Underdated Mustangs Eager To Upset Owls

By RONNIE KLINE

Last Saturday evening, the Rice Owls, playing for three quarters as if Bobby Dodd's ghost hovered over the field, finally rose to the occasion in the last fifteen minutes to slip by a game Florida eleven, 19-10. Time and again, the Gators' slippery quarterback, Larry Libertore, sliced through the fabled Owl defense for long gains. Libertore, Florida's sequel to Georgia Tech's Stan Gann, led a surprising Gator attack which kept the Owls guessing all evening. When Libertore wasn't running his forte, the quarterback option, he sent the Gator backs crashing through the tackle slot, outrushing the Big Blue two hundred forty-seven yards to one hundred ninety-two.

WITH FLORIDA DEEP in Owl territory, superior manpower, however, became a telling factor. The Owl defense stiffened and held the Gators to an early field goal and a lone third period touchdown. Although our defense failed to halt Florida most of the evening, in all fairness we must commend the superb performances "when it counted" of an injury riddled line.

Certainly, there were two standout performers in blue Saturday. The overwhelming power with which fullback Roland Jackson smashed through the Gator defense was reminiscent of the great Kossie Johnson-Dicky Moegle era. Jackson spearheaded drives of sixty-eight and fifty-three yards, gained eighty-four yards in thirteen tries, and scored both Owl touchdowns. Some fans commented that this was Jackson's finest day.

BUTCH BLUME, WHOSE two timely interceptions stirred Florida drives, was a superb performer on defense, not to mention the two field goals contributed by his educated toe. But for an unfortunate encounter with a courageous brown and white pooch which chose an untimely moment to saunter on to the field of battle, Butch would have had an easy touchdown runback of the first interception; he settled for fifty-two yards instead.

Turning our attention to tomorrow evening's encounter, the Owls meet a very underrated bunch of SMU Mustangs. In previous starts, the Ponies dropped a 14-7 contest to 18th ranked Maryland, extended a USC eleven (which scared the daylights out of 14th ranked Iowa) to the limit, and defeated the Air Force, 9-7. The victory in Dallas was the Ponies first win in two years, and they've had two weeks to prepare for the Owls. Speaking to the Downtown Quarterbacks Club Monday, scout "Red" Bale indicated that SMU is a hungry team with several "speedy, shifty" backs. The Owls have already encountered two backs of the speedy, shifty variety (Gann and Libertore) who have dealt the defenses misery.

THE PONIES, CERTAIN TO recall vividly the 47-0 humiliation of last year, will undoubtedly be seeking revenge; and they are, therefore, doubly dangerous. The win over the Air Force may have brought the Mustangs the confidence needed to give all SWC rivals fits.

The Owl-Mustang rivalry is an old, intense one dating back to 1916 when Rice stampeded SMU, 146-3. To date, the Owls have won eighteen, the Ponies twenty-one, and there has been one tie. Rice fans will recall the memorable 13-13 tie in 1959 when Pony ace Don Meredith threw a touchdown pass, called back because Meredith was supposedly across the line of scrimmage when he threw. Later, films revealed he wasn't over. This touched off a squabble, typical of the series, which culminated in the rather humorous suggestion of an SMU official that the Owls should forfeit the game! With many cloudy memories fogging the SMU record, Pony seniors will be in no mood to drop another one to Rice—the Owls should not take them lightly.

ASIDE FROM the Rice-SMU clash in Houston, all SWC fans will have their eyes on the hills, where Arkansas entertains Texas in the day's chief head-knocker. That should be a dandy, with the steers trying to avenge a 24-23 defeat last year on a last second field goal by you know who! Owl scouts will gaze on with interest, and Joe Davis will bring us the annual horror report on our next foe, the orange destruction crew from Austin.