

Sports

Even match

Aggies, Cowboys to field similar teams in Independence Bowl

By RITCHIE PRIDDY

Sports Editor
Saturday's Independence Bowl in Shreveport, La., matches two even teams in Texas A&M and Oklahoma State.

The 7-4 OSU Cowboys will throw one of the top defensive units in the nation at one of the most explosive offenses.

The Cowboys finished the season as the ninth best defense in the nation, giving up an average of nearly 253 yards a game. In addition, they finished 15th against the rush, yielding an average of 109 yards a game. The team finished as the third best defense in the Big Eight Conference and first against the rush.

Meanwhile, the Texas A&M offense ran up a total offense of 385 yards a game during the regular season. The 6-5 Aggies averaged 213 rushing yards a game and averaged 172 passing yards each outing. Texas A&M finished as the number two offensive team in the Southwest Conference.

Head coach Tom Wilson said: "The strength of their team lies in their defense. They've got two outstanding linebackers and a noseguard that is a one-man wrecking crew."

OSU runs a 5-2 defense with linebackers Ricky Young and Mike Green the biggest threats. Green, 6-2, 223 pounds, finished as the team's leading tackler with 129. Young, 6-1, 217 pounds, had 122 tackles, while noseguard Gary Lewis had 96 tackles. All three

were considered for post-season honors.

Wilson said the Cowboys are similar to some of the defenses the Aggies have faced this year.

"They're a defense you can compare to Houston or SMU — very aggressive and dominating," he said. "They do a real good job."

The Cowboy secondary is good, but not outstanding. Averaging 144 yards a game against a predominantly sophomore and junior secondary, opponents have had little success. Opposing quarterbacks have completed 132 completions of 272 attempts for 1,585 yards and seven touchdowns.

The secondary is anchored by sophomore free safety Chris Rockins and senior strong safety Pete DiClementi. Rockins finished the season with 83 tackles and two interceptions. DiClementi was named the defensive player of the game in a 54-7 loss to Nebraska late in the season. DiClementi also finished with 83 tackles and three interceptions.

The OSU defensive line averages 6-3, 233 pounds, while the Aggie offensive line averages 6-3, 244 pounds.

The Aggie line, behind the blocking of senior center David Bandy and sophomore strong tackle Tommy Robison, has been largely responsible for the team's offensive success.

The Aggies finished as the number two offense in the school's history, running up 4,243 yards, an average of 385 yards a game.

Fullback Earnest Jackson finished his junior year with 902 yards on 153 carries, a 5.8 yards per carry average. Junior tailback Johnny Hector finished the regular season with 772 yards, an average of 5.3 yards a carry.

It was the passing of junior quarterback Gary Kubiak that led the team to several victories. Kubiak passed for 1,808 yards this year, completing 111 of 209 passes (53.1 percent) and 11 touchdowns. In addition, he ran for 178 yards and three touchdowns.

Kubiak set several passing marks this year. Against Louisiana Tech he connected with junior flanker Don Jones for the longest touchdown pass in conference history. Against Rice he threw six touchdowns and ran for another.

Kubiak's favorite target is senior split end Mike Whitwell. The Aggie all-time leading receiver, Whitwell caught 27 passes for 731 yards and three touchdowns.

Hector caught 24 passes for 214 yards and Jackson caught 18 for 202. Jones finished with 16 catches for 332 and six touchdowns.

Texas A&M scored 247 points in the regular season for a 22.5 average. Opponents scored 187 points for a 17 point game average.

The third quarter has been particularly strong for the Aggies, who have scored 80 points while holding opponents to 30. The second and fourth quarters have been the worst. Opponents have scored 74 points in the second and 49 in the fourth, while the Aggies

scored 66 and 48. Offensively, OSU averaged 339 yards per game, with 172 coming on the ground.

The Cowboys lost their starting quarterback, senior John Doerner, early in the season and sophomore Rusty Hilger took over. Both are healthy now and Saturday's starter has not been named.

Wilson said Doerner is a better passer. Before he went down with the injury he completed 79 passes for 877 yards and four touchdowns. He also threw 10 interceptions.

Hilger completed 50 passes for 645 yards and four touchdowns. Wilson said that Hilger is a better runner and directs the rushing attack well.

Sophomore tailback Shawn Jones leads the team in rushing with 788 yards on 209 carries, an average of 3.8 yards a carry. Sophomore fullback Earnest Anderson finished with 678 yards on 129 carries for an average of 5.3 a carry. Anderson ran for over 100 yards against Oklahoma in the regular season finale.

Sophomore tight end John Chesley is the leading receiver, having caught 26 passes for 350 yards and four touchdowns. Junior split end Mark Comer has 19 catches for 347 yards and one touchdown.

