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SAINTS AT COWBOYS NOON SUNDAY FOX

Abdul D. Tentmakur is a musician, and his inspiration is the Saints



JEFF DUNCAN

Most New Orleans Saints super fans are visual sensations, expressing their passion through an arresting display of colorful costumes and black-and-gold face paint.

Al d'Aquin chose a different way to express his lifelong love of the Who Dats. He made his mark from a stage rather than the stands, distilling his super-fandom through one of New Orleans' other cultural touchstones, music.

Unless you've been sequestered in a cave for the past two decades, you've undoubtedly heard one of d'Aquin's snappy Saints ditties at a game or on radio.

D'Aquin's alter ego, Abdul D. Tentmakur, ranks among the most famous Saints super fans thanks to his regular appearances on WWL-870. His character has become a perennial fan favorite, and his songs have become popular rally cries before, during and after home games.

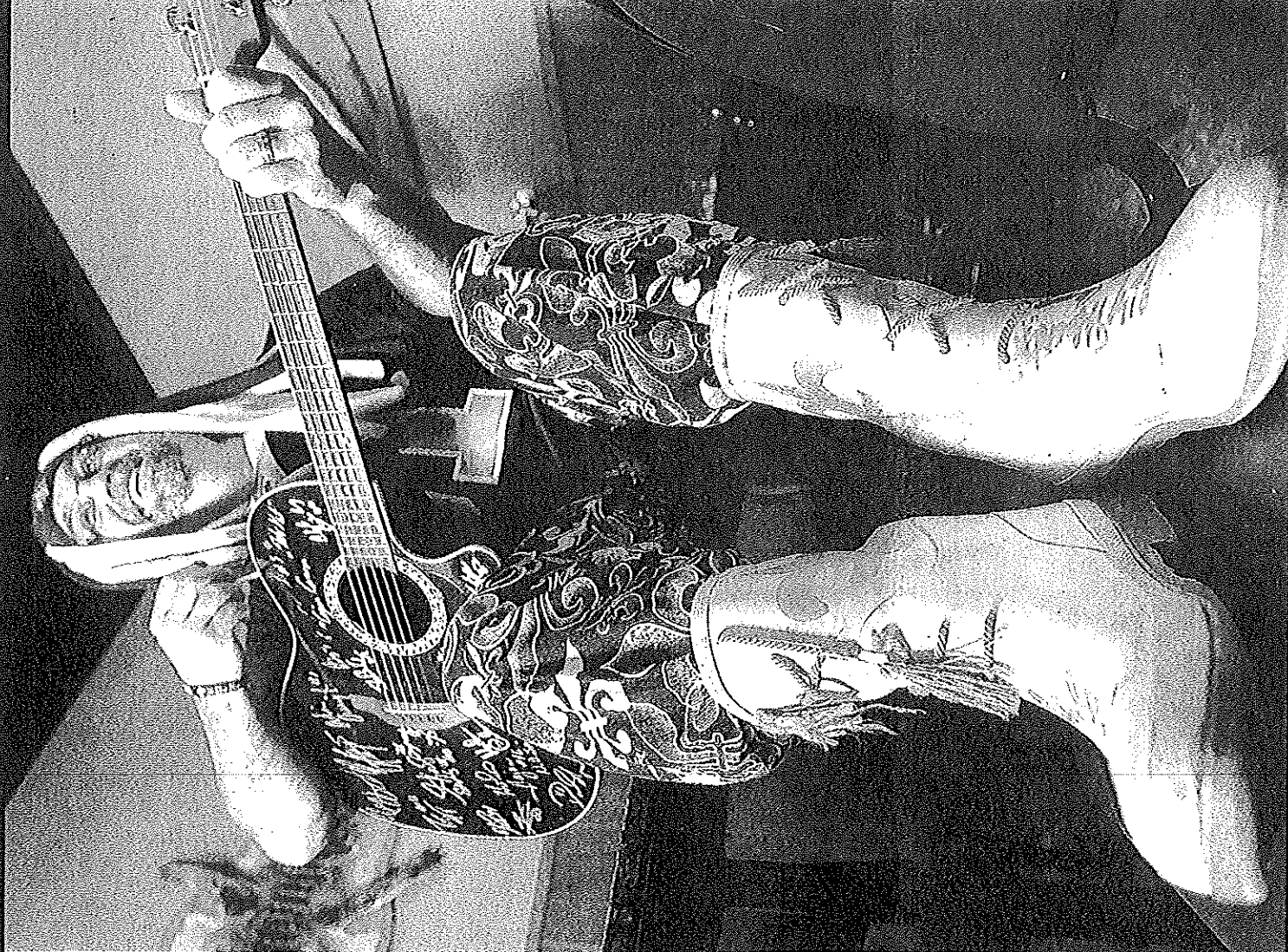
"It's always amazed me that something as simple as a football game could bring a city together like it did," said d'Aquin, 50. "We've always been that way about everything. Look at our food. Look at our culture. Our partying is far above anybody else's in the country. Our food is over the top."

