

'Stagger Lee' to sit bench in Bills' game

HOUSTON (AP) — The best-known play in the Houston Oilers playbook may not be used Thursday night against Buffalo in their NFL exhibition opener in the Astrodome.

If Coach Jerry Glanville splits three blockers out wide in front of running back Mike Rozier, any casual Oilers fan will know the play.

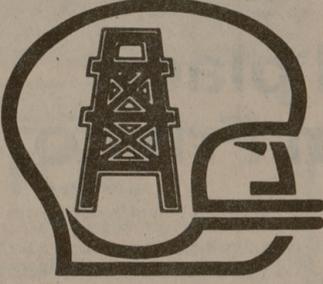
It's "Stagger Lee," the star-crossed play that led to the Oilers' 34-10 loss to Denver in last year's NFL playoffs.

"The only problem with that play is we had to describe it so much with its options that we just about told all of our options," Glanville said.

"Stagger Lee" gained notoriety before a national television audience on the Oilers' first series from their own four-yard line.

Rozier fumbled a lateral from quarterback Warren Moon, and the Broncos' Steve Wilson recovered at the Oiler one-yard line, setting up Denver's first touchdown.

Denver scored twice in the first quarter and the Oilers never recovered but Glanville still defends the play.



"I promise you no one in football knew what we were doing off of it," Glanville said. "We ran that play more in Pittsburgh. That's exactly how we won the game and no one asked me about it then."

"We kept running it after Pittsburgh. But now we were questioned so much about it, I think we told too much about it. That's the bottom line."

Glanville, who thrives on calling the unexpected, could have a new "Stagger Lee" planned.

"I'm sure we'll use it again," Moon says slyly. "It just depends on who we play."

"It didn't work that one time. It was a crucial time, a crucial game, and a crucial point on the field."

"But it worked in other games so I'm sure you'll see it again."

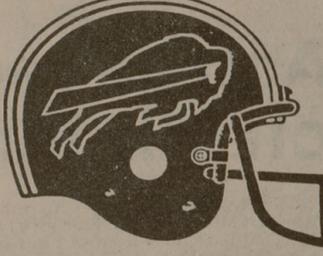
The Oilers likely will be more interested in looking at their new players Thursday night than devising new alternatives to "Stagger Lee."

There is a battle for the backup quarterback job between Cody Carlson and Brent Pease.

Defensive end Sean Jones, obtained in an off-season trade from the Los Angeles Raiders, is challenging last year's starter, Richard Byrd.

Michigan State running back Lorenzo White, the Oilers' No. 1 draft pick, will be in uniform.

The team's second- and third-round picks, cornerback Quintin Jones and punter Greg Montgomery, remained unsigned.



Starting cornerback Patrick Allen also is a contract holdout.

Buffalo Coach Marv Levy will start backup quarterback Frank Reich against the Oilers instead of starter Jim Kelly, still recovering from an ankle injury.

It will be homecoming for two Bills draftees, safety John Hagy from Texas and Oklahoma State running back Thurman Thomas, who played high school football at Sugar Land Willowridge.

Kickoff is at 7 p.m. CDT.

Olympian kills two in driving accident

BRANDON, Fla. (AP) — Olympic diver Bruce Kimball told police he'd been drinking before his sports car hit a group of teenagers, but officials said Wednesday they have not concluded the accident that killed two and injured six was alcohol-related.

While the Hillsborough County sheriff's department continued its investigation of the accident, speculation about the cause centered around an arrest affidavit in which Kimball, 25, admitted to drinking four beers earlier Monday evening.

Shortly before 11 p.m. that night, police said, Kimball lost control of his 1984 Mazda RX-7 as he drove down a dead-end road and ran through a crowd of 30 to 40 teenagers gathered at a meeting place called "The Spot."

Kimball, a silver medal winner in the 1984 Olympics, was charged with two counts of vehicular homicide and released on \$10,000 bond. The former University of Michigan star was given a blood-alcohol test, but authorities said it might be several days before the results are received from a state laboratory.

"We said originally it was possibly (alcohol-related)," Hillsborough County Sheriff's spokesman Jack Espinosa said. "But how much is the question. That's what the blood-alcohol test will tell us. How much, and whether alcohol was the cause."

Witnesses said it was not unusual for cars to approach "The Spot" at a high rate of speed. Police estimate Kimball was traveling between 70 and 90 mph when his car hit at least three parked cars and plowed into the teenagers who were sitting on the cars or standing in the street.

"He went by us so fast that the wind from his car set off the motion detector on my car's burglar alarm," said John Austurias.

The Tampa Tribune reported some witnesses told the newspaper Kimball climbed out of his car after it skidded to a halt and asked if everyone was all right. When he saw bodies scattered about, Kimball reportedly fell to his knees and pounded his fist on the pavement and moaned, "Why me... why me?"

"There were body parts strewn up and down the road. That's no exaggeration," paramedic Dan Kilcrease said. "It looked like they had stepped on a land mine."

One witness said it appeared the right front tire of Kimball's car blew out.

"All that's under investigation," Espinosa said. "We're trying to find out what happened."

