

LSU-Alabama Match Starts Bowl-Deciding Showdowns

The showdown period for the nation's Top Ten college football teams begins this week with second-ranked Alabama playing sixth-ranked Louisiana State at Birmingham.

This is the first of four games during the next two weeks which not only will determine the prime bowl pairings but also will undoubtedly cement spots in The Associated Press rankings.

Next week Southern California defends its No. 1 rating against an old and formidable rival, UCLA, ranked No. 8, and the following week there are two more games with a definite bearing on final determination of the national championship.

Nebraska's awesome Cornhuskers, ranked No. 3 and the country's highest scoring machine,

meets tough Oklahoma, No. 7, in their traditional Thanksgiving Day rivalry while on Nov. 25—the following Saturday—the Big Ten's two unbeaten powers, Michigan and Ohio State, clash at Columbus in the battle of unbeaten powers. Michigan is No. 4 and Ohio State is No. 5 in the latest AP ratings.

This week's poll produced no change among the leading 13 teams because all of them came through the firing last week without damage.

Southern California, winner over Washington State 44-3, maintained its top position, gaining 40 of the 49 first place votes from a panel of sports writers and broadcasters and accumulating 978 points.

Alabama stayed at No. 2, beat-

ing Mississippi State 58-14, but felt the growing pressure of Nebraska, which impressed a national television audience with a 33-10 triumph over Colorado.

Nebraska received five first place votes, Alabama 3, Ohio State and Michigan 1 each.

The Top Ten, with first-place votes in parentheses, season records and total points. Points tabulated on basis of 20-18-14-etc.

1. So. Calif (40).....	9-0	978
2. Alabama (3).....	8-0	821
3. Nebraska (5).....	7-1	797
4. Michigan (1).....	8-0	708
5. Ohio St. (1).....	7-0	600
6. La. St.	7-0	524
7. Okla.	6-1	485
8. UCLA	8-1	381
9. Texas	6-1	308
10. Penn. St.	7-1	304

Press Conference Report

Bellard Praises Aggs After Win

By BILL HENRY
Battalion Sports Editor

Coach Emory Bellard's weekly press conference Tuesday went much smoother after the Aggies 10-7 win over Arkansas than it had the past seven weeks. Bellard was full of praise for everyone.

"You can credit the defensive line for the six intercepted Ferguson passes," he said. "They applied steady pressure even though they didn't get to him very much."

"And then again you can't say enough about the secondary. They got to their receivers early and threw the timing off. Some of those interceptions were due to darn fine coverage."

Though the offense did little to blow the game open on the chances it had, Bellard had kind words also.

"Some individuals did a much better job blocking than in past games," he said. "We did some basic things that we hadn't been doing in the line. Ricky Seeker improved, Mike Park did a better job as did the other members of that group."

Freshman Dennis Smelser got his first starting assignment against Arkansas and Bellard seemed pleased with the performance of his new right guard.

"Dennis did pretty well," he said. "He's gonna be a darn fine football player here as soon as he gets some experience. He's got the talent and the desire."

The effects of winning, which the Aggies have not had the pleasure of feeling since Sept. 9, were much in evidence.

"There is no question about a better attitude by the players," he said. "There's really no particular differences now than before, but that is due to us having a great attitude all year long. Winning puts a little satisfaction in all of us."

"SMU does a multiple of things offensively," he said. "They have a lot of threats and pose a lot of problems for a defense. They have two fine split receivers and two tremendous running backs."

"They've got a fine defensive unit also, that's for sure. They

were leading the nation in rushing defense a couple of weeks ago. They're aggressive, big, active and have a very experienced secondary. They are hard to move the football against."

