

# Arkansas, Texas bring national respect and excitement to SWC

Analysis  
By DENNE H. FREEMAN  
of The Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — When Travis Mays' 26-foot prayer went unanswered by the basketball gods and a frustration foul followed with 16 ticks remaining on the clock, the Texas Longhorns lost their chance for a rocky mountain high Final Four.

The Arkansas Razorbacks, as they had been all year long, were a little too good for Texas coach Tom Penders' overachievers and earned the ticket to Denver.

The 88-85 victory sent the Razorbacks to the finals against Duke and the 'Horns had to be content with a welcome home party in the "Super Drum."

But wasn't the Southwest Conference the big winner with an outpouring of national publicity unmatched in the league's somewhat spotted basketball history?

No less an authority than the New York Times had welcomed the SWC out of the basketball dark ages, saying before the game:

"Buckle your seatbelts for an exhilarating example of what everyone is calling the new wave of college basketball, a style that's high on free-wheeling shots and low on patience, offering pressure defense for 40 seconds, and a thrill a second."

Indeed, it did. The Arkansas-Texas game, round four provided a thrill a minute for basketball fans everywhere.

"It was a tremendous game and we knew Texas would make a run," Arkansas coach Nolan Richardson said. "If Texas had gone another



route in the tournament I sincerely believe we would have played them for the national championship."

Penders and Richardson, who had traded barbs all season, made up and traded warm handshakes at game's end, exchanging "good job" congratulations.

Penders was the gracious loser although it had to hurt as the 'Horns just missed their first Final Four appearance in 47 years.

"They had too many great players," Penders said. "We had to hit on all cylinders to beat them. We didn't."

Texas shot below 40 per cent from the field and made a costly 22 turnovers which Arkansas cashed into 23 points.

Texas and Arkansas had gone into their third meeting of the year with no respect from the NCAA selection committee. Arkansas won the other games 109-100 and 103-96 in overtime.

The 'Horns were a 10th seed and Arkansas only fourth, pretty shabby for the No. 7 ranked team in the na-

tion. This prime time matchup on CBS brought national attention to the SWC which has never won a Final Four. Baylor and Houston (twice) have lost in championship games.

"I tried to tell everyone how good the conference was getting and they said I was blowing smoke," Richardson said. "I wasn't."

Former Arkansas coach Eddie Sutton, who had some great teams in the late 1970s, said flatly "I've seen over 100 games this year and these two teams can play with any of them."

One of the big questions being asked immediately after the final buzzer was whether Penders would turn down an attractive offer from The University of Florida (reported at \$500,000) and stay with the burnt orange.

A big raise from Penders current Texas salary of \$200,000 plus fringe benefits was expected to accomplish that.

"I love being at Texas but I also have to see what's best for my family," Penders said. "My policy is if someone wants to talk to me I'll listen. We're working on a new contract at Texas and I plan to be here for a long, long time. Maybe I'll have an announcement before long."

Stay tuned but Penders should be offered big bucks to stay at Texas.

The SWC might want to take up a collection to keep him out of the \$2,630,000 the league cashed in tournament play. Texas got \$589,000 for advancing to the exciting eight while Arkansas took away \$673,000.

# Penders denies rumors about coaching jobs

DALLAS (AP) — Texas basketball coach Tom Penders on Monday denied published reports that he has talked to conference officials about jobs in Virginia and North Carolina State.

"I would swear on a stack of Bibles," said Penders in a telephone interview from his office at the University of Texas at Austin.

He denied a report Sunday by the Dallas Times Herald that Atlantic Coast Conference Assistance Commissioner Fred Barakat called three weeks ago to tell Penders he had recommended him for those jobs.

"That's totally false," Penders said. "I don't know anything about it. I'm not applying for jobs. If Virginia had contacted me, I would have said they did. They have not contacted me, and the N.C. State job is not even open."

The Times Herald reported that Virginia has joined the list of schools hoping to lure Penders away. The Longhorns fell 88-85 to Arkansas Saturday in the NCAA Midwest regional final.

The newspaper said Penders will be asked this week to interview for the vacant head coaching position at Virginia. Penders was quoted as saying no one from Virginia has contacted him about possibly replacing Terry Holland as Cavaliers' coach.

"My policy is if someone wants to talk to me, I'll listen," Penders said. "Every coach has to do what is best for himself and his family. I love the University of Texas and plan to be here for a long, long time. We're working on a new contract. Maybe I'll have an announcement before too long."

Holland resigned to become the athletic director at Davidson. Officials have met with Penn State coach Bruce Parkhill and Stanford coach Mike Montgomery, but have put off a decision in order to seek Penders and Xavier coach Pete Gillen, the source told the newspaper.

Stanford Athletic Director Andy Geiger confirmed that Montgomery met with Virginia twice and also said Virginia would like to talk to Gillen and Penders this week.

Xavier Athletic Director Jeff Fogelson said Virginia has not approached him for permission to talk to Gillen.

Asked if he has an interview scheduled with any school, Penders said, "I have no plans, nor have I ever had plans. If someone really wants to talk to me, I'll talk. It might be nice to see how other schools do things."

Texas Director of Athletics DeLloss Dodds and Penders have said that Florida Athletic Director Bill Arnsperger called seeking an interview with Penders about the vacant coaching position at Florida.

