

Barone's legacy will be more than losses



CHRIS FERRELL
sports writer

What Tony Barone has done for the Texas A&M Men's Basketball Team over the past seven seasons can't be measured in wins and losses, but unfortunately in the world of big time college athletics, that's all that counts. Yesterday, Athletic Director Wally Groff announced that Barone would be reassigned within the athletic department after the season, putting an end to weeks of speculation about coach's future. The Aggies are 6-16 on the season and winless in conference play. But to measure Barone by wins and losses would completely overlook what he has done during his time in College Station. Seven years ago, Barone took the worst coaching job in college basketball. He came to a school which was decimated by NCAA probation, had terrible facilities and had no fan support. He left behind a program which had advanced to the second round of the NCAA Tournament and had won Missouri Valley Conference titles in the past three seasons. The only thing Texas A&M had was the promise of a new arena, one that was not approved

until 1994 and will not open its doors until next season, when a new coach will be leading the Aggies. With Barone's arrival there was renewed hope that A&M would return to the same level of success it had enjoyed under Shelby Metcalf, who became the winningest coach in Southwest Conference history during his 27 seasons at A&M. But that never happened. In fact, the Aggies would only experience one winning season under Barone. That was in the 1993-94 season when the team received an NIT bid. But what Tony Barone did bring to the A&M basketball program was class and unmatched enthusiasm. As ESPN's Dick Vitale told me last fall, "Tony does things the right way." The purpose of college athletics, no matter what you may hear, is not to serve as a minor league to the professional ranks, but rather to develop better people, the same way teachers do it in the classroom. During Barone's time at A&M, he

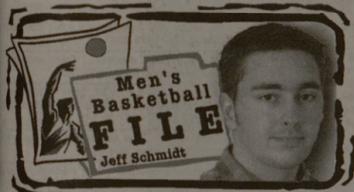


has graduated 88.9 percent of his players, an unheard of number in today's game. He has done that by going out and getting good people, not just good basketball players. He brought in players that cared about Texas A&M and the program. Maybe he did not produce lottery picks, but he produced good citizens. He put everything he had into Texas A&M basketball. He celebrated with every basket and died a thousand deaths with every loss. He could be spotted playing defense along with his team, shuffling back and forth across the sideline shouting out instructions to his players. Watching Barone was often more entertaining than watching his teams — teams which were limited by scholarships, and usually by talent, but always found a way to play tough and keep most games competitive. His enthusiasm for the game is contagious and you could see it in his players and those around him when he started talking about A&M basketball. Yesterday's announcement was the last sce-

nario Barone envisioned at the start of the season. He was excited about the team and felt that this was going to be the breakthrough year for the Aggies. But with a couple of tough losses and a couple of big injuries, the season quickly fell apart. There was not much question that a change needed to be made for the sake of wins and losses. With horrible attendance at G. Rollie White Coliseum and a new 12,500 seat arena set to open, something needed to be done to shake things up. After all, money talks and that's why Barone walks. His legacy at Texas A&M will be as the guy who took off his jacket and tie and danced around the sideline. Barone has been more than that. By weathering the storm of the past seven seasons, Barone turned the worst job in America into one of the best. The next Men's Basketball Coach at Texas A&M will inherit a young, talented team and the arena which Barone was promised when he first arrived. He may bring more wins. He may produce better basketball players. But doing things with the same commitment to academics and with the same dedication as Tony Barone will be a tough act to follow.

—Chris Ferrell is a sophomore journalism major

Men's team limps into final weeks of season Individuals stepping up for the women



minus four and counting. There are four games left for the Aggies to win: at Texas, vs. Texas Tech, at Kansas State and vs. Baylor. Baylor may be the best bet for a victory. The last time the Aggies lost to Baylor at home was 95-92 in 1994 in double-overtime. Unfortunately, it looks as if everything is on hold after the big news on Monday:

Barone Reassigned
Coach Tony Barone will be reassigned as Athletic Director Wally Groff's special assistant at the end of the season. The Aggies hope to hire a new head coach June 1. *The Sporting News* has speculated that Barone could "wave big money at New Mexico's Dave Strasser or Mississippi's Bob Evans."

Analysis Of A Losing Streak
The Aggies lose to upper-tier Big 12 teams (Kansas, Oklahoma State and Oklahoma) by an average of nearly 21 points per game. The Aggies lose to second-tier teams (a six-way tie for fourth place between Texas Tech, Kansas State, Missouri, Colorado, Baylor and Nebraska) by an average of around 13 points a game. The Aggies lose to bottom-tier teams (Texas Tech, Iowa State) by an average of five points a game. Makes sense, doesn't it?

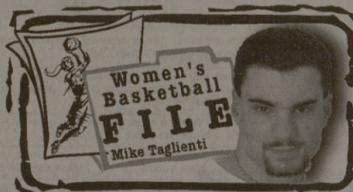
Injuries And Arrows, Part II
Junior guard Chris Clayton was out for the season with a fractured right foot suffered in the loss to Texas

Tech. Clayton was averaging 6.8 points a game and was shooting 33 percent from three-point range. "Chris had worked very hard and was starting to get more and more playing time," Barone said. "It's a very unfortunate injury. Our main focus now is to make sure his injury is treated properly so he can play next year." Clayton is the fourth Aggie to sustain a season-ending injury. Others include Dario Quesada (bulging disk), Calvin Davis (herniated disk) and T.J. Brown (torn anterior cruciate ligament). Clayton's injury left the team with only eight players.

Schmidt Has Career Day
Freshman guard Michael Schmidt (no relation) had a huge game off the bench against Missouri with a career-high 24 points. Schmidt, who entered the game shooting about 20 percent from three-point range, was 4-5 from the same area against Missouri. Schmidt has an interesting story. A native of Toronto, he was the only high-schooler named to the 1997 Canadian Under-22 National Team and was rated by several recruiting publications as the No. 1 player in Canada. He chose Texas A&M before visiting the University over Minnesota, DePaul, Syracuse and Southern California.

