

SWC Preview—Another Tough Year

By TED BORISKIE

The Southwest Conference has a reputation for being an incredibly tough conference. Upsets are almost the rule rather than the exception.

This year looks to be no different. Texas has won the conference for the last five years, ever since shifting to the wishbone formation. This year they are back with one of their strongest teams in recent years, so they are naturally favored to win the conference title once again.

Pre-season favorites in the SWC, however, have a strange habit of not being on top when the shouting is over. This will undoubtedly be an exciting year with Texas having a powerhouse and Rice, A&M and SMU featuring explosive teams capable of surprise. Here's how the teams stack up.

ARKANSAS

Arkansas was pictured for big things last year but had a disappointing 6-5 season with an even more frustrating 3-4 record in the SWC. It is all in the past now with most of the team graduated. Arkansas is returning only six starters (two offensive, four defensive) with big guns QB Joe Ferguson and SE Mike Reppond gone to the pros. However, one of

their biggest guns, Dickey Morton, is back and with a runner like Morton on the squad, the problems may not be so big after all. Morton was a consensus all-SWC last year picking up 1188 yards in 242 carries for a 4.9 average. This was accomplished in an offense that featured mainly the aerial antics of Ferguson. This year, the offense will be geared a bit more toward Morton and if some of the young players give class performances, Arkansas could be awesome indeed.

The Razorbacks are counting on Junior Scott Bull to fill the gap left by Ferguson. Bull quarterbacked the season finale last year and guided Arkansas to a 24-14 victory. Arkansas is also looking to linebacker Danny Rhodes and fullback Marsh White to re-instill the winning tradition in the Razorback squad.

BAYLOR

Baylor is returning 14 starters from last year's 5-6 team. Eight returning starters are on the offensive squad so Baylor needs only to fill a couple of holes to have a killer of an offense. They have more speed and more depth in the backfield than almost anyone else in the conference in returning players and to add to that the Bears recruited high school

stars SE Aley Jackson and RB-LB Mike Ebow. Baylor may not have room for them with such class players as quarterback Neal Jeffrey, and running backs Godfrey White, Brian Kilgore, Pat McNeil and Gary Lacy already occupying the backfield.

Even though the Bears lost most heavily to graduation on the defensive squad, Head coach Grant Teaff said "Despite losing all-America Roger Goree, I think we will be as good or better defensively." Baylor is probably still a year away but their backfield could run them to a fine season.

RICE

Rice lost all-star quarterback Bruce Gadd and nine other starters to graduation but they return their three starting running backs and all-America candidate safety Bruce Henley. Henley has thirteen interceptions in two years and needs only six more for a new conference record.

Running Backs John Coleman, Gary Ferguson, and Ron Arce-neaux and ends Edwin Collins and Carl Swierc could provide all the offensive punch anyone could need if the Owls can just find a quarterback.

Coach Al Conover expects to improve on last year's 5-5-1 record

because his youth laden team of last year is one year older and wiser.

SMU

Southern Methodist returns 33 lettermen, along with Rice the most in the conference. Their offensive strength is almost frightening returning eight starters. Alvin Maxson is a definite all-America candidate as he could become only the second collegian in history to rush for more than 1,000 yards three years in a row. He has 2,017 yards for the last two years and made all-SWC both times. He led SMU in scoring with 77 points.

Halfback Wayne Morris was the leading freshman rusher in the nation last year with 884 yards and a 5.1 average. He was named most outstanding offensive newcomer in the SWC last year. End Kenny Harrison became the first freshman to make all-SWC since Doak Walker in 1945. He didn't start until the fifth game when he caught eight passes for 172 yards and two touchdowns. He runs the 100 in 9.6.

DT Louie Kelcher made all-SWC last year and has been picked to several pre-season all-America teams this year. As a sophomore last year he made the Detroit Sports Extra all-America

team. All SMU has to do is fill the six holes left by graduation in the defense. If they can accomplish that, the Ponies could be smiling for the rest of the year.

TEXAS

It is easy to see why Texas is so heavily favored. The Longhorns return 13 starters from last year's 10-1 team. They return the entire defensive line that gave up only seven touchdowns, just three by rushing, in 11 games last year. Standing behind them is linebacker Glenn Gaspard, all-American selection on several pre-season lists.

If Texas has a problem, it would have to be the offensive line where four members of last year's line are gone. With Texas' depth, however, the problem would have to be a small one. With running backs Tommy Landry and Roosevelt Leaks, an offensive line seems only incidental. Leaks is a crushing fullback who delights in running over defenders. He ran for 1,099 yards with six games of over 100 yards. Marty Akins should fit into the quarterback spot quite nicely.

Texas is going to play tough

football for the entire season and it will take a super effort to unseat them.

