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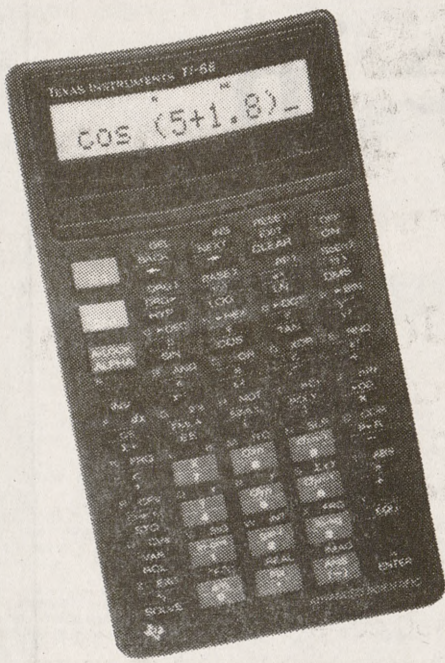
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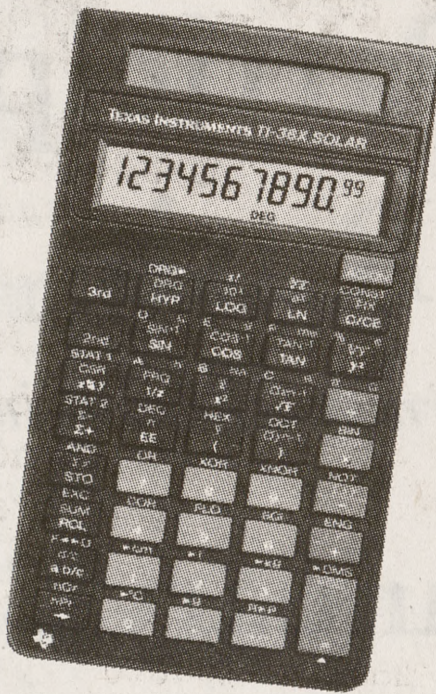
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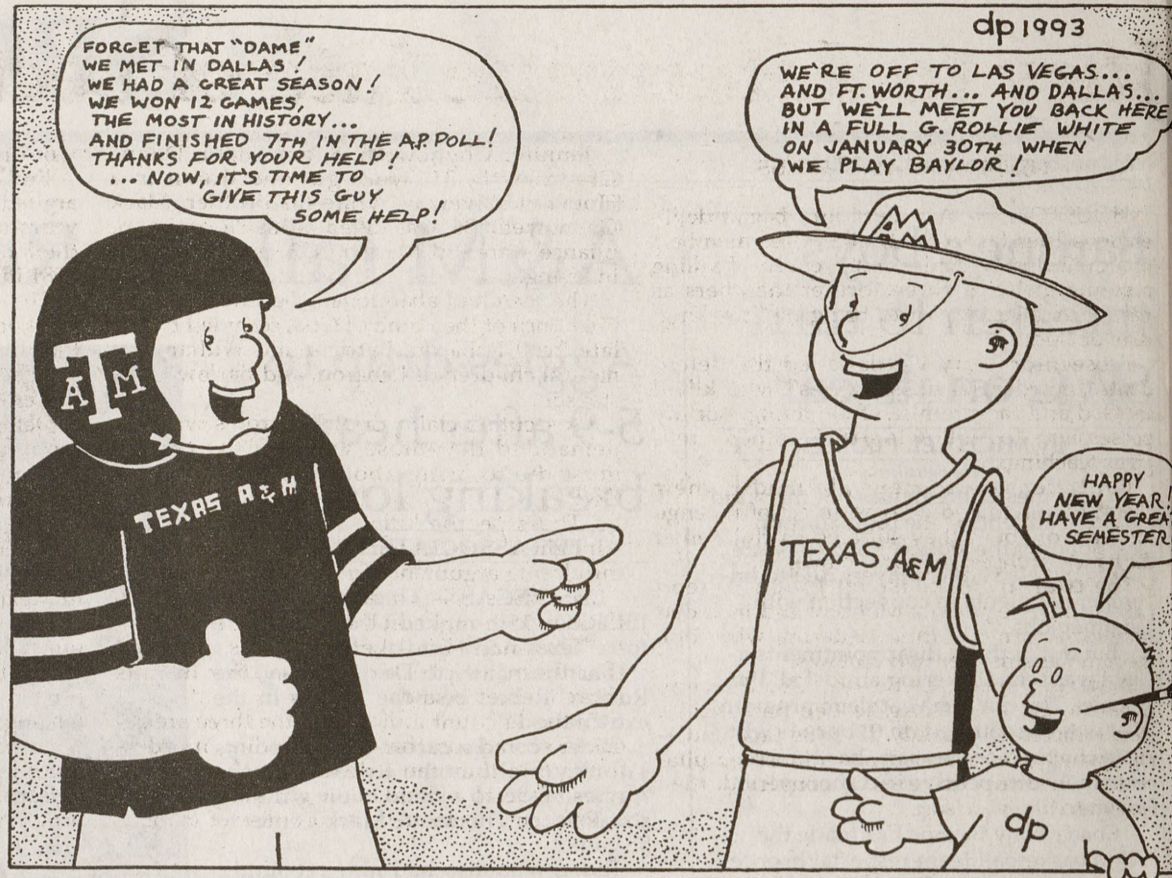
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A&M shortstop Barber injured in auto wreck

FROM STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

The tenth-ranked Texas A&M baseball team will start the season without its projected starting shortstop after Paul Barber, a sophomore from Queen City, Texas, was involved in an early morning auto accident Sunday.

The team began working out Monday, and immediately began the search for a new shortstop.

