hurts true Oiler fans

WES SWIFT STAFF WRITER



Tow bittersweet the National Football League can be to Aggies

On Saturday, Aggieland was abuzz after former A&M running back Rodney Thomas agreed to a three-year contract with the Houston Oilers. The pact ended a week-long hold-out for one of Texas A&M's best backs.

Unfortunately, Thomas' beginning has cost another Aggie standout his career in Columbia Blue.

Monday the Oilers waived third-year quarterback Bucky Richardson to pay for Thomas' contract. Richardson was one of the Oilers most popular players, but, alas, popularity couldn't overcome the NFL's salary cap.
It's just another day in the

new NFL.

Jerry Glanville once told an official during a game that the NFL stood for "Not For Long." He was referring to the officials call, but now it seems like the same can be said for players who make too much money.

The salary cap has cost good veterans and young, develop-ing players their jobs. If a play-er has an off year, he gets his walking papers and a chance to re-sign at the league minimum. Whoopee.

Although Bucky didn't al-ways excel on the field, he always entertained the fans. Houstonians cheered him on every time he went under center, whether he was starting the game or mopping it up.

The worst thing about this age of salary cap shenanigans and free agency tomfoolery is how it has virtually destroyed player loyalty to teams.

Players like Dallas' Bill Bates or Buffalo's Steve Tasker who have played for several years on one team have become luxuries for football teams.

These "everyman" icons used to stay with a team for ages. They became as tradi-tional as turkey on Thanksgiv-

Richardson could have been one of those players for the Oilers. A guy who used to play on special teams just to get into the game, Bucky might have evolved to Bates' status. Years from now, we might have seen him in the middle of those "He's still playing" features that pop up during every pre-

Now Bucky may not have a career at all. In the old days, he could have had a long and wonderful career as a journeyman. Now he'll never get the chance, thanks to the salary

Let's hope the same doesn't happen to Rodney Thomas.

Bucky's release Freshman qualifies for diving nationals

□ Jodi Janssen will be the first-ever Lady Aggie to compete in the national championships.

Staff and Wire Reports

Despite being just a freshman on the Texas A&M Swimming and Diving Team, Jodi Janssen is about to make a very big

On Tuesday, Janssen was selected to compete in the 1995 U.S. Senior

Nationals Aug. 9-13 in Bartlesville, Okla. Janssen earned the

spot after finishing fifth in the one-meter competition at the U.S. Preliminary Meet, Zone C,



held last Friday in Largo, Fla.
Only the top four divers from each of the four zone preliminary meets advanced to the Senior Nationals meet, but the third-place finisher in Janssen's zone was disqualified because she did not meet all of the eligibility requirements.

Janssen scored 399.80 points and will become the first female diver in A&M history to compete in a national championship.

This season, Janssen was one half of a freshman tandem that brought the Aggie diving program back to the national forefront. Along with fellow freshman diver Jarrod Flores, Janssen helped the A&M team to its most successful season in recent history.

The duo became A&M's became A&M's first representatives at the NCAA Zone Championships since the resurrection of the Âggie diving program in

While Janssen narrowly missed an automatic trip to the national meet after tipping the board on her fifth dive, Flores did advance, becoming A&M's first-ever diver to reach the

NCAA Championships. Flores notched 456.90 points in the one-meter competition to take 14th, place and earned honorable mention All-American honors. In addition, he scored 457.25 points on the three-meter springboard to finish 23rd. Janssen and Flores combined to set five A&M all-time records in their first seasons with the

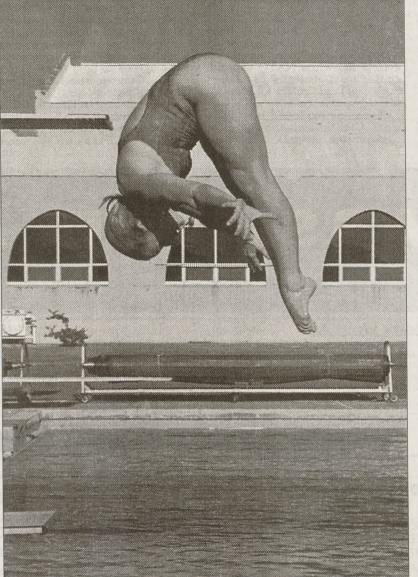
In the fall of 1994, Janssen made an immediate name for herself on the Lady Aggie team when she took first place in the one-meter and second in the three-meter dives as A&M upset No. 2 Texas on Nov.8

She was a four-time Nebraska state title winner in the one-meter dive and also won the high school national championship in 1994. Janssen made the All-American Diving team three

American Diving team three straight seasons in high school.

"The goals of the program continue to be met," A&M Head Diving Coach Kevin Wright said. "We began the 1994-95 season with intention of moving to the next level and diving at the NCAA and U.S. National Championships. Going into the fall of '95, we have met both goals." both goals.

