

Bumbling Beavers fumbled Kragthorpe decision

Last Wednesday, Oregon State Athletic Director Dutch Baughman sent the Beavers' football coach, Dave Kragthorpe, home for the holidays — permanently.

Baughman didn't actually fire Kragthorpe, but his forcing of Kragthorpe into a resignation was a lousy finish for the Beavers' poor excuse of a football season.

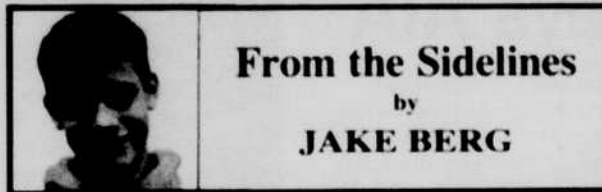
The Beavers' 6-3 loss to Oregon in the Civil War game left them resting quietly in the Pacific-10 Conference basement with a 1-10 record. As the horn sounded to end the Beavers' season finale, speculation began that Kragthorpe had coached his final game in Corvallis.

The announcement came at a press conference last Wednesday that Baughman's decision to find a new coach was agreeable to both he and Kragthorpe. Baughman did not label the move as a firing, and *The Oregonian* reported that Kragthorpe "was reluctant to discuss the reasons for his dismissal."

That leaves the legacy of Kragthorpe to even more speculation. Why was he forced to step down? It certainly should not have been the Beavers' 1-10 mark. As miserable as the Oregon State season was, Kragthorpe was the 1989 Pac-10 coach of the year and had accumulated more wins in consecutive seasons (in the 1988 and '89 campaigns) than the Beavers had accomplished in two years since the 1972 season.

The marked record of improvement over that period set the Beaver fans' hopes high for the 1990 season, but Kragthorpe failed to deliver the wins this fall and is now only a six-year footnote in Oregon State's gridiron history.

A few bad breaks and having a team that was maybe not as terrific as its "Killer Beavs" billing led to a poor season for Oregon State, but that is no reason to



From the Sidelines

by

JAKE BERG

fire the Beavers' most successful coach in recent history.

If the reason for his departure is the winning percentage, then why wasn't he released earlier? Kragthorpe had never produced a winning year for Oregon State, and the Beavers had won only 16 games in his first five years. His poor success rate would seem to be an even poorer motive for Baughman's decision, as Kragthorpe did bring a certain amount of respect (as much as was possible) to OSU.

At the other state Pac-10 school, Oregon Coach Rich Brooks will be leading the Ducks into their second straight bowl appearance for the first time in the school's history in December. But like Kragthorpe, Brooks hasn't always been so successful at Oregon.

In his first six seasons, Brooks had only 20 wins compared to Kragthorpe's 17 victories over his first six years. Not much difference, but Oregon gave Brooks a chance to produce (and he obviously has) when Oregon State did not cut Kragthorpe an equal amount of slack.

Now that the Beavers football program is without a director, Baughman may find that getting a new head coach may be as hard as it was to win a game this year.

Oregon State, following Kragthorpe's abrupt absence, has a football program on the decline. Its coach

has just left, the team is coming off a 1-10 nightmare, and the fans have got to be irate with the Beavers' inability to snare a winning record since 1970.

With that in mind, what coach in his right mind has any desire to inherit Kragthorpe's former position? Kragthorpe had three years remaining on his contract, and if Baughman had any patience or common sense, Kragthorpe would still be in Corvallis.

Instead, Oregon State is dreaming of possible coaches who have probably never heard of Corvallis and the athletic department will be forced to pay off Kragthorpe's remaining three years. This could pose a problem.

Reports estimate that the the OSU athletic department's deficit is at \$2.5 million, and Kragthorpe would have earned roughly \$250,000 over the contract's last three years. So where is this money going to come from when the Beavers will have to pay another head coach over the next three years? Baughman better get to work on those bake sales.

Regardless of how bad the Beavers' season looked, it had nothing to do with the coaching ability of Kragthorpe. Oregon State simply did not have good players in 1990 for many different reasons.

Sure, it's Kragthorpe's responsibility to recruit talent from the high school pool, but the Beavers' miserable reputation and their lack of decent facilities preceded the coach's recruiting efforts. Oregon State did not provide Kragthorpe with the tools he needed to build a good team.

He did his best with what he had on his own, and the Beavers decided last Wednesday that it wasn't good enough and let him go. He was never given a chance.

Schedule finished, CSU sets sights on Ducks

From staff and wire reports

Colorado State, Oregon's opponent in the Dec. 29 Freedom Bowl, ended its regular season Saturday night with a 30-27 victory over Hawaii.

The Rams finished the regular season at 8-4 overall and 6-1 for a second place finish in the Western Athletic Conference. Colorado State's only WAC loss was a 52-9 drubbing at the hands of Brigham Young.

The Rams' Freedom Bowl appearance will be only the sec-

ond trip to a bowl game in the school's history. In the 1948 Raisin Bowl, the school's only other bowl appearance, Colorado State was a 21-20 loser to Occidental College.

Colorado State's win in Hawaii wasn't easy as the Rams had to rally from a 21-16 third quarter deficit and trailed 27-22 in the fourth quarter.

Running back Brian Copeland scored three touchdowns for Colorado State, including the game-winner on a nine-yard pass from quarterback

Mike Gimenez with only 28 seconds remaining. Gimenez then ran in for the two-point conversion to give the Rams the three-point win.

Copeland rushed for 76 yards on 13 carries, and caught two passes, both for touchdowns, for 30 yards.

The Rams had a chance to go ahead for the first time in the game earlier, driving to the Rainbow two-yard line before Copeland fumbled and Hawaii recovered with 3:04 remaining.

Gimenez led a six-play drive that took only 53 seconds to get Colorado State into the end zone for the win.

The win over Hawaii was Colorado State's fourth in the last five games, which helped the Rams clinch a second-place finish in the WAC and the Freedom Bowl berth. It also kept them from entering a bowl game with a two-game losing streak.

Colorado State had lost 31-30 to Louisiana Tech the week be-

fore the Hawaii game, ending a three-game winning streak that included wins over Tulsa, New Mexico and Wyoming.

The only losses the Rams suffered this season besides the BYU and Louisiana Tech games were a 31-20 setback at Arizona State and a 31-20 loss at Arkansas.

The 8-4 record and a berth opposite Oregon in the Freedom Bowl mark a complete two-year turnaround for the Ram football team.

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