

It Was Just Another Day - Almost

To a 'Degree', Sims Thankful for Heisman

By CLAY HENRY
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NORMAN — FOR BILLY SIMS, TUESDAY, NOV. 28, 1978 was just another day at the University of Oklahoma. It meant getting up and going to Botany class. After all, earning a degree is more important than winning the Heisman Trophy.

Oklahoma's junior halfback from Hooks, Tex., did go to class Tuesday morning before accepting the Heisman Trophy in typical Billy Sims fashion.

He didn't appear any different than the cool, mature 23-year-old who had taken in stride both the good things and the bad things during a most unusual season.

He went to bed early Monday night and "slept like a baby and, no,

I didn't say any prayers. Me and the Man upstairs have an understanding." He would have slept until just before time to go to his 9:30 Botany class, but his phone began ringing early.

"Finally, we just got up and started talking about the Heisman," said Greg Roberts, who shares suite 114 in the Bud Wilkinson Complex with Sims.

"I couldn't miss that Botany class," Sims said. "It's my toughest class. I wanted to go today because we got a test back from last week. I did pretty good. I've got a 'C' average in that class."

Sims has a special reason for wanting his degree in recreational therapy for the handicap.

"My younger brother, Darrel, is 15 and he's mentally retarded.

Not by much, but he is disturbed. He can play soccer and hockey, but he doesn't play football." Sims said. "I know some kids who never will be able to get the pleasure out of playing football. Someday, when I'm finished playing football, I want to go back to Hooks, maybe, and start a recreation center for handicapped kids."

Sims said the only time he really felt excited Tuesday was when John Farrell of the Downtown Athletic Club telephoned to tell him he had won the Heisman.

"I think my heart stopped for a second. Then I just said, 'Thank you, I appreciate it.' I don't guess Hooks will ever be the same. I'm supposed to go down there for a Billy Sims day Saturday. They were going to have it even though I was there. They might make it just a whole week now," Sims said.

"This is an award for the team. Without the offensive line, I wouldn't have been up for the Heisman Trophy. Their blocking makes a running back," Sims said.

Would he give part of the Heisman to Roberts, the quick offensive guard who cleared the way for him? "He (Roberts) can have all of it," Sims laughed. "The main thing is that I believe in the Man upstairs. I put Him before anything."

Roberts, the quick offensive guard who cleared the way for Sims, and Thomas Lott, the wideback quarterback who made things click, stormed into the press conference in the OU Student Union after Sims had been there about 15 minutes.

"Now we've got everything," Sims said to Roberts, who Sunday picked up the Outland Trophy as the nation's premier lineman. "They'll (the trophies) make nice book ends."

Sims began joking with his two best friends. "No line and no quarterback. I did everything," Sims blurted out just before nearly falling out of his chair laughing.

Roberts said all the media attention hasn't changed Sims. "We've been friends for four years and he's always been a hassle. It's not like ways done things together and there has never been anything wrong," Roberts said.

"I don't think I've changed," cut in Sims. "Sometimes I have a headache. It reminds me of my recruiting days. I try to handle it all the same."

Sims was wearing an Orange Bowl jacket, an Oklahoma T-shirt and a Boston Red Sox baseball cap. "I think the 'B' used to stand for Boston. Well, it stands for Billy now," Sims said.

The first person he planned to call Tuesday afternoon was his mother, who lives in St. Louis. "She probably already knows, but I want to call her. I'll take her to the banquet in New York. It should be on Dec. 7, Sims said.

Oklahoma coach Barry Switzer was in Dallas "trying to get him (Sims) some help. I told him four years ago that if he came to Oklahoma he'd win the thing. It happens here, you know. No back in the court try did what he did himself. He had no pre-season buildup or anything. He did it all on his own." Switzer said. Switzer has indicated that the four OU co-captains will make the trip to New York for the banquet. That means Roberts, Lott, Daryl Hunt and Phil Tabor will join Sims.

