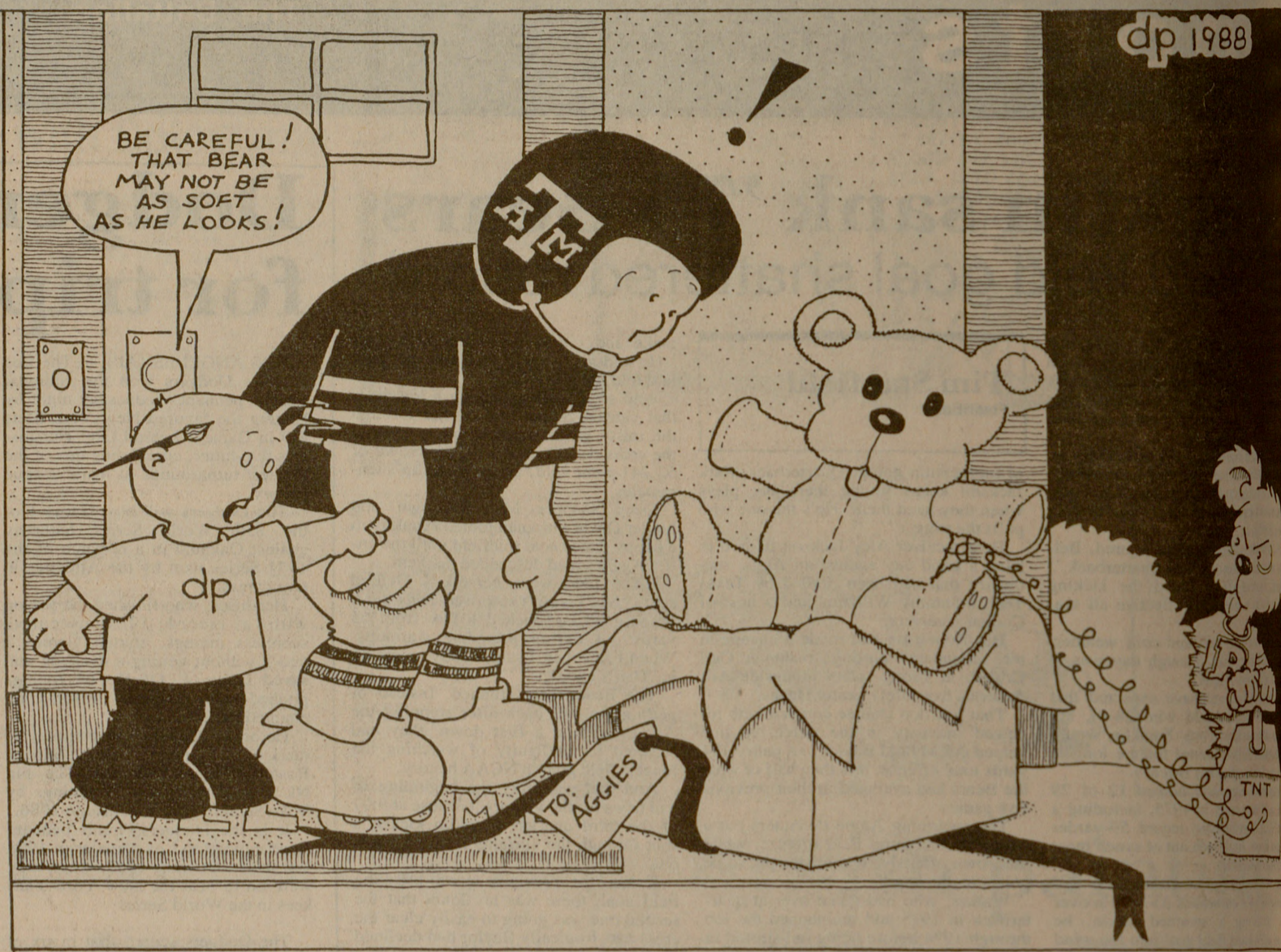


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Heisman hoopla frequently misses those most deserving

The performance of Darren Lewis over the past three weeks has led some writers covering Southwest Conference football and some Aggie fans to speculate about his chances of winning the Heisman trophy as college football's finest player.

A&M Head Coach Jackie Sherrill added to the speculation at his weekly press conference by saying that Lewis and Oklahoma State's Barry Sanders are the top two players he has seen in college football this year.

The chances of Lewis or Sanders winning the Heisman this year are very small. At least the praise that is beginning to spread about these two players stems from their performance on the field and not from past years and preseason media hype.

Some past Heisman award winners have won the award mostly because of their performance of the previous season combined with a media blitz before the season in which they won the award.

As a result, the actual awarding of the trophy is usually anticlimactic.

The only Heisman vote in this decade in which most of the public was uncertain of the winner was in 1985. That year Auburn running back Bo Jackson edged Iowa quarterback Chuck Long in the closest balloting ever.

Both players benefitted greatly from preseason hype and past performance and backed up the hype with spectacular performances on the field in that season.

Unfortunately, many times the top candidates fail to meet the expectations on the field.

