

he Battalion

## Crunch time looms for Ags

### Aggie Women's Basketball looks to make return to winning ways

BY AARON COHAN  
The Battalion

Improving is an often difficult test every team must go through at some time or another. The Texas A&M Women's Basketball Team has faced the challenge of climbing that hill this season in facing their conference competition.

Over the break, A&M squeezed off a 2-5 record, bringing its record to 6-9 overall and 1-4 in Big 12 play.

But numbers do not tell everything.

The Aggies posted wins against Oklahoma State and Prairie View A&M and dropped close decisions to Rice University, the University of Kansas, the University of Missouri, Texas Tech University and Iowa State University.

Those kind of losses were what A&M women's basketball coach Peggie Gillom said are stepping stones of improvement for the Aggies.

"A loss can be really tough for most teams," she said. "But we take the positives and the negatives from each one to work on getting better."

Of the last eight losses for the Aggies, five were by five points or less. Last year the Aggies lost 19 games by an average of 14 points.

The Aggies have struggled with shooting percentage in a majority of their defeats.

The Aggies have shot an average of 35 percent from the field in their nine losses, but they have shot 46 percent from the hardwood in their six wins.

"We seem to fall out of rhythm when we don't hit our shots," Gillom said. "The team picks it up

though, and regroups usually."

The Aggies have been led again this season by junior forward Prissy Sharpe. Sharpe has been the one constant in the line-up this season. Averaging 20.2 points per game, Sharpe is currently second in the Big 12, and 23rd nationally.

Yet it is her rebounding that has helped the team stick close in most contests.

When a player like Sharpe is grabbing more than 10 boards a game to lead the Big 12, she is making a statement about work ethics.

"Prissy has come through time in and time out," Gillom said. "She crashes the boards harder than anyone I have ever seen."

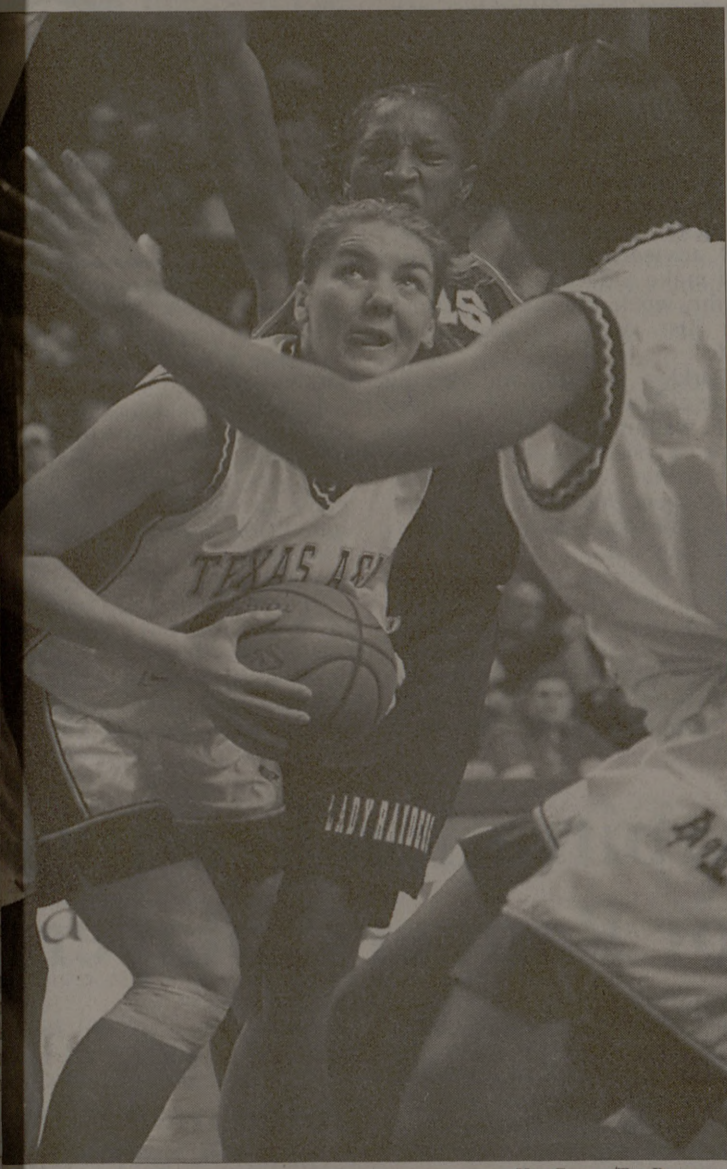
Junior guard Amy Yates, who is only 25 three-pointers away from breaking Lisa Branch's school record, has been pumping in key shots all season as well.

Junior forward Kera Alexander has continued to clean up under the basket, while senior guard and floor-leader Kim Tarkington has been keeping the Aggies in sync on both ends of the floor.

Other players, like Brandy Jones, who has come off the bench for defensive pressure, and Kerrie Patterson, who has hit key shots to keep the team in the game, have helped add a sense of stability to the basketball squad.

Gillom said she believes the team knows what it takes to win, they just have to believe in themselves.

"We're fighting and scratching in every contest," Gillom said. "And if we start getting some wins, then something good is going to happen to this program."



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

A&M junior forward Prissy Sharpe looks for an opening against the Texas Tech Red Raiders Jan. 13 at Reed Arena. Sharpe, who is averaging a team-leading 20.2 points, and the Texas A&M Women's Basketball Team have faced a difficult conference schedule this season, with a 1-4 record against Big 12 opponents and a 6-9 overall record.



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

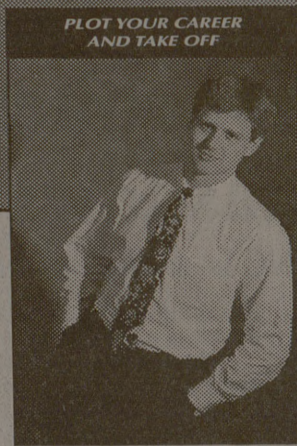


MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

**TOP:** Senior guard Kim Tarkington has averaged 7.5 points and added 37 total steals for the season for the Texas A&M Women's Basketball Team as the Aggies' lead guard.

**LEFT:** Junior forward Kera Alexander has put up 12.5 points and 5.5 rebounds per contest for the Aggies this season. She has shot 77 percent from the free-throw line and 52 percent from the field this year.

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