

Bledsoe ditches Wazzu for NFL

PULLMAN, Wash. (AP) — Standout Washington State quarterback Drew Bledsoe announced Monday that he will skip his last year of college eligibility and turn pro.

Bledsoe said he's decided that entering April's NFL draft makes more sense than staying in college.

"I just feel like I need a new challenge for my skills," he said at a news conference. "I want to take my skills to the next level and see what I can do playing football at the highest level."

Bledsoe's expected to be one of the top picks in the April draft. New England has the first pick, and the Seattle Seahawks are second.

Bledsoe said he would risk injury if he remained another year, which could hurt his future draft status.

"This year I feel I have an opportunity to be drafted pretty highly," he said. "I don't feel like I'm leaving the school hanging. ... We have another great quarterback."

Bledsoe said he is confident backup quarterback Mike Pattinson can help Washington State keep winning. The Cougars were 9-3, including a vic-

tory over Utah in the Copper Bowl.

Bledsoe had a school-record 476 yards passing in the Copper Bowl, and the Cougars finished ranked 15th. Since then, Bledsoe had been seeking counsel from Washington State coach Mike Price and friends and family around his hometown of Walla Walla.

"Our whole football team ... is excited for Drew and supports him in this decision 100 percent," Price said.

Bledsoe said he has enough experience to make the jump to the NFL.

"In three years at Washington State I've started 29 games, which is more than most people play in five years," he said.

Bledsoe began playing for the Cougars as a true freshman in 1990. NFL draft guru Mel Kiper has predicted that Bledsoe, 20, could be the No. 1 pick this year.

Bledsoe said he will finish the current semester at Washington State and return spring semester.

Joining Bledsoe and Price at the news conference was Pattinson, a redshirt junior who has played his college career in Bledsoe's shadow.

Pattinson said earlier he would support Bledsoe's moving to the pros.

"When you've got the opportunity that Bledsoe has at this point in time — not only to play pro football but to be the No. 1 pick and make millions upon millions of dollars — there's really no reason for him to stay," Pattinson said Sunday.

Bledsoe, 6-foot-5 and 225 pounds, completed 241 passes in 432 attempts for 3,246 yards this season — all school records. He passed for 20 touchdowns with 15 interceptions and was named Pacific-10 Conference Offensive Player of the Year.

Bledsoe was eighth in this season's Heisman Trophy voting, and second only to Heisman winner Miami's Gino Torretta among quarterbacks.

For his three seasons, Bledsoe totaled 7,373 yards. Had he decided to remain at Washington State, he would have been within reach of the Pac-10 career passing record of 9,393 yards set by Oregon State's Erik Wilhelm in 1988.

Bledsoe is 1,920 yards short of the conference record for career total offense, set by Stanford's John Elway in 1982.

Blue Devils squeak past Sooners, 88-84

DURHAM, N.C. (AP) — Top-ranked Duke felt the heat all night long, and the unseasonably warm weather at Cameron Indoor Stadium was just part of the problem.

No. 11 Oklahoma took the unbeaten Blue Devils to overtime before key baskets by Grant Hill and Antonio Lang led to an 88-84 victory Monday night.

"They put us in a position where there was pressure on us," Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski said. "They fought like crazy."

To be precise, Oklahoma fought like a team bent on avenging the type of loss Duke pinned on the Sooners two seasons ago. It was then that the Blue Devils stopped Oklahoma's 51-game home winning streak with a 90-85 victory.

This time, Duke was trying to preserve a winning streak which was at 21 games, second longest in school history. It not only accomplished that task, but the Blue Devils (9-0) extended their home-court winning streak over non-Atlantic Coast Conference schools to 77 games — just barely.

"They just played tough. I don't know what it was," Grant Hill said. "They crashed the offensive boards, and they played extremely hard."

Oklahoma's Jeff Webster tied the score at 76 with 4:21 left in overtime, but that would be Oklahoma's last basket for almost three minutes as the Sooners (10-2) repeatedly rushed their shots.

Thomas Hill hit two free throws and Grant Hill scored twice on a pair of passes from Bobby Hurley as Duke pulled ahead in overtime.

The Sooners missed five straight shots until Bryan Sallier hit a short jumper with 1:26 to play.

Duke spread its offense to run down the clock and Lang drove for a lay-up with 1:05 left. Angelo Hamilton canned a three-pointer with 47 seconds to play, but Hurley put an end to the Oklahoma threat with four straight free throws.

Grant Hill finished with 25 points for the Blue Devils, Hurley scored 23 and had a school-record 15 assists. Thomas Hill got 13.

Webster scored 25 for Oklahoma, and Hamilton got 17 of his 21 points in the closing 25 minutes. Sallier added 18 points and 11 rebounds.

The Blue Devils squandered most of a hot streak in the first half, then blew all of a 20-point lead in the second half. If Grant Hill couldn't provide an explanation, Hurley knew what Duke's problem was.

"We weren't staying in our offense. We weren't looking for our shots like we were," Hurley said. "We didn't do the things we did to build our 20-point lead. We became tentative and thought the game was over at that point."

Hamilton tied the game on a three-pointer with 33 seconds left, and Thomas Hill's shot at the buzzer was deflected, sending the game into overtime. But it was the extra period where Oklahoma couldn't clear the hurdle.

"We hit that spot in overtime where the shots weren't necessarily that bad," Oklahoma coach Billy Tubbs said, "but we just couldn't get anything to fall."

Duke was horrible from the free throw line, making only 15 of 31 on the night and only one of 12 during a second-half stretch.

Schott response due by Jan. 20

NEW YORK (AP) — Baseball's executive council decided Monday to give Cincinnati Reds owner Marge Schott until Jan. 20 to respond to allegations that she made racial and ethnic remarks.

The four-person committee investigating Schott presented its findings to Schott's lawyer, Robert Bennett, on Dec. 23. Bennett said Monday he asked to have until Jan. 25 to respond and said "it appears to me there is no intention of giving her due process and there is a rush to judgment because of outside pressure."

Milwaukee Brewers owner Bud Selig, the executive council chairman, said he didn't know how long after Jan. 20 it would take for the executive council to make its decision. The council can fine Schott up to \$250,000 or suspend her.

"Although the executive council is anxious to complete the investigation and come to a resolution, we have reluctantly agreed to an extension for a response until Jan. 20, 1993, in view of the importance to everyone in baseball," Selig said in a statement issued by the commissioner's office.

Bennett said the five days were significant in preparing a defense because many of the witnesses he wants to interview were unavailable during the Christmas holidays.

"Those five days make a big difference to me, but I don't think it makes a very big difference to them," Bennett said.

Former employees of the Reds and at least one other club have accused Schott of making racial and ethnic slurs against blacks, Jews and Asians. She has apologized for using offensive language, denied some accusations, confirmed others and said she's not a racist.

"They have picked a date that they know I cannot meet," Bennett said. "I do not think that it is due process or that is fair."

The executive council, which is ruling baseball in the absence of a commissioner, appointed a committee on Dec. 1 to investigate Schott. The committee consists of American League president Bobby Brown, National League president Bill White, California Angels executive vice president Jackie Autry and Pittsburgh Pirates director Douglas Danforth.

"I had been hopeful of working out an amicable resolution of this thing," Bennett said. "But I am not going to let Mrs. Schott be rushed to judgment. I am hopeful that this isn't an indication that they have reached their sentence even though there hasn't been a trial."

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