Hustling, Upsetting Ponies Bring New Look To Stadium Saturday

By GERRY URBACH

This week the Southwest conference's annual autumn madness begins for two teams who have tasted little of its glory during the past few years as our Owls, lackluster 23-13 victors over Stanford, meet a surprising band of Ponies from Southern Methodist.

The Ponies are fresh from two winning forays against favored Service Academies, strafing the Air Force Academy 10-0 and reaching the nation's fourth ranked team, the Navy 32-28 in Dallas last week end. The victory over Navy set the stage for a weekend of topsy-turvy results not only in Dallas, but throughout the nation.

SMU IS COACHED by Haden Fry who is only in his second year at the Hilltop. He has impressed so much that he was named Senior College Coach of the Year in Texas last season even though his Ponies ran up a none-too-impressive 2-8 log for the campaign. This year Fry's all-out-hustle brand of football has begun to pay dividends: witness those two surprising upsets in a row.

The game Saturday night could unfortunately be a strong contrast between two types of football attitudes. We hope not. But nevertheless, under Fry, the Ponies have never yet failed to put out 100 per cent or better effort every game and the opening week of Southwest conference action for '63 would seem no time for them to ease up.

SMU WILL NOT bring the credentials of a Penn State or Texas into this game. It is one of the lightest squads around with a line averaging only around 190 lbs. per man. In pre-season forecasts the Ponies were also expected to be one of the slowest squads but the advent of trackman John Roderick, (9.3 for the hundred and not listed in the pre-season brochure), has suddenly motorized this Mustang outfit.

Roderick looped in and out of the clutches of the budding admirals for 146 yards and two touchdowns last week. Thus the Owls must be ready at the flanks for a new and swifter Pony. Other backfield standouts are quarterback and one of the nation's leading punters Danny Thomas and halfback Billy Gannon.

THE LIGHT MUSTANG line contains some sterling individuals including tackle John Knu, and Bill Harlan and John Hughes, a pass-snatching linebacker who was named lineman of the week for his play against the Air Force.

SMU is not a team with power, finesse, or speed. It is however a squad of athletes who, under the expert tutelage of Hayden Fry, a protege of Arkansas' Frank Broyles, have come to believe in themselves. This year the Ponies appear to have something to believe in. Last year they were everybody's favorite (except Rice's) as they played a heartbreakingly 2-8 season which included only one loss of over six points and that to National Champion Southern California.

FOR THE RECORD, the Ponies run the so-called "combination-T" in which all backs line up directly behind center and then shift to various formations including the split-T, wing-T, double wing, standard T, and the "pro set." Sometimes the backs remain as they are and SMU runs from the Southern California "I" formation.

But in the main, the aspect of the Ponies' game to watch for is their hustle and preservance.