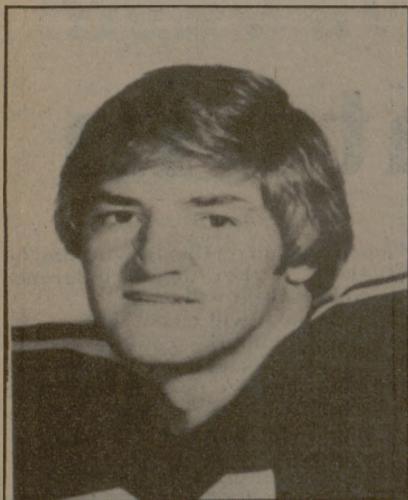


Mikeska strives to be best

By KURT ABRAHAM



Russell Mikeska

With a fine season behind him and a starting berth virtually assured, tight end Russell Mikeska has his sights set on accomplishing the goal he has had his entire football career at Texas A&M.

"I set goals in everything I do," said Mikeska. "For the past two years I have strived to be the best blocking tight end that I can be."

For Russell that should not be impossible. During his freshman year the 6-3, 220-pound Temple product saw little action playing behind the likes of Richard Osborne, David Greeno and Gary Haack. Then came a red-shirt year in 1975. The next season Mikeska came back strongly as the back-up to Haack. Last fall as a junior he became the starting tight end. Now, he hopes,

not only will his personal fortune prosper, but so will the team's.

"We seem to be able to communicate and agree on things as a team a lot more now than in the past," Mikeska said. He sees individual team members helping each other and listening to each other. He said he feels comfortable in his role as a senior leader.

"As a senior, I feel a strong commitment to help the younger players and provide leadership. Any great team has people who step forward and bring everyone together. This year there are people doing just that and it makes this a tightly knit team."

Mikeska said he is confident that the Aggie offense is ready to go. And, even with the I-formation being used to supplement the powerful wishbone, he said "basically, my job is about the same. The only change I personally make is to ad-

just my release against the various defenses used against the I-formation."

The big tight end feels "very comfortable" with quarterback Mike Mosley throwing the football. "I like the way we are able to communicate after a play," Mikeska said. "If Mike makes a good throw, or I make a good catch, we tell each other. It makes for a good relationship on the field."

Mikeska has had to adjust somewhat to the different spin that Mosley puts on the ball versus the spin and speed that southpaw David Walker used last year.

"Mike does a good job adjusting the spin and speed to suit the individual pass," the senior tight end said. "On short ones, he'll throw a much softer ball to catch."

Mikeska sees the SWC race as a fight among Texas A&M, Arkansas and Texas but still doesn't see any "softies" on the schedule. "I started preparing for Arkansas way back in January watching them beat Oklahoma on TV."

When he's not facing off against big defensive linemen, Mikeska likes to be out on the golf course. "I love golf," he said. "That's how I relax and release my tension."

Mikeska, a business management major, plans to interview soon with several corporations. "I guess I'll just leave the future up to fate," he said.

But, for the present, the brown-eyed blonde has all his thoughts on the Kansas Jayhawks. That's where the action starts Saturday afternoon as the Aggies meet the Jayhawks in their season opener.

You can be sure, Russell Mikeska will be ready.



Taking a break

Battalion photo by...

Sophomore quarterback Mike Mosley pauses for a breather during a recent Aggie workout. The Aggies are preparing for Saturday's sea-

son opener against Kansas. The game is scheduled to kick off at 1:30 p.m. from Memorial Stadium in Lawrence, Kan.

Ali can still do commercials says unsympathetic Spinks

United Press International

NEW ORLEANS — Heavyweight champion Leon Spinks, who says he is an even-money shot to retain his World Boxing Association title against deposed champ Muhammad Ali, Monday said he wouldn't feel sorry for Ali if he beat him a second time.

"I don't think it would be the end of (Ali's) career because he could still do commercials," Spinks said following a one-hour workout in which he did not spar, preferring instead to jump rope and hit the heavy and speed bags.

"It won't be the end of his career," Spinks said. "You know, it's come to the point where money seems to keep a lot of me in the ring, especially Ali."

Spinks said gamblers have made him a 10-2 underdog against Ali, but he said the odds would reflect a different line if he were setting them.

"Fifty-fifty," Spinks said. "The people who do the voting are against

me. The odds are 10-2 in Ali's favor. And it was 10-1 at first, so they got one point more confidence in me."

Ali, who skipped his Labor Day workout to tour a battleship docked in the Mississippi River, called Spinks' prediction accurate.

"He's right," Ali said. "It might be even more than that. I'll win but it'll be rough. It won't be easy."

Spinks received an inauspicious welcome Saturday when several hundred fans roundly booed him after he cut his sparring to just three rounds, the only boxing he has done since arriving in the city for the Sept. 15 bout. But the 25-year-old from St. Louis said the criticism hasn't affected him.

"As far as the fans, they don't understand what's going on," Spinks said. "They ain't got to do the sparring, they ain't got to do the fighting. So they're going to boo naturally because they paid to get in here. At an average fight they would have had to pay more."

"About the end of this week I'll be at my peak. I'm adjusting myself to the heat and working on the bag, then I'll start my sparring. I'm getting slowly adjusted to the humidity. I'm breathing better."

Spinks, who admits he has had trouble matching Ali's electric arial among fight fans, said "all I got to do is keep doing what I do best — fighting."

Spinks said since he won the title in an upset from Ali has whirlwind reign has made him smarter.

"I'm just a little wiser as far as my business and the heavyweight title," Spinks said. "But I'm going to live life as an average human being. As far as being the heavyweight champ, I have the opportunity to help a lot of young kids to try to make it themselves without trying to cut and steal and shoot each other up."

"(Ali) is still my idol. It ain't changed as far as him as a person."

Horns halted

United Press International

AUSTIN — Bolts of lightning caused Texas coach Fred Akers to close down the Longhorns' practice session early Monday, but he said progress was made anyway.

No rain fell, but lightning began to crackle after a little more than an hour of a routine practice session.

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