



# Sport Talk

by Ron Sykes, Sports Editor

## Ron's NFL picks

### Cleveland vs. Houston

Cleveland, 3-4, should have little difficulty in disposing of Houston, 1-6. The Browns eked out a 10-4 decision over the Steelers last week and seemingly have found a new leader in second year pro Paul McDonald, ex-USC quarterback. Cleveland by 5 1/2.

### Detroit at Tampa Bay

Detroit, 3-4, now is struggling after getting off to an impressive start. Tampa, behind QB Doug Williams, should prove too much for Lions at Silverdome. Sims appears to be only offensive threat in Detroit's arsenal. Passing game has suffered lately, putting the full load on Sims' broad shoulders.

Strong Tampa defense should allow Bucs to win by 4 1/2.

### New England at Pittsburgh

Both teams have identical 4-3 records. New England's quarterbacking is still a question mark. Bradshaw hasn't regained early season touch. Steelers haven't showed much consistency on offense. Should be noted that usually dependable receivers are now dropping easy passes. However, after losing 10-9 to Cleveland last week, Steelers should rebound to beat Patriots.

Steelers by 6.

### New York Giants vs. St. Louis

Giants are 3-4 and still in the race for playoff tournament, while 4-3 Cardinals now appear to be in tournament. Cardinals downed the Bears 10-7 in the snow and sleet of Chicago's Soldier Field. St. Louis QB Neil Lomax was replaced by the veteran Jim Hart in the fourth quarter. Again Hart got the job done leading the Birds on a late drive that produced a 48-yard field goal by Neil O'Donoghue. Giants must get more passing yardage to win. New York defense is

sturdy, but cannot win putting less than 20 points on scoreboard. Take St. Louis by 2.

### San Francisco at Kansas City

Both teams are going nowhere this season. San Francisco, last year's Super Bowl champs, are 2-5, as are the Chiefs. Kansas City rushing game appears strong. KC amassed 198 yards rushing on just 33 tries in their 37-16 win over Denver last week.

Denver's Steve DeBerg was held to just 146 yards in the air.

S.F.'s reliable secondary have been sternly tested because of a sorry pass rush. Young 49er secondary is still the best, but team needs to put more pressure on opposing QB to be effective. Take Chiefs at home by 6.

### Cincinnati at Seattle

Bengals, after taking a tough 50-34 loss from Chargers, should handle Seattle, a 16-0 loser last week to New England, with ease.

Seattle, 3-4, could possibly make playoffs. Interior Coach Mike McCormick has seemingly worked a miracle with usually hapless Seahawks.

Bengals by 11.

### Washington at New Orleans

Redskins are for real. New Orleans will suffer if Kenny Stabler is not available for duty Sunday.

Kenny was hurt in 21-7 loss to Dallas. A Washington win will put Redskins in playoffs. Take Redskins by 10.

### San Diego at Baltimore

Ordinarily a team coming off a Monday night game would have trouble playing the following Sunday. Not this time. Baltimore has only managed one time in eight years.

San Diego in a cake walk. Dan Fouts alone is too much for Colts.

### L.A. Rams vs. Chicago

Rams (2-5) and Bears (1-6) is the crummy game of the week. Pick 'em.

### Raiders at Denver

Hope for snow and cold is Denver's only chance. Raiders (6-1) is

led with Dallas and Washington for best record in NFL. Raiders by 9.

### Dallas at Philadelphia

Cowboys (6-1) will simply outman (2-5) Eagles. Ron Jaworski will need a big day just to keep it close. Cowboys by 10.



NEW YORK CITY (December, 1982)—Sam Belnavis (L.), Miller Brewing Company's manager of sports promotion, congratulates 1982 Heisman Trophy winner Herschel Walker at a reception sponsored by Miller for former Heisman recipients and the media. Walker, a junior running back from the University of Georgia, easily outdistanced Stanford quarterback John Elway and Southern Methodist running back Eric Dickerson to win college football's highest individual honor.

# Inman: 'I told you so'

by Joe White

I can imagine seeing Stu Inman, General Manager of the Portland Trailblazers, sitting in his office and saying "I told you so," to all the skeptics who thought the Blazers were in serious trouble earlier this

year.

