

NFL takes advantage of junior talent

NEW YORK (AP) — The year of the junior started early Sunday as five underclassmen were taken with the first seven picks of an NFL draft dominated by defense.

It was the first draft ever open unconditionally to underclassmen, and teams jumped on them despite reservations about their lack of experience.

Altogether, eight were chosen with the 25 picks of the first round, starting with Illinois quarterback Jeff George as the No. 1 pick by the Indianapolis Colts and including Alabama linebacker Keith McCants by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Southern Cal linebacker Junior Seau by the San Diego Chargers, defensive back Mark Carrier by the Chicago Bears and Houston Heisman Trophy winner Andre Ware by the Detroit Lions.

"Experience will take place during minicamp," said Seau, the fifth pick overall despite having started just one year at USC. He sat out as a freshman because he failed to meet academic standards.

Seau was one of seven linebackers and 13 defensive players chosen with the first 18 picks in what was supposed to be a year for linebackers and running backs. It sure was for linebackers, but the running backs waited until later as the eternal quest for big men had them going early.

No running back was selected between the second choice, when the New York Jets took Penn State's Blair Thomas, and the 17th, when Dallas traded up to choose Florida's Emmitt Smith, another junior. A total of six runners were picked, almost all of them late, while 14 of the 25 first-rounders were defensive players.

George, who on Friday signed a six-year, \$15 million package with Indianapolis, was the first pick, the Colts having obtained it for tackle Chris Hinton, wide receiver Andre Rison and next year's No. 1.

He was followed by two seniors, Thomas and Miami defensive tackle Cortez Kennedy, who went to Seattle after the Seahawks gave up the eighth and 10th picks to move into New England's No. 3 slot.

Juniors invade draft

Then came the rush to underclassmen: —McCants, projected as the top pick only two weeks ago but dogged by reports of a bad knee, went to Tampa Bay.

—Seau went to the Chargers, who had been ready to take huge offensive tackle Richmond Webb of Texas A&M and were delighted to get what they hope will be an instant star for their defense.

—In the first big surprise, Seau's USC teammate, Carrier, went to Chicago, and the Bears signed the safety immediately to avoid training camp holdout problems that Coach Mike Ditka said hurt both their No. 1 choices a year ago.

—Ware went to Detroit, where he will find a familiar run-and-shoot offense and fellow Heisman winner in Barry Sanders waiting in the backfield.

Another surprise came five picks later at No. 11, when the Raiders made one of their classic picks —Anthony Smith, a defensive end from Arizona who has a history of knee problems and played at three colleges, starting with Alabama.

"I'm really shocked I was picked on the first round," he said. "I had no idea when I would be picked, but I knew who would pick me. Being with the Raiders fits my personality and my style of play."

McCants was chosen by Perkins despite a report in Sunday's Atlanta Journal and Constitution that he might need knee surgery and miss the season.

"Everybody's talking about my knee. I had an arthroscope in my junior year," he said. "It's mind-boggling to me that this can come up the day of the draft. Twenty-seven doctors of the NFL looked at it and they all said it looks well."

Perkins said McCants would probably need arthroscopic surgery, but no more.

"Our doctors have looked at his knee, have looked at X-rays and all the other kinds of tests. He does have a little problem. He'll probably be in the next week or so to have it scoped to take care of that problem."

The waiting game

It was a long round, lasting 3 hours and 24 minutes for the 25 picks, 11 minutes longer than last year, when there were 28 picks.

After Ware, taken by Detroit with the seventh pick, came Arizona linebacker Chris Singleton to New England; Webb, the Texas A&M offensive tackle, to Miami; North Carolina State defensive tackle Ray Agnew to New England; Smith to the Raiders; Baylor linebacker James Francis to Cincinnati; Michigan State linebacker Percy Snow to Kansas City and West Virginia defensive end Renaldo Turnbull to New Orleans.

