

Who's going Where?

Bowl groups confuse scene

Commentary

By PAT EDMONDSON
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With one and a half weeks remaining in the regular football schedule, the bowls have landed most of their respective pairings for the holiday season. The question now is whether the American audience will want to view the mediocre match-ups. With a few adjustments

being made the last couple of days, the major bowl situation now looks like this:

1. The Cotton Bowl will match the winner of the Southwest Conference, either Texas, Texas A&M, or Arkansas, versus the Southeastern Conference Georgia Bulldogs.
2. The Crimson Tide of Alabama will play Joe Paterno's Penn State Nittany Lions in the Sugar Bowl on New Year's Eve in New Orleans.

3. The Rose Bowl will feature the winner of the Ohio State-Michigan showdown in Ann Arbor this Saturday against the Pacific Eight champion: either California, Stanford, or UCLA. That winner won't be decided until after the classic rivalry between USC-UCLA on Nov. 28.

4. The winner of the Oklahoma-Nebraska game this weekend will represent the Big Eight in the Orange Bowl and will face the loser of the Big Ten battle between Ohio State and Michigan.

In analyzing the four major bowls, some priorities must be taken into consideration:

1. The Cotton Bowl books the Southwest Conference champion against a highly ranked team. Recent schools participating have been Georgia, Alabama, Penn State, Notre Dame, and Nebraska. This year, as in previous years, it appeared that the bowl committee would choose an opponent falling along these lines.

2. The Sugar Bowl customarily invites teams of national prominence, usually those which not involve a champion of a certain conference. The Sugar Bowl two years ago featured Alabama versus Notre Dame for the national championship.

3. The Big Ten champion and the Pacific Eight champion are both committed to play in the Rose Bowl in Pasadena.

4. The Orange Bowl in recent years has paired two powerhouses in an effort to produce the best contest. This year, however, the Big Eight signed a four year commitment to the bowl. This left one vacant spot for a highly ranked team to fill.

In choosing a prominent team to play the Southwest Conference champion, Cotton Bowl officials originally were interested in either the Big Eight runner-up or the Big Ten runner-up. But the possibility of Texas and Oklahoma meeting in Dallas again wiped the Big Eight runner-up consideration out. (Texas and Oklahoma play during the regular season in the Cotton Bowl each year.)

The likely candidate at that stage then appeared to be the Big Ten runner-up. But the Orange Bowl made it quickly known that it was interested in the Big Ten runner-up, since it would match teams with only one loss. This left Cotton Bowl officials out in the cold, forcing them to consider Notre Dame and South-

ern Cal as likely choices. It was then assumed that they were to book the Fighting Irish providing they were victorious over Pitt last week. But Pitt surprised Dan Devine's crew, pummeling them 34-20, and bowl officials chose unranked Georgia for the New Year's Day affair.

Weeks ago, Coach Bear Bryant of Alabama made it perfectly clear that he wanted his squad to be the first to play in the new Superdome in the Sugar Bowl. Due to his past bowl record (Alabama has not won in a bowl for several years) this was an apparent move to shy away from the Orange Bowl where he would have to face Oklahoma or Nebraska. But Bryant later changed his tune, saying that he would agree to face the Big Eight champion in the Orange Bowl because it would give Alabama and outside shot at the national championship when OU fell short to Kansas. Two weeks ago, Bryant came to terms with Sugar Bowl officials and it was speculated that he might have broken the Nov. 15 contact date. When Bryant realized his team's chances for the national championship had dwindled, he jumped to his original decision to go to the Sugar Bowl.

The possibility of Oklahoma beating Nebraska probably loomed in his mind, and he realized that a meeting with a once-defeated team would leave Alabama in no position to challenge for the national championship.

What few people realize is that Barry Switzer's Oklahoma Sooners were never considered for a spot in the Sugar Bowl. When it was revealed in 1972 that OU had participated in recruiting violations, the school was placed on probation for two years. This meant that they could not appear on television or in a bowl game until Jan. 1, 1976. Since the Sugar Bowl is held on New Year's Eve, it leaves the Sooners ineligible under NCAA rules. Therefore, the only major bowl that OU can play in is the Orange. Because the bowls refused to hold off until after the regular season to bill the teams, Nebraska, too, was left out of the picture since the outcome of their game with Oklahoma could not be determined.

