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## **By ALAN ROBINSON** AP Sports Writer

PITTSBURGH — The Pittsburgh Steelers again plan to rely on an oft-neglected part of their offense, the running game, in Sunday's playoff game against the San Diego Chargers. "We're going to run the ball, and we're going to be effective," said Terry Bradshaw. "And we're

going to throw the ball." The Steelers, 6-3, have qualified for the National Football League playoffs for the ninth time in 11 years. They used the run only infrequently after returning from the players' strike, but Coach Chuck Noll resurrected the running game in recent victories over New England and Cleveland.

Franco Harris, the third-leading rusher in NFL history, has had consecutive 100-yard games, including 120 yards and a touchdown in a 37-21 victory last Sunday over Cleveland. Walter Abercrombie, the Steelers' top draft pick

from Baylor who was bothered by a knee injury, had his best day as a pro against the Browns, running 10 times for 73 yards and a touchdown. "Walter looked good," Noll said. "He turned some plays into big gains — things that looked like

# **Steelers to activate running game**

The blend of the running game and Bradshaw's regular season were "fun" for the Steelers' line passing — he threw for 269 yards against the Browns - reminds several players of the offensive thing for an offensive lineman. You don't score a scheme the Steelers used in winning four Super

"We threw very sparingly and I think that was the key to winning," Bradshaw said. "Evidently, we've found our place by establishing the run and using the pass off that. That seems to be the best utilization of talent. It wears down the opposing "It kind of reminds me of the 1970s. We've

playing ball control, passing when we have to. We're mixing it up. "Our offensive line is blowing people out. We're

getting three, four, five, sometimes eight yards at a pop. They're making things happen." After being shut out twice in a month in losses to Seattle and Buffalo, the Steelers scored 74 points in victories over New England (37-14) and the Browns (37-21)

"We've been concentrating more on running, a more balanced offense," said tackle Ray Pinney. "I think that's taken some pressure off Terry. The defense can't load up on the pass. They have to play it straight." Guard Ron Wolfley said the last two weeks of the

"This is what's fun," he said. "It's the only type touchdown, you get satisfaction from body rolling or knocking him down. When you get Franco yardage and protect Brad (Bradshaw), that's what makes the game fun. We're winning and that's the bottom line.

But the Chargers, 6-3, have also been winning. They had won five in a row until a 41-34 loss to the Los Angeles Raiders last Sunday in San Diego cost them the home field advantage in the first round of the playoffs.

"We wanted to play (San Diego) at home," said Jack Lambert. "It'd be silly to say the cold weather doesn't bother them."

Although Sunday won't be an Artic-type day at Three Rivers Stadium, the National Weather Service is calling for cloudy skies, a chance of flurries and temperatures in the 30s. The Steelers have played nine playoff games at

Three Rivers, losing only once, the 1972 American Conference title game to the Miami Dolphins. The Steelers last played at home in the playoffs in 1979, beating Miami (34-7) and Houston (27-13)

before beating the Los Angeles Rams 31-19 in the Super Bowl

## NEW YORK (AP) - Quar- Unitas had held the record with 26 terback Dan Fouts of the San such games. Diego Chargers, who continued his

League record book, was named Offensive Player of the Year yesterday by The Associated Press. Fouts was the runaway winner in balloting by a nationwide panel of 84 sports writers and broadcasters, receiving 43 votes. Marcus

Allen, the Los Angeles Raiders' running back and unanimous choice as Offensive Rookie of the Year, was second to Fouts with 18 Mark Moseley, the record-setting place-kicker for the Washington Redskins and a narrow winner

over Fouts in the balloting for in the Offensive Player voting with Others receiving more than one

In five of those games he threw

## Redskins don't plan to take Lions lightly offered. "If it wasn't for the year Raiders and New England is at Mi-By BRUCE LOWITT

