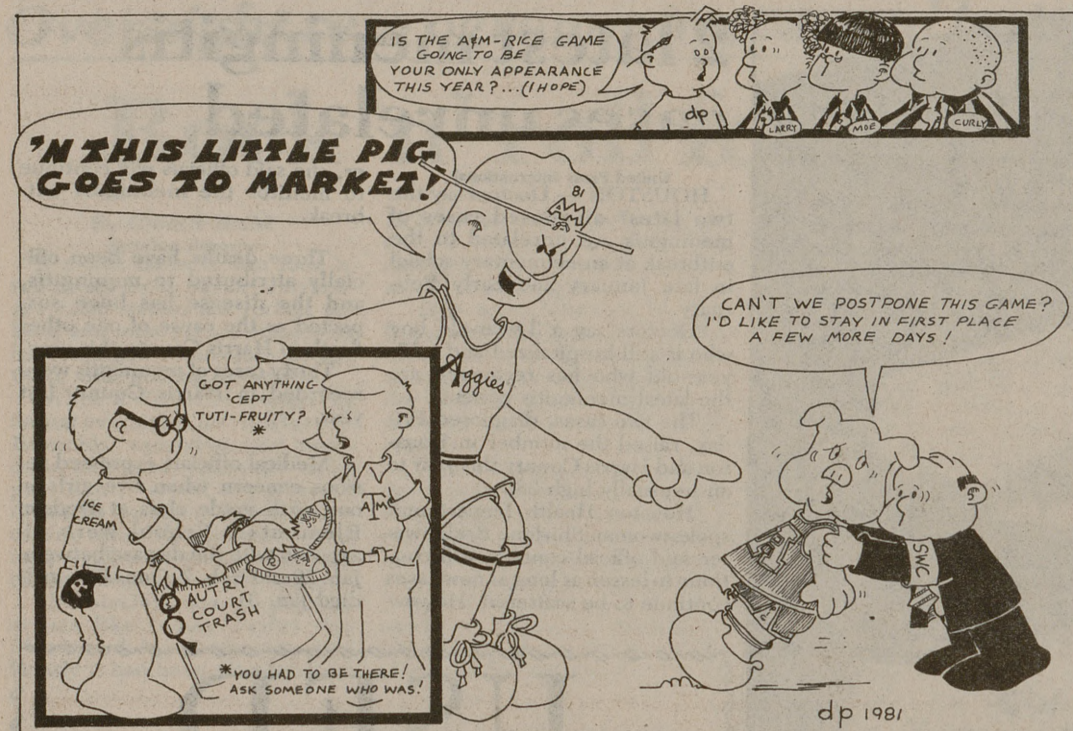


# Sports



## Battle for third is in SWC spotlight

United Press International  
Other than being able to hang up a pennant in the gymnasium, it doesn't make that much difference whether it is the Houston Cougars or Arkansas Razorbacks that finish on top at the end of the Southwest Conference's regular season.

They will both almost certainly be drawing bids into the semifinals of the league's postseason tournament and they both will probably receive invitations to the NCAA tourney.

But if one team does eek out the other for the league crown the odds seem to favor the Houston Cougars, despite their 15-point setback at the hands of the Razorbacks in Fayetteville last Saturday.

The Arkansas win, which came with the Razorbacks shooting 60 percent, outrebounding Houston, 32-23, and taking advantage of a giant shift in momentum midway through the second half, left the Hogs and Cougars tied for the

league lead with 9-3 records.

But down the stretch Arkansas has somewhat the tougher schedule. The Razorbacks must go to both College Station tonight and Lubbock (Feb. 28) in addition to their home games against Rice and SMU. Houston, meanwhile, also has to go to College Station on Feb. 28, but its other road trip is to TCU tonight while the Cougars have home dates with Baylor and Rice.

If they wind up sharing the crown, the seeding for the tournament would be determined how the two teams finished against the third-place team. At this point Texas Tech and Baylor are tied for third. Arkansas has lost to Baylor and Houston has lost to Tech.

All of that figuring, however, doesn't make a hoot to the Razorbacks, who won their biggest game of the year last Saturday in blasting the Cougars during the second half.

"A team with less character might have gone into a tailspin (after losing three conference games earlier in the season), but we fought back and I think we can win the conference now," Arkansas coach Eddie Sutton said. "Our players certainly think so."

The game seemed to turn on a decision made by coach Guy Lewis with 13 minutes left in the game. Having picked up three free throws — one of them thanks to an Arkansas technical foul — the Cougars had trimmed the deficit to three points.

Houston seemed to have the momentum, but when the Cougars brought the ball inbounds (again thanks to the technical foul) they went into a delay game. Four minutes ran off the clock before Houston took a shot and it turned out to be an airball by Lynden Rose.

The crowd at Barnhill Arena, which had been screaming its collective throat out of joint during the stall, really erupted after the missed shot. Houston did not score for another four minutes while Arkansas ran its lead to 12 points.

While Arkansas and Houston are left to worry about first place, the middle of the SWC race has turned into a jumble. Thanks to Texas Tech's 56-53 win over Baylor in Lubbock and Texas A&M's 71-56 decision over Rice — the Aggies fourth straight victory — there are five teams battling for the third-place spot in the final standings.

Texas Tech and Baylor are tied for third at 7-6, Rice is a half step behind at 6-6 and Texas A&M and Texas are at 5-7.

## Reflections

By Richard Oliver



### The Hogs need a lesson

On Jan. 24, Barnhill Arena in Fayetteville rocked as 9,400 Arkansas Razorback fans screamed their lungs out for their team as the Hogs took on Texas A&M.

