



On the line

By Steve Sadler

Smith makes 'Late Night' apology to 'fix' remarks

Having always been a late owl anyway, I applauded two years ago when NBC put "Late Night with Dave Letterman" on the air beginning at 12:30 a.m. Monday through Thursday.

I was never able to watch his first attempt at TV, a morning show, and since he has always been one of my favorite comedians I was happy to know I could watch him late at night.

Previous to now, my gains from watching "Late Night" have been plenty of laughs from skits like "Dial-a-Service" and "Viewer Mail."

Thursday, however, I got even more. Just over an hour after Ted Turner's CNN cable sports report at 11 p.m. I was able to listen to a first-hand, live interview with the man who had dominated CNN's sports headlines.

A lengthy segment of CNN's half-hour sports show was devoted to a comment made by former Baltimore Colt star defensive end Bubba Smith concerning the 1969 Super Bowl.

The report stated that Smith Thursday had said — while in New York promoting a new book — that the Jets' 16-7 victory over the Colts was fixed.

CNN asked several players who had played in the game for their reaction, and predictably, they all expressed surprise and anger at the statement, vehemently denying the game was fixed.

By coincidence (?) Smith was on the Letterman Show that night. It had been announced the previous night he would be on, and I had looked forward to listening to Smith, whom I had always enjoyed before.

After the CNN report, my interest naturally heightened.

Smith seemed almost apologetic about the statements he had made. First he explained how the original interview came out. Then was given time to explain what he meant.

According to Smith, here's what happened:

He was being interviewed by long-time New York City broadcaster Marv Albert, who's also with NBC, on a "Live at Five" show in New York. Smith was told there wasn't much time left, and after he mentioned that he had at one time wondered if the game was fixed, the show came to an end.

Naturally, the New York media — not the most discreet in the business by a long shot — jumped on Smith's statement. And what the New York media knows now, the world knows a short time later.

It was bad enough the beloved Jets of New York were involved in the game, but everybody loves to hear about how pro football games are fixed.

So the furor was on. Letterman held up the day's *New York Daily News*, which used two gigantic headlines across the front page of the paper, proclaiming the game was fixed.

Smith seemed genuinely concerned about the fuss he had created, so he retold his story to Letterman — this time given a chance to complete the whole story.

He explained:

"After the game, I was in a taxi and the driver turned around and said, 'Thank you.' I was disappointed we had just lost the game, and I didn't understand what he was talking about. I said 'what do you mean?' and he said, 'you just made my Christmas.' I asked him how and he said 'the guy whose house you just left made a lot of money on that game betting on the Jets.'"

The house Smith had just left was that of the late Carol Rosenbloom, then owner of the Colts. "It was supposed to be our victory party after the game," Smith said.

Smith began to think. The owner of the Colts betting big on the Jets?

"I couldn't believe it," Smith said. "So I went back to my hotel room that night and played the game over and over again in my head. And there were some things that could have been interpreted as being fixed."

"We had the ball inside the 35-yard line five times in the first half and came away with no points," Smith said. "Once, on one of our regular pass plays, Earl Morrall, the quarterback, never looked at Jimmy Orr (who was wide open in the end zone). There were just a lot of strange things that happened."

"But finally, I decided that there's no way it could have been fixed."

That's the part left out in the original interview. Just a small detail.

Smith had been widely accused of promoting his new book "Kill, Bubba, Kill" (Letterman had a lot of fun with that one). But Smith said the whole saga concerning the Super Bowl takes up a grand total of three pages in the book.

And so the story raged through New York and then the country like a brush fire out of control. All because Smith's interview wasn't completed. All because he didn't have a chance to say that he had finally decided the game couldn't have been fixed.

Again, he seemed apologetic about the situation, and thanked Letterman for letting him explain his position.

He said he has never seen or been involved with a game that was fixed.

"People say my story is an unbelievable one, but how do you think I felt when I heard it (from the taxi driver)?" Smith said.

To my knowledge, no one has ever been able to prove — or disprove for that matter — that NFL football games have been fixed. There seems to be two kinds of people in that argument: Those who swear they are fixed, and those who swear they aren't.

I get the feeling Smith wants to be in the group that swears they aren't, but was put in an unfortunate situation that needed to be cleared up — albeit at 1 a.m. in the morning. Thanks to David Letterman.

