

Texas A&M

The Battalion Sports

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Rice may pull tricks against Aggies

by John P. Lopez

Battalion Staff

Ho hum.

Texas A&M will travel to Houston Saturday to take on the Rice Owls.

Sound exciting?

Probably not, but with Rice coach Ray Alborn walking the sidelines as head coach for the last time at Rice Stadium, just about anything may happen when the Owls challenge the Aggies.

Alborn announced his retirement from coaching two weeks ago and has since made it clear that during the remainder of his tenure as head coach, he's going to, "do all the things I've always wanted to do as a coach."

Exactly what those "things" are, nobody exactly knows, but the Aggies will likely find out Saturday. Many Southwest Conference football observers expect Alborn to gamble and use many trick plays while trying to upset the Aggies.

But Alborn hasn't said a word about the Owls game plan for Texas A&M — he just hopes it will be good enough to give him a win in his last home appearance.

"It will be an emotional time for me," Alborn said. "After spending 16 years at the place, it will be difficult knowing that I won't be walking up that tunnel again after a game."

That emotion, Aggie coach Jackie Sherrill says, could help the Owls play much better than their 1-6 record indicates.

"Rice played extremely well against Texas Tech (14-0 loss)," Sherrill said, "and I'm sure they're going to play hard against us because it'll be an emotional thing for them due to

the resignation of coach Alborn."

And with Rice on an emotional high and Texas A&M perhaps looking forward to key SWC games against SMU and Arkansas, will the Aggies be flat against the Owls?

Texas A&M center Matt Darwin doesn't think so.

"Every game is special and the whole team has to be ready to play awfully hard," Darwin said. "Rice will be ready and we have to be ready to play."

Nevertheless, since Rice has only won a single game in the last two years, it would be easy for the Aggies to be overconfident. But linebacker Darrell Smith said Texas A&M cannot afford to look past the Owls.

"We'll have no problem getting up to play Rice," he said. "Every player wants to win and knows that we have the capability to do just that."

Offensive tackle Nate Steadman agrees:

"They're no pushovers," Steadman said. "We have to go out and get better this week and every week."

The Aggies are heavy favorites over Rice, but that's not to say the Owls don't have talented players — players that are hungry for an upset.

But Alborn said the Aggies are also talented and will be a tough opponent to knock off.

"They certainly have a lot of talent," Alborn said. "Kevin Murray has really been a spark for their offense. He sits back in the pocket against the rush and has a quick release, but it's really frightening when he starts running around back there."

Defensively, it's a typical A&M team — big, strong and mobile."

