

# SWC Challenge Bowl Lost, But Idea Became Stronger

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The Southwest Challenge Bowl lost money in its first venture but, uniquely, the project became stronger as a result.

It doesn't sound like progress when something loses a bundle. But in the case of the Challenge Bowl a city came to the aid of the promoters because it obviously was an excellent idea and something on which no chance should be taken that it might die.

CORPUS CHRISTI people saw immediately that they had a fine feature that could be built into a great advertising medium while furnishing entertainment for the citizenship.

It isn't often that you find a group of people willing to step in and insure the success of a project that has run into rough financial ground. But it was a matter of civic pride. The Corpus Christi people didn't want to allow a black mark on their city, especially since the promoters had failed to make the project pay for itself because not enough people turned out for the game. There were over 7,000 in the stands but at least 5,000 more were needed to reach the desired break-even point.

The idea of the game was to match college players from the Southwest against players from the rest of the nation. These athletes were turning pro in this game since the winners were to receive \$800 and the losers \$600.

A television deal that would pay

in more than \$20,000 was obtained and if more than 12,000 paid their way into the stadium enough money would be realized to pay the players and all the expenses incident to the game.

THE GAME lost money. Some said it was \$35,000. Ken Jackson, the Austin restaurateur who once played football at Texas and in pro football and who headed a small group promoting the game, said it was about \$16,000. Anyway, there was a deficit.

However, this was not considered unusual. Most sport projects lose their first time out. Some lose the second and third times. Remember the Cotton Bowl, which today is one of the most solid promotions of sport.

Curtis Sanford started the Cotton Bowl and bucked the field alone for four years. Only one year did he realize a profit but that was wiped out by the losses the other three years. In fact, he finally sold out with an over-all loss of about \$15,000.

Most of the big golf tournaments took financial beatings at the start. Let the founders of the now rich Colonial National Invitation tournament at Fort Worth tell you about their early troubles.

Jackson recalled that he played in the Senior Bowl at its inception and was supposed to get \$400. He had to take \$120.

THE PLAYERS put on a sort of strike at the conclusion of the first Challenge Bowl and demanded their money. Jackson's group

had planned to mail the checks the next week when all the money was in. Jackson realized there had been a loss but he had sufficient money to pay off the players and his group planned to put up the deficit.

But the Corpus Christi people wanted to meet the players' demands immediately and not permit a report to go out that the players couldn't get their money. So they stepped in and took an option on 51 per cent of the stock so they might underwrite any deficit.

Jackson didn't want it that way because it would be taking control of the project a way from his group. But he went ahead and got the money together to pay off the players.

And the following week when the two groups got together and worked out a plan whereby he and Phil Branch, another former Texas football player, would be able to keep 24 per cent of the stock and be managing directors of the project, with the remainder of the stock to be sold to Corpus Christi individuals, Jackson was elated.

JACKSON REALIZED that he had run into a rarity for promoters—the cooperation of a city to make a project click when it could have allowed his group to suffer the entire loss and thus probably have to fold its tent.

Jackson not only was going to be able to carry on his plan but have the backing of an entire city to insure its success.

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Students with sophomore or higher classification who desire intensive work during the spring semester in specific aspects of writing such as spelling, punctuation, clearness, and idiom may take English 103, Section 505, Monday nights 7:15-9:45 p. m., 307 Academic Building. The class is not intended for foreign students. Additional information can be obtained from the Department of English. John Q. Anderson Head 5347

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