

# Football is Sims' profession

United Press International  
NORMAN, Okla. — Oklahoma Sooners running back Billy Sims, one of the top candidates for the Heisman Trophy, takes more of a pragmatic view of football than many of his teammates do.

To Sims, football is not just a game to be played win or lose — it's his profession. He likes to do other things in his spare time, even if it's just listening to jazz.

"It's just another job," Sims said. "Of course, there's no cash salary in-

involved yet, but it's still just another job."

While football is not exactly a 9-to-5 routine for him, he says preparing for games is hard work, much of it the disagreeable kind.

"I hate practice, in fact, everybody hates practice," Sims said, noting that a day last week was the first one he had had "off" since coming to OU in 1975.

To break the pressures of the game, Sims takes to drag racing and riding horseback at his great-

grandmother's farm in Hooks, Texas. He lives with his great-grandmother during the summer and says he will never really enjoy city living again after life on the farm.

Sims started school in St. Louis, but he says he is glad he left. He also found he preferred running to fighting. While he working a newspaper route for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch he once was an intended robbery victim. He said he held his money and ran, leaving the newspapers behind.

"Maybe that's why I got so fast," Sims said, noting he always preferred to run than fight in the tough St. Louis ghetto.

Even though he dislikes the practices and long hours that cause him to see football as work, he says it's worth it if it pays off. This year, it has.

Sims' meteoric rise to the top ranks of college running backs is somewhat of an anticlimax for Oklahoma fans. His rise to prominence comes two years after the Hooks High School star was among the most heavily recruited athletes in the country, but he failed to show any of his talents in his first two years with Oklahoma.

Sims' first two years were disappointing for many Oklahoma fans, who now often modestly describe him as the best running back in history.

Oklahomans take pride in their football players.

But even Sims admits this was a good year for him — he was finally able to shake off leg injuries that stifled his performance for his first two seasons.

He broke the Big Eight and Oklahoma rushing records for a single season with 1,762 yards, a figure four times as great as his 1977 rushing total. He led the nation in rushing with 163.4 yards per game, averaging 7.8 yards per carry.

Adding to those accomplishments, he scored 20 touchdowns and romped for more than 200 yards in four games this season.

Two factors will be working against Sims in winning the Heisman. First, he is a junior and only five juniors have ever won the award.

Second, Sims fumbled twice against Nebraska in a nationally televised game. The last fumble allowed the Cornhuskers to score a fourth-quarter field goal and knocked Oklahoma out of a No. 1 ranking.

Even though he played well against Oklahoma State the following week, scoring four touchdowns and gaining over 200 yards, the Heisman committee may not be able to forget the Nebraska game.

"I have my bad days and my good ones — I'm human just like everyone else, but when you play football, people seem to forget," Sims said.

The standout yardage figures have brought the modest 6-foot junior some publicity, but Sims sees the attention as another distasteful part of his job.

"Sometimes you get too much publicity," said Sims, who claims he likes to spend much of his time alone "just to think things out."

He says he even goes into hiding sometimes, heading for a friend's house where he cannot easily be found.

Sims may appear ungrateful for the publicity, but he says he is not.

For example, during a 25-minute interview session, television camera crews moved into his spotless dormitory room for a later interview, a local civic club president dropped by to ask Sims for a speaking engagement and the telephone rang six times with various callers, including an Oklahoma student who wanted to know if Sims was related to any of his West Coast relatives.

"I kind of wish the Heisman would be a surprise, without all that publicity," Sims said.

Lineman Greg Roberts has been Sims' roommate and friend since they were freshmen — a room any college coach would not mind moving to his school considering Roberts won the Outland Trophy Sunday naming him the country's outstanding lineman. Sims was also selected as the Walter Camp Football Foundation's 1978 player of the year.



Stamp takes a Little licking

TCU quarterback Steve Stamp gets pressured by Texas A&M linebacker Mike Little late in Saturday's game. Little and the Aggie defense stopped a last-minute drive by Stamp and the Horned Frogs as Texas A&M defeated TCU

15-7. Friday the Aggies travel to Austin to meet the Texas Longhorns in a game that will be nationally televised with an 8 p.m. kickoff. This will be the 86th game in the Texas-Texas A&M series, which the Horns lead 60-20-5.

Battalion photo by Pat

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