SUNDAY'S GAMES

Home team in caps
CINCINNATI 24, Baltimore 13 — Bengals remember how to win now, and flex defensive muscles against improving Colts.
DALLAS 27, MINNESOTA 20 — Without Tommy Kramer, Vikings come up short against unbeaten Cowboys.
DENVER 17, CHICAGO 13 — Bears in a state of chaos with Ditka coaching and unsure of the quarterback situation. Payton and offensive line are hurting.
LOS ANGELES RAMS 30, Detroit 21 — Might not be too many more games on the sidelines for Monte Clark.
PITTSBURGH 31, Houston 17 — When Cliff Stoudt is good, he's good. When he's bad, he's very bad. Against Oilers, he should be good.
LOS ANGELES RAIDERS 27, WASHINGTON 21 — The game of the day. Raiders defense comes through and Plunkett hits a pair of bombs for TDs.
MIAMI 20, NEW ORLEANS 13 — Not much offense for either team in this one.
ATLANTA 28, Philadelphia 17 — Eagles already sagging offense has lost Wilbert Montgomery for six to eight weeks.
KANSAS CITY 24, St. Louis 17 — For the Missouri state championship, neither team "Shows me" much here.
SAN DIEGO 27, NEW YORK GIANTS 23 — Chargers can't afford to fall too far behind division-leading Raiders. Time could be running out.
SAN FRANCISCO 31, NEW ENGLAND 24 — 49ers looking an awful lot like the team that won it all two years ago, and nothing like the team that flopped last year.
CLEVELAND 24, Seattle 17 — OK Cleveland fans. I picked the Browns to win. Are you happy?
GREEN BAY 26, Tampa Bay 17 — Packers must regroup after dismal showing Monday Night.

MONDAY NIGHT

New York Jets 23, BUFFALO 20 — Loss of Freeman McNeil hurts the Jets, but there's plenty of punch in the New York (New Jersey?) passing attack.

OSU's big plays crush Gophers

By GENE CADDES
UPI Sports Writer

COLUMBUS, Ohio (UPI) — Ohio State's win over Minnesota Saturday didn't come exactly the way Coach Earle Bruce had mapped it out.

Bruce had vowed to bring the grinding running attack back to a place of prominence in his offense. Instead, it was the big play, both on offense and defense, which carried the Buckeyes to a 69-18 Big Ten win over the Gophers.

"It was a Big Ten win and we're looking forward to building on that," said Coach Earle Bruce. "After a slow start we finally got going. We got some big plays both on defense and offense. We snapped back from defeat and that's important."

The Buckeyes, who lost at Iowa a week ago, got three touchdowns from sophomore tailback Keith Byars and took advantage of seven Minnesota turnovers, including four pass interceptions. They also had a blocked punt for a TD.

Although Ohio State rushed for 240 yards, quarterbacks Mike Tomczak and Brent Offenbecher bettered that figure, passing for 247 and a pair of touchdowns.

Minnesota Coach Joe Salem

was disappointed, not so much in the score, but the performance of his team.

"I don't want to take anything away from Ohio State, but we gave them a lot of help," said the coach of the struggling Gophers. "I have never had a team that looked so bad and so inept. We just failed miserably on fundamentals."

Bruce said he deserted his game plan because "they committed a lot of men to the line of scrimmage and did a pretty good job of it. We've always said we'll take what they give us."

Byars, a sophomore tailback who carried only 10 times for 87 yards, scored on runs of 1, 22 and 33 yards as the Buckeyes ran their record to 3-1 overall and 1-1 in the conference.

Eight players scored for Ohio State, which led 38-12 at the half. The other Ohio State touchdowns came on a 5-yard run by fullback Vaughn Broadnax; a 20-yard run by Sandusky High's Kelvin Lindsay; Cedric Anderson's recovery of a blocked punt in the end zone; a 7-yard pass from Mike Tomczak to Roman Bates; a 32-yard run by John Woodridge; and a 47-yard pass from reserve quarterback Brent Offenbecher to Jay Holland.

Paul Allen also kicked 26 and

33-yard field goals for the Buckeyes.

However, the win did cost the Buckeyes the services of at least two players, possibly for seven to 14 days.

Lindsey twisted his ankle moments after he had scored his 20 yard touchdown run and missed the entire second half. And defensive tackle Dave Creclius, an Ashland High graduate originally from Sandusky, also was injured. Both are expected to miss about a week.

Minnesota, 1-3 overall and 0-2 in the Big Ten, marched 71 yards with the opening kickoff to the Ohio 9-yard line. On 4th-and-6 Jim Gallery kicked a 26-yard field goal to put the Gophers on top 3-0.

Ohio State's first score came with 4:20 left in the first period with Broadnax capping a 6-play, 59-yard drive for a 7-3 Buckeye lead. Lindsay made it 14-3 just over a minute into the second quarter. The ensuing kickoff was fumbled by Minnesota's Donovan Small and recovered by Ohio State's Tom Bose on the Gopher 11. Five plays later, Byars dove in from the one.