Kimball, a top prospect for the 1988 U.S. Olympic team, was not injured. Two other divers in the car with him, Chuck Wade and Colleen "Coke" Smith, also escaped serious injury.

U.S. Diving, the sport's governing body, issued a statement Tuesday, saying there was nothing in the organization's rules that would prevent Kimball from competing in the Olympic Trials Aug. 17-21 in Indianapolis.

Kimball is the son of Michigan and three-time U.S. Olympic diving coach Dick Kimball.

Pokes jostling for starting positions

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. (AP) — Tailback Herschel Walker and quarterback Danny White will sit out the Dallas Cowboys' preseason opener against the San Diego Chargers Saturday night, Coach Tom Landry said Wednesday.

Landry didn't want to take the chance of losing either to injury. Neither played in Saturday's intrasquad scrimmage.

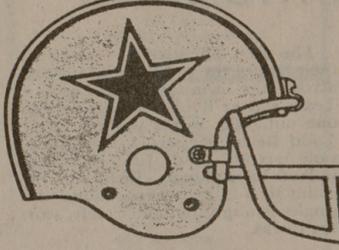
Steve Pelluer, whom Landry tabbed going into camp as the team's No. 1 quarterback, will start for the Cowboys in the 6 p.m. PDT game at Jack Murphy Stadium in San Diego.

Tailback Darryl Clack and fullback Timmy Newsome will be in the backfield with Pelluer, Landry said Wednesday at a press conference.

Landry said No. 1 draft choice Michael Irvin and second-year veteran Kelvin Martin will split time at flanker Saturday night. But Martin will start, Landry said.

"Kelvin Martin has been our most improved receiver during training camp," Landry said of the former Boston College star, who was used primarily as a punt returner during his rookie season. "I'd just like to see him go out there, give him a chance to start the game."

Martin, 5-9, 163-pounder who was Dallas' fourth-round pick last year, caught three passes for 98



yards, including two 45-yard receptions that set up touchdowns.

"If he (Martin) can maintain this level, he has a chance to compete for more than a punt returner's job," Landry said.

Landry also praised Irvin, the former Miami star who was the 12th player selected in the draft.

"I don't know whether he's (Martin) ahead of him (Irvin)," Landry said. "Irvin has been playing very well also. They'll be splitting time, but I think Kelvin has earned the chance to start."

The makeshift defensive lineup that Landry had to devise due to various injuries will include starters Ron Burton, Steve DeOssie and Garth Jax, left to right, at linebacker.

"They're our only experienced linebackers," Landry said.

With Ron Francis mending a separated shoulder, Landry is leaning towards starting second-year veteran Robert Williams at right cornerback, over third-year man Manny Hendrix. The other returning defensive backfield starters — cornerback Everson Walls, strong safety Bill Bates and free safety Michael Downs — are also slated to start Saturday.

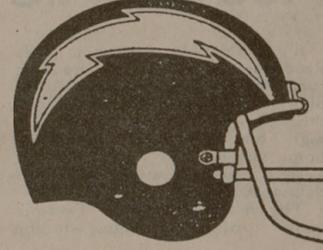
On the competition between strong safeties Bates and Vince Albritton and free safeties Downs and Victor Scott, Landry said:

"We said before we came into camp that almost every job is open. I don't think Herschel's is, but most of them are. All four of those safeties are good players. We'll just see who comes up to the level that they were at last year, and see who's going to end up playing for us."

Both Bates and Downs have worked hard in camp, Landry said.

"Just because we opened the job, it doesn't mean that they are going to be released tomorrow, because of the competition," he said.

Up front, 1987 No. 1 draft pick Danny Noonan will play at right tackle, with Randy White still being held out of practices because of a neck injury. Kevin Brooks, who Landry says is the most improved



veteran this summer, will man the left tackle spot. Left end Ed Jones and right end Jim Jeffcoat are also set for Saturday.

On what he'd like to accomplish in early pre-season games, given that Walker won't play much, Landry said:

"We're evaluating personnel all the time. That's our biggest objective this summer. We have so many offensive linemen to look at. We have so many wide receivers and quarterbacks."

"Offensively, we have almost a whole team, other than tight ends, to evaluate. Hopefully, we'll come out with the right decision at the end. Defensively, you don't have that many options."

Strange returns to course that spurred successful year

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Curtis Strange will be back at Colonial Country Club Thursday to defend his St. Jude Classic title, a championship which may have marked a turning point in his career.

Last year's victory at Memphis was one of three PGA Tour wins that propelled Strange to the No. 1 spot on the 1987 money list with a record \$925,941. It was the second time in three years the former Wake Forest All-American was the tour's top money winner with a record total.

Strange got down in two shots

from the 18th fairway during a year's final round to take the title and has built upon that victory.

He defeated Nick Faldo in a hole playoff to win the U.S. Open last June and thrust his name in the ongoing debates about who is the world's top golfer.

The U.S. Open win, Strange's major victory, was his 12th triumph in the past five years and his 14th in the 1980s.

"I have confidence in my ability and I work hard at it," Strange said. "And I expect a lot out of myself."



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