

Sports MONDAY

A Sooner Song of Supremacy

BY TREY CLARK

As the Oklahoma Sooners romped to a 13-2 victory over the vaunted Florida State Seminoles to win their seventh national championship Jan. 4, millions of fans across the country sat with gaping mouths. The Sooners were between 11 and 13 point underdogs leading up to the date of the Orange Bowl, and just about every college football analyst picked FSU to win.

But this was no upset.

If these two teams play again in two weeks, the final outcome would be the same. Oklahoma has without question the best college football team in the nation.

Most critics claim that an off-night by Heisman Trophy-winning FSU quarterback Chris Weinke and a couple of dropped balls by the receivers was the difference in the game. You can throw those excuses out the window. The reason OU won, plain and simple, is because it is the most well-coached team in college football.

What other reason could there be for the complete shutout pitched by the Sooners' defense? A bad night by Seminoles' quarterback Weinke has never resulted in zero offensive points, and receivers are going to drop the ball a few times when you throw the ball 40-plus times a game.

The game plan devised by Oklahoma Head Coach Bob Stoops and co-defensive coordinators Mike Stoops and Brent Venables was complex and deceiving. Florida State's offense never had a clue as to what OU was going to pull out of its hat, and the defense made Weinke visibly uneasy whenever he dropped back to pass. The Seminoles tried to offset the defense with their run attack, but Oklahoma only allowed one run of more than five yards, and that was a Weinke scramble that resulted in a fumble recovered by the Sooners.

On the offensive side, it may appear that OU had a poor game. It was a difficult match-up playing against one of the top defenses in the nation, but the Sooners were not out on the field to engage in a shootout. The main goal of the offense was to eat the clock, keep the ball safe against the opportunistic Seminoles and score enough points to win. Had Florida State performed better offensively, you would have seen OU light it up more. There was just no need for it.

Above all the other intangibles in the championship game, you could see that the Sooners expected to win the game. As the final seconds ticked away, you didn't see OU players crying in elation of a victory. They were excited, yet composed. Oklahoma's coaching staff would not allow its players to take Las Vegas spreads and lack of media respect to heart. Come to think of it, that probably wasn't difficult; all the team needed to do was remember that it had seven victories over bowl teams to get to where they were.

The national title victory over Florida State raises that total to eight. And don't be surprised if the same thing happens next year.

Trey Clark told you so.

Santa Barbara Soars Against LMU, Then Buck the Broncos in Big West Opener

BY ELIAV APPELBAUM
Staff Writer

After losing three straight games and falling to 2-7, the UCSB men's basketball team wanted to turn its season around and end the year on a positive note.

Santa Barbara finished December with a bang by crunching Loyola Marymount 85-69 at the Thunderdome. The Gauchos followed up their last win of non-conference play with a come-from-behind Big West opening victory on Jan. 4 over Boise State, 81-75. The win bolstered the team's current record to 4-7, 1-0 in the Big West Conference.

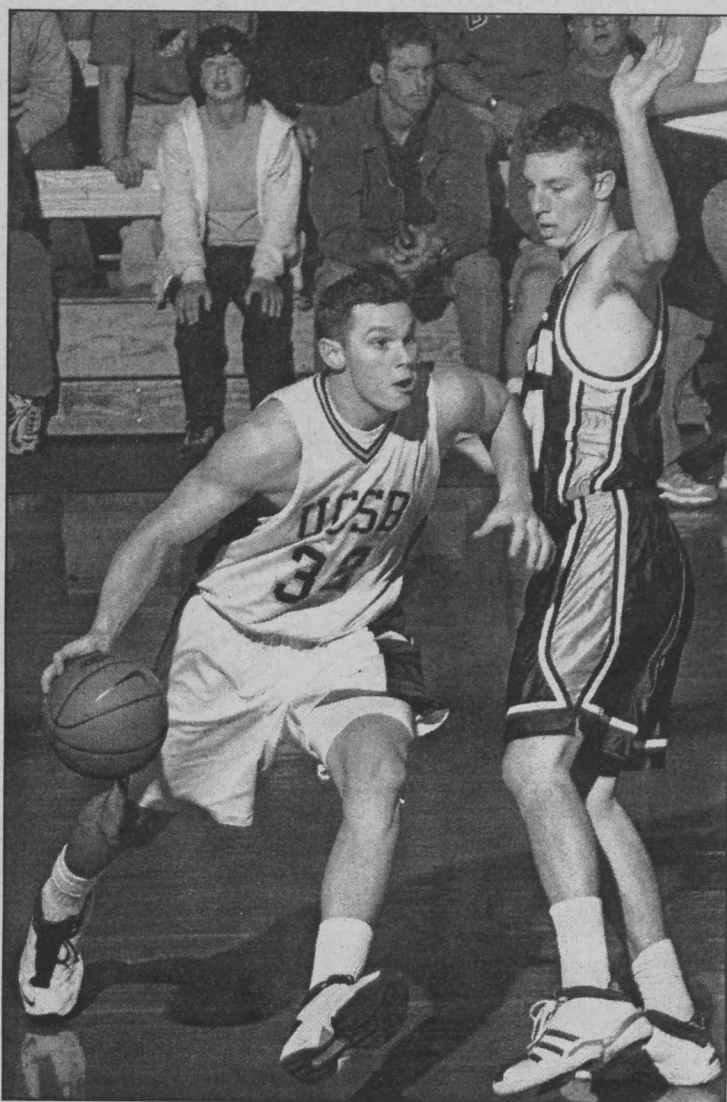
UCSB Head Coach Bob Williams started three freshmen against LMU for the first time in school history. Redshirt freshman guard Nick Jones paced the UCSB youth movement with a career-high 19 points. Guard Branduinn Fullove punched in 13 points while adding five rebounds and five assists. Point guard Jacoby Atako scored four

