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"QUALITY FIRST"

# Sutton optimistic about Arkansas cage chances

By DAVID WALKER  
Battalion Sports Writer

The cover of the 1975 Arkansas basketball press book says, "Basketball is Getting Bigger at Arkansas." After the best basketball season in over three decades no one in the Ozarks is doubting it.

Last season under first year coach Eddie Sutton, the Razorbacks finished 17-9, their best finish in 17 years, and missed the Southwest Conference title by one game as the 11-3 conference finish was Arkansas' best in more than 30 years.

Sutton feels that they have only just begun.

"We'll be improved," says Sutton. "But so will everybody else. All of the SWC teams had good recruiting years. This league will be much, much tougher."

Sutton, who at times has had more headlines than his team, feels that the SWC is on the verge of gaining some of the national spotlight that SWC football has had for so long.

"We're not that far behind now. I realize that this is a football area and it's not going to change. It doesn't have to change though. We can have excellent basketball programs to go along with our football programs," Sutton said.

"I'm a little outspoken at times but I'll tell you one thing, I'm going to stay in this conference for a long time and help raise SWC basketball where it should be on a national level," he added.

While Sutton feels the conference will be tougher he also feels that the Razorbacks will be able to hold their own.

"We're going to have a better team this year but it's possible for us to have a better team than last year and lose more games," Sutton said.

"Our strengths will be depth, offensive balance and overall team speed. We're going to have more quality players and I feel we'll have more confidence than we did a year ago. We couldn't reach beyond our sixth or seventh man with effectiveness last year. We may have the players to give us depth beyond that point this year," Sutton said.

"When you think of balance you think of offense. It will be difficult for a team to pinpoint on one player. I look at this club and see people who are capable of scoring consistently. If one player is stopped, it won't stop our offensive attack."

All-SWC guard Robert Birden has the hottest scoring hand among the three returning starters. Forward Charles Terry gives the Porkers proven rebounding strength. Centers Darryl Saulsberry and Jack Schulte provide a one-two punch at center.

Also returning from last year's

17-9 team include guards Jim Black and Marvin Delph, who worked up to sixth man status last year in his freshman year. Ray Buckner and Jim Counce return at forward, with Steve Stroud entering his third year at center.

Junior college transfer Ron Brewer heads the class of recruits in experience. The sophomore leaper is joined at forward by Corky Corzine (6-10) from St. Louis. Sidney Moncrief, Chris Bennett and Trey Trumbo are speedy additions at guard while Kansas City product Steve Schall (6-11) boosts depth at center.

"Our philosophy is not one to go out and massage the ball. We want

to fast break at every opportunity. We want to test the other team's defense every time we get the ball," Sutton said.

"The speed and quickness of their club gives us the opportunity to be more diversified. We may try to press, extend our defense beyond the midcourt line. Speed and quickness are more evident on defense, so we'll continue to emphasize defense," he said.

"Everybody in the SWC is going to be improved this season, and any of seven different teams could win the title. It's going to be a great year and I'm just happy to be in this conference."

Tomorrow: Baylor

# OU hopes to start new victory string

Associated Press

NORMAN, Okla. — "It's just like I tried to tell you guys. I told you they hired Barry Switzer they'd end up losing a game every two or three years."

Bob hurt, sports editor of The Daily Oklahoman, reported that the above came from one caller to his department following Oklahoma's first loss in 39 games — a 23-3 upset at the hands of Kansas.

Among the mail received by Switzer, who was losing his first game in three years as a head coach, was one letter which said, "Bad coaching finally caught up with your good personnel."

The traditional post-game partying was more subdued than usual Saturday night. "The students and fans were really stunned," said Richard Brown, bartender at the "South 40," a favorite Norman watering hole.

But he said as the night wore on, the remorse wore off. "I heard some people say that the loss would do them good," Brown said. "They said they hated to see it happen but it was bound to happen sooner or later. Everyone was optimistic."

Despite the momentary depression, no one around here is canceling flight reservations for an anticipated trip to the Orange Bowl.

That goal won't be easily reached because of the biggest upset of the 1975 season. To get to Miami on New Year's Day, the Sooners must defeat Missouri this Saturday and second-ranked Nebraska on Nov. 22.

A check with two major airlines revealed that there had been no

cancellations of reservations for Miami flights from Dec. 27-30 — ones that have been booked up for weeks. Spokesmen for a grocery chain and a travel agency promoting junkets to Miami said they were continuing the promotions with their fingers crossed.

Although dreams of a second straight national championship have been all but shattered, the Sooners still can grab a share of the Big Eight title and their first bowl berth in three years.

"I'm sure we're going to beat Missouri and Nebraska and go to the Orange Bowl," said Cecil Samara, Oklahoma's No. 1 fan who has driven his red-and-white Model-T Ford to Miami many times before.

The picture was a bit more gloomy Saturday as dazed fans drove around this town of 60,000 for hours, apparently trying to figure out what happened.

Midway in the fourth quarter, when the last of an incredible string of nine straight Oklahoma turnovers concentered the Sooners' fate, some booing resounded onto Owen Field.

