

Big XII Notebook

Simmons leaves OSU

NOTEBOOK from page 10

Oklahoma State (2-6, 0-5; lost 21-16 to Texas A&M; at Texas Tech)

After a spirited showing against the Aggies, OSU announced on Monday Coach Bob Simmons will not return next season.

Simmons' team is winless in the Big 12 this season after starting out 2-0. In five years, Simmons has compiled a record of 24-30 with one bowl berth - the 1997 Alamo Bowl.

Simmons would not comment during the Big 12 Coaches Teleconference on Monday, but did say his family was holding up well through the scrutiny.

"When you are in this profession, you can't please everybody," Simmons said.

Kansas State (8-2, 4-2; beat Iowa State 56-10; Nebraska)

Despite struggling in Big 12 play, the Wildcats can salvage their season by beating the Huskers on Saturday. The winner is virtually guaranteed a trip to the conference-championship game.

Coach Bill Snyder said quarterback Jonathan Beasley, who struggled against NU in Lincoln last year, has nothing holding him back.

"He is in far better physical shape at this time than he was last year," Snyder said.

Defensive end Monty Beisel, who leads KSU in tackles with 78, was named the Big 12 Defensive Player of the Week after racking up 11 tackles and one sack against ISU.

Missouri (2-7, 1-5; lost 28-18

to Colorado; at Baylor)

Saturday's battle between the Tigers and Bears will pit the two worst teams in the conference. Both teams are 2-7 and have struggled offensively after losing their starting quarterbacks.

Mizzou lost starter Kirk Farmer in the Tigers loss to Nebraska, and Baylor lost its starter, Greg Cicero, against Minnesota in the second game of the year. Combined, both teams have used six quarterbacks on the season.

Texas Tech (6-4, 2-4; lost 29-17 to Texas; Oklahoma State)

Mike Leach's spread offense has not only helped the Red Raiders become bowl-eligible in his first season as coach, but it has also put fans in the stands, as well.

In its loss to Texas, Tech set a single-season attendance record in Lubbock with 293,013 fans this season with one game still remaining.

Baylor (2-7, 0-6; lost 56-7 to Oklahoma; Missouri)

Coach Kevin Steele's team gets somewhat of a break this week after going winless in conference play against teams that have a 34-12 combined record.

Baylor started Big 12 play against Iowa State, followed with a trip to Texas Tech and then faced A&M, Nebraska, Texas and Oklahoma in a six-week span. Mizzou, which is 2-7, will offer a bit of a breather for the BU offense, which hasn't scored more than 17 points in any conference game.

Iowa State (6-3, 3-3; lost 56-10 to Kansas State; at Colorado)

The Cyclones, while bowl eli-

gible, showed against the Wildcats a gap still remains between ISU and the upper echelon of the Big 12.

Iowa State has beaten the likes of Baylor, Oklahoma State and Missouri but lost by at least three touchdowns to perennial powers Texas A&M, Nebraska and Kansas State.

ISU Coach Dan McCarney said a letdown may have occurred against KSU after the Cyclones became bowl eligible a week earlier against Missouri.

"It sure looked like it," McCarney said. "These kids have never experienced success, and we were worried all along that could happen."

Texas (7-2, 5-1; beat Texas Tech 29-17; at Kansas)

The Longhorns rattled off their fourth-straight win after being throttled 63-14 by Oklahoma, which remains UT's only blemish in conference play.

Texas needs OU to lose to Texas A&M and Texas Tech; Texas needs to win the Big 12 South. The Longhorns will go about their business against KU without starting quarterback Major Applewhite, who strained his knee against Tech and is questionable for UT's last game against A&M.

Running back Hodges Mitchell, the Big 12 Offensive Player of the Week, rushed for 229 yards and two touchdowns against Tech and will be expected to produce a similar performance with Applewhite out.

