

# Purdue

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Purdue gained command with a 17-point halftime lead.

Texas A&M was plagued by turnovers. The Lady Aggies had 29 of them, one more than their rebounding total.

Purdue, meanwhile, penetrated the Lady Aggies' defense and was able to take high percentage shots from in close. When Texas A&M clamped down, the Aggies began fouling and Purdue converted 19 of 22 free throws.

The Boilermakers also had 36 rebounds, with Johnson and Tonya Kirk each pulling down seven. Kirk also had 15 points.

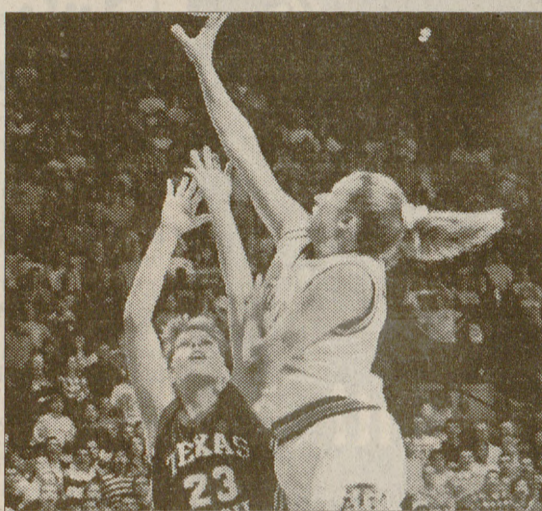
The Lady Aggies were led by Martha McClelland's 15 points. Lisa Branch scored 14 points, but was only 3 of 12 from the field.

The Boilermakers expanded their half-time advantage by scoring the first eight points of the second half. Texas A&M didn't get its first field goal of the second half until Bambi Ferguson's layup with 13:40 remaining. By then, Purdue was out in front 53-32.

Texas A&M hung close early, but the Boilermakers turned to their inside game and started to pull away, using a combination of close-in shots and free throws to take a 45-28 halftime lead.

With the Boilermakers already in front, Purdue went on a 14-2 spurt to pull away to a 39-18 lead with 3:12 left in the first half. The run started with Johnson and Jennifer Jacoby converting five consecutive free throws between them and was capped by a Johnson layup.

The Aggies scored eight of the last 12 points of the half but still found themselves down by 17 at the break.



William Harrison/The Battalion  
Cami Williams (right) shoots over Noel Johnson during the game against Texas Tech.

# Lady Aggies earn respect despite loss

Maybe it was better this way. After two nerve-racking, nail-biting roller coaster victories, the Texas A&M women's basketball team miraculous run through the NCAA tournament ended Thursday night in Palo Alto, California, at the hands of a dominating Purdue team.

Purdue took control of the game relatively early in the contest, led by 15 at the half, and took the lead into the upper 30s before settling for an 82-56 victory.

Despite the disappointment of the loss, the Lady Aggies enjoyed their most successful season of all time, and can look forward to bigger and better things down the road.

Sophomore Lisa Branch emerged as the Southwest Conference Player of the Year at point guard, while fellow sophomores Martha McClelland and Kelly Cerny became inside forces to complement Branch's outside game.

Also becoming key contributors were freshmen Lana Tucker and Marianne Miller.

Tucker started in the backcourt with Branch down the stretch,

while Miller was effective in spelling either McClelland or Cerny when one of the two starters needed a breather or got in foul trouble.

The season was full of exciting games and fantastic finishes, with the biggest wins coming after the Winter Break.

In January there was a thrilling one-point win over the Lady Longhorns, but that was no match for the intensity felt on Feb. 5 when the then-fourth ranked and defending national champion Texas Tech Lady Raiders came calling to G. Rollie White Coliseum.

Emotion was already at a fever pitch that day following the men's stunning victory in Lubbock, and the ensuing altercation between Aggie players and overzealous Tech fans.

Scoring the last six points of the game, the Lady Aggies shocked Tech 67-64. The G. Rollie White

Nick Georgandis

Sportswriter



faithful stormed the court, led by the Aggie men's team, including guard Chuck Henderson, who just hours

before had nailed the winning free throws at Lubbock.

Henderson sifted through the crowd to find Branch, scooped her up on his shoulder and galloped around the court with her held high above the throng of joyous Aggies. It was a great moment to remember.

Down the stretch, the Lady Aggies stumbled a bit, and fumbled away the Southwest Conference crown.

Nevertheless, they provided the fans and the graduating seniors on the squad with a splendid regular season home finale by topping the century mark in points while routing Southern Methodist 103-85.

Going into the SWC Tournament in Dallas, the Lady Aggies had put together their first 20-win season ever. The Lady Longhorns knocked A&M out of the tournament in the second round, but for the first time ever, Texas A&M was going to the NCAA Tournament.

The rest of the season is pretty recent stuff, but some records are worthy of space here.

The Lady Aggies became the lowest seed in tournament history to make the Sweet Sixteen. They were the first Aggie team, men or women, to make the Sweet Sixteen since Shelby Metcalf's crew lost to eventual national champion Louisville in 1980.

Perhaps the best part of this whole season is what begins now. What will come about next year as Branch, McClelland, Cerny and the rest of the team return with a great season's experience under their belts is enough to make an Aggie basketball enthusiast tremble with excitement.

Now that they've shown they can play in the big time, the Lady Aggies may be well on their way to national prominence.

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