Sport Talk

by Ron Sykes
Sports Editor

BRYCE OGLESBY
Fullback

After watching the L.A. Raiders destroy Miami 27-14 last Monday night, two things became evident. The Raiders are the NFL's best team and Marcus Allen the most effective runner. Allen is seemingly unstoppable; he accelerates quickly and can cut on a dime. After one full season in the NFL, no matter that it was abbreviated, the quick young man from USC has emerged as a runner.

Marcus is a force. In nine games last year, he rushed for 697 yards, scored 14 touchdowns and established himself as a pass receiver. Yes, Marcus is a player for all reasons.

The 6-2, 205 lb. ex-Trojan is so durable and seemingly never tires.

And what a weekend they had up north. Seattle fans saw their Huskies defeat a good Michigan team 25-24 on Saturday, and then thrilled to a 37-34 Seahawk victory on Sunday.

WSU brings on new QB

Washington State coach Jim Walden announced last week that he was benching senior quarterback Ricky Turner in favor of sophomore Mark Rypieu.

It's needless to say that Turner was upset. And understandably so.

Ricky Turner has been, and still is a very productive QB. He almost pulled off a big upset the previous week as he rallied his team against powerful Michigan. "I'm concerned about our offense," Walden said, "and that's why I'm making the change."

Well, he should be having nightmares now...In a stunning 45-6 loss to Arizona last Saturday, the Cougars weren't able to score one touchdown. Mark Rypieu is the celebrated prep sensation out of Spokane.

He was a blue chipper who was recruited by some 100 colleges, including Notre Dame, USC, UCLA and Oklahoma.

He reportedly chose WSU after some strong pressure from local fans.

The same fans applied pressure on Walden for the young man to start. Walden seemingly succumbed to those same wishes in making his decision.

Turner deserved better. The question now is what this will do to future recruiting of Black athletes? The word will surely spread, because Turner wasn't benched for his performance.

Oregon State football

The OSU Beavers are playing in Colorado this weekend and they should win. At least coach Joe Avezzano and star running back Bryce Oglesby think so. But doesn't Joe always believe. The Colorado Buffalos are 1-1, the same as the Beavers.

But it should be noted that there's only one Portland State University around to be beaten. "We're playing Colorado of the powerful Big Eight Conference," stated head coach Avezzano. "And to beat a team from this conference would mean something to our program."

Now, wait a minute, Joe. Is it really the conference, or the team? The PAC-10 is a powerful conference, but I don't suppose many coaches turn back over flips after beating Oregon or Oregon State.

Is Nebraska for real?

Just how good is Nebraska? They've certainly raised more than a few eyebrows after posting three consecutive very impressive wins.

Last Saturday the Cornhuskers plowed over Minnesota 84-13. And that is awesome. In three games Turner Gill and crew have averaged 61 points. They say games are won from the skill positions, right? Well, Nebraska has three players that are considered legitimate Heisman Trophy contenders.

It's quite chilling to have the best quarterback in the nation handing off to the best running back in the nation, or throwing to the best receiver in the nation. Brother, that is some kind of talent, and all on one team.

Knox...knocking on the door

September 26, 1983 was the beginning of a new era for the Seattle Seahawks. That was the day Chuck Knox was hired as head coach. And what a difference it has made to the Seahawk franchise, and what a difference a coach can make.

With Knox at the helm, the Seahawks have gone from buffoons to contenders. Under Jack Petera, the Seahawks had the infamous reputation for doing the zany.

Remember the days when Seattle was expected to do the unexpected, and they did. More than once on fourth and two, deep in their own territory, the Seahawks would line up and go for it, rather than punt.

Oft times leaving themselves in a big hole when they failed to make the yardage. Also, who can forget those famous fake punts, the play designed to have the place kicker involved in running pass routes. Little Efrem Herrera, who never played football in his native Mexico, and was only involved because he could kick, running through the middle of the line as a pass receiver. And who can forget all that wild running about by quarterback Jim Zorn? Well, if you can't remember, too bad. Because those days are gone. The Hawks are serious and good. Knox has 10 years of head coaching, and boy does he bring success.

His winning percentage of .636 ranks third among active head coaches behind only Miami's Don Shula (.708) and Don Coryell (.640).

Knox is a stern technician. He is known as a motivator, but most of all a great assessor of talent.

His first and foremost need was to establish a good running game. He huddled with management to secure a deal that would enable him to draft high.

This accomplished, he chose Curt Warner, 6-1, 205 lb. running back out of Penn State. And, oh how Warner has helped. With his 106 yards against San Diego, Warner became the first running back in Seahawk history to have back to back games of 100 yards or more.

To further enhance his running game, Knox acquired the services of offensive guard Reggie MacKensie.

MacKensie, 6-5, 254 lbs., is a former all-pro performer. He gained fame during O.J. Simpson's record-breaking days in Buffalo.

For his efforts Knox has twice been named NFL Coach of the Year.

He was named in 1973 and again in 1980. Knox-coached teams have won 6 divisional championships.

Although it's not likely he will achieve a divisional crown in his first season at Seattle, it is highly likely that he will be a man in contention very soon.

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