

Merger only solution

Colonels face financial crisis

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP)—The Kentucky Colonels win basketball games. But they are losing dollars, plenty of them, their owners say.

The five owners of the American Basketball Association team believe a merger between the ABA and National Basketball Association is imperative.

"If Congress votes down the merger," said Colonels' Board Chairman Wendell Cherry, "you're going to see a tremendous flight of capital out of basketball, and it won't stop short of Kentucky."

He said, "We'd have to quit, that's all. We'd have to throw in the towel."

If the Colonels' projected loss for this fiscal year—\$402,837—is correct, Cherry and the four other owners will be \$1,771,649 in the red since they purchased the ABA team in October 1969.

One reason for the deficit is the bidding war between the two leagues for college basketball players. This bothers Cherry, but not as much as the ABA league assessment.

He said it came to \$78,113 in fiscal 1970, was \$128,297 during

the past fiscal year, and probably will be \$147,300 this year.

"This has been a tremendous expense," he said. "We pick up one-eleventh of the bill and it has been getting higher each year, primarily because of attorneys' fees. A lot of time and money has been spent on working out this merger at the league level."

Should the merger go through, he continued, "the league office can operate much more efficiently. Costs would generally be lower and would be divided among more teams."

When Cherry testified before the Senate subcommittee studying the consolidation, its chairman charged that club owners

enjoy losing money because of the tax advantages involved.

Cherry calls this "absurd. I've said it before: there's no future in tax write-offs."

He explained that under the corporate setup for the Colonels, the largest possible write-off for one of the five owners would be 70 per cent, "provided the individual has other income to offset the loss."

The Colonels are averaging about 9,300 spectators per game at home. This figure, which is sixth best among the 28 pro teams, includes complimentary tickets.

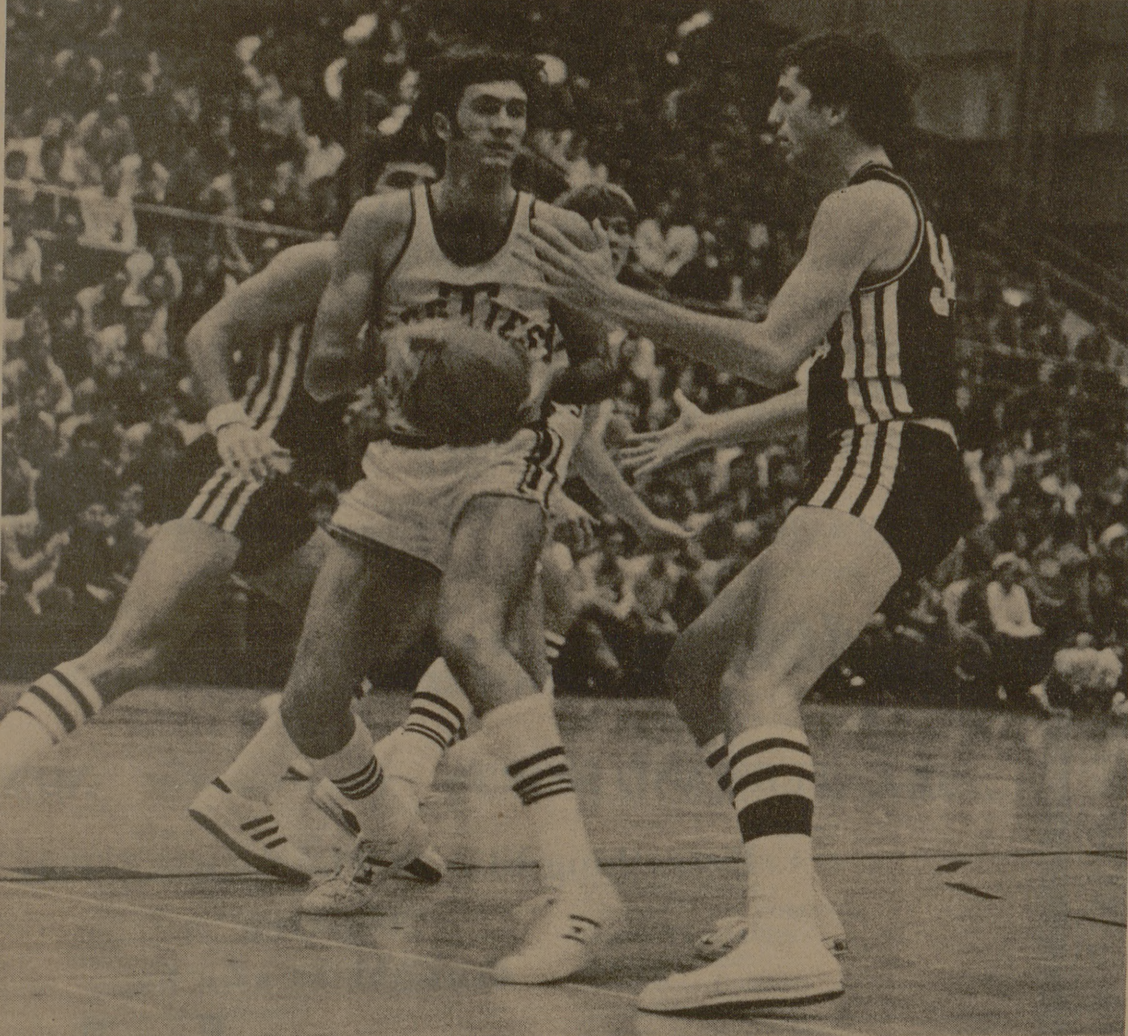
Cherry said he has "no axe to grind with the fans. If we