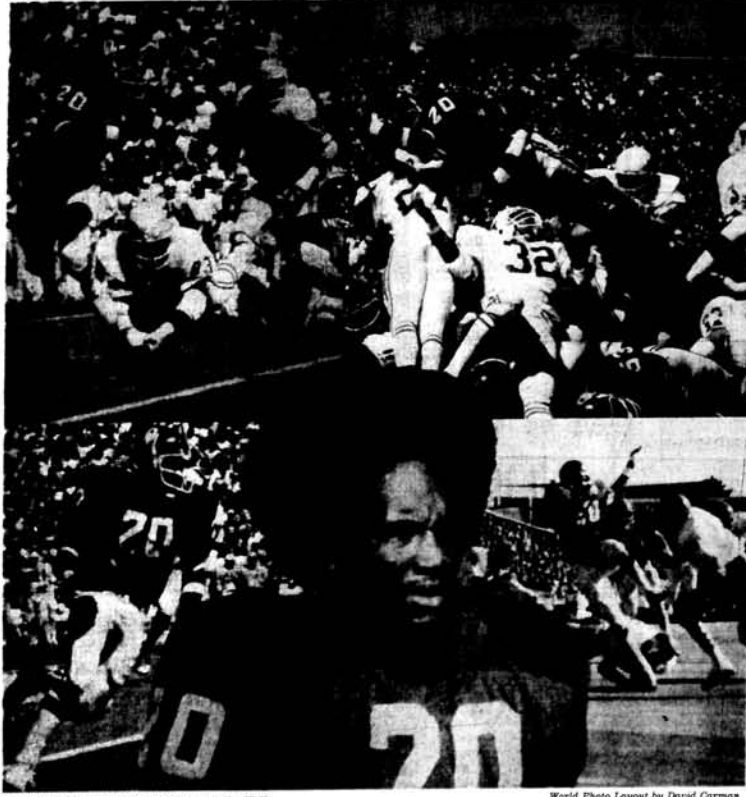
"I'll rent me a tuxedo somewhere," Roberts said. "I think I can get a tuxedo before we go," Sims added.

"I didn't come to Oklahoma because of what coach Switzer said about the Heisman," Sims said. "I didn't believe him. I came here because of the competition. There were a lot of places I could have gone and started right away. But I liked the competition."

Sims said he did have some thoughts of winning the Heisman last year. "In Texas, they have an award. I guess the little Heisman they give it every year for the best high school player in Texas. My junior year in high school they gave it to Earl Campbell, then I won it the next year. Well, last year Earl Campbell won the Heisman. I figured it was my turn this year. I didn't tell anyone that, though," Sims said.

Lott, who was billed more as a Heisman candidate before the season than Sims, said he knew Sims would win "if they gave it to the guy who earned it on the field. I don't have a lot of faith in it.

Continued on C-4



World Staff Photos by Johnny Walker and Jim Wolfe

En route to the Heisman Trophy, Billy Sims (inset) was a master of elusive wind photo.

World Photo Layout by David Cormack

TULSA WORLD
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Holtz Insists He Will Stay at Arkansas

Unpredictable Lou Holtz, after weeks of silence, surprised football observers in Arkansas and Florida Tuesday by saying he intended to remain as coach of the Razorbacks.

"I have no plans to leave Arkansas today, tomorrow or next year," Holtz said on a radio show he tapes daily in Fayetteville. "There may be warmer climates, but there are no warmer people than the people in Arkansas."

Rumors that Holtz would resign and accept a similar position at Florida have been rampant for weeks. Holtz refused to defuse the rumors (As he

did when similar reports about Louisiana State surfaced) prompted many Arkansas insiders to conclude he would leave after the Razorbacks' Fiesta Bowl game against UCLA on Christmas Day.

Reportedly, Florida is preparing to fire coach Doug Diekey. It was reported Florida would also dump athletic director Ray Graves and offer Holtz both positions.

