

Texas-Auburn match could decide national champion

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United Press International
AUBURN, Ala. — Third-ranked Texas meets fourth-ranked Auburn in a televised showdown Saturday that could decide which team will be the more threatening contender for a national championship.

While Tiger Coach Pat Dye was skeptical about his team's ability to stage an upset in the Longhorn's season opener, Texas Coach Fred Akers was more concerned about Auburn's kicking game and running attack.

"I will make no prediction as far as this game is concerned," said Dye, whose Tigers are 1-0 after last week's 24-3 win over Southern Mississippi. "I think we'll find out a lot about our football team on Saturday."

"We found out a little about this team last Saturday, but we'll find out a great deal more this week," he said.

Texas will go into the game, at Auburn's Jordan-Hare Stadium, without the help of at least two injured players. Starting quarterback Todd Dodge separated a shoulder in a recent scrimmage and Jeff Leiding, who was the starting middle linebacker, had minor surgery on his leg this week to treat infection.

Akers said he does not intend to announce the starting quarterback until just before the game, although Dye said he expects Rob Moerschell to take on the early duties instead of Rick McIvor.

"He is the better runner of the two," Dye said about Moerschell, "but McIvor will also play and when he is in the game, we anticipate them throwing the ball more."

Dye said he expects the toughest battles to occur on the offensive and defensive lines.

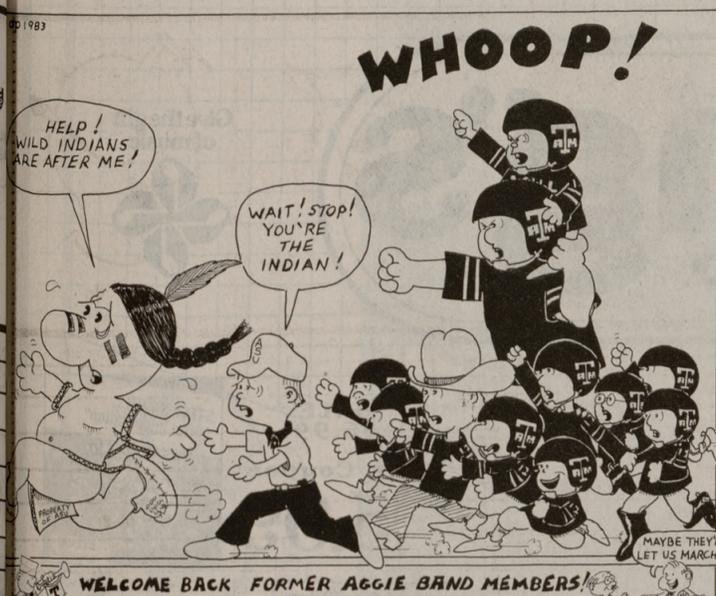
Akers stressed the quality of Auburn's kicking game, which he claims could be the deciding factor.

"We're really impressed with their execution of the kicking game. Many times in the first game you will have some faulty execution. They did not. They were excellent and dangerous in the kicking game," he said.

on 16 carries, was ranked second in the nation this week in all-purpose running.

"Everybody thinks Bo Jackson is their big man," said Longhorn weak safety Jerry Gray. "If that No. 6 (James) gets going, he can be a big threat. You shouldn't overlook him."

Auburn quarterback Pat Washington said it is "tough" to evaluate the Longhorns because Saturday's game will be their season opener.



WELCOME BACK FORMER AGGIE BAND MEMBERS!

Connors says he won't fool around' with rank

United Press International
DALLAS — In an era when the word "burnout" is becoming more popular in the world of sports, Jimmy Connors serves as the obvious exception.

"Tennis is still fun to me," he said Wednesday night. "When it's not, I won't be here. And as long as I'm here, I'll be doing the best I can. I'm not in it to come in and get around and be 15th (in the world) or 20th or 40th."

And because tennis is still fun, Connors showed up Wednesday evening in a cozy atmosphere — far different from that he experienced last Sunday in the finals of the U.S. Open — and won his first-round match in the Dallas stop of the Grand Prix tennis circuit.

The \$200,000 tournament is sponsored by Paine Webber and the Dallas Times Herald.

Connors, despite some problems brought about not only by his

opponent but a swarm of bugs that flitted around the outdoor court, defeated Tony Giammalva, 6-4, 6-4, to set up tonight's second-round match against Van Witsky.

Second-seeded Gene Mayer will face Rodney Harmon in another highlight attraction.

After winning the Open last Sunday in four sets over Ivan Lendl, Connors took two days off — not even picking up a racket. "I put my feet up and relaxed," he said. "I didn't hit a ball until I flew down here today."

The difference in playing conditions between the Open and the Dallas tournament could not have been more noticeable. Instead of a huge, screaming crowd, Connors played before less than 3,000 people Wednesday night and with bugs attracted by the lights zipping around his head.

"I play in different conditions all the time," he said. "The tennis is

no different here than it was in New York. The only problem is that this is the eighth or ninth week in a row I've played.

"It's hard to play that many weeks in a row. After this week I'm going to take off a little."

Connors had two break points against Giammalva's first two serves, but could not break either one. And after Connors did get a break in the first set, Giammalva broke right back.

But Connors, playing to the crowd almost as if it were an exhibition match, called on his experience to fight off the challenge.

After failing to reach a Giammalva passing shot in the first set, Connors kept running off the court and wound up 12 rows deep in the stands.

"I relate to all crowds," Connors said. "It's a tribute to me that they show up. I just enjoy being out there in front of people."

Bengal-Brown tops big NFL weekend

United Press International
When the Cincinnati Bengals set up on offense against the Cleveland Browns tonight, their rushing game will be watching at home in front of a television set.

The winless Bengals are discovering just how valuable the power back is to their running game as Pete Johnson sits out the suspension handed down by NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle for violating league drug policies.

Cincinnati heads into Cleveland tonight sporting the weakest ground attack in the league, gaining just 138 yards rushing in losses to the Los Angeles Raiders and Buffalo.

They are a much better football team with Pete Johnson when he's running for 100 yards," says Browns coach Sam Rutigliano. "If they get inside the 5-yard line, forget about it. You might as well put a Caterpillar (tractor) back there because he's going to get into the endzone."

As a result, the Bengals have been forced to put additional strain on their passing game, and even that could destruct at any time. Quarterback Kenny Anderson left last week with a recurring neck injury, and one tough sack might send the AFC's No. 1 passer to the sidelines.

The Browns, behind the reliable legs of Mike Pruitt, have their ground game working at peak efficiency. Cleveland topped Detroit

31-26 last Sunday as Brian Sipe fired four TD passes and Pruitt gained 137 yards — many of them on power sweeps resurrected from the Browns' playbook.

In Sunday's 10-6 loss at Buffalo, the Bengals were unable to score late in the game despite a 1st-and-goal from the 4-yard line. Rutigliano said Charles Alexander and rookie Larry Kinnebrew are good backs, but Johnson is the best in the league near the goal line.

In Sunday's games, the New York Giants are at Dallas, Kansas City at Washington, San Diego at Seattle, Baltimore at Buffalo, Chicago at New Orleans, the Los Angeles Rams vs. Green Bay at Milwaukee, Pittsburgh at Houston, San Francisco at St. Louis, the New York Jets at New England, Atlanta at Detroit, Philadelphia at Denver and Minnesota at Tampa Bay. Monday night, Miami is at the Los Angeles Raiders.

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