

Notre Dame ponders problem of Air Force's effective wishbone

By Thomas Wyman
Associated Press

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (AP) — Lou Holtz's fretting notwithstanding, Notre Dame appears to have solved the problem of defending Air Force's wishbone offense.

"I believe this is the fourth year Dee Dowis has started against the University of Notre Dame, or played against Notre Dame, so he's seen virtually everything he's going to see," Holtz said Tuesday at his weekly press conference.

The Notre Dame coach meant the comment to give the advantage to Dowis. The Irish would have no new tricks to show. But they may not need them.

Two years ago, the Air Force

rushing attack directed by quarterback Dee Dowis gained 269 yards in a losing effort against the Irish. Dowis scored a fourth-quarter touchdown.

Last season, Notre Dame snuffed Dowis's game in the second half, shutting out the Falcons and limiting their ground game to 39 yards enroute to a 41-13 victory. Air Force had led the nation in rushing coming into the game.

This year, top-ranked Notre Dame (5-0) and Air Force (6-0) have maintained perfect records midway through the season. While the Irish schedule so far has included ranked opponents such as Michigan and Michigan State, Air Force has faced lesser known teams like Northwestern and Wyoming.

"They haven't been challenged yet," Holtz says.

Holtz nonetheless gives Dowis his due.

"He'll spring to the corner and outrun most people," he says. "If he cannot get to the corner, he'll stop, let you overrun him, tuck underneath and then outrun everybody else."

Air Force has averaged 7.5 yards per rush and thrown more passes this season than in the past. Dowis had six completions in 12 attempts for 116 yards against Navy last week.

Notre Dame holds a 14-4 edge in the series, with all the losses coming under former coach Gerry Faust, the last in 1985.

Netters play UCLA Friday

It will be a battle of nationally ranked volleyball teams Friday night as UCLA and Oregon hook-up in McArthur Court.

Both teams are ranked in the latest NCAA and Tachikara/American Volleyball Coaches' Association Top 20 polls released on Tuesday.

The Ducks, 4-3 in the Pacific-10 and 15-3 overall, are ranked 20th in the NCAA poll and 17th in the Tachikara poll. UCLA is ranked second in both polls, just below top-ranked Hawaii.

Four other Pac-10 schools are also ranked in the polls.

USC is ranked sixth in the Tachikara poll while Arizona (ninth), California (11th) and Washington (19th) are the other conference schools in the coaches poll.

In the NCAA poll, USC checks in at No. 7, followed by Arizona at No. 11, California at No. 12 and Washington at No. 18.

In the NCAA cross country polls, the Oregon men are ranked eighth this week while the women failed to make the Top 20.

Iowa State is the top-ranked men's squad while perennial power Villanova leads the women's rankings.

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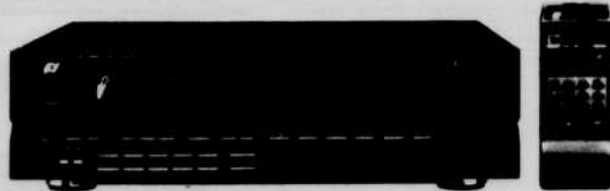
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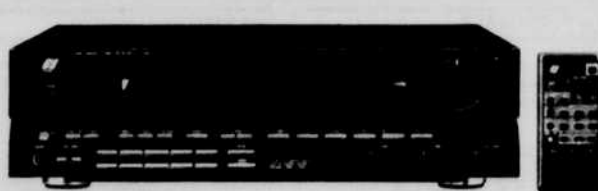
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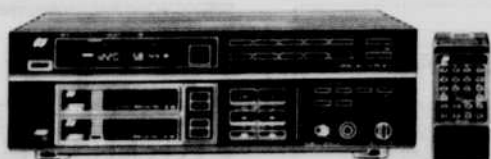
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