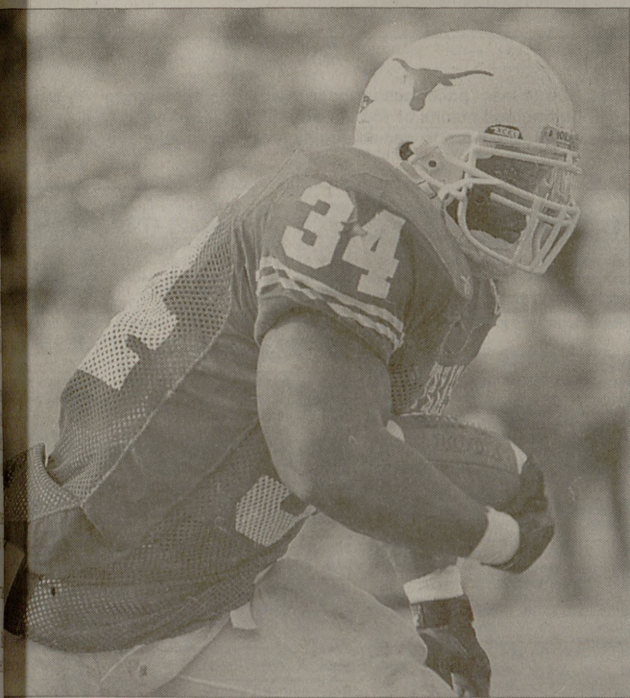


UT's Williams favorite to win the Heisman



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

Running back **Ricky Williams** set college football's lifetime career-rushing record playing Texas A&M.

NEW YORK (AP) — The fans cheered Ricky Williams in Lincoln, even though he was the reason Nebraska's 47-game home winning streak had just ended.

Hoping to see him break Tony Dorsett's career rushing record at home in Austin, they inundated Texas coach Mack Brown with e-mails, begging him to pull Williams out of the Texas Tech game at Lubbock if he got too close to the mark.

And on that final weekend before the home folks, Dorsett, Earl Campbell and John David Crow — Heisman winners all — stood on the sidelines and cheered as Williams smashed the record in grand style. He ran for 259 yards, including a 60-yard TD run for the record-breaker, and led the Longhorns to a 26-24 upset over rival Texas A&M.

It has been a remarkable ride for Williams, the gifted 6-foot, 225-pound tailback with the dreadlocks who came back to school for one more year to "win games and have fun."

On Saturday, Williams' sensational season is expected to come to a fitting conclusion: He is the overwhelming favorite to take home the Heisman Trophy, college football's most prestigious award. Among the other contenders are quarterbacks Michael Bishop of Kansas State, Tim Couch of Kentucky and Cade McNown of UCLA.

All three said they would vote for Williams if they could, and would be shocked if anyone else walked to the podium at the Downtown Athletic Club to accept the trophy.

"There was a lot of pressure about the Heisman at first," said Williams, who carried 361 times for 2,124 yards and scored 28 touchdowns this season. "Everyone was looking at you and every team was trying to stop you. But as the season went on, I didn't think about it as much. I just went out and played hard."

And when he finished, Williams found himself with 16 NCAA marks and 40 school records. In addition to breaking Dorsett's 22-year-old standard of 6,082 yards — Williams has 6,279 yards — the 21-year-old back from San Diego also has NCAA career marks for touchdowns (75), points (452) and all-purpose yards (7,206).

Last year, Heisman week was filled with suspense as Tennessee's Peyton Manning appeared to be the favorite, but Michigan's all-purpose star Charles Woodson became the first primarily defensive player to win the award.

Williams would become only the third running back in the 1990s to win the Heisman. Eddie George of Ohio State won in '95 and Rashaan Salaam of Colorado won in '94. Campbell was the only other Longhorn to win the Heisman, in 1977.

Williams was stopped cold a few times this season. He had 43 yards on 25 carries in a loss to Kansas State and 90 yards on 23 carries in a win against Oklahoma State. But that only made him more determined. In the two games after K-State, he had his two 300-yard games — 318 against Rice and 350 against Iowa State.

