

TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



Texas football battle takes place Saturday

United Press International
IRVING — Texas' two professional football teams meet Saturday night for their final tune-up of the year and the coaches involved will take different approaches to the game.

With the regular season only a week away, and the Pittsburgh Steelers awaiting them as their initial opponents, the Cowboys will try to put themselves into top gear against the Oilers.

"I'm worried about our running game," Cowboys coach Tom Landry said. "Well, I'm not worried. But I'm concerned about it somewhat. The running game is not where we want it to be."

"And the defense has not had a lot of time on the field together. We have been playing a lot with a mix of people in there."

Houston coach Ed Biles, meanwhile, is not worried so much about polishing his front liners as he is in making sure he keeps the right players on his final roster.

"We have got some difficult cuts to make," Biles said. "We have to go from 60 players to 49 after this game and we probably have 20 people battling for about nine jobs."

"We will go with the first group for about a half. A lot of people feel they have to play their regulars in the last game, but I'm not sure I agree with that theory."

"I want to give our backup quarterback (Oliver Luck) as much playing time as we can."

Even if the Cowboys' running attack is not up to form, the team's passing game has been excellent and Biles says he sees

Dallas being the same old contender it has been for years.

"It is a typical Cowboys team," Biles said. "They scored 10 points in their first game, 26 the next week and 36 points last week. So they seem to have things going in the right direction."

The final preseason game will be played under the continuing cloud of a possible walkout by NFL players. But, as is his habit, Landry is not going to worry about something that is out of his control.

"I don't know what is going on and I don't ask," Landry said. "If the players wind up getting involved (in a strike), then I will get involved, too."

"But as far as what is happening in the talks, I don't know anything."

Rockets must meet 76er six-year offer to Malone

United Press International
PHILADELPHIA — The battle is on over whether Moses Malone will be snaring rebounds for Julius Erving and Company or staying right where he has spent the last 5½ seasons.

The Philadelphia 76ers Thursday signed the 6-foot-10 Malone, the two-time NBA Most Valuable Player and the league's leading rebounder last season, to an offer sheet providing a six-year contract worth a reported \$13 million.

At a crowded news conference, Sixers owner Harold Katz appeared confident that the Rockets would not match the 76ers' offer for business reasons, that Malone filled up the Houston Summit as much as he's going to and that there are plenty of empty seats to fill at the Spectrum to justify the expense.

But in Houston, Rockets owner Charlie Thomas said he wasn't giving up the fight, even though his final offer to Malone over the same six-year period was \$4 million short of what Katz offered him.

Under NBA rules, the Rockets have 15 days from the time they receive Malone's offer sheet and contract to either match the offer or keep Malone, or match it and then trade him. Thomas said he would use up much of that time examining it and seeing how much money the Sixers would pay Malone up front.

"I wouldn't rule out paying the \$13 million," Thomas said. "I would have to look at the situation and see what I would have to charge in ticket prices in order to pay those dollars."

"I sat down and started thinking that extra 4 million dollars isn't in real dollars. Maybe I just better sit down and take a look at this whole thing when I have the offer in front of me, because I don't think we were that far off from an agreement with Moses."

Katz said he would be willing to discuss a deal with the Rockets for Malone. The Sixers have ammunition six first-round draft choices stored up for the next two years.

The Rockets' last talks with

Malone were on Aug. 12 but there was no indication that the player was close to signing. His agent, Lee Fentress, made first contact with the Sixers "seven or eight days ago" and negotiations were on.

Fentress and Katz worked out the contract during a nine-hour meeting at a New York hotel that ended at 5 a.m. Thursday.

"We made a very substantial offer to Moses Malone," Katz said. "I can't say whether they'll match it or not before they've had a chance to see the sheet. I've never met their new owner but after I met with Lee, I felt we had a deal on the way."

"This is a good business deal for Philadelphia but I'm not sure if it's a good business deal for Houston. Malone has already drawn the fans in Houston. We have the extra seats to fill because we don't sell out. He'll put more people in the seats and that justifies the cost. Plus, they can't surround him with the players we can."

Redskins '82

Gibbs looking for improvement on 8-8 record

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Confidence abounds in the Washington Redskins' training camp but reality rears its ugly head also.

General Manager Bobby Beathard and second-year Coach Joe Gibbs see more talent on hand than a year ago when the Redskins finished 8-8 after an 0-5 start.

But they also know they trailed Dallas, Philadelphia and the New York Giants last year, none of whom is sitting idle while the Redskins catch up.

