

Coogs hard to figure

Yeoman has surprises

United Press International
HOUSTON — To oddsmakers for the years, the University of Houston football team under coach Bill Yeoman has been a puzzle. The Cougars often are so hard to figure that they appear to operate on a different psychological circuit than most college teams.

Yeoman's 1967 squad, for instance, beat No. 1 ranked Michigan State 37-7 and then stumbled to three losses that season. The 1968 team inundated Tulsa 56-6 one week only to get trampled 40-20 by Florida State the next week. And in 1969 his team lost its first two games before winning its next contest 74-0 en route to nine straight victories.

Season to season with the Cougars is not much steadier. As an example, in the fall following Yeoman's 2-8 season in 1975, the Cougars ran over Texas 30-0 in Austin, won the Southwest Conference title and the Cotton Bowl.

Why the almost constant surprises? "I don't know," said Yeoman. "It's hard to figure. I do know our ups and downs were a lot more common when we were independent. In the Southwest Conference the kids have something to fight for each week."

Houston began playing for the national football championship in Yeoman's 14th season as the Cougars' head coach, 1976.

This season, his troops did not seem likely to surprise the oddsmakers as they upset ninth-

ranked Florida State 27-21 in Tallahassee, Fla., following games in which they looked bad against Memphis State and only slightly better against Utah.

"We did play a good bit harder," said Yeoman, named UPI's coach of the week as a result of his latest upset.

Could it be that Houston is affected by motivational aspects of the game more than most teams? The Cougars often times play tougher games on the road than at home.

"The ability to stay calm on the



Bill Yeoman

road is something we brought along from our independent days," he said. "Heck, these are kids we are working with. We sit them down and talk to them. We go over the contingencies should we fumble or make mistakes."

The Cougars were high stepping when they went on the field against the Seminoles. They scored touchdowns the first four times they had the ball and with 6:48 left in the second quarter they led 27-0.

Said Seminoles coach Bobby Bowden, "Nobody runs the veer better than Houston does. They

have a great offense and Bill is the master at it."

It was something Bowden said before the game, however, which may have been much more significant to the outcome.

"Houston has the best team money can buy, but don't quote me on that," Bowden jokingly told a local quarterback club meeting. He also spoke of Houston's image as an "outlaw" team.

The comments were brought to the attention of Yeoman before Saturday's game and then printed last Friday in a Florida newspaper.

"That all ended," Yeoman said, "when we got in the Southwest Conference. It was like we didn't have B.O. anymore."

Houston, with the victory, displacing Florida State in the nation's Top 20 while the second NCAA probation levied against Houston's football program in 10 years expired. The Cougars are presently ranked seventeenth in the UPI coaches' poll.

Meanwhile, Yeoman Tuesday was doing his work with the media in preparation for Houston's conference opener at Baylor Saturday.

"It's imperative we get a good week of work and get a whole lot better, because we are still not in any position to be competitive in the conference race," he said.

Writers covering the SWC tabbed Yeoman's Cougars in a pre-season poll to run second on the heels of Arkansas. That prediction already has been devalued and inflated twice in three games.

UT-OU overshadows SWC games

United Press International
They will crank up the roller coaster and the cotton candy machine on the Texas State Fairgrounds this week and if the thrill rides are running can Texas vs. Oklahoma be far behind?

Of course not.

It's one of the most anticipated sporting events in the Southwest and a king-sized social gathering as well.

People who are used to attending opera balls or making purchases at art auctions suddenly find themselves putting on their game face and going quietly mad at this time of the year — all because of what will take place next Saturday in the Cotton Bowl.

It will be the 73rd meeting between the major state universities of Texas and Oklahoma and, as usual, the event will transcend the sport.

Social calendars have long been filled. The hotels will start to bulge about Thursday.

Finally, on Saturday, a quarter of a million people will take in the first big day of the nation's largest annual fair and 72,000 of them will shove their way into the Cotton Bowl for the noon kickoff.

"I don't know much about Oklahoma yet," said Texas Coach Fred Akers after his sixth-ranked Longhorns bumped off Texas Tech last Saturday, 24-7. "But I do know that Oklahoma has an outstanding football team, that they are No. 1 and that they are piling up points."

"But we'll be ready. I don't know how we're going to stop them, though. I don't know of anyone who has shut down Oklahoma."

