

Sports

Campbell says Oilers improved

Ex-coach insists he leaves team better off

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Deposed Houston Oilers Coach Hugh Campbell said Thursday he leaves the National Football League club in better shape than when he took over two years ago.

"I haven't coached anywhere that I haven't left a team in better shape than the way I've found it — and that record's still intact," Campbell said in an interview with Houston radio station KODA. "My position right now is to try to land on my feet and take note of what's going around."

Campbell was fired Monday after the Oilers assured themselves of another losing season by dropping Sunday's game against the New York Giants. He said he was disappointed about losing his job, but acknowledged that "sometimes it's time for a change."

Campbell, who has been reluctant to comment in the wake of his firing during the second year of his tenure as Oilers coach, refused to criticize General Manager Ladd Herzog.

Herzog this week called the hiring of Campbell, a highly successful Canadian Football League coach, the "worst mistake of my professional career."

The owner of the CFL's Calgary Stampeders has expressed interest in Campbell, who won Grey Cups with Edmonton before joining the United States Football League's Los Angeles Express and then the Oilers two years ago.

"At this time I haven't even considered that, although someone has told me that somebody else has considered that," Campbell said. "I haven't experienced being fired before and I have no blueprint to follow in what steps to take."

A&M to get one more chance at UT

Aggie spikers hope third time's a charm against Longhorns

By CHAREAN WILLIAMS
Assistant Sports Editor

AUSTIN — Superstitious? Not the Texas A&M volleyball team.

As long as the players go through their pregame rituals, avoid walking under ladders and keep black cats from crossing their paths, they say Friday the 13th might be their lucky day.

"Yeah, and it will be full moon," A&M Coach Terry Condon said.

No. 19 A&M faces No. 8 Texas tonight in Gregory Gymnasium at 7 p.m. in the semifinal of the NCAA Championship Tournament's South Regional.

Since the Aggies have already lost to the Longhorns twice this season and, in fact, haven't defeated them since 1981, it appears they will need "Lady Luck" on their side tonight.

"What's everyone saying?" A&M setter Chris Zogata asked. "Third time's a charm? It's starting to sound like a broken record, but I hope it's true."

Three weeks ago, the Ags won the first two games against the 'Horns in College Station but lost the next three, losing a match to UT for the ninth straight time.

"We're just very tired of losing to Texas," A&M All-America Sherri Brinkman said. "We've always had the skill to beat Texas. We just haven't had the right mental attitude. Everyone makes such a big deal about beating Texas. They're no different than anyone else we play. Just because they're Texas shouldn't affect the way we play."

So besides the mental attitude, what else do the Aggies need to do to finally defeat the Longhorns?

"We just need to play like we did in the first two games last time," Zogata said. "I'm confident. I wasn't real excited about playing them again when I first heard we might. But now, with the way we've been playing and thinking about that last match against them, I think we can do it."

Condon, too, believes A&M can win, if they contain UT's fierce outside hitting game, spear-headed by

the Southwest Conference's Player of the Year, Diane Watson.

"Their key is the outside game," Condon said. "We have to try and control them on the outside. We have to serve real tough. And we can't make many mistakes."

After watching films of UT Tuesday night and remembering how close they came in the last meeting, the Aggies seem to have a different attitude about playing Coach Mick Haley's 'Horns.

"We've been talking in practice more about strategy than in the past," Condon said. "They've really been concentrating on knowing where Texas' weaknesses are. It's like one of them dinked to a spot and the others stopped and said, 'That's what they do. That's exactly where they hit the ball.'"

"Maybe this time will be different. They seem to be real mellow about it all — not uptight as usual."

Even the players admit they're more confident.

"We're all saying, 'We're going to beat Texas.'" A&M outside hitter Stacey Gildner said. "We know what we have to do to win. We've been working on it all week in practice. And in two days, Terry's even gotten us into excellent shape. We're ready."

AGGIE VOLLEYBALL NOTES:

No. 3 UCLA, the NCAA defending champion, faces Georgia at 5:30 p.m. Friday. The winner of that match will face the winner of the A&M-UT match on Saturday in Austin. . . . Condon said the *Austin American-Statesman* ran a story about Texas looking past A&M at UCLA. "They were saying, 'UCLA this and UCLA that.' But I think when it comes down to it, it will be A&M playing Texas. That old rivalry will come through." . . . Condon would like nothing better than to face her alma mater, UCLA, for a chance to make it to the Final Four next weekend in Kalamazoo, Mich.

The Aggies practiced Thursday night from 6-8 p.m. Friday, practice was at noon.



Photo by JOHN MAKELY

All eyes are on A&M's Margaret Spence (foreground) as she tries to set the ball up for a spike

in A&M's NCAA tourney win over Texas-Arlington. No. 8 Texas hosts No. 19 A&M tonight.

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Happy Holiday Season