

TCU Daily Skiff

Friday, March 13, 1992

Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas

89th Year, No. 88

Paint gun fad grows

By COTY LONG
TCU Daily Skiff

The paint guns used in recent vandalism at TCU are part of a growing sport called paintball, enthusiasts said.

"Action Pursuit Games" and "Paintball" magazines are both dedicated to the what they call the sport of the '90s.

The magazines list 12 paintball dealers in Texas and hundreds of others across the United States.

Paintball players use the air-powered guns to shoot round balls filled with paint at other players. The object of the game is to shoot opponents with a paintball. When players are hit they are out of the game and leave the playing field.

The only playing field in the Fort Worth area is a located west of Fort Worth and owned by Fun on the Run.

The field is open to individual players as well as teams, said owner Ray Knight.

The rules are enforced by a referee on the playing field. Anyone who removes their goggles or attempts to wipe paint off of their clothing is asked to leave.

The average game takes about 30 minutes and most players play about a dozen games in one day, Knight said.

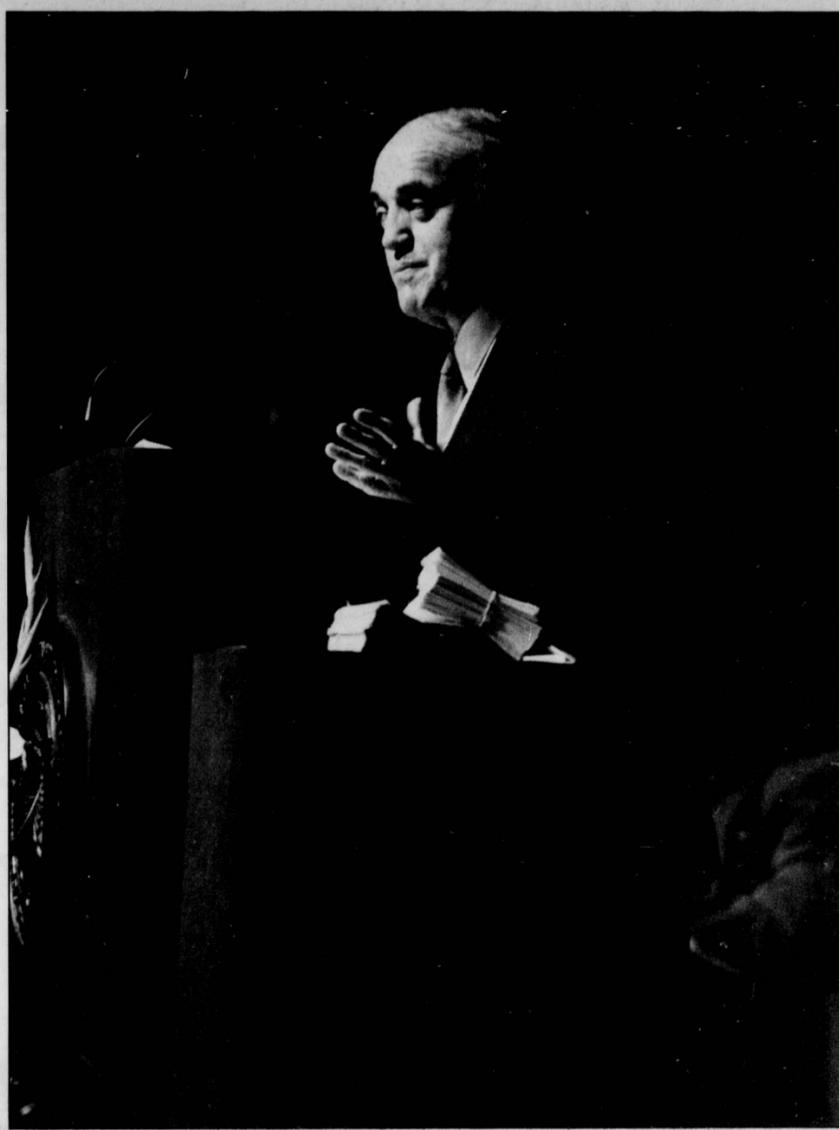
Players rent guns or bring their own to the playing fields.

The guns are manufactured by several companies and can cost up to \$400. Some models are equipped with automatic firing and can shoot up to 50 paint balls before reloading. The paint balls vary in price but most are about 10 cents each.

The guns are sold with a list of safety procedures and warnings against misuse.

The sport originated in California where the International Paintball

See Paint, page 2



Peter Arnett, CNN's reporter from behind enemy lines during Operation Desert Storm, addresses the campus community Thursday night in Ed Landreth Auditorium.

Correspondent recalls Gulf War

By SARAH YOEST
TCU Daily Skiff

Peter Arnett, the man who reported from Baghdad's El Rashid Hotel as the first bombs of Operation Desert Storm blasted the city, said that no story is worth dying for.

"Dying for a news story defeats the purpose," he said. "But if we're (the press) not prepared to take risks, we'll never hear about anything. That's why I stayed in Baghdad."

Arnett was the CNN correspondent who stayed in Baghdad as U.N. Coalition Forces bombarded the Iraqi capital during the Persian Gulf War. He spoke to an audience of 800 people in Ed Landreth Auditorium Thursday night as part of the Distinguished Speakers Forum sponsored by Team Bank, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram and TCU Programming Council's Forums Committee.

Although his crew was in Baghdad at the invitation of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, Arnett said they were under strict censorship.

Iraqi officials approved every bit of information Arnett reported and would often cry out, "You're giving out too much detail — remember the rules!" while he was on the phone with the CNN News Center in Atlanta.

"I was on the air as bombs were falling, metal bomb fragments were sizzling in the nearby pool, and CNN would ask for more detail as the chief Iraqi official was whispering at me to remember the rules," Arnett said.

Arnett said some fancy footwork was necessary to get around the Iraqis' news censorship.

"After I'd give my written

report," he said, "the anchors and I would do a 'Q & A' session." CNN's anchors asked Arnett to confirm that there had been a great deal of traffic on the road to Al-Basrah, but the network and the Iraqi government had struck a deal that Arnett could not give out any military information.

"I said, 'There is a lot of traffic on the road, and not much of it is civilian,'" Arnett said.

On another occasion, the CNN anchors asked to Arnett to confirm if sensitive strike and casualty information was true. He could not say yes, but managed to confirm the anchor's information.

"If I said anything," Arnett told his anchors, "the Iraqis would pull me off the air."

Arnett said that CNN's live coverage of the Persian Gulf War was a giant step in the world's move towards a global village.

"The Gulf War let a worldwide audience see events as they happened for the first time. The public could make up its own mind and you could debate with your friends," he said.

"The global village has been talked about for years, but only now has technology made it possible," he said.

The global village theory argues that as technology such as fax machines and supersonic planes shrink the size of the world, Earth becomes less of a group of separate, national camps and more like an international community, or global village.

"It's a great convenience to turn on the television and see President Bush live or a coup in Moscow,"

See Arnett, page 2

University minister relies on faith in battle of life

By ALFRED CHARLES
TCU Daily Skiff

John Butler came of age during the 1960s.

The turbulent decade that spawned a civil rights movement, anti-Vietnam protests and flower children also produced a man concerned about society and equality.

"The social justice issues and the quality of life in the community were important to me," said Butler, director of university ministries.

"My faith was important to me." Butler's faith was so important that he decided to enter pastoral ministries instead of psychology as a vocation.

His 1964 undergraduate degree was obtained at the University of Tulsa. Three years later, Butler earned a master's degree from TCU's Brite Divinity School as well as a master's degree in clinical psychology from Washington State Uni-

versity.