OSU scored 181 points during the season, an average of 16.5 points a game. Their opponents, meanwhile, scored 183 points, a 16.7 average. The OSU offensive line averages 6-3 and 245 pounds.

The Texas A&M defensive line stands 6-4 and averages 241 pounds.

The Aggies run a 4-3 defense anchored by linebackers Bobby Stroger and Mike Little.

Strogen, a junior, finished the regular season with 133 tackles to lead the team. Senior linebacker Little had 117 tackles, while Stroger had five interceptions.

Senior defensive end Keith Baldwin had 91 tackles and junior Fred Caldwell had 80.

The Aggie secondary has been a weak spot all year long, giving up over 195 yards a game through the air. Most of those yards, however, came from passing teams such as California and Rice.

Sophomore Billy Cannon anchors the secondary, having finished the season with 58 tackles and one interception. Sophomore cornerback Greg Williams had 44 tackles and one interception.

Both teams are blessed with good place-kickers, with junior David Hardy being the Aggies' leading scorer with 65 points. He's made 13 of 19 field goals and 26 of 30 extra points.

Freshman Larry Roach handles the place-kicking chores for the Cowboys. Roach connected on 19 of 28 field goal attempts and 14 of 15 extra-point attempts for 71 points.

Overall, the game matches two even but youthful teams. The Aggies appear to have the experience and the talent advantage, but anything can happen to take that edge away.

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Wilson's era shows slight increase

A&M football graduation rate rising

By JOHN P. LOPEZ

Battalion Reporter
The graduation rate of football players at Texas A&M University has increased considerably since Tom Wilson became head coach in 1978.

According to figures obtained from the University Archives, the graduation rate of football players while Emory Bellard was head coach was 43.5 percent. Since Wilson's midseason promotion to the top spot in 1978, the graduation rate has increased to almost 54 percent.

Efforts taken by the Athletic Department may play an important part in this increase. Leroy Sutherland, academic adviser for athletics, said that much time and effort has been spent trying to improve the academic standing of the University's athletes.

One way the Athletic Department has tried to improve academics among athletes is by monitoring their class attendance.

"If you go to class, you're bound to do better," Sutherland said.

The Athletic Department also evaluates mid-term grades and councils players. Tutors also assist in the instruction of athletes.

A prime example of the success

the Athletic Department has had in improving academics is this year's group of seniors on the football team. Sutherland said all 14 of the athletes will probably graduate.

Even though the graduation rate of football players at Texas A&M is improving and ranks above the national average of 51 percent, the graduation rates at other Southwest Conference schools are slightly higher.

Baylor University, Rice University and Southern Methodist University have the highest graduation rates in the conference, although exact figures were not available.

The SMU football guide lists the average grade point ratio of the school's football players as 3.0, while at Baylor, Tommy Newman, academic adviser for athletics, estimated the graduation rate to be about 84 percent.

Rice has the highest football player graduation rate among SWC schools, an estimated 85 percent to 90 percent. In 1980, all 21 seniors on the Rice roster received their degrees.

The University of Texas has a graduation rate of 70 percent among its football players, while at

the University of Arkansas, the rate is 51 percent.

Texas Christian University, Texas Tech University and the University of Houston did not have specific figures on the number of football players who graduate. However, Jewell Wallace, academic adviser at TCU, estimated that 50 percent of the school's players graduate.

Overall, the SWC graduates more football players than most other conferences in the country.

Cliff Speegle, commissioner of the SWC credits the league's consistently high graduation rate to the quality of the schools.

"We have very fine institutions in this conference," Speegle said.

Another reason so many football players graduate from SWC schools, Speegle said, is because "every school has an academic adviser and tutors if the student-athlete wishes to use them."

Sociologist Harry Edwards of the University of California said that more football players would

probably use tutors and advisers if they weren't hoping to play professional football.

The idea that an athlete will play professional football after completing eligibility is a misconception in most cases, Edwards said, since only one percent of the 40,000 athletes playing college football are drafted into the professional ranks.



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SAVINGS

Rockets' tough luck keeps coming; Bucks win 89-83

United Press International
MILWAUKEE — Just hours after signing an eight-year, \$8 million pact making him the sport's newest millionaire, forward Marques Johnson had a hand in a key play during the Milwaukee Bucks' 89-83 victory over the Houston Rockets.

The irony of it all was that, according to Johnson, he made two illegal moves on the play and was not called for either.

A short time later Johnson

came out of a pack under the Houston basket and drove up-court.

First, it looked like he stepped out of bounds. But Johnson kept going and then double-dribbled before passing to Junior Bridgeman for a basket that made it 87-82 and put the game away at 1:42.

But there were no calls and the Bucks went on to post their fifth straight win and keep control of the Central Division with a 13-6 record.

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