Oklahoma's wishbone attack is clicking nicely, as demonstrated in a 45-23 win over Missouri last Saturday. But Coach Barry Switzer seems to still be a little itchy about his defense.

"The final exam hasn't come for the defense yet," Switzer said. "That will come against Texas."

As it almost always does, the Texas-Oklahoma thing will overshadow the first busy week of league activity in the Southwest Conference.

Texas A&M, ranked seventh, a 58-0 winner over Memphis State last Saturday and maybe the best team in the league right now, will open its conference season at home against Texas Tech, which suffered six turnovers in its loss to Texas.

The Baylor Bears, who battled Ohio State hard before losing their third game in a row, 34-28, also will be at home against the seventeenth-ranked Houston Cougars, who gave themselves a boost by upsetting then ninth-ranked Florida State, 27-21.

Baylor will be in a bind on offense with the loss of running back Greg Hawthorne for the year with a hip injury.

And the fifth-ranked Arkansas

Razorbacks, who had a mighty scare before edging Tulsa, 21-13, should have an easy time in Little Rock against TCU, which was bombed by Penn State, 58-0.

Of more interest than the conference games could be SMU's trip to Ohio State. The Buckeyes secondary has been considered one of the weak spots on the team this year and Mustangs' quarterback Mike Ford will be trying to take advantage of that.

The two most recent Texas-Oklahoma games have been fierce defensive struggles (the 1976 contest ending in a 6-6 tie and Texas winning last year, 13-6) and this one could be, too.

Texas' offense perked up a little against Texas Tech last Saturday and the Longhorns' defense, although it did allow its first touchdown of the year, did set up three touchdowns with turnovers.

Tech Coach Rex Dockery feels the Longhorns defense is better this year than it was last year even though Texas has lost two starters from that unit.

"If you decide to go out there and run over Texas you are going to have a bad night," said Dockery. "We can't do that. Maybe somebody can, but we can't."

"And their offense presents you with a great problem because of (Olympic sprinter Johnny) Lam Jones. You have to double cover him so much out there that it takes away from defense against the run and they are real good about seeing that coverage and changing their plays at the line."

"Texas has so much quickness on defense, too, that they cause a lot of mistakes. But I know Oklahoma has a fine football team, too."

"That game in Dallas should be a great football game."

The defense have left coach Lou Holtz worried mostly about the team's offensive performance in its conference opener this weekend.

"Right now I don't know if we could score if the other team missed the bus," Holtz said. "It seems the more we work on passing, the worse we get. We aren't throwing the ball worth a darn."

The No. 5 ranked Razorbacks will meet TCU in Little Rock Saturday night.

The kicking game was emphasized in Tuesday's workout, and Holtz liked what he saw.

"I think we are improving some areas," he said. "Our kicking game is gaining some consistency working the same people."

Conference notes

Baylor may use walk-on kicker

WACO — Baylor coach Grant Teaff said Tuesday walk-on kicker Bill Manes would replace Robert Bledsoe as the Bears' kicker Saturday against the 17th ranked Houston Cougars.

Bledsoe has missed four field goals in as many attempts in the Bears' first three losses. Bledsoe will remain the kicker on extra point attempts.

"I have based my decision on Bill's performance the last two days in practice," Teaff said. "If he doesn't get the job done this week, I will try to find someone else."

AUSTIN — University of Texas coach Fred Akers said Tuesday the sixth ranked Longhorns were working out as best they could in preparation for Saturday's game against No. 1 Oklahoma, even though many

players had been sidelined with injuries.

"The uncertainty of the injuries is what bothers me," Akers said. "I'd rather see them working out. It wouldn't be so bad if we weren't playing a team that does things differently than other teams we have played."

Listed as missing the workout were kicker Russell Erleben and flanker Lam Jones, both out with the flu; safety Johnnie Johnson and defensive tackle Steve McMichael, out with hamstring injuries; defensive tackle Bill Acker and defensive end Ron Bones, sprains; and cornerback Ricky Churchman with a hip injury.

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. — Slow progress in the Razorbacks' kicking game and increasing consistency in

the defense have left coach Lou Holtz worried mostly about the team's offensive performance in its conference opener this weekend.

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Von Foot' expects kicking duel

United Press International
OKLAHOMA — Uwe von Schamann thought about it all week Saturday calmly kicked his 88th consecutive conversion for an 88th record. He booted five more top-ranked Oklahoma conversions and its 45-23 conquest of Texas to boost his record to 93.