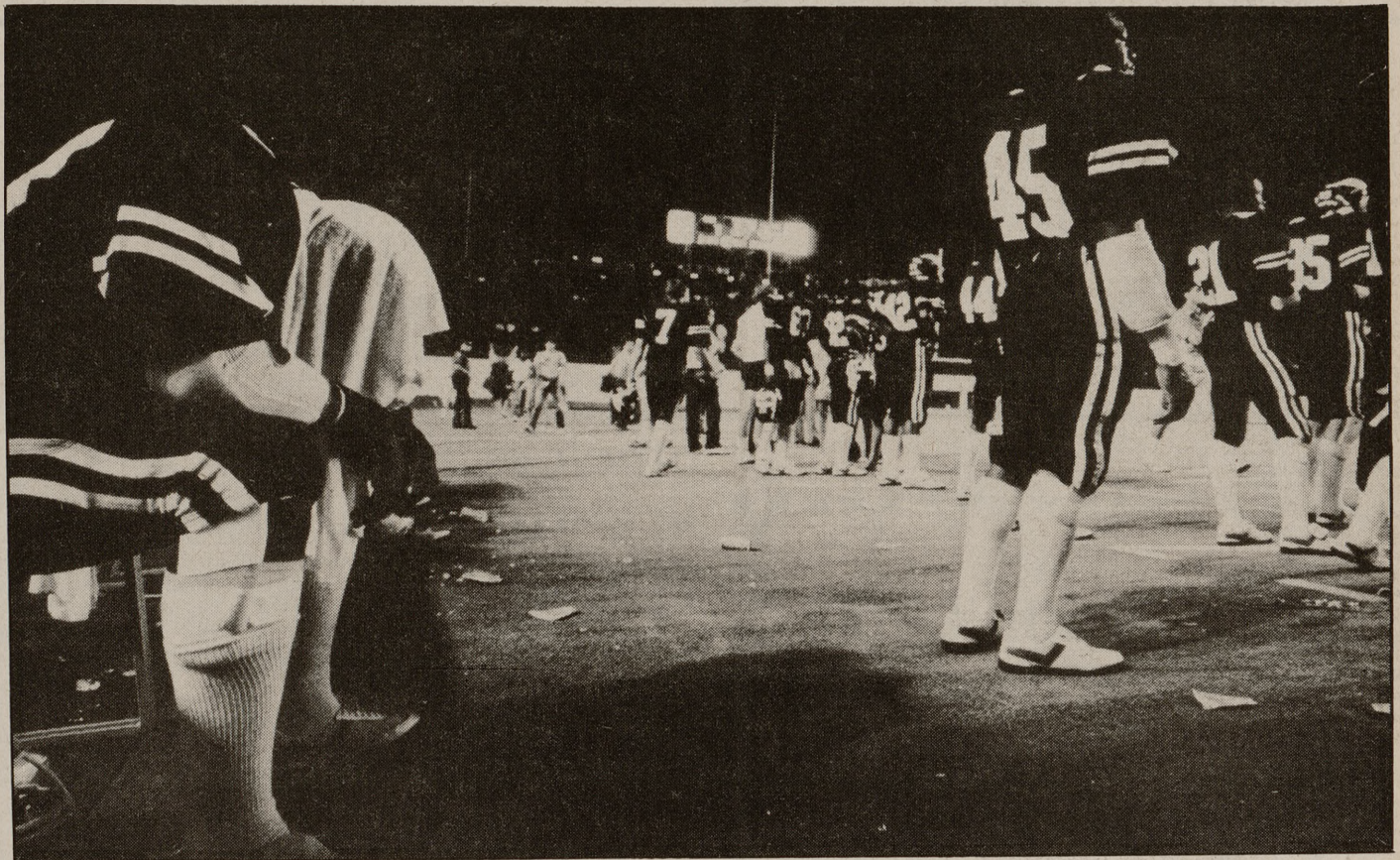


photo by Donn Friedman

This has been the scene for the Rice Owls all year — a dejected bench in the fourth quarter. The Owls have lost all but one game over the

past two years, but hope to give retiring Owls coach Ray Alborn a win in his last home game as Rice head coach Saturday against the Aggies.

Paterno hopes to upset W. Virginia

United Press International

Coach Joe Paterno suffered deep embarrassment in Penn State's ignominious slide from 1982 national champion to right out of the top 20 college football ratings. He has an opportunity Saturday to silence some of his critics by beating fourth-ranked West Virginia.

Penn State is on an upsurge and that momentum could help Paterno and the Nittany Lions make West Virginia their fifth

consecutive victim this season. The Lions dropped their first three games to Nebraska, Cincinnati and Iowa and roared back with victories over Temple, Rutgers, Alabama and Syracuse.

West Virginia is enjoying one of its finest seasons with six consecutive wins. Additional prestige would be forthcoming if the Mountaineers beat Penn State for the first time since 1955.

Fortunately for the Mounties,

they no longer have to contend with a Curt Warner, a second team All-America with Penn State last season who now is tearing apart National Football League defenses. State's best offensive weapon these days is D.J. Dozier, the nation's 17th leading ground gainer with 677 yards for a 96.7 game average.

The only rusher to pass the 1,000 yard mark this season is Heisman Trophy candidate Mike Rozier of top-ranked Neb-

raska with 1,064 yards. His 152 yards a game is second only to the 157.7 for No. 1 ground gainer Napoleon McCallum of Navy.

Rozier can improve on his figures against a 2-4 Colorado Saturday as the unbeaten Huskers aim for an eighth consecutive victory this season and attempt to improve on a 17-game winning string, the longest among major college football teams.

Aggies to host volleyball tournament this weekend

by Bob Caster

Battalion Staff

The Texas A&M volleyball team will host the A&M Classic volleyball tournament Friday Saturday in G. Rolie Whiteiseum. Entered in the tournament are Texas Tech, Oral Roberts, LSU and Texas A&M. Kay Don, Texas A&M assistant athletic director, said the tournament will be good for the Aggies, who are holding down second place in the Southwest Conference race — one match and Texas.

"We're looking forward to it because it will be a good test for us," she said. "But it won't be the best teams that are impossible to beat."

Don hopes that the tournament, which is only five years old, can be expanded to host a total of about eight teams next year.

"What we're trying to do," she said, "is to build it into a tournament where we could have one of the top teams in the nation coming in. We have been trying to get it off and running that direction."

She said the Texas A&M volleyball team tries to get most of its teams for the tournament from out of state because most of the Aggies' opponents are Texas

Mostly out-of-state teams are sought for the tourney because many of the Aggies' opponents are Texas teams, she said. These teams from other states provide the Aggies with some different competition and allows the team to see a little of what it will be up against when it gets into regional and national competition.

The Aggies have already played in four out-of-state tournaments this season, competing against some nationally-ranked teams. Team members Sherri Brinkman and Chris Zogata have racked up all-tournament honors in two of those tournaments — Brinkman at LSU and

Nebraska and Zogata at LSU.

The team recently suffered a loss to nationally-ranked Tennessee in three straight games. But Don said the team responded in a very positive way coming off of the loss.

"I think it helped them to know what they had to work harder at," she said. "It's giving them an extra boost to work on the things they need to."

The Aggies will play Texas Tech at 2 p.m. Friday, LSU at 7 p.m. Friday and Oral Roberts at noon on Saturday.

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