

SPORTS

Aggies looking for crown in Red-hot Raider's royal room

By **BRANDON BERRY**
Sports Writer

Lubbock may seem an unlikely throne room, but one of the basketball kings of the Southwest Conference can definitely be found among its tumbleweeds. Going into Saturday night's game with Texas A&M, Texas Tech is tied with SMU for first-place in the SWC with a record of 9-4.

The Red Raiders have a season record of 17-7. Tech has beaten Arkansas (twice), Southern California and SMU. According to Texas A&M Head Coach Shelby Metcalf, the Red Raiders have won with a team of veteran over-achievers.

"They're a senior ballclub," Metcalf said. "They start four seniors and a junior and bring two more seniors and a junior off the bench. That experience really helps them. They play smart and don't make very many mistakes. And they beat Arkansas in Fayetteville."

But they also lost to the Aggies 50-47 in G. Rollie White Coliseum earlier this season and lack the physical big man in the middle.

When Tech wins, they win with teamwork and defense, as opposed to dominating height or blinding speed. But teamwork has been good enough for a first-place tie with three conference games remaining.

"What impressed me the most about their game in Fayetteville (against Arkansas) was how they kept their composure all the way through," Metcalf said. "They never panicked, and that's a sign of their maturity."

Tech is led in scoring and ball-handling by senior point-guard Bubba Jennings. Jennings scored 32 in a recent game against Houston and was named the Associated Press SWC Player of the Week the past two weeks.

The Red Raider leader is averaging 19.8 points per game, second in the SWC and is good on 56.4 percent of his shots, eighth in the SWC.

"I like that Bubba Jennings," Metcalf said. "He plays with a lot

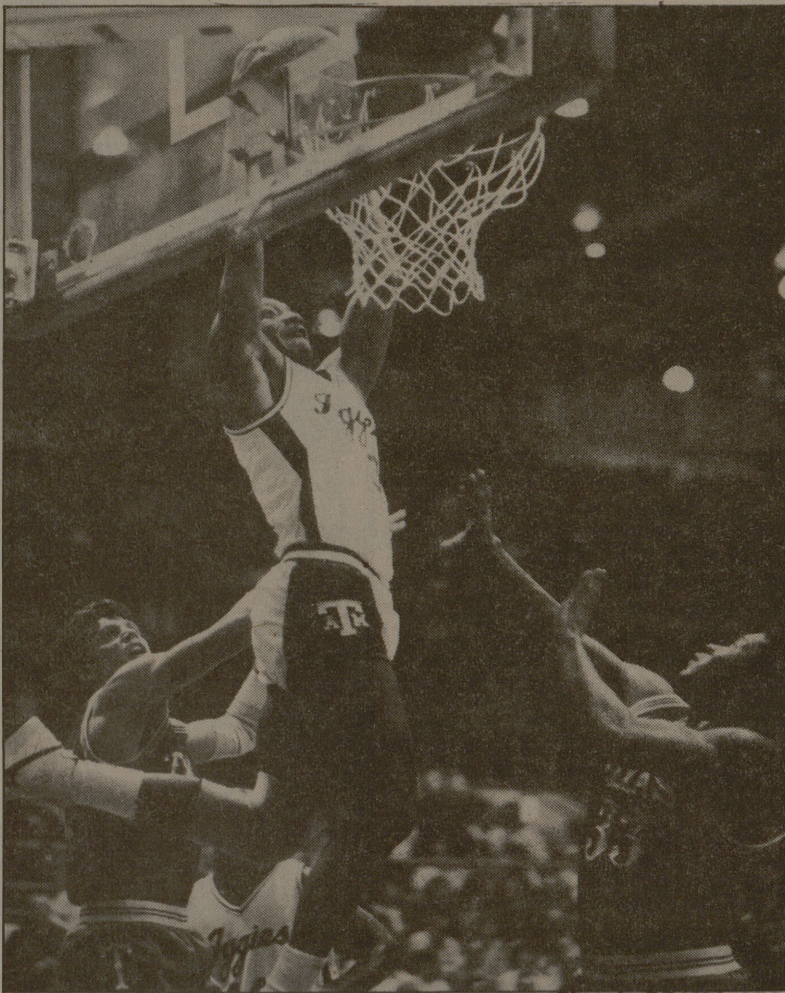


Photo by DEAN SAITO

Texas A&M guard Don Marbury goes for a flying two-handed dunk past Texas' bewildered Mike Wacker (left) and Carlton Cooper (33). A&M lost to Texas Wednesday, 53-51. A&M tangles with first-place Tech in Lubbock Saturday.

of heart and is just a great shooter. I tried to recruit him when he came out of high school, that's how much I liked him.

"And I like that big-kid (Quentin) Anderson. He's really a good scorer on the inside. (Tech Coach) Gerald (Myers) has just done a good job of working with his team."

An A&M victory would move the Aggies into a tie with Texas

Tech for either first-, second- or third-place in the conference depending on what Arkansas and SMU do this weekend. It would also greatly enhance their chances for a post-season tournament bid.

