

Tech matures into a threat

By Lisa Nance
THE BATTALION

If it's lonely at the top, then the Aggies and the Longhorns are in luck.

In a conference where Texas A&M and Texas have dominated football in the 1990s, Texas Tech has stepped up and proven that while two may be company, three is definitely a crowd.

With Head Coach Spike Dykes at the helm of the Tech team, the Red Raiders have finished in the upper division of the SWC in each of his eight seasons, including one-fifth of the championship last season and runner-up finishes in 1991-1993.

Tech Athletic Director Bob Bockrath said that Dykes has done an impressive job of coaching the Red Raider team and bringing the program to a new level.

"He's done a great job, almost an incredible job of raising the performance level of this football team," Bockrath said.

Dykes came to Texas Tech in 1983 as the defensive coordinator. He made an immediate impact, helping the Red Raiders to a top 20 national ranking in total defense in 1984.

Dykes accepted the head coaching position in December, 1986 when David McWilliams left. Ironically, Dykes' first college head coaching opportunity came in the town in which he was born. In his new position as head coach, Dykes had only two weeks to prepare his team for its Independence Bowl battle against Mississippi, a game which the Raiders lost 20-17.

Three years later, Dykes had taken the Red Raider program to unparalleled heights.

In 1989, his team finished No. 19 in the nation and beat four nationally-ranked teams along the way. Dykes was named SWC Coach of the Year and registered the school's most lopsided bowl victory ever, a 49-21 smashing of Duke in the All-American Bowl.

Bockrath said the Red Raiders' sudden turnaround was due in large part to Dykes' powerful personality and style.

"His roots are in West Texas and a big characteristic of West Texans is how they feel about one another," Bockrath. "Coach Dykes personifies that type of person. He's a very warm, genuine, no nonsense type of person."

As dean of SWC coaches, Dykes has built a reputation as one of the game's straight shooters. He has elevated the Tech football program to the level of title contender. His priorities start and end with people — everything else is secondary.

Dykes just sees it all a justification for coaching. "I think you coach because you love kids," Dykes said, "If you coach for any other reason, then you're doing it for the wrong reason."

Dykes incorporates his West Texas charm and attitudes into his coaching and he adds an emphasis on academics.

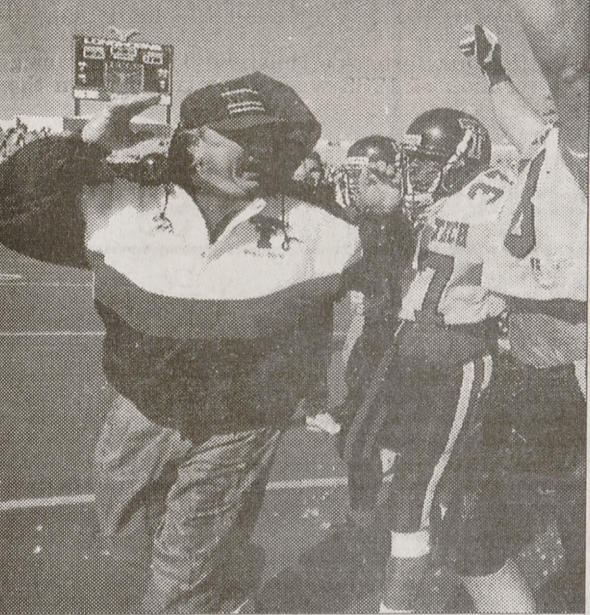


Photo Courtesy of Texas Tech SID

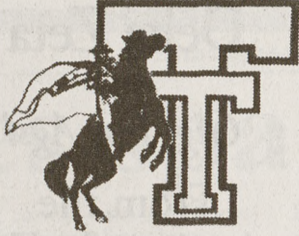
Texas Tech's Spike Dykes is doused with Gatorade following the Red Raiders' 31-22 upset of UT in 1993.

