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## SWC baseball season begins

DALLAS (AP) — Although Texas battled Wichita State for the 1989 NCAA baseball championship less than seven months ago, Southwest Conference teams swing back into 1990 baseball activity on Friday to begin the 76th season of league competition.

Texas Tech and Rice get off first. The Red Raiders host New Mexico of the Western Athletic Conference at 2 p.m. Friday while Rice travels to Tempe, Ariz., to tangle with Arizona State in a 5:30 p.m. CST encounter.

SWC round-robin play doesn't begin until March 16, the contests prior to conference play have a strong bearing on possible NCAA at-large invitations and national prestige.

Arkansas is the last SWC team to open its baseball schedule. The Razorbacks open two weeks from Friday.

Arkansas, which tied Texas A&M for the SWC baseball title last year, have a solid pitching nucleus returning from last year's 51-16 unit, which tied for fifth in the NCAA World Series.

Pre-season ratings in a couple of publications — "Collegiate Baseball" and "Baseball America" exude confidence that SWC teams can play up to the potential demonstrated by a nation's best record of 244-61 (.800 winning percentage) against all outside opposition last season.

One publication rates Texas second, Arkansas ninth and Texas A&M 15th nationally while the other selects Texas second, Arkansas 13th and the Aggies 24th in its initial 1990 survey.

Besides some outstanding non-conference opponents in single games, SWC teams are involved in multi-team tournaments such as the

Texas A&M Aggie Invitational (Iowa State, Washington State, St. John's, N.Y.) on Mar. 10-13, the Best of the West tournament at Fresno, Calif. (Arkansas, Maine, San Diego State, Fresno State, Kentucky, George Washington, and Gonzaga), on Mar. 12-17, the Florida Citrus Bowl Classic (Houston, Central Florida, Long Beach State, and Illinois) at Orlando, Fla., on Feb. 16-19, the Shreveport (La.) Dixie Classic (TCU, Auburn, Oklahoma State, Sam Houston State, and Illinois State) on Mar. 16-18, and the Louisiana Classic in Lafayette (Texas Tech, Southwestern Louisiana and UT-Arlington) on Mar. 9-11.

But possibly the season's most significant pre-NCAA tourney occurs on May 17-19 in Austin as Texas hosts the SWC tournament to determine the post-season qualifier.

## Pokes, Vikes finalize picks in Walker deal

IRVING, Texas (AP) — The Dallas Cowboys and the Minnesota Vikings wrapped up the Herschel Walker trade on Thursday with a deal that gives the Vikings three draft picks and allows the Cowboys to keep three veterans who played for them during the 1989 season.

Cornerback Issiac Holt, an linebackers Jesse Solomon and David Howard will remain Cowboys, and the Vikings will get third-round picks in 1990 and 1991 and a 10th-round pick in 1990.

The Cowboys originally hoped to receive eight draft picks when they traded their star running back to the Vikings in the middle of the season.

The Vikings had until 5 p.m. Thursday to accept a deal with Dallas or the Cowboys would have put the three players on the plan B unprotected list.

Cowboys coach Jimmy Johnson, who is in Indianapolis evaluating the talent in a combine said, "Naturally we are happy to be able to keep the three players because we feel they can be great contributors this season."

The NFL will release the list of unprotected players on Friday.

## A&M hosts UT in key Friday swimming meet

Texas A&M hates to lose to Texas in any sport. That includes swimming.

The Aggies will get their chance to avenge last year's 69-42 loss at the hands of the Longhorns Friday when they host Texas in P.L. Natatorium.

But defeating Texas won't be easy; the Longhorn swim team is a national defending champion from their roster includes four members of the 1988 United States Olympic Swim Team.

"It's always fun to have the top ranked team in the nation come swim at your home pool," Aggie swimming coach Mel Nash said.

## Thornton

(Continued from page 6)

going. That'll help getting us back to where we're supposed to be and where we want to be. The other thing is being more visible, I think — just going out and promoting ourselves.

**Would you support the building of a new facility to replace G. Rollie White Coliseum?**

"Either way, I have mixed emotions. It really wouldn't matter to me one way or the other. If they want to renovate G. Rollie, that's fine. It's been a great home court advantage in the past, but it's the people — not the gym. We've got to get people in there and enjoying it again."

**Coach Metcalf used to rely heavily on junior college transfers. What would your recruiting philosophy be?**

"I'd want to build it from the very beginning — mix it with predominantly freshman players, redshirt the ones you want to mature and junior college athletes who are ready to play."

"I believe in junior college players, but I also believe in the program that's based on the continuation of a good freshman class, sophomore

class, junior class, then mixed in with as many quality junior college players as you need them."

**You're the first head basketball coach A&M has known in 27 years. What would you tell the students who don't know you?**

"The message I want to convey to them is I want them to enjoy basketball the way it is. I want them to come and see the games, and make basketball more of their college experience because it's fun."

And there are some people who just can't stand basketball, and that's fine. But there's a lot of people who are borderline, so why not go to a game?

Get involved in it, have fun. That's what we're going to try and sell. That's what athletics needs to be anyway."

**At 4-4, A&M is in the middle of the pack in the conference race. The second half of the SWC schedule starts Saturday. What's your outlook for the rest of the season?**

"Right now, we're .500 at the midpoint, but we still have our best basketball ahead of us. I can't predict how many games we're going to win, but I think we're capable of beating anybody on a given night. We're just going to play one game

at a time. I know that's a coach's cliché and every coach uses it, but why not? We've got eight games left, let's just play them and have fun with it."

At the end of the year when we get to the SWC Tournament, let's just see what happens. They have confidence. They know that on a given night, they can play real good."

**Your next two games are against opponents you've already beaten on the road. Are you hoping that the team can sweep those two, then catch some luck and get hot for the SWC Tournament?**

"We'd love it. We'd love to. But we can't overlook the teams we beat on the road. Baylor is streaking right now as well. Nobody is head and shoulders above anybody else right now. We're all there together."

They're crucial games for us, but at the same time I don't want people to think they're live-and-die for us because they're not."

Let's just play and see what happens. We both have something riding on the games. We want to improve, they want to improve. They'll be battles."

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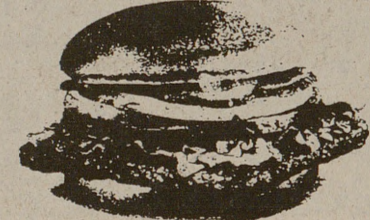
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