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the sports

Aggies, Raiders meet in Summit

By MARK PATTERSON
Battalion Sports Staff

There is no tomorrow for the Texas A&M basketball team. It's time for them to put their chips on the table and eal the cards.

Tonight at 7 o'clock, the Aggies open post-season play against the Texas Tech Red Raiders in the second round of the Southwest Conference Post-Season Classic. Being held in the Summit for the third year in a row, six teams have earned the right to battle for the automatic berth into the NCAA playoffs.

In the lower bracket, the winner of tonight's Aggie-Red Raider match will play co-champion Arkansas Friday night.

In tonight's second game, scheduled for 9 o'clock, the Houston Cougars challenge the Baylor Bears for the right to face conference co-champion Texas in the semifinals Friday night. Winners Friday play Saturday for the NCAA berth.

Because of their victory over TCU last Saturday, the Raiders advanced to the Summit to face Texas A&M.

The Aggies, finishing 11-5 and third in conference play, earned a first-round bye in the tourney.

In their first meeting this year, played in G. Rollie White Coliseum, the Aggies took a narrow 68-63 verdict. But on their trip to Lubbock late in the season, the Aggies were nipped by the Raiders 67-63 in one of the key games of the SWC title chase.

The loss to Tech was the third in a row for the Aggies and ended all title hopes for Coach Shelby Metcalf. Before traveling to the panhandle, Texas A&M lost consecutive games to Texas in Austin and Arkansas in Fayetteville.

The game in Lubbock was no surprise; the Red Raiders have always played the Aggies tough. The series, spanning a 21-year period, is knotted at 21 wins apiece going into tonight's game.

"I don't know what it is, but Tech always gives us a good ball game," Metcalf said about the series. "And it doesn't matter where we play them. It's always a battle to the end."

Tech Coach Gerald Myers thinks his Raiders have a fair shot at best to win the tournament.

"Our team can only be considered a dark horse at best," Myers said. "We're not real strong on the boards, and we've got to get somebody to come through for us to neutralize the rebounding."

"A&M is certainly capable of winning it all. With their front line (Rudy Woods, Rynn Wright and Vernon Smith) they have to be considered a contender for the top spot. And they've also got good guards that if left alone can sink the outside shot."

Myers declined on picking a favorite to win the tournament. Team by team he feels that anyone of them could advance into the NCAA tournament.

"The teams are so evenly matched it's hard to pick a winner," Myers said. "In one bracket you have Texas, Baylor and Houston. And in the other you have Arkansas, Texas A&M and Tech."

"I guess I'd have to go with Texas in their bracket because of their experience. Houston is the darkhorse. They've played well near the end of the regular season."

"But with Vinnie Johnson, you can't count out Baylor. They've upset some teams this season."

"In the other bracket it's tough to pick between Arkansas and A&M. I'd probably have to give Arkansas the edge because of Sidney Monerief. He's just a fantastic player."

For the first time, officials for the Atlantic Coast Conference will be

working the SWC tournament two conferences have made in officials to try and get a truer feeling of impartiality.

"The most important reason for doing this," Myer explained, "is because we have so many good players that are alumni of schools that are alumni of schools that work a game that involves this eliminates a lot of the bias."

"Our officials are in fact trade. I wouldn't want to do it. If this doesn't work, we can go back to the way we were doing it."

Things are already being talked about for next year's tournament. The losers of tonight's game begin thinking about next year.



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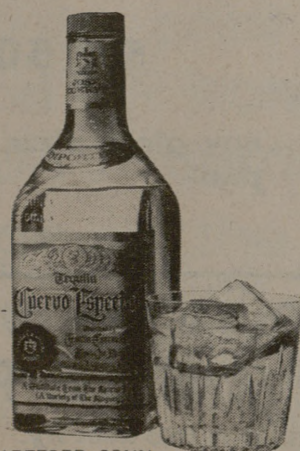
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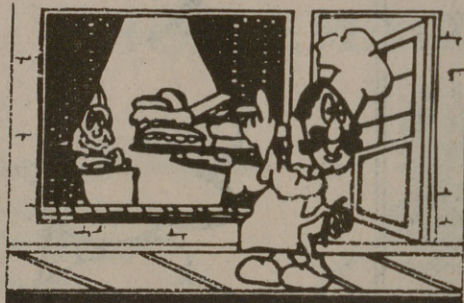
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20th Year	14,774.51	29,549.02	59,098.04	73,872.57	295,490.20
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