Owls Host SMU Ponies in SWC Opener

Rice Hunts First Win as Mustangs Seek Bowl Berth

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The moment of truth is at hand for the Rice Owls. Jess Neely’s charges start play-forkeeps action by clashing with SMU’s mighty Mustangs Saturday night at Rice Stadium.

All-American Don Meredith leads the Mustang stampede into Houston, as the Ponies likewise are facing their Southwest Conference inaugural. The Mustangs were pre-season choices in most quarters to win the loop crown and the host spot in the Cotton Bowl, but a rude awakening by Georgia Tech slashed their national prominence. After bowing to the Engineers 16-12, the Ponies bounced back to down Navy 20-7. Last week SMU made it two in a row by conquering Missouri 23-2.

Abilene vs. Abilene

Bill Meek’s Mustangs throw one of the conference’s finest backfields at Rice’s vaunted inner line. In addition to Meredith, Glynn Gregory and Jimmy Welch, schoolboy teammates of the Owls’ Boyd and Rufus King, at Abilene, add to the Mustang power. Gregory is a fine pass receiver and a good punter.

Tirey Wilemon, Frank Jackson, and Billy Polk offer further targets for Meredith and each is a constant breakaway threat. Wilemon has returned intercepted passes twice for TD runs of better than ninety yards. End Henry Christopher is a favorite recipient of Meredith’s mighty heaves.

Other Mustangs mentioned prominently in conference circles are tough linemen Bobby Loveless and Max Christian. Both were all-conference picks in pre-season polls.