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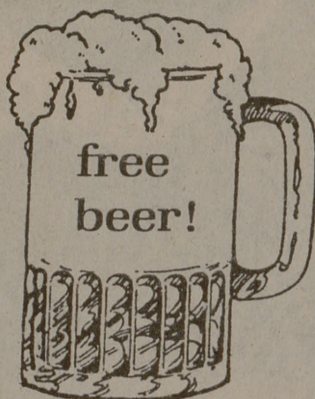
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Skins, Broncos say being 'Super' losers will help

SAN DIEGO (AP) — To a man, the Denver Broncos claim that losing the Super Bowl last year gives them the motivation that will carry them to victory on Sunday.

Almost to a man, the Washington Redskins are telling them: "Hey, wait a minute. We're losers, too."

As Sunday's Super Bowl between the only two teams this decade to reach the NFL title game two years in a row drew a day nearer, a subtle game of onedownmanship was going on. Each team was trying to claim it is the bigger loser.

It's almost as if to win a Super Bowl, you have to lose one first.

"I certainly remember both our Super Bowls," said Washington Coach Joe Gibbs, whose team beat Miami 27-17 in 1983, then was routed 38-9 by the Los Angeles Raiders the next year.

"The first one was one of the great experiences of my life. But I also had a bitter, bitter experience the next year when we lost. You'd think it would have been enough to be here, but it wasn't."

That was the general tenor of the

debate over which team feels worse about its loss.

The Broncos were beaten 39-20 to the New York Giants a year ago. They claimed that the aftermath of that defeat — Coach Dan Reeves uses the word "haunted" to describe his feelings — has given them an unquenchable thirst that can be slaked only by victory on Sunday.

"Everybody but one team ends the season unhappy," Reeves said. "But the unhappiest team of all is the one that loses the Super Bowl."

The Redskins buy that argument. But they don't buy the corollary — that because the Broncos lost last year, they have more motivation.

"There was nothing worse than that," said linebacker Neal Olkewicz, one of 13 Redskins left from the 1983 winner and one of 18 who played in the 1984 loss.

"I'd rather lose in the conference championship and not get to the Super Bowl than to lose in the Super Bowl. It leaves you with an empty feeling."

The great debate even enters into a friendly dispute between Washington

Denver strong safety Dennis Smith, who went to high school together and remain close friends.

"We talked the other day, and I discussed being in the Super Bowl losing," Kaufman said Wednesday.

"He said, 'At least you won one of them. Give me a chance to win one this time.'"

Wednesday, meanwhile, was a day that both teams began the buildup for the game, with teams resuming workouts after a Tuesday off in accordance with their regular-season routines.

Included in the Washington workout was starting wide receiver Art Monk, who missed the last weeks with a knee injury and missed the 1983 Super Bowl with foot injury.

However, Ricky Sanders, who placed him, is expected to step ahead of Monk, who holds the single-season NFL reception record of 106, set in 1984.

Denver injured wide receiver Vance Johnson missed the AFC game with a groin injury. But Coach Dan Reeves said he expected him to play, if not start.

Mav goes from bench to the court to oblivion

DALLAS (AP) — Despite an elegant north Dallas home and a \$245,000-a-year contract, these are difficult times for Bill Wennington of the Dallas Mavericks, a 7-foot forward who went from towel-waver as a rookie, to role player last season, and this year to the forgotten man under the system of new coach John MacLeod.

The popular third-year player appears headed next summer for a National Basketball Association expansion team, if he is not traded by then.

Passed in pre-season by 7-2 center Uwe Blab and now the fourth-string power forward, the former center for St. John's has played even less than rookie guards Jim Farmer and Steve Alford.

As of mid-January, Wennington had played one minute since Dec. 9 and had averaged 4.8 minutes a game after averaging 10 in his first two seasons.

"It's like putting a kid in a candy store and saying, 'Look, but don't touch,'" Wennington said. "You talk to people and they say that when it comes down to it, I'm getting paid. That's not enough. Making the league is one thing, but there are those of us who love basketball and want to play."

