

Miami of Ohio coaches suspended by school

Alan Schmadtke
The Orlando Sentinel (KRT)

Always clamoring for attention, the Mid-American Conference suddenly has it — though not in the form it would like.

Two assistant coaches at Miami of Ohio were suspended with pay by the school Wednesday, hours after one was arrested for assault and the other admitted he had a hand in wrecking the visitor's coaching box at Marshall University Football Stadium on Tuesday night. The Red-Hawks fell to Marshall 36-34 in the final seconds.

After a back judge called the Red-Hawks for two pass-interference penalties in the end zone — including one on fourth down — Miami gave up a 1-yard touchdown run with 5 seconds left.

On Wednesday afternoon, Miami suspended defensive coordinator Jon Wauford and linebackers coach Taver Johnson with pay. Wauford was led from the stadium in handcuffs after allegedly shoving a Marshall fan to the turf. The fan had come onto the field to celebrate Marshall's comeback. Wauford was arrested on a charge of battery, a misdemeanor.

In a statement, MAC Commis-

sioner Rick Chryst said the league "greatly" regretted the incident.

"Unfortunately, the great competitive and sportsmanlike efforts... have been overshadowed by this incident, and we must collectively commit ourselves that this never again happen in the Mid-American Conference," said Chryst, whom wire services reported witnessed Wauford's arrest.

"These events suggest that we've fallen short of our goal."

James Garland
Miami president

The game was televised nationally by ESPN.

Wauford was released from jail early Wednesday after posting \$5,000 bail. A court hearing is scheduled for Dec. 13.

The fan, Robert Flaughter, 36, was treated at a hospital and released. He was among thousands of fans who stormed the field moments after Marshall scored the winning touchdown.

West Virginia State Police said Wauford shoved Flaughter, who fell and struck his head on the artificial

turf. He was taken away on a stretcher with what was diagnosed as a concussion.

Flaughter's brother, Todd, said neither he nor his brother used foul or abusive language toward Miami players or coaches.

"He was waving goodbye to Miami's players," Todd Flaughter said. "The coach basically hit him with a forearm. That knocked him flat. His head definitely hit first on the turf."

Johnson's suspension is tied to damage done to the visiting coaches box. A desk was ruined, and chairs were thrown through walls, school officials said.

"I don't want to prejudge our investigation," Miami President James Garland said. "But I have to tell you, as president, to see one of my coaches led away in handcuffs was one of the most difficult things I've seen since I've been here. We justify our support of athletics because of the message that it sends about character. These events suggest that we've fallen short of our goal."

Miami of Ohio said it would pay for the damage to the coaches box.

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Jude

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Beavers are planning an expansion of Reser Stadium.

But does anyone really believe the Cougs and Beavs can keep up?

Wazzu has a good team once every five years, and Oregon State scares up an upset every now and then, but the Ducks and Huskies have been and will be constants. They have the money, they have the facilities, they control the propaganda (as Rick Neuheisel pointed out).

Oregon and Washington just have it. They just need the win to have it all.

Which is why this game, the battle on the field, is more important than

just this season's conference standings or the December bowl placement.

It's hard to fathom, but this one game will decide the next four or five years for these programs, mainly because of recruiting possibilities.

Rightfully so, Washington's Neuheisel and Oregon's Mike Bellotti have butted heads in the past over recruiting. Neuheisel charged that Bellotti was a dirty recruiter after two recruits backed out of Seattle and came to Eugene.

That's only part of it.

On the field Saturday, Oregon's defensive secondary — battered from getting picked on all season, and now coping with injuries to safety Keith Lewis and corner Aaron Gipson —

has to counter the best passing game in the Pac-10. Cody Pickett to Reggie Williams has become an art in Seattle. Pickett to Williams. Repeat. And again. And again.

Off the field, the Huskies have to cope with Oregon's public relations buzz, which ranks atop the Pac-10, if not the country. That includes another billboard. And another. Anyone seen a poster in Seattle yet?

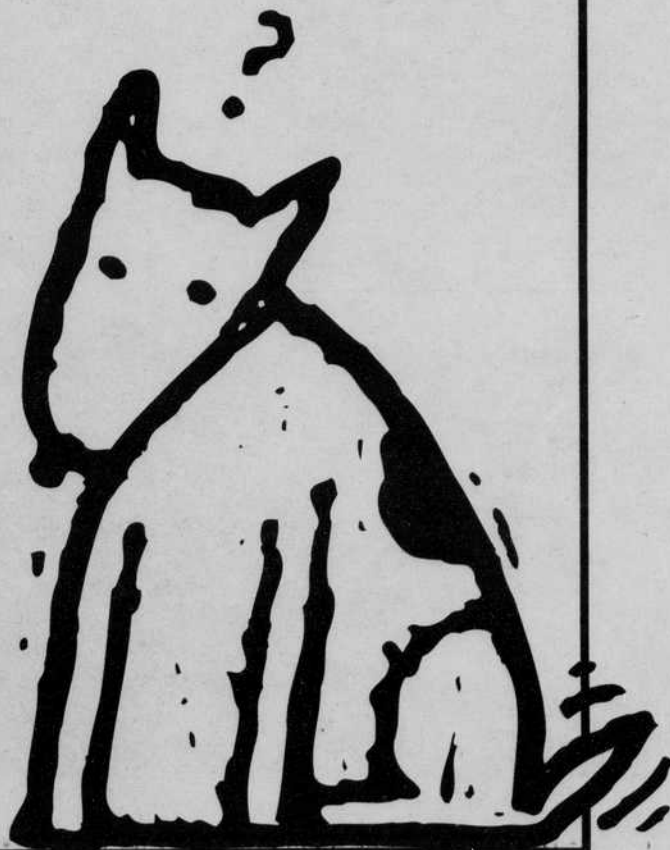
You have to admire the Cougars and Beavers of the world — the hard workers, the underrated over-achievers — but you have to bow down to the real powers.

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Contact the senior sports reporter at adamjude@dailyemerald.com.

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