

The beginning

One hundred days to the crown

By TONY GALLUCCI
Battalion Staff Writer

is the first of a two-part series reporting the Aggie basketball team's trek to their second consecutive SWC title.)

seven o'clock in the evening of March 5, 1976, almost everyone had gathered in College Station. They were celebrating, in fact, they

were numb and it wasn't the alcohol that did it. It was Arkansas. The Hogs had just devastated the once mighty Aggie football team and ruined many a dream of an undefeated season.

Few people could wade far enough through the numbness to remember about the defending champs who were to play on campus that night.

The Aggie basketball team, the 1974-75 Southwest Conference (SWC) champs and already 2-0 on the season with a couple of 100-point ballgames, were hosting Houston Baptist in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

The cagers immediately went out and served notice that they were in contention once again with a record-shattering 127-80 victory over the Huskies.

The Ags had generally been picked to finish second or third behind the likes of Tech, Arkansas and SMU in the upcoming SWC season, but the already highly developed freshman crop indicated otherwise.

Head coach Shelby Metcalf had merely the returning crew of Sonny Parker, Barry Davis, Ray Roberts and Gates Erwin to build around. Doug Mezger was available after a first year of limited action and Steve Jones, who had no success the year before, was back for another try.

Metcalf had scoured the country and brought in what was considered by those who rank such things as the eighth best incoming crop in the nation.

He had picked up probably two of the top three recruits in the country

as a package all-America from Houston Kashmere in Karl Godine and Jarvis Williams. He had rounded up another Texas boy in Bryan Holland and had gone to Illinois where the expertise of Norman Reuther, assistant coach, netted all-America Wally Swanson, and Bob Middleton, who Sonny P described as "the baddest white dude in Chicago." From Metcalf's home quarters of Tulsa came all-America Joey Robinson. There wasn't a better balanced bunch of frosh in the country. It reminded one of the super frosh team fielded last year by Cincinnati when the Bearcats beat the Aggies in their first round National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) playoff.

The team went through various adjustments during the season. Mezger ended up a red-shirt in anticipation of future depth problems. Holland and Middleton disappeared over Christmas break for various reasons; and a walk-on, Kevin Jones made his appearance. Jones' importance would not be highlighted until later on in the season, but his immediate contribution of providing depth for workouts was indeed valuable.

The Ags won their other pre-season home game, also a 100-point affair over Southwest Texas State. Once before the Ags had come by four 100-point ballgames in a year, but it wasn't even close to this year's four in a row. The Ags embarked on the tournament trail carrying a 4-0 record and were ranked second nationally in scoring offense at 113.5 points per game, while smothering their opponents at a 40.5 point scoring margin.

The first stop was Lawrence, Kansas for the Jayhawk Classic. The Ags went down to a ranked La Salle team by a score of 59-57, but rebounded to down Yale 71-62 for third place.

From there it was to Louisville for another tourney which included a come-from-behind win over Seattle, and then a disappointing loss to 10th-ranked Louisville. The Ags played great, outscoring the Cards by eight points from the field, but had only 16 free throws (making 12) while Louisville made 34 of 43 from the line to take the win.

The next week in Houston, it was nationally-ranked San Francisco in the first round featuring the number one recruiting crop in the nation. SF wound up two-point victors over the Ags in the first round of Bluebonnet action, 77-75. A&M bounced back to take a 99-74 victory over Houston Baptist.

The start of Southwest Conference action was but a week away. Several new aspects of SWC play were to be unveiled, but two were quite important for this season. First, the annual SWC post-season tourney to determine a playoff representative was to premier; and secondly, the University of Houston was making its debut as a conference team.

The tournament was welcomed by most. It gave a chance for teams not in the regular season running to make the playoffs, no matter how embarrassing their record. It also gave incentive for teams out of the chase title to better their record, for it meant a home-site advantage for

upper division finishers. In this case (the premier) it meant that the team picked to go all the way and failed could roust the regular season champs.

The Aggies opened the SWC-half of the season with a breathtaking overtime win over Baylor, a simple indication of just how balanced the conference was to be this year. The first week also did something to disprove that theory though, when Arkansas did its best to welcome Houston to the SWC by pinning a devastating 51-point loss on the Coogs, worst in the school's history.

It was to be a season of rumors, complaints and general grumbling. As soon as the season started, gripes began to fly as never before about the officials and the lack of basketball promotion by the SWC office. Infant rumors also began to spread about "two star freshman at a conference school being investigated for driving new cars." Most passed it off as idle gossip.

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Texas A&M's Mark Thurmond scores following a sacrifice fly as the Aggie baseball team upped its season record to 12-0.

