

# SPORTS

Friday, January 22, 1992

The Battalion

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## Hakeem has MVP look this season, but...

By DAVID WINDER

The Battalion

If Hakeem Olajuwon played in New York, Chicago or Los Angeles, he would be a front runner for the Most Valuable Player award. But Olajuwon plays in Houston, which at last count was just four games over the .500 mark. Even though it has nothing to do with the MVP, geography will probably cost Hakeem the most cherished individual award in the NBA.

This season, Olajuwon is averaging 25.2 points a game, good enough to lead all other centers in that category and place him sixth in the league. He is currently in the top five in rebounding and blocked shots, and in the top ten in field goal percentage.

Hakeem is having a MVP year, but I have only read two articles about his slim hopes of capturing the award. If those were Patrick Ewing's numbers, he would already be writing his acceptance speech.

I have read tons of stories that Charles Barkley should win because he is having a great year and means the most to his team. There is also a lot of campaigning again for Michael Jordan because the Chicago Bulls would be only mediocre without him. So what would the Rockets be without Hakeem?

Without Barkley, the Suns would still have Dan Majerle, Kevin Johnson and Danny Ainge. The Bulls would still have Scottie Pippen, Horace Grant and John Paxson without Jordan. If you took Hakeem away from the Rockets, then you would have Kenny Smith, Vernon Maxwell and Otis Thorpe. If there was a three-on-three competition, I do not think that the Rockets would win many games.

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## TCU next road obstacle for Aggies

Barone, team hope to erase memories of near-misses

By MICHAEL PLUMER

The Battalion

Last Tuesday night Texas A&M almost upset the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, which would have ended the nation's longest home winning streak at 55 games.

But the Aggies came up on the short end of a 98-96 score in overtime and now they must turn their attention to Saturday's resumption of Southwest Conference play.

The Aggies (5-9, 0-2 in SWC action) play Texas Christian University (3-10, 0-3 in SWC action) at 12:00 Saturday in Fort Worth.

A&M head coach Tony Barone said that while he was disappointed with the loss to the Running Rebels, he was happy with the Aggies' effort.

"We knew Vegas would come back like they did, and I think we handled it real well," Barone said Thursday. "The physical effort has been outstanding, and I could find no fault with it."

The loss to UNLV was A&M's fourth consecutive close loss, but Barone said he thinks the team will learn from the defeats.

"I think we can learn from losing, although that is tough," he said. "We need to win those close games at some point."

A&M forward Chuck Henderson agreed with Barone that the Vegas loss was a tough defeat, but one that could prove beneficial later in the season.

"We were disappointed that we lost because we had the lead throughout and then let it get away," Henderson said. "We knew that we had played a great game, so maybe something good will come out of it."

"The game is still in the back of my mind, but it is time to move on and play TCU."

A&M forward Damon Johnson had a slightly different tone than Henderson



Battalion file photo

A&M forward Damon Johnson grabs a rebound in a game earlier this season. Johnson, who scored 22 points in Tuesday's overtime loss to Nevada-Las Vegas, is one of several Aggies hoping to end a string of near-misses against Texas Christian in Fort Worth tomorrow.

concerning the loss.

"After the game, I dropped my head between my hands and kept saying that this can't be happening to us over and over," he said. "In fact, I am still having a hard time putting this game out of my mind, because it was really frustrating for them to tie it up like that in the final five seconds."

Johnson said that it is time for the team to win a close game, and that he is looking forward to the TCU game.

"This team is waiting to explode, and I think playing TCU on Saturday will give us the chance," he said. "TCU is a good team and, taking nothing away from

them, if we come out and play the way we have in the past, it will be interesting."

For A&M to make it intriguing, the Aggies must contain Horned Frog point guard Brent Atwater, who is averaging eight points and five assists, and forward Allen Tolley, who chips in 14 points per contest, Barone said.

If A&M is successful in shutting down those two, Barone said he feels there are two other things that must occur.

"First of all, we have to go in there confident," he said. "Confidence gives you tremendous enthusiasm, which is

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## A&M women look to continue streak at home

By DON NORWOOD

The Battalion

Anyone who was witness to the 8-5 Texas A&M Lady Aggies' 58-57 win over Louisiana State Wednesday night would be hard-pressed to argue the fact that the contest was full of emotion. The two squads traded major scoring runs in the second half, carrying a thunderous G. Rollie White crowd along for a wild ride before A&M forward Beth Burket scored the winning layup with 24 seconds left in the game.

As might be expected, A&M head coach Lynn Hickey was still keyed up Thursday about the Lady Ags' third straight home win, which could provide the type of confidence boost the Lady Aggies might need after blowing a lead in a 60-58 loss to the University of Houston Jan. 18.

"I think we're going to know more Saturday night," Hickey said about whether her team will be able to keep a high confidence level. "I'm anxious to see how they react tomorrow in practice."

"It should (build confidence). The danger is you don't want to rest on your laurels."

Texas Christian might be able to provide Hickey's squad with the perfect opportunity to gain even more confidence when A&M hosts the Lady Horned Frogs at 7 p.m. tomorrow.

TCU enters the game 7-7 overall, but is 0-4 in Southwest Conference play, compared to A&M's 1-1 mark in the league. The Lady Frogs' latest SWC loss came Wednesday when they lost narrowly to Southern Methodist, 86-82.

Despite their record, Hickey said that TCU has a few weapons, the most powerful of which are in the backcourt.

"They have some guards that are real hard workers," Hickey said. "They're very scrappy."


"It (TCU) is a team where you think, 'Well, we should win this one.' That gets dangerous."



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