

SWC teams meet Saturday in Austin, Houston, Ft. Worth



(AP) — As the Aggies prepare for Saturday's 2 p.m. kick-off against non-conference Louisiana Tech, the rest of the Southwest Conference teams (except Baylor, who has an off week) will square off against each other.

Here is a preview of Saturday's matchups.

ARKANSAS (5-2, 3-1 SWC) at RICE (2-6, 0-4 SWC), Noon CST — Last year when these two teams met, the Arkansas Razorbacks prevailed 45-14. Despite the win in Fayetteville, the Hogs and the Rice Owls are about even in the series.

The Razorbacks own a 31-28-3 advantage entering the 63rd game of a rivalry, which dates back to a 40-7 Rice victory in 1919. Each team has managed a seven-game winning streak at one point in this hard-fought series, and the Razorbacks can equal that domination with a win Saturday.

Rice last downed the Hogs 17-16 in 1980 at Little Rock. All games in the rivalry have counted in SWC standings. Arkansas Coach Ken Hatfield is 58-42-2 (nine years) overall, 31-11-1 (four seasons) at Arkansas, 20-8 in SWC games and 3-0 against Rice.

Owls' Coach Jerry Berndt is 44-40-3 (nine years) overall, 6-13 (two years) at Rice, 2-10 in SWC contests, and 0-1 against the Razorbacks.

Noseguard Tony Cherico and Linebacker Rickey Williams head an experienced defensive unit against Rice's talented quarterbacking duo of Quentis Roper and Mark Comalander.

Roper is enjoying his best passing season (76-of-158 for 884 yards and four TDs) after eight games while Comalander is 12th in SWC career pass completions with 331 and 18th in SWC career passing yards with 4,076.

Arkansas' ball-control offense burst loose for 218 passing yards (13-of-20 tries) against Houston last week and has committed just 10

turnovers in seven games. Broadcasts: Raycom, SWC Radio Network.

TEXAS TECH (5-3, 2-2 SWC) at TEXAS (3-3, 2-0 SWC), 1:00 p.m. CST — The Texas Longhorns will be fighting for their untarnished SWC record as they battle the Texas Tech Red Raiders.

The game also is a reunion of sorts. Tech Coach Spike Dykes replaced Texas Coach David McWilliams prior to the 1986 Independence Bowl after McWilliams accepted his current post, and the two worked together last fall to produce the Red Raiders' first bowl team in nine years.

Last year the Red Raiders edged Texas 23-21 in Lubbock, but Texas holds a 29-7 advantage going into the 37th meeting of the teams.

Dykes is 5-4 in his first complete season as a college head coach while McWilliams, whose first head coaching post was at Tech last year, is 10-7 in his second campaign. McWilliams is 7-3 in SWC games while the two head coaches in this contest have combined to win four of their first six SWC games in 1987.

Quarterback Billy Joe Tolliver is 59-of-107 for 847 yards and five TDs. Scott Toman backs Tolliver with 53-of-86 for 605 yards and two touchdowns.

Texas counters with Bret Stafford, the SWC's 15th-best career passing yardage producer with 4,146 yards. Stafford also ranks 15th with 856 career total offense plays

behind Baylor quarterback Cody Carlson's total of 900 rushing and passing attempts.

Rushing stars James Gray of Tech, third in SWC with 720 yards, and Texas' Eric Metcalf (598 yards, second in SWC) also spice the offenses. Broadcasts: Ron Franklin and Jack Dale on the SWC Radio Network.

HOUSTON (1-5, 0-3 SWC) at TEXAS CHRISTIAN (4-3, 2-1 SWC), 2:00 p.m. CST — Two contrasting styles of offense meet as the air-minded Cougars battle the run-oriented Horned Frogs.

Houston easily tops the SWC in passing offense with an average of 280.2 yards per game while TCU is No. 1 in the conference in rushing offense at 321.4 net yards each contest. The Cougars have a 9-2 lead, though TCU has won two of the last three games.

Cougars' Coach Jack Pardee is 1-5 in his first college head coaching season after going 81-65 as a professional head coach. Horned Frogs' Coach Jim Wacker is 123-64-3 (17 years) overall, 19-31-2 five years at TCU, 9-25-1 in SWC contests, and 2-2 against the Cougars.

UH has rallied around the run-and-shoot offense with three different quarterbacks shouldering the load. Junior David Dacus of Kingsville was the hero last week against Arkansas as he came off the bench to complete 25-of-43 passes for 240 yards.

