

## Ag swan shares pond with frogs

Once upon a time, Texas A&M had a team. A team shunned by everyone (except the Dunn Hall Bleacher Bums).

She was the "ugly duckling" on the A&M campus.

Fewer than 200 fans showed up to see her play and the media paid her little attention.

Learning as she went, she became better with each passing year.

Finally, the calendar turned its pages to 1984.

At Texas A&M, everyone thought '84 would be the best year ever. The Aggies had only one sports team. "Cotton" became synonymous with their ambitions.

Then fate frowned upon the College Station campus. Several student deaths, two controversial court decisions and a losing football team created something worse than even George Orwell could have envisioned.

Meanwhile, the "ugly duckling" celebrated her 10th birthday in August. She was still shunned, but she began to win. Music to any Aggie's trained ear.

She won the first game, the second game and, slowly, she was transformed. No longer was she an "ugly duckling."

She had 31 victories against only 3 losses, a No. 14 ranking by the NCAA News and an upset win over No. 8 San Diego State.

She became a swan in a pond of minnows and frogs.

Yes, indeed, the Texas A&M volleyball team has become a light at the end of this campus' tunnel.

A winner, in a semester filled with disappointments and losses. The word on campus has changed from Cotton to "Nationals."

### CHAREAN WILLIAMS

Sports Writer

"We're the best team in the nation, when we want to be," Aggie middle blocker Chemine Doty said.

The A&M volleyball team began in 1975 as an ugly duckling. With time and effort, it has been transformed into a swan.

This year, A&M is tied for first in the Southwest Conference with Texas. The Ags play the Horns in Austin on Nov. 14 for the SWC championship. Ultimately, the Ags have a legitimate shot at the national championship.

However, one small problem still exists — the students and faculty at Texas A&M, excluding the "Bleacher Bums", have not taken note of the Ags' accomplishment.

With two home volleyball games left in the '84 season, you have a chance to feel the excitement of winning. As the "Seventh Man," you won't find yourself yelling till your hoarse, only to be let down with a loss.

The team plays Pepperdine on Nov. 9 and Texas Tech on Nov. 12. Both matches are in G. Rollie White Coliseum at 7:30 p.m.

You can't expect good things to happen without going out and searching. Waiting gets you nowhere.

If more than 1,500 people can show up to protest something like SWAMP, at least that many can show up to support a long lost Aggie tradition — winning.

To the swan I say, "Congratulations on a job well done." I can only hope others will stand up and admire your beauty before it's too late.

## A&M's cagers back in action

By JEFF GRAUNKE  
Sports Writer

Get ready for some high-impact, high-intensity basketball excitement. They'll be hanging from the rafters at G. Rollie White Coliseum tomorrow night, when the Aggies host the Continental Flyers from Houston.

Tomorrow night is the first show-down on the basketball court for the Aggies, and they're coming out shooting.

Yesterday, in practice, the Ags broke into two teams and scrimmaged. The guys are looking tough. This year the Ags have a little more height and size to work with, although it not the biggest A&M has ever seen. 1984's players are physical and I believe it's going to be a good year for Aggie basketball.

The Continental Flyers are an Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) team comprised of former collegiate players, most of whom were drafted by the NBA, but then waived or cut from the roster.

Michael Young, a first round draft choice of the defending World Champion Boston Celtics, is playing for the Flyers. Young's played against A&M before with Houston, so he'll be ready.

The Flyers are coming to town with some big boys. The AAU franchise sports former TCU Horned Frogs' Brian Christensen (6-foot-10) and Nick Cucinella (6-8), along with former A&M player Steve Sylestine and Texas' (6-8) Bill Wendlandt.

"They're a class outfit," said A&M Coach Shelby Metcalf of the Flyers.

The competition will be tough for the Ags because most of these players have played against A&M before and are familiar with their playing style.

Starting in the middle for the Aggies is Jimmie Gilbert (6-9), who looked real strong in yesterday's scrimmage. Metcalf will start three guards — Don Marbury, Todd Holloway and Kenny Brown. Winston Crite will start at forward.

Metcalf is confident about this year's squad.

"We're going to be improved," Metcalf said. "We're playing with a lot of intensity and we're real physical. We have speed, quickness, shooters and rebounders. We'll be a better offensive team."

The Ags play a continuity offense with a lot of movement off the ball. It worked fairly well in scrimmage yesterday, but the first test will come against the AAU Flyers.

On defense, the Ags basically play man-to-man, "and we like to press," Metcalf added. At times, A&M moves into a match-up zone.

