Owls Slight Favorite In Tomorrow's Game

By MILTON NIRKEN

On Saturday, December 16, the 1961 Bluebonnet Bowl will pit the Kansas Jayhawks against the Rice Owls. This will be the first meeting of these two teams. Both teams had comparable records and both ended the season in third place in their respective conferences.

In his four years as Kansas football boss, Coach Jack Mitchell has brought the Jayhawks their second post-season bowl bid and a Big Eight championship. In the 1960 campaign, Kansas was undefeated but were ordered to forfeit their last two wins, when the league officials ruled that the former Pasadena star, Bert Coan, was ineligible. This year the Jayhawks had a 6-3-1 record. The three games were lost by a total of five points! Kansas lost to TCU 17-16, to Colorado 20-19 and to Missouri 10-7.

BASICALLY, Mitchell teaches close-to-vest football, emphasizing tough defense and a good kicking game. Offensively, he has shown wide imagination and versatility. This year he unveiled the Sliding-Slot, which blends single-wing off-tackle power of the old Sliding T.

Mitchell emphasizes speed and spirit in choosing his personnel, with size a secondary factor. Visiting pro scouts have called his practices “one of the best organized in the country.”

The 1961 Kansas football team has the following characteristics: a comparatively light and fast line; a versatile offense; a maneuverable defense; two-deep line depth; and John Hadl, an All-American quarterback.

John Hadl is one of the finest all-around backs in Kansas' football history. He trailed Iowa State's national leader, Dave Hoppman, in Big Eight offense with 950 yards. He is also one of the nation's finest punters with a 40 yard average for his three year career.

THE FIRST string Kansas backfield is an excellent unit. At right half is the Big Eight scoring champ, Curtis McClinton. The powerful 212 pounder has speed enough to share the school's 60 yard indoor high hurdles record. He is also a tremendous blocker and an excellent pass receiver. The left half position is shared by Roger McFarland and Tony Leiker. At fullback, Ken Coleman finished the '61 season as the fourth leading rusher in the Big Eight.

On line play, the Jayhawks are outstanding at guard, good at center, tackle and at the end positions. Guard Elvin Basham is a two-time Big Eight all conference star. He is backed up by several other quick and promising sophomores. Tackle Stan Kirshman is one of the Big Eight's finest linemen. Center Kent Staab was a second team all conference choice and is considered to be an excellent blocker and fierce tackler. The top end on the Kansas squad is Benny Boydston.

Weather permitting, a crowd of 70,000 is expected to witness the third annual Bluebonnet Bowl. The Rice Owls will have a slight advantage over their opponents since they will be playing on their home field for a partisan Rice crowd. The Owls should also be favored because of their overall power, speed and ability. Although the Owls played a few disappointing games, they generally had a successful season.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

The Rice basketball team has gotten off to a fast start by defeating three top Southeastern Conference teams. The Owls have four players in the top ten scorers in the Conference. In a pre-season National Sports magazine, Kendall Rhine was picked as one of the top 100 players in the country along with four other SWC stars. After three weeks of the 1961 basketball season, there isn't an undefeated team left in SWC; Texas got beat by Tulane 77-75 and Memphis beat the Aggies 62-60.

Coach Darrel Royal of Texas has been named the 1961 Coach of the Year. It is rumored the Rice coach, Bo Hagan, will be head coach at SMU. Red Smith, syndicated sports columnist, said that the first Gotham Bowl was comparable to Rose Bowl except for Roses, Sunshine, People, Money and Football.

Billy Cox's alma mater, Galena Park, meets Wichita Falls for the 4A High School football championship.