

the sports

viewpoint

By SEAN PETTY
Battalion Staff

The eyes of Texas
were upon Colorado

Here we are back at school after yet another spring break. Everyone spent the quick nine days in different ways. Some people went to the Texas coast (where the sun failed to show its tanning face). Some went to different parts of the country and some people just regrouped at home after a tough half-semester. Still others headed northwest to the mountains to cast their lot on the ski slopes.

I was one of those who opted for the cold of the mountains and the risk of breaking every bone in my body instead of slowly sipping suds by the seashore soaking up the sun's rays. I was ready to melt the snow on a few slopes.

We've all heard "The Eyes of Texas are upon you" (yeah, I know, sounds like hell) but those words never made more sense than during our week-long stay in Crested Butte, Colo. The size and reach of the long arm of Texas followed me everywhere.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, it took over 13 hours just to get out of Texas, our Texas. And once we got to Colorado, all I saw were Texas license plates along with many Oklahoma plates.

I had heard that most people who frequent the Colorado ski resorts were from Texas but now I believe Texas should be given credit for most of Colorado's income. Just as Texas oil and gas flows to all parts of the country, so goes Texas money like a pipeline to the Colorado mountains.

Everywhere I walked or skied I heard the familiar twang of Southern accents. I was haunted by people flying down the slopes wearing cowboy hats. As I rode the ski lifts, I looked down on people wearing Baylor shirts, Texas Longhorn hats, Dallas Cowboy hats, SMU hats and Houston Oilers t-shirts. The barrage of Texas paraphernalia was endless.

EVEN ON THE LIFTS, I would ask people where they were from and the most common answer was Texas. I came to the conclusion that a bumper sticker I had seen was correct. It read, "God wanted Texas to ski, that's why He gave them Colorado."

One interesting aspect of the trip was the Coloradoans' view of "foreigners" overrunning their state. One man who has lived his entire life in Colorado Springs summed up the general feeling towards Texans and other outsiders: "All the money is great but the people... well, we could do without most of them. They sure raise a lot of hell around here."

But like the popular saying goes, "Don't bite the hand that feeds you." And the hand that feeds many of Colorado's ski resorts pays a pretty penny to leave the warmth of Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Alabama and various other states to ski in Colorado. For example, ski lift tickets were \$12 a day at Crested Butte. When all the lifts are running, 7,300 people an hour can be zipped up the mountain. That is a lot of greenbacks being made just getting people up the mountain.

SKI RENTAL IS MORE REASONABLE. Skis, boots and poles are \$8 a day and there is no charge if you break a pole (like I did) or other equipment.

The people of Colorado, or at least of Crested Butte, provided a lot of entertainment. It was interesting to watch and listen to the last of the hippies who apparently hang out and work at ski resorts around Colorado. Listening to them talk was like being back in the late 60s. I kept waiting for them to talk about Woodstock or start protesting the war in Vietnam.

I overheard two of these men talking at the ski lodge: "Like man, it's just not happening in Boulder anymore. Boulder used to be where it's at but it's just not there anymore."

"Like man, I guess I don't know where 'it' is at either. 'It' must not be in Texas because I bet I would have found 'it' if 'it' was here. I tell you what, if I find 'it' I'll call those guys in Colorado so they can get to 'it'."

GETTING BACK TO THE 70s, I had to wonder what keeps people coming back year after year to the Colorado ski slopes. It's not just the parents or college kids that return, but small kids, too. I couldn't believe it. It looked like some sort of kindergarten had taken a field trip skiing. The slopes were covered with kids who wore skis longer than the kids were tall. And what really killed me was that they were all better skiers than me.

I could just picture some of these kids' parents taking them to get their first skis even before they could walk. I talked with one eight-year-old girl who told me, "We try to go skiing at least once a year. I'm supposed to be in school right now but I got to ski instead." Then I watched her stay on the lift and go to the expert slopes while I slipped and tumbled on to the beginners' slopes.

Oh well, keep your ski tips up.

Aggies come back
to College Station

By DAVID BOGGAN
Battalion Sports Editor

Birdwatchers in San Juan Capistrano, Calif., were worried Monday morning. The swallows, tiny birds that return to that town each March 19, were late. They finally arrived at the old mission two hours behind schedule, apparently delayed by a rainstorm.

Fifteen-hundred miles east of San Juan Capistrano, the return of the Texas A&M baseball team to Olsen Field is also in doubt because of the weather. If rain does not prevent it, the Aggies, who just flew in from Florida, are scheduled to host Arizona in a double-header beginning at 1 p.m. this afternoon.

While in Florida, the Aggies participated in the Hurricane Invitational Tournament, playing 10 games in eight days. Playing in what Aggie coach Tom Chandler calls a "tournament of champions," Texas A&M compiled a 6-4 record in Florida.

