

The Fifth Quarter

Sports by Mike Oths

Quick now, who do you think will win the championship of the United States Football League? Too tough? Okay, name five teams in the U.S.F.L. Name Three. One?

Don't feel badly if you failed this quiz. If you're like me, about the most enthusiastic response you can generate for the March-July pro football league is a stifled yawn. Forget for a moment that I resent the U.S.F.L. because it steals headlines from my favorite time of the sports year — baseball's spring training. The U.S.F.L. is just a bad idea. Like electric toothbrushes and power rear-view mirror adjusters, the U.S.F.L. was well-intentioned and a novelty, but it's really unnecessary.

The U.S.F.L. was founded on a basic premise — that Americans love pro football, and that there was a demand for it year-round. The first part of the formula is arguably true, a lot of people enjoy pro football, but even that fact is showing signs of erosion. TV ratings for the N.F.L. were down significantly during the past season. Part of this wane can probably be traced to lingering resentment toward the 1982 N.F.L. strike, but that is not the only explanation. The grand Pete Rozelle "parity" plan can probably take most of the rest of the credit for the slack in interest in the N.F.L. Proliferation of teams with 8-8 records probably does give more teams (and therefore their fans) a shot at glory, but it also creates an aura of mediocrity which makes it hard to get excited about the N.F.L. except in limited cases (Cowboys-Redskins, Raiders-Chargers, etc.).

The other factor which is contributing to the decline of the N.F.L. is the sameness of the teams. With the advent of slick packaging, artificial turf, computerized gameplans and special teams for everything except the waterboys, the whole league starts to blend together.

The second facet of the formula — that there is a year-round demand for pro football — is something of an insult to the average sports fan. The attitude seems to be that all the networks need to do is put "Pro Football" in the TV Guide, and all of us sports-starved TV addicts will dutifully flop down on a beautiful spring day. Granted, there are those fans who will grasp at any straw to watch pro football, but that doesn't include most of us, nor does it create the depth of interest that would permit an expansion team to pay one player (Mike Rozier of Nebraska and the Pittsburgh Maulers) over a million dollars a year.

One person who certainly must be happy with the U.S.F.L. is your neighborhood bookie who can capitalize on sports bettors (baseball is a notoriously bad proposition for bookies). Other than that, however, I don't expect to see too many of us thumbing through the sports page for the rushing leader of the U.S.F.L. But wait, maybe I can name five U.S.F.L. teams. Let's see, there's the Gamblers, the Maulers, the Outlaws, the Nobodys ...

Statewide photo contest announced

Gov. Vic Atiyeh has announced a state-wide photo competition to commemorate Oregon's 125th birthday.

"This is our way of recognizing the creative talents of our amateur and professional photographers as we share the best of Oregon with Oregonians," Atiyeh said in announcing the competition.

The contest, "Oregon, Sharing the Best," will be sponsored by the Tourism Division of the Economic Development Department as part of a larger in-state tourism promotion. The contest began March 1 and will run through May 1. Prizes have been donated from vacation and recreation facilities in Oregon.

Eight contest categories will include both amateur and professional divisions. Contestants may enter any print or slide of Oregon. Entries may be black and white or color. Entry forms are attached to "Oregon: Sharing the Best" posters which have been distributed throughout the state to camera stores, chamber of commerce offices, high schools, colleges and some travel resorts. In Heppner, entry forms are available at the Gazette-Times office. A panel of professional photographers with backgrounds in media, commercial photography and photo

