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Sports

Tulsa receiver will miss bowl bid

By Doug Ferguson
Associated Press

TULSA, Okla. (AP) — Tulsa receiver Dan Bitson, who helped the Hurricane earn the team's first bowl trip in 13 years with the Ducks, was hospitalized with two broken legs Monday following a head-on collision near the university.

Bitson, who tied a team record this year with 16 touchdown receptions, underwent surgery Monday and was in serious but stable condition, Coach David Rader said.

Authorities spent about 45 minutes Monday morning trying to free Bitson from his car. He was admitted to St. John Medical Center and later transferred to St. Francis Hospital, where the team's doctor practices.

Hospital officials said Bitson had a broken wrist in addition to the broken legs.

"We feel comfortable that there were no head and internal injuries," Rader said. "It's going to take time for him to heal. The guys are really satisfied that Dan's OK."

Tulsa police spokesman Jerry Isaacs said the accident occurred at 8:12 a.m. near the university. He said the police

report showed Bitson was westbound on a city street when a car driven by Scott Knobbs, 20, veered into Bitson's lane.

Knobbs was in fair condition at St. John with facial injuries, spokesman Steve Reynolds said.

"We're still trying to determine what caused" Knobbs to veer into the westbound lane, Isaacs said.

Monday's accident came 12 days before Tulsa, 6-5, meets the University in the Independence Bowl at Shreveport, La., the Hurricane's first bowl appearance since 1976.

"Dan's a big part of our football team," Rader said. "We may have to change some of our philosophies. There are ideas I don't know if I can answer right now. We'll just have to adjust."

It will be quite an adjustment, Bitson, a 6-foot-2, 185-pound junior from Tulsa, caught 73 passes for 1,425 yards, averaging 19.5 yards a reception. His 16 touchdowns tied the school record set by Howard Twilley in 1965.

"He's part of our family, and whenever one of your family gets hurt, it's depressing," quarterback T.J. Rubley said. "He didn't do anything. It just



Dan Bitson

goes to show that you can be taken out anytime."

The accident marked the end of a trying year off the field for Bitson, who reportedly was leaning toward bypassing his senior year and applying for the NFL draft.

Before the season began, Bitson was charged with possession of a stolen vehicle. The charge was dismissed in late August because of insufficient evidence and Bitson rejoined the team.

"He's had some bad luck," Rader said. "This is as poor as it gets right here."

Ducks place 12th in Las Vegas

By Mike Maloney
Emerald Contributor

The Oregon Ducks wrestling squad didn't live up to their own expectations at last weekend's Las Vegas Invitational. And that may be good news.

"The fact that we weren't pleased with the way we wrestled is good," Oregon assistant coach Chuck Kearney said. "To not be pleased and still place higher than we ever have in the Las Vegas tournament is really saying something about the quality of our team."

Overall, the Ducks placed 12th in the 45-team competition. Conference rival Arizona State captured the team title.

"Our finish was particularly impressive considering we only entered nine wrestlers while almost every other team had ten," Kearney added.

The void in the Oregon lineup was due to the absence of 167-pounder Eric Messner.

Messner is still recovering from a hand injury and wouldn't have been at full strength for Las Vegas.

"Messner isn't in shape yet and needs more time to train," Kearney said. He wasn't ready for a tournament where he could have had to wrestle seven or eight matches."

The Ducks highest placer was 118-pounder Dan Vidlak. He lost a 5-3 decision to Arizona State's Zeke Jones, the NCAA's number one ranked 118-pounder, then battled his way through the consolation bracket to eventually claim fourth place.

Vidlak lost his bid for third place when a knee injury forced him to default his final match. He is expected to be healthy for the Ducks next match.

Also placing for Oregon were 142-pounder Scott Glenn and 177-pounder Curt Strahm.

Glenn won four matches in route to his sixth place finish,

including a victory over BYU's Robbie Winters. Winters had defeated Glenn 5-0 in their previous meeting.

Strahm placed eighth in the competition, with his only losses coming at the hands of the consolation bracket and tournament champions.

"Curt wrestled better in some areas than he ever has," Kearney said.

One hundred thirty-four pound junior Rob Stone turned in one of Oregon's most impressive performances when he posted a 9-5 victory over two-time all-American John Epperly of Lehigh. Stone lost his next match in overtime.

Heavyweight Cam Strahm missed placing by one match, losing a close decision to eventual tournament champion Joe Malecek of Nebraska.

Also winning matches for the Ducks were 150-pounder Pat Craig, 158-pounder George Johnston, and 190-pounder Joe Rissone. Kearney cited both Craig and Johnston for performing well under difficult conditions.

"Craig is normally a 142-pounder so he was giving up size to every opponent," Kearney said. "And Johnston had the toughest draw of the tournament."

Kearney said the competition was a good test for the Oregon team.

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