

Face tough LaSalle first

A&M cagers hit tourney trail

The defending Southwest Conference champions in basketball hit the road Friday for their first game of an extended road series.

The Ags, now 4-0 and carrying winning credentials of 113.5 points per game, will meet highly-rated LaSalle in the opening round of the Phawck Classic in Lawrence, Kan. LaSalle, 22-7 and an NCAA playoff representative last year, has lettermen returning to boost their chances for an improved record and another invite to the playoffs.

The winner will meet the survivor of a matchup between improved Yale and always tough Kansas. Yale suffered through a 3-20 season last year, but returns nine lettermen. Kansas

returns six lettermen from a 19-8 club. Kansas is defending Big Eight champ and a finals matchup between the two defending champs, A&M and Kansas, would be a season highlight.

From Lawrence, the Ags travel to Louisville on the 26th for an opening round matchup with Seattle, who was 8-18 last year and returns seven lettermen. The tough starting matchup will be between Louisville and Kentucky State. Louisville, an NCAA semi-finalist and 25-3 last year, returns eight lettermen. The Cardinals are currently ranked 10th nationally although they finished third in some polls last year. The Kentucky State Thorobreds return

six lettermen from a 26-3 club that finished as the number one ranked small-college team last year.

The Ags then travel to Houston for the Astro-Bluebonnet Tournament in Hofheinz Pavilion. The Ags first-round meeting will be with San Francisco, currently ranked 13th with a 5-1 record. The Dons, according to two polls, brought in the number one freshman crop in the country, led by Bill Cartwright, probably the most sought after schoolboy in the nation last year. The Ags were ranked eighth and tenth in incoming talent by the same polls.

In the other matchup in the first

round will be conference newcomer and host University of Houston, and Houston Baptist. Houston and A&M are the only conference members still unbeaten at this point, and one of the Aggie victories is a 127-80 shellacking of the Baptists. The Ags consistently finish second to UH in this tourney, but this year things may be different.

Before school starts up again the Ags will have started conference play, opening against Baylor in Waco on Jan. 10, and returning home to meet SMU on Jan. 14.

The Ags are probably one of the highest scoring machines in the

country and currently have seven players averaging in double figures to bolster that machine. Barry Davis leads with a 19.8 norm, followed by Sonny Parker at 17.5, Ray Roberts at 16.3, Karl Godine at 14.5, Jarvis Williams at 11.0, Steve Jones at 10.3 and Wally Swanson at 10.

Davis also leads in rebounding with 11.3 and Williams is averaging 10.

The Ags are outrebounding their foes by 18 per game, have a 78-27 margin in assists, 62-11 in steals, 12-3 in blocked shots, and 127-68 in turnovers. A&M is outscoring its opponents by 40.5 points per game.

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Pruitt leading Cleveland Browns to respectability

Associated Press
CLEVELAND — Among the brightly colored designs on his van are the uniform number 34 and, below it, the legend: "Do it Pruitt."

Greg Pruitt says he thought of painting the van over with a nice conservative brown earlier this season when both he and the Cleveland Browns were struggling.

Sunday's 40-14 win over Kansas City gave the much-improved Browns another boost toward respectability. It was also the game in which Pruitt, a third-year back, apparently shed for good whatever vestiges remained of the rap that he might be too small to play pro football.

He led Cleveland to its third victory in four games and joined former Browns Jim Brown and Leroy

Kelly in the team's 1,000-yard club. Gaining 214 yards and scoring three touchdowns in 20 carries, the 5-foot-10, 185-pound Pruitt raised his season rushing total of 1,030 yards.

Heaping a great deal of the credit on his linemen, Pruitt said: "I always felt if you were good enough to gain 1,000 yards in professional football it put you in a special class."

The former University of Oklahoma All-American rushed for a total of 909 yards in his first two seasons with Cleveland, gaining most of his reputation as a stylish runner with his kick returns.

The Browns lost their first nine games, looking dismal in most. "We just kept plugging, and the Oakland game showed us how much this team had improved," Pruitt said. The Browns lost 38-17 at Oakland, but only after giving the powerful Raiders a scare.

Cleveland defeated Cincinnati and New Orleans the next two weekends, then lost at Pittsburgh before taking on the Chiefs. In those five games, Pruitt dashed and darted for 600 yards in 93 carries — an aver-

age of 6.4 — and caught 21 passes for 179 yards. He also scored eight touchdowns. Seven on the ground.



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