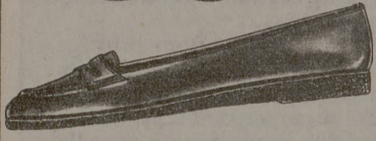


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Texas World Speedway ready for weekend's NASCAR competition

By MICHAEL PLUMER

Sports writer of THE BATTALION

Indianapolis, Ind. is considered the center of the racing world. But 23 years ago, Lawrence H. LoPattin wanted to transfer that title to the Bryan-College Station area.

LoPattin's dream was to bring world class auto racing events to the Brazos Valley. He envisioned College Station becoming a regular stop on the Indy and NASCAR circuits.

In November of 1969, LoPattin opened the track that is nestled just six miles south of College Station under the name of Texas International Speedway.

LoPattin was the president of American Raceways and he built the oval as a sister racetrack to Michigan International Raceway, located in Irish Hills.

Ed Stansel, a public relations assistant at what is now Texas World Speedway, said LoPattin picked College Station for a very simple reason.

"He felt that this area was perfect because of its close proximity to Dallas, Houston, and

San Antonio," Stansel said. "He felt the area was close enough to draw crowds from those major cities."

The first race held at the Texas International Speedway was a Canadian-American Challenge Cup series which was won by Bruce McLaren.

NASCAR invaded the speedway in 1971, which started a ten year marriage that ended unceremoniously due to some of



the NASCAR drivers complaining about the track conditions. Richard Petty was the pole-sitter for the first NASCAR Winston Cup race, and 'King Richard' dominated the race as he posted the first of his three wins at the speedway.

His other checkered flags came in 1972 and 1973. The final NASCAR race was

won by Benny Parsons in '81 with Terry LaBonte being the polesitter.

LaBonte did taste victory lane later in '81 and consecutively in 1984 and 1985 as a driver in the TROC series.

Indy cars made several pit stops in College Station, with the most memorable one being in 1973.

Mario Andretti won the race with a record time of 214 miles per hour that to this day is the official track record.

The last race was in 1988 and the track remained close until the Ishin Corporation bought the track in 1991 and renamed it the Texas World Speedway.

Stansel said the speedway is renowned for its fast times. "This track is the fastest two mile oval in the country," he said. "We have had several top

racing teams and they were impressed with the track."

The favorable reviews come from the extensive face-lift the track has undergone in the past two years. The surface of the track was completely renovated and the improvements totaled \$21 million.

According to Stansel, an all-star race could be staged with the testing participants.

"We have had Roberto Guerrero, Team Penske, and Michael and Mario Andretti were both here," Stansel said. "That is some impressive company."

This week's NASCAR Winston West/ARCA shootout is hopefully the beginning of something big, Stansel said.

"Right now we are working on getting a Busch Grand National race sometime in the near future," he said. "After that we want to bring NASCAR in here plus we would like to see the Indy circuit stop in here again."

"Those plans are in the works right now, and good attendance this weekend would further our chances."

NFL teams filling quarterback voids

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The NFL quarterback shuffle is in full swing, with six opening-day starters sidelined for the third week of the season.

At Cleveland, Bernie Kosar's out with a broken ankle and Todd Philcox is in. And so is Mike Tomczak, signed Wednesday by the Browns as the backup's backup.

The Los Angeles Raiders simply benched a healthy but ineffective Jay Schroeder in favor of Todd Marinovich.

And at Indianapolis, nobody knows who's going to start Sunday night against the Buffalo Bills. It could be Jeff George, Jack Trudeau or Tom Tupa, or even Mark Herrmann, who started the Colts' opener but was cut the next day and might be signed again by general manager Jim Irsay.

Entering this weekend's games, three season-opening starters are out with injuries, two

more have been benched and Herrmann was cut. The injured threesome is Kosar (out six weeks), the New York Jets' Browning Nagle (finger) and the Phoenix Cardinals' Timm Rosenbach (shoulder).

Jack Trudeau, who started the Colts' second game, has an injured back.