Inman said he wasn't really thinking about saying that because he knows the team hasn't arrived yet. The Blazers are looking more like a basketball team as of late though. They are currently on a six-game winning streak and have won 14 out

of the last 20 games.

The man who doubles as Portland's director of player personnel still has guarded optimism about the team. "I expect some serious ups and downs the rest of the season," Inman said.

Lately it has been all up for the Blazers. Two of the wins during the streak came against Phoenix and Los Angeles. What is more impressive is that the team came from behind to win both games. Inman said, "I was very impressed at being down 10 to Phoenix and turning around and winning it." A similar situation happened against L.A., the Blazers were losing by seven but pulled out a 107-103 victory.

Inman looks at the team with more of a long-term plan. "It could be a very special team in a year or so," he said. Right now he is pleased with the work ethic of the team and the character being shown.

"I think we may be very competitive with most of these teams by the end of the year," Inman said.

What he is doing is not promising the playoffs or anything else actually. What the Blazers are doing is regaining the confidence that seemed to vanish at the season's start.

One player who was pressured a great deal at the year's beginning was Darnell Valentine but he has settled down to add not only strong defense but some offensive punch at times. Inman, about Valentine, said, "I think he's playing awfully well."

Valentine was one of three Blazers that Inman gave high marks on a standard grading scale. The point guard, Jim Paxson and Calvin Natt all received A-minuses from Inman (he doesn't give A-pluses because of his teaching background).

Valentine has had to fight an uphill battle to make that grade while Paxson and Natt have been playing on that level all year long.

Three of the newest acquisitions on the team received a solid B from Inman. Wayne Cooper and Kenny

Carr earned the B for their rebounding. Ever since Cooper became the starting center and Carr the first man off the bench, both have increased their rebound totals. Lever was influential in the Phoenix win and seems more confident in his ability on the court.

The two most disappointing grades go to Mychal Thompson and Jeff Lamp. Thompson looks like he may improve on his C mark. He pulled down 15 rebounds against the Lakers and seems to like his power forward position more than center. Lamp hasn't seen the hardwood for a while and poor shooting when he has earned him a grade of C-minus.

Jeff Judkins got an incomplete because he just returned from the injured list. Linton Townes and Pete Verhoven haven't seen enough playing time to be evaluated yet, Inman said.

The team as a whole was on its way to flunking out after a 1-5 start but since then have improved to 15-11. That is good enough for third place in the Pacific Division and a grade of B. No one expected them to be in third place come Christmas but the team is playing better. Inman said, "I think we're getting a little more familiar with each other."

Should everyone on the team continue to improve to the point projected, this team will make the playoffs. The only thing they have to remember is that after Tuesday night's game against Seattle there are 55 more games. A long season still and discipline is needed to keep the playoff fever burning.

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## Shriners host children

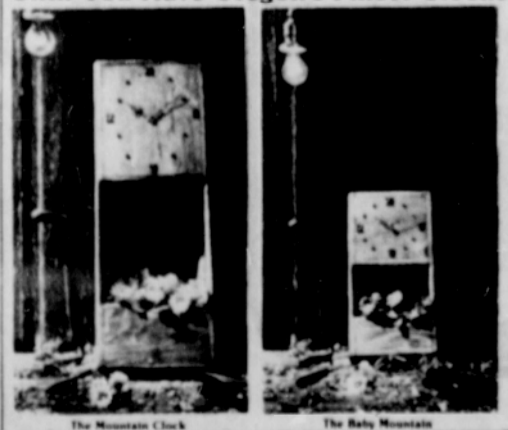
Nobles of Mina Temple No. 68, Prince Hall Shriners, and Daughters of Isis Court No. 142 gave their annual children's Christmas Party, Saturday, December 18th, at the Masonic Temple. The children enjoyed goodies, hot dogs, and games and Santa (Noble William Haygood) presented each child with a gift and a Christmas stocking. The Isiserettes, the youth group of Mina

Court, were Santa's helpers.

Dr. Booker T. Lewis, a local dentist and also a Shriner, gave free dental inspections.

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