Penders has taken the Longhorns to back-to-back NCAA tournament appearances.

# Loyola Marymount forced to face Gathers' death after loss to UNLV

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — The on-court mission is over for Loyola Marymount, but the emotional recovery from Hank Gathers' death was just beginning Monday.

Players on the nation's sentimental favorites in the NCAA tournament became ordinary students again, returning to the reality of life without basketball as therapy.

The team was greeted by a welcoming crowd of about 2,000 students at its Los Angeles campus at 11 p.m. Sunday. After a final flurry of national television interviews, Coach Paul Westhead went back to grading papers from his sociology class and his players looked ahead to a final team meeting on Tuesday.

"We've been running scared," said reserve guard Tom Peabody. "I don't want to have to deal with Hank's death. We've run our emotions out."

"It's going to be a difficult next two weeks ... month ... year," he said after Sunday's 131-101 loss to UNLV in the West Regional final, burying his face in a towel as he started to cry.

"With a basketball in our hands, it helped us," said guard Terrell Lowery. "It made it easier to deal with."

Westhead said the defeat showed that Loyola's three previous wins in the tournament may have been fluke, more a measure of his players' heart than of their ability. All the emotion they put into basketball after their star center collapsed in a March 4 game and died from a defective heart will have to be invested elsewhere.

"They have to sit down and ask themselves, 'What's happened to me the last three weeks?'" Westhead said. "They have to reassess what has happened."

"We haven't had a quiet moment, literally, since Hank's death. That time is necessary and upon us."

Nearby, on the chalkboard in the Loyola locker room, someone had written "Remember the dream."

"The last three weeks have been sort of a blur," said ace outside shooter Jeff Fryer, one of four seniors on the team besides Gathers.

# Hogs streak through NCAA on way to Denver

DALLAS (AP) — After Arkansas beat Texas Tech on Feb. 7 for its 12th straight victory, a trip to the Final Four looked possible.

A week later there was reason to wonder.

During the streak, the Razorbacks twice beat Houston and Texas — the other Southwest Conference powers — and moved to No. 3 in the poll. But Arkansas then lost to Baylor and Texas Christian and fell to 13th with a 20-4 record.

"The one goal we have every year," Coach Nolan Richardson said, "is to go farther than we did the year before."

So knowing they made it only as far as the second round in last year's NCAA tournament, the Razorbacks attacked the rest of their schedule.

They swept past Southern Methodist, Texas A&M and Rice in the final three regular season games to win the conference title and improve to 23-4. Then they beat SMU, Baylor and Houston to win the conference

tournament.

Arkansas entered the NCAA tournament ranked seventh but received only a fourth seed in the Midwest Regional. Richardson called the seeding a "slap in the face" to the conference.

The Razorbacks have been slapping back ever since.

Against Dayton, Arkansas had the tempo much more to its liking and won, 86-84, on Todd Day's follow shot with four seconds left.

The Razorbacks have two outstanding sophomores in Mayberry and Day, and another sophomore force in 270-pound Oliver Miller.

Arkansas will take a 30-4 record to Denver, where the Razorbacks will play Duke in a national semifinal. Richardson says his team has an "excellent chance" to win it all, and is thankful for the opportunity.

"Dayton, North Carolina, it doesn't matter who it is," Richardson said. "We don't care who wins, as long as we get a chance to play it."

# Skeeter

(Continued from page 7)

in my heart stop.

But let's be fair.

Offensive Coordinator Bob

Toledo has said the starting job is

Pavlas' going into spring drills.

That's the way it should be. He

earned the job with his performance

last season under a new offense.

True, at times he was a bit

inconsistent. Crucial mistakes by

Pavlas cost the Aggies dearly at the

end of games against Arkansas and

Pittsburgh.

But he also saved a few games

also. His clutch performance in the

last-minute, game-winning drive

against Baylor and his game against

Houston gave A&M two important

victories.

Former quarterback Gary Kubiak

said it best. The Aggies have a pretty

problem in having to choose

between Pavlas and Richardson.

Both can break a game open, and

both have shown the leadership

needed to take the Aggies to a

higher level.

The sad thing is that the

competition may be nothing more

than a token gesture on Coach R.C.

Slocum's part.

Richardson says he's back, but he

has yet to make it completely

through spring drills. Then comes

two-a-days next fall. If his knee can

hold up through then, he has a shot.

If not, Pavlas is our man.

Just as I, Skeeter Brown, seem to

be The Battalion's new man, I am

thrilled to have taken Mr.

Rasmussen's place. But don't call me

a scab. I took two years of beginning

journalism in high school, and am

well versed in both editing and

spelling.

What of Mr. Rasmussen, you ask?

He can currently be found hovering

outside Battalion Editor Scot

Walker's door, demanding a pay

raise and a new desk with a bay-

window.

He already got the personalized

Bob Uecker mug.

It's sad. One guy can get an idea

for a strike like this just from

watching professional athletes —

supposed role models for today's

youth. I can remember a time when,

"Take Me Out to the Ballgame"

meant wanting peanuts and cracker

jacks — not increases in pay to pad

my average salary of \$600,000 a

year.

Where have you gone, Emory

Bellard?

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