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Showdown on the Brazos

By PAUL ARNETT
Battalion Sports Editor

It was a February evening in Houston. Texas A&M had just lost the services of their two outstanding freshman, Karl Godine and Jarvis Williams, due to recruiting violations. This sudden move by the Southwest Conference (SWC) fathers caused Shelby Metcalf to do some hurried changes in his starting line-up.

With the help of Wally Swanson and Steve Jones, Metcalf coached one of the most brilliant games of his career as the Aggies stormed past the Cougars 94-50. Two games later Texas A&M had clinched the SWC crown.

It probably won't start the Aggies towards another conference championship, but the game tomorrow afternoon against Houston should be one of the better games of the season. Houston has had a year to think about that stinging defeat A&M handed them on their home court, and you can bet that the Cougars are more than ready to return the favor.

For the Aggies to compete effectively against the Cougars they must stop Otis Birdsong. Birdsong is the leading scorer in the conference and is shooting over 60 per cent from the field. The brilliant senior has scored over 20 points in every game he has played in this season.

Birdsong's best game of the season occurred in California, where

he scored 42 points. The UCLA Bruins used every possible defense to try and stop him, but found it futile.

Last year the Cougars did everything possible to try and stop Swanson. Wally hit from all corners of the court, and finished the evening with 21 points. Jones added 18 points of his own along with six rebounds. A&M finished the contest hitting a blistering 61 per cent from the field. It was by far the best effort of the 1976 season for Texas A&M.

Swanson and Jones will have to have another outstanding effort if the Aggies are to defeat the Cougars. Houston has played well all year, with only inexperience keeping them from greatness.

Jones must make the outside shots good, with Swanson having to be effective inside in order to keep the inexperienced Cougs off-balanced.

The starting line-up for the Aggies will be Dave Goff, Steve Syles-tine, Steve Jones, Wally Swanson and Doug Pederson. The sixth man will probably be Willie Foreman. Foreman has been a pleasant surprise so far this season. His inside play and good defense have proven invaluable for the Aggies this year.

Foreman has also been the most aggressive man for A&M this season. He often crashes the boards, leaving bruised victims in his wake. The ironic thing about Foreman is that his cousin is heavy weight fighter

champion George Foreman. If Houston plans on any fighting, they had better check with Willie first.

All in all the contest matches up pretty well. Both teams have good players, with Houston holding the edge because of Birdsong. If the referees let the teams play, then it should be a good quick contest. One has to give the edge to Houston, but don't count the Aggies out too quickly. If Houston is cocky, then the "young ones" may capture the day.

Readers' forum

Guest viewpoints, in addition to Letters to the Editor, are welcome. All pieces submitted to Readers' forum should be:

- Typed triple space
- Limited to 60 characters per line
- Limited to 100 lines

Submit articles to Reed McDonald 217, College Station, Texas, 77843. Author's name and phone number must accompany all submissions.

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