points, dished out four assists and ripped away two steals in the victory to round out the contributions from the starting youngsters.

LMU led 38-37 at the half, yet the Gauchos countered the Lions' roar with 60 percent shooting in the second half. Santa Barbara put its jets on during a 15-6 run after the game was tied 55-55 with 10:03 remaining in the second half, ultimately putting LMU away.

"I think we played real well together," freshman forward Casey Cook said. "We depended on each other. Before, we took selfish shots. Against LMU, we moved the ball well and always made the extra pass. We decided to come out and play real hard on the defensive end and with more intensity. We came out and made LMU play at our level and they had trouble playing with us."

Junior forward Mike Vukovich drilled in 16 points



JASON SCHOCK / DAILY NEXUS FILE

Freshman forward Casey Cook and the rest of the Gauchos hope to sweep past Cal State Fullerton for their third straight victory Thursday.

and pulled down six boards and senior guard LaRon Bryant scored 10 points and had two steals in limited action. Veteran sophomore guard B.J. Ward came off the bench for seven points and four assists and senior forward Juliano Jordani had eight

points and five rebounds.

In the Big West opener against Boise State, the Gauchos rallied from a nine-point deficit in the second half

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Gauchos Look to Trample Opponents in Big West Play

BY ELIAV APPELBAUM
Staff Writer

two minutes of UCSB's victory.

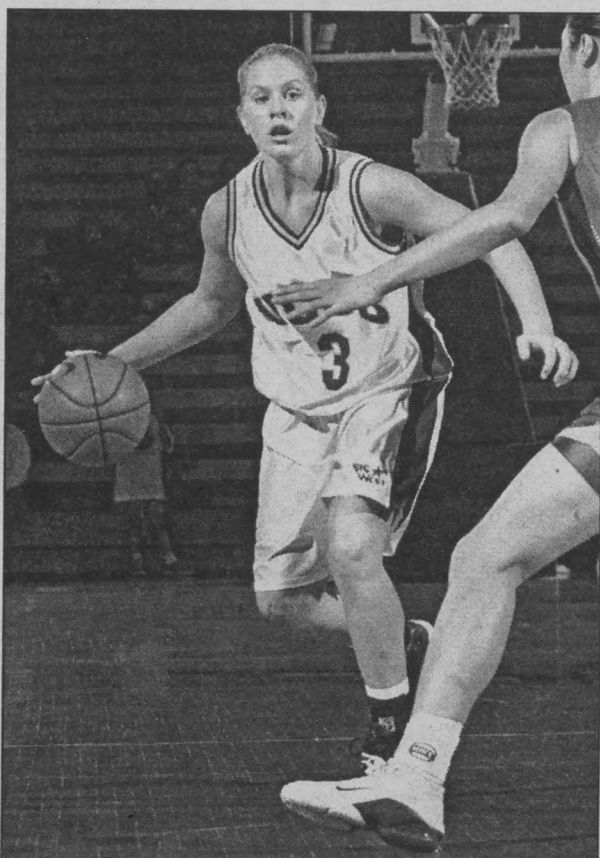
Senior forward Nicole Greathouse

rebounds. Freshman guard Lisa Willett pumped in 10 points and six boards.

