Improved Blue Tie
Unbeaten Florida

By TED HERMANN
Thresher Sports Editor

Apparently beaten for the third time in three games, coach Jess Neely’s Rice Owls fought from behind twice Saturday to tie unbeaten Florida 13-13. Although failing three out of four times in one of their specialties, placekicking, the Owls showed some 34,000 fans how much difference five days of good weather can make in a football team. Although far from letter perfect in any department, the Owls’ effort Saturday was a great improvement over their two previous starts.

The greatest improvement shown in the backfield, where the Owls looked improved in every facet except passing and quick-kicking. Behind the fine running, faking, and blocking of Max Webb, Roland Jackson, Bill Buck, Lonnie Caddell, and Johnny Stephenson, the Rice offense finally got rolling, as the Owls finished the evening with a respectable 256 yards on the ground. Whereas the halfbacks and fullbacks were having a great evening running, blocking, and faking.

The Owl quarterbacks were having their troubles in the throwing department. The Rice men-under completed only one of six and had one intercepted to set up a Gator touchdown.

Good Pass Defense
Just looking good on offense, however, did not satisfy the Owl backs, for the Rice defensive secondary also turned in a good performance Saturday night. Besides making some bone-jarring tackles, the men in blue had the Florida receivers so well covered that at least three times Gator quarterback Wayne Williamson was forced to hold onto the ball for a loss in yardage.

If the Rice forward wall was having its troubles blocking Saturday night, the troubles were apparently one way, for the Owl stalwarts, led by Charles Pollard, Robert Johnston, Boyd King, Gene Miller, and Jerry Graves, appeared to have the defensive situation pretty well in hand. Hustling and aggressive all the way, the Owl line showed great improvement in pursuit, rushing and covering on punts.

Blocking, Passing Poor
In short, the Owls showed an improvement in everything except blocking and passing. The two things which characterized the Owls Saturday night were their hustle and spirit. Although still a long way from their full potential, an improvement this week matching that of last week could put the Owls in a pretty good position to give Mr. Meredith and his high riding Mustangs their first taste of what should be a very bumpy road to the Cotton bowl.