

TANK McNAMARA®

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



Lions' Sims still Hook-ed on his Texas hometown

Associated Press

HOOKS — Don Marie Sims was pregnant with Billy when she left East Texas to have her baby in St. Louis. So an argument could be made that Billy Sims was running before he was born.

Today, 29 years later, he is still running, and not just from tacklers in the National Football League. He is dodging Detroit's fast pace and cutting back against the grain of urban living.

Always, his runs take him the same place — to tiny Hooks, a town of 2,489 people, where Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas meet in the Piney Woods.

Hooks phone numbers all start with 547.

"Going to town" means driving about 10 miles into Texarkana.

"Detroit is where I work," Sims says. "East Texas is where I live. This is home."

Home is a sprawling five-bedroom, ranch-style house on a grassy knoll overlooking a pond in the middle of 40 wooded acres. In front, there are cows and horses. Out back, there is a swimming pool, tennis court, guest quarters, a 1955 Chevy — "my hot rod," Sims says — and a garage with three models of Mercedes that get less use than his Ford pickup.

Sims tries to keep from knocking the place that made him a wealthy Lion on the playing field and a young Lion in business. But in De-

troit, No. 20 keeps only a condominium, five minutes from the Silverdome.

During the season, he asks his wife Brenda to take Billy Jr., age 4, and Brent, 3, home every once in a while "to keep in touch." Until this year, when Sims needed therapy after knee surgery, he has always left Motown quickly after the season is over.

"When I won the Heisman Trophy at Oklahoma, and the Lions drafted me, bam! I was supposed to be the savior of the franchise," Sims says. "Everything you saw and heard in Detroit was Sims, Sims, Sims. The notoriety was fine for a couple years, but I've always been a player who likes to see the publicity get spread around. There's plenty for everybody."

"I wasn't used to all the pressure, the demands by the public and the press in Detroit. It all gets to be pretty cutthroat. The pace can get you," Sims said.

"So I started taking every chance I could get out of that. I'm not rippin' Detroit, really. If I was single, I would stay there during the off-season," he said. "But here, you've got good neighbors, and they're not right on top of you. They are hundreds of yards away. I do as I want to do. In a small town, they care for you. There are no games, no tricks."

In East Texas, Billy is just "folks," driving his pickup, wearing a blue gimme cap with a white script "H"

for Hooks, where he was an All-State football player.

He gave \$5,000 to his old school to update its weight-training facility. He still keeps a key to the school gym in case he ever wants to shoot a few hoops.

This is the guy who helped support himself in high school with all sorts of odd jobs — hauling hay, cleaning out the sewage plant, paving roads for the city. He may be the only running back in Texas school-boy history who filled the stadium on Friday nights with his ball carrying, then swept it on Saturday mornings with his broom.

Sims won the Heisman Trophy in 1978, fulfilling a recruiting promise made him by Barry Switzer.

"I learned in a hurry that he is a players' coach," Sims says. "He believed in me, even when I was hurt and really not producing that well."

"I almost went to Baylor. I really did. They were running the I (formation) and our communication was good. But Switzer got into the act by calling me at halftime of OU games. I would be pumping gas at the filling station and he would call and say, 'Well we're here in Lawrence and kicking the hell out of Kansas.'"

Sims said he chose OU over Baylor because Switzer vowed that, in Norman, he eventually would earn his degree and win the Heisman.

"I found out later," Sims said with a laugh, "that he tells all good backs that."

Rangers twist past Twins, 2-0

Texas rookie pitcher picks up second win

Associated Press

ARLINGTON — The first day rookie pitcher Jose Guzman arrived in the major leagues two weeks ago, he told Texas Rangers' Manager Bobby Valentine he was here to stay, and after Thursday night's performance he may be right.

Guzman, 2-2, scattered six hits in 8 2/3 innings to pick up his second win in his fourth big league game with a 2-0 victory over the Minnesota Twins.

Guzman looked to be headed to an easy shutout, but after giving up two, two-out singles in the ninth, Dwayne Henry came in to pick up his second save of the year.

"The first day I got here, I told him (Valentine) I would work hard and am not going back to Oklahoma City (the Rangers' triple-A farm team)," Guzman said.

Valentine has lauded Guzman as the Rangers' top young pitching prospect, and, after Thursday's 2-0 victory, he went as far as to compare him to Dwight Gooden.

"He has quality major league stuff," Valentine said. "He has great control and composure. Everyone talks about Dwight Gooden, and Guzman has that kind of composure. He doesn't get rattled."

Valentine also said the game was good for Henry, another young arm the Rangers hope will lead them to brighter days in the future.

