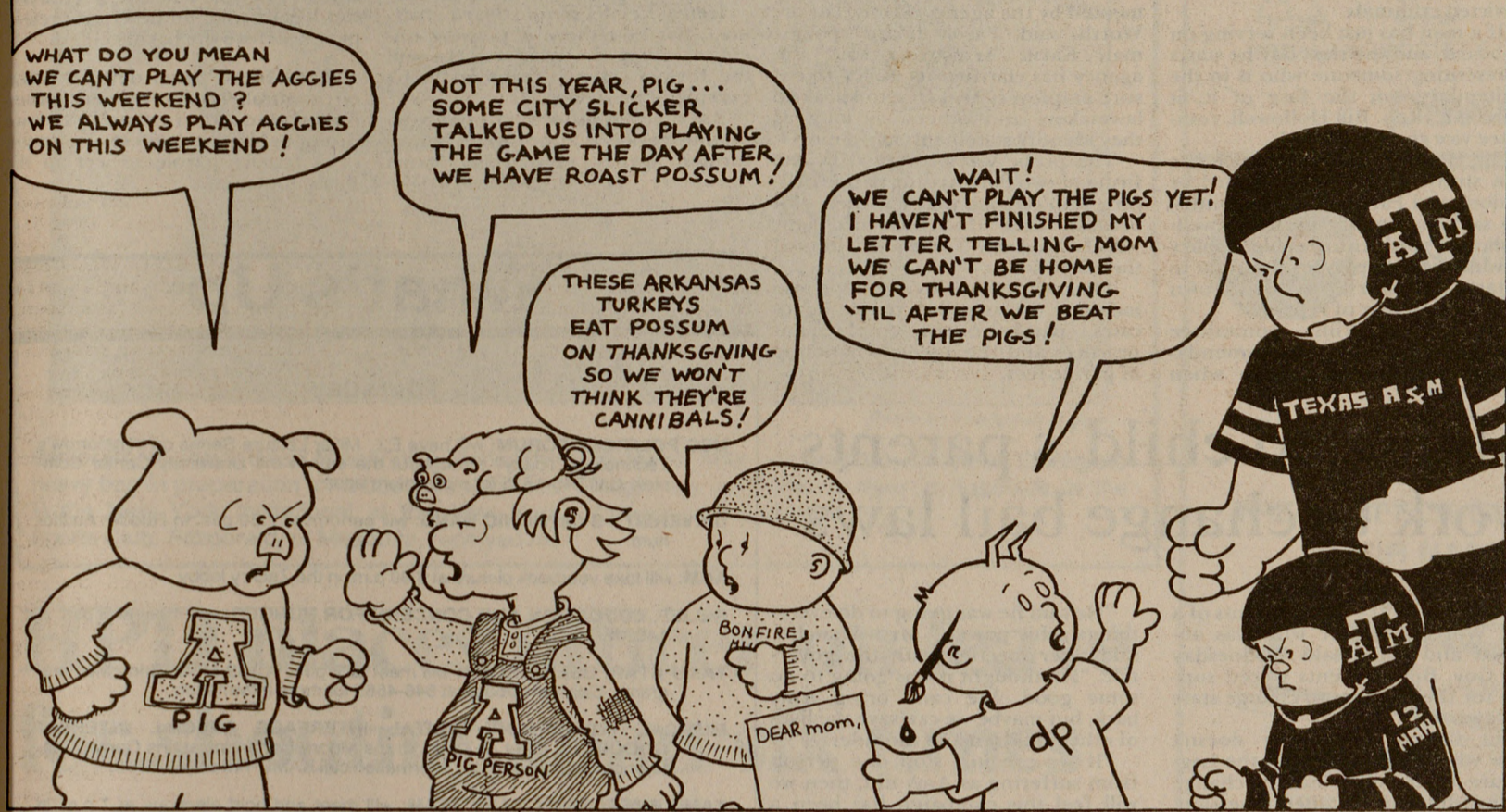


dp 1989



TANK McNAMARA by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



Free Agents

(Continued from page 9)

leave his hometown, the defending world champions and a club with a chance to repeat to go back to George Steinbrenner's dog and pony show? Okay, maybe it's just a dog show.

But, ultimately the answer is money. Maybe he feels one winner's ring is enough and that he'd better get the huge money (because he's already making the big money) while he can.