TCU relies on the defensive prowess of junior safety Falanda Newton, who had one interception in each of four midseason games. Senior halfback Tony Jeffery leads the SWC in rushing with an average of 129.7 yards per game, 131 carries for 908 yards and seven touchdowns.

Houston's Johnny Jackson, the SWC Player of the Week for Oct. 17 and All-SWC linebacker Gary McGuire will help mount Houston's attack. Broadcasts: SWC Radio Network.

Houston's Dacus starting to live up to billing after first game disaster

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston quarterback David Dacus bombed in the Cougars' season opener against Oklahoma State after being named the newcomer of the year in the Southwest Conference in preseason.

No one was more disappointed with his debut than Dacus.

"I looked like someone they brought in off the street," he said. Dacus sat on the bench until last week when he got a second chance. And this time, he was throwing the bombs.

Dacus completed 25 of 43 passes for 240 yards, one touchdown and no interceptions in a 21-17 loss to Arkansas.

After Dacus went to the sidelines in the 35-0 loss to Oklahoma State, freshman Andre Ware emerged and started the next four games until he broke his arm in the first quarter against Wyoming.

Ed Powers took over the run-

and-shoot for one game, but when he faltered against the Hogs, Dacus returned.

"Basically, you're just waiting for another quarter so you can get back on the ride," Dacus said. "It's hard to go up so high and come down so low. I had to swallow a lot of pride. I'd let so many people down, the coaches, the other players, my friends and myself."

The Cougars' season has been like a roller-coaster ride. Powers replaced Ware and threw three touchdown passes despite a 37-35 loss to Wyoming.

The heavily favored Hogs trailed going into the fourth quarter but took the lead with 9:32 to go and controlled the ball the rest of the game.

Dacus enrolled at Houston after passing for 2,381 yards and 15 touchdowns at Cisco Junior College. He went through spring drills with the Cougars and was

the starting quarterback for the opener.

"Maybe the best thing that happened is what did happen," Dacus said. "I've been rock-bottom before, like my freshman year at Cisco. We had eight or nine quarterbacks and you're going in on a wing and a prayer in junior college."

"Things just don't always work out the way you expect. I'm 21 years old and I've got to be man enough to handle the ups and go on when I'm down."

Offensive coordinator John Jenkins said it was predetermined that Dacus would get a chance if Powers faltered early against the Razorbacks.

"There's nothing worse than waiting on a quarterback to get a hot hand when the rest of the offense is ready to go," Jenkins said. "You can't have a quarterback go three downs and punt when everyone else is waiting on him."

Oilers have bad Cincinnati memories

CINCINNATI (AP) — Houston Oilers Coach Jerry Glanville points to a bizarre finish at Riverfront Stadium as one of the hallmarks of his team's ragged climb to prominence in the AFC Central Division.

The Oilers suffered a 31-28 loss in Cincinnati last year by giving up a touchdown drive in the last two minutes. It was one of several tough losses in a 5-11 season for a team considered an emerging contender in the division.

This year, the Oilers will visit Riverfront Stadium on Sunday with a 4-2 record, a share of the three-way tie for the division lead, and accolades as a team that's beginning to realize its potential.

"I think we were a pretty good team last year, and we just managed not to get it done, such as we did in Cincinnati," Glanville told Cincinnati sports writers in a conference call Wednesday.

The Cincinnati game provided one of the Oilers' most haunting finishes last year.

Houston rallied from a 21-7 second-quarter deficit to trail 24-21 late in the game. However, the Bengals appeared ready to put the game out of reach with a score when fullback Larry Kinnebrew fumbled and linebacker Robert Lyles returned it 93 yards for a touchdown with 96 seconds remaining.

Boomer Esiason then led the Bengals the length of the field for the winning score, which came on a 21-yard run by James Brooks.

Glanville thinks the Oilers, a young team, learned from the experience, and are in a better position this year to pull out last-minute victories in such circumstances.

"I think our problem is every year we stand up and we're the youngest team in football," he said. "I think it's hard to pull games off at the end of the game if people haven't been with you. Even though we are younger this year than last year, our starters are all a year older."

The Oilers are tied with Cleveland and Pittsburgh for first place in their division. The Bengals are 2-4 with a pair of division losses, and need a victory Sunday to stay in contention.

Although Glanville isn't ready to start talking about his team's playoff chances, he is enjoying the turnaround.

"I don't think it (being in first) really matters until the season's over. I think that you've just got to keep taking care of this week's business," he said. "But it feels better than 1-8. You know I've been there, too."



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