

Coaches blast rule changes

Landry: Find better way to play defense'

United Press International
DALLAS — It used to be that to have a good defensive football team you simply needed some linemen who resembled a concrete wall and an overall attitude of nastiness. Now it takes an anti-aircraft gun and a bomb shelter. Or, as Dallas coach Tom Landry put it Tuesday:

"Defense seems to be passe now." It's not that he's necessarily complaining, he's just commenting. And so are a lot of other coaches these days as they attempt to devise a way to slow down the sophisticated passing attacks that are in vogue.

"The league is a lot different than it has been a long time," Landry said. "You see it every day. You saw it again last night in Houston's 38-34 win over New England."

Teams are gaining much more confidence. Receivers are much more confident because they are not getting knocked around all the time. They are running freely in the secondary,

and when you have that kind of situation it becomes much tougher."

The culprit in all of this has been the rule change which forbids the bumping of a receiver more than five yards past the line of scrimmage. NFL officials hoped the change, along with a looser interpretation of holding, would open up the offense and bring about more points.

It has worked. Now, does Landry think it has worked too well? "There is going to be much more reluctance to go back the other way (toward defensive-oriented football)," Landry said. "We're going to have to find better way to play defense. We've tried every way we know to slow it down, but it's hard if the quarterback has got time to throw the ball."

"I think the game should be an innovation thing. I don't believe in changing rules. "I'm not going to say we should go back to where we were because where we were, the defense was taking advantage of

the offense. I think when a receiver has to drag three defenders downfield to catch the ball, which was happening before, then something had to be done.

"But whether this is the way it should be only time will tell. Maybe from a coaching standpoint we can change something defensively that will help us to stop the onslaught because it's the same every week."

Even though passing offense has mushroomed, Landry feels it still takes a decent running game to make the passing attack go the way it can.

"In the Houston game against New England Earl Campbell only averaged one yard per try in the first half," Landry said. "But the fact that he's hitting in there made it easier for them to complete the passes."

"You have to run successfully to put the fear in them and make them gang up on you to keep you from trying to run the football."

Bum: 'Make 'em pay.. don't ya reckon?'

United Press International
HOUSTON — Increased scoring in NFL games has Bum Phillips down, and Tuesday the Houston Oilers head coach said he wanted to return to the good old days when receivers paid a price for coming across the middle.

Oilers defensive players, Phillips added, are being prohibited from playing football because NFL rule changes have speeded offensive linemen pass block and receivers avoid contact in the secondary.

The whole rules committee has made every attempt to make it a high-scoring game," he said. Asked whether he liked the developments, which generated record 732 points in 14 games last weekend, Phillips shot back, "No."

"I'd rather a guy have a chance to defend himself on defense. I don't like to see a guy run down the field 15 yards and come across the middle, and you can't touch him. That's not the way the game was raised. You always made 'em pay a price for coming across the middle, don't you reckon?"

New England Patriots receivers made Phillips yearn for yesterday Monday night by grabbing 374 yards in passes, and despite the Oilers harrowing 38-34 victory Phillips was teed off.

"It's harder to get to the quarterback. It's harder to pass rush because of the liberalized rules on pass protection, and of course it's extremely hard to play defense when a guy gets five yards downfield and you can't touch him," he said.

He added that a pass interference penalty called against Oilers cornerback Greg Stenrick Monday was an "incidental" trip as both men went for the ball. The flag never would have been thrown, he said, if there was no such rule as the one which prohibits defenders from touching receivers five yards past the line of scrimmage.

The Oilers defensive plan was to keep the Patriots' wide receivers from catching the bomb.

"Our prevent defense almost prevented us from winning," Phillips said.

Bowl scouts look at key matchups

United Press International
DALLAS — The Alabama-Notre Dame and Georgia-Auburn games set Saturday hold the key to the major bowl picture and representatives from the Sugar, Orange and Cotton bowls will all be present at both those contests.

Cotton Bowl executive director Jim Brock and former executive director Field Scovell will both be at the Alabama-Notre Dame game.

The fact that both of those influential members of the Cotton Bowl hierarchy will be present in Birmingham appeared to indicate they planned to make a hard rush for either the Irish or Crimson Tide.

If Georgia defeats Auburn the Bulldogs would earn an automatic invitation to the Sugar Bowl. In that case Alabama would likely go to the Orange Bowl if it defeats Notre Dame Saturday.

Notre Dame, however, is not considered a certainty for the Sugar Bowl if it beats Alabama.

The Cotton Bowl will also have its

president, John Scovell, in Tallahassee, Fla., in case the bowl opts for Florida State — a team that does not play again until Dec. 6.

Cotton Bowl committee member Bill Crisler will be at the Auburn-Georgia game while Southwest Conference commissioner Cliff Speegle and bowl committee member Jim Ray Smith will be at the Baylor-Rice game in Houston.

Smith, a former Baylor star, will issue the automatic Cotton Bowl invitation to the Bears as Southwest Conference champion if they defeat Rice Saturday.

The Texas Longhorns are expected to accept a Bluebonnet Bowl bid if they defeat TCU Saturday and the SMU Mustangs apparently have their choice of three bowls — Tangerine, Sun or Holiday — if they win over Texas Tech.

The Houston Cougars also jumped into the bowl picture this week. There are reports that two or three of the smaller bowls are looking at the Cougars even though they have lost four games this season.

Aggie polo team defeats Texas, again

The Texas A&M polo team continued its domination of the University of Texas team Sunday with a 2-0 win in Austin.

In the last 15 meetings between the two teams, the Aggies have won 14 and tied one.

A&M was led with goals by John Henslering and Roe Babers.

Two riders fell from their horses during the game, Steven Bell and Paul Harris of Texas. One required hospitalization for a cut lip.

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