## AP Sports Writer

The last time the Detroit Lions beat the Redskins on the road, the game had the ball on the 2-yard line when was in Boston. Yes, the Boston Redskins. In 1935. In nine games since the 'Skins moved to Washing- Mark Moseley's 44-yard field goal ton, the Lions have come up on the short end every time. But they are not being taken lightly

by Washington Coach Joe Gibbs as ing. the two teams prepare for their playoff game tomorrow in the nation's goal, it should be some finish," Gibbs Cleveland visits the Los Angeles

"All I know about Detroit is that they came in here last year, gained a ton of yards, lost by two points and time expired," Gibbs said. The 'Skins won that game 33-31 on with 43 seconds to play after Eddie Murray put the Lions on top 31-30 with

a 50-yard field goal with 2:58 remain-"If this game comes down to a field ference playoff games tomorrow,

would be talking about Ed Murray." Like Moseley, Murray missed only one field goal during the 1982 season. Unlike Moseley, Murray hit all of his extra points. In the other National Conference

playoff opener tomorrow it's St. Louis either at Green Bay. Sunday in the NFC it's Atlanta at Minnesota and Tampa Bay

at Dallas. In the two American Conball

Mark has been having, everyone ami. On Sunday in the AFC it's the Kellen Winslow with two. New York Jets at Cincinnati and San Fouts, the pilot for Air Coryell — Diego at Pittsburgh. "The Lions may not be a great season, passed for 2,889 yards in team," said Richie Petitbon, Washington's defensive coordinator. "But record to four seasons leading the then, they're not playing a great team eague in vardage.

> "They are very talented, have a great running back in Billy Sims, and their outside receivers can catch the



# Fouts voted as top player of the year

"There's no question he's the

catalyst," said Coryell. "He's the

sparkplug of this team. He's per-

fect for our offense. He's so intelli-

gent, he sees the field and he's

very tough, both mentally and

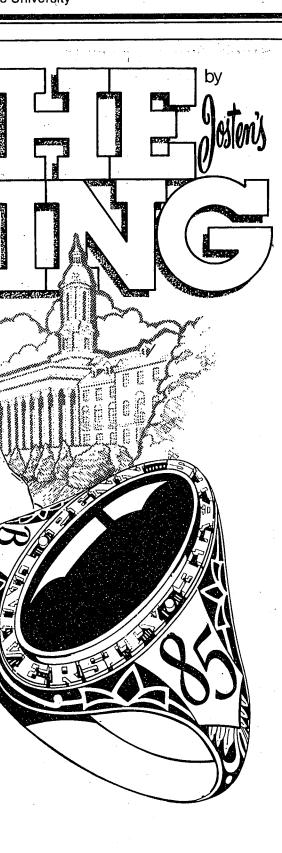
assault on the National Football

physically. Fouts also became the first passer in NFL history to throw for 400 or more yards in consecutive games, teaming with last year's two Super Bowl quarterbacks -San Francisco's Joe Montana and Cincinnati's Ken Anderson — in a pair of extraordinary games which toppled still more NFL re-

cords On Dec. 11, in a 41-37 victory in Most Valuable Player, was third San Francisco. Fouts completed 33 of 48 passes for a career-high 450 yards and five touchdowns. He and Montana (and, briefly, 49ers vote were San Diego wide receiver reserve quarterback Guy Benja-Wes Chandler and Dallas quarmin) teamed for a record 65 comterback Danny White with three pletions apiece and Chargers tight end

And on Dec. 20, in a 50-34 shelling of Anderson and the Bengals in San Diego, Fouts completed 33 the awesome aerial game of Coach of 48 passes for 435 yards and a Don Coryell - in his 10th NFL TD, the teams combined for 66 completions to break the 9-day-old nine games to extend his own record and also combined for 851 yards passing, surpassing the mark of 834 by Philadelphia and St. Louis in 1962. The two teams'

for at least 300 yards and now has total offense for the game, 1,102 30 games of 300 or more yards. yards, fell 31 yards short of yet Going into the 1982 season, Johnny another record.



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Eastern football took it on the chin out of their eastern backyard and more often than not during the re- gave up a mediocre schedule to take cent festive, let's-everyone-have-abowl-game holiday period.

