

SPORTS

Lady Aggs falter in season finale

The Texas A&M Women's Basketball Team struggled in the second half against the Lady Longhorns, 79-58.

By JAMIE BURCH
THE BATTALION

With the headliner now engraved, the Texas A&M Women's Basketball Team (9-17, 3-11) closed the season with a 21-point loss to the University of Colorado (20-6, 12-4) Saturday in G. White Coliseum.

Head Coach Candi Harvey said the sophomore-led Lady Aggies' season-long trend of starting strong and collapsing in the second half was a tale of two halves.

"Same situation, different outcome," Harvey said. "We were fortunate to get a home court advantage for the first half."

"We came out (in the second half) with a great opportunity to win the ball over, our confidence dropped, and it snowballed. We've talked about it several times (this year)."

Trailing by six points, 33-27 at the half, the Lady Aggies failed to score a field goal in the first eight minutes of the second half.

Freshman forward Jennifer Burrows finished with a two-foot jump shot to put the Lady Aggies on the board.

Durand scored four points and finished with the Lady Aggie drought, the Longhorns rattled off 19 points, to beat the Aggies by a 19-5 scoring run.

Texas senior forward Amie Littleton scored four points and finished with the second half onslaught with 14 points. Five of those points

came within a six-second span.

Leading 64-40 with nine minutes remaining, Smith stole the ball from freshman guard Amy Yates at half court and hustled to the basket for an easy two. Smith, fouled on the shot, hit the free throw to complete the three-point play. The ensuing inbound pass was stolen by Texas sophomore guard Kim Lummas, who dished it to Smith, and Smith laid in to complete a five-point run.

Smith said defeating the Lady Aggies was an important win for Texas' confidence because it proved that they can recover after a tough defeat by the University of Colorado Wednesday night.

"Unfortunately, we've lost games we should have won," Smith said. "We've bounced back from them before. This team was ready to get 20 wins. And to win at A&M, you have to be focused and you can't be thinking about what happened last Wednesday night."

Texas Head Coach Joy Conrad said her team's second-half defense sparked the win.

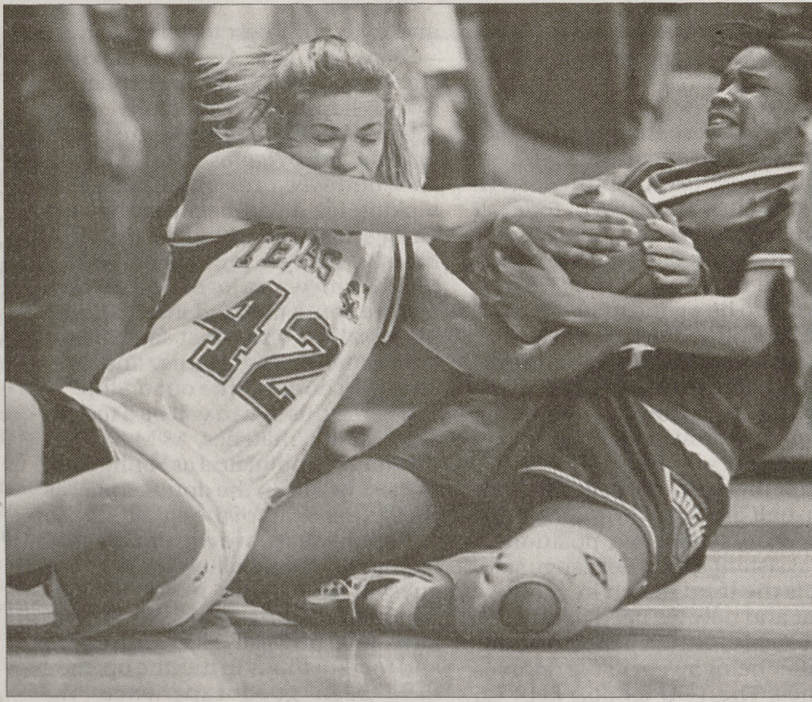
"I felt like we were suffering from the effects of Colorado early," Conrad said. "We came out in the second half with defensive intensity. We forced lots of turnovers, got some easy baskets, and got into a flow."

"The turning point of the game, in my mind, was the play of (freshman center) Carla Littleton. She came in and took charge of the paint. I thought that gave us some momentum and we were able to build on that."

Littleton scored four points and grabbed three rebounds in seven minutes.

Harvey said Littleton shut down A&M's offense.

"She just really hurts us," Harvey said. "We'd done such a good job in



Tim Moog, THE BATTALION

Freshman Jennifer Burrows tries to wrestle the ball away from Texas' Edwina Brown Saturday at G. Rollier White Coliseum.

the first half of fronting, getting around and getting over the top. She gets you down there, posted up, and it's just impossible to get around her."

A&M never recovered from its slow start in the second half. Trailing by 29 points with 8:53 left in the game, A&M failed to connect on layups or hit free-throws throughout the second half. The Lady Aggies shot just .391 (9-of-23) percent from the field and .478 (11 of 23) percent from the charity stripe after the intermission.

Texas, on the other hand, shot .545 (12-22) percent from the field and

buried 21 of 23 (.913 percent) from the free throw line down the stretch.

Harvey said the biggest problem was A&M's mistakes.

"Our (29) turnovers, most of which were unforced, [killed us]," Harvey said. "I think more than anything it boils down to confidence."

Senior forward Melissa Roller-son, playing in her final regular season game, led the Lady Aggies with 11 points and five rebounds. Freshman point guard Natalie Tucker also scored 11 points.

