

TEXAS FOOTBALL ROYALTY

Former Texas football coach Darrell Royal still a legend in the game

By JEFF WEBB
Staff writer

Perhaps one day, just as John Wooden is known as the "Wizard of Westwood" in basketball circles, Darrell K. Royal will be known as the "Teacher of Texas."

Royal coached the University of Texas Longhorns from 1956 until 1976. In that period, Royal achieved a benchmark of success that will never be matched but will always be coveted.

Everyone who knows of the wishbone offense knows of Royal,

who "invented" his own version of the winged-T by moving the full-back toward the line of scrimmage. The wishbone would be responsible for three national championships and a 30-game win streak that culminated in a record six straight Southwest Conference Championships.

"Air Force, Army, Navy and Rice all run it," Royal said. "They do fairly well. It's a good offense. It's the only offense I know of where you leave two guys free on the line of scrimmage to the side you're running and still move the ball. You don't even try to block two of them. It's not necessarily the best offense in the world, but it's basically a sound offense."

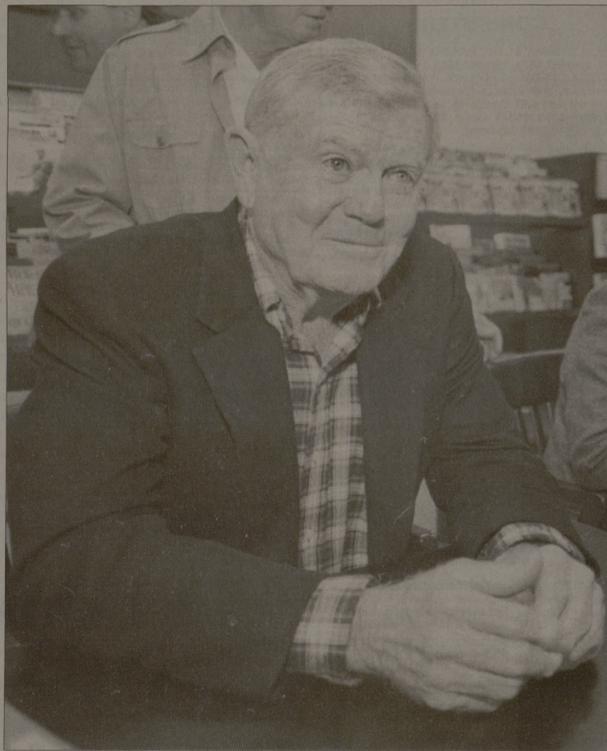
When considering the future, there have been many changes to the landscape of football that Royal knew.

He achieved his success in the now-defunct Southwest Conference. Royal was upset to see the conference go, but understood the reasons behind it.

"I was sorry to see the conference break up, but it was inevitable," Royal said. "It might have even stayed together a little longer than it should. It takes a lot of money to run athletic programs, especially with the advent of Title IX. Scholarships go to all these programs, so it's expensive to operate a major college program."

"You've got to make enough money to support the major programs, which means you need to get good television packages and play good games. Most of that was falling off."

The teams that dominated the face of college football in the '60s and '70s were primarily teams that relied on the run. Modern football has since been taken over by high-powered passing teams and systems like the West Coast



RYAN ROGERS/THE BATTALION

Former Texas Coach Darrell Royal was in College Station last week to autograph copies of his new book.

offense. Royal says football comes down to basics, and if you cannot get a yard when it counts, you may as well get off the field.

"There's a lot more throwing," Royal said. "They are a lot more efficient throwing the ball. I've noticed that the great teams, regardless if they're passing teams or running teams, make short yardage. They're able to punch it

in when they get it down in the scoring zone.

"I see a lot of differences in the way that linemen, backs and running backs are. In most cases, they are a lot heavier. Linemen are the real difference. They are just huge."

The monetary corruption of professional athletics also is not lost on the legendary coach. Roy-

Darrell Royal's Career Highlights



•Three National Championships (1963, 1969, 1970)

•Eleven Southwest Conference Titles

•167-47-5 record in 20 seasons as Texas Coach

•Inventor of the Wishbone

•In 1996, UT's Memorial Stadium was renamed

al said the money made by professional football players in today's market hinders the ability of coaches to coach.

"I'm not coaching, but I would imagine it would be very hard to get strong discipline-wise with a guy who is making four times what you are."

However, one thing that has not changed in Royal's opinion is the attitude of the fans. When asked about the fans' disappointment of Royal's initial 6-3-1 season after the program had gone a dismal 1-9 the year before, Royal was blunt with his response.

"I was disappointed. But they have been like that ever since I can remember," he said.

