Texas A&M The Battalion Sports

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for The Showdown at Barnhill

Houston, Arkansas battle tonight for share of SWC championship

Ided for AVETTEVILLE, Ark. — the accompaniment of a fullted roar that would proby be looked upon as unhealby the Environmental Proon Agency, the Southwest ference will make some basall history tonight.

p.m.m. Never before have two bas-ball teams from the SWC TION iched such lofty heights, with p.m. int? Arkansas Razorbacks cur-ntly rated No. 4 in the country d the Houston Cougars havte stude y made it all the way to No. 1. sity Luty And tonight, in a fortress that nks as one of the most impreable anywhere, those two A&Mhms will collide.

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This will be a showcase for thwest Conference basketat 7 p.m.ll." Arkansas coach Eddie Sutsaid. "It has to be the biggest ference game ever played in in Rud

league. We are ready for the test and players think they can win." rkansas players should cerpaign. feel they can win since haven't lost at home for two s and have never lost to iston in Fayetteville.

But this is not an average m coming into Barnhill Are-

10^{a tonight.} "Night in and night out," Sut-n said, "Houston is the best n in college basketball."

> nning kyo to a Virginia team that as playing without Ralph

ourteen of those victories Scott Hastings hit an 18-foot



Eddie Sutton's team hasn't lost to Cougars in Barnhill

and if the Cougars win tonight they will capture their first SWC championship since joining the league for the 1975-76 cam-

Arkansas, meanwhile, has lost only once this season - that being a 15-point embarassment that was Sutton's worst setback

as the Razorbacks' coach. But the overriding statistic in-volving this game is the number of wins Houston has had in Arkansas — zero.

Houston's first trip to Bar-Houston (23-2) has reached nhill came in 1976 and the e No. 1 spot in the rankings by Cougars suffered the worst loss ning 18 straight. The in the history of their basketball gars last lost on Dec. 16 in program, 92-47. Since then the Cougars have lost by 11, 19, 20, 3, 15 and 1 in Fayetteville.

its not just idle gossip

Last year, Arkansas center been in conference play jump shot with five seconds to berlain as far as blocking shots.

go to wipe out the last of a 10point Houston lead and give the Hogs a 67-66 triumph.

"It's just a hard place to play in," Houston coach Guy Lewis said. "But that's pretty evident since they haven't lost many games in there. Coach Sutton has some great fans up there that respect and support him and his program.'

But at least one of Sutton's and Lewis' Southwest Confer-ence competitors thinks this is the year for Houston to escape Fayetteville with a victory.

'I think Houston is strong enough to overcome all of that this time," Texas Tech coach Gerald Myers said. "I just think they are so much better physically than they have been before. I'm going to enjoy watching it."

The key, as usual, appears to be Houston's ability to handle the pressure defense and the noise that goes along with it.

"Arkansas scores off its de-fense," Myers said. "And if those Houston guards feel the press-ure and short out, then it might be all over right there.

"But if they can get the ball downcourt, they are going to be in good shape. The other way Arkansas scores is with Darrell Walker and Joe Kleine getting in close to the basket. And I don't think they can score enough

points inside against Houston. "I look at Akeem Olajuwon (Houston's 7-foot center) as one of the top three or four guys in the history of college basketball as far as blocking shots. "I would rate him right along

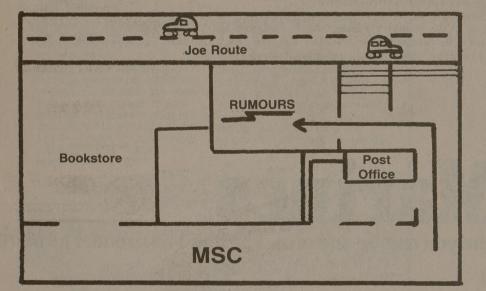
with Bill Russell and Wilt Cham-





The play of Arkansas' Alvin Robertson, left, and Houston's Akeem Olajuwon, inset, will be major factors when the two teams meet tonight.

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