

the sports

Oilers to close against Philly

HOUSTON — The Philadelphia Eagles and Houston Oilers, two playoff-bound teams with next to nothing to gain Sunday, complete their regular seasons in a rare meeting. Minimizing injuries is important to the Eagles and Oilers, who on Sunday, Dec. 23, host the two wild card playoff games in the NFC and AFC, respectively.

But it was difficult to determine what factor that might play. The Oilers were non-committal whether regulars would see much action and whether Earl Campbell would try to win his second straight NFL rushing title. He was three yards off the lead of St. Louis rookie Ottis Anderson.

The Oilers announced early this week they would field their best lineup and give nothing less than a total effort.

"I don't think it's fair to the team," head coach Dick Vermeil said, "to sell one philosophy and then go against it."

A lopsided game would cause Vermeil to pull his regulars, he admitted.

A game being played in Dallas at the same time as the Eagles-Oilers game could give the Eagles hopes that the NFL East title was still in their grasp. Such an occurrence would take both an Eagles win and a tie between the Dallas Cowboys and Washington Redskins.

Kickoff for the Oilers-Eagles is 3 p.m. CDT. Houston is a spectator in the AFC Central Division denouement. A Pittsburgh Steelers win at Pittsburgh against the Buffalo Bills Sunday makes the Steelers champion; a Pittsburgh loss makes Houston champion — no matter what the Oilers do.

The Oilers will end about the time the Oilers kick off.

Campbell has taken a battering the past few weeks as he has improved his rushing total to 1,563 yards. The Cardinals' Anderson, who this season broke Campbell's NFL rookie rushing record, carried 1,566 yards into his game against the Chicago Bears.

"It would mean a lot to our offensive players," Oilers backfield coach Andy Bourgeois said, "to have blocked for the rushing champion again."

Campbell gained 1,450 yards in his rookie season. The Eagles and Oilers, who have met only once in regular season, both come off highly emotional performances witnessed by club record crowds. The Eagles were beaten by Dallas 24-17. Houston beat Pittsburgh 20-17.

The Eagles have had more rest than the Oilers, since Philadelphia played on Saturday and Houston on Monday night. Houston, 11-4, can set a club record for wins in a season. Philadelphia, 10-5, can keep alive Vermeil's string of winning the last games of the regular season. On the last weekend of the three previous seasons, the Eagles have won their fourth, fifth and ninth games.

Lady scribe allowed in locker room

United Press International
DALLAS — The Dallas Cowboys backed down from an initial refusal to allow a female reporter for the Washington Star into the team's practice field locker room following a complaint to the NFL commissioner.

Betty Cuniberti, the reporter, joined about 15 other reporters Wednesday conducting interviews in the locker room.

On Tuesday, she had been denied entrance to the dressing room. Her newspaper contacted NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle and league public relations director Jim Heffernan.

The Cowboys changed the team's policy Wednesday of allowing reporters in the dressing room from 11:30 a.m. until 1 p.m.

In a story in her newspaper, Cuniberti wrote: "They told me I had to stand outside and they'd let me know if anything happened. I said, 'What if there's thunder and lightning?' and they said they have an awning. So, in other words, if Harvey Martin walks up to Roger Staubach and punches him in the mouth while Tom Boswell of the (Washington) Post is interviewing him, somebody is supposed to come out under the awning and tell me about it."

Dennard, Risien on list

United Press International
NEW YORK — Ottis Anderson of St. Louis, the running sensation who broke Earl Campbell's year-old rookie rushing record this season, leads United Press International's 1979 NFL All-Rookie team announced Thursday.

Anderson, the former Miami Dolphins star who was the first running back selected in the NFL draft in May, enters the final game of the season Sunday leading the NFL in rushing, holding a three-yard advantage over Campbell, Houston's star runner.

The All-Rookie team is selected by UPI after a survey of selected NFL coaches and scouts and pro football writers.

Joining Anderson in the rookie backfield are quarterback Phil Simms of the New York Giants and running back Williams Andrew of Atlanta. The wide receivers are Jerry Butler, one of three Buffalo players picked, and Earnest Gray, also of the Giants. Cincinnati's Dan Ross is the tight end.

The tackles are Keith Dorney of Detroit and Dave Studdard of Denver and the guards are Greg Roberts of Tampa Bay and Cody Risien of Cleveland. Mark Dennard of Miami was selected at center and Matt Bahr of Pittsburgh the kicker.

On defense, the ends are Jesse Baker of Houston and Dan Hampton of Chicago and the tackles are Fred Smerlas of Buffalo and Manu Tuasopopo of Seattle.

Stan Blinks of the New York Jets is the middle linebacker, flanked by Jim Haslett of Buffalo and Jerry Robinson of Philadelphia.

UPI names 1979 NFL All-Rookie team


United Press International
NEW YORK — The 1979 NFL All-Rookie team:

- QB—Phil Simms, New York Giants
- QB—Jerry Butler, Buffalo; Earnest Gray, New York Giants
- QB—Dan Ross, Cincinnati
- QB—Keith Dorney, Detroit; Dave Studdard, Denver
- QB—Greg Roberts, Tampa Bay; Cody Risien, Cleveland
- QB—Mark Dennard, Miami
- QB—Phil Simms, New York Giants
- QB—Ottis Anderson, St. Louis; Williams Andrew, Atlanta
- QB—Matt Bahr, Pittsburgh
- QB—Jesse Baker, Houston; Dan Hampton, Chicago
- QB—Fred Smerlas, Buffalo; Manu Tuasopopo, Seattle
- QB—Stan Blinks, New York Jets
- QB—Jim Haslett, Buffalo; Jerry Robinson, Philadelphia
- QB—Henry Williams, Oakland; Aaron Mitchell, Dallas
- QB—Vernon Perry, Houston
- QB—Brenard Wilson, Philadelphia
- QB—Bob Grupp, Kansas City

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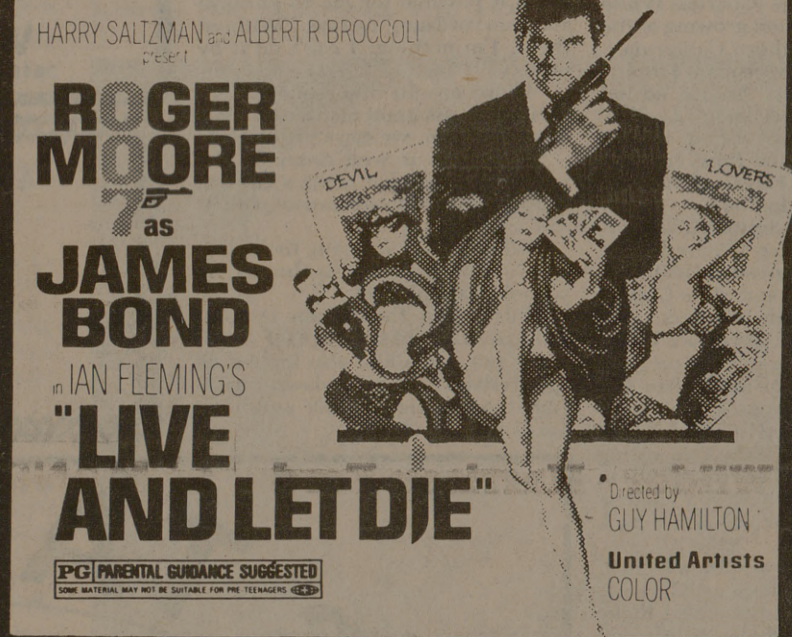
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