

Sports

Houston, Rice try to mend program Cougars try to rebuild after period of struggle

By Doug Hall
Assistant Sports Editor

Second in a five-part series

With the exception of Southern Methodist, probably no other athletic department in the Southwest Conference has suffered as much turmoil as the one at the University of Houston.

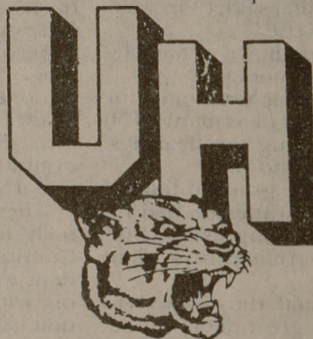
After the 1985-86 basketball season, Coach Guy Lewis, who led the Cougars to the NCAA Final Four in 1983 and 1984, retired in favor of less recruiting and more golf time.

Following the 1986 season, Head Football Coach Bill Yeoman also retired. Yeoman had led UH to four Cotton Bowl appearances since 1979 (an impressive statistic considering UH began competing in SWC athletics in 1976) and compiled a 211-135-10 record since 1962.

Unfortunately for the Cougars, the circumstances were not favorable. In 1986, the Cougars finished 1-10 and were surrounded by talk of NCAA investigations, slush funds and illegal

recruiting practices condoned by Yeoman.

Lewis was replaced by former Lamar University Coach Pat Foster and Yeoman was replaced by



Texas A&M graduate and former Washington Redskin Head Coach Jack Pardee.

Rebuilding is a term that comes to mind when discussing UH athletics.

The baseball program is currently under the direction of Coach Bragg Stockton, who took over for Rolan Walton after lead-

ing the Texas Christian and San Jacinto Junior College baseball programs.

In his first year, Stockton has led the Cougars to a 36-20 record (11-10 in conference) and a slot in the upcoming SWC tournament. In 1986, the Cougars finished fifth in the SWC with an 8-13 conference record.

Much like Arkansas' and Baylor's track programs, UH has gained a large amount of notoriety for its golf program led by retiring Head Coach Dave Williams.

Since taking the job in 1952, Williams has won 15 NCAA championships, over 325 tournaments, produced over 50 All-Americans, and won nine SWC titles since 1974.

A list of Cougar golf alumni reads like a Who's Who in golf. Keith Fergus, John Mahaffey, Bruce Lietzke, Phil Rodgers and Ed Fiori are just a few.

But Williams' success couldn't stop the student body from protesting against the athletic depart-

ment last fall when it was revealed that the department, due to a general million dollar shortfall, requested an increase in service fees.

At one point, the students called for the university to divest the athletic department.

However, Rudy Davalos, first-year athletic director, called for the university to produce an outstanding department with their \$60 million budget raised through revenues, student service and donations.

"I feel comfortable with the direction in which we are heading," Davalos said. "I'm pleased with the total coaching staff, and especially Pardee and Foster, who wouldn't trade those two for two in the country."

Rick Rivers, UH's sports information director, said that the addition of Pardee and Foster and the predicted turnaround of the two main revenue sports, Cougars should be solid again.

Owl athletics inundated with losing programs

By Doug Hall

Assistant Sports Editor

It's tough on a school's athletic department when its claim to fame is having a player from the opposing football team jump off the bench and tackle its star football player as he raced unopposed down the sideline with the ball.

But such is the case if you are a member of the Rice University athletic department.

In the 1954 Cotton Bowl against Alabama, Rice's star running back Dicky Moegle was blazing down the Alabama sideline for what looked to be a sure touchdown when the Tide's Tommy Lewis jumped off the bench to make the tackle.

Moegle was awarded the 95-yard score, and Rice went on to win its third and last Cotton Bowl. Since then the Owls have made the trip to Dallas only once, and that resulted in a 20-7 defeat to Navy in 1958.

In fact, since 1959 the Owls have had only three winning seasons, and since 1980 their record is 16-59. Meanwhile, three different head coaches have yet to turn the program around.

Unfortunately for Rice fans, the Owls lack of athletic prowess does not end on the football field. It has been 17 years since Rice

won the Southwest Conference Championship in basketball and since 1972, Owl teams have finished no higher than sixth. Finally, after five seasons of sub-.500 records, Head Coach Tommy Suits resigned midway through the 1987 season.

