



Alan Lehmann
Sports Writer

Spring lockout hurting baseball fans the hardest

Call it a lockout. Call it a labor dispute. Call it greed. No matter what label you put on it, the current rift between the baseball team owners and players means that baseball will be put on hold.

Already, teams are canceling spring training games and if the situation isn't resolved soon, the season may not open on time.

As a baseball fan, it's hard to imagine spring without baseball. Will the flowers postpone blooming for a couple of weeks? Will the birds not chirp until the two sides agree?

Regardless, it'll feel like winter until the teams trot out for opening day. If they ever settle this thing.

For the record, it's called a lockout. The owners have stopped their players from working out in the spring training facilities by literally locking them out.

In contrast, a strike is when players refuse to work. At the moment, the players want to work, but have no place to go for spring training.

The players and owners are fighting over several issues, the central one being (surprise): money.

Money issue #1 is arbitration — the method of settling contact disputes in which an independent arbitrator decides whether the player's demand or team's offer is more fair — and who is eligible for it.

Currently, a player must have three years of major league service to request salary arbitration. The players union

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UH too good for Aggs in 100-81 win

A&M may find it hard to match up with Coogs later

By RICHARD TIJERINA
Of The Battalion Staff

Texas, shmexas. The Texas A&M men's basketball team looked like it was on its way to meeting the Longhorns in the first round of the Southwest Conference Postseason Classic in March.

But Houston now finds itself in second place in conference standings, and it appears A&M may draw them first instead.

If so, that's bad news for A&M coach John Thornton. The Cougars are starting

"We stunk up the place. We can't do that against a good team, and Houston is definitely a good team."

— Freddie Ricks, A&M guard

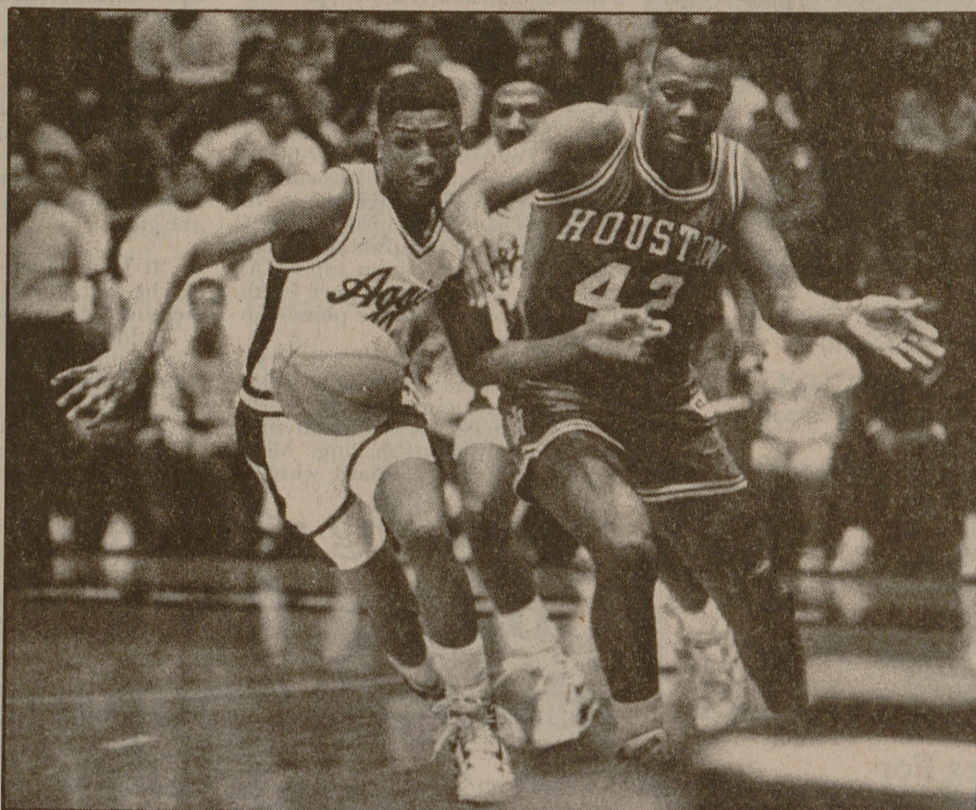


Photo by Phelan M. Ebenhack

A&M guard Lynn Suber battles Houston guard Kelvin Smith for a loose ball in the Aggies' 100-81 loss Wednesday. Suber finished with 12 points as A&M dropped to 13-16, 6-9 in conference play. A&M hosts Texas Tech Sunday.

The Aggies tried to match the Cougars offensively, and succeeded at some points. But Houston was too much for A&M, Thornton said.

"They were playing so poised and under control," he said. "They took what we gave them. They never were rattled, never were scared. They just went back to work."

Houston pretty much did as it pleased Wednesday night. If the Cougars wanted to hold the ball behind the three-point line and hit the trey, they did. If they wanted to pass it inside and score on a slam dunk, they did that too.

Not that the Aggies didn't have a good game. They shot well and seemed relaxed, but there wasn't much they could do against the Cougars.

A&M center David Harris fouled out at the 8:03 mark with the score 85-69. For all intents and purposes, the game was over.

Without Harris, the Aggies had no one to close up the middle and stop the Cougars from taking advantage of their height and quickness.

"I thought that when David Harris fouled out of the game, that really hurt them," Houston coach Pat Foster said. "Although they were able to hit the three-point shots to get back into the game, not having him in the middle hurt them."

Senior guard Tony Milton led the Aggies with 18 points. Freshman guard Brooks Thompson had nine points, all of them in the first half. But his three-point accuracy kept the Aggies in the game.

to look like they're the team to beat.

Case in point: Houston's 100-81 thrashing of A&M Wednesday night in front of 2,045 at G. Rollie White Coliseum showed that while the Aggies may match up well with the Longhorns, they have little business messing with the Cougars.

Houston outrebounded, outshot, out-muscled and outplayed A&M in improving to 21-6, 11-3 in the SWC. The Aggies dropped to 13-16, 6-9 in conference play.

This year's Cougars may not appear to be Phi Slama Jama, but they did enough slammmin' and jammin' to last Thornton a good while.

"It's easier to match up against Texas than it is for Houston," Thornton said. "We've got Darren (Rhea), who's 6-9. (David) Harris is 6-10. But their 6-8's are extremely quick. They get it done around the basket."



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