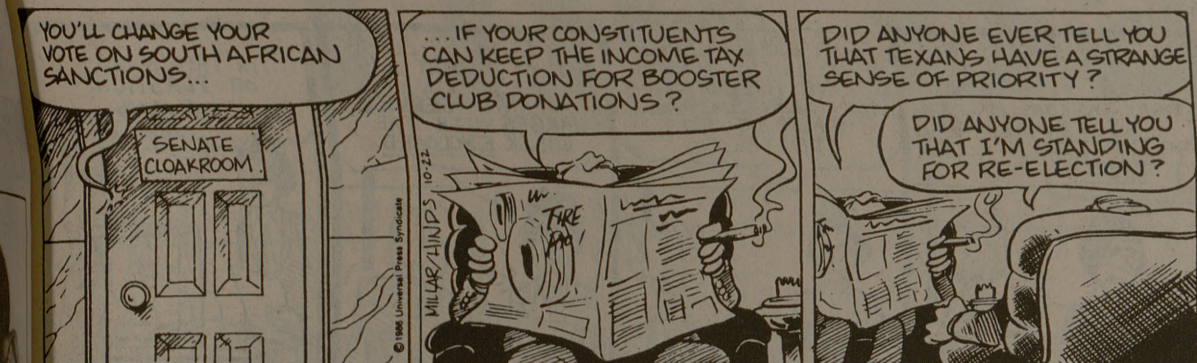


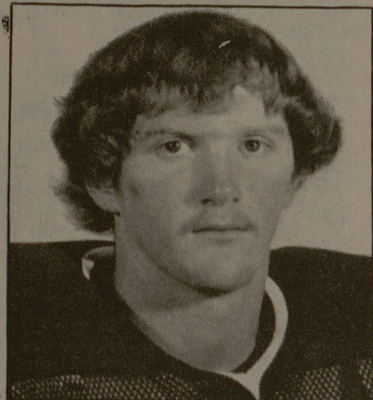
TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



Former A&M player Cannon sues Dallas for back injury

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP)—Dallas Cowboys President Tex Schramm said he isn't surprised that former linebacker Billy Cannon Jr. is suing the team for a back injury he got halfway into his rookie season.



Billy Cannon Jr. During A&M playing days

"It's the typical plaintiff lawsuit that is causing all our insurance rates to soar," Schramm told the *Dallas Morning News*. "It comes out of nowhere, as far as I'm concerned. It doesn't surprise me; it's typical of our times."

Cannon, who played collegiate football at Texas A&M, filed the \$9.6 million suit in U.S. District Court here Monday, claiming that the career-ending back injury he suffered was the result of negligence by the National Football League team.

Cannon's attorney claims the suit is the first of its kind in the nation and could change player-safety rules.

"There's going to be a lot of intriguing legal questions that have to be hurdled," Ross Brupbacher of Lafayette, La., said. "It could set some standards on duty and care concerning the health of players."

The lawyer acknowledged football is a dangerous sport, but he said more should be done to protect players.

"Everyone that plays knows it's a dangerous game, but there are significant numbers of players who are

playing with risk of injury they need to be made aware of," he said.

The suit says Cannon was signed in May 1984 to a series of six one-year contracts worth \$1.9 million, excluding performance bonuses.

Cannon aggravated a spinal condition known as spinal stenosis when he tackled New Orleans Saints running back Wayne Wilson during a game on Oct. 28, 1984, the suit alleges.

After doctors told Cannon that if he continued to play football, he risked permanent paralysis, Cannon retired from football and returned to Baton Rouge.

Cannon claims in the suit that he complained to the Cowboys before the Saints game of numbness in his upper body and upper extremities after making tackles.

Dr. Pat Evans, a member of the team's medical staff, said he did not recall Cannon having any complaints at all before the injury. He wouldn't comment on the suit.

The suit also claims the Cowboys failed to diagnose the risk that Cannon was taking, failed to coach him properly in tackling methods that would have minimized his risk of injury, and failed to provide equipment that should have reduced the injury risk.

The lawyer said Cannon underwent several physical exams by the Cowboys and the NFL, so the spinal condition should have been discovered.

Cannon was later diagnosed as having a spinal column that is too narrow and pinches his vertebrae. Cannon was not aware of the condition before his injury, the lawyer said.

Cannon, the Cowboys' No. 1 draft pick in 1984, is the son of Billy Cannon Sr., who won the Heisman Trophy while playing football at Louisiana State University.

Cannon Sr., who played professionally for the Houston Oilers and the then-Oakland Raiders, is back in Baton Rouge after serving a federal prison term for counterfeiting.

Flutie signs contract with Chicago Bears

LAKE FOREST, Ill. (AP)—Doug Flutie, "anxious to get into the National Football League and onto the playing field," signed a contract with the Super Bowl champion Chicago Bears on Tuesday.

The 1984 Heisman Trophy winner from Boston College signed 1987 and 1988 contracts as well as one for the current season which would make him eligible to be placed on the active roster Nov. 4.

"Practice starts at 1:30 tomorrow," said Bears Coach Mike Ditka, who was instrumental in bringing the 5-foot-9 quarterback to the Bears.

"It will take a couple of weeks before I get the grasp of things and become comfortable with the offense," Flutie said. "I'm going to prepare as quickly as possible to become competitive."

Flutie was signed after Ditka termed the Bears' quarterback situation unstable because of injuries which have sidelined McMahon for three games this season.

Flutie hasn't played football since the spring of 1985, but said, "I don't feel rusty now. Maybe my body will feel it in a week or two. We'll see what happens."

Flutie was brought into the Bear camp on a day when the rest of the team was off.

"I have not met the players," Flutie said. "I understand the situation of new guy coming in. There are loyalties; I have to deal with that. I want to impress the coaches and get my opportunities."

