

Sports

Vick, Bernstine top Ag draftees

Six Aggies chosen in NFL draft's top 4 rounds

From Staff and Wire Reports

Texas A&M produced two first-round picks in Tuesday's NFL draft, with running back Roger Vick going to the New York Jets and tight end Rod Bernstine ticketed to San Diego.

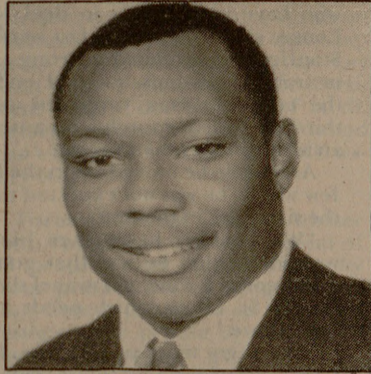
Vick was the 21st player chosen in the draft and Bernstine was the 24th. Vick was the Aggies' leading rusher in 1986, while Bernstine was the top tight end receiver in the nation.

The Aggies also had a second-round selection in All-America linebacker Johnny Holland, who was picked by Green Bay and a third-round representative as linebacker Todd Howard went to the Kansas City Chiefs.

In the fourth round, A&M defensive lineman Rod Saddler was chosen by the St. Louis Cardinals, and linebacker Larry Kelm will be headed to the Los Angeles Rams.

A&M linebacker Steve Bullitt was drafted in the eighth round by the Cleveland Browns.

"I couldn't really see myself going in the first round or the top 25 play-



Roger Vick

ers. This really is a special feeling," Vick said.

"I'm happy to be going to the Jets. I think I can go there and help them out. I was surprised they picked me.

Everybody had been talking about Minnesota or San Francisco, but I figured anything can happen in the draft, and it did."

Bernstine was delighted that the

Chargers selected him.

"I'm from the Bay area, and going back to California is a good feeling. I've watched Kellen Winslow play so many games and catch so many passes. It'll be exciting to learn from him," Bernstine said.

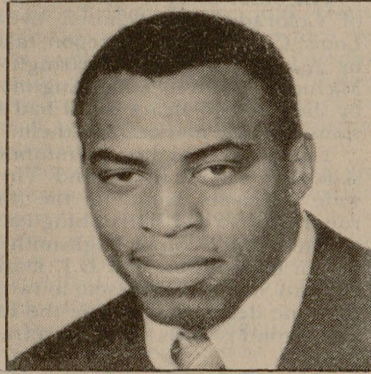
"I'm excited about going to the Chargers because they throw the ball around as much as any team in the league."

Baylor jumped into the second-round picture, sending linebacker Ray Berry to Minnesota and cornerback Ron Francis to the Dallas Cowboys.

Texas Tech's Roland Mitchell, a cornerback with 4.5 speed, was selected by the Buffalo Bills and SMU wide receiver Ron Morris was picked by the Chicago Bears, all in the second round.

Baylor's strong-armed quarterback Cody Carlson was a third-round draft choice by the Houston Oilers, while SMU noseguard Jerry Ball went to the Detroit Lions.

Carlson said he felt he was asked to do a lot of things at Baylor that he



Rod Bernstine

might not have been suited for, but it made him better prepared for professional football, he said.

Carlson was picked ahead of All-SWC quarterback Kevin Murray of A&M, but Carlson said that wasn't one of his goals in the draft.

"There are a lot of other things to be happy about today. That wasn't one of my goals," Carlson said.

'Pokes make Noonan, Francis top choices

IRVING (AP) — The Dallas Cowboys shored up their aging defense by picking massive Nebraska noseguard Danny Noonan and Baylor cornerback Ron Francis in the NFL draft on Tuesday.

Noonan is a 6-4, 290-pound All-American who spends six days a week pumping iron in the weight room.

"I'm not a finesse player," Noonan said. "I'd just as soon run through 'em as I would around 'em. I'm a run over 'em type of player." Noonan, who doesn't have an agent, is so dedicated to improving his strength that his wife had to tell him he was drafted by Dallas. Noonan was in the weight room at the time Dallas picked him 12th in the first round.

"I work out all the time," Noonan said. "I'm happy to be going to Dallas."

Player personnel director Gil Brandt said Noonan stopped by the Cowboys' facilities to work out during a Kodak All-America press trip in December.

"Noonan was working out while everybody else was enjoying the festivities. He's a hard worker and it takes that kind of player to be successful his first year in the NFL," Brandt said.

Noonan said he didn't expect to start the first year.

"Too many things can happen," Noonan said. "I'm not that familiar with the Dallas defense. Of course, everybody knows Randy White and John Dutton."

Noonan is targeted to replace Dutton, who also is from Nebraska.