Then came another junior, Houston's Lamar Lathon to the Oilers, where he will play for his college coach, Jack Pardee, followed by defensive back J.D. Williams of Fresno State to Buffalo and Smith, the seventh junior, to the Cowboys, who gave up an extra third-rounder to move up.

Green Bay had two picks, one for linebacker Tony Bennett of Mississippi, the other for running back Darrell Thompson of Minnesota. Then Washington's Steve Broussard became the third running back in four picks when he was chosen by Atlanta.

Pittsburgh took Eric Green, the 270-pound tight end from Liberty; Philadelphia added speed to its secondary with Georgia's Ben Smith; the Los Angeles Rams took Washington center Bern Brostek; the New York Giants took Georgia running back Rodney Hampton, another junior, and San Francisco finished the round by picking Dexter Carter, a running back-wide receiver from Florida State.

NFL draft flooded by SWC talent
Ags Webb, Wallace, Jones go in first day of draft

From Staff and Wire Reports

Texas A&M offensive guard Richmond Webb led a contingent of three Aggies into the National Football League's 1990 draft. Linebacker Aaron Wallace, tight end Mike Jones and Webb were all chosen in the first day of the draft.

Webb, 6-6, 291, was the 10th overall selection in the first round. He led the Aggie ground attack that averaged 199.9 yards per game last season.

Webb, nicknamed "Bam Bam" by his teammates because of his persistent style, had five knockdown blocks in a 44-7 victory over Texas Christian.

His block broke Darren Lewis free for an 84-yard touchdown run to set up the game-winning field goal in a 17-13 victory over Houston.

"As a little kid growing up, I always wanted to play professional league ball," Webb said. "I was always watching the Cowboys. Now that dream has come true."

He said he will continue on his program of workouts and running before going to Miami next Saturday.

"I talked to their (Miami's) offensive line coach about three weeks ago. They had four or five offensive linemen, and that was one of their needs going into the draft," he said. "They never said they would pick me but they were interested. I lucked out and it just happened that way."

Wallace, who was picked up by the Los Angeles Raiders, was an integral part of A&M head coach R.C. Slocum's blitz-oriented defense. Despite being hampered most of the season with turf toe, Wallace broke the Aggies' career sack record.

Houston quarterback Andre Ware was

selected by the Detroit Lions, linebacker Lamar Lathon was selected by the Houston Oilers, and Baylor linebacker James Francis was picked by the Cincinnati Bengals.

Heisman Trophy winner Andre Ware of the University of Houston, the first of four Southwest Conference players chosen in the first round of Sunday's NFL draft, said he was pleased with his decision.

Ware, who threw 75 touchdown passes in his college career with the Cougars' run-

Lamar Lathon, who overcame an auto accident and major knee surgery last year, was reunited with Coach Jack Pardee Sunday as the first round selection of the Houston Oilers in the NFL draft.

"I know what Jack Pardee expects of me, this is the biggest moment of my life," Lathon said in an emotional response to being the 15th pick in the draft.

Lathon recovered from an auto accident prior to last season and started one game

The Oilers continued to add defensive help in the second and third rounds.

They selected Notre Dame defensive tackle Jeff Alm, 6-5, 274 and Miami defensive end Willis Peguese, 6-5, 262, in the third round.

Francis, 6-4, 243, was a first-team Associated Press All-American pick in 1989. He led the Bears in with 129 tackles, eight sacks and 12 tackles behind the line.

Francis caused and recovered three fumbles and deflected five passes.

He set a school season record and tied a national record with eight blocked kicks, including two against Rice.

Francis had expected to be chosen by the Chicago Bears and become a teammate of former Baylor linebacker Mike Singletary.

"That's fine with me, I just wanted to get it over and play football," Francis said.

"I think I can start if I go down there and do the same things I've done in college."

"I really tough I was going to Chicago but I knew Cincinnati wanted me so I'm happy," Francis said.

