

Cagers seek rebound, repeat of history



Jeff Overhouse



Rick Duplantis



Charlie Jenkins

Coming off the second worst Texas Aggie cage record in 15 years the Texas A&M basketball squad embarks on the 1971 season as the underdog.

And in no game will they be more the underdog than when they open the season with the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) in December.

Last year's 9-17 mark, only the second losing campaign in seven tries for Coach Shelby Metcalf, came at the end of predictions that ranged from the Aggies to be either the champion or a major contender for the Southwest Conference title.

But the Aggies found themselves nestled in seventh place in the eight team circuit and minus a standout player. In the past it had been Carroll Broussard, Bennie Lenox, John Beasley and most recently Mike Heitmann that gave the Aggies the consistent 20 point performance. Last year it wasn't there.

Metcalf, whose teams own a couple of Southwest Conference titles, two second place finishes and a third in seven years, will seek to put the Aggies back in

the winning column. Recalling Metcalf's first losing season of 1967, the next Aggie club was 14-10 and then a year later they were conference champs. In other words the sophomores, who had their problems in 1967 had developed into champions by their senior season.

Last year's group was paced by several sophomores, the most prominent of which was the league's sophomore of the year, 6-7 Jeff Overhouse. Overhouse averaged 13.3 points and 8.7 points to rank second on the squad behind Steve Niles.

Niles, one of four departed seniors, was drafted by the New York Knickerbockers of the National Basketball Association in that league's annual collegiate player draft.

Besides Overhouse, who could see action at either post this fall, the Aggies got timely support especially in the second half of the season from first year players, Charlie Jenkins, Bob Gobin and Wayne Howard.

Howard, after seeing very little action in the early part of the season due to a misund-

standing with Coach Metcalf, finished the season with an 11.4 average in SWC games as the former high school All-American at Spring Branch Memorial had scored only 17 points in part-time duty in 8 nonleague contests.

Jenkins took over the point post and scored at an average of 7.2 during league play. His play was valuable late in the campaign as the Aggies had to fill the point post that came open when senior Pat Kavanagh missed the last half of the season due to a back injury.

Gone also are seniors Bill Cooksey and Chuck Smith, who shared their moments of glory and along with Niles were members of the 1969 championship squad.

Gobin, noted for his aggressive style of play, passing and ballhawking defense, hopes to improve on his shooting which produced 5.2 per game.

Another sophomore from last year's squad was Bill O'Brien, but the 6-0 pointman who teamed with Howard at Memorial, is not returning this fall as he is

transferring to McNeese State.

6-7 Rick Duplantis and 6-3 Bobby Threadgill are the only returning seniors for the Aggies and, like their counterparts, had their moments but as the case was didn't have enough of them.

Duplantis, bothered early last season with a knee injury that was recuperating from surgery, chipped for a 7.5 average in scoring and 4.2 rebounds per game. His .496 shooting percentage ranked among the loop's leaders.

Coach Metcalf and assistant Jim Culpepper went hunting for the big gun and felt that the quickest help might be the junior college route where the Baylor Bears have benefited greatly and the Texas Christian University Horned Frogs found a conference champion.

Culpepper — spending numerous hours searching the midwest, northeast and west and fighting with the powers such as Drake, USC and Jacksonville and just about everybody else — picked out two junior college stars.

The most prominent of them is 6-2 Mario Brown from Kennedy King Junior College in Chi-

cago. Brown, a prolific driver, will fight along with Gobin, Jenkins and freshman Bobby McKey for the point position.

Brad Pauling from Glendive Junior College in Montana is 6-5 and will be in the battle at the high post and at the wings when practice starts in October.

The Aggies have added five freshman recruits to the list but have six prospects coming up from last year's 7-5 squad to battle for the varsity.

Most prominent among the sophomores-to-be is 6-6 Randy Knowles, who will be trying for a wing or post job and McKey, a fiery competitor at the point. McKey, from Dallas Thomas Jefferson was impressive with his leadership, quickness and a good shooting eye. Knowles, from Geneva, Ohio, is an outstanding outside shooter as he led the Fish with an 18-point average last season.

Other prospects from the Fish are 6-3 Joe Arciniega at a wing post, and 6-8 postmen Johnny Mayo and Jack Vest.

Mark Stewart, who was one of the Fish leaders despite playing

without a scholarship, will also contend for wing post.

The five freshman recruits who will make the nucleus of the Aggie Fish team coached by Culpepper are headed by Cedric Joseph who was chosen the player of the year last season for high school basketball in Texas and scored 66 points in one game. He will be joined by high school teammate 6-4 wingman Du Donaldson.

6-7 Webb Williams brings a 30-plus average from Class power Comstock and 6-8 Jerry Mercer brings a lot of muscle and scoring power from Cypress Fairbanks, the Class 4A basketball champion. Mercer, also an All-State selection in football and dominated the backboard at the state basketball tour. Another 30-point average was recorded by 5-11 guard Mike F from Rockford, Illinois.

With defending national champion UCLA leading off the season the Aggies will definitely be the underdog but the possibility the Aggies will back and that comeback a strong one. Remember 1969.

Aggie netters seek first team tennis championship

The Rice Owls lost All-Americans Zan Guerry and Mike Estepe to graduation and with them possibly went the Owls' complete domination of the Southwest Conference tennis race for the past four seasons.

It will at least bring the Owls down to earth and Aggie tennis coach Omar Smith feels that it will be at least a four-team scramble for the crown next year with runnerup Southern Methodist, the University of Texas at Austin and the Aggies vying for the crown with the Owls.

Rice does return All-American freshman Harold Solomon for his sophomore season. Solomon also has Jorge Berm, Emilio Montano and Gus Pellizi.

Smith points out that SMU returns its top player Jon Gardner among three of its top four from last year's squad and the Longhorns have everybody back including number one player Avery Rush.

Smith feels his own club will be strengthened with the competition and some outstanding newcomers.

Heading the newcomers are A&M Consolidated state doubles champions, Billy Hoover and Jere Mills. Hoover recently placed third in the Texas Junior Davis Cup tournament.

Smith has added Billy Wright from Ecuador, who has outstanding potential and Bobby Coch from Brazil. Although from Brazil, Coch is an American and his brother, Bill, played for Coach Smith and the Aggies in the early 1960's.

The Aggies will be minus two of their top six players from last year, Jon Ragland and Mike Hickey, who have completed their eligibility.

But coach Smith feels the newcomers plus the competition by a tough group of returnees will make the team stronger next season.

Leading the returnees is the number one player Dickie Fikes, who teamed with Ragland for second place in the Southwest Conference doubles last year. Smith foresees a tight battle for the number one spot with Fikes. Senior Tommy Connell, junior

Lawton Park and sophomore Dan Courson will lead that fight although several other players are expected to be in the battle for the top six spots on the team.

Among the leading players back from last year are Carl Jaedicke, Mike Mills, Jeff Carter, Mitch Barker, Bill Pecor, Mitch Barker, Kermit Smith, Dennis Hirschfield, Don Smith, Bob Barnard and Doug Laukhuf.

Former Aggie netter Richard Barker has returned to help Smith as an assistant coach this season. Barker is a former SWC doubles champion.

The Aggies have never won a team championship and Coach Omar Smith would like nothing better than for this to be the time.

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