

Guns firing big blanks on offense

San Antonio to change QBs for Denver game

Associated Press

DENVER — Theirs is not the worst offense in the United States Football League — thanks to the presence of lowly Orlando — but don't ask San Antonio Gunslingers Coach Jim Bates to heap praises on any phase of his anemic attack.

"Our offense has sputtered and we haven't gotten anything going offensively in any of our four games," said Bates as his team wound up preparations for Monday night's United States Football League game against the Denver Gold at Mile High Stadium.

"It's not a question of running problems one game and passing problems another," Bates said, "it's been a total breakdown every game."

"Maybe we've tried to do some things offensively that don't fit our personnel. I don't know. We've just got to get more productive."

Offensive coordinator Tom Rossley was fired last week, leaving Bates and the remaining offensive assistant coaches to handle this week's game plan. Indications are the Gunslingers will go with a more simplified attack aimed at improving execution.

Bates has promised at least one lineup change.

San Antonio will have its third starting quarterback in as many games, as second-year pro Whit Taylor gets the call against Denver. Taylor, a former Vanderbilt star, replaced Fred Mortensen, who had just taken the job from Rick Neuheisel.

Mortensen, a former Gold quarterback, completed only seven of 23 passes for 73 yards, with one touchdown and one interception, in last week's 38-7 loss to the Los Angeles Express, dropping San Antonio's record to 1-3. The Gunslingers didn't cross midfield until late in the final quarter.

San Antonio is averaging 200 yards per game on offense, ranking 13th in the 14-team league. They have fewer first downs than any other USFL team (47), and are tied with Orlando for fewest points scored (44).

But the Denver defense might be a unit San Antonio could get well against. The Gold has surrendered 361 yards per game, most of it through the air, to rank 13th in the USFL.

Denver, 2-2, bowed to Houston 36-17 last week. Coach Mouse Davis' run-and-shoot offense has shown signs of exploding, but five interceptions and six sacks stymied the attack against Houston. Quarterback Vince Evans is completing only 44 percent of his passes, with four touchdowns and a league-high 10 interceptions for the year.

Gold officials were hoping for a crowd well in excess of the home-opener gate of 17,890 — the team's lowest attendance in its three years of existence.

Kirk's Tigers end 2 years of Final Four frustration

Associated Press

DALLAS — The Memphis State Tigers have finally made it back to the NCAA Final Four after two years of failure and second-guessing.

"Now, I want to wear the roses around my neck," said Memphis Coach Dana Kirk.

Kirk, in a buoyant spirit after the Tigers had knocked off Oklahoma and All-American Wayman Tisdale 63-61 in the final of the Midwest Regional, was alluding to the fact that the Final Four beginning Saturday will be held in horse race country, Lexington, Ky. And he wants to win it all.

The opponent for the Tigers will be Villanova, who bumped off North Carolina in the Southeast Regional.