That same year, Butler returned to TCU as a counselor in the university's counseling center. When an opening occurred in the University Ministries office, Butler applied for—and received the position.

Now, the 50-year-old minister to the university spends his time counseling students, implementing ecumenical programs and creating an atmosphere conducive to all denominational worship.

Although some believers of a religious faith say other faiths don't matter, Butler disagrees.

"Different religious faiths strengthen my faith, they don't weaken it," he said.

Conservatively dressed and sporting a low-key demeanor, Butler resembles the all-knowing patriarch who is loving, just and accepting of other's faults.

"He's an incredible man," said Jennifer Burgess, a senior speech

communication major who worked with Butler during Hunger Week last semester.

"It's hard to approach some ministers, but not him. He's very accepting," Burgess said. "He's sort of a second father."

Butler's own family moved several times during his early childhood. His family belonged to the Disciples of Christ denomination, which Butler is ordained in as a minister.

His working class family was poor, but Butler said growing up poor has made him a better person.

"You learn to accept a lot of things when you grow up poor," Butler said. His father worked in retail and was required to move his family often to find employment.

The Butler family settled in Oklahoma when he was in the fifth grade. Butler remained there until he left for college.

He is the oldest of six brothers and sisters.

The future minister became active in campus ministries during his college years. Butler said he pursued a career in higher education because it allowed him to share his faith with others.

"I have the openness to affirm the role of faith in higher education," he said. "I am a responsible representative for the church in the setting of higher education."

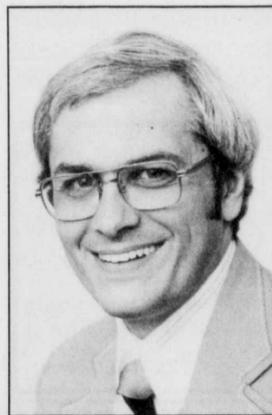
"I'm not trying to be a witness for John Butler's faith, but rather a witness for the church," he adds.

Faith is important to Butler.

So important that he never questioned when he discovered nine years ago that he had multiple sclerosis, a disease of the central nervous system.

"I never said 'why me?'" Butler says. "Faith isn't like that."

When Butler has an episode of the disease, it makes him extremely dizzy. He said the disease causes muscle and arm pain and, "deals with



John Butler

everything you are physically."

Butler said he was depressed and angry for two years, but throughout the ordeal he now has, "an apprecia-

tion for weakness as a strength."

Butler's co-workers say one strength is his ability to not pass judgement on those he counsels.

"I think he's great because of the way he loves everybody and cares for the students in any way they need," says Carolyn Rowell, administrative secretary in the University Ministries office.

"He's a true minister," Rowell said.

Most ministers, however, disagree with many of Butler's views.

He has an assortment of non-traditional outlooks.

"I don't believe in the devil or hell," he said. "I don't believe homosexuality is a sin and I am opposed to capital punishment."

Butler's non-traditional views stem partly from his background as a product of the 1960s.

During the mid-60s, Butler and his

See Life, page 2

Chorale chosen to participate in Southwest regional convention

By CHRISTINA BARNES
TCU Daily Skiff

The members of the TCU Concert Chorale will not be heading off to the beach or to the mountains for Spring Break.

Instead, the group will travel on a three-state tour highlighted by a performance at the Southwest division convention of the American Choral Director's Association in Kansas City.

"The whole essence of the trip is to sing for the seven-state Southwest division convention of ACDA," said Ron Shirey, Concert Chorale director.

Approximately 55 members of the group will perform in churches in Tulsa, Topeka and Oklahoma City. En route to the convention, the Chorale will also present a performance for the high schools of

Shawnee Mission, Kan.

The opportunity to sing at the convention is not given to everyone, Shirey said. Judges select participants by listening to anonymous tapes of groups and then inviting those they feel are the best, Shirey said.

"This is the third time we have performed at a Southwest division convention," Shirey said. TCU has been invited to sing at the conventions each time Shirey has applied.

"We have a very high profile in the ACDA," Shirey said. "The choral work at Texas Christian University is nationally recognized."

The Concert Chorale is a diverse group with students ranging from freshman pre-majors to graduate students.

"It is an amazing group," said Jenna Cropper, a sophomore vocal major.

"We work around five hours a week, and it's a lot of work," she said.

Cropper said she doesn't mind the effort it takes to produce such a quality group.

"It's so much fun with these people," she said. "No one wants to let the other person down, and everyone works for the same goal."

The Chorale will perform a variety of pieces for the convention. The opening and closing pieces, "Personent Hodie" by Lara Hoggard and "Gloria" by Randol Allen Bass, were written especially for TCU by composers who will attend the conference.

"We are doing another piece written for us by Kevin Issacs, a graduate of TCU, called 'Agnus Dei' written for and dedicated to me," Shirey said.

See Tour, page 2

Inside

International Week
Guest columnist writes about the highs and lows of the university's International Week.
Page 3

Classic XVII
An in-depth analysis of the SWC contest in Dallas.
Page 4

Outside

Today's weather will be partly sunny with a high temperature of 65 degrees.
Saturday's weather will be sunny with a high of 75 degrees.

Islamic students prepare for Ramadan observance

By ELIZABETH DE LA GARZA
TCU Daily Skiff

Muslim students attending the university and around the world are currently observing Ramadan, a month to become closer to God, a student said.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and is a time for fasting and prayer.

"By fasting, I am obeying God and we become good worshippers by praying," said Khaled Alrayes, a freshman radio-television-film major from Kuwait.

"Everything one does during Ramadan is for God," he said.

Alrayes, a practicing Muslim, said he observes the month because it allows him to obtain spiritual renewal.

The month is also an opportunity to embrace the central teach-

ings of the Islamic faith. The teachings, or pillars, are ways of becoming closer to God.

The first pillar is the verbal acknowledgement of one's faith.

Fasting, also a pillar, is an exercise of self-discipline and purification when a worshipper attempts to come closer to the Creator. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims are prohibited from eating during the day but they are able to eat after sunset.

Muslims are also prohibited from engaging in sexual activity while observing the month.

"Once you can control your desires you can achieve many things," Alrayes said.

Other pillars include praying five times a day, giving to the needy and making a pilgrimage to

See Islam, page 2

CAMPUSlines

CAMPUSlines is provided as a service to the TCU community. Announcements of events, meetings and other general campus information should be brought by the Skiff office, Moudy 2915 or sent to TCU Box 32929. The Skiff reserves the right to edit for style and taste.

TCU Student Foundation is looking for excited new members for the 1992-93 academic year. Interested students should pick up an application at the Information Desk or in the Alumni Office. All applications are due no later than Friday, March 27. For more information contact the Alumni Office at 921-7803.

Air Force ROTC will be holding a 5K Run on March 28, beginning at 8 a.m. in Amon G. Carter Stadium. Registration is \$12 before March 14 and \$15 afterwards. Medals will be awarded to the top three finishers in each age category and all entrants will be eligible for a post-race drawing for gifts from area merchants. For more information, call 921-7461.

Delta Sigma Pi presents "He Said, She Said," an information session on different management styles according to age and gender. The session is at 4 p.m. March 23 in Dan Rogers Hall Room 136. The meeting is open to the public.

TCU Showgirls Tryouts will be held Saturday, March 28 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Anyone interested in trying out needs to wear a leotard and tights and meet in the Rickel lobby.

Phi Chi Theta Business Fraternity will meet on March 24 at 5:30 p.m. in Dan Rogers Hall room 140. Open to all business students.

Pre-Law Association the SMU Law School field trip is March 31. Sign up in the Political Science office, Sadler 205, by Friday, March 27.