The Sugar Bowl is slowly becoming the Super Bowl of college football, and deservedly so. Because of crying everything but, "We wuz its excellent facilities and gala at- robbed." SMU Coach Bobby Collins mosphere, it was easy for football found out that this time the Presifans and pollsters around the nation dent of the United States could not to see who exactly was the best steal one from the Nittany Lions college football team this year.



It was clear to me, and many others, that Georgia's light schedule which included the likes of Mississippi and Memphis State, and its, let's face it, one-man attack, were just a couple of the obvious downfalls for the Bulldogs. While Penn State's theory of play-the-best-tobecome-the-best ultimately proved that cream does rise to the top. But just because Penn State is an

Eastern football team people should not be led to believe that Eastern football is this holier than thou, mightier than all concept. While Penn State is, for the first time, the best in the nation, it has always been the Beast of the East the class act of the region — plain and simple. But one great program

does not a whole bunch make. -The East's other powerhouse, archrival Pittsburgh, found out

Highly-touted and often overrated rather well. The Panthers stepped on No. 2 Southern Methodist. The undefeated Mustangs, who handed Pitt a 7-3 loss in the most boring bowl of all, have been heard

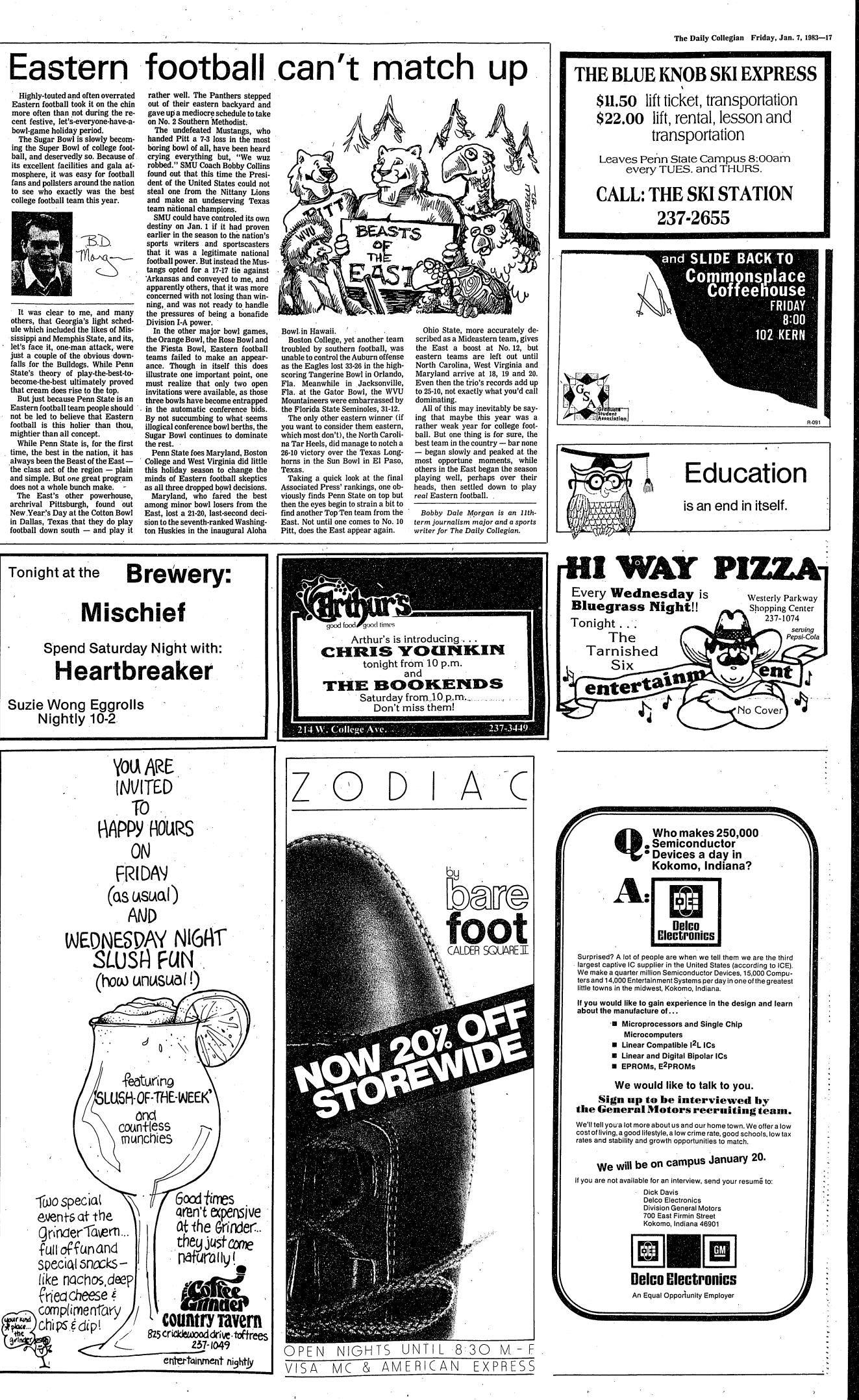
> and make an undeserving Texas team national champions. SMU could have controled its own destiny on Jan. 1 if it had proven

