

Poor officiating, injuries plague A&M



Men's Basketball
Matt Mitchell

The Texas A&M Men's Basketball team is only one of three Big 12 teams to face the same conference in back-to-back games. Its second matchup against Oklahoma State University will take place in Stillwater tomorrow. After the Cowboys, the Aggies' last three games haven't gotten any easier, with ex-Southwest Conference nemesis Baylor, Texas and Texas Tech all jostling for postseason position. Here are some more maniacal musings from the head of the hardwood has-been.

Stripes of a Different Color
I've kept my pen still in regards to the oft-ridiculed officiating this season at the Holler House. But the debacle Saturday night against OSU was absolutely inexcusable, and it's high time something was done about it.

Let's face it, A&M has just not gotten the calls this year at home. The officiating has been inconsistent at best, downright partisan at worst. No one wants to use that as an excuse, and to their credit, the Aggies have refused to use it. But looking at all the games A&M has lost by the slimmest of margins, one can invariably locate a call that made a difference. Such blatant inconsistency spurred A&M Head Coach Tony Barone to contact Dale Kelly, the Big 12 head of officials who incidentally was in attendance Saturday night. "I've never sent a letter to the Head of Officials, ever — [but] I've done it twice in the past three games," Barone said. "I'm disappointed with some of the things that have gone on. The issue is the consistency of calls. That inconsistency

is what has been bothering me. "I can send a tape of a game to the head of the officials and identify 10 calls that were absolutely not good calls. If you can do that as a coach, and the other coach can do that, and we start talking about 20 calls, I think you've got a big problem."

It Just Ain't Natural
One of the biggest problems stemming from the Aggies' lack of warm bodies is that players who would normally be able to play and concentrate on one position have been forced to play positions for which they are not as naturally suited. Injuries and the loss of scholarship players, two thorns in the Aggies' collective side all year, have left A&M with one true point guard (Barone) and one true shooting guard (Anderson). The rest is a jumble of post players struggling to fit into the mix, none emerging from the shadows, except maybe Calvin Davis. It speaks volumes that the Aggies have re-

mained as competitive as they are, but when a shooting guard playing point guard (Anderson) gets in foul trouble and is replaced by a small forward, you can't help but lose something in the transition.

Player of the Week
With compliments to freshman guard Jerald Brown, who awoke from a two-week slumber with 15 and 19 points against Tech and OSU, respectively, the coveted POW award this week goes to sophomore forward Calvin Davis. "Lo-Cal" had a monster game against the Red Raiders (losers of four of their last six games) that included a career-high 29 points. For the week, Davis averaged 19.5 points and 10 rebounds per contest, and showed more fire and hustle than anyone in the low post. All this was against the likes of the conference's leading rebounder, in Tech's Tony Battie, and 6-foot-11, 255-pound center Brett Robisch of OSU. This week, Davis' play can only be deemed Hi-Cal-iber.

Oilers reject call to pay legal expenses

HOUSTON (AP) — The Houston Oilers have rejected a call by Mayor Bob Lanier that the team pay \$500,000 in city legal expenses in exchange for permission to leave the Astrodome a year early. Houston television station KRIV reported Monday.

In a letter to city attorney Gene Locke obtained by the station, the Oilers counteroffered a payment of \$50,000 over two years, with a provision that the money be used exclusively to buy new books for the Houston public library. "The city has not incurred this sum in legal expenses," wrote Steve Underwood, Oilers vice president and general counsel, in rebutting Lanier's demand. "We feel confident the city's expense... has been nominal at most," he added, noting that the city's chief attorney in the case, private lawyer John O'Quinn, has donated his services. The offer "fell on deaf ears," Locke told KRIV Monday. The Oilers declined to comment. Lanier also declined comment.

According to the team's letter, Lanier has not formally proposed the \$500,000 figure to the team. The Oilers noted that if the team stays in Houston for the upcoming season, "the city (to say nothing of Harris County) will receive nothing for legal expenses."

Oilers owner Bud Adams already has arranged to move the franchise to Nashville, Tenn., but cannot go before 1998, unless the team gets out of its Astrodome lease.

As part of a federal court order, permission is required from the county, the city and Astrodome USA, which manages the stadium for Harris County.

Last week, Harris County Judge Robert Eckels said a \$3.75-million buyout offer, along with the donation of the Oilers' practice site to the county, amounted to a good deal and should be accepted.

County commissioners are to vote Feb. 25 on the offer, estimated to be worth \$5.25 million.

Lanier said he would not block the deal if the Oilers picked up the legal fees.

Houston Astros owner Drayton McLane, however, whose Astrodome USA holds the lease and manages the stadium for the county, has said he expects the Oilers to honor the final year of their lease.

