

Slocum says revenge not a big factor

Staff and Wire Reports

At his weekly media luncheon Tuesday, Texas A&M head football coach R.C. Slocum stressed that revenge is not the motivating factor in the Aggies' preparation for this Saturday's home opener against the Oklahoma Sooners.

"There's not a revenge factor in this game, it's an opportunity to play a quality team, a respected opponent in front of a sellout crowd," Slocum said. "That is what college football is all about, and I think it's exciting."

The Aggies received some good news on the only player to suffer a significant injury in the season opener last Saturday against Louisiana State. Junior tight end Hayward Clay hurt his right knee during the game and had to be helped from the sideline following the contest.

An MRI done on Clay, however, showed the anterior cruciate ligament was not torn as coaches had feared, and Clay will only miss three to four weeks instead of the entire season.

After this Friday, it's all over

NEW YORK (AP) — One day closer to Friday's deadline and still no movement toward settling the baseball strike.

The owners received from the National Labor Relations Board a copy of an unfair labor practice complaint filed by the players' union on Tuesday.

The union is contesting management's failure to make a \$7.8 million payment to the players' benefit plan following the All-Star game.

"We actually thought they'd file it sooner," management lawyer Lou Melendez said.

Acting commissioner Bud Selig, owners' negotiator Richard Ravitch and players' union head Donald Fehr took off most of Tuesday to observe the first day of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year.

Selig has set Friday as the date for calling off the season if there is no settlement. But no talks took place on Day 26 of the players' strike, and no negotiations are planned.

"No news is no news, I guess," Melendez said.

Tuesday marked the midpoint between the start of the strike on Aug. 12 and the scheduled end of the regular

season Oct. 2. Another 14 games were called off, bringing the total to 338.

Wednesday will mark the second anniversary of the date baseball last had a commissioner.

On Sept. 7, 1992, Fay Vincent was forced to resign by owners, who have put off hiring a successor until there is a labor settlement.

The owners and players have not met since Aug. 25. Talks broke off that afternoon following 5 1/2 hours of discussions during a two-day period, the lone time the sides have met since the strike started.

While owners pull for a salary cap and players push against the plan, the lack of progress is being noticed by other sports.

The NHL has gone more than a season without a contract agreement, but hockey training camps still opened this week, in spite of the threat of a management lockout.

"Baseball's a good lesson, I think, for all of us in what I would call 'cooperative vs. non-cooperative bargaining,'" said Gerry Meehan, executive vice president of the Buffalo Sabres.

"It doesn't seem like they're

making any progress. And I would hope that our people who are negotiating on behalf of both players and management are paying attention to that," he said.

Anyone who watched the NFL game Monday night between the San Francisco 49ers and the Los Angeles Raiders saw another sign that baseball is becoming more and more a memory.

The dirt infield at Candlestick Park is long gone, covered by grass for football. The place for the pitcher's mound was still visible, down near an end zone, although it had been sodded over.

Also doing a disappearing act were the Oklahoma City 89ers and the Iowa Cubs on the final day of the American Association regular season.

Both Triple-A teams were angered about fines levied after a bench-clearing brawl Sunday, so they made a quick getaway Monday night.

With almost every player swinging at first pitches, the game lasted only one hour, seven minutes and host

Oklahoma City won 2-1 — not much action for the 3,616 fans to appreciate on Fan Appreciation Night.

Switzer not too optimistic about Sunday's game

IRVING (AP) — In 16 years at Oklahoma, Barry Switzer had a constant battle with complacency when his talented Sooners teams played a low-rated opponent.

On Sunday, he has a different challenge with a professional team installed as a 14-point favorite over a freshly humiliated club.

"I know the talent Houston has," the Dallas Cowboys coach said Tuesday. "There's not that great a margin between us and Houston. This game could be a tight fit where just one or two plays decide it."

The Cowboys rolled to a 26-9 victory over Pittsburgh while Houston was

rocked 45-21 by the Indianapolis Colts.

Switzer said he learned one thing at Oklahoma: "humility is only seven days away. You don't take any victories for granted."

"I think we can play a lot better than we did. And I know Houston can play better," he said. "We looked at the tape of the Colts game and all the good things happened for them that you would like to see happen in an opening game. That's how it got out of hand. It just snowballed on Houston."

Switzer hinted the Oilers might have been looking ahead to the Cowboys.

"That's a natural tendency and one my teams were guilty of at Oklahoma when

we had a Nebraska or a Texas down the road," Switzer said. "I've seen teams practice for one team while they were thinking about another. It could have happened to Houston."

Switzer said he has already learned that there's a thin line between winning and losing in the NFL.

"There's not that great a disparity of talent," he said. "Games can turn so quickly in the NFL that it shocks me. Mental mistakes can really hurt."

Switzer said he never took much stock in oddsmakers.

"That's a billion dollar industry," he said, "but I never let any of that influence me."

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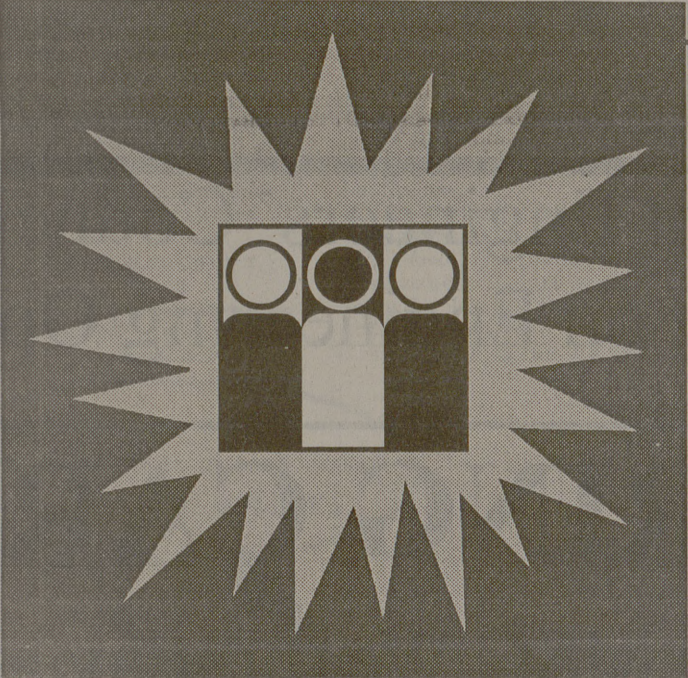
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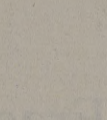

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