

Bell dies from rare disease

United Press International

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — Former USC football star Ricky Bell, runnerup for the 1976 Heisman Trophy who went on to play for the NFL's Tampa Bay Buccaneers and San Diego Chargers, died Wednesday from a cardiac arrest caused by a rare degenerative disease.

Bell, 29, died at 11:06 a.m. at Daniel Freeman Hospital, spokeswoman Christie Plank said.

The running back learned in November 1982 that he suffered from dermatomyositis, a rare inflammatory muscle disease that attacks the heart, muscles and skin, his physician, Dr. Allen Metzger, said.

Plank said the disease caused a major vessel to rupture, and subsequent bleeding into the left side of the chest caused the cardiac arrest.

Bell's 10-year-old son, Ricky Jr., and his brother, Nathan, were with him when he died. Bell's wife did not reach the hospital before his death.

While at USC from 1974-76, Bell carried on the tradition of outstanding Trojan tailbacks by rushing for 3,689 yards for a 5.2-yard average and 28 touchdowns.

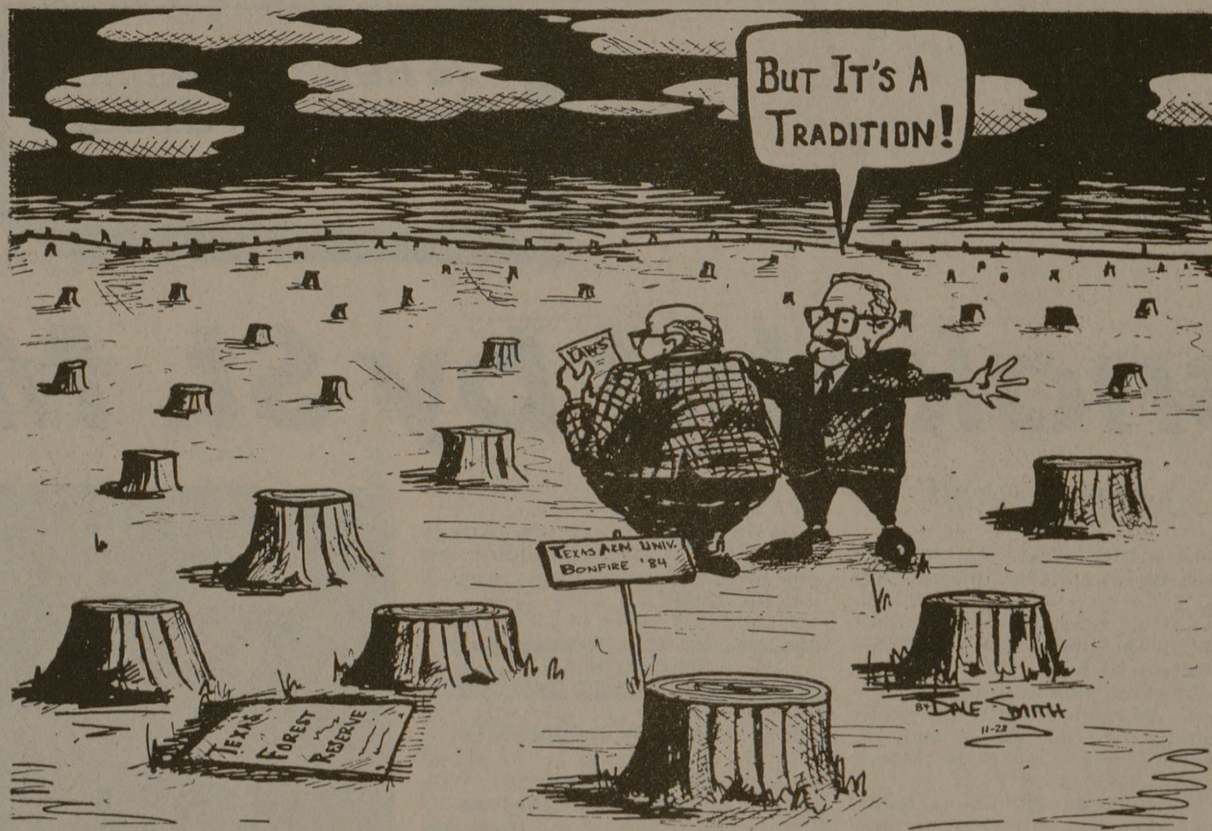
Bell was the nation's leading rusher with 1,875 yards as a junior and finished third in the Heisman voting in 1975. He finished second to Tony Dorsett for the coveted award in his senior year. He was an All-America both years.

The Fremont High School graduate was a first-round pick of Tampa Bay in 1977, where he played under his old USC coach, John McKay.

He was traded to the Chargers in 1982, but appeared in only four games and rushed for six yards before the disease ended his career.

Chargers spokesman Bill Johnston said Bell weighed 225 pounds when he joined the club but dropped to 196 by the end of the season, his lightest weight since high school.

Bell was placed on non-football injury reserve and retired during training camp of the 1983 season.



Nash tells his squad to swim in a 'school'

By TAMARA BELL
Sports Writer

Behind A&M Swim Coach Mel Nash's carefree exterior lurks a perfectionist striving to make his Texas A&M Women's Swimming team No. 1 in the Southwest Conference.

