

Injuries plague Falcons' offense

United Press International

SUWANEE, Ga. — No one, least of all Dan Henning, expected the Atlanta Falcons offense to come apart at the seams.

Last season, Henning's first at the Falcons' helm, had been a shake-down cruise; a learning period for the one-back offense Henning brought with him from Washington.

Although Atlanta was only 7-9, the first four losses were all by 4 or less points. The Atlanta offense — with Steve Bartkowski the top-rated passer in the NFL and William Andrews the top all-purpose running back in the league — averaged 32 points over the closing five games of 1983.

Henning figured the offense was set for '84. If the Falcons tightened up their defense, they would be a solid contender for a playoff berth.

But that was before Andrews went out for the year with a preseason knee injury. Before Billy "White-shoes" Johnson suffered a similar blow five games into the season, and running backs Gerald Riggs and Lynn Cain were also injured.

Now the Falcons, 3-4 after last

week's upset at the hands of the New York Giants, go into next Monday night's game against the Los Angeles Rams uncertain who will be at running back.

"We have an extra day, but that isn't going to solve all the problems," said Henning. "We've got to keep pressing on. Whoever is in there will have to play to the ability they have. That will have to be enough."

Henning said any more losses of players to injury will force the Falcons to readjust their thinking.

"We'll have to take a different approach with our defense," he said. "We will have to do things that will keep us in a low-scoring game. But we haven't reached that point yet."

"The loss of so many running backs creates a dual problem," Henning said. "It not only hampers our running game, it also puts a dent in our passing."

A year ago, Andrews and Johnson were responsible for more than a third of Atlanta's pass completions. Bartkowski, connecting on two-thirds of his attempts, is averaging 17 completions and 229 yards per game. But he hasn't thrown a touch-

down pass in the past three games, and Henning blames that on the receivers.

"Bart has gotten the ball in close plenty of times, but he can't take it in himself," said Henning. "Many touchdown passes are due to the speed and running ability of the people who catch it."

"With the injuries to our runners, he's had to fit the ball in places where he normally wouldn't have to. There have been too many dropped passes of late and he's had to throw the ball away more often than he used to."

When Andrews was in the lineup, Bartkowski used him as a primary target. Riggs, while doing a good job as a runner when he's been healthy, isn't in Andrews' class as a receiver.

"Even if we get Riggs back for the Rams game, he probably won't be a factor in our passing attack," Henning said. "Gerald hasn't practiced in two weeks and running pass routes isn't something easily done on a bad ankle."

Henning plans to use Floyd Hodge in Johnson's H-Back position.

"While we figure Floyd can do an adequate job filling in for Billy," said Henning, "that leaves us with the problem of who fills in at wide receiver for Floyd."

"The only receiver we have with more than one year's experience is Alfred Jackson. It's good we are playing our next game on Monday. If ever a week comes along to help get well, this is the week."

Jackson seems to feel that some of the injured Falcons could do better than they have if they wanted to.

"We've got guys on this team who don't know the difference between pain and injury," said Jackson. "If we had more guys who did, we'd be 6-1 now instead of 3-4."

Team owner Rankin Smith Sr. said losing Andrews and Johnson hurt the Falcons mentally as well as physically.

"Not only do you lose people who are very productive, you lose a lot of glue," said Smith. "They inspired people to do better. We don't have somebody to take up the slack. If they do, they haven't risen to the occasion."

Switzer wants to forget Horn tie

United Press International

NORMAN, Okla. — Last Saturday's controversial tie with Texas was like a loss to Oklahoma coach Barry Switzer and it, rather than the coming game at Iowa State, was the main item of discussion at his weekly media luncheon Tuesday.

"Yeah, it was like a loss," Switzer said of the 15-15 tie. "It was disappointing to have it taken away from us, and to know that we should have won the football game. It's as simple as that."

"There have been so many times I've gone down that ramp, or any coach at Oklahoma has gone down that ramp, and didn't have the best team and knew they couldn't win."

"(When) we went down that ramp

(Saturday), I knew we were the best football team," he said. "And when you don't get the win, when you should've had the win, that's frustrating."

As expected, the sports writers and sportscasters attending the weekly briefing asked numerous questions about the apparent interception by OU's Keith Stanberry on the next-to-last play of the game.

Switzer repeated that Bruce Fimaly, the Big Eight's supervisor of officials, had apologized to him.

"He saw the game, he looked at the film, he talked to Clark (the Big Eight official that ruled Stanberry was out of bounds) and both of them are sorry it happened," Switzer said. "He said Clark felt worse than we

did about it."

"Bruce suggested that he take him off of having any games that come up in the future, and I didn't say anything," he said. "I don't mind having him next year at all. I think the guy couldn't see the ball."

"It's been ingrained in those guys (officials) if they can't see the reception offensively or defensively in the end zone then call it incomplete."

