

Aggs Play Cougars In Tuesday Game

BY MARVIN SCHULTZ
Battalion Asst. Sports Editor

Before the Cougars play host to the Aggies, they will have to do battle with two other SWC foes, Texas Christian and Baylor. This, in itself will be a chore for the Cougars, having had their share of injuries.

They may well be without the services of their high scoring forward Don Schverak who injured the middle finger on his left hand in a Monday workout. Don Eckelman also is injured with an ankle hurt but is expected to fill in for the injured Schverak.

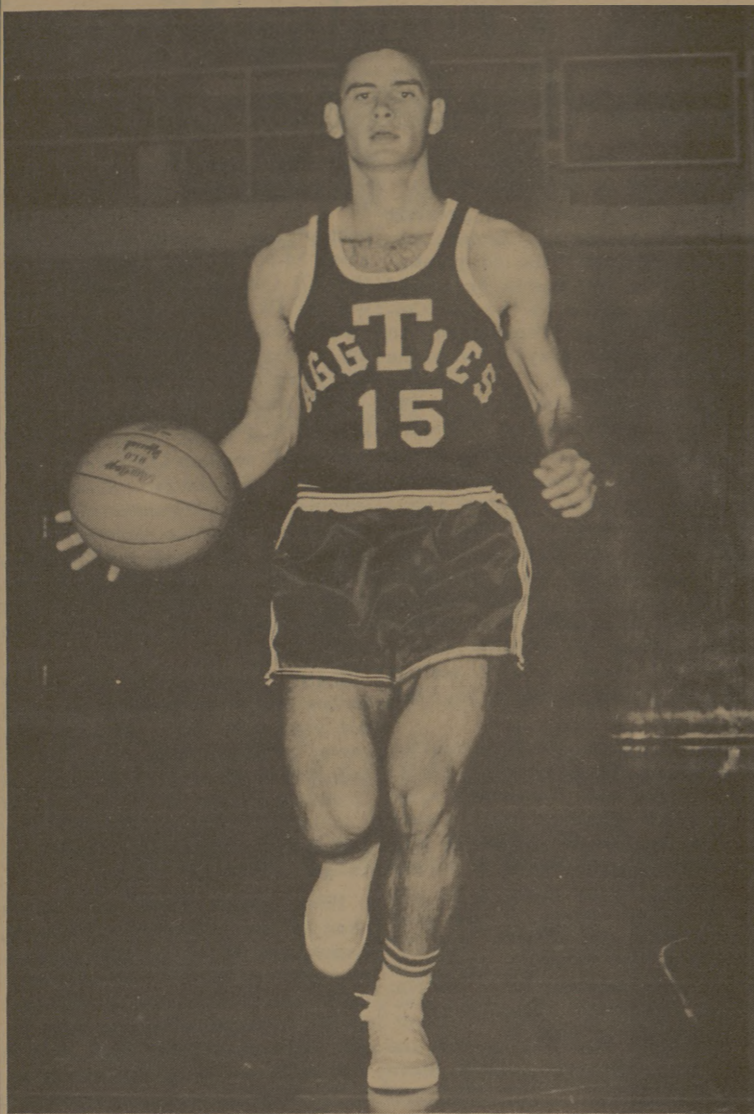
The flashy sophomore from Michigan, Joe Hamood has a groin injury which will keep him out of the lineup for an indefinite time, so as one can see, the Cougars have their share of troubles.

With the high riding Aggies invading Houston Tuesday night, Coach Guy Lewis will have an extra worry as the Aggies will feature the team that is currently pacing the SWC with a 3-0 slate.

This will be a warmup tilt as far as the Aggies are concerned because the crucial contest will come on Feb. 1 when the Aggies take on the Owls of Rice University in the Bayou city.

So far, the Aggies have been the talk of the conference as they have developed into a well-rounded attack that stands up under pressure, which is the underlying characteristic of any championship team.

This highly regarded squad deserves all the support of Aggie followers in and around the Houston area.



Junior Sparkplug

Paul Timmins, 5-11 guard, has regained his starting berth with fine ball-handling and playmaking. Coach Shelby Metcalf says Timmins is playing the best ball of his career. Timmins' play was a big factor in A&M's win over Texas.



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FROM THE SIDELINES

Metcalf Has View At Top, Fears Only Seasickness

BY JIM BUTLER

"Don't rock the boat!" Four short words expressed the philosophy of Aggie coach Shelby Metcalf as he and the Cadets move into the second half of the current cage season.

METCALF THESE days looks like a man with something on his mind. It wouldn't take three guesses to find that the vision was a crown, Southwest Conference variety.

The Aggies re-open SWC action Feb. 1 against the Rice Owls in Houston with a solid grip on the league lead. A&M stands 3-0 while the Owls are 2-1, losing to SMU in Dallas. The Cadets defeated the Mustangs in Big D.

"OUR TOUGHEST game is Rice; it's the next one," said Metcalf, sticking to the tried and true adage "one at a time."

The big name and big man for Rice is their 6-10 center Kendall Rhine. Rhine tied A&M's Bennie Lenox for the SWC scoring championship last season with a 25.1 average.

