

Buffalo set to join NFL elite, end fans misery

Finally, the list is down to nine. Seattle, San Diego, Houston, Cleveland, Atlanta, New Orleans, Tampa Bay, Detroit, and Phoenix all share one thing in common — none have ever made their way to Super Bowl Sunday.



Douglas Pils
Asst. Sports Editor

Before last Sunday there was 10, but the Buffalo Bills triumphantly took their name off that list with a 51-3 stomping of the L.A. Raiders in the AFC Championship game.

Considering my chosen field of study, I guess I should keep an impartial view of this weekend's game ... Nah!

Growing up in Fayetteville, Ark., during the early seventies while my father pursued his degree after finishing his Army duties, I followed any Arkansas Razorback that made it to the NFL.

The most notable of which was quarterback Joe Ferguson, who still holds the UA record for most yards passing in one game with 345 yards in a 1971 game against Texas A&M.

When Ferguson left Arkansas, he was drafted by Buffalo, so naturally I became an instant Bills fan. One of the most vivid sports memories I have is from his rookie year when Ferguson, who because of injuries, was forced into the starting position.

Ferguson didn't do much passing that year, for that was 1973 — the year of the Juice.

O.J. Simpson shattered Jim Brown's single-season rushing record with 2,003 yards. Going into the last game Simpson needed 197 yards against the New York Jets to break the 2,000 mark, but with an arctic blizzard blowing through a frozen Shea Stadium, few thought O.J. could amass such a high total.

Over and over Ferguson turned and handed off or pitched the ball to Simpson, as I and millions across the nation sat glued to our television sets. As the game was winding down O.J. hit off-tackle one last time to give him 200 yards on the day and surpassing that magical 2,000-yard mark.

Now, after 18 years of frustration, a handful of playoff experiences and two

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Rocket will leave Notre Dame

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (AP) — Raghieb "Rocket" Ismail, a breakaway threat for three seasons at Notre Dame, broke clear from college football Thursday and dashed to the pros.

"I will be officially entering my name in the 1991 (NFL) draft," he said, ending weeks of speculation.

The decision represents an about-face for the junior from Wilkes-Barre, Pa., who had insisted that he would return for his senior season.

But the death of teammate Chris Zorich's mother hours after Notre Dame's Orange Bowl loss to Colorado on New Year's Day helped change Ismail's mind about turning pro.

"It's something that made me realize that things in life don't always happen the way you expect them to," he said. "I want to do something for my mother and my family."

Ismail, a two-time All-American and runner-up for the 1990 Heisman Trophy, made his final decision on Monday.

"It's going to be exciting — it's something I want to do," he said.

Ismail is likely to be one of the first three players picked in the April draft, but he said a multi-million-dollar contract isn't his top priority.

"Money isn't everything, and money isn't happiness," he said.

The New England Patriots, who finished 1-15 this season, have the first pick in the draft. But they aren't saying which player they'll take.

"The Patriots, like other NFL teams, are in an evaluation process at this particular time and it is far too early to make decisions," said Sam Jankovich, the team's chief executive officer.

Ismail said he won't be choosy. "Anybody who picks me, I'll be happy to play for them," he said.

Ismail is the 12th underclassman — and fourth in the last two days — to enter the NFL draft. The other entries this week were Virginia receiver Herman Moore, Tennessee running back Chuck Webb and Syracuse receiver Rob Carpenter.

Concern that a salary cap may be established in the NFL is one of the main reasons talented juniors are deciding to leave school early.

Ismail was a flanker, tailback and kick returner at Notre Dame, but the 5-foot-10, 175-pound speedster will probably concentrate on receiving in the pros.

Ismail returned five kickoffs for touchdowns at Notre Dame, one short of the NCAA career record by Southern Cal's Anthony Davis. During his three seasons, he gained 4,187 all-purpose yards and scored 15 touchdowns.

Opposing coaches were amazed by Ismail's blazing speed and versatility. Michi-



Photo courtesy of Notre Dame

Notre Dame's Raghieb "Rocket" Ismail announced today that he would forego his senior season of eligibility to enter the NFL draft.

gan's Bo Schembechler called him "the most dangerous player around" and Tennessee's Johnny Majors said Ismail was "like a blur."

Despite his decision to turn pro, Ismail pledged to complete the 30 credits he needs for a degree.

"There's no doubt I will graduate from this university," he said.

Notre Dame coach Lou Holtz was on a recruiting trip Thursday, but he praised Ismail in a written statement.

"We thank Rocket for the contribution he has made to the University of Notre Dame, both on the field and off," Holtz said. "He has been a pleasure to coach, and we certainly wish him well."

Relaxed Aggs take on Owls

By STEVE O'BRIEN
Of The Battalion Staff

Kermit Davis Jr. is still poised. Even after a 113-88 drubbing by Arkansas Wednesday and the controversial return of Syracuse transfer Tony Scott, the A&M head basketball coach said his team remains focused.

"The Southwest Conference is an extremely difficult league and we just have to stay positive and build on game after game and get our team better," Davis said.

The cloud of an NCAA investigation still hangs over the team.

"I think the investigation is on everybody's mind, but I think more the staff than the players," Davis said.

Scott, who returned to A&M this week after accusing the basketball program of NCAA rules violations earlier this year, is not on the team roster until further notice, Davis said.

"He's not going to practice with our team right now," Davis said. "We're going to have to evaluate his situation along with the University after the investigation is over."

The main thing the Aggies are looking for is to have the investigation over, Davis said.

"I think everybody is just ready to get this behind us, a decision to be made, and whatever that decision is then you know exactly where you stand," Davis said. "and just go on from there."

The findings of the in-house investigation are expected some time this month.

After losing to No. 2 Arkansas, the Aggies upcoming road game against Rice on Saturday is a chance to get a victory and put some things behind them, A&M junior forward Rashone Lewis said.

The Aggies will be looking to grab their first Southwest Conference win and move out of the conference cellar against the Owls, 1-5, in Houston on Saturday.

"We learned how to play from behind against a ranked team," Lewis said. "It was a learning experience."

"Rice is definitely a team we can beat. If we go down there and compete hard, we'll come up with a victory."

Despite the distractions of the NCAA investigation and an 0-6 record in conference play, Lewis said that the Aggies will remain focused on their game

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