

Bears, 'Horns, Ags looking to escape SWC grim reaper

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Sports Analysis

The day of reckoning in the Southwest Conference has arrived.

The grim reaper snatched up an inoffensive little piggie last weekend, and Saturday, he'll have his choice of one or two victims.

Baylor invades Memorial Stadium in Austin with its second opportunity in three weeks to kill two birds with one victory.

If the Bears defeat the Longhorns, Baylor will finish with an SWC record of 7-1, no worse than a first place tie in the standings and a Cotton Bowl berth.

HOWEVER, if Baylor loses it will travel to an out-of-state bowl game and set up a winner-take-all battle in Kyle Field on Thanksgiving Day, featuring Texas and Texas A&M.

The rest of the conference teams are serving out the remainders of their sentences of mediocrity, with the exceptions of the Arkansas Razorbacks (who possess a good team, excellent defense and a bowl trip ahead of them) and the SMU Mustangs (because their probationary sentence doesn't run out for another three years).

A recent ESPN poll rated the SWC as the fifth best football conference in the nation this year — not so hot for a state that worships a pigskin madonna.

The dismal performances dished out on a weekly basis this season by TCU, Texas Tech, Rice and Houston have done little to change that mediocre tag.

However, going into the final two weeks of the season, the SWC appears to be sending four teams to bowl games, and that figure would have been higher if SMU had been less blatant about their "wild ways."

Not bad for a conference with no teams ranked in the nation's Top 10.

Texas Tech at Houston
The Astrodome
Houston — 7 p.m.

Boy, could this one be fun.

The quality of play will most probably be lousy — fumbles, interceptions, missed tackles, personal fouls,

etc. There also should be quite a bit of scoring.

And all to the beat of Tech Coach Jerry Moore's swan song.

Moore, the first football coach in Tech history to be fired, refused to resign his position and said he will do his best to go out a winner. Moore's players, meanwhile, feel betrayed by the school administration and promise to, "Win one for the Jipper."

Houston has no such motivation. One year after growing their way to the Cotton Bowl (even though they did as cats are wont to do by sneaking in the back door), the once-promising Cougars have looked as motivated and menacing as fat tabbies taking a snooze on granny's lap.

UH quarterback Gerald Landry has broken most of his school's passing records, but he's done so trying to play catch-up. Tech should be able to play with emotional intensity — which just about does the trick against Houston — Tech 28, Houston 24.

SMU at Arkansas
Razorback Stadium
Fayetteville — 1 p.m.

Early in the year, most everyone thought this game would be the showdown of the season in the SWC, where the expected champion (SMU) would take on the most eligible champion (Arkansas).

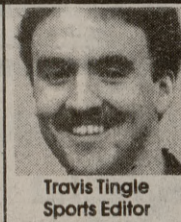
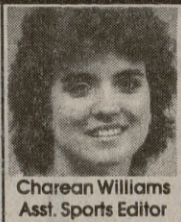
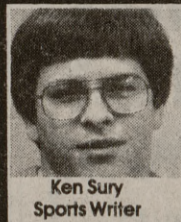
But the rest of the conference teams have made such championship dreams mere passing fancies (which, incidentally, have nothing to do with these two teams that pass like Buffy and Hildegard in a singles bar).

The hit-and-miss I-formation attack of SMU will take on one of the best defenses against the run in the nation. SMU's less sturdy defense will try and contain the Arkansas "just try and make me pass" wishbone.

Neither team is flying high in the motivation department right now — the Ponies are locked in the stable for their long probationary winter and the Hogs have already locked up an invitation to the Holiday Bowl.

This game should go down to the wire and will probably hinge on who has the best passing game — which means the team that throws the least

Football Forecast



(19) Texas A&M at TCU	A&M by 21	A&M by 21	A&M by 30	A&M by 21	A&M by 10	A&M by 35
(15) Baylor at Texas	Baylor by 6	Texas by 1	Baylor by 1	Baylor by 7	Texas by 3	Texas by 1
SMU at (18) Arkansas	Arkansas by 7	Arkansas by 1	Arkansas by 8	SMU by 10	Arkansas by 6	Arkansas by 7
Texas Tech at Houston	Texas Tech by 7	Texas Tech by 1	Texas Tech by 3	Texas Tech by 17	Houston by 1	Texas Tech by 6
(2) Nebraska at (5) Oklahoma	Nebraska by 4	Nebraska by 1	Nebraska by 1	Nebraska by 6	Oklahoma by 3	Oklahoma by 3
(12) Ohio State at (6) Michigan	Michigan by 3	Ohio State by 1	Michigan by 2	Ohio State by 3	Michigan by 1	Michigan by 6
(17) LSU at Notre Dame	Notre Dame by 7	LSU by 1	Notre Dame by 1	LSU by 4	LSU by 3	LSU by 21
Arizona at Arizona State	Arizona State by 6	Arizona State by 1	Arizona State by 4	Arizona State by 9	Arizona by 7	Arizona by 9
USC at (8) UCLA	UCLA by 3	UCLA by 7	UCLA by 7	UCLA by 10	USC by 3	UCLA by 14
Harvard at Yale	Harvard by 14	Harvard by 1	Harvard by 6	Yale by 1	Harvard by 6	Harvard by 1
Philadelphia at Dallas	Dallas by 3	Dallas by 1	Dallas by 10	Dallas by 3	Dallas by 1	Dallas by 4
San Diego at Houston	San Diego by 17	San Diego by 1	San Diego by 7	San Diego by 9	San Diego by 3	San Diego by 17
Last Week's Record	8-4	11-1	9-3	7-5	9-3	8-4
Overall Record	82-34-4	82-34-4	81-35-4	78-38-4	72-44-4	71-45-4

interceptions returned for touchdowns.

Go with Arkansas — you can't intercept them if it doesn't throw them — Arkansas 24 SMU 21.

Baylor at Texas
Memorial Stadium
Austin — 12:04 p.m.

For once, the Raycom Sports Network got it right.

The 'Horns and Bears will play for the Cotton Bowl bid in front of a regional television audience. Raycom color commentator Bud Wilkinson will prove to the world (or at least Texas) why he is the best candidate to replace Jerry Moore at Tech (at least the Raiders could claim natural causes when it came time to get rid of him).

This game would be a sell-out anywhere.

Last week, with Baylor rooting for an A&M upset of Arkansas, the BU "Golden Wave" marching band struck up the "Aggie War Hymn."

This week, the Aggies are actually rooting for the Longhorns. Cats and dogs, living together — it just goes to show that the Cotton Bowl makes strange bedfellows.

Unfortunately for the 'Horns, Aggies and the rest of the world, Texas quarterback Brett Stafford is not at full strength, even though he is expected to start the game. And on his passing arm hinges any chances UT has of postponing indefinitely the Bears' Cotton Bowl reservations.

Baylor's solid defensive line will bend but not break under the all-too-predictable, plain vanilla Texas running game. Stafford will feel BU's defensive pressure when he drops back to pass.

Texas can win this game if they roll Stafford out and utilize a short, controlled passing game to open up the Bear defense for the run.

Baylor can win if they don't turn the ball over and Texas plays with the offensive conservatism that has made it one of the most boring teams in the nation.

The Texas defense should play respectably and keep the score close, but A&M's Kevin Murray couldn't pass on the No. 1 nationally-ranked Baylor pass defense and Stafford probably won't be able to, either.

BU Coach Grant Teaff eats worms to get his team motivated. He once somehow motivated a player

paralyzed from the neck down to stand in a pregame pep talk. He motivated a team that lost its first four games all the way to the Cotton Bowl.

Texas' 34-year Memorial Stadium winning streak doesn't stand a chance. And you'll hear the groans from Austin to College Station — Baylor 24 Texas 20.

Texas A&M at TCU
Amon Carter Stadium
Fort Worth — 2 p.m.

A fun game for A&M amidst the pressures of a Cotton Bowl run.

A relief game for TCU in a year where everyone in the SWC possessed Horned Frog poison and much more experienced players.

A game that doesn't really mean that much in the standings.

If the 'Horns win and the Aggies win, next week's Thanksgiving match-up is for all the Cotton. If the 'Horns win and the Aggies lose, next week's game is for all the Cotton. If the 'Horns lose and the Aggies show up, the game will be for what it has traditionally been for — pride and bragging rights.

A&M Coach Jackie Sherrill would like to win the game to enhance the Aggies' record in whatever bowl game they participate in and keep the forward momentum his team has generated with three straight wins.

Moreover, Sherrill and TCU Coach Jim Wacker have reportedly not been the best of friends in conference coaching circles and beating one's enemy is always more satisfying than mugging a pal.

The Aggies expect the Toads to be fired up for their last game of the season and to try an assortment of gadget plays.

Sherrill said the Aggies must be ready for anything.

And they will be — the Aggies should beat TCU and beat them handily.

The only sad thing about Saturday for the Aggies and a possible national TV Cotton Bowl audience will be a Baylor victory in Austin — which means the best team in the SWC, not to mention the most fun to watch, will be going to another bowl in another state — A&M 31, TCU 13.

The Aggie blood drive committee would like to express our warmest thanks to you for helping to make the blood drive a success!

2,314 pints were donated - the largest supply ever! Way to go Ags!

Congratulations to Contest Winners:

1st place

- 6th Battalion - large group
- Squadron 16 - small group

2nd place

- Mosher Hall - large group
- Squadron 13 - small group

3rd place

- Squadron 15 - small group

Special Thanks to:

- All who gave the gift of life
- Wadley Nurses and attendants
- Bob Cannon, Mama's Pizza
- Creamery
- Dan Mizer, Steve Hodges, Willis Richie
- All student workers and other volunteers

Thanks Again Aggies,
APO, OPA, Student Government