

New faces bolster power and skill position depth

Barone enjoys first full scholarship season

By David Winder

THE BATTALION

Although the Aggie men's basketball team returns 99 percent of its points, rebounds, assists, steals and blocked shots from last season, the 1993 recruiting class is expected to make a big impact for this season.

After having only seven scholarship players in his first two seasons, head coach Tony Barone will start the 1993-94 season with 13 scholarship players. Guard Chuck Henderson was given a scholarship over the summer, giving the Aggies eight returnees and five newcomers.

"We started off trying to get a certain type of kid," Barone said. "We got what we wanted, five student athletes who are athletically tremendous."

The junior college ranks provided two players: 6'9" forward Roy Wills from Seward Community College and 6'6" forward Joe Wilbert from Tyler Junior College.

The Aggies also signed three top high school recruits, 1993 Mr. Texas Basketball 6'1" guard Jimmy Smith from Victoria, 6'0" Anthony Burks from Fort Worth Dunbar and 6'6" forward Chris Pulliams from Fork Union Military.

"The main reason I chose A&M was Coach Barone. He was a big influence on my decision," Pulliams said. "I also felt that I could come in and help the team become better and win a championship."

Barone said he sees a lot of potential in Pulliams, and that Pulliams will see action at the small forward position this season.

"Chris really benefited from a year at private school," Barone said. "He had an excellent coach and fits our system well."

Burks is another player who fits the Aggie system.

"I chose A&M because it was a good academic school," Burks said. "I wanted to help A&M become a better team, and there was playing time here."

"I really like Coach Barone because every time he came to my house he motivated me and told me a lot of good things as far as basketball and academics."

"We'll be using Burks at the point guard position - he's quick and can stop on a dime," Barone said. "The only drawback is his size. He's going to have to gain some weight."

Burks said this year will be a learning experience behind senior point guard David Edwards.

"My style is running the fast break, pushing the ball up and shooting the three," Burks said. "I still have to learn the whole system, but I feel I should get some playing time."

Wilbert, who was a basketball star at nearby Bryan High School, is also expected to see playing time.

"The first reason I chose to

come to A&M was because of my parents," Wilbert said. "Another reason was that I feel I might be able to turn a child's life around if they see me out here playing for the Aggies."

"If they see Joe Wilbert out there playing for a big university, maybe they will believe they can play, too."

Wilbert is expected to give A&M a boost in the rebounding department and Barone said that he has surprised the coaches with how fast he picked up the Aggie system.

"I just want to make an impact on the team - to come in and help on rebounding and scoring," Wilbert said.

Barone has also been impressed with the play of Wills and Smith.

"Roy is a great athlete and gives us the shot blocker that we need," Barone said. "I think we are going to be able to use Smith at both the point and off guard positions."

"All the coaches have been really impressed with his toughness."

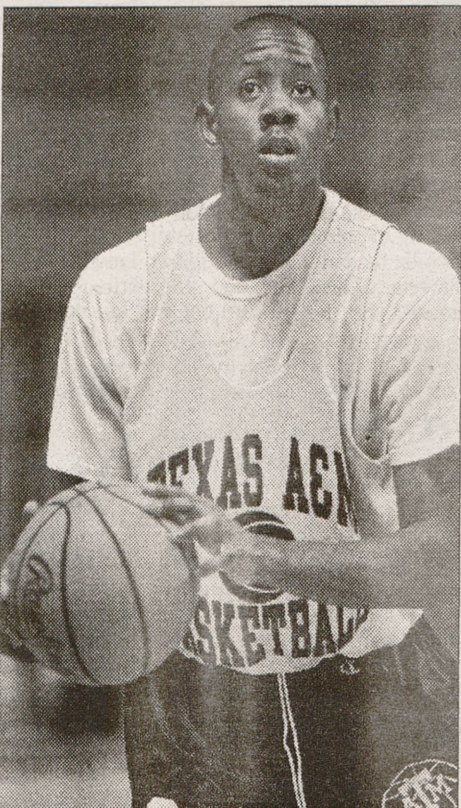
Pulliams has been impressed by how much assistance the upperclassmen are giving the newcomers.

