

A&M basketball team to host exhibition game

AIA spreads Christianity while competing

by John Wagner

Battalion Staff

For six months out of 12 — from November to April — the Athletes in Action USA basketball team travels across the country, playing some of the nation's toughest college basketball teams in their home arenas.

Nothing unusual there. Many college coaches welcome the challenge of playing a top amateur team, without the pressure of conference races and playoff berths. For them, it's a chance to evaluate their team in a game situation — without worrying about the won/lost column.

But for the USA'ers, as the Athletes in Action team is nicknamed, there's a more important mission at hand than just defeating that night's opponent.

In fact, when the first half ends and the home team heads

to the locker room, the USA'ers stay on the court and speak to the crowd.

Their message? Christianity — as well as basketball. The AIA team uses basketball as a way to spread Christian beliefs to college campuses around the country.

Saturday night, Athletes in Action will bring its traveling ministry to Texas A&M as the USA'ers meet the Aggies in G. Rollie White Coliseum. The exhibition contest begins at 7:30.

AIA began in 1967, the brainchild of David Hannah and a offshoot of an organization known as Campus Crusade for Christ. Campus Crusade is a non-denominational group that works with college students.

Hannah, a Campus Crusade worker in Oklahoma, attended a CC-sponsored concert, and came up with the idea for a traveling

basketball team that could help CC do its work all over the country.

If music could be used to spread the world of God, Hannah reasoned, why couldn't athletics? He met with CC founder Dr. William Bright, and AIA was born.

It's been a successful venture — especially on the basketball side. Since their inaugural season in 1967, the USA'ers have been 392-195 for a winning percentage of .667. Last season AIA was 25-12, and so far this year they're 5-2, including defeats of Maryland, Penn State and Oral Roberts.

Those victories, coupled with two defeats at the hands of UCLA and Clemson, epitomize what AIA is all about. They play tough teams, and they play to win.

Don Ott, assistant sports information director for AIA, says

the USA'ers' rough schedule is important to their overall goal of reaching as many people as possible.

"We want to be the best amateur team in the country," Ott said in a telephone interview from AIA's headquarters in Memphis, Tenn.

"It's important to us to be as good a team as we can be. If we come to Texas A&M (with a record of) 7-0 after having beaten teams like UCLA and USC, then a lot more people will be interested in seeing the game than if we were 0-7.

"Being good helps us draw big crowds.

Having good athletes helps also. The USA'ers, coached by Wardell Jeffries, recruit players just like college coaches do. Many of their athletes come from teams that have played AIA, as in the case of Ralph

Drollinger of UCLA and Terry Cummings of DePaul.

Drollinger and Cummings were outstanding college athlete who played for AIA when their college days were over. However, neither is with the team now.

This season, Jeffries' USA'ers are led by forward Dan Frost from Iowa and Steve Bontrager, a second-year player from Oral Roberts.

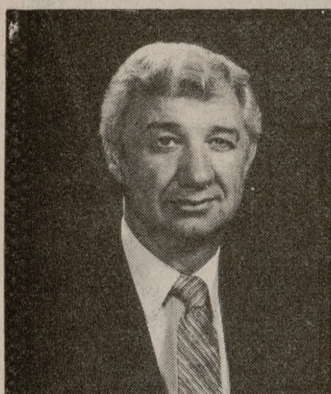
AIA has a reputation for being a running team, and Coach Shelby Metcalf's Aggies are likely to see the USA'ers continue that tradition.

For Texas A&M, Claude Riley, the Aggies' all-America candidate at forward, will start with Roy Jones, Tyren Naulls and Reggie Roberts. Either Roger Bock or Jimmy Gilbert, both freshmen, will start in the middle to fill the position left vacant by four-year starter Rudy Woods.

After meeting AIA, the Aggies will go north to take part in the Great Alaska Shootout in Anchorage. That tournament



