Shades Of Grayness

By JOHN DURHAM

It is not true that the Rice Owls will change the colors of their uniforms this year to green and gray to correspond with the experience of the team and the predictions for its success.

Although other Houston newspapers have predicted that the Owls will finish so low that they will need a Titan rocket to get up, we happen to know that the Athletic Department is perfectly happy with the color of its present uniforms, and furthermore, since it now costs $1200 for each athlete on an athletic scholarship, they can't afford it.

But leaving uniforms aside, there will be some new looks in Rice Stadium this fall—on Saturdays as well as Sundays.

We keep getting releases from the Rice University Sports Information Director (publicity man to the uninitiated) saying that there is more speed than last year, more enthusiasm than last year, better running backs than last year, plus more players seeing more action courtesy of the NCAA rules committee which changes its mind more often than a recent visitor to the Louisiana coast named Betsy.

These reports, coupled with last year's predictions that the 64 Owls would battle UT for the conference championship, make us wonder just how strong the best teams in the conference are this season.

But we will not know the answers to the questions of who is the leading Southwest Conference contender until after the first three non-conference games are played.

And the first one unfolds Saturday night under the lights and mosquitoes as the Owls engage Louisiana Tech (we'd tell you where the school is, but we don't know either).

According to the reports from the aforementioned Sports Information Director, there are a "flock of reasons" why ye old Owls should not take Louisiana Tech lightly. The chief one seems to be a quarterback named Billy Laird, who completed more than 50% of his passes last year while gaining 1361 yards in ten games, and losing only one of those ten.

Other points in favor of the visitors include experience: the Bulldogs (that's the nickname of Louisiana Tech) have nine more lettermen than the Owls (that's the nickname of our team).

The Bulldogs also have eight tackles who weigh from 225 to 250 pounds, which figures out to almost a ton of manpower at one position.

And finally, the Cajuns figure to bring with them at least 4000 fans, which figures out to almost six per cent of the Rice Stadium seating capacity.

Having considered the strong points of the opposition Saturday, we feel it is only fair to give the pessimists some more material at this point and list the recognized weak points in the big blue football machine.

The perennial problem of what to do with the position between guard and end is still with us. It seems that boys who stand over 6'4", weigh over 250 pounds, and can move quicker than any man in the backfield are again in short supply.

Likewise, quarterbacks who pass like Frank Ryan and think like his math professors have been as scarce as SWC crowns on South Main in the past few years.

But aside from these obvious shortcomings, the Owls appear to be solid for the '65 season. Solid enough to hit rock bottom according to some prognosticators.

But the forecasters have at least twelve weeks between now

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and the time they can crows or eat crow.

Still, some mysterious force compels us to add our predictions to the growing attempt to cull order from the annual chaos that is the Southwest Conference.

Discarding the theory that Texas is long overdue for the crown since they last won it in 1963, we like Arkansas to repeat for the title.

The Rice Owls, we suggest, will finish at 6-4, losing to LSU, Texas, Arkansas, and Texas Tech.

But we still find it hard to picture the Bulldogs as the man-eaters presented by the SID.

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