

Poor defense kills Aggies' upset bid

A&M allows 51 points in 2nd half

BY JAY SAUNDERS
Assignment Reporter

Before Wednesday night's game against Nebraska, the Texas A&M women's basketball team set three goals to try to break its four-game losing streak.

A&M Coach Candi Harvey and the Aggies wanted fewer than 20 turnovers, more than eight steals and at least 12 assists. The Aggies accomplished two of those goals, with 14 assists and only 15 turnovers, but the unexpected happened to the A&M defense in an 88-74 loss to NU.

The Aggies (4-9 overall and 0-3 in the Big 12 Conference) came out fast with an 11-4 run in the first four minutes of the game. After a Nebraska timeout with 17:15 left in the half, the bottom fell out of A&M's defense. NU outscored the Aggies 33-19 to close out the first half.

"The execution out of the gate was good," Harvey said. "We needed to stick to the game plan."

Texas A&M, which hasn't won a game when trailing at halftime this season, never got closer than the seven-point halftime deficit.

What failed the Aggies was not their offense. A&M improved in field-goal, 3-point and free-throw shooting in the second half. Even though the Aggies scored 44 points in the second half, an ineffective press defense and a 50-percent-shooting effort by the Huskers gave A&M its fifth straight loss.

"I thought the half-court defense got better as the game went on," Harvey said. "We got hurt when we

went to the press. We didn't get stops."

The Huskers put 51 points on the board in the second half. Harvey said NU picked apart the Aggies' press. As a result, Nebraska was allowed to score a lot of transition baskets, which Harvey said is a sign of bad basketball.

"We can't go on four- or five-minute runs of bad basketball," Harvey said. "Against a great team like that you are shooting yourselves in the foot."

Freshman guard Brandy Jones came off of the bench to lead Texas A&M in scoring with 15 points. The Aggies had three other players with 13 points each, including junior guard Kim Tarkington. The smallest player on the floor, Tarkington, led A&M with 10 rebounds.

Forward Prissy Sharpe and guard Amy Yates — who ranks third in the nation in 3-point shooting — were held below their averages in both points and rebounding. Yates, who had eight points, said she was not as involved in the offense as normal.

"I wasn't a factor in the second half," Yates said. "I wasn't putting myself in position to get shots."

After the first four minutes, Sharpe said, A&M didn't get good looks from anywhere on the floor. Most of the stats, except for field goal shooting, were virtually the same, which is why Sharpe said she couldn't figure out how the Aggies went from a seven-point lead to a 14-point deficit.

"I just don't know what happened," Sharpe said. "They made a quick run and that was it. It kind of snowballed."

Despite NU's fatigue, A&M feels the burn

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"Most of the turnovers we make come when we're setting up our half-court offense, and we really didn't have to do that tonight."

With the victory, Nebraska extended its home winning streak to 10 games and has won 12 of its last 13 at the Devaney Center.

Now, Sanderford wants to see if the road-weary Huskers have some success away from the comfortable confines of home.

NU is 0-2 in conference games on the road, losing at Colorado and Kansas last week.

"We pulled in at 7:40 that night after the Kansas game, and coach said, 'OK, you have 20 minutes to get taped and ready,'" DeForge said. "We all looked at each other and said he had to be kidding. He wasn't kidding. We beat each other up for an hour and a half."

"Right now, I just need a day

“They were more ready to play than we were in the first half.”

PAUL SANDERFORD
NU women's basketball coach

off." Nebraska returns to the road this weekend, traveling to Kansas State Saturday and to Baylor Wednesday.

"This is an exceptionally tough time of the year for us," Sanderford said. "It's kind of like the dog days of the baseball season. We need a rest, but we can't take one right now. When we get back from Baylor, then we'll get our legs back."

Jayhawks win fourth straight league contest

From staff reports

Third-ranked Kansas reached the 20-win plateau for the ninth consecutive season with an 83-65 thumping of Texas A&M Wednesday.

