

# Dogfight continues tonight

United Press International  
Rice is playing well and Baylor isn't and they meet each other tonight. The Owls figure to be a slight favorite, which means they will probably lose.

Houston is sizzling mad because of its loss in Lubbock last Saturday night and SMU was drubbed its last time out. In addition, the Cougars are still pretty hot over the triple overtime loss to SMU the last time they met. So Houston should be an easy winner when those two teams tangle tonight at Hofheinz Pavilion, but don't count on it.

There are plenty of chances for more upsets in the Southwest Conference this week, and whenever there has been a chance for an upset this season it has usually happened.

"I think there might be three or four teams with five losses fighting it out for the lead at the end of the race," said Arkansas Coach Eddie Sutton, whose Razorbacks have a pretty tough task ahead tonight as well.

The week begins with Houston (7-2) owning a one-game lead over the surprising Rice Owls (6-3). Another half-game back comes Arkansas (5-3) and then there is Baylor (5-4).

Houston will try to protect its advantage Tuesday night at home against SMU (3-6), while Rice — winner of all four of its SWC road games — will visit Baylor. The Bears have lost four in a row after winning their first five in conference play.

Arkansas, meanwhile, will visit Texas (4-5) and Texas Tech (4-5) will be at TCU (4-5). Texas A&M, which won only its second league game of the year last Saturday night, will take Tuesday off.

"It looks like Texas is playing well again," Sutton said. "Our game with them is important since the second and third place spots are valuable places to be. It's important for Texas, too. But every game is important."

The top two finishers in the SWC regular season race earn byes to the semifinals of the league's post-season tournament. The third-place finisher will have a bye past the first round. The bottom six teams, however, must win four games to capture the tournament and winning four games in a row has not been easy for any club.

"Everybody," Sutton said, "has been playing in spurts."



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## Royal supportive of Phillips, is silent about Saints rumor

United Press International  
AUSTIN — Former Texas Longhorns Coach Darrell Royal said Monday he was glad the New Orleans Saints had hired Bum Phillips and declined to comment on a report that he could have had the job and that he had wanted it.

The Houston Chronicle Monday noted Saints owner John Mecom as saying he had offered Royal the head coach and general manager positions with the New Orleans club before Phillips was finally hired to coach the beleaguered Saints.

"Nah, I'd rather not comment on that," Royal said. "Bum Phillips is his coach and the best man he could get in the world for that job, and I'm delighted he has got Bum. I'm not involved in that at all."

The Saints, who posted a 1-15 season last year, dismissed Coach Dick Nolan with four games remaining in the campaign. The week before the Super Bowl Saints General Manager Steve Rosenbloom quit and two days before the NFL championship game Mecom announced the hiring of Phillips.

Phillips was fired by the Houston Oilers on New Year's Eve after leading his team into the playoffs for three consecutive years.

"Darrell and I had talked before," said Mecom in the Chronicle report. "The last time must have been about four years ago. So I was right out with him."

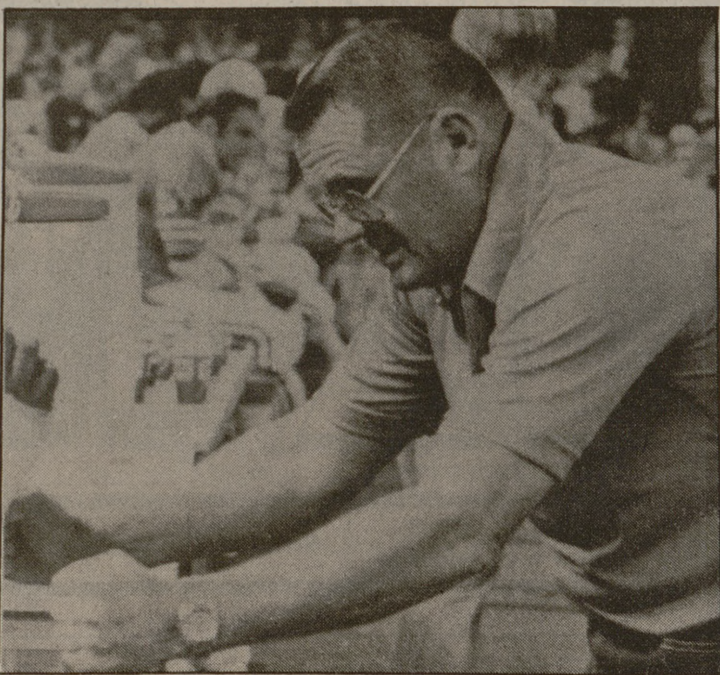
"I told him I wanted him to come and help. I told him he could have both jobs (head coach and general manager) or either job."

"I told him (Royal) the philosophical differences between Mr. Rosenbloom and me were widening. To the point, I told Darrell he could solve those differences by coming to the Saints."

"I told him that my choices were to sell the club to Mr. Rosenbloom and let Steve become the natural owner, or to speak. Or I could run the team without Steve."

Royal, now special assistant to the university of Texas president, downplayed his conversation with Mecom, but did not deny that the coaching offer had been made.

"John and I are good friends so we talk," Royal said. "I called him on several things and he has called me, and that's probably where the confusion is. He called me about some people, and we've talked about the profession. I'm helping him organize



'Bum' Phillips

a golf tournament down there, but I'm not involved in that (the coaching decision) at all."  
Mecom said his differences with Rosenbloom had begun long before a coaching change was made.  
"What took place a week and a half

ago (Rosenbloom's resignation) didn't just happen," Mecom said. "It had been building. Bum had no connection with it."

Mecom also described his conversation with Royal as "long and hard."

## New franchise buys ads to attract potential players

United Press International  
DALLAS — The Dallas Cowboys would never resort to seeking players through the classified advertising section but the Dallas Jets are far from being on the Cowboys' level.

The fledgling Jets have no schedule, no uniforms, no equipment — except for a few footballs — and no certain salary. But they are part of a new Continental Football League including teams in San Antonio, El Paso, Oklahoma City and "maybe teams in Alabama and Florida and one up in the Northeast somewhere," said Aaron Gersh, the team's coach.  
Gersh, who claims to have played

for North Texas State and the Cleveland Browns although team officials say they have never heard of him, placed classified ads in newspapers to lure players.

"Semi Pro football team looking for players, especially linemen. Call 696-3729, Aaron or 369-8596, Ed," it said. Ed is owner and general manager Ed Claybo.

Gersh said the classified ads work. More than 100 men showed up Saturday at the Jets' practice at Thomas Jefferson High School.  
"This might sound silly," he said of the ads. "But it works. By God, it works."

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