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Lewis says

UH won't overrun SWC

By **DAVID WALKER**
Battalion Sports Writer

Fans around the Southwest Conference have been waiting for years for the University of Houston to join the SWC basketball family. They need not wait any longer.

The Cougars begin their first run at the conference championship this season, and coach Guy Lewis disagrees with those who think the Cougars will walk away with the title.

"I sure don't think we're going to run away with it like some people seem to think," Lewis said. "Maybe three years ago, but the conference has really upgraded basketball in the past three years."

"Some of the big differences in SWC basketball has come about mainly because of more emphasis being put on the sport by the schools," Lewis added.

"There are a number of things that moved the conference up. Such things as more assistant coaches, recruiting nationally and the black player," Lewis said.

"We all know this is a football state — and it's going to be a football state — but there's no reason for a conflict because you don't play with the same kids," Lewis said.

While Lewis is glad to be in the SWC he feels that it could be a long first year. "This is the youngest team I've had since 1963. With the exception of Rice it will be the youngest team in the conference. I've only got one senior who's played any, and that's David Marrs," Lewis said.

There are two other seniors on the Cougar squad, but they played only a total of 50 minutes of varsity ball last year. Marrs was the fourth

leading scorer for the Cougars last year with a 9.5 average and the third rebounder with seven per game.

The only other returning starter is Otis Birdsong who was the leading scorer last year with a 24.6 average. He was the No. 15 scorer in the nation as a sophomore when he was the first Houston player ever to score more than 1,000 points as a sophomore.

From there it's mostly freshmen led by the state's No. 1 blue-chip prospect from Arlington, Allen

Winder. Winder, a 6-10, 240-pound center is expected to start for the Cougars after averaging over 20 points a game throughout his high school career.

Other top recruits include 6-9 Gary Noble, an All-Stater from Evans Louisiana, Tim Suddarth a 6-9 all-district star from San Antonio Holmes and George Walker, a 6-5 all-stater from Stafford.

The Cougars will miss the seniors from last year's 16-10 team. Those gone are two-time All-American

Louis Dunbar, three-year starter Maurice Presley and Ed Riska.

While the seniors will be missed, Lewis feels that there is no use in worrying about their absence.

"It's going to be tough this season. The league is strong from top to bottom, and I think the winner of the league will have at least three losses, maybe four," Lewis said.

"It's going to be tough, but we're looking forward to the challenge and hope that everything turns out for the best."

Tomorrow: Rice.

Aggies' Woodard named SWC 'Player of Week'

Associated Press

Consider these statistics of George Woodard, mere freshman:

— He has started only four games at Texas A&M University at fullback but has never been held under 100 yards.

— He is 249-pounds yet was timed at 9.9 in the 100-yard dash at Van Vleck High School.

— He can bench press 425 pounds and lift 700 pounds of weights with his legs.

— He is so strong that Coach Emory Bellard says he can play any spot on the offensive line, including tight end.

"With that guy at fullback you can put your game plan on a postage stamp," says Rice Coach Al Conover.

Conover should know. Woodard chewed up the Owls for 167 yards on 32 carries Saturday in a 33-14 victory. It earned Woodard The Associated Press Southwest Conference Offensive Player of the Week award.

Middle linebacker Robert Jackson, a junior college transfer from Henderson County, made it a clean sweep for the Aggies by taking The AP's SWC Defensive Player of the Week honor. Jackson made 11 tackles and turned in two big plays that the Aggies cashed into touchdowns — tackling Rice's punter and causing a fumble.

Woodard has started against Louisiana State, Baylor, Southern Methodist and Rice and gained 106, 101, 106 and 167 yards, respectively. He started out the season battling for the third team position against another promising freshman, Eddie Hardin of Houston Madison.

"George has done an outstanding job when you consider how little work he has had," says Bellard. "He's been bothered with a hamstring

pull and a hip pointer. I felt from the start he could be a tremendous prospect. He is just getting to where he understands everything . . . he's come on pretty darn fast."

Bellard says "That hamstring pull set him back three or four weeks."

Woodard, one of the most highly sought schoolboy prospects in the state, said "I'm surprised I moved into the starting lineup so fast. I guess you can get motivated real fast playing on those kick teams."

Woodard started the season in the Aggie opener against Ole Miss playing on the specialty teams.

He says there is no petty bickering because he has moved into the starting job ahead of seniors Bucky Sams and Ronnie Hubby.

"They've just encouraged me to go on . . . we're like a big family down here," says Woodard. "I had to get my weight under control. I was afraid they'd make an offensive lineman out of me."

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Cotton bid finds way to Georgia

Associated Press

"We didn't have anywhere else to go."

With that fact staring the Cotton Bowl Selection Committee in the eye, it selected twice-beaten Georgia Sunday for the guest team spot in the New Year's Day Classic.

The SWC host team will be either Texas, Texas A&M or Arkansas.

Arkansas will play in the Liberty Bowl against Southern California if the Razorbacks don't make it to the Cotton Bowl. Arkansas has lost to Texas and must play Texas Tech and Texas A&M.

The loser of the Nov. 28 game between third-ranked Texas A&M and No. 7 Texas will go to the Astro-Bluebonnet Bowl to face Colorado Dec. 27 in the Astrodome.

However, if A&M beats Texas and Arkansas whips A&M, the Aggies will go to the Liberty Bowl.

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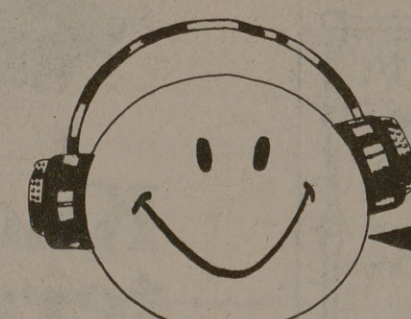


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