



Metro/Sports

#1 Fla. St 46, #2 Va. Tech 29

ASSOCIATED PRESS

No. 1 at the start, No. 1 at the finish. Florida State is the perfect national champion.

Led by the sizzling Peter Warrick and the steady Chris Weinke, the Seminoles held off Virginia Tech for a 46-29 victory Tuesday night in the Sugar Bowl. The Hokies' freshman quarterback, Michael Vick, played an electrifying game of catch-me-if-you-can, but it wasn't enough.

Warrick thrilled a Superdome crowd with a record 20-point game - he caught touchdown passes of 64 and 43 yards, returned a punt 59 yards for a score and snagged a 2-point conversion pass from Weinke. The 27-year-old Weinke, playing

perhaps the final game of his college career, completed 20 of 34 passes for 329 yards and four TDs - two to Warrick and two to Ron Dugans. Warrick finished with six catches for 163 yards in the highest-scoring Sugar Bowl in history.

Vick threw for 225 yards and one TD and ran for 97 yards and a score. Florida State (12-0) was certain to become the first team to go wire-to-wire in The Associated Press' poll since the preseason ratings began in 1950. The final AP poll will be released early Wednesday to confirm the obvious.

The Seminoles were automatically crowned national champs in the USA Today-ESPN coaches' poll under the Bowl Championship Series format.

Packers, Pats, Jets Lose Coaches

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bill Parcells stepped down on his own terms, Ray Rhodes and Pete Carroll were pushed aside and Mike Ditka awaited his fate as the NFL's also-rans started planning for next season.

Parcells resigned as coach of the New York Jets on Monday, while Rhodes was fired after only one season in Green Bay, and Carroll after three years in New England.

"This job has turned into a 365 day a year job and it's difficult, because I've been doing it for 15 years in this

league and I think it is time," Parcells said.

"I read a little message to the players and I told them you can't fool yourself. ... I demanded a lot from the players in terms of commitment, and they have a right to expect the same from me. And at this point in time, I just don't feel like I could give it the way that I know it has to be given to be successful."

Parcells, 58, who took the New York Giants to two Super Bowl crowns and the Patriots to an AFC title before joining the Jets in 1997, stepped into the front office. Bill Belichick, who was Parcells' defensive coordinator for 14 seasons and was 37-45 in five seasons as Cleveland's coach, takes over.

"Bill will be making the football decisions," said Parcells, whose career record is 149-106-1.

The Patriots attempted to contact Belichick on Monday about replacing Carroll. But because Parcells told Jets president Steve Gutman after Sunday's 19-9 victory over Seattle that he was resigning, Belichick already was the Jets' head coach Monday, based on a contract signed in '97 and updated last January. Belichick received a \$1 million bonus at that time.

The injury-plagued Jets rallied from a 1-6 start to finish 8-8.

"If we hadn't finished the way we had, I think I probably would have

(Please see 'Coaches' page 3)

PORTLAND 114, TORONTO 90

Associated Press

Damon Stoudamire made his return to Toronto count, scoring 22 points in three quarters as the Portland Trail Blazers remained hot, cruising to a 114-90 blowout of the Raptors.

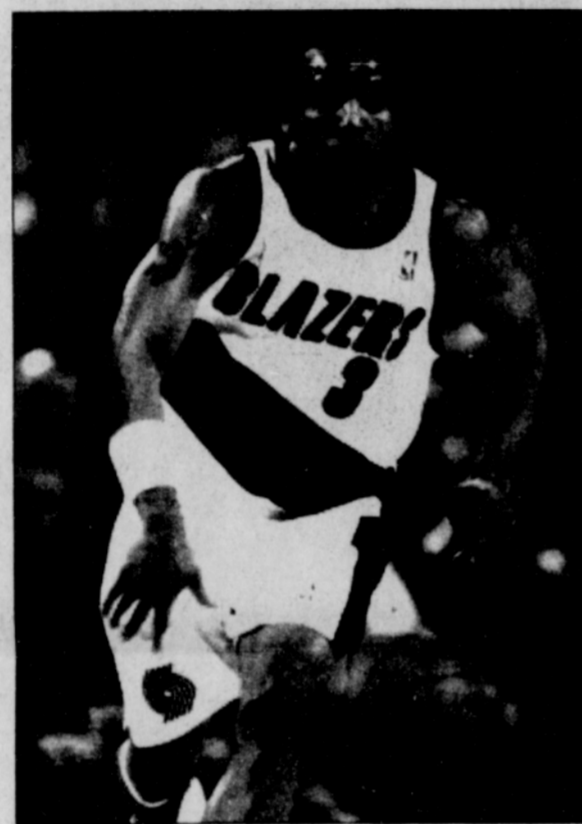
Stoudamire was selected seventh overall by Toronto in the 1995 draft. He was the 1996 NBA Rookie of the Year and averaged over 19 points per game during two-plus seasons with the Raptors before being traded to Portland in a five-player deal in February 1998.

