

NEBRASKA CORNHUSKERS



Head Coach: Frank Solich
Stadium: Memorial Stadium
Capacity: 72,700
1997: 13-0 (8-0)
Big 12 Finish: Big 12 North Champs

Will win because: Nebraska runs the best option offense in college football history. Throw out the personnel changes. It's the system and offensive linemen that get the wins here. Bobby Newcombe is the real thing at quarterback and might have some people recalling the visage of Tommie Frazier.

Will lose because: The team plane is delayed and they have to forfeit. That's the only way they will fall in 1998.

1998 Prediction: 12-0 (8-0)

Reason: Who's Tom Osborne? Solich picks up where the great one left off.



KANSAS STATE WILDCATS



Head Coach: Bill Snyder
Stadium: KSU Stadium
Capacity: 42,000
1997: 11-1 (7-1)
Big 12 Finish: 2nd (North)

Will win because: Michael Bishop returns at quarterback, and the do-everything junior college transfer isn't hyped for the Heisman for nothing in this, his senior season. A strong linebacking corps returns with solid all-around defense. Watch out for junior running back Frank Murphy, the preseason All-Big 12 Newcomer of the Year.

Will lose because: Nebraska has the Wildcats' number. Also, can you say cupcake non-conference schedule? Snyder can.

1998 Prediction: 10-1 (7-1)

Reason: Non-conference opponents had an 8-26 record last year.



COLORADO BUFFALOES



Head Coach: Rick Neuheisel
Stadium: Folsom Field
Capacity: 51,808
1997: 5-6 (3-5)
Big 12 Finish: 6th (North)

Will win because: Neuheisel will have things back on track after a horribly disappointing season in 1997. Defense remains solid with Hannibal Navies patrolling the field. Quarterback Mike Moschetti seems to be the real deal after he shredded the Colorado State defense for three touchdowns in the upset win.

Will lose because: Kansas State will be hungry when they invade Boulder. In a battle of wills, KSU wins by a nose.

1998 Prediction: 9-2 (6-2)

Reason: Buffaloes bounce back in a big way after disappointing season.



TEXAS A&M AGGIES



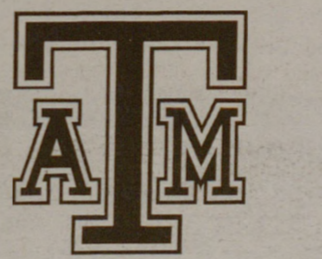
Head Coach: R.C. Slocum
Stadium: Kyle Field
Capacity: 58,000
1997: 9-4 (6-2)
Big 12 Finish: Big 12 South Champs

Will win because: Returning senior quarterback Brannon Stewart, senior linebacker Dat Nguyen and the running-back factory return nearly unchanged. There is no reason why the Aggies can't contend for a top-10 national ranking. Beating Nebraska will be the key.

Will lose because: Questions about shaky placekicker situation and untested offensive line remain unanswered. Record against top-ranked teams leaves much to be desired.

1998 Prediction: 10-2 (7-1)

Reason: A year older, a year wiser in College Station.



TEXAS LONGHORNS



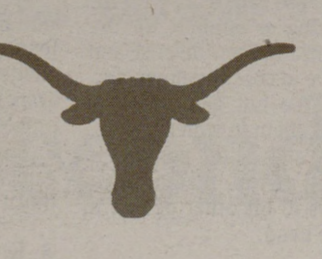
Head Coach: Mack Brown
Stadium: Royal Memorial Stadium
Capacity: 80,216
1997: 4-7 (2-6)
Big 12 Finish: T-4th (South)

Will win because: Two words: Ricky Williams. The "dreaded" foe figures to terrorize defenses and break the all-time school scoring record, probably before Big 12 competition even starts. Offense should be able to produce enough points to stay with any team.

Will lose because: Two words: Richard Walton. The unproven quarterback floundered against UCLA last season after James Brown's injury. Defense remains porous.

1998 Prediction: 7-4 (5-3)

Reason: Brown injects new life into team that was headed nowhere.



OKLAHOMA STATE COWBOYS



Head Coach: Bob Simmons
Stadium: Lewis Field
Capacity: 60,614
1997: 8-4 (5-3)
Big 12 Finish: T-2nd (South)

Will win because: Sophomore quarterback Tony Lindsey is a younger version of Missouri's Corby Jones. Combined with backs Jamaal Fobbs and Nathan Simmons, a dangerous offense awaits visitors. OSU can put points on the board and has early momentum with win over Kansas.

Will lose because: Loss of NFL draft picks R.W. McQuarters, Alonzo Mayes and Jamaal Williams weakens a team that was overachieving to begin with.

1998 Prediction: 7-4 (4-4)

Reason: Cinderella season just hit midnight — back to reality for Cowboys.



