

FOOTBALL

Flutie 'short': Miami D-back

DAVIE, Fla. (AP) — The Dolphins-Bills rivalry intensified Wednesday when Miami cornerback Sam Madison accused Buffalo quarterback Doug Flutie of being short.

Madison was responding to comments by Flutie, who said Miami's cornerbacks often get away with holding.

"When he's five-foot-five and can't see over the line unless he scrambles, that does make me mad for him to say something like that," Madison said.

"That really touched a nerve with me."

The dispute will be settled Saturday when former CFL most valuable player Flutie and the Bills face Miami in a first-round NFL playoff game.

"They have to get him out of the pocket because he's too short to see over the defensive line," Madison said.

"We're going to be ready for that and get him on the ground and shove some Flutie Flakes down his throat."

The comments by Flutie that angered Madison were posted on the bulletin board in the Dolphins' locker-room.

"It will be important for the officials to pull their flags if (the Dolphins' corner-

Bills battered

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. (AP) — With the playoffs approaching, the Buffalo Bills wanted to avoid snow and injuries. Both have been piling up.

A trip to Miami for the NFL wild-card round will take care of the snow. But the team will need a miracle to heal the wounds in time for Saturday's kickoff.

Injuries have been key in Buffalo's season, even in some of its success. Doug Flutie wouldn't have played had not Rob Johnson been hurt. Young players such as offensive linemen Jamie Nails and Robert Hicks have proven themselves by replacing injured teammates. But the Bills now seem to have more ailing players than comparable replacements.

"The injury list certainly concerns me," said Bills coach Wade Phillips, whose list of 10 injured players includes defensive end Phil Hansen and cornerback Thomas Smith.

The list even includes Flutie, although he'll play. Flutie had a minor leg injury in the Bills' recent loss to the New York Jets and rested last week.

Along with Hansen and Smith, both out with knee sprains, seven defensive players are listed as questionable and that leaves one big question: Can the Bills beat the Dolphins in Miami with so many moving parts not in working order?

backs) start tugging and pulling as usual," Flutie said Monday. "They get away with that a lot."

"If they throw their flags, it's big for us. You can't cover Eric Moulds one-on-one. You can't cover Andre Reed one-on-one."

On Wednesday, Flutie said his comments were merely a reflection of his confidence in his receivers. He said he had no regrets about providing the Dolphins with bulletin-board material.

"What are they going to do, play harder?" he said.

"If that makes someone play harder, why didn't they play that way last week or the week before?"

Miami coach Jimmy Johnson said Flutie's comments were just an attempt to influence the officials. Dolphins veteran defensive back Terrell Buckley was amused by Madison's reaction.

"He looks at it as an insult, but being a veteran, I'm going to wait until I get out there Saturday," Buckley said.

"You don't want to spend your energy getting mad now, or you might be tired by the time the game begins."

Badgers not getting respect

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — The Wisconsin Badgers don't mind being the underdog in the Rose Bowl. They've grown accustomed to being overlooked this season.

Even when Wisconsin was 9-0, national poll voters rated the Badgers just eighth in the country, behind four teams that had lost a game.

The Badgers shared the Big Ten title with Michigan and Ohio State, but it also has been suggested they were merely the third-best team in the conference since they lost 27-10 to the Wolverines and didn't have to face the Buckeyes.

Barry Alvarez, who was in the same spot before guiding Wisconsin to a 21-16 victory over favoured UCLA in the 1995 Rose Bowl, obviously has heard it all before.

"We've never gone about our business worrying about other people's perceptions of us," Alvarez said. "I think any time you win 10 games, you don't have to apologize to anybody."

"I'm only concerned about my group of guys and playing against a very talented UCLA team. That's the only thing that worries me."

Ninth-ranked Wisconsin, winding up its first 10-victory season, comes into Friday's game as a nine-point underdog. Sixth-ranked UCLA (10-1) had its 20-game winning streak end in a 49-45 loss at Miami on Dec. 5.

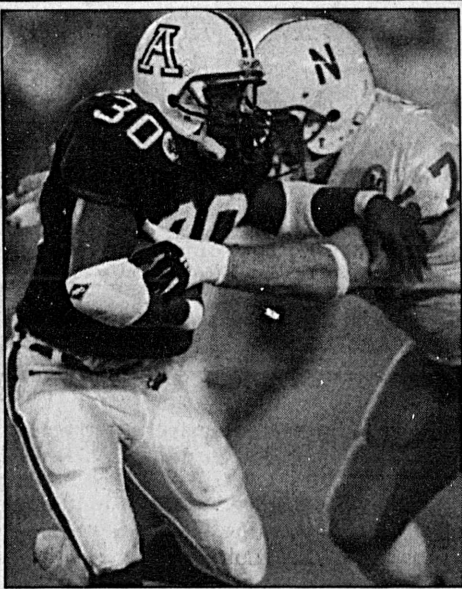
Ron Dayne, the 253-pound tailback who provides most of Wisconsin's offence, is used to playing in relative obscurity, so he considers the Rose Bowl a chance for the Badgers to show what they can do.

"Nobody has given us credit all year, so this is the same," Dayne said. "It hasn't bothered us before and it won't bother us now."

"You never get a lot of attention at Wisconsin. You have to earn people's respect and that's what we want to do."

Defensive end Tom Burke, who led the country with 21 sacks and was the Big Ten defensive player of the year, agreed with Dayne.

"Sooner or later, I hope people will see that we are a good football team, because we are," Burke said.



AP photo
SLIPPERY CAT — Arizona's Troy Canidate gets through the tackle of Nebraska's Chad Kelsay at the Holiday Bowl Wednesday night. The Wildcats slipped past the 'Huskers 23-20, while Idaho scored one more major in a 42-35 win over Southern Miss in the Humanitarian Bowl.

Angelos backs off on 'Skins

WASHINGTON (AP) — Baltimore Orioles owner Peter Angelos has reportedly dropped out of the bidding for the Washington Redskins after declining to raise his offer from just under \$600 million, the Washington Post reported Wednesday.

Five bidders are reportedly still interested in the NFL team and Cooke Stadium:

- New York banker Howard Milstein and Bethesda, Md., businessman Daniel M. Snyder.
- Fort Worth, Tex., investor David Bonderman, Washington developer Ted Lerner and Dallas banker Gerald J. Ford.
- A group led by Phoenix developer Sam Grossman that includes former Redskins coach Joe Gibbs.
- New Jersey Devils owner John J. McMullen and cable television magnate Chuck Dolan.
- Redskins president John Kent Cooke, son of the late owner.

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