

Clay Rasmussen
Sports Writer

The Cowboys won, but let's remember it's a loong season

It finally happened. Not many people around the league, or the nation for that matter, thought it ever would. But it did.

The *New and Improved* Dallas Cowboys has its very first mark in the win column. More impressive is the fact that they picked up the win against long-time division rival Washington.

Life is sweet.

I'll admit I had little faith in the Cowboys' ability to post a win after their 0-8 start, the worst in franchise history. I had visions of an 0-16 mark looming on every sports page around the country. I mean, last year's 3-13 record was bad enough, but the possibility of a fat goose egg under the win column sent cold chills down my spine.

The last game the Cowboys won before Sunday's victory was in RFK Stadium over the Redskins. It was Tom Landry's last victory as the Cowboys' head coach.

Ironically, Dallas Coach Jimmy Johnson received his first regular season victory in the same place over the same team.

Could this be a sign?

"It's been a hard, frustrating year and there will still be some rocky days ahead, but the future of the team is bright," Johnson said after the win. "Now we can go about our business."

And just what is the Cowboys' business? Some would say, theoretically, that winning games is Dallas' business. If that's the case, I'd say Johnson and the organization are about to go bankrupt.

The Cowboys had such high hopes at the close of preseason. They were 3-1 and were talking about the possibility of going .500 in 1989.

Instead, they lost eight straight. Then came the Redskins.

Are the Cowboys really improving, or is Washington just a lousy 5-4 team? My guess is the latter.

"The defense is really starting to come

1989 season begins for Metcalf, Aggies

Ags hope to start year on right foot

By Richard Tijerina and Clay Rasmussen
Of The Battalion Staff

Texas A&M Coach Shelby Metcalf has some big questions he needs to answer about his basketball team in 1989.

Can the Aggies pick up where they left off last season, when they had the best record in the Southwest Conference over the last half of the year? Can the Aggies find a replacement for All-SWC forward Donald Thompson, last year's leading scorer and rebounder? And how much can Metcalf de-

Team	SWC Record
Arkansas	25-7
Texas	25-9
TCU	17-13
Houston	17-14
Texas A&M	16-14
Texas Tech	13-15
SMU	13-16
Rice	12-16
Baylor	5-22

pend on the new faces in the Aggies' lineup?

It's a pretty long list for Metcalf, considered "the dean of SWC coaches" because he's in his 27th year as A&M's head coach — the longest tenure of any other SWC coach.

"We have more experience back than we've had the last few years, but we lost our top scorer and rebounder and one of our better shooters," Metcalf said. "Our success hinges on how soon (junior college transfer David) Harris can acclimate himself to Division I basketball.

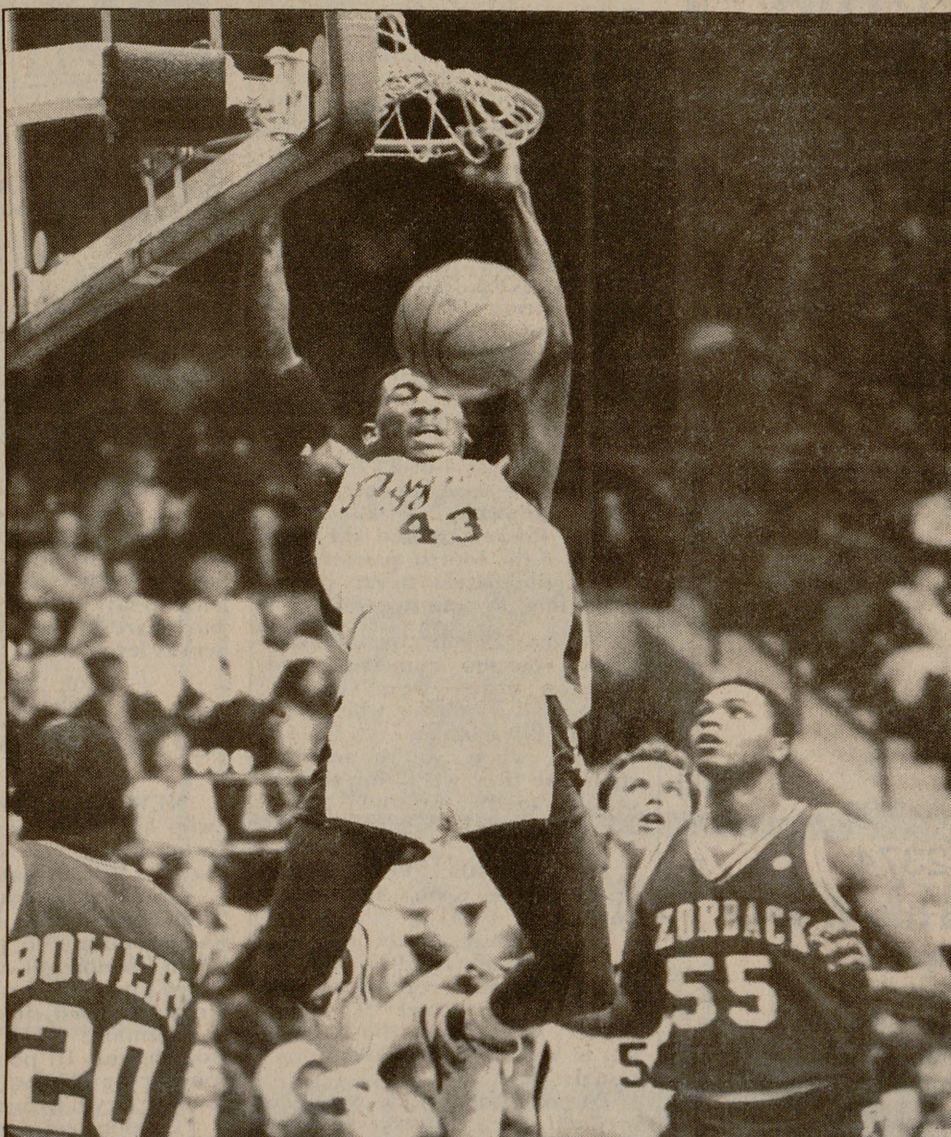
"He is essential to us."