"I thought one run might win that game," Valentine said. "It got a little hairy at the end, but the more times Dwayne (Henry) gets a chance in a situation like that, the better he is going to be in the future."

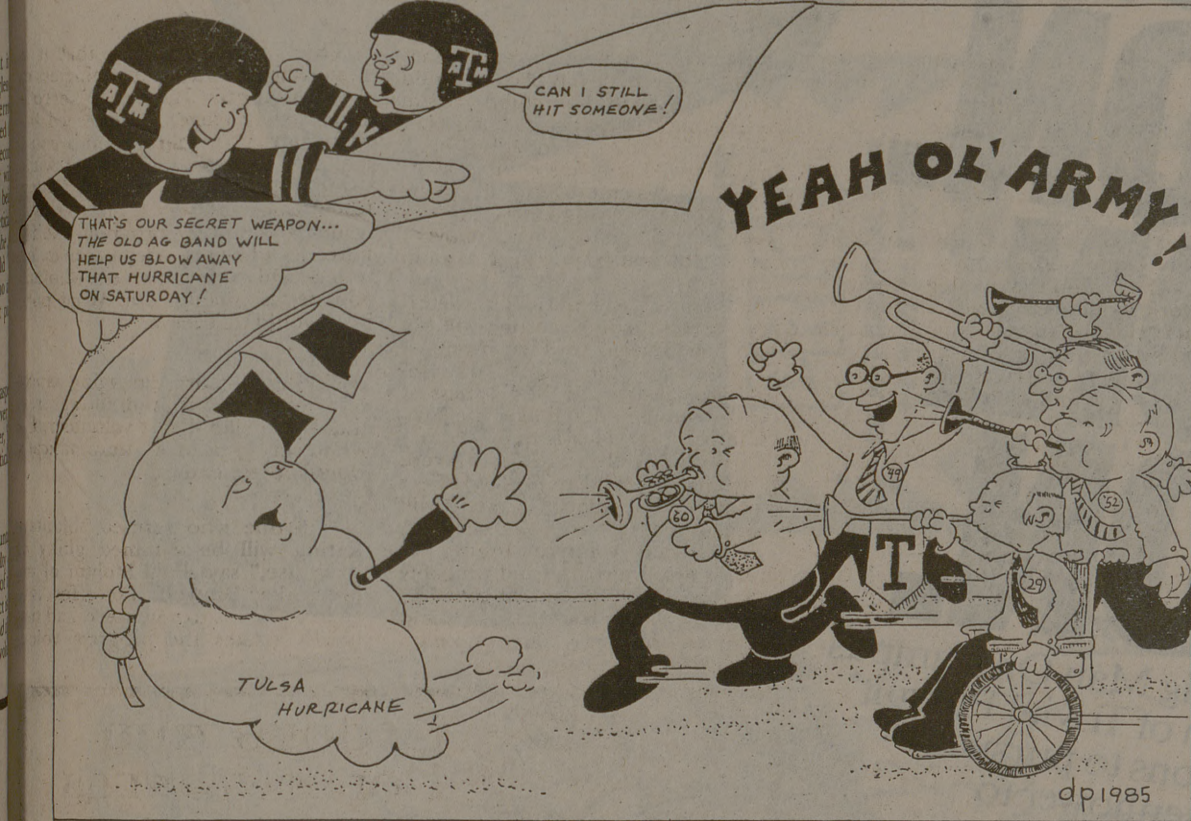
The Rangers scored the only run they needed in the fourth inning when O'Brien hit his 21st home run of the year, a towering shot to center field.

The Rangers added an insurance run in the seventh inning when Gary Ward, who had three hits in the game, came home from third with two outs on Bill Stein's fielder's-choice grounder.

Twins starting pitcher Mike Smithson, 14-13, held the Rangers to only six hits. He struck out four and walked four.

Rangers' outfielder Duane Walker suffered a hairline fracture of his left wrist and will miss the rest of the season, the club announced after the game.

Walker suffered the fracture when he was hit by a pitch from Smithson in the fifth. He continued to play until the eighth.



Other Thursday games:	
(Home team in capitals)	
AMERICAN LEAGUE	
Baltimore 9, MILWAUKEE 1	
Boston-TORONTO (rain)	
Detroit-NEW YORK (rain)	
Kansas City-SEATTLE (night)	
Chicago-OAKLAND (night)	
NATIONAL LEAGUE	
Atlanta 6, CINCINNATI 1	
New York 3, CHICAGO 0	
ST. LOUIS 5, Philadelphia 0	
Montreal-PITTSBURGH (rain)	

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