CRIMELINES

Campus Police reported the following incidents in the TCU area from March 4 to March 11:

Theft March 9- License plates were reported stolen from a car in the stadium parking lot. The Texas plates read 904-ESK.

March 9- A color photo was reported stolen from display in the North Moudy building. The color photo depicted a man's chest with an American flag painted on it.

Criminal Mischief March 4- Windows were broken out of a door in the Worth Hills dining hall.

March 6- A glass panel was broken out of a door in the west wing of Milton Daniel Hall.

March 10- A student's car in the Worth Hills parking lot was covered from the hood to the trunk with flour and eggs.

Car Fire March 3- A visitor's car parked in the health center parking lot caught fire in the engine compartment. The fire was put out with fire extinguishers shortly after it began.

Car Theft March 11- A student reported a car stolen from the University Christian Church parking lot at McPherson and Rogers streets.

Car Burglaries March 11- Campus police caught four juveniles breaking into cars in University Christian Church parking lot at McPherson and Rogers streets. The four boys were later taken into custody by Fort Worth Police. Police are investigating any link between the car theft and the car burglaries.

Obscene Phone Calls March 11- A Jarvis Hall resident and her roommate reported that they had received obscene phone calls from men who claimed they were inmates at Tarrant County Jail.

Life/ from page 1

wife lived among the African-American community in segregated Chapel Hill, N.C.

Butler said his experiences during that era still influence his beliefs about equality today.

"Racism is evil because it separates people on an arbitrary basis," he said.

Butler has been active with organizers who plan the Black South African Scholarship Fund; he chaired the Chancellor's Minority Task Force last semester and is adamantly opposed to South African apartheid.

Butler served on committees for the Tarrant County AIDS Interfaith Network and Tarrant County's HIV Advisory committee.

At home, Butler said he likes to unwind by practicing amateur astronomy.

"I enjoy watching the stars," Butler said. "I try to do a little watching each month."

"I really have a sense of being one of the pieces in a fabric that I don't comprehend," he said.

Butler said the heavenly bodies open his horizons and keeps him alert to the challenges he faces.

Also at home, Butler maintains a close relationship with his wife of 30 years, Mary Frances. The two met in the eighth grade and have been dating since high school.

Their similarities are what keeps them going.

"It seems like we've always been together and I can't remember a time not being with him," she said. "We're very much the same."

The duo's close relationship helped them survive when John discovered he had multiple sclerosis.

"It frightened all of us," she said. "We've always been extremely close and that made us come to grips with that."

The middle-aged minister said he enjoys working at the university because it keeps him young.

"I get really excited about student ministries," he said. "It keeps me alert and current."

If he had to leave the university, Butler said he hopes TCU would know he tried to do his best.

"I would want them to know that I care about campus ministries and that I tried to contribute to a campus community that understood its place in a global society."

Campus Man

by Andrew Deutsch



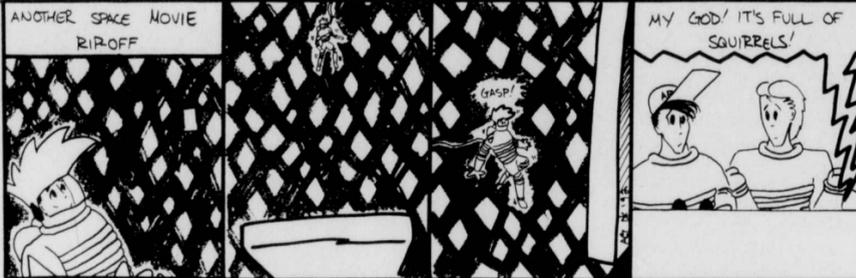
Insanity Fair

by Joe Barnes



Siege

by Andy Grieser & Kall Loper



Calvin and Hobbes

by Bill Watterson



Tour/ from page 1

At the convention, the members of the Chorale hear choirs from around the country, including two guest choirs from San Francisco and Bulgaria.

Shirey said he hopes to leave an impression on the other directors at the conference and gain "the kind of respect and knowledge of the choral

directors in this area which makes them send their students here."

Cropper said she expects to learn a lot from the convention.

"It's really ideal for the music major," Cropper said.

The convention is really interesting because it provides free information and exposure to many aspects of music, Cropper said.

"The more choirs you hear, the better ideas you have for your own choir," she said.

Have a safe break and drive safely. Illustration of a car and people. Text: Have a safe break and drive safely.

Arnett/ from page 1

Arnett said his interview with Hussein was the most important moment in his 30 years as a journalist.

Before he was allowed to meet with the Iraqi president, Arnett said he was required to strip down for a full body search by Iraqi security. The security agents made him soak his hands in a strong disinfectant before he was allowed to shake hands with Hussein.

Arnett said that if the U.S. economy doesn't turn around, Bush could launch a pre-election "October surprise" invasion or upstep covert efforts for a coup d'etat to wrest Hussein from power.

"These are not predictions, just possibilities," he said.

Paint/ from page 1

Players Association is based. The IPPA has developed a code of conduct for all players to follow. The code requires that players wear protective eye wear and headgear to pre-

Islam/ from page 1

Mecca by those who are financially able. Approximately 1 billion Muslims worldwide and 40,000 in Fort Worth are observing Ramadan.

Skiff classified ads bring results to your doorstep. 921-7426.

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\$1,500 SCHOLARSHIPS All undergraduate girls at TCU are eligible! Applications available in the Financial Aid Office. All applications must be returned to the Financial Aid Office by March 23, 1992 Four \$1,500 scholarships will be awarded. Scholarships provided by ΔΔΔ football program sales!

HIGHER INTEREST RATES. Illustration of a man with a briefcase. Text: HIGHER INTEREST RATES. For more information call (817)335-6147

Opinion

TCU Daily Skiff

All-American newspaper

Associated Collegiate Press

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Drinking

Don't let spring break break you

All of the anxious waiting is over now. At long last, spring break is finally upon us. And while this vacation comes at a good time and is greatly needed by most students, it is important that we all recognize the potential dangers around us.

Spring break and drinking are almost synonymous for college students. Remember, if you are going to drink, don't be stupid — give the car keys to someone else. Either call a taxi or call a friend — just don't get behind the wheel intoxicated.

In the past, this campus has become all too familiar with the grief and tragedy that is associated with drinking and driving. There are some very simple things that you can do to make sure the TCU family does not have to live through this nightmare again.

If you are drunk, don't get behind the wheel of a car. If you are not drinking, don't let one of your friends or classmates try to drive if he/she has had too much to drink. Taking a few minutes out of your vacation to drive an inebriated friend home may save his/her life.

While everyone enjoys a having a good time and everyone needs to blow off a little steam, the tired old cliché still holds true: drinking and driving do not mix.

So as we all go our separate ways next week — whether it is to the beach or the ski slopes — don't leave your common sense behind.

Letter to the editor

Mistake

It was a Thursday night in mid-February in Seattle, Washington. It was 10 o'clock at night when a white '92 Chrysler flew by stationary objects on the side of the road. The car was going nearly twice the speed limit. The car approached a corner but couldn't slow down in time. In seconds it was all over. The car creamed a telephone pole, flipped numerous times, hit a second telephone pole, and finally came to a stop on its side next to a building. The engine kept running for a few minutes and then it was turned off.

A figure slowly emerged from the jagged glass of the broken door window. It was a young, business-type man. His expensive suit was ripped and stained with blood from his face and hands. The clean-cut, athletic man hobbled with a bent back from the wreck. A woman came out of the building and cared for him until more help could come.

Then the sirens came. They were not just ambulances, but the police as well. My brother's life will never be the same. He had a few cocktails after work and decided to drive home anyway. The consequences were damaging and lasting.

