

Welcome back O.J.

By PAT EDMONDSON

A few days ago, this column would have read something like this. He's a Hollywood actor, Superstar champion, former Heisman Trophy recipient, ABC side-kick, but most importantly, a professional football player. Orenthal James Simpson is the most incredible human to ever lay hands on a pigskin, but the man must think he is something special.

The Sunday afternoon football fan who glues himself weekly to pro football's most anxious 60 minutes will be denied the spectacular antics which have made the Juice the most highly acclaimed running back since Jim Brown. Buffalo Bill uniform number 32 will hang in the quiet solitude of a Buffalo locker, and for the first time in eight years, will not venture to the famed cities of New York, Miami, Baltimore, etc.

O.J. Simpson does not want to play football in the city of Buffalo, New York. His wife refuses to live there another year and Simpson will not suit up in '76 unless Bill owner Ralph Wilson deals him off to the Los Angeles Rams. The Bills and L.A. have not agreed to terms concerning O.J.'s departure, and a football career is going

to waste.

Why doesn't he formally announce his retirement from pro football? It would keep front office men in Buffalo and L.A. from holding their breaths.

I would not want to play football in Buffalo either, much less live there. But pro football is no Saturday afternoon auction. O.J. is a stud, but he is not free to negotiate with any club in the NFL. A football player in the NFL is bound to the team he is drafted by, and O.J. Simpson is bound to the Buffalo Bills.

Dan Jenkins' satirical view of Larry Csonka in this week's issue of Sports Illustrated may not be far from wrong. Jenkins cites, among other demands, that Zonk had reportedly signed a contract with the New Jersey Dwarfs for four million dollars over a six month spread.

I suppose Simpson figures:

- 1) He's served his time in Buffalo. After all, eight years in Buffalo is enough.
- 2) A personal relationship between the wife and kids could not be maintained with him in Buffalo and the rest of the family in L.A.
- 3) The Bills are contenders, but it looks as though they will never make it into the play-offs.

4) In L.A., he will be closer to his outside activities in the off-season.

5) Buffalo has no choice but to trade him. The Bills need the material and even a few future draft choices would suffice an empty gap in the Bill backfield.

So while O.J. was giving the American public expertise commentary on the men's 4x100 meter relay race at the Olympic Games in Montreal; rookies, veterans, walk-ons, also rans and has been were undergoing the sweat, pain, anguish, and torture of a football training camp.

A deal would come through soon, Simpson hoped, and surely the former Southern Cal dasher would again suit up in the coliseum that brought him fame.

Today, the column continues, following O.J.'s announcement that he was returning to pro football.

Three cheers for the Juice. He signed a three year pact with any other club. Though it is costing Ralph Wilson his right arm and leg to keep O.J. in the backfield Buffalo enthusiasts agree he is worth every penny after viewing his near spectacular performance last Monday night in Buffalo against the Miami Dolphins. Welcome back, O.J.!

Howard haunted Colorado's offense

LUBBOCK, Tex. — Thomas Howard came within a eyelash of going to the University of Colorado. Buy don't remind Eddie Crowder, the director of athletics at the Big Eight school. Not after what Howard did to Colorado Saturday night.

The swift, 6-foot-2, 208-pound Howard mauled running backs and clogged passing lanes in Texas Tech's 24-7 thrashing of the Buffaloes.

It was a defensive show the like of which Tech Coach Steve Sloan had never seen from a linebacker. And it earned Howard The Associated Press National Lineman of the Week award.

Howard intercepted two passes, had 11 solo tackles and made six assists. He stopped two Colorado drives deep in Tech territory and set up two Red Raider scores.

"It's ironic that I played that kind of game against Colorado because I almost went to school there," said the senior from Lubbock. "I really

liked Coach Crowder at the time, but in the end I just wanted to stay home."

Howard ran a 13.7 in the 120-yard hurdles, a national record at the time coming out of Lubbock Dunbar. But he decided to concentrate on football in college. Professional teams such as Dallas, New England and Cleveland already have left their calling cards.

But Howard said "I need to be a little more aggressive. I really like to hit people, but I just need to work on getting there a little faster."

Sloan said "It was the best game I ever saw a linebacker play. If Howard doesn't run over you, he runs you down."

Howard is a quiet-spoken person who drives to the home of his mother and father to relax on game day when Tech is the host team.

"I sit back and relax and just talk to my mom and dad and then I'm ready," said Howard.



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Women's softball team travels to Huntsville

The women's softball team will travel to Huntsville this weekend to compete in the Sam Houston State University Tournament.

The Aggies will start their play Friday against Texas Wesleyan College and Lamar University, with the top two finishers advancing into Saturday's finals.

Besides A&M, other top contenders in the 12 team tournament will be Texas Woman's University, Lamar, and Stephen F. Austin.

The Aggies started their regular season play here last Tuesday night with a doubleheader sweep against Sam Houston State University.


In the opening thriller, the Aggies displayed outstanding defense as they struggled back from a 2-0 deficit to edge out Sam Houston 3-2. Aided by shortstop Cindy Gough's defensive wizardry and Kim Bellamy's consistent pitching, the Ags captured the lead in the sixth inning and held it for the rest of the game.

In the second game the Aggies,

behind more good defense and a strong pitching performance by freshman Michele Alford, shut out Sam Houston 8-0.

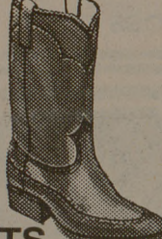
The Aggies, boasting a strong, aggressive team filled with depth, are considered one of the favorites to win the State Championship this year.

The tournament this weekend in Huntsville should give the Ags a first hand look at their opposition, and which teams they should watch out for in the coming weeks.



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