

■ Oklahoma notes

Oklahoma's strong finish earns trip to San Diego

Rhett Bomar's growth under center has helped the Sooners finish strong

BY SCOTT J. ADAMS
SPORTS REPORTER

After its season-opening 17-10 home loss to TCU, it appeared that defending national finalist Oklahoma had nowhere to go but forward in trying to reach the Big 12 conference title game and a Bowl Championship Series berth. The Sooners never found their footing, however, losing two of their next four games and limping into a third-place conference finish.

The Sooners' berth in the Holiday Bowl may not be the exclamation mark head coach Bob Stoops was looking for to cap off his first seven years at Oklahoma, but he's proud of his team for the invite.

"We consider it an honor to be invited to the Pacific Life Holiday Bowl," said Stoops. "This game has certainly earned its position among the elite bowl games nationally."

Oklahoma's berth in the Holiday Bowl is the program's first and is a tribute to its resilience. The Sooners never quit this year, as they were accused by college football analysts of doing in last year's BCS title game. Even after rival Texas handed them a 45-12 loss Oct. 8, they bounced back, taking five of their final six games to close out the season.

Freshman quarterback Rhett Bomar was handed the starting job under center and faced a trial by fire filling in for the departed Jason White, winner of the 2003 Heisman Trophy. It took Bomar three games to total over 100 yards passing but once he did, he and the offense both began to show improvement. Bomar passed for a season-best 298 yards and completed 20 of 28 passes in Oklahoma's 36-30 victory over Texas A&M Nov. 12. He threw and ran for a touchdown in the win which made the Sooners bowl-clinching win.

The defense turned the corner after the loss to Texas as well. It held Kansas to a field goal the following week and played an essential part in Oklahoma's regular season ending 42-14 win over Oklahoma State. Linebacker Rufus Alexander led the Sooners with four tackles and a sack.



COURTESY

Linebacker Rufus Alexander was Oklahoma's leading tackler with 93 total tackles, including 50 solo. He accumulated 17 tackles for 51 yards lost and had five sacks this season.

Remember me?

Tailback Adrian Peterson has had a quiet sophomore season after being a finalist for the Heisman Trophy last year. Injury has been his biggest setback. Peterson sprained his ankle earlier in the season and has not been 100 percent healthy since. He has still managed to rush for more than 1,000 yards this year. Last year against the Ducks, Peterson carried the ball 24 times for 183 yards

Hold on to the ball

Opponents have made a killing off of Oklahoma fumbles. Bomar alone has put the ball on the ground 16 times

with five of them being against UCLA. Bomar has thrown nine interceptions as well, but he's not the only Sooner having trouble protecting the ball. Peterson has six fumbles to his credit and wide receiver Lendy Holmes and tailback Jaco Gutierrez have two apiece.

Best two out of three

With the Sooners facing Oregon this and next season, the two schools will have met on home, away and neutral ground for three years straight. Oklahoma was the victor last year in Norman, Okla., by way of a 31-7 win.

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Dear Students,

As you have probably noticed, the Counseling & Testing Center is currently undergoing a substantial remodel. Consequently, our contractors have asked us to vacate the building while our new air handling system is installed during Winter Break.

From **December 12th to December 26th**, we will NOT be providing walk-in hours, appointments or phone coverage. If you have an emergency during this time, please contact **White Bird at 687-4000** as they will remain staffed 24 hours every day.

From **December 27th to January 6th**, you may call 346-3227 between 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday to be connected with a counselor **by phone**. We will have intermittent heat and electricity during this time, so will still NOT be available for any on-site counseling. After hours and evening emergencies will continue to be handled by White Bird.

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Sincerely,
Counseling & Testing Center Staff

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