Williams will represent both Lathon and Francis and he promises no holdouts.

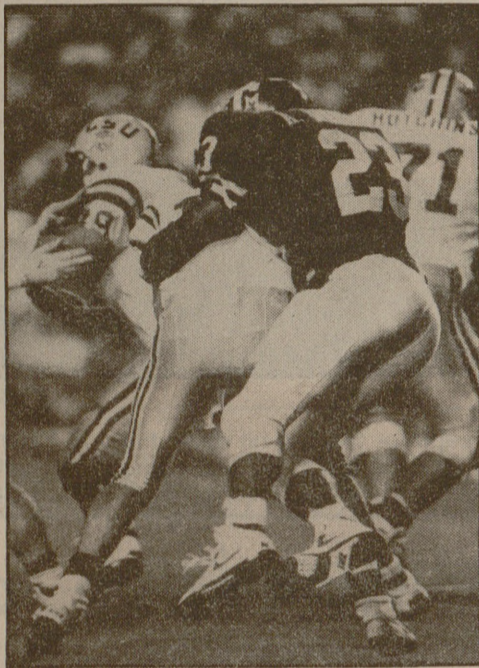
"I don't believe in that holdout stuff," Williams said.

Williams said Lathon needed as much work as he could get to prepare for his first pro season and Lathon said he was ready for work.

"I don't think I'm giving anything away," Lathon said.

"I think the Oilers will respect me much more for taking that approach."

Oilers general manager Mike Holovac praised Lathon's athletic skills but then cut off his comments.



A&M linebacker Aaron Wallace was drafted in the second round by the L.A. Raiders.

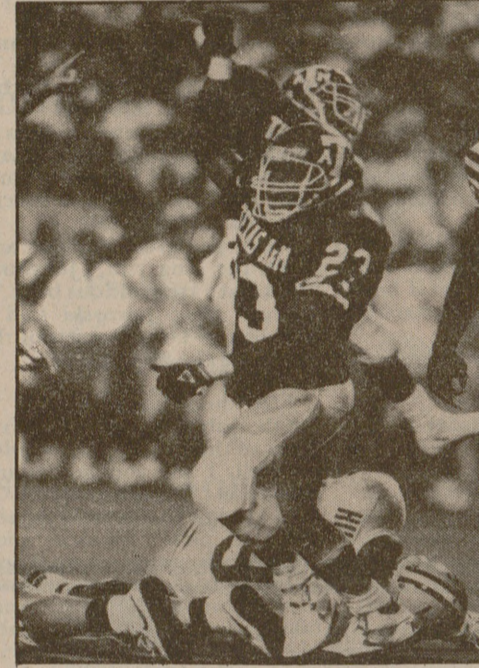


Photo by Jay Janner

and-shoot offense, was chosen by the Detroit Lions, who were the first NFL team to exclusively use the run-and-shoot.

"I was really happy; it's a good situation to go to," Ware said. "They do basically the same things we do. A lot of the terminology is the same as far as the offense."

"Going to a situation like Detroit is great. They are an up and coming team and they need some help at quarterback."

Rodney Peete started for the Lions last season.

Ware set 13 NCAA records in his explosive junior season with the Cougars. He completed 365 of 578 passes for 4,699 yards and 46 touchdowns last season.

but suffered a season-ending knee injury.

He spent the rest of the season working out under the direction of Tom Williams, a former Oiler official, who operates a fitness center in Houston.

"I feel I can add a lot to the Houston Oilers," said Lathon, a native of nearby Wharton. "Coach Pardee and I have a good one-on-one situation. "I'll just try to be the best Oiler I can be."

The Cougar linebacker was especially impressive in workouts for NFL scouts prior to the draft.

"His knee is fine," Williams said. "He was working out two or three times a day. I had to cut back on what he was doing with me."

