

SPORTS

NFL must solve equality conflict

Equal access is a conflict that hasn't been resolved — a battle of the sexes, one might say — and now it is up to the NFL to find a resolution. Unfortunately for people in the sportswriting field, the NFL is a very indecisive institution.

Although the equal access issue has recently been thrust out of the shadows and into the national media spotlight by Lisa Olson, a Boston reporter, it's a problem that has never really disappeared. Since women were granted equal access to lockerrooms, male players have complained that women reporters stare too much, and women reporters have claimed they are subjected to un-called-for sexually suggestive remarks and lewd comments from players.



From the Sidelines
by
PAUL MORGAN

Recently, Cincinnati Bengals Coach Sam Wyche was fined nearly \$30,000 for preventing USA Today reporter Denise Tom from entering the lockerroom after the Bengals lost to Seattle. While the men enjoyed easy access to the lockerroom and to the players, Wyche forced Tom to wait outside until quarterback Boomer Esiason could be summoned for an interview.

In most cases the players don't really have a choice, and their personal rights should not be violated, whether the reporter is male or female.

Wyche was taking advantage of the recently publicized equal access issue to voice his concerns about a woman in a lockerroom with 50 or so naked men — a complaint that cost him a sizable chunk of his salary — but he also offered some alternatives.

One alternative is to keep all reporters out of the locker room and bring requested players back for interviews with the media.

Another is to hang a curtain in the lockerroom. The players could stand behind the curtain while undressed, and then emerge clothed for interviews. Wyche used this technique in the lockerroom when the Bengals played the Rams last weekend.

I feel uncomfortable about writing about equal access. I have never experienced the problems a woman must overcome to be a sportswriter in a male-dominated field, nor have I ever stood naked with somebody holding a tape recorder in my face. But I sympathize with both sides.

Fortunately, this problem is practically nonexistent at Oregon football games. There is a media interview room in the Len Casanova Complex, where Oregon coaches and players are available after the game. The visiting lockerroom does not have this luxury, but equal access has been allowed with very little hassle.

After the Brigham Young-Oregon game, no reporters were allowed in the visiting lockerroom because a woman writer was present. The media packed into the hallway leading up to the lockerroom, and clamored for position as they interviewed players that came down after a 10 minute cool-down period.

Apparently, the senior journalists who employ Olson and Tom are in full support of equal access at all times, as they should be. They must fight to protect the integrity of journalistic freedom, and Wyche is just trying to protect the integrity of his players.

The NFL reacted poorly when it fined Wyche, but it had to do something. It was trying to make a statement to women, as if to say, "Hey! We do stand up for women's rights." But the NFL has done nothing to come up with a truly workable solution.

Ducks ranked 19th, face Washington next

By Ashley Conklin
Emerald Sports Editor

Oregon moved up three notches in this week's Associated Press Top 25 poll, checking in at No. 19. It is the highest ranking in the AP poll for the Ducks since Oct. 4, 1988 when they were ranked 18th.

The Ducks received 432 points in this week's poll to move from the No. 22 spot they occupied a week ago after beating Brigham Young 32-16. This past weekend Oregon toppled Utah 52-7.

Three other Pacific-10 Con-

ference teams are also in the Top 25 with USC at No. 16, Washington ranked 17th and Arizona at No. 21. One other Pac-10 team, Stanford, also received 25 votes after Saturday's win over Notre Dame, last week's top-ranked team. The Cardinal didn't make the poll, but did come in 29th.

Michigan took over the top spot this week from Notre Dame after being ranked third last week. Virginia checked in at No. 2 while Miami, Oklahoma and Tennessee rounded out the top five. Notre Dame fell to eighth.

Oregon will meet the 17th-ranked Huskies this Saturday before a sold-out crowd of 72,500 at Husky Stadium. Washington leads the Pac-10 race with a 2-0 conference record while Oregon is 0-1. However, the winner of Saturday's game will likely be the front-runner for the Rose Bowl.

The Ducks have already lost to Arizona, but don't play USC this year. Oregon finishes out the season with Arizona State, Stanford, and UCLA at home and faces California and Ore-

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