

# Arnie Palmer Defends Title In Phoenix Golf Classic

By JACK STEVENSON  
Associated Press Sports Writer  
PHOENIX, Ariz. (AP) — Golf's Big Three was back together again Wednesday as South Africa's Gary Player arrived on the eve of the \$50,000 Phoenix Open Tournament.

With Arnold Palmer seeking to win this title a fourth straight year and Jack Nicklaus figuring he should have his own game back in top shape, the three could dominate the event.

JERRY STEELSMITH of Glendale, Calif., served notice this may not necessarily be true as he sizzled eight-under-par 63 in the pro-amateur prelude.

He and his pro-am team posted a best-ball 54.

"I've been active in tournaments in South Africa and won the Australian Open," Player said when asked if he'd been resting.

"I DIDN'T HAVE any rest at all," he said, "I've been active all the time."

He won four of the seven tournaments in which he played in his homeland.

Arriving Tuesday night, Player found he was battling time

as well as the Phoenix Country Club course.

THERE IS A 10-hour time differential and if he had stayed home he would have been going to bed instead of just starting to play golf in noon sunshine.

Player passed up the California tournaments awaiting the birth of his fourth child at Johannesburg.

"It was a little girl and now we have two girls and two boys," he said.

LAST YEAR, Player competed in 22 tournaments on the PGA

tour and won \$1,000 or more in 21 of them, including a second-place finish at Phoenix. He was just one stroke behind Palmer.

All told, he collected \$55,455 in those 22 events.

FOLLOWING Wednesday's pre-am prelude, 150 pros tee off in the 72-hole tournament over the 6,765-yard, par-35-36-71 Country Club course.

Palmer won the tournament with two 69s in 1962, the last time the course was used for the open.

A year ago at the Arizona Country Club, Arnie won with 273.



## FROM THE Sidelines

By JIM BUTLER

Some people get their kicks throwing peanuts at winos. The Batt sports staff gets theirs from reading columns by other conference sports editors, and the feeling is probably mutual.

John Durham took over the top slot for the funniest with his Jan. 29 column in The Rice Thresher. The column came out on the Wednesday preceding A&M's visit to Houston last Saturday.

Durham's observations: "Admittedly the Aggies are inhuman in some aspects, but they are not superhuman—which they would have to be to win in Dallas, Austin, and Houston in the first round."

A&M won, 74-70. But in spite of Durham's predictions, phone booths around Aggieland haven't been spouting Aggies in red and blue uniforms with a big "S" on the chest and a short, flowing cape.

Durham does make one forecast that Aggies would hopefully endorse. He sees the Southwest Conference basketball derby being narrowed down to Rice, SMU and A&M. The Cadets have already measured the Owls and Ponies on the enemy's court.

What happened to Texas Tech?

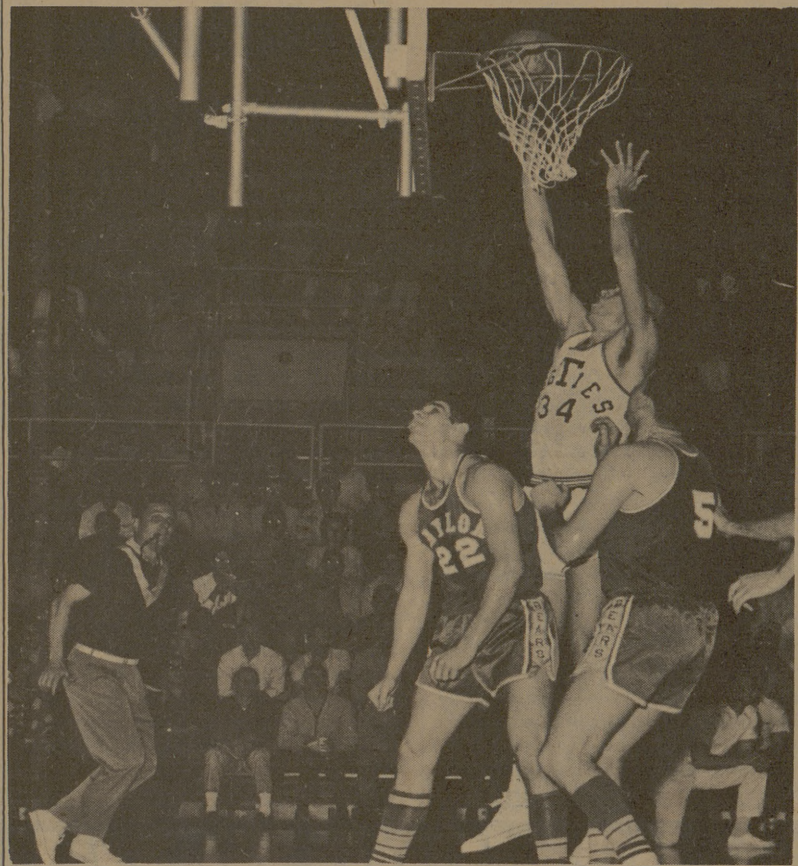
But nobody can be all bad and Durham shows his shrewdness in his evaluation of Coach Shelby Metcalf's crew. "The main thing about the Aggies is that they seem to be hustle personified. They have the benefit of sophomores' attitude without sophomorphish mistakes."

With A&M's 83-58 win over Baylor Tuesday night, this truly seems to be a great part of the Aggie success story so far.

Tim Timmerman has turned from a tall, gawky freshman into a talented ball-handler and an accurate shot. Timmerman was instrumental in A&M's crucial win over Rice and started against Baylor as a result of his fine play.

John Beasley, straight off the Fish team, stepped into the center spot like he had ordered it custom made. Beasley scored 22 points against Rice for scoring honors.

The third soph, Dick Stringfellow, has teamed with junior Paul Timmins and senior Bennie Lenox to give the Cadets the best backcourt team in the conference. His aggressive defensive play sparked the Aggies in their second half rally that beat Baylor.



High Jumping Sophomore

John Beasley stretches to tip one in against Baylor Tuesday night. The Aggies won 83-58.

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