See FANS, D-6



SUPER FANS

Fifteenth in a season-long series on the fans of the New Orleans Saints



When Buddy Diliberto said on his radio show that he would need a tent-maker to sew a dress for him if the Saints ever made it to the Super Bowl, Al d'Aquin called in, and Abdul D. Tentmakur was born.

CHRIS GRANGER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Saints get tangible proof of improving defense

By Nakia Hogan
 Staff writer

After Sunday's impressive 41-0 shutout victory against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, New Orleans Saints interim coach Joe Vitt, a veteran of 34 NFL seasons, said he could count on one hand the number of times one of his teams had shut out an opponent.

Saints defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo, who has 13 years of NFL coaching experience, didn't need his fingers to keep count of the times his teams pitched a shutout. The Tampa Bay goose egg was the first

"It (the shutout) can do nothing but boost the confidence of the defensive players. It should. They should be proud of what they did."

STEVE SPAGNUOLO, Saints defensive coordinator

of Spagnuolo's professional coaching career.

"It won't sink in until after the season, because I am on to Dallas," Spagnuolo said of Sunday's upcoming road game at Cowboys Stadium.

At the moment, however, the Saints'

defense, which is still on pace to yield the most yards in NFL history, has something tangible to show when discussing its incremental improvements. The shutout was the first by the Saints since the final game of the 1995 season, and the second-largest shutout victory in franchise history, trailing only the 42-0 victory against the Denver Broncos in 1988.

"It's a confidence-booster," Spagnuolo said. "We are all human. ... When it was all said and done there were no points on the board. There is a lot that goes into that. The special teams

See SAINTS, D-5

Green Wave adds JC quarterback Montana

sources at Tulane said.

Before deciding

17,500 AVAILABLE
 LOUISVILLE
 14,000 SOLD 6,500

Cards' fans buying tickets good past

Gators' numbers not with Sugar Bowl draw

By Trey Iles
 Staff writer

When Florida and Louisville take the 79th annual Allstate Sugar Bowl, the fourth-ranked Gators will be a pretty big favorite, by about 16 points.

But when it comes to ticket sales, it hasn't been close, at least thus far.

As of Friday, Louisville had sold more than 14,000 of its allotted tickets, and the Gators had sold about 7,000.

Thanks to a donation from Paperhead, the Louisville-based company headquartered in Louisville, the likely come close to selling them all.