It was a big moment for von Schamann, but not the biggest of his career. That came last year, when he kicked a 41-yard game-winning goal against Ohio State.

"I felt very relieved," von Schamann said of his 88th straight point. "I knew I had only one point Saturday and I had a lot of

confidence. I had all week to think about that one extra point. I was very emotional, happy and relieved."

The German-born senior from Fort Worth, Texas, began the season unaware he was so near the national mark of 87, set by Don Bitterlich of Temple.

"I didn't know I was that close to a national record until last week," he said. "I broke a school record and I was wondering how close I was to a national record. I asked the sports information office and they found out."

Von Schamann, 6-0 and 197 pounds, expects a stiff kicking challenge Saturday from Texas standout

Russell Erleben.

"He's one of the best. He's the best punter, I think, in the nation," von Schamann said. "I feel like the kicking game will be very important this weekend because I anticipate a very close game."

"The Texas defense hasn't allowed many points this season. It should be a good showdown. The kicking game is always very important. It can lose or win a ball game for you."

Last year in Oklahoma's game against Ohio State, von Schamann's 41-yard field goal in the final seconds did just that as the Sooners won, 29-28.

"That will be the kick I remember all my life. It was the happiest moment of my college career," he said.

The Ohio State game outcome setting the national record because, "It didn't just matter personally," he said. "It mattered to the team, it mattered to the coaches and it mattered to Oklahoma."

But back to today's pressures, von Schamann said plans for the Texas game call for him to practice more with the team on punting. Oklahoma has punted only 11 times in its four games this season.

"I will work a little more with the team. Our punting has been a little unstable. We didn't do a real good job last week," he said. "We had one punt blocked and we had only 10 men on the field instead of 11. It could lose the ball game for us."

Von Schamann said he felt the new NCAA field goal rule might not affect the Texas game, depending on how badly points were needed.

"I don't know if that rule will matter because I could see the Texas team try a 60-yarder in a crucial situation if there were only seconds left in the half and the score was tied, or there was no score at all," he said. "They are going to try the long one, and I think we're going to do the same thing."

Under the new rule, if a field goal fails, the ball returns to the spot from which it was kicked instead of the 20-yard line.

"It hasn't mattered in our last four games, but I anticipate this game will be closer than our last four games," von Schamann said.

Dodgers and Phillies meet again

United Press International
PHILADELPHIA — The Philadelphia Phillies and Los Angeles Dodgers both played their baseball of the season in September and each club says that is when they can win the National League playoffs.

The Dodgers, who defeated the Phillies in four games last year to win the league championship, are at Veterans Stadium today to play for tonight's opening game of the best-of-five series.

The Phillies, who are 0-2 in the playoffs the past two seasons and have gone 28 years without a National League pennant, won their straight Eastern Division title Saturday with a 10-8 win over the Pittsburgh Pirates.

The Phillies led the Pirates by 10-8 on Aug. 12 but Pittsburgh won 36 of its next 47 games. The Pirates drew within a game on Sept. 5 but Philadelphia

went on a 17-8 tear to hold them off.

The constant pressure was enough to wear out a lot of teams, but Phil's catcher Bob Boone thinks that may be the best way to prepare for the series.

"We've been playing nothing but crucial games for more than three weeks," Boone said. "I think it has toughened us up mentally for the championship series. In fact, I'm sure of it. We've been through the mill and we're mature enough to handle what comes along."

The Dodgers, getting stronger as the season rolled on, overtook the San Francisco Giants at the end of August and breezed in, clinching the divisional title on Sept. 24.

"It's a tribute to the club the way we did it down the stretch," third baseman Ron Cey said. "We played our best baseball down the stretch. Now the important thing is for us to have our momentum going into the playoffs."

In the opening game, the Phillies will send right-hander Larry Christenson, 13-14, to the mound against Burt Hooten, 19-10. Philadelphia's Dick Ruthven, 15-11, meets the Texas Tommy John, 16-10, in the second game Thursday afternoon.

The Phillies would appear to have an edge with the first two games at Veterans Stadium but team captain Mike Schmidt noted that the Dodgers won the season series, 7-5, including a 3-3 mark in Philadelphia.

"They (the Dodgers) showed us last year that they can win there, and we showed that we can win in LA," the Phillies' third baseman said. "It's to our advantage to win the first two. It doesn't matter where they are."

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