

Three-year losing streak going

SWC draws another tough year

DALLAS — The Southwest Conference can claim the strongest non-conference football schedule in its 61 seasons.

Among the arguments for the 1975 schedule, underway Saturday, Sept. 6:

The 28 teams that will play 32 games against the SWC this fall include 17 that posted winning records last season and two more that broke even;

Ten of those teams won eight or more games last season, including two (Oklahoma and Alabama) that posted 11-0 regular-season marks;

Four of them finished in the top ten in both the Associated Press and United Press international polls;

And eight of them won bowl invitations following successful '74 campaigns.

Rice, TCU and defending champion Baylor draw the toughest assignments, based on previous track records.

The Owls' four foes won 28, lost 14 and tied two in regular-season

play, and three of them went through bowl encounters without a loss. Houston, playing its last season as an independent before joining the SWC race in '76, and Mississippi State both went 8-3 last year and Vanderbilt was 7-3-1. All three were bowl participants, Mississippi State winning the Sun Bowl and Houston and Vandy playing ties in the Bluebonnet and Peach, respectively. Mississippi State's only losses were to major-bowl participants, Alabama, Auburn and Florida.

Rice's fourth foe is, LSU. That game will be on the road (at Shreveport), while the other three are in Houston.

A bowl a week is set for Rice. Since SWC foes Baylor, Texas and Texas Tech went bowling last year, the Owls count six bowl teams among their 11 opponents.

TCU's four opponents are Alabama (11-1), Nebraska (9-3), Arizona State (7-5) and UT Arlington (1-10), a combined '74 record of 28-19. Alabama was second

in the final UPI poll and fifth in the AP, while Nebraska finished eighth in the UPI and ninth in the AP balloting. Arizona State, winner of five straight Western Athletic Conference championships, slipped to third last season after dropping a three-point decision to eventual champion Brigham Young.

Baylor struggles against Michigan (10-1), one of the nation's most consistent winners of the 1970's, and Auburn (10-2), the Southeastern Conference power that walloped Texas in the Gator Bowl. Adding to Auburn's fury this fall, the Plainsmen have dedicated this season to Ralph (Shug) Jordan, their coach of 25 years who retires after this campaign. South Carolina (4-7) and Mississippi (3-8) are the other dates as Baylor's '75 foes compiled a 27-18 record last year.

Among the other strong schedules, Arkansas plays a pair of eight-game winners and a bowl victor and SMU plays two teams that won eight games and two bowl

teams. The Razorbacks' four foes posted a 25-20 mark last year, with both Missouri Valley Conference champion Tulsa and Utah State going 8-3 and Oklahoma State (7-5) defeating WAC champion BYU in the Fiesta Bowl.

SMU's opponents were 21-24-1 last fall, but both Florida and Houston were 8-3 in regular season to earn bowl trips. West Virginia was 4-7 and opening-game for Wake Forest was 1-10.

The Texas schedule includes a composite 21-22-1 record with Colorado State (4-6-1), Washington (5-6) and Utah (1-10) leading up to the non-conference closeout with Oklahoma. The Sooners are undefeated the last two seasons and finished number one in the AP poll, being ineligible in UPI voting.

New Texas Tech coach Steve Sloan opens against Florida State (1-10), which sounds comforting until you remember that the Seminoles led Baylor by 17-0 at the

half last year, dropped an 8-7 decision to Alabama, defeated strong Miami of Florida, and lost a three-point decision to Eastern toughie Pitt. From there the Raiders take on New Mexico (4-6-1), potent Oklahoma State (7-5) and WAC runner-up in Arizona (9-2), possessors of one of the nation's top won-lost records last year. It adds up to a 20-24-1 composite won-lost record.

Texas A&M, the pre-season SWC favorite, meets four solid teams from major conferences — Mississippi (3-8), LSU (5-5-1), Illinois (6-4-1) and Kansas State (4-7). Their records total out to 18-24-2 but they include victories over MVC champ Tulsa, Tennessee, Colorado, Stanford and Minnesota.

In all, the 28 SWC opponents won 163 regular-season and four bowl games for an average of around six victories apiece. The 4-2-2 bowl record would have been a perfect 8-0 with just nine more points.

From the SWC point of view, the 1974 records promise strong competition for the strong opposition of 1975. SWC teams won 18 non-conference games last year, a total that has been topped only one time since Tech joined up to make it an eight-team family in 1960. The SWC has finished on the winning side of the non-conference ledger in four of the last five seasons and 53 of the 60 years it has been operating. It also marked the first time since 1963-65 that the SWC has posted three straight winning non-conference seasons.