Last year it was known by the end of the third week of the season that Notre Dame's Tim Brown was going to win the award. He actually deserved the award in 1986, when he was the nation's most talented and exciting player.

Lorenzo White of Michigan State deserved the award at least as much as Brown. White almost single-handedly led the Spartans to their first Big Ten title in over 20 years and a Rose Bowl win over Southern California.

This year's Heisman watch has for the most part been a wide open event.

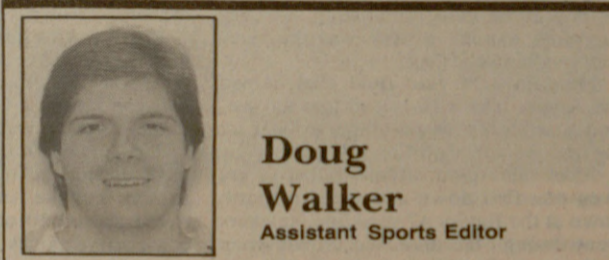
It should always be this way.

At the beginning of the season, there were at least seven candidates who were being heavily publicized by the sports information hacks at their schools and by sports writers covering their teams.

The list of candidates included Alabama running back Bobby Humphrey, UCLA quarterback Troy Aikman, Florida running back Emmett Smith, Texas running back Eric Metcalf, LSU quarterback Tom Hodson, Nebraska quarterback Steve Taylor and USC quarterback Rodney Peete.

All these players are excellent in their own right. However, they each were given an unfair advantage over players that have emerged during this season as top players.

As far as I'm concerned, Oklahoma State's Sanders is the most explosive player in college football. He has burned opponents in several different ways this year. Yet it's probably a safe bet that the Eastern media has probably never heard of him. Therefore, he probably won't win the award.



Doug Walker
 Assistant Sports Editor

Sanders is leading the nation in individual rushing, scoring and all-purpose yardage. He averages 203.3 yards rushing, 22.5 points and 275.5 all-purpose yards per game.

All this has been accomplished in four games. As you remember, but would probably like to forget, Texas A&M is one of the teams he terrorized.

These impressive numbers have been racked up in games in which he has finished work by the end of the third quarter.

Probably the most impressive statistic of all is the all-purpose yardage mark.

All-purpose yardage is calculated by combining yards gained rushing, receiving and returning kicks.

By being a threat in three different areas, Sanders shows the diverse talent that can only be possessed by the best in his sport. Last year, Brown made his case for the Heisman by much the same means.

In attaining these impressive per-game averages, Sanders has rushed for 813 yards, scored 15 touchdowns, compiled 222 yards on kick returns (while returning a kickoff and a punt for TDs), and added 66 yards receiving for a total of 1,101 total yards.

Sanders has attracted attention only recently and faces his biggest test so far this Saturday as the 10th-ranked Cowboys travel to Lincoln, Neb., to battle the Nebraska Cornhuskers.

If Sanders harbors any realistic hope of wresting the Heisman from either UCLA's Aikman or USC's Peete he must put together a respectable showing against a team that shut out OSU 35-0 last year in Stillwater.

Looking at all-purpose yardage made me realize what a flop Eric Metcalf has been this year.

Metcalf is expected to break open each week, yet he has dominated no one this year. He's a great player, but he's not the best in the nation this year.

This is a classic case of over-publicity.

The true measure of a player's greatness is his performance in the big games. Metcalf has been neutralized in every big game he's played in.

Only a 52-yard run against A&M last year saved him from posting a terrible performance in the game that decided the SWC champion. He had never scored a touchdown against Oklahoma until he scored on a pass reception in last week's game. Perhaps if he had a little help he would live up to the

See Heisman hype, page 11

Lady Ags beat SHSU in 4 games

By Cray Pixley
 Assistant Sports Editor

The Lady Aggie volleyball team defeated Sam Houston State in four matches, 15-11, 15-8, 7-15, 15-10, on Tuesday night in Huntsville.

A&M moves to 11-6 on the year and Sam Houston drops to 10-11.

"I'm happy with the 'W,' but not with the way we played," Head Coach Al Givens said. "We will have a win anyway we can get it, but we played the worst match."

"It was not a pretty win."

The Lady Aggies won the first two games but played a timid third game that they lost.

The team returned to form in the fourth game, reeling off 14 straight points to win after dropping behind early to 4-1.

The Lady Aggies are having difficulty with some starting players struggling with injuries.

"We have some individual pain," Givens said. "We need to get through this."

Vivian Viera, who led the Lady Ags with 16 kills on the night, was one of the injured.

She played the Huntsville match with a back problem.

Cheri Steensma, with 12 kills, had tendonitis in her right shoulder.

Krista Hierholzer followed Viera and Steensma with 10 kills for the match.

"I think because we played so well against Sam Houston so handily that we expected them to field," Givens said.

Givens said SHSU got better at night progressed.

"We need to get back to what we were doing with the basics and the defense in the beginning of the season," he said.

"I was very pleased with the way Vivian Viera played offensively."

The Lady Aggies next game is at 7 p.m. on Friday against Baylor in Waco. The game time has been changed from 7 p.m. to 7:30.

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