

Head Coach Neely Ranks High in SWC

One of the best known and most famous football coaches in the nation, the head man of the Rice Owls began his 12th year at Rice this season.

Jess Neely is in his 21st season as head coach in the major collegiate ranks, and his 29th year of a very successful coaching career. Jess Neely earned a law degree at Vanderbilt, Tenn. However the lure of coaching was too great, and he by-passed the practice of law to make good in coaching.

That great love for football grew during Neely's gridiron days at Vandy where he played offensive

from '28 to '30—in that era when Wade's famous "Red Elephants" achieved much fame and frequently played in the Rose Bowl.

Neely then got his chance as head coach at Clemson College in South Carolina where he took over in 1931. There were three sad seasons at Clemson, where the grid program had to be built virtually from the ground up.

Then the Tigers of tobacco land hit that right combination and had six winning seasons, climaxed by the 1939 team's 6-3 victory over Frank Leahy's Boston College team in the Dallas' Cotton Bowl, with All-American Banks McFadden pacing Clemson.

Despite those sub-par building years, Neely's record was 43 won, 35 lost, 7 ties in nine seasons.

That earned Neely a shot at the challenging post of athletic director and head coach at Rice Institute, by far the smallest school in the strong Southwest Conference.

Neely Magic Touch

The Neely touch has worked very well at Rice, where the little school toppled the giants frequently.

Despite three sub-.500 seasons during the World War II years of '43, '44, and '45 when the Owls manpower was very low, the Neely record at Rice to date is 69 won, 41 lost, 4 tied.

Even with his earlier building years and three bad seasons at Rice, Neely has one of the best records as head coach in the 20-year college circles.

Three Neely-coached teams have played in major bowl games, and all won. In addition to the Clemson victory over Boston College, the Rice '46 co-champs of the SWC beat Gen. Bob Neyland's Tennessee Vols 8-0 in the Orange Bowl. The Owls' 1949 SWC champs whipped Carl Snavely's Charlie Justice-led North Carolina Tarheels 27-13 in the Cotton Bowl.

Neely is married, and he and Mrs. Neely (Dorothy) and teen age daughters, Joan and Mary, live in their two-story home just off the Rice campus.



Rice Owl Tri-Captains—Walls, Burkhalter, Howton

Rice Tri-Captains Steady Young Owls

Rice Institute's tri-captains, Billy Burkhalter, Glenn Walls, and Bill Howton, will be playing in their last Owl-A&M football game Saturday afternoon in Houston.

These three seniors have never played on a Rice team that has lost to the Aggies.

Howton is a top candidate for All-SWC and a strong contender for All-American honors. The lean redhead from the Texas Panhandle is the leading pass receiver in the Southwest Conference, catching 18 passes for 482 yards for an average gain per pass of 26.7 yards.

Five of the aerials went for touchdowns to place the Rice end in a four-way tie for second place in the SWC scoring race.

Of the five touchdown passes caught, only two were in the end zone. On the other three the great Owl end used his speed to break into the clear, evade would-be tacklers and outrun everyone to the goal line.

National passing statistics are based on the number of passes caught which handicaps Howton, because Rice does not pass as much as the other SWC teams. Of those listed in NCAA statistics, only six men have more total yardage and they have participated in four more games than has Howton. Only five of those listed have scored more TD passes and they have

also played in two more games than the Owl end.

Walls plays left tackle on the young Rice line. He is six feet three inches tall and weighs 210 pounds. His two years as a letterman has provided experience and steadiness in the Blue and Grey forward wall, which has a great many sophomores.

One of the five married men on the team, Walls is an offensive specialist who is called by his teammates one of the finest blocking linemen in the SWC.

Last year Walls played in the shadow of Rice's All-SWC tackle Paul Gioski and did not receive his just dues from the critics.

Besides being one of the Owl tri-captains, Burkhalter is president of the senior class. He has established himself as one of the finest backs in the Southwest on the basis of his two good seasons to date. In the 1950 Cotton Bowl game, Burkhalter then a sophomore, was named the outstanding back of the game over Charlie "Choo Choo" Justice who was playing for North Carolina.

In last year's tilt against the Aggies, Burkhalter had a great day as he flashed his '49 form.

A contender for All-Conference honors, Burkhalter can play equally well at halfback or fullback. If "Kosse" Johnson should become unavailable, Burkhalter can also handle the kicking chores.

Owl Sophs Lead Way For SWC Chances

Much has been said about the youth of the Rice team playing such an important role in many of the key positions on the Owls' offensive and defensive first teams.