A 20-yard TD pass from Greg Murphy to Jay Carroll cut the margin to 21-10 and the Gophers added a safety when Tomczak

was hit trying to pass and the ball scooted to the end zone.

Minnesota's other touchdown came late in the fourth quarter when substitute quarterback Andy Hare hit flanker Dwayne McMullen with a 3-yard scoring pass.

Tomczak completed 6 of 15 attempts for 179 yards, while Murphy hit on 16 of 29 for 209 yards and two interceptions.

	Minn	OSU
First downs	20	16
Rushes-yards	36-12	47-240
Passing yards	236	247
Return yards	3	114
Passes	25-45-4	9-19-0
Punts	8-30.2	4-38.0
Fumbles-lost	6-3	5-4
Penalties-yards	6-39	11-111
Time of possession	35:30	24:30

Minnesota 3 9 0 6-18

Ohio State 7 31 24 7-69

Minn—FG Gallery 26

OSU—Broadnax 5 run (Spangler kick)

OSU—Lindsay 20 run (Spangler kick)

OSU—Byars 1 run (Spangler kick)

Minn—Carroll 20 pass from Murphy

(Gallery kick)

Minn—safety, Tomczak fumbles out of end

zone

OSU—Anderson recovered blocked punt in end

zone (Spangler kick)

OSU—Bates 7 pass from Tomczak (Spangler

kick)

OSU—FG Allen 26

OSU—Byars 22 run (Spangler kick)

OSU—Byars 33 run (Spangler kick)

OSU—FG Allen 33

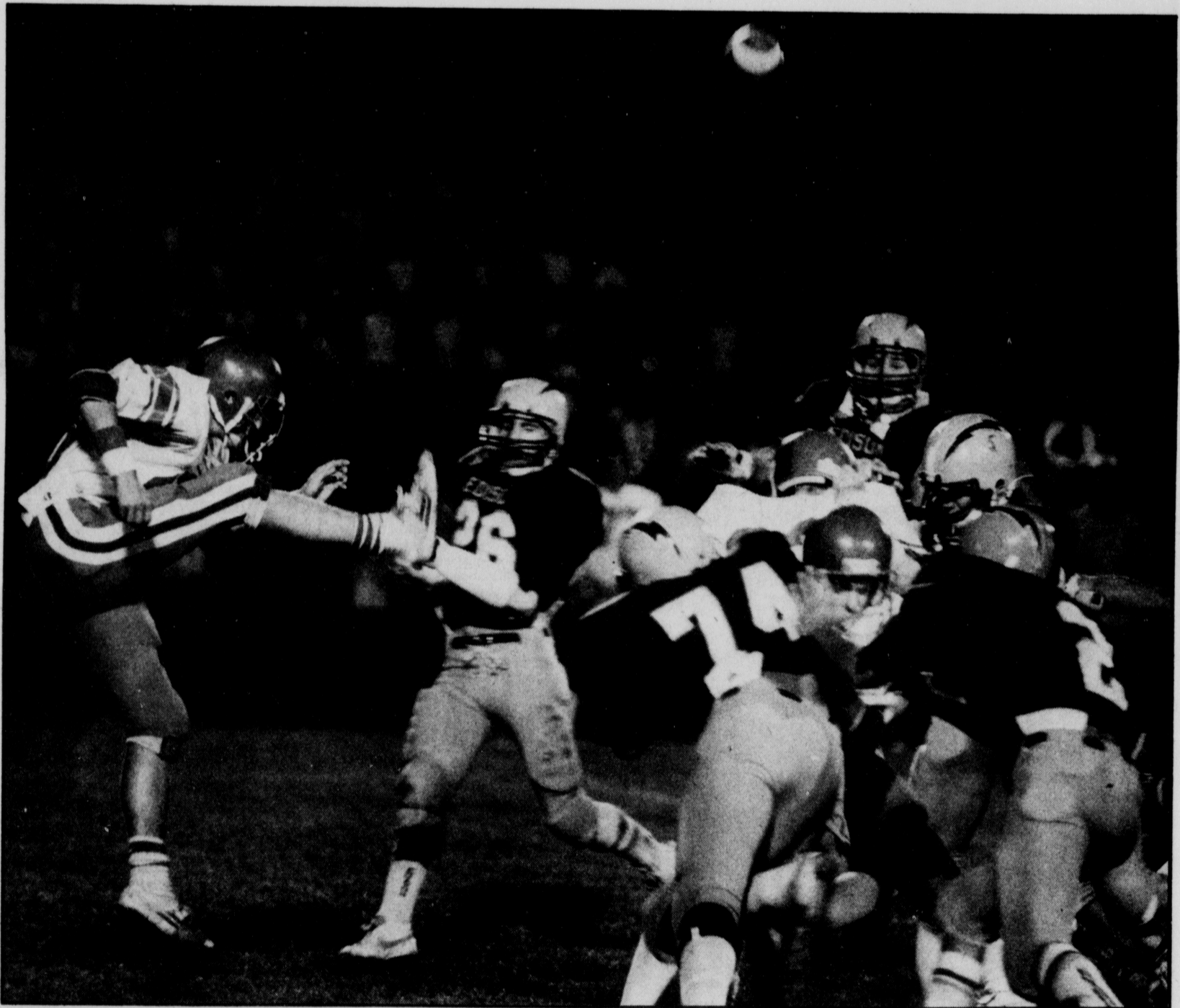
OSU—Woodridge 32 run (Spangler kick)

