

Sooners' win Big 12 victory

DALLAS (AP) — When the Big Eight and Southwest Conference merged to form the Big 12 "super-conference," this was what its founders expected every football season: A unanimous national champion. Three Top 10 teams. Five in the Top 25.

Oklahoma's victory in the Orange Bowl, which capped an undefeated season and No. 1 ranking, was as much a crowning achievement for the 5-year-old conference as it was for the school.

The Sooners gave the Big 12 its first outright national champion. In 1997, Nebraska was voted No. 1 in the coaches poll, but was second to Michigan in The Associated Press writers poll.

There also were near misses in '96 and '98, when the Cornhuskers and Kansas State saw undefeated seasons end with Big 12 championship losses to Texas and Texas A&M.

"It's great to get the monkey off our back as far as not having won an undisputed national championship," commissioner Kevin Weiberg said Thursday. "Internally, we weren't putting that kind of pressure on ourselves, but when the conference was formed, there were some high expectations. And every year that goes by that you don't get to that level, it does add to it."

The Cornhuskers were eighth in this season's final AP poll and Kansas State was ninth, marking the first time the league has finished the season with

three teams ranked that high.

While the Pac-10 topped the Big 12 by having teams ranked Nos. 3, 4 and 7, the West Coast league had no other teams in the top 25. The Big 12 also had Texas at No. 12 and Iowa State at No. 25.

The SEC placed the most teams in the Top 25 with six, but five of them were ranked between No. 18 and 24. A seventh SEC school, Tennessee, was one voting point shy of tying Iowa State for 25th.

This is the first time since 1981 that the Cyclones have been ranked, and it's their first appearance in the postseason poll since 1976.

"To have a breakthrough for them is another good mark for the conference, that there's good depth," Weiberg said. "Just a couple of years ago, Oklahoma was 3-5 in the Big 12. It shows you can go from being somewhat mediocre to strong. That ought to give hope to everyone in our conference."

In becoming the conference's first undisputed champion, the Sooners (13-0) struck a mighty blow for the Big 12 South, which has been the weaker half of a league that's often been bitterly divided between the divisions.

But Oklahoma's 13-2 victory over Florida State couldn't hide an ugly disparity in the bowl records of the divisions.

With victories this bowl season by Nebraska, Kansas State, Iowa State, North schools are 18-5. OU's victory

was only the second for the South against 12 losses, including defeats this bowl season by Texas, Texas A&M and Texas Tech.

Seminole coach Bobby Bowden apparently expected the Sooners to continue that Big 12 South skid.

"They are a better team than I thought they were. They were for real," he said. "Bob Stoops was saying it all week, but we all assumed — I assumed — that the Big 12 wasn't that good."

The biggest obstacle the Sooners faced was getting out of the conference unscathed. They beat Texas when it was No. 10, Kansas State when it was No. 2 and Nebraska when it was No. 1.

Oklahoma also won at Texas A&M and held off Kansas State in a rematch in the league's title game, which could've gained a reputation as a graveyard for national championship dreams had the Sooners stumbled.

"That's just something you have to live with on an annual basis in any conference that has the kind of strength and depth of quality teams we have," Weiberg said. "That makes what Oklahoma did even more impressive."

The Big 12 also had five Top 25 teams in the 1997 and '98 postseason polls.

While there have been two Top 10 teams in three of the previous four years, the best showing among those was last year when Nebraska was third and Kansas State sixth.

New head coach may cost Chiefs

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — If the Kansas City Chiefs can hire Dick Vermeil as head coach, it might cost them on draft day.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported Friday that the St. Louis Rams, who still have the retired Vermeil under contract for one more year, want a first-round pick in exchange for the right to hire him.

"My interpretation is, he can't go to Kansas City without our consent, which we haven't granted at this point," Rams president John Shaw said Thursday. "Right now, there is some dispute. If a coach still has years remaining (on his contract), he can't go to another club without our permission."

The Chiefs, meanwhile, refused to confirm reports that they fired Gunther Cunningham on Thursday after two lackluster seasons and want to replace him with Vermeil, who led the Rams to last year's Super Bowl title.

However, Shaw said, the Chiefs telephoned him Wednesday asking for permission to speak to Vermeil.

The matter could wind up being decided by NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue. A league spokesman confirmed Thursday that both parties have

taken the dispute over whether the Chiefs can hire Vermeil to the NFL.

"It is a matter of interpretation of a contract, and if the parties can't agree, then it could go to the commissioner. We have had conversations with both teams," NFL spokesman Greg Aiello said.

"If they cannot reach an agreement, then the commissioner could play a role. This is similar to the situations in recent years with the Patriots and Jets involving Bill Belichick and, before that, Bill Parcells."

