

viewpoint

By Mark Patterson

when sitting in the press box at a otball game. No cheering is al-wed on the working press level at

When No. 33 for Texas A&M ran me arst quarter against Houston, I summer of 1978 he had been away from football. During the span of inactivity he ballooned to 303 pounds. In his three years under E eorge Woodard back to football at exas A&M. I couldn't. I just smiled. It wasn't his first appearence of the ar at fullback for the Aggies, havg carried the ball six times against aylor in the second game of the seam. But this was his first game in ont of the home folks, in his dium. It was his chance to show non-believers that he had made

On his second carry in the Hous-ngame, Woodard broke up the iddle into the open field and ramed 18 yards before Cougar safety is Bradley tackled him by cutting Wan his legs out from under him.

had no

tact, and went back to the huddle. The non-believers had their proof; Woo" was back

But it was a long wait for the fans and a longer road back for Woodard.

Bellard, Woodard's weight steadily increased. As a freshman he weighed 240 pounds. After his junior year he weighed 280 pounds.

During his junior year, Washington Redskins' head coach Jack Pardee told Woodard that if professional football was in his plans, he would have to slim down to 240 pounds. "Woo" didn't and then broke his leg on in a summer softball game.

Before Woodard returned, Texas George an ultimatum; either get his weight down to 250 or forget about

'Woo' has returned but time's almost up

and diet soda, shed his pounds When he reported for practice at the end of the summer he had met Wilson's challenge; he weighed an unrecognizable 248. He was given his

But expected problems set in. After the long period of inactivity, Woodard's knee swelled and became sore after each practice. On Monday he would be fine but by Friday he would be too sore too run.

Last week Woodard made it

Last week Woodard made it through a week of practice sessions without pain. Wilson felt Woodard was ready, both physically and mentally, to play against Houston.

"There's no one who's more tickled to see him back than I am," Wilson said Wednesday. "It's been amazing to see how far he's come back since his injury.

"Against Houston last week, it was

'Against Houston last week, it was obvious that he isn't what he was before his injury. His timing and quickness isn't what it used to be. But it's been a long time since he's been in a football game and he's a little rusty.

It remains to be seen if Woodard A&M coach Tom Wilson gave can capture the attention and command the respect he drew in his first three seasons as an Aggie. His playing football at Texas A&M. chances to prove himself are num-Woodard accepted the challenge bered. In 12 rushing attempts this

and, living on a diet of boiled shrimp season he's gained 43 yards. Five

"Right now, there are people that are more deserving to play the position," Wilson said. "David Hill (a sophomore) has performed well for us this season. And we're very expensive the season. cited about Ronnie James. He's only a freshman and he hasn't gotten in a game at fullback for us.

"That's the problem that we're fac-ing. We have a lot of people to play the position and we haven't been able to give everyone enough play-

During his college career Woodard has gained 2,907 yards, second on A&M's all-time rushing list. But the clock is running. The big fullback is running out of time.

"There's a place in my heart for someone who's done what George has done, to sacrifice like he's sac-rificed," Wilson said. "But half of our season is over. We're going to have to start seeing some results and start making some decisions.'

Woodard made the decision to play college football after his injury. He made the sacrifice. Now it's up to him to prove the decision he made was the right one and all the pain was worth it. All he needs is the chance.

Pirates win World Series

The Pittsburgh Pirates, led by Willie "Pops" Stargell's two-run home run, became the 1979 World Series champions defeating the Baltimore Orioles, 4-1 in the seventh game in Baltimore.

It was a storybook finish for the Pirates as Stargell, the team's elder statesman and leader, was named the Most Valuable Player of the Series after hitting three home runs in the Series and knocking in and scoring the winning run in the final game. Jim Bibby got the win for the Pirates and Kent Tekulve got the save.



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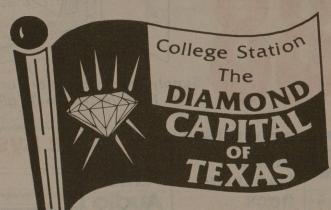
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