But the SWC posted winning non-conference record for its first 29 years straight, from 1915 through 1942, so that record is safe until 2000 AD.

Newcomb has knee operation

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Australian tennis star John Newcombe underwent surgery Tuesday to remove damaged cartilage from his left knee.

Orthopedic surgeons from the University of Texas Medical School at San Antonio said that "everything went just fine."

"This injury occurred about 10 weeks ago — we're not exactly sure when," said one of the surgeons. "He can't document it precisely."

However, Newcombe, still groggy from anesthetics but cheerful, said he injured the knee June 12 in Pittsburgh, Pa.

"My knee went one way and my foot stayed on the ground," he said. That came during a World Team tennis match against Vitas Gerulaitis.

"Once I recover I don't anticipate any trouble coming back," Newcombe, 31, said.

His plans were to remain at his San Antonio home for five weeks before traveling to Hawaii and eventually to his native Sidney, Australia.

Newcombe might be back at full speed for tournament play in about three months, the doctor said. "We're anticipating at this time that he'll be able to go back and hit ground strokes in about six weeks."

Newcombe, a friendly, mustachioed man with dark shaggy hair, was expected to remain in the hospital for several days.

"We'll have him up walking tonight," the doctor said.

Newcombe trains at his TBar-M Tennis Ranch at New Braunfels, Tex., 30 miles north of here.

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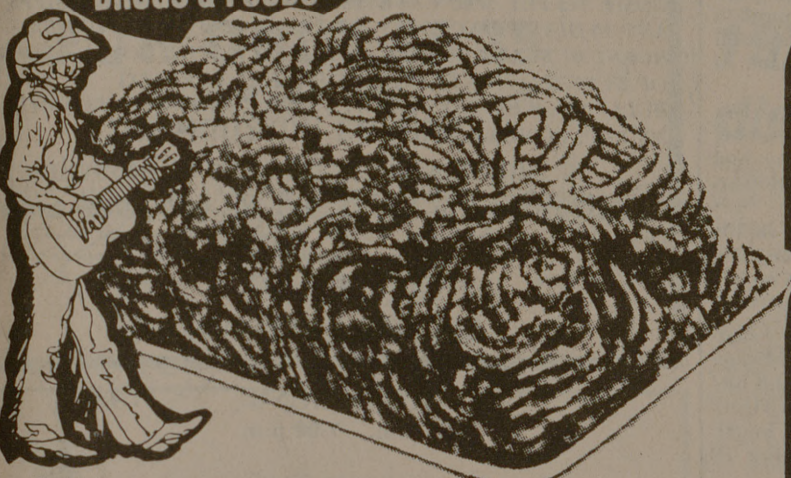
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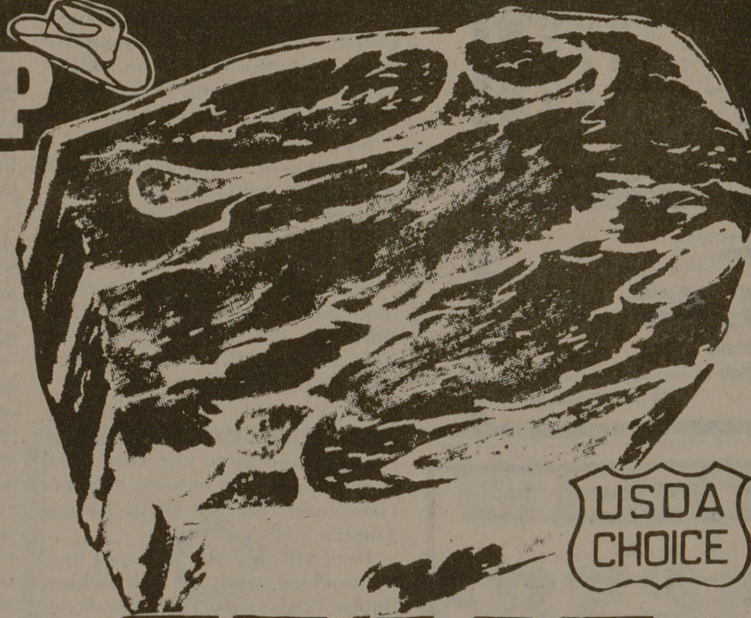
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