In its 71-64 victory over Kansas, Santa Barbara was led by senior forward Rachelle Rogers' career-high 27 points and freshman center Lindsay Taylor's 11 points and seven rebounds. Hansen contributed 10 points and five assists against the Jayhawks.

Against Northwestern, the Gauchos pulled away from the Wildcats in the final ten minutes of the contest to win 72-59. Christensen led UCSB with 15 points and 15 boards. Taylor scored a career-high 12 points. Rogers and Greathouse both put in 10 points against the 'Cats.

Santa Barbara could not pull off road upsets against #12 Penn State and #23 Oregon, and the team's road woes continued as the Gauchos fell to St. Mary's 59-56 on Sunday afternoon. Santa Barbara received its strongest play from Christensen, as she compiled 47 points in the three defeats. UCSB as a team could not shoot better than 40.4 percent in any of the losses, and also lost the turnover battle against all of its opponents.



JASON SCHOCK / DAILY NEXUS FILE

Junior guard Kristyn Miller and the Gauchos are banking for greater success against Cal State Fullerton on Tuesday.

The UCSB women's basketball team has hovered around the .500 mark all season and has struggled to recapture the success in terms of victories that the program has achieved in previous seasons. The Gauchos head toward their Big West opener with Cal State Fullerton on Tuesday with a record of 6-6 and hope for a promising revival against their conference opponents.

During the past few weeks, Santa Barbara did pull off some big wins against good clubs, including a previously #23 ranked Virginia, Kansas and Northwestern.

Sophomore shooting guard Jess Hansen poured in a career-high 26 points in a 78-66 victory over the Cavaliers; Hansen also dished out six assists and chucked in six treys. UCSB led 17-7 in the opening six minutes of the contest, yet Virginia continually climbed back into the game.

Santa Barbara rallied behind each other when its leading scorer, junior forward Kayte Christensen, fouled out of the contest with the score tied 61-61 and only 5:15 remaining. The Gauchos blazed ahead while outscoring Virginia 17-5 the rest of the game, holding the Cavaliers to zero points in the

final scored 15 points and pulled down 14 Thunderdome.

The Gauchos open their Big West Conference competition against Cal State Fullerton this Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the

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BASKETBALL

Continued from p.1A

to pull off the victory. The Broncos took a 53-44 lead with 15:20 to go before UCSB trimmed the lead. Santa Barbara used a 6-2 run to cut the lead to 55-50, and with 5:33 left remaining in the game the Gauchos erased their deficit when sophomore forward Mark Hull nailed a 20-foot jumper in the right corner to tie the game at 66-66.

UCSB made 6-8 free throws in the closing moments of the game to send BSU packing. Santa Barbara's Vukovich scored in double-figures for his sixth straight game with a career-high 20 points. Fullove also helped the winning cause by contributing a career-high 16 points and seven assists.

"It's very exciting and very good for us to win [our first conference game]," Cook said. "It was very important that we won the LMU game and have confidence going into league. We'd like to win the Big West and it has been a goal we've been working on the whole season."

Improved shooting the past two games has led to a resurgence in the team's fortunes. Before their current two-game winning streak, the Gauchos lost three in a row to USC, St. Mary's and Riverside. The Gauchos shot a sizzling 52.5 percent against LMU and improved on that mark by smoking a season best 54.9 percent of their shots against the Broncos.

"Playing at home has been a big help for our shooting," Vukovich said. "We've been shooting a lot after

practice."

UCSB faces Cal State Fullerton on Jan. 11 at 7 p.m. for their second Big West game of the season.

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YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE
By Linda C. Black

Today's Birthday (Jan. 8). You're full of good ideas, but a partner ensures your success. Competition energizes you in January. Do the research in February; then trust your intuition in March. Postpone a household project in April and make time for a favorite playmate in May. The work and pay are available in June. Hand the reigns to an expert in July. Plan your romantic jaunt for mid-September. Support an inspired team in late October. Good news sparkles in December.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

Aries (March 21-April 19) - Today is a 5 - If you feel like somebody's draining your energy, you're right. Quite a bit of conflict is going on. You're not likely to win this fight. Pretend you're a student, instead. Listen carefully and take notes. Expect an exam later.