"All the players have come together to help the newcomers," Pulliams said. "Damon Johnson has been a really good friend of mine since high school and he's helped me a lot. Corey and Chuck Henderson and Tony McGinnis have been a big help, also."

Barone has been pleased with the 1993 recruiting class so far.

"I don't really know where this recruiting class ranks in the conference, but I'm happy with the five kids we got," Barone said.

"We were more concerned with the quality of the players than the quantity."



Kyle Burnett/The Battalion

Texas A&M freshman forward **Chris Pulliams** is expected to provide size off the bench for the Aggies this season.

Williams, Miller highlight new Lady Aggies

By Matthew J. Rush and William Harrison

THE BATTALION

The goals are simple.

Win 20 games, win the Southwest Conference, and earn a berth to the NCAA tournament, and on a team already loaded with young talent, the Lady Aggies will be aided by another highly-touted recruiting class.

Helping them to achieve these goals this season, will be the fresh new faces of two impact players: Cami Williams and Marianne Miller.

Williams, a junior college transfer from New Mexico, and Miller, a freshman from Oklahoma, will both don maroon and white jerseys this year in hopes of bringing A&M the first SWC women's basketball championship in the school's history.

Williams, who led the Western Junior College Conference in three-point attempts with 182, will try to bring a much-needed outside threat to the squad.

A&M head basketball coach Lynn Hickey, in her tenth year as head coach, said that Williams is just the type of weapon that the Lady Aggies can use.

"We needed a three-point shooter really badly, and Cami just gets her shot off extremely well and has great range," Hickey said.

"I think she is going to give Beth (Burket, a senior) some backup at the forward position."

Williams said that she is eager to meet the challenge of adapting to the next level of college play.

"I pretty much know what it takes to make that quality shot," Williams said. "When I was a player in junior college, I played against Division I ma-

terial, so I know what it takes."

Williams looks to make an immediate impact on the team and said that she is setting her goals fairly high.

"My goal is to have one of the highest three-point field goal percentages in the conference," Williams said. "I'd also like to make the SWC All-Tournament team."

Williams, who led New Mexico Junior College with 17.5 points per game last season, said that she is confident that the team can achieve their goals.

"A lot of our team goals will come about with communication and as long as we can communicate, then we will be all right," Williams said.

"Not only that, but we are one of the tallest teams in the nation, so we should be intimidating."

Miller, who was the state of Oklahoma's Player of the Year last season, could have some difficulty in making the transition from high school to college, said that she is ready to take her part in making the team successful.

"The girls have helped me out in trying to make the adjustments," Miller said. "But I think as a whole, we all click pretty well together."

Miller, who averaged 25 points a game in her senior year, said that she likes the team's chances for chasing after Texas Tech, last year's National Champion.

"They seem pretty intimidating, but we're ready to face them," Miller said. "I think that with our returning players and our inside/outside combination, we can achieve our goals."

Miller also said that she has an individual goal, an honor that teammate Lisa Branch achieved after last season.

"Personally, I'd like to be the SWC's Newcomer of the Year."

Hickey said that she has been impressed with Miller's uncanny ability to play wherever she is needed.

"She has real good ability to get up and down the court, and she has a really nice shot," Hickey said. "She's 6 feet 2 inches and can play facing the basket, or we can post her up."

Hickey said that the switch to college from six man basketball, which Miller played in high school, will be tough. However, Hickey said she expects Miller to see ample playing time this season.

"We have so much depth that we're going to have a lot of people getting playing time for us," Hickey said.

"That will be good for us because we can keep everybody fresh."

Hickey said that there may still be some unknowns about how the team will perform, especially in the SWC.

"Looking back at last year, if there is a question about us, I think two questionable areas would have to be our youth and our ability to shoot from the outside," Hickey said.

"(But) I really believe that we have everything in place now to answer those two questions."



Kyle Burnett/The Battalion

Shown in here in action against Vilnius, freshman forward **Marianne Miller** is looking to contribute big for Texas A&M.