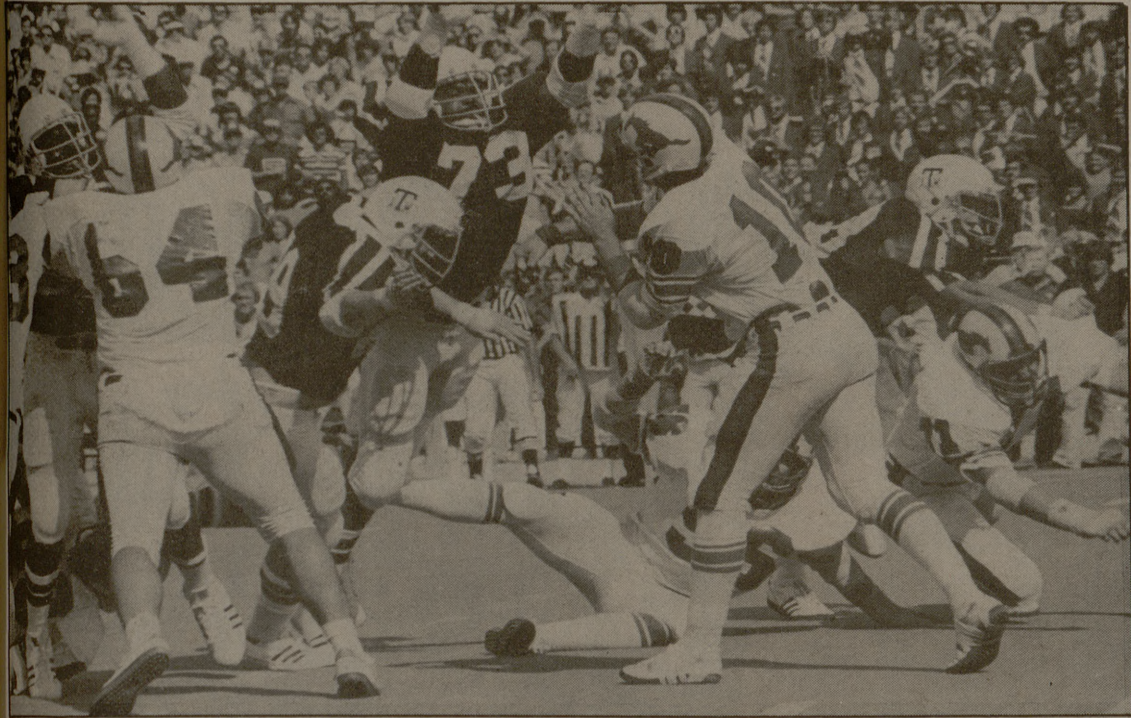


sports

Seven SWC punters rank nationally



While Southwest Conference place-kickers continue their onslaught upon both distance and proficiency records, those other guys in the league who use their feet for a living are beginning to make some noise of their own.

Through nine weeks of the 1977 football season, seven SWC punters are still booming the ball at a rate of 42 yards or better per kick, and if that keeps up, it will easily mark the best year ever for punters in the SWC.

Only three times in SWC history have as many as four punters ended their season with at least a 40-yard average, those years being 1976, 1968 and 1966. And only three other times did as many as three finish with that high a mark.

With defending SWC punting champion Russell Erxleben of Texas leading the way, SWC kickers in 1977 currently hold seven of the top 23 positions nationally, including five of the top 17 places. No other conference can claim more than four punters among the top 25.

Erxleben, whose 46.6-yard average in 1976 set an SWC standard, is the nation's second-ranked punter with a 45.9-yard average. Then a ways down the list comes TCU's Cameron Young, who must be a little miffed as to how his 42.0-yard average can rank 23rd in the nation but only seventh in the SWC.

