

Sports

Coach should be given fair chance to see result of work

Rumors are once again spreading of the possible dismissal of head coach Tom Wilson. That's nothing unusual. The thing that is particularly disturbing to me is the fact that something may happen soon. If it's the wrong move it is indeed unfortunate.

Most likely some person(s) with power and knowledge of the football program will like to make the decision to keep him or run him.

I'm not saying that Wilson will quit, be fired or given a vote of confidence. That is not up to me.

Several things should be made perfectly clear before any action is taken, though. One, Tom Wilson has the respect and admiration of his players and the people who know him. In fact, I would dare say that anyone who has had the opportunity to meet the man would have trouble criticizing him.

Sure, he's had trouble coming up with a winner. That is starting to turn around now. However, everyone, or at least those few blessed individuals with power, thinks that a coach has to win from day one. People seem to forget it takes time to build a program, especially with a new offensive attack. Throw in a coaching change and it takes even longer.

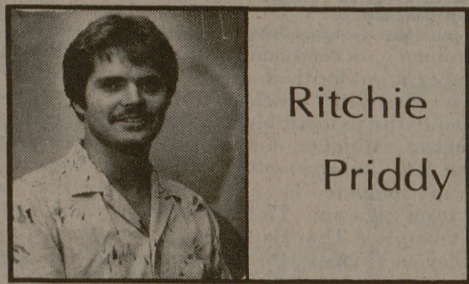
When Emory Bellard left A&M for greener pastures the players, almost without exception, insisted upon Wilson as his replacement. Why? Wilson cared about his players enough to take that extra step it takes to help his players perform.

Wilson also has a great offensive mind. One only has to look at his record for proof of that. Not his win-loss record, though that is not bad in itself. A winning record takes time to build up.

Wilson took over a wishbone team, one that was quite effective. However, it was also one that had its share of critics. People said they could write the A&M game plan on a postage stamp (Up the middle in a cloud of dust). Things had to change and Wilson was just the man to do it.

People seemed to forget that his first play as head coach called for a pass from the I-formation with a man in motion, something unheard of from A&M. That play, against Rice in 1978, resulted in a long touchdown pass. That should have told everyone things were going to change.

Since then he has been through two bad



Ritchie Priddy

seasons (6-5 and 4-7). Lots of excuses can be made for the performances of his teams.

It doesn't seem to matter that A&M's losses in '79 were by fewer than 28 points, two of which were by one point. The Aggies traveled to Penn State with an 0-2 record and upset them 27-14 and they closed out the year with a 13-7 win over Texas. Given a few breaks, the Ags could have been 9-2.

Although last year's team was different, finishing 4-7, it showed a lot of character and determination. Not many people picked up the fact that beginning with the second half of the Arkansas game last year A&M was a different team. One that believed in themselves.

Wilson takes the blame for the mistakes and losses endured during his tenure as, I guess, a coach should. At the same time he doesn't give himself much of the credit for his successes.

Though he has had his problems winning all of the games, he has instilled a winning attitude in his players, and that alone is probably the most important thing a team can have.

That is particularly true of this year's team. Unfortunately, most people can't see that, or what's worse, don't even want to see it.

Having been around the team off and on since last April, I have had the opportunity to observe the attitude and "feeling" of the team.

The general attitude reflects one of confidence, leadership and desire.

The players are confident that they are winners. They believe they can win. On and off the field they are winners. Something Wilson takes particular pride in is the fact that so many players are doing much better in school as well as in football. Not many coaches can claim that.

The leadership that has been absent for so long is finally there. Seniors such as Kent Adams, David Bandy, Keith Baldwin, Mike

Little and Mike Whitwell see to that. But it doesn't stop there. Many of the younger players, juniors on down, are becoming leaders, good team leaders.

Desire is one of the main ingredients of a winning program. Everyone involved wants to be a winner. Few, however, will pay the price of success. I can't help but think that one would be hardpressed to find one, just one, player on the 1981 squad that is not willing to pay that price.

Youth and talent are also characteristic of this team. There are only five starting seniors on the squad. The team is young but has performed well this year. Through nine games it ranks among the leaders in total offense. That's rather remarkable considering the fact that the first team is made up largely of underclassmen. The defense is almost the same way. The Texas Aggies are clearly a team of the future.

When you have the talent of Johnny Hector, Earnest Jackson and Thomas Sanders, each gifted in different ways, you've got one of the best backfields in the nation. That's excluding perhaps the best quarterback in the conference. Next year look for some all-Americans back there.

Defensively it's more of the same.

Still, people consider only the won-loss record of a coach, especially here at A&M. I would hate to think of a university, of any size, where the pressure applied to the head coach is worse than that of Texas A&M. Other than the possible exception of Texas one doesn't exist.

I can't figure out why this is so. Maybe people have things in proper perspective; maybe they don't here.

