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SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Neither Raiders nor Bucs solely one-dimensional

By Barry Wilner THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hey, Super Bowl fans, the Oakland Raiders are not wimps on defense and the Tampa Bay Bucs are not buffoons on offense.

True, neither is ranked at the top of the league the way the Raiders are with the ball and the way the Buccaneers are when the opposition has it. And neither has gotten much credit for lifting its team to a conference title.

"But we've played well," Raiders cornerback Charles Woodson said. "We've been beaten up and we still played well. So we're not concerned about their defense getting all the attention.'

Nor are the Bucs offended that they're pretty much ignored while all the recognition goes to Oakland's highpowered attack.

"If we win the Super Bowl, that will change," wide receiver Keyshawn Johnson said. "The Super Bowl puts the stamp and the legacy on what you did in your career. The great players win Super Bowls. The stats don't matter — it's the ring.'

Tampa Bay ranked 24th in yards gained (27th rushing, 15th passing). The Bucs scored 346 points, but the defense scored five touchdowns, four by NFL defensive player of the year Derrick Brooks, and the special teams had one. The defense also set up a bunch of points by forcing 38 turnovers, including 31 interceptions.

But the Buccaneers have begun to establish an identity offensively, and they've been efficient enough in the playoffs. "We have attitude," Pro

Bowl fullback Mike Alstott said. "We haven't always looked pretty, but we get the job done one way or another. We try to be very physical up front, we have a wide receiver corps that will go downfield and block. They are horses.

'Remember, we have a new offense, a new O line since Jon (Gruden) was hired as our coach. Ask any player in the NFL when you have gone through dramatic said, "but it is a defense that



Friday, January 24, 2003

Tampa Bay Buccaneer head coach Jon Gruden is ready to face off with his old team, the Oakland Raiders, in Sunday's Super Bowl XXXVII.

asked to be perfect in nine months, it can't happen.'

Here's what the stars on the Bucs' stingy defense believe can happen: Their teammates on offense will rise to the challenge of winning a championship.

"We've got an inferno going," said All-Pro defensive tackle Warren Sapp, "and when that three-headed monster — offense, defense, special teams — raises his head, he is impossible to slay.'

Oakland's defenders say they are ready for that monster, regardless of how many heads it has. The Raiders have plenty of big names on defense, from All-Pro safety Rod Woodson to cornerback Charles Woodson to linebacker Bill Romanowski to tackle Sam Adams. Rod Woodson, Romanowski and Adams already have won Super Bowls with other teams.

The Raiders ranked 11th in yards allowed and a very impressive third against the run, ahead of the Bucs, who were fifth. But Oakland was 23rd against the pass and allowed 304 points, 108 more

than the NFC champions. "They might not get the notoriety of Tampa's defense," Raiders coach Bill Callahan

McLane, Biggio holding talks

this into the budget.'

changes like we have, to be has improved and continues to make plays. The value of our defense was so important to us down the stretch.

Oakland's defense also has injury concerns, most notably Charles Woodson's leg. Although he made the Pro Bowl, he's had a difficult stretch, particularly in the playoffs.

"We overcame a lot of injuries on that side of the ball," Callahan said. "How we stayed together to do that and play at such a high level is astronomical."

The number of points the Raiders usually put up is astronomical. If the game turns into a shootout, the Bucs are done.

However, if Tampa can establish its tempo when it has the ball, how long will league MVP Rich Gannon and his compatriots get to assert themselves? Adams, a Super Bowl win-

ner two years ago with Baltimore, says not to count on that happening. Besides, it's not what everyone wants.

"Our job is to get off the field as quick as possible and let our guys do their thing on offense," Adams said. "I'd pay to see it, too: No. 1 vs. No. 1.

"Yeah, we have a solid defense and they are a good offense. But it's not what people are paying to see.'

to him," McLane said, "We'll have to look at

our long-term finances and see how we can fit

career with the Astros and ranks as the team's

all-time leader in games played, years played,

career hits and runs scored. McLane has said he

wants Biggio and first baseman Jeff Bagwell to

million in 1999. He is set to earn \$8 million this

Biggio signed a four-year contract worth \$33

end their careers with the Astros.

Biggio has spent his entire major league

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"I told (Biggio) we'd review it and get back SPORTS IN BRIEF

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston Astros owner

McLane and Biggio met for two hours

Drayton McLane is considering a contract exten-

sion request by 14-year veteran Craig Biggio,

who will be moved from second base to the out-

Wednesday and the Astros owner planned more

meetings Thursday with team officials to consid-

er keeping Biggio beyond the end of his contract

at the end of this season. McLane said he didn't

field this season with the arrival of Jeff Kent.

Aggie soccer team receives accolades

expect a decision until next week.

Five members of the Texas A&M soccer team recently received postseason awards by the National Soccer Coaches Association and Soccer America Magazine.

Freshman goalkeeper Kati Jo Spisak was awarded a spot on Soccer America's Freshman All-American team. Spisak led the Aggies to their second consecutive Elite Eight appearance in the NCAA Championships, stopping six of nine penalty kicks in A&M's first two playoff games.

Sophomore forward Linsey Woodard, junior midfielder Kristen Strutz and senior defender Jessica Martin also earned accolades.

Woodard was named a thirdteam All-American after leading the Aggies in goals and points for the second consecutive year.

Woodard, Strutz and Martin were all named to the first team All-Central Region squad.

Strutz led the Aggies with 10 assists and added eight goals during the 2002 season. With nine more assists, Strutz will become the A&M record-holder for assists.

Martin was a leader of the A&M defense that posted nine shutouts during the 2002 season. She also added a goal and seven assists for the team.

Kansas

Continued from page 7

Kemp who averages 10.3 points and 5.6 rebounds per game. "We don't get down on ourselves at all. Coach says we have to keep our heads up. There isn't pressure, we just need to go out and play the best we can.'

If the Aggies want to keep the Lady Jayhawks from enter-

play, they must shoot better and control the play of Ransburg and Kemp beneath the basket. In the Aggies' most recent loss to Baylor, A&M gave up 50 of the Bears' 66 points in the post.

ing the win column in Big 12

"We gave (Baylor) too many points," Gillom said. "They got a lot of them right there in the paint."

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