

SWC on the rise again after 1989

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Arkansas Razorbacks successfully defended their championship, three teams are in bowl games and Andre Ware won the Heisman Trophy.

While the Southwest Conference won't produce a national football champion this year, it had one of the most exciting races in recent times.

Arkansas claimed the title outright on Saturday with a hard-earned 38-24 victory over lowly Southern Methodist. The Hogs had one loss on their record.

Texas, the team that beat Arkansas early in the season, fell 21-10 to Texas A&M and, in the process, suffered their second consecutive losing season. It was the first time the Longhorns had back-to-back losing since 1937-38.

The Aggies claimed second place and a berth in the John Hancock (Sun Bowl) in El Paso on Dec. 30 against the Pittsburgh Panthers.

Arkansas, of course, will meet Tennessee on New Year's Day in the Cotton Bowl. The Hogs lost 17-3 to UCLA in the Cotton Bowl last year.

Texas Tech is the other SWC bowl representative. The Red Raiders play the Duke Blue Devils in the All-American Bowl in Birmingham, Ala., on Dec. 28.

Although Houston couldn't go to a bowl because of probation, Ware

collected the ultimate prize, the Heisman Trophy. He won it by only 70 points in close balloting over Indiana running back Anthony Thompson.

The junior said he will return for his final year at Houston in 1990 instead of opting for the big bucks in professional football.

Houston ripped Rice 64-0 to finish its season with only two losses, to Arkansas and Texas A&M.

The Aggies beat Texas for the sixth consecutive time as they finished the season 8-3. Coach R.C. Slocum gave them time off until Dec. 16 when they will begin work for the Panthers.

SMU led Arkansas 24-23 with 10:21 left before the Hogs finally subdued coach Forrest Gregg's 40-point underdogs.

"When they scored that touchdown, I was thinking the same thing everyone else was thinking, what's going on?" said Arkansas quarterback Quinn Grovey. "We were just shocked we were in that position."

Grovey came right back to score the game-winning touchdown for the Hogs, who go to the Cotton Bowl with a 10-1 record.

SMU, playing its first season since it returned from the NCAA's "death penalty," had two victories and led, Texas, Arkansas, and A&M before losing.

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dp 1989

Houston's Ware plans to return to Cougars next year



Photo by Jay Janner

Heisman winner Andre Ware will return to UH next year.

HOUSTON (AP) — The Houston Cougars accepted Andre Ware as a quarterback when others recruited him as a defensive back.

Now the 1989 Heisman Trophy winner plans to ignore the riches of the NFL and repay the favor by returning for his senior year.

"We'll be back doing the same things next year," Ware said Saturday shortly after beating out Indiana's Anthony Thompson for the coveted trophy.

"Yes, I'll be back next year. I'm looking forward to the season. We've got a lot of guys returning on offense and we're going to sign some of the finest recruits across the country."

Oklahoma State's Barry Sanders, the 1988 winner, skipped his senior year and became a 1,000-yard rusher for the Detroit Lions this season.

Ware has other plans. "I was here when this program was about to hit rock bottom and now it's special for me to see it turn around," Ware said in an emotional post-announcement news conference. "I'm so proud of this school."

Some recruiters projected Ware as a college defensive back rather than quarterback, his position at Dickinson High School.

"I'm so proud to be a Houston Cougar, a school that believed in me to the fullest and never sold me short," he said.

"The thing I want to get across to everybody is there is no more Cougar High. We're definitely back and we're on track."

The 13th-ranked Cougars closed out a 9-2 season with a 64-0 victory over Rice Saturday.

Ware completed 36 of 51 passes for 400 yards, finishing the season with 14 NCAA records, 13 of them achieved within this year. He tied two other NCAA marks.

Ware's 365 completions for 4,699 yards are both NCAA records. He also set records Saturday with 4,661 total yards.

Ware threw 46 touchdown passes, missing Jim McMahon's record of 47 in 1980.

Ware won the award by a 1,073-1,003 margin over Thompson, who scored 64 touchdowns and rushed 5,299 yards in his career. Thompson gained 377 yards against Wisconsin this season.

It was the fourth-closest vote in the 55-year history of the award.

West Virginia quarterback Major Harris was third with 709 points and Notre Dame quarterback Tony Rice was fourth with 523.

Coach Jack Pardee, a blocking back for Texas A&M's John David Crow in 1956, a year before Crow won the Heisman Trophy, said Ware's selection was his proudest moment.

"It's the dearest moment I've had in athletics," Pardee said.

The pursuit of the Heisman for Ware replaced battling for a major bowl for the Cougars, who are on NCAA probation and unable to appear on television or play in bowl games through next season.

"This was our bowl game, Andre winning this for himself and for the team," Pardee said.

Crow, now Texas A&M athletic director, and Earl Campbell, the 1977 Heisman winner from the University of Texas, advised Ware to skip his senior year and take the riches of professional football.

Their suggestions in print angered Houston athletic director Rudy Davalos.

"We don't need anyone from our sister institutions telling us how to run our program," Davalos said. "And he doesn't have to depend on football for his future."

