

The Battalion Sports

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Ditka set for '82, but has questions about his offense

United Press International
CHICAGO — Chicago Bears coach Mike Ditka caught up with his veteran players by reuniting them during last spring's mini-camp when he gathered the team for its first meeting. Ditka, who had replaced Neill Armstrong after Chicago finished 6-10 last year, started talking about his team's chances of making it to the Super Bowl this season.

"It wasn't that we had a negative feeling before but it was surprising," veteran safety Gary Jenkins said. "He was talking about getting us to the Super Bowl and that's the kind of talk I haven't heard around here."

Whether the Bears have the power to duplicate the San Francisco 49ers' rise from the depths to the NFL championship remains questionable. The team and the question marks remain virtually the same from last year with the defense-oriented Bears seeking to generate more offensive explosions in their passing game than in the running of perennial All-Pro Walter Payton.

But under Ditka, the Chicago philosophy has been changed from a mild cub under Armstrong to an angry bear.

"I can promise that no one in the league is going to work harder than we do," said Ditka, an honored member of the Dallas Cowboys' organization by owner George Halas. "I think I learned the things about winning under Tom Landry at Dallas and I learned about hard work. I'll have our own identity here. It's not what we're going to use some of the things that made the Cowboys winners."

However, about the only thing the Bears have that Dallas

has is a potentially strong defense led by defensive coordinator Buddy Ryan. Despite finishing last in the NFC Central Division last year, the Bears were still first in the league in defensive passing percentage and gave up only five touchdowns in the last four games last year.

As has been the case in recent years, the major question concerning the success of the Bears lies at quarterback, where veteran Vince Evans has been dueling the team's No. 1 draft choice, Jim McMahon, for the starting spot. Evans was among the worst in the NFL in passing efficiency last year while McMahon was rewriting the NCAA record book at Brigham Young.

"Right now, Vince is my No. 1 quarterback and will be there as the No. 1 man when the season begins unless someone shows that he is head and shoulders better than Vince," said Ditka.

Evans isn't lacking in confidence regarding his ability to hold off McMahon's challenge. "I think Jim McMahon will be a valuable attribute to this team, as long as he is playing behind me," Evans said.

McMahon said: "I think I can provide consistency to the Bears offense. I'm not knocking any of the other quarterbacks but I'm confident I can fit into the system."

Regardless of who survives the battle, Chicago's offense is again likely to revolve around Payton. The star running back was hit harder and showed more bruises last year than at any time in his career.

"Yes, I was hurt more than any time in my life. I'm optimistic things will improve this year," said Payton, who enters the sea-

son with 9,608 career yards, fourth on the all-time list. "I don't know whether we'll make the playoffs but we will be better."

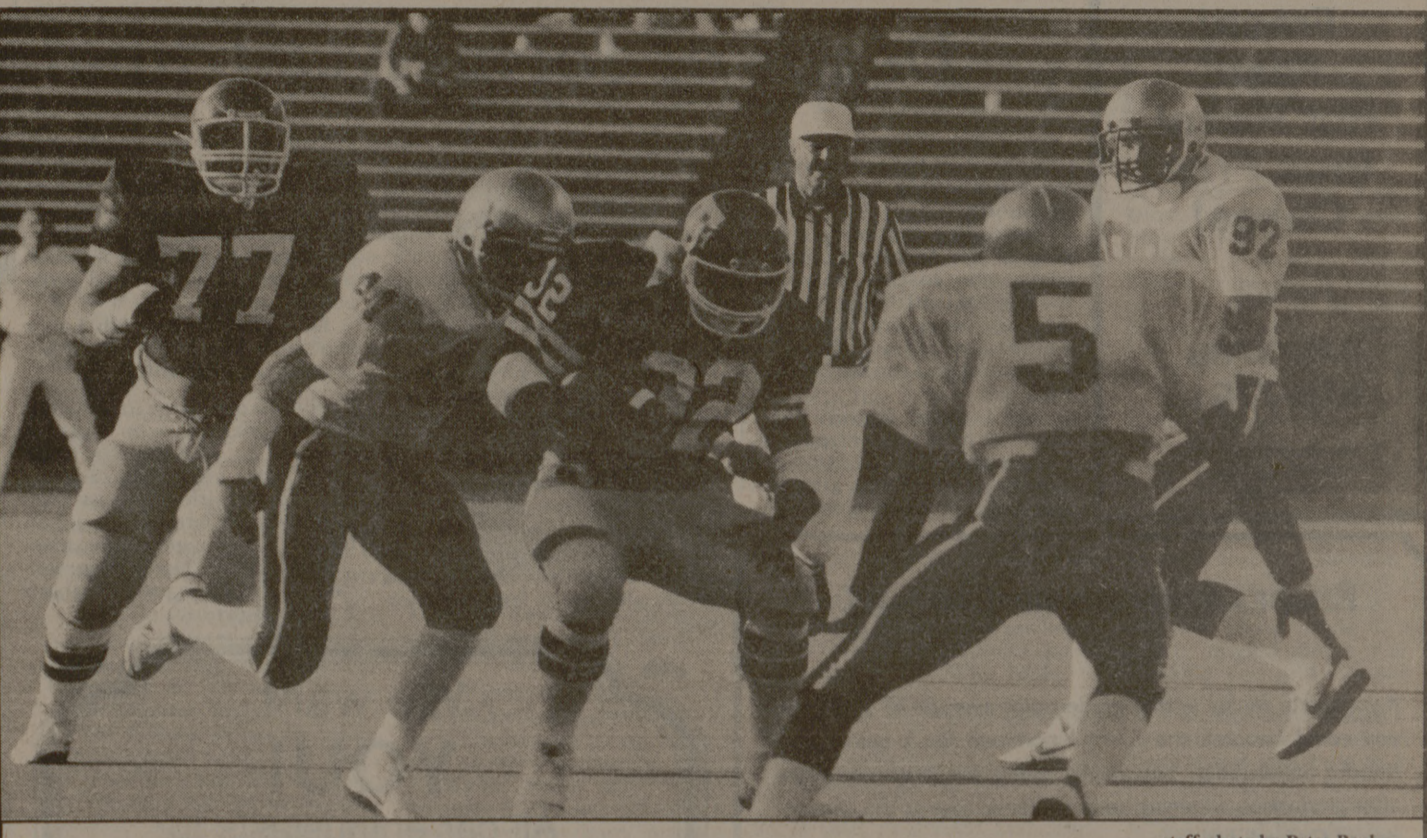
Both the offensive and defensive lines have question marks that Ditka says he is confident can be erased by the time the season opens Sunday in Detroit. The survivor in the quarterback derby will have more receiving help than last year. James Scott, who fled to the Canadian Football League for one season, is back to give Chicago a deep threat again.