"We have more quality players in camp than we've had," Beathard said. "But I'm trying to remain objective. I know injuries can wipe out a lot of plans, like last year. And some players don't play up to the expectations you have for them."

A dozen of the 30 Redskins on injured reserve last year (only 16 players started every game) are vital to 1982 success. And some 1981 starters may be cut by opening day.

On offense, solid veterans in the backfield depend on a young line.

Gibbs' offense is dependent on quarterback Joe Theismann, coming off his best year and secure in a new 4-year contract.

Theismann hit 293 of 496 passes for 3,568 yards and 19 touchdowns last year. Only Sonny Jurgensen has done better as a Redskin.

Gibbs likes to use two tight ends and one running back, swift Joe Washington or powerful John Riggins. Theismann must make decisions on the fly since pass routes are determined after the ball is snapped.

"We've just scratched the surface of what this offense can do," Theismann said. "Joe Gibbs and I know each other better, I understand what he wants the offense to accomplish and we have a year of experience with it on the field. We can't help but improve."

Gibbs has confidence in Theismann, some of it gained through 1981.

"I feel good about having Joe in there," Gibbs said. "The more confident people like Joe are with what we're trying to do, the better we'll be."

Right tackle George Starke, in his 10th year, has more NFL years than the other four line starters combined.

Joe Jacoby (6-8, 300) joins Starke at tackle with former University of Pittsburgh teammates Russ Grimm and Mark May at guard flanking center Jeff Bostic (250). All are in their second year.

May, a No. 1 1981 draft pick, started last season at left tackle but was benched after eight games when his weight, 30 pounds, and his play fell off.

"I know I'm fighting for a job but I feel good at guard," May

said. "I don't like what I produced last year. It isn't what I'm capable of doing."

May leads 1981 starter Melvin Jones and veterans Ron Saul and Fred Dean. Saul probably will retire if he isn't needed while Jones and Dean fight for the backup slot.

The tight ends probably will be veterans Don Warren, Rich Caster and Rick Walker or fifth-round draft pick Michael Williams. Warren is steady, while Caster, Walker and Williams have the speed to go deep.

Art Monk is firm at wide receiver. Rookie Charlie Brown, who spent last year on injured reserve, and third-round draft pick Carl Powell are battling veterans Virgil Sey and Alvin Garrett for the other spot.

Defensively, the Redskins, 21st in the NFL against the rush last year, need a lot of help. The defensive end play a year ago was so bad Gibbs cut veteran Karl Lorch before training camp.

Mat Mendenhall and Dexter Manley will try to change that.

One tackle will be veteran Dave Butz (6-8, 290). Beside him, if the Redskins stay with the 4-3 alignment, will be veteran Perry Brooks or youngsters Pat Ogrin or Darryl Grant, moved from offense.

An abundance of linebackers may send the Redskins to the 3-4.

Monte Coleman, Neal Olkewicz, Rich Milot, Brad Dusek, Peter Cronan, Charlie Weaver, Mel Kaufman and Quentin Lowery started at times last year. Larry Kubin, a rookie on injured reserve last year while a college knee injury healed, could start in the 3-4.

Washington was sixth in pass defense last year, mainly because opponents ran at will. But the Redskins did allow fewer

than 50 percent completion.

Backfield starters for the year include Jeris White, Mark May, the leading tackler for the straight year, and Tom Turner. Curtis Jordan, rookie Vernon Dean and

Two-time Pro Bowl line backer Mike Nelms, who turned at safety, is solid.

Kicker Mark Moseley, challenged by rookie Darryl Grant, is the Redskins' career leading leader (722 points) in the NFL (867).

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Arkansas holds last scrimmage today

United Press International
FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. — With coach Lou Holtz absent because of eye problems, Arkansas worked for two hours in shorts Thursday in a football practice mainly devoted to special situations.

"It was a sterling practice," offensive coordinator Larry Beightol said after the low-key drills on a humid afternoon at Razorback Stadium.

Beightol predicted plenty of contact in today's final preseason scrimmage after two practices with minimal hitting.

"Hopefully we will have a lot of hitting," he said. "The scrimmage will be important as a tune-up for the first game (against Tulsa). The younger players will have a chance to find out where they'll be on the depth chart."

Beightol said every squad member would have a chance to advance or drop back on the depth chart based on his scrimmage performance. The scrimmage will pit the first and second units on both offense and defense against the first and second scout teams.

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