

Battalion

Classifieds

Sports

Upsets result of scholarship limit

up-set, v. t. 3. to defeat or overthrow, especially unexpectedly
— Webster's Dictionary

The concept of the upset in college football is all but obsolete, thanks to a four-year-old NCAA rule that effectively limits the number of players a team can recruit.

Last Saturday, three unranked underdogs — Wisconsin, Georgia Tech and Iowa — knocked off three Top 10 teams — Michigan, Alabama, and Nebraska, respectively — in what appeared to be fairly evenly-matched contests.

Appearances were not deceiving. What the shocked Wolverine, Crimson Tide and Cornhusker fans watched were three demonstrations of the damage done to traditionally top-ranked football programs by an NCAA regulation that limits the number of scholarships a school can give.

Before 1977, a school could award as many football scholarships as its budget could handle. And if a fully-paid four-year education wasn't enough incentive, few serious athletes could turn down the chance to play for a national championship contender.

As a consequence, powerhouse teams with generous alumni associations easily drew the most talented high school athletes year

after year. Schools like Notre Dame, USC, and Alabama — recognized national powers — continued to have almost unbeatable teams, quickly replacing their seniors with high school blue chips. And grateful alumni continued to pad their athletic departments' budgets with more scholarship money.

But the NCAA laid down the law in 1977: no school could award more than 30 football scholarships per year, nor have more than 95 total active football scholarships. Ironically, the rule was directed not at maintaining a balance of power, but at insuring that schools' athletic budgets were more evenly distributed among all sports, both men's and women's.

As a side effect, however, the rule has done for college football what the draft system does for the NFL. The talent is more evenly spread out, not only among the traditional powers but among the up-and-coming schools as well.

Oilers, Dolphins to clash

HOUSTON — Ed Biles and Bill Arnsparger, two of the NFL's finest defensive coaches, match wits Sunday in an early-season showdown between the Houston Oilers and Miami Dolphins, who are unbeaten but something less than Super Bowl contenders.

Oiler Head Coach Biles tried early this week to place the pressure elsewhere, saying, "We certainly aren't going to outcoach Miami. Our players are going to have to play."



Gaye Denley

championship, which used to be a two-team race between Texas and Arkansas every year, could conceivably go to any of seven teams this year, Wilson said.

Keeping a healthy starting lineup is a must, he said, if a team wants to stay competitive. Another priority is maintaining an even mixture of seniors and underclassmen so that limited recruiting doesn't become a problem.

For example, the Aggies will

lose 11 seniors this year, and in order to comply with the 95 limit, they can offer only 21 scholarships to incoming freshmen next year.

However, the new rule has been good to Aggie teams and has probably played a major role in upsets over Penn State in 1979 and over Texas in 1979 and 1980.

If the scholarship limit balances the other conferences as it has the SWC, the practice of rating teams on a "top 10" list will be the next concept to become obsolete.

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