Barone Speaks After The Missouri Loss
On having eight players: "It really disrupts practice. We don't have any (Missouri center) Monte Hargdes walking around campuses. You need guys to scrimmage against." On losing streak: "I'm fully aware of our record. These guys aren't quitting, they are playing their hearts out. You'll try anything to keep your sanity. As you lose, the critics are there, but most don't know anything about basketball or our team." On playing at the Hearnes Center (Missouri): "It's like playing the Packers at Lambeau. They're 11-1 here."

—Jeff Schmidt is a junior journalism major



The Texas A&M Women's Basketball Team went 0-2 this past week. The Aggies lost to the OSU Cowgirls 95-57 and the Texas Tech Red Raiders 90-65. This week, the Aggies take on the University of Texas Wednesday at 7 p.m. at G. Rollie White Coliseum, and Texas Tech Saturday at 2 p.m. in Lubbock.

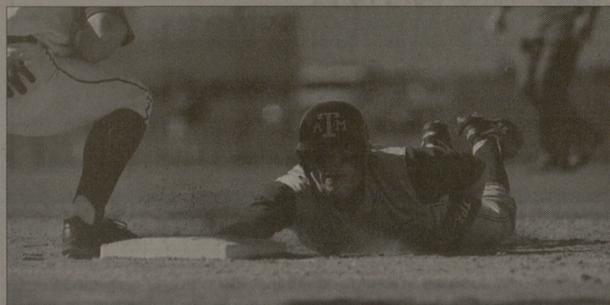
Sharpe Doubles Her Pleasure
Sophomore forward Prissy Sharpe has scored in double figures in 18 of the Aggies' 22 games this season. Sharpe leads the Big 12 in double-doubles with 14. For her career, Sharpe has scored in double figures in 29 out of 49 games with 19 double-doubles.

Alexander Takes Over
Sophomore forward Kera Alexander started against Texas Tech on Saturday. Alexander had been A&M's leading scorer coming off the bench, averaging 12.6 points per game. Alexander ranks ninth in the Big 12 in scoring, averaging 15.2 points per game in conference. Alexander scored a career-high 32 points in a loss to Baylor earlier this year.

—Michael Taglienti is a senior sports management major

Baseball team faces DBU in doubleheader

from staff and wire reports
After a weekend which included three wins, a tournament championship and a broken record, the 20th-ranked Texas A&M Baseball Team returns home this afternoon for a doubleheader with Dallas Baptist University. Dallas Baptist is 1-1 on the year, with a 6-5 loss to Concordia and a 4-3 win over St. Edwards on Friday. A&M knocked off Arkansas State, Oral Roberts and UT-Arlington by a combined score of 34-9 to capture the UTA Arlington Morning News Invitational and improve their season record to 7-0. Junior center fielder Jason Tyner stole second in the ninth inning of Sunday's game against UTA to set the career record for stolen bases with 84. The former record was held by Chuck Knoblauch, who had 83 swipes in his three seasons at A&M. He now plays second base for the New York Yankees. Tyner has continued his torrid start of the season, hitting .438 with five steals in five attempts. Sophomore



Senior **Scott Sandusky** dives back into first base against UT-Pan American. Sean Heaney is also off to a solid start, with nine RBI and an average of .444. Junior Shane King is the likely starter in the first game, which will get underway at 1 p.m. at Olsen Field. King last saw work in the opening day no-hitter, pitching two innings in relief with two strikeouts. Sophomore Chance Caple will go

in the second game for the Aggies, following his win against Tarleton State, in which he gave up three runs on five hits and struck out three. Caple will be gunning for his second victory to join senior Ryan Rupe, sophomore Casey Fossum and junior Matt Webb as Texas A&M's two-game winners.

Corps takes on fraternities in charity game sponsored by Order of Omega

By **ROBERT HOLLIER**
Staff writer

The eighth annual Corps-Fraternity charity basketball game will be played tonight at 7:30 in G. Rollie White Coliseum to benefit the Steel Creek Boy's and Girl's Ranch. The game officially kicks off the Order of Omega's annual Greek Week, which also benefits the same charity. The Interfraternity Council will donate \$1,000 to Steel Creek during a halftime presentation. While this game will not be a judge match for the teams, it is a game both sides are playing to win. Troy Coleman, Corps coach and team captain, said this game is just a friendly competition between them. "It's nothing personal," Coleman said. "We want to win of course, but we still just see this game as a friendly competitive game. It should be a lot of fun." This will be the fourth time Coleman has participated in this event and he and the rest of the team are ready to play. "We've been looking forward to this game all year," he said. "We put our team together real early, set up our practice schedules and now we're ready to play." Robert Ladimir, member of Pi Kappa Alpha and team co-captain agreed, saying the players are just out there to have a good time. "Win or lose, there will be no hard feelings," Ladimir said. "We get to play on a nice court in front

of a big crowd and it's all for charity. That's the best thing about it." Ladimir also said another great thing about this event is that it creates a rivalry between the fraternities and the Corps, which adds more excitement and energy to the game. Starters for the Corps team include seniors Troy Coleman (Company E-1) and Brandon Henderson (Company L-1), juniors Clay Stanfield (Company C-2) and Joe Garza (Squadron 17) and freshman Robert Neal (Company E-2). Starters for the fraternity team are Patrick Collier (Beta Theta Pi), Pranay Patel (Sigma Chi), Rob Turner (Pi Kappa Alpha), Tom Greger (Phi Delta Theta) and Brian Sims (Delta Chi).



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