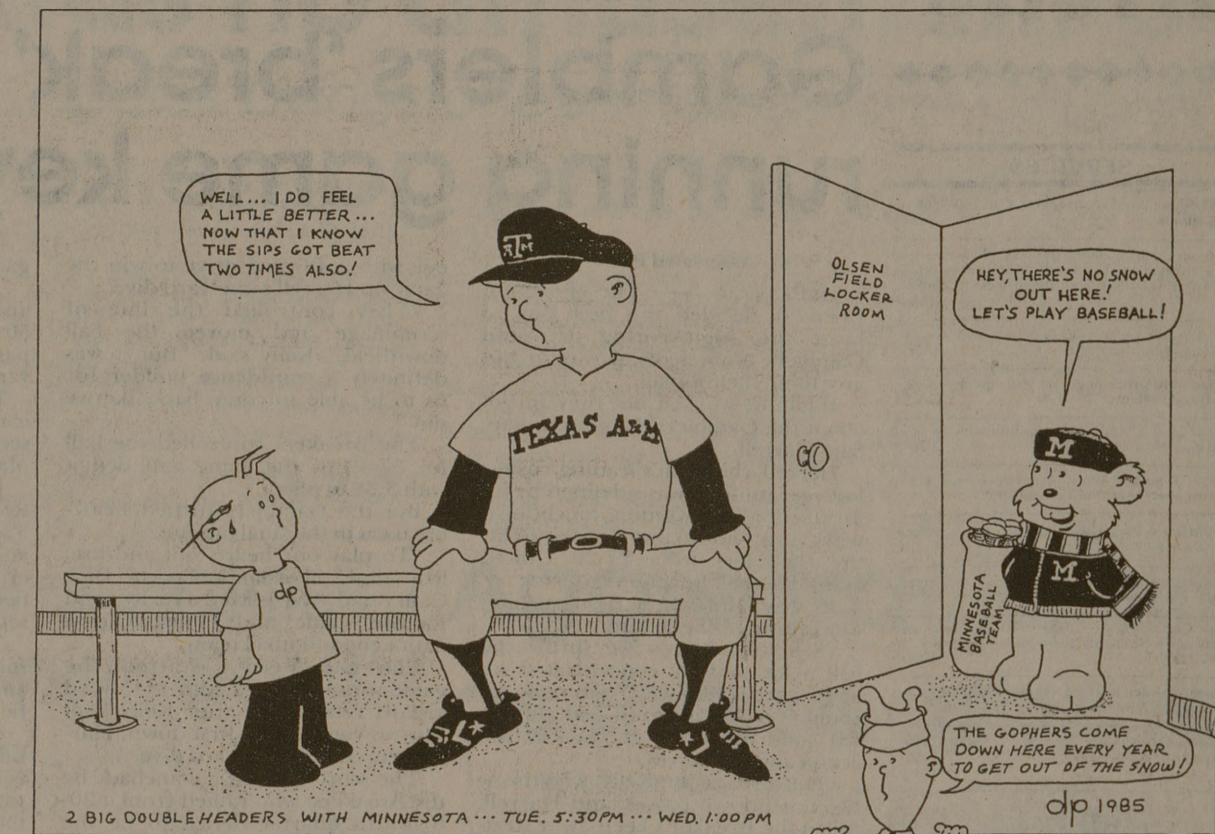
Memphis State was defeated by Houston in the NCAA playoffs the last two years and Kirk was starting to tire of answering his critics.

"We're going to Lexington and we know it's going to be tough, baby," Kirk said.

But he quickly added "I think we've got a good basketball team and however far we go we deserve it."

Andre Turner was the hero again for the Tigers.

Turner, who beat Boston College



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Villanova knocks off No. 7 North Carolina

Associated Press

Wildcats 56; Tar Heels 44

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Harold Pressley, Dwayne McClain and Harold Jensen put Villanova in control with six points each early in the second half and the Wildcats upset seventh-ranked North Carolina 56-44 Sunday to advance to the NCAA Final Four.

The Wildcats redeemed themselves in the second half after shooting only 23 percent in the first.

By winning the Southeast Regional championship, Villanova, 23-10, became the second Big East Conference team to reach the national semifinals. The Wildcats will face No. 5 Memphis State, 30-3, at Lexington, Ky., Saturday. Memphis State won the Midwest Regional Saturday 63-61 over Oklahoma.

Villanova, which last appeared in the Final Four in 1971, was led by Pressley with 15 points, McClain and Gary McLain with 11 each and Jensen with 10.

Brad Daugherty had 17 points for North Carolina.

North Carolina, 27-9, led 22-17 at the half.

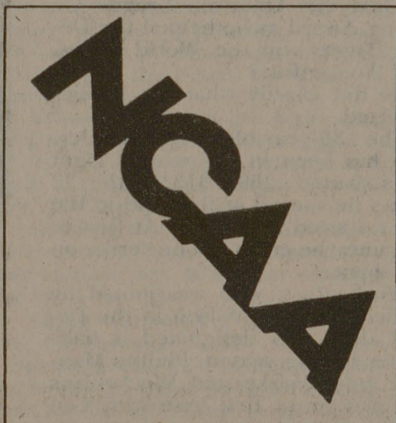
Villanova trailed 26-21 after Daugherty hit a layup two minutes into the second half before Ed Pinckney started a 10-0 spurt by hitting a layup.

