

TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



Rifle team's Woodard met for national meet

by Frank L. Christlieb
Battalion Staff

As he approaches his shooting at the rifle range in the Military Sciences Building, Todd Woodard begins to make his usual preparations. "Every shot should be the same," says Woodard, captain of the Texas A&M Rifle Team. "You have to make some adjustments for the target moving from shot to shot, but not much."

As he sets the rifle on the support stand in front of him, Woodard looks toward the target for a unmagnified view of the target card that hangs 33 feet in front of him. Standing with his hips parallel to the card of bull's-eyes, Woodard takes a short breath, closes his eyes, opens them and pulls the gun on the support stand toward his chest.

While looking into the gun's sights, he leans back slightly to allow the rifle to rest on the upper part of his chest. Woodard's eyes stay focused on a tiny "10" in the center of the bull's-eye at which he is aiming.

All around the 10 circle are other rings with the numbers 9 through 1. But Woodard's attention is centered on one ring and one number.

Twenty seconds later, a shot is fired and a small pellet hits the bull's-eye.

Where did it hit? "That's a nine at 6 o'clock (on the lower part of the nine-ring)," says Woodard. Then after looking into the telescope-like object beside him, Woodard discovers that his shot was better than he'd thought. "No, that was a 10 at 3 o'clock. I didn't think I had a 10 at that one."

Woodard shoots twice more, once calling the shot a nine and once calling the other time an eight. But a closer look reveals that he's shot another pair of 10s.

Woodard, the senior member of the Texas A&M squad, makes a habit of shooting nines and 10s on any rifle range he's on. And he's had a lot of success in the past. In the 1982 NCAA championships, he'll be expected to pile up as many 10s as he can.

The competition will be held at Xavier University in Cincinnati next Friday and Saturday.

In the sport of riflery, shooters concentrate on hitting numbers on a target. In the air rifle event, competitors shoot 40 times with the highest possible score being

400. That would mean hitting the dead-center 10-ring 40 times.

Each card of 10 bull's-eyes is worth a potential 100 points, and a shooter will go through four cards during his 40 shots.

Woodard, the first member of the Texas A&M team to qualify for the national competition since the Aggies became an NCAA-recognized squad four years ago, has a match average of about 369 and a practice average in the 378-380 range. He said he hopes to shoot between 380 and 383 in the championships.

"If I were to shoot four cards of 98," Woodard said, "I would

"Shooting's a simple sport. You're really just trying to stand still, and when you do that, you're training your body to do something it doesn't do well." — Rifle Team captain Todd Woodard.

win the NCAAs. But I don't think anyone can shoot a 392. I expect to shoot about a 383. I'm pretty convinced I can't shoot 390 because I haven't paid my dues. I'm not in good enough physical shape and I would have to revamp my mental approach. "I'm comfortable shooting about a 380 (95 for four cards). I know I can shoot those any day of the week. In shooting, you have to have a comfort zone at which you won't experience much tension. I'm used to shooting about 380, so I think a 383 will be a good performance."

Woodard said a 383 might place him among the top 15 or 20 shooters in the nation. But, he said:

"If ... no, when I shoot a 380, I'll be happy with my performance. There's no sense in saying I might do it, because then if I do it, there would be no planning involved and it would be luck."

Woodard, who has collected 12 medals, trophies and plaques while shooting in air rifle and .22-caliber competition, said it takes body control to be successful in the sport of riflery.

"Shooting's a simple sport," he said. "You're really just trying to stand still, and when you do that, you're training your body

to do something it doesn't do well. A track runner explodes from the starting block, a football player moves laterally and a shooter must train himself to stand still.

"Everything's mental. You have to train yourself to relax and be totally balanced."

Another key, Woodard said, is concentration. There's a time limit of 2 minutes for each shot, so competitors can't waste time in preparation.

"When I'm preparing to shoot, I'm concentrating on the sight picture and I look to see how the target looks in the front (sight)," he said. "I fill my mind with the target — my mind is completely occupied with what I call a program ... and nothing else enters my mind. It's a matter of automatic responses. If you don't have those it's very tough to shoot."