SOPHOMORE JOHN Beasley, A&M's 6-8 center will draw the task of trying to stop the potent Rhine. "It wouldn't be fair to expect John to handcuff Rhine," Metcalf said. "Rhine has an edge in height and two big years' experience. But I wouldn't trade Beasley for Rhine any time. It will be a real test of John's defensive ability."

Before the Owls and Aggies tangle, however, the Cadets go to Houston for a warm-up in the coliseum against the University of Houston Cougars. The Cougars, 10-6 on the season, drew their first loss, 61-58, in G. Rollie White.

"BOTH TEAMS have improved," Metcalf said, "but we're a young

team and young players improve a little faster. Houston will have an edge since they play Thursday (TCU) and Saturday (Baylor) before we catch them Tuesday. We've had 17 days off and 10 days without practice."

"I hope the break didn't kill our momentum," Metcalf went on. "I don't know why it should have. Texas was in the same spot last year and it didn't hurt them."

THE MENTION of the Longhorns brought up the 65-60 A&M victory over the Steers in Austin and the play of junior college transfer Ken Norman. Norman came off the bench to sink two crucial buckets that kept the Aggies in the lead.

"I just want everyone to know that Ken wasn't pulling rabbits out of a hat. He's been looking real good in practice. Ken's made the adjustment well and will help us out a lot."

"I WAS REAL proud of all eight that played and one that didn't,"

Metcalf said. He was referring to senior defensive specialist Cecil Ferguson. "Ferguson is as fine a guard as there is in the conference," Metcalf added.

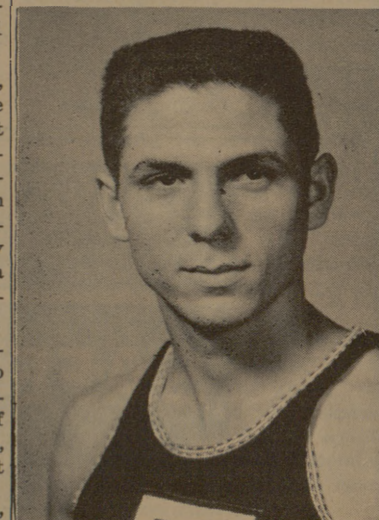
Ferguson—"Eagle" to his teammates—is a quiet, hard-working player who fits well into the Aggie scheme. He's always there for Metcalf to call on when things aren't going too well.

"FERGUSON IS like a bull pen pitcher in baseball. He only gets the call when there is trouble," Metcalf said. And like the bullpen pitcher who has become a necessity for a championship team (Ron Perranoski for the Dodgers), the unknown man on the Aggie bench—Ferguson—occupies the same position of importance for the Aggies.

With half the season gone and half to play, Metcalf surveyed the future from his view at the top. "Before the season started, I said defense and rebounding would be our biggest problems. I knew we had boys who could shoot. The key to our success so far is that we have overcome these problems." A&M is leading the league in defense and second to SMU in rebounding as well as leading in offense.

"WE DEFINITELY have to win all our home games. The big factor here is the support of the student body. School spirit is the reason why the Aggies are so tough at home. To reach our goal, we will have to have 100 percent support of the student body," Metcalf concluded.

Usually that would be like an eskimo asking for snow but nothing can be taken for granted now days. Aggies, get behind the team and show the school spirit.



CECIL FERGUSON

Soph Big John Stands Tall As Top Aggie Rebounder

BY DAVID STILES
Special Writer

One of the brighter spots of the still young Aggie basketball season has been the improved and spirited play of 6-8 sophomore center John Beasley.

The 19-year-old business major broke into the starting line-up after the season opener with the University of Houston. His consistent point production and rebounding rank him as the team's leading rebounder and second high scorer, behind sharpshooter Bennie Lenox.

BIG JOHN carried an 18.8 average on the Fish team last year and was a freshman all-conference selection.

John, who is better known to his teammates as 'Beas,' likes to recall his first experience with a basketball. "I was in the third grade when I played my first game. Some older boys needed an extra so I filled in. I was what you might call a defensive specialist because I guarded my man even when our team had the ball.

My older brother, who was refereeing, called an official time out to explain the fundamentals of offensive basketball to help us both save face and it was then that I learned to shoot." And luckily for A&M, Beas has developed a tremendous touch that causes the ball to nestle in the net with confident

accuracy. THE BROWN-EYED youngster was an all-district selection for three years and all-state two years at Linden-Kildare High School in northeast Texas.

John spent a summer of heavy construction work and many hours in a nearby gym to reduce his freshman playing weight fifteen pounds. "I feel like I can run a lot faster now and I know I can jump higher," he said.

The likeable lad is optimistic about the upcoming games and conference race. "I think we all needed this semester break in play but I feel like we will be ready again for the Houston game."

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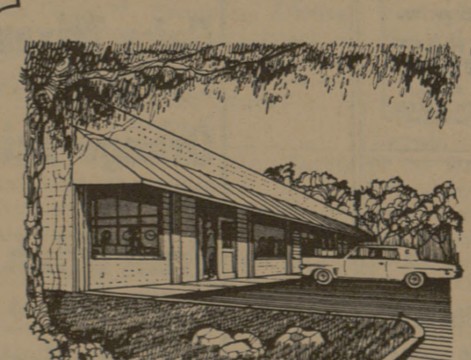
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