In the wilds of Hog country, that means a lot of cussing, fighting and intimidating.

Saturday, that intimidation brought about the downfall of Bob Williams and the Houston Cougars 70-55, and catapulted the Razorbacks into first place.

I sat through that Texas A&M-Arkansas game on Jan. 24 and lived to tell about it — barely.

In a column after that game, I discussed and cussed that crowd, thanking my Lord for C. Rollie White and the remnants of sanity in the world. I endured a few taunts and blasphemies and even a fist in the back from a Hog groupie who found out I was an Aggie, but didn't squeal. At least not like they did when a call went against them.

And not many do up there.

A team may saunter boldly into Barnhill Arena, but more often than not that team will run back to the bus after the contest and plead for the security of home. It's that bad, folks.

Even Skip Bayless, that renowned column writer of the Dallas Morning News, wrote an article about the hapless Hog crowd Sunday.

Speaking of Saturday's Hogs-Cougars game, Bayless reiterated what many have said and noticed:

"The refs were worried about being lynched by the Razorback rowdies. The final was Arkansas 70, Houston 55 — but don't take it to Wells Fargo Bank. In the San Antonio flatlands with half as many Hog Wilds in the SWC tourney stands, it will be different. Houston without Williams is Arkansas without its fans."

As Bayless quoted, recently Inside Sports magazine ranked Barnhill as one of the top 10 "pits" of the country.

Tonight at 7 p.m., Arkansas will creep out of that pit and venture into G. Rollie White Coliseum, a place known not only for a crowd that emits a noise perhaps "a decibel louder" than Barnhill despite having fewer in attendance, according to Bayless, but one that is becoming known for its sportsmanship albeit being a bit fanatical.

Last week, columnist Dick Vitale of the Detroit Free Press praised Texas A&M for its Jolly Rolly crowd. At Rice Saturday night in Houston, half of Autry Court was filled with vocal Aggie fans.

The Razorbacks have won seven straight. The Aggies have won four straight. Arkansas rests on top of the SWC heap. Texas A&M lies silently waiting in fifth place, a game and a half out of third.

When the smoke clears and the season is over, the Hogs and the Cougars will undoubtedly both be invited to either the NCAA or NIT classics, regardless of the final tournament results. Both have virtually clinched semifinal berths in San Antonio's HemisFair Arena March 5-7 for the post-season classic.

The Aggies, however, will have to continue scrapping. But needless to say, the day in, day out battles will have them primed for combat come March.

And tonight's battle will be the most important of all for Texas A&M. In Arkansas, the Aggies had the Hogs on the ropes as they weaved, bobbed and scored repeatedly while maintaining a practical, solid defense. But eventually the crowd and some bad free throw shooting won out — Barnhill 1, Texas A&M 0.

Now, the Razorbacks visit G. Rollie. Assuredly, the stands will be packed with avid fans. And assuredly, the fans will have their say. That in itself is fine. There are fans and there are mobs.

Arkansas will find out the difference tonight.

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The Association of Baptist Students invites you to their spring retreat at Paron, Ark. The dates are Feb. 27, 28, & Mar. 1. The guest speaker will be Dr. Joe Pendleton, pastor of First Baptist Church of Magnolia, Ark. The theme for this retreat will be "Fruit of the Spirit." Registration fee is \$20. Deadline for registration is Feb. 19. Transportation will be provided.

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National deadline for submitting applications is March 1. Local deadline for applications is February 25, 1981.

## Reggie wants more

United Press International  
NEW YORK — George Steinbrenner wants a few things clearly understood about his relationship

with Reggie Jackson.

He thinks the world of him, and that isn't just talk, he means it. He understands him and can comprehend the concern his slugger's fielder has over his contract which expires at the end of this year.

Moreover, George Steinbrenner appreciates the four productive years Reggie Jackson has given him with the Yankees and has no fault to find with his overall effort during all that period.

He would like to sign Jackson again. He says he will bend every effort to do that, and if he can't, well, that would mean Jackson probably would elect to go somewhere else, to some other club willing to pay him more money.

Speaking from his office in Tampa, Fla., Monday, the Yankee owner said he'll meet with Jackson sometime next week to discuss his future with the club.

"I'm not trying to put any heat on Reggie," Steinbrenner says. "I'll do what is realistic and what I think is fair," he goes on. "If it isn't good enough and he decides to try for free agency, I'll understand that perfectly. If he can't get \$9 million from someone else, God bless him. I spoke with him by phone the other night and he asked me, 'What if you can't get together and I go for free agency? Would you be mad at me?' I told him no, I wouldn't be mad, and that's the truth."

When Jackson signed a five-year contract calling for \$2.66 million with the Yankees in November of 1976, few, if any, at that time foresaw the possibility of his being in the position to ask for even more at the end of that contract. To his credit, Jackson never sought to renegotiate during any of the period his contract was in force. Now, with one year to go and seeing the more than \$15 million given to Dave Winfield, he feels he can rightfully ask for more.

This will be Jackson's 14th season in the big leagues, he'll be 35 in May and he has, on pure performance, established himself as a legitimate candidate for the Hall of Fame.

He reads the papers and saw where an arbitrator awarded Yankee catcher Rick Cerone \$440,000 a year from the Yankees the other day, even though Cerone has been in the big leagues only four years and only one season with the Yankees. Cerone's salary compares favorably to the \$532,000 a year Jackson is getting and would serve to strengthen Jackson's argument for more money.

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