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**Aggie basketball squads
gear up for 1986-87 season**

By Ken Sury
Sports Editor

The sounds of sports are everywhere these days. The crack of a bat on a baseball, the grunts and groans of hard-hitting football players and now... the thump, thump, thump of the basketball and the swish as the ball goes through the net.

Yes, basketball is back. The pros are playing exhibition games and Texas A&M began practice Wednesday for the 1986-87 season. The Aggies will be out to defend their Southwest Conference championship and the Lady Aggies will try to improve on last year's 16-13 season.

But A&M Men's Head Basketball Coach Shelby Metcalf isn't looking ahead to repeating as SWC champions. He's more concerned with molding a team that can contend for the title.

"I haven't even thought about (trying for the championship)," Metcalf said. "We have five junior college players who I haven't even seen play (in a game). So it's hard to evaluate how we'll do."

The Aggies are missing two prominent members from last year's conference tri-championship team — Don Marbury, the SWC's top scorer last season, and center Jimmie Gilbert, who Metcalf called the best defensive center A&M has ever had.

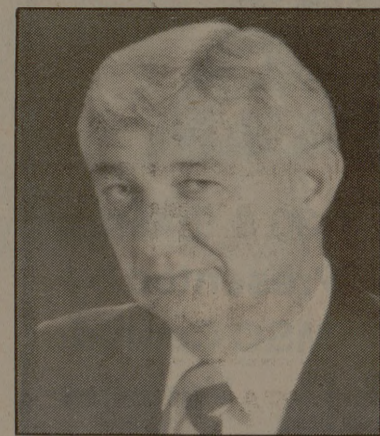
"The center position is our No. 1 hole to fill," Metcalf, who begins his 24th year as head coach at A&M, said.

"We have no proven centers. We're looking at Jules Moor (a 6-8 senior transfer from Baton Rouge), Jesse Spinner (a 6-10 junior transfer from Los Angeles) and Eric Bethea (a 7-0 sophomore transfer from Key West, Fla.), but none have scored a point or grabbed a rebound for Texas A&M yet."

But despite the losses of Marbury and Gilbert, three-year lettermen Winston Crite, Todd Holloway and Mike Clifford return to this year's

squad. Crite led A&M with eight rebounds per game last year and was named to the all-tournament team at the SWC Post-Season Classic in Dallas. Holloway set an A&M record 161 assists last season and Clifford can play all five positions.

"I'm high on Mike Clifford," Met-



Shelby Metcalf

calf said. "He's not a shooter, so the average fan doesn't appreciate him. But he's got those intangibles and he's versatile. He's the best defensive player on the team."

Metcalf said he wasn't sure who would be the offensive catalyst to replace Marbury, but he expects this year's team to have more depth.

"Offensively, we'll just have to wait and see how the chemistry works out," Metcalf said. "There's no bonafide 20-point man on the squad. But we should have more of a balanced attack."

The Aggies' first game is an exhibition contest Nov. 18 in G. Rollie White Coliseum against the Continental Coors Flyers from Houston.

For the women, Lynn Hickey begins her third year as the Lady Aggies' head coach. The Lady Aggies had their first winning season since

1979-80 last year and finished fourth in the SWC.

A&M was a young group last year, with all-time Aggie leading scorer Lisa Langston being the only senior on the squad. And Hickey said the youth is still a factor.

"We're still so young," Hickey said. "I don't want this to sound like a copout, but the fall is still going to be a bit of a discomfiting time for us without Lisa."

But Hickey said she expects this year's team to be better than last year's and is encouraged by the players' attitudes.

"The kids are coming up and saying, 'Hey, I'm ready to play now.'" It's probably best that A&M doesn't play just yet because sophomore Nette Garrett underwent a leg operation and is not expected back until mid-November. Sophomore Debbie Lorenzen, the Lady Aggies' tallest player at 6-5, has a stress fracture that's being watched closely.

Since Langston was the only player lost, Hickey said she expects strong play and leadership from returners such as senior Paula Crutcher, senior Beth Young, sophomore Donna Roper, junior Evelyn Sanders and sophomore Lisa Jordan.

Roper was a member of the winning South team in the U.S. Olympic Festival and Hickey said that experience will help Roper out tremendously.

Hickey added that she was excited about bringing some of the nation's top caliber women's teams to play in G. Rollie White Coliseum this year. Other than SWC opponent Texas, which already is No. 1 in preseason polls, national powerhouses Louisiana Tech, Louisiana State University and Nebraska will come to A&M.

Aggie Notes . . . Tryouts for walk-ons for the Lady Aggies' team will be held Monday, Oct. 20 at 6:30 p.m. in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

Texas veteran Harrah becomes free agent

ARLINGTON (AP) — Second baseman Toby Harrah, a 16-year veteran in the major leagues, will be a free agent in 1987, because the Texas Rangers decided on Wednesday not to exercise the option year on his contract.

However, the club's vice president and general manager, Tom Grieve, said, "that does not necessarily mean that he does not have a future with the Rangers' organization. We plan to sit down with Toby and his rep-

resentative in the near future to discuss the situation."

Harrah, who will be 38 this month, signed a three-year contract extending through 1986 with an option year for 1987 prior to the 1984 season while with the New York Yankees.

Harrah hit .218 with seven homers and 41 RBI in 95 games.

He is currently spending a week at the Rangers' Florida Instructional League camp working as a minor league infield instructor.

Dallas releases safety Clinksdale

DALLAS (AP) — Safety Dextor Clinksdale, who failed to report to the Dallas Cowboys this season, was placed on waivers by the NFL club.

Clinksdale, a six-year veteran who started for the Cowboys the last three years, was placed on waivers Tuesday. Should another team not claim him by 3 p.m. Wednesday, he would become a free agent and could try to work out a deal with another club.



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