"Stanberry's back was to him and he did slide out of the end zone," Switzer said. "The only problem is that you've got another Big Eight guy there who told Stanberry he caught it."


Switzer also commented about an apparent Texas fumble by Jerome Johnson that was disallowed during

the Longhorns' final drive. He agreed the fumble was even a worse call than the nullified interception.

"It is to me (the worst call of the two) because the head linesman, the guy in front of me, obviously saw the same thing I did," Switzer said. "I know he did because he'd been yelling at me to get back the whole day."

Even though a lot of attention at the luncheon was given to Texas, Switzer did address the problem of stopping Iowa State's passing attack, Saturday night in Ames.

"I watched their Colorado film yesterday," he said of the Cyclones, 0-2 in Big Eight play, "and they probably should have beaten Colorado."



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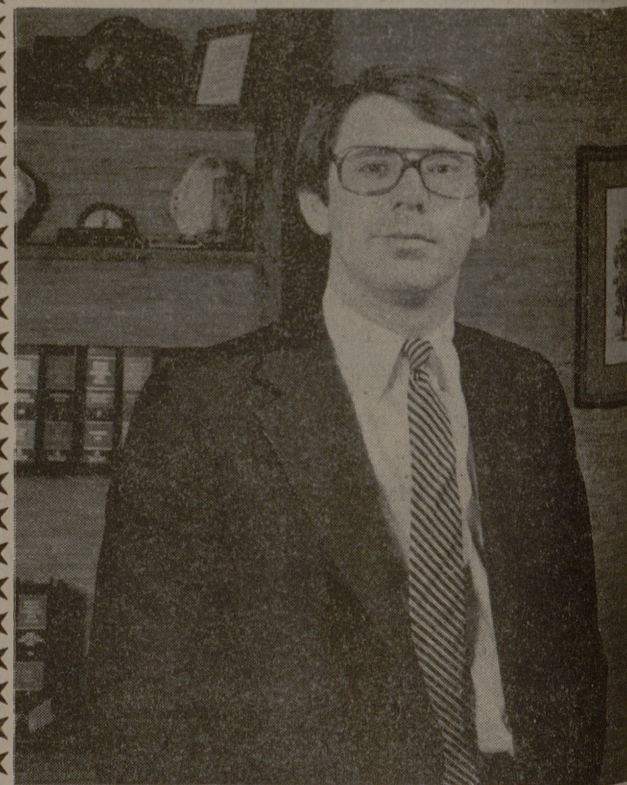
The rest of the story.

This past spring, State Representative Neeley Lewis was elected in a special election when former State Representative Bill Presnal stepped down. In a hotly contested election, a record number of Texas A&M University students voted, disputing any claim that the Aggie students who desired to vote were "disenfranchised" because of the date of the election.

State Representative Neeley Lewis was sworn in on March 20, 1984 and immediately went to work to represent the best interests of Brazos County and Texas A&M University. He stepped in at a politically tough time when the legislature would be asked to "bite the bullet" and deal with two of the most important issues facing Texans, present and future: public education and highways. Representative Lewis could have played the game and done the politically expedient thing. He could have voted for the education reform and highway package to look good, and then voted against the tax bill which was necessary to fund the education and highway bill. That would have been hypocritical and dishonest. State Representative Neeley Lewis chose to do the right thing. That took courage. Texas had not had a tax increase in 13 years yet its growth was unparalleled in that period with a population increase of some 4 1/2 million people. The demands on our schools and education had attained overbearing levels, and traffic had deteriorated our once excellent highway system to the point that the safety of Texans was being threatened. Because Neeley Lewis had the courage to vote for improving education, paying teachers a fairer salary and meeting our highway needs, the kids won, teachers won and so did every Texan who drives our roads and highways. Moreover, because Neeley Lewis stood up and forthrightly fought an "ill conceived tuition increase" at our state colleges and universities, the students of TAMU were winners as well. That also took courage, and it proved that Representative Lewis can stand up for his constituents and not succumb to the leadership of The House. He proved he could effectively work with the leadership when he felt it was right, and could differ with them and win when he felt it was wrong.

Thus the real issue of this contest to elect a State Representative boils down to who can most effectively represent the needs of Brazos County and Texas A&M University, not who can spout cliches and screech ideologies.

Representative Lewis, has proven he is a responsible legislator who understands the legislative process and deals with the real issues the way he sees them, not as he would dream them to be. He has worked hard for the 14th Legislative District for the past eight months and he has the respect of those members of the Texas House with whom he works for the ultimate benefit of all his constituents.



RE-ELECT NEELEY Lewis STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Paid for by the Neeley Lewis Campaign, Stuart F. Lewis, Treasurer 4500 Carter Creek Parkway, Bryan