

Out of the Blue

By Rick Stolle



Wait 'til next year, again

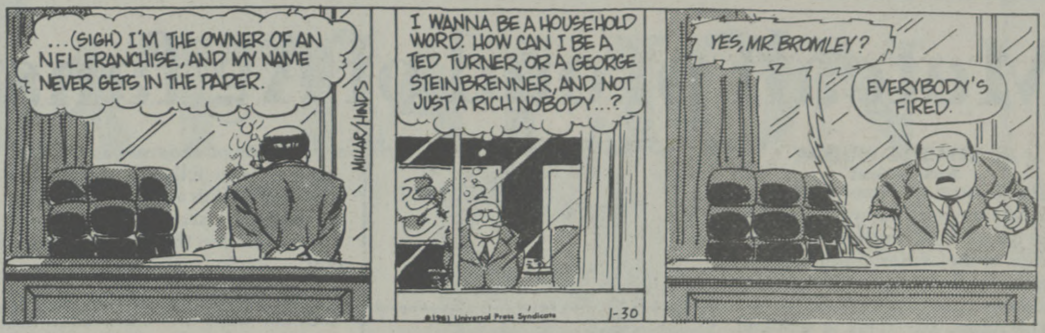
It really galls me. Every year since I was a little boy just beginning to watch Aggie sports, I have been told, "Well, the Ags had some hard luck, just wait 'til next year."
I only had a penny for every time I heard that...
As an objective observer, I'd say Texas A&M University has done very well over the years in the area of sports. Numerous times have Aggie teams won games, matches and meets. Championships have been won in almost every sport. Even a football national championship in 1959. That's one more than a lot of schools.
Aggie teams are always competitive and are seldom outclassed. There is no one area in sports where the Ags are totally, physically and completely dominated.
Of course, there are a few sports where Aggie coaches are still trying to build their program. They have been beaten consistently and realize they need to strengthen their respective teams.
Yet, all Texas A&M teams are competitive.
And the fans — what can I say — they are the best in the conference. When opposing coaches agree that Texas A&M is one of the best places

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the Southwest Conference to compete. The Aggie fans are polite and all for their team. Not against the visitors.
But those same polite fans can never be satisfied.
It's kind of like when you thought you were in love as a kid. After holding hands with him or her for a while, it's just not that exciting anymore. You have to do something else that's a little more exciting.
It's the same for Aggie fans, after one championship, you have to have more. You can't have just one.
Aggie fans are the hardest people in the world to please. We, as fans, expect the best from every team and championships every year. A second place finish is not as exciting as it used to be.
No matter how well it did, nobody ever remembers the team that came in second. Just the one that won the championship.
Aggie fans are also built up with promises during the off-season of that a great team Texas A&M will have the next season. Mostly that building is done by the media who report what the "experts" say.
"Sure, they'll have a good shot at the championship."
"Yeah, they'll win it going away, there is no one around who will be able to compete."
And then, when the team does not match the media predictions, all Aggie fans are disappointed. The team is disappointed with itself, but the people who are the most upset are the media and the experts.
They are the ones with egg all over their face.
Eventually, the disappointment disappears as another season begins and Aggie fans turn their attention to the next sport.
Already, though, the chorus has begun, "Well, they had some hard luck, just wait 'til next year. We'll get 'em next time."
Just once, as an Aggie fan, I wish next year was here.

TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



Phillips not thinking of past as he evaluates Saints' future

United Press International
NEW ORLEANS — Coach Bum Phillips said Thursday the internal turmoil that scarred the New Orleans Saints last season will not be carried over into his first year with the team.
"It's unfortunate that whatever happened to tear the team up tore it up," Phillips said at a news conference where he introduced administrative assistant Pap Peppler and four assistant coaches.
Incidents such as last year's benching of defensive end Don Reese because of a fight with another player would be left in the past, Phillips said.
"I know nothing about it and don't want to know about it," he said.
Phillips, who was fired by the Houston Oilers Dec. 31, said he will start from scratch in evaluating player talent and attitude.
"There won't be any carry over," Phillips said. "I haven't asked anybody about a football player here. What they've done in the past is unimportant to me."
"I think we've got a lot better football team here than what you think we have."
The new assistants joining Phillips at the news conference were offensive coordinator King Hill, special teams coach Harold Richardson, linebacker coach John Paul Young and defensive line coach Willie Zapalac. Newly hired offensive line coach Joe Spencer did not attend.
The hiring of Phillips' son Wade as defensive coordinator was announced earlier. Phillips has yet to hire coaches for the defensive secondary, the receivers and the running backs.
Although he downplayed the im-

portance of an offensive coordinator in previous statements, Phillips said he included the position on the Saints' staff because the coaches came from different teams and needed one assistant to direct them.

Phillips said the Saints, who were 1-15 in 1980, have not decided whether to keep the first pick in the NFL draft or trade it away. He also said he would let quarterback Archie Manning call most of the plays.

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