

# **An Analysis of Why Ohio State Did Not Go to the Rose Bowl in 1962 and the Spirited Aftermath**

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The passion of the citizens of Columbus, Ohio, and most of the state of Ohio for Ohio State football is rarely equalled anywhere in the country with the possible exception of Texas. In the hearts of the Ohio State fans the only acceptable culmination of the football season is a trip to sunny Pasadena, California on New Year's Day. Imagine, then, the shock waves which roared through the university and the community when the Faculty Council, on a unique occasion on November 28, 1961, voted 28 to 25 against participation by the undefeated Buckeye football team. One of those voting against the Rose Bowl trip was the writer who at the time was the elected representative to the Council from the Department of Athletics and the Men's and Women's Divisions of the Department of Physical Education. Why a council member from this area would not allow the football team to enjoy its hard-earned reward is inconceivable to many people.

Those who voted "Yes" felt that the Rose Bowl was a just reward and a "bit of glory" for the players and their undefeated season. Also some thought it would help the university get more money from the alumni and the legislature.

Those voting “No” believed that playing in a commercial venture had no educational value and that classes would be disrupted since they began the next day after the game. Some said that important university business was put aside for several weeks in favor of Rose Bowl matters. Finally the Rose Bowl was seen as an enormous boondoggle for the athletic administration and their families, administrative personnel, state legislators, city officials, and prominent alumni who were guests of the university. This was detrimental to the central purpose of the university which was to educate students.

The decision provoked student demonstrations for two nights. Several thousand marched four miles downtown to the state capitol and finally university, city, and state police had to restore order.

The three Columbus newspapers and all local radio and television stations vigorously attacked the Council decision. However, out of 19 daily newspapers in Ohio only ten disagreed and nine were supportive. The heat generated by the controversy cooled as one moved away from Columbus and Franklin County and into the rest of the state.

The University Alumni Association, the Council, and university president were bombarded with phone calls, telegrams, and letters. The Council was called “traitors to the state,” “egotistical dopes,” and “a bunch of hypocritical jerks.” Sixty-three members of the Association resigned in protest which left 32,723 who did not resign. One sympathetic alumnus wrote, “In Heaven’s Name, protect that one lone voice from the Athletic Department who voted “No!”

It was gratifying to find that the Council vote received approval of leading newspapers in the state such as the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, the *Akron Beacon-Journal*, and the *Toledo Blade*. Gordon Cobbleddick, sports editor of the *Plain Dealer*, wrote: “As an Ohioan who wants to be proud of his state’s largest university I’m glad that the faculty council had the courage to say a polite “No thank you.” Even Coach Woody Hayes controlled his citriolic temper by stating: “I don’t agree with those 28 ‘No’ votes but I respect the integrity of the men who cast them, if not their intelligence. I would not want football to drive a line of cleavage in our university.”

In the final analysis the Council vote in 1962 was only a tiny blip on the television screen of football sport history. Since that time Ohio State has never turned down a Rose Bowl bid and in fact has played in several other bowl games. But the incident did show that the combined influence of the media in Columbus, Ohio was thwarted by 28 members of the Faculty Council.