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Barone, A&M program must rebuild without much-needed scholarships

By Scott Wudel
The Battalion

A white bulletin board rests on the back wall of Tony Barone's office, filled with the basketball coach's pending engagements and a long list of prospective recruits, divided by height and position. But not one of those prospects will see the G. Rollie White Coliseum floor for almost two years. Each recruit is just a high school junior, but all are part of Barone's plan to get a head start on next year's recruiting competition. Barone's work on this year's recruiting class has been completed for more than five months. It actually came to an

abrupt halt the first week of November when the NCAA sanctioned A&M's basketball program for violations under former coach Kermit Davis Jr.. Barone was left with just two scholarships to give to a new "class" that was supposed to be the foundation of his rebuilding project.

"It's a disaster," Barone said. "The recruiting sanctions, at first glance, seemed to be relatively insignificant. But in all honesty, the issue was that we were allowed two scholarships for next year. That meant, in a program that was already shorthanded, we were restricted in terms of the scholarships."

"It wasn't like we had a full complement of scholarships anyway."

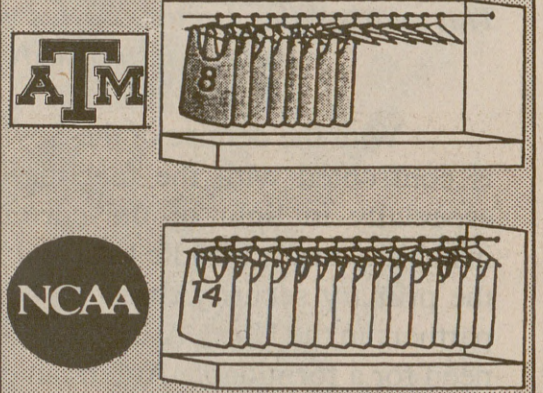
The penalties against the basketball program, which also include a limitation on the number of expense-paid visits to A&M by prospective student-athletes during the 1992-93 year, hit Barone and his plan where it hurt the most - the A&M team is badly in need of scholarship players.

The coach chose to honor the first two commitments he received - Keith Morgan, a 6-foot-10, 210-pound center from Austin, and Lance Broderick, a 6-foot-6 forward from Naperville, Ill.. Barone was forced to tell two other prospects, who had already made their decisions to attend Texas A&M, that

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PLENTY OF HANGERS . . .

Texas A&M will have only eight scholarships available next season, compared to the maximum amount of 14 allowed by the NCAA.



'Polar Bears' jump at chance to ski in March

Off in the back corner of the Brazos Valley, where man rarely travels, sits Century Lake.

This tranquil body of water rests off the beaten path, far away from civilization - from crowds, from noise, and from smog.

For 363 days of the year, Century Lake is a place to commune with nature. But every March, the water skiing world visits the lake for two days.

The end result is a stiff competition, a chilling experience, and what water skiers from around the Southwest call the biggest party on water. It is more commonly known as the A&M Polar Bear Water Skiing Tournament.

Over 160 skiers from schools in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Mississippi and Arkansas give up a weekend in the name of water skiing. Not only that, but they also must face some pretty cold water temperatures, hence the name "Polar Bear."

Warm temperatures have glazed the area this spring, but that doesn't mean that people are flocking to swimming pools, yet. It's still a little nippy.

So the big question that must be asked is, "Why would anyone in their right mind get out in that cold water, let alone get on a pair of skis and be dragged off by a boat?"

Well, to become one of the few who partake in this year's Polar Bear, you have to be brave or insane, or both.

Freshman and avid skier Chet Lenox is putting on this event, and he said part of the intrigue to the tournament is the colder-than-average water.

"It's the best indication of a skier's dedication," Lenox said. "It has nothing to do with ability. It's all about loving the sport."

Stacy Keese, a freshman on A&M's women's water skiing team, said that skiing in the tournament will be enjoyable, but participants have to have the desire to do it.

"Well, the water is hardly bearable," Keese said. "If you are a diehard skier and you really want to ski, you'll overlook the cold water. You just want to do it."