My brother not only lost his car and insurance, but his job as well. He was driving the company car. He owes the insurance company the deductible for the brand new car (under 2,000 miles). He also owes the city for two telephone poles and numerous traffic violations incurred during the wreck. He must pay hospital bills, yet he has no medical insurance. Furthermore, he will incur future bills for such things as rehabilitation.

My brother will in all likelihood be convicted of driving while intoxicated. At the very least, he will have to pay major fines and have to do community service. The biggest bill of all will have to go to his lawyer. When its over, the state will probably take my brother's licence away

for one year.

My 27 year old brother is okay. He injured his ankle, knee, and his back, which is now that of a 60 year old. He had deep thigh and chest bruises from the seat belt.

I have a small, close family: my mother and her new husband, my grandmother, and my brother. He has put us through turmoil. My mother got sick after the wreck. It was tough for me to deal with this family crisis over the phone 2,500 miles away. To tell my mom that she shouldn't worry and that the neurological tests will go okay, or that he won't go to jail (which is a distinct possibility for a first offense in Washington) was not easy. I know she worries about me more than ever.

I am mad at my brother, but I can't find the words to scold him. I'm just happy he's alive. But was all this worth five dollars or even a quarter? He could have called a cab or a friend.

I would be a hypocrite if I told you that I haven't driven after a few drinks. I have been lucky. I'm sure that many of you have been lucky too. My brother's only luck was that he had his seat belt and an airbag. And by the grace of God, the driver's seat was the only survivable position in the car.

But luck runs out! Stop doing it before it stops you. This is not a story about death, but rather life. We can all learn from my brother's experience. Had he played it safe, he wouldn't be paying for his mistake for the rest of his life.

I wish you all a safe break and a safe life. I also hope that you follow some of my fraternity brothers and start calling cabs after drinking. Safe doesn't have to mean boring.

Scott Stirts
 Senior
 Political Science

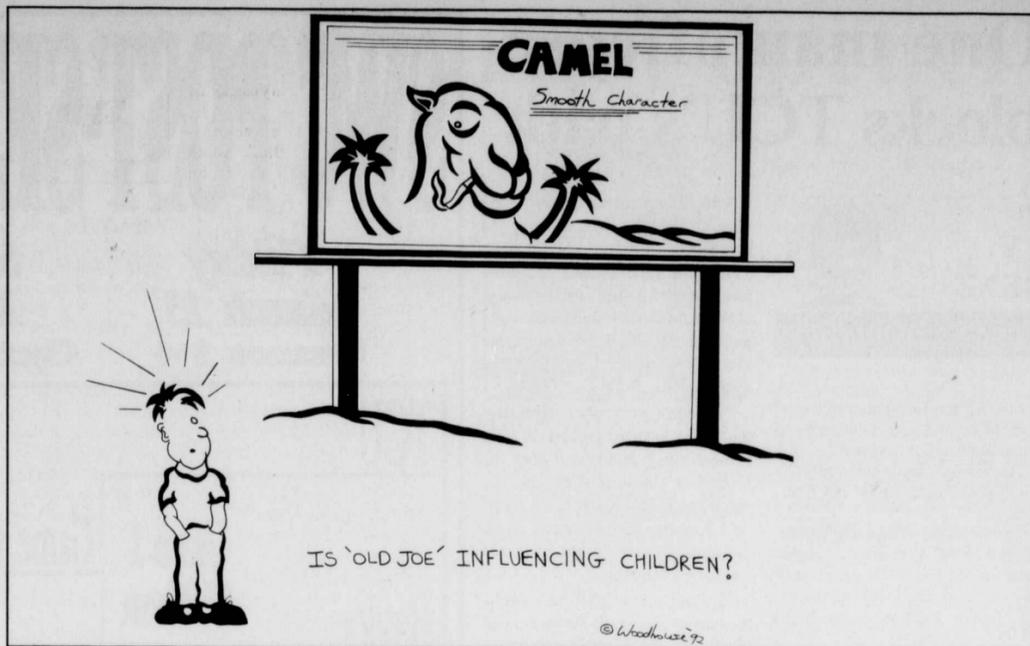
Letter policy

The TCU Daily Skiff is produced by the students of Texas Christian University, sponsored by the journalism department and published Tuesday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters except during finals week and holidays.

Unsigned editorials represent the view of the Skiff editorial board. Signed letters and columns represent the opinion of the writers.

The Skiff is a member of the Associated Press.

The Skiff welcomes letters to the editor. Letters must be typed, double-spaced, signed and limited to 500 words. Letters should be turned in two days before publication. They must include the author's classification, major and phone number. The Skiff reserves the right to edit or reject any unacceptable letters.



Take me out to the ball game

by
**TODD
 TURMAN**

Columnist



In my last column, I used a baseball motif to describe the interesting developments in this year's presidential primaries. Unfortunately, my creative approach to discussing contemporary politics was not well received. Many of my readers felt that I had tricked them by using baseball lingo to talk about politics.

So, in order to make amends, today I am going to write about baseball. Yes, you read that correctly — the great American pastime will be the topic of today's column. I am going to resist my inclinations to sound off about last Tuesday's outcome in the election and address a more important topic to show my readers that I can identify with their true interests.

First, let me say a few things about the game itself before commenting on the upcoming season. For the record, artificial turf socks and the designated hitter is great. The obvious arguments against turf are that it makes the game too fast to be enjoyed and it takes away the natural atmosphere of the game. The obvious arguments for the DH rule are that it makes the game more exciting (more home runs) and allows the grand old men of the game to continue playing. So there you have it. (For those of you who don't read between the lines very well, those comments are meant to prepare you for my overwhelming bias towards the American League.)

Having said that, allow me to get on with some predictions, starting with the my thoughts on the individuals in the game. Around the horn, you can count on the same

guys as always. At shortstop, look for last year's MVP Cal Ripken to continue towards Lou Gehrig's record of consecutive games played. At second base, expect Julio Franco, last year's American League batting champ, to make another run. Also, expect Ryne Sandberg to take another step towards Cooperstown. At first base, Cecil Fielder will again be the man in Motown — though this year he'll only hit three balls OUT of Tiger Stadium. At the hot corner, watch for buzz-headed and goggle-faced Chris Sabo to get his stroke going again.

On the mound and behind the plate, there also figures to be some interesting performances. Count on the amazing Nolan Ryan to get no-no number 8. It's also a given that Roger Clemens will again present his case for eventual Hall of Fame status. Orel Hershiser may even return to past glory along with Dave Stewart. As far as human backstops go, the man called Pudge, Ivan Rodriguez, is the one to watch. His arm is so good that he could probably throw a fastball from his knees harder than most big league pitchers do from their feet. Don't, however, expect too much from Benito Santiago. He's always been overrated, and this year he's also overpaid.

In the outfield, let's just say that the Rangers, Red Sox, and the Dodgers have the boys to watch. Between the Rangers' Ruben Sierra, Juan Gonzalez, and Kevin Reimer and the Bosox's Phil Plantier, Ellis Burks, and Mike Greenwell, there are bound to be plenty nice catches, throws, and dingers. I mentioned the Dodgers' Kal Daniels, Darryl Strawberry, and Eric Davis because they are likely to be the biggest disappointments. Others to watch include Bobby Bonilla, Barry Bonds, and Seattle's boy wonder, Ken Griffey the Younger. But who knows how they'll do.