"I'm reasonably satisfied with our

results," Chandler said as he stood in the dugout and watched the rain soak his field Monday afternoon, his 53rd birthday. "It's unfortunate that we couldn't score more runs. There were several factors involved in that. There was an all AstroTurf field and there was a wind. All the teams, not just A&M, experienced difficulty in getting runs across."

Aggie third baseman Mark Warriner, who was voted all-tournament, said that Texas A&M also experienced difficulty at the plate.

"We didn't hit the ball like we can," Warriner said. "Our team batting average dropped because of that. But I believe it (the tournament) will do us good in the long run."

Chandler agreed that his team is not hitting as good as it is capable of doing.

"We left far too many men on base," the Aggie coach said. "But our boys will hit; they've hit before. "While we didn't hit and weren't productive, our pitching really came to the front. Our pitching throughout the tournament was good."

Chandler was especially pleased with the pitching of John Pockrus, who he has named as the third pitcher in Texas A&M's rotation. This announcement was fine with Pockrus.

"I've always wanted to start," said the senior right-hander, who has served the Aggies from the bull pen before this season. "If that's his decision, that's great. I'm tickled to death."

Pockrus said that he feels a starting position will improve his game.

"When you're starting, you know what game you're going to start in and you know how to prepare," he explained. "When you relieve, you could relieve every day. You never know when you're going to pitch."

"When I was relieving, I could use one or two pitches — a fastball and a slider. Since I'm starting, I have to add a change up. This does two things. It helps save my arm and it gives batters something different to look at."

"When I was a reliever, I knew how to throw strikes. I think that has carried over. A reliever has to

know how to throw strikes because a lot of times when he comes in, the bases will be loaded."

The Aggies could face several bases-loaded situations against Arizona.

"They are hitting real well right now," Warriner said of the Wildcats. "They're a good, solid ball club."

Chandler agreed that Arizona will be a formidable opponent. "I understand that they're a fine ball club," he said. "They're coming off a weekend series with USC. And they play in the toughest baseball conference (Pac-10) in America. They call it the 6-Pac and it's tough. There's USC, Stanford, California, Arizona, Arizona State and UCLA."

The Aggies are scheduled to play the Wildcats again Wednesday as well as hosting Minnesota. Texas A&M and Minnesota will play a double-header Thursday.

While in Florida, Texas A&M defeated Miami (Ohio) 8-2 and defeated Florida International 15-3. They then lost three straight to Southern Illinois, 4-0; Oklahoma State, 2-1 and Miami (Fla.), 3-1. The Aggies defeated University of Wisconsin (LaCrosse) 3-1 and defeated Southern Illinois 4-3. They lost again to defending Big Eight champion Oklahoma State 2-1. Finally, the Ags beat Bowling Green 4-0 and Miami (Fla.) 4-3.

Purdue,
Indiana
in finals

United Press International

NEW YORK — Indiana and Purdue usually let their hostilities out on the gridiron each year where they compete for the Old Oaken Bucket, but Wednesday night for the first time in history they'll square off for one of college basketball's most prestigious prizes — the National Invitation Tournament championship.

The state and Big Ten Conference rivals reached the championship round by disposing of Alabama and Ohio State, respectively, in Monday night's semifinals at Madison Square Garden.

Purdue, led by 7-foot-1 Joe Barry Carroll's career-high 42 points, crushed Alabama, 87-68, and Indiana stayed off Ohio State, 64-55, to set up a third meeting between the two squads this year. The clubs split their previous two games this season.

Carroll was just too big and too agile for Alabama. The Crimson Tide stayed with a man-to-man defense throughout the game, but their biggest player was only 6-feet-9 and Carroll acted like a starved wolf going after a lamb chop. The gangly junior hit on all eight of his field goal attempts in the first half and connected on 16 of 19 shots overall in the finest showing of his collegiate career.

Alabama might have had a better chance against Purdue if they'd employed some of Indiana's defensive tactics. The Hoosiers were being hurt by Ohio State's Herb Williams in the first half but enveloped the 6-10 center like an octopus in the second half and held off the late-charging Buckeyes.

Williams had nine points in the first half but scored only five after the intermission and did not score a point in the second half until 13:40 had elapsed.

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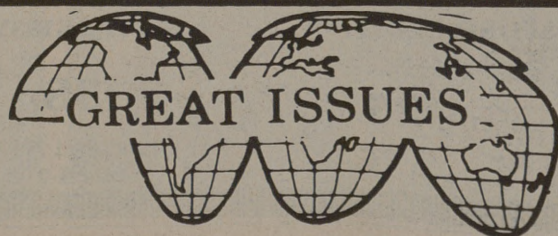
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