

"We've given our offense a chance to start punching it out a little bit, and make things happen. I still think the offense is going to come."

The Aggie bats were slow in starting Friday, but the Broncs weren't.

The first three Pan American hitters singled off sophomore starter Ronnie Allen.

However, Allen pitched his way out of the jam, allowing only one run.

"I got off to a shaky start, but I found my composure," Allen said. "I was leaving the ball up in the strike zone a little bit, and that's an easy pitch to hit. I just tried to bear down and not give up three or four runs."

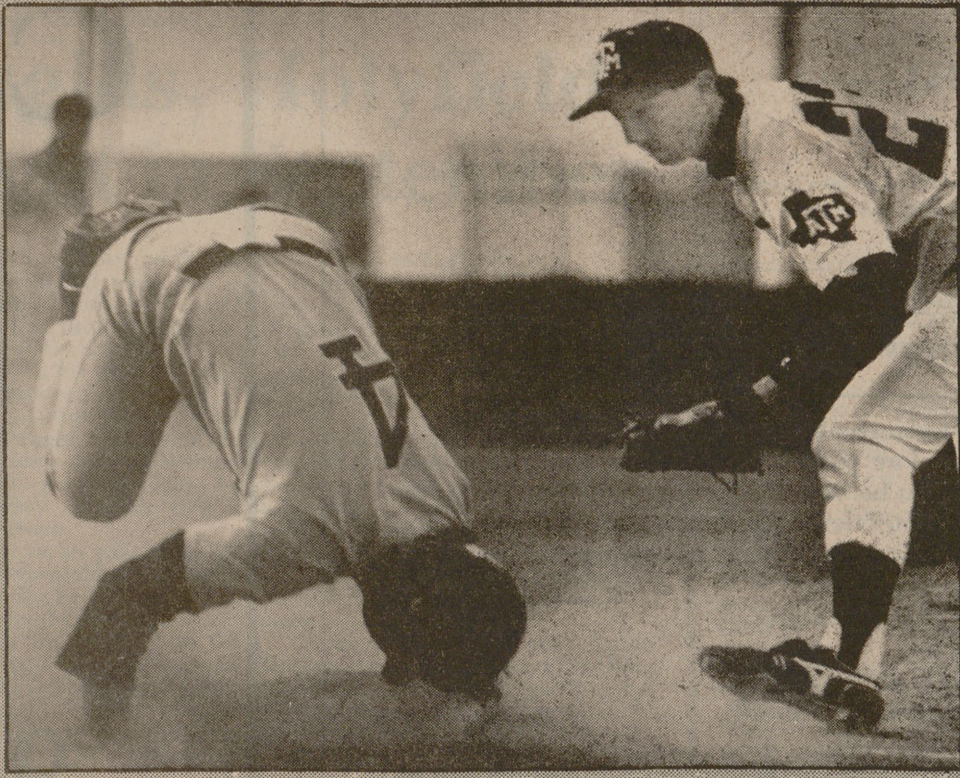
After the first inning, Allen was almost untouchable, allowing one hit and no runs through the remaining eight innings.

Robinson delivered a game-tying single in the bottom of the first inning. But the Aggies squandered chances to blow the game open, leaving five runners on in the first two innings, and 13 during the game.

In the third, junior first baseman Blake Pyle put A&M ahead to stay with an RBI single.

Junior left fielder Chad Broussard added some insurance in the eighth inning on an RBI single, the Aggies' eighth hit of the game.

Broussard said the team never was



Aggies first baseman Blake Pyle tries to tag out UT-Pan American's Frank Akers during Friday's 3-1 win. Pyle had the game-winning RBI.

worried about Allen's rocky start.

"Ronnie is a great pitcher and has great stuff," Broussard said. "He's handled pressure situations before, and we weren't really worried."

Johnson said he was impressed by Allen's poise.

"Ronnie really showed me something there," Johnson said. "I think that last year, he may not have been able to get out of that situation."

The Aggies received impressive pitching in Saturday's games also.

Senior Pat Sweet went the distance, allowing only two hits in the first game. In the nightcap, Robertson blew the Broncs away, giving up only one run in his seven innings, and striking out 12 batters.

Both pitchers improved to 2-0 on the season.

The Aggies held a 3-0 lead in the fourth inning of the first game when Robinson came to the plate with the bases loaded.

Robinson scorched a Loy Gillis pitch over the left field wall for a grand slam. It was his second home run of the season.

"I got a good pitch and I was able to drive it," Robinson said. "I was lucky to get that opportunity because the other guys got on base for me."

Sweet pitched well but missed a shut-out because of some shaky defense.

In the sixth inning, errors by backup shortstop Sean Drinkwater and second

Photo by Jay Janner