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OU regains top spot in basketball poll

Week of upsets shakes rankings

NORMAN, Okla. (AP) — Oklahoma Coach Billy Tubbs is happy to be No. 1 in the nation — again. "We'd like to stay there," Tubbs said Monday after learning his Sooners had taken over the top spot in the Associated Press college basketball poll again. "But we're not going to get into the hype of the thing. We've experienced it before, so now maybe we can do better."



Oklahoma was ranked No. 1 two weeks ago for the first time in the school's history. But the Sooners lost to intrastate rival Oklahoma State and fell to fifth in last week's poll. Oklahoma moved back to No. 1 this week after defeating No. 3 Missouri and Arizona, last week's No. 1 team. Tubbs noted after Sunday's 82-80 victory over Arizona that the No. 1 team has had to immediately go out and play tough road games. The Sooners are "no different." "This week we've got Kansas and Colorado on the road," Tubbs said. "I think there should be some kind of clause that if you get to be No. 1, you can change your schedule so you don't have to play on the road for at least two weeks," he joked. Oklahoma, 21-3, received 58 first-place votes and 1,273 points from the nationwide panel of sportswriters and broadcasters to top Arizona, 18-3, which dropped to second with two first-place votes and 1,162 points. Missouri, 21-4, remained third despite its loss to Oklahoma, receiving two first-place votes and 1,096 points. Georgetown, 18-3, dropped from second to fourth after a 79-74 loss to Pittsburgh with 1,001 points, 13 more than Illinois, 20-3. The Fighting Illini, who were seventh last week, had 988 points to edge Syracuse, 21-4, which received 974 points. The Orangemen, Fighting Illini and Oklahoma were the only members of last week's Top Ten not to lose in a week that saw 12 members of the Top Twenty lose a total of 14 games. Florida State, 19-2, moved to seventh with one first-place vote and 813 points. North Carolina, Indiana and Louisville rounded out the Top Ten. The Tar Heels, 19-5, received 791 points in dropping one spot, while Indiana, 20-5, rose from 13th to ninth with 752 points. Louisville, which lost two of three games last week to fall to 17-5, dropped from fourth to 10th with 731 points. Duke, 17-4, led the Second Ten with 641 points that included the final first-place vote. The Blue Devils were followed by Seton Hall, Michigan, West Virginia, Iowa, Ohio State, Stanford, Nevada-Las Vegas, North Carolina State and Louisiana State. Last week's Second Ten was Seton Hall, Florida State, Indiana, Duke, West Virginia, Ohio State, North Carolina State, Stanford, Nevada-Las Vegas and Georgia Tech. Louisiana State, 17-6, is the only new member of the poll as the Tigers replaced No. 20 Georgia Tech, which lost to Virginia 78-71.

Prairie View team sticks by protest

PRAIRIE VIEW (AP) — Worried they're not being allowed to get an education, a group of football players at Prairie View A&M say they'll stand firm in their promise not to practice unless their coach is replaced. All but a handful of the 55 players returning for next season have said they're on strike, calling for the ousting of Head Football Coach Haney Catchings. Led by two 300-pound offensive linemen, the players accuse their coach of withholding textbooks from team members, suspending study hall and holding six-hour practices that leave no time for studying. They also say Catchings has run practice drills that have caused injuries to players. "The coach imposed an 11 o'clock curfew and he'd punish players for missing curfew because they were studying," Haynes said. "They told us to go to the library on our own time, but there wasn't any time." — Richard Haynes, PV A&M football player

Although the predominantly black, 5,600-student school has never had a strong football tradition, players say the team would be better under someone the players liked. While on strike, Moore and Haynes have taken on responsibility for directing the team. They're urging teammates to keep in shape, run and lift weights, to prepare for spring practice, which begins next month. But the players say they won't be practicing for Catchings. "The practices will be under the direction of the team captains," said Haynes, a criminal justice major with a 3.2 grade average. Practices under Catchings would often last six hours, players say, with team members not getting back to the dorm until 10:30 at night. "The coach imposed an 11 o'clock curfew and he'd punish players for missing curfew because they were studying," Haynes said. "They told us to go to the library on our own time, but there wasn't any time. From 4:30 to 9:30 was their time. They emphasized that." Athletic director Brutus Jackson said Catchings has told him practices were only 3½ hours. Catchings would not comment Monday on the controversy. Jackson, who said he was not aware of all the players' concerns and could not comment on them specifically, said he thinks the dispute can be resolved without Catchings' departure. "We care about their academics and we care about their well-being," he said. "We need to hear more about their specific concerns before I can comment." Jackson on Monday received a list of specific complaints from the players and met with them to discuss the problems. Among the complaints are charges that Catchings set up practice drills that were unduly harsh. Haynes described drills where players were forced to dive over telephone poles amidst rocks and broken glass and where players ran head on into each other from 30 feet apart. The offensive line and other players walked out of several subsequent practices. Neither Catchings nor Jackson would comment on the allegations. Moore said he's not displeased with the education he's gotten at Prairie View but is concerned about the younger players, who he says don't know how to study. He blames the coaches and athletic department, not the school, which a recent educational survey said has produced more black agriculture PhDs than any other predominantly black institution. But another coach says the criticism is unfair. "My star runner has class during track practice so I'm out here working with her now," said women's track coach Barbera Jacket while timing sprints on the track. "So how can you say Prairie View doesn't care about academics?"

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