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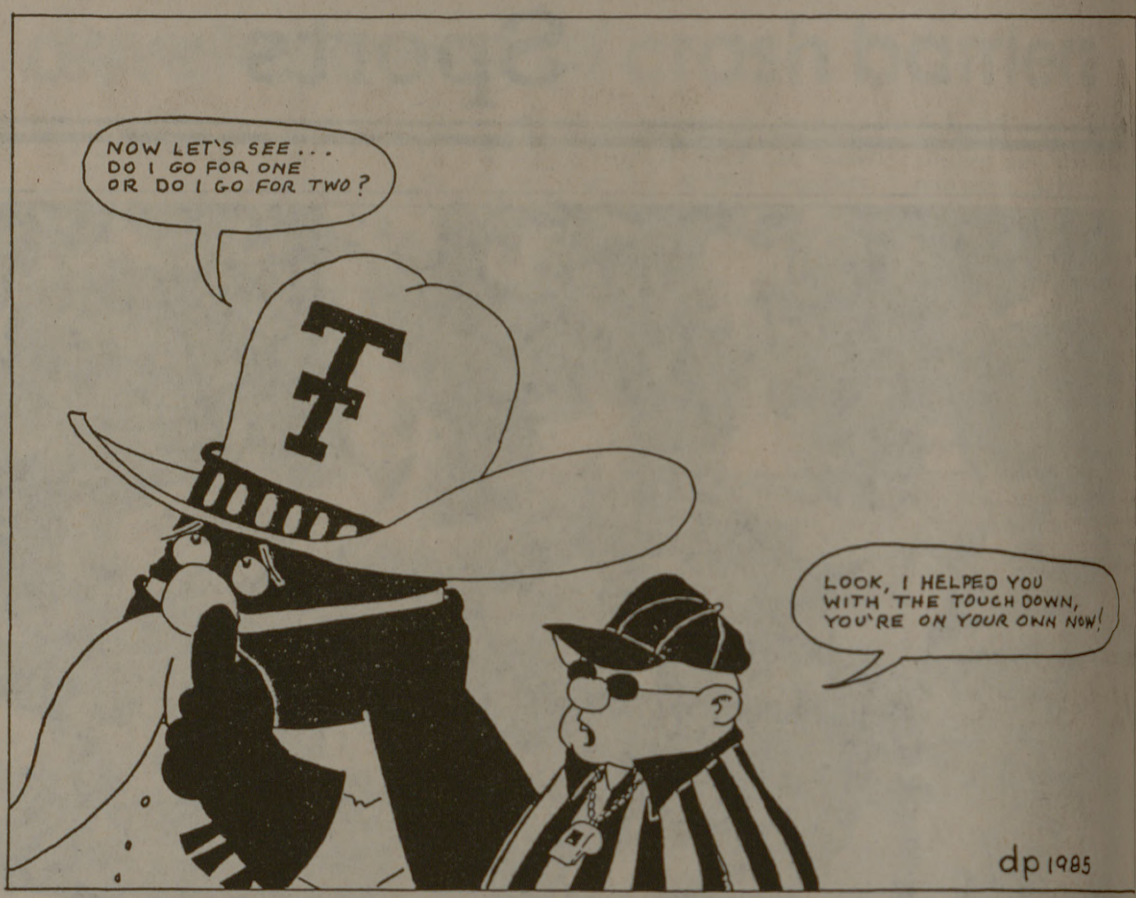
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**Astros give manager ax 1 day after season ends**

**Associated Press**  
 HOUSTON — Bob Lillis, who guided the Houston Astros to a winning record in three full seasons as manager but never to the playoffs, was fired Monday and offered a top-level job in the organization, General Manager Dick Wagner announced.  
 A replacement for Lillis, a member of the Astros organization since 1962, would be announced later this month, Wagner said.  
 Wagner said he hoped Lillis would remain in the organization but felt that a change needed to be made because the Astros had not risen far above the .500 level under Lillis' direction.  
 "I don't want to be critical of Bob, but the fact that Houston played at the .500 level over three years was a big part of it," Wagner said. "We've got to look for a team that is more aggressive on the field."  
 Lillis was not immediately available for comment.  
 Wagner said coaches Denis Menke, Les Moss and Matt Galante had agreed to 1896 contracts and coaches Cot Deal and Jerry Walker would be offered posts in the Astros minor league organization.  
 "Bob has been asked to take over the vacant position as head of baseball operations," Wagner said. "While this is a behind-the-scenes job, it is one of substance and importance to the Astros."  
 Lillis, 55, took over the Astros in 1982, following the dismissal of former manager Bill Virdon and led the Astros to a 28-23 record. In his first full season as manager, the Astros finished third in the West Division and last season tied for second place.  
 Pitcher Nolan Ryan, reached at his home near Houston, said he was not aware of Lillis' dismissal but said he was not surprised.  
 "I think with the new general manager it was to be expected," he said.  
 The Astros never were in contention this season after a disastrous July in which they posted an 11-11 record.  
 "Bob Lillis has worked hard for the Astros," Wagner said. "However, as we go forward with plans for 1986, new field leadership is a necessity."  
 Wagner said he did not know Lillis would accept the new job with the Astros.  
 Wagner said his next assignment would be to hire Lillis' replacement.  
 "Some of the people we want to talk with are still working so we have to get permission to speak with them," Wagner said. "We should know something this month."  
 Lillis came to the Astros in October 1961 in the expansion draft. He played six seasons for the Astros and had held several positions in the team's minor league system before becoming a major league coach in 1973, a post he held until he replaced Virdon in 1982.

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