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Jenkins, Erickson ignoring results from last season

MIAMI (AP) — Both coaches deny what last year's scores suggest — that high-flying Houston might be in over its head Thursday night against the Miami Hurricanes.

The scores are these: Miami trounced Texas 46-3 in the Cotton Bowl. Houston, unstoppable in most games, suffered its only loss to that same Texas team, 45-24.

"Comparative scores mean nothing, particularly when you overlap into another season," Houston coach John Jenkins said. "The complexion of this team is much different from a year ago ...

"And many times, certain opponents just match up better against certain people. You can't put a finger on it, but that's the fun part of it."

Miami coach Dennis Erickson agrees.

"Seventeen guys that played on our team in the Cotton Bowl are gone," Erickson said, "and 17 pretty good players, I might add." Erickson and Jenkins say Houston quarterback David Klingler is even better than a year ago, when he threw an NCAA record 54 touchdown passes. Klingler threw for nine touchdowns as the 10th-ranked Cougars beat Louisiana Tech 73-3 in their opener.

The Hurricanes, also 1-0, are ranked No. 2. But some observers say they're not as good as last year, when they finished 10-2.

Still, in the past nine years the Hurricanes have thumped Southwest Conference opponents with regularity. Including this year's 31-3 victory at Arkansas, Miami has won 10 in a row against SWC teams by an average score of 40-9. The Cotton Bowl victory

made an impression on Jenkins.

"Miami might have been the best team in the country last year at that point," he said. Klingler didn't see the game; he was fishing. But he wasn't shocked by the score.

"I know if you get ahead of Texas quickly and force them into throwing the ball, they're not as good a team," he said. "If you let Texas stay in the game, you're going to get beat."

The Longhorns did more than stay in the game against Houston; they had a 42-10 lead in the fourth quarter. Texas controlled the ball for 38 minutes and intercepted four of Klingler's passes.

"They were able to get to him with their pass rush, plus Texas controlled the ball," Erickson said. Those are the secrets to beating Houston, he said.

Texas played man-to-man coverage against the Cougars. Miami will play mostly zone but plans to mix things up, using six defensive backs on one play and a seven-man blitz on another, defensive coordinator Sonny Lubick said.

Such strategy doesn't matter, Jenkins said. The mastermind of the run-and-shoot is confident that his offense can adjust to any defense.

"There's nothing on paper that concerns me," he said, "because we've got answers for all that." Jenkins believes the loss to Texas cost Klingler the Heisman Trophy. If the Cougars win Thursday's nationally televised game, Klingler may take a commanding lead in this year's Heisman race.

"Just give it to him," Erickson said. "Really, that's what I think."

Bergeron

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tire, with pompon in hand, hours before a televised game would come on and just sit on the couch and anxiously wait. He even drove an hour one time because our local stations were not broadcasting the game but they were 60 miles away.

So, you understand, this is a vicious match, not only between the schools but also between the two of us.

I attribute his undying Tiger spirit to my Baton Rouge relatives, mainly my uncle who began grooming him at a very early age showering him with Tiger clothing, posters, bumper stickers and even a Tiger mirror with a clock. I amazingly never caught this fever — thank god — because my mother and father are alumni of the University of Southwestern Louisiana, and furthermore my father played for Southwestern Louisiana when USL and Louisiana State were rivals. This has also made for fun in my family since A&M began playing the Ragin' Cajuns. But they don't quite pose a challenge like LSU — sorry Dad.

The funny thing is that my

brother does not even attend LSU, but it's only because he received a golf scholarship to another university. He claims he is a Tiger in spirit though, and it's also quite ironic that purple is part of his school's colors.

My freshman year in 1988 we lost to LSU in Baton Rouge, and although he was just a sophomore in high school, for weeks after the game he would call me in the middle of the night chanting G-E-U-X TIGERS and hang up. Since that year we have won here in College Station, and lost last year in Baton Rouge. I think that says something about each team's fans. He always likes to tell me that there is no way we can win in Tiger Stadium with all the Tiger fans. Well, he is coming this weekend and I know he will leave understanding that there is no way the Tigers can win in Kyle Field with the fighting Texas Aggie fans.

There's no doubt in my mind that I will own the bragging rights after this weekend, and I will relish calling him in the middle of the night blaring HULLABALOO CANEK CANEK!

