

'Dorsett's Ride' El Paso folklore

United Press International
 EL PASO — The story of "Tony and the Pony," an account of Tony Dorsett's ride on a Sheriff's Posse horse, drew laughs at a Sun Bowl news conference with the coaches of Maryland and Tennessee.

Tennessee coach Johnny Majors laughed loudest at the recollection. He'd forgotten about the incident. But Sun Bowl veterans say the story of "Dorsett's Last Ride" on a horse is now part of Sun Bowl lore.

It seems a few days before the 1975 Sun Bowl game between Pittsburgh and Kansas (Majors was coaching Pittsburgh), the players from both teams were taken to the Sheriff's Posse roundup, one of a number of hospitality events for which the Sun Bowl is famous.

Dorsett, Pittsburgh's All-American running back, decided to go native and mounted a Sheriff's Posse horse.

"An assistant coach ran in and told Johnny," said Sam Jenkins, Sun Bowl Association president-elect. "Johnny turned white. He could just see his All-American tailback falling off a runaway horse."

For Majors, now with Tennessee, it was a return to the good old days at the Wednesday news conference. For Maryland coach Bobby Ross it was his first time at the Sun Bowl, but not his first time in Texas.

"I was an assistant coach at Rice, and I hope I do better in this bowl game than we did at Rice," Ross said. "My wife and the children think

back to many, many happy days in Texas."

The Maryland and Tennessee teams do not arrive until the Monday before the Dec. 22 game. But Sun Bowl Executive Director Donnie Duncan arranged for the two coaches to hold a news conference in El Paso to plug the game.

"I don't know much about football. I've been coaching it since 1957," deadpanned Majors. "But I think going in we've possibly got the best matchup of any bowl game."

It will be a second bowl encounter for the teams. Tennessee beat Maryland, 30-23 in last year's Florida Citrus Bowl.

Both coaches came in from the College Hall of Fame induction banquet in New York. Ross even cancelled some in-home recruiting visits and left El Paso on a red-eye flight Thursday at 3:50 a.m. in order to get back on schedule.

The 1976 Pitt team - with Dorsett winning the Heisman Trophy - won the national title. The Sun Bowl victory the year before "was our first win on the way to the national championship," Majors said. "It catapulted us right into being the best college football team America's seen in the last 20 years. Of course, I speak from a prejudicial viewpoint. But that was a completely well-balanced team with no weaknesses."

Dorsett kept his balance on the Sheriff's Posse horse, also, Jenkins recalled. "Tony stood tall and rode the horse around the Sheriff's Posse arena like he was born in the saddle," he said.

What else can be said about TCU's Wacker?

United Press International
 FORT WORTH — One of the things Jim Wacker has turned out not to be over the course of his 47 years is shy.

It takes only a matter of seconds, certainly no more than 30 to 45 of them, to become aware that Wacker enjoys doing just what he says he enjoys doing.

"I love coaching because coaching is teaching," Wacker said. "But I love selling, too. I love going up against the other coaches, trying to sell our program and our school. I love recruiting."

That's where Wacker is these days. He's in Austin and Houston and who knows where selling Texas Christian University to the youth of America.

He did a pretty good job of that the past two years, but his job was made a lot easier this season since his TCU Horned Frogs produced the sharpest turnaround of any football team in the country.

TCU went from a 1-8-2 record to 8-3, earned a bowl trip for only the second time in 25 years and came within one victory of representing the Southwest Conference in the Cotton Bowl.

For all of that Wacker was named Thursday as UPI's collegiate football coach of the year.

It makes no difference whether Wacker is speaking to a chemistry professor, a group of seminary students or the people whose bankrolls help finance the school's athletic department.

He is apt to give them the same lecture and the theme of that lecture is that TCU is inevitably going to be national champion.

"We were so close to winning the conference championship and going to the Cotton Bowl," he said. "We had that brass ring and let it slip away. We talk about the things you've got to do to hang on to it. You've got to make it happen."

"The pot of gold is still out there and we are coming closer. We will be pushing and grinding and reminding the players of what it takes to make a good team into a championship team."

"And once you get to the Cotton Bowl you start talking about national championship."

Reagan meets Doug Flutie, receives Heisman replica

United Press International

WASHINGTON — President Reagan greeted Heisman Trophy winner Doug Flutie of Boston College Thursday as a college football player "in a class by himself."

The diminutive quarterback advised high school athletes in the audience: "If you can dream it, it's possible."

The football star, who set a major college passing record, was named last week as the best player in college football.

The ceremony was held in an auditorium in the Executive Office Building filled with football players from Gonzaga High School in Washington, which is run by the same order of priests that operates Boston College.

Among the guests were Flutie's coach, Jack Bicknell; his parents; Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., and Reps. Barney Frank, D-Mass., and Silvio Conte, R-Mass.

Afterwards, Harold Reinauer of the Downtown Athletic Club, which awards the trophy, gave the president a small replica of the statue.

"That's better than an Oscar," remarked Reagan, recalling his admiration of Jay Berwanger, the first Heisman winner 50 years ago, when he was sportscaster "Dutch" Reagan.

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