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The Battalion

SWC rejects Tulane; smart move

Jayme Blaschke
Sports Editor

Believe it or not, it finally happened. After nearly a decade of incompetent leadership, the Southwest Conference has finally done something intelligent. Maybe that's too strong a statement. In all honesty, they merely resisted the temptation to do something stupid.

The presidents of the eight SWC member schools rejected Tulane's bid to join the 77 year old conference Monday, thus rebelling against the wishes of SWC commissioner Fred Jacoby. Approval from six of the eight SWC schools was necessary for Tulane's admission, and conference officials indicate the vote wasn't even close.

This could actually mean the SWC has a future, after all. Fred Jacoby has lobbied hard for the admittance of Tulane in the conference, presenting them as a replacement for Arkansas.

Tulane — a school whose football team's claim to fame is their annual come-from-behind victory over Rice each season, whose basketball team plays in a worse (and smaller) arena than G. Rollie White Coliseum, and whose student body is smaller than half the schools in the conference.

The only things Tulane brings to the SWC is the New Orleans television market and high academic standards. Unfortunately, Rice can testify that academics don't balance the bank account, and if the New Orleans television market was so valuable, you can bet the Southeastern Conference would have already snatched that plum.

A replacement for Arkansas indeed. If Tulane were let in, why not let in Tulsa, also? They've said they would make an excellent addition to the SWC, and apparently that's all Jacoby needs to hear.

Unless, of course, the school happens to be a national power.

Some sports fans may have heard of a land called Oklahoma, where football is nearly as exciting as that in Texas, basketball is more than a curiosity, and baseball is played religiously. Oklahoma has no television markets, but they also don't have any professional sports teams, so the two main schools, Oklahoma University and Oklahoma State, have excellent attendance at their games.

In the weeks following Arkansas' departure, the athletic director at Oklahoma stated publicly several times that the Sooners were not satisfied with the situation in the Big 8 Conference, and would be interested in rejoining the SWC since Arkansas had left. Although Oklahoma State's athletic director said the Cowboys did not share OU's feelings, many felt the Oklahoma schools would stick together if one decided to go conference hopping.

Commissioner Jacoby's response? He said it wouldn't be ethical to talk to schools that belonged to other conferences, even as the Big 8 began calling up Texas Tech.

When Arkansas threatened to leave, the SWC sat on its hands. When basketball was becoming a multi-million dollar sport, the conference ignored it. The conference broke recruiting rules during the 80's, and paid for it. Now, finally, with the rejection of Tulane, it appears the member schools have woken from their decade-long slumber and are demanding real solutions to real problems.

Hopefully they'll find the solutions, but Tulane isn't it.



Richard S. James

Dr. Dick Respass, president of Texas World Speedway, explains some of the construction going on at the racetrack. Despite recent heavy rains and unfavorable weather, construction is expected to be completed by June 15.

Texas World Speedway celebrates reopening

By Richard S. James
The Battalion

Local officials, heads of motorsports sanctioning bodies, and racing drivers got a firsthand look at the reconstruction of Texas World Speedway at its official reopening Monday afternoon.

Reconstruction of the track six miles south of College Station continues in preparation for the first weekend of racing July 6 and 7. The first races will feature the SCCA's Escort World Challenge series for production-based cars.

Dr. Dick Respass, president of Texas World Speedway, said the track is currently undergoing phase one reconstruction, which includes the racing surface, the fans' comforts, and the corporate amenities.

Respass said concrete sky boxes, the pit road suites and the 1500-seat speedway club will be complete in time for the first race.

Final paving of the track was expected to begin Tuesday, Respass said, and will take about 12 days to complete. The paving is being overseen by Clarence Cagle, who has worked on many major racetracks including the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Although Respass said the track will be ready well ahead of the grand opening in July, others are not so sure. Bob Anderson, head of SCCA Pro Racing, said he is worried whether the track will be functional in time for the first race.

"We're concerned, but will monitor the situation," Anderson said. "We'll be back next week to check on the progress."

Anderson said he thinks the overall design of the road course is acceptable, but said anytime a road course is put inside of an oval, the road course is compromised.

"This is showbusiness," Anderson said. "To be able to have a full course that's viewable from the grandstands is a great asset these days."

The inside course is replacing the three-mile road course that incorporated half of the oval and extended out of the infield.

Doc Bundy, driver for the LotusSport racing team which will compete in the World Challenge series at the track in July, also is happy with the new layout.

"It'll be a challenge," Bundy said. "We race street circuits, so it doesn't matter what the layout is as long as there's room to race, and obviously there will be. It looks like we're going to generate really

good speed too, and I like high speed."

The high speeds should make for a good show for the race fans, and many changes are being made to better accommodate them, Respass said. He especially hopes to target the students at Texas A&M.

"We want the local residents to come out, and one thing that was not done very well in the past was reaching the students," he said. "The students weren't attracted because the prices were too high."

Respass said there will be discounts for students.

Texas World Speedway currently has four events scheduled for 1991. The first event is the SCCA races in July with the Escort World Challenge series, the Truckguard/Shellzone series for mini pickups, and the American City Racing League which features open-cockpit racing cars.