"After the Kansas State game, the first thing people said to him is, 'Are you out of the Heisman race?'" Texas coach Mack Brown said. "And he says, 'I haven't even put myself in the Heisman race. What we've got to do is become a better football team.'"

After the Longhorns opened 1-2, they strung together a six-game winning streak, including the 20-16 stunner at Nebraska on Oct. 31. When the game ended, and Williams had led the Longhorns on the game-winning drive, thousands of Huskers fans stood and applauded as he left the field.

With three games to go, Williams needed nearly 300 yards for Dorsett's record, and his teammates figured he could get them all against Oklahoma State. But when the Cowboys put nine men on the line and shut down Williams in the first half, Brown went over to console his tailback.

SEE WILLIAMS ON PAGE 9.

Excited students camp out for Sugar Bowl tickets

BY JEFF WEBB
The Battalion

At 1 a.m. Thursday in front of Rollie White Coliseum, there was a collection of 122 tents, hundreds of students snuggled into G. Rollie's walls playing games of "42" and a smattering of would-be football players tossing soaked pigskin in the miserable cold and rain.

The few televisions showed replays of the Kansas State University-A&M Big 12 Championship game, *My Best Friend's Wedding* and *Eddie Murphy Raw*.

Welcome to Slocumville, population 330, home to treasure hunters in search of tickets to the first Sugar Bowl appearance

since the 1940 version, a 14-13 win over Tulane University, which earned the Aggies their only college football national championship.

"We were the first ones here," acting Slocumville town mayor Ryan Klebba, a junior business analysis major and self-proclaimed Sugar Bowl Master, said.

Klebba, who arrived with his two companions at 10:30 p.m. Monday, was the one responsible for calling the hourly ticket-window roll call until tickets went on sale at 7 a.m. Thursday.

Each student is allowed to buy 10 tickets, and since the A&M allotment of passes was limited to 4,400, the Aggie student section in the Superdome on New Year's Day will probably be sold out.

"There was nobody here when we got here," senior agricultural systems major Robert Real said. "We decided to set up a tent to be the first people here."

"It's been wild out here [tonight]. Monday night we watched the K-State game on TV, and I studied for an Agriculture Economics 330 test, which I made an 87 [percent] on."

Some students studied, some watched television and some simply visited over their barbecue pits while sipping on hot chocolate.

After the midnight roll call, senior yell leader Pat Patillo led an informal yell practice.

"I got a phone call from my friend Bethany Boyd," Patillo said. "People were asking why there

wasn't a yell leader showing up.

"I figured the least I could do was come out here and lead an informal yell practice for the people who were sucking it up in the rain and cold."

Patillo said the site for Midnight Yell Practice in New Orleans is still undetermined.

"You have to get a permit, and getting a permit to do anything in New Orleans on New Year's Eve is difficult to do."

Life in Slocumville moved on slowly until 5 a.m. when the ticket-window line-up was scheduled to begin.

Students were unanimous about two things — an A&M Sugar Bowl victory, and the fact witnessing it will be worth the wait.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Dat 'Nguyen's' Lombardi Award

Three days after his Aggies upset top-ranked Kansas State to throw a monkey wrench into the Bowl Championship Series rankings, Texas A&M line-backer Dat Nguyen was named the recipient of the 29th annual Rotary Lombardi Award at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Houston.

Nguyen, the all-time leading tackler in A&M history, became the first Aggie to win the award. In 13 games this season, Nguyen has 147 tackles. For his career, he has 517 stops.

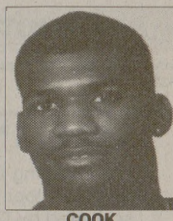


NGUYEN

Cook named Big 12 Rookie of the Week

Texas A&M junior guard Clifton Cook has been named the Phillips 66 Big 12 Rookie of the Week by a panel of media members who cover Big 12 men's basketball.

Cook averaged 15.0 points in the Aggies' three victories last week against Alabama (65-58), Sam Houston State (73-70) and Lamar (77-69). On Saturday against Lamar, the 6-foot-1 Cook scored a career-high 27 points with seven rebounds and made 3-of-5 from three-point range.



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