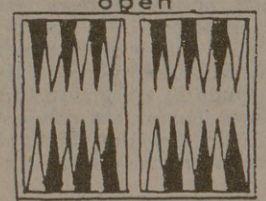


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SPORTS

Ponies sitting pretty in the Top 20 saddle

Associated Press
DALLAS — A bountiful, bigtime bench has contributed to Southern Methodist's basketball success story this season.

The high-riding Mustangs reached No. 2 in The Associated Press poll Tuesday — the highest ranking ever by the Southwest Conference team.

"It's nice for our program to be recognized as among the elite in the country," said SMU Coach Dave Bliss. "I wasn't sure we deserved to be there (in the Top Ten) earlier this season."

"Our bench has given us a lift recently. We've developed some quality depth. We have some players we can go to now and be confident when we do it," he said.

Sophomore reserves Terry Williams and Johnny Fuller haven't received the acclaim of Jon Koncak and Carl Wright. But they've provided the critical depth and balance needed by a team with national championship hopes.

Williams, a 6-foot-9 bruiser from Newburgh, N.Y., has averaged almost 10 points and 4 rebounds per game as a reserve. He's shooting 65 percent from the field.

Williams is the first one off the bench for the seven-foot center Koncak and power forward Larry Davis.

"Terry has improved so much since his freshman year," Bliss said. "He wasn't sure then whether he wanted to work hard enough to be a player."

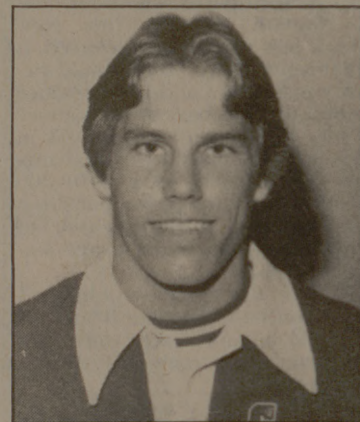
"He dropped 20 pounds in the off-season and was dedicated enough to work hard every day during the summer. And now we feel confident with him no matter the situation."

Williams hit two critical free throws late in SMU's 84-82 victory over North Carolina.

Fuller, a 6-foot-1 guard from Wilmer-Hutchins, is called upon to give Wright and Butch Moore breathers. Bliss also loves Fuller's defense. He has 16 steals.



SMU's Dave Bliss



SMU's Jon Koncak

For example, Fuller made two steals and contributed five points in a 60-second span during SMU's 74-70 victory over Texas Christian last Saturday.

"Fuller played a great game," Bliss said, "but he's been playing a big part in a lot of ball games for us lately coming off the bench. Fuller is an important player for us now. He is one of our top players. We need to have someone like him as our defensive stopper."

Top 20

The Top Twenty teams in the Associated Press' college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, total points based on 20-19-18-17-16-15-14-13-12-11-10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1, recored through Monday, Jan. 21 and last week's ranking:

1. Georgetown (60) 17-0 12001
2. SMU 15-1 11083
3. St. John's 13-1 10804
4. Memphis St. 13-1 10125
5. Duke 13-2 9582
6. Illinois 15-4 72911
7. DePaul 13-3 68210
8. North Carolina 14-3 6806
9. Oklahoma 13-4 65113
10. Oregon St. 14-1 60514
11. Syracuse 11-2 6027
12. Louisiana Tech 15-1 59812
13. Indiana 11-4 4658
14. Villanova 12-3 43318
15. Kansas 13-3 4169
16. Georgia Tech 13-3 31617
17. Tulsa 14-2 23920
18. Michigan 12-3 157 unranked
19. Virginia Comm. 12-2 10816
20. UNLV 13-2 96 unranked

Williams almost quit the team last year, but thought better of it after chat with Bliss.

"Terry was a long way from home and just having trouble adjusting as a freshman," he said. "He realizes his time will come as a starter. He has two years in there."

Although Bliss said "rankings are nice," he quickly pointed out that "the only one that counts is the Final Four (NCAA playoff) results."

