

## TCU's Wacker optimistic about Saturday's Houston showdown

FORT WORTH (AP) — A pessimist, they say, sees a glass half filled with water and proclaims it half empty. An optimist calls it half full. And then there's Jim Wacker.

The personable Texas Christian University coach figures it's not water but champagne and the bartender is nearby with a refill.

With his job in jeopardy, and coming off a critical loss to Baylor, Wacker takes his Horned Frogs to Houston Saturday to face the unbeaten, sixth-ranked, totally awesome Cougars in the Astrodome.

A loss would eliminate the 5-2, 3-1 Frogs from the Southwest Conference race. The Cougars haven't lost in the dome since 1988. In fact, their 11-game winning streak is the longest in major college football.

So is Wacker worried? "I love these kinds of games," he said, smiling broadly. "Your kids can play relaxed and loose because

you've got everything to gain and nothing to lose.

"Nobody expects you to win, so you can go down there and take a shot and if you do win, then — man alive! — the pot of gold is still there



at the end of the rainbow."

The pot of gold, of course, is the SWC title and a New Year's Day Cotton Bowl date, both of which seemed a not-so-remote possibility until TCU dropped a 27-21 verdict to Baylor Saturday.

Until then, the Frogs were riding a five-game winning streak, lounging atop the SWC standings at 3-0

and ranked in the Top 25 for the first time since 1984.

Meanwhile, the Cougars, though 6-0 in the SWC, are on probation and ineligible for either a title or a bowl — but not the national championship.

"When they're hitting on all eight cylinders, anybody who plays them is in trouble," Wacker said. "They're that good."

Wacker insists that Houston coach John Jenkins has the "best offensive mind in the country right now" and the Cougars' 200 NCAA, SWC and school offensive records bear that out.

"His offense is the most explosive in football," Wacker said. "No pro team is putting points on the board the way the Cougars are. What he's done is flat incredible ... A lot of us are incorporating the principles of the run-and-shoot into our own offenses."

## Lombardi award narrows choice to four seniors

HOUSTON (AP) — Moe Gardner of Illinois, Russell Maryland of Miami, David Rocker of Auburn and Chris Zorich of Notre Dame on Wednesday were named finalists for the Lombardi Award, given to the nation's top lineman.

All four are defensive players, although offensive linemen also are eligible for the award.

Twelve players were nominated before the season. That list was narrowed to four finalists — all seniors — by a nationwide committee of college coaches, sports writers and sportscasters.

The winner will be announced Dec. 6.

Gardner was an All-Big Ten selection as a sophomore and junior.

Rocker, whose brother Tracy won the Lombardi Award in 1988, anchors Auburn's highly rated defense.

Maryland, who had a career-high 20 tackles against Notre Dame two weeks ago, has 64 tackles this season with six sacks.

Zorich, who was a Lombardi finalist last year, dislocated his kneecap last Saturday and will miss this week's game against Navy. The injury could force Zorich to miss the rest of the season.

## Change in Denver rookie's medication allows him to return

DENVER (AP) — A change in medication for Denver Nuggets rookie Chris Jackson to control Tourette's Syndrome is working and he should be back within two weeks.

Jackson, the third player chosen in the NBA draft, was placed on the injured reserve list on Monday and will miss the first five games of the regular season.

Jackson, a high-scoring guard from LSU, was hospitalized on Sunday while doctors ran several tests to determine why he was so sluggish on the court.

Team physician Dr. Allan Schreiber concluded that Jackson's play was being slowed "dramatically" by one of two prescription drugs he has been taking to combat Tourette's Syndrome, a neurological disorder characterized by involuntary muscle movements, uncontrollable vocal sounds and inappropriate words.

Jackson is said to have a mild case of the multiple-tic disorder, and team physicians said they did

not believe it would hinder him when the Nuggets selected him in the draft.

Schreiber, in consultation with Jackson's personal doctors, took Jackson off one of the medicines and substituted another drug he has taken in the past without incident.

After changing medications, Jackson performed better in Tuesday's practice, coach Paul Westhead said.

"I think the bright side is that Chris has now kind of turned the corner physically," Westhead said. "It probably was his best practice since he's been here."

Westhead said Jackson, who was late reporting to training camp because of a contract dispute, can use the next 10 days "as his personal training period, the time he probably needed in the first place."

Jackson had been taking two prescription drugs — Proloxin and Anafronil.

## Wudel Continued from page 9

years of NBA knowledge and his demeanor on and off the court were the elements that mixed together the chemistry of the youthful nucleus.

Boasting the largest turnaround in NBA history is a testament to the preacher's effect on the team. A lesson that could be learned by many other teams in the league.

It just takes one player. And we are not talking about Sam Bowie of the New Jersey Nets or a Randy Breuer of the Minnesota Timberwolves. We're talking the real impact player.

Let's look at the younger, and hopefully upcoming, teams in the NBA.

There are the Los Angeles Clippers and the Sacramento Kings out west. Both teams are loaded with young promising talent that had great reputations in college but may never reach the same heights in the

pro ranks.

The Clippers boast of draft picks Bo Kimble and Loy Vaughn to add to their nucleus of Gary Grant, Danny Manning, Charles Smith and Benoit Benjamin.

A combination of players with enormous potential, but that lack one important ingredient — an experienced leader. They may just have one in Ron "Why did you trade me, Cleveland?" Harper. Time will tell after a horde of injuries struck the team down just as it was getting up off the ground last year.

The Kings story is almost the same. They have four first-round draft picks this season, who may all start for them this year considering the rest of the talent on the team. Wayman Tisdale's star shot down after college and the team's only other decent talent runs one player deep.

The expansion teams, while saying they want to start from scratch with youth, will be years, perhaps a decade from jumping to the heights of the league.

Has the idea not sunk into the heads of all these lowly teams' general managers? Their players are running around on the court like chickens with their heads cut off. Someone needs to show them the only logical answer to this problem.

It just takes that one seasoned veteran to add to a young brood of players.

Entering a new environment is tough. Having someone there who's been around the bend a few times in the league could certainly make the adjustment a lot easier for the new kids. It may make the difference.

Bottomline — a little bit of old and new can go a long way. Maybe all the way to a championship.

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