Vermeil, 64, was out of football this season after the Rams beat Tennessee in the Super Bowl.

He has been a close friend of Chiefs president Carl Peterson for more than 25 years. They coached together at UCLA in the 1970s, and when Vermeil led the 1980 Philadelphia Eagles to the Super Bowl, Peterson worked in the team's personnel department.

Cunningham, 16-16 in two years as Marty Schottenheimer's successor with the Chiefs, was apparently informed Thursday morning that he would not be retained.

The usually accessible Cunningham could not be reached for comment.

"He's home, but he's not available,"

Rene Cunningham told The Associated Press.

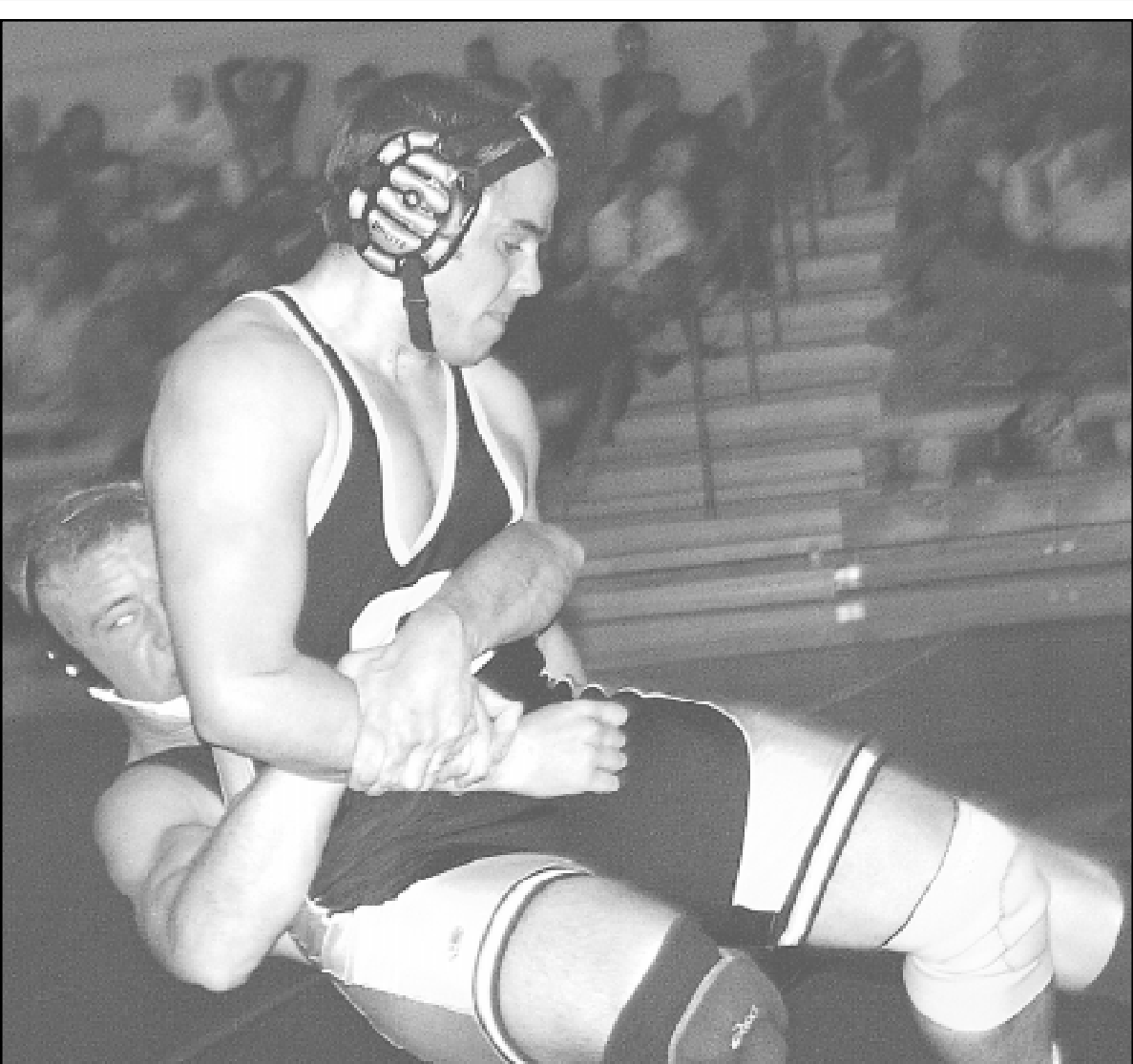
Asked how her husband's spirits were holding up, she said, "He's doing OK now."