Wennington has handled the situation with dignity, saying he does not want to "rock the boat." Despite deep-down feelings, he did not go off the deep end when the Mavericks nixed a possible trade in December with the New York Knicks, one that would have sent him back home with swingman Detlef Schrempf for center Bill Cartwright.

But Wennington is realistic. He knows that at this rate, he will be one of the four Mavericks left unprotected for the expansion draft next summer. Dallas can lose only one player. With veteran guard Brad Davis unexpected to join another team

and with 7-footers in demand, Wennington all but has his plane ticket to Charlotte, N.C., or Miami.

"I can't think that far ahead (to the expansion draft). Maybe tomorrow, tops. Things like the New York trade get you upset for nothing."

"I feel I can play in this league another eight years, at least. It's hard to look out there and see that someone's not playing well. I think, 'Hey, I could be in there.' But if I get put in for a minute, I don't care what happens. If I get put in with four other guys who sit the bench the whole game, I'm just going to try not to look bad. There's not much you can do."

The situation has become so bad, in fact, that Wennington works out at local gyms after each team practice. That generally is frowned upon by the organization, for fear of injury or overexertion, but the team's front office has sympathized.

"I like Bill as a person and as a forward," MacLeod said. "Bill was a very popular guy here and I know that. I sympathize. I appreciate the way he's handled things. He played a lot last year. Dick (Motta) went with him and I'm using Uwe. It's nothing against Bill."

Uwe Blab, drafted by Dallas one spot (17th overall) after Wennington in the 1985 first round, averaged 5.3 minutes last season and is averaging 11.1 now.

Wennington had those minutes under Motta as the ninth man in a fairly regular rotation.

But in training camp, starting center James Donaldson was out with a sore hamstring and Wennington was out with a groin pull. Blab started all but one pre-season game and showed a newfound coordination on offense.

MacLeod then moved Wennington to forward.

Lowe lifts Red Raiders past Aggies

LUBBOCK (AP) — Despite more Wes Lowe scored a career-high 28 points Wednesday to power Texas Tech past Texas A&M 72-61 in Southwest Conference basketball action Wednesday.

Lowe, whose previous career-high was 27 points last Saturday against Southern Methodist, scored 14 of his points in the first half to help the Raiders fashion a 33-31 lead at intermission.

Lowe was busy early in the second half, scoring six points as the Red Raiders outscored A&M 21-10 to build a 54-37 advantage with 9:06 remaining in play.

The Aggies, who fell to 4-2 in conference play and 12-8 overall, chipped away at the deficit and came within nine points three times but could get no closer.

The Raiders are now 8-9 and 3-3.

Joining Lowe in double figures for Tech was Sean Gay with 11 points and Greg Crowe with 10. Lowe and Crowe also shared game-high rebounding honors with eight each.

Donald Thompson was high point man for the Aggies with 11 and Darryl McDonald added 11.

McDonald, who hit only four of 12 field goal attempts and turned the ball over six times, was baffled by the Aggies poor shooting.

"We didn't play together as a team," he said. "I don't know what the problem was. I've been starting slow the past few games and I can't explain it. We have to get hungry again."

A&M head coach Shelby McGuire was equally disappointed in his team's second-straight loss.

The Economist

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Executive Editor

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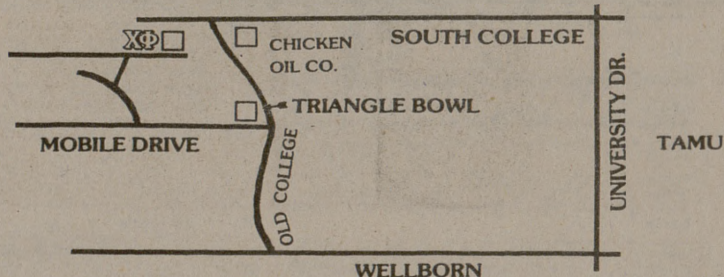
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