It might be noted that of the 25 players who saw the most playing time in the first five games of the season, six were seniors, nine were juniors and 10 were sophomores. In all, there are only ten seniors on the '51 Rice squad.

Where the sophomores are really prominent is the quarterback position. All four candidates battling for the posts are second-year men.

Dan Drake, who has seen lots of action this year, had the edge on the other players in that he played a lot in practice with the

varsity last fall while laying out a year as soph.

The Fort Worth Polly star used that year to learn the "T" as only previous experience was in five fish games of '49, playing single wing tailback.

Fenstemaker The Biggest

Leroy Fenstemaker, the biggest of the group, stands two inches over the six foot mark and tips the scales at 190 pounds. He showed the most promise in spring drills and has alternated with Drake to handle the position most of the time.

The other soph candidates are Buddy Grantham and Bobby Leggett, who is the smallest of the four man-under-the-T men and possesses the best record for fish games last year.

Fullback Johnson

The fullback slot is another key position that has been captured by an eager young Owl.

David Johnson came to Rice varsity rated one of the brightest prospects in the SWC. He had a fine impressive record on the team and had a fine chance of becoming the starting fullback, a rare thing on Neely's teams.

He is rated a fine punter and one of the better punters in the



Rice Sophomore Backs—Johnson, Fenstemaker

conference, so far this year he has turned in a very creditable job. He is also a track star.

Nestrta, The Smallest

In Horton Nestrta the Rice Owls have the smallest player in the Southwest Conference, but one of the ablest and most valuable.

The little sophomore from San Antonio (Harlandale) officially is listed at 147 pounds but after one tough game weighed in at 139 pounds.

Despite his lack of size, Nestrta is the Owl's regular safety-man, an able defender against passes,

and ranks third in the SWC in punt returns.

Off the gridiron he is boyish in appearance, well-mannered and good natured, but on the field his coach, Jess Neely, describes him as the "toughest little nut I've ever seen in a football uniform."

In both the SMU and Texas game he had to be taken from the field with injuries after jarring tackles by linemen who outweighed him nearly 100 pounds, but he returned to action in both games.

Those sophomores will be dangerous.

—Beat Rice—



Jess Neely Head Coach

back and defensive end under the colorful Dan McGugin and his aide, Wallace Wade.

After a year as coach at Murfreesboro High in Tennessee in 1923, four years as coach at little Southwestern U. in Memphis and a spring as assistant baseball coach at Princeton in 1928, Neely went to the University of Alabama.

He served as end coach under Wade, the former aid at Vandy,

New Rice Stadium Seats 70,000 Fans

Now one year old, Rice's magnificent new stadium on the school campus will be the site of the Rice Owls' battle with the Cadets Saturday afternoon.

With this first stadium of such size to be built in this country in many years available, the Rice Owls' home attendance record was nearly doubled as some 300,000 fans saw the six home games last year.

The spectators at Rice's 1950 games acclaimed the many outstanding features of the new structure that was designed with the comfort of the fans the primary goal.

For Football Only

The stadium was designed strictly for football. There is no track around the field. The sidelines are only 35 feet from the first row of seats.

The structure is double deck, with the lower part a complete bowl and upper decks on each side extending beyond the end zone lines.

The lower stands, or bowl, seat 40,000 fans while each upper deck seats 15,000.

Playing Field Below Ground

The playing field is in a man-made bowl, 26 feet below actual ground level. Fans enter the stadium at ground level, walk up a very slight incline to a concourse 60 to 90 feet in width that completely circles the lower stands.

Fans entering the lower stands walk down to their seats. Spectators goint to the upper decks have to walk up relatively few rows, and much of their climb is accomplished by a ramp, which leads to a second concourse at the level of the 15th row of the upper deck.

The first row of six seats are above the playing surface, and the first seven rows of the end zone seats have been eliminated so that every fan in the stadium gets a view of the entire playing area.

No Waiting

The entrance system is designed to eliminate waiting at gates, or unnecessary walking to get to a specific entrance.

Fans may enter at any one of the four entrances at each corner of the stadium. Each entrance has three gates in an area 24 feet wide. After passing through the gate, the fans simply walk up a ramp a short ways to the concourse that surrounds the lower stands and proceed to their aisle.

The stadium has enough concession stands, telephones, rest rooms, etc., to provide such services and facilities for a capacity crowd, and they are located strategically so that no one has to walk very far to reach them.

There are two electrically operated scoreboards located at each end of the stadium.

Rice's new stadium is one of the best lighted anywhere. It has 16 light towers, eight on each side of the field. Lights are attached to the upper deck therefore there are

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