Sports Focus: Aggie Baseball

Frogs rob Robertson; Ags split with TCU

By ALAN LEHMAN
Of The Battalion Staff

Rich Robertson couldn't have picked a worse time to give up his first home run of the season.

The homer, launched by Mike Losa, was a three-run shot that gave the Texas Christian baseball team a 3-1 win over A&M in the first game of Saturday's doubleheader.

The Aggies managed to salvage two wins, however, as they came back to win the finale 13-2 in front of 4,029 at Olsen Field.

A&M won in dramatic fashion Friday night as they rallied for five runs in the

bottom of the ninth inning to win 10-9.

The Aggies improved to 42-12 on the season and remain firmly lodged in third place in Southwest Conference play. A&M (10-5) trails Texas (12-2) and Arkansas (12-3).

In Saturday's seven-inning opener, the Horned Frogs showed that they weren't impressed by Robertson's spotless 9-0 record. They bashed seven hits off of him before Losa's dinger. TCU seemed to have runners on in every inning.

Still, Robertson managed to work out of every inning until the seventh. Then, Chad Shipes led off with a double and was sacrificed to third.

First baseman Scott Malone, who was 6-for-7 in the first two games, was intentionally walked to set the stage for Losa's drive. It was the first homer given up by Robertson in 78 innings this season.

"I left a fastball up and out over the plate," Robertson said. "It was supposed to be outside, but I left it in the worst possible place."

The Aggies couldn't come back in their half of the seventh off TCU starter Jared Shope, who allowed only one hit and three baserunners throughout the game.

Catcher John Wood singled home Chad Broussard in the fifth inning for the lone A&M run.

Shope came into the game with a bloated 6.97 earned run average and 81 hits allowed in only 64 innings.

Coach Mark Johnson said that the Aggies just didn't give Robertson enough run support.

"Rich just didn't have the freedom to have a shaky inning," Johnson said. "He had to be so careful with only the one-run lead."

"We should have gotten on Shope earlier, but he threw the ball well and kept us off balance."

That he did, but the Aggies didn't dwell on it. They came back in the nightcap to squash the Frogs like Highway 6 roadkill.

A&M got some nice pitching from senior Pat Sweet. The lefty scattered seven hits in seven innings and gave up only one run on another Losa homer. Sweet struck out four and walked no one to improve to 6-4 on the season.

After getting only one hit in the opener, the Aggies went wild at the plate in the finale. A&M victimized three TCU pitchers for 11 hits and six walks.

Scoring early and often, the Aggies built a 10-0 lead after three frames.

Broussard's two-run homer -- his sixth round-tripper of the season -- highlighted A&M's three-run first inning.

Designated hitter David Rollen was 3-for-5 in the game, and Blake Pyle and Brian Thomas were both 2-for-4.

Thomas added three RBI while Pyle, Rollen and Broussard each chipped in two RBI.

The TCU defense was again horrendous, allowing four errors to bring their series total to 10 and their season total to a school-record 101.

Friday night, the late-inning magic returned to Olsen field. Like last year's team, the Aggies came from way behind to win in the final frame.

The game was tied 1-1 until the fifth when TCU touched A&M starter Ronnie Allen for three runs. The Frogs got homers from Losa, Shipes and Darren Thorpe and scored single runs in the seventh and eighth innings.

Trailing 6-1, the Aggies scored four in the eighth.

Singles by Tim Holt, Trey Witte and Thomas scored one run and chased TCU starter Britt Shoptaw. Rollen's sacrifice fly plated another and Pyle's two-out double scored two more.

