

Houston Oilers' brass loses off the field, as well

Some members of the Houston Oilers coaching staff are a bit confused. Maybe no one ever told them about the substantial things in life, maybe they never listened, maybe they have little sense, or maybe they just have a football stuck somewhere it shouldn't be.



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Their problem this week: a baby. Scot Cooper Williams never imagined in his lengthy, two-day-old life that he could evoke so much controversy. Without saying a word, the nine-pound infant was able to ruffle the feathers of his father's employers. When "daddy," Oilers' offensive tackle David Williams, missed Sunday's game against the New England Patriots to be with his wife when she was giving birth to Scot Cooper, some coaches unnecessarily went off the deep end. They harshly criticized his decision and threatened to penalize him with severe fines. The coaches had reason to be frustrated. After a disappointing season with a failing offense, the five-year starting lineman was essential, and there is nothing wrong with the coaches expressing that fact. However, what the coaches said was not that they were upset about Williams' missing a single game. Their message was that football should be the number-one priority in the player's life - not his wife, not his

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Harrison plays strong, steady in senior season

A&M offensive guard remains injury-free and anchors line as he prepares to graduate with his 'fumblerooskie' days behind him

By Michael Plumer

THE BATTALION

Once the A&M offensive huddle breaks, Texas A&M senior left guard Tyler Harrison's thought process begins.

He focuses on the play that is called, when the ball will be snapped and what he has to do to make the play a success for the Aggies.

It is his responsibility to make sure the A&M running backs have a clear lane to run through and sophomore quarterback Corey Pullig has ample time to throw. He does all the grunt work while other players get the credit and press clippings.

But Harrison has no problems standing on the outskirts of the spotlight with the rest of his offensive line mates.

"It is easy to overlook people when names are not in the paper all the time," Harrison said. "The people that it matters to, like my teammates, coaches and opponents, are aware of us."

Last season, Harrison became known to more than just the careful observers of football. In a nationally televised contest against Houston, he scored a touchdown on a 25-yard fumblerooskie in A&M's 38-30 victory, and in the process, sealed his place in A&M lore.

"I guess there are worse things to be known for," Harrison said with a smile.

In the second quarter, A&M quarterback Corey Pullig hiked the ball, set it on the turf and rolled to his left as Harrison played off of his block. Harrison then swiped the football, ran to the right side of the field away from the defense which was pursuing Pullig, and lumbered all the way into the end zone.

A&M offensive line coach Mike Sherman said the score was literally a long time coming.

"Well, he didn't show any speed," Sherman said. "It is such an unglorified position that it got everybody excited."

This season, the Arlington High School product has another reason to bring his teammates to cheers.

Harrison, a three-year starter, will be making his 32nd consecutive start on Saturday against the Rice Owls - an amazing streak considering the injury problems that he has encountered the past two seasons.

In 1992, Harrison had a separated shoulder and suffered from a broken wrist in 1991 and had to wear a huge cast on his hand for most of the season that restricted his movement.

Sherman said Harrison's overcoming the pain speaks for itself.

"He is a tough kid and he plays like A&M players are expected to," he said. "He gives you everything he has got as evidenced by him playing hurt. Tyler is one of the guys that I want others to follow in regard to being tough."

But so far, 1993 has been relatively pain-free for Harrison due partly to his efforts to obtain a very important piece of paper.

"Tyler only comes to practice on Monday and Wednesday due to the fact he is trying to graduate in December," Sherman said. "He is taking 17 hours right now, so he is in class on Tuesday and Thursday."

"That makes it pretty difficult for him to get prepared because there are things in practice that you need to see and feel, so it could be a negative."

"But on the positive side, he is healthier than he has ever been because he has not been getting banged around as much."

Harrison said the missed practice time could hurt him, but he pointed to his experience within the system.

"I have been doing this for a number of years so I am comfortable with what is going on and I don't think I am falling behind," Harrison said. "I am pleased with the way the season is going and I think my staying injury-free has been a key."

"This season has been a physically challenging, of course, but I think not being banged-up has helped me mentally prepare for the things that happen."



Mary Macmanus/THE BATTALION

Texas A&M left guard Tyler Harrison (55) blocks backup offensive tackle James Brooks (78) during practice. Harrison has played in 32 straight games for A&M.

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