

Tuesday, January 31, 1989

## Horns and A&M lead poll A&M picked to finish second in SWC baseball

**FROM STAFF & WIRE REPORTS**  
DALLAS — A panel of media who cover Southwest Conference baseball agreed unanimously on Texas as the favorite to win the league championship in 1989.

The baseball season begins Friday with Baylor hosting Hardin-Simmons University.

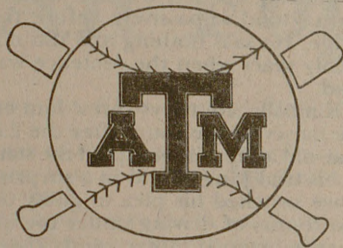
On a scale of 8 points for first, 7 for second, etc., Texas received 72 points from the nine-member panel. Texas A&M finished second in the poll with 60 points, followed by Arkansas with 57 points.

From there, the race for the anticipated fourth position in the SWC post-season tournament gets extremely close. Houston, an NCAA region runner-up to Texas at Austin in 1987, got the nod for fourth place with 35 points.

Texas Tech, with a bevy of power hitters returning, was chosen to finish fifth with 32 points, while Baylor edged TCU for the sixth position in the poll with 26 points.

Coach Lance Brown's Horned Frogs were tabbed seventh with 24 tallies. Rice was the eighth choice with 18 points.

A year ago, the media panel



picked the top three finishers — Texas, Texas A&M and Arkansas — all of whom got NCAA post-season bids. Texas and Texas A&M advanced to within one win of earning a spot in the NCAA World Series at Omaha.

Baylor follows its debut on Friday with a doubleheader on Saturday,

also against HSU. Texas Christian and Texas Tech open on Saturday. The Horned Frogs travel across Fort Worth to meet Texas Wesleyan, and Texas Tech's Red Raiders host New Mexico.

Texas opens on Sunday with its unofficial lidlifter in the annualVarsity-Alumni game at Disch-Falk Stadium. Texas Tech plays a doubleheader against New Mexico on Sunday.

Texas A&M begins its season Feb. 10-11 with a three-game series at home against Pan American.

Texas, Texas A&M and Arkansas have been mentioned in several national preseason polls. *Baseball America* magazine ranks Texas ninth and A&M 11th while the *ESPN/Collegiate Baseball* poll lists Texas at sixth and A&M 13th. Arkansas is 20th in the *ESPN* poll. *The Sporting News* ranks A&M 18th in the country.

## Oklahoma leads AP top twenty as Illinois, Georgetown falter

**NORMAN, Okla. (AP)** — Oklahoma coach Billy Tubbs, an admirer of the great explorers such as Christopher Columbus and Magellan, has reached uncharted territory with his Sooners.

They're ranked No. 1 in The Associated Press college basketball poll for the first time in the school's history.

"It's something I've always wanted to do," Tubbs said Monday. "I guess you could say it's a dream come true."

"You always want to coach the No. 1 team in the nation, even if it's just for a day. You'd like to coach it forever, of course. I think it's something you work for, and it came true. I'm happy about that."

The Sooners, 17-2, were ranked fourth a week ago but jumped to No. 1 after victories over Colorado and Nevada-Las

Vegas, and losses by the top three teams.

Illinois, which became No. 1 for the first time in 37 years, held the top spot for just one week as the Fighting Illini lost to Minnesota 69-62 before rebounding for a victory over Indiana.

When Illinois lost Thursday night, it appeared Georgetown would move up one place to the top spot, but the Hoyas were upset by Louisiana State 82-80 on Saturday.

To show the wide range of opinion on who deserved the top ranking, six teams received first-place votes.

North Carolina, 18-3, jumped from seventh to third with four first-place votes and 1,074 points, 19 more than Arizona, 15-2, which improved two places and was named No. 1 on one ballot.

Missouri, 18-3, stayed fifth.

The Tigers had three first-place votes and 1,048 points.

Georgetown, which fell to 15-2 with the loss to Louisiana State, dropped from second to sixth with 1,019 points and the final first-place vote.

Louisville was seventh with 1,011 points after having its 14-game winning streak snapped and falling to 14-3.

Florida State, 16-1, moved from 11th to eighth with 797 points and Iowa, 15-3, jumped from 12th to ninth with 651 points, 13 more than Seton Hall, 18-2, which rounded out the Top Ten after being ninth last week.

Michigan dropped one spot to lead the Second Ten and was followed by Duke, North Carolina State, Syracuse, Ohio State, Nevada-Las Vegas, Indiana, West Virginia, Louisiana State and Stanford.

## Aggie fans barking up wrong tree; Metcalf deserves patience

Talk about being in a tough position. Losing nine of the last ten games — four in a row — and facing conference leader Texas next is hard on Shelby Metcalf. With the rest of the guff he's catching from sportskind, he couldn't be blamed for taking a game off.

But as needed as it might be, Metcalf doesn't have that option. He's a college coach — an Aggie coach straining to keep his footing on a slippery mountainside. And any such unruly behavior would send him reeling down the side.

Metcalf is getting rained on heavily right now. Not just by opponents — they're just sprinklers turned on during a gully-washer.

