

Perkins still holding out as Mavericks open camp; rookie White may benefit

DALLAS (AP) — The Dallas Mavericks, fighting the fallout of a disappointing 1988-89 season, opened training camp Friday without forward Sam Perkins.

Perkins' agent, Lee Fentress, told the Mavericks Thursday night that their best defensive player would hold out for a new contract.

The two sides are in disagreement over the contract length for Perkins, a restricted free agent.

The Mavericks want to sign Perkins to a three-year deal while Fentress has proposed a six-year agreement.

"I'm hopeful Sam will be in soon," said Mavericks coach John MacLeod. "I don't want to talk about distractions right now."

"If he stays out a week, it might

the terms of his drug after-care program.

MacLeod announced two weeks ago that Tarpley would move into the starting lineup ahead of Perkins.

But there are doubts concerning Tarpley's future.

If Tarpley violates the league's substance-abuse rule one more time, he faces a minimum two-year suspension.

"He's our best player," said forward Rolando Blackman.

"Here's a guy who's given a starting position two weeks before camp. So there has to be a sense of responsibility to this organization and to his teammates. If he's on the floor, he's a powerhouse for us."

During Tarpley's drug suspension absence, the Mavericks went 17-32.

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— John MacLeod, Mavericks' coach

be. I'd like to have him right now."

Perkins and Fentress were not immediately available for comment Friday.

The other nine veterans from last year's team reported on time to work out at Moody Coliseum on the Southern Methodist University campus.

Among Dallas' rookies, only second-round forward Pat Durham was missing while his representatives continue to negotiate a contract.

Perkins' absence will present an opportunity for first-round draft pick Randy White.

White's upbeat personality is expected to inject some fire into a generally unemotional team.

"We're going to plug somebody into that spot for now so it might be a good opportunity for him (White)," MacLeod said.

The Mavericks must confront a number of questions after going 38-44 last season and missing the playoffs for the first time in six years.

Near the top of the list is the mental state of forward Roy Tarpley, who missed 63 games last season — 14 with a knee injury and 49 more when he was suspended for violating

Tarpley returned for the final six games of the season and led the Mavericks to four victories with 22.7 points per game and 13.3 rebounds.

"If he can play the whole year, I think we'll see that we have a tremendous talent," MacLeod said.

"With his talent, he deserves to be on the floor as a starter."

Also among the team's most pressing questions is the health of James Donaldson.

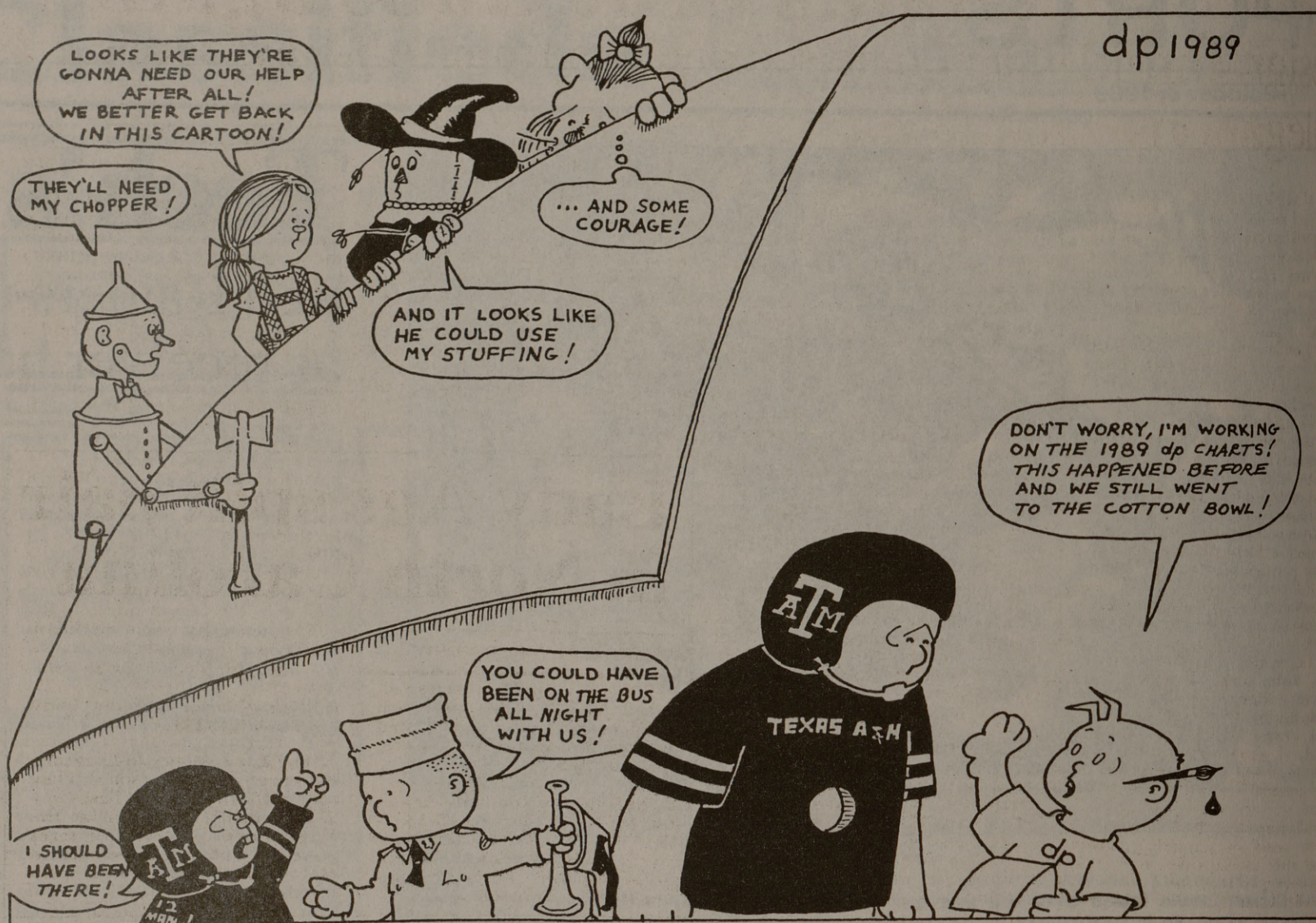
The 7-2 center was playing the best of his career before suffering a serious knee injury on March 10. In the six games prior to the injury, Donaldson averaged 17.3 points and 18.5 rebounds.

