'63 Review Is '64 Preview

By PAUL BURKA

On January 3, 1963, only two short days after the New Year began, the basketball season ended for the Southwest Conference. An unsteady, uncertain, and inconsistent University of Texas team edged Rice's nervous Owls in Austin's favorite house of horrors, Gregory Gym. The pre-season favorites to win the SWC looked like anything but champions as they squeaked past their arch rival.

ONLY 54 DAYS LATER, an amazing basketball team roared out of Austin, blitzed the Owls in Houston, and returned to Austin to lie in wait for Arkansas' outmanned Razorbacks.

Nevertheless, Rice can compete against the Longhorns. The question is, can they compete with them?

FACING A TEAM on the floor is an entirely different proposition than facing it during the entire season. The Owls, as dependent as they are upon Rhine, are far more likely to get in trouble against any opponent than Texas is. Whenever Rhine is in foul difficulty, the Owls are on the ropes. But Texas doesn't have that problem.

It was clear in the game here that Rice and Texas are fairly evenly matched, if Rice has Rhine.

Yet the Owls, even with Rhine at his best, can't win consistently, particularly on the road, because they are too dependent on the one man. Only Steinkamp offers any help.

SOONER OR LATER, when you depend on one man in the close ones, you're going to lose a couple. You might squeak past Baylor in Waco, Arkansas in Fayetteville, and TCU in Fort Worth, but then you lose to Texas by five and Texas Tech by one.

That brings us to next year, and to the outlook. There's only one answer: Texas.

The Owls simply need more help than they're going to get. But it's all a long shot chance of unproven quality versus proved quality. Face-to-face, we're still not convinced that it isn't Rice and Texas, side by side. But over the season, there's only one answer.