

the sports

Aggies travel to Ozarks

By MARK PATTERSON
Battalion Staff

It's hard to imagine that the outcome of a season can come down to one game — 40 minutes of basketball — to decide who is a champion and who is dubbed an also-ran. But that's how the Southwest Conference race is shaping up for the Texas Aggies, with a showdown game against the University of Texas Monday night in G. Rollie White Coliseum. But the rematch will decide a champion if, and only if, the Aggies can win their next two games on the road. And the first stop is against the Hogs in the Hills of Arkansas. With Arkansas' defeat of the

Longhorns last week, the race for the conference crown is very much undecided. The Longhorns and Aggies are tied for the lead with 9-2 marks. But following closely are the Razorbacks (7-3) and the Texas Tech Red Raiders (7-4). "We could still finish fourth this season," Aggie coach Shelby Metcalf said of his team's chances in this year's race. "The worst thing we can do right now is look ahead to the end of the season. Tech, A&M and Arkansas are all playing very good basketball right now. Texas is fortunate that after they lost (against Arkansas last week) they didn't have to travel to Lubbock or Fayetteville. But that's just one of those things that you

have, no control over during a season." With the Longhorns' loss, the Texas A&M has control over its own destiny. The Aggies don't have to wait for some other team to do their work for them. They face their three closest competitors in the next seven days. "We need to win two of our next three games and one of those wins has to be over Texas Monday night," Metcalf explained. "If we can win in Fayetteville it sure will make the Lubbock trip a whole lot more relaxed. We have the situation where, if we play the best we can, whatever the results, we won't be able to fault anyone. We could win in both Lubbock and Fayetteville and lose Monday night. That would still give us second place. And with second we would have accomplished an awful lot."

Second would be quite an improvement from last season, a 12-15 record and seventh place in the SWC. Second would still give the Aggies a bye into the semi-finals of the post-season tournament in Houston March 1-3. With the new format, the third-place finisher gets a first-round bye, with first- and second-place teams receiving byes into the semi-finals March 2. But before final finishes are decided the Aggies have a match against the Razorbacks tonight. And

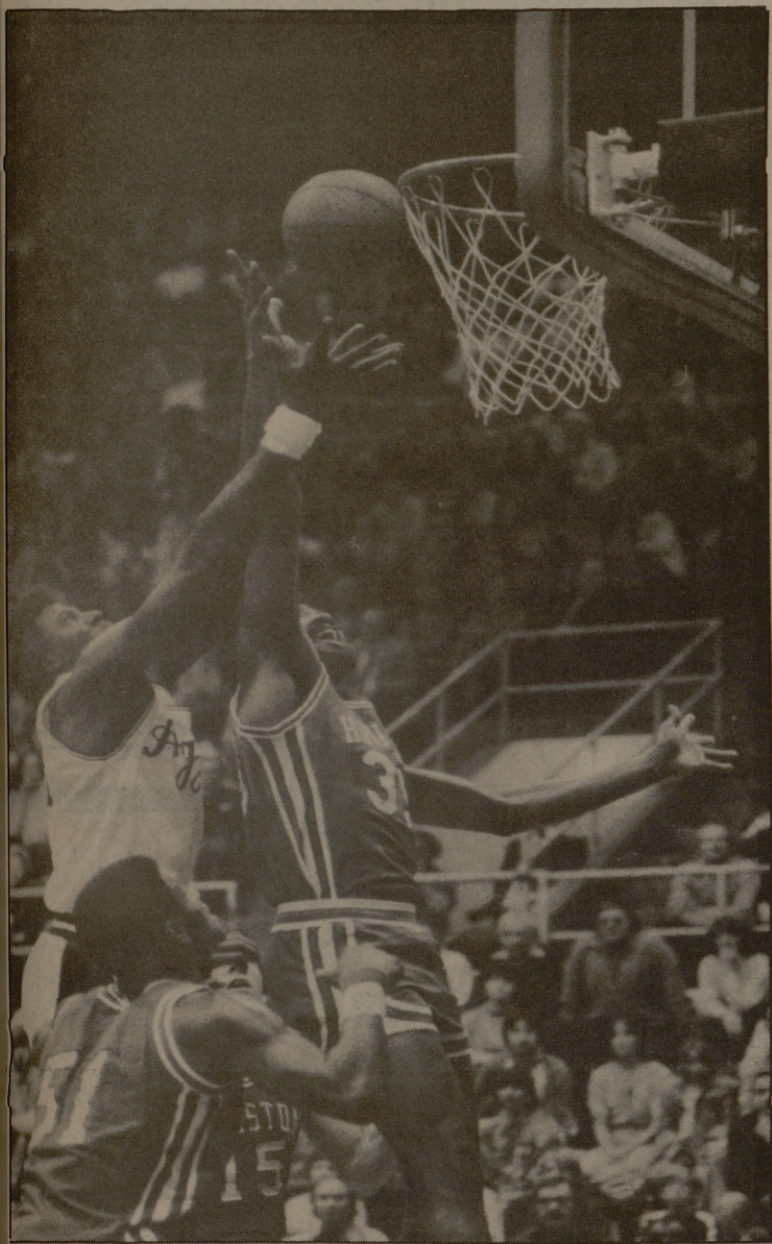
when you talk about the Hogs you have to talk about their star, Sidney Moncrief. "When they played here (Jan. 17) we had great luck stopping Sidney with a 1-3-1 zone," Metcalf explained. Moncrief was held to 10 points, four in the second half and none in the overtime period. "We were able to double-team him when he brought the ball inside. There is no way we could go heads up on him. If you're going to stop Moncrief it has to be done with team defense. You're not going to stop one of the great ones all the time. We were just fortunate the last time they were here. Anytime you have a player that can draw a crowd it can cause you problems. If you double-team him the other players are playing 4-on-3. And at this level, the four will beat the three."