Harris, along with two other newcomers to the A&M roster, will be counted on heavily in 1989.

Harris was a second-team JUCO All-American last year. Freshman David Petersen, a brother of former Houston Rockets star Jim Petersen, was the top-rated high school player in Minnesota last season. Freshman Brooks Thompson was named the prep player of the year in Colorado.

The three new Aggies will be joining a team that brings back four of its five top scorers from 1988.

Senior Tony Milton (12.5 points/4.2 re-



A&M's Ray Little (43) dunks over two Arkansas defenders last year. Little is expected to be one of the Aggies' team leaders in 1989.

Photo by Mike C. Mulvey

bounds/5.3 assists), junior Lynn Suber (10.8 points), senior David Williams (8.6 points, 4.5 rebounds) and junior Freddie Ricks (9.2 points/3.0 rebounds) return this season. All but Suber were starters in 1988.

The Aggies started off poorly in 1988. They suffered through a 1-7 first half of the SWC season. A 58-51 defeat by Texas

Christian prompted Metcalf to redesign A&M's offense into a more open, fast-break philosophy.

The Aggies rebounded in the second half of the SWC season. They lost only to Houston 86-82 on their way to a 7-1 conference record. A&M averaged 80.1 points per

Coaches tab Hogs as SWC favorite

DALLAS (AP) — The Arkansas Razorbacks were picked by Southwest Conference coaches on Tuesday to successfully defend their league basketball title, and as far as Texas coach Tom Penders is concerned, the Hogs will make it all the way to the NCAA's Final Four.

"Arkansas has no weaknesses," Penders said. "They are the best team we played last year. You'll very definitely see them make the Final Four."

Arkansas received seven of nine first place ballots. Nolan Richardson of the Hogs and Texas A&M's Shelby Metcalf gave Houston the other two first place ballots.

Baylor coach Gene Iba seconded Penders' notion that the Hogs could be good enough to play for the national championship.

"Arkansas had a great team with Sidney Moncrief years ago but this one is better," Iba said. "There's no doubt in my mind Arkansas will be in the Final Four."

Richardson laughed when told about Penders' bold pick.

"That Tom," Richardson said. "I think I'll predict he'll make it also and we will probably play each other in the finals."

Arkansas was picked first in the nation by The Basketball News and Richardson said he doesn't mind all the preseason top-billing.

"I love it," Richardson said. "I've been under pressure all my life so that's no big deal. We do want to win the conference championships but our goal is to win a national championship. Getting to the big party (The Final Four) means a lot to me."

Richardson said his team was "the best group of guys I ever had, the best team. We are deep."

Richardson said the Hogs will have to be better because the conference overall has been upgraded.

"The Southwest Conference is twice as good as it has ever been in the history of Southwest Conference basketball," Richardson said. "I've never seen as many teams capable of winning it all. From top to bottom, this conference will be playing some bigtime basketball. The rest of the country will find out this year that we play basketball, not just football."

Arkansas had 78 points, followed by Houston 71, Texas 66, Texas A&M 53, Texas Christian 43, Rice 32, Texas Tech 30, Southern Methodist 21 and Baylor 11.

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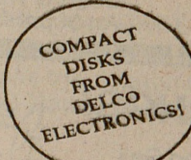
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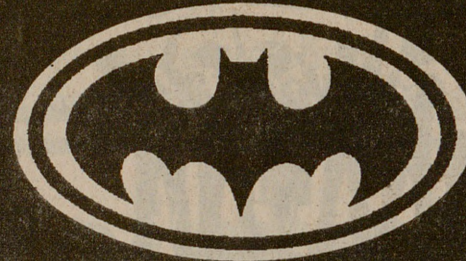
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