

Sports

Oilers gear up for '88 at San Marcos campus Jeffires' good hands shine

SAN MARCOS (AP) — Wide receiver Haywood Jeffires came to the Houston Oilers camp as a No. 1 draft pick last season not realizing the level of intensity it takes to play in the NFL.

Now he knows. "I'm a better listener, a better practice player — in everything right now," Jeffires said between workouts at Southwest Texas State University. Jeffires complicated his status by crossing the picket line during the NFL players strike, angering Oiler veterans in general and quarterback Warren Moon in particular.

Add a broken bone in his wrist, and it was an unfortunate first season for Jeffires.

But now he has reached peace with himself and Moon and expects to have the kind of season that was anticipated a year ago.

"It's all behind now," Jeffires said. "It's not like I killed someone's brother or sister and they're going to hate me for life. These guys love me and I love them."



Moon questioned Jeffires' work habits last season publicly and Jeffires fired back a response in public.

"I finally learned what he was talking about," Jeffires said. "He just told me 'you've got all that talent, it's time to use it.'"

"Maybe he spoke in a way I could understand, like, 'you are man now, grow up and act like one.'"

Jeffires caught seven passes for 89 yards last season and dropped many more, part of it due to a broken wrist he suffered in training camp.

He developed bad habits, trying to catch the ball with his body instead of his hands, receivers coach Milt Jackson said.

"I don't think most people knew about the broken bone in his wrist," Jackson said. "It wound up making him not look like as good of a player as he really is. He's healthy now and playing well."

Moon can see a big difference in Jeffires, even early in training camp.

"If the guy is trying, he can be one of the best in the league," Moon said. "Now he's having a great camp and we're trying to utilize his talents."

Astrodome spectacle to end

HOUSTON (AP) — The plug soon will be pulled on the Astrodome's giant scoreboard, putting an end to the Texas-style light shows that have hailed the home-team's triumphs for more than 20 years.

Sometime during the next two months, workers will disconnect the center field scoreboard in use since the Astrodome opened in 1965.

Gone will be the largest scoreboard in the world, the 14,000 light bulbs, the ride-em cowboys, the snorting steers and electronic pyrotechnics of the Dome's trademark, home-run spectacular.

In its place will be installed 10,000 seats, part of \$60 million in Astrodome renovations designed to keep the Houston Oilers from moving to Jacksonville, Fla.

And a promised high-tech replacement spectacular has been postponed because of lack of money, Harris County officials said Monday.

Architects initially consulted Hollywood special effects whiz George Lucas about a \$2 million-to-\$8 million laser display. But unforeseen costs for asbestos removal and other items have eaten up the light show budget, project manager Jack Watkins of the county engineer's office said.

There is a slight chance a new spectacular scoreboard will be built if the remaining work comes in under budget, Harris County Judge Jon Lindsay said.

Meanwhile, work on dismantling the scoreboard will begin during an Astros road trip in either August or September.

That would mean farewell to the scoreboard against either San Diego on Aug. 15, Cincinnati on Sept. 6 or Atlanta on Sept. 22.

"It's extremely sad," said Harris County Commissioner E.A. "Squatty" Lyons, the only current commissioner on the court when it approved Dome construction. "I really hate to see it go."

Costing \$2 million, the scoreboard included the first-ever large-screen stadium television, the spectacular light show and two flanking information panels.

The scoreboard stands more than four stories tall, covers one-half acre of wall space, weighs 300 tons and originally included 1,200 miles of wire and more than 50,000 light bulbs.

Paul Darst, manager of Astrodome scoreboard and video operations, said a new spectacular scoreboard will be built someday. The old one, meanwhile, will be replaced by four animated, strip scoreboards.

"It won't be a tradition," Darst said. "But there's no ballpark that can afford the kind of wall space the original scoreboard took up."

A big retirement party is being planned for the final game. "We'll send it out with style," Darst said.

'Rocket' Roger leading Bosox charge in East

ARLINGTON (AP) — The Boston Red Sox, baseball's hottest team, are following the vapor trail of a rocket.

"Rocket" Roger Clemens leads the majors with seven shutouts after blanking the Texas Rangers 2-0 Monday night. It was the 17th complete game shutout of his career.

Clemens, 14-5, struck out 14 to increase his major league-leading strikeout total to 219.

He teased the Rangers in the ninth, allowing a Pete O'Brien lead-off double. But Clemens got Ruben Sierra on a fly-out, then set down Pete Incaviglia and Geno Petralli in what is, for him, typical fashion — on called third strikes.

"Once I see the end coming, I just get after it," Clemens said. "I always want to be around for the finish."

During Clemens' latest streak, there's little suspense as to the outcome. Among American League pitchers, Clemens and Minnesota's Frank Viola (16-2) form a division of their own.

Clemens outdueled Rangers starter Charlie Hough, who yielded only four hits but was bested by Clemens' three-hitter.

Hough could only sit back and admire Clemens' work in the ninth.

"This is how great the guy is," Hough said. "He gives up that lead-off double, then he says, 'Poof. Enough of that.'"

Behind Clemens' lead, the Red Sox have used their longest winning streak in 40 years to get back in the American League East race.

Clemens, a two-time American League Cy Young winner, is 4-0

over his last six starts. "I've really been in a groove," Clemens said.

Monday night Clemens was also as hot as the game-time temperatures, which reached 100 degrees.

"The hot weather is something I really like, something I'm used to," said the native Texan and former University of Texas star. "I pitch my best when the weather is like this."

Nevertheless, Clemens had a vigorous workout, throwing 161 pitches on a night when he estimated he lost "seven or eight pounds."

Red Sox manager Joe Morgan marvels at Clemens' competitive nature.

"He's amazing," Morgan said. "He's a great competitor. He always seems to find a way."

New cornerbacks see 1st practice

AUSTIN (AP) — Newly acquired cornerbacks Elbert Foules and Evan Cooper saw their first practice as Houston Oilers Monday, but Coach Jerry Glanville said it will be some time before they fit in.

"We're doing something they haven't done," Glanville said. "It's something brand new and it'll take them a while to adjust."

The veteran corners came to the Oilers in a deal with Philadelphia Saturday for two undisclosed 1989 draft picks. Both

suited up for Sunday's practice but did not participate.

The Oilers obtained Foules and Cooper to shore up their defensive backfield situation with half of last year's starting secondary — Steve Brown and Patrick Allen — holding out.

Quinton Jones of Pittsburgh — the Oilers second-round pick — is also holding out.

Until Foules and Cooper are ready, Oiler veterans Richard Johnson and Audrey McMillen are the frontrunners.

Although most of the afternoon practice concentrated on the shotgun formation, Glanville felt the defense was dominant.

"The tempo of practice was set by the defense," he said. "There was intensity there."

Glanville also has been pleased with first-round draft pick Lorenzo White of Michigan State.

"He's good," Glanville said. "All those people who wondered why we drafted him should have been here this morning. He's an excellent athlete."

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