The Jayhawks (20-2 overall and 4-0 in the Big 12 Conference) were led by freshman Eric Chenoweth, who scored 16 points and grabbed a career-high 20 rebounds.

The Aggies, who made just 29 percent of their shots in the second half, lost their fifth consecutive game.

KU junior Paul Pierce added 15 points for the Jayhawks, and Kenny Gregory and Ryan Robertson each scored 13.

Kansas is now tied for the league lead with Oklahoma (13-4 and 4-0) and Baylor (9-5 and 4-0).

In other Big 12 action Wednesday night, Kansas State defeated Iowa State 77-59, and Missouri beat Oklahoma State 70-64.

Former mobster tells students to stop bets

ATLANTA (AP) — The rise in youth gambling and campus bookmaking also means an increased threat to college sports, experts warned NCAA college administrators this week at the NCAA convention.

"There's potential for bribery or extortion to affect the outcome of the game," said Thomas French, a New York-based FBI supervisory special agent. "There's a vulnerability there to be compromised."

During a workshop at the annual convention, French and a former mobster described how athletes are lured into giving gamblers inside information or participate in point-shaving and throwing games during a workshop.

"Gambling at a young level, from what I'm seeing, is becoming a lot more prevalent," said Michael Franzese, a captain in the Colombo crime family who broke from the mob in the late 1980s while serving a 10-year federal racketeering sentence.

"It's not a new problem, but it's proliferating," said French.

The problem can be hard to detect, French said, because organized crime uses student bookies and recruits roommates, fraternity brothers and school employees to provide valuable inside information on athletes and teams.

Franzese, who was involved in a variety of mob operations, including gambling, gives talks about the problem for the NBA and Major League Baseball. He meets with rookies in both leagues and said he's amazed at how many have placed bets and at their knowledge of campus bookmaking operations.

He and French said it appears

nearly every major college has a bookmaking operation on or near the campus.

Bill Saum, the NCAA's representative on agents and gambling, said a 1996 NCAA-sponsored survey of Division I men's basketball and football players indicated that as many as 25 percent bet on college sports and nearly four percent bet on their own teams.

The NCAA has taken a stand against all sports gambling, legal and illegal, and has increased education efforts and toughened penalties. Saum urged that coaches and other college sports officials refrain from discussing point spreads.

Franzese and French, an FBI agent for nearly 30 years who promotes gambling awareness, said the growing national availability and acceptance of gambling — along with the affluence of many students — has increased the campus problem.

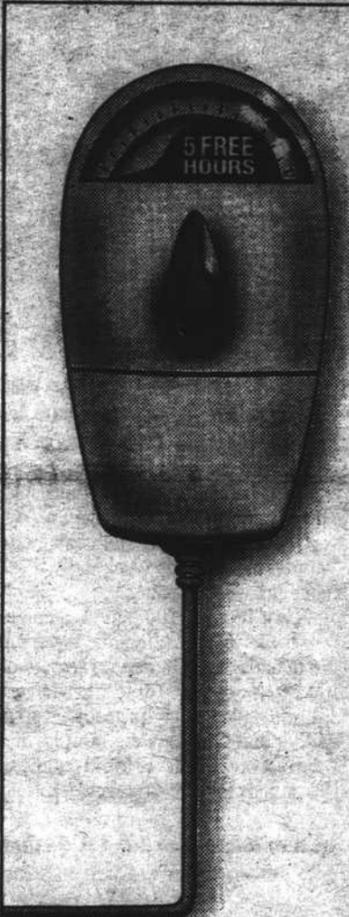
In past betting scandals, college officials usually had no idea that such influence was going on, French said.

"You have to be vigilant," he said. "They're going to bring embarrassment to your university."

He urged colleges to make sure their coaches, administrators and security officers are aware of the potential problems and to meet with police to learn about unsavory characters and places for athletes to avoid.

There should be "zero tolerance" of gambling on campus, he said.

Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala told the NCAA officials that colleges can help battle youth alcohol abuse by severing advertising, sponsorship and other ties between college sports and alcohol.



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