Taurus (April 20-May 20) - Today is a 9 - You're the big kid on the block. You have the good sense everybody needs. Be a good friend to a person who thinks the world of you. If you're looking for love, look no further.

Gemini (May 21-June 21) - Today is a 5 - You're an intellectual. You prefer reason to emotion. Today that's not going to get you far. It's a soap opera out there. An influential person could take wise cracks the wrong way, so keep your witty retorts to yourself.

Cancer (June 22-July 22) - Today is an 8 - Everything will work out fine; more love's available than ever before. Make time for an important discussion with your mate and don't be alarmed if the two of you don't agree. Also, save time to kiss and make up later.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22) - Today is a 4 - You've got more work than you can finish. Beside that, somebody's nagging you. Don't complain. Prioritize and keep people apprised of your progress. This is good for you, as you will eventually see, possibly by this Wednesday.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) - Today is a 9 - Talking your sweetheart into doing whatever you want should be easy. He or she is in an affectionate mood, and you're just so cute, how could anybody turn you down? They can't, so don't speculate. Use the time to issue orders, instead.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) - Today is a 6 - Good thing you're generally lucky. You could run into some interesting problems. You're good at balancing, but today's a real challenge. It turns out well, but winning this one could be expensive.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) - Today is a 9 - Your intuition's excellent, especially regarding love. You'll know exactly what to do, and your timing's perfect. Use something you've recently learned to stay in control. That's always your favorite position.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) - Today is a 4 - Is the wolf pounding on your door? Maybe you'd better lie low for a while. Spend time in seclusion, figuring out how to pay off everything that's due. It might require that you do something you'd rather not.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) - Today is an 8 - If you and a partner are having a disagreement, get a referee. A mutual friend would love the chance to tell you both what to do. You'll end up feeling blessed with what you do have, instead of grumpy about what you don't.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) - Today is a 5 - You'd like to retreat into fantasy, but you have to be practical. You can't put it off any longer. The person who wanted what you were going to provide last week is about to come get it. Stop churning out excuses and get to work.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20) - Today is a 9 - You don't have to look for love. Love is likely to knock on your door. Prince Charming or the Magical Princess may be riding over as we speak. Now, if one of you can be practical about money, you'll have a win-win situation.

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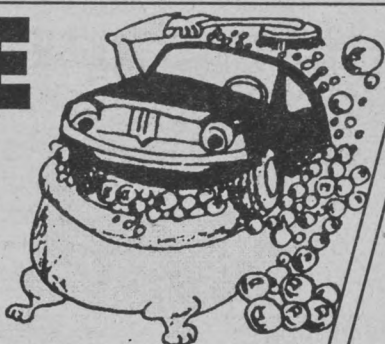


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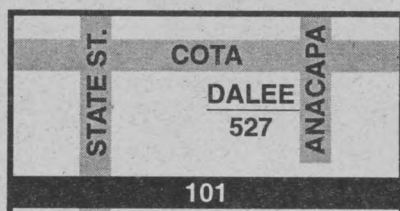


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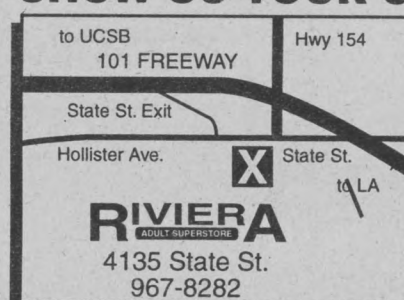
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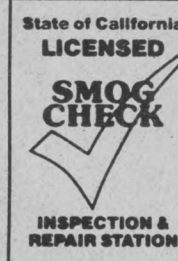
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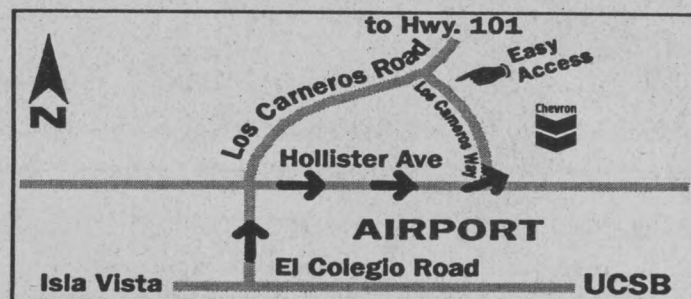
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