The July lineup will be followed by the American Motorcyclist Association National Road Race Series August 9-11 and the ARCA 500-kilometer stock car race September 21-22. The World Challenge and Racetrack series will return to the speedway as support races for the season finale of the Liquid Tide Trans-Am Tour October 18-20.

Baseball signings add depth to A&M

From staff and wire reports

Texas A&M Head Baseball Coach Mark Johnson announced the signing of 15 baseball recruits Tuesday.

"We are very pleased with this class," Johnson said. "They are a quality group."

Noting the recent concern over academics, Johnson said the recruits would perform in the classroom as well as on the field.

"They'll have the opportunity to earn their degrees at A&M," he said. "We feel like each one has that goal."

Johnson said the upcoming minor league draft was a concern. In past years, several recruits have passed up A&M to turn pro.

"We'll have to see what happens with the draft," he said. "Some of these players will be drafted."

Texas A&M Baseball Signees

NAME	Pos	Ht	Wt	Class
Barber, Paul	INF	5-11	175	Frosh
Queen City (High)				
Carroll, David	LHP	6-1	185	Frosh
Fairfax, VA (Chantilly HS)				
Casey, Robert	RHP	6-2	190	Sr-TR
Bryan (High/Hardin Simmons)				
Claybrook, Steve	OF	6-0	165	Frosh
Robstown, Calallen (HS)				
Clemons, Chris	RHP	6-4	200	Frosh
MacGregor (High)				
Curl, John	OF	6-2	185	Frosh
Logansport, IN (High)				
Estes, Jay	1B/OF	6-2	175	Sr-TR
Abilene (Cooper/Hardin Simmons)				
Fowler, Jared	INF/C	6-0	180	Frosh
Everett, WA (High)				
Gonzales, Eric	INF/OF	5-4	160	Jr/TR
Robstown (High/Southmost JC)				
Keller, John	C	6-0	185	Jr-TR
Blinn JC				
Lewis, Robert	C	5-11	180	Jr-TR
Rolling Hills, CA (LA Harbor JC)				
McIntyre, Spencer	LHP	6-1	175	So-TR
Calgary, Can. (Indian Hills JC)				
Minor, David	RHP/OF	5-11	200	Frosh
Brazoswood (High)				
Moore, Trey	LHP/1B	6-0	185	Frosh
Keller (High)				
Sherwood, Matt	RHP	6-2	215	Jr-TR
Abilene (Cooper/Blinn JC)				
*Miller, Matt	C	6-2	205	Frosh
San Diego, CA (Mt. Carmel)				

*Signed football scholarship, but will also play baseball.

Lakers looking for second win

CHICAGO (AP) — The Los Angeles Lakers believe they have the poise, talent and experience to win again Wednesday night, in front of the boisterous crowd at Chicago Stadium.

The Chicago Bulls saw their league-record 15-game playoff home winning streak snapped Sunday, when the Lakers won Game 1 of the Finals 93-91.

The Lakers are 5-2 on the road in the postseason.

"We know that no one in the crowd can come on the floor and do something to us, so it's what the teams do on the court," James Worthy said. "Our mental preparation to play on the road is the key."

"The nucleus of the team, the core of us, knows what to expect. We try to use the hostile crowd as an incentive. The situation is not foreign to us."

The most experienced Los Angeles players — Magic Johnson, Worthy and Byron Scott — learned a lot about playing on the road in three Finals against the Boston Celtics and the mystique of Boston Garden.

"The building doesn't make the

game," Worthy said. "The fans and atmosphere make the game. Some of the most fun games are on the road."

Vlade Divac, the Lakers' second-year center from Yugoslavia, is playing in his first Finals, but said European basketball prepared him for places like Chicago Stadium.

"The crowds in Europe are crazier than here," Divac said. "They throw everything on the floor there, even chairs. Winning on the road is easier here, even in Chicago."

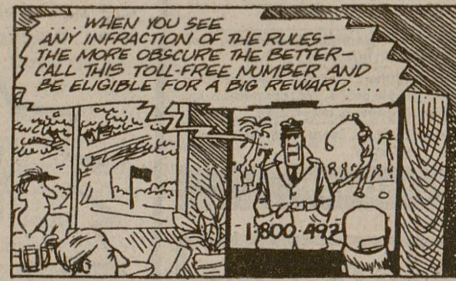
"We've been successful on the road because we're totally focused," guard Byron Scott said. "We don't listen to anyone saying what we can and can't do on the other team's floor."

Magic Johnson had 19 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds in the opener.

"As a point guard, I have to control the situation more on the road," Johnson said. "Every turnover, every possession, is more important on the road because every mistake is magnified by the crowd. Since I'm the leader of the team, I have to remember all those things."

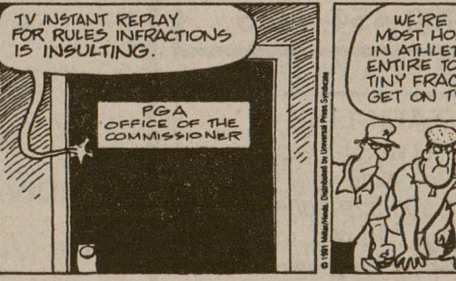
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