

# Taking shape

## 12th Man team 'impressive' in alumni game

by Scott Griffin  
Battalion Staff

After some initial bumps and bruises, the 12th Man Kickoff Team has toughened up and is looking forward to the fall season, says 12th Man Coach David Beal.

With the end of spring training approaching, Beal says the special squad is looking good, and used the varsity-alumni game to support his claims.

"In the game," Beal said, "the team covered both kickoffs and punts, and only one return man made it past the 20-yard line."

Still, not everything went smoothly. "We did have some problems," Beal said. "I thought some of them weren't sprinting downfield fast enough. When they slowed down, too many people were bunched up in the middle."

But Beal did point out that the squad was hyped for the game, and that it helped their performance: "They were really excited about the game — their eyes were bugging out at the opening kickoff."

Beal said the tackling and hitting drills that the players have been going through also helped on Saturday.

"The surprising thing to me," Beal said, "is that most of the players knew how to tackle ahead of time. Their football knowledge really impressed me. After the first week, most of the players had the tackling form down."

A typical 12th Man practice starts 30 minutes before the regular team practice. At this time, the squad goes through tackling drills and kickoff coverage drills. After that, the unit joins the rest of the football team for the regular practice.

As far as motivating the players, Beal says he's had no problems: "We've tried to go through some drills at half-speed,

but these guys are so pumped up that they go full speed anyway."

Beal said it's special to work with these guys because "they're not recruited athletes. While they may be less talented, they work harder than the scholarship athletes because they know they've got to play football. I expected them to work harder." Another advantage of working with the squad, Beal says, is that "You only have to tell them how to do something one time."

"After that," Beal says, "they'll do it right every time."

One of the more interesting aspects of the squad is the pain they endured in the opening practices.

"At first," squad member Tom Bevans said, "it wasn't exactly fun. For the first two weeks all I wanted was Bayer and Deep Heat." And Tom Bumgardner, another member of the special squad said: "It was a little hard on the body at first, in fact, I could hardly make it."

But these guys have made it, and they have survived their first game without any injuries.

Another good sign for the unit is the reaction from both the regular team and the fans. Bevans and Bumgardner both said they've received no negative feedback.

"So far," says Bevans, "there's been no negative reaction."

Bumgardner agreed: "Everyone's been complimentary. I guess they're for it. Of course, they probably wouldn't tell me if they weren't. They're not going to have anything to worry about, though, 'cause there's a lot of good athletes on the team."

While both Bevans and Bumgardner seemed confident, they weren't always so sure of themselves.

"My roommate is the one who talked me into this thing," Bevans said. "At first, I wasn't sure it would work, but now I do."

Bumgardner has even more reason to be confident. "At first," Bumgardner admitted, "I didn't think I'd even make the team." Yet in addition to making the kickoff squad, Bumgardner has been working as a cornerback with the regular defense.

What motivates one to endure such punishment? Bevans said it was his love for the sport:

"I've always loved football," he says, "and this gave me a chance to play and to do something for A&M."

Bumgardner said: "Me and Dennis Burns (another 12th man) just decided to go after it as a last fling at trying to play college football."

So far, both have gotten their wish. But what was it like to play against the alumni, many of whom were excellent athletes, after laying out a few years? Were they nervous? "Hell, yeah," Bevans said, "what do you expect? I mean, those guys weren't just a bunch of high school athletes."

Bevans said his friends think he's not exactly normal: "They all say I'm crazy — they can't believe I came out for the team."

While Bevans and his buddies may be confident, Beal still expresses some doubt in their ability. "We want them to be ready for anything, but in an on-side kick situation, we might substitute two or three players to handle the ball, but those will probably be the only changes made."

In the fall, Beal says he will work specifically with the kicking team about three hours a week. After these practices, the players will work out with the rest of the team and will try out at various positions.

# Blues' sale nears NHL vote

United Press International  
MONTREAL — Ralston Purina of St. Louis hopes to set up "an early meeting" with the National Hockey League board of governors to approve its sale of the St. Louis Blues to a group that will move the franchise to

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. An NHL spokesman said the league had been notified documents required by the governors to vote on the transfer were on the way to league headquarters from Ralston Purina. NHL President John Ziegler

had not yet set a date for the meeting, the spokesman said. Some NHL owners have vowed to vote against the transfer, notably Toronto's Harold Ballard, who predicted "80 to 85 percent" of governors would reject it.

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# Hanzlik blocks out Phoenix' Sun in Denver's 113-99 win

United Press International  
Bill Hanzlik's playoff role is simple: make sure the Sun don't shine.

Hanzlik was great out there tonight. Denver Coach Doug Moe said Thursday night after Nuggets evened their NBA Western Conference playoff series at one game each with a 113-99 victory over the Phoenix Suns.

"He was super on defense," Moe said. "He played against guards and forwards and he was helping out everywhere."

The deciding game in the best-of-three series will be played Sunday night in Phoenix, Moe said.

Kiki Vandeweghe scored 26 points and Dan Issel added 25 to lead the Nuggets while Hanzlik chipped in with 10 points and 15 shooting from the field.

"I was happy with the game tonight," Hanzlik said. "We accomplished what we had to do

and now we can go down to Phoenix and win it."

Denver jumped to a 14-4 lead and was never headed. The Nuggets spurred to a comfortable lead by the middle of the second quarter and were never seriously threatened thereafter.

Phoenix, which got 31 points from Walter Davis, suffered a serious blow when Maurice Lucas had to leave the game with 37 seconds left in the second quarter with torn ligaments in his left foot. X-rays for a possible fracture were negative, but the Suns' forward is considered doubtful for the Sunday finale.

Besides Davis, no Phoenix player was able to score more than 12 points.

In an Eastern Conference mini-series, the Knicks eliminated the New Jersey Nets with a 105-99 victory at New York. The Knicks open a best-of-seven conference semifinal Sunday at Philadelphia.

Truck Robinson scored 22

points and Bernard King added 18, allowing the Knicks to hold off a frantic comeback by the Nets.

The Nets closed to within 82-76 with more than nine minutes remaining in the game, but two foul shots by Marvin Webster and two baskets by Sly Williams upped New York's lead to 88-76. Albert King, who led New Jersey with 25 points, nailed a driving shot and a jumper to bring New Jersey within 99-94 with 54 seconds remaining.

Webster missed two free throws 11 seconds later, but New Jersey failed to close the deficit when Darwin Cook missed a driving shot. The Knicks hit four foul shots down the

stretch to ice the victory. "We as a staff are just thrilled with our kids," said New York Coach Hubie Brown. "They answered the bell."

The other two mini-series resume tonight. Boston, leading 1-0, is at Atlanta and Seattle, trailing 1-0, is at Portland.

Not only have the Celtics beaten the Hawks six times in seven tries this season, including three straight in Atlanta's Omni where Game 2 will be played, but the Hawks have their best player injured.

Power forward Dan Roundfield, who had 24 points and 20 rebounds Tuesday night in Boston when the Celtics took a 1-0 lead with a 103-95 victory, has a bad back.

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