Texas had three players reach double figures in scoring, including Smith, who led all scorers with 17.

Aggies bring home eight gold medals

STAFF AND WIRE REPORT

The Texas A&M Men's and Women's Track and Field teams brought home eight gold medals in the first outdoor meet this season at the Baylor Early Bird Invitational Saturday.

A&M Head Coach Ted Nelson said the meet was a good way to kick off the outdoor season.

"Our teams are built to be competitive during the outdoor season, and I think that's apparent this weekend," Nelson said. "We won events that are only run outdoors, so it was ob-

viously good for us to start the outdoor season."

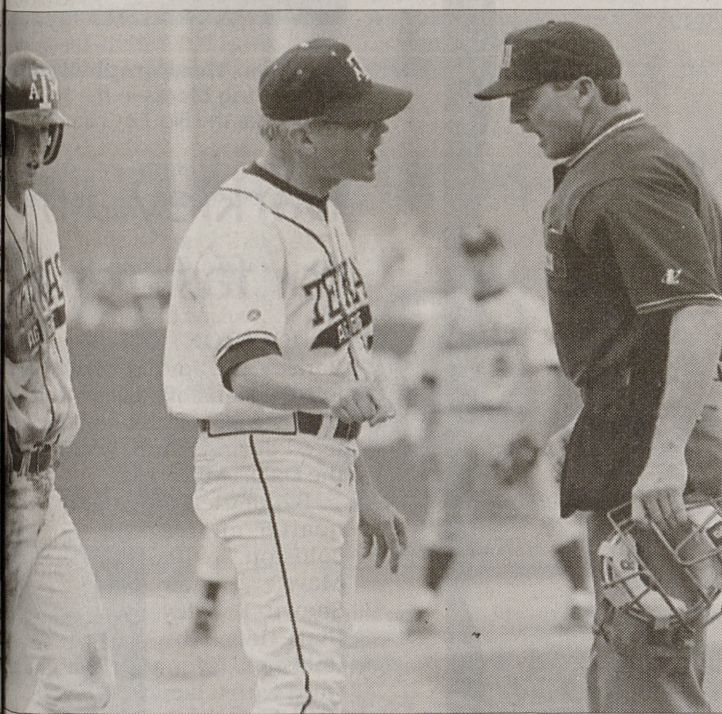
Senior All-American Russell Nuti won gold in the weight throw with a toss of 189-11, which was over 30 feet further than the second-place finisher. Kelli Schrader and Carrie Carmen finished 1-2 in the discus competition, with Schrader's toss of 155-6 winning the event by nearly 30 feet.

"This was a very good opener for Russ (Nuti)," Nelson said. "He has to be considered one of the favorites to win the Big 12 title in the discus. Kelli (Schrader) probably would have liked to have thrown further, but this was a good starting point."

Senior Ryan Theriault and freshman Travis Grasha finished 1-2 in the javelin throw with marks of 209-5 and 205-11, respectively, and defeated Texas' top javelin entry along the way.



Nuti



Derek Demere, THE BATTALION

Head Coach Mark Johnson argues with the umpire after he intentionally called senior shortstop Rich Petru out at home.

BASEBALL

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Sunday's rubber game had the feel of mid-winter football with temperatures dipping into the upper 40s and a strong north wind causing fans to break out their blankets. But even Mother Nature could not cool off the bats at Olsen.

Junior southpaw Matt Blank started for A&M against Baylor's Kip Wells. The Aggies ran out to a 7-2 lead in the fourth after Benefield took Wells' pitch over the right-center field wall for a grand slam.

Blank gave up two runs in the fifth but A&M matched them with Hunter's third homer of the series in the sixth. Blank was cruising into the ninth, after Stephens knocked another Aggie solo homer the previous inning. He had given up three earned runs, struck out nine and started the ninth with a 10-5 lead.

Three hits, three walks and two home runs later, the Aggies were starting down the throat of a terrible loss.

Blank gave up a solo home run to shortstop Preston Underdown and then was ripped for a double. Senior

John Codrington relieved Blank and recorded the innings' first out before walking the next two batters to load the bases. Keens replaced Codrington with one out and walked the first batter he faced to force in the Bears' seventh run.

Two pitches later, rightfielder Jeremy Dodson was rounding first base as his game-winning grand slam was clearing the railroad tracks down the rightfield line.

As Johnson described it, "You're going to have some tough losses, and it didn't take us long to get one."

The offense sparked for the Aggies this weekend — highlighted by Benefield and Hunter. Benefield went five for 15 with two home runs, seven RBIs and four runs scored. Hunter slammed three homers, drove in six and scored three in his five for 12 performance. But it was not enough to knock off Baylor.

Hunter said even though the pitching staff has struggled lately, the team is not pointing any fingers.

"What people are forgetting is that at the beginning of the year the hitters were off and the pitchers were on," Hunter said. "Everyone's entitled to their bad outings. We'll just pick it up and move on."

KAPPLER

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With this solid foundation, Kappler said, "We'll be a large part of why we do so well at the meet. He is liked by the team and by himself, which is good."

Although Kappler will be at the NCAA Championships in four weeks, that is not the last place he will have a chance to compete. His teammates said the sky is the limit for him. Nash said Kappler has no where to go but up.

"Well, I have already qualified to compete at the Olympic trials in 2000, depending on how fast I get I will train and try to make the team in 2000," Kappler said. "Like I've said before, though, right now I like being in this position and as long as I am helping out the team and helping others, I don't have any complaints."



Kappler

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