

# The Dome Gets Bigger And Better



SOME WILL WALK, OTHERS WILL RIDE ... ramps and escalators will whisk spectators to their seats.

BY MICHAEL REYNOLDS  
Day News Editor

The eyes of Texas and the nation will figuratively and, in many cases, personally be on the Harris County Domed Stadium in Houston when it opens in early April of 1965.

The stadium could turn out to be a great tourist attraction drawing out-of-state money into the southeast Texas economy, as well as being a sports palace for many residents of the state and probably many Aggies in the bargain.

Although A&M has cancelled the University of Houston from its schedule, the Aggies could conceivably play in the stadium next year, if and when the young Bluebonnet Bowl game takes up residence under the dome along with the Colt .45's, the Houston Oilers and the Cougars.

The Houston Fat Stock Show and Rodeo will be another drawing card that could introduce many citizens of Brazos County as well as students and faculty of A&M to the stadium.

When completed, the stadium and the proposed Y-shaped livestock hall will provide the world's largest convention facilities, drawing groups from throughout the state, the nation and the world.

What member of any of these groups, especially the sports fans, would mind traveling the distance to Houston to see a game or show that would go on, regardless of outside weather, at a moderate 72 degrees?

Gone will be the long walks through parking lots at the mercy of the elements. Plans call for a covered walkway to the stadium to be no further than 150 feet from any car in the circular parking lot—which has a capacity of 30,000 cars and 500 buses.

Gone will be long lines waiting for tickets. A pneumatic carrier tube running from a central distribution area will provide customers at any gate with complete selectivity of seats, and in record time too.

Gone will be the long climbs to uncomfortable wooden seats.



COLT'S HOME IN THE DOME

... stadium will seat 53,000 for football, 45,000 for baseball and 66,000 for boxing.

Since the playing field is 31 feet below ground level, spectators will enter the stadium at about mid-point. All that will remain will be a short distance to walk on gently sloping ramps or escalators to plush, completely upholstered seats on any of six seating levels.

Once in their seats, a view will be presented to the spectators which will fill them with awe ... the world's largest unsupported domed area. It will be 642 feet from side to side (longer than two football fields).

Even now, with construction work only 75 per cent finished, the view is spectacular. With nothing to use as reference on the floor of the stadium, the eye fails to register the true size of field.

Every seat in the house will be well worth the money because the roof gives the spectator the effect of being twice as close to the play in action. It is equally hard to believe that the roof is actually 208 feet above the field. Obviously many sports writers have been taken-in by the optical illusion, as is shown by requests for the baseball commissioner's



75 PER CENT FINISHED

... lower level seats will rotate on tracks for football, baseball.

office to rule on balls hitting the dome.

Real evidence of any hitter's prowess is lacking. Even using fungo bats under ideal conditions

yielded only one successful hit, and that one failed to hit the top of the dome. It struck near the side at the 182-foot level.

Since the floor of the stadium

is still being used daily by bulldozers cranes and trucks, it has been impossible to start preparing the grounds for grass.

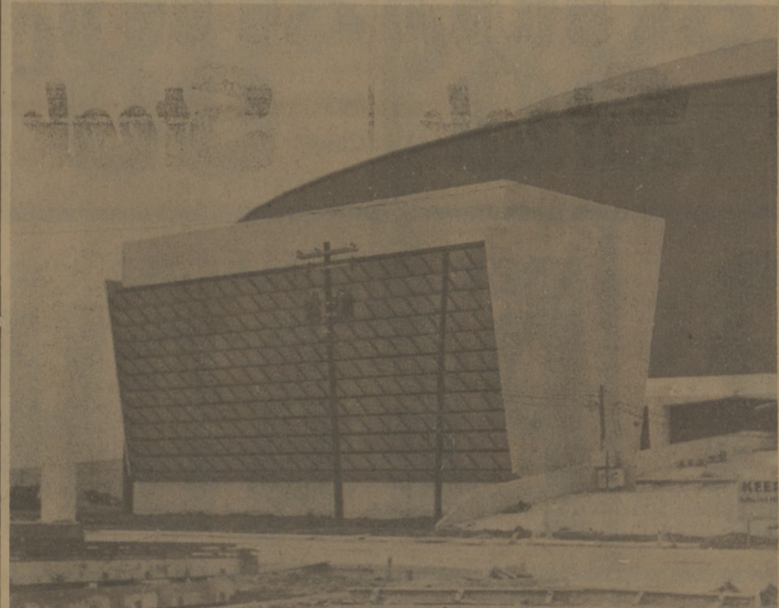
The A&M Agricultural Extension Service did extensive research to discover what type of grass would best suit the covered air-conditioned stadium.

"They told us Tiffway Bermuda would be the best for those conditions," said John Giles, publicity director for the Houston Sports Association, and owners of the Colt .45's, chief tenants of the multipurpose building.

"We have begun raising this grass on a farm near Wharton and will continue to raise it there for replacement purposes once we have our first grass in the stadium."

"We know that when we put down a floor, it will kill the grass but the researchers told us that it will come out again. The whole thing is a gamble. We will not know whether it will or will not until we do it the first time," said Giles.

Because the dome is the first of its kind in the world, the entire construction of it has been a gamble. No one had built one before and no one was 100 per cent sure that it could be built.



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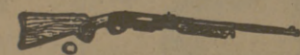
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