

Thursday, JULY 12TH

Phil,

Just wanted to say that I recently picked up a copy of your '07 Preview magazine and saw your call to action regarding FCS (I-AA) coverage. I've always enjoyed your coverage, commentary, and analysis for both the FBS and FCS, but I would love to see more FCS coverage. I'm not complaining by any means, because I think your coverage of FCS is about as good as it gets.

I'm an alumni (and season ticket holder) of James Madison and I'm looking forward to a great season in the newly formed CAA. JMU should have a good year this year, but we need to get some questions answered with a new QB and O-Line coming in.

Thanks again for the great magazine, and consider me a vote for expanded FCS coverage in the future.

*Will Cassell
JMU '97*

Will,

Thanks for buying the Pac 10/FCS magazine! Your purchase is a strong vote as to how much coverage we will give the FCS in the future. Basically if we sell about 500 magazines then it is not worth pouring hundreds of man hours and printing a separate FCS magazine (expanded coverage). If we see a groundswell of support for FCS teams and folks show me they want more, I will be happy to invest the time and money it takes to cover the FCS in a professional manner. I will have expanded FCS information on this site each week during the year.

Thanks for writing,
Phil

Phil:

Just picked-up a copy of your 2007 College Football Preview and wanted to let you know that it is without question, the finest CFB publication on the market today! In the past, I would purchase four or five college football magazines every summer such as the Sporting News, Athlon, Street & Smith, and Lindy's to name a few...all fine publications in their own right. No longer...why spend the money when everything I need about college football is covered in your publication. Kudos to you and your staff on an outstanding job!

Dave Plagman

Dave,

Thank you for the comments. My goal every year is to make my magazine the best in the business and comments like yours keep me going during those 100 work weeks during the football season and the magazine season!

Thanks,
Phil

There is such a plethora of coaching talent in the SEC and only so much room at the top which coaches will be in trouble in 2-3 years?

Specifically in regards to Spurrier, Tuberville, Meyer, Saban, Fulmer, Richt, and maybe Miles

I'd say you probably have enough winning to go around for three of them. Take your pick.

Marshall,

I love SEC football and the MAJORITY of the radio shows I do in the months of June and July are in SEC country. I am going to be doing an article on "coaches on the hot seat" in

one of my upcoming "Phil's Weekly Notes" but was thinking of doing it in late July or early August, when more of the fans from the other parts of the country are more involved. I will address your SEC coaches question now however. I would think Spurrier can stay at SC as long as he wants. As long as they have bowl teams of any kind I would think Tuberville, Meyer, Saban and Richt are safe. As long as Miles has the success I think he will this year (I called for the Tigers to be SEC Champs) he will be safe for years. Right now I would list Fulmer as the coach that I get the most questions about from Tennessee fans so I think he is already on the hot seat. As you said the SEC is soooo competitive that not every coach can have success and if Fulmer beats South Carolina and Georgia at home this year he could win the SEC East and take himself off the list.

Thanks
Phil

*Phil,
Do you think a 9-3 or an 8-4 season will be enough to get the elite alumni upset enough to call for Coach Fulmer's removal?*

Cynthia and Chris,

In the previous question I do believe that of all the top rung coaches in the SEC that Fulmer looks the most vulnerable right now. I believe a 9-3 season could be good enough for the SEC East title if the Vols losses are on the road to Cal, Florida and Alabama. I put UT at 8-4 this year as they have just 11 returning starters and I think 8-4 should be good enough for a nice bowl and for him to stick around. I do get more email questions from Tennessee fans about Fulmer than I do for all the other coaches but I think it would take 7-5 season or less to really turn up the heat.

Thanks for writing,
Phil

Hello Phil,

I notice you have Ohio State with the 35th toughest schedule for 2007 and all I hear on the radio is another source having us with the 110th (9th easiest) toughest. Who should I believe. Thanks for your reply. Great magazine.

*Pete Mackin
Sales Manager*

Pete,

The last time I checked the Buckeyes were still playing in the Big Ten and that means 8 games against Big Ten teams and they also draw a Pac 10 member in Washington. Just at a casual glance you would have to figure that their schedule is tougher than any team that plays the majority of its games in the MAC, Sun Belt, CUSA, MWC and WAC so that would automatically give them a tougher schedule than 51 other teams. They have to face 3 of my top 6 teams in Michigan, Wisconsin and Penn St and two of those games are on the road. I could go more in-depth but right there you can tell they are at the #35 toughest schedule and clearly NOT the 9th easiest schedule in the country! (Can you imagine Ohio St playing a WAC or Sun Belt schedule?).