Strait, Johnson grab AP honors

DALLAS (AP) — Robert Strait never had to block Cuero High School.

He didn't think he was ever going to be saddled with the distasteful chore at Baylor University. Not with his credentials as perhaps the best running back to come out of Texas three years ago.

Now, Strait has not only learned to block but the red-shirt sophomore has realized sometimes you can score touchdowns from the fullback position before the other team knows you have the ball.

Strait dashed 30 and 40 yards for touchdowns Saturday during Baylor's 27-7 victory over Texas-El Paso to earn The Associated Press Offensive Player of the Week award for the first time.

On the defensive side of the ball, end Ray Lee Johnson of the Arkansas Razorbacks won AP Defensive Player of the Week laurels for his 20-yard touchdown on an interception return that gave the Hogs a 17-6 league victory over Southern Methodist.

It was the first time an Arkansas player had won an AP honor in two years.

"It was a very big moment for Robert to play fullback," said Baylor coach Grant Teaff. "He had a hard time with the word 'fullback.' All the fullbacks he had ever known blocked for him. It was a big step for him, a tough transition. He had to get to the point where he put the team above himself."

Strait has tremendous speed and quickness for a 265-pounder and Teaff said his tough short yardage runner may be realizing that fullback could be his ticket to professional football.

"I told him there are a lot of great running backs in the NFL but not very many great fullbacks," Teaff said. "He has a chance to be the best in the Southwest Conference that we've had in a long time. He has the size and makes quick cuts against the grain. And he's learning to be a good blocker."

Strait is so serious about his new job that he carries a football with him even to class.

"He's also supposed to take it on dates but I haven't checked with his girlfriend," Teaff said.

Strait admits "I didn't like the idea of fullback at first but it's coming to me now. It's a way I can contribute. It's important to the team."

Strait beat out Texas Christian's Leon Clay who had four touchdown passes against New Mexico. Texas Tech's Tracey Saul became the SWC's all-time leading interception yardage returner with a 40-yard return against California-Fullerton but his theft didn't have the impact of Johnson's critical return.

Fired referees complain to NCAA

DALLAS (AP) — An NCAA committee has ordered all Division I schools to provide the agency with a list of dismissed or tired officials, a list of assignments and copies of evaluations.

The NCAA's Division I men's basketball committee recently investigated alleged "scratch" procedures in the Southwest and Big East conferences. But the committee said Monday it was recommending that no action be taken against the two leagues.

Several officials fired by the SWC last spring claimed that conference coaches had used a scratch list, allowing each coach to prevent certain officials from working his team's game. The SWC denied the allegation. A scratch list would be a violation of NCAA rules.

SWC commissioner Fred Jacoby defended the conference in a four-page letter to the NCAA. He denied a scratch list was in place. As a member of the NCAA basketball officiating committee, Jacoby said, "I am well aware of the scratch procedures."

"We have always followed the NCAA guidelines," Jacoby said. "And in our response (to the NCAA), we tried to point out our rationale for adjusting our staff."

Jacoby has said the conference will need fewer officials this season because of Arkansas' departure to the Southeastern Conference. Jacoby said the loss of the Razorbacks means 60 fewer officiating assignments.



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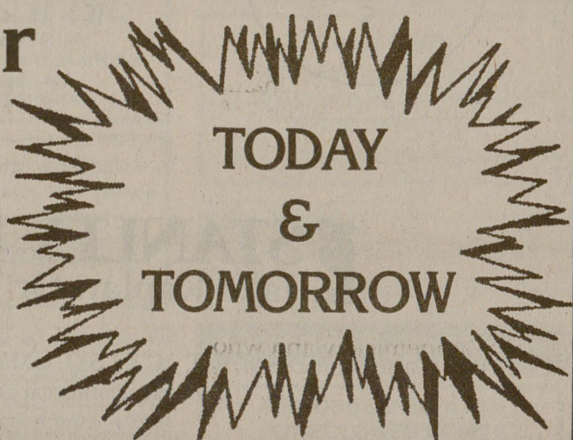
MSC Town Hall is now accepting new members. Applications for Freshmen and transfer student are available in the Student Programs Office, room 216 in the MSC

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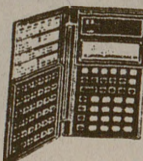
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