And Happy New Year

BY PAUL BURKA

It's reassuring to see the Southwest Conference fall into its familiar confused pattern so early in the year. Rice and Texas, favorites in the basketball race, have yet to overwhelm anyone, and Texas A&M, supposedly an also-ran this year, has been impressive. Arkansas looks little short of devastating, and SMU has alternated between spurt and slump.

AS THE SWC members head toward the opening of play-for-keeps activity in January, Arkansas, the Aggies, and Texas look like the best of the lot, in that order. SMU and Rice fall in line next, then come a hodge-podge of tail-enders in Baylor, TCU, and Texas Tech.

A lot more will be known about the Owls after tonight, when Johnny Frankie's all-junior line-up will open at home against Centenary. The Owls are simply too good to continue losing, and if they don't snap out of it soon, they'll find themselves with an 0-9 record on January 3, when the revenge game against Texas in Gregory Gym awaits.