



OHIO U. LEFT HALFBACK CLYDE THOMAS TWISTS OFF TACKLE IN FIRST QUARTER THROUGH A FORMIDABLE TANGLE OF LINEMEN

Biggest frog in the small pond

Ohio University is undefeated in Mid-America Conference, untied and, sadly, unranked

AT ONE TIME there existed in the minds of the people around Athens, Ohio a wisp of doubt as to whether the home town team, Ohio University of the Mid-America Conference, really was better than Minnesota, leader of the Big Ten and the top-ranked team in the nation. Then last Saturday, Ohio whipped unbeaten Bowling Green 14-7 while Minnesota was being upset by Purdue, a four-time loser, 23-14. In Athens all doubt disappeared.

For Minnesota, which had succeeded in winning "the big game" against powerful Iowa the week before, the loss was difficult to accept. With it went its undefeated season, the No. 1 ranking, and perhaps a

bowl invitation. Purdue, led by Quarterback Bernie Allen's accurate passing, took the opening kickoff and moved 80 yards to a touchdown in eight plays. "We couldn't adjust quick enough," said Minnesota's Murray Warmath after the game. "They were playing inspired ball. When they got their noses in front they liked the feeling, and we could never catch up."

Minnesota's defeat does not automatically place Ohio University—unbeaten in nine straight games—in the top-ranked spot, despite opinions from Athens. As a matter of fact, Ohio will not be ranked in the top 10, or even 20. Ohio University, like the rest of the schools in the Mid-America Conference—Western Michigan, Marshall, Miami (Ohio), Bowling Green, Kent State and Toledo—bears the designation "small college," a stigma that bars it from consideration as a football power. It

doesn't matter that Ohio has scored 221 points to its opponents' 28. It doesn't matter that Ohio beat Boston University by a larger margin than Syracuse or Penn State did. No small college, say the men who rank the teams every week, can compete with a large college.

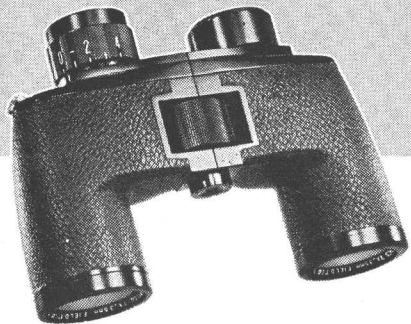
That the NCAA lists Ohio University as a small college is absurd. Ohio has 8,100 students, more than Notre Dame, more than Indiana, more in fact than most of the colleges in the NCAA's university division.

"It's not right that we should be in the small-college category," says Coach Bill Hess of Ohio. "It hurts, but there isn't much we can do about it. In time it will change."

Bowling Green's backfield coach, Bob Dudley, has found there are practical difficulties in being in the small-college category. "The designation can be troublesome when you're try-

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COLLEGE FOOTBALL *continued*

ing to arrange a schedule," he says. "Last year I sent 60 letters offering to play any team, anywhere. Big Ten, Southwest, just anyone. We got answers from all of them, but only five were faintly encouraging. Some of the major schools frankly admitted they had nothing to gain by playing a small college. Others asked for a preposterous \$20,000 or \$30,000 guarantee."

One group of people does not concern itself with what category a college is in. That group is the pro scouts. In the Mid-America Conference they discovered Mel Triplett and Bob Schnelker, now with the Giants, and Vince Costello of the Browns. This season scouts have made frequent visits to Mid-America campuses.

Ohio U. is situated in the hilly, sparsely settled southeastern part of the state, about 75 miles from Columbus and Ohio State. The faculty points with pride to the school's Ivy-like layout, with Georgian Colonial quads surrounded by ancient sycamores and near-extinct elms.

