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# Blair tries for nationals

By STEVE MARTINDALE

Now that Texas A&M's Brad Blair has a championship to add to his credentials he has one more goal before wrapping up his final indoor track season.

Blair won the pole vault in the Southwest Conference Indoor Track and Field Meet Friday in Fort Worth with a vault of 16 feet. With one more scheduled meet in the 1976-77 indoor season he said he wants to qualify for the NCAA Nationals to be held in Detroit, Mich.

"They (NCAA) set standards before the season begins," the Carthage native explained. "This year you have to clear 16-6 to get into the nationals. I only have one more

chance to get it though."

Blair will travel to the Oklahoma City Myriad this weekend to compete in the Track and Field Federation Meet. He also had to qualify for it by clearing 15-6 or better.

The 6-1, 180 pound senior was not alone in representing Texas A&M in the event though. Sophomore Pat Ruehle also cleared 16-0 for second place. Two other vaulters cleared the mark: Houston's Brett Dames for third and Texas's Mark Hems for fourth. Their places were determined by the number of misses.

Blair entered at 15 feet and cleared each height on his first jump. Ruehle had a few problems earlier, according to his teammate,

but made 16 on his first attempt.

All four of the top finishers had a crack at qualifying for the nationals as the standards were moved to 16-7 after the 16-foot jumps. They were also chasing the 16-6 1-4 record set by last year's winner, Texas' David Sheppard.

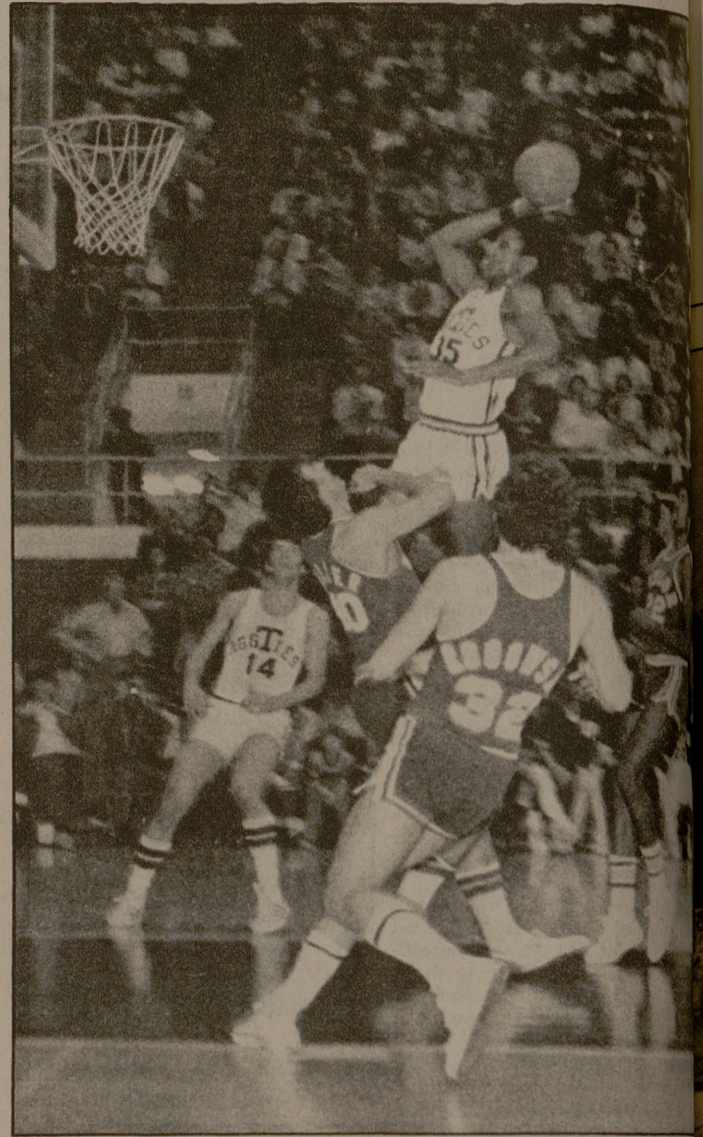
Earlier this winter, Blair broke his own A&M record for indoor vaulting with a 16-4 jump at Baton Rouge. His old record was 16-0.

Soon, though, the meets will move outside, where Blair owns a personal best of 16-7. He cleared that two years ago in the College Station Relays. Blair said the competition will change little after moving outdoors, which means it could be a very close contest again. Reigning champion Frank Estes won't be back to haunt the pits however, having transferred from Texas.

"You have to change a little bit when you move outside," Blair said. "There's some change in your run because there will be a wind at your back—hopefully."

Texas A&M's outdoor season will begin here Feb. 19 when the Aggies host the University of Texas in a dual meet.

Asked what his goal was outdoors, he quickly replied, "High as I can go." He later added that "It's all in your head. You go as high as you can if you don't form a mental block and say you can't go higher. Like, you may be trying for 17 feet. When you get there you have to look higher and not decide that's as high as you can go."



