

Oiler coach Ed Biles unconcerned with speculation about job security

United Press International
HOUSTON — Houston Oilers coach Ed Biles, whose team has now lost 12 straight games, said Monday he wasn't concerned about speculation on his job security, and happy not to be receiving any votes of confidence.

"By management not coming out with that kind of stuff (votes of confidence), that's an indication of what they think about our rebuilding program," he said, referring to Oilers owner K.S. "Bud" Adams Jr.'s hands-off approach this year.

But some Houston media as the losses have continued has focused on Biles and speculated he will be fired any day now. The Oilers, 0-5, host the Denver Broncos, 1-4, Sunday.

Biles reacted sarcastically to the reports.

"Maybe we can get a pool up," he told sports reporters at his regular weekly news conference. "Let's all put up \$5 and pick the game, the round (of the firing)."

"I can't concern myself with that. I'm concerned with holding this team together. That's

my basic job, making sure the good morale, hustle and enthusiasm are there," he said.

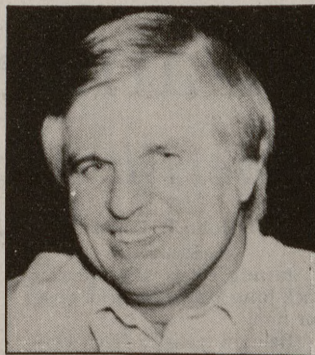
He said he thinks Adams and General Manager Ladd Herzog, who along with Biles were promoted when Bum Phillips was fired as coach and general manager in 1980, appreciate the job being done.

"I think they recognize the pitfalls we are going through weren't created by me," Biles said, referring to Phillips.

He said one day "people are going to marvel" at the job the Oilers are doing rebuilding. He said the young team did everything but win Sunday in a 17-10 loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Oilers linebacker Gregg Bingham, who in 1980 was a vocal critic of Phillips' philosophy, praised the job Biles is doing.

"I've been seeing the light at the end of the tunnel for a couple of weeks now. We're on the right road. We're hanging tight, from the top down and from the bottom up. We've just got to play through this," he said.



Oilers coach Biles says management backs him

"I find it hard to second-guess ourselves on that play," Biles said.

At Dallas, Cowboys' wide receiver Tony Hill and center Tom Rafferty have been listed as questionable for next Sunday's game with Tampa Bay, but running back Tony Dorsett sustained no new injuries during his 141-yard rushing performance against Minnesota.

Hill has missed the last two games with a sprained foot and doctors originally thought he might be available for the Vikings' game. But Hill apparently worked too much on the injured foot during practice last week and was unavailable for duty.

Rafferty, meanwhile, suffered a bruised big toe on his left foot and was replaced during the Minnesota game by second-year backup offensive lineman Brian Baldinger.

Dorsett went into the Minnesota game with a soft cast on his right wrist to protect a small fracture and also played with bruised ribs.

"The ribs hurt worse than the wrist," Dorsett said.



john wagner

QB controversy hurts offensive performance

Football, football, who'll get the football?

Either Mazur or Murray, and nobody's saying for sure. Not even Jackie Sherrill, who told reporters at his Monday press conference that he might wait until Saturday before deciding Mazur, (John, the defender), or Murray (Kevin, the challenger), will start against the Houston Cougars.

Welcome to a bona fide, real-live, honest-to-goodness quarterback controversy.

Haven't had one of these around Aggieland since Tom Wilson benched Mike Mosley back in 1980. Mosley's quick feet weren't enough to keep him out of Wilson's doghouse, and back-to-back losses to Georgia and Penn State sealed Mosley's fate faster than Elmer's glue. Wilson yanked him in favor of senior David Beal. It made quite a few headlines back then, especially after Beal led the Aggies to what's becoming a rare victory over Texas Tech the next weekend.

LIKE MOSELY BEFORE him, Mazur was expected to lead the Aggie offense to bigger and better things — a Moses in turf shoes. That hasn't happened. Pre-season predictions of Aggie offensive firepower have slipped away like so many scoring chances, leaving behind only frustration and a 1-3 record. But press clippings were points ...

A totally ineffective offensive line and Mazur's own immobility have kept the Aggies not only from reaching their potential, but from moving the ball at all. Against Oklahoma State: 207 yards of total offense. Against Texas Tech: 130 yards of total offense.

Neither Mazur nor Murray has been able to generate yardage and/or points. At times, it seems the Aggies need a pass-medical more than a quarterback. Are they alive? Are you sure?

A&M has scored only one touchdown in the last two games. And Sherrill's insistence on replacing Mazur with Murray has everyone wondering who'll be under center — and how long he'll stay there — when the Cougars hit town.

MAZUR OR MURRAY, Murray or Mazur? Sherrill won't say. "I don't know when I'll make up my mind," Sherrill said Monday. "I'll decide on which one gives our offense the most spark."

Spark? Who needs spark? The Aggies need to decide on a quarterback, and let him be. Mazur's had his problems, but then, Murray hasn't exactly lit up the scoreboard. If you're going to replace quarterbacks, shouldn't John Elkins, Craig Stump and Jay Hess get a chance to play, also?

There's an unwritten law in football that forbids pulling your starting quarterback on a whim. It leads to bad feelings, name-calling, hair-pulling — all sorts of nasty reactions.

But Sherrill has used Murray as a type of relief pitcher — when things get bad, go to the bullpen.

It's not working. And time is running out.

Will the real Aggie quarterback stand up? Please?

