

SPORTS

Hell will freeze over, Beavers will improve



FROM THE SIDELINES

BY JAYSON JACOBY

Civil War week, 1991. The Oregon State Beavers are coming into Saturday's game sporting a school-record 15 straight losses, the longest current streak in Division-I NCAA football.

First year head coach Jerry Pettibone has yet to win at the Beavers' helm. More than a year has passed since Oregon State has come off a field victorious. And our neighbors up in Corvallis have been outscored, in this, their 21st straight losing campaign, by a combined 362-111.

Prediction for 1993: Oregon State stuns the Pacific-10 Conference — and much of the nation — by finishing with a 5-3 league mark, and by garnering its first winning season in 23 years, the Beavers end with a 6-5 overall record.

OK. So now you're saying, "Hey, wait just a minute. You've been sitting in front of that computer too long and all those nasty video display terminal rays are scrambling your brains."

Maybe. But allow me to explain a bit about my prognosis for the Beavers' meteoric rise to mediocrity.

Not surprisingly, when Pettibone took over in Corvallis last year, there was quite a bit of enthusiasm among the Beaver faithful. It's inevitable. Anytime a program so long immersed in losing as Oregon State makes a change — any change — somebody is going to predict an immediate turn-

around. The same thing happened when Dave Kragthorpe took over in 1985, supposedly the beginning of the "Air Kragthorpe" era.

And now, as the Beavs continue to break records for futility, the calls for Pettibone's head are coming in. But those first predictions, however shortsighted they may have been, will prove to be right, after all.

Pettibone definitely did bring a change from his former head coaching job at Northern Illinois — a big change. Now Oregon State is the only Pac-10 team to run the triple option offense. And while some people are all over Pettibone for completely revamping Oregon State's program — which is still winless — it behooves one to remember that they haven't been winning for more than two decades.

Eventually the new system will prevail, though. What Pettibone is doing is giving his program its only chance of recruiting quality players. There is no way — aside from a strong winning season and maybe a bowl bid — that Oregon State is going to win many offensive — or defensive, for that matter — recruits with the credentials to excel at this level by running an everyday offense. Why would a quarterback or running back come to Corvallis when he could run the same offense for a winning team?

But Oregon State doesn't run a typical offense. However, quite a few high schools around the country run the option just like the Beavers. And there are going to be high school players

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Panel 2: "THERE'S RAISIN FLAKES, RAISIN NUGGETS, RAISIN SMOKES, KIBBLES-N-RAISINS, LOW SALT RAISIN BRAN, RAISIN ROUGHAGE AND RAISINS-IN-A-DISKIT!"

Panel 3: "UH... JUST GIMME SOME CORN FLAKES." "CORN CRISPIES? CORN BRAN? SUGAR-FREE CORN FLAKES? LOW-FAT CORN CRUNCHIES?"

Panel 4: "SIGH... JUST GIVE ME A GUN." "AUTOMATIC? SEMI-AUTOMATIC? REVOLVER?"