

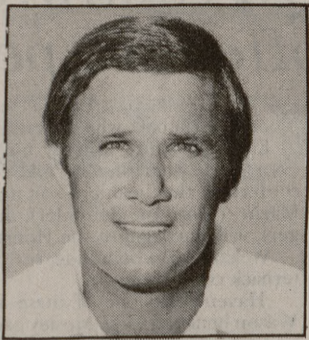
Texas A&M

The Battalion Sports

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Texas-OU battle hinges on Longhorns' defense Change? Sherrill uncertain about starting quarterback

by John P. Lopez
Battalion Staff



Texas coach Fred Akers says defense is consistent

United Press International
AUSTIN — Oklahoma's tendency to fumble the football won't make the Sooners less of a threat to ruin Texas' unbeaten record. After all, Texas Coach Fred Akers said Monday, the Dallas Cowboys have similar fumble troubles but still manage to win every game. Akers takes his No. 2-ranked Longhorns to Dallas this weekend for the annual grudge match with No. 7-ranked Oklahoma. The Sooners won the non-conference battle last year 28-22.

"I think Oklahoma is a much improved team over last year," Akers said at his weekly news conference Monday. "They have speed and talent across the board and they have a lot of defensive starters who have been there for three years."

Texas enters the game against OU with a 3-0 record, having beaten Rice 42-6 last weekend in its Southwestern Conference opener. Oklahoma's record is 3-1 after the Sooners beat Kansas

said, referring to turnover-plagued, come-from-behind wins in all five Cowboy victories this season.

Akers described OU's outstanding running back Marcus Dupree as a game-breaker.

"He can change the complexion of a game in a single play," he said.

Akers praised his team's defensive effort against Rice and named quarterback Rob Moerschell as offensive player of the week, tackle John Haines as defensive player of the week and — for the third week in a row — defensive back Jitter Fields as special teams player of the week.

"It was a great win for us because we saw improvement in all the areas we needed to see it," Akers said of the Rice game. "The one thing we have really been consistent in is our defense. We have played with a lot of effort, not always doing things right, but we do it with enthusiasm."

Starting Texas A&M quarterback John Mazur has a lot going for him.

Being a transfer from USC, he has game experience against the likes of Notre Dame and UCLA, he has four games under his belt as a starter for the Aggies and he has what coaches call "leadership abilities" on the field.

But one thing Mazur doesn't have going into Saturday's Southwest Conference game against the Houston Cougars is job security, Texas A&M head coach Jackie Sherrill said Monday.

Sherrill said he doesn't know why the Aggies have had difficulty lighting up the scoreboard

'We'll watch them in practice. I may decide today, I may not decide until right before the game who's going to start.' — Texas A&M coach Jackie Sherrill on the Aggie quarterback situation.

Regardless of who gets the nod for Saturday's game, Sherrill said, Murray will likely see action. But Mazur will be a tough man to replace as a starter because of his experience and successful past as a quarterback, Sherrill said.

"It's not puzzling," Sherrill said of the Aggies' poor offensive production under Mazur. "It's just a little disheartening and it's one of those things you have to overcome. There could be a lot of reasons for it. Sometimes the receivers haven't been watching the ball, sometimes we haven't protected John like we should and sometimes he holds onto it too long."

Dodgers, Phillies tee off tonight

United Press International
LOS ANGELES — The Philadelphia Phillies and Los Angeles Dodgers, two teams who successfully tinkered with the hands of time, meet in the best-of-five National League Championship Series beginning Tuesday night at Dodger Stadium.

Game One will be nationally televised beginning at 8:20 p.m. EDT.

Philadelphia, a team which won the NL East with a mixture of the not-too-old "Wheeze Kids" and young players, will start left-hander Steve Carlton, who recently won his 300th major league game and ended the regular season at 15-16. Los Angeles will pitch left-hander Jerry Reuss, 12-11 with a 2.RA.

Unlike the Phillies, who fielded old-timers such as Pete Rose and Joe Morgan for much of the season, the Dodgers — 11-1 against Philadelphia this season — won their division with young players.

Los Angeles gambled last winter when it traded third baseman Ron Cey, a cornerstone of the infield for 10 years, to the Chicago Cubs and allowed Steve Garvey, a bulwark at first base for 10 seasons and the team's most popular player, to try free agency and sign with the San

Diego Padres.

