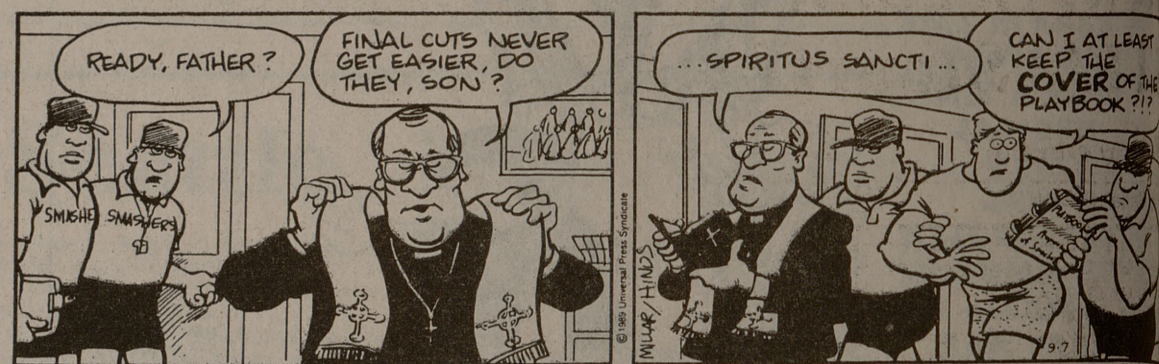


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by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinc



Oilers' Rozier reports to camp

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston running back Mike Rozier, a contract holdout since the start of training camp, agreed to a one-year contract and reported to workouts Wednesday.

"I wouldn't be here if it didn't get anywhere," Rozier said after packing his gear in his locker. "I haven't signed but I'll be at work tomorrow."

Oiler officials said no contract had been signed but Rozier said he was ready to play.

The Oilers at one time offered Rozier a five-year contract worth \$5.2 million and a \$25,000 signing bonus but the battle lines formed over the bonus.

Rozier wanted a \$250,000 bonus but the Oilers would not budge from their \$25,000 limit.

Terms of Rozier's contract were not announced but KRIV-TV reported the Oiler running back agreed to sign a one-year contract worth \$600,000.

"It should have been done a long time ago," Rozier said. "Different things kept coming up. He (Oiler general manager Mike Holovak) said no. I said no. But ev-

erything is worked out now."

Rozier said he didn't regret missing preseason. "Hell no, who likes to go to camp anyway," he said. "I got a gift from God. It's not hard for me to come in and start playing and do the things I've doing. I don't gotta work hard like some ballplayers do."

Holovak, who thought Rozier had been near signing previously, remained cautious.

"Nothing has been done yet, and until something signed there is nothing," Holovak said.

Rozier worked out at the team's practice facility receivers coach Ray Sherman Wednesday.

Rozier, the Oilers leading rusher last season, ran 1,004 yards, the first Oiler 1,000-yard rusher since Campbell in 1983.

The Oilers now have their full team in camp including wide receiver Drew Hill, who missed the entire season demanding that his contract be renegotiated. The Oilers open their season Sunday at Minnesota.

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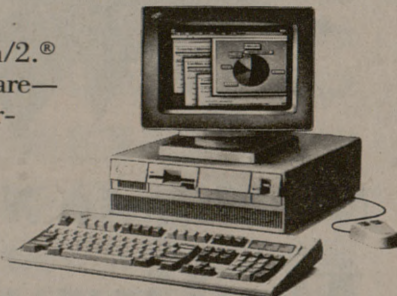


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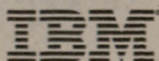
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Pokes, Ponies open differently

DALLAS (AP) — The Dallas Cowboys and Southern Methodist Mustangs brought their freshly scrubbed programs before the populace last weekend, and you get the impression they're on different orbits.

The Cowboys, 3-13 and the NFL cellar-dwellers last year, have an exciting young quarterback and an energetic new coach.