TCU

Texas Christian will return 13 starters with eight coming back on offense. The Horned Frogs could have trouble on offense as they will have to almost completely rebuild the offensive line. They have plenty of stars, the brightest being DT Charlie Davis. Davis made the AP third-team all-America team last year and was picked on the Football Writer's pre-season first team this year.

QB Kent Marshall was off to a great start last year before he broke his collar bone and missed the last seven games. He ran for 115 yards in the opening game victory over Indiana last year and was completing 59% of his passes when injury took him out.

Mike Luttrell was the fourth leading rusher in the SWC last year and if the Frogs can build a good line, he could better his output this year.

It will be hard to score on the Frogs this year, so to beat them, it will take a good defensive stand. With Marshall and Luttrell banging against it, a good

defensive stand will be hard to come by.

TEXAS TECH

Tech is returning 13 starters but has a serious problem of building both lines. The backfield will have relatively the same faces as last year.

QB Joe Barnes is a big artist and master of the game. He ran for 510 yards and 11 touchdowns while passing 1,148 yards and another 11 TD's. His two favorite targets are Calvin Jones and Andre Tillman, both returning.

Also returning will be tailback George Smith who ran for 1,148 yards and an incredible 6.7 average. He had 174 yards and 11 touchdowns against North Carolina in last year's Sun Bowl.

In rebuilding the defense, the Red Raiders are looking to Ecomet Burley for help. He is primarily in reserve, he still is the only Tech freshman to earn a varsity letter last year. He voted the outstanding lineman in the Sun Bowl.

Both lines will be young. Tech could develop into a powerhouse toward the end of the season.

Women Field Winners

In its first year at A&M the Women's Sports Association fielded several successful teams and gave A&M women the chance to compete in intercollegiate athletics.

Not officially affiliated with the Physical Education department, the organization is co-sponsored by Kay Don, P.E. instructor, and Dr. Mickey Little, associate professor of P.E.

Finances have been an obstacle for the WSA. Aid was received earlier in the year from Exchange Store funds and the Former Students Association. The club has had fund-raising projects and membership dues to supplement the treasury. Entrance fees and travel expenses have been its major expenses. The club is now looking for other sources of funds.

Last fall at the district bowling tournament, the coeds took second and fifth in singles. Bernie Ponzio and Jerri Lampkin won first in doubles. A&M also took third and fifth in that event. The team placed second in the tourney and Ponzio became the individual high point winner.

At the state meet, Ponzio again was high point winner and took first in singles. The swimming season was both successful and yet disappointing.

The team won second overall at the state with several individuals taking first and second medals in various events. Five women qualified for the national in Moscow, Idaho, but due to money problems only one could attend. Jean Collins placed eighth in the 50-yard backstroke, twelfth in the 100-yard medley, and 50th in the 100-yard backstroke. She won all the events at the state meet.

A&M gymnasts competed three meets this season. The team won the dual meet at Pan American College. Kay Bell and Elaine Eike were top performers.

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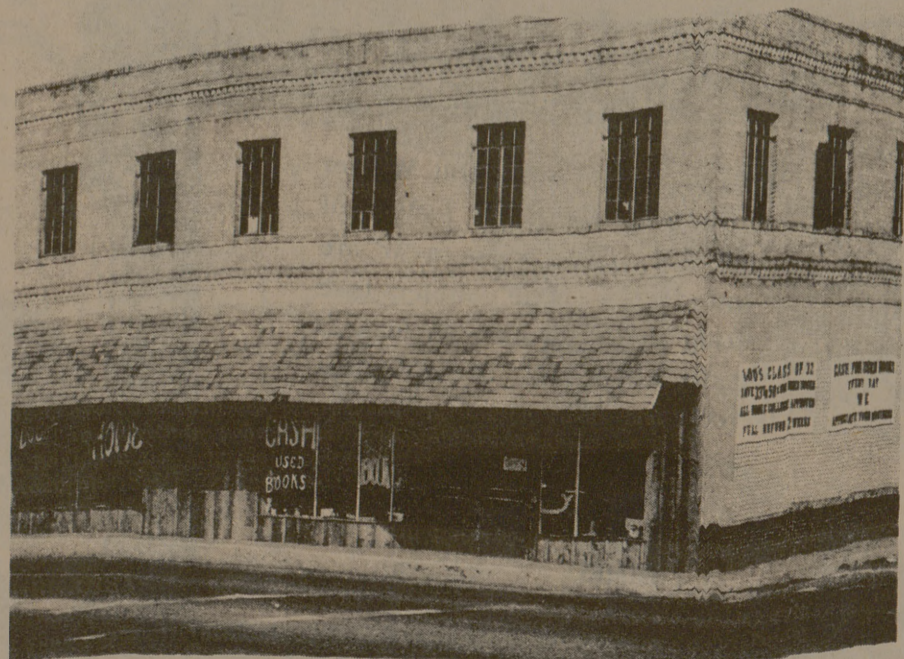
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