

TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



Second USFL season starts

United Press International

The United States Football League begins its second season Sunday with the same concern with which it began its first — financial survival.

While most USFL owners have lots of money, they didn't make it by investing in losing ventures and one has to wonder how long they will be willing to pick up the tab if television and box-office revenues don't offset expenses.

National Football League teams probably could make it on television revenue alone if they had to. But the USFL's television package is a great deal less lucrative. And, unless the ratings are better in '83 than they were in '82, the next USFL television package likely won't be as good as the present one.

USFL Commissioner Chet Simmons

said originally that his league had no intention of matching NFL salaries. But the need for name players — both from the NFL ranks and out of college — quickly opened the same sort of price-bidding battle that the NFL and AFL got into in the '60s.

A survey of the USFL teams in the Southeast indicate deficit budgets.

The Tampa Bay Bandits, capitalizing on apparent fan dissatisfaction with the NFL Tampa Bay Buccaneers, report they've sold 33,000 season tickets for their games in 73,000 Tampa Stadium. But the newly formed Jacksonville Bulls have sold only 22,000 at the 81,000-seat Gator Bowl, and the Birmingham Stallions and the newly-formed Memphis Showboats, who play in 78,000 and 50,000-seat stadiums, have each sold only 18,000.

In an effort to bolster ticket sales, USFL teams are resorting to gimmicks. The Tampa Bay Bandits, for example, have given away trips to England, along with the team and other prizes to 100 people to Tampa Stadium.

"The NFL has discouraged that sort of thing," said Falcons' promotion director Charlie Dayton. "They figure the quality of our product is all the selling point we need."

The USFL made off with the last trophy winners — Walker last year and Nebraska's Mike Rozier who went to Pittsburgh Maulers this year — and signed about a third of the college players drafted in January.

The NFL has declined to move up draft date from early May to go head-to-head with the USFL on signing college players.

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NCAA Champs begin season

Ag softball tries for 3rd title

By DAVE SCOTT
Sports Writer

Head coach Bob Brock and the Texas A&M women's softball team are like the two mountain climbers who have just conquered Mount Everest. All they can do is look at each other, shrug their shoulders and say "What now?"

After two consecutive national championships, the team can't climb any higher. All it can do is start at the bottom like everyone else and get ready to play king-of-the-mountain for another year.

The ascent to the top begins Sunday for the Aggies. A&M, ranked No. 4 in the preseason polls, plays No. 6 Louisiana Tech in a doubleheader Sunday at 1:30 p.m.

This year's climb will be made steeper because the Aggies will be without the powerful pitching duo of Shan McDonald and all-American Lori

Stoll. Their departure has caused the other would-be mountain climbers to be even more eager to knock A&M off its mountain top.

But Brock is confident. He says the team has new enthusiasm and the players are excited about the upcoming season. The two new pitchers, freshman Shawn Andaya and junior transfer Yvette Lopez, are two of the best pitchers in the country, Brock says.

Lopez is a power pitcher, reminiscent of Stoll. To compliment her speed, she has a good curve ball and an effective change-up.

Andaya, in comparison, doesn't rely on power pitches. She has two main pitches, the drop-ball and the rise-ball, which are considered to be the two best types of pitches in softball. And Andaya isn't fazed by the pressure of stepping in after a pitcher like Stoll.

"I'll just have to face it," she says.

Both pitchers had winning records in fall competition. Andaya was 8-2 with a 0.37 ERA and Lopez was 4-3 with a 0.45 ERA.

But Andaya and Lopez still lack experience, Brock says, he has planned a schedule against strong teams such as Louisiana Tech to season the young pitchers. So by play-off time, he says, the pair should be ready for any team.

And Brock says he expects his team to be in the play-offs, even if this year's record isn't quite the same.

"We may lose a few more games this year," Brock says, "but we're not going to be losers."

Shortstop is the only other position besides pitcher Brock has had to fill.

All-American Carrie Austgen has graduated, leaving freshman Judy Trussel and senior Linda Lancaster fighting for the moment.

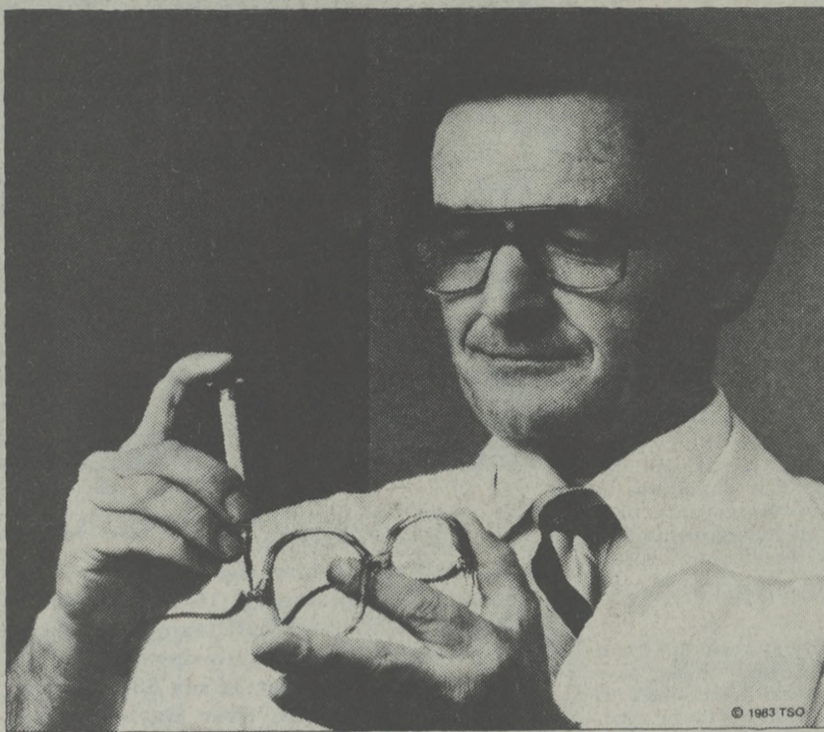
Lancaster is having trouble with a sore arm, giving Trussel an edge for the job.

The rest of the infield returns intact with sophomore Mary Schwind at first base, senior Patty Holthaus at second base and sophomore Cindy Cooper at third base. Holthaus



Photo by DEAN SA...

Outfielder Cindy Foster holds the NCAA Championship trophy that the Aggies won last season. Texas A&M plays Sunday at 1:30 p.m. at the Penberthy Intramural Complex.



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