



Sports Talk

by Ron Sykes, Sports Editor

PAC-10 update

1. Oregon State
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10. Washington State

I know some will cry foul! But a lot of things have happened that we feel justify our making an update.

For years this conference was the private domain of the Bruins of UCLA but that finally changed last season when Ralph Miller's OSU team swept through the Pac-10 like Grant marched through Richmond. We decided on the update solely because the NCAA in all their splendid wisdom decided to place our previous choice as the Pac-10 champion, UCLA, on the disabled list for 1981-82. And who besides yours truly really expected the Beavers to perform so admirably during the early campaign. The thought was that it would take the young Beavers until the second half of the Pac-10 race to finally gel, especially after losing such stars as Mark Radford, Ray Blume and Steve Johnson to the pros. But Lester Conner has emerged as the leader and A.C. Green has just been phenomenal in his brief career.

OSU will take a Far West Classic 10-game winning streak and two championships in a row to this year's tourney. The Beavers have defeated five clubs expected to challenge for the championship of their respective leagues. OSU defeated strong Bradley, ranked in the top 20 of several pre-season publications; BYU, defending champion of the WAC and ranked in the top 20 when

the Beavers and Cougars played; Pepperdine, defending champion of the WCAC; Penn, Ivey League runner-up last year and NCAA playoff team that in 1979 was in the NCAA final four; and the latest power to bite the dust, Louisville, 1980 NCAA champion and defending Metro Conference champion. Louisville was ranked No. 3 by both wire services before losing to OSU. Oregon State impressed everyone as they captured the title at the Japanese Suntory Ball Tourney. Oregon State under Coach Ralph Miller is rapidly becoming a national power. Junior guard William Brew was named the Most Valuable Player and was joined by teammate Charlie Sitton on the Suntory Ball All-Star team.

It's still baffling how all-everything guard Lester Conner could have been overlooked as an all-tourney selection. Lester led the team in scoring, steals and assists. Wiltjer was the rebounding leader followed closely by Conner and I'm still wondering what Charlie did.

Can Black Football survive?

When Alabama, Mississippi and the rest of the South started recruiting the Black ballplayers in the early sixties, many observers feared that this would lead to a decline in the programs of major Black universities. But so far this has not happened. The good Black schools such as Grambling, Texas Southern, Florida A&M etc., continue to pack them in. A crowd of 50,000 showed up to watch the annual Bayou Classic between Grambling and Southern two weeks ago and officials report that this was the smallest crowd ever to watch the annual game.

This annual classic, which was

won by Coach Otis Washington's souped up Southern University Jaguars 50-20, picked up the Bayou Classic name in 1974 when 76,753 packed the Tulane Stadium, which has since been razed. After that they moved the classic into the spacious Superdome in the mid-'70s drawing 73,188, but the present Superdome record of 76,188 was established in 1976. Now, anyone knowing anything about publicity will tell you that these figures are not too shabby.

Bennie Thomas, SID, of Southern reports that the 1980 Bayou Classic drew 75,000.

In the '70s, Coach Eddie Robinson's Grambling State University Tigers established the longest winning streak in the series, by winning nine from 1970 through 1978. Southern snapped the string with a 14-7 victory before 72,000 in 1979. According to these lively attendance figures one can hardly say that the Black colleges are through. They Bayou Classic is a biggie, in fact it's rapidly become the lifeline of the major Black universities, just as the Rose Bowl is to the PAC-10 and arch-rival Big-10. Without its revenue the football program would be in bad shape.

Much like the other Major Bowls the Bayou classic draws immense media coverage but not if you happen to live North of the Mason-Dixon line. Southern's 39-0 win over Grambling in 1939 is the largest win margin in the series.

There has never been a tie in this series, which dates back to 1932. So if any of you are unable to obtain a Rose Bowl ducat and want to witness a spectacular event with all the festivities, then perhaps the Bayou classic is not a bad idea. The half-time show alone would be worth the price of admission.

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