A Sooner Song of Supremacy

BY TEREY CLARK

As the Oklahoma Sooners roamed 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 Charlie Ward and a couple of dropped balls by the receivers was the difference in the game. You can throw that 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 pinched by the Seminoles? A bad night by Florida State's quarterback Charlie Ward has never resulted in zero offensive points, and receivers 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 Wincey 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 Wincey 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 to light it up more. There was just no need.

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 15-4 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 and pulled down six boards and senior guard LaRon Bryant scored 10 points and had two steals in limited action. Veteran sophomore guard R.J. Ward came off the bench for seven points and four assists and senior forward Juliano Jordan 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 and outscored the Broncos 47-37 in the second half.

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

BY ELAY APPELBAUM

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 crushing Loyola Marymount 85-49 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 the 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 Brandun Rollins punched in 13 points while adding five rebounds and five assists. Point guard Jacoby Akrako scored four points, dished out four assists and ripped away two steals in the victory to round out the contributions from the starting youngsters.

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

The Gauchos Look to Trample Opponents in Big West Play

BY ELAY APPELBAUM

The UCSB women's basketball team has hovered around the .500 mark all season and has struggled to recapture the magic 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 career-high 26 points in a 78-69 victory over the Cavaliers. Hansen also dished out six assists and sucked 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 its senior guard B.J. Ward come off the bench for seven points and four assists and senior forward Juliano Jordan had eight points and five rebounds. Freshman guard Lisa Willet 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 13 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 59-64 on Sunday afternoon. Santa Barbara received its strongest play from Christensen, as the 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.

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

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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 Hall 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. Fullelove 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 teams 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 scoring 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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