"Lubbock is always a tough place to play but so is Houston (the site of the Aggies' following game)," Metcalf said. "We're just in a tough position."

1985 A&M Baseball

Ags open season against NE Louisiana

By **BRANDON BERRY**
Sports Writer

The hot dog ladies pander their wares in shuttle-bus depots as unseasonably white legs rush to catch the Scarlet O'Hara. Picnic lunches have replaced thermoses and Lake Somerville now has more appeal than a cozy fire on a cold winter's night.

The leaves on the trees outside the Academic Building are starting to outnumber the raucous black crows.

Warm weather has indeed returned to the Brazos Valley and Olsen Field, Texas A&M's "other" stadium, will resound with the noises of the first game of the 1985 season when the Aggies take on Northeast Louisiana in a doubleheader this Saturday and a single game Sunday. Both games scheduled for 1 p.m.

This changing of the seasons will also be a changing of the guard for the A&M baseball team. The 26-year, coaching career of Tom Chandler came to an end last season and new coach Mark Johnson said the pressures of head coaching aren't what he thought they would be.

"Coach Chandler ran an extremely successful program here at A&M and you don't need to change something that works," Johnson said. "In my time here as his assistant, the other assistants and I had a lot of responsibility, so the decision-making shouldn't be too difficult. The way the team will look on the field shouldn't be any different than in the past."

"The pressure of coaching at A&M is in continuing Coach Chandler's winning tradition. Twenty-six wins in 26 seasons speaks for itself.

"The main difference between the way we're going to do things and the way they've been done in the past is in the promotions. We truly believe we have a good product to sell out on the field. We are the representatives of Texas A&M University and we're going to try to represent the school well."

"But more than anything else, we want people to know that they're going to have a good time when they come out to the ballpark."

The Aggies should also be an exciting team on the field as well. Six starters return from a team that finished 41-21 and advanced to the NCAA playoffs. All-Southwest Con-

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— **A&M Baseball Coach Mark Johnson**

ference shortstop Rob Swain is a legitimate candidate for individual post-season honors again this season. Plus, A&M has signed some highly regarded junior college transfers and high school players in the off-season.

So is it too early to order College World Series tickets now?

"We're in a very tough conference," Johnson said, "and, right now, you have to consider Texas and Arkansas to be the favorites. Baylor is really going to be improved and Houston is doing good things with their program."

"Right now, our strong point seems to be our hitting. Our pitching concerns us right now because we lost Sherman Corbett and Chris Hutchinson when they signed pro-contracts. We have Tom Arrington-back and he was the MVP of the Southwest Conference Tournament last year. We also have Kelly Keahey back. Beje Mahoe is going to be our short reliever and Phil Taylor and Barry Smith can do either."

"Jimmy Flowers was looking really strong as our third starter for this season until he got hurt. He's going to be out of action for at least three more weeks but when he comes back he's probably going to be our (designated hitter).

"Baseball is a hard sport to predict ahead of time because there are so many intangibles. The junior college

transfer also plays such a large role in college baseball. A few JC transfers can make all the difference in the world between a winning season and a losing one."

Not only do the Aggies return Swain to the starting lineup, but also senior Buddy Haney, who moves into right field from first base where he's been a steady performer the last two seasons; senior Mike Scanlin in centerfield; senior Shawn Choruby in left field; and junior Steve Johnigan behind the plate at catcher.

The Aggies will be counting on Russ Schow and Fred Gegan to fill the voids left by Haney at first base and Tony Metoyer at third base, respectively.

Scott Livingston, a highly touted freshman recruit last season, will also see considerable playing time at third base.

"The inexperience on our infield really concerns us, but we think we've got the potential for some good chemistry in our defense," Johnson said. "We are playing a very traditional A&M pre-season schedule and by the time we get into the conference schedule, we should know a lot more about our team."

"I think that baseball really does have something that no other sport can match. There's that constant drama of the one-on-one confrontation between the pitcher and the hitter that's just so intense. And baseball is the 'American' sport."

"Everybody knows what it's like to go out and throw a baseball. Not everyone knows what it's like to get pinned by a linebacker or slam-dunked over."

"We know that we're putting a good product out on the field and we can't wait to get started. D.D. Grubbs, our P.A. announcer is really major-league quality and he can't wait to get started. He bought an organ and he's been practicing. He should be pretty good by gametime. What's a baseball game without an organ?"

What's warm weather without baseball.

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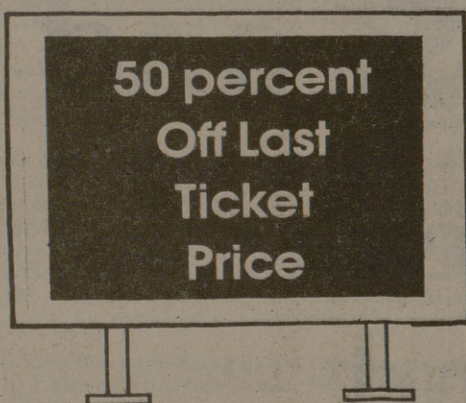
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