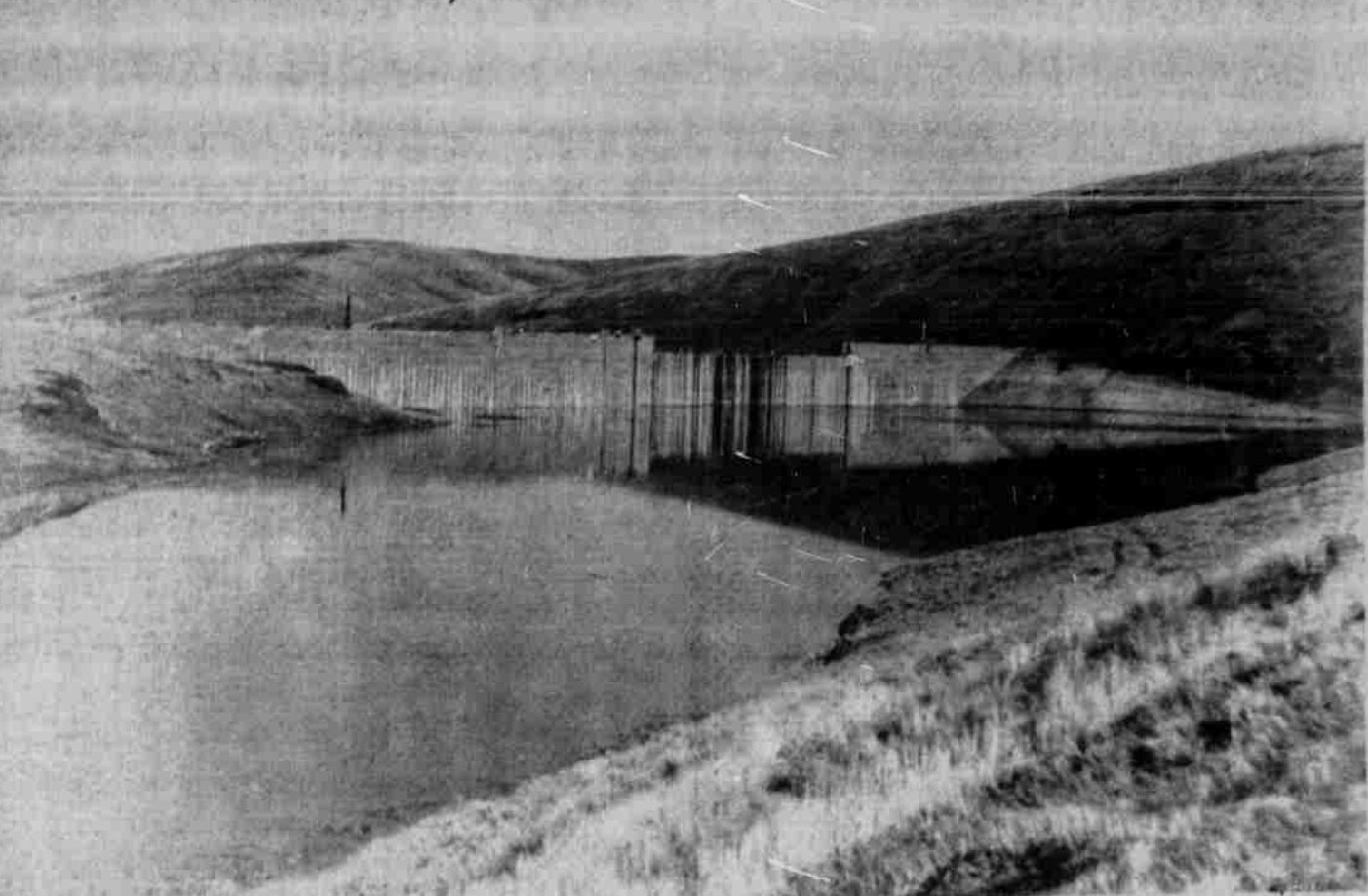
education will select the winners.

The photo competition will also provide special recognition for many of the photographers, according to Shirley Eads, manager of the Tourism Division. Several photographs will be selected for a non-profit Oregon poster series to be produced by the Tourism Division.

All entries will also be considered for use in "The Great Oregon Adventure," a privately produced multi-image slide presentation celebrating Oregon's 125th birthday.

Additional entry forms may be obtained by writing Oregon: Sharing the Best, P.O. Box 13129, Salem, Oregon, 97309.

Willow Creek, lake to be stocked with fish



After a June 13, 1983 chemical spill in Willow Creek, which virtually killed all fish and aquatic insects for about 22 miles from the spill site to Heppner, the creek is now recovering, reports the Umatilla National Forest office in Pendleton. Glen Ward, game biologist for the Oregon De-

partment of Fish and Wildlife in Heppner reports that the creek will be restocked with fish after the water level from spring runoff goes down.

Ward said that Willow Creek Lake will also be stocked soon, after an agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers is finalized. The lake is to be

stocked with fingerling trout and possibly some legal size trout if they are available, he said. If the water quality goes down, should the temperature of the water begin to become warmer and algae begin to grow, warm water fish such as bass, crappie and possibly catfish may be added, the biologist stated.

SCHOOL LUNCH MENU

Heppner Elementary School

Thursday, Mar 8 - pocket tacos and milk.

Friday, Mar. 9 - no school for students; teachers' in-service day.

Monday, Mar. 12 - beans and franks, carrot coins, fruit, bread, milk and salad bar.

Tuesday, Mar. 13 - hamburger steak, potatoes and gravy, relish plate, crackers, oranges and milk.

Wednesday, Mar. 14 - hot dinner sandwich, macaroni salad, fresh fruit, graham cracker and milk.

Heppner High School

Thursday, Mar. 8 - spaghetti, garlic bread, vegetable salad, peaches and milk or salad bar.

Friday, Mar. 9 - cook's choice.

Monday, Mar. 12 - hot dogs, corn, vegetable sticks, fruit crisp and milk.

Tuesday, Mar. 13 - ravioli, bread and butter, choice of vegetable, gelatin and milk or salad bar.

Wednesday, Mar. 14 - turkey and noodles, green beans, bread, dessert and milk or salad bar.

IHS students available for hire March 16

The lone High School Student Body will be holding a workday on March 16 to raise funds for student body projects. Students will be contracting with people in the community and surrounding area to work for six hours that day at a minimum rate of \$3 per hour.

Those students who secure contracts will be excused from regular classes. All other students will be expected to attend school as usual, said a school spokesperson.

People interested in hiring a student for that day should contact the high school office, 422-7131.

Airman promoted

Joseph D. Struthers, son of Maynard and Edna Struthers of Heppner, has been promoted in the U.S. Air Force to the rank of airman first class. Struthers is a maintenance systems analyst at Williams

Air Force Base, Ariz., with the 82nd Field Maintenance Squadron.

His wife, Sarah, is the daughter of Carl and Gerry Martin, also of Heppner.

The airman is a 1982 graduate of Heppner High School.



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Page 4

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