

Smith may be selected Newcomer of the Year

By DAVID BOGGAN
In a season full of disappointments, one of the bright sides for coach Shelby Metcalf has to be the performance of his highly recruited freshman, Vernon Smith.

The 6-foot-7 inch newcomer from Dallas Carter made an excellent showing in pre-season workouts and earned a starting position in the Aggies' first game of the season against Angelo State. In fact, Smith has started in all but two of his games as an Aggie.

"The coaches said they would give me a fair chance to play when I came down here," Smith said. "Being a freshman, I wasn't expecting to start. But I think now I deserve it."

Obviously, Metcalf believes that Smith deserves game time, also. Smith has logged 688 minutes of game time (prior to Wednesday night's TCU game) since the season opener in November. Only sophomore point guard Dave Goff and senior Willie Foreman have compiled more court time than Smith.

"I feel real good about being a starter," Smith said. "I know that I still have three years to play and I'm really looking forward to that. I

think we will have a conference championship team next year because we will all be used to each other's style."

Smith's accomplishments in his 11 plus hours on the court have been many. He has become the Aggies' second-leading scorer, averaging 13.7 points per game. His conference high is 31 points against the University of Houston, but he scored 33 points in his second game as an Aggie against Southwestern Louisiana. Included in those 33 points were two game-winning free throws that gave A&M their narrow 81-79 victory over the Ragin' Cajuns, an event that Smith calls, "one of the most exciting moments for me all season."

Smith has also been a major reason that the Aggies have out-rebounded their opponents in all but eight games. Smith has pulled down 119 rebounds to lead the Aggies with an average of 8.5 rebounds per game. His freshman teammate, Rynn Wright, is right behind Smith, averaging 7.5 rebounds per game.

His scoring and rebounding efforts seem minor when compared to the experience Smith has gained

this year, which he will carry with him in his next three seasons at A&M.

"I've played against a lot of good players," Smith said. "(Houston's Mike) Schultz and (Arkansas' Steve) Schall have been the toughest. They have more experience and they play more physical than other post men in the conference. They're not the type that will just give up. I enjoy defending them; they're challenging."

Smith said he is pleased with his performance in his rookie season.

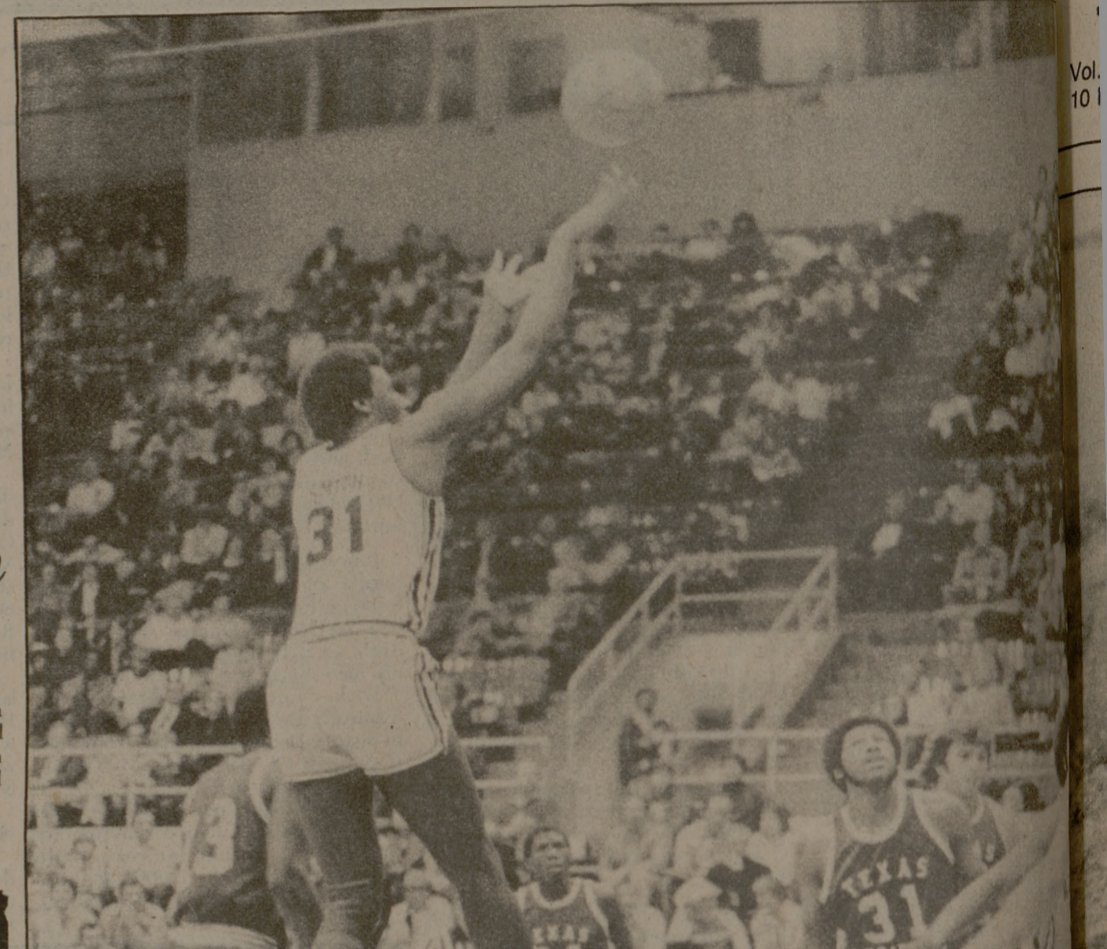
"At the beginning of the year, I played pretty good," Smith said. "Then for a while things weren't going the way I wanted them to. Everything just went blank for a while.

"I started practicing harder and my shots started falling. Now I think I'm ready."

Ready for what? For a possible selection as SWC Newcomer of the Year? Certainly Smith has to be one of the top contenders for the title. Coach Metcalf said that Smith is a possible candidate.

"I would like to see 'V' get it," Metcalf said. "Of course you have to remember Vinnie Johnson." Johnson, Baylor's junior college transfer sensation, averages 21.3 points per game for the Bears.

"Vinnie Johnson will probably be the Newcomer of Year," Smith said. But that comes from a man who said he didn't expect to start in his freshman season.



Vernon Smith (No. 31) takes a 15-foot jump shot against TCU. Smith finished the night with 17 points and eight rebounds. The freshman from Dallas may be selected Newcomer of the Year.

Texas A&M rifle team defeats Lumberjacks

The Texas A&M University Rifle Team won their fourth Southwest Rifle Association match in Nacogdoches, Texas, with a 2096 to 1817 win over Stephen F. Austin University.

Eric Johnson led the Aggies' scoring drive with a score of 541 out of a possible 600 points. Other firers and their scores were: Elizabeth Nealin (523), Michael Winzler (519) and Glenn Celerier (513).

This gives the Aggies a 4-0 record in association competition.

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