THE BATTALION Page 7



## Houston high school loses to win

By ANGELO RUSSO

"one in a million chance brought a Texas high school basketball team to national prominence recently, but their place in the spotlight was short-lived. Superior ball-handling didn't

arouse the interest of NBC news in this team, nor did an air-tight defense, nor even an overpowering of-fense. The nation's eyes turned to Texas when the 4A Stratford High School Spartans of Houston's Spring Branch School District found them-selves in the unusual position of having to lose a basketball game in order to gain a spot in the district playoffs.

Because of the district's "two-half" season rule, which splits the compe-tition into two rounds and brings the winners of each round together to play off for the district title, a victory Stratford would have excluded them from the playoffs. Stratford tied Westchester High School for first place in the first round of season

In the second round, Westchester and Spring Woods were vying for the No. 1 position while Stratford held the third place spot. Westchester would win the second round and the district crown if Stratford beat Spring Woods in the season finale. If Stratford lost, Westchester would tie with Spring Woods for the second

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7:00

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round lead and all three, Westchester, Spring Woods and Stratford, would be forced into a district playoff.

So if Stratford was to gain a spot in the district playoffs, they would have to lose to Spring Woods. "Purposely losing a game con-

tradicts everything that competitive athletics is about, <sup>5</sup> Stratford basket-ball coach Jerry Kroll said. "But our purpose at the beginning of the season was to win district; that was our son was to win district; that was our primary goal. Winning Tuesday night would have precluded us from advancing to the playoffs." The marquees in front of Stratford High read, "Watch us lose to Spring Woods tonight, 8:15." And the Spartene did just that They played

Spartans did just that. They played their reserves all evening and were soundly defeated by Spring Woods, 72-45.

The game, which was covered by NBC news, was entertaining, Strat-

ford cheerleader Ginger Roush said. Two can ride cheaper than one.

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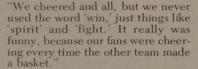
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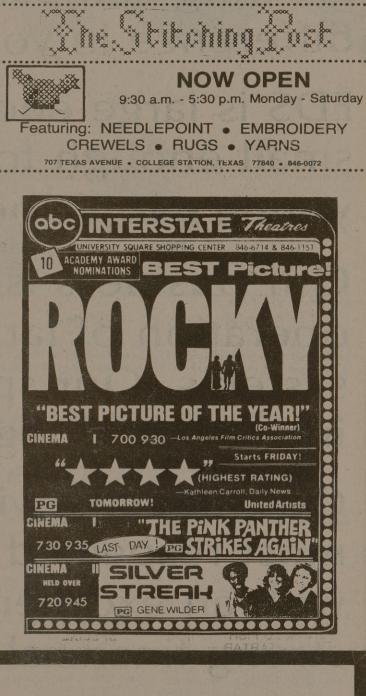


The referees got the best deal,' one student said. "Nobody was against them tonight. Everyone wanted the same team to win. The news cameras came to the school the day of the game and interviewed students. I think they tried to make

'We cheered and all, but we never used the word 'win,' just things like it into a controversy, but coach Kroll did what he had to do. That's what competitive sports is all about.

The Spartans' excitement was short-lived however, as they lost to Westchester 53-36 last night in the first game of district playoffs. This one was for real and cost the Spartans the district title.

"I have no second thoughts about



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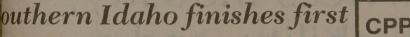
Our representatives will be on The Texas A&M campus to interview Chemical Engineering graduates on Wednesday, March 2, 1977.

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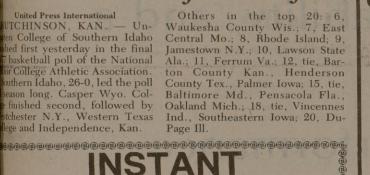
Battalion photo by Debby Krenek 63-62



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uthern Idaho, 26-0, led the poll eason long. Casper Wyo. Col-finished second, followed by Oakland Mich.; 18, tie, Vincennes chester N.Y., Western Texas Ind., Southeastern Iowa; 20, Du-Page Ill.



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