

## Oilers' mishaps especially hard on Old Ags

**TOM DAY**

Sportswriter



The plight of the free-falling Houston Oilers seems to be of little concern to most people these days. But it is of great distress to a few distinguished individuals who once thrilled fans in this neck of the woods.

The Oiler's boat is sinking fast, and much to the disdain of Aggie fans, it's taking former A&M phenoms Ray Childress and Bucky Richardson with it. Aggie great Jack Pardee was the first casualty, as his tenure as head coach came to an unmerciful end a couple of weeks ago.

Pardee was a well-respected leader on the field in his glory days at A&M and for four and a half seasons, he was an admirable leader on the Oilers' sideline as well. With a cool head and a steady hand, Pardee guided the team to two division titles.

Despite their regular-season success, the Oilers could accomplish very little beyond that. As a fine collection of talented individuals, their failure to unite as a team would ultimately cost Pardee his livelihood.

Bucky Richardson's maroon blood must surely be boiling at this point. The second-string quarterback could do nothing but watch last Sunday, as starter Billy Joe Tolliver made a joke of himself and his position in the Oilers' latest setback. Tolliver couldn't hit the broad side of a barn, as he failed to complete 50% of his passes.

It would seem that Bucky would be the more suited quarterback for new head coach Jeff Fisher's offensive scheme. With fewer receivers to throw to than in the run-and-shoot, the more mobile and agile Richardson could scramble and creatively open things up for the stagnant Oilers' offense.

Based on what Bucky showed as a starter earlier this season, he can throw the ball with just as much, if not more velocity and accuracy as Tolliver. But for now, Bucky is wasting away on the bench.

It truly breaks an Aggie's heart to see all-pro defensive tackle Ray Childress suffer through the lean times. Childress is a winner who has given his soul to the game, and he definitely deserves better.

This season hasn't been easy on Childress, who has been adversely affected by the off-season departure of defensive ends Sean Jones and William Fuller. Without either Pro bowl end accompanying him on the line, he has had to battle through double-team blocks every week as opposing offenses now concentrate on him alone.

As an unselfish, team-oriented player, it's sad Childress has to be a part of his team's demise. With not too many years left in his career, it would be a tragedy if Childress left the game with his team at the bottom of the NFL ladder.

As members of the league's worst team, Richardson and Childress are in the wrong place at the wrong time and it seems this season just can't end quick enough. Sadly, it breaks the hearts of Aggies everywhere to see these fierce competitors suffer through the agony of losing every week.

For players like these two Aggies, it's devastating to be losing so badly and to not be able to do anything about it. Playing football for the Houston Oilers is quite simply a no-win situation.

# New coach brings new era to A&M

By Stewart Doreen  
THE BATTALION

When Laurie Corbelli took over as the head coach of the Lady Aggie volleyball team in 1993, the NCAA tournament was not commonplace for Texas A&M.

Two seasons later, the program is making back-to-back tournament appearances for the first time since 1986. Large steps when you consider the transition that comes with a new coach.

"When I came, I saw a lot of talent and physical potential," Corbelli said. "I saw players who needed more repetition in their drills, in their intense training and positive feedback. It was a change for the girls to hurdle."

The players see Corbelli's positive nature as a key factor in the team's improved performance.

"She's a great teacher," junior setter Suzy Wentz said. "She's positive with our team explaining what you did wrong, telling you how you can fix it and how not to do it the next time."

Corbelli calls training a small portion of what is needed when building a successful volleyball program. She lists recruiting as the top aspect of building a nationally-respected program.

"Your program is based on recruiting," Corbelli said. "If you don't have the athletes to train, you are going nowhere. The top players want to go to the top teams in the country."

This year's team is a product of a strong recruiting class and a tough schedule. After losing four

starters from last year's team that went 27-8, the Lady Aggies welcomed a talented group of freshman to help fill the large void. Key newcomers included two California products, freshmen Kristie Smedsrud and Cindy VanderWoude.

"She (Corbelli) recruited players that are phenomenal," Wentz said. "With players like that, our program will be so much better."

The schedule has also been an important factor in developing the talent and showing where the program stands compared to the rest of the country.

"We saw wins and tremendous efforts against teams that have been traditionally strong for many years," Corbelli said. "You don't get the top kids unless you start performing like a top team."

Success is not something new to Corbelli. She was a member of the U.S. National team from 1978-84, and was a two-time member of the Olympic team.

Corbelli came to A&M in 1993 after coaching at Santa Clara (California) University where she posted a 61-35 record and was named the West Coast Conference coach of the year twice in three years.

"I think I can bring to them the joy of being the best," Corbelli said. "Especially with what I've achieved, I can say to the team, 'I've been there.'"

Corbelli's philosophy is getting the players to trust their teammates. Her experience as a player has taught her that scare tactics and verbal challenges are not the way to connect to her players.

"I took offense to being treated that way," Corbelli said. "I show great respect and demand respect in return."

When asked about the future, Corbelli considers herself "patient, yet aggressive." Corbelli sees the future of A&M volleyball connected to the quality of recruiting classes and the steady improvement in the performance of the team.

"I perceive consistent climbing in the polls," Corbelli said. "Getting to the third round and working into the Sweet 16 and Final Four. So much depends on who comes to Texas A&M. You see the same teams at the top every year, but it took them some time to get up there. That's where we are."

### 1994 Texas A&M

#### Player Honors

##### All-SWC, First Team

Jennifer Bronner, Senior  
Kristie Smedsrud, Freshman  
Suzy Wentz, Junior

##### SWC Freshman of the Year

Kristie Smedsrud



Photo courtesy of A&M Sports Information Department  
Head coach Laurie Corbelli calls a play to the Lady Aggies during a game.

