

Accidents rob fans of role models

NICK GEORGANDIS

Asst. sports editor



When are they going to learn? How much more tragedies must we all endure before professional athletes realize that off the court, field or whatever, they are just human as all the rest of us.

The latest travesty of which I write of course, is the paralysis of Seattle Seahawk defensive tackle Mike Frier. Frier was riding with Seattle running backs Chris Warren and Lamar Smith in a car owned by Smith that smashed into an utility pole in Kirkland, Washington. Frier, a 6 foot, 5 inch, 299 pound, 25-year old from Appalachian St., is not expected to ever walk again.

Warren suffered two fractured ribs in the crash and Smith, suffered a chip fracture in his spine that now appears to be more serious than previously thought, and an ankle sprain.

The issue of who was driving the car remains in question, but alcohol appears to have played a role in the wreck. Smith is a rookie running back from the University of Houston and Warren is a two-time All-Pro, currently second in the AFC in rushing, just five yards behind the leader, Marshall Faulk.

All three now have a shock to the system, especially Frier. But what of Smith and Warren? It seems likely both will eventually return to the game, but will what happen change them? After a couple of months of being adored by fans and getting the big checks for playing a game, will the two players begin thinking that they can fly again, or will what enough to keep them grounded?

Common sense would say yes. Your brain would say yes, and so would your heart. But if that was case, why do we all know it's just a matter of time until another great athlete leaves the world prematurely?

But the money flows freely in big-time sports and the head can swell quickly. It is understandable. Warren slashes his way through defenders in the Kingdom, why can't he do the same thing in his car on a Washington freeway? Jerome Brown used to be unstoppable on the defensive line of the Philadelphia Eagles, why shouldn't he have been the same driving way over the speed limit? He was until he hit a slick spot and sailed the car into a palm tree, killing him and his small nephew.

As if you need any further examples, there is of course, Magic Johnson. Although I have always been a Rockets' fan, I was a big admirer of Magic while growing up in the 1980s. Magic always knew where the open man was and where the defense was not. When he announced his retirement in November of 1991, I was stunned beyond belief. I always thought Magic was different, I guess I was won over by his charm and flair and penchant for doing the impossible. I had put Magic up on that "untouchable" platform, but he had fallen, fallen fast and hard.

Who's next? Another Len Bias

See Georgandis/Page 10

Lady Aggies take title in tournament

By Nick Georgandis THE BATTALION

In a game of runs, the Texas A&M women's basketball team saved the best for last. After Alcorn St. had closed to within 58-53 of the Lady Aggies in the championship game of the Domino's Pizza/Holiday Inn Lady Aggie Invitational, A&M regrouped and closed out the game with a 28-11 run to win the championship game, 86-66, Sunday at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

The Lady Aggies' junior point guard Lisa Branch was named tournament MVP while scoring 14 points Sunday and dishing out eight assists. Junior transfer forward Angel Spinks and junior center Martha McClelland were named to the All-Tournament team. Spinks led the Aggies in scoring with 19 points and added nine rebounds. McClelland added 16 points while junior forward Kelly Cerny hauled down 12 rebounds.

A&M head coach Candi Harvey said she was extremely pleased with the way her team played over the weekend.

"This is my first trophy at A&M, and it feels very, very good," Harvey said. "This game is what we needed. It made us dig deep, and we responded with lots of pride and intensity."

The Lady Aggies led 39-29 at half time, and seemed to have the game well in hand when they started off the second half with a 18-11 run to take a 57-40 lead with 12:47 left in the game. But ASU didn't give up easily, going on a 13-1 streak of their own to close within five points with 10:31 to go.

The player keeping ASU close throughout the contest was forward Nickie Tatum,

who led ASU with 18 points and eight rebounds. But Tatum could only play 24 minutes, fouling out with 10 minutes to play in the game.

