

# Midnight Madness

## New festivity builds A&M basketball teams' confidence

By DENNIS RAMIREZ  
THE BATTALION

Within the depths of G. Rollie White Coliseum late Monday night, Texas A&M brought in the 1996-97 college basketball season in a festive fashion. Students packed the arena for Midnight Mania — an event designed to introduce students and the community to the A&M Men's and Women's Basketball Teams.

With NCAA regulations allowing college teams to begin practice at midnight on Tuesday, A&M kicked off the season with a bang.

"This is what it's all about," Men's Head Coach Tony Barone said. "This is what Texas A&M Basketball should be about. We had a lot of people behind supporting this — the Corps of Cadets, the band, the student body. Together, the enthusiasm that you can generate in this building is incredible."

The event featured a free throw contest held between dorms on campus, a yell practice lead by the Aggie yell leaders, and a slam-dunk competition which capped off the evening. Each of these offered an outlet for students to show their support through involvement.

"It was a great way for us to come out here, have a good time and show our support for the teams," Eli Alvarado, a junior environmental design major, said. "Hopefully, all of this energy and excitement will carry over and the teams will have great seasons."

Although the event did offer the students an opportunity to show their support and basketball skills, the athletes were more than happy to show off their as well.

The Lady Aggies began the player introductions by shooting three pointers, while the Aggies conduct-

ed the slam-dunk contest. The competition was won by freshman Jerald Brown.

"It felt really great winning it," Brown said. "The pressure was on because of the guys before me, but the crowd got me hyped and into it. I'd like to thank the crowd, I love the fans here at A&M."

Women's Head Coach Candi Harvey was thrilled by the event and said it will have an impact on the Lady Aggies.

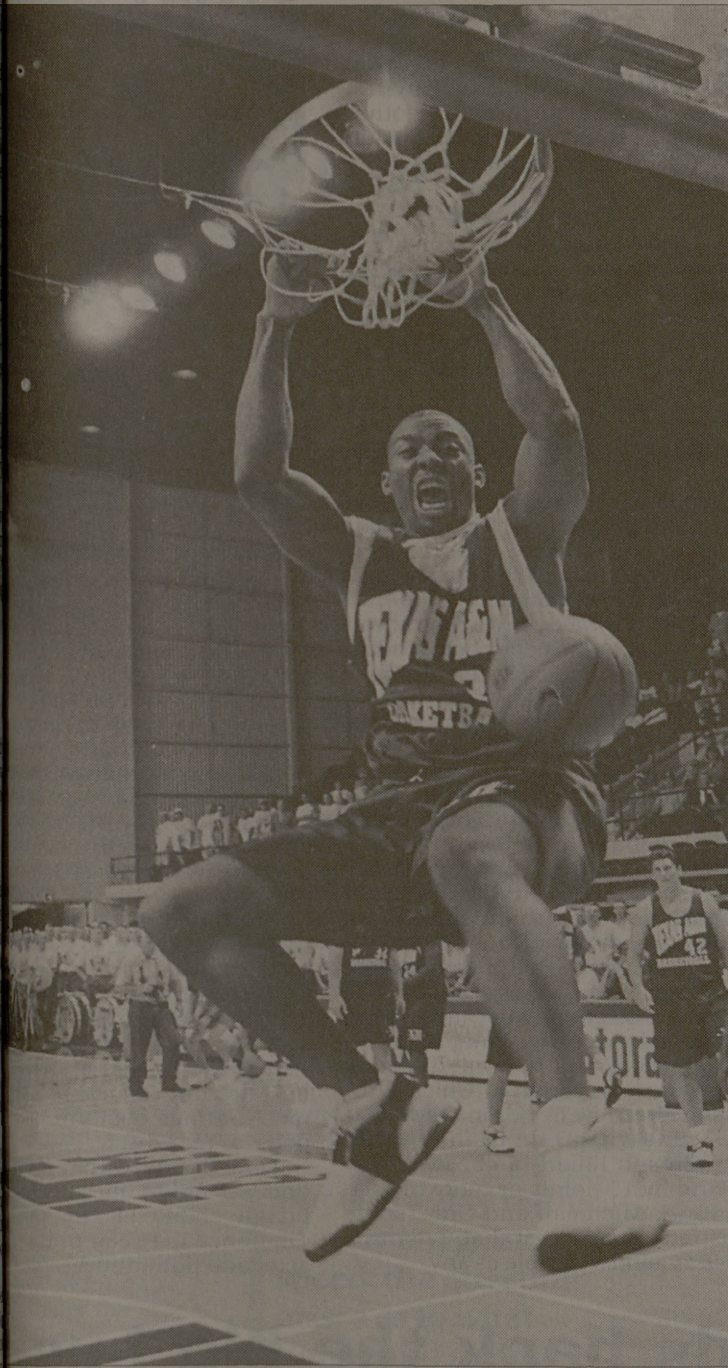
"I'm so excited — this is my first Midnight Mania, and if we can have this kind of spirit in here every time we play, it would be tremendous," Harvey said. "They (the Lady Aggies) are ready to start practice right now, and I might have to give them a sedative to calm them down. If this is indicative of how it's going to go, we will certainly give them a run for their money."

Barone also said the event has a direct impact on his team's confidence level.

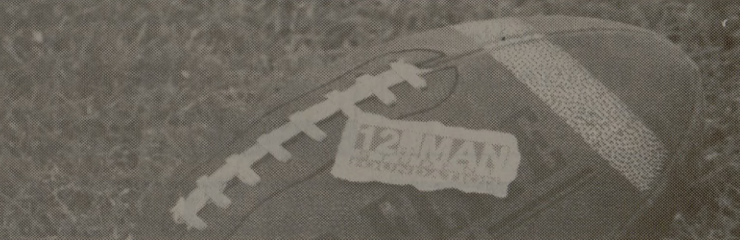
"We could go right onto the court and practice for three hours and these guys would be pumped," Barone said. "You need to feel wanted, that is part of what all of this is about. We had a tough season last year and this gives these guys confidence, because of the support mechanism. I think it's an absolutely phenomenal event."

Barone said the event went off without a hitch.

"Tonight disproved a lot of people who said this wasn't going to work," Barone said. "The doubters are going to come in here and see what a wonderful experience this was for our guys, the ladies, and the coaching staff. The spirit mechanism of this university was present, and it was an incredible enthusiastic approach to what should happen in Texas A&M Basketball."




Tim Moog, THE BATTALION  
more forward Shanne Jones slam dunks at Midnight Madness Monday.



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