The Ags start conference play this Friday against SMU.

Gibson tosses shutout; Aggies trounce OCU twice

PAT EDMONDSON
Battalion Staff Writer

James "Hoot" Gibson threw a four hit shutout, and Clint Thomas and David Lockett combined their efforts in the night to hurl the Texas Aggies past Oklahoma City University in a doubleheader Tuesday.

The Aggies got on the scoreboard in game one when second baseman Buddy Grobe scored on a wild pitch

by OCU pitcher Ron Smith. Kirk Campbell reached first base on a shortstop error and designated hitter Randy Blanchard rapped a triple for the RBI. Mark Thurmond added a two bagger to put A&M up, 3-0.

The Chiefs closed the lead to 8-1 as Jim McCabe was hit by a Thomas pitch and scored on a single by teammate Doug Atchley.

The Farmers tacked on another score in the fifth when shortstop

Robert Bonner crossed the plate on a ground ball following walks to Blanchard and Billy Raymer.

Grobe scored his second run of the afternoon on a throwing error the next inning to put the Ags ahead, 5-1. Thurmond's theft of second prior to a Robert Verde double scored the Ag's sixth run.

OCU designated hitter Dave Grisham added a pair of RBI's in the seventh inning to end the game's scoring.

THE INFORMER
- Student Government Newsletter -

The Student Government, in connection with Hertz Rent-a-Car, offers a car rental service for all interested TAMU students. Cars can be rented at 30% off regular price. If you are interested in this service, call Hertz at 846-2550.

The Student Senate of A&M has ratified new amendments to the Constitution for the Texas A&M Student Body. These amendments will come up for your vote on April 7th and 8th. Become familiar with these revisions — a copy can be obtained in the Student Government Office, Rm. 216 MSC — and be sure to vote on the 7th or 8th.

ELECTIONS: Student Government will also hold elections on April 7th and 8th. These will be for Senators, Class Officers, RHA Officers, and Yell Leaders. If you wish to run for one (or more) of these positions, you need to come by Room 216 of the MSC and file. Filing opens Wednesday, March 24th and runs for 10 class days. A copy of the NEW Election Regulations must be picked up at this time also (or earlier).

Discount ABC Interstate Theater Tickets are on sale in the Student Finance Office, Room 217 MSC. These tickets can be purchased for \$1.50 each by any Texas A&M student, Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

College Station will be holding City elections on Saturday, April 3rd. Learn about the issues and candidates, and VOTE!

The next meeting of the Texas A&M Student Senate will be Wednesday, March 10th - TONIGHT! It will be in Room 204 of the Harrington Building at 7:30 p.m. and everyone is encouraged to attend. Discussed, among other things, will be:

- ***approving Charter Revisions of College Station (to elect City Councilmen by Wards),
- ***proposals for football ticket distributions for Fall '76,
- ***final approval on Texas A&M System Student Board Constitution,
- ***final approval on monetary stipend for Gathright Award recipients.

All students and interested visitors are welcome to attend all Student Senate meetings, and we would like to see you there tonight. If you need information or would like to give your opinion on anything Student Government is doing, do not hesitate to come by Room 216 of the MSC and see us, or call 845-3051.

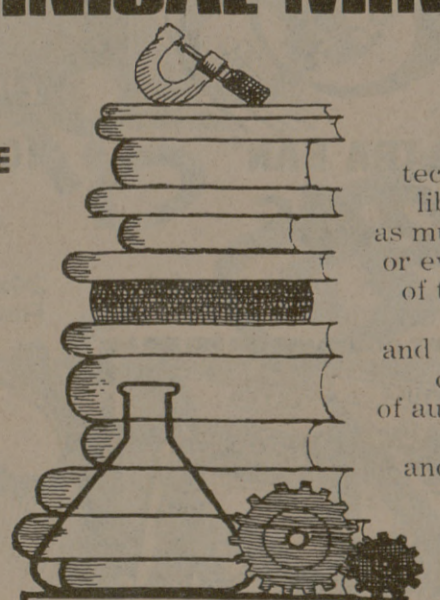
PARENTS-OF-THE-YEAR
Applications Now Being Accepted

Beginning March 1st, students have the opportunity to nominate their parent(s) for the 1976 Parents of the Year Award. This traditional award recognizes Aggie parents for outstanding support to sons and daughters enrolled at Texas A&M. The award is presented each year on Parents Day, which will be held on April 18th this year. Applications may be picked up at the Student Government Office on Room 216 of the MSC. Deadline for applications is 5:00 p.m. on March 26, 1976. Additional information can be obtained by calling Missie Miller at 845-3051.

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