

# Sports

## McMullen fires Astros' Smith

United Press International  
HOUSTON — Houston Astros Manager Bill Virdon said "all I hear is positive things" about the team's new general manager, Al Rosen, but it was clear nothing could erase his disappointment at the firing which made room for Rosen.

Tal Smith, the Astros' architect and a "very close friend" of Virdon, was given his pink slip Monday by

owner Dr. John J. McMullen for reasons not yet revealed. Two weeks ago, the Astros completed their most successful season.

Virdon, reached at his home in Springfield, Mo., said Smith "needs most of the credit" for the National League West Division championship.

"You go a long time until you find a man as knowledgeable about base-

ball as Tal Smith," Virdon said. "I'm disappointed. It came as a surprise. It was a shock to start with."

News of the high level personnel change came in a one-page statement distributed to reporters Monday afternoon. In it, McMullen said Rosen "brings to the Houston Astros a depth of experience and a sophistication, unique to baseball and sports."

Smith said he was shocked and was given no reason for the move when he was called into McMullen's office at 11:30 a.m. and fired.

"He didn't say why, not really. I recognize that that is unquestionably the prerogative of any owner to do what is best. Obviously he inherited my contract and inherited my services, and if he wants to make a change, there's nothing that I can say or do that can dissuade him," Smith said.

The Astros were required to inform Smith this year if they desired to sign him to a new contract when his current agreement expired Nov. 30, 1981. The statement said the decision was made not to seek a new contract with Smith.



Staff photo by Jeff Kerber

### Heads up

Texas A&M soccer team captain Paul Winston (right) "heads" the ball upfield during Saturday's game against nationally ranked SMU. The Mustangs shut out the Aggies, 4-0, to drop Texas A&M to 5-3-2 on the year.

## Reflections

by Richard Oliver



### Soccer team gets better

Eureka! Just when all seemed lost in the up and down world of Aggie sports, I discovered soccer.

The discovery occurred as I sat happily under a beautiful sky in the makeshift stands bordering the drill field. The surprising Aggie men, who have taken themselves by the seat of the pants and determined to become a quality team worthy of varsity status at the University this year, were preparing to take on the extremely powerful SMU Mustangs. SMU has already been awarded varsity status, and came to College Station ranked No. 4 in the United States.

Most less-than-status teams might consider simply trying to keep up with SMU and make it look respectable. Texas A&M, however, has upset on the brain.

It was obvious from the first, as the Aggies came out running, inspired by the over-400 fans crowded around the field. Playing under clear blue skies and before a biased crowd, the upset effort seemed almost rational.

But, as the day wore on and the crowd thinned toward Kyle Field and the Rice-Texas A&M football contest, the Aggies felt their strength finally begin to sap, and fell to the reliable, steady passing and defense of the Mustangs.

The final score, 4-0, was a blow to the hopeful Aggies, but more present at the game will probably say otherwise. The spirited play of the young Aggies against the much more experienced SMU squad was a pleasure to watch, and made one wonder if that same spirit on other Texas A&M teams might result in a few better performances.

The soccer team isn't powerful yet, by any means, yet there is finally a spark there. Behind the positive prodding of new Head Coach Talm Frano, an expert tactician who starred in Peru years ago, and his assistant David Flentge, the Aggies are gradually becoming a team to be reckoned with.

Baylor, an annual powerhouse in the SWC, knows all too well what the inexperienced Aggies are capable of. They fell to the Aggies earlier this year, 3-2.

The sudden upward surge of the "small" women's and men's teams on the campus is a great thing to see, and the soccer team seems to be leading the way. Let's hope the support these teams receive doesn't come only from girlfriends, boyfriends and reporters.

There's some good things going on out there in sports, folks.

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ENDS THURSDAY

**Phillips upsets at criticism of use of Earl**  
United Press International  
HOUSTON — Head Coach Phillips Monday admitted to aggravated criticism of the Houston Oilers' utilization of strong tailback Earl Campbell, who he said is "too much or too little."  
Campbell has shown no sign of fatigue despite the continual rushing he has taken en route to 583 yards in the last three games. A number of carries has steadily reduced from 38 three games ago to 27 in the Oilers' 23-3 win over Cincinnati Bengals Sunday.  
"I read," Phillips said, "that (Bengals' General Manager) Brown said he (Campbell) must have carried the ball 40 times. It must have looked like he carried it 40 times because he made 200 yards."  
"If you've got a back, you've got to use him," Phillips continued. "I like anything else. We let him run 12 times and everybody says because we didn't run him enough. We let him carry it 38 times and he carried 27 times and I don't know what the hell's wrong with this aggravates me."

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