The Lady Aggies advanced to the final by blowing out Central Michigan 72-39. ASU squeaked by New Mexico State in Saturday's first game 75-69 to reach the finals. A crowd of 523 watched the Lady Aggies advance to 4-0 on the season.

Harvey said the team's play so far this season has legitimized its Top 25 ranking.

"I think we are definitely a top 25 program," Harvey said. "When we broke into the Top 25, I thought it was kind of a statement on last year's laurels but now I think we are the team to beat in the SWC."

Defense was again a key for the Lady Aggies as they forced ASU into 21 turnovers. A&M collected five block shots including three by Kelly Cerny, four steals and limited ASU to a .317 shooting percentage including a paltry two of 20(.100) from behind the three-point strike. The Lady Aggies used their height advantage to dominate ASU inside. Shooting mainly from the post, McClelland was seven of 12 from the field and Spinks shot eight for 14.

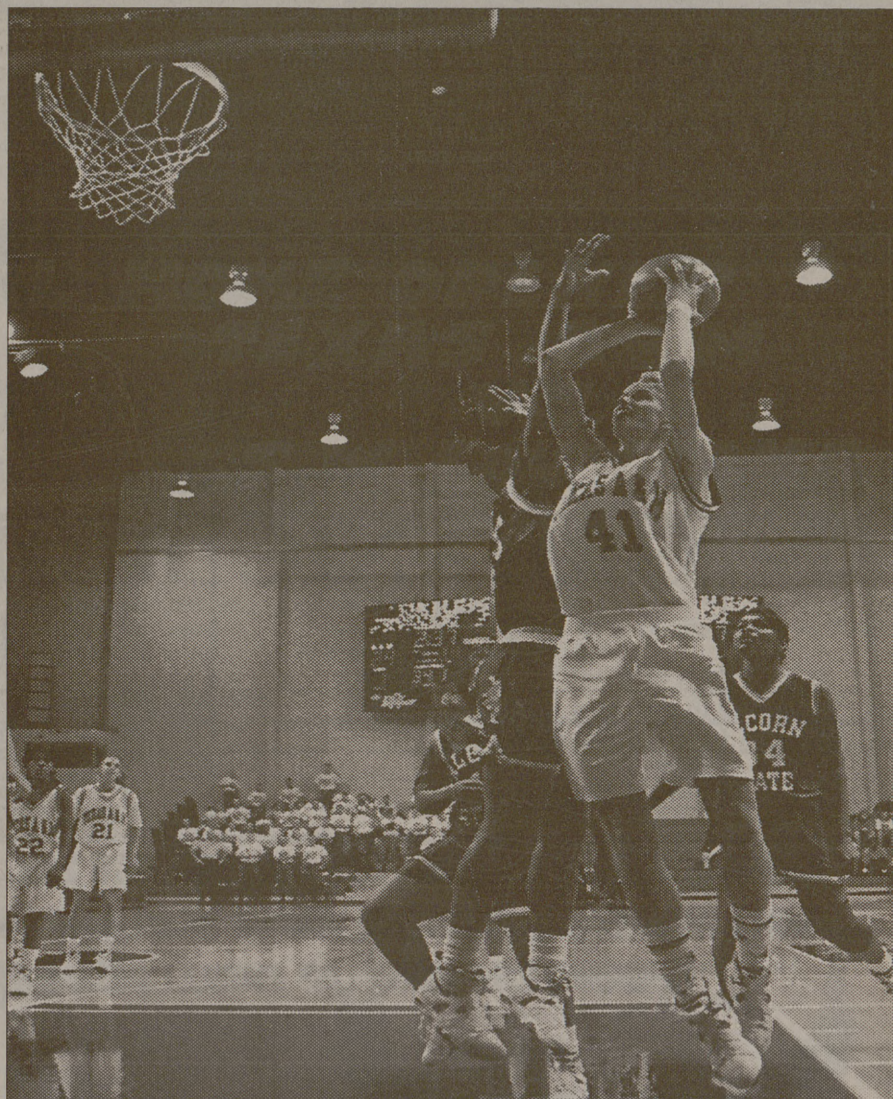
Although the season is still very young, Branch said other teams should start paying attention because the Lady Aggies are starting to believe.