This plus the prospect of warm climate supposedly fascinated Holtz, who coaches cold weather and is not athletic director at Arkansas. Frank Broyles is

But Holtz appeared to put to rest any supposition that he was not happy in his role under Broyles. He praised Broyles and others in Arkansas' athletic administration.

Oddly, Holtz' comments caused more surprise in Arkansas than Florida. A source in Florida familiar with the effort to hire Holtz said Florida was never confident of landing him. The source also said Graves probably would not leave for at least another year.

Holtz said he was "tired" of the rumors. He said, "There is no way I can say I will spend the rest of my life in Arkansas." But

he assured he intended to return next season.

He explained further, "I think that is probably what people want to hear, but I can't say that because of two reasons."

"No. 1, I feel the word is the most valuable thing a man has. If I give you my word on something, and it does not come to pass, then there's no way in this world people can possibly respect somebody that says one thing and does something else."

"The second thing is, I have an obligation to my family. If I say I will never leave the University of Arkansas and an opportunity came along, maybe

another adventure or another field of endeavor, then I would have to do what I think is in the best interest of my family."

Holtz said he hoped his statement "will put an end to all the various and vicious rumors that people hear."

Holtz has also been rumored to be being approached by Woody Hayes at Ohio State. A native of Ohio, Holtz served as Hayes' state coach and considers Hayes a hero. But he has often said, "His or right managers for the position he would be Hayes' successor coming to Arkansas. Holtz coached successfully in

underdog programs at William and Mary and North Carolina State. Then he spent one miserable year as coach of the professional New York Jets, before being hired to replace Broyles.

Holtz soon took a national coach-of-the-year award in 1977, his first season at Arkansas. He took a highly regarded team and directed it to an 11-1 record, concluding with a shocking 31-0 upset of Oklahoma in the Orange Bowl. Arkansas played the game without three backfield starters, superseded by Holtz for a dormitory incident, plus its best offensive lineman.

Firing Shocks Anderson

World Wire Reports

Sparky Anderson was given a lot of time for the next few months Tuesday — the golf course. The unemployed baseball manager appeared to be taking his time by the Cincinnati Reds in stride at Thousand Oaks, Calif.

"I've never pined so well," Anderson quipped. "Maybe I should get fired every day."

He admitted, though, that he was totally surprised by the swift turn of events that saw Reds president Dick Wagner terminate him and hire John McNamara to manage the team. The move was announced earlier Tuesday.

"I was totally shocked," Anderson said. "I knew nothing of it until Dick told me Monday morning. We'd just got back from Japan and it was a super trip. Dick even congratulated me on how we'd done."

He called me Sunday night, asked if I could meet him at a hotel down by the airport the next morning. I figured right away. I told my wife, we either got Lee Lacy (free agent) or are right on the verge of getting him. That was the only thing I thought of."

Asked the reason for his firing, Anderson indicated the fact that he wanted to keep his coaching staff intact may have had something to do with it.

The only thing I can think of is that possibly they know my stand

on coaches and they possibly wanted to make some changes there. They hadn't hired any coaches yet. That's the only thing I can think of I didn't ask, I don't think I was bitter toward Wagner."

"I've always felt that management has the right at anytime to fire you, to me that's all part of business," Anderson said. "The man who had to fire me is a dear, dear friend of mine, and our wives are very close."

"I'm sure when Cincinnati comes to play Los Angeles this summer, they'll come to our home and have dinner with us. There's a business, and then there's friendship," Anderson said he will "kinda sit" until he finds another managing job.

"I've got a year left on my contract," he said. "All the managers' jobs are all taken up, but I'm sure I'll hear from some people sooner or later. If I have to wait until the end of next season, I'll wait. I've always felt that management has the right at anytime to fire you, to me that's all part of business. I'm going to stay home, play golf, go to Dodgers and Angels games."

"It is our decision that the move we make is in the over-all best interest of making Cincinnati a better team," Wagner said. "Let's just say it's time for a change," added Wagner, who said

Continued on C-4



SPARKY ANDERSON



JOHN McNAMARA