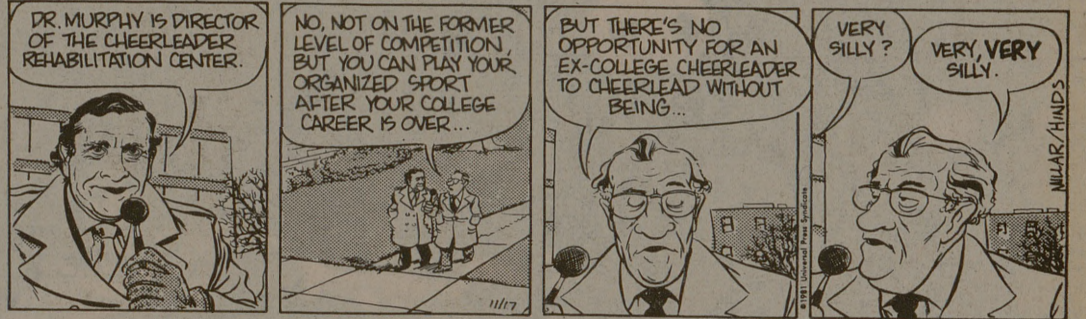
Whatever the reason, the pressure that Wilson has endured his entire reign is tremendous and he is paying a price for that.

The continuous threat of one's job being taken away is enough to bring down even the strongest individual. Sooner or later it comes time to draw the line. One side has got to give or stand up for what he believes in. Wilson believes in his team and I think that he will do what is best for his team, even if that means stepping down.

I am nothing more than a believer in this 1981 football team and in the man that has taken them from the depths of frustration to the edge of something great. How anyone can destroy something like that is beyond me.

TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



Pitt, Clemson strengthen positions as top two teams

NEW YORK — Georgia, the defending national champion, inched its way to the No. 3 ranking today while Pittsburgh and Clemson strengthened their positions as the top two teams in college football in balloting by UPI's Board of Coaches.

The top-rated Panthers, 9-0 following a 48-0 triumph over Army, became just the second team to hold down the No. 1 position for three straight weeks. Pittsburgh, riding the nation's longest winning streak among major colleges at 16 games, received 40 of the 42 first-place votes from UPI's coaching board and accumulated 628 points.

Clemson, 10-0, champion of the Atlantic Coast Conference and on the verge of its first perfect season in 33 years, received the remaining two first-place votes and totaled 584 points.

With Washington's 13-3 upset of Southern California — rated third last week — the once-beaten Bulldogs rose to their highest rating this season. Georgia received 515 points from the board — composed of six coaches from each of seven geographical sections of the country.

Alabama, 8-1-1 following a surprisingly easy 31-16 victory over Penn State, jumped two spots to the No. 4 position, receiving 505 points. The victory gave Bear Bryant his 314th coaching victory, tying him with Amos Alonzo Stagg for the most wins ever by a coach.

Rounding out the Top 10 are

No. 5 Nebraska, the Big Eight Conference champion and host team for the Orange Bowl, No. 6 Michigan, No. 7 Texas, No. 8 Southern Mississippi, No. 9 Southern California and No. 10 Arkansas.

The second 10 consists of No. 11 North Carolina, No. 12 Washington State, No. 13 UCLA, No. 14 Penn State and No. 15 Brigham Young.

Also, Washington is rated 16th followed by No. 17 Iowa, No. 18 Ohio State, No. 19 West Virginia and No. 20 Missouri.

Southern Cal, the only other of the six teams rated No. 1 this year to hold that position for three weeks, tumbled six positions this

week while Penn State, losing for the second time in three weeks, dropped nine spots.

Nebraska, 8-2, advanced two places as did Michigan, Texas, 7-1-1, and undefeated and once-tied Southern Mississippi.

Arkansas, with a 13-10 victory over Texas A&M, moved up three spots to reach the Top 10 for the first time this season.

Oklahoma, rated 11th last week, lost to Missouri 19-14 and dropped from the rankings for the first time this season.

Also dropping out of the Top 20 are Hawaii, which lost its first game of the season last week to Brigham Young (13-3), Florida State and Minnesota.

Aggies defeat Rice for second place

With the hosting Texas A&M University soccer team winning 2-0 over Rice University midway through the first half, Owl coach Mike Henshaw turned to one of his players on the bench.

"We can get this game back easily," he said. "All we need is one goal."

One minute later, the Aggies scored again to take a 3-0 lead, and the Rice sideline became quiet. Although they played aggressively the entire game, the Owls weren't able to catch the Aggies, who won Saturday's match 5-1 with two more second-half goals.

With the win, the Aggies finished the season with a second-place 4-0-3 record in the South-

west Conference Soccer League, while the team's overall record was 7-4-3.

Carlos Gutierrez scored the Aggies' first goal off an assist by Neto Walsh 15 minutes into the first half, while Walsh came back

to add a goal one minute later. Walsh scored his second goal of the match 10 minutes later as the Aggies took a 3-0 lead at halftime.

Texas A&M's Gutierrez and Carlos Cline scored in the second half for the Aggies' last two goals.

Texas tickets to be distributed differently

Student ticket distribution has been changed for the Texas A&M-Texas game, according to ticket manager Jim Kotch.

Beginning Thursday at 7 a.m. seniors and graduate students may pick up their tickets.

Friday juniors may pick up their tickets, Monday sophomores and Tuesday freshmen. Any remaining tickets will go on sale Wednesday.

Also, students are urged to keep their coupon books if they wish to purchase bowl tickets should the Aggies receive a bid.

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