Barber is expected to stay in the hospital for three to six days after suffering a dislocated and broken ankle and breaks on both sides of his jaw.

A&M baseball coach Mark Johnson expressed concern for the health of his young shortstop, as well as for the direction his team will take without Barber.

"At this point in time we are concerned about Paul; about his health, his recovery, and whether he will be able to return to school this spring," Johnson said. "Obviously we will miss him. He was hands down our starting shortstop."

The Aggies will open their season Feb. 9th against Dallas Baptist University at Olsen Field, and Johnson said that a top priority before then is to find a new shortstop.

"Our infield was, and is, a major concern going into this season, and this compounds the concern," he said. "Without question, shortstop was our weakest depth spot on our team. With the NCAA's reduction in scholarships, depth recruiting is almost impossible, Johnson said.

Johnson added that Barber's loss will force changes throughout the lineup, not just at shortstop starting with moving sophomore Robert Harris across from second base to shortstop.

"This problem will force us to move some of our starters around," Johnson said.

Lady Ags

Continued from Page 9

bouncing with 6.5 per game, followed by Cerny with 4.2 boards per game.

The main individual for LSU is guard Cornelia Gayden, who is

the top scorer in the SEC, averaging 19.5 points per game. Many of those points have come from three-point range, where Gayden has hit on 36 of 101 attempts.

Hickey said that stopping Gayden, who also leads the Lady Tigers in rebounds with 8.6 per contest, will be an important fac-

tor in stopping LSU.

"She (Gayden) has a real go-to three-point shot, and we have to shut her down," Hickey said. "Having that kind of upper class experience is a big advantage for LSU."

Forward Tarleshia Brown is averaging 11.8 points per game.

Aggies

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to go ahead 81-75 with 1:39 remaining.

Rider brought the Rebels back with a pair of 3-pointers to trim Texas A&M's lead to 82-81 with 50 seconds to go.

Texas A&M's David Edwards made a foul shot with 40 seconds left to make it 83-81, but UNLV's Ken Gibson made a pair of free throws with 4.5 seconds left to force overtime.

The Rebels led by as much as six points in the overtime, and Boney's three-point play with 14.3 seconds left made it 98-93 to seal the win.

"We're in a rebuilding process," Texas A&M coach Tony Barone said. "I have no problem with what we did tonight. We could hold our heads up high."

"We're not as quick or as strong as Vegas, but we played just as hard tonight and that's all you can ask for out of your team. I thought we did a good job of forcing their defense out and creating some open shots."

Edwards led Texas A&M with 26 points — 11 in the overtime period — and eight assists. Damon Johnson had 22 points and Chuck Henderson 21 for the Aggies.

Chicago picks Cowboy's Wannstedt to replace Ditka

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO — The Chicago Bears dipped into Dallas for another hands-on, emotional coach Tuesday, picking Cowboys defensive coordinator Dave Wannstedt to replace Mike Ditka.

Ditka turned the Bears into Super Bowl champions after he came from Dallas 11 years ago, and now the Bears want Wannstedt to work the same magic. That job starts after the Cowboys play the Buffalo Bills in the Super Bowl on Jan. 31.

"It's the right opportunity and right time," the 40-year-old Wannstedt said.

Wannstedt has been credited with rebuilding the Cowboys' defense into the league's best; Dallas held opponents to 15.2 points and 245.8 yards per game in the regular season.

Bears president Michael McCaskey announced Wannstedt's hiring two weeks after he fired Ditka following a 5-11 season marked by the former coach's flareups with McCaskey, players and fans.

"This is a historic day for the Chicago Bears," McCaskey said at Tuesday's news conference.

Wannstedt and Ditka have similar backgrounds. Both grew up in Pennsylvania, played college football at Pittsburgh and went to Chicago from assistant coaching jobs at Dallas.

"I'm a hands on coach, enthusiastic, emotional. A players coach," Wannstedt said.

Wannstedt won't discuss his plans for hiring assistants until after the Super Bowl, although Cowboys' offensive line coach Tony Wise, a close friend, could also be headed to Chicago. Wise won't comment until after the Super Bowl.

"I need the respect and like to have good rapport with players," Wannstedt said. "I know the Bears are very talented, but you always look in all areas for improvement."

"I'm sure some of the fans will wonder if I'm tough enough to be in Chicago," Wannstedt said. "I'm tough enough and I'm looking forward to the challenge."

Plumer

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Barone's philosophy is that to be the best, his team has to play the best.

The first game of the season for A&M was a perfect example of his philosophy. The Aggies opened at New Mexico, one of the toughest places in the nation to win a road game.

That game was not decided until the final shot. Although A&M was not able to register the victory, the 71-69 setback established the tone for the season.

It allowed a preview of the improved play the Aggies would

exhibit on the court in all facets of the game. Sure, there have been games when the Aggies were overmatched. The Missouri game was an example.

But that was to be expected with the lack of depth A&M possesses on the bench. The kind of blowout games that were expected with such a tough early schedule have not materialized.

In fact, A&M scored one of the biggest non-conference wins of any SWC school. The Aggies' victory over the University of Florida on Dec. 22 showed just how far A&M had come in a short period of time. A&M registered a quality victory over a competitive team at a time the SWC is struggling to gain any re-

spect in basketball on a national level.

In fact, the SWC's biggest victory, according to most national observers, was actually a loss. Rice played Michigan tough before finally succumbing to the Wolverines.

But there are no such things as moral victories at this juncture for the SWC. For this conference to succeed in basketball there needs to be several teams playing well.

Texas A&M has not reached a point where it can be considered a definite threat to win the SWC crown. But with improvement shown so far and the increasing crowd support, anything is possible for this group of Aggies.



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