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Vols find defense still wins

n this era of glamour, glitz and glorified offenses, the old adage that defense wins championships has all but gone extinct.

Instead, college and even pro football teams often concentrate on elaborate offensive attacks in the hopes of outscoring opponents and keeping fans on their feet. Meanwhile, defenses - to

borrow a Sports-Center phrase -Opinion can only hope to contain their explosive opposi-

But Monday night's inaugural Bowl Championship Series national title game at the Fiesta Bowl boiled down to a classic defensive

battle between No. 1 Tennessee and No. 2 Florida State.

Pyle

Ultimately, the difference in the Volunteers' (13-0) championship-clinching, 23-16 victory over the Seminoles was Tennessee's ability to shut down Florida State's prime offensive target, wide receiver Peter Warrick, while the Vols' leading man, wide receiver Peerless Price, was able to break two big plays.

Price caught four passes from quarterback Tee Martin for 199 yards, with the majority of that yardage compiled on a 76-yard bomb that led to Tennessee's first touchdown in the second quarter

and a 79-yard lightning bolt that pushed the Vols to a 20-9 lead in the fourth quarter and effectively burnt any Seminole championship hopes.

Besides those two big plays, the Florida State defense, ranked No. 1 nationally, matched Tennessee's defense punishing tackle for punishing tackle. But the Vol defense produced a touchdown of its own on a 54-yard interception return by Dwayne Goodrich in the second quarter and limited the electrifying Warrick to one reception for seven

Tennessee was an underdog heading into the game, and I admit I was among those who did not believe the Volunteers could clinch their first national title since 1951. It seemed all season long - seeing the close calls against Syracuse, Florida and Arkansas — that Tennessee was merely delaying an inevitable loss with late-game heroics and/or luck.

Plus, it was inconceivable to me, and I assume countless others, that the Vols could win a national title a season after losing star quarterback Peyton Manning to the NFL draft, where he was selected No. 1 by Indianapolis.

But to Tennessee's credit, it successfully fought the doubts and odds throughout the seasonlong odyssey that was the BCS' first run and ended up on top of the college football landscape.

Even though game-breaking

injury early in the season, Martin, Price, a steady running game and a dominating defense led by powerful linebacker Al Wilson vaulted the Southeastern Conference champion Vols all the way to the Fiesta Bowl's postgame winner's podium.

Ironically, it was Tennessee's defense that crowned it champion in a season that featured

66 Ironically, it was Tennessee's defense that crowned it champion in a season that featured countless offensive fireworks... "

countless offensive fireworks from Ricky Williams' Heisman run to the plethora of recordbreaking quarterbacks.

In the last year of the century, a time of world-changing technology and sports-world altering offense, defense still reigned supreme in college football when all was done.

And Bob Barker is assuredly pleased, because the Price was indeed also right for the Vols on Monday night.

Tim Pyle is a sports reporter for the Emerald. He can be reached via e-

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RIM basketball and floor hockey









Winter Term 1999

League	Manager's Meetings	Location	Time
Basketball	January 12	207 Chapman	4:00p.m.
Floor Hockey	January 19	105 Esslinger	4:00p.m.
Coed Volleyball	January 20	105 Esslinger	4:00p.m.
League	Playoff Meetings	Location	Time
Floor Hockey	February 10	105 Esslinger	4:00p.m.
Basketball	February 11	207 Chapman	4:00p.m.
Coed Volleyball	February 11	105 Esslinger	5:00p.m.
Special Events	Deadline	Dates	Location
Basketball Scramble	January 12	January 13 & 15	Esslinger gyms
Free Throw/Hot Shot/ 3-Point Contest	February 10	February 10	Esslinger gyms
Open Swim Meet	February 17	February 19	Leighton Pool
Tournaments	Deadline	Dates	Location
Table Tennis	January 28	January 31	Gerlinger 220
Wrestling	TBA	TBA	Mac Court
Indoor Soccer	February 11	February 13 & 14	Esslinger gyms
Stadium Football	February 18	February 20 & 21	Autzen Stadium
Badminton	February 18	February 23	Gerlinger Annex B54

For more information, stop by 102 Esslinger Hall or call 346-4113. Check out our Web site: http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~pars/ An equal-opportunity, affirmative-action institution committed to cultural diversity and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Accommodations for people with disabilities will be provided if requested in advance.