

# SWC teams play Saturday

United Press International  
HOUSTON — Rice quarterback Randy Hertel says his first game against the Texas Longhorns was comparable to trying to hold a punching bag motionless against the force of Muhammad Ali's left jab.

"I threw 45 passes and was knocked down 35 times," Hertel says. "And that was not counting eight sacks."

Rice was at the low point of a 10-game losing streak last season when they met Texas. The Owls did no better than Hertel, losing 72-15 only because the Longhorns' regulars retired early.

Afterwards, Rice could boast it had scored the first two touchdowns of the season against the eventual Southwest Conference champions. Such has been the team's fruits in 15 straight non-winning seasons.

But, as is the case with conference teams, they must play each other every year. And an estimated 65,000 fans will jam Rice Stadium Saturday night to see the expected massacre. A larger portion of the audience than in past years will be Owls boosters, however, because Rice, under a new coach, played a close game against a good team last weekend.

Nationally ranked Iowa State scored twice in the final quarter to beat Rice 24-19. Afterwards, first-year coach Ray Alborn said he had reminded himself his team had lost after all the congratulations he received.

In contrast to what was expected, the Owls did not get beat up by the best opponent on their murderous early schedule which, after Texas, continues with Oklahoma and LSU.

"Our kids," Alborn said this week, "aren't going to roll over for anyone."

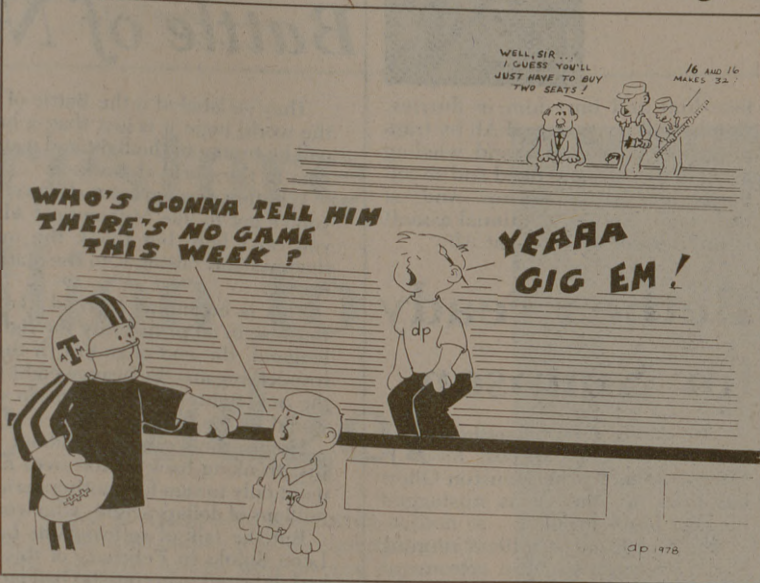
The coach also said he has rekindled his team that the 72 points they scored last year was the most scored against Rice since 1912. Such embarrassments have been known in this once-tight series to cause surprises.

Hertel, 19, has reason to hope that his offensive line is a better pass-blocking unit than last season. He was dumped only once against Iowa State.

Hertel understands Alborn's offensive system, which is simple compared to the "triple pocket combination" used by last year's head coach, Homer Rice.

"I wasn't really sure what that meant," Hertel said.

Owls receiver Doug Cunningham says Hertel's right arm is stronger this season and his passes are thrown harder.



If he is not hounded by Texas' pass rush Saturday night, he could keep his team in contention against the Longhorns. He led the SWC as a freshman with 156 pass completions and in the Iowa State loss he was 15 of 27 for 149 yards and two touchdowns.

Meanwhile, in Atlanta Georgia, Vince Dooley agrees with the oddsmaker that Georgia is the underdog for Saturday's opener against the big and experienced Baylor Bears, but he adds that the Bulldogs are ready.

"We've had to make a lot of changes since last season and we'll have a lot of new people in our lineup," said Dooley. "But, we've had a good preseason. We've worked hard and I feel that we are as prepared as we could hope to be."

School doesn't start at Georgia until Sept. 22 so the crowd at Sanford Stadium Saturday is expected to be about 45,000, three-fourths of capacity.

"I expect those who do show up are going to see a good, hard-fought

contest," said Dooley. "Baylor has a lot of size and some outstanding individuals. We hear they are rate the darkhorse in the Southwest Conference behind Arkansas, Texas and Texas A&M."

Baylor will have junior college transfer Steve Smith making his first start at quarterback for the Bears. Two 214-pound seniors, Greg Hawthorne and Steve Howell, will be the running backs. The offensive player expected to cause Georgia the most trouble is 263-pound senior Ronnie Lee whom Baylor coach Grant Teaff calls "the finest blocking tight end in the country."

"This will be a mirror game for the two teams," said Teaff. "It is an unusual type of opening game. Usually it is tough to prepare for an opener because you don't know what to expect from your opponent. But, in this instance, both teams run out of the I-formation with split backs and both defenses have had an opportunity to work against those offenses since last spring."

Baylor also was 5-6 last year, but Teaff said he thinks this is the best team he has had in his seven years as Baylor coach. "We have outstanding people at each position and a good blend of experience and young players. I'd have to say our depth is a definite strong point."

Saturday will be only the second time Georgia has played Baylor. The other time was in 1972 when the Bulldogs won in Athens, 24-14.

action this weekend, Houston will travel to Memphis State, SMU will visit Florida and Arkansas will host Vanderbilt.

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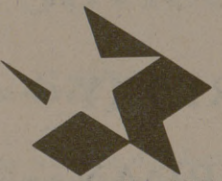
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