MISSOURI TIGERS



Head Coach: Larry Smith
Stadium: Memorial Stadium
Capacity: 62,000
1997: 7-5 (5-3)
Big 12 Finish: 3rd (North)

Will win because: Quarterback Corby Jones can do it all — run the option, thread the needle or carry the team when it falters. Smith is a master of strategy, and surely the near-win against Nebraska left the impression this team can knock off the heavyweights.

Will lose because: Tailback Brock Olivo graduated, leaving a huge hole for even Jones to plug up. Murderous schedule includes trips to College Station and Lincoln.

1998 Prediction: 6-5 (2-4)

Reason: Big 12 North is one of the strongest divisions in college football.



KANSAS JAYHAWKS



Head Coach: Terry Allen
Stadium: Memorial Stadium
Capacity: 50,250
1997: 5-6 (3-5)
Big 12 Finish: 4th (North)

Will win because: Iowa State is on the schedule. Offense can't be any worse than last year's squad, which ranked last in the nation. Non-conference schedule holds a few walkovers so the win column isn't totally empty.

Will lose because: Not even Roy Williams could get this offense to score points. As long as basketball outdraws football, Kansas can pack it in.

1998 Prediction: 4-7 (1-7)

Reason: Allen will be too busy looking at want ads to coach.



IOWA STATE CYCLONES



Head Coach: Dan McCarney
Stadium: Cyclone Stadium
Capacity: 43,000
1997: 1-10 (1-6)
Big 12 Finish: 5th (North)

Will win because: A Sept. 19 game against Ball State at home will have the Cyclones fired up about their only chance for a win. Running back Darren Davis and quarterback Todd Bandhauer produce decent offensive numbers, but not good enough to make up for the lack of defense.

Will lose because: They're the opposite of Texas A&M — a tradition of absolutely no defense. Tough to make it like that in the Big 12.

1998 Prediction: 1-10 (0-8)

Reason: Someone has to finish last. Why not the Cyclones?



TEXAS TECH RED RAIDERS



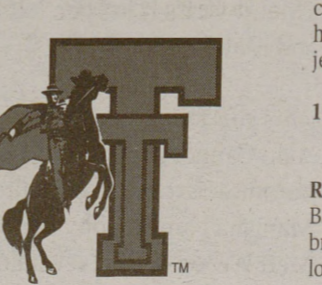
Head Coach: Spike Dykes
Stadium: Jones Stadium
Capacity: 50,500
1997: 6-5 (5-3)
Big 12 Finish: T-2nd (South)

Will win because: Two words: Ricky Williams. Sound familiar? Folks in Lubbock call him "Ricky Williams Lite" in reverence to the other one in Austin. May be chasing Longhorns' back for rushing title at end of season. Receiver Donnie Hart might be the best in the Big 12.

Will lose because: Lack of motivation because of NCAA sanctions. Quarterback Rob Peters doesn't have enough game experience to adequately replace departed Zebbie Letheridge.

1998 Prediction: 6-5 (3-5)

Reason: Players could use more than a tutor, coach.



OKLAHOMA SOONERS



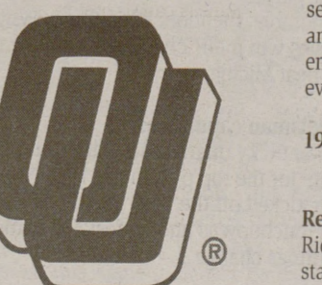
Head Coach: John Blake
Stadium: Memorial Stadium
Capacity: 75,004
1997: 4-8 (2-6)
Big 12 Finish: T-4th (South)

Will win because: The option and Oklahoma were made for each other. Remember Barry Switzer? Junior quarterback Brandon Daniels can run with the ball and his replacement, Patrick Fletcher, is a capable thrower. Running back De'Mond Parker is dangerous in the open field.

Will lose because: John Blake has yet to prove he can win in the Big 12 Conference. Until he can put together a decent winning streak, his job will be in jeopardy.

1998 Prediction: 4-7 (2-6)

Reason: Barry, come back and bring Jamielle Holoway back with you!



BAYLOR BEARS



Head Coach: Dave Roberts
Stadium: Floyd Casey Stadium
Capacity: 50,000
1997: 2-9 (1-7)
Big 12 Finish: 6th (South)

Will win because: Sophomore quarterback Odell James will finally step into the role of playmaker, replacing four-year starter Jeff Watson. Stable of running backs includes Darrell Bush, who was the second all-time leading 5A rusher at Jersey Village High School.

Will lose because: It's Baylor. They haven't had a winning season since 1994, and the Big 12 Conference just gets stronger every year.

1998 Prediction: 2-9 (1-7)

Reason: Rich get richer, Baylor stays the same.

