



Photo by DEAN SAITO

Looking Down The Road

The scoreboard at Kyle Field tells the tale of the A&M football team — 9/14/85 is the date of spring drills for Jackie Sherrill (right) and of the Ags' season opener against Alabama.

Three R's mean more to Arkansas fanatics

The three "R's" of the 1985 Southwest Conference Basketball Classic in Dallas were "Red, Rowdy and Razorback."

In fact, it seemed oddly inappropriate for the tourney's championship trophy to be carried home by Gerald Myers' surprising Texas Techsters (even though they are another "R" team dressed in red) because the University of Arkansas' influence pervaded not only Reunion Arena and the tournament's Hyatt Regency headquarters, but every bar and restaurant in the east-central corner of "Big D."

Yes, Virginia, Dallas is still located in Texas. "The Hogs have come down from the hills and we're here to have some fun," said David Barrow, a businessman from Little Rock and staunch Razorbacker. "My wife and I come down every year. We wouldn't miss the show for the world."

This year's "show" began on the first night of the tournament against the Texas Longhorns. It wasn't Academy Award winning material.

The Hogs dismantled the Horns with as much difficulty as a meat-grinder making its first acquaintance with Elsie the cow. And UA accomplished the massacre with even less resistance in the stands than on the court.

"I looked up into the stands at the end of the game and I still saw my wife sitting there," said Texas Coach Bob Weltlich after the game. "It was nice to know that somebody was there cheering for us."

A quick check of an audiometer would have shown that the Hogs were in attendance long before their 7:30 p.m. tip off against the Horns.

The majority of fans at any tournament game involving any SWC

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teams were wearing crimson shirts and pig-snouted hats. And the biggest cheers in games involving other schools were voiced when the Razorback team entered the arena just to scout their potential opponents.

"I just don't understand you Texans," said Barrow after the TCU-Texas A&M game, in which the Aggies advanced to the tourney's semifinals on the strength of Todd Holloway's last-second jump-shot. "We love our Hogs. They're the best thing going. But then again, if we didn't love 'em, who would?"

The Hogs didn't need anyone else's love in Dallas.

Approximately 8,500 loyal "Piggies" tramped to Dallas and a large share of them stayed in the Hyatt Regency Hotel, located directly beneath the trendy Reunion Tower.

At night, the hotel bar was filled with boasts of that day's conquests and promises of those yet to come. During the evenings, the hotel restaurant was filled with the sounds of hearty-appetited munching that could only have been caused by a full day of cheering and jeering. And during the day, no-one could be found anywhere in the hotel because they were all wallowing in Reunion, whetting their appetites and egos.

UA fans even had time for pep rallies every morning in the middle of Reunion Plaza, right next to the fountain gardens. The "Hog Wild Band" was there, and so were the cheerleaders, pompon girls and the athletes being deified.

And pig hats. Everywhere one looked, there were pig hats and other pork paraphernalia.

"You have to understand a little about Arkansas to understand exactly why everything is the way it is," said Millie Waters, a waitress and new grandmother of twin boys (as evidenced by an ever-present snapshot) from Fort Smith. "We don't have any pro teams in any sport there. We don't really have any other big schools to follow."

"The Razorbacks are all we have and we love 'em."

Arkansas advanced to the tournament championship game against Tech and lost a close game. But their season was far from over.

"We have a really young team," said a writer for the Northwest Arkansas Gazette-Times. "Aside from big Joe Kleine, we really don't lose much next year. And you just watch — the Hogs started out slow this year, but they're picking up steam."

"They're gonna surprise some people in the NCAA Tournament." The Hogs lost 68-65 to No. 2 St. John's in the second round of the NCAA Tournament's West Region with a team containing 11 freshmen and sophomores and seniors Kleine and Charles Balentine.

The game was played in Salt Lake City before a crowd of 8,000, about 3/4 of which answered to the calls of "Soooie, Pig!"

It's a shame that the words "die-hard fans" don't begin with an "R" too.

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