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Ditka happy with wins but not with methods

LAKE FOREST, Ill. (AP) — Coach Mike Ditka has nothing against winning, but he's not happy the way his Chicago Bears are doing it these days.

"That's not the way we've designed it," Ditka said Monday of the three straight come-from-behind triumphs since the end of the NFL players' strike. "It defies explanation."

What bothers Ditka most is that the Bears are not playing "Bear Football," which is a combination of a strong running attack along with a vicious defense. But he finds it difficult to get his point across because of the team's 7-1 record and three-game lead in the Central Division of the National Football Conference.

"It's a matter of fact that teams that run the ball 40 times a game win," Ditka said. "And teams that pass 40 times a game lose. We're doing it with heroics."

The latest heroics came Sunday, when Kevin Butler kicked a 52-yard field goal on the final play of the game, giving the Bears a 26-24 victory at Green Bay.

In the previous two games, quarterback Jim McMahon supplied the heroics. McMahon came off the bench in the second half against Tampa Bay and rallied the Bears to a 27-26 victory after they had trailed 20-0.

And against the Kansas City Chiefs, McMahon rallied the Bears from deficits of 14-0 and 28-14 for a 31-28 triumph.

"We're not playing well," Ditka said. "We're doing things that aren't good. We've won games because of our special teams. That's good. We're supposed to win some games because of our special teams."

"But we need consistency from our offense and our defense. We're not getting it."

Last year, the Bears allowed an average of 11.6 points per game. In three games since the strike, they have yielded an average of 26 points per game.

Before the strike, the Bears opened the season with a brilliant 34-19 victory over the Super Bowl champion New York Giants. They followed that with a 20-3 thumping of Tampa Bay. Then came the strike and the nonunion team won two of three games.

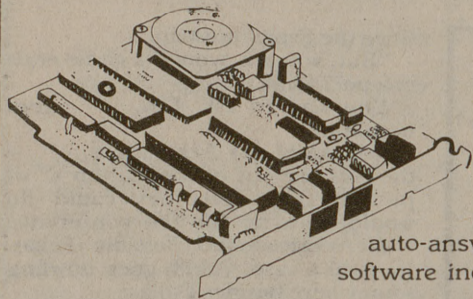
Since the strike, the Bears have won three straight but not the way Ditka would like.

"Maybe it was unrealistic to think we could come back again (to where we were)," Ditka said. "We thought it as coaches and they thought it as players. But it isn't so."

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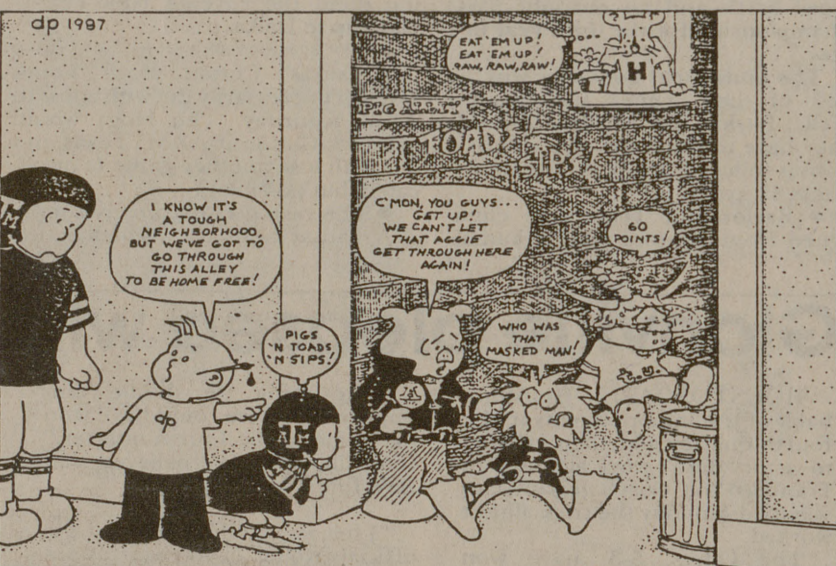
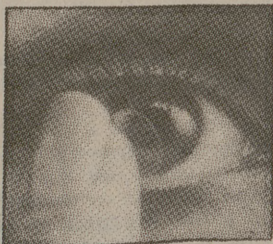
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Minnesota hurler tops lengthy free agent list

NEW YORK (AP) — Thirteen players, including relief pitcher Juan Berenguer of the world champion Minnesota Twins, filed for free agency Monday as the midnight deadline approached.

The additions brought the total of free agents to 71 of a possible 105 players.

Others declaring for free agency Monday were pitchers Ed Lynch and Dickie Noles and infielder Manny Trillo of the Chicago Cubs; outfielder Eddie Milner and utilityman Joel Youngblood of San Francisco; outfielder Ken Griffey and infielder Graig Nettles of Atlanta; utilityman Jamie Quirk of Kansas City; pitcher Mark Clear of Milwaukee; outfielder Ken Landreaux of Los Angeles; pitcher Moose Haas of Oakland; and pitcher Greg Minton of California.

