

Injuries may cause arthritis

United Press International
NEW YORK — Doctors warn that youngsters who repeatedly injure their knees and other body joints in football and other contact sports are prime candidates for arthritis when they get older.

"Professional football players, for example, often develop traumatic arthritis as early as the 20s and 30s but they are adults and know the chances they are taking," said Dr. Colon Wilson of Emory University Medical School in Atlanta.

But he said at an Arthritis Foundation meeting that the situation is different with youngsters. Hundreds of thousands play football in their communities, high school and in college and Wilson said half to four-fifths will sustain some injuries.

Most injuries will be minor but Wilson said many will require proper care and protecting from additional injury if a form of arthritis is to be avoided later.

The concern is that injuries damage the cartilage covering the ends of bones that meet together in joints. This cartilage serves as an elastic cushion and provides lubricated, smooth gliding surfaces for the movement of the joint.

Repeated damage to the cartilage leads to degenerative joint disease, otherwise known as osteoarthritis. The cartilage undergoes biochemical changes and breaks down, first causing a softening and fraying of the surface. As the disease progresses, whole sections of cartilage may be

worn away, leaving only smooth bone ends exposed to each other.

With the gliding surfaces of cartilage gone or damaged, it may become painful to move the joint. In severe osteoarthritis, the shape and mechanical structure of a joint may be destroyed.

Osteoarthritis is often described as a wear and tear disease. Ordinary aging, without repeated injuries, will cause it and the Arthritis Foundation says everyone over 60 probably has it to some degree. But only a

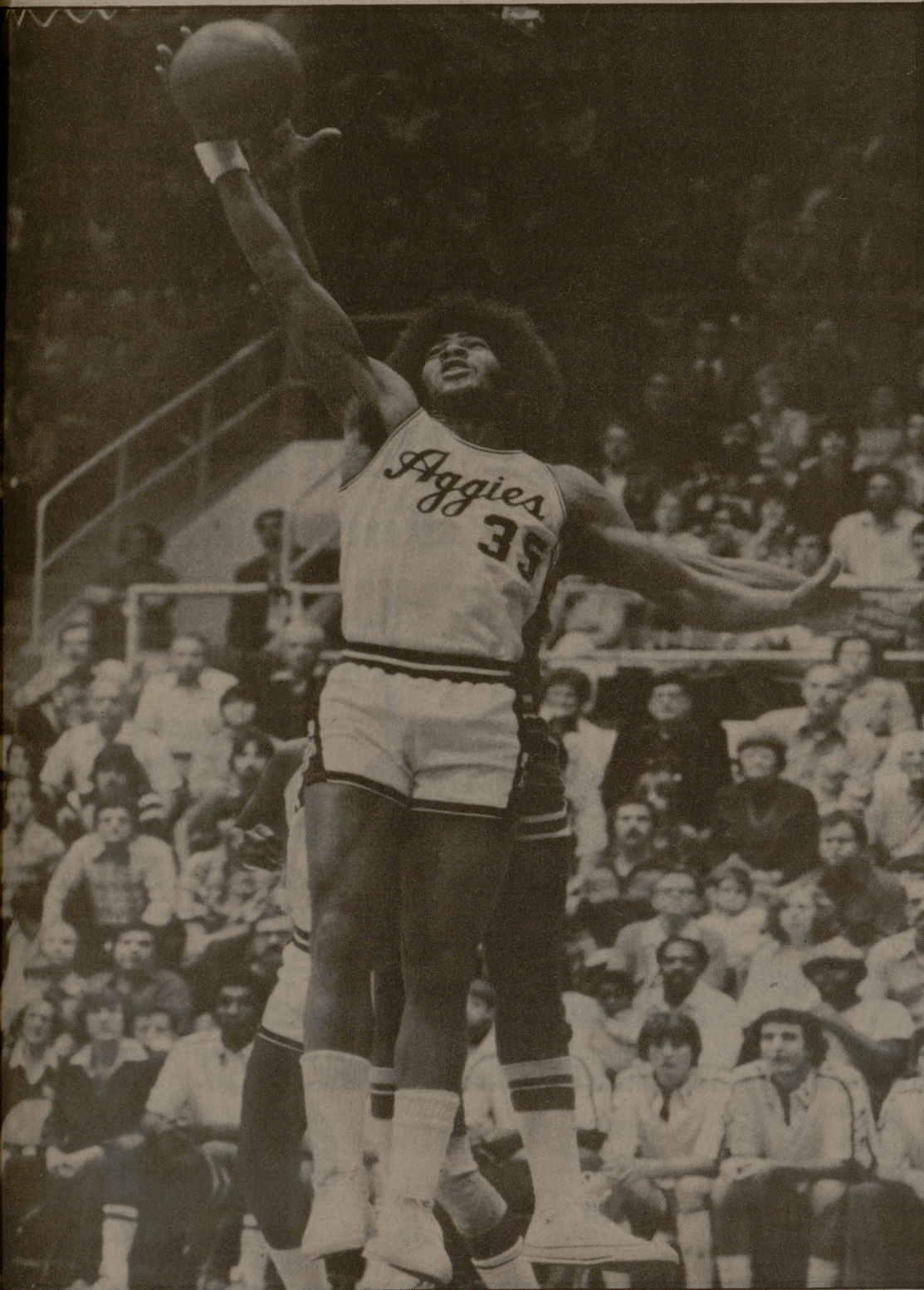
small percentage will have it badly enough to notice it.

But repeated injuries accelerate development of the disease.

"We would not like to do away with sports," Wilson said. "The thing we would like to do would be to have the attitude or the understanding of the physician, the parent, coach, the trainer developed so they analyze the play performed in the game to minimize the situation that would produce severe trauma to specific joints that are unprotected."

When a joint injury has occurred, Wilson said special attention should be given to prevent repeated injury to the joint.

Whether an injured joint should be immobilized for a long time is a matter of debate in the medical community. Recent research has shown that immobilization in a cast interfere with the process that nourishes the cartilage. Unlike most tissue which are nourished by blood, cartilage receives its nutrients from joint fluid.



Wright on top of the action

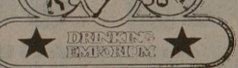
Texas A&M's Rynn Wright was held to 15 points, while pulling down 14 rebounds in

Tuesday night's 60-54 loss to Arkansas.

Battalion photo by Lee Roy Leschper Jr.

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Tech stops SMU

United Press International
LUBBOCK — Texas Tech let an 8-point lead slip away in the second half, but Kent Williams made six free throws in the final 30 seconds Tuesday night to bring the Red Raiders a 66-60 victory over Southern Methodist.

It was the fourth straight win for the Raiders and boosted their Southwest Conference record to 8-4 and their season mark to 15-6.

The Mustangs played their fourth straight game without Billy Allen, the club's playmaking guard who has been suffering from a mild case of pneumonia. SMU is now 3-7 in conference play and 8-12 for the year.

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