

Pep Talk

By Brant Long



Long list of possible winners of Heisman Trophy this year

As another college football season draws to a close, professionals and amateurs alike are selecting their choices for the coveted Heisman Trophy award.

This year, though, there is no clear-cut favorite, only a long list of potential winners. I'll start with the guys who have done well, but probably not as good as expected.

Emmitt Smith, Florida: Smith had an amazing year in 1988 and hasn't done too terribly bad this season. Many thought he would be a shoo-in for the trophy this year, but he has been inconsistent. Against Georgia Saturday, he had only 106 yards. Sure, more than 100 yards again, but short of what people now expect.

Major Harris, West Virginia: The "major" led the Mountaineers to the national championship game this past season and looked as if he might have done the same until some below-par performances against Virginia Tech and Penn State hit. Saturday's 163-yard rushing and 139-yard passing day will keep him in the running, though.

Dee Dowis, Air Force: Nobody had heard of this little guy until he started running all over the place for the Falcons. Dowis was the leading rusher in the country early in the season, yet now his name is not in the Top 15. He has struggled to late, but he has provided a lot of ground excitement to the usually air-happy WAC conference.

Andre Ware, Houston: Ware and the Cougars have run up more offensive yards this season than many teams get in two or three years. Ware is an excellent player, but also has slacked off some. Ware broke records for completions (292) and passing yards (7,327) in a career Saturday.

Now, for the other candidates:
Tony Rice, Notre Dame: The Irish

look as if they are headed for another national championship game, and Rice has had a lot to do with it. The Woodruff, S.C., native can run, throw and do just about anything. But he has such a great group of linemen, receivers, runningbacks and a defense that stopped Southern Cal four times inside the 10-yard line, that Rice is more of a team player than an individual performer.

Anthony Thompson, Indiana: USC remembers him running up, down and all over the field in this past year's Liberty Bowl. This year Thompson is having another banner season and is probably in the driver's seat for the Heisman. He is No. 1 in the country with 1,514 rushing yards.

Darian Hagan, Colorado: The Buffaloes are undoubtedly the most exciting team this year. Colorado is fourth in scoring offense and third in rushing offense, and Hagan is the on-field general. In a Big 8 Conference where only Oklahoma or Nebraska are supposed to win, Colorado has taken care of both of them. His arm, like most Big 8 quarterbacks, is weak, but he can run if no one is open. His chances are slim, but a national championship would probably suit him fine. With only a game against Kansas State left on the schedule, look for Hagan to try to get that championship on Jan. 2.

Other possibilities are Siran Stacy of Alabama, Blair Thomas of Penn State, Ty Detmer of Brigham Young, Peter Tom Willis of Florida State and Raghib Ismail of Notre Dame.

The Heisman race will indeed be interesting. More people than ever could get votes. Instead of recognizing top five Heisman vote getters, it could be the top 10. The difference is that no one is a clear-cut favorite. But maybe that's not so bad.

Bowl game remains possibility for USC

By CHRIS SILVESTRI

Sports Editor
Mississippi State and USC appear to be the front-runners for an invitation to the 1989 Independence Bowl.

"Let's put it this way," said Penny Lee, the bowl's assistant executive director. "We are only sending representatives to the Mississippi State and USC games this weekend."

Heading into its showdown with arch-rival Clemson, USC's football team remains as one of a number of teams still in contention for a bid to the Independence Bowl, which will be played Dec. 16 in Shreveport, La.

Other than USC and Mississippi State, Independence Bowl officials are also considering Florida and Kentucky as possible prospects.

The Independence Bowl had been considering Texas Tech and Mississippi before those two teams agreed to play in other bowls.

Texas Tech apparently will be playing in the All-American Bowl, and Mississippi will be playing in the Liberty Bowl.

Still, much is undecided. "It's a little bit up in the air right now," Lee said. "Basically, we are going to wait until the games are over Saturday before we make any decisions."

This puts added pressure on the

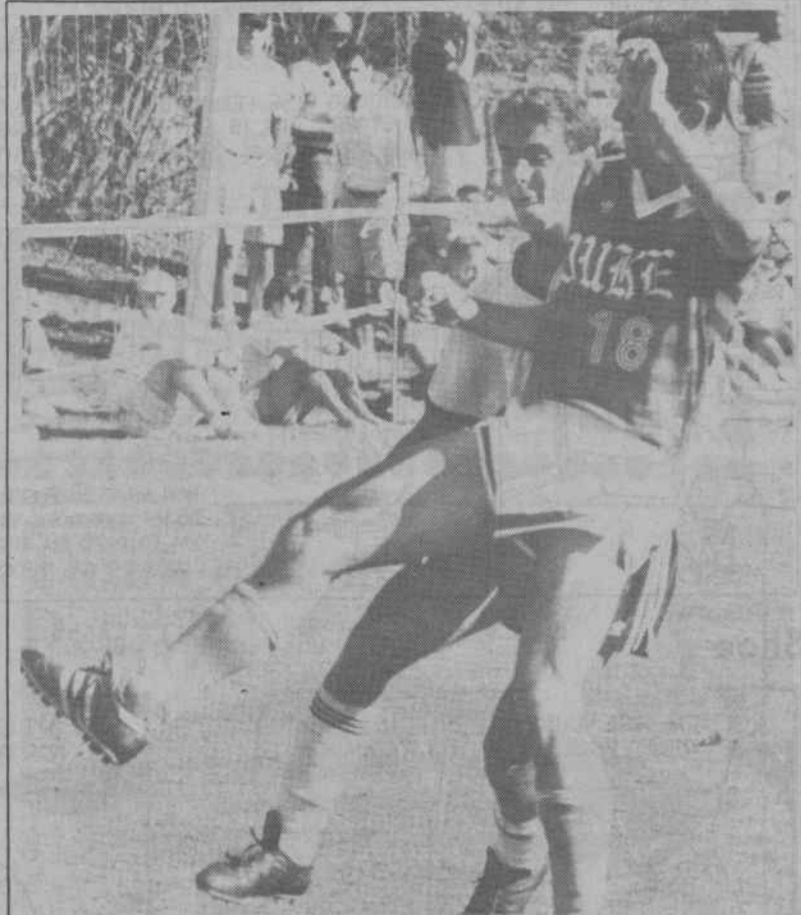
"Let's put it this way. We are only sending representatives to the Mississippi State and USC games this weekend."

Penny Lee
Assistant executive director
Independence Bowl

Gamecocks, 6-3-1, to make a strong showing in their nationally televised game against the Tigers at Williams-Brice Stadium Saturday.

"A win would certainly make USC look better," Lee said. "But I don't know if we would kick them out of contention if they didn't win."

Mississippi State, 5-4, could make a strong bid for the invitation with a win over Louisiana State this weekend. The Gamecocks will need to at least keep the score close in their match with Clemson to remain a strong contender for an invitation.



Close quarters

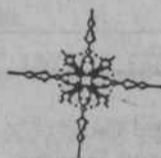
Gamecock freshman Ruben Tufino fights off a Duke defender in Sunday's 2-1 NCAA Soccer Tournament first round victory. USC will play Wake Forest on Sunday in second round action. The match starts at 1:30 p.m. at Polo Field in Winston-Salem, N.C.

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