McCain had the last two baskets to give the Wildcats a 31-26 lead with 14:29 to go.

After North Carolina cut the lead to one on two baskets by Daugherty, Jensen hit three baskets in the 15-18 foot range and Pressley added two buckets, including a slam dunk off a steal that provided a 43-33 lead with 8:13 to play.

North Carolina was never able to get closer than seven points the rest of the way.

It was only Villanova's second victory over North Carolina in six meetings, including a loss to the Tar



Heels in the 1982 East Regional finals. Villanova also lost to Houston in a regional championship game in 1983 and fell to Duke in a 1978 regional championship contest.

It was the second time in three years that North Carolina lost in the regional championship game, following an upset by Georgia in the East finals two years ago. The Tar Heels lost to Indiana in the regional semifinals last year.

Villanova, which finished third in the Big East, had entered the NCAA as the eighth seed and knocked off top-seeded and second-ranked Michigan in the second round and fifth-seeded Maryland Friday night.

Redmen 69, Wolfpack 60

DENVER — Swingman Chris Mullin scored 25 points and forward Walter Berry added 19 as third-ranked St. John's defeated North Carolina State 69-60 Sunday in the NCAA West Regional final, sending the Redmen to a Final Four rematch with No. 1 Georgetown.

St. John's, 31-3 and the top seed in the West, will be in the Final Four for the first time since 1952, when it

lost to Kansas in the championship game.

The Redmen's victory capped a successful day for the Big East Conference, which will send a record three teams to the national semifinals Saturday at Lexington, Ky. Villanova joined St. John's and Georgetown by upsetting North Carolina 56-44 in the Southeast Regional championship game and will meet Metro Conference champion Memphis State in the other semifinal.

St. John's, which hit 25 of 31 free throws to 18 of 23 for N.C. State, didn't pull away from North Carolina State until the final two minutes.

Mullin's rebound basket and two subsequent free throws staked the Redmen to a 47-42 advantage midway through the second half. To that point, the Redmen had converted all 13 of their free-throw attempts.

With 6:18 left, the 6-foot-6 Mullin in a mismatch against State's 5-7 guard Anthony "Spud" Webb went inside for a three-point play. A minute later he popped a 15-foot jumper over Webb to give St. John's a commanding 56-48 lead.

The Wolfpack got no closer than four points after that, even though St. John's free-throw shooting was shaky down the stretch, missing five of the last 14, most in the final two minutes.

State's Lorenzo Charles, who started slowly and didn't score his first points until late in the first half, led a Wolfpack rally early in the second half as his team drew within 43-42 with 11:21 to play. But a collapsing St. John's defense inside held Charles to only two points the remainder of the game and he finished with a team-high 15. Webb had 14 for the Wolfpack, 23-10.

Center Bill Wennington added 14 for St. John's.

San Antonio uses 'Ice' to rattle Seattle

SAN ANTONIO — Guard George Gervin scored eight of his 15 points in the fourth quarter, leading the San Antonio Spurs to a 104-99 National Basketball Association victory over the Seattle SuperSonics Sunday.

Gervin, nicknamed "The Iceman," played sparingly in the first half and not at all in the third quarter to lead a well-balanced Spurs scoring attack. Forward Marc Iavaroni added 14 points and centers Artis Gilmore and Ozell Jones had 16 and 13 respectively.

In all, six Spurs scored in double figures.

Sonics center Tim McCormick and forward Tom Chambers keyed a fourth-quarter Seattle rally. The comeback attempt fell short despite six points each from the two players.

McCormick led Seattle with 29 points and seven rebounds. Chambers scored 26.

San Antonio, which trailed during much of the first period, took a 12-point lead midway through the second quarter, primarily on the play of Jones. Jones, who filled in for Gilmore early in the second period, scored 10 points, grabbed seven rebounds and blocked three shots in eight minutes of play.

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