should have to call it quits, it won't be their fault."

The fact is, he continued, "these people (the owners) aren't going to put their capital into something that has no hope whatsoever of being rewarded. That's true in any area of business, and basketball is no exception."

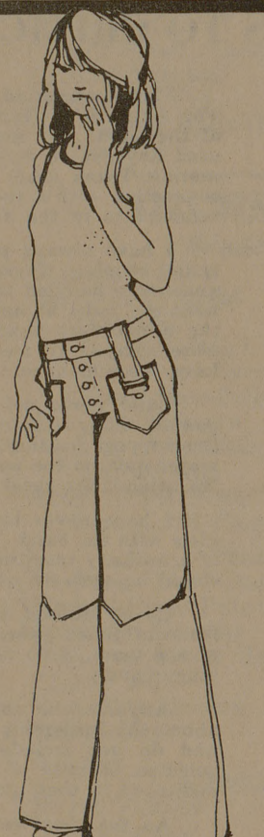
Cherry is optimistic that the proposed merger will be approved but doubts that action is likely before the upcoming draft of college players.

And that means, he said, "that a lot of kids will be getting enough money to make sure they never have to do a full day's work again."



DEFENSIVE STANDOUT BOBBY THREADGILL (with ball) is harassed by Texas Christian Horned Frogs Mark Stone (54) and Ricky Hall. Threadgill, a senior from New Braunfels, has started the last eight games for the Aggies, six of which A&M won. The 6-4 guard has appeared in 14 of the Aggies' 15 games, averaging 7.9 points per game, 9.7 in conference play. His most impressive statistic is the 24 personal fouls he has committed, averaging out to 1.7 per game. (Photo by Make Rice)

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Intramural wrestling starts with next week's weigh-ins

Intramural wrestling weigh-ins begin Monday and Tuesday, January 31 and February 1, the intramural office announced Monday.

Any person who has entered a weight division has to weigh in on one of these days. He has to make his weight class on these days or he cannot wrestle. No switching classes will be allowed. Weigh-ins will be conducted in the P.E. locker room in the basement of G. Rollie White Coliseum between four o'clock and six o'clock.

The intramural office also announced that softball entries are due February 18. Every team in every class must enter by this date.

Playoffs are continuing this week in Class A basketball and Class B horseshoes. The championship game in Class B horseshoes will be Monday, January 31 at five o'clock.

Playoffs in Class B football begin January 31. Class C win-

ners in bowling and golf should meet in the intramural office at 5:15 on January 31 to set the final roll-off and final match in those sports.

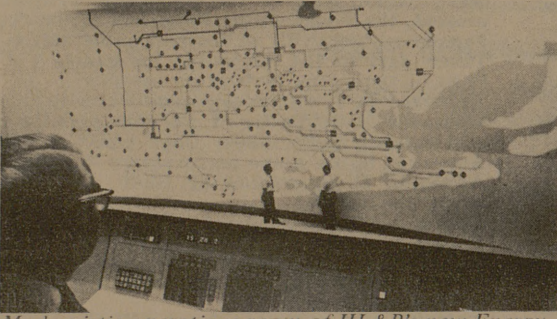
Cardinals acquire Steve Worster

ST. LOUIS (AP)—The St. Louis football Cardinals announced the acquisition Wednesday of Steve Worster, former University of Texas running back who played last season in the Canadian Football League.

Worster was a fourth-round draft choice by the Los Angeles Rams in 1971. He signed with the Hamilton Tiger-Cats but was suspended by the CFL after four games because of an arrest on a charge of possessing marijuana.

Worster was arrested at his apartment where he was entertaining friends. He said he had no knowledge of the marijuana.

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