

SPORTS

Big business makes uniform design a whole new ballgame

Many Texas professional sports teams have drastically changed their "looks" in the past two years.

Staff and Wire Reports

What once was simply a way of identifying different teams and players has become a full-blown industry.

As professional and college athletics have become money makers, logo and uniform designs have become big business as every team and school vies to create the most visually appealing and marketable look.

Several Texas professional sports franchises have changed their uniforms and logos radically in the past two years.

In 1994, the Houston Astros changed its logo to a shooting star with one side open. When the uniforms were introduced, Astros owner Drayton McLane said the new look gave the Astros a "hard-charging," aggressive attitude.

In the same year, the Texas Rangers also scrapped its old uniforms and introduced new ones in conjunction with the opening of The Ballpark at Arlington last April.

Three weeks ago, the Houston Rockets, fresh off their second-straight NBA Championship, unveiled a new logo, uniforms and color schemes. The logo, a rocketship with teeth and eyes orbiting a basketball, has drawn harsh criticism from many Rockets fans who say the design is too "cartoonish."

Last year in the National Football League, every franchise had at least three uniforms. Along with home and away uniforms, each franchise had an additional, "throw-back" uniform in honor of the league's 75th year of existence. The "throw-back" jerseys reflected each team's jersey styles from their first years in the league.

Unique uniforms are brought out for special occasions in all sports. The Texas A&M men's basketball team introduced new uniforms at last season's Southwest Conference Basketball Tournament in Dallas.

Kevin Hurley, administrative assistant for Texas A&M basketball, played a major role in deciding to bring the new uniforms out for the postseason tournament.

"The uniforms were supposed to be here to start the season, but since they were delivered late, we decided to wait and bring them out in the postseason," Hurley said. "They showed us 15 different uniforms that we could choose from, so we went with one that had flair."

A&M last changed its basketball uniforms during the 1992-93 season. The team changed to the

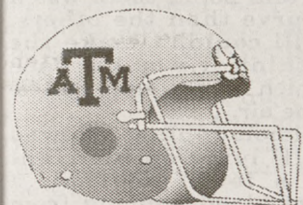
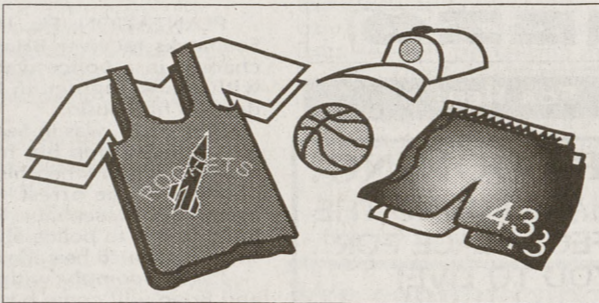
longer, baggier shorts - made popular in the NBA by Michael Jordan - that most basketball teams at the college and professional levels now wear.

The Aggie football team has seen its uniforms change dramatically over the course of the sport's history at A&M. The most obvious change was the addition of helmets as part of the standard uniform around the turn of the century.

Since then, the helmet has evolved into one of the most recognizable symbols in college football. A&M toyed with several helmets before deciding on its current maroon with white lettering model. Other A&M helmet styles included a simple "T" on each side, each player's number on the helmet and white helmets with maroon lettering.

The football uniforms have stayed fairly consistent over the past 25 years. The Aggies wear maroon jerseys at home and white on the road.

A&M's Assistant Athletic Director of Marketing and football announcer Dave South, said some unrevealed changes will be made in the Aggies' uniforms for the 1995 season, the last year of Southwest Conference football.