Texas Tech University

First year in league: 1960
SWC Record: 125-137-6
All-Time Record: 399-330-32
Championships: 1976, 1994
All-time coach: Spike Dykes: SWC: 33-25-, All-time: 47-44-1

Top 5 Players:

1. Bam Morris, Running Back
2. Tracey Saul, Safety
3. Billy Joe Tolliver, Quarterback
4. Lloyd Hill, Wide Receiver
5. Zach Thomas, Linebacker



Top 5 Games:

1. Nov 18, 1994: Tech 34, UH 0: Tech clinches its first Cotton Bowl berth
2. Nov 23, 1976: Tech 24, Baylor 21: Tech wins its first SWC title
3. Oct 7, 1995: Tech 14, A&M 7: Zach Thomas' interception beats the No. 9 Aggies
4. Dec 1, 1988: Ok.State 45, Tech 42: Billy Joe Tolliver 443 yards
5. Nov 19, 1973: Tech 24, Arkansas 17 at Little Rock, First win ever at Little Rock

"I think that the great thing that football teaches is that it's a team sport and everybody can't be chairman of the board," Dykes said. "There can only be one quarterback, one star, but everybody has got a big part in it." Before going to Tech, Dykes had a coaching stint at another SWC school. UT's Darrell Royal noticed Dykes' talents as a high school coach and brought him to Austin in 1972, where he stayed for five seasons.

In his almost 15 years as a coach in the SWC, Dykes has seen players come and go in, but he has a hard time narrowing down the greats. "There have been so many, it's hard to pick a few," Dykes said.

"We've had so many great players in this conference and so many great people, I don't know how you could single them out."

Tech football has produced a number of SWC greats including tailback Byron "Bam" Morris, who brought national attention to Tech in 1993 when he was selected as the Doak Walker Award winner for being the nation's best running back.

The Red Raiders approach a whole new era when they join Texas A&M, Texas and Baylor in forming the Big 12 Conference in 1996.

Although Dykes said he is excited about the move, he's a bit sentimental about the demise of SWC football.

"I've got great, fond memories of the SWC," Dykes said, "I grew up in Texas so college football has always been the Southwest Conference to me. We felt like it belonged to all of us. It's been a lot of exciting Saturday afternoons." Bockrath looks at the Big 12 as a great opportunity for all Texas schools involved in the move to showcase their talents.

"I'm excited about the move to the Big 12," Bockrath said. "It will be a great opportunity for Tech and the three other schools who were lucky enough to move. The move represents a great opportunity for all of the schools to showcase their programs in a larger geographical area than in the past and I'm really looking forward to it."

As the clock ticks down the final seconds of the SWC football finale at Kyle Field Saturday, an era of great football will come to a close. But with that door shut, a window opens that will lead Texas Tech, Texas A&M, Texas and Baylor into a new conference and an era of new beginnings.

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Dec 1-2

Student Recreation Center

Friday	December 1	6:00am-8:00pm
Saturday	December 2	10:00am-Midnight

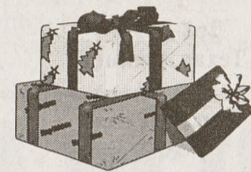
* Pools close one hour before building closes.

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'96 PUSH '97

CLASS OF	ENROLLED	PHOTOGRAPHED	%
'99	7,873	998	12.6
'98	6,746	897	13.2
'96	10,624	335	3.1
'97	8,822	199	2.2

- **WHAT:** Aggieland Individual Pictures
- **WHEN:** Monday-Friday, 9-5
December 1 is **Last Day**
- **WHO:** Seniors ('96) and Juniors ('97)
- **WHERE:** A R Photography
707 Texas Ave. (across from Bonfire)
693-8183
- **WHY:** Why not? It's FREE!

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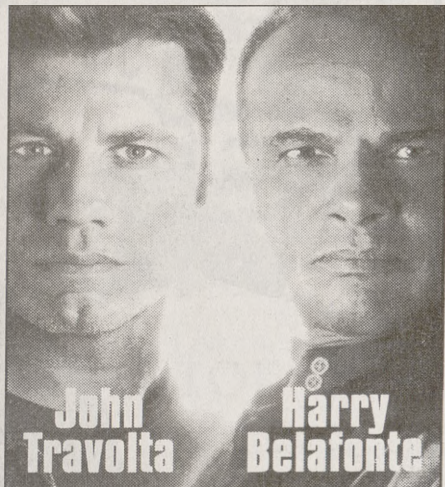
-TIME MAGAZINE

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