

Sport Talk

by Ron Sykes,
Sports Editor

Oregon State Coach Ralph Miller took time out five weeks ago to assess his team and situation. And the results of his changes are devastating. Ralph admitted that he had made a mistake on his judgement of talent. He didn't make excuses for his poor 1-4 start, but made changes.

And the changes that were made in tiny Corvallis hit like an earthquake in mighty Los Angeles. After suffering a humiliating 99-77 defeat to UCLA back in January, and following that with a 65-56 loss at the hands of U.S.C., which was the first loss to the Trojans in 11 outings, Miller made the change. He simply went back to what had made his program... speed.

Darryl Flowers, who was recently honored as Wisconsin's top prep athlete of the year, was inserted into the lineup and will soon more than fill the shoes of the now departed Lester Conner.

With OSU on a five game win streak and the Bruins finally losing one, the Pac-10 is now going to be a dog fight. U.C.A. not only lost a game Saturday afternoon, but even more costly they may have lost the big Stuart Gray, their seven-foot center for the year.

Gray went down during the first half and after being examined Sunday in L.A. it was learned he had a slight strain of a medial collateral ligament. That injury along with the shoulder separation suffer by Kenny Fields, should pose serious problems to the Bruins. UCLA is a talented bunch and is still odds-on favorites to dethrone OSU. But, now the likes of USC, OSU and Washington State are in a battle to see who will emerge as runners up and claim that all-important NCAA selection, which will undoubtedly go to whomever finished second. Right now USC stands 7-2 in conference play and must defeat red-hot OSU on the road and still face the Bruins twice more. Their chances are good. Washington State is third with a good 7-3 mark, but like the Bruins, WSU lost its leading scorer when 6-9 forward Guy Williams went down against Oregon. Many fans thought the Pac-10 would be another OSU-UCLA battle; then George Ravelings' Cougars served notice that they were a team to be reckoned with. The Cougars were 6-0 before losing a heart-breaker to UCLA down at Pauley Pavilion.

The situation now looks good for the Beavers. After USC at home, they must meet WSU at Bohler. If they should survive Raveling, and they should, then I would expect them to finish second to the Bruins and enter the NCAA. The Beavers are a very fine team and will get a post season bid, either NCAA or NIT.

Don Curry won the WBA welterweight title Sunday evening by out-pointing Korea's Hwan. Curry, weighing in at 146 1/2 pounds, won a gruelling 15-round decision over the wild swinging Hwan.

Hwan, 21, is the welterweight king of the Orient. He proved in this championship fight that what he lacked in skill and experience he made up for in heart. The smaller Korean at 5-6 gave away 5 inches in height and 8 inches in reach to the taller American. Hwan's fight plan was to bull his way inside and bang away at his opponent's body. Curry got off to a fast start winning rounds on through three on good jabs that kept the shorter Kor-

ean off balance. Curry strung his opponent repeatedly but could not put the game Korean down. Hwan came on strong in the fifth. He chased Curry around the ring and delivered some strong left hooks to the head. However, this fight was all Curry's, who was fighting in his home town of San Antonio. Curry opened round seven as though he was trying to end it all. With just seconds gone he caught Hwan with a straight right hand that hurt. After missing a left hook, Curry again caught Hwan with a right that drove the Korean to the ropes. Curry moved in with a combination to the body. He then moved in to throw his right, but walked instead into Hwan's solid right hand that sent the champion down for the first time in his professional career. Curry, whom Sugar Ray Leonard picked as his successor, was visibly shaken by that right and immediately used all the 20-foot ring to stay away from the on-rushing Hwan. Curry's clever boxing enabled him to win the latter rounds and caused much frustration on the part of the Korean.

By beating Hwan, Curry became the WBA Welterweight King. Marty McCrory is expected to win the WBC title and hopefully the whole welter picture will be settled soon. McCrory vs Curry should prove to be an interesting fight.

Remember all the controversy that surrounded the 1968 Mexico-City Olympics? How U.S. sprinters Tommy Smith and John Carlos were banished from the Olympic Village after they stood on the victory stand with their clenched fists held high? Remember how the Africans dominated the distance events? Some said the thin air of Mexico City gave the altitude-trained Africans an unfair advantage. Remember that it was Mexico City where Bob Beamon made his historic leap in the long jump? Beamon sailed out over 29 feet. And that done when no one had ever landed 28 feet before.

Even more remarkable was the 9.95 hundred meters time posted by Henry Hines, a record that has stood for some 15 years. Well, since nobody was close Mr. Hines is now out of retirement and in hot pursuit of his record. Well, maybe not hot but is once again running.

Hines was entered in the Foot Locker meet, but was disqualified after two false starts. Another on the comeback trail is an ex-400 meter Olympic star, Lee Evans.

Evans, 37, is trying a comeback in the 800 meters. While we wish these ex-champions the best one has to realistically think that there's no chance in the sprints for older athletes. They would have a far greater chance in the distance events where conditioning and strength play such a huge role. The sprints are usually for the young.

Philadelphia 76er Julius Erving walked away with the MVP award in Sunday's NBA All-Star Classic. But had the fans been able to vote singer Marvin Gaye would have easily won. Gaye gave a stirring and soulful rendition of the national anthem that set the fabulous forum on their heels, and Francis Scott Key shaking in his grave.

The East, behind "J's" 25 points, were awesome. The final score read 132-123 but this game was probably the most exciting ever. Who said all-star games were dull?

A child shall lead them...

Grant's Generals pulled a stunning upset in PIL play Friday night when they downed the Benson Techmen 85-79.

Playing like a man possessed, Tony Ross, a 6-1 freshman, came off the Grant bench and did everything but walk on water.

Ross, playing in only his fifth varsity game, led the Generals with 20 points.

Just who is this mere lad with so much talent? Tony is the little brother of General senior guard Eric Ross and the son of Ethel and Norman. Until last month he was terrorizing the PIL.

During his brief stay with the Frosh squad Tony was averaging over 20 points per game.

Ross had toiled in virtual obscurity on the varsity until coach John Stilwell called his number after just three minutes had expired in the first quarter.

Young Ross entered the contest and immediately canned a 20-ft. jumper from the top of the key.

After gaining his confidence Tony hit four straight bombs from the 18-foot range.



TONY ROSS

Tony Ross appears to be a new star on the horizon. At 6-1 he should grow another three inches by his senior year. He is cool, confident and can shoot the eyes out of the basket.

"He is just a great shooter," beamed Stilwell.

Ross had 20 points on 9 of 14 shooting. Kudos to the Freshman star from Grant High.

INTERESTING FACTS



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