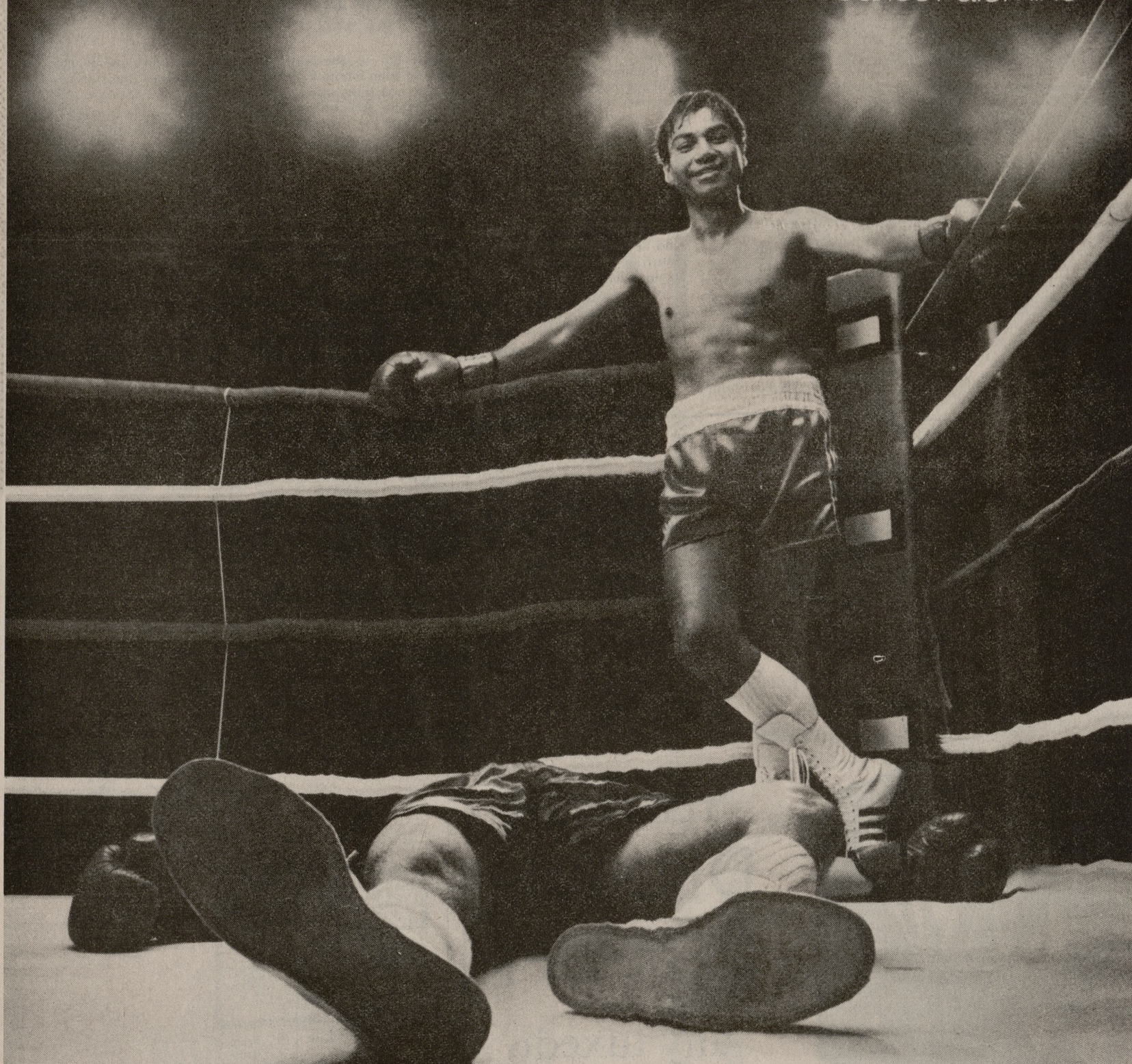
Wardell Jeffries' AIA has beaten Maryland.



Shelby Metcalf's team set to play Athletes in Action

BOXERS ARE A LOT LIKE BEER.  
SOME GO DOWN EASIER THAN OTHERS.

Carlos Palomino



Aggie gymnasts set to host meet

by Frank L. Christlieb

Sports Editor

Take away their still rings, parallel bars and pommel horse and they're like basketball players without a hoop, baseball players without gloves or hockey players without sticks.

Like any athlete, they're committed to their sport, even though they play as an extramural sport rather than as a varsity squad. This weekend, they'll participate in their only competition of the season, so they're as excited about it as a football player would be about the first start of his college career.

Competing as a club sport, the Texas A&M gymnastics team has been a neighbor of success for several years. And once a full slate of competition begins in the spring, the Aggie gymnasts hope to find that this year's squad can boast success as a roommate.

"Our team is looking very strong," says team captain Mark Hartwell, a four-year team member. "We've got 16 team members this year and our performers in the intrasquad meets we've held have already equaled last year's best performances."

The Aggies host the University of Texas-Arlington Saturday at 7 p.m. in 307 East Kyle, with a charge of 50¢ for admission. The dual meet will feature all six Olympic events: floor exercise, pommel horse, rings, vault, parallel bars and high bar.

Although the Aggies won't compete in any more meets this

semester, they've planned to meet at the spring semester. The team will conclude on that slate are competitions against six schools as well as Fort Hays State, Texas and Memphis State.

Texas A&M finished second in the TGC last season, Texas Tech placing first and Texas Longhorns winding third. This season, Hartwell said, the Red Raiders may be as formidable.

"Boy, are they looking like a powerhouse this year," he said. "It looks like they're going to (turn) varsity pretty soon."

Hartwell has been the leader in several events, participates in the floor exercise, rings and vault. Other team members include Mark James, who this season, Jim Farris and Mauricio Orozco. Mustangs and Galindo and Grant Lauderdale. "SMU is a team but an opponent," Hartwell said. "And yet, passing team."

The Aggies also have two all-arounders, which are gymnasts who must compete in all events at each meet. Jim Gallo and Ray Moltz are Texas A&M all-arounders.

"We've got quite a bit of this year," Hartwell said. "The key to our strength is got a whole new set of bars and some real good freshmen."

Hartwell said the team would like to become a varsity sport in the near future, complete with coach and scholarships for athletes. But for now, they

See GYMNASTS page

SPECIAL

Roast-Beef and a Baked Potato with all the fixings for \$2.49

One package of free cookies to children under 10 with each order.

Plus

- All you can eat Salad Plate.
- And a speedy, convenient Drive-Thru Window

201 DOMINIK



EXPIRES 14 NOV. 82



EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED IN A BEER, AND LESS.