One source told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity, that Cunningham, a respected defensive coordinator until he became head coach, might take a similar position with St. Louis. This would lessen the compensation due the Rams.

ESPN.com said the Rams denied the Chiefs permission over the past two days to speak with Vermeil. The Rams faxed a copy of Vermeil's resignation letter to the league office.

Neither Vermeil nor Peterson could be reached. The Chiefs posted a statement on their Web site Thursday afternoon quoting Peterson as saying his evaluation of the team was "an ongoing one."

"As I stated previously, I will not be constrained by a timetable," he was quoted as saying. "I am in the midst of an in-depth look at our entire football operation and that takes time. The evaluation process includes me, coaches, players, and support staff. When I've concluded, then I will make my decisions."



Cowboy Thomas Tompkins (above) pulled down Colby wrestler Bo Kleinsorge during the dual meet Thursday night. Bryce Abbey (below) tried to take down Colby wrestler Drue Herl.

Photos by Jay Kelley/The Goodland Daily News

Cowboys lose meet to Eagles

Goodland wrestlers fell to the Colby Eagles in their first dual match after the winter break on Thursday night at the Colby High School gym.

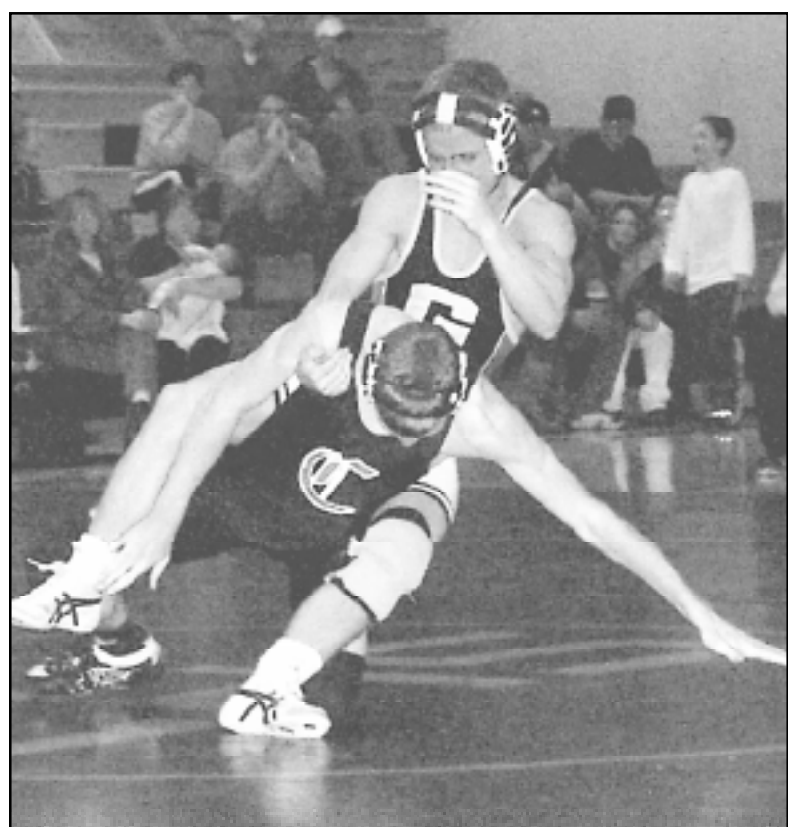
The Cowboys won six of the 15 matches they wrestled for a final score of 39-25.

The Cowboys, ranked fifth in Class 4A schools before the loss to the second ranked Eagles, still have a chance to recover this weekend when the varsity team travels to the Liberal tournament to face wrestlers from Kansas, Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico.

Coach Chris Guillot said the Liberal tournament should be the toughest of the year. The two-day tournament starts at 1 p.m. on Friday and 8 a.m. on Saturday.

The dual with the Eagles was close with Goodland in the lead 6-0 after the first match, tied 6-6 in the second match and pulling ahead again in the fifth match, 16-12, after Bryce Bahe scored a major decision over the Eagles Schuyler. The Cowboys were leading 22-18 by the eighth match, but Colby pulled ahead into solid domination for the remainder of the meet after Zach Luedke put the Eagles ahead with a pin of Shandon Wolak at 152. Luedke pinned Wolak in 1:48 and gave Colby a 24-22 lead. The Eagles built on their lead from then on, losing only one match, a 5-0 decision against Eric Seemann in the 275 division.