The new backups this week are Schroeder and San Diego Chargers' Bob Gagliano, who actually became a second-stringer two weeks ago. Nagle is expected to be replaced by Ken O'Brien, who was the Jets' starter since 1985, and Chris Chandler fills in for the Cardinals.

In one Sunday matchup of reserves, it'll be Philcox's Browns (0-2) at Marinovich's Raiders (0-2).

"Obviously, this is what I'm here for," said Philcox. "I look forward to getting a chance to start."

"Unfortunately, it comes at the expense of Bernie's injury."

McDowell protests contract

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HOUSTON—Just when Houston Oilers coach Jack Pardee thought he had all of his hold out players in camp, strong safety Bubba McDowell did not show up for practice on Wednesday in an apparent contract protest.

Oilers general manager Mike Holovak declined comment. "I don't know where Bubba is today," coach Jack Pardee said.

McDowell's agent, David Levine, knew.

"Basically, he missed practice because he was very upset about some assurances in respect to his contract and Cris Dishman's contract which he believes are not being held up," Levine said.

Dishman signed a two-year contract worth \$1.5 million last week. McDowell, who signed a new contract last year, reportedly has an agreement that he will be paid higher than Dishman.

"Bubba is one of the nicest guys and a great team player and for him not to come to practice shows the seriousness of how upset he is," Levine said.

Levine said he was trying to

set up a meeting between Holovak and McDowell on Thursday to settle the issue. Levine said he didn't know if McDowell would practice Thursday or play in Sunday's game against Kansas City.

The Oilers went through most of their training camp without five players, four of them because of contract negotiations.

Guard Mike Munchak, Dishman, wide receiver Curtis Duncan, defensive end William Fuller all were contract holdouts. Sean Jones returned last week after deciding he wasn't ready to retire.

"I have noticed people tend to have problems with these contracts around here," defensive end Lee Williams said. "Knowing Bubba, this is warranted."

"That's not a guy Houston can afford to lose. If it's my business, I'd rectify it and get Bubba back on the field as soon as possible."

Dishman also called for McDowell's return.

"We need Bubba in here," Dishman said. "Whatever it takes we need him. Kansas City is too much of a ball control team. We can't play the game without him."

Foster

Continued From Page 7

on pulling out victories against the tough teams and pounding the tar out of the patsies on the schedule. The Tigers are as much of a patsy as A&M has left.

R.C. Slocum might tell you a different story. As will many of the A&M players. "Missouri's a tough team," they might say. "They play really well at home."

As we have already pointed out, it should not matter. Texas A&M is the fifth-ranked team in the nation. That means there are only four teams ranked higher

than the Aggies. Being fifth has its responsibilities, and it is also a spot that must be earned.

And so far this season, it is still up in the air as to whether or not the Aggies have earned that ranking.

Defensively, they have played like the fifth-ranked team or possibly better. Offensively, well... fifth-ranked may be being a little generous. Let's face it, missed receivers, dropped passes, fumbles and passes that should have been intercepted have haunted this squad all season.

It's not that the potential for greatness isn't there. It is, just as it is with the defense. The defense, however, has made the most of their potential, capping

off three games by holding Tulsa to 184 yards total offense.

But the offense, on several occasions, has missed contact like a five year-old spark plug with a severely bent tip.

There have been times, however, where this offensive unit has shown promise. Quarterback Jeff Granger and the boys must be given credit for their part in the win over LSU, because they did put 31 points on the board.

But, without the 'Wrecking Crew' defense on A&M's side, this team could easily be 1-2.

This is their chance. This is their weekend. Winning is good, and all Aggie fans love it, but it takes more than winning to be a threat for the national champi-

onship. Teams like Missouri are put on the schedule to be fodder for a powerhouse's run at the big trophy, and if the Aggies want to be counted as a true top five team, they must roll over the Tigers as if they were playing Navasota Junior High.

Slocum and his troops will try to tell you Missouri is a tough team, and they may be, but AP voters think they know better.

The AP voters want blowouts. Everyone knows that. Slocum knows that, and his team knows that.

Its all part of the survival of the fittest in college football. And this weekend, A&M's success relies on total elimination of the Tigers.

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