See TICKETS, D-7



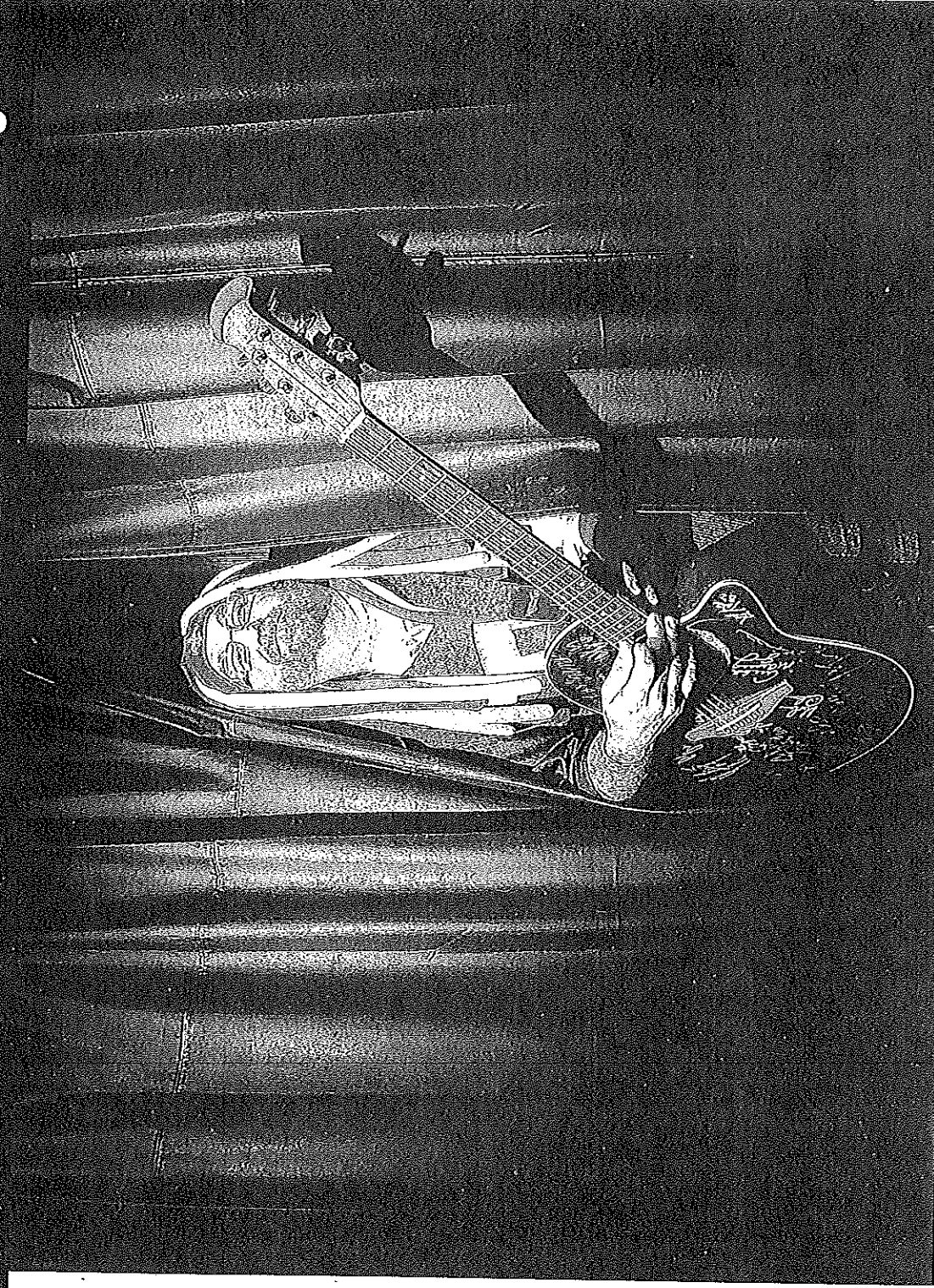
"Some of the interceptions I throw in my opinion, timing and bad Now those things have been TERRANCE BROADWAY, UL-Lafayette

QB BROADWAY CONFIDENTLY KEEPS GROWING

By Trey Iles Staff writer

Terrance Broadway's first game in the new uniform at Louisiana State University was a success though not necessarily suitable for framing from a statistics standpoint. He led the Ragin' Cajuns to a 41-13 homecoming victory

One of Abdul's favorites is a eulogy he did for Buddy D



PHOTOS BY CHRIS GRANGER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Abdul D. Tentmakur's first song was called 'A House Called the Superdome,' a parody of the Animals' 'House of the Rising Sun.' Since then, he has done songs on everyone from Willie Roaf and Sammy Knight to Deuce McAllister and Drew Brees. His latest song has Roger Goodell in the role of the Grinch.

FANS, from D-1

Anything we wrap our arms around we go above and beyond. It's the same with the Saints."

A corrosion specialist for British Petroleum Pipeline in Moss Point, Miss., d'Aquin was born and raised on the West Bank. He was a class clown and a classmate of former Saints quarterback John Fourcade at Shaw High School, but didn't take up music until a buddy persuaded him to learn to play the bass guitar and join a rock band.

The tent-maker

His career as a singing super fan was launched by a phone call to Buddy Diliberto's popular sports talk show on WWL in 1998. The Saints' surprising 5-0 start had stirred fans into a frenzy and prompted Diliberto's now-famous promise to wear a dress if the team earned a berth in the Super Bowl. In his inimitable way, Diliberto kidded that a tent-maker would be needed to construct the dress because of his renowned girth.

D'Aquin called the show as Abdul D. Tentmakur from Baghdad, a Middle Easterner with a passion for the Saints and the sewing skills to solve Diliberto's problem.

Abdul soon joined Sid from Jefferson and Bubba on the Magic Carpet as regular callers on the show. He would religiously call the "Point After" on game days, whether it was from his car on the postgame commute home, a deer stand in Colorado or offshore in the Gulf of Mexico. He eventually started to pen parody songs about the Saints and play them live on the air.

His first song was "A House Called the Superdome," a riff on the Animals' "House of the Rising Sun," and it was so popular WWL officials asked him to write and perform a new song each week. Eventually he was invited to perform live at Buddy D's pregame show at the New Orleans Centre mall, and a star was born.

Still going strong

Six CDs and more than 100 songs later, he's still singing away, usually in stirrup boots signed by former Saints stars Dalton Hilliard, Rickey Jackson and Bobby Hebert, and always with his devoted wife of 30 years, Kim, nearby.

"It's great," Kim said. "It's so much fun for us, and I get the fringe benefits without having to do all of the work."