"I think, very definitely, Noonan could be an impact player for us," Dallas Coach Tom Landry said. "He has the size, speed and quickness you look for in a defensive lineman."

Noonan could play any position in the defensive line and be a good pass rusher, Landry said.

"We believe he will be an excellent pass rusher," he said. "He might not be an immediate starter, but we think he will definitely help us next year."

Brandt said Noonan reminded him of Dallas' All-Pro defensive

tackle White.

"He looks a lot like Randy White when Randy came out of college in size, speed and competitiveness," Brandt said. "He even has the same kind of personality White has."

Noonan was particularly tough against the run at Nebraska where he was a consensus first team All-Big Eight Conference and All-American selection.

He was the highest the Cowboys have drafted with their own pick since 1966.

The 5-10, 185-pound Francis, who intercepted three passes in the Texas game last year, was the 11th pick on the second round.

"He has good speed, good aggressiveness and good coverage ability," Landry said. "We rate him very high as a competitor. He will challenge for a job in our secondary."

Brandt said Francis "was very productive. He also has a 34-inch vertical leap. He doesn't have great size but we learned our lesson there. We want competitiveness and Francis has it."

Francis, who is from LaMarque, said, "I'm very happy. The Cowboys have always been my favorite team since I was growing up in Texas."

He was switched from running back to defensive back his junior year at Baylor.

"We had him as the second-best defensive back in the draft," Landry said.

He said the Cowboys considered drafting an offensive lineman in the first two rounds but decided Noonan and Francis were too good to pass up.

"We're concerned about our offensive line," Landry said. "Any of you guys (media) who want to try out for the offensive line, we'll try you out."

The Cowboys got a much-needed offensive lineman in the third round by taking 310-pound Jeff Zimmerman of Florida.

"He moves well for a guy his size," Brandt said. "He looks like those linemen from the Washington Redskins and Los Angeles Raiders. He has huge legs and moves like a big cat."

Oilers boost offense with Highsmith

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston, trying to improve on last season's offensive production, chose Miami fullback Alonzo Highsmith and North Carolina State receiver Haywood Jeffries in the first round of the NFL draft Tuesday.

The Oilers traded their No. 8 pick in the first round to get Buffalo's third choice and grabbed Highsmith, expected to solidify the Oilers' fullback position.

The Oilers gave the Bills one of their two second-round picks to get Highsmith.

Louisiana Tech linebacker Walter Johnson, 5-11, 218, was the Oilers' selection in the second round. Jeffries, 6-2, 198, caught a school

record 14 touchdown passes for the Wolfpack. He will offer depth for Ernest Givins and Drew Hill, both 5-9, the fourth best receiving tandem in the NFL last season.

"We wanted to get a receiver who couldn't qualify as a jockey," Oiler Coach Jerry Glanville said.

Jeffries said he's anxious to fit into the Oiler receiving corps.

"I've seen Givins play, he's a great receiver," Jeffries said. "The other one (Hill) is aging a little. I hope he can teach me some things."

"I'm not worried about playing right away, though. I can wait my time."

Fullback was an unsettled position for the Oilers last season. Four play-

ers started at the position and none had more than five starts.

Highsmith thinks he can fit into the Oilers' scheme with his running and blocking.

"My running style is kind of distinctive, I guess," Highsmith said. "One time I'm quick, the next time I'm powerful. I do a combination of things."

"My style is not just three yards and a cloud of dust and that's it."

Miami Coach Jimmy Johnson had three players taken in the first round, including two of the first three players selected.

"I'm really happy that Alonzo was drafted on the third pick overall," Johnson said. "He is as dedicated an

individual as I have been around and because of that dedication, he has the ability to be a tremendous impact on the Oilers' program."

Highsmith was a high-school defensive end who converted to offense with the Hurricane. But he kept his defensive temperament.

"I still have a defensive attitude," Highsmith said. "I still attack people when I'm blocking."

Highsmith played on pass-oriented teams quarterbacked by Bernie Kosar and Vinny Testaverde.

"Most people knew the situation I was in at Miami and that if given a chance, I could run," Highsmith said. "They realized I had the talent."



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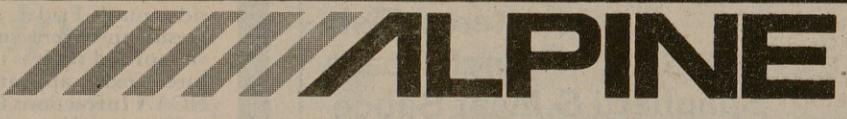
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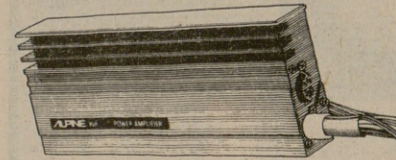
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