Basketballers Off To Good Start In Conference Race

By DICK PARK

A Christmas vacation hasn't hampered the Owls as they cling to the top in the opening Southwest Conference basketball race. While everybody else in the eight-team league was on the go between Christmas and New Years, the Owls had a four day break and a week of practice; the first time in well over a decade they haven't had a flurry of games as a final tune-up for league play just before the busy conference schedule.

THE HOLIDAYS started on a rather sour note however, when the Owls took a 91-57 lancing from tough Creighton in Omaha for their only really bad setback during a 4-4 pre-league inter-sectional schedule. The Owls actually were supposed to have played against tenth ranked Duke at Des Moines on December 23, but a midwest blizzard, the worst in thirty years, caused the game to be cancelled and added a couple more days to their layoff time.

Off to a fast start in the title chase, the Owls gave the Baylor Bears a 79-56 going over in the conference opener in Waco last week. Returning home the cagers rallied past T.C.U. for their second straight Southwest conference victory in a row. The T.C.U. Hornfrogs led by one point at halftime after Rice blew its twelve point lead to coach Brannon's fast break offense.

RICE'S SLIM LEAD in the rebound department seemed to be the difference, particularly in the closing minutes. Kendall Rhine, the Owl's 6-10 sophomore center, played his best game of the season since spraining his wrist shortly before the holidays. Rhine's scoring was somewhat overshadowed however, by the thirty-two point production of T.C.U. guard Phil Reynolds.

In a game which saw both teams turn from hot to cold, the young Owls showed signs of improvement over earlier games. The Owls are off to a good start in what promises to be a tough conference race. A win this Tuesday over the defending Southwest conference champion Red raiders in Lubbock would give the Owls a running start to the championship.

IN THE PRELIMINARY to the Rice-T.C.U. game, the Rice Owlets suffered their third defeat in four starts at the hands of the South Texas Seahawks. The Owlets were ahead by twelve points in the first half but fell prey to the Seahawks' fast break in the final period. A last minute rally by the frosh died as a last second shot from mid-court by Warren Shick narrowly missed tying the game. Larry Tiner was the top scorer for the Owlets with seventeen points. John Straining was high for the winners with nineteen. The Owlets next home game will be January 12, against Texas.
BROTHERS KENDALL AND Paul Rhine team up for Rice Owls. Kendall, 6-10 sophomore, is leading scorer and rebounder for the '62 Owls. Kendall also has the distinction of being the tallest player in the S. W. C.