Pro Bowl: a Super Bowl rerun

Associated Press

HONOLULU — The San Francisco 49ers and the Miami Dolphins get another shot at each other Sunday.

That's right. Dan Marino gets another shot at Joe Montana and the 49ers' secondary that stymied him in Super Bowl XIX.

Ten 49ers and seven Dolphins who will participate in Sunday's Pro Bowl arrived Monday, a day after San Francisco's 38-16 Super Bowl win, then went through loosening up exercises and a photo session.

But the intensity preceding the National Football League's annual postseason all-star game will be nothing like what the players went

through a week ago preparing for the Super Bowl.

"You have to try to shut out all the outside influences on your concentration before the Super Bowl," said 49ers' guard Randy Cross.

The American and National conference squads of 41 each will have workouts of about 1½ hours each morning under coaches Mike Ditka of the Chicago Bears and Chuck Noll of the Pittsburgh Steelers — the coaching staffs of the losers in the two conference title games are the coaches for the Pro Bowl game.



Relaxation also is the way the Dolphins and the 49ers, including Montana and Marino, are taking the renewal of their rivalry. In the minds

of the 49ers, Montana's masterful performance in the Super Bowl earned him the title of the NFL's quarterback over Marino, despite Marino's record-shattering 17 touchdown passes and 5,084 yards during the regular season.

One incentive the two teams have in Sunday's game is money — the winners get \$10,000, the loser \$5,000. Another is the AFC-NFC rivalry, although that has waned since the early 1970s, the first days of the NFL's merger with the old American Football League.

Since that merger, the NFC has won nine games, the AFC five, including three of the four played here.

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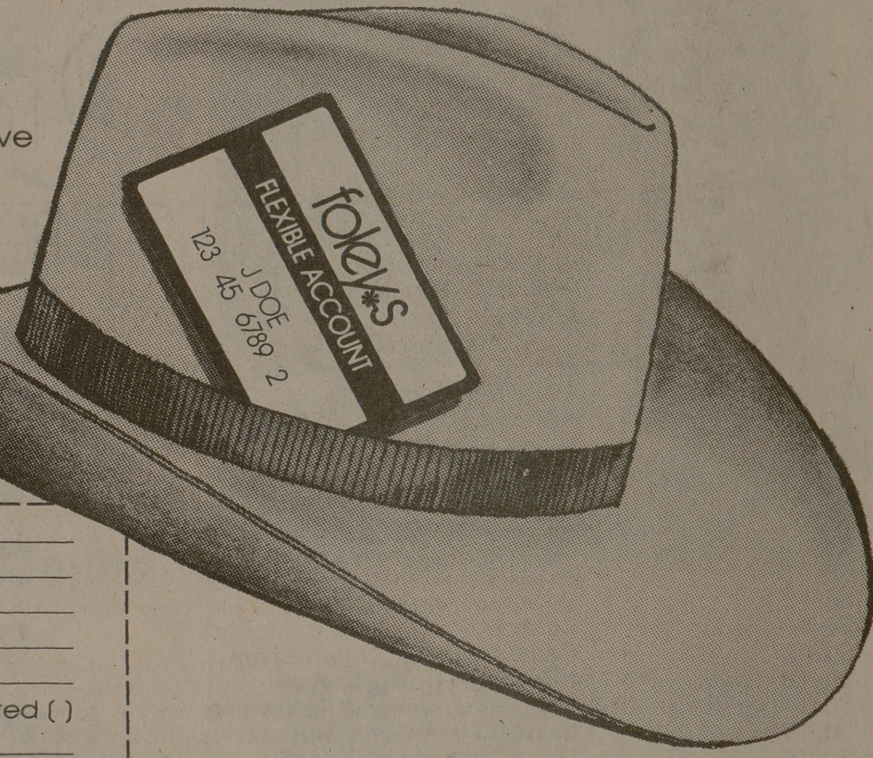
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