For Woodard, making a trip to the national competition means the achievement of a goal.

"I had goals 2½ years ago to make the NCAAs," he said. "I just cut it a little too close and didn't work hard enough. I can look back now and take the blame for that myself. I could've come out and practiced more, but I didn't."

"But I am happy with my technique. And learning a bad technique is probably worse than not shooting enough."

Since the sport requires such intense concentration, Woodard said, shooting above 390 is nearly impossible.

"I'll shoot five or six 10s and I'll start getting goosebumps and think to myself, 'Man, am I shooting great,'" he said. "Then I start getting edgy about shooting another 10 and end up shooting a nine. The discipline is to just let the shot get there. As for shooting better scores, I'm just not there yet. I'm not shooting real good scores."

Woodard said preparation for each shot may be the most crucial aspect of the sport.

"The preparation is actually more important than breaking it (shooting), because if you prepare right, then all the extraneous things around you just disappear," he said. "So all you have is a weight on your chest and a little black dot that you're trying to hit."

"There's no tension involved in a good shot. When you have to think about it, it's going to be a bad shot. Your right finger senses when you're (centered) in the 10-ring."

sports

Razorback fans Sooie supportive

by John P. Lopez
Battalion Staff

DALLAS — Of the 12,000-plus fans attending the Texas A&M-TCU game Thursday night at Reunion Arena, some were pulling for the Aggies and some for the Frogs.

The other 10,000 were merely stalking their prey.

To say that Arkansas has a "good" fan support at the Southwest Conference tournament would be like saying the No. 1-ranked Houston Cougars have a "good" basketball team playing in the tourney.

Houston may have Phi Slama Jama, but Arkansas has its own fraternity of sorts — Stomp, Shout and Screama.

And just to show TCU they mean business, the throng of Arkansas supporters did one of its "Pig Sooie" yells just as the Horned Frogs were leaving the floor after defeating Texas A&M 65-53.

No ice was thrown and the Hog-Wild Band wasn't there, but the sea of red and the Hog calls made many a TCU player think of an echo chamber in Fayetteville, Ark., where the Razorbacks play basketball.

"We like to think of it as Barnhill (Arena) South," Little Rock's Champ Crawford said. Crawford has taken his family to every SWC tournament for the past eight years and said he attended the Aggie-Frog game with no intention of pulling for either team.

"It's just good to go to a basketball game and leave with my voice still intact," he said. "There's no pressure on the fans to produce at a game like this."

Produce? Yes, produce. The Arkansas fans take their role seriously.

Laura Moorman, a high school student from England, Ark., said the Razorback supporters could make the difference in some games.

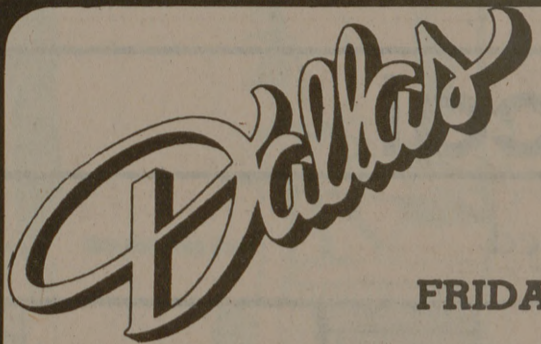
"I came down with about 30 people and I know there were a lot of other groups that did the same," she said. "We came to this game to see the competition for the big game tomorrow."

"I'm glad we're going to play

TCU because they have a lot of fans here and we all love to get into it with other fans. It feels good to have thousands of fans here and know we'll play a part of the game."

Moorman's father, Dick, who led a caravan of six recreational vehicles down I-35 from Arkansas, said he loves to follow the Arkansas team wherever it goes.

"I've been to six tournaments in a row and I love yelling for the Hogs," he said. "I know they can win without us, but I also know we help them a lot, too."



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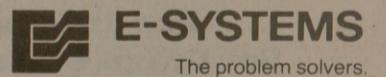
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