"When our inside game and outside game are working, we can be a stomach ache for the other team," Branch said. "I agree with Coach Harvey, it's about time we start believing in ourselves. We are the team to beat in the SWC. That's not being cocky, that's being confident."

"We are the team to beat in the SWC. That's not being cocky, that's being confident."

-Lisa Branch,

Lady Aggie junior point guard



Senior center Debbie Beirmann is fouled on her way to the basket against Alcorn State.

Ags face Ragin' Cajuns in home court debut

By Nick Georgandis THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M men's basketball team will attempt to stir up a little home cooking tonight when they debut at home against the University of Southwestern Louisiana at 7 p.m. at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

The men's team is attempting to break out of a slow 2-4 start to the 1994 campaign. Saturday night the Aggies were thrashed by Oklahoma State, 86-56, behind Bryant "Big Country" Reeves' 22 points in 21 minutes.

The team recorded its second win of the season Friday night, defeating Oral Roberts University 60-58 on a last-second tip-in by senior forward Tony McGinnis. Senior forward Joe Wilbert continues to lead the team in scoring, averaging about 17 points per game.

A&M head coach Tony Barone, in an earlier interview, said fan participation has to be one of the elements if the Aggies are to continue on the road to becoming a top program.

"We have established ourselves as a good team, and now we need to catch the next step," Barone said. "We have to have people getting out and filling the stands to keep the level of competition high."

There will be several new faces for Aggie fans to acquaint themselves with tonight. Gone is all-star point guard David Edwards, as well as standouts Brett Murray and Chuck Henderson. Replacing these three are Wilbert, junior guard Corey Henderson (Chuck's younger brother) and freshman guard Kyle Kessel.

The point guard job was up for grabs in training camp between Kessel and sophomore Jimmy Smith, but apparently the job is now Kessel's to lose. Filling out the starting line-up are McGinnis at small forward and senior forward Damon Johnson. Last season, the team reached a post-season tournament for the first time in seven years, losing to the University of New Orleans in the first round of the National Invitational Tournament. Last season's record of 19-11(10-4) in the Southwest Conference was A&M's best record in over a decade.

Following tonight's game, the team will be off for 12 days for finals. Their next game will be December 17 at Montana State. They return home on December 19 to host McNeese State at 7 p.m. The Aggies begin SWC play on January 14 when they travel to Austin to play arch-rival Texas in a game set to be televised regionally on ESPN.

Texas A&M Basketball
Ags vs. SW Louisiana
G. Rollie White Coliseum
7 p.m.

Netters knocked out of NCAA tourney

Staff and Wire Reports

The Texas A&M women's volleyball team's season came to an end Saturday afternoon when they were defeated by Ohio State University 6-15, 13-15, 10-15 in the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

"I'm going to make our players watch the Ohio State tape all spring," head coach Laurie Corbelli said. "I want to play a quick offense, and you have to have the athletes. But, I also want our players to remember this match."

The Lady Aggies were led by junior outside hitter Dana Santleben who contributed led the team with 16 kills and a .560 hitting percent-

age. Junior setter Suzy Wente dished out 42 assists and freshman outside hitter Kristie Smedsrud led all players with 13 digs.

The Lady Aggies reached the NCAA tournament for just the second time in their history, but for the second year in a row. They finished third in the Southwest Conference and were the runner-up in the SWC Tournament three weeks ago at Rice.

The fourth-ranked Ohio St. Buckeyes moved to 27-2 on the year and advanced to the round of 12 in the tournament. The Lady Aggies finished their season 19-14. They also lost in the second round of the NCAA tournament last season, falling to the University of Texas in Austin a year ago.

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