Cage Prospects Low

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Somebody once explained that if a football team scores 20 points, it will beat just about anybody. With Rice's defense, 20 points a game would have resulted in no worse than a 7-3 record. Maybe even a 9-1 record, since 20 points Rice might have accumulated would possibly have wiped out 21 points Arkansas and Stanford got on pass interceptions.

Fairly useless conjecture, though. The Owls wound up 4-5-1, the last loss coming Saturday against Baylor, 27-20. The offense came to life for the third straight week, as 14 last-quarter touchdowns resulted in Baylor scores. Pantanal soph Terry Southall, and All-American Larry Elkins led the Bears from a 20-12 deficit in the final stanza, and snatched third place in the conference standings from the Owls' grasp.

Hard core Rice supporters were treated to the first real romp in several years as the Owls completely crushed TCU 31-6. Six pass interceptions, and a punt returned for a touchdown by David Ferguson made matters easy for Rice. It was nothing but mercy in the second half that kept the score from mounting.

Time For Basketball and Euphemisms

So the team saved the best for the last, and now that the football season is history, it's time to turn to basketball. It has been suggested that we skip basketball this year and discuss track; nevertheless we will indeed talk about basketball for the next few months.

When a good sportswriter is forced to analyze a team whose prospects are nil, he resorts to the device known as the "euphemism." There is a whole catalog of these. The one we have selected is the concept of the "rebuilding year."

When a coach loses all his lettermen, and sees his uniforms filled with clean-shaven American athletes who have played a total of about 30 minutes of college basketball, he is allowed by the NCAA to age five years only if he remains glib. "This is going to be a rebuilding year," said in any tone of voice, is one of the sanctioned remarks.

"No doubt about it," sighed Rice's once-youthful basketball coach George Carlisle, "this is going to be a rebuilding year." He went on, mumbling something about losing Kendall Rhine, who is now the tallest manager in the United States, as well as Herb Steinkamp, Larry Phillips, Barry Rodrigue, and Eli Spradling, who started every game, and did almost all of the playing last year.

Then he made an expansive gesture with his arm, pointing out toward the Autry Court floor, where Rice plays its home basketball games. Scattered here and about in groups of two's and three's were 15 clean-shaven American athletes, playing a little basketball among themselves. These were the hope of Rice University for the 1945-46 basketball campaign. And these were the Owls' representatives who traveled to Tennessee to take on the frighteningly powerful Vanderbilt Commodores tonight, and then to Georgia Tech on Saturday. The first home games are during the Bluebonnet Classic, against Texas A&M and Auburn, December 16-17.

On Paper, Rice Looks Like a Loser

On paper, the Owls look like . . . well, like losers. Of the fifteen players, only two have ever lettered, Senior Don Siegmund, a 6'7" center played barely enough to letter last year, and Dick Cramer, a 6' guard, earned his "R" the year before. Only they, along with Larry Tiner, Wiley Hall, Doug Kendrick and Carroll Kellers, have ever been in a varsity game. Tiner, a senior guard already a lettermen, Mr. McClure, played more than a enough to letter last year, but Hall and Kellers have only about five minutes of playing time between them.

So Rice is forced to field a team of seven sophs, four juniors, and four seniors. Leonhard White and Bill Doty are redshirt sophs, and Guy Lease and Travis McCan are junior college draftees from Del Rio and Midriff, respectively, who should prove a lot.

But Carlisle is optimistic about the desire and hustle of his charges. "We may not win often, but fans should enjoy watching our green kids develop. They have a fine attitude."

Since there is no pressure on Rice to win this year, if enough of the players are playing well (as only a clean-shaven American athlete can) on the same night, there are going to be some upsets scored on Autry Court this season.