



Oscar L. Combs

Cats' Pause Publisher



Will Latest NCAA Changes Have An Effect?

It'll never be the same.

Some college coaches are repeating those words today after the annual NCAA convention delegates made a sweeping number of changes last week in San Diego.

Among other things, the NCAA decided to eliminate the part-time basketball coach, reduce the number of basketball scholarships from 15 to 13, reduce from 30 to 25 the number of football scholarship signees each year and reduced the length of off-campus recruiting periods and abolished all booster contact with recruits.

Everyone agree the decisions are an attempt to reduce athletic costs and/or reduce cheating on the college scene.

Most everyone also agree that the changes will not eliminate cheating and most likely will not achieve their intent.

With that in mind, one has to ask the question, "if it won't cure the ills, why make the changes?"

Let's examine some of the changes.

Eliminating the part-time basketball coaching position—This move was made because football supporters noted that basketball teams already have a full-time coach for each five players on a team while the ratio is over 1-9 in football.

The new rule is grossly unfair for schools which do not have a large local population basis. Schools in big cities like Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, etc., won't suffer as much as schools which must recruit nationally and have small population bases like Auburn, Mississippi State, etc.

Quite frankly, there's no way a team can recruit nationally if it doesn't have at least two recruiters on the road. If the part-time coach is eliminated (and it has been now), then one of the two on-the-road recruiters will now have to remain at home to become more involved in the day-to-day operation.

Reduce by half the length of off-campus recruiting periods for football and basketball—This is a highly debatable issue.

On one hand, the cutback will be a blessing to the thousands of recruits who are hounded almost daily by big-time college recruiters.

And it will certainly save schools lots of money. No doubt about that.

The only problem with this rule change is that some prep seniors who are visited by college coaches will not be visited by the big names in the future.

Many coaches won't have the time to visit with the second-line prospects they've visited in the past. The coaches will continue to concentrate on the blue-chippers and the cutback in the recruiting period will leave some kids feeling they're second class recruits.

Changing the player complimentary ticket policy to allow a player to give away one ticket to anyone the player wishes—Prior to the rule change a player could only allow his immediate family or a fellow student to use his four game tickets. If the player had a favorite uncle, or a girlfriend who wasn't a student, they were prohibited from using a player's ticket. All that has changed now with the rule.

The only problem with the new rule is that

it should extend to all four tickets, not just one. C'mon, give the kids a break.

Boosters banned from all contact with recruits, including a ban on even writing a letter—Those voting delegates have got to be kidding about this one.

How in the world is anyone going to be able to monitor who writes and signs a letter?

Proponents of the rule admit the rule is unenforceable, but claim the legislation is in the right direction and will discourage booster involvement. If they believe that, I've got some excellent strip mine land that can be had real cheap up in eastern Kentucky.

More next week on other NCAA changes.

The wild, wild Southeastern Conference

race. That's the way it's going to be all season long this winter.

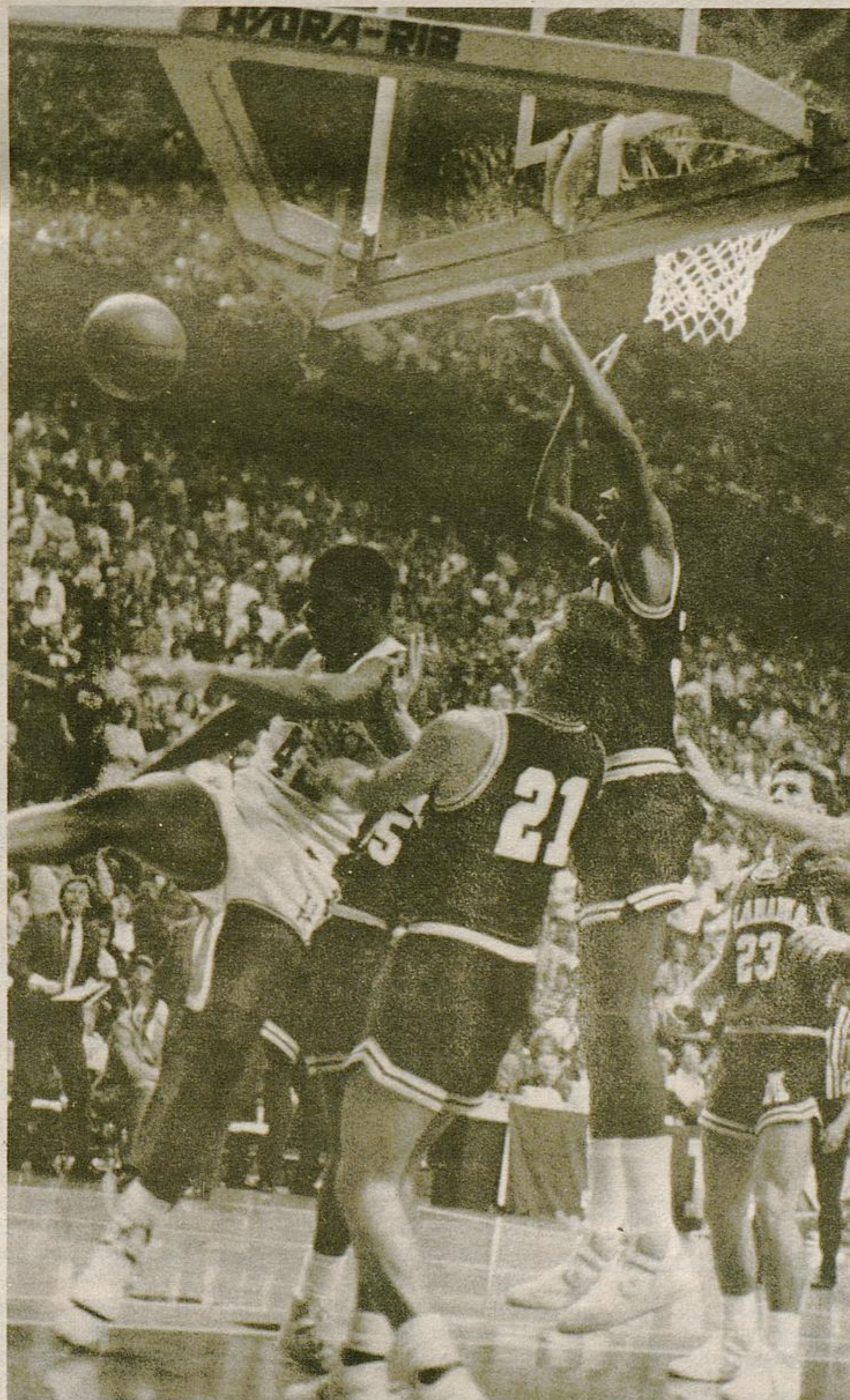
Going into last Saturday's action, Alabama was atop the league standings with a 3-0 season, tied with Florida which enjoyed the same mark. Vanderbilt was third with Auburn and Tennessee tied for third.

