

TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



Elsik's students, fans disagree with ruling

by Donn Friedman, Tracey Taylor and John Wagner

Battalion Staff
HOUSTON — Wednesday morning the marquis at the Astrodome read "High School football playoff game: Stratford vs. Westbury 6 p.m."
Friday morning the sign read "Aliel Elsik vs. Westbury 6 p.m."
But Friday afternoon, two hours before the bi-district playoff game, eight empty buses pulled out of the Elsik High School parking lot. The football players were still at the school, the pep squad was gossiping in the halls, the cheerleaders had been sent home, and members of the band were going to a park to play football.

A court order issued Friday afternoon thrust Stratford into the playoffs, thereby ending Elsik's playoff hopes.
In the ninth week of the season, the University Interscholastic League ruled Stratford linebacker David Niles ineligible for allegedly breaking a UIL residency rule. The UIL rule states that a student may live with a guardian and participate in school activities if he formally and legally records that guardianship.

A 12-year resident of the Spring Branch area, Niles

moved to California in the spring to live with his mother. However, he re-enrolled at Stratford in the fall, and is now living with family friends who had been named legal guardians.

But the UIL said no dice, declaring Niles ineligible and ordering Stratford, which clinched a playoff berth during the final week of the season, to forfeit seven victories in which Niles had played. That decision vaulted Elsik into the playoffs — or so the Rams thought.

The Rams had finished third behind Memorial and Stratford in the 17-5A race with a 4-3 district record.

However, Niles' lawyer, Lew W. Harpold of Hofheinz and Harpold, went to federal court Friday morning to get a temporary stay which would allow Niles to play.

In that hearing, U.S. District Judge George E. Cire ruled against the UIL and the 17-5A Executive Committee, saying the organizations did not have the power to keep Niles from

playing — thereby putting the Spartans back into the playoffs. Cire said Niles would suffer "immediate and irreparable damage" if Stratford was kept out of the bi-district contest.

The UIL then sought to have the entire eligibility question resolved through other federal court channels, but gave up at 3:30 Friday afternoon and sent word to Stratford to go ahead and play.

Elsik Principal Bobby Porter said he had received word on Thursday that the Rams would play Westbury. Porter said Elsik students were excited that their Rams — who at one time had been one of the worst teams in Texas, losing 22 straight games during the 1980-81 seasons — finally made a mark in the district race.

But the federal court order took the excitement out of the halls of Elsik. The students, who had a holiday from school Friday, waited outside the school and close to their radios to hear

See SPARTANS page 12

Schoolboy playoffs feature upsets

Runners-up faring well

United Press International
Second-place teams, allowed into the playoffs for the first time this year, are taking full advantage of the opportunity, with more than half of the Class 5A runners-up advancing to the second round at the expense of a district champion.

In the first weekend of high school playoffs, only 12 of 32 district champions were victorious in their games with runners-up from adjacent districts. Seven districts had both of their teams advance.

Among those who will not be continuing in the playoffs are UPI's No. 6-ranked Fort Worth Eastern Hills, a 14-12 loser to Denton; No. 10 Plainview, which lost 20-15 to San Angelo Central, and co-No. 10 Brazoswood, a 12-10 loser to Austin LBJ.

In the Class 3A and Class 2A, 20 of the 32 district champs in each division advanced.

None of UPI's Class 3A Top

Ten teams was defeated, but in next week's round, No. 3 McGregor plays No. 5 Daingerfield and No. 4 Cameron plays No. 9 Waller.

In the 2As, No. 5 Pottsboro was upset by Southlake Carroll, 28-25, and No. 9 Deweyville was beaten by Garrison.

Included in the second-place teams to advance from Class 5A were El Paso Bel Air, Eules Trinity, Fort Worth Western Hills, Conroe McCullough, Highland Park and Plano.

In defeating Dallas Kimball 28-20, annual playoff figure Plano got 295 yards of offense against the area's leading defense.

"We knew they had the leading defense in the area," said Plano quarterback Paul Davis. "But we were able to control the line of scrimmage. That's what we wanted to do."

Highland Park coach Frank Bevers, whose Scots finished second in District 9-5A behind North Mesquite and advance to

the second round with a 17-14 win over Dallas Samuell, said motivation was a problem, even in the playoffs.

"I think each time you win a big game, it's real thrilling inside and this is very thrilling," he said. "Of course, each team is different and you've got to take them where they are and try to get them as far as you can get them. We're having to work real hard to keep the heat on our

kids. If we don't put heat on them, they don't play well."

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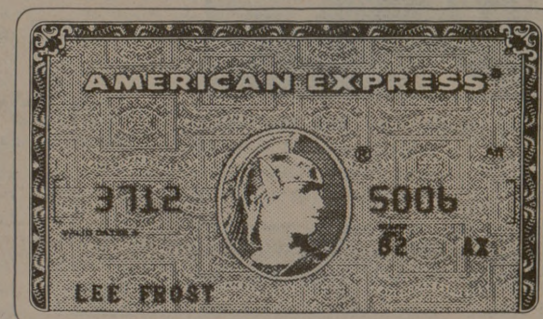
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