Although his playing time and numbers have decreased since joining Portland's balanced roster, Stoudamire looked every bit the scorer tonight in leading the Trail Blazers to their sixth straight win.

He made 7-of-11 shots, was 2-of-2 from 3-point range, hit all six of his free throws and had eight points in the third quarter when the Blazers blew open the game, outscoring the Raptors, 28-16. Stoudamire fell just two points of his season high in scoring despite playing just 29 minutes. "We've been winning, but we haven't been playing well," said Stoudamire. "Tonight was good for us. We've got to keep building on this game. I'm wanted to come out and attack right away. Toronto is a solid ballclub. They are a tough team and we caught them when they were down. We have to keep taking our game to another level."

Stoudamire did not receive a friendly welcome from fans at the Air Canada Centre as they booed him mercilessly during opening warmups and introductions. He even drew a mock cheer when he was fouled hard in the lane in the

fourth quarter and was slow getting up. But the 5-10 point guard had the last laugh as Portland handed Toronto its worst loss of the seas



Damon Stoudamire

Tiger Woods Chases legends of golf

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KAPALUA, Hawaii (AP) - Another PGA Tour season begins this week. Or perhaps it should be called the Tiger Tour.

An off-season that lasted only seven weeks, ending on the southern coast of Spain and starting again Thursday on the coast of Maui, only built up the legend that has become Tiger Woods. That can happen when a guy wins four straight tournaments, especially since it was 46 years ago the last time it happened.

Woods will try to make it five in a row in the winners-only Mercedes Championship. Ben Hogan was the last player to win five straight, in either 1953 or 1948. The discrepancy is because the tour didn't count the British Open as an official event in 1953.

Whatever, it seems as though Tiger wins when Tiger plays. He is a big reason the field for the Mercedes Championship is only 30.

At this rate, Woods will topple the most untouchable record in golf, Byron Nelson's 11 consecutive victories, when he puts on the green jacket after winning the Masters in April. Just think. He'll already have matched his eight victories from 1999 and will become the career money leader at age 24.

Anyone else who wants to win will have to go to Europe. Or the Buy.com Tour.

Are you listening, David Duval? Are you ready, Sergio Garcia? Can Ernie Els or Phil Mickelson, first-time fathers last year, hear the message over the cries of their infants? Will Davis Love III and Tom Lehman figure out how to finish tournaments as strong as they start them?

The plot for the first three months of the season is not built around whether Woods will continue to dominate, but rather which players are capable of meeting his challenge.

"It doesn't appear as though he got a lot of pressure from the other golfers late in the year," Jack Nicklaus said. "Nobody got hot at the end of the year - Sergio a little, David early on. But it didn't look like anybody tried to take things over."

"He was playing so well, nobody could surface." Now is the time to find out who will, or who wants to

NBA Standings

WESTERN CONFERENCE													
PACIFIC DIVISION						MIDWEST DIVISION							
W	L	Pct.	GB	L10	Stk.	Home	Away	Conf.	W	L	Pct.	GB	
L.A. Lakers	25	5	.833	-	10-0	W-10	15-2	10-3	16-4	San Antonio	21	10	.677
Portland	23	7	.767	2	8-2	W-5	10-3	13-4	15-4	Utah	19	10	.655
Sacramento	17	10	.630	8 1/2	5-5	W-3	11-2	6-8	12-6	Denver	15	14	.517
Phoenix	18	11	.621	8 1/2	5-5	L-2	14-3	4-8	7-10	Minnesota	13	14	.482
Seattle	18	12	.600	7	4-6	L-5	10-5	8-7	12-7	Houston	10	20	.333
L.A. Clippers	9	20	.300	19 1/2	5-5	L-2	6-8	3-12	5-14	Dallas	9	21	.300
Golden State	6	24	.200	19	2-8	L-6	3-12	3-16	3-16	Vancouver	6	23	.207