It is no accident that much of the campus resembles Harvard, for President John Calhoun Baker, the man responsible for much of the school's growth, is a former dean of the Harvard Business School. In the 15 years that Dr. Baker has been president, the school's enrollment has grown from 2,030. Its recreational facilities have grown, too. There is now a nine-hole golf course, the only college-owned indoor hockey rink in the state, a new physical education center that contains eight of the best basketball courts in the country and a student union which houses bowling alleys, ping pong and billiard tables.

"I'd always hoped I would go to a school like this," said Dick Green, Ohio's starting center. "It took only one visit to the campus to convince me. I love it. It's like the college campuses you see in the movies."

It is this sentiment and not, incidentally, a fine football team, that has helped Ohio University get its share of the 700 players who graduate from Ohio high schools every year.

Bill Hess, Ohio's 37-year-old coach, is a former assistant to Woody Hayes of Ohio State, and it is said that when Hayes retires Hess may get his job. If so, it will not be the first time a Mid-America Conference alumnus went

on to a major coaching position. Such famous coaching names as Weeb Ewbank, Red Blaik, Paul Dietzel, Ara Parseghian and Woody Hayes himself all came from Mid-America.

This is Hess's third year as Ohio's coach. In that time he has won 20 games, lost four and tied four. Hess is of the new school of football coaches, a meticulous planner and organizer. His effort to be close to his players borders on compulsion. During pre-season practice he moves into the dorm with his team and during the season eats at the training table. His wife occasionally hires a baby sitter and sneaks down to be with him.

Although the big wins over Toledo (48-7), Western Michigan (24-0) and



HAYESLIKE HESS WATCHES FROM BENCH

Miami (21-0) indicated that Ohio was the best team in the Mid-America Conference this season, there was no definite proof until the Bowling Green game. Bowling Green, coached by Doyt Perry, had won 18 straight games and last year was the national small-college champion. Perry, like Hess, came from Ohio State, where he coached under Hayes for three years. Unlike Hess, he holds himself aloof from his players. He is also one of the great pessimists in the game. Three weeks ago he told a *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reporter: "OU will beat us by 28 or 32 points, depending upon

whether Hess decides to run or kick." Just before game time, Perry reduced the estimate to two touchdowns. "I have been beaten by more than that only once in my career," he said.

Bill Hess roared at the prediction. "That man is the saddest, sorrow-fullest, most successful coach I know. I've heard he even denies he teaches control football. Not so. We play the same game. Even the teams resemble one another. Our basic attack is the power sweep and the belly series, and theirs is too. We have a strong 200-pound fullback, Bob Brooks, and they have Bob Reublin, 215 pounds. We have fast halfbacks like Bob Harrison and Clyde Thomas. They have Don Lisbon and Chuck Comer. But they also have trackman Bernie Casey, who weighs 210 pounds."

Bowling Green's 13,000-seat stadium was sold out 10 days before the game. The athletic department squeezed in temporary stands to the edge of the running track, and when that source of seats gave out it searched for wall angles in which to pack a few folding chairs. As the game began there were at least another 1,000 spectators leaning over the parapets and peering out of windows of adjoining buildings to watch the play.

It was a game for purists, basic and powerful. It had blocking and tackling and a careful consideration of the fickle factors that often decide a game. Bowling Green scored first, going 90 yards in 19 plays. Only one of the plays was a pass.

Ohio, behind for the first time this season, scored before the first half ended on a three-yard run.

The score was still tied in the fourth period when Bowling Green's cautious play may have cost it the game. Faced with a fourth down and one from mid-field, Coach Perry chose not to gamble. "I decided we were apt to have a better chance if we kicked and kept the pressure on them," Perry said later.

But Ohio took the punt deep in its own territory and started a slow, meticulous march that ended with the winning touchdown. The victory gave Ohio the Mid-America Conference championship. The team will undoubtedly be voted small-college champion.

"Ohio," said Bowling Green's Doyt Perry, "is good enough to beat any team in the country on a given day." He will get no argument from the people of Athens, Ohio.

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