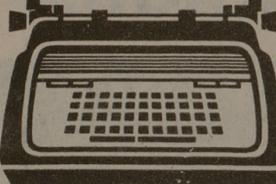


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**Ags' Marbury crowd pleaser from streets of New York City**

By CHAREAN WILLIAMS  
Assistant Sports Editor

Texas A&M guard Don Marbury calls himself a crowd pleaser. While growing up playing basketball on the streets of Brooklyn, N.Y., Marbury learned to play for the fans.

"(Basketball's) a different game in New York," Marbury said. "They run and gun (fastbreak) there. They really don't even play defense. They play for the crowd. They're crowd pleasers."

"I love the game. I really enjoy giving the crowd its money's worth."

The A&M crowd seems to enjoy Marbury just as much.

This season, Marbury's first as an Aggie, the G. Rollie White Coliseum fans have adopted Marbury as one of its favorite sons.

"It really makes me feel good," Marbury said. "Sometimes I am so much into the game I don't hear them. My girlfriend, Lisa, came to the SMU and Houston games and said, 'Donnie, they really like you here.' She said they were saying things like, 'That Don Marbury is really good.'"

The tough New York asphalt taught Marbury how to be good.

"I played everyday," Marbury said. "I played basketball 'til three in the morning. We had lighted courts behind my house, so I always went outside and played."

Following his career at Lincoln High School in Brooklyn, in which he earned a New York News all-city honors, Marbury decided on Farmingdale Junior College.

At Farmingdale JC last season, Marbury averaged 25 points and seven rebounds per game.

Following his season at Farmingdale, such basketball powerhouses as Marquette, Nevada-Las Vegas, Michigan and Wichita State found something they liked in Marbury and vigorously recruited the 6-foot-3 guard.

"I visited Texas A&M first," Marbury said. "I heard Fred Burton might be coming here. I knew a lot about Fred. I figured we could go down and help the team."

Marbury's father also had a say in the matter.

"My dad wanted me to go to A&M," he said. "My mom wanted me to go to Vegas. I had to decide. I kind of picked A&M 'cause my mom had picked Georgia for my brother."

Monday, Marbury was named Southwest Conference Newcomer of the Year and earned second team SWC honors. He said he was pleased with both his performance and the team's.

"Sometimes we let down and didn't play with enough patience," he said. "I'm just happy I'm playing. I like the way I'm playing."

In the Aggies first encounter with SMU, Marbury suffered a knee injury that prevented him from practicing most of the regular season.

"I came down (on the knee) and (it) went the wrong way," Marbury said. "(SMU's) Scott Johnson put his knee in my knee and pushed down.

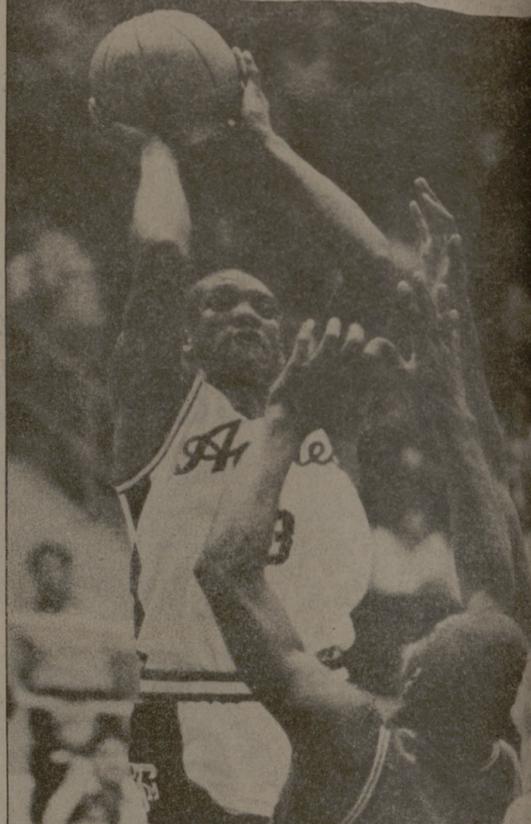


Photo by DEAN SA...

Texas A&M guard Don Marbury (above) — "(Basketball's) a different game in New York. They run and gun (fastbreak) there. They really don't even play defense. They're crowd pleasers. I really enjoy giving the crowd its money's worth."

"(Not practicing) kind of hurt my timing, but I recovered and I'm playing hard."

The knee has responded to treatment and off-season surgery seems unlikely.

"My knee is starting to get stronger," he said. "It only hurts after games. I'm just glad I'm healthy enough to play, even though the knee gives me problems."

The future appears even brighter for Marbury and the Aggies. A&M has all its starters back and Marbury's injury problems should be over by then.

"I feel like next year, we should be picked to win the Southwest Conference," he said. "All the key players on the other teams are leaving — (Joe) Kleime and (Charles) Balentine at Arkansas, (Jon) Koncak at SMU, (Mike) Wacker at Texas, (Bubba) Jennings at Tech. We should be No.

I in the conference and we should be ranked in the Top 20 in the nation."

A career in speech communication lies ahead of Marbury, if the NBA can't find a spot on one of its rosters for him.

"It doesn't make any difference whether I play (NBA) basketball or go into radio broadcast," Marbury said.

Although he loves the Texas weather, New York is his home and Marbury longs for those Big Apple nights on the asphalt.

"I miss New York," he said. "It's a great place. There are a lot more people there, but the people there are more friendly and communicative."

For now, at least, Texas' wooden gyms are the place for Marbury.

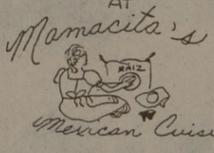
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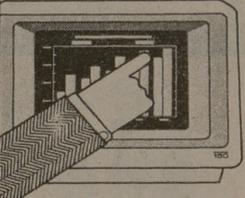
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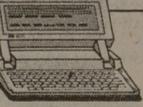


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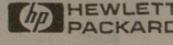
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**BU's Haller accused of being 'travel agent'**

Associated Press

DALLAS — A Baylor basketball player claims he was provided with a round-trip airplane ticket home during Christmas break, a violation of NCAA rules if arranged by the university, The Dallas Morning News reported Wednesday.

The player, who asked not to be identified, told the News he received his ticket from Head Coach Jim Haller, who turned in his resignation

Feb. 22 after disclosure that he had given an unauthorized university living expense check to a reserve center John Wheeler and suggested he use the money for car payments.

Haller denied the unidentified players allegations.

"I have never touched an airplane ticket in my life," Haller said. "All you have to do is call a travel agency."

The newspaper contacted Brazos Valley Travel in Waco, where it

learned that five or six tickets to Baylor basketball players Christmas break had been billed to parents.

But the father of the player in question denied he had paid for an airplane ticket.

Providing free airplane tickets to a player would violate the NCAA "extra benefits" rule that says athletes may not be given benefits available to other students.