

Fresno State, Wake Forest open NIT semifinal round tonight

United Press International
NEW YORK — Fresno State leads the nation in defense and has the best record among the National Invitation Tournament semifinal teams.

So how come nobody knows coach Boyd Grant's Bulldogs? "We are the only team left from the West," Grant said. "Have you even heard of us before? We are conservative on offense and have a strong defense, plus 500 fans all the way from California to root for us."

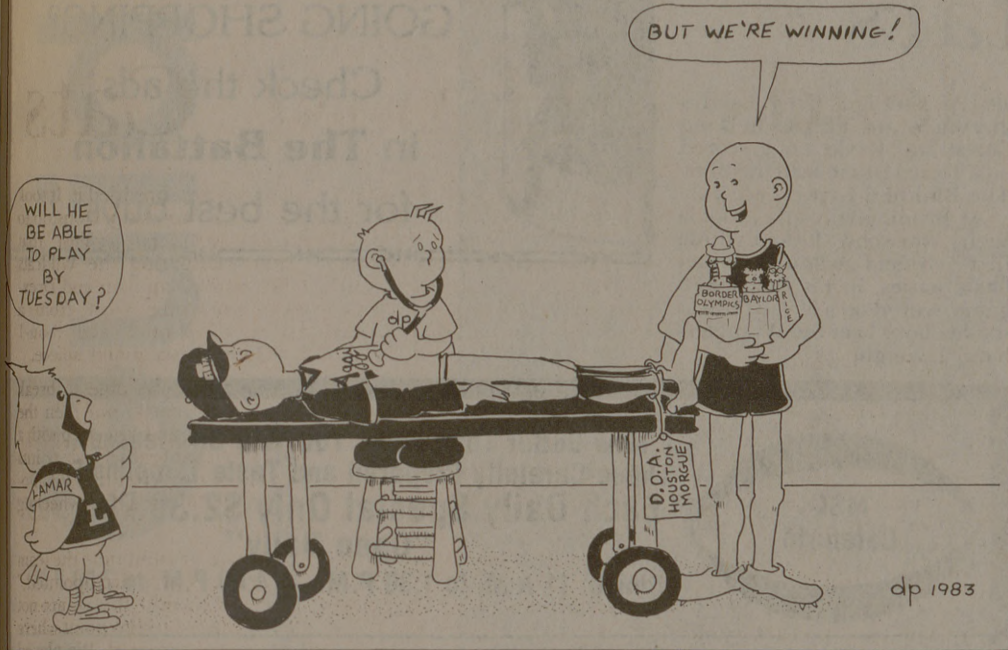
Fresno State, 22-10, faces Wake Forest in tonight's opening semifinal game at Madison Square Garden at 6:30 p.m. EST, followed by DePaul-Nebraska. The winners meet Wednesday night in the 46th NIT championship game.

Bulldogs defeated Texas-El Paso, Michigan State and Oregon State to reach the NIT Final Four. Fresno State is paced by forwards Bernard Thompson and 6-7 Ron Anderson, who averages just under 19 points a game.

Wake Forest, 19-11, has struggled since early February and the exposure at the national meet, there's no way we're going to go anywhere but up."

With his effort, O'Neil became the first Aggie to make all-America since 1957. In addition, Texas A&M's 26th-place finish marked the first time the Aggies have ever scored at the national competition.

"This was really the first time we made an inroad to national recognition and toward a legitimate national ranking (Texas A&M finished No. 18 in the polls preceding the meet)," Nash said.



Nash pleased with swimmers' performance at NCAA meet

by Frank L. Christlieb

Battalion Staff
 Aggie coach Mel Nash says he sees a bright future in Texas A&M swimming after this weekend's performance by several of his team members at the NCAA meet in Indianapolis, Ind.

After watching Aggie freshman Chris O'Neil break a school record by swimming the 100-yard butterfly in 48.02 and then receiving all-America status, Nash said he's already excited about next season.

"We're only losing one of the seven who went to the NCAA meet — Rick Walker," Nash said Sun-

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to two road wins among its three NIT victories.

DePaul, 20-11, coached by 69-year-old Ray Meyer, is the richest in NIT tradition among the semifinal teams. The Blue Demons won the NIT in 1945 after losing in the finals to St. John's in 1944.

Although the NIT presently consists of teams not selected for the 52-team NCAA Tournament, Meyer remembers when

the NIT was THE college basketball showcase.

"I've come full cycle from George Mikan to the present NIT," Meyer said. "I can remember when we had bids from both the NIT and the NCAA and took the NIT because it was the more prestigious tournament."

Meyer might be familiar with the NIT but DePaul's opponent is a stranger to the veteran coach.

"I don't know anything about Nebraska and that's OK because this is all for fun," Meyer said. "It isn't how big you are. It's how big you play and I hear the Cornhuskers play pretty big."

Nebraska, 22-9, is away from home for the first time since the tournament began.

Freshman center David Hoppen is Nebraska's leading scorer and 5-foot-10 guard David Ponce runs the offense.

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