Dallas was 9-21 after Donaldson went down.

Donaldson's off-season rehabilitation program has placed him far ahead of the schedule drawn up by team physicians. "I'm close to my old self," Donaldson said.

When Donaldson reports, Perkins will play the sixth-man role after starting the past four seasons.

MacLeod also changed guard Derek Harper's role, making him a truer point guard who takes fewer shots.



Spurs open camp without holdout Elliott

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The San Antonio Spurs opened training camp Friday with a roster loaded with new faces, but among the missing was the team's No. 1 draft choice, Sean Elliott of Arizona.

"I'm disappointed Sean is not here," second-year coach Larry Brown said. "He's going to be a big part of the team's future and we'd like to have him here. I know he wants to be here."

Elliott has yet to sign a contract and negotiations appear to be at a standstill. Elliott's agent, Bob Woolf, is believed to be asking for \$2 million a year for the third player selected in the recent NBA draft.

The opening of camp marked the long-awaited arrival of center David Robinson, who sat out the last two seasons while fulfilling an obligation to the Navy.

Among the other new faces in camp were two players acquired during off-season trades: Terry Cummings from Milwaukee and Maurice Cheeks from Philadelphia. As part of the house cleaning, the Spurs dealt starters Alvin Robertson, Greg Anderson and Johnny Dawkins.

The Spurs are hoping to improve on last year's franchise-worst 21-61 record. Willie Anderson, Vernon Maxwell and Frank Brickowski are the only holdovers from a team that produced the worst record in franchise history.

Brickowski missed last year's camp because of a contract dispute.

"It was fun out there," Brown said after the four-hour workout at the University of Texas at San Antonio. "What a difference a year makes. We're in a lot better situation this year. We have a

good mix of experienced players and young talented players.

"It's tough for some of the older, more experienced guys because they've gone through this before. They've heard the same thing 8,000 times. Our goal is to just get everybody ready for Nov. 4 (season opener against Los Angeles Lakers)."

Robinson said the first practice went better than expected.

"Coach Brown eased us in," Robinson said. "It was the first day and you're going to expect mistakes. As long as the guys come out and work hard and maintain that, we're going to be all right."

Robinson, the college basketball player of the year at Navy in 1987, said the addition of Cummings and Cheeks will take some of the scoring load off his shoulders.

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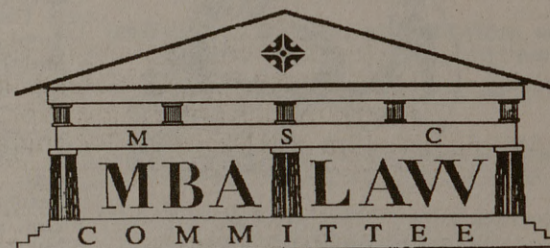
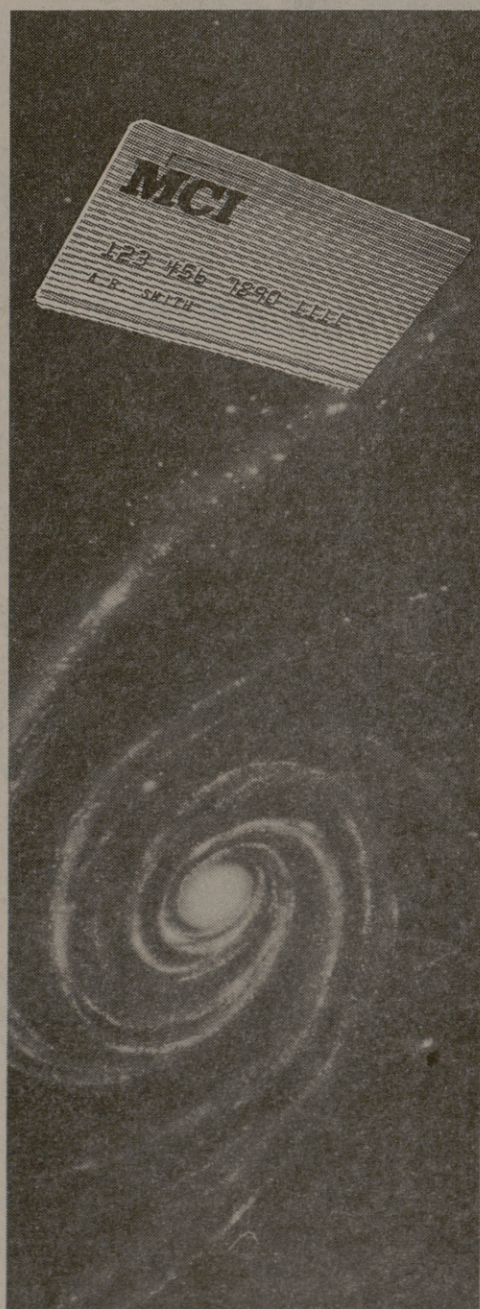
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