

Chicago's Walter Payton snags MVP honor

NEW YORK (AP) — Rushing champion Walter Payton of the Chicago Bears, whose yardage total on the ground was the third highest in National Football League history, was named Offensive Player of the Year Wednesday by The Associated Press.

Payton won the league rushing title with 1,852 yards and dominated the season as the league's most productive running back. En route to the rushing crown, he

shattered O.J. Simpson's single-game rushing record with 275 yards against Minnesota Nov. 20, and he threatened Simpson's season mark of 2,003 yards until an icy field on the final Sunday of the season short-circuited his bid for the record.

The third-year player out of Jackson State was a nearly unanimous choice in The AP balloting, receiving all but three votes from a committee of 84 sports writers and broadcasters. Miami quarterback Bob Griese was the only other player to receive any mention from the panel composed of three voters representing each of the 28 league franchise cities.

Only Simpson's 2,003 yards and Jim Brown's 1,863 surpassed Payton's 1977 ground production. For Payton, it followed a 1,390-yard season that was second-best in the NFL, behind only Simpson, in 1976.

Payton, compactly built at 5-foot-10 and a half and 204

pounds, also led the National Conference in scoring, an unusual accomplishment for a non-kicker. He led the league, scoring 16 touchdowns, 14 of them rushing and the other two on pass receptions, for 96 points.

Payton averaged 5.5 yards per carry and set another record with 339 rushing attempts, breaking Simpson's mark of 332. His longest run from scrimmage was a 73-yarder.

Depending on quick cuts and changes of direction that befuddled defensive linemen, Payton's runs devastated the NFL. Just as Simpson's offensive line tabbed itself The Electric Company, saying they "turned on the Juice," Payton's blockers used their back's nickname, calling his runs "Sweetness Sweeps." And Payton insisted that his line — center Dan Peiffer, guards Revie Sorey and Noah Jackson and tackles Dennis Lick and Ted Albrecht — be acknowledged for its contribution to his outstanding

production.

Playing for one of pro football's oldest franchises where Hall of Fame runners such as Beattie Feathers, Bronco Nagurski, George MacAfee and Gale Sayers performed, Payton became the first Bear to rush for 1,000 or more yards in successive

seasons and the first to have two 200-yard games in a career. He gained more than 100 yards in 10 games in a season, one short of the NFL mark.

Payton's production helped the Bears to a 9-5 season and their first trip to the NFL playoffs in 14 years.

New faces appear as women host SOSOC

With three new members, Oregon's women's basketball team will end a month-long lay-off when it hosts Southern Oregon prior to the Oregon-Stanford men's game Saturday night at McArthur Court.

Tip-off is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. The Ducks will feature three players who weren't with the squad when it streaked through its first five games of the season enroute to an unblemished 5-0 record before breaking for winter vacation.

Returning to the Ducks will be last season's leading rebounder, Shannon Kelly, and freshmen Patrice Thrasher and Peggy Shekell.

Kelly, a sophomore out of Beaverton High School, started at center for the Ducks last season and grabbed 8.8 rebounds a game to lead Coach Elwin Heiney's team in that department. Kelly was also the third leading scorer on the team, scoring at a 9.2 point per game clip.

Thrasher and Shekell are both guards and will lend depth to the Duck backcourt which will be missing Chris Briot for the Southern Oregon game due to a knee injury.

Also missing from the Oregon roster will be 5-foot-10 senior center Margaret Bonn. Bonn will sit out the remainder of the season because of a knee ailment.

Flying Ducks face ranked teams in Illinois meet

Oregon's men's gymnastics team will be rubbing elbows with some of the best collegiate teams in the country today when they compete in a four-way meet in Chicago.

The fourth-ranked Ducks will compete against fifth-ranked Louisiana State and 10-ranked Illinois as well as Wheaton College.

Heading into the meet the Flying Ducks boast a pair of individuals who are at the top of the nation in their respective events. Tom Truedson's 9.6 performance on the pommel horse is the best in the country while Scott McEldowney's 9.5 effort on the still rings is equal to the best turned in this season.

A new gymnast, David Villaseñor, will join Coach Bill Ballester's crew for the meet in Chicago. Villaseñor is a national junior college champion from Pasadena City College.

"He can really help us," said Ballester of Villaseñor, who can compete in either the parallel bars, rings or vaulting events.

Grapplers pin Missouri

Fresh from an upset of 14th-ranked Missouri Wednesday, the Oregon wrestling team will continue its current road trip with a match against Northern Colorado today. Tomorrow the Ducks will compete in the Colorado Invitational.

Jeff Stuebing and Don Brown each recorded a pin against the Tigers to key the upset that lifted the Ducks' season record to 2-7. Also wrestling well was 150-pounder Scott Bliss who swamped Missouri's Mark Colbert 21-7. Also getting a key win was Randy Besaw who claimed his 177-pound match with a 3-2 decision.



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