Now, on to some predictions about the teams themselves. Though it's been said that baseball is beginning to experience parity, it

seems that there are two teams to beat this year: the Atlanta Braves and the Boston Red Sox. I know, I know — what about the Dodgers and Reds in the National League and what about the Blue Jays and White Sox in the N.L. (though their hurlers will probably be fulfilling their every-other-year obligation to win the division. For those of you who are cringing at these picks, allow me to make this concession — I could be wrong. Who knows, maybe the Dodgers will outthit everyone in the N.L. (though their sorry infield will allow just as many runs) and maybe the Reds pitching staff can shut down every opposing lineup in the N.L. (though their hurlers will probably spend too much time on the suspension list to be consistent). And, who knows, perhaps the Blue Jays will win enough at home to stay on top of the A.L. (though they'll probably still choke in the last week of the season as usual) and perhaps the White Sox can keep their balance on the A.L. tight rope (though without Jeff Torborg to guide them they're just a hodgepodge of young sluggers and old fielders). So, you see, somebody else could be around when the dust clears in September.

Well, friends, there you have it and there it is. I talked baseball as promised, and hopefully redeemed myself in the eyes of those who I have alienated with my political mumbo-jumbo. My only fear, however, is that my comments on this subject may incite more controversy than the Ted Strout/paint pellet business or my own previous columns for that matter. Oh well though, I may at last be the subject of a scathing letter to the editor.

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● Todd Turman is a senior Political Science major from Cleburne, Texas.

International Week in review

by
**AL
 MLADENKA**

Guest Columnist



Some folks have the good fortune of frequent travel beyond the U.S. borders and are able to travel to many countries of our globe each year or even each month. Others, unfortunately, can manage to make only one or two trips abroad annually, travelling to one, two, or a small number of countries. While still others more "unfortunately," can't or merely don't cross the Texas borders, much less the U.S. or other countries' borders. (Those who do cross borders usually make every effort to do it again and again!)

Those of us as TCU who have never gotten out of Texas or the U.S. are fortunate, however, in that we have 214 international non-immigrant students from 56 countries of our globe. They bring their languages, cultures, and country knowledge to our campus community, for our global knowledge enhancement and enjoyment. The differences and similarities can become known and appreciated by all of TCU's students, faculty, staff, administration, and the greater campus community — sputniks or not.

This year, the week of February 24 - 29 was designated as International Week. Chancellor Tucker, Fort Worth Councilman David Chappell, Student Body President Ben Walters, ISA Faculty Advisor and Journalism Professor Anantha Babbili, and International

Student Host Family Chairperson Mrs. Pat McClard joined ISA President Isabel Casas-I-Klett of Barcelona, Spain, in the opening dedication ceremony.

In addition to the dedication ceremony, the week was full of all sorts of wonderful social and educational programs, highlighting countries represented by our international students.

All of this sounds great, but all is not well. It's a shame how small the number of participants was (and has been) at the annual opening ceremony; once again, the audience consisted of about a dozen U.S. students, a few faculty and staff members (usually the same individuals) and only a dozen international students. The idea and purpose of the ceremony is great, but is the time and effort of all involved worth it? It's rather embarrassing to have the Chancellor and the Mayor or designated councilman participating and delivering messages to an audience of 24-30, especially when only half of them represent the international students for whom the event really takes place. I question once again whether the event should be included.

The RHA-sponsored Salute the World program in which various residence halls volunteer to present a one-hour program on a certain country ranks among the three best events of the week. The programs generally attract 15-30 or more students who are usually from the residence hall involved. These programs are both educational and enjoyable. Its unfortunate that more of the residents of the hall and students of other halls do not attend, but even more so that the faculty and staff, for the most part, do not attend. The Taste of the World is also among the

best events of the Week. Organizations sponsor a particular country displaying artifacts and providing information about the country and a food taste to booth visitors. Several hundred students and some faculty and staff visit the booths, receiving information and enjoying a snack. Only six organizations participated this year; however, that is understandable due to the late mailing of invitations.

Finally the International Student Banquet and Entertainment Program was, as always, a tremendous success. Approximately 330 people enjoyed food prepared by Marriott Food Service based on recipes provided by international students from about twenty countries. It is again regrettable that few of the students' faculty members shared in their cultural celebration.

As a whole, this year's International Week was a successful global multicultural awareness event. Those of us involved in its planning and activities express our appreciation to all those who participated in some way. The coverage of the TCU News Service and the Daily Skiff prior to and during the week was, as always, great and appreciated.

Finally, we appreciate the continued support of the University's Administration regarding not only International Week and the international student program, but also all of the more-encompassing globalization actions taken and efforts being made for our educational and cultural enhancement. As the week's theme stated, let's continue our efforts to "become global citizens."

● Al Mladenka is director of International Student Affairs.

SWC Classic XVII

One man offense blocks TCU's path

by
TY
BENZ
Sports Columnist



After all the long hours of sweat, work, blood and guts, it comes down to one weekend of basketball.

That's what stands between TCU and its pot of gold, the NCAA Tournament.

One weekend of winning basketball in the SWC Post-season Tournament and the Frogs will grab one of the elusive 64 spots that has slipped out of their grasp so many times before.

This year could be different for TCU because of the hardships that the Frogs have to overcome. This team has handled more controversy this year than any other Frog basketball team ever.

Four players quit the team, leaving TCU with a seven man rotation. Despite this, the Frogs stayed in front of the pack in the SWC and cruised along in first place with impressive victories over Texas, Houston and Rice along the way to record a 20-win season for the first time in five years.

But the dice came up snake eyes against Texas Tech—not only did TCU lose the game in embarrassing fashion, but the team lost sophomore backup center Kurt Thomas for the season with a broken leg. This forced seniors Mark Moton and Reggie Smith to man the middle with no backups, and more importantly, no rest for the weary.

And believe me the Frogs are weary. The loss of Thomas stripped the Frogs' depth inside and left the cupboard bare. Smith, Moton and junior point guard Brent Atwater have become ironmen and have averaged almost 40 minutes a game.

But the schedule has also played a part in the Frogs late collapse. Five of the Frogs last eight SWC games were on the road. The combination of long minutes and tough road trips has been deadly, and the Frogs' play has shown this recently.

"I don't think fatigue is a big factor for us," said TCU head coach Moe Iba. "I hope that our players aren't thinking about fatigue at the end of games, but are concentrating on what we have to do to win the game."

The last two games have shown just how much fatigue has effected the Frogs. In losses at Houston and Texas Tech, the Frogs battled all game long and stayed close until the end, but couldn't pull it out.

Two big reasons why the Frogs lost to Houston and Tech was because both of the opponents pounded the ball inside to their star bigmen. This strategy was also designed to get Smith and Moton in foul trouble, and both teams were successful.

Houston consistently went inside to 6-8 power forward Craig Upchurch (he scored 14 points), to get both fouls and points, while Tech went inside to their star center Will Flemons, who responded with 25 points. This led to an alarming problem for TCU—foul trouble for the Frogs' inside duo of Smith and Moton.

In fact in both games, Moton fouled out. With help from the bench, it left Iba scrambling for answers because there's nobody left inside to fight opposing power forwards. 6-5 swingman Junior Graves is the tallest defender left, and he is not strong enough to stop the bulkier power forwards.

This has forced Iba to go to a very small three guard lineup. Strickland, Albert Thomas and Brent Atwater teamed with 6-4 small forward Allen Tolley to play with Smith.

"Going into the game, our goal was to get both Reggie and Moton into foul trouble," Upchurch said after the 50-44 Cougar win in Houston. "After those two, they don't have anyone inside that can stop us."

"The important thing is that Reggie hasn't fouled out since Kurt went down," Iba said. "We can only knock on wood and hope that he continues to stay out of foul trouble. In an effort to relieve some of the pressure off those two, we'll start sending people to help out on defense."