Other league punters ranked nationally include Arkansas' Steve Little at 43.9, SMU's Ken Rosenthal at 43.7, David Appleby of Texas A&M at 43.6, Luke Prestridge of Baylor at 42.8 and Houston's Jay Wyatt at 42.3. And with a couple of good performances in their final games, Texas Tech's Mike Mock (38.7) and Rice's Steve Gleaves (38.5) could climb over the 40-yard plateau. Collectively, SWC punters have kicked the ball 446 times in 1977 for a 41.1-yard average.

While Erxleben's league record serves as the average to beat, several of the punters have a chance to finish ahead of the mark the Texas junior topped last year, the 45-yard average posted by SMU's Dave

Sherer back in 1957. Next best after that is the 44.4 average Little turned in last season.

Elsewhere, Texas fullback Earl Campbell continues to close on the 4,000-yard career rushing plateau, his 173-yard effort against Houston last Saturday keeping him firmly entrenched as both the SWC and the nation's leading ball carrier with

a 148.5 reading. With regular season games remaining against TCU, Baylor and Texas A&M, Campbell lacks only 109 yards from becoming college football's fifth 4,000-yard rusher.

Campbell's teammate Johnnie Johnson tops the nation's punt returners with a 14.1-yard return average.

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Just missed

SMU quarterback Mike Ford (No. 10) lofts a pass over the out-stretched hands of Johnnie Donahue (No. 73). A&M will need this pass rush in its game with Arkansas this Saturday. Kick-off is at 1:30 p.m.

Battalion photo by Kathy Curtis

Ag rifle team has good year

The Texas A&M University Rifle Team has taken first and second place in two of its first four matches.

The Aggies' first match was in Huntsville, Texas. They defeated five other teams in the NRA 3 Position Match to take first and second place.

The #1 team fired a score of 2090. Led by Eric Johnson with a score of 535, took top honors. Other first team members and their scores were: Michael Winzler (507), Brett Armstrong (519) and Elizabeth Nealin (529).

In the ISU (International Match) match, the Aggies were forced to settle for 6th, 8th and 11th place as nationally ranked TCU and top-ranked University of Houston took top honors.

In the second match of the season at Arlington, Texas, the Aggies took 4th, 7th and 12th place as TCU and UH lead the field. The only individual awards were won by Brett Armstrong who fired a 177 out of a possible 200 to take third place standing position.

At Kingsville, Texas, the Aggies came back to lead the field with a first and second place win.

The first team's total was 2135. They fired a 2151 to take top honors.

The first teams scoring drive was led by Marietta Johnson with a score of 550. Other first team members were: Brett Armstrong (541), Michael Winzler (537), and Eric Johnson (523).

In addition to team awards, the Aggies won nearly all of the individual honors.