"As long as we continue to meet our goals, we'll continue to experience success. I'm quite pleased. Overall, it's been a very



A&M freshman diver Jodi Janssen comes out of a flip during a onemeter dive. Janssen will compte in the U.S. Senior Nationals Aug. 9-

The Giants listed his status as day-to-day.

Athletic departments joining computer age

CD-ROMS and the World Wide Web have become popular media outlets for college sports.

By David Winder THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M cycling team needed a better way to distribute information to it members. So it started a homepage on the World Wide Web, making team information and schedules available to anyone on the planet with a computer and modem.

"(The home page has) been getting us more publicity," Texas A&M cycling team vice president Donald Brenner said. "We've



been getting some responses from around the world."

The idea of sports on the Internet is noth-

ing new, even at Texas A&M. The Athletic Department also has set up a homepage, offering information on the Aggie football team and with several women's sports.

Other universities, including one of A&M's future Big 12 opponents, have moved ahead quickly on the information superhigh-

way.

Todd Benson, the information systems director for the University of Colorado's athletic department, started a home page for the Buffaloes when he found out other universi-

'We're getting a lot of hits (log-ons) from college students and alumni," Benson said. People from all around the country are getting the information; a lot of the information you would have to have a media guide to

Benson said university administors will get more involved with multimedia services when they realize how easy it is to disseminate information.

"People who live in Miami are not going to find out a lot about how Colorado or Texas A&M did the night before," Benson said. "With the Web, they're going to be able to get two to three pages of stats and see how their favorite player did. It will be almost as good as being there.

"With people all across the country able to access this information, a university could get a nationwide following.

Ben Padnos, the director of marketing for Stella Interactive, a software company, said

more collegiate athletic programs are going deeper into the multimedia outlets.

"The universities are now discovering that the information they are releasing is a commodity," Padnos said. "Our goal is to make it fun and exciting to get information while providing sports geeks a less expensive way to get it.

Starting this fall, Padnos' company will unveil a CD-ROM collection featuring the University of Michigan, Florida State and other schools. The discs will feature the history of each school's football program and will include video clips.

"We're just doing selected colleges right now," Padnos said. "We hope to do Texas A&M and other Big 12 schools next year."

Stella Interactive is also working on an on-line service featuring college athletics. "We'll feature home pages on the top 50 teams in every sport from basketball to women's golf," Padnos said. "The service

also will feature a type of on-line shopping mall where you can buy merchandise from the computer. Let's face it, it's all about money

Derek Eiler, director of university services for Collegiate Licensing Company, said profit has been increasing for the makers of computer technology and video games involved in collegiate athletics.

Things like screen savers and Sega and Nintendo games have increased from zero to two percent of the total market of colle-giate merchandise," Eiler said. "Colleges will start licensing their names to video games, on-line services and CD-ROMs for the money and the exposure.'

SPORTS

Mantle given "fighting chance" against cancer

DALLAS (AP) - Mickey Mantle has a "fighting chance" against the cancer that has developed in his right lung, but his doctor said Tuesday the baseball great would not have re-ceived a liver transplant if he had known the cancer had spread.

Mantle said in a statement taped Friday that "doctors found a couple of spots of cancer on my lungs" about two weeks ago. The Hall of Famer had returned Friday to Baylor University Medical Center, where he underwent a liver transplant June 8,

and was released Tuesday morning. His original liver was damaged by the combined effects of a cancerous tumor, a longstanding hepatitis infec-tion and years of alcohol abuse. Mantle's doctors said during a

news conference Tuesday that they discovered in an examination during a routine follow up that the cancer had spread to several small spots on

Mantle's right lung.

Doctors would not predict
Mantle's chances for survival as they had after the initial transplant.

"Neon" Deion jams ankle, listed as day-to-day

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Deion Sanders, acquired by the San Francisco Giants in a recent eight-player trade with the Cincinnati Reds, jammed his right ankle against the fence making a catch Tuesday night and had to be helped from the field.

The two-sport star started limping immediately after making the catch in center field of a ball hit by San Diego's Phil Plantier in the second inning. Two teammates helped him off the field.

Sanders spent six weeks on the disabled list before the trade because of an injury to the same ankle.

Despite the high amount of contact involved in Sanders other sport, football, he has never missed an NFL game because of an injury.

Biggio's two dingers down Cardinals, 8-6

ST. LOUIS (AP) - Mike Hampton allowed three runs over seven innings and Craig Biggio hit two home runs to lead the Houston Astros to an 8-6 victory over the St. Louis Cardinals on Tuesday

Houston has won 13 of its last 19 games, while the Cardinals have lost ive in a row.