In the second division were the likes of Kentucky, Georgia, and LSU along with Ole Miss and Mississippi State.

But the most startling news out of the early conference race has been the ability of teams to win on the road.

Kentucky was beaten the only two times it had played home games (Georgia at Louisville and 'Bama at Rupp).

Georgia has played much the same way and its only win came on the road and two of its three losses have come in Athens.



So Far SEC Race Has Been A Wild Affair

Vanderbilt, which had been one of the early surprises in the SEC, was expected to be virtually unbeatable at home, then promptly was unpet by Tennessee in Nashville and had to fight for its life before overcoming pesky Ole Miss last week in Nashville.

It's certainly too early to predict a winner, but it's not too early to tell Wimp Sanderson what he can do with his wimping about not being very good. Those Crimson Tiders have plenty of firepower and that 14-point loss pinned on UK is evidence enough that the Tide will be in the hunt to the very end.

HITS AND MISSES . . . One of the first visitors to the Kentucky team in Knoxville over the weekend was former Wildcat **Chris Gettlefinger** who played for the 'Cats back in the late seventies. Chris, who now resides in K-town, remains a big Kentucky fan. "I really miss UK," said Chris. "There is only one place in the world to play basketball and that's Kentucky . . . What a year for ex-Wildcat football assistant **John Cooper**, the man who was a big factor in the 1976 team which defeated **North Carolina** in the Peach Bowl. After that season, the defensive whiz moved on to **Tulsa** where he worked wonders and then on to **Arizona State** where he almost took the Sun Devils to the **Rose Bowl** in his second year. A last minute field goal prevented that, but Cooper's team enjoyed a banner year this time, including a victory in the Rose Bowl. Cooper was interviewed for the UK job after **Fran Curci** was fired five years ago, but Kentucky chose **Jerry Claiborne**, a UK alum who had fashioned several bowl teams at Virginia Tech and Maryland . . . Media types in Atlanta are still buzzing over Louisville coach **Howard Schnellenberger's** denial that he had approached anyone about any coaching job in recent weeks. One Atlanta newspaper over the weekend noted that **Atlanta Falcons** top brass was unavailable at the same time that Howard was changing plans in Atlanta last Wednesday. The columnist mused, perhaps it was just coincidental. Media types in both Louisville and Lexington are yet to address the report that Howard was ready to take the **Florida State** job if Bobby Bowden had been named the Alabama coach. UL officials have suggested that all the uproar over Howard's wandering will actually help the Cards in recruiting because his name has been associated with some big-name situations. Humm . . . Kentucky may have been 1-2 in the SEC race prior to the Tennessee game, but Knoxville sports writers were still predicting a race among Alabama, Florida, Auburn and Kentucky . . . UT officials say they expect to have their 25,000-seat basketball arena completed by November, but the Vols may wait until the beginning of the SEC race in January before they open up the facility . . . When **Todd Ziegler** announced his intentions to transfer to **Western Kentucky University** last week, he became the second UK player in the eighties to transfer to the Bowling Green school. Back in 1983, Indiana product **Mike Ballenger** left Kentucky for WKU. He played there two years before giving up the roundball sport to concentrate on baseball his final year.