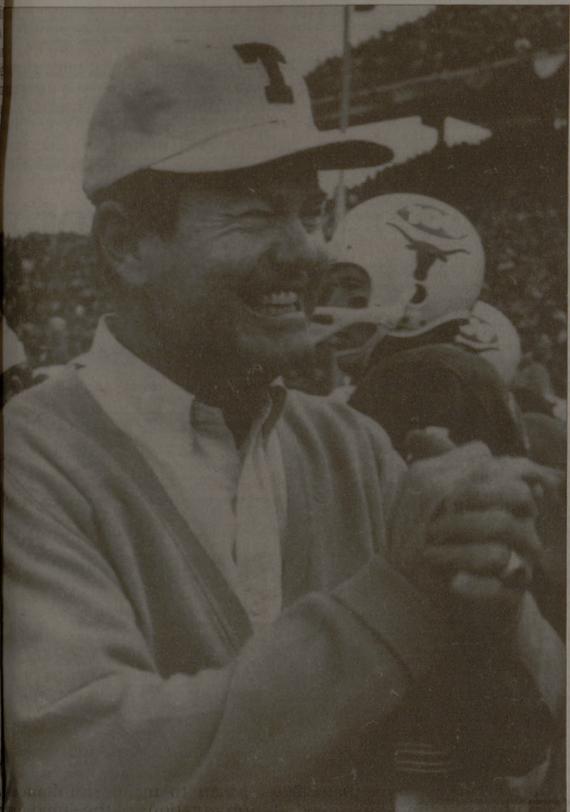
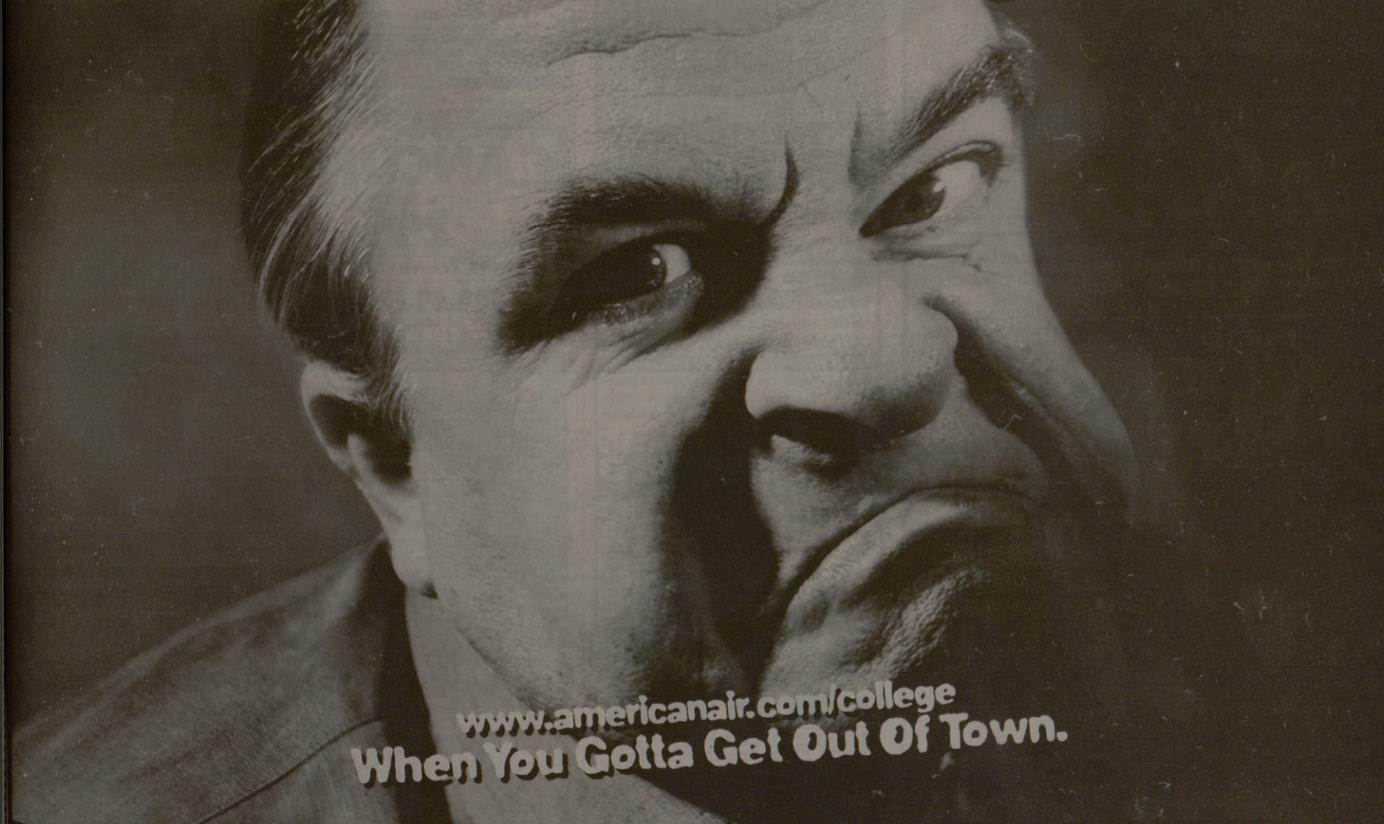


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20 years at Texas, Darrell Royal amassed a 167-47-5 record while winning 11 SWC and three national titles.

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