

Sports



High-spiking Johnson

Photo by Brian Tate

Texas Aggie Cheryl Johnson (3) comes down after spiking the ball in a recent volleyball game as teammate Chemine Doty looks on. The Texas A&M volleyball team finished second at the Southwest Conference championships in Austin.

Garner inks with Astros for big bucks

TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill H...

United Press International
HOUSTON — Three-time National League All-Star second baseman Phil Garner has ended speculation he would try the free agent market by signing a three-year, \$1.85 million contract with the Houston Astros.

Centerfielder Tony Scott, however, told Astro officials he would test the free agent waters. The only other Astro eligible for the re-entry draft, pitcher Vern Ruhl has not told the team of his intentions, a club spokesman said Monday.

Garner, a .261 lifetime hitter, batted .239 in 31 games with the Astros. He anchored the Astros' infield during the team's drive to the second-half Western Division championship. The Astros were beaten by the Los Angeles Dodgers in the division play-offs.

Garner, 32, played seven seasons with the Pirates and represented them in the All Star game for the third time last season before being traded Aug. 31.



Broncos hold on for 19-17 win over fired up Vikings

United Press International
DENVER — Quiz time: You're a head coach, your team has the ball on its own 40 and it's 4th-and-1 with 2:55 left to play. You're ahead by nine points, but you're working against an offense famous for winning games in the last two minutes — in fact, their quarterback has done it eight times.

You take a time out to think it over and you decide to gamble, to go for the first down and the opportunity to run more time off the clock. Your decision is: 1) courageous, 2) reckless, 3) stupid.

"Stupid," said Denver Broncos' coach Dan Reeves, who made that particular decision Monday night against the Minnesota Vikings. The Broncos held onto a slim lead and won the game, 19-17, but only because Minnesota's last-ditch field goal — a 47-yard attempt by Rick Danmeier — fell short with time running out.

"It was a rookie mistake," said Reeves, 37, the youngest head coach in the league. "They wanted us to gamble on fourth down. Not only did I, but I had a timeout and then I changed the play. But I learned from it; we'll punt next time in that situation."

The victory gave Denver a 6-3 record and a share of first place in the AFC West, along with Kansas City and San Diego. Minnesota fell to 5-4 and a first-place tie in the NFC Central with Tampa Bay.

Until the fourth quarter, it was a defensive game. But in that final period both teams added a pair of touchdowns apiece.

Denver's two TD's were less than two minutes apart. Running back Rob Lytle scored from 5 yards out for the first one, and a pass interception by Aaron Kyle — returned 40 yards to the Minnesota 18 — set up the second.

Two plays after Kyle's interception, Morton hit Steve Watson on a 15-yard scoring pass, the 11th TD reception for the lanky third-year player from Temple.

Morton, the NFL's No. 1 passing quarterback going into the game, completed 16-of-28 attempts for 201 yards and one interception. Minnesota's Tommy Kramer was 22-for-36 for 230 yards, one interception and no touchdowns.

The Broncos dominated the first half but bungled their initial scoring opportunity when Steinfort missed a 28-yard field goal attempt early in the first quarter.

Steinfort, however, redeemed himself with a 42-yarder that barely hooked inside the left upright.

He was playing for his job Monday night, having missed 10-of-15 field goal attempts entering the game.

Last year, he was 26-of-34 for 110 points, and set a team record for field-goal accuracy.

Minnesota tied the score at 3-3 late in the second period when Danmeier kicked a 32-yarder to cap a 74-yard drive.

Kramer's talents showed up best in the hurry-up offense, but Minnesota did not wait until the last two minutes to use it. Beginning with 8:27 to play in the game, Kramer led the Vikings on a nine-play, 80-yard TD drive, most of

the time calling the plays on the spot without huddles.

With Kramer in control of the pace of the game, the Denver defense suddenly became porous.