Battalion photo by Debby ...  
Willie "Sky" Foreman goes in for a dunk against Baylor. Foreman was the leading scorer for the Ags with 20 points. A&M won the game 72-57.

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## Arkansas can clinch the SWC crown

United Press International  
The Arkansas Razorbacks, having survived a large scare in New Orleans earlier this week, get back to the business of clinching the Southwest Conference (SWC) championship tonight.

In fact the Razorbacks could conceivably clinch a tie for the crown tonight with the right set of circumstances.

Arkansas, which nipped Tulane Monday night, 76-73, to run its season mark to 20-1, returns to SWC play against Baylor in Fayetteville. And the second-place Houston Cougars 8-3 host the SMU Mustangs.

The only other conference game tonight will find the streaking Texas Longhorns—winners of their five—visiting TCU.

The Longhorns 6-5 can cement their bid for a first-division berth and the home court advantage in the opening round of the SWC tournament with a victory over TCU 0-12.

One of the teams taking tonight off is Texas A&M 7-4 and the surprising Aggies deserve a rest.

A&M has won three straight games and also seems destined for a first-division spot in the standings.

"We've had three days off since Dec. 23," said A&M coach Steve Metcalf. "That counts Sundays as everything. And on about those days, we've practiced twice."

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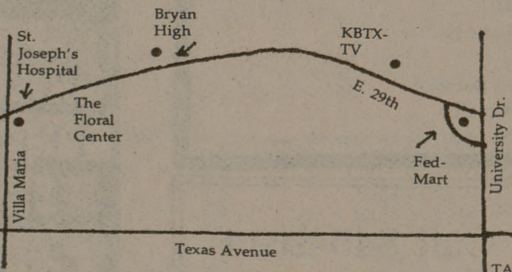
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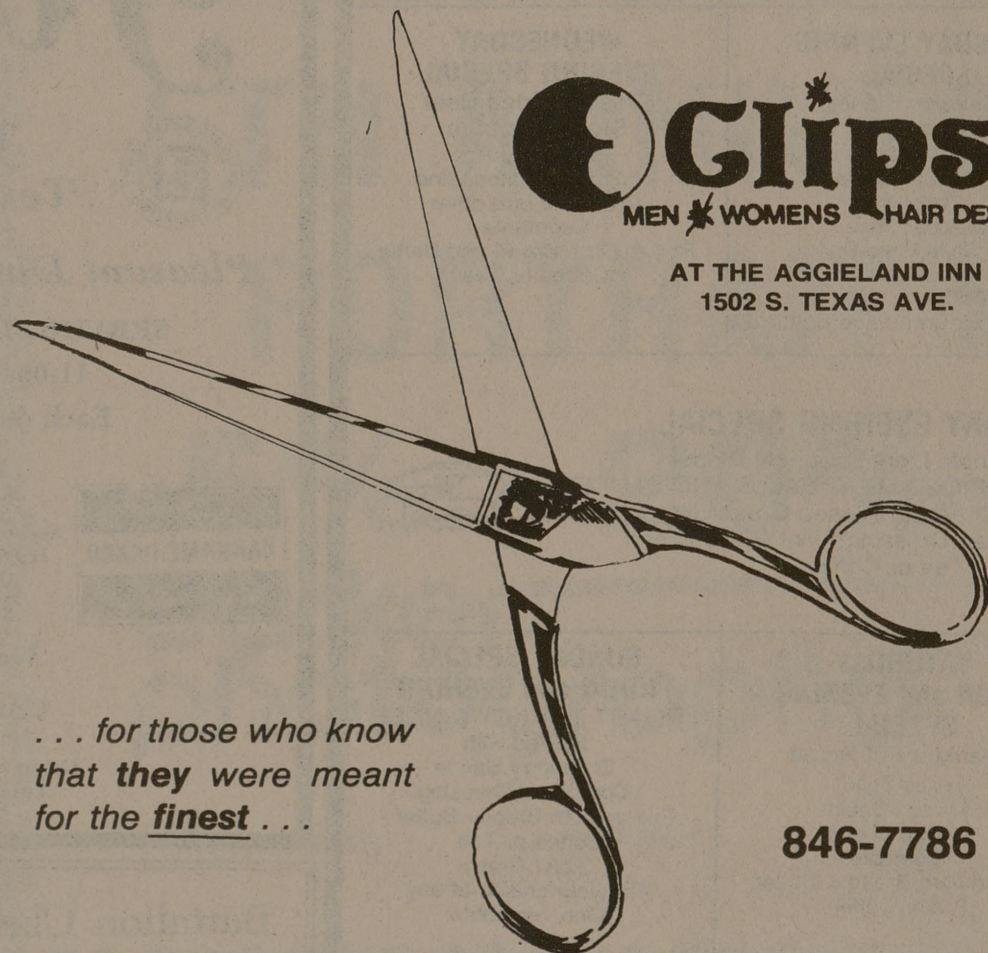
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