Texas A&M The Battalion Sports

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Cream of the crop Lewis' Cougars favored to win league basketball crown

by Frank L. Christlieb

Sports Editor DALLAS — Guy Lewis hasn't chosen his starting guards, Eddie Sutton has his youngest team ever and Jim Killingsworth has to figure out a way to sneak his talented team past several others and onto the top rung of the Southwest Conference ladder.

But don't let these guys fool you. When the final buzzer sounds at the end of the last game of the regular season, Lewis, Sutton and Killingsworth may be so tightly bunched together that they and their players won't have room to breathe. Or it may just turn out to be a

runaway. After all, Lewis and the Houston Cougars did make it to the Final Four last season before losing to North Carolina 68-63 in the semifinals. And after all, no matter how young or old his players may be, Sutton and the Razorbacks always man-

age to win their share of games. And look at "Killer" Killing-sworth's Horned Frogs. In guard Darrell Browder and forward Doug Arnold, TCU has the top two returning scorers in the conference. While spectators cry that the league won't be the same with-out Rob Williams, Ricky Pierce,

Terry Teagle, Scott Hastings, LaSalle Thompson and Clar-ence Swannegan, the coaches have only one reply: Hogwash.

New names, they say, will crop up in place of those old cliches that have been bandied

Clyde Drexler returns as

Houston's top rebounder

n U Y

Arkansas' Darrell Walker

part of top backcourt duo

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day's meeting HOUSTON, Guy Lewis: the air at this point, Lewis can't or nine guys. figure out why everyone's in an leave it to Lewis to find an effective backcourt combination if

ger and better things.

balanced and strong from top to

bottom. It's not only hard to pick

the champion, but it's hard to

In a league like this that's so

well-balanced, you can go from

top to bottom in a hurry. Or

maybe from bottom to top. I think our league will be one of the best-balanced leagues in the

Here is a breakdown of each SWC coach and his ideas on the

1982-83 basketball season. The

teams are listed in the league's

order of finish as predicted by

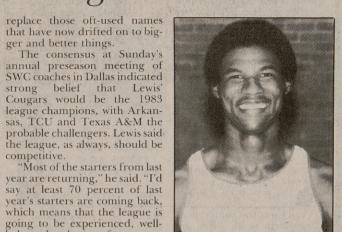
media representatives at Sun-

pick the cellar team, too.

competitive

country

conference schedule.



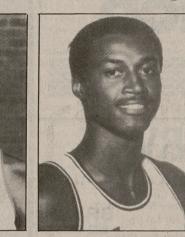
Rice forward Kenny Austin leads an experienced squad

points and 10.5 rebounds a game during the Cougars' 25-8 season in 1981-82.

"Houston is the only place in the country that can lose its two starting guards — and its top two reserve guards — and everybody thinks that they're im-proved," Lewis said. "It doesn't make sense

'We're going to be a good basketball team - if we ever find out who our starters are. I think **HOUSTON, Guy Lewis:** we've got good bench strength With his guard situation up in and I should be able to play eight

'The only thing that worries uproar about his Cougars. But me is that all of our big guys are on one end of the court and the basketball starts at the other end not before the season, at least of the court - and there's 94 during the Coogs' tough non- feet in between," he said. "If we can get around the double-



Claude Riley tops list of returning SWC rebounders

Lewis said he knows Arkansas, TCU and Texas A&M will be hot on the Cougars' path throughout the season.

"You're going to have to win it on the floor," he said. "If you could just mail in your ballots and award Houston the championship, I'd be grateful. But I know that's not the way it's going to be. We're going to have to go out there and do it ourselves — one would have any interest in or whichever other team will do his squad.

Lewis said he's looking forward to witnessing the improve-ment of Olajuwon, the Cougars' 7-foot center from Nigeria. Olajuwon, who's been playing basketball for only three years, av-eraged 8.3 points and 6.2 rebounds a game last season.

'I'm very, very enthusiastic at

how much he's improved, and I'm very, very disappointed that he hasn't improved more," Lewis said, "He has made some improvement and is a better basketball player than he was a year

ago. "He's still not dominating like you would want a 6-11 player to be. He's still learning the game and he's going to be a much better player in the future.'

Lewis, who will earn th 500th victory of his UH career with the Cougars' first triumph this season, described his guard situa-tion as "muddled." He said in experience in the backcourt may be a problem in the first few games

There are about five or six players on about the same level of play," Lewis said. "And I don't like that. I want one or two of them to rise above the pack. I would really like to know now who my starting guards are going to be in our first game."

ARKANSAS, Eddie Sutton: Sports Illustrated visited the Arkansas campus last week to find out about Sutton's 1982-83 team. But a la the usual, Sutton one would have any interest in

I could not believe that they would come to our campus after we lost five seniors," Sutton said. "This is the youngest basketball team I've ever coached. I said, 'Why would you come?' and the guy said, 'tradition.' I guess that is important in any game you

now. I think we're going to get-better. It's the most inexperi³ enced and youngest basketball team that I've ever coached at a major-college level."

Sutton has two top starting guards in Darrell Walker and Alvin Robertson, plus Joe Kleine, a transfer center from Notre Dame who will be the Razorbacks' starter in place of Scott Hastings.

"There are a lot of question marks about the Razorbacks in 1982-83," Sutton said. "But still, I like our basketball team. I like the chemistry of our ballclub. I don't think I've ever had a team work any harder during the first three weeks of practice than this group has.

"It's a great start when you have Robertson and Walker, because ... they're as good as any backcourt combination in college basketball. If we get any kind of play (under the basket), then we can be competitive in the conference race.

Sutton said Kleine, a 6-11, 250-pounder from Missouri, won't be as versatile as Hastings.

"Kleine's not as good as you think he is, and he's certainly not as good as our fans want him to be," Sutton said. "But in time, I think he'll be a big-time center.

'Joe's a different type of player than Hastings. He is not as good as Scott Hastings, but in time, he may be. Kleine is strictly an inside player, whereas Hast-ings could play at the forward position Sutton, who after last season

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