Longhorns power past young Aggies

by Scott Griffin
Battalion Staff

Texas A&M volleyball coach Terry Condon said before Monday's match with the University of Texas that inexperience might hamper her team's chances in this year's conference race.

And for the time being, UT proved her right — they rolled to an easy three-game victory over the Ags Monday in Gregory Gymnasium by scores of 15-4, 15-8 and 15-8.

Texas dominated the match from the beginning with power spiking and blocking at the front line.

A&M looked young and inexperienced, while Texas appeared confident and overpowering.

But Condon said after the match that A&M still has the ability to compete with the 'Horns.

"Our capabilities and skills are as good as anybody's — we're just not playing smart ball," Condon said.

"We didn't do any of the things that we worked on in practice right," she added. "If we would have, we could've gotten Texas in trouble."

Still, Condon admitted that Texas was overpowering on

"We didn't do any of the things that we worked on in practice right. If we would have, we could've gotten Texas in trouble — Aggie coach Terry Condon after Texas A&M's loss to Texas."

Monday. "Texas played well," Condon said. "They did a lot of things better than we thought they could — especially passing."

Texas was on a roll. Sharon and Laura Neugebauer and Kim Larson accounted for a total of 20 spikes on the evening.

In the first game Sharon, a junior middle blocker, led an early 7-0 Texas spurt while A&M struggled on defense with poor serve receiving and short passing.

The Aggies managed a three-point margin in the second set, but Larson and the Neugebauers blasted the front line and cruised to an east 15-4 win.

And after UT got off to a quick 9-4 lead in the second set, A&M did put up some offense of a better fight. They closed the gap to 11-8 and had control of the serve at one point, but were again the UT front line dominated action.

Texas coach Mick Haley was pleased with his team's performance. "Sharon played well tonight," Haley said. "She and Kim Larson are a good combination. I would have liked for them to finesse the ball at the front line more, but they just dominated at the net."

Indeed they did. Larson was over in the final game with several powerful spikes to boost to an early 9-1 lead.

The Aggies were never able to recover, as Texas blasted them again, 15-8.

UT is now ranked 10th in the nation — and it looks like they could have a very successful season. "I'm pretty excited about this team," Haley said.

The Aggies next match will be against the University of Houston Wednesday night at the Rollie White Coliseum.

White Sox, Orioles set for AL playoff

United Press International
BALTIMORE — The Chicago White Sox earned a trip to this fishing capital by finally learning to make a catch.

Despite rivaling the Orioles in power and pitching and out-racing them on the bases, the White Sox actually captured their first American League West title by patching up the second-worst defense in the league.

Their gloves as well as their bats and track shoes will be on display Wednesday when right-handed Cy Young Award favorite LaMarr Hoyt, 24-10, faces Baltimore left-hander Scott McGregor, 18-7, in Game 1 of the best-of-five AL playoff series.

"Year-in and year-out the strength of Baltimore has been that it doesn't beat itself," said Chicago manager Tony LaRussa. "This year, we haven't done it either."

"This is a game of pitching, hitting and defense and you win with all three," said Baltimore manager Joe Altobelli. "The stats show they've made 119 errors on 121 so we look even or almost even on paper."

Last season, while the Orioles finished first in team defense, making only 101 errors, the White Sox committed 154. This year, earning a post-season berth for the first time since they went to the 1959 World Series, they cut the figure by 35.

More significantly, the White Sox drastically improved their error-double play ratio. Last year, they made only 19 more double plays than errors. This season the ratio improved to plus 39.

"We've gotten the big double play but we've also gotten the routine double play all year long," said LaRussa.

After the All-Star game, the White Sox defense went from 13th in the league to fifth. Chicago had the second tightest defense in the league over the second half, much of the credit going to the keystone combination of shortstop Scott Fletcher and second baseman Julio Cruz.

Fletcher was re-inserted after an early-season benching and Cruz was acquired at the trading deadline.

"Julio has as much range as

anyone in the league and he turns the double play as well as anyone in the league," said LaRussa. "I don't think you can (single out) the keystone combination without talking about the corners. Part of the reason we have done so well is because (Tom) Paciorek and (Mike) Squires and even Greg Walker have made the plays at first base and Vance Law has played super at third."

LaRussa said it was no coincidence that LaMarr Hoyt, Floyd Bannister and Richard Dotson, who combined for a 42-5 record in the second half, began winning when Fletcher and Cruz became the steady double play combination.

"Good team defense is a vital component of good pitching," said LaRussa, who also praised his outfield. "Rudy Law has been running them down all year long. Harold Baines plays a very good right field and (Ron) Kittle has played a good left field. I judge an outfielder by how often they make a mistake that beats you and ours has made very few this year."

Baltimore continued its defensive excellence this year, even though its errors soared by 20. The error-double play ratio was a plus 38 with shortstop Cal Ripken emerging as an MVP candidate.

"I'm proud of our defense, which has always arose to the occasion for us in big games all year," said Altobelli.

Second baseman Rich Dauer is Ripken's dependable double play partner, with potential Gold Glove winner Eddie Murray at first and Todd Cruz at third. Catcher Rick Dempsey ranks among the best at containing runners, which could be a key against a club that stole 165 bases, compared to 62 for Baltimore. Rudy Law alone stole 77 and Cruz added 57.

"We've been stealing more bases than Baltimore but Baltimore is the best in the league at taking away the steal," said LaRussa. "On paper it's an edge for us but I don't think you can predict it."

Altobelli agreed that previous results, such as Baltimore's 7-5 edge in the season series, won't mean much.

"Those are just statistics and history," said Altobelli. "We're just going to have to see what happens."

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