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# Experience shortage worries A&M's Hickey

### '85 schedule toughest ever for Lady Ags

Page 14/The Battalion/Thursday, November 21, 1985

By BRANDON BERRY

They can run. They can jump. They can play defense. They can re-

One player was even nominated for homecoming queen. In fact, the 1985-86 Texas A&M

women's basketball team has a little

"The only thing we're missing is experience," A&M Coach Lynn Hickey said. "I believe we have brought a caliber of athlete to the Aggie women's basketball program that people have not seen before on this campus.

Only four players from last season's 14-14 squad were seen in G. Rollie White Coliseum last week.

Hickey and assistant coaches Eileen Feeney and Shelly Hughes brought in four junior college transfers and six freshmen to fill the vacant spots on the squad. Two walk-ons add the finishing touches to the

So how can 12 newcomers and four holdovers compete with the likes of Texas Tech, Houston, Arkansas and the nation's preseason

'Anytime you bring in this many new people, you're going to have problems," Hickey said. "That's why believe this team won't begin really showing itself until late January or early February, when the (Southwest) Conference games start. We should have a better idea about this team then."

Feeney and Hughes were a little less reserved concerning the pros-

pects of their protegés.

"The potential of these girls is way up there," Hughes said. "I can't think of another team in the conference, except Texas, that has as many really good athletes.

"The best thing about these girls is that they're all winners. They were all-stars on state championship teams in high school or in junior col-

lege. They will do anything to win." Hickey conceded, "I'd be crazy if I didn't admit that we will have a much better team than last year. But these kids are so young that they don't know what they're going to be up against. Sometimes, they don't jump or play physically on the boards because they're so used to be-ing so much bigger and stronger than everyone they play against.

"They don't realize that everyone they're going to be playing against is just the same as they are.

With the toughest non-conference schedule in the program's history, the Lady Aggies can only hope to be the same as most of their early season opponents.

The Aggies open their season on the road Friday at 7:30 p.m. in Nacogdoches, against a dangerous Stephen F. Austin team. On Nov. 29, A&M begins the Big "O" Tournament in Oregon against UCLA. They then take to the road in mid-December for games against nationally-ranked Oklahoma, LSU and Louisiana Tech.

A&M's five-home game non-conference season is highlighted by a New Year's Eve encounter with the Nebraska Cornhuskers.

This season's non-conference foes won almost 60 percent of their

"I think the preseason schedule is good for us," Hickey said. "We might not have a great won-loss record heading into conference play, but it will be good for us because we will have played as tough, if not tougher, competition than we will face in the SWC."

The competition in the SWC has traditionally been for second place. Texas has dominated the conference

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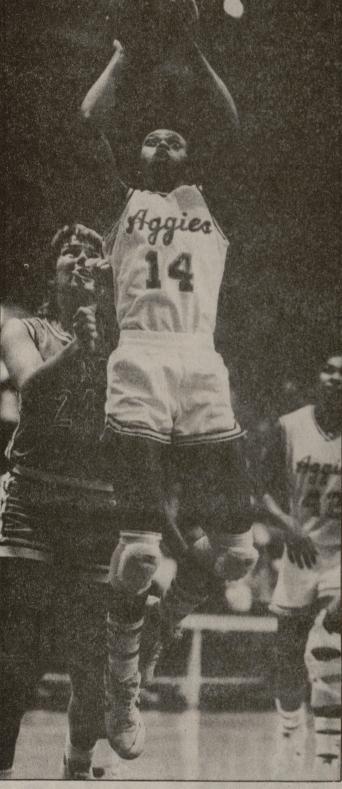


Photo by JOHN MAKELY

A&M guard Lisa Langston (14) — "You can see a big difference in this (A&M) team and the ones we've had here in the past few years. These girls are big, but they're also quick and they can jump. Coach Hickey recruited them and they're the type of athlete she likes."

since its inception in the early '70s. And this season looks to be no dif-

"Looking at the SWC as a whole, the conference is getting better, and every year is getting tougher and tougher," Hickey said. "Texas may have the best team they've ever had this season. Texas Tech, Houston and Arkansas will be tough again, and Baylor has as many natural athletes as anyone and will be able to compete with anyone.

The Lady Longhorns lead every-one's preseason SWC lists because of tradition, experience and defense.

"Texas is so good because of their defense," Feeney said. "No one can hold up under the defensive pres-sure they put on you for the full 40 minutes. They wear you out because they have so much depth and they never quit.

"If Texas has a weakness, it's their rebounding. We beat them badly on the boards last year and that's always been a problem for them." And one of the few glimmers of

hope in a brow-beaten conference.
"My philosophy is that no team is unbeatable," said A&M's Lisa Lan-

gston, last year's leading scorer (16.3 ppg) and an All-SWC selection. "You can see a big difference in this team and the ones we've had here in the past few years. These girls are big, but they're also quick and they can jump. Coach Hickey recruited them and they're the type of athletes

"Last year, she came in here in a bad situation. There was a team with a lot of seniors that had never won anything before.

"These new kids are tough. In the past, I pretty much knew I would be a starter, but now I can't make that assumption. These kids are really pushing me.'

Hickey concurred, "Every position is open at this point. I don't believe anyone has a starting spot sewn up just yet. There is going to be a great deal of competition at each position and that will make every player work harder and will make \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* copies

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