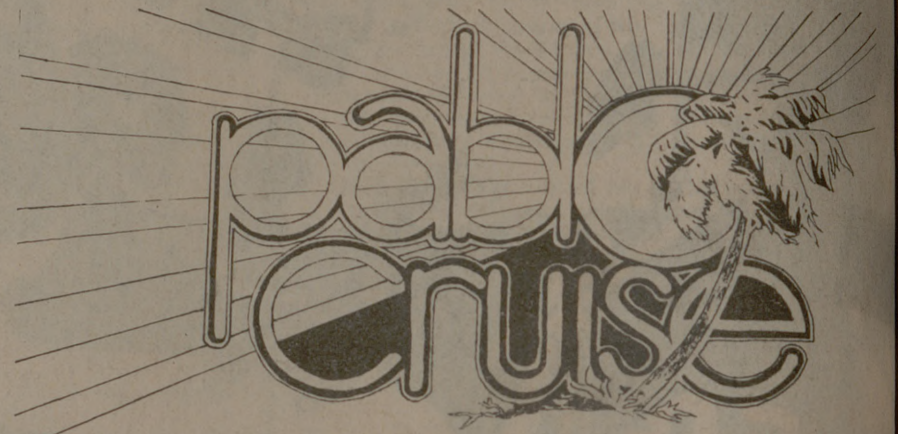
On Minnesota's second and third possessions of the final period, the Vikings finished drives with 1-yard touchdown runs by Tony Galbreath.

The Vikings' final, desperation scoring bid, however, stalled at the Denver 28 when Bronco cornerback Perry Smith caught Ted Brown for a 2-yard loss.

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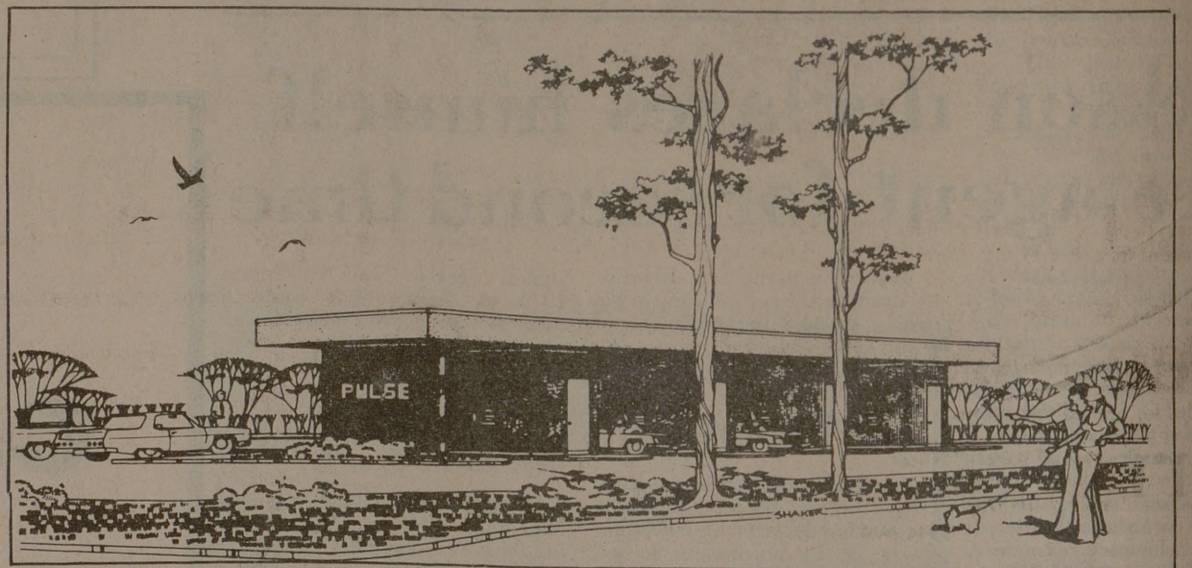
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