EASTERN CONFERENCE													
ATLANTIC DIVISION						CENTRAL DIVISION							
W	L	Pct.	GB	L10	Stk.	Home	Away	Conf.	W	L	Pct.	GB	
Miami	20	9	.690	-	5-5	W-3	11-3	9-6	12-6	Indiana	20	9	.690
New York	18	12	.600	2 1/2	7-3	W-1	9-3	9-9	12-7	Charlotte	18	11	.621
Philadelphia	18	15	.545	4	7-3	W-1	10-6	8-9	13-8	Toronto	17	12	.586
Orlando	15	16	.484	6 1/2	5-5	L-5	6-8	9-8	10-9	Milwaukee	17	14	.548
Boston	13	16	.444	7 1/2	3-7	W-2	11-5	2-8	10-10	Detroit	16	14	.533
New Jersey	12	18	.400	8 1/2	8-2	W-4	10-8	2-10	9-12	Cleveland	12	18	.400
Washington	11	20	.355	10	6-4	W-1	6-9	5-8	7-12	Atlanta	11	18	.379
										Chicago	2	26	.077

NFL Standings

AFC												
West						East						
W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA	Home	Away	AFC	NFC	Div		
x-Seattle	9	7	.0	563	338	298	5-3-0	4-4-0	7-5-0	2-2-0	4-4-0	
Kansas City	9	7	.0	563	390	322	6-2-0	3-5-0	7-5-0	2-2-0	4-4-0	
San Diego	8	8	.0	500	269	316	4-4-0	4-4-0	7-5-0	1-3-0	5-3-0	
Oakland	8	8	.0	500	390	329	5-3-0	3-5-0	5-7-0	3-1-0	3-5-0	
Denver	6	10	.0	375	314	318	3-5-0	3-5-0	4-8-0	2-2-0	4-4-0	

NFC												
West						East						
W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA	Home	Away	NFC	AFC	Div		
x-St. Louis	13	3	.0	813	526	242	8-0-0	5-3-0	10-2-0	3-1-0	8-0-0	
Carolina	8	8	.0	500	421	381	5-3-0	3-5-0	6-6-0	2-2-0	4-4-0	
Atlanta	4	11	.0	267	251	351	3-4-0	1-7-0	4-7-0	0-4-0	3-4-0	
San Fran	4	11	.0	267	266	419	3-5-0	1-6-0	3-8-0	1-3-0	2-5-0	
New Orleans	3	13	.0	188	260	434	3-5-0	0-8-0	3-9-0	0-4-0	2-6-0	

Seattle backs into playoffs

ASSOCIATED PRESS

On the plane ride home, Mike Holmgren broke out the hats and T-shirts proclaiming his players AFC West champions. After a bizarre and fortunate windup to the regular season on Sunday, the Seattle Seahawks came to work Monday and saw a division championship banner hanging on the side of their team headquarters.

It was Seattle's second division title in franchise history. The team is headed to the playoffs for the first time since 1988, ending the NFL's longest playoff drought.

But the players can be forgiven for wishing it happened a little differently. They reached the playoffs because Kansas

City lost to Oakland on a field goal in overtime. Seattle lost its final regular season game 19-9 to the New York Jets. Cornerback Willie Williams, a playoff veteran from his years in Pittsburgh, said the honor was bittersweet. "It feels good to be in the playoffs, but it would be much sweeter if we would have beaten the Jets," he said.

Having an AFC West championship took away some of the sting of the last six weeks, when the Seahawks lost five of six games.

But not all of it. Against the Jets, Seattle's offense didn't score a touchdown, and the defense gave up a career-

(Please see 'Seattle' page 3)

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