

# SPORTS

WEDNESDAY  
July 3, 1996

## Moving on up

Reed Arena is expected to put A&M athletic facilities in the national spotlight

By Ross Hecox  
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M men's basketball coach Tony Barone is scheduled to have his prayers answered in the Fall 1997.

The construction of Reed Arena, the new special events facility, is well under way and promises to improve the basketball and special events in Aggieland.

Director of Special Events Facilities Steven Hodge said the foundation has been laid, some of the walls are up, the floor for the main concourse is finished, two of the eight main columns are in place and the steel work has been started.

"It will start to look like a building now instead of just a big hole in the ground," Hodge said.

Barone said Reed Arena will be much larger and more flexible for special events than G. Rollie White Coliseum.

"The basketball facilities have been way behind the times," Barone said. "The reality is that they are outdated. The building of Reed Arena at least puts us on a level playing field."

The new arena will feature 12,500 padded seats, more accessible refreshment stands, wider concourses, enlarged and improved locker rooms, meeting and conference rooms.

A 55 x 16 foot scoreboard, with an expected 12 x 16 foot instant replay, and a portable basketball court will also be included.

"The fans are going to have good sightlines and be close to the floor," Barone said.

Reed Arena is a dual bowl structure, meaning it will have a balcony for seating. Hodge said the building was designed to host many different events.

"This is a true special events center," Hodge said. "It's designed to do a range of things. It is a good facility for basketball, Muster and graduation. We hope to do everything from ice capades to tractor pulls."

Hodge said careful planning was done to ensure proper facilities for the men's and women's basketball programs.

"We have worked with the Athletic Department to be sure to have all the support spaces for basketball," he said. "This facility will have a full-court practice room."

Barone said Reed Arena will help the basketball programs better than G. Rollie did, especially with recruiting.

"Facilities do not directly show how good a team is," Hodge said, "but they

do affect how a recruit perceives a team's talent. And if recruits avoid A&M because of poor facilities, it is very difficult for the team to improve."

Barone said G. Rollie White is a hindrance to recruiting basketball prospects.

"It has to do with perception," Barone said. "When you bring in a new recruit, G. Rollie is a negative."

Athletic Director Wally Groff said the construction of Reed Arena has already improved recruiting.

"There has been a tremendous impact already on our recruiting," Groff said.

"We have Jerald Brown coming to A&M. He's a McDonald's All-American, and [last year] we were ranked 15th nationally in recruiting."

Groff said he hopes the new facility will boost the attendance of Aggie home basketball games.

"Just the atmosphere of the facility will have an impact on attendance," Groff said.

"From 1975 to 1980 we filled up G. Rollie, so we know that there is interest.

We just need to recreate that interest. If we can put an exciting product on the floor, we'll have that sixth Man."

Groff said soon all A&M athletic facilities will be among the best in the nation.

"When we have the new special events center and the new tennis courts, personally I wouldn't trade our athletic facilities with anyone," Groff said. "We'll have first class facilities."



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— WALLY GROFF  
Athletic Director



Shane Elkins, THE BATTALION

Reed Arena will house the A&M men's and women's basketball teams along with hosting graduation, Muster and tractor pulls.

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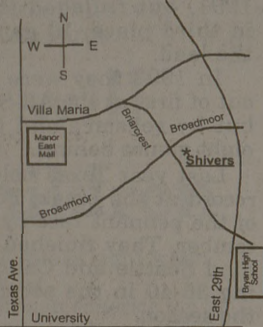
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