

The Greek Speaks

# Enthusiasm high in Oiler camp

By NICK VOINIS  
Special Correspondent

One Sunday afternoon some nine months ago in Minnesota the Houston Oilers entered their quiet visitor's dressing room. Ready to shower, dress and begin another lonely flight back home.

The Oilers had dropped another one. This time they were soundly thrashed by a more experienced Viking team. Whipped like a child being scolded by an elder.

This had been the Columbia blue sixth game of the young 1974 National Football League season. But it seemed as if it were all over, for they had only won one of those games.

Everyone remembered the previous two Oilers' seasons and the disastrous events that resulted — consecutive 1-13 records.

Home attendance had dwindled. It came to be known that you couldn't give away tickets to an Oilers game. Football fans stayed home Sunday afternoons to watch the top teams fight it out on television.

The Oilers were down on them-

selves, that's for sure. They had received much the same treatment the Astros receive everyday now, by the fans and most of all, the media. Writers wrote them down constantly, TV news and sportscasters teamed to bill the "the joke of the NFL". Everyone laughed.

Though, slowly but surely things began to happen. In a matter of weeks turn-around '74 had taken effect. Uncle Sid had kept his pre-season promises and delivered a respectable product to Houston con-

sumers. They were even beginning to buy it. The team had rebounded to finish with a strong 7-7 record at season's end. Sid Gillman was regarded a genius by those who cursed him weeks earlier. He was even named Coach of the Year by his peers, but most of all turn-around '74 became reality.

The Oilers now prepare with enthusiasm for a new season. With the addition of a few new faces, the team looks basically the same. So Charlie Ford, Carl Mauck, Jerry Levis and

Morris Stroud will be helpful additions to the young Oilers.

But there's something different this year. Under new head coach O. A. "Bum" Phillips the team feels confident of its chances in '75.

The team has been receiving abundant space in the Houston sports pages and air time on sportscasts. Better yet, they've been given support and encouragement. The Oilers are now heroes to those who made goats of them one year ago.

Season tickets sales this year are expected to reach 28,000 by the opening home game against Washington August 16. Individual tickets for that game and a later match with Dallas on the 30th are becoming harder to come by. Sell-outs are expected and they'll all be cheering. The "Boobirds" have flown away to some distant NFL city, which will suffer the disasters previously experienced in Oiler town. May they never return.

How times change.



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## Fort Worth hosts clinic for coaches

The largest coaching school in the world is under way in Fort Worth today where the 43rd annual Texas High School Coaches Association school got under way Sunday.

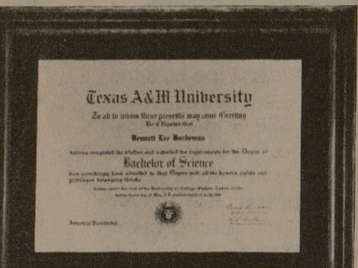
One of the highlights of the week's activities is tonight when the North squares off against the South in the high school All-Star Basketball game. The top seniors from last year team for tonight's Tarrant County Convention Center 7:30 tip off.

Cage coaches are Jackie Carr of Houston Wheatley for the South and Joe McWilliams of Lubbock Dunbar for the North.

The other main event is tomorrow's football game, also between the North and South to be played at TCU's Amon Carter Stadium. The South is coached by Buster Gilbreth of Cuero while the North is coached by Morris Southall of Brownwood.

Membership in the THSCA this year is 7,824, bringing hopes of a record crowd to eclipse the 6,521 coaches who attended last year's meeting in Houston. The attendance has climbed each year for the past eight years. It is expected to be no different this year.

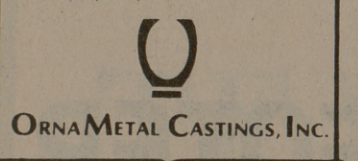
Among the instructors at the school will be grid coaches Al Conover of Rice, Dave Smith of SMU, and Tom Osborne of Nebraska. The basketball lecturers include Bobby Knight of Indiana and Abe Lemons of Pan American. Baylor coach Clyde Hart will be there to talk track.



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