Hampton (7-3) has won 10 games in his two-year major league career and is 3-0 against the Cardinals this year and 5-1 lifetime. He allowed six hits, struck out two and walked two.

Biggio hit his 15th homer off starter Danny Jackson (2-11) in the first after James Mouton had doubled with one out. His second, a solo shot, came in the ninth and made it 8-4.
Jackson allowed seven runs and 10

hits in 4 1-3 innings

The Astros added a run in the fourth on a double by Tony Eusebio and a sinfour in the fifth with the help of two er-

Mouton appeared to have been picked off first by Jackson, but Darnell Coles dropped the ball for an error, allowing Brian Hunter to score. Biggio singled Mouton to third and he scored on a fielder's choice by Derek Bell.

Eusebio singled Bell to third. Dave Magadan grounded to second baseman Ramon Caraballo who threw wildly to second for an error. Bell and Eusebio both scored on the play for a 7-1 lead.

Eusebio has a .500 career average against the Cardinals.

Richardson latest victim of Oilers' salary cap

□ Houston cut the quarterback for formance, it's a matter of money," Flannery said. "That helps me to deal with it. If it money to sign Rodney Thomas.

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The Houston Oilers battled their salary cap on Tuesday by cutting one Texas A&M Aggie to make room for another Aggie.

Quarterback Bucky Richardson, a crowd favorite because of his aggressive style, became the latest casualty in general manager Floyd Reese's attempts to keep the Oilers under the

salary cap.
Rodney Thomas, a running back chosen in the third round, signed a three-year, \$852,500 contract and could become the backup for starter Gary Brown. The Oilers cut Richardson's \$400,000 salary to make room for

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Thomas. Richardson "I felt this was going to happen from Day 1,

Richardson said before leaving training camp early Tuesday. "When you start losing reps in practice the writing is on the wall. Speculation continued that guard John Flannery and his \$900,000 salary could be

the next to go to make room for All-Pro center Bruce Matthews, who has agreed to a four-year, \$10.4 million deal.

They've told me it's not a matter of per-

happens, it doesn't mean my career is over. It's just over with the Oilers Richardson, who thrilled Oilers fans with

his scrambling ability, lost his battle with Will Furrer as the Oilers backup to starter Chris Chandler. Steve McNair, the team's No. 1 draft choice, currently is No. 3. Both Chandler and Furrer are familiar

with the Oilers' new offense and both have worked with Oilers offensive coordinator

Jerry Rhome.

"It's like Monopoly, you only have so much money," Rhome said. "When you run out, you have to get rid of people." Furrer signed with the Oilers after play-

ing in the World League last season. I'm not afraid to stand up and say I think I've performed well," Furrer said. "So, to say it's because of the salary cap, that's not the way I'd like to hear it. I think I've performed well.

Furrer said his World League play helped him get ready for Oilers camp. I took a month off but still I came in in shape and in good football rhythm," Furrer said. "That's important for a

Richardson said the Oilers told him they may want to re-sign him for a lower figure. This has nothing to do with ability, it all starts with money and the salary cap,"
Richardson said. "They've already (Oilers) With the release of Bucky Richardson, Steve told me they want me back.'



McNair is now the Oilers' No. 3 quarterback.

Harper happy as a Buc

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) - Money and the opportunity to play closer to home were only part of the lure for Alvin Harper.

An important component of a team that won two Super Bowl titles and figured to contend for more in Dallas, the speedy receiver left the Cowboys after last season and signed a four-year, \$10.66 million contract with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

While some people joke the fifth-year pro went from the penthouse to the outhouse of the NFL, Harper envisions himself prospering in a Bucs uniform.

"I saw an opportunity for me to come here and make a lot more plays than I did in Dallas, catch more passes and be a part of something special when Tampa Bay starts winning," he said. "I want people to say, 'He had a major part in that.

Leaving Dallas was in-evitable. The Cowboys were not in a position to re-sign Harper, an unrestricted free agent last winter, because of the salary cap.

He was the 12th highest paid player in Dallas in 1994, earning \$868,000, and the Bucs outbid the New York Jets, Arizona Cardinals, Kansas City Chiefs, Houston Oilers and Washington Redskins to sign him in March.

"I'd have been crazy to stay there, although the Cowboys are a great team to be with, said Harper, who received a \$3 million signing bonus and the chance to continue his career near his hometown of Frostproof, Fla.

"I'm not going to lie. The money is good and was a factor. The Cowboys just didn't have enough to offer," he added. "But I liked the situation here, too, and the thought of catching more passes and making things happen."

In four seasons with Dallas, Harper established himself as one of the best deep threats in the league. He's averaged 20 yards per regularseason catch during his career (124 receptions, 2,486 yards, 18 touchdowns), and his 27.3 post-season average is the best in NFL history.