The real rain is falling from those big, dark and heavy clouds of grumblers that have seen enough of Metcalf and his juco transfers, too many mediocre seasons, and not enough big-name talent.

After 25 full years at A&M, Metcalf has undoubtedly established some coaching tenure. Winning five outright conference crowns outdoes everyone else during his time here.

But with SWC basketball having a tough time doing anything on the national scene



**Jerry Bolz**  
Assistant Sports Editor

since Houston's impact in 1983 and 1984, people are getting a little stir crazy. Unfortunately for the coaches, most of the attention is focused on them, and nowhere in the nation are basketball coaches getting a harder look than in the SWC.

Focusing a little more narrowly, those who have been around the longest tend to get the first look — that arrow points down the path to the Silver Fox.

It seems unfair that those who have proved they can win over decades get so much speculation when the won-loss record isn't satisfactory. But it's understood. People often prefer to wipe the slate clean

rather than turn what they already have into something worth keeping.

So Metcalf is caught underfire for a slow start and expected to come up with results soon — in thought if not in word — by Aggie fans ranging from students to sports writers.

The wave has welled, but probably not for the first or last time. In 25 years, you can assume there's been grumbling on plenty of occasions about getting a new basketball coach.

The word is that Metcalf is out-of-date, past his prime and over the hill. His style is older than G. Rollie and he can't keep up with the rest of the conference and nation.

No way. I can't go for that.

Spending 25 years at a school doesn't cause a coach to lose track of what's going on in a sport. Metcalf has amassed a full load of information on college basketball from coaching technique to recruiting to simply helping out players.

Metcalf hasn't lost track of anything. He has coached in the way he felt would be most competitive with the resources he's had. Lately that hasn't been very much.

He needs help to turn this program into any kind of powerhouse. Much of that help is coming with high school recruits Metcalf

has redshirted for next year, and hopefully he'll get a few more this recruiting season.

But the athletic department needs to stand behind Metcalf in building a good program. The man has a lot of wisdom from the sport, but that can only take him so far. A&M must have a solid recruiting effort.

And top recruits want to go where they can get some exposure. G. Rollie White just isn't the hot spot for basketball that it might have once been. A&M needs a new place to play, somewhere that can hold more than a handful of fans. They need the support of the athletic department and the school for that.

The list goes on but a coach can't do anything to build a team without cooperation.

After the Texas Christian game, Metcalf put in a new offense he had planned to save for next season. Since then the Aggies have won one game.

The offense is supposed to be a running game much like Oklahoma or Nevada-Las Vegas uses. And it would take a team with the talent like OU or UNLV to win games after changing offenses mid-season. The Aggies don't have that talent yet.

However it happened, A&M has gotten into a habit of stacking the basketball court

with transfer students. There have been some great ones come through A&M and there are some here now. But they aren't here long enough to learn each other's names before their eligibility is over. Metcalf understands this.

For a while, the juco quick fix was the thing to do in the conference. Zap — you have a competitive team. But it's just like microwave stew — it gets hot quick but there are always some cold spots, and the ingredients aren't together long enough for the flavors to mix well.

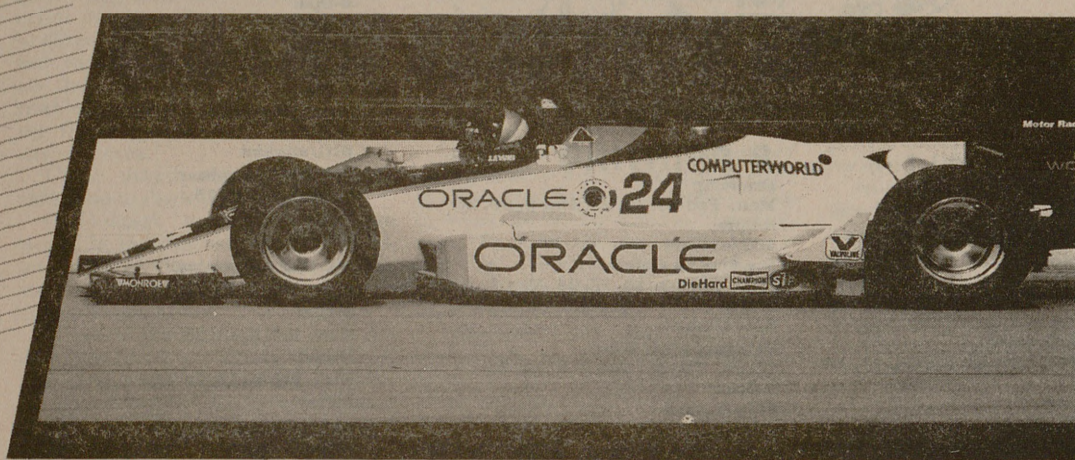
Metcalf knows he needs a conventional, slow-cooking recipe that may take time to get hot, but stays hot. One that isn't good without all the ingredients. Sure, the carrots may be your favorite, but they just aren't the same without the potatoes, onions and beef.

Metcalf is not fading away — he's on the way. But he needs respect and support by the fans and the school.

Aggies may want quick results in A&M basketball. But deep down we know it's not the way.

Shelby has been around long enough to know what he needs. This time is harder on him than anyone. Let's give him a break — even if it's not a game off.

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