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## Oilers' owner Adams says Pardee won't be fired after humbling loss

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — Houston Oilers owner Bud Adams on Monday dismissed as "ridiculous speculation" rampant rumors that coach Jack Pardee would be fired in the wake of a disappointing 1-3 start.

"There seemingly has been a lot of ridiculous speculation regarding the Oilers' current coaching situation," Adams said in a terse one-paragraph statement late Monday afternoon.

"I don't like issuing statements in reaction to wild rumors so I'll make this short and sweet. Jack Pardee is the head coach of the Houston Oilers and will remain as such, period."

Following Sunday's 28-13 loss to the Los Angeles Rams, outraged fans jammed phone lines at sports talk shows, many demanding Pardee's ouster. The Oilers' flagship radio station, KTRH, reported that two phone lines were knocked out by the volume of calls. Columnists for both major Houston newspapers also called for Pardee to be fired.

At his weekly news conference Monday, Pardee was at his low-key

best, even as he talked about his job security and the season's disastrous start. In fact, Pardee said, his evenhanded approach in the face of adversity may be his best asset in trying to end the tailspin.

"This is a confidence game and we've got to get our confidence back," Pardee said. "If you take suggestions from everyone in the world you end up worse. I'm pretty focused and determined that we're going to get it done."

Pardee said he had not talked with Adams since Sunday's game and didn't want a vote of confidence.

"You start getting statements like that here and there and that's a worse omen than anything else," Pardee said.

"But we've been through hard times before and I'll get over it. I can stay focused enough not to worry about that and do what needs to be done."

Pardee isn't the only one under scrutiny in the organization.

Critics have called for the sputtering run-and-shoot offense to be scrapped. The scheme has scored more than two touchdowns in a game just once in the last 13 regular season games.

Quarterback Warren Moon has thrown eight interceptions and only four touchdown passes, and he was benched for the first time during Houston's loss to San Diego two weeks ago.

He stayed in the game Sunday and completed 19 of 42 passes for 310 yards and one touchdown, but he was sacked four times and threw two interceptions.

Even the defense, which had looked strong early in the season, seems to be collapsing. Rams quarterback Jim Everett found three uncovered receivers for touchdowns on Sunday as Los Angeles averaged 6.2 yards per play, including 11.3 yards per pass.

"After a game like that, everyone is shell-shocked," Pardee said. "There are things that got better and something else breaks down. We have done nothing to earn the respect of the opponents, the fans or anyone else."

The Oilers really haven't been the same since last year's historic collapse in the AFC playoffs at Buffalo, where they blew a 35-3 lead and lost 41-38 in overtime.

"We haven't done a lot to regain our confidence since then," Pardee said.

## Lombardi

Continued from Page 6

A&M to ever win.

Since 1970, when the Lombardi Award started, only three football players in the west Conference have been selected by the University of Texas and one from Houston.

This year, contending with player guard Rob Waldrop of the University of Texas and outside linebacker Derrick State for the Lombardi Award, Adams petitioned.

However, Slocum said winning the award will help Adams and he will have a steady performance.

"It all depends on the remaining games and how he plays," Slocum said.

"He has to continue to improve as if he's on the field, he's going to play."

Though Adams may receive more attention from the media because of various tendencies to make the "big plays," singling-out a certain player does not reflect on a team's cohesiveness, but reflection on the team as a whole.

"I think you take the positives and helps us as a unit," he said.

"And you talk about it being an honor but the reason Sam is being mentioned is because Sam plays defense at Texas A&M."

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