

Several distractions hinder Mississippi bowl workouts

OXFORD, Miss. (AP) — Coach Billy Brewer says Mississippi is behind in its preparations for the Independence Bowl because the football team has had to deal with the distraction of recently imposed NCAA sanctions, several player injuries, rainy weather and final exams.

"We've had a difficult time in starting preparations for the Texas Tech Red Raiders," Brewer said at a news conference in Oxford Monday. "The weather has been a factor; it's been raining here since Sunday afternoon."

"Also, we're in exams right now, trying to work around that. We're working at noon in order for them to have lunch and prepare for the

exams."

Tailbacks Willie Goodloe, Shawn Sykes, Reid Hines and Johnny Boatman are all ailing, with Brewer calling Hines "extremely doubtful" with a shoulder problem. Linebacker Jeff Herrod is still slowed with a groin injury, and defensive end Ben Morris was banged up in a recent automobile accident.

"No question it's distracting, but we've had two workouts since the announcement, and they have been very good," Brewer said.

Boatman and flanker J.R. Ambrose, declared ineligible pending a hearing by the NCAA Eligibility Committee, are practicing. A hearing has been scheduled for Dec. 16.

Patriots' Berry declines SMU offer of becoming athletic director

BOSTON (AP) — Coach Raymond Berry of the New England Patriots of the NFL on Tuesday rejected an offer to return to Southern Methodist University, his alma mater, to direct the school's embattled sports program.

A source at the Patriots, who refused to identify himself, said representatives of SMU contacted Berry on Tuesday by telephone and he rejected their offer to become athletic director.

Berry issued a one-line statement saying, "It is a compliment to be considered by SMU, but I have no indication whatsoever that I am to take such a step."

Mary Jane Johnson, a spokeswoman for acting SMU President William B. Stallcup, said Tuesday that Stallcup was not aware of any such offer being made.

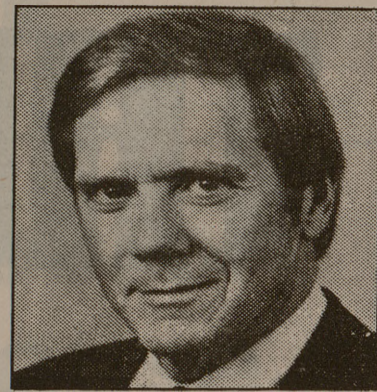
"He's never heard of this man (Berry)," Johnson said.

SMU's football program is in

the midst of an NCAA probe of allegations of payoffs to its players. The Mustangs face the possibility of being banned from playing football for two years, which would make it the first school to receive the "death penalty."

The school is already serving three years' probation, mandated in 1985, because of illegal cash payments to players by boosters, and other NCAA violations.

Berry has maintained contact with his old school. Last spring,



Raymond Berry
for example, he coached the SMU alumni team in the annual game against the varsity.

Collins discovers winning is everything in SWC football

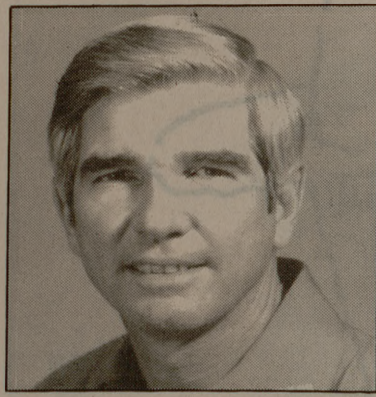
DALLAS (AP) — When Bobby Collins came to Southern Methodist University as the head football coach in 1982, the southern gentleman from Mississippi quickly discovered there was just one law of the land in the Southwest Conference — victory or unemployment.

Bragging rights were the only things that mattered in the SWC football wars and good old boys grow hard or get chewed up fast.

Collins learned and survived until out-of-hand alumni eventually brought down both him and Athletic Director Bob Hitch.

Hitch had warned Collins "in Dallas the press will check your mail quick."

He should also have cautioned him about rogue alumni, who have caused the school to be placed on



Bobby Collins

can't legislate integrity around here. All I can tell'em is just don't violate the rules."

However, in the end, Collins and Hitch were felled by the premise "How can the coach and athletic director not know?" A new allegation by former player David Stanley that he was paid cash after SMU's last probation was just too strong.

For SMU's program to survive, some heads had to roll. In this case, SMU President L. Donald Shields, Hitch and Collins resigned before an NCAA investigation got under way that would have abolished the Mustangs' football program.

SMU went on probation in August 1985 and could receive the "death penalty" and lose the sport of football for two years if found guilty.

Hitch said he was hired with the purpose of bringing national championships to SMU.

The Mustangs wanted to be a private school national power like Southern California.

Hitch and Collins did accomplish that goal.

Collins was no rube from the cotton fields. He could X and O with any coach in the country and he quickly proved it much to the dismay of his fellow coaching sharks in the SWC.

Inheriting some solid talent from Ron Meyer, Collins masterminded an unbeaten season for SMU in 1982. Only a tie with Arkansas marred the Mustangs' perfect record and they finished second in the nation in the Associated Press poll before Penn State after defeating Pittsburgh 7-3 in the Cotton Bowl.

SMU and Hitch and Collins were the toast of the nation. SMU stu-

dents, alumni, professors and the Board of Governors were proud. SMU's program was the envy of the nation.

SMU was 10-2 the next season, losing to Alabama in the Sun Bowl.

The Mustangs were 10-2 again in 1984, tying Houston for the SWC title. Collins was hailed for his coaching genius in a 27-20 Aloha Bowl victory over Notre Dame. The Mustangs finished eighth in the AP poll.

Then the probation bomb struck with SMU losing all of its scholarships. Collins and the disheartened Mustangs struggled through back-to-back 6-5 seasons.

"I'm determined to work through this," Collins said. "SMU is too great a school to have this happen."

Collins refused to look for jobs elsewhere.

"I feel an obligation to this school," Collins said. "I'm sticking this thing out."

Collins never seemed more determined even after Notre Dame gave the Mustangs their second worst whipping in school history.

"We'll just do a better job of working with what we've got," Collins said.

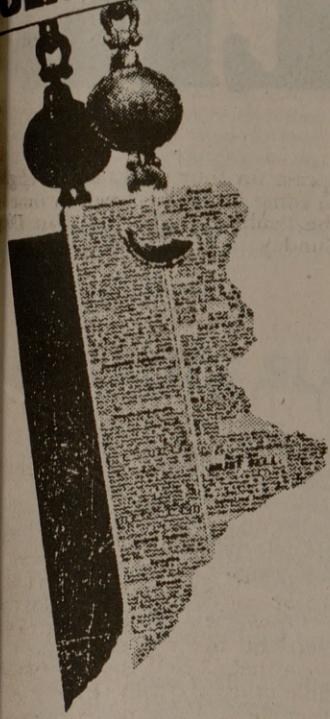
Then came Stanley's revelations and an investigation into tight end Albert Reese's apartment payments, allegedly paid for by an alumnus.

Collins and Mitch couldn't survive the fallout. History will judge them once the full facts are known.

National championships are a far away dream now at SMU.

The sports program at the school is just trying to survive.

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