

Despite victory, Fisher unhappy with Oilers' all-around showing

HOUSTON (AP) — The Houston Oilers finally made enough big plays to win. Now, they're having trouble with the little ones.

"As odd as it seems, I'm more disappointed than last week after the loss to Kansas City," Fisher said Monday. "After looking at the film, we're talking about special teams and the defensive film, we were lucky to come out with a victory."

The Oilers (1-1) had plenty of big plays in a 24-27 victory over Jacksonville that turned into an exciting finish when the Jaguars almost overcame a 31-13 third-quarter deficit.

Marcus Robertson intercepted two passes, one that killed Jacksonville's final drive. Mel Gray had a 62-yard kickoff return set up a touchdown and Eddie George had a 76-yard run that set up another score. The plays by George and Gray are the longest in the NFL this season.

Yet, the Oilers needed every one of the highlights to cover their defensive problems.

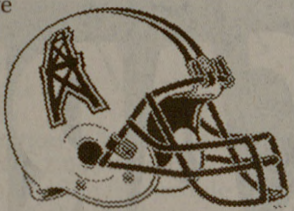
"This might have been one of the worst defensive performances I've been around in

a long time," Fisher said. "I don't mean to minimize the win, but we need to do a better job coaching and playing, period."

What had Fisher so upset?

Poor tackling

"The first half we didn't tackle very well," Fisher said. "We had 9-10 missed tackles. We'll usually have 9-10 with this defense over three or four games, not one game. I think we started on our heels and never got rocked up on our toes."



Third-down performance

"One of the major points about this defense over the years has been its success on third down," Fisher said. "Look at stats and it says we held them to one of six on third down but we

couldn't get them into third down. We couldn't win on first or second down to get them into third down."

Defensive line play.

"Throughout the game the defensive line was either hot, tired or hurt or whatever," Fisher said. "This is our second regular season game and twice we had 10 guys on the field. We were one short on a goal line situation and one short on third down. We played with three defensive linemen."

The Oilers won the game on offense. A bigger, stronger Chris Chandler had another solid performance. His 63-yard touchdown pass to Malcolm Floyd tied for the second longest in the NFL this season.

"Last week the defense and special teams put us in position to win," Fisher said. "This week the offense won the game for us. We're only going to be successful if we can tie these three groups together and have consistent, successful efforts from all three phases."

MENSIK

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with a record-shattering 80 assists against Loyola Chicago, an astounding feat so early in the season.

"It really helped my confidence," Mensik said. "I have always wanted an A&M record — to be in the history books." Kristie (Smedsrud) and Stacy (Sykora) were getting a lot of kills and the middle started coming up, and my passers were doing a great job of getting the ball to me. It wasn't just me, it was the whole team — which made it that much sweeter."

Corbelli was just as ecstatic about Mensik's total.

"It was phenomenal," Corbelli said. "Our outside hitters were really on and she was really connecting with our middles. It was the best passing performance and team

effort I've seen yet this season."

The early season success Mensik has experienced bodes well for future league play in the Big 12 Conference, where eight current teams saw postseason action last year.

"Our attitude as a team has stayed the same — to always improve," Mensik said. "I think it has motivated us more than anything to put more into every practice, every match and every weight-training session. It may have put more pressure on us, but we just use it as motivation."

Along with a new season and a new conference, Aggie fans can look forward to watching a talented and confident new setter lead the Lady Aggies every bit as well as her predecessor.

"I think she is already developing a consistent, level-headed leadership role on this team," Corbelli said. "I think her play will determine a lot about our success." Just look at Steve Young.

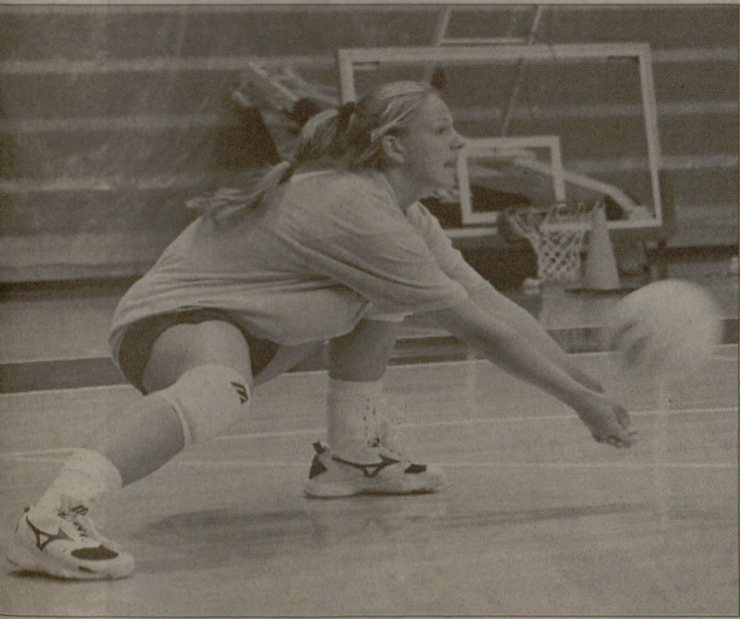
ROBERTSON

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After early season success in Fort Collins, Colo., and in Wisconsin, Robertson said the team is fired up about the team's chances this season.

"I really think we can [make] the Sweet 16 this year, and our team goal is the Final Four," Robertson said. "If we play like we did in Wisconsin, there's no doubt we can get there."

With the Final Four in its sights, the Lady Aggies will rely on all their pistons, including the explosive Robertson, to lead them to their final destination.



Tim Moog, THE BATTALION

Junior setter Farah Mensik digs a shot during practice Monday afternoon at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

HECOX

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Friendly Competition

Three players are competing for the right outside hitter position, on the opposite side of the setter. Freshman Summer Strickland and junior Jennifer Wells both started games last weekend, and junior Brooke Polak was a starter in the University Park Holiday Inn Classic Tournament in Colorado Aug. 30 to Sept. 1.

Preseason Accolades

Smedsrud was the only Lady Aggie named to the Preseason All-Big 12 team. The University of Texas boasts two players on the team, senior middle blocker Sonya Barnes and sophomore outside hitter Demetria Sance.

The University of Nebraska also has two on the squad, senior OH Kate Crnich and junior OH Lisa Reitsma. Junior OH Patrice Arrington of the University of Oklahoma and senior setter/hitter Rachel Wacholder of the University of Colorado round out the group.

For the Record

A&M is projected to finish third in the Big 12. Texas is the favorite, while Nebraska is picked to take second in the conference.

Through six matches, A&M is 1-1 against ranked teams, including a victory over No. 20 Loyola Marymount in the season opener.

The Lady Aggies will host five teams this weekend in the Post Oak Mall/Lady Aggie Invitational, including old Southwest Conference rival Rice University. A&M is the defending champion.

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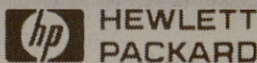
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