► NBA Trade

Mavericks make historic trade with New Jersey

DALLAS (AP) — The Dallas Mavericks made another major trade Monday night, this one a nine-player deal that sent Jim Jackson and All-Star Chris Gatling to the New Jersey Nets for center Shawn Bradley.

The Mavericks also traded Sam Cassell, George McCloud and Eric Montross to the Nets. New Jersey also sent guards Khalid Reeves and Robert Pack and forward Ed O'Bannon to Dallas.

The trade was believed to be the largest between two NBA teams in the last 25 years, league spokesperson Chris Brienza said.

Both teams are struggling this season. Dallas is 16-31 under first-year coach Jim Cleamons and New Jersey is 15-36 under first-year coach John Calipari.

For the Mavericks, it culminates nearly an entire turnover of the roster since the start of the season. Don Nelson alone has added eight new players to the roster since he was hired as general manager Feb. 7.

Dallas sent former first-round draft pick Jamal Mashburn to Miami last Friday in exchange for Sasha Danilovic, Kurt Thomas and Martin Muursepp.

The only regulars remaining from Dallas' opening day roster are rookie forward Samaki Walker, who has been injured much of the season, and veteran guard Derek Harper. No players remain from last year's roster.

"I haven't seen a team made over in this short of time," Nelson said. "It's just that as it happened, the deals I was able to make were major deals."

Though he did not name players, Nelson said several bad attitudes in the Mavericks' locker room prompted his swift moves.

"There were just so many negative things about this ball club," he said. "This

locker room shocked me. It's not acceptable and will not be acceptable from this point on... I observed it, watched it and basically got sick about it."

Jackson's departure also means the official end of the Three J's era. The three-player combo of Jackson, Mashburn and Jason Kidd had been expected to anchor the Mavericks for years, but personality conflicts and injuries ended the plan.

Kidd, who did not get along with some teammates and Cleamons, was traded to Phoenix in December.

The Mavericks were in Vancouver Monday night to play the Grizzlies and had to activate rookie forward Samaki Walker from the injured list just so they would have the requisite eight players in uniform to start the game.

Walker was not expected to play, so Dallas had to take on Vancouver with only seven players.

The Mavericks traded their top four scorers — Jackson, Gatling, Cassell and McCloud. Those four averaged 62 of Dallas' 93.4 points per game.

"When you look at what has to be done, what needed to be done, and then it happens all at once, it kind of takes your breath away," Cleamons said before the Vancouver game. "But you have to look at the positives behind it."

The Dallas-bound Nets players found out about the deal after a 108-101 loss to the Cleveland Cavaliers on Monday.

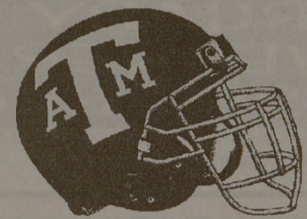
The 7-foot-6 Bradley, who was also involved in the trade that sent Derrick Coleman to Philadelphia last season, did not record a single rebound in 32 minutes against the Cavs. He leads the NBA in blocked shots.

TEXAS A&M FOOTBALL 12TH MAN / WALK-ON ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, February 25, 1997

TIME: 4:30 PM

WHERE: Kyle Field
Stadium Film Room



For More Information: 845-0374

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Come to Hurricane Harry's for a fantastic night of fun. Admission is \$2.00.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH -
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Department of Food Services will be catering Bar-B-Q in the Grove from 11-3. Aggie Bucks Accepted.

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SHERMAN

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"Now I have a similar opportunity at Green Bay, but at a different level — in a community that is totally supportive of its team and led by a great head coach in Mike Holmgren."

Under Sherman, the Aggies set a school record and Southwest Conference rushing record with 3,829 yards in 1991, while winning the first of three SWC crowns.

Sherman has developed several prominent players including: NFL All-Pro tackle Richmond Webb (A&M), 1996 NFL first-round selection Jonathon Odgen (UCLA), 1990 All-American Mike Arthur (A&M), Hunter Goodwin (A&M) and Jason Mathews (A&M).

Sherman said this was the only offer he would have considered.

"I've enjoyed the small-town atmosphere of College Station for my family, and Green Bay offers that same atmosphere," Sherman said. "If the truth be told, there is not a whole lot of difference between an 'Aggie,' and a 'Cheesehead.'"

Sherman said the Aggies will be successful next season, and he looks forward to seeing them succeed.

"I am anxiously looking forward to my opportunity with the Green Bay Packers, but I will surely miss being a part of something special here at Texas A&M," Sherman said. "With this past year's recruiting class, combined with the way our players and coaches are presently working, this group will be a force in the Big 12 next season and for years to come. My only regret is not being able to be a part of this program's future success and also missing out on the opportunity to coach a very special group of offensive linemen who mean a lot to me."



Sherman

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