



Sean Petty

Don't ask me about Houston tickets

It was 2 p.m. Tuesday. I had just attended head football coach Emory Bellard's weekly press conference. The question was raised concerning the choice of stadiums for this week's game with the University of Houston.

Why won't the game be played in Rice Stadium which seats some 80,000 rather than the Astrodome which seats only around 52,000? That way, more Aggies could attend the battle with Houston.

Bellard said the decision was totally up to Houston and was set at the Southwest Conference meeting before the season.

At 2:30 p.m. I decided to investigate. So like a good journalist, I figured I would find out the answer for the common A&M student. I would be able to let everyone know why they could not go to the game because they couldn't get tickets.

I mean, why not play at Rice? It seats more people than the Dome which means more tickets sold, which means more money for both schools. With the close proximity of the game to College Station, surely Rice Stadium would be filled.

Yes, that should make good sense.

So I put my college-trained mind to work thinking what I can ask the people at Houston about the decision. Why the Astrodome? Is there some sort of contract with the Dome? Is the rent too high at Rice Stadium? Is there not a big enough demand for tickets to play the game at Rice? Are they afraid there would be more Aggie fans than Cougar fans at the game?

I casually looked up the proper numbers and names of the people I needed to get in touch with to find the answers to my questions. Once I found the answers, I thought, I can relate my findings to the average Aggie fan who is concerned about the ticket situation.

My first call was to the Houston ticket manager's office to see if he could solve my problems. His secretary answered and said he was busy but that she could help me. I posed my question to her and she courteously answered.

"The first two years we were in the conference, we couldn't play in the Dome," Catherine Lieschkeski said. "That is why they played at Rice two years ago. But now we have to play all of our conference games at the Dome because of a contract agreement."

Oh, well that seemed simple enough. If you have a contract, you must honor it. My questions seemed to be answered.

But I was still not satisfied. There must be more to it than that. So I called the sports information office to verify the information I just received.

I contacted a secretary who was apparently eating her lunch. I detected this because of the chomping in my ear. She told me that the sports information director is busy but said, "I can help you, what do you want?"

Taken aback by her aggressive attitude, I calmly told her of the ticket situation at Texas A&M. But before I could get the entire sentence out of my mouth she said, "Big deal, we got less (tickets) than that to the game at Kyle Field last year."

I thought this attitude was certainly uncalled for and tried to remain calm. Besides, I didn't think it was that big of a deal. I just wanted to know if the game could have been played at Rice to accommodate more Aggie fans and make more money for both schools.

But the attacking female was not done with me yet. I could just see her sitting there chained to her desk being fed raw meat while she talked to me.

"We play in the Dome because it's our home stadium," she said. "We could play all of our games in Rice Stadium if we wanted too." I wonder where Rice would play, I thought.

Remembering what Miss Lieschkeski had told me, I asked about the contract agreement with the Dome.

"We don't have a contract with the Astrodome," she answered. "We could play in Jeppessen Stadium (on the Houston campus) which seats 25,000 and give A&M 10 tickets to the game if we wanted."

What power that school must have, I thought. To be able to play just about anywhere they wanted and give as few tickets as they wanted.

"Why don't we play the game every year at Rice like Texas and Oklahoma do in Dallas?" she asked. This caught me completely off guard. She made no sense at all and I honestly did not know why. All I could think of this whole time was, "Where did my interview go, and how can I find someone who knows what they are talking about?"

"Besides, the seats are bigger in the Dome," the lady said. Don't tell Aggies about the size of seats, I thought.

Trying to make a comeback, I asked her why we should pay \$2 to park in the Dome parking lot when you could park around Rice for free.

Somehow she didn't hear me, she just told me, "We can make as much money playing in the Dome as you can playing the game at Kyle Field, we don't need the money and why don't we play the game every year at Rice?"

I tried to tell her we were not Texas and Oklahoma and that since we (A&M and Houston) were in the same conference, we should switch home games each year. She asked why. I asked to talk to someone who knew what they were talking about.

She told me I did not know what I was talking about. I told her I was asking the questions not giving information.

What ever happened to the issue at hand? How did this get out of hand? Will the A&M student ever know why the game is being played in the Dome? I certainly had not gotten any closer to my goal as a journalist.

All of sudden, the secretary left and there was a male voice saying, "What about Rice Stadium?"

I could see I was in trouble now. Again I asked the question.

"The Dome is our home field, Kyle Field is yours," he replied "We prefer to play in the Dome, OK?"

"You actually like the Dome?" I asked.

