

Steelers' Thompson a fine catch

By ALAN ROBINSON
AP Sports Writer

PITTSBURGH — Much the way John Stallworth's hands seem to attract footballs, the Pittsburgh Steelers latch onto premier wide receivers — and Weegie Thompson may be their latest catch.

First there was Stallworth and the acrobatic Lynn Swann, then Stallworth and the graceful Louis Lippis. Now Thompson is trying to catch up with his more well-known predecessors with performances like last Sunday's, when he caught three touchdown passes in the Steelers' 27-3 victory over the Green Bay Packers.

With Stallworth on the injured reserve list with a bum knee and Lippis sidelined with a strained back, Thompson stepped off the sidelines and into the lineup with six receptions for 79 yards.

No wonder he earned rave reviews from two watchful critics, Steelers Coach Chuck Noll and quarterback Mark Malone.

"Weegie had a great day. Here's a guy who's a fierce competitor and wants to be in there but he's in the unfortunate situation of playing behind Louis Lippis," Malone said. "Louis got hurt but we don't miss a beat because Weegie did a great job."

Noll hinted he was so pleased with the three-year pro's play that Thompson may keep his starting job even when Lippis, a two-time Pro Bowl choice, is ready to play again.

"It's hard to put somebody who's producing back on the bench," said Noll, who indicated Thompson may play some at the wide receiver slot being made in Stallworth's absence by Calvin Sweeney.

Thompson made what Noll called "some great catches, spectacular catches" against Green Bay, including a sprawling 6-yard touchdown catch and a leaping 9-yard scoring grab over 5-10 Packers' cornerback Ed Berry.

"He finally got an opportunity to play . . . maybe for him, it's easier getting into the flow of the game when he starts," Noll said.



Weegie Thompson

Gottfried still uncertain of starting QB

By ALAN ROBINSON
AP Sports Writer

PITTSBURGH — Pittsburgh has the unenviable task of trying to shoot down top-ranked and unbeat Miami without the guy Pitt Coach Mike Gottfried says "pulls the trigger for us" — quarterback John Congeni.

Because his top gun is out for the rest of the season with a hairline fracture in his back, Gottfried could be blamed for dumping the sophisticated run-and-shoot offense that permitted Congeni to average nearly 40 passes a game.

"We've lost the one guy we couldn't afford to lose," Gottfried said.

But while he has been stripped of

his field general, Gottfried refuses to scrap his battle plan.

"No matter who the quarterback is, we're going to throw the ball. It's too late to change the offense," said Gottfried. As of yesterday, he hadn't decided whether junior college transfer Sal Genella or junior Joe Feitisky would replace Congeni.

Pitt was a 10½-point underdog for Saturday's nationally televised game even before Congeni's injury was disclosed Monday; afterwards, oddsmakers refused to set a line.

Pitt, 4-3-1, is regarded as Miami's last major regular-season test. The top-ranked Hurricanes, ranked by Gottfried as one of the best college teams he has ever seen, close

out the season against Tulsa and East Carolina.

Gottfried's dilemma extends beyond trying to improve an offense with an untested quarterback against the nation's premier team.

Feitisky, a transfer from Notre Dame, has thrown but 27 collegiate passes, including 11 this season. If he starts, Gottfried could be criticized for allowing a quarterback who was fourth-team at the start of the season to play the Panthers' biggest game of the season.

If Genella starts, he will lose an entire season of eligibility and would rank by Gottfried as one of the best college players he has ever seen, close

regular-season games; if he does play, he could start no more than 14 games.

"There are a lot of factors that go into the decision," Gottfried said. "What we've got to do is play the guy who gives us the best chance to win."

Gottfried had planned to redshirt Genella, who passed for 3,555 yards last year at San Mateo (Calif.) Junior College and nearly won the starting job from Congeni in preseason training camp.

Genella hasn't practiced with Pitt's varsity offense for weeks and Gottfried said, "People forget that it takes a while to get a quarterback ready to play."

sports briefs

Hoyas picked in Big East

NEW YORK (AP) — Georgetown edged Pittsburgh as the favorite to win the 1986-87 Big East Conference basketball title in a preseason poll of the league's coaches announced yesterday.

Georgetown, with only one starter returning, Reggie Williams, landed four first-place votes and 25 points. Pitt, with three returning starters, including Charles Smith, had two first-place votes and 56 points.

Syracuse was next with 50 points, followed by Villanova, 44, and St. John's, 42. Those three teams each received one first-place vote.

LSU chancellor denies violations

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — NCAA allegations that friends of the LSU basketball program granted special favors to student athletes ranging from free cars to free rent and cash payments were denied yesterday by Chancellor James Wharton.

Wharton said at the outset of an afternoon news conference that the university denied 13 of the 16 allegations of wrongdoing and stressed that the athletes mentioned "did not or were not allowed to complete studies at LSU."

The NCAA claimed special favors were granted by such people as LSU Board of Supervisors member Jack Antonio, and businessmen Al Guglielmo and Tom Moran.

Student athletes mentioned, none of whom are students any longer, included Tom Curry, Stephon Johnson, Terrence Cojoc and highly touted Tito Horford of the Dominican Republic.

Etc., Etc., Etc.

The Penn State Wrestling Club will sponsor a brunch at the Nittany Lion Inn's Colonial Room at 10:30 a.m. on Nov. 16. Cost is \$6 per person. Anyone interested can call Bob Noll at 239-7922.

Three members of the men's golf team have been named to the Atlantic 10 all-conference team. Senior Terry Hertzig and sophomores Chris Keim and Mark Treese were honored for their role in the team's A-10 Championship victory. Six members of the men's cross country team earned A-10 all-conference honors. Eric Carter, Brian Laird, Rick McGarry, Bill McCafferty, Doug Walter and Jay Novak helped the Lions win its first A-10 title since 1982.

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