Then Penn State (also selected by Bear Bryant) was chosen to face Alabama in view of their 8-2 record.

There is also an uneasy situation surrounding the Rose Bowl. The bowl will have one of three unranked teams with an unimpressive record facing one of the two biggies in the Big Ten. The match-up seems

unproportionally balanced. Also, the possibility of UCLA meeting Ohio State exists. Ohio State soundly defeated the Bruins earlier in the year. This would be bad for football. Officials would not consider Texas playing Oklahoma for the second time in the same season, but for some reason the same possibility occurs in the Rose Bowl. Where is the line drawn?

Oklahoma, Texas, and Texas A&M will find themselves playing elsewhere in smaller bowls should they not capture their respective conferences. In regard to their records this year, these teams are much too good to settle for smaller bowls. The system of bowl selection at present is very complicated. A change in the near future is undoubtedly in order. A play-off system of some sort has been suggested. At any rate, something should be done soon because various schools of national prominence are being deprived of participating in a major bowl.

Fem cagers open year at SWTSU

The women's basketball team will open its 1975 season tonight when the Aggies meet Southwest Texas State in San Marcos at 8 p.m.

There are five veterans returning from last year's team — Cissy Auclair, Sally Morrisse, Dianne Quita, Cindy Horton, and Dana Callaway. Newcomers are Belinda Brewer, Margaret Byrne, Cindy Gough, Jane Jenkins, Beth Mamaliga, Carol McAllister, Donna Parmer, Eileen Roitsch, and Bonnie Guedin.

Last year's team finished with a 24-9 record and was ranked seventh in the state. Coach Kay Don feels her team can do equally as well this year, if not better.

"The team looks real good at this stage," Don said. "We have more depth than we had last year. My main concern has been the aggressiveness on defense, but I think we're improving."

In preparation for their season opener, the Aggies scrimmaged Tyler Junior College and McLennan Community College last week. In both scrimmages, the women played a total of three halves, with the Aggies winning two in each.

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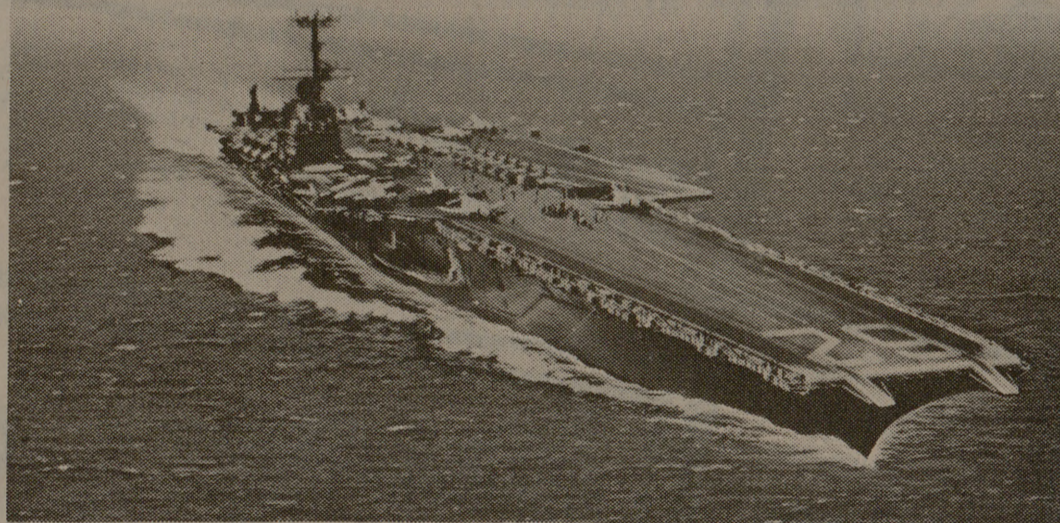
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