But not all of it is mere devotion to skiing. There is some pretty rough-and-tumble action going on.

"You're really competing against yourself," Lenox said. "There are individual and team awards, and bragging rights are pretty hefty. This is the biggest tournament around."

Just Do It . . .

People who have skied for most of their lives will say that the draw to the sport is the exhilarating thrill of zooming along at incredible speeds with nothing separating man and water, but a thin piece of wood.

Keese explained what the sensation was like for her to go off one of the ski jumps.

"The first time I ever went off the jump, it seemed like forever as I approached the ramp," Keese said. "Then, all of a sudden as I got closer, I thought, 'Do I really want to do this?' But then I realize that I've come this far, so I might as well just do it."

"All of a sudden, flash, and I'm flying in mid-air. Another half-second later, I could see the ground turn upside down. And then splash."

A&M's men's team has a good chance of doing well, but Keese said the women's team has been depleted because of graduating seniors. Still, she looks forward to the challenge because she loves the sport. She considers skiing to be an enjoyable outlet from her daily life.

"Skiing is a lot of fun," she said. "I have a good time when I'm out there. Going out to the lake gives you a total change of atmosphere. You go out there, get away from studying, and have fun."

Apparently, water skiers know how to have a good time. Lenox says anytime you get a large consortium of them together, the fun never stops. "Skiers are pretty outrageous people in general," he said. "They love to party more than anybody. It's a party atmosphere that happens out there in the lake. People ski to have a good time."

Saturday should be no exception.

THE WINTER OF DISCONTENT

Basketball team gains credibility through adversity

By Chris Whitley
The Battalion

Since A&M head basketball coach Tony Barone received his degree in English, he, no doubt, is familiar with the first line of Shakespeare's tragedy, *Richard III*.

"Now is the winter of our discontent." No saying could more aptly fit A&M's worst season in 37 years.

In the first year on his mission of bringing a successful program back to Texas A&M, Barone has been beset by numerous setbacks that were out of his control.

From old business with the NCAA to a bizarre poisoning incident to family tragedy, the Aggies have borne the brunt of many unforeseen dilemmas.

Still, the same team that finished in the Southwest Conference cellar with a 6-22 record managed to gain some respectability by sticking with a credo that Barone has drilled in their minds from day one.

"You control what you control, and what you can't control you don't let it get in the way of what you can control," Barone said. "If you do that, then I think you can be successful."

The negative situations that A&M couldn't control hit A&M like a case of the plague throughout the season:

- October 31 - The State Board of Education rejects A&M's proposed Special Events Center, one of the recruiting tools that originally brought Barone to A&M.

- November 4 - The NCAA hands down a two-year probation on the Aggie basketball program. The team is barred from 1992 post-season play and stripped of all but two scholarships for the 1992-93 season.