Things looked bleak for A&M in the ninth as TCU added three insurance runs. Reliever Jason Bullard got into

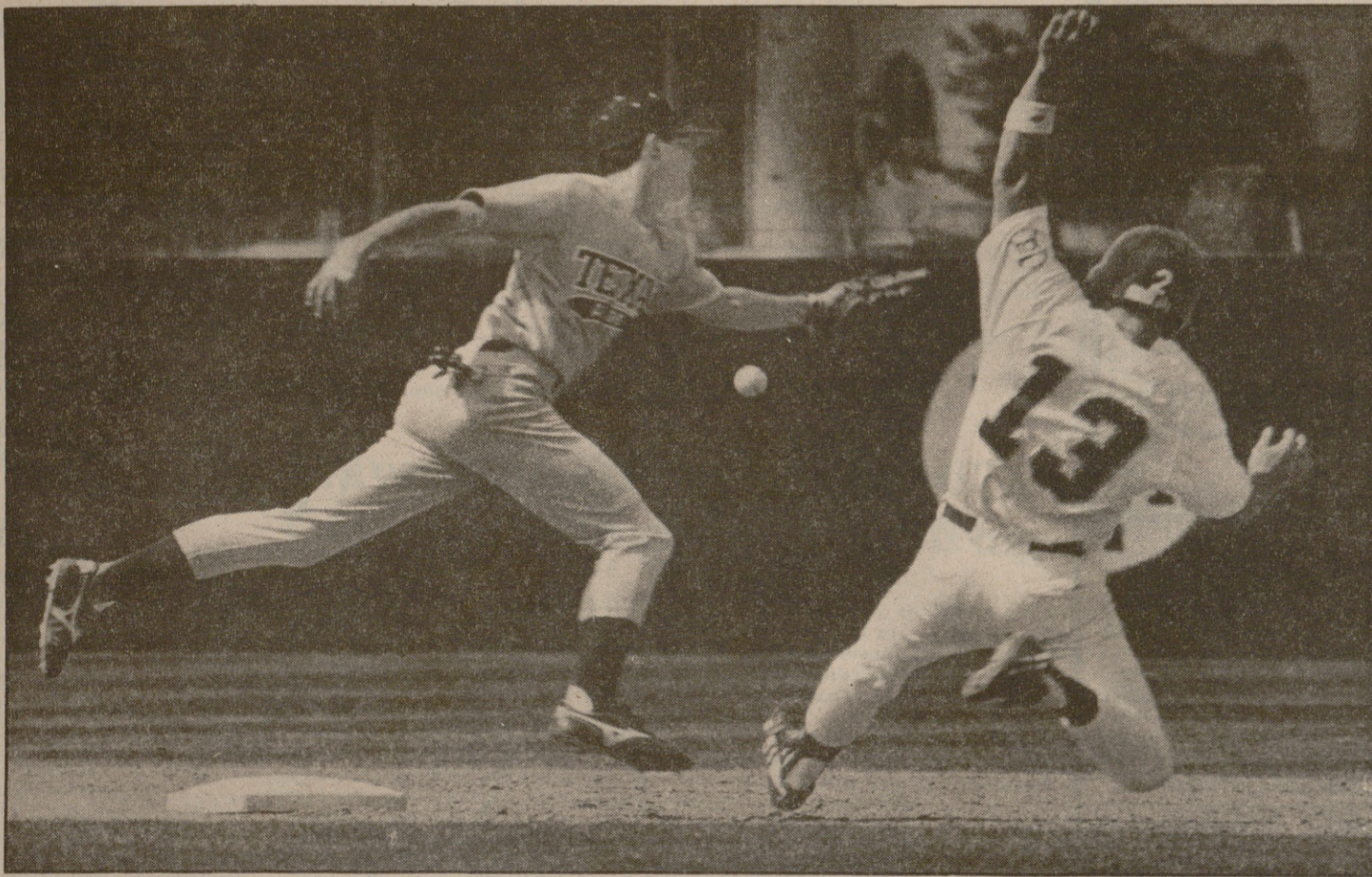


Photo by Scott D. Weaver

A&M shortstop Jason Marshall misses the throw from catcher Blake Pyle in the first game of Saturday's double-

header with Texas Christian. The Aggies lost the game 3-1 but took the series.