In baseball, although they tied Texas A&M for second place in 1984, the Owls have never won a SWC title.



But according to Jerry Berndt, Rice's first-year head football coach and athletic director, the athletic department at Rice is not in any way down and out. Berndt's four wins this season are the most Owl victories since 1980 when they were 5-6.

"Our athletic department is definitely on the upswing," Berndt said.

"We've received much more readily now and are a far more integral part of the University itself."

To emphasize his point, Berndt quoted Rice statistics indicating almost 90 percent of the student body bought tickets or attended games over the past two football seasons.

But if there is one other statistic in which Rice stands out, it's the fact that its 3,600 students comprise the smallest Division I school in the nation.

"If there is anything that makes Rice unique, it's that we're

the smallest Division I school in the country," Berndt said. "I did the same time we have seen major college football schools."

Obviously, the students are interested in Owl athletics, Berndt said, "it's just that numbers are so small."

But what Rice might lack in numbers, it often makes up for in enthusiasm. If there's anything about that, then you must have seen the MOB (Major Owl Band) during halftime football games doing "freeze," the "twist" or the "train."

Because Rice is a private institution, officials there would disclose the size of the athletic budget. However, with only 20 players on the roster, it's probably that the money available to the athletic department is comparable to the football team's — somewhere near the bottom.

Thursday: SMU and TCU

NBA loses one of its brightest stars as Erving retires from the game

By Hal L. Hammons

Assistant Sports Editor

A page of basketball history saw its final line filled Sunday, as Julius Erving, "Doctor J," closed out his illustrious career.

He went out with a bang in the final game of a five-game series with the Milwaukee Bucks.

He scored 24 points, including a three-pointer thrown in as a going-away present in the final minutes. He even converted another graceful layup in traffic for two points and a free throw, just like he does in all the NBA highlight films.

But his team lost. That was not the way he wanted it to end. Truly, if justice was to be served, the Philadelphia 76ers would have come from behind to beat the Bucks on the way to an NBA title.

But it was not to be. Much to the chagrin of Dr. J fans everywhere, NBA banners are not necessarily won by the players who deserve it most, but by the teams that play the best.

It would have been a fitting climax to the career of one of the greatest players — no, make that one of the greatest people — in the history of the game.

In a sports world full of people that are admired as heroes and role models, Erving stands out as one of the few that really deserve the honor. Fans and peers alike respect him, not only because of his amazing exploits on the court, but also because of his character off the court.

Who else in the game could have gotten such rousing send-offs in every pro basketball city in the country? This year, as the Sixers made their rounds through the NBA, fans across the nation took time out from cheering for their own team to cheer one particular man, even one on the opposing team.

When Erving was taken out of the game Sunday, every Buck fan in the arena stood and applauded, giving the master showman one final ovation.

True to his competitive nature, Erving did not come out until the game was completely out of reach. Every other Sixer starter already had been taken out, giving Erving a few more precious moments to play the game he has loved for so long and played so well.

How many others have contributed so much to the game? Wilt Chamberlain, Bill Russell, Bob Cousy, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar perhaps? But even these players take a back seat to Erving in my book.

Why? One simple reason, and yet the most important reason of all: he made the game fun to watch.

Night after night, game after game, The Doctor provided entertainment for fans of all ages, colors and genders. Even fans of the team he was in the process of jumping over or swooping around found it difficult to keep from dropping their jaws, shaking their heads in wonder and secretly hoping he would do it again the next time down the floor.

He almost single-handedly kept the ABA alive long enough to merge with the NBA. Fans did not mind that the caliber of basketball might

not be quite so high if they could see "that skinny guy with the big Afro" thumb his nose at Isaac Newton and all of that gravity garbage.

Then he joined the NBA and brought his brand of ball to the big audiences and, more importantly to NBA executives, network television. Ratings jumped as high as Erving himself, and kids across the country began to spend their Monday evenings trying what they saw their new-found idol do Sunday afternoon. A star was born.

And through it all, Erving remained the same. While other superstars tried to ignore or hide from their fans, The Doctor always seemed to find time to shake a hand or sign an autograph.

When he left the Mecca floor Sunday afternoon, he saluted the Milwaukee crowd by raising the game ball that had been given him, thanking the fans there and fans across the nation for allowing him to spend 16 years of his life being paid for playing a game he would have played for free.