A&M uniforms through the years

Student Publications File Photos



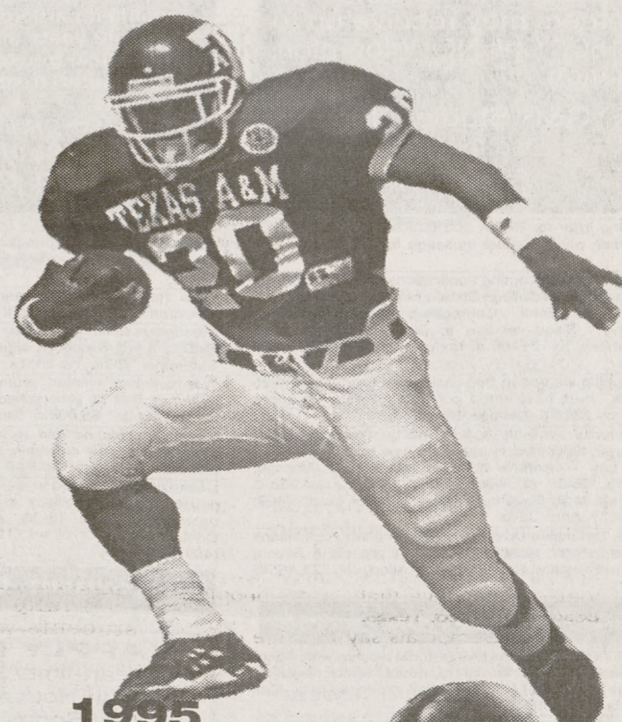
1935



1956



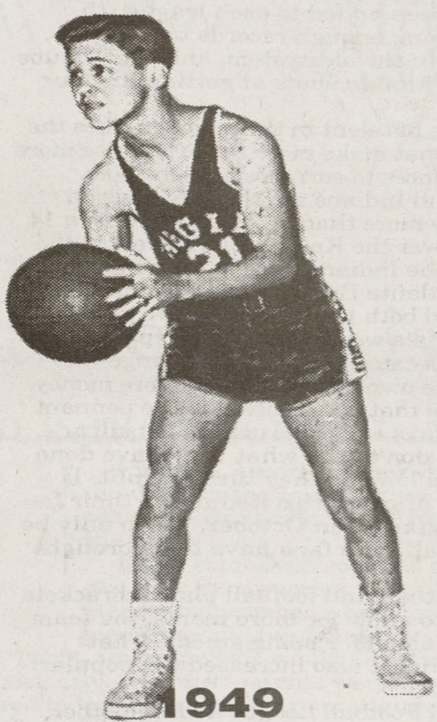
1979



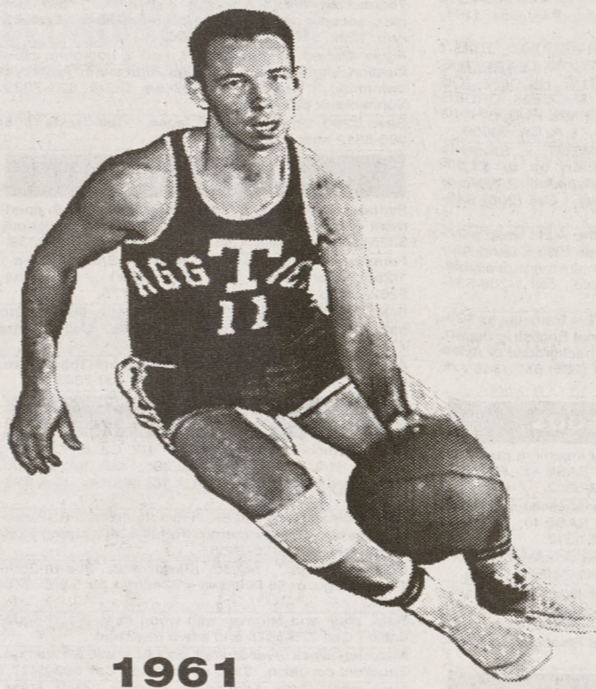
1995



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1949



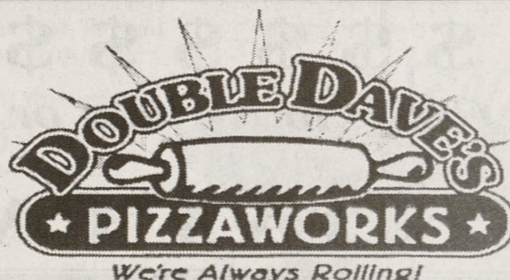
1961



1995

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