> earlier in the season to the nation's sports writers and sportscasters that it was a legitimate national football power. But instead the Mustangs opted for a 17-17 tie against Arkansas and conveyed to me, and apparently others, that it was more concerned with not losing than winning, and was not ready to handle the pressures of being a bonafide Division I-A power.

In the other major bowl games, the Orange Bowl, the Rose Bowl and the Fiesta Bowl, Eastern football teams failed to make an appearance. Though in itself this does illustrate one important point, one must realize that only two open invitations were available, as those three bowls have become entrapped in the automatic conference bids. By not succumbing to what seems illogical conference bowl berths, the

Sugar Bowl continues to dominate the rest. Penn State foes Maryland, Boston College and West Virginia did little this holiday season to change the minds of Eastern football skeptics as all three dropped bowl decisions.

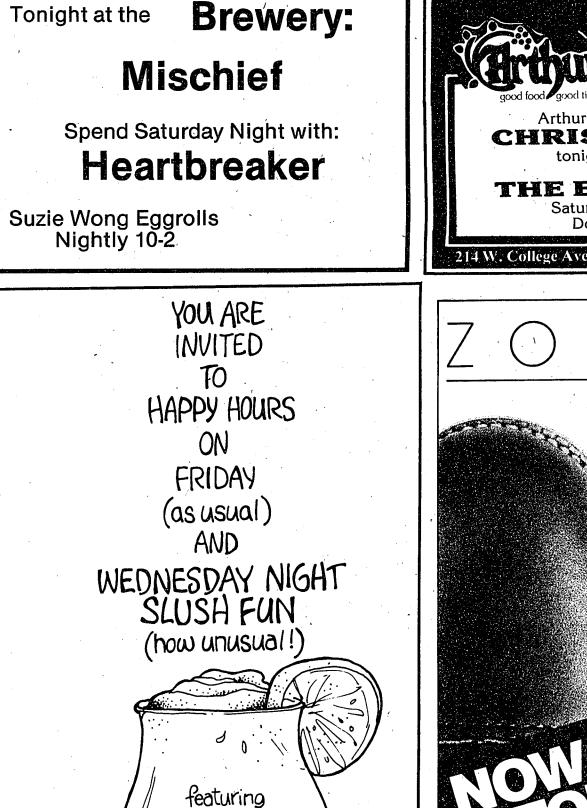
Maryland, who fared the best among minor bowl losers from the New Year's Day at the Cotton Bowl East, lost a 21-20, last-second deciin Dallas, Texas that they do play sion to the seventh-ranked Washingfootball down south — and play it ton Huskies in the inaugural Aloha



Bowl in Hawaii. as the Eagles lost 33-26 in the highscoring Tangerine Bowl in Orlando, Fla. Meanwhile in Jacksonville,

Fla. at the Gator Bowl, the WVU Mountaineers were embarrassed by the Florida State Seminoles, 31-12. you want to consider them eastern, which most don't), the North Caroli-

Texas. then the eyes begin to strain a bit to find another Top Ten team from the



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