

Cowboys may be 0-7, but leading some NFL stats



Tom Kehoe
Sports Editor

While perusing the NFL statistics Wednesday, I noticed something that hadn't been seen all season. The woeful Dallas Cowboys lead a statistical category. Not as a team of course. No, they're still at rock bottom in both team offense and defense. But James Dixon, a free agent from the University of Houston, stands alone at the top of NFC kick returners, leading by a slim two-tenths of a yard with a 26.5 average. Of course, you have to figure he's just getting more opportunities. Who returns more kickoffs than the Cowboys? I suppose they lead that category too, but it's filed under the heading "Most Points Allowed." But these are more or less "official" statistics. How about more realistic, if not off-the-field categories that the Cowboys most likely would lead? • Most fans alienated — Not since Al Davis, Robert Isray and Bill Bidwell up and moved their teams altogether, have so many long-time supporters been turned off by an owner. Jerry Jones may be counting all the socks and jocks (or maybe he's washing them, he never really said), but he sure can't count on fans showing up in Texas Stadium. And he left the team right where he found it. No, not last place, Dallas. • Alienation of most talent — The J-Birds ran off two-thirds of last year's starting backfield, a starting defensive tackle and two linebackers that started most of the time. Way to go, Heckyll and Jeckyll. I hope I wasn't the only one who smiled smugly when Steve Pelluer got

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Versatile Hollas key for Owls in 1989

Junior QB's seen both sides of ball

By Alan Lehmann

Of The Battalion Staff

When Texas A&M squares off against Rice this weekend, it'll face a quarterback unlike anyone it's seen in 1989. How many other QBs in the nation have collegiate defensive experience?

Owls' junior quarterback Donald Hollas has, and he just wasn't filling in either.

Hollas was a free safety his first two years at Rice, but has made the move to quarterback in 1989. He ranks second in total offense in the Southwest Conference this season.

"Hollas is a very good quarterback,"

Texas A&M at Rice

- Site: Rice Stadium (70,000 cap.)
- Kickoff: 2 p.m.
- Ranking: A&M (21st), Rice (—)
- Records: A&M (5-2), Rice (1-5-1)
- TV/Radio: The game will not be televised live; KTAM (AM 1240)

A&M Coach R.C. Slocum said. "They're doing things with him that allow him to take advantage of his abilities — passing the ball and spreading you out, and doing things to where you just don't get a chance to overpower them."

Hollas said that it hasn't been easy preparing for the Aggie defense, which is ranked nationally.

"I don't know how to prepare for A&M," Hollas said. "They're awesome. They're fast, and quick up front."

"They put pressure on the quarterback, and I think it's going to take a perfect game on our part just to have a chance. Looking at them on film, they're the best defense we've faced this season."

As a redshirt freshman in 1987, he was listed as third-string quarterback behind the tandem of Quentis Roper and Mark Comalander.

Although he wasn't overjoyed, Hollas agreed to play defense rather than ride the bench.

"I've always wanted to be quarterback and that's the reason I came here," Hollas

said. "I got moved to free safety, and I did it for the team."

Still, he played well enough to be named to the second-team All-SWC defense in 1987. His biggest game that year was against Arkansas when he registered 18 tackles (12 unassisted).

He also was named to the All-SWC team last year.

But despite his defensive success, Hollas said he'd rather play quarterback.

"I think it's easier to play defense because it's more reckless abandon," Hollas said. "On defense, you get more excited, but offense is the glamour part. You don't hear too much about defensive players."

However, Hollas knows that it's not all fun and games on offense, either.

"Playing quarterback, you want to get excited, but you really can't," he said. "I have to be mentally alert on every play. Defensively, you have to check and make audibles, but it's not as intricate as being quarterback."

Playing safety has given him insight into defenses, he said.

"It helps in reading defenses," he said. "I realized why people are where they are. I see certain coverages, and know where defenders are supposed to be."

Hollas got a chance to test his knowledge last year, when he started two games at quarterback, and completed 30 of 59 passes for 373 yards, one touchdown and two interceptions.

Still, Hollas' efforts on both sides of the ball weren't enough to prevent the Owls from going 0-11 in 1988. Hollas attributed Rice's losses to their lack of a winning attitude.

"We had chances to win a lot of games last year," he said. "It all goes back to that attitude."

This year, Hollas has played only quarterback, and the Owls have shaken their losing ways. However, after beating Southern Methodist in its season opener, Rice has not won any of their last six games.

The Owls tied Wake Forest and lost to Texas 31-30. The Owls led by 13 points late in the game.

"We've played a lot of close games this year, and come up on the losing end," Hollas said. "It's been frustrating to have so many leads in the fourth quarter, and lose."

"It just doesn't seem like we can hold them. I think the mental part isn't there yet."

Until Rice starts protecting late-game leads, it'll be a long season for the Owls, Hollas said.

"You can see that we haven't learned

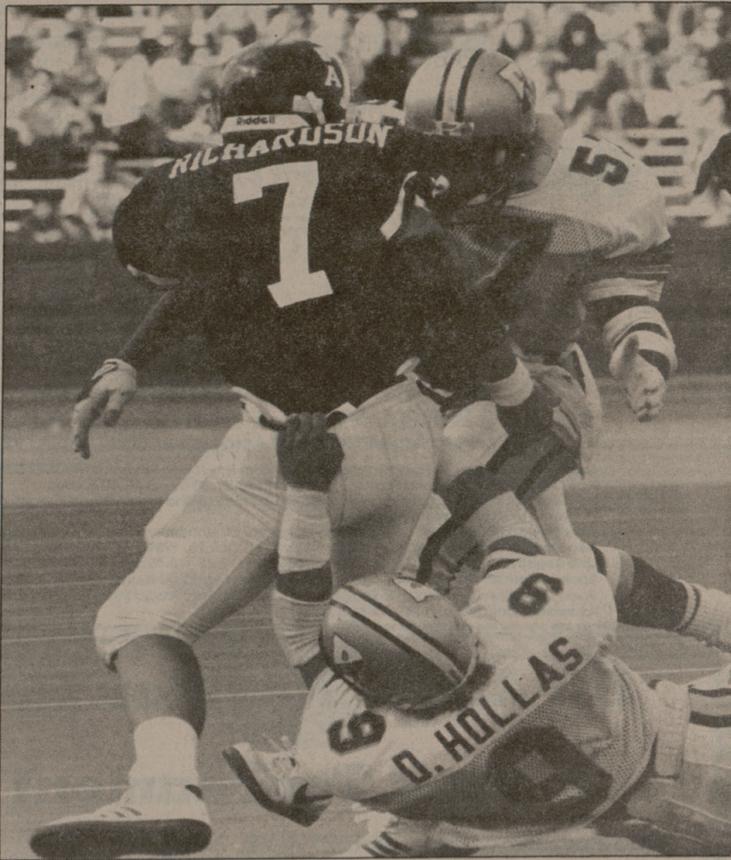


Photo by Frederick D. Joe

Rice's Donald Hollas (9) teams with linebacker O.J. Brigance in sacking A&M QB Bucky Richardson in last year's game. A safety last year, Hollas now is the Owls' starting QB and will lead Rice this Saturday.

some things about winning, yet," he said. "When we go to the fourth quarter with a lead, it's like, 'What, we have a lead?'"

posed to be, we'll be in for a lot more losing Saturdays."

Hollas almost single-handedly won the

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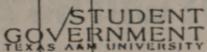
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