Ware has his teammates' support no matter what choice he makes.

"He's got to do what's best for Andre," cornerback Cornelius Price said. "It would be hard to turn down the pros but he says he'll return."

Super back Chuck Weatherspoon, also a junior, hopes to have another season with Ware.

"Playing with him this year has been an honor," Weatherspoon said. "He has shown what a football player should be on and off the field."

A&I's Bailey among finalists for Harlon Hill

FLORENCE, Ala. (AP) — One of the nation's top small-college offensive performers were named Sunday as finalists for the Harlon Hill Trophy, the Heisman Trophy of NCAA Division II football.

The trio included Texas A&I running back and two-time winner Johnny Bailey; Alabama A&M receiver Barry Wagner; and Earl Cole, a running back for Edinboro.

Bailey, Wagner and Cole were top vote-getters from a field of 31 semifinalists. They will attend a Dec. 8 awards banquet, held on the eve of the NCAA Division II championship game in Florence.

The finalists emerged from a pool of 31 nominees in regional ballots and then a national vote of the division's 116 sports information directors.

Bailey heads the list after doing his career as the all-time leading rusher in NCAA football. Bailey gained 6,320 yards to smash Tom Dorsett's mark of 6,038 yards at Pittsburgh, and he also holds the purpose record with 7,803 yards.

This year Bailey rushed for 1,200 yards at Texas A&I, leading the Jayelinas to a 10-1 record and a Star Conference championship.

Bailey, a senior from Houston, was a runner-up for the Harlon Hill Trophy in 1986, the first year it was presented. He took home the award each of the last two years.

Wagner, a senior from Greenville, recorded 106 catches for 1,320 yards this year, both records. Against Clark College, the Alabama A&M receiver pulled in 23 tosses for 370 yards, two more Division II records.

Wagner led Division II in receiving and touchdown receptions with 17 and helped the Bulldogs reach the playoffs, closing his career with 162 catches for 2,669 yards. He caught only 56 passes in his first three seasons before A&M switched to a more pass-oriented attack.

Cole ran for more than 100 yards eight times in 1989 to finish with 1,382 yards.

Everett outduels Aikman in 35-31 win over Cowboys

IRVING (AP) — Jim Everett, saving his best for the last, avoided the embarrassment of losing to the NFL's worst team on Sunday and kept the Los Angeles Rams' slim NFC West championship hopes alive.

Everett threw four touchdown passes, including two in the last four minutes of the game as Los Angeles beat the luckless Dallas Cowboys 35-31 in a classic case of living dangerously.

"We're lucky to get out of here with our fannies," Los Angeles coach John Robinson said not so delicately.

"I'll give Dallas some credit," said Everett. "We got two easy touchdowns but they wouldn't die. It surprised us but we did what we had to do when we had to do it."

Everett, who hit 27 of 37 passes for 341 yards, rallied the Rams to a 20-17 overtime victory last Sunday night in New Orleans.

"We can't continue to screw up for

57 minutes then start playing great football," Robinson said. "We can't expect to win against San Francisco next week doing that."

Troy Aikman threw four touchdowns passes and had Dallas beating on the victory door when the Cowboys ran out of time. He hit 19 of 34 passes for 179 yards.

"Troy played a great game," Johnson said. "We should have had a time-out left late in the game but

the referee thought Troy called one when all he was doing was giving hand signals to our receivers. We argued but it was too late."

Aikman said he thought Dallas finally was going to win a home game.

"We got down there at the end but the ref hurt us when I was trying to signal my receivers," Aikman said. "We came close again. This one hurts."

Los Angeles advanced its record

to 9-4 while Dallas dropped to a 1-12 record in its second-worst season. The Rams are two games behind the 49ers in the NFC West.

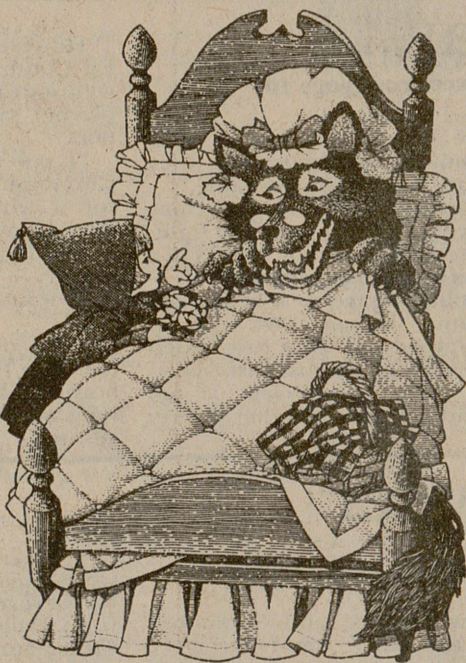
Everett overcame a 31-21 deficit with scoring passes of 39 yards to Ron Brown with 3:58 to go and 23 yards to Aaron Cox with 1:50 left to play.

"Jim told me in the huddle just what to do if Dallas blitzed and they did blitz so I took advantage of it," Cox said.

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