Texas A&M (7-2, 5-1; beat Oklahoma State 21-16, Oklahoma)

After surviving a scare against

the Cowboys, A&M will try to earn a spot in the Big 12 Championship game with a win over the No. 1-ranked Sooners.

ESPN Gameday will be at Kyle Field for the matchup, in which A&M will try and avenge last year's 51-6 loss.

"We looked pretty dumb as defensive coaches, but since then, others have suffered the same fate," said Slocum of OU's offensive capabilities.

Colorado (3-6, 3-3; beat Missouri 28-18; Iowa State)

The Buffaloes won their second-straight game and continued their mastery of Mizzou, winning 14 of the past 16 games.

Freshman Craig Ochs threw for 119 yards and two touchdowns in the first half before spraining his right foot. Ochs' status is up in the air for the game against the Cyclones. Coach Dan McCarney said. CU is hoping Ochs gets healthy quick, as his backup, Zac Colvin, was 3-10 passing with an interception in Ochs' place.

Nebraska (8-1, 5-1; beat Kansas 56-17; at Kansas State)

NU, which bulldozed the Jayhawks behind a renewed spirit of running the football, lost offensive lineman Jon Rutherford for the season to a torn ACL in the game. Husker Coach Frank Solich said Rutherford, who could play all five positions on the line, will be missed. But Solich was pleased that his team took the first step in getting back in the national-title race by taking care of Kansas handily, unlike in 1999, when NU trailed KU 9-0 at half.

Compiled by Joshua Camenzind

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expansion of Lewis Field, along with competing with the now-rising Sooner program, the emphasis is on winning now.

Simmons, who tinkered with his offense considerably over the past three years with off-and-on injuries to quarterback Tony Lindsay, never fielded a consistent team.

Rumors about Simmons' job security arose as early as last season, when the coach continued to start his son Nathan at tailback despite an abysmal average of 2.5 yards per carry.

In the end, Missouri Coach Larry Smith said, the bottom line for Simmons, and many other coaches, becomes winning.

Smith resigned at Southern California several years ago and may face the same situation at Missouri at the end of the season. Smith had two consecutive winning seasons and bowl trips in 1997 and '98, but those have been forgotten by many Tiger fans in the wake of another losing season.

"You have a few good years," Smith said, "But those years don't seem to exist after a couple of bad ones."

"It's become about this: 'Just win, baby.'"

Simmons will be the ninth Big 12 coach to leave the conference, preceded by Baylor's Chuck Reedy and Dave Roberts (both fired), Colorado's Rick

Neuheisel (left for Washington), Kansas' Glen Mason (left for Minnesota), Nebraska's Tom Osborne (retired), Oklahoma's John Blake (fired), Texas' John Mackovic (reassigned to the athletic department) and Texas Tech's Spike Dykes (retired).

Only four teams: Iowa State (Dan McCarney), Kansas State (Bill Snyder), Texas A&M (R.C. Slocum) and Missouri (Smith) have retained the same coaches since the Big 12's inception in 1996.

Simmons, who was part of that group, becomes the latest victim.

The former Colorado defensive coordinator, who many thought was passed over for the CU coaching job that Neuheisel assumed when Bill McCartney retired, has compiled a 29-36 record, along with a 15-25 record in the Big 12. OSU finishes the season with Texas Tech, Baylor, and No. 1 Oklahoma.

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Fewer ads, more style needed

McKEWON from page 10

His remarks on Nebraska's lost fumble on a punt return Saturday were a particularly nice pick-up; he said referees knew nothing until a KU player pointed it out to them.

But Sharp plays a small role, as do the broadcasters as a whole, at least when they stack themselves against the commercials. They're oppressive, really, almost cumbersome to the actual broadcast.

When Webber has to read a (put sponsor here) score update right after an analysis-worthy play, it stuffs up the fun. Pinnacle should work an easier mix of those promotions and game actions.

