Neely Begins 20th Year

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Boasting the longest tenure of office of any Southwest Conference coach, Rice's Jess Neely opens his 20th year at the Institute flanked by a