Brian Baschnagel, Rickey Watts and Ken Margerum will fight for the other spot. Watts did not enhance his standing with the discipline-oriented Ditka when he walked out of the mini-camp last spring.

Chicago still has a tight end problem. The team's No. 3-round draft choice, Tim Wrightman of UCLA, refused the club's contract offer in July and became the first player to sign with the new USFL rival Chicago Blitz.

The Bears, by virtue of finishing last in 1981, do have an easier schedule than in recent years, with only one playoff team on the slate. However, Ditka refused to speculate about what type of record he will have in his first season.

"I can't say," said Ditka, noting that the club was 2-6 against the NFC Central Division while going 4-0 against the tough AFC West. "I don't want to get into that. We'll work and be ready. We've got to do a better job against our own division. We're just pointing to that opener with the Lions. We'll see what happens after that game."



Kyle Field traffic jam

staff photo by Peter Rocha

Caught in the middle of three members of the Boston College defensive unit, Aggie tailback Johnny Hector attempts to maneuver toward open ground in the Aggies' 38-16 loss to the Eagles Saturday. The

Boston College defenders include strong safety David Pereira (41), weak safety Vic Crawford (5) and tackle Rob Swanke. Texas A&M offensive lineman Tommy Robison watches the action from behind the scenes.

Tennis squads top tourney

by Joe Tindel Jr
Battalion Staff
 The Texas A&M tennis teams opened fall play with impressive victories in Beaumont's Labor Day tournament, held Saturday through Monday.

In men's doubles action, senior Ron Kowal and junior Van Barry gave the Aggies a championship by defeating the Rice duo of Mark Mill and Tres Cushing, 7-6, 6-7, 6-4. In singles, sophomore Greg Hill advanced to the finals with a 4-6,

6-4, 6-4 victory over Lamar's Jose Arova.

The Aggie Ladies, led by standout Liliana Fernandez, seized championships in both singles and doubles, with Fernandez topping Lynn Davis of Dallas, 2-6, 6-3, 6-0, for the summit in singles. Fernandez and senior Teresa Landry teamed up to defeat another Aggie team of Amy Closs and Cheryl Stansford, 6-1, 4-6, 7-5, for the doubles championship.

Coach David Kent said he was pleased by both the men's and the women's performances, and that continued improvement could result in Texas A&M being a formidable foe for any competitor.

"We just played really good tennis, and I think it's going to give us confidence down the road," Kent said. "I was pleasantly surprised with our outstanding play."

He said he was impressed

with the singles play of Greg Hill and newcomer Arnold Kettner, who was redshirted last year. Kent cited the play of Fernandez, while women's coach Jan Cannon said Fernandez could be the first all-America tennis player she's had.

"Liliana was the class of the tournament," Kent said.

Kent also said Vann Akagi, the Aggie Ladies' freshman from Hawaii, performed well in her first collegiate match.

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