"Yes, is that all?" he snapped.

"Well...uh...I guess..." I said. He hung up the phone.

So Aggies, I have no answer. Coach Bellard will not know why they are playing in the Dome, the students or faculty or old Ags will not know, and unfortunately, I will never know. Nor will I ever call Houston's sports information office again.

Fore!

'Nuttiest golfer' plays on highways, lake

United Press International
NEW ORLEANS — At last count, Floyd "Lake" Rood had hit 97 pedestrians and 123 automobiles with golf balls.

The 67-year-old native New Orleansian is living proof there is nowhere a golf ball cannot go, if you have enough time or will power or crazies as the self-proclaimed "world's nuttiest golfer" obviously has.

From the Atlantic to the Pacific, Rood has nudged screamers down America's interstates and rural dirt roads. For every person he has hit, he has missed millions, which is quite an accomplishment in 20 years of highway golf, the sport he invented to help his drug addiction problem.

Sound incredible?

"My game is geared for the highway," said Rood, who last Friday began his last hurrah, a 7.5 million-yard trek from New Orleans to Shelby, Mont., by way of Los Angeles.

Typically, Rood started this adventure in madcap fashion. He was 360 feet in the air, tied to the roof of a downtown hotel with a life rope, just in case.

The ball he hit off the elevated first tee was saved for posterity—or maybe for resale—to help fulfill Rood's dream of equipping 50 trailers with anti-drug abuse exhibits. Rood shoots for sponsorships of 10 cents per mile, and he figures he needs about \$2 million to build his dream.

Usually Rood aims for the white line down the middle of the road and changes from a long-hitting driver to a shorter-hitting iron when cars have the audacity to move along his concrete fairways.



"I hit everything with a fade (from left to right) because I aim for the white line when I'm working a two-lane highway," Rood said. "Now that's OK on the highways, but when I get into the cities, I like to put it down the main street around 12:15 (p.m.) when everybody's out on their lunch break. The police usually come along and give me an escort."

Rood has a wealth of experience and technique behind him. He started relatively small-time by knocking tee shots off a Mississippi River ferry before working up to crossing 24-mile wide Lake Pontchartrain north of New Orleans with an average of 250 lost balls.

Rood, who earned his nickname by diving in water traps to recover balls, did it by standing on the bow of the boat, hitting it forward and having another boat mark his forward progress.

His all-time accomplishment was the 3,397.7-mile cross-country he took in a souped-up golf bag on the East Coast to the Pacific in 1963-64. He lost 3,311 golf balls. The \$1 ball he was about to hit in the sands of the Pacific before the water hazard was \$2,000.

In his journeyman's golf he has hit a ball from home Dodger Stadium, from a perch inside the Louisiana State dome (the only golf ball ever inside the dome), and apologized to endangered species from the top of a 540-pound in Pontchartroula, La.

"I took a little hide of time I hit it, so then I hit the left rear leg and took shot," Rood said.

Once in Eloy, Ariz., he went off in search of a deer in the area when he saw smoke wafting from the back of the truck. He stroked the ball perfectly directly into the back of a deer who was cooking a can of beans. He was incensed, and he came after Rood, who reached in his pocket for a gun.

Then the hobo asked, "You can go back and do it again give me another five bucks?"

Even though Rood runs a normal round of golf any day, he says he doesn't miss his golf for a birdie or finally getting to the next tee.

"I really don't," Rood said. "Everytime I go to hit a ball I'm going to help a young man just like winning he four championships in one day."

Akers delays decision

United Press International

AUSTIN — Coach Fred Akers Tuesday delayed his decision on whether freshman Donnie Little or senior Randy McEachern will start at quarterback for the Longhorns Saturday against North Texas State.

Akers told reporters Monday he would announce that decision Tuesday, prompting speculation that Little, a highly recruited scrambler from Dickinson, would replace McEachern as the Longhorns' top signal caller.

McEachern has started each of Texas' four games this season, but Little played about half the game against Texas Tech and three quarters during the Horns 31-10 loss to Oklahoma Saturday.

Texas failed to make a first down with McEachern at the helm, but Little was plagued by three interceptions and two fumbles.

"Coach Akers has changed his mind and is not going to announce it today," a spokesman in the Texas athletics department said Tuesday. "He's really sort of leaving it open now."

North Texas Coach Hayden Fry anticipated Akers would go with Little in an effort to instill some life in the Longhorn offense, which thus far has lacked the explosiveness of previous years.

"You have to prepare for Little. When he scrambles he is really dangerous," Fry said. "He's going to be a good one."

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