With Thomas definitely out for the Classic, and little chance later in the post-season, Smith and Moton must stay in the game to limit the other teams powerful inside game because every team in the conference has a potent inside attack. Without these two, the Frogs are very vulnerable inside.

"We can't worry about Kurt anymore and have to prepare to play without him," Smith said after the Frogs last win over Rice when he outplayed Rice's center Brent Scott. "It's a tremendous advantage if we get him back, but right now that would be a long shot."

With all the foul problems inside, the guards and small forwards need to pick up the pace offensively. In both of the Frogs recent losses, the guards have been cold as ice from outside, especially from three-point range, which has doomed TCU to its two losses.

Senior guard Michael Strickland must break out of his recent slump if the Frogs will have any chance for the NAAs. The last two games, Strickland has shot only 16 percent (3-19) from the field. After his 29-point explosion against St. Louis four games ago, Strickland has scored only 17 points and hit only three three-pointers.

"I just tell Michael to keep shooting the ball," Iba said. "That's the only way a shooter is going to get out of a slump."

Meanwhile senior guard Albert Thomas has picked up the slack. Against Rice, he poured in 21 points including 5-of-6 three-point shooting in the second half to help the Frogs escape with a win. Against the Cougars and Red Raiders, Thomas was the second leading scorer in both games, chipping in 12 points against Houston and 13 against Tech. This needs to continue throughout the tournament.

But the biggest problem for TCU has been their one man army on offense. One man can't lead a team to the promised land without help from his teammates, and lately Smith hasn't had any.

In the past eight games, Smith's play has been superlative and he has carried the Frogs on his broad shoulders all season long. The 6-10 senior center has averaged 18.2 points and 12.3 rebounds the last eight games of the season including a 28-point, 14 rebound performance against Tech last Saturday in the Frogs' 76-67 loss, while his teammates have been up and down.

But all his scoring hasn't been good for his teammates. Juniors Allen Tolley and Brent Atwater haven't had many shots, and combined with Strickland's cold shooting and Moton's foul trouble has left Smith to carry almost all of the offensive burden.

This one man show has made the Frogs too predictable on offense, and opposing teams have taken advantage of this. They are sending two or sometimes three defenders at him. This has made things difficult for him and helped wear him down.

"He's the focal point of their team," said Houston center Charles Outlaw. "If you contain him then you'll probably beat TCU."

But there is still hope for the Frogs because Strickland and Thomas are capable of bombing away from three-point land. When those two get hot, its lights out for the opponent.

"TCU is very potent offensive team," said Rice head coach Scott Thompson after Thomas bombed away for 21 points. "When they start hitting NBA threes, you're in real trouble on defense because if start sending guys out after them, Smith starts to dominate inside."

This will be the key to Frogs' success in the tournament. If Strickland, Thomas, or Tolley can step up and relieve the pressure off of Smith, then green pastures of the NAAs could be calling.

SWC POST-SEASON CLASSIC XVII

Friday
March 13
Games 1-4

Saturday
March 14
Games 5 & 6

Sunday
March 15
Game 7

TCU	Game 1 Winner	TCU
Baylor	Game 1 12 Noon	
University of Houston	Game 5 Winner	BU
SMU	Game 5 8:00 PM	
University of Texas	Game 2 Winner	UH
Texas A&M	Game 2 2:00 PM	
Rice	Game 6 Winner	Automatic NCAA Tournament Bid
Texas Tech	Game 6 6:00 PM	
	Game 3 Winner	ATM
	Game 3 7:00 PM	
	Game 4 Winner	R
	Game 4 9:00 PM	
	Game 7	D
	Game 7 1:30 PM	
		T



Senior guard Michael Strickland, shown here against Texas Tech, needs to break out of his funk and find his outside shot this weekend in the Southwest Conference Post-season Tournament if TCU is to contend for the title and gain an automatic NCAA Tournament bid.

TCU Daily Skiff/ Aimee Herring

Skiff Sports hopes you drive safely and rock Reunion Area!

SWC Classic XVII

Frogs battle Baylor in tourney opener

TCU vs. Baylor
(21-9) (13-14)

What: First round of SWC Classic XVII

Where: Reunion Arena, Dallas

Game Time: Noon

By WILLIAM HATFIELD
TCU Daily Skiff

The TCU Horned Frogs head into today's Southwest Conference Basketball tournament with one mission: win the championship and make the NCAA 64 team tournament field.

To do this, TCU will have to conquer their old rivals from Waco in first round action which begins at noon at Dallas' Reunion Arena.

TCU, 21-9 overall and 9-5 in SWC play, is the third seed in the tournament and will face Baylor, the sixth seed, in the first game of the tourna-

ment.

The Bears finished 13-14 overall and 4-10 in conference action, including a 64-63 victory over the Frogs in Fort Worth. TCU managed a split with the Bears in their regular season series by beating Baylor in Waco 73-63.

For the Frogs, an impressive showing this weekend is pivotal if they wish to make the NCAA's. TCU heads into the SWC tournament on a two-game losing streak, having dropped road contests to Houston and Texas Tech the final week of the regular season. A split of those two

games and a win in the tournament might have been enough to get the Frogs an at-large berth for the NCAA's.

Now the Frogs only assurance of making the field would be to win the SWC tournament, which would give TCU an automatic berth to the NCAA Tournament.

But all the second guessing on what TCU has to do this weekend to get a bid will be for naught if the Frogs drop their first round game against the Bears. The two teams have split the past four meetings between them, each winning twice on the others home court. It will be interesting to see how the neutral site affects the outcome.

"It will be a very even game," said TCU head coach Moe Iba. "Either team could win."

The Bears will be led by AP SWC Player of the Year David Wesley. Wesley led the league in scoring this year, including a 33-point effort against TCU in the game played in Waco. Wesley can take control of a game offensively, but for the Bears to

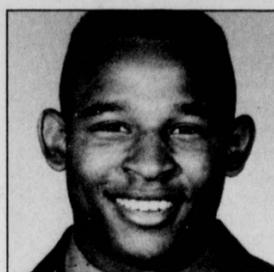
be successful, the other players on the floor have to contribute. Despite his efforts, TCU won the game in Waco.

Wesley was held to only 11 points in the first TCU-Baylor matchup this season, a game the Bears won.

"We have to make sure he (Wesley) doesn't explode offensively," Iba said. "We're going to put Albert (Thomas) on him and see if he can contain him."

TCU's hopes rest on the shoulders of senior center Reggie Smith. The first team All-SWC pick has played tremendous basketball all year, leading the Frogs in scoring and rebounds. Smith will get his points, but TCU needs strong efforts from seniors Michael Strickland and Mark Moton to reach peak performance.

Strickland went inexplicably cold the last three games of the season. Following a 29-point night effort against St. Louis, the senior guard failed to reach double figures again. He scored only five and three points in the Frogs losses to Houston and Tech.



David Wesley

With injured 6-10 reserve center Kurt Thomas unable to play, Moton is the next tallest Frog player behind Smith. The 6'7 senior fouled out of the Houston and Tech games. His leadership is invaluable to TCU, as is his height and free throw shooting late in close contests.

TCU will also look to super sixth man Albert Thomas to come off the bench and provide needed points and defense. The senior guard has picked up some of the scoring slack the past

two weeks and continues to play superb defense. He chipped in 21 points against Rice two weeks ago and tallied double figures in both contests against the Bears this season.

Rebounding will be a key in the contest. Baylor controlled the glass in their victory in Fort Worth while TCU out rebounded the Bears in their win.

"We need to keep their big people off the offensive glass," Iba said. "That really hurt us in the loss at home."

While many believe TCU must win at least two games this weekend to make it to the NCAA's, the Frogs can't look ahead to a possible rematch with Houston in the semifinals.