Many baseball people felt the Dodgers could not recover from such losses, but Manager Tommy Lasorda used Greg Brock to fill Garvey's shoes and moved Pedro Guerrero — who this year became the first Los Angeles Dodger to have consecutive seasons of 30 or more home runs — in from the outfield to take over at third base.

Mike Marshall took over Guerrero's spot in right field and had a fine season and another rookie, Jack Fimple, proved invaluable to the Dodgers after catchers Steve Yeager and Mike Scioscia went out with injuries.

"When you get youngsters, you know they're going to make mistakes and you know you have to be patient and help them along," said Lasorda. "Now these young men have gained that experience."

"I saw a headline that said 'Boys in April, Men in October.' That certainly describes this team. I wish I had thought up that line. It's like a Marine in battle. When he comes back, you know he's experienced."

The Phillies, 52-36 after the All-Star break, used the likes of journeymen Greg Gross, Len Matuszak and Joe Lefebvre to clinch the division in September,

but enter the playoffs with a seasoned team.

"The only pressure that can be put on a baseball player is the playoffs," said Rose, who finished with the lowest batting average (.245) and hit total (121)

of his career.

"The World Series is fun, but you have to win the playoffs to get there."

Philadelphia was 47-30 after Paul Owens replaced fired Manager Pat Corrales on July 18.

OU coach Switzer says game should be on TV

United Press International
DALLAS — The Texas-Oklahoma game, one of the top college football rivalries and traditionally an important contest as far as national reputations are concerned, will not find its way onto network television this year.

And that makes Oklahoma coach Barry Switzer less than pleased.

"This is a great classic and it should be a national television game every year," Switzer said Monday in a visit with Dallas area writers. "But the way they have that damn television thing so screwed up I don't know if we will ever get it back on."

The current NCAA television plan with ABC and CBS permit each network to show a team no more than three times over a two-year period.

CBS has already used its limit of Oklahoma appearances and ABC has run out of Texas appearances. ABC was willing to trade CBS an Oklahoma appearance, which is allowed under the contract with

NCAA, but an equitable trade arrangement was never achieved.

The University of Texas was in position to arrange a lucrative pay cable contract if it had known ahead of time that CBS and ABC were not going to reach an agreement.

"They (the networks) have known about this problem since last winter," said Texas athletic director DeLoss Dodds. And they have known we had a desire to do something with cable.

"They kept telling us that they would get it worked out tomorrow or the next day. I guess they didn't care (about Texas' chances for a large payday). I guess that's just the way it is in business, but it is a shame it had to be that way."

Texas will go into the game ranked No. 2 while Oklahoma — an early season loser to Ohio State — still has a spot in the top 10 and will be trying for its second straight victory

over the Longhorns.

As preparation for the game began, Switzer said no matter what kind of shape running back Marcus Dupree might be in, it was not as good as it could be.

Dupree suffered a bruised knee against Ohio State, but he still managed to gain 151 yards last weekend against Kansas State.

"He isn't the same back he was at this time last year," Switzer said. "He hasn't practiced, he is not conditioned and he is hurt. He doesn't have the quickness, speed or acceleration that he had at this time last year."

"The one thing is he is tougher this year. It he was well he would be a better back because he is more physical."

"It has been a disappointment to me that he has not been there. I counted on us being a pretty good offensive team because I kind of counted on him being better and well."

Gastineau, Jets dance past fumbling Bills for 34-10 win

United Press International
ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Mark Gastineau, whose war-dance antics have become an issue of controversy, recovered a fumble in the endzone for a touchdown and Richard Todd threw two touchdown passes Monday night to send the New York Jets to a 34-10 victory over the Buffalo Bills.

The All-Pro defensive end, whose "sack dance" incited a

bench-clearing brawl in last week's victory over the Los Angeles Rams, recovered Joe Cribbs' fumble for the touchdown that gave New York a 17-0 lead.

NFL officials are thinking of banning such flamboyant celebrations next season. Gastineau finished with three sacks against Buffalo but this time no incidents stemmed from his bursts of self-congratulation.

The Jets' victory left four teams — New York, Buffalo, Miami and Baltimore — tied in the AFC East with 3-2 records.

New York had a 10-0 lead late in the third quarter when they downed a punt by Chuck Ramsey at the Buffalo 1. On the next play, Cribbs fumbled and the ball was pounced on by Gastineau in the endzone at 11:35.

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