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the sports

Sims doesn't like 'religion'

OU fans praise football god

United Press International
KINGS ISLAND, Ohio — University of Oklahoma fans have elevated football to a "religion," are now "spoiled" and expect the Sooners to win all games by gigantic margins, complains Oklahoma star Billy Sims.

Sims, who will be trying to win his second straight Heisman Trophy this coming season, opened a week-long NCAA cross-country collegiate football promotional tour Monday by telling sports reporters at the College Football Hall of Fame that "football is a religion in Oklahoma."

Asked if he felt there was anything wrong with football taking on a "religious" connotation, Sims said, "I do, because from my standpoint, the people in Oklahoma have really become spoiled."

"They expect you to win every time. They expect you to beat the hell out of somebody every time. If we win by one point, it's not good enough. If we fumble, we blow everything."

Sims, whose Big Eight Conference single-season rushing record of 1,762 yards last year helped him win the Heisman Trophy in only his junior year, recalled one time when Sooners fans really blasted him for fumbling.

"It was when I fumbled against Nebraska," he said. "But they forgot the two touchdowns I had scored to keep us in the game."

"For myself," he added, "I don't think I have anything to prove to the fans of Oklahoma. As long as I go out and play to the best of my ability and feel like I gave it my best, I don't care what they think."

If Sims wins the Heisman Trophy again this season, he will join Archie Griffin as the only players ever to win the award twice.

"A lot of people ask me, 'What's your chance of winning the Heisman again?'" said Sims. "I just tell them that last season I was sort of an unknown running back and I really wasn't in the game to win the Heisman Trophy and I'm not going for it

again this year. But if it happens, fine."

"The two things I'm playing for are myself and the team, and also to remain healthy and come out of the college ranks walking instead of broken up."

"It's going to be sort of a rebuilding year for us, but who knows, there might be a chance that the Heisman will wind up at Oklahoma again."

"And," added Sims, "I'm not going to let down, Charles White, if you're listening."

White was listening. The star running back from Southern Cal, who is rated a good shot at the Heisman this season, was with Sims on the tour and admitted, "Yes, I think about the Heisman."

"But," figured White, who already is the leading career rusher in Pacific-10 Conference history, "I

feel if you're winning, even will take care of itself. That important part of the game is to win, people are going to be in."

White also said he had no regrets about not winning the Heisman year, despite outrushing Sims.

"Hey, the best man won," he said. "If I had been the best, I would have received it, I respect to the man that would go on from there."

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