OSU—Holland 47 pass from Offenbecher

(Spangler kick)

Minn—McMullen 8 pass from Hare (kick fails)

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(Register photo — TIM FLECK)

Plymouth punter Mike McKenzie, left, under a barrage of Edison defenders, had his kick blocked in the first period Saturday night. The Chargers were unable to capitalize on

the scoring opportunity but did come away with a 39-6 win over the previously-undefeated Big Red in the Firelands Conference showdown.

Edison opportunistic in 4th period

By ED FOX
Staff Writer

MILAN — Edison lived up to its nickname Saturday night in a 39-6 rout over Plymouth.

Heading into the final period, the Chargers found themselves clinging to a 13-0 lead in the Firelands Conference showdown battle with the undefeated Big Red.

However, they struck quickly for a trio of scores within a four-minute span of the final quarter and the rout was suddenly on as the Chargers improved to 4-1, 2-0 in the FC. Meanwhile, Plymouth dipped to 1-1 in the conference and 4-1 overall.

Penalties and fumbles plagued the Chargers throughout the contest.

In fact, they held the ball for nearly eight minutes at the outset of the second half and still came up empty-handed.

But, it all began to fall into place for the four-time defending FC king in the last 12 minutes.

"We were our own worst enemies. More than once, we stopped ourselves rather than having them (Plymouth) stop.

We sure made more than our share of mistakes but the defense hung in there and gave us a lift in the final period," noted Edison head coach Jim Whittington.

The Chargers fumbled on six occasions and lost two of them. Also, they were whistled with 10 penalties for 90 yards.

Poor field position, which had haunted Plymouth throughout much of the game, eventually took its toll during the early stages of the final period.

The Big Red was forced to punt from its own two-yard-line and the kick by Darren Branham traveled only 29 yards.

Taking over at its own 31, it took Edison just five plays to reach paydirt and up its lead. Jeff Springer went in from 14 yards away with the Chargers facing a fourth-and-four situa-

tion. The PAT failed but the hosts had a 19-0 lead with just 8:46 left to play.

A pair of interceptions led to two more quick scores by the Chargers.

First, Springer picked off a Rodney Hampton pass at the Plymouth 40 and returned it to the Big Red 14. On the second play from scrimmage, senior quarterback Joe Taylor scored on a sneak up the middle and Pat Landoll booted the conversion for a 26-0 lead at the 7:11 mark.

On the third play of the ensuing series, Cliff Prosek intercepted a Plymouth pass and returned it 23 yards to the Big Red 12-yard-line. Also, there was a personal foul call against the visitors which moved the ball half the distance to the goal.

And, the Chargers were quick to capitalize on the opportunity with sophomore Ron Field going the final four yards for the score for a 32-0 lead at the 4:56 mark.

With substitutes flooding the

field, Plymouth avoided the shutout on an impressive 75-yard drive which was capped off by a five-yard touchdown jaunt by freshman Shaun Branham. The conversion failed and Edison's lead was trimmed to 32-6 with 2:18 left on the clock.

However, Edison was quick to answer with a score of its own set up by a 46-yard-run by Field, who carried only twice in the game for 50 yards. Following Field's run to the Plymouth 2, quarterback Jim Hall ran to paydirt for the final scoring in the game with Scott Schwan booting the conversion for a 39-6 lead with 54 seconds remaining.

Prior to the fourth quarter, the only scoring came on Edison's first and last possessions of the first half.

Following a Plymouth punt of just 25 yards, Edison took over at its own 46. And, they were on the board four plays later. A 44-yard burst up the middle by

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