

W. BASKETBALL

Slumping Aggies lean on experienced Ade

A&M learns its seeding for NCAA Tournament Monday

By Cole Stenholm

In early December, the excitement surrounding the Texas A&M women's basketball team hit a high-water mark after a second-half rally over then-No. 8 Duke. The win came as part of A&M's immaculate 11-0 start to the season, which saw its ranking climb as high as No. 4.

Just a few months later and senior Achiri Ade and her teammates are doing damage control following a 1-3 concluding stint to the regular season. And unfortunately for Ade, one of those losses came on Senior Night in a heart-wrenching one-point loss to Missouri in her last regular season game at Reed Arena.

"It hurt," Ade said. "But I think these three losses have really brought us together and really taught us a lot. It hurt to lose on Senior Night — yeah it did — but we've learned a lot and we have grown so much."

Ade, who hails from Baltimore, Md., arrived in Texas in 2011 to play junior college basketball at Midland College where she ranked sixth in the nation as a sophomore with 12.5 rebounds per game. At Midland, she was exposed to Texas culture.

"That was the one thing that really kept me in Texas because the people were really nice, genuinely nice here," Ade said.

Head coach Gary Blair epitomized one of those genuinely nice Texans to whom Ade referred, becoming a key reason she chose to attend A&M.

"Out of all of the schools that were really recruiting me, I had a relationship with coach Blair," Ade said. "He talked to me, he called me. The other schools, I talked to their assistant coaches, but coach Blair was really the one, he made me feel welcome, and like a family atmosphere."

Despite being only the fourth-tallest member on the A&M roster, Ade, at 6-foot-1, proves her knack for grabbing rebounds in junior college was no fluke. She leads A&M in the category this season (259), averaging 8.1 boards per game. She also scores 6.7 points per contest, making herself a threat for double-double numbers on a nightly basis.

"We cannot do without Ade even if she is not playing well because she gives us the defensive presence and the



Cody Franklin — THE BATTALION

Senior **Achiri Ade** looks to help the Aggies rediscover their winning ways as the NCAA Tournament approaches.

rebouncing, and she can do it both offensive and defensive," Blair said.

Ade will have one last shot to salvage her senior season in this year's NCAA Tournament. But to right the Aggie ship, her work will be cut out for her. The No. 21 Aggies are only 12-9 since their perfect start, dropping all but one of six contests versus ranked opponents during that stretch.

Further, the team's third-leading scorer, Jordan Jones, remains sidelined for the season and the Aggies can only watch as their tournament stock drops after being ousted in their second game

of the SEC tournament. But the discipline of a seasoned veteran like Ade might be just what the Aggies need to escape their slump.

"She's always where she's supposed to, she doesn't have a car, she's never late, she's always on time, she doesn't get hurt and she's a good leader," Blair said. "And so sometimes, you put all of those things together, people listen to her. And it's not that she's babbling or anything like that, but when she talks people listen."

The Aggies will learn their tournament seeding Monday.

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SOFTBALL

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puzzle answers can be found on page 2

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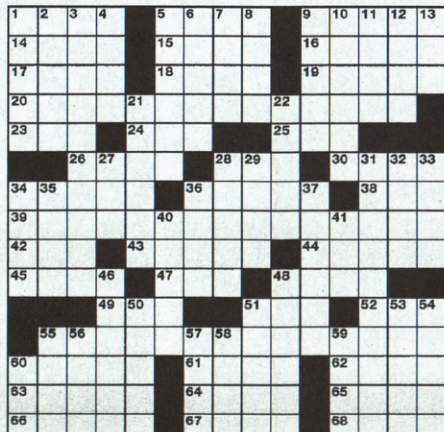
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Newsday Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Check mark
 - 5 Music symbol
 - 9 Quick rides
 - 14 Cultural figure
 - 15 Braggart of fable
 - 16 Sacred scroll
 - 17 Renown
 - 18 Region in Risk
 - 19 Yellowish green
 - 20 Capitalism principle
 - 23 Vast quantity
 - 24 Check-mark alternatives
 - 25 First word spoken in Genesis
 - 26 Churn up
 - 28 In the style of
 - 30 Wax-covered cheese
 - 34 Strapped for cash
 - 36 Distort, as a report
 - 38 Contents of some buckets
 - 39 Utilities, etc. groceries, etc.
 - 42 Subject for Keats
 - 43 Former Chicago mayor
 - 44 Composed manner
 - 45 Verbal fanfare
 - 47 Pop artist
 - 48 Possible
 - 49 Family guy
 - 51 Director Brooks
 - 52 Org. with a snake logo
 - 55 Metaphor for wealth
- DOWN**
- 1 Spats
 - 2 Words of concern
 - 3 Change one's opinion
 - 4 Tot's perch
 - 5 French fashion house
 - 6 Sticks around
 - 7 Lake that sounds spooky
 - 8 Trepidation
 - 9 Pack away
 - 10 Gentle
 - 11 Van Gogh flower
 - 12 Pew locale
 - 13 Cow or sow
 - 21 Took one's leave
 - 22 Fallback strategy
 - 27 Where many RNs work
 - 28 Backstreet
 - 29 Lord's wife
 - 31 Late-model SLR
 - 32 Top guns
 - 33 Hand (out)
 - 34 Boarded up
 - 35 Kibbutz dance
 - 36 Single-handed
 - 37 Elvis' birthplace
 - 40 What "good" starts with
 - 41 Carmen title
 - 46 Look up to
 - 48 Modernized, maybe
 - 50 Was out of sorts
 - 51 "Holy cow!"
 - 53 Locale known for lobsters
 - 54 As You Like It locale
 - 55 Rounds of munitions
 - 56 Vietnam neighbor
 - 57 Hodgedodge
 - 58 Head setting
 - 59 Priest of the East
 - 60 Discontinuity



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