Thanks for writing,
Phil Steele

Phil,

I do not understand your placement of Boston College as last in the ACC Atlantic Division. You rank Matt Ryan as the 8th best QB in the country, and note that they return a strong backfield. They have 15 returning starters and you have them tied for first in the ACC in your experience rating. You also rank them 2nd in the division talent-wise. So why do you think they will finish last in the division?

*Thanks,
Tim*

Tim,

I answered this question in detail in my June 22nd Q&A session.
Thanks for writing
Phil

Hey Phil, I have a suggestion for future editions of your magazine that would be helpful. Could you start putting in your bowl projection page the conference tie-in spot for each bowl. Assuming the Big 6 conferences get the BCS bid and an at large for some of them, listing things like "Capital One Bowl, SEC #2 vs. Big Ten #2" would be pretty helpful as people would know how the teams fit in. Thanks, Shane.

Shane,

Thanks for the suggestion. Space is always limited in the magazine and while we will try to get the pairings into next years magazine, I cannot promise it. What I can promise however is that on the Bowl Matchups section on PhilSteele.com (should be up within a week) we will list the pairings and update my picks for the bowls as the season goes along. We will also list the last 10 bowls for each and have the latest information up there on each bowl including how you can purchase tickets to the game!

Thanks for the idea,
Phil

Phil,

Hey just wanted to tell you first of all that I love your magazine and I buy it every year as soon as I can. I know there is a section in your magazine where you can make suggestions but I have already filled that out and I forgot one of my best (at least I think so) suggestions. On individual team pages you give each player a PS# which is very helpful. But what would also be very helpful (and I feel "more" helpful) would be to also included the players ranking in terms of where YOU have them ranked in the beginning of your magazine. I do this by myself every year, I go back and forth through the pages and write the players ranking next to them. I'm sure you understand what am saying, but for example, I go to Michigan's page and then flip back to your first couple pages and find that you have chad henne ranked as the 5th best QB this year, I then flip back to the Michigan Page and write a 5 next to henne. I think having a PS# include this ranking AND the current ranking that you give them. I have great respect for how much work you put into your magazine and you do a great job every year.

*Thanks,
Chris*

Chris,

You and I are a lot alike as we do the same thing to our magazines! Since the my magazine is written by just one person it has to be done in sections and we send the sections to the press in a week long process. Many of the pages are printed already by the time I finalize the individual position rankings for the players in the front of the magazine (one of the last pages to be sent). What I will do which will make it easier for both of us is

on the individual schedule pages for each team (which should be completed in the next few weeks including stadium diagrams) we will list any players that appear in the rankings in the front. This way you can click on the team page and quickly see all the players listed. I know people use their magazines so much that they are beaten up by the end of the season. This should cut down on quite a few page turns for you and your magazine will be a little fresher when you are using it in January.

Thanks for writing
Phil

Thanks so much for publishing great annuals. I am a regular customer, and have been for sometime. Though, sadly, I just recently filled out my first survey and sent it in.

Thanks, too, for offering such a wonderful deal. I am gleefully waiting my copy of the Pro mag. I enjoy your publications very much. I honestly like every little square inch of the magazine. So, yeah, your time is not being spent for nothing.

I do notice that in your team/position captions you tend to take up space talking about the past too much. Almost every team's QB caption mentions their last great passer, no matter how long ago. Every publication, every year chimes in Terry Bradshaw in the La Tech page. We already know all of that.

I'd like to see the space used on giving us info about the second and third strings. Such as their High School or JUCO experience...or their potential.

Keep up the great work! I'll buy 'em as long as you put 'em out!

Ryan,

Thank you for the kind comments as words like that keep me going during the 100 work weeks in April and May knowing how much people appreciate the hard work. Also thank you for buying the magazines, I hope you have checked out the regional magazines as we have SIX full pages on each BCS team and 4 on the non-BCS teams. I answered a similar question to this in the June 22nd Q&A!

Thanks for buying the magazines!
Phil

Phil,

This past February, I started my own NFL Draft website, www.draftheadquarters.com. Through the "Draft Season", I was featured in several media publications (<http://www.startribune.com/508/story/1159728.html>) and quickly began to work my way up. I also published my own Draft guide, "Shawn Zobel's 2007 Draft Preview".

I ended up placing 8th out of 95 people in The Huddle Report's Mock Draft Contest, one point behind Mel Kiper. The contest also featured several other well know Draft analysts, including NFL Network's Mike Mayock and Charles Davis, ESPN's Todd McShay, and ex/Texans General Manager Charley Casserly. I finished ahead of all four.

I have begun the process of scouting talent for next year's draft, and I wanted to let you know that your magazine has been a big help so far. I think that it is an amazing value for the \$9.00.