Metcalf said the Southwest Conference is loaded with basketball talent this year. He said 33 out of 45 starters return from last season. Also, three out of the 12 members of the 1984 Olympic basketball team were from the SWC, comprising 25 percent of the team. The conference sent three first round draft picks to the NBA last year.

Packed with that much talent, the SWC should produce some of the best basketball in the nation. It begins tomorrow night at 7:30 p.m. Be there.

The Flyers' game will be physical. Both teams have a lot of strength and size. The Flyers played last week and are already in the playing mood. A&M has been working hard and it shows in practice.

The Ags came back from the summer quicker, stronger and more experienced. Crite, Holloway, and Mike Clifford are sophomores this year. Last season, the Ags were young and finished fifth in the SWC. With more experience, the Ags should be contenders for the SWC title in '84-85.

If you're tired of seeing the Ags losing week after week, come on out tomorrow night and watch a different A&M team take to the floor and really make things happen.

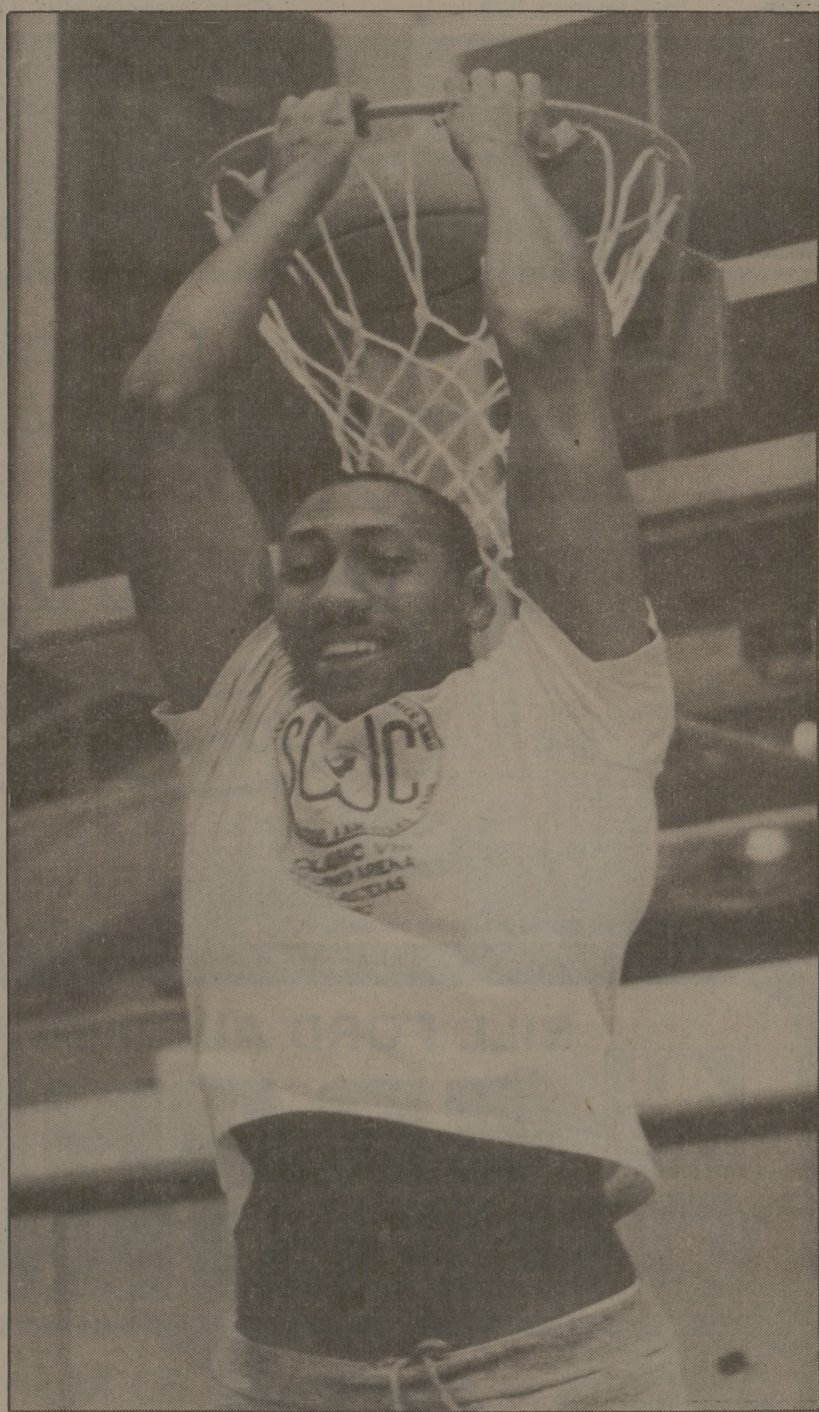
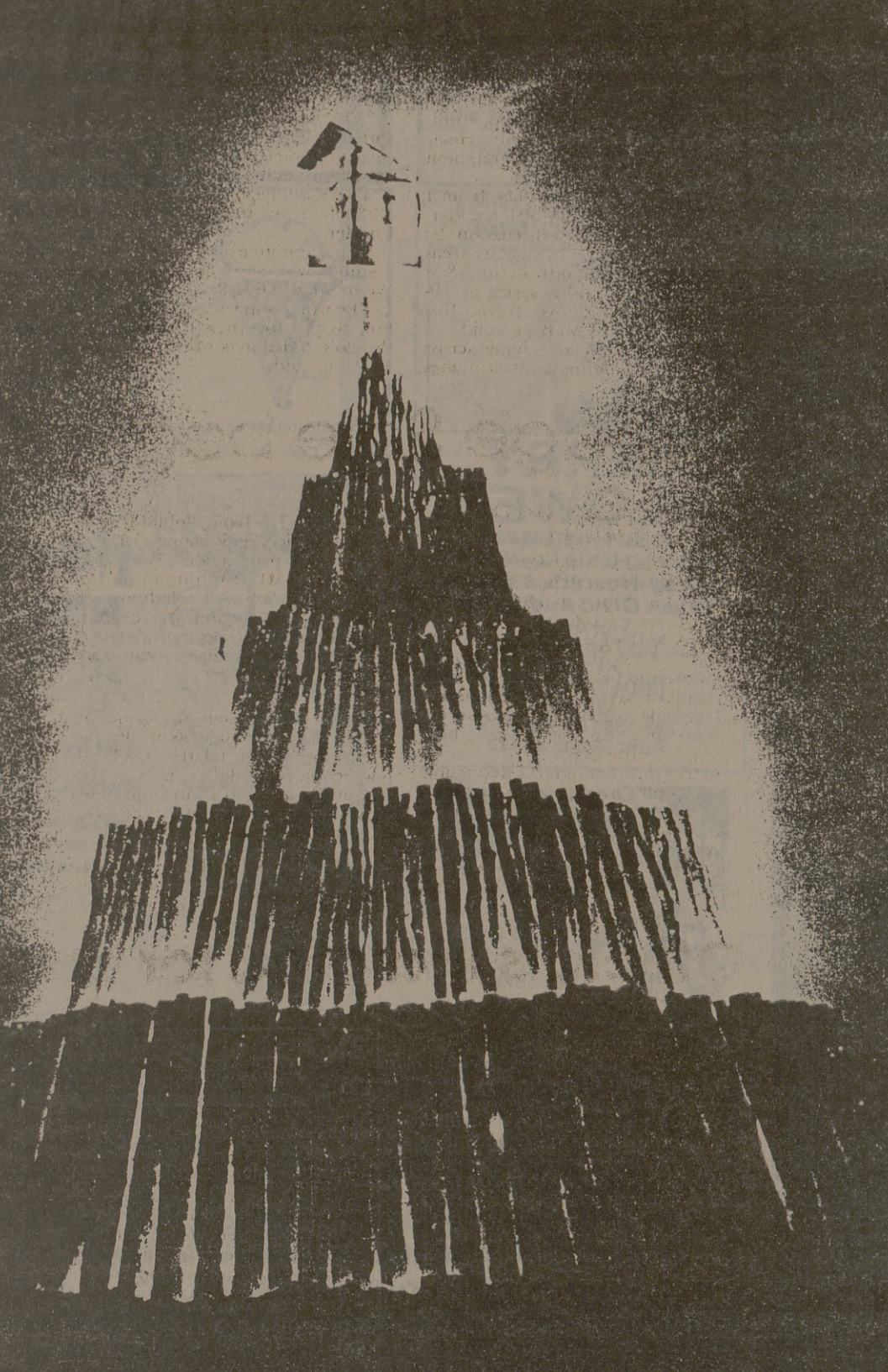


Photo by JULIE COKER

A&M starting center Jimmie Gilbert makes a reverse slam dunk look effortless, during workouts Monday afternoon.

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