



David
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Sports Editor

Life ain't easy for true Texans

That was some commotion the boys at the National Broadcasting Co. stirred up in the Lone Star State last Sunday, wasn't it?

With NBC scheduling the Dallas-New England game and the Houston-Pittsburgh game at the same time, folks all across Texas were a mite upset. Two opposing groups of loyalists came forth, with Dallas fans snarling at Houston fans, Houston fans snarling at Dallas fans and all fans collectively snarling at NBC.

The situation almost got so bad in San Antonio that Cowboy fans were rumored to be taking refuge in the Alamo while Oiler faithful were heard practicing the *Dequello*. And things weren't much better elsewhere. NBC affiliates across the state had to decide which game to air and which set of fans they could most afford to offend. Needless to say, the television stations didn't stand the chance of a snowball in Laredo in this battle.

THERE WAS ALSO a third group of Texas fans that was affected by Sunday's simultaneous telecasts. A fan in this third group can be labeled a true Texan. A true Texan is someone who will bet his Tony Lamas on anything associated with the Empire wide and glorious. A true Texan is a fan who roots for the Cowboys and the Oilers, as well as the San Antonio Spurs, the Houston Rockets, the Texas Rangers and even the Houston Astros. The man you saw buying a new channel selector for his television set Monday was a true Texan.

But regardless of whether they live and die with the Cowboys or the Oilers or both, Texans are notorious football fans. Yes sir, you can regulate their natural gas, raise their taxes and even take away their gusto. But don't tamper with their football.

Now, with the hostilities of the past weekend behind, Texas football fans can look towards the NFL playoffs.

AFTER DEFEATING NEW England, the Cowboys, who are to the playoffs what Santa Claus is to Christmas, clinched the NFC Eastern Division playoff spot. Dallas is now going to post-season play for the 12th time in 13 years.

The bruised but equally bruising Oilers need only defeat New Orleans and San Diego to assure themselves of their first playoff spot since 1969.

Now what if, just what if both the Cowboys and the Oilers go through the playoffs, win their respective conference championships and find themselves in Miami on Jan. 21? This will be an unprecedented situation. Pittsburgh and Philadelphia have never met in the Super Bowl, nor have Miami and Tampa Bay or Cincinnati and Cleveland.

CALIFORNIANS HAVE NEVER seen either the Rams or the 49ers go against the Chargers or the Raiders for the big money and the Giants have never met the Jets or the Bills in Super Bowl.

Of course, an all-Texas Super Bowl will be super for the Texas fan who supports either the Cowboys or the Oilers. But once again the true Texan is faced with a dilemma. Should the true Texan go with the defending World Champions or grab a pompon and back Bum and the boys?

Should events transpire that would bring Dallas and Houston together in Super Bowl XIII, I have no solution to the problem confronting the true Texan. I can only offer an idea on how to cope with the situation.

Come Jan. 21, grab a longneck, mosey over to the easy chair and enjoy the dilemma.

Bird's return delayed

United Press International
ORLANDO, Fla. — The Detroit Tigers' hope for 1979 — the return of a healthy Mark Fidrych to the pitching lineup — has been dashed.

Fidrych, who was sidelined for the second half of 1977 with tendonitis and missed all but his first three starts of 1978, probably will not be able to pitch again until 1980, if at all, doctors said Tuesday.

That was the consensus of members of the Association of Professional Baseball Physicians, who examined "the Bird" and evaluated the condition of his ailing right shoulder.

They prescribed an extensive program of rehabilitation, including weightlifting and exercise, but predicted it would take months for Fidrych to build up strength in his arm and shoulder. They also said the right arm and shoulder has shrunk in size from disuse during the year and a half he has been sidelined.

"He can't pitch until he has built up strength in his arm," said Dr. Harvey O'Phelan, the Minnesota Twins' team physician and chairman of the doctors' association.

"It could take all of next year, and it could take longer," he said.

North Texas patiently seeks SWC membership

United Press International
DENTON — C.C. "Jitter" Nolen is a short, jovial fellow given to well-tailored suits and elegant conversations.

He is president of Texas' fifth largest institution of higher learning and is well-versed in the art of fund raising.

And, in his own words, he is tenacious.

"I have the patience of Job," said Nolen, president of North Texas State University. "We are not going away."

Nolen's comments were directed at the nine member schools of the Southwest Conference, a group that his school hopes eventually to join. And his remarks came on the eve of the annual winter business meeting of the Southwest Conference in Dallas.

North Texas officials originally had planned on being a part of the SWC's agenda and had prepared their case for admission to the league. At least two schools were ready to place North Texas on the list of discussion items.

Now, however, North Texas will not be on the agenda.

On the recommendation of what Nolen calls "our friends in the conference," North Texas will await another occasion to make its presentation.

"They say to us, 'we've got a lot of controversial issues right now. We just can't stand another controversial

question,'" said Nolen. "So we will wait."

The controversial questions that will be thrashed out during the meetings involve complaints about the SWC's broadcast package and statements and deeds attributed to coaches and officials of the University of Arkansas that could bring about a private or public reprimand.