I was hoping that you might be interested in talking with me about next year's college season and your personal feelings and projections. I am heading into next season with a load of confidence and would really appreciate any help that you could give me!

As for me, I have had Minnesota Gophers season tickets for the past seven years....so, in other words, I don't have much to look forward to this season!

Please feel free to visit my site,

*Shawn Zobel
www.draftheadquarters.com*

Shawn,

As mentioned on page 303 of the magazine, I like to think you also get an NFL draft guide with your purchase and coming from someone who has had as much success with the NFL draft your comments are high praise. I will be in touch and if you have projections for future

drafts we could include you in our team of NFL scouts that we use to help formulate our projections. I will be getting in touch with you.

Yes, it does look like a long year for the Gophers with a new staff, new schemes and a killer Big Ten schedule.

Thanks for writing,
Phil

Hello Phil,

Just following up on our previous correspondences. Do you still plan to have the D-1 snappers rated this year? Grant executed another flawless season last year as the short and long snapper for the Spartans ad Coach Tomey. Even beyond Grant, I would think our entire kicking team would grade out well higher than most in pre-season 2007. Kicker, Jared Strubeck, Long / Short Snapper, Grant Izokovic, and Punter / Holder Waylon Prather all had amazing 2006 campaigns.

If it would be OK to get notification of this, I would like to order one of your magazines as soon as it is available. Will you have the WAC preview in the PAC-10 magazine again this year?

*Thank you so much for your time and response
Regards, Larry Izokovic*

Larry,

Thanks for the email and I think your son is doing a GREAT job with the Spartans. I did not have room in this years magazine for the long snappers but within the next two weeks we will have the long snappers rated for the upcoming season and I should go at least 25 deep as it is a very underappreciated position and one that NFL teams do follow closely. You never notice the long snapper unless something goes wrong, so it will be good to give them some credit!

Thanks for writing, Phil

Hey there.... Just want to say,I absolutely love your college football preview magazine. IT is VERY THOROUGH. Even though I disagree with some of your predictions,at least you explain and show why you think the way you do.

OK,one question. I'm a diehard Pittsburgh Panther fan. So I'll ask you,is there any hope for my Panthers? Are they going to come back and become those Panthers of the late 70's and early 80's? Lie to me if you have to.

*THANK YOU,
John Gula III*

John,

The late 70's and early 80's were indeed some great years for the Panthers. I do think they can get back up to that level for the following reasons. 1. They play in a great state for high school recruits in Pennsylvania. 2. They are in a major market of Pittsburgh. 3. Recruiting may have been hurt for a couple of years with the defections of the Big East's top teams to the ACC but the Big East proved itself last year and deserves the automatic CS bowl berth. I think Dave Wannstedt is a quality coach who will have them back to contending for the conference crown on a yearly basis.

Pitt was 6-1 at one point last year so they were not too far off and I think they will get back to a bowl this year (Papa Johns) and start the move towards reclaiming their status among the NCAA's elite.

Thanks for writing
Phil

Phil,

I can't believe I never invested in your preview magazine until this year. It's incredible and I can never put it down. Great work by you and your staff and I will be sure to recommend to friends.

To my question - It's pretty lonely being a Nebraska fan up here in Rhode Island. What do you see as the true upside for the Huskers this year? Most "experts" see them competing for a Big 12 North title but not much more. If QB Keller and the D-line steps up do they have Top 10 potential?

Randy Shepherd

Randy,

The Huskers do have top 10 potential and my Power Poll in the back of the magazine lists them as the most talented team in the Big 12 North. To get into the Top 10 this year they need to....

A) Knock off USC at home and lose only two other games all year

or

B) Beat Missouri on the road and then pull an upset in the Big 12 title game.

I think they will be an underdog at home to USC and on the road vs Missouri and Texas. Last year's Final Top 10 did NOT include any teams with more than 2 losses which is why I have them as my #22 team.

Thanks for writing,
Phil

I love your book and it is great read but I couldnt help but notice that you had Tray Allen, OL (Fr.) (Texas) as a PS 198, yet every other publication I have read has him rated at either number 1 or 2 at his position. Was this a misprint, or is there really this much of a difference in your opinion.

Sincerely, Ryan Bernardo

Ryan,

Thank you very much for the comment as I want the information in my magazine and on my website to be 99.9% accurate. PS#198 is a wrong rating. The problem is some of the high school lists we use had him listed as Tray and others had him as Davon. We have Davon Allen listed as PS#13 OL and when you add in the points we had for him under Tray his grade moves up to PS#9 OL For this year!

I appreciate your eye for detail!!

Phil