"One of Coach Nash's favorite sayings is 'practice doesn't make perfect, perfect practice makes perfect,'" A&M swimmer Melanie Schmauch said, "and he enforces this philosophy when instructing someone on the little things such as turns that can make a good swimmer great."

Combining the men's and women's swim teams for practice, makes that extra lap bearable.

"As a transfer student from Texas Tech, where I also participated in the swimming program, I remember watching the A&M team at meets reacting as a unit, not as a group of individuals," Schmauch said.

"Since both the men and women's teams workout together, which is an unusual coaching technique, a family atmosphere is created. The support

they (the men) lend during practice and meets helps build our confidence."

Although swimming is an individual sport, Nash aims for a team effort when swimming in meets.

"It's difficult for swimmers to think in terms of 'team' and 'unity' because meets are usually swam on a one-to-one basis," Nash said, "but at A&M, because of the University's emphasis on traditions, it's easy to integrate this concept into the program."

Team unity is further enhanced by the lack of one "superstar" swimmer. Instead the team boasts 15 "superstar" swimmers.

"Because the talent is evenly distributed throughout the team, the women's team is not reliant on a few good swimmers. They all contribute to the victory," Nash said.

Before a meet, Nash's coaching technique varies according to the level of competition the Aggie women will face.

"If we're pitted against a weak team, I'll instruct the swimmers to

stay low key," Nash said. "I don't want them to get too fired up, with nostrils flaring, because they'll get burnt out before the major competition begins."

"If we're facing a major competitor, I'll talk to them. Sometimes they fall asleep, but sometimes they listen and take note."

One of Nash's pet peeves involves the amount of time wasted in practice.

"We train for four hours a day," Nash said. "Somedays they just go through the motions and waste the practice time. If they have to be at the pool anyway, they might as well apply themselves and perform as close to perfection as possible. This would make it easy during a meet because the motions would be natural."

Motivating swimmers is often difficult Nash said. He approaches motivating swimmers from a practical standpoint.

It's tougher to be a basketball loser

NBA draft rules altered for '85

United Press International

NEW YORK — It's not unusual to hear talk of teams near the bottom of the NBA standings looking forward to the No. 1 selection in the college draft.

But when some talked about it in mid-November — when the season was scarcely 15 games old — well, that was strange. Pro basketball's new lottery system could be the cause.

The NBA was concerned that teams close to the cellar at the end of the season would rather lose, hoping to become one of two clubs to participate in a coin flip to determine who got the top selection.

Now, for the first time, the seven teams this year that do not make the playoffs will toss their names into a hat and Commissioner David Stern will pick the winner of NBA Lotto.

This system is not without its faults.

Now that three or four teams are vying for the right to pick No. 1, there is a possibility of twice that many deriving long-term benefits from losing a late-season game.

Last year, five teams had a shot at participating in the coin flip. If the lottery system had been in effect, however, the two other non-playoff clubs and three others would have been within four victories of gaining entrance to the lottery.

Might they sacrifice a few playoff games for a 1-in-7 chance to grab a franchise-turner like Pat Ewing or Wayman Tisdale? Maybe. Would they say so publicly? Never.

"It wouldn't be fair to management, the players or the fans," Bernard King said after his Knicks got off to a 2-9 start. "I'm not ready to

throw away the season. I don't like losing."

The system received near-unanimous support from general managers during the NBA meetings in Salt Lake City last summer.

Philadelphia general manager Pat Williams thinks the new procedure is the best one the NBA could have arrived at.

"Yes, there's no foolproof solution," he said, "but it's designed to prevent a late-season nose-dive like Houston had last year. We've eliminated the coin flip so even if a team plays like Houston did, sure, they might pick No. 1 — but they might pick No. 7."

Williams outlined a possible April scenario for a team on the edge of making the playoffs or the lottery.

"It's down to the last few games, your team is fighting for the play-

offs," Williams said. "The playoffs have a magic ring to them. In the heat of battle, players and coaches are going to go for it. They will not back off from the challenge. The public pressure to make the playoffs will see to that."

The worst situation that can arise with this format would be when one team is overwhelmingly the worst. In the 1972-73 season, the 76ers were 9-73 and it would seem a crime to deprive a club as bad as that of an automatic No. 1 pick.

"I understand that," Williams said. "Take Golden State for instance. Their center is unsigned, they are shorthanded and they are legitimately working hard. They could clearly deserve the No. 1 pick and shouldn't have to go into a lottery. That's a valid criticism."

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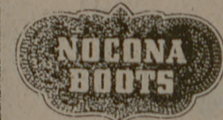


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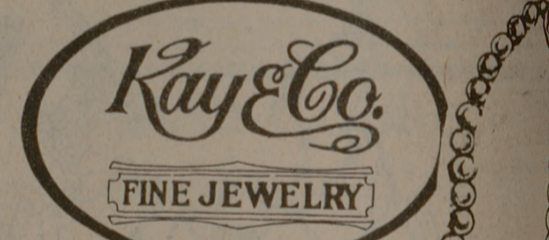
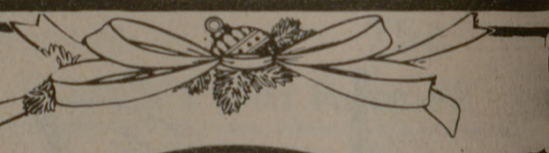
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