Fresh Air Returns

By STUART GLASS, Thresher Sports Editor

While there is still time, one might wish to avail himself of the cool, relaxed atmosphere of a Rice University home baseball game. Few modern teams can boast of such a modest stadium in which to play their games.

The so-called "Owl-o-drome," Rice's home diamond, is one of the few "open air" fields in Houston, and one is hard pressed to find a bad seat among the 400-plus capacity wooden bleachers, all located behind first or third base. (With the possible exception of those behind the spacious plywood dugouts.)

The sedate, $4.75 scoreboard provides consistent gate appeal for the dying breed of hard-core baseball fundamentalists. Standing eternally mute in deep center field, the board restricts its function to telling the spectators—those who can see that far—what the score is, manifesting absolutely no reaction (except for an approving nod by the guy who puts up the numbers after each inning) when an Owl hits a home run.

Nobody need worry about sloshing out in the rain to see a game, because he can remain confident that it will not be played. "There will definitely be rainouts," assures J. B. Sternzenseeeps, concession stand operator for the past several years. (Nobody can recall when he wasn't there.)

Yet there is no need to bother keeping up with rain checks in case the game is postponed. No admission is charged, thereby providing one of the cheapest dates in the Southwest.

The field is versatile. Just press a button, and within a couple of days, fifteen gnomes have dismantled the bleachers and the cyclone fences, and—voilla!—the freshman football practice field.

"In an atmosphere like this," sighs coach Doug Osburn, "how could anyone not play good baseball?"