"Nobody can let down in this tournament because in any given game an upset could occur," Iba said.

The TCU-Baylor winner will take on the Houston-SMU winner in Saturday's late semifinal.

Cougs, Horns lead the hunt for title

By DAVE NORDEN
TCU Daily Skiff

As the curtain draws on the Southwest Conference tournament this weekend, players, coaches and fans alike share in the belief that their college basketball team can capture the championship.

The beauty of the SWC tournament lies in the belief that regardless of the season their favorite team enjoyed, the players can forget about

up with SWC Defensive Player of the Year, junior center Charles Outlaw, and senior forward Sam Mack and Foster has a lethal front-line. The only problem foreseen for the Cougars is their lack of perimeter shooting.

Senior guard Derrick Daniels and junior guard Darrell Grayson are the designated shooters, but their shooting percentage has fallen off tremendously. This allows opponent's defense to collapse down low in the

Any other team would have been crippled, but UT managed to go 10-6 in his absence. If Cambridge continues his rigorous play, the Longhorns certainly will advance to the championship game against Houston.

Senior forward Benford Williams provides the Longhorns with good perimeter range and a capability to drive to the basket and finish the play with a hoop. Freshman All-Conference guard Terrence Rencher and sophomore guard B.J. Tyler give Penders a backcourt that is capable of excellent ballhandling, but streaky outside shooting. When these two are hot from the outside, the middle opens up for Cambridge, Williams and sophomore center Albert Burditt. Tyler also ranks among the SWC leaders in steals and assists, but his reckless turnover-producing play often negates his positive points.

Look for the Longhorns to drill Texas A&M in the first-round, and follow that with a revengeful victory over Rice, who defeated UT in Houston 103-97 last Tuesday. This leaves Texas in a showdown with Houston for the third time this year, this one, however, isn't hooked by the 'Horns.

TCU In what originally looked like a storied season for the Horned Frogs (21-9, 9-5 SWC) at the start, turned into a nightmare. The nightmare began when reserve players Bobby Frain, Ken Fiedler, David Preston and Paul Tramble quit the team just before Christmas. This forced Iba to give the team's man-

their hearts out every night for Iba and the fans. After super-sub Kurt Thomas broke his leg, when Iba looked down the line on the TCU bench, he saw Thomas, forward Junior Graves and the understudies.

The under-manned and ill-prepared Frogs lost must win games down the stretch to Houston and Texas Tech, not because of the talent they had on the floor, but the talent they needed on the bench.

Look for Smith and the Frogs to play a game from the heart, and win a tough game from Baylor in the first-round. The second-round brings the Cougars, and also an exit for the Frogs. An NIT invite should be in the mail to Iba.

Rice The Owls (20-10, 8-6 SWC) earned the fourth-seed for the tournament by outlasting Texas in Rice's last game of the season. That victory should rally the Owls fans around head coach Scott Thompson and his men.

The Owls are built All-Conference honorable mention center Brent Scott, who showed the ability to dominate the paint this season. For the Owls to succeed in the tournament, it is vital that Scott demand the ball and receive it from the Rice guards in the right position.

One of Scott's major faults lies in his lack of agility around the basket. When he receives the ball in the post, however, there simply are not many players in the conference that can stop him. Above average outside shooting, believed to be one of Rice's

SWC FINAL MEN'S STANDINGS

	SWC	Total
Texas	11-3	21-10
Houston	11-3	22-5
TCU	9-5	21-9
Rice	8-6	20-10
Texas Tech	7-7	15-12
Baylor	4-10	12-15
SMU	4-10	10-17
Texas A&M	2-12	6-20

the gloom of the regular season and hurdle each obstacle this weekend in route to post-season glory.

Teams such as Texas, Houston and TCU enjoyed remarkable seasons, which should earn them invitations to either the NCAA Tournament or the National Invitational Tournament. Rice, Texas Tech and Baylor scored upsets over the elite teams in the conference, but hopes of anything more were shattered on nights when these teams looked lethargic. SMU and Texas A&M showcased arguably some of the worse exhibitions in the game of basketball every time the teams stepped on the hardwood. Dr. Naim-Smith rolled over in his grave many times this season.

Each team's analysis of possibilities for capturing the championship provides a unique look to legitimately decide whether the Horned Frogs stand a chance.

Houston

It is hard to describe the Houston Cougars, who finished 22-5 (11-3 in SWC), as underachievers but Pat Foster's squad certainly consists of the richest talent in the conference, and should have gone undefeated in conference action. In regular season play, the Cougars placed in a first-place tie with Texas for the championship, but because Texas beat them twice, Houston received the second seed in the tournament.

The Cougars present match up problems for their opponents both because of their size and their quickness. All-Conference senior forward Craig Upchurch is as versatile as any player in the conference. Team him

lane and deny Outlaw, Mack and Upchurch the ball.

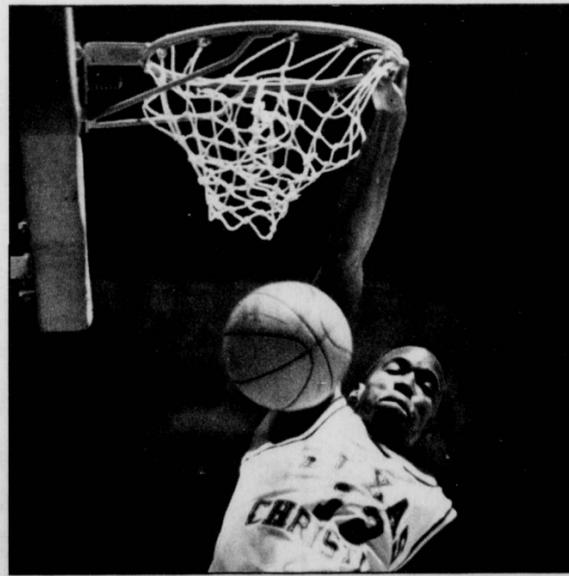
Foster assembled a difficult non-conference schedule before the season, which has certainly helped the Cougars in the regular season, and will benefit the team in post-season play. Look for the Cougars to trample SMU in the first-round, eliminate TCU in the second-round and finally beat Texas to win a trip to the NCAA Tournament.

Texas

The first-seed in the SWC tournament (21-10, 11-3 SWC) features the best coach in the conference, Tom Penders. When Penders arrived in Austin from the University of Rhode Island a couple years ago, Longhorn fans expected a quick transformation into an NCAA Tournament-caliber team.

Penders made that transformation indeed, but with talent like Travis Mays, Joey Wright and Lance Blanks, Texas played SWC exile Arkansas to a draw each season. This season, Penders did a masterful job incorporating both youth and experience into a team that will earn an invitation to the NCAA Tournament.

After being suspended to start the season, senior All-Conference forward Dexter Cambridge arrived on the floor with 15 games remaining and started dominating immediately. Certainly the most talented and best frontcourt scorer the Longhorns showcased, Cambridge also rebounds, passes and plays tenacious defense. Imagine TCU without Reggie Smith or Texas Tech without Will Flemons, and you would equal Texas without Dexter Cambridge.



TCU Daily Skiff/

Michael Strickland jams home two points against Rice. The Frogs open the SWC Post-season Tournament against Baylor at noon today in Reunion Arena in Dallas.

ager a uniform, an unknown walk-on from Miami a uniform and an aging geology professor a practice jersey.

Luckily for Iba, the players that remained on the team, such as Michael Strickland, Albert Thomas, Allen Tolley, Mark Moton, Brent Atwater and Reggie Smith played

assets, is aptly manned by senior guard Dana Hardy and junior guard Marvin Moore.