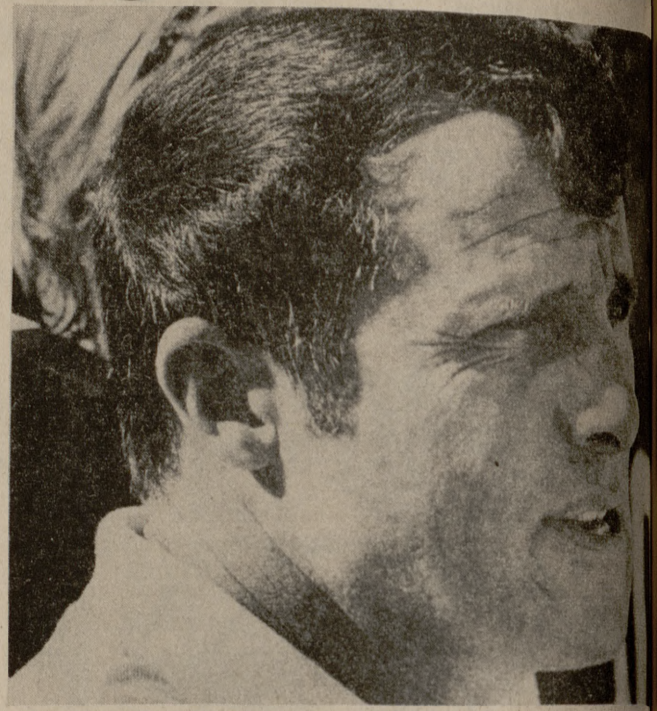
Injuries are again big news in the Aggie camp. Max Bird, who suffered a sprained knee Saturday, is doubtful for Saturday's game, but Bellard says that, "if anyone could play after an injury like that it'd be Max, he's a competitor."

Bubba Bean, who had a slight shoulder separation Saturday, is recovering satisfactorily and will probably play against SMU.

Mark Green, injured against TCU, is still out, but is responding to treatment.

"Mark is getting better," he said. "Odds are a lot better now than before on his being able to play again this season."

Sophomore Don Long will replace Bird at his left defensive position if he is unable to play. Replacing Bean at left half will be freshman Ronnie Hubby who spelled Bean last week after the second quarter injury. Skip Walker has replaced Green at right half for the past two weeks.



AGGIE HEAD COACH EMORY BELLARD seems to be in deep concentration during Saturday's game against Arkansas. After the game, it was all smiles for him as he and his team chalked up their first Southwest Conference victory of the year, 10-7. The Aggies return league action this Saturday in Dallas against SMU. (Photo by Steve Ueckert)

Johnny Bench Named MVP In National League Race

By WILL GRIMSLEY
Associated Press Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP)—Johnny Bench proved both to himself and to baseball that he could come back and he reaped his reward Tuesday by being named the 1972 Most Valuable Player in the National League.

It marked the second time in three years that the honor had fallen upon the 24-year-old catcher of the Cincinnati Reds who, after a spectacular 1970 season which won him the MVP, went into an abysmal .238 hitting slump in 1971.

"I got a little out of shape on the banquet circuit," Bench said

of his 1971 collapse. "I fell behind in my hitting and pressed too much. I kept pressing but still couldn't catch up."

"I said to myself then: 'Maybe I'll never have another good season.'"

The rugged, hard-hitting catcher from Binger, Okla., was a strong winner of the MVP award this year, getting 11 first place votes from the 24-man panel of the Baseball Writers Association—two from each league city—and was rated no lower than fourth on any ballot.

Bench received a total of 263 points—52 more than the runner-up in the voting, Billy Wil-

liams of the Chicago Cubs, got 211. Willie Stargell of Pittsburgh was third with 203 points and Joe Morgan, a Bench teammate with the Reds, was fourth with 197. Steve Carlton of Philadelphia Phillies, winner of the Cy Young Award in year's top NL pitcher, came fifth with 124 points.

The electors named 10 more points were awarded on a 144 etc. ratio.

Bench batted .270 and led league in home runs, 40, and runs batted in, 125. He became the sixth player in the league history to be a repeat MVP.

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