The Bears obtained the rights to Flutie last week from the Los Angeles Rams. The Bears traded a

third-round draft choice for a fourth-round choice and gave up a sixth-round pick in the 1987 draft.

Flutie, who received \$1.3 million from owner Donald Trump to play the 1985 spring season with the New Jersey Generals of the United States Football League, will receive \$175,000 a year from the Bears.

His salary this season will be prorated, which will entitle him to about \$100,000 for the balance of this season.

In four seasons at Boston College, Flutie passed for an NCAA-record 10,579 yards and 67 touchdowns. In nine games in the USFL, he completed 134 of 281 passes for 2,109 yards and 13 touchdowns before suffering a broken collarbone.

"I'm fine physically. The Bears' doctors checked me out," Flutie said.

Last week, Bears players in general and regular quarterback Jim McMahon in particular criticized management for acquiring Flutie.

"I don't feel threatened and I don't think the criticism is pointed directly at me as Doug Flutie personally, but to a new player," Flutie said. "I'm coming to a team that won the Super Bowl and is 6-1 this season."

Flutie said he figured the rest of this season and the next would be devoted to learning.

As for McMahon, "I don't know him, I've never met him," Flutie said. "I know he's a competitor and he'll do what's best for the team. I don't think his comments were directed at Flutie but at a new player."

NBA votes to expand league size

PHOENIX, Ariz. (AP)—The NBA's Board of Governors voted Tuesday to expand by one to three teams, but not before two years from now at the earliest and possibly not until the 1990-91 season.

NBA Commissioner David Stern announced at a news conference that a five-member expansion committee would be formed and would decide on the sites and timetable for expansion, which will be announced next April in New York.

The new teams would be added between the 1988-89 and 1990-91 seasons.

The 23-member pro basketball league last added a new team in 1980, when Dallas was granted a franchise.

"The NBA has reached a point in strength where the next logical step for us is to expand. The vote was unanimous, 23-0," Stern said. "The collective force of the presentations given by six cities here this week put away any doubts that we should not be moving aggressively forward."

Representatives from six applicants — Toronto, Minneapolis, Miami, Fla., Orlando, Fla., Orange County, Calif., and Charlotte, N.C. — all delivered 30-minute presentations to the board Monday.

Miami, Orlando and Minneapolis reportedly are the front-runners in the race to land a franchise.

Houston must move game with Arkansas to Astrodome

HOUSTON (AP)—The Southwest Conference voted Tuesday to force the University of Houston to move Saturday's SWC football game against Arkansas from Robertson Stadium to the Astrodome, SWC Commissioner Fred Jacoby said.

The game was moved from the Astrodome, Houston's home stadium, Oct. 4, to avoid possible conflict with the National League playoff series between the Houston Astros and New York Mets.

But when the Astros were eliminated last week, Jacoby said, Arkansas officials appealed to have the game moved back to the Astrodome, citing the "unfair competitive advantage" it would give Houston to play on the natural grass surface of Robertson Stadium on the UH campus.

"There is a rule in our sports agreement that says no game can be

played in a stadium that is not a team's designated home stadium unless approved by the conference," Jacoby said.

Jacoby said Arkansas asked for the change on Friday, two days after the Astros were eliminated from the playoffs.

Arkansas Coach Ken Hatfield said the Razorbacks had not practiced on grass all season and would be at a disadvantage playing on Robertson's natural turf instead of the artificial surface at the Astrodome.

Hatfield said his team had not practiced in cleated grass shoes and Razorback fans were unfamiliar with Robertson Stadium and how to get to the campus.

Houston officials had been busily preparing the 22,000-seat Robertson Stadium for Saturday's homecoming.

Houston Coach Bill Yeoman said his team would be disappointed.

"It is somewhat disconcerting," Yeoman said. "They had been really looking forward to it."

Houston officials have discussed playing all home games at Robertson when its Astrodome contract expires. Saturday's game was to be a test for such a move.

"It's not going to be a test of anything now, is it?" Yeoman asked.

It was ironic, Yeoman said, that Arkansas would be complaining about not playing in the Astrodome.

"I've listened to Frank Broyles (Arkansas athletic director) talk for hours about how bad it was to play in the Astrodome," Yeoman said. "Now he wants to go there."

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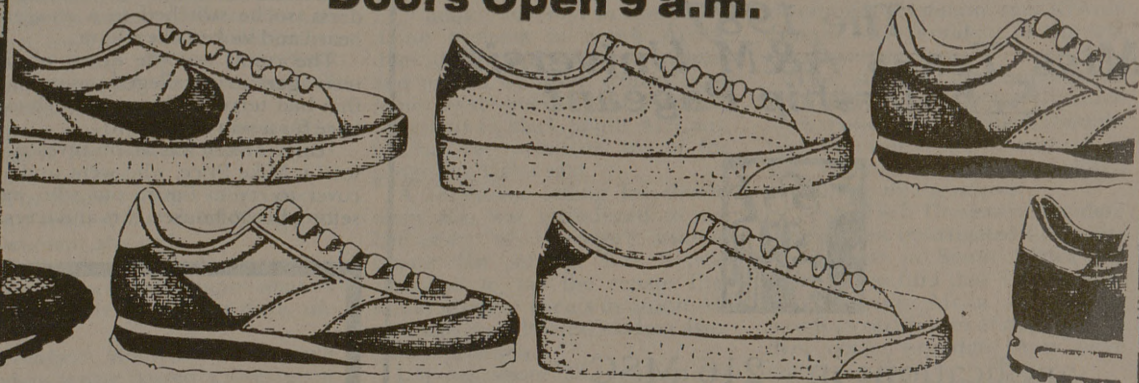
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