## Young leads 49ers past New Orleans

### 35-14 victory secures playoff spot, home-field advantage for San Francisco

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The San Francisco 49ers are back at their accustomed spot, NFC West champions for the 11th time in 14 years with more — they hope — to come.

So what if there were a few stumbles and fumbles on the way.

Steve Young threw for 281 yards and four touchdowns Monday night, overcoming a pair of seemingly costly fumbles as the 49ers beat New Orleans 35-14 to become the first NFL team to clinch a playoff spot this season.

More important, it kept the Niners (10-2) on top of Dallas (10-2) for the home-field advantage on their inevitable course toward a third straight NFC title game. San Francisco, which won for the seventh straight time, would get the home field if both teams win out because it beat the Cowboys

two weeks ago.

Young, who had completed 68.2 percent of his passes entering the game, was 24 of 30 as he hit four TD passes in a game for the fourth time this season.

He threw first-half touchdowns of 4 yards each to Brent Jones and John Taylor, found Jones again from 6 yards out on a drive that consumed 9:02 at the start of the second half and capped the scoring with a 43-yarder on a slant to backup Nate Singleto.

That was enough to negate Tyrone Hughes' 86-yard return of a fumble by Ricky Watters for the Saints (4-8) and a second-quarter fumble by Young at the Saints' 12 that held the Niners to a 20-14 lead at halftime.

San Francisco now has won 10 or more games for 12 straight seasons and qualified for the playoffs in 11 of

them, missing only in 1991 despite a 10-6 record.

This year's team, however, is one rebuilt by the signing of a half-dozen veterans to bolster a defense that can stop Dallas. The latest newcomer, Tim Harris, got a sack Monday night in his first game under a contract that pays him \$5,000 each time he dumps the quarterback.

The Niners led 20-14 at the half, but it might have been more if not for those two San Francisco fumbles.

But Hughes also contributed to San Francisco's scoring, fumbling a punt on his own 7 late in the first quarter, a play that led to the Niners' first TD.

San Francisco took a 3-0 lead on its first possession on Doug Brien's 40-yard field goal.

The Niners made it 10-0 with 10 seconds left in the first period on Young's TD pass to Jones after Hughes' fumble and appeared to be heading for a 17-0 lead when Young fumbled as he was scrambling to the Saints' 12 and Jimmy Spencer recovered.

## Foundation to host scholarship shootout

By Tom Day  
THE BATTALION

Fresh on the heels of successful seasons, the Texas A&M men's and women's basketball teams are returning to the court this season with high expectations, giving Aggie basketball fans much to look forward to. But fans will have another reason to pack G. Rollie White Coliseum this season.

During both men's and women's conference home games, halftime festivities will include the 12th Man Foundation Half-court Full-scholarship Shootout.

In the contest, an A&M student will get one opportunity to sink a shot from mid-court. If the shot falls, that lucky fan will receive a full scholarship for the 1995 fall semester.

Mike Caruso, the assistant athletic director for promotions and game operations, said the school is ready to award several scholarships.

"Theoretically, we could give away 14 scholarships equal in dollar amount to an athletic scholarship," Caruso said.

All registered A&M students are eligible to be a contestant by signing up before tip-off in the front lobby of G.

Rollie White Coliseum at any home conference game. Since contest officials will draw from the same names all season, students can increase their odds of being picked by registering at non-conference games as well.

Frank Shannon, executive director of the 12th Man Foundation, said the shootout's purpose is to help boost attendance at A&M home games.

"We're really excited about the opportunity to help stimulate attendance at Aggie basketball games," Shannon said. "We've got to get more people out to watch men's and women's games."

As a bonus, any winning contestant who is a member of the 12th Man Foundation, wins a full scholarship for the entire 1995 school year.

By the end of the season, if no scholarship has been won, a drawing will be held at the last home game of both the men's and women's season.

Shannon said the contest is part of the 12th Man Foundation's commitment to helping out the athletic program.

"As a support organization for Aggie athletics, the 12th Man Foundation wants to help out," Shannon said. "We're delighted to be a part of it."

## Stanford head coach steps down

STANFORD, Calif. (AP) — Bill Walsh, who returned to Stanford "to find my bliss" after coaching the San Francisco 49ers to three Super Bowl titles, resigned Monday after two straight losing seasons.

Walsh, who had two years remaining on a five-year contract, will become a special assistant to Stanford athletic director Ted Leland.

The departure of Walsh, who turns 63 Wednesday, had been rumored in recent weeks. He often seemed distracted this season, and repeatedly had trouble remembering the names of his players and opponents' players during his news conferences.

"I just felt that this was an appropriate time to move to another stage of my life," Walsh said. "Anyone who looks at my chronological age can understand that. I love football and have thrived on it. But the job of head coach is an exhausting job, and at this stage in my life it's time for somebody else to do it."

Leland said Walsh now will focus on fundraising, as well as creation of a coaching development program and a sports research institute at Stanford. But Walsh said he'll also be available to advise his successor.

Leland, an assistant coach under Walsh at Stanford in the late 1970s, said a nationwide search for a new coach already has begun. Terry Shea, the current offensive coordinator, is expected to be among the candidates.

Walsh returned to Stanford three seasons ago after compiling a 102-63-1 record in 10 years as coach of the 49ers, including Super Bowl crowns in 1981, 1984 and 1988. He was elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1993.

He spent three years as a pro football analyst for NBC, through the end of the 1991 season, before deciding to return to coaching.



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