

Sutton says Razorbacks ready

Aggies, Hogs resume rivalry Saturday in Barnhill Arena

by John P. Lopez
Battalion Staff

There's no doubt the Texas A&M-Texas football rivalry is one of the fiercest battles in the country. But when it comes to basketball, many Aggies consider Arkansas to be the top rival. The feeling is mutual.

Arkansas head coach Eddie Sutton said motivating his players to play Texas A&M is always an easy task.

"You have to realize," Sutton said, "that no one has won the conference championship the past nine years except Texas A&M or Arkansas. I don't have to worry about firing my players up because they've been in too many wars with the Aggies. They know it'll be another war Saturday."

Another reason the Aggies are on the mind of many Razorbacks, Sutton said, is because Texas A&M consistently plays well in Fayetteville. Sutton added that Saturday's game should be another Barn(hill)burner.

"Every time we hook it up with A&M you can count on a great basketball game," he said.

The first time we ever played them here we went into three overtimes. That's just how most of our games go and I'm sure this year will be no exception.

Both teams are very evenly matched.

The Aggies, no doubt, will have revenge on their minds from a 66-64 loss earlier in the year when they walk onto the Barnhill Arena court, but the Razorbacks aren't the only factor Texas A&M must deal with. The hollering Hog crowd will see to it Arkansas has a definite home-court advantage.

The Aggies have done well in Barnhill before, but this year Texas A&M has six players that have never played in front of the rabid Razorback fans — a definite disadvantage for the Aggies. Freshman Kenny Brown will be broken in to hostile surroundings Saturday, but he said he'd prefer to concentrate on the game.

"I've heard so much about their crowd that I'm looking forward to going," Brown said. "But I'd just like to win. And I think we can win if we keep our own intensity up."

"If we win, we'll be in real good shape for the (SWC) tournament. And if we lose we really won't be hurt too bad either."

Senior guard Tyren Naulls agrees, but doesn't want to think about losing.

"Since TCU lost, (Wednesday to Tech) we're only one game out of third place in confer-

ence," Naulls said. "We'd really like to win to stay in the battle to get to Dallas (SWC tournament)."

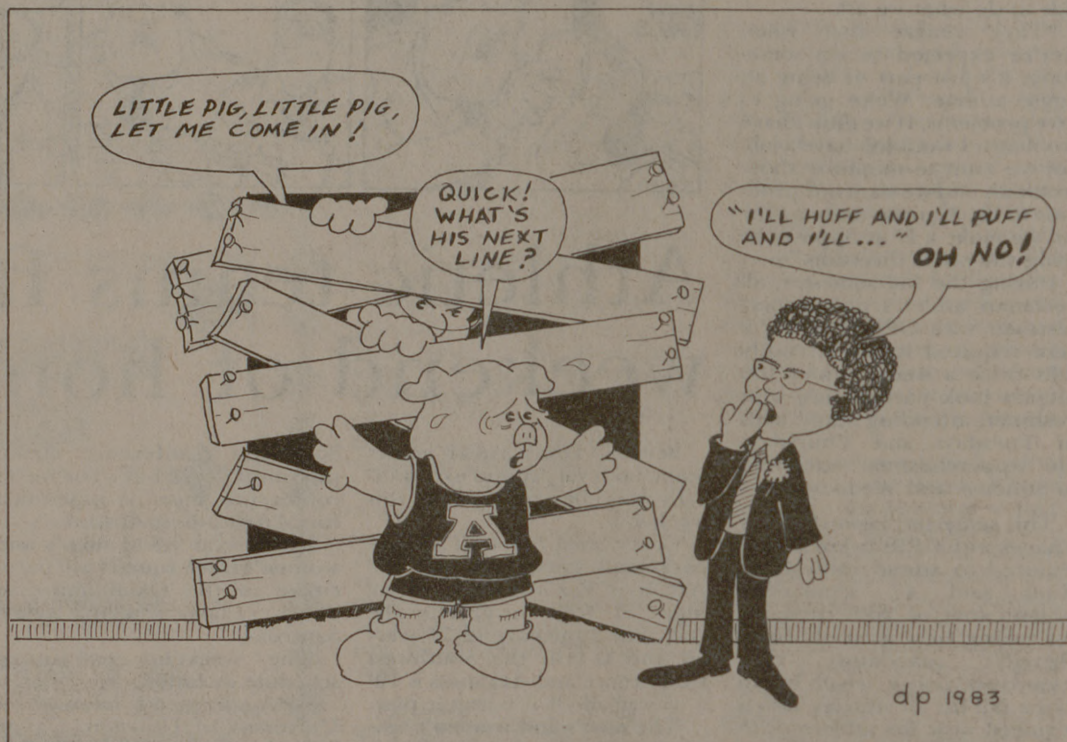
Arkansas is already virtually assured of a first-round tournament bid, but Sutton said the Hogs have been playing inconsistently of late.

"We had a good game against Wake Forest," Sutton said, "but I think we still need to go out and have a good game against A&M. I think a big difference in our game will be the play of (center) Joe Kleine. He's been a lot more consistent in his play lately."

"(Darrell) Walker has also been doing very well. I think the Reggie Roberts-Darrell Walker matchup will be a great one. They're two of the quickest guards around. But naturally, if you want to beat A&M you have to stop Claude Riley. He can hit you with 25 or 30 points in no time at all."

If past Aggie-Razorback games are any indication of what to expect Saturday, Sutton's prediction of a down-to-the-wire game should prove to be correct. But the Arkansas players might have a little more motivation on their side than Texas A&M's players.

The Razorbacks can't afford



to lose another game since they are one game behind Houston in the Southwest Conference standings and the Cougars don't seem to be loosening their

stranglehold on the top spot. On the other hand, the Aggies would like to finish in one of the top three spots in conference to gain an automatic

birth in the Dallas portion of the SWC tourney. And every Aggie knows the road to the top of the conference goes right through Arkansas.

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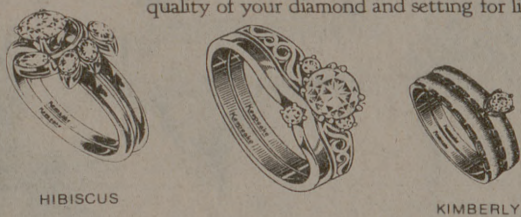
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