Most North Texas officials have been lobbying quietly for the past two years in hopes of gaining admittance to the SWC. But head coach and athletic director Hayden Fry has used the blustery approach, taking advantage of any forum to sell North Texas.

Recently Fry said he was through speaking out, that it was all in the hands of Nolen and the board of regents.

"Work as hard as Hayden has and you get no recognition by others then frustration sets in," said Nolen. "I think he has been speaking out of sheer frustration and I cannot blame him."

"Right now all we can continue to do is work our tail off to prove to the conference that we would be a good addition. We have accumulated a great deal of information and forwarded it to the schools."

"I have talked to school presidents who have read our material and said, 'I didn't know this about your school.' So we are at least making ourselves known."

"The feedback I get from other presidents is that it is just a matter of

time. There is not any problem of the stature or scope of our academic or athletic program.

"I think it is mainly a matter of finances. They want to make sure that we won't be one more mouth to feed and that we can contribute

something. "And that has been good to hear. It is not a case of where they have relegated us to secondary status."

Nolen, a former cheerleader at the University of Texas who before coming to North Texas headed the fund

raising department at Texas Christian University, said it is possible his school shifted its approach.

"I think we are going to form another strategy and I know what that will be,"

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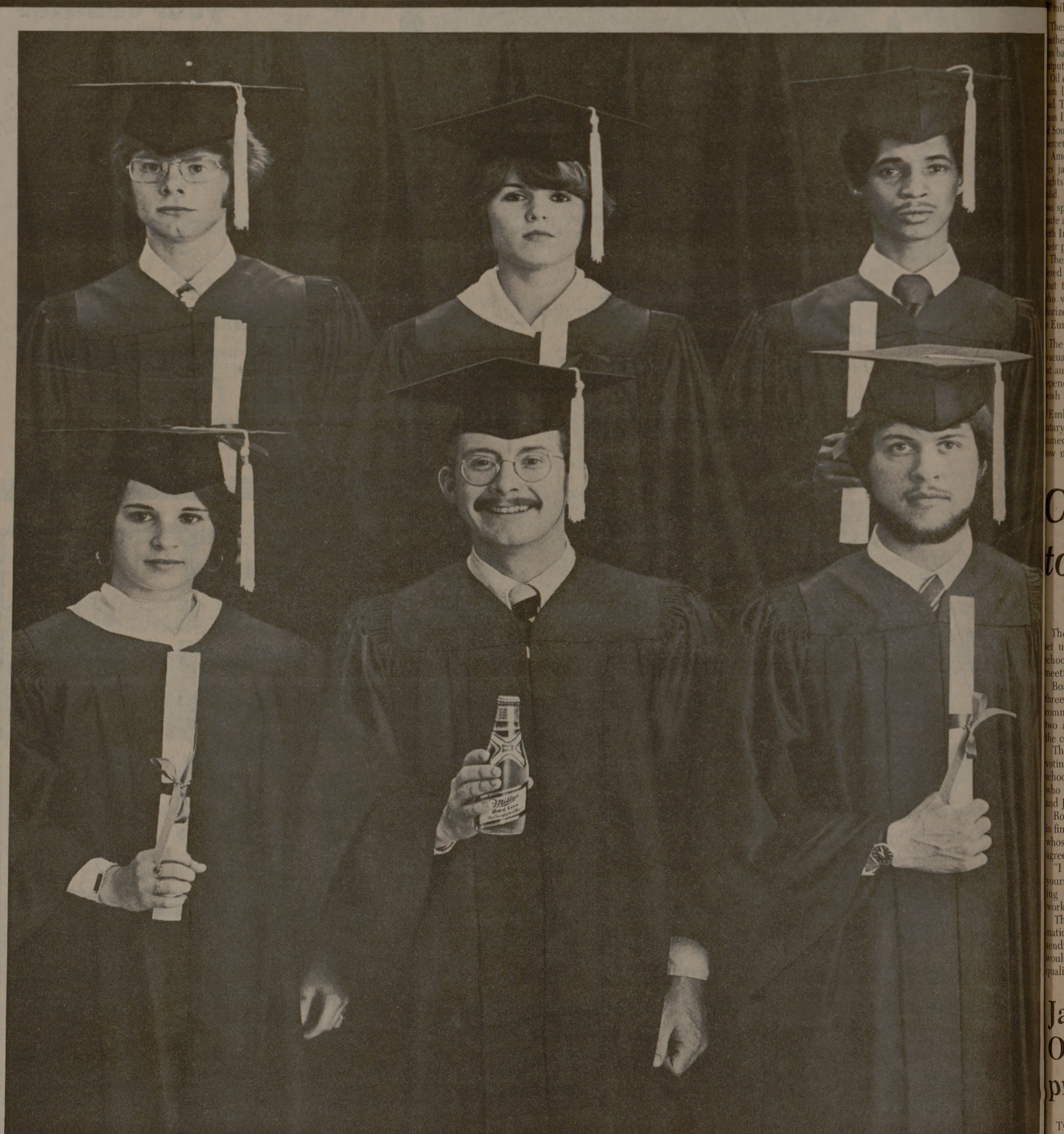
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