Thompson's belief in stressing the fundamentals of the game of basketball is highlighted in the perimeter shooting attack the Owls possess. A series of high screens run by the



TCU Daily Skiff/ Amiee Herring

Reggie Smith slams for two against Texas Tech. The Frogs play in the Southwest Conference tournament this weekend.

Owls springs Hardy and Moore open for open three-point field goal attempts. Other coaches around the conference should take a lesson from Thompson's ideas.

Rice will certainly earn a bid to the NIT after stinging Texas and winning 20 games.

Texas Tech

The Red Raiders (15-12, 7-7 SWC) look to ride on the back of All-Conference center Will Flemons to the tournament championship.

Wishful thinking would be an understatement in this case. Tech improved their team spirit and morale with a trouncing of third-seeded TCU in the last game of the regular season, which enabled Tech to sweep the season series from TCU. That should be a cause for jubilation on the part of Red Raiders fans, after a dismal season last year.

The Red Raiders will unravel against the up-and-coming Rice Owls, but great things are on the horizon for Texas Tech.

Baylor

The Bears (12-15, 4-10 SWC) look to salvage their season with a victory over rival TCU in the first-round of the tournament. After having high expectations coming into the season, head coach Gene Iba has seen his talented athletes underachieve all season. A classic example of this is a loss suffered by Baylor to lowly cellar-dwellers Texas A&M in their last game of the season. A victory over TCU would ensure that the Bears' season would not end on such a low note, yet prove beneficial to build on for the start of next season.

Although it has been a tragic season for the Bears, there has been one

bright spot. Baylor showcases AP SWC Player of the Year, David Wesley, in the backcourt. Wesley was among the conference individual leaders in eight different statistical categories during the season. Both an offensive and defensive stalwart, Wesley poses many problems for the opponent.

Watch for Baylor to give TCU a battle, but fall short to the dominance of three-point gunners Michael Strickland and Albert Thomas. Baylor certainly employs the talent that could make them compete for the title next season.

SMU

The Mustangs (10-17, 4-10 SWC), like Baylor, look to redeem themselves in the tournament for having a miserable season. Head coach John Shumate may have worn out his welcome in Dallas, as a result of his lack of stable recruiting, but will try to repeat last year's first round tournament upset of the Cougars.

Juniors Tim Mason and Mike Wilson lead the Mustangs into the battle with favorite Houston in the first-round and will for help from guard Chad Allen and center Greg Kinzer.

Texas A&M

The Aggies (6-20, 2-12 SWC) topped their season off by beating Texas Tech in the final game of the season. That was the highlight, but their first-round matchup with Texas certainly will be the lowlight.

The Aggies will try for a Cinderella story tournament and hope that the dynamic duo of David Edwards and Damon Johnson will lead to an upset over mighty Texas.

Expect the Aggies to be the Longhorns' first victim.

The Ruthless, Rogueish Reviewer strikes again!

Two issue-oriented comedies to ponder as you lounge in the sun

by
Carl Kozlowski
TCU Daily Skiff

This week I'm looking at two new movies that explore the worlds of the courtroom and our nation's health care system. Don't worry, they're not documentaries; in fact, they're comedies, or claim to be.

One stars Joe Pesci doing his usual whiny, abrasive thing. The other features an all-star cast that puts the best efforts of Pesci and his cohorts to shame.

"My Cousin Vinny" is the latest film featuring Pesci, the most annoying Italian actor in the business — yes, even more annoying than Sylvester Stallone. Pesci, of course, plays Vinny Gambini, a man who finally passed his law bar exam on the sixth try — a stunning record of ineptitude.

Vinny is called from his New York City home, where he has been in practice all of six weeks, to defend his cousin Bill (Ralph Macchio) and his friend Stan (Mitchell Whitfield) on trumped-up charges of murdering a convenience-store clerk while traveling through the Deep South.

Vinny arrives in the small-town dressed from head-to-toe in black leather and boots, and accompanied by his girlfriend, Mona Lisa (Marisa Tomei), who seems an airhead at first but gradually emerges as a sharp assistant in the case. The two clash with the small-town residents and the local judge (Fred Gwynne, of Herman Munster fame) while the lives of Bill and Stan hang in the balance. Will Vinny finally prove himself to be a great lawyer and finally gain some respect? The answer, of course, is predictable, although there are quite a few good twists

along the way.

"My Cousin Vinny" was written by Dale Launer, who was responsible for "Blind Date," "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels" and "Ruthless People." This script is probably his most inconsistent — the film is half an hour too long and takes forever to really pump up the laughs. But when the big humor scenes emerge about an hour into the film, they're almost worth the wait.

Director Jonathan Lynn of "Nuns on the Run" makes "Vinny" claustrophobic. The



film feels compressed; too much of it takes place in the same indoor locations. Although the last hour is hilarious, it could have used some relief from the wood paneling of the courtroom.

Pesci, Tomei, and Gwynne are the only actors to make much of an impression. Macchio is struggling to find a job outside of "The Karate Kid," but he has little to do here. Pesci relies on the same old tricks in every performance, while Tomei starts out as a grating stereotype before emerging as an enjoyable comic actress. Gwynne is surprisingly warm, and it's good to see him acting after all these years.

"My Cousin Vinny" is by no means perfect, but if you're willing to wade through its first hour, the laughs will almost make your time and money worthwhile.

Score it a C-

A far stronger and more ambitious film is the potentially controversial "Article 99," which features Ray Liotta of "Goodfellas" and Kiefer Sutherland, in his best work ever, at the top of an amazing cast.

"Article 99" is trying to be a "Catch 22" for the '90s, replacing its wicked, black-as-night satire of war with an almost-comic nightmare of what happens to war heroes seeking care in U.S. Veterans Administration hospitals. Liotta is the voice of cool reason and leadership in the film. He is a doctor who has spent seven years at a hospital that keeps its costs down by denying war veterans the treatment they need.

Sutherland is a new resident who is shocked at the VA's lurid conditions. He appears to be like all the rest of the new medical staff — just using his time in the VA as a launching pad to a glamorous private or hospital practice. But Sutherland meets a patient, played by Eli Wallach, who has been suffering for years and who teaches Sutherland to respect his patients as the heroes they are.

Sutherland soon finds himself engaging in midnight raids on supply closets with Liotta and a few other renegade doctors, who have to steal in the dead of the night just to get the surgical supplies that their patients desperately need. These scenes are tense, original, and funny — a real rarity in a Hollywood that churns out predictable junk like "Stop! Or My Mom Will Shoot."

The main plot tension arises when Sutherland is approached by the head of the hospital (John Mahoney, the dad in "Say Anything") and offered a huge



Joe Pesci stars in "My Cousin Vinny" as Vincent Gambini, a lawyer fighting to save two clients who have everything against them — including the fact that Vinny has never been in a courtroom before. Photo courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox.

promotion in exchange for ratting on the actions of Liotta and his other cohorts. The film soon roars on into a tense showdown between the veterans and federal forces.

"Article 99" rivals "JFK" in having the best, talent-packed cast of recent years. Liotta and Sutherland are just top-of-the-line; they are joined by Forest

Whitaker, Kathy Baker, Lea Thompson, Keith David and great character actors like John C. McGinley, Julie Bovasso and Jeffrey Tambor. You may not know their names now, but you will recognize and appreciate their faces on screen.

The film's director, Howard Deutch, doesn't quite succeed all the time. Some scenes are a little

over-the-top while others lack the extra bit of "oomph" that would have made this a classic.

But the script by Ron Cutler, who seems to have come out of nowhere, is a grade-A marvel.

Overall, "Article 99" is a great film, but beware that it may leave you feeling a bit more educated than entertained. Score it a B+.

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