Fans here are spoiled, what with the Bud Wilkinson era that produced a 48-game winning streak and a pair of national crowns and the success of the last several years under Chuck Fairbanks and Switzer.

Before Saturday, Oklahoma had won 28 games in a row, had gone 39 without a loss and had not lost at home since a titanic clash with Nebraska in 1971.

Switzer says defeat is "probably shrugged off a little more" at other schools with less tradition of winning. "Here our people expect us to win and to win every week regardless of what occurs."

But, Switzer said that of the 34 initial letters and telegrams he received, all but three were sympathetic.

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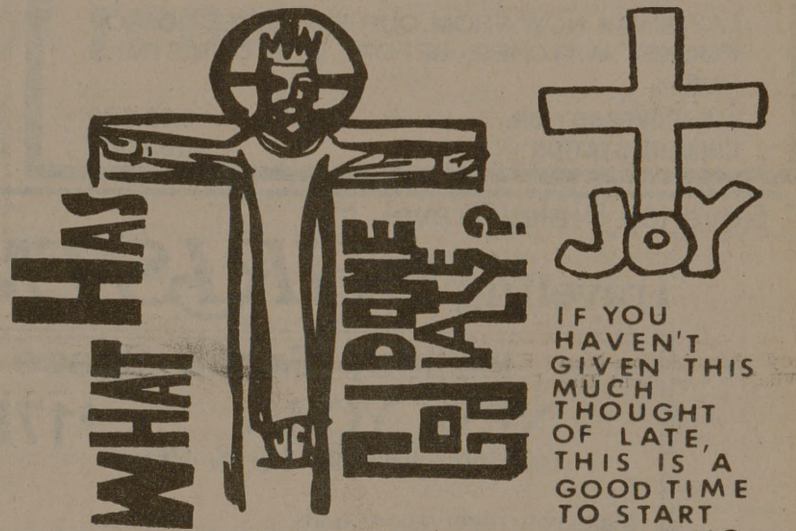
WHERE? CORNER OF N. COULTER & ETTLE STS. WHEN? NOV. 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, & 15 at 7:30 p.m. SPEAKER: HAGAR THOMAS OF BEAUMONT, TEXAS

OTHER ITEMS: REFRESHMENTS AND FREE LITERATURE AFTER THE MEETING TO THOSE WHO DESIRE IT. THIS SERIES OF SIX (6) BIBLE LECTURES WILL BE PRESENTED IN THE LIGHT OF EARTH BEING THE THEATRE OF THE UNIVERSE.

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SUNDAY 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m.

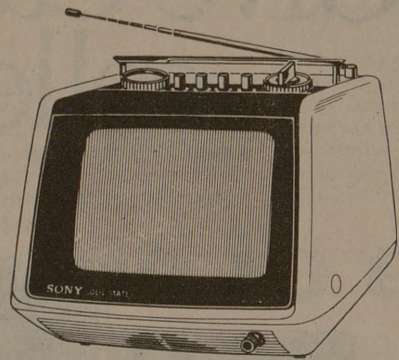
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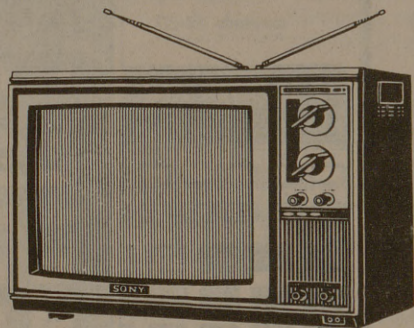
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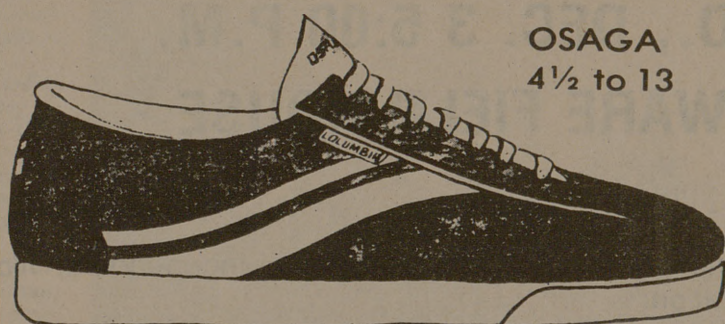
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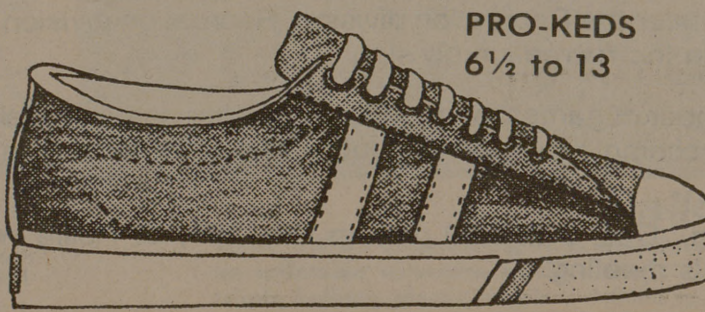
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