

Bears move toward SWC upper class

United Press International

This is the first in a series of articles profiling Texas A&M's 1979 Southwest Conference basketball opponents.

WACO — This might be the season the Baylor Bears make a move to join the upper class in the Southwest Conference basketball picture. At least their coach is extra optimistic. And so are their fans — who have purchased 4,000 season tickets,

a gain of 1,500 from last season. "We have a chance to be better because we have much more depth," said Baylor coach Jim Haller. "Many times last year we had only five or six players we could go with and when we played one of those stretches where you have eight games in four days we just got too tired. "Our fans wanted to know how we could beat teams like North Texas and Oklahoma early in the year and then get beat by some teams that perhaps should not have beaten us.

"Depth was the answer. You look at the nights we beat Texas and Houston last year and you will find we were well rested on those occasions." Baylor finished fifth last season and much of the year depended on one player — flashy guard Vinnie Johnson. Johnson led the SWC in scoring and finished second in assists, but still reacted more as a schoolyard player. Haller thinks that will change this year.

And with the moving of 6-9 senior Wendell Mays to the backcourt, along with the recruiting of two highly sought after freshmen, Haller is almost bubbling. "We moved Mays to the outside (with 6-9 freshman Jimmy Carter moving in) and he is not getting the heck beat out of him any more," said Haller. "And when you put him out there with Vinnie you have a pretty good combination. "I hate to put pressure on freshmen, but Terry Teagle (from

Broaddus, Texas) is a good freshman. I don't mind saying that. "He is a great leaper (at 6-5) and with him in there along with some of our other youngsters we are going to be able to do more things than we were able to do last year. "We are going to press more, we will press a lot. Last year we couldn't do that because we were too tired to do it." Whenever Baylor is discussed, however, the talk always gets around to Johnson, the junior-college trans-

fer from Brooklyn who was recruited by schools throughout the country. "Don't get me wrong," Haller said. "Vinnie is the greatest basketball player I've ever been around. "But he has changed his attitude a little this year. He is setting the ball club up and he is running it. He's accepted our philosophy well. He didn't do all the things we wanted him to do last year. "But this year he came back 10 or 12 pounds lighter. He is quicker. He is motivated.

"Vinnie is from a tough neighborhood in New York and he has a major college life has been in him. I expect another year from Vinnie. And a great year from Vinnie could mean a very good Baylor. The Bears are 1-1 to date, having defeated Austin 121-55 and lost to Oklahoma. Baylor will be Texas A&M's SWC opponent of the week. The Aggies host the Bears

Playoffs calculated for winner

United Press International

DALLAS — Having worn out a lot of pencils and paper and burned out a few calculators, the Dallas Cowboys management made the following announcement Tuesday:

"The winner of Sunday's game between Dallas and New England will clinch a playoff spot. "So the Dallas-New England game has a prize dangling at the end of it and there are those who think that it might be a preview of the Super Bowl as well.

"There is a lot of water that has to go under the dam before the Super Bowl is played," said New England coach Chuck Fairbanks. "All we are trying to do right now is make the playoffs."

"I think Chuck has it right," echoed Dallas coach Tom Landry. "There is too much left to be thinking about that."

But it's certainly not too early to be thinking about playoffs, which both teams figure to make.

The Patriots have a two-game lead over Miami in the AFC East and if New England should win Sunday and Miami should lose to Washington, then the Patriots would clinch their division title.

But even if both New England and Miami win Sunday the Patriots would be assured of no worse than a wild card playoff spot.

In the NFC, meanwhile, a Dallas win and losses by Philadelphia to Minnesota and Washington to Miami would give the Cowboys the NFC East crown. But, again, if Dallas, Philadelphia and Washington all win, the Cowboys will still clinch a wild card berth.

"If we make the playoffs we will have accomplished what we want," said Landry. "Our objective is to make the playoffs, even if it is the fifth team."

Landry is in a more relaxed frame of mind these days. His club has won its last three games with relative ease and with the Los Angeles Rams having problems both on and off the field lately the Cowboys coach was asked Tuesday whether his team was the best in the NFC.

"Oh, it's hard to say," Landry began. "I think we are much improved over what we were, say, four or five weeks ago. Just from our better mental attitude.

"We have worked hard and come back to be in the position where it is in our hands and that's what we want. It's been encouraging. When you go through a period like we went through, you have some reservations.

"But we have been playing well over the last three games. I think teams like Los Angeles who have their thing pretty well cinched anyway, it's hard keep your mind on your business each week. I think that accounts for some of their problems."

In New England, Landry sees a team that has looked as steady as any team has all year in the NFL.

"This team (the Patriots) has performed as well as any team has over the long stretch," Landry said. "The games they have lost have been a result of something happening late in the game, a fumble that got loose or something.

"Not too many teams can say that's the only way they have lost."

Sparky fired

United Press International

CINCINNATI — The Cincinnati Reds Tuesday fired manager Sparky Anderson, who led the team to back-to-back World Championships in 1975 and 1976, and replaced him with John McNamara, former manager of the Oakland A's and the San Diego Padres.

McNamara, a coach with the California Angels last season, was signed to a one-year contract by the Reds.

Reds President and General Manager Dick Wagner flew to California Monday and met with Anderson at his Thousand Oaks, Calif., home to inform him of the Reds' decision. Anderson will be paid for the final year of his three-year contract.

"The decision we made was not a hasty one," said Wagner. "Our club won in 1975 and 1976 and by that I mean won it all. The past two years have been good ones by the standards of most clubs, but we are determined to set a higher standard.

"It is our decision that the move we have made is in the best overall interests of making the Reds a better team," said Wagner. "Sparky Anderson served us well. I don't want to get into the specifics with regard to the move we made."

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