What started as a lark has carried d'Aquin to the stages of some of the Gulf South's most revered institutions: Tipitina's; Birdie's Roadhouse in Varnado; and the Flora-Bama Lounge in Pensacola, Fla. He and his band, the Tentmakurs, ride and play in several Mardi Gras parades, including Thoth, Cleopatra and Argus. Proceeds from his CD sales have realized more than \$40,000 in donations to local charities.

His songs range in style from

ballads to rock anthems, but lyrically lean toward topical parodies of current events surrounding the team. His latest creation, for example, "The Grinch Who Stole Football," is satirical broadside to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, public enemy No. 1 among the Saints' faithful for his draconian punishments in the wake of the bounty scandal.

"You're a mean one, Mr. Grinch. Yeah, you have an evil heart Your stupidity and your ignorance Are off the freakin' charts. You make Honey Boo Boo and Snookie look smart. Well, you're a dumb one, Mr. Grinch

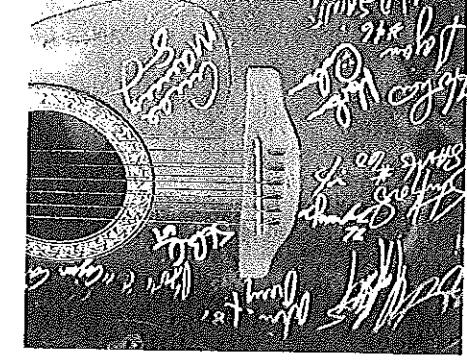
Ups and downs

There have been some twists and turns along the way.

The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 forced him to temporarily change his character name to Al from Marrero and drop the cartoonish Middle Eastern accent, robes and headaddress during public appearances.

In 2002, he was kicked out of a game by Superdome security because of an altercation with a Falcons fan.

And last spring his lighthearted parody of LSU Coach Les Miles landed him in hot water with some Tigers



Al d'Aquin's guitar is covered in autographs of past and present Saints players. He plans to keep playing professionally, primarily as a solo acoustic act.

fans after the ugly loss to Alabama in the BCS championship game.

But all in all, the near 20-year-run has far exceeded his humble expectations. D'Aquin said he intends to scale back his public appearances next fall to three or four a season, but he plans

SUPER FAN CHARACTER: ABDUL D. TENTMAKUR

Real name: Al d'Aquin Jr.
Hometown: Marrero
Current residence: Vancleave, Miss.
Age: 50
Family: Wife, Kim; daughter, Ashley, 26; son, Scott, 21.
Occupation: Senior corrosion specialist for BP Pipeline Co.
Saints fan since: 9 years old, '97; huge Archie Manning fan back then.
Saints super fan since: 1992
Season-ticket section at Dome: 619
Favorite Saints moment: 1. Steve Gleason's blocked punt; 2. Super Bowl XLIV in Miami.

to keep playing professionally, primarily as a solo acoustic act. "I've had a blast," he said. "I don't consider myself in any way shape or form a celebrity. I'm just a local guy that hit a niche that made a lot of people happy. I was able to do some good."

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NFL PLAYOFF PICTURE

SEED/TEAM	RECORD	DIV	SEED/TEAM	RECORD	DIV
1. Houston ⁺	12-2	S	1. Atlanta ⁺	12-2	S
2. Denver ⁺	11-3	W	2. San Francisco	10-3-1	W
3. New England ⁺	10-4	E	3. Green Bay ⁺	10-4	N
4. Baltimore [*]	9-5	N	4. Washington	8-6	E
5. Indianapolis	9-5	S	5. Seattle	9-5	W

WILD CARDS

NFC East playoff race going to the wire

The Redskins clinch the East if they win out because they hold tiebreaker advantages.

"Every game we go into now we believe we can win and that has to be your mindset," Coach Mike Shanahan said. "When you win close games, you expect it."

The Cowboys' division hopes came down to the final game at New York last year. The Giants won 31-14. Dallas could be in the same position this season.

Cowboys, Redskins, Giants in if they win

By Rob Maaddi
AP Pro Football Writer

PHILADELPHIA — There's two weeks left in the NFL season and the NFC East is up for grabs

Cousins, at quarterback. Griffin could be back for this week's game at Philadelphia. These aren't the same Eagles who looked pathetic in a 31-6 loss at FedEx Field last month. But these clearly aren't the same Redskins, who started their winning streak with that lopsided victory against Philadelphia. A win over the lowly Eagles would set up a potential all-or-nothing

34-0 loss at Atlanta. The Giants visit the reeling Baltimore Ravens (9-5) on Sunday. The Ravens already clinched their fifth consecutive trip to the playoffs, but have lost three in a row and are desperate to straighten things out.

"This is as important a game as you can have, this upcoming game, and our mindset is the playoffs have started," Manning said. "This is it. This is it."