

Fumble-itis Ruins USIU Aspirations

There used to be an old gag where a football coach would tape a handle onto a football and make a player carry it to classes if he had been guilty of too many fumbles the previous Saturday.

USIU coach Marv Braden could well be entertaining such an idea.

And it's no laughing matter.

Even after dropping a tough 14-13 decision to Hawaii in the season opener, Braden and his players still has visions of an outstanding season, something like 9-1 or at least 8-2.

The next three games did nothing to discourage the idea.

NOW AT 3-3 MARK

But then along came a 15-14 upset at the hands of Whittier followed by last week's 9-3 loss to Cal Lutheran.

Suddenly the bubble has burst. The Westerners now find themselves with an ordinary 3-3 record and some rugged foes still on the horizon.

One doesn't have to look very far to discover the prime reason for the two successive setbacks — a bad case of "fumble-itis."

In its first four games, USIU ball carriers bobbled the ball 17 times but lost possession on only five occasions. The last two contests produced a "perfect" 9-for-9, perfect for the opposition, that is.

USIU passers also suffered two interceptions against Cal Lutheran.

"You just can't turn the ball over as many times as we have and expect to win," Braden declared yesterday as he checked the lockerroom supply cabinet for the glue bottles.

The USIU bossman hopes to find a quick cure for the slippery pigskin before UC Riverside comes calling at Balboa Stadium Saturday. He has several reasons for desiring an impressive victory over the 2-4 Highlanders.

One is that he still remembers

the manner in which Riverside pulled out a 29-28 win last year.

USIU had rolled up five straight triumphs including shutouts in the last three and appeared headed for another with a 28-6 lead. But Riverside used three successful onside kicks to rally for a 29-28 success.

The loss prevented Braden from compiling the best won-loss record in the school's history in his first season on the Westerners' campus.

"Riverside is a deceiving outfit," says Braden. "One week it will lose by a big score, then turn around and have a good game the next weekend."

One of the Highlanders' two wins to date was a 21-19 nod over the University of Nevada (Las Vegas), after being routed by Hayward, 62-12, the previous week. Nevada last week handed talented Fullerton State its first loss of the season, 20-10.

240 POUND QB

Riverside has a "fullback" in quarterback's clothing in 6-4 and 240-pound Pete Fulton, a junior from Joliet, Ill. He has connected on 44 per cent of his passes (68 of 153) for 878 yards and eight TDs.

Despite gaining only seven yards last week, tailback Bill Nugent continues to lead USIU's ground game with 369 yards in 105 carries. Doug Omer is 55-for-107 passing. Slotback Bobby Fultz has 17 receptions for 233 yards and end Tim Titus 15 for 176.

USIU six-game statistics:

RUSHING

| | TC | Net | TD | LG |
|---------------|-----|-----|----|----|
| Nugent | 105 | 369 | 4 | 25 |
| Houchin | 16 | 77 | 1 | 15 |
| Omer | 102 | 117 | 3 | 46 |
| Heaton | 32 | 129 | 0 | 18 |
| Fultz | 10 | 50 | 0 | 21 |
| Lucia | 11 | 24 | 1 | 28 |

PASSING

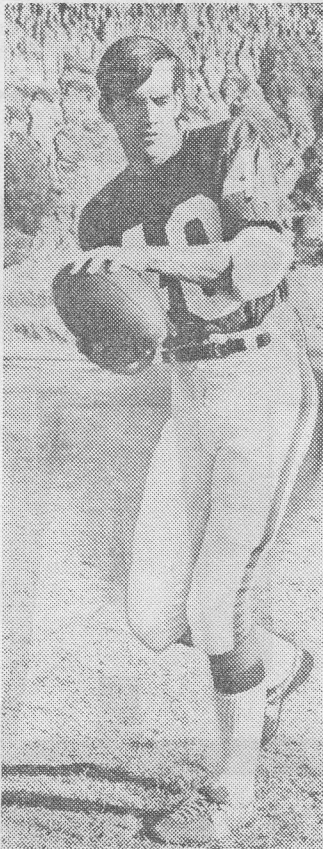
| | PA | PC | HI | Yds. | TD | LG |
|-------------|-----|----|----|------|----|----|
| Omer | 107 | 55 | 7 | 698 | 2 | 63 |
| Lucia | 32 | 12 | 2 | 137 | 0 | 16 |

RECEIVING

| | No. | Yds. | TD | LG |
|----------------|-----|------|----|----|
| Fultz | 17 | 233 | 1 | 34 |
| Titus | 15 | 176 | 0 | 23 |
| Nugent | 10 | 109 | 1 | 60 |
| Limbrick | 6 | 54 | 0 | 2 |

PUNTING

| | No. | Yds. | Avg. | L |
|----------------|-----|------|------|---|
| Bradshaw | 56 | 1774 | 38.4 | |



TIM TITUS

... 12 yards per catch