Power Hitting Horn Frogs Test Owl Pitching In Conference Opener

By DICK PARK

Spring is here and the national pastime has taken over top billing on the Rice campus since coach Johnnie Frankie's cagers have hung up their "tennies" for a well deserved rest. Coach Frankie is in line again this year for special plaudits for the outstanding job he did in guiding his youthful charges to a respectable 7-7 conference record.

FRANKIE LOSES only two starters from this years squad, which was largely dominated by sophomores. Led by Kendall Rhine, who received second team All-Southwest Conference honors this year, the experience wise Owls could be a strong threat to capture the conference crown next year with a small amount of luck on the road.

Rice Sports fans now have an opportunity to look forward to a promising baseball season. The Owl nine opened their season on the road last week by winning a solid 10-2 victory over the University of Corpus Christi. The Owls next encounter following last Thursdays clash with the University of Corpus Christi will be this Saturday when they host power hitting T.C.U. in the Southwest conference opener for both teams.

THE T.C.U. GAME will kick off a home series for the Owls on the Rice diamond, since next week they meet Sam Houston State on Tuesday and St. Mary's of San Antonio on Friday.

Joe Gallagher has been appointed temporary head coach of the Owls replacing the respected and well-liked Dell Morgan, whose life was claimed in a tragic accident. Coach Gallagher, now a Houston insurance salesman, has an outstanding record as a major league out fielder and coach. Gallagher played with the New York Yankees, St. Louis Browns and Brooklyn Dodgers. He was on two pennant winning clubs, the Yankees of '39 and Dodgers of '41. He was also head coach of the East Texas Lumberjacks for three years prior to coming to Houston.

The only factor of major consequence which might hamper the Owls chances of having a successful season this year is the strength of the pitching staff. Coach Gallagher has only three bonafied pitchers to call on in Ken Schoppe, Wayne McClelland and Butch McKeown. With only three pitchers available, Coach Gallagher may have to dig deep into other positions to field help for relief duty.

THE PROBABLE STARTERS for Saturday will be Joel Tiggett at first, Johnny Stephenson at second, Jim Fox at third and Butch Blume at short stop. The outfield will lineup with Ronnie Dreyer in left, Gary West in center and Lee Raesener in right. The catching chores will likely go to Kerbow.

THIS YEAR'S OWLS are made up of nine returning lettermen and two squadmen from last year. The Owls will be lead by All-Southwest Conference catcher Jim Fox. Fox, who can play anywhere, has been moved to third to strengthen that position, while catching duty will be divided be-