At times during the season it has looked like the Aggie were playing with four or fewer men on the court. And still other times the Aggies can look like they have their opponents out-manned 3-to-1. "We played better entire games back in December," guard Dave Goff remembered, "but we playing better basketball in spurts now. We were in a recession earlier in the (conference) season, not on top of our game, not shooting well. But we're out of that now. Just playing

Alou named player-coach

United Press International
HOUSTON — The Houston Astros Monday named Jesus Alou, 36, as a new player-coach to replace Tony Pacheco, who will become the team's National League scout. Alou batted .324 last season after the Astros brought him out of retirement. The 1978 major league season was Alou's 15th. It was not

disclosed whether Alou would assume Pacheco's duties as first base coach. Pacheco's primary responsibility, providing the team with scouting reports on National League teams, caused the club to move Gordon Lakey to the American League scouting post.



Vernon Smith battles for a rebound with George Walker.
Battalion photo by Lee Roy Leschper Jr.

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2. Indiana St. (16) (20-0) 562	12. Ohio St. (13-6) 131
3. UCLA (1) (16-3) 514	13. Iowa (15-4) 105
4. Duke (3) (16-3) 483	14. Arkansas (15-4) 95
5. Louisville (19-3) 435	15. Texas (16-5) 88
6. North Carolina (16-4) 345	16. Vanderbilt (15-4) 60
7. LSU (16-3) 289	17. Temple (17-3) 58
8. Marquette (16-3) 260	18. Purdue (17-5) 39
9. Michigan St. (14-5) 243	19. (tie) So. Calif. (13-6) 31
10. Syracuse (18-2) 214	19. (tie) Georgetown (16-4) 31

brought us out of that. Plus the fact that every game is a lot more important now." Goff, says Metcalf, is the key to the Aggie attack. He sets up the plays and directs the team on both offense and defense. Metcalf calls Goff the settling influence on the team, the court leader that heads the attack. "If Arkansas plays a lot of man (-to-man defense), I'll take it to the basket more than I usually do," Goff said. "They have a bigger team overall, but they have a much slower team. Their guards aren't as quick as ours. We know that we have to win all three of our next games. We could win the next two and lose to Texas and that's all she wrote. If we finish second we will have fallen short of what we fought for. We set a goal to win the conference and if we don't we've failed at what we tried to do. But I'd settle for a tie for first. After all, you can't just throw something like that away after working so hard to get it. But first, before a tie is even considered, the Aggies have to play the Arkansas Razorbacks. Tip-off is scheduled for 7:30 p.m., with the game being carried on radio by KTAM, 1240-AM. Air time is 7:20 p.m.

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