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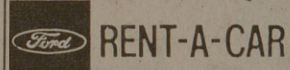
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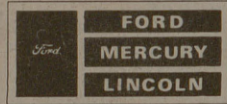
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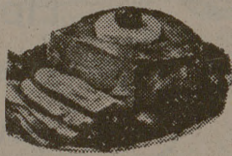
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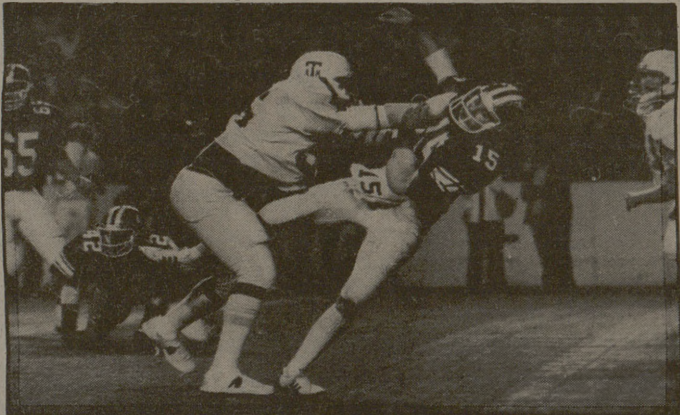
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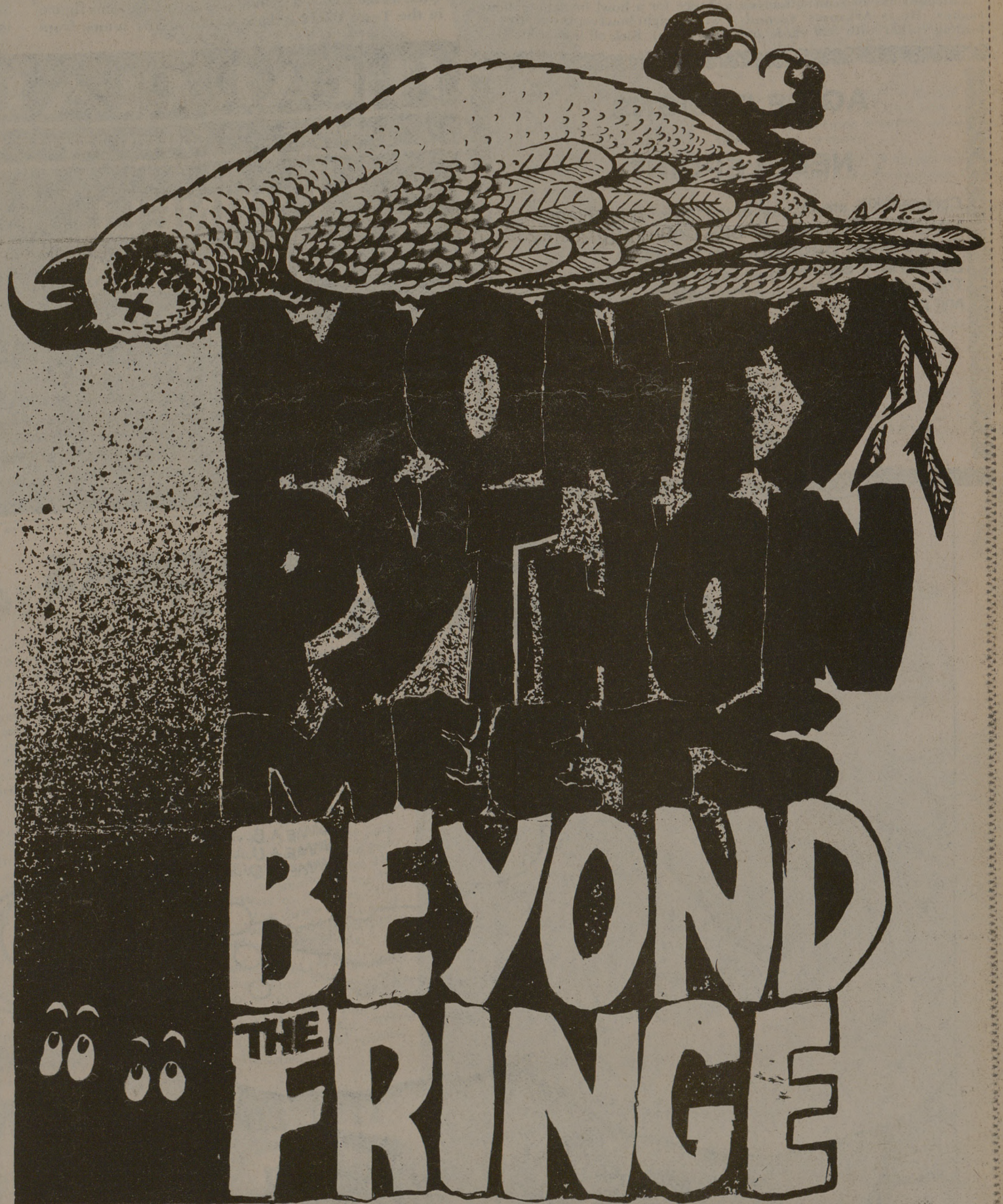
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