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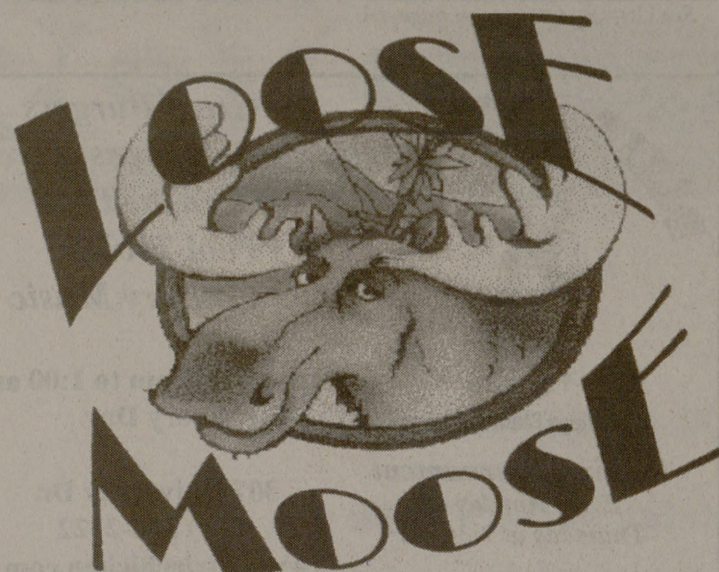
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Sports

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THE BATTALION

Tuesday, November 27, 2001

Leaf to start against Atlanta

IRVING, Texas (AP) — Ryan Leaf is getting another chance as an NFL starter.

Dallas coach Dave Campo said Monday, a day after Leaf made his first appearance with the Cowboys, that Leaf would be the starting quarterback next weekend at Atlanta.

"We feel Ryan will give us a little spark, and he feels comfortable with the offense," Campo said. "This is definitely an evaluation process."

Leaf was the No. 2 overall pick by San Diego in 1998 and was 4-14 as a starter the last three years. The Chargers cut him after last season, and he did not make Tampa Bay's roster during training camp.

The Cowboys (2-5) signed Leaf on Oct. 12, and Sunday he will be their fourth different starting quarterback this season. He follows rookie Quincy Carter, Anthony Wright and Clint Stoerner.

Carter and Wright are out with injuries. Stoerner threw interceptions on four straight drives, including two in the end zone, in the second half of Sunday's 27-24 overtime loss at the New York Giants.

Campo confirmed the anticipated move after team meetings Monday, when he had an opportunity to speak to both quarterbacks.

Campo said the move was not based on Stoerner's performance Sunday, but rather

a desire to take a good look at Leaf. Carter, who has played just five quarters, is expected back from hamstring surgery in early December.

"We feel Ryan will give us a little spark, and he feels comfortable with the offense. This is definitely an evaluation process."

— Dave Campo
Cowboys' head coach

"We want to get an evaluation of where we are at quarterback," Campo said. "If we come out of this year not knowing what we have, we've made a mistake."

The Cowboys signed Leaf after Carter tore his left hamstring at Oakland on Oct. 7. Leaf had failed a physical because of a wrist injury when Cowboys owner Jerry Jones tried to sign him before the season opener, but there have been no indications that is

still a problem.

"I feel like I can go in and play," said Monday before he knew he was starting. "I felt like I got a good grasp of the offense relatively well in my short time. I want to do that."

Leaf took over with 4:23 left in the first half against the Giants and the game tied at 24, and was 4-of-8 passing for 38 yards. The Cowboys had blown a 24-17 lead.

With Dallas pinned at its own 38-yard line, Leaf fumbled his first snap before the Cowboys moved the Cowboys into Giants territory. But just like his first OT possession, Leaf fumbled the snap, and the Cowboys had to punt from midfield. Leaf was sacked and a penalty.

"He looked like a guy that had been waiting just waiting for his chance," said end Jackie Harris. "Mentally, he was ready to go."

Leaf started making plays and moving the Cowboys into Giants territory. Leaf was sacked and a penalty.

Carter, named the starter during training camp when Tony Banks was suddenly injured, played all the way in a season-opener loss to Tampa Bay. He then missed three games after injuring his thumb in a game and tore his hamstring in the first game of his return at Oakland.

UNACCEPTABLE

Continued from Page 3A

It was not that the Tech defense was strong; it was just that the Aggie offense made critical mistakes when it should have been making critical plays.

Junior quarterback Mark Farris threw an interception at the goal line in the waning seconds of the first half that would have put the Aggies up 7-3 at halftime.

Freshman wide receiver Terrence Murphy coughed up the football at the Tech 15-yard line after converting on a fourth-and-three. Convert either of those attempts, and the Aggies' chances of winning the

game increase dramatically.

Now the Aggies have more to worry about than will they win a game the rest of the season. The better question is, will they score a point? If they play they way they did Saturday against Oklahoma and Texas, two of the best defenses in the Big 12, odds are their point total heading into Lubbock will be the same when they head to Shreveport.

Of course, if OU and Texas do the same to A&M as what Tech did, do not expect them to behave the way Tech fans did. Those two schools actually have been there before.

Doug Fuentes is a senior journalism major.



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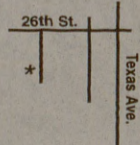


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Irvin's case dismissed

DENTON, Texas (AP) — A felony drug charge against Dallas Cowboys receiver Michael Irvin was dismissed Monday.

State District Judge Lee Gabriel honored a state request for Irvin's release on bond.

Irvin was indicted in June, 10 months after he and a woman were arrested at a Dallas apartment where law officers said the marijuana and ecstasy pills. He has denied that the drugs were his.

But in a motion filed Monday, Denton County prosecutors learned last week that an officer searched the apartment without a warrant.

"Until this fact was revealed to the state, the state was in the belief that all of the evidence that the state intended to produce in the trial of Michael Irvin ... was found in plain view of the officers when they entered the apartment," according to the motion.

The charge carried a penalty of six months to two years in prison and up to a \$10,000 fine.

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