And Swain, who has an approach that lacks the smart-alecky antics of Pavelka, should concentrate on the nuts and bolts better. Give the time remaining every once awhile. Mention after a long run or pass just how many yards the play was. Sneak in

statistics on the front and back ends of plays.

Swain could do better to bust outside the company-man mindset of "We Love These Huskers!" Surely, radio listeners want a "homer."

But in an era where they can see nearly every game on television, listeners need an experience - a pleasure to listen to. Not to say that an older version of Bob Costas must grace the Pinnacle airwaves. But Swain has not yet grown beyond the event itself.

He's the voice of the Huskers in name only. At the very least, Pavelka had 10-year-olds screaming "Touchdown! Touchdown! Touchdown!" in their backyard leaves. Lyle Bremser had "Man! Woman! Child!" What does Swain have?

It's not just about signature, but style. Swain, even in those HuskerVision replays at Memorial Stadium, gets annoying with that sandpaper excitement he invokes. It's getting old. It is old. This is not the best \$10.6 million can buy.

Lions coach resigns; Moeller steps up

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PONTIAC, Mich. - The Detroit Lions replaced a burned-out coach with one who wore out his welcome less than 70 miles away.

Bobby Ross, mentally and physically drained after 3 1/2 years, resigned Monday and was replaced by assistant coach Gary Moeller, who was fired as Michigan's coach in 1995, days after his arrest during a disturbance at a Detroit-area restaurant.

"I really think I can put less pressure on myself," Moeller said Monday after signing a three-year contract. "But I'm not sure, you know what I mean? You get into it, things start to tighten and the screws start to tighten. ..."

"This honeymoon is going to end tomorrow, probably in two or three hours. I think I can deal with that and deal thoroughly with it." Ross' resignation is the third coaching change in the NFL this season, but it's the first with a team that is having a relatively successful season.

The Lions are 5-4 and have a chance to earn a playoff berth.

Two weeks ago, Arizona fired Vince Tobin and replaced him with Dave McGinnis. On Sept. 25, Bruce Coslet resigned in Cincinnati and was replaced by Dick LeBeau.

Ross has one year remaining on his five-year contract with the Lions. Vice president Chuck Schmidt said details of the contract buyout have not been determined.

Schmidt said Ross had thought about resigning before Monday.

"This isn't the only time he felt this way," Schmidt said. "He doesn't get too high, but he gets down pretty low."

"I can't say I talked him out of it before, but has he thought about this? Sure."

In his fourth year with the Lions, Ross compiled a 27-30 regular-season record and an 0-2 mark from playoff appearances in

"I think he felt that he just burned himself out physically and mentally, that he didn't have any more to give. I think he made the right decision."

William Clay Ford
Detroit Lions owner

1997 and last season. He replaced Wayne Fontes, who was fired in December 1996.

The 63-year-old Ross, who did not attend the news conference, submitted a letter of resignation to owner William Clay Ford.

"I am sorry, also, for not giving you the championship trophy you so richly deserved. Your strong support was my constant motivation throughout my time here," Ross wrote.

Ford said Ross resigned on his own.

"I think he felt that he just burned himself out physically and mentally, that he didn't have any

more to give," Ford said. "I think he made the right decision."

The news of Ross' resignation surprised the Lions.

"We've seen how frustrated he's been and we understand his feelings," Herman Moore said. "But I don't think anybody saw this coming."

Ross does not want to coach again, according to Moeller.

The highlights of Ross' career occurred before he came to Detroit in 1997.

He led the San Diego Chargers to the 1995 Super Bowl, five years after taking Georgia Tech to the national championship.

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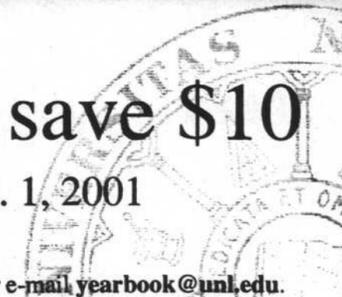
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