And Henderson, along with Mark Langston, are franchise-type players, the type you'd trade Herschel Walker for. You may not blame them for striking out, seeking and making new fortunes.

But what about those other 88 who don't quite measure up to one-man-gang status?

Take Rick Leach of the Rangers. Please.

The only notable things he did last season were pull a disappearing act for a few days and get busted with some marijuana in his luggage. Oh, and he got knocked out when he ran into the outfield wall. Maybe these events were related.

That's it. And now he's a free agent. If I were him I'd be hoping the Rangers would just re-sign me. If I were the Rangers, I'd Just Say No.

But Rickey, Rick and the Rangers may not have to worry about any of this.

The agreement between the players and owners runs out before the next season begins. If that deadline is missed, who's playing for whom will be irrelevant.

Mark Macon ready for strong support

When Mark Macon was a freshman, Temple soared to the top of the college basketball polls and a gaudy 32-2 record with the 6-foot-5 guard grabbing honors in a season that ended one game short of the Final Four.

As a sophomore, Macon was hounded defensively and could only shoot and watch as the Owls dropped to 18-12 and an NIT bid.

It looks as if those things will change for the Temple junior. The Owls, ranked 15th in the preseason poll, have the height and talent to draw some of the attention Macon faced last season.

"It's still just Mark Macon, and I don't think we were frustrated last year and I don't think anybody on my team would say they were," he said. "It's just my team coming in with a different cast of players and we're going to try to play our best every game."

Macon averaged 18.3 points last season and handed out 115 assists, but his shooting percentage dropped from .454 as a freshman to last season's .407.

Macon's only frontline help last season came from 7-0 Duane Causwell. He was second in the nation in blocked shots and averaged 11.3 points and 8.9 rebounds. But when Causwell was in foul trouble, the size of the team dropped dramatically.

It won't this season, with the addition of Prop 48 sophomores 7-0 Donald Hodge, 6-11 Chris Lovelace and 6-9 Mark Strickland.

"It's been different in practice but not that much," Macon said of the new pro-size frontline. "Size can help you make up for a lot, but it may also hamper you."

Lack of height will hurt Rutgers and West Virginia in the Atlantic 10 race with Temple.

Rutgers has four starters back from last season's team which caught the country's attention with an emotional ride to the NCAA tournament. West Virginia lost three players from an offense that was balanced and had been together for three seasons.

The Atlantic 10 has two new coaches, with Seton Hall assistant John Carroll taking over at Duquesne and former Gannon head coach Tom Chapman moving to St. Bonaventure.

Maybe no coach can expect as big a turnaround this season as George Washington's John Kuester. His team went 1-27 last season, matching the NCAA mark for losses in a season.

Pitt poised for post-season bowl action

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Pitt is all but assured of going to its second bowl in six years, but hold the celebration.

The Panthers are happy they'll have their day in the Sun, or what used to be called the Sun Bowl, but they realize that the John Hancock Bowl on Dec. 30 won't be the same as appearing in a big-buck bowl like the Sugar or Fiesta two days later.

Pittsburgh's worst back-to-back losses in 19 years — 45-7 to Notre Dame and 24-3 to Miami — cost the Panthers (5-2-1) any chance of reaching their season-long goal to play in a New Year's Day bowl game.

"We haven't won a game in a month," safety Dan Crossman said. "We haven't played a good game in a long time."

The El Paso-based bowl came close to extending an invitation last season to the Panthers, only to be persuaded by CBS-TV officials to invite Army to play Alabama.

Pitt, apparently discouraged after being snubbed by the Sun and Gator bowls, went on to lose its final two games and finish 6-5.

John Hancock Bowl officials said Pitt's invitation isn't contingent upon the Panthers beating East Carolina on Saturday or rival Penn State on Nov. 25, the day invitations officially can be extended.

Pitt has three games remaining, including a Dec. 2 game in Dublin, Ireland, against Rutgers, and conceivably could finish 5-5-1.

Even if that happens, Fulmer said the John Hancock Bowl won't reconsider its decision.

"I would never make Mike (Gottfried, the Panthers' coach) an offer and then take it back," Fulmer said. "Mike is a good friend of mine and I have a lot of respect for him and his program."

Pitt will collect \$900,000 for appearing in the John Hancock Bowl.

The Panthers' likely opponent is the Southwest Conference runner-up, perhaps Texas A&M (7-2) or Arkansas (8-1).

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