Two of the key potential free agents — third baseman Mike Schmidt of the Philadelphia Phillies and shortstop Cal Ripken Jr. of the Baltimore Orioles — were negotiating with their clubs Monday.

Berenguer had an 8-1 record with a 3.94 earned run average this year, when he earned \$152,000.

Lynch, 2-9 with a 5.38 ERA, reportedly earned \$550,000 in 1987.

Noles, who was acquired by Detroit late in the season from the Cubs, was dealt back to Chicago after the season. He had a 4-2 record and 3.50 ERA for the Cubs and a 0-0 record and 4.50 ERA for the Tigers, earning a reported \$150,000.

Trillo, who received a reported \$295,000, batted .294, with eight home runs and 26 runs batted in.

Griffey batted .286 with 14 homers while earning \$1.075 million.

UT's Stafford may miss TCU game with injury

AUSTIN (AP) — The Texas Longhorns may be without the services of starting quarterback Bret Stafford in this week's game against Texas Christian, Coach David McWilliams said Monday.

Stafford injured his right elbow in the Longhorns 60-40 loss to Houston Saturday night. McWilliams said Stafford's status is day-to-day, but it is doubtful he will play against the Horned Frogs Saturday.

"He has some swelling on both the inside and the outside of his elbow," McWilliams said. "He cannot throw the ball at all. At this point, it doesn't look good for Bret. We'll just have to wait and see."

In one half against the Cougars, Stafford had one of the best days of his career, completing 15 of 23 passes for 238 yards and three touchdowns. He sat out the second half.

If Stafford isn't available, Texas will start junior Shannon Kelley, who played in the second half

against Houston and was 23 of 36 for 233 yards. The 23 completions is a new school record.

However, Kelley also threw three interceptions, all of which were returned for touchdowns by Cougar cornerback Johnny Jackson.

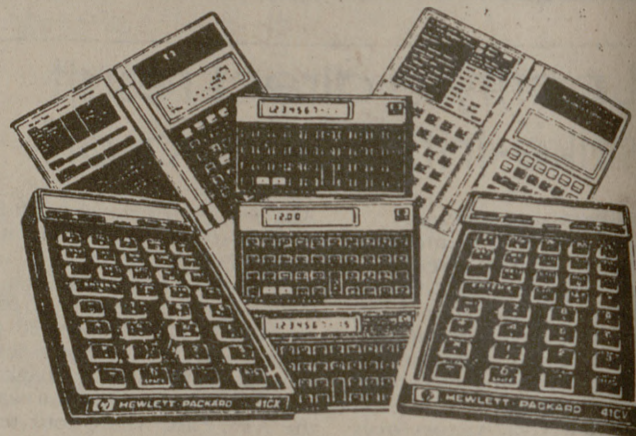
Four other Texas starters might also miss the TCU game, which will be regionally televised.

Starting defensive tackle Steve Llewellyn suffered a shoulder separation in the first quarter of the Houston game and could be out for the rest of the season, McWilliams said.

Receiver Jorrick Battle and defensive back Gerald Senegal are both on crutches with ankle injuries, and their status is questionable. So is that of Tony Jones, the Longhorns leading receiver.

"We've got to approach the game as if we might be without four or five starters," McWilliams said. "We can't go through the week assuming that they all will be able to play."

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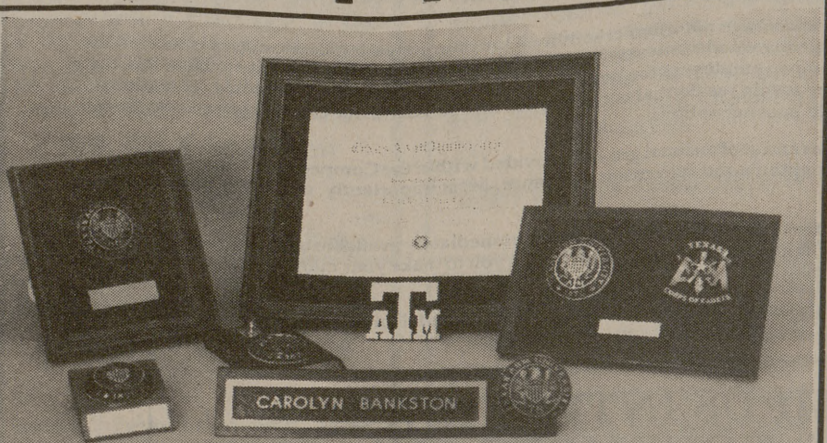
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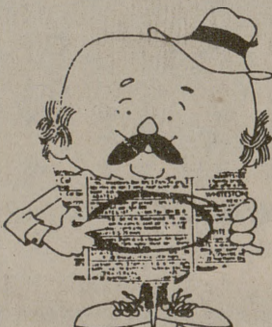
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