Individual results
103 — Blaze Bahe pinned Doug Hurr in 2:40.
112 — Kyle Schulte was pinned by



Eric Luedke in :51 seconds.
119 — Danny Mainus, of Colby, received a forfeit.
125 — Bryce Abbey pinned Drue Herl in 5:33.
130 — Bryce Bahe scored a major decision, of 8 points or more, over Schuyler Sharpe, 12-2.
135 — Kyle Whisler was pinned by Matt Murray in 5:11.
140 — Taylor Brack won by decision over Brooks Wederski 6-3.
145 — Max Saint beat Tyler Hellmuth 7-3.
152 — Shandon Wolak was pinned by Eagle Zach Luedke in 1:48.
160 — Chris Zimmerman was defeated by Chris Erickson 5-3.
171 — Jordan Bedore was defeated by Damien Stephens 7-3.
189 — Thomas Tompkins lost to Bo Kleinsorge 9-3.
215 — Brandon Nemecek was pinned by Justin Finley in 1:45.
275 — Curtis Swager defeated Eric Seemann 5-0.

Avalanche tie game with Sharks 2-2

DENVER (AP) — San Jose coach Darryl Sutter was so angry about a holding penalty called against his team in overtime that he refused to talk with the media after the game.

Sutter might have overreacted to the call on Gary Suter. San Jose had Steve Shields in goal, and it seemed like nothing was going to get past him. Shields had 38 saves, including

seven in overtime, as the Sharks and Colorado Avalanche skated to a 2-2 tie on Thursday night.

Colorado's Ray Bourque scored the tying goal at 5:45 of the third period.

In a battle of division leaders, Colorado had a 40-21 edge in shots. On Colorado's power-play opportunity in overtime, Shields stopped all four shots.

Shields admitted he faced several difficult shots in overtime.

"(Joe) Sakic had a tough one, and (Milan) Hejduk took a slap shot and hit my glove," he said. "There were a few tough saves, and you have to be lucky on all of those."

Check out these country homes at www.shayrealty.com

COUNTRY HOME ON 4 ACRES JUST LISTED: Nice 1,456 sq. ft. 3 bdrm/2 bath home, 2-car garage w/workshop area, large pole storage bldg., nice windbreak. Adjacent 30 acres may be available for lease to purchaser. Priced right! located on Hwy. 25, 17 mi. North of Colby, KS. Call Diana.

CHARMING HOME ON 16± ACRES: Three bdrm, 1.5 bath home w/5,000 sq. ft. Butler bldg, guest house, grove trees. Purchase with or without elk and elk equipment. Access to I-70, east edge of Edson, just 26 mi. west of Colby, KS.
TWO-STORY HOME ON 98 AC. NATIVE PASTURE: Nice 1,954 sq. ft. 4-bdrm, 2 bath home with 2-car garage, metal barn, workshop & corrals. Great access to Interstate-70, just 8 mi. W. of Goodland, KS.

HOME & IMPROVEMENTS ON 6.7 ACRES: Four bdrm, 1.5 bath home with basement, nice family room & large deck. Features barn, 32'x41' quonset & storage bldgs. Priced to sell! 11 E. of St. Francis, KS.

SHAY REALTY, Inc.
107 E. Washington, St. Francis KS

Rodney W. Shay, 785-332-2566
Ryan W. Shay, 785-332-2566
Reese W. Shay, 970-332-3350
Rebecca Jordan, 785-332-2566
Diana Araabright, 785-626-3196
www.shayrealty.com



Happy 15th Birthday!
Mom, Dad, & Brothers 2

AgraSafe Program

Farm Safety Demonstration

"First on the Scene"

Sherman County 4-H Building
Tuesday, January 16, 2001, 5:00-8:30 p.m.

Contact Person: Dana Belshe, K-State Research and Extension/Sherman County (785) 899-4880
Valarie Kaup, Sherman County Farm Bureau, County Coordinator (785) 899-2378

Meal is Provided: RSVP by January 11, 2001

When an accident occurs, do you know... when, how and who to call for help? when and how to give first aid treatment? whether to move the victim or not?

This program is ideal for farm families and farm employees.

Information will be shared concerning:

- Machinery Entanglements
- Machinery Overturns
- Chemical and Grain Bin Emergencies
- Reporting Farm Emergencies

Sponsors & Cooperating Agencies

Sherman County Farm Bureau
Sherman County Extension Service
Sherman County EMS
Farm Bureau Insurance (Tim Rath Agency)
Mueller Grain
First National Bank
Goodland Greenline
B's Pump and Well
BankWest
Frontier Equity Exchange
State Farm Ins. (Jim Neal Agency)
Sherman County Extension Service
Western State Bank
The Insurance Agency
W-R Equipment Inc.
Collingwood Grain
Shores Brothers
Orscheln Farm & Home Supply
McDonalds
SIGCO
Yost Farm Supply
Hitchcock

This program is provided by Hays Medical Center as a community health service. Funding for this project was partially provided by The Office of Rural Health Policy.