

By Bill Glovin

# Hurricane Force

**W**hen Scarlet Knights quarterback Bryan Fortay trots onto the field of Miami's Orange Bowl on November 13 to face the renowned Hurricanes, he may feel a bit strange coming out of the visitors' tunnel. Fortay played two seasons for the Hurricanes before transferring to Rutgers in 1991; now he's hoping to beat his former teammates. "I'll be pumped up and excited at the game," Fortay predicts. "It'll be very emotional for me."

More rests on the Miami matchup than Fortay's hopes. Because a team's ability to pack rivals' stands with enthusiastic fans improves the team's chances for a bowl bid, the Rally for Rutgers committee is arranging special travel packages and activities to draw Knights fans from New Jersey, Florida, and sections of the southeast to the game.

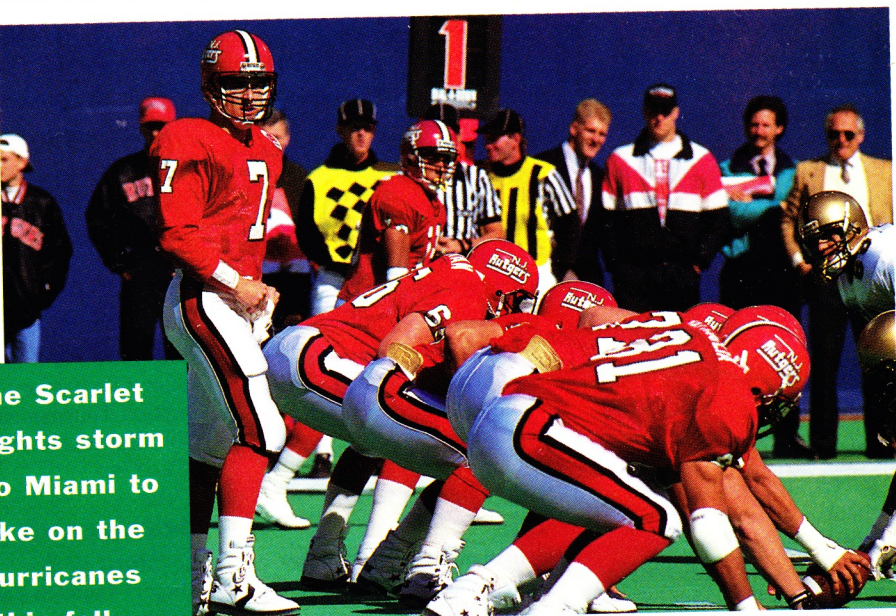
"A bowl bid is tangible evidence that you've had a successful season," says Rutgers Director of Athletics Fred Gruninger. "It's a tremendous financial boost, helps recruiting, and creates television opportunities for the following season." A bowl appearance would also help the university absorb the \$3.6 million annual cost of underwriting the football program. Depending on the bowl, an appearance can gross an athletic program from \$1 million to \$3 million including broadcast revenues.

At the end of last season the Scarlet Knights hoped their 7-4 record would earn an invitation to a second-tier bowl. The closest they came was the Independence Bowl in Shreveport, Louisiana, which seriously considered Rutgers. But bowl officials ultimately selected Oregon (6-5) over the Knights because they felt the PAC-10 team would draw more fans. If the Knights are to receive a much-coveted bid this season, the team not only needs to improve on last season's fourth-place finish in the conference, but must also demonstrate

to bowl officials that it can draw on the road in states such as Florida, where 6,000 Rutgers alumni and six alumni clubs are located.

"We deserved a bowl bid last year based on merit but we didn't get it because of weak fan support," contends Leonard Weissberg (RC'43), a Knights

fan who says he has missed only two games in the last 40 years. "Unless we're at least 8-3, we probably won't go to a bowl unless our attendance improves."



**The Scarlet Knights storm into Miami to take on the Hurricanes this fall.**

The Knights will take on a Miami team that has, over the past 10 years, finished the season ranked number one more often than any other program in America. Before losing to Alabama in last year's Orange Bowl on New Year's Eve, the Hurricanes had spent most of the year ranked number one. "The kind of talent they recruit every year is remarkable," says Knights coach Doug Graber. "Year after year, on both sides of the ball, their people routinely move into the National Football League."

Fortay, in 1989 one of the highest-rated high school players in the country, was one such promising recruit, although his experience with the Hurricanes did not live up to expectations. The coach that recruited Fortay joined the Dallas Cowboys, and the young quarterback spent much of his time there in the shad-

arm," says long-time Knights fan Thomas Hartmann, a Rutgers professor emeritus. "When he's on, he can throw any kind of pass." Buf Lucas, at 6'4", 190 pounds, "has a whip," Hartmann says. "He can do it on the move."

The November contest at the Orange Bowl promises to be a formidable match, regardless of who starts at quarterback. "Miami is *always* in its prime," says Fortay. "It's tough to tell what Rutgers will be this year. The quality of athletes is better than it's ever been, but Miami," he pauses, "is Miami." □

*Special travel packages to Miami for the November 13 Scarlet Knights vs. Hurricanes matchup are available with or without air fare. Participating alumni will stay at the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, Florida. Activities are planned over several days and include a game-day pep rally with Rutgers players, coaches, cheerleaders, and marching band. For information and reservations, call the Scarlet R at 908-932-7629.*