Mounts, Hudgens Lead Tech To Victory In Season's Last Tilt

By RONNIE KLINE

With little Del Ray Mounts and huge Harold Hudgens leading the way, the Texas Tech Red Raiders slapped the Rice Owls into their second straight 7-7 season in conference action. It was the same old story for Rice: 8-16 free throws for a miserable fifty percent. But for a brief period in the second half, the teams were rarely more than three points apart.

The excitement was too much for some, as one fan, sitting in front of me, nervously ate his program.

THE RAIDERS jumped off to an early 2-1 first half lead which the Owls quickly closed. From there to the end of the first period, it was a see-saw affair which saw the West Texans take a two point (32-30) lead into the dressing room. The first half statistics gave the Owls a below par 35.9% while Tech shot at a 44.4% clip.

The Owls grabbed ten more rebounds (Rhyme had twelve at the half) and took twelve more shots in that cold first half, but too frequently, they were unable to connect.

Tech took command early in the second period and jumped out to a ten point advantage, 46-36, with 12:02 remaining. Then Rice came to life and began whittling at the lead. Several times the big blue drew to within one point of the Raiders, but Tech's consistency at the free throw line paid off in a 60-58 victory.

FOR TECH, THIS was a must game. As SMU beat Arkansas 84-81 in Dallas, the Raiders and Ponies finished the mad SWC scramble at 11-3. They will meet in Fort Worth to decide the championship and the right to meet the Air Force in the first round of the NCAA tournament.

The Owls blew their chances of improving last season's conference mark, although the season record was 12-11, compared to 11-12 last year. The Raiders were the only conference team to whip the Owls in Houston, but Rice was able to defeat only Baylor on the road.

For a team that started three sophomores all season, the Owl basketball club should be lauded for an outstanding effort throughout the year. It should be observed that, had that extra experience been present, four games might have gone to the Owls.

They lost to Texas in Austin by one, SMU in Dallas by five, TCU in Fort Worth by two, and Texas Tech in Houston by two. Any time a total of ten points separates you from victory in four contests, it is safe to say that the teams, for all practical purposes, were even.

THE FUTURE LOOKS very bright for the Owls. If Bob Hill, John Womack, and Orville Welch get a little game experience behind them early, they should provide the Owls with a solid starting five, as Phillips, Steinkamp, and Rhyme should show marked improvement over their outstanding sophomore performances.

For Jim Fox, Mike Maroney, and Olle Shipley, college basketball careers have been concluded. Fox has certainly been the nucleus of the team all year. His fine ball handling and superb passing figured heavily in the Owls successes.

We nominate Fox for All Conference on the strength of his all round ability and leadership. However, it appears that Mounts and TCU's Reynolds will nose him out due to their scoring ability. It should be noted that Reynolds can score, but Fox can do it all.

ALTHOUGH starting slow, Shipley and Maroney came on to give Rice fine performances again this year. Olle led the team in scoring on more than one occasion. They will both be missed come next season.

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