Preseason games don't tell all, but the Cowboys definitely showed a winning attitude under new coach Jimmy Johnson and a strong offensive spark behind rookie quarterback Troy Aikman. The 3-1 preseason record is meaningful in that it gave the Dallas players some confidence after the shambles of last season.

Of course, you can have all the confidence in the world and run slow, and you'll get flogged like a bad dog.

"The more you win the better your attitude," Johnson said. "The better morale you have, then you have more confidence and a chance to win in the future."

Notice he said "in the future." Johnson knows he doesn't have the horses on defense to run with the NFL big boys this year.

Yet you sense that just as soon as

Johnson gets close to dead even in talent, then the Cowboys will be a bona fide playoff team.

Alas, the story is a much sadder one on the hilltop at SMU.

Talk about a program in ruins. SMU started 17 freshmen the other night against the Rice Owls.

The NCAA "death penalty" caused the Mustangs to stay out of collegiate football for two years, but it's going to be much longer than that before the punishment ends.

The Mustangs are too slow and small. If ever a team needed to play its games on a water-soaked wheat field, it ought to be SMU. The Mustangs hit hard and fought hard, but you can't hit what you can't catch.

Rice, not exactly a top 50 rated team, was much too swift for the determined Ponies in a 35-6 victory.

Only the size of SMU's heart kept the game from becoming a scoreboard disaster.

Make no mistake, disciplinarian Forrest Gregg will have the Mustangs playing hard, but if they don't beat Connecticut in two weeks at Ownby Stadium, then SMU is likely looking at an 0-11 season.

Athletic director Doug Singletary says SMU's comeback "a grand experiment."

He says "We'll do it right or trying."

Indeed, it is a grand experiment with the high admission standards and you're-fired-if-you-cheat to SMU administrators and coaches.

Years ago the University of Chicago, once a proud football school, decided to raise its standards for letters and cut out the pay-for-practice that had become common place at many schools.

Chicago couldn't hang with big boys.

Right now the school is playing Division III football.

Will it happen to SMU?

It all depends on whether you are an optimist or a pessimist.

The way it looks right now, you got to figure SMU may be out of Southwest Conference in five years.

Holtz still unsure of No. 1 Irish

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (AP) — Lou Holtz has added Shakespeare's poetry to his repertoire of lines beaming the prospects of his top-ranked Notre Dame football team.

"Wasn't it Shakespeare who said, 'Heaven is the head who wears the crown?'" the coach asked after learning the Irish climbed to the No. 1 spot in the weekly Associated Press poll.

"Each week is different, and all I know is we're better than Virginia."

Notre Dame's convincing 36-13 victory over Virginia was enough to nudge Notre Dame up one position and trade places with Michigan, which opens Sept. 16 against the Irish.

"I don't feel like we're the worst team in America," Holtz said in jest after a practice. "But if we're the No. 1 team, college football has deteriorated considerably."

With nine days left before the top two teams meet, Holtz has his squad practicing on artificial turf to pre-

pare for the Michigan field. Notre Dame plays its home games on grass.

"The last two days have been encouraging," Holtz said. "I think they've fallen into their practice habits."

Running back Ricky Watters, who rushed for 80 yards in 12 carries against Virginia, said fans disappointed by the loss of Tony Brooks should watch Rod Culver. "Rod doesn't have all the experience yet that Tony had, but in due time you'll see that Rod Culver's a great back also," Watters said.

Culver, a sophomore from Detroit, rushed for 195 yards and three touchdowns last year in Notre Dame's national championship season. Brooks was refused re-admission this fall after a series of disciplinary scrapes.

Culver scored a touchdown against Virginia while rushing 47 yards in nine carries.

"It'll be the same thing Brooksie and I would have had — like a tan-

dem," Watters said. "I would've been a nice 1-2 punch to knock you out. As we go along, I think Rod and I will develop into the same of thing."

Defensive coordinator Barry Alvarez was reluctant to draw comparisons between this season's Irish and the players who allowed Michigan 213 total yards in 1988. "I think we were a pretty good team against Michigan last year," he said. "I got some things to work on."



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