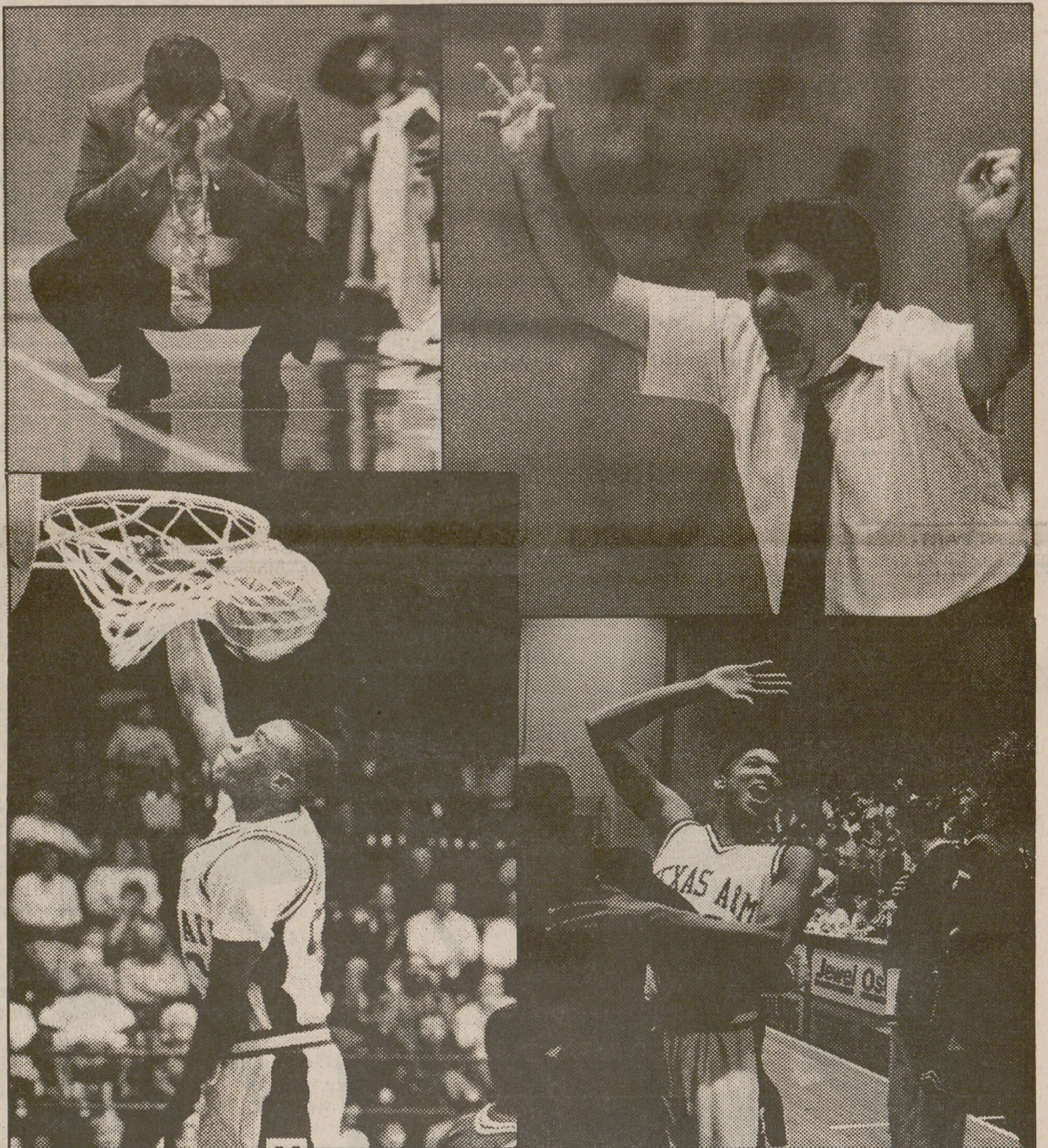
- December 20 - Freshman Kevin Barker quits the team for personal reasons. An All-State player out of high school, Barker averaged 9.6 points in the five games he played.

- January 14 - In a heartbreaking loss to Texas, leading scorer Damon Johnson breaks a bone in his left foot, keeping him out of action for six weeks and ruining any chances of SWC Freshman of the Year honors.

- January 18 - The entire team and several other officials are hospitalized after a leak of carbon monoxide fumes infiltrates the A&M locker room at the Ferrell Center in Waco before a game with Baylor. Four were sent to Dallas for further treatment, and two games had to be rescheduled.

- January 26 - Barone's mother, Corinne, dies after suffering a heart attack two days earlier. Barone and his walk-on son, Tony Jr., miss the Rice game as a result.

- February 11 - The Aggies fall to SMU, 44-38, to extend their losing streak to 12 games. It is one of sev-



A&M coach Tony Barone (top, left and right) found reason for frustration many times this season. (Bottom, left) Freshman Tony McGinnis provided several bright spots for the Aggies this season. (Bottom, right) Freshman Corey Henderson celebrates after A&M's win over Texas Tech on Mar. 4.

en games that the Aggies lost by six points or less.

Any other squad would buckle when the basketball gods lay down such a fierce wrath as that which had stricken the Aggies. But Barone's team continued scoring considerably higher-ranked opponents up until the end of the season.

"People have asked me on a number of occasions, 'Wasn't I upset? Wasn't I disappointed?' Or, 'Wasn't I

mad about what happened?' Because there have been a ton of things that have happened," Barone said. "The answer to that has been no."

"I'm not upset with the way this season ended. I'm not upset with the way the kids played. I'm upset we won six games. But in the bigger picture of things,

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Lady Aggies fall to Mustangs, 5-4

The Battalion News Services

The A&M women's tennis team lost its second Southwest Conference match Thursday after SMU edged the Lady Aggies 5-4 at Omar Smith Tennis Center.

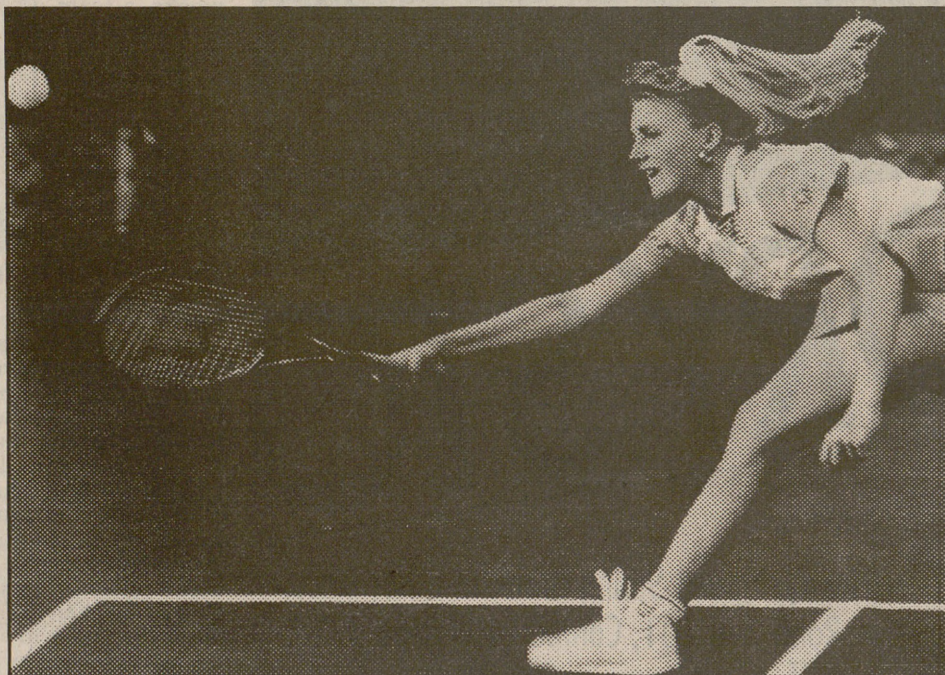
The Mustangs doubles team of Jennifer Brennan and Nicole Woods defeated A&M's Nicole Monsul and Joanne Maki in the final match of the day to grab the win.

A&M falls to 2-2 in the SWC, and 7-9 overall.

The Lady Aggies will play a nonconference match today against Tennessee at the Smith Center. First serve is at 5 p.m.

Janine Burton-Durham and Anna Schlumpf won their doubles match, as did the team of Christine DiNardo and Lynn Staley to force a tie.

Burton-Durham and DiNardo were the only Lady Aggies to win in singles competition.



Lynn Staley reaches for a forehand in Thursday's match at Smith Tennis Center.

A&M men's tennis faces Longhorns

The Battalion News Services

The 19th-ranked A&M men's tennis team will face unranked Texas today in Austin in the teams' annual slugfest.

A&M, 13-3 overall, 1-0 in the Southwest Conference, will be trying to down the Longhorns in Austin for the first time in A&M coach David Kent's 14-year career in Aggieland. Singles play begins at 5 p.m. at Penick-Allison Tennis Center.

Kent notched his first career victory over Texas last year during the SWC Championships in College Station. He said that win has the Aggies ready to face off against the powerful Longhorns on their home court.

"There's probably no tougher team than Texas on its home court," Kent said. "We learned that we could beat them last year, and I think that confidence has carried over to this season. It's going to be a dogfight from start to finish, and we'll have our work cut out for us."