

Gilbert May Leap To Top Of NCAA Rushing List

AUSTIN (AP)—Texas' Chris Gilbert burst through a strong Southern California line and was sent spinning with a solid tackle. He checked his fall by pushing off the ground with his hand and sped 15 more yards before being whacked out of bounds.

The Southern Cal game of Sept. 17, 1966, was the debut of Gilbert, a 180-pounder whose this-way, that-way running style has made him the greatest ground

gainer in Southwest Conference history.

In his senior year, with three regular season games to go, Gilbert has a chance to leap to the top of the list of all-time NCAA rushing leaders.

He's 16 now with 2,874 yards, 507 behind the national leader, Art Luppino, who played at Arizona in 1953-56.

Between Gilbert and Luppino are such former rushers as Mike

Garrett, in second place and the three-year rushing leader with 3,221 yards; Alan Ameche, Ollie Matson, Glenn Davis, Larry Csonka and Ray McDonald.

"Watching Chris run is like a film strip with several frames missing," said his coach, Darrell Royal. "You see him hit a hole here and all of a sudden he's way over there and you don't see him get over there."

"I'm his No. 1 fan other than

this week," Texas Tech Coach J. T. King said just prior to the Texas-Texas Tech game. "I think he's one of the all-time greats to play in this conference."

"There isn't any doubt in my mind that he has run successfully against better defenses than a lot of people you may have read about in the old days. I mean the Doak Walkers, the Jim Swinks, the Jack Crains, the Bohn Hilliards," King added, listing former

SWC stars. "He has gone against better defenses Saturday after Saturday than then they ever did."

"It is amazing," said Royal, "that he has yet to be picked on an All-American team. I realize there are other great ones, but there has to be a backfield picked somewhere with Gilbert on it."

Statisticians have worn out packages of pencils recording Gilbert's exploits.

He started the 1966 season, his sophomore year, as a sub against USC and didn't carry the ball until the second half but finished with 103 yards in 14 carries. Since then he has gained more than 100 yards in 15 games, including a SWC single game record of 245 against Baylor in 1966.

He piled up 1,080 yards in 206 carries as a soph, for a 5.2-yard average and tacked on an extra 156 against Mississippi in the

1966 Bluebonnet Bowl, which not counted in the NCAA statistics.

As a junior, he raced for 180 yards in 205 carries, a 5.3 average, although he missed the equivalent of two full games to shoulder and hip injuries.

His 96-yard run from scrimmage against TCU in 1967 was a conference record.

Texas was only a so-so 6-4 team both years.

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