Every one of those 16 years saw Erving elected to the All-Star team of the league he was in at the time. And perhaps that is deceiving, since his last two or three selections may not have been merited.

But then again, that's another tribute to the man's popularity with the masses. Despite having a less-than-distinguished year, the fans found it easy to look past the player and vote for the man.

A class act and a deserving role model.

Oh yes, and also an incredible basketball player.

Probe begun on UTEP player's death

EL PASO (AP) — Authorities launched an investigation in connection with the death of University of Texas-El Paso basketball star Herrell "Jeep" Jackson, the chief of police said Tuesday.

The probe by the Special Investigative Group began Monday "because of information the department received concerning the situation," Scagno said.

SIG includes officers from intelligence, vice, narcotics and other specialized units of the police department.

Scagno said he did not know when the investigation would conclude.

Jackson, 23, collapsed May 2 during the second half of a charity basketball game at the Fort Bliss military facility on the outskirts of El Paso. He had been playing for five minutes, sat at the bench and fell to the floor shortly before 3 p.m. Jackson was declared dead at Beaumont Army Medical Center at 4:09 p.m.

Scagno would not comment on whether the information police received involved drugs.

"I can't go into this right now,"

Scagno said. "This is all preliminary stuff."

A preliminary autopsy was inconclusive. There were "no visible signs of damage to the heart that could be seen with the naked eye," Manuel Diaz, chief investigator for the El Paso County medical examiner's office, said after a three-hour autopsy Sunday.

Samples of blood, urine and tissue were being processed but results of those tests were not expected for a week.

Cowboys' probe used steroids before trials

DALLAS (AP) — Dallas Cowboys President Tom Donaghy said the team used steroids for several years to help him regain weight after getting ill in Japan.

Noonan, a 6-foot-1, 280-pound defensive tackle from New York, was among 20 players who tested positive for anabolic steroids in the NFL scouting combine last January, officials said Monday.

But Cowboys President Schramm said he was not concerned and was confident Noonan's steroid use would not factor in the tackle's career.

"We have always been concerned that would not be any problem with Danny Noonan," Schramm said.

Noonan told the Dallas Morning News his steroid use began upon his return from the Japan Bowl all-star game ended by Jan. 28, the day 330 players arrived in Indianapolis for the league's most important scouting session.

"I had never tried steroids before," he said, adding that he lost 15 pounds after getting ill in Japan.

"I was weighing about 250 pounds before the Japan Bowl and I built back up for the combine," Noonan said from Lincoln, Nebraska.

Steroids are chemical compounds that can be used to increase muscle mass by as much as 15 to 20 percent, but they are regarded as increasingly dangerous because of their side effects, including high blood pressure, heart disease, liver tumors, and can cause personality changes.

The NFL tested college players for steroids, controlled substances and alcohol before the time this year.

Noonan said he didn't know he would be tested for steroids. The league will test players for steroids for the first time in this summer's training camp physicals.

The Cowboys and the NFL teams were notified of the 24 letter of the 29 players who had flunked the drug test combine.

LOUPOT'S At Northgate
Cash For Used Books

AM/PM Clinics
Minor Emergencies
10% Student Discount with ID card
3820 Texas Ave. Bryan, Texas 846-4756
401 S. Texas Ave. Bryan, Texas 779-4756
8a.m.-11p.m. 7 days a week
Walk-in Family Practice

Get Involved
Join Any of 36 University Committees
Pick up an application and more information at 221 Pavilion
Due May 8
STUDENT GOVERNMENT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Add Fire To Your Aggie Ring
with a quality diamond from Service Merchandise.
Mens 20 pt. diamond \$195⁰⁰
Ladies 5 pt. diamond \$49⁰⁰
While You Wait
Friday, May 8
10 am-8 pm
764-0022 Post Oak Mall
SERVICE MERCHANDISE
We accept Visa, Mastercard, Discover

Congratulations Aggie Graduates
Hard Work Deserves The Best Rewards
Bud Ward is your Aggie Connection for Fine German Cars.
Grad Finance Program
90 Day Deferred Payment
Low Down Payment
No Prior Credit
All '87 Grads Qualify*
Come By or Call Today for Details
*Subject to credit approval
BUD WARD
Volkswagen-Porsche + Audi
"The Dealer With A Heart"
1912 Texas Ave. 693-3311
Under the water tower in College Station