

# Thompson keeps going and going ...

By NADJA SABAWALA  
Of The Battalion Staff

The Brooks Thompson Warranty: It's not the years, it's the mileage.

Thompson, a freshman guard for Texas A&M, isn't your average first-year college basketball player, A&M coach John Thornton said.

"At this point in the season, Brooks is not a freshman because of the number of games he's played in," Thornton said.

Just last year, Thompson was the pride of a Littleton High School Lions basketball team, averaging 28.7 points a game on his way to being named the Colorado Prep Player of the Year.

But now he's playing ball with a team full of former high school stars.

"It's a lot more intense up here, people are tougher, and a lot stronger and quicker," Thompson said. "I knew it was going to happen. I'm just a freshman, while these guys have been here and they're a lot more experienced than I am."

Thompson has seen playing time in all 27 of the Aggies' games this season, including nine starts. He's scoring eight points a game in an average of 20 minutes of playing time.

Not bad for someone who has been playing college basketball for only three months.

"It was tough going from high school to college, academically and athletically," Thompson said. "I knew it would only take time."

Thornton has confidence in Thompson, and said he has surpassed the average freshman level of play.

"The real thing you see in newcomers is they don't really understand the intensity at which you've got to play," Thornton said. "That's what makes Brooks so special."

As the Aggies wrap up the 1989-90 basketball season, Thornton believes Thompson is building the endurance he needs to play aggressively. As a result, Thompson has been starting in place of junior Lynn Suber, who's averaging over 13 points a game.

"Brooks is an up-and-down player," Thornton said. "He's getting a lot tougher in the periods in which he plays hard."

Thornton said he was pleased with Thompson's performance against Arkansas Wednesday, in which Thompson scored 13 points in a 114-100 loss.

"He confidently put it up, made some tough little moves around the basket and defended well," Thornton said.

Thompson said he felt he has adjusted well to playing college basketball, and he likes being part of the team ... and A&M.

"My whole background's been Aggie," he said. "I've grown up Aggie, my dad came here and my uncle and my grandfathers. I like it and that's why I want to get in the thick of

things and be an Aggie."

Thompson said former coach Shelby Metcalf was another factor in his decision to come to A&M.

He was recruited by several schools, including the University of California at Santa Barbara, Wyoming and Louisiana Tech. But Thompson's father Neal played freshman basketball under Metcalf at A&M.

Thompson at times this season has shown the three qualities important for a guard: a deft shooting touch, leadership and the ability to see the court.

Those qualities may be put to the test in 1991, when senior point guard Tony Milton ends his final year of eligibility. Thornton said either Thompson or junior guard Freddie Ricks will have to take over Milton's position.

Thompson played the point guard position in Colorado.

"We're just going to have to fill it in," Thompson said. "I think with what we have now, with our depth in the guards, we can all come together and look out for each other."

Thompson said the team's main problem this year has been consistency. Intensity also plays a crucial role to the Aggies, who have been playing with more emotion since Metcalf was removed Jan. 22.

Playing on adrenaline alone has its drawbacks, however.

"Sometimes we come out really intense, and sometimes we're really dead," Thompson said.

When Metcalf left, both the team and Thornton felt a certain bond with each other, Thompson said.

"It's been tough, but we've handled it really well," Thompson said. "Thornton's done a really good job with our team, especially with what we had to work with (emotionally)."

Although A&M's 3-5 record since Thornton took over won't win the conference title, Thompson said he believes the Southwest Conference Tournament in March will be full of surprises.

"I think we're going to do well," he said. "I think we're going to surprise a lot of teams like Texas and Arkansas. They've both beaten us twice, and we should have won those games."

Depending on final conference standings, the Aggies most likely will face the Longhorns or Razorbacks in the first round of the tournament. Thompson said he'd rather play Texas first because the two teams match up well with each other, and that the Aggies could play the Razorbacks in the finals.

Thompson will start Saturday's game against Rice — his third consecutive start in SWC play. As a freshman, he has a lot of basketball ahead of him at A&M. And as the freshman keeps improving, Thornton will keep hoping the Brooks Thompson Warranty doesn't run out.



Photo by Fredrick D. Joe

Brooks Thompson has emerged as A&M's sharpshooter.

## Tijerina

(Continued from page 7)

decided on Olajuwon, and the Rockets were on their way to an eventual NBA Finals appearance behind their Twin Towers.

Indiana had the No. 2 pick, and through a trade Jordan ended up in lively Chicago. The rest is history. Sampson turned out to be a bust because of a pair of knees that are in the same condition.

The Rockets traded Sampson in 1988 to the Golden State Warriors. Now he's with the Clippers, averaging less than four points a game.

Jordan's averaging 33.0 points a game for the Bulls. Rony Seikaly averages 16.8 for the Miami Heat. But back then, Sampson was the king. The Rockets could have traded him anywhere for just about anyone. So here comes the dream

sequence. Olajuwon and Jordan as teammates. Dream and Air, playing together in the same Houston Rockets uniform.

What if the Rockets had seen that they'd have Sampson and Olajuwon both fighting for room under the basket, and decided to do something about it? Both were college centers, and now Fitch was committed to converting Ralph into a power forward. It didn't work.

So, Fitch and general manager Ray Patterson decide to ship Sampson out of Houston and get as much as they can for him, which would be plenty. They don't have an established guard, and instead of looking to pick one up in a trade, they look to the draft.

Get ready dreamers, here it comes.

The Rockets trade Sampson to the Pacers for their No. 2 draft pick, some bench players and a whole lot of cash. Armed with the No. 1 and

No. 2 draft selections, Houston gets Olajuwon and Jordan. It's as easy as that.

Four years later, and the Rockets would be the most dominating team in the NBA. With Olajuwon ruling the paint, Jordan would be running the show with his high-flying acrobatics. Championships would be the talk of the town.

But it's time to wake up. It sounds great now, but back then the idea would have been unthinkable. Sampson was on the top of his game, and everyone figured he'd be a force for years to come. Olajuwon looked to be just what the Rockets needed to get them over the hump and become championship contenders. Jordan was a college junior coming to the NBA early.

Hindsight is always 20/20, even in dreams. You may say I'm a dreamer. But imagine.

## Lady Ag netters host SMU, UT

The Texas A&M women's tennis team will host Southern Methodist University and Texas this weekend at the Omar Smith Tennis Center. Matches are set to begin at 1:30 p.m.

The Lady Aggies are coming off an 8-1 win over Notre Dame last weekend in College Station, while both SMU and Texas are undefeated. Texas, A&M and SMU all finished in the top three of the Southwest Conference last year and are expected to pace the conference this year.

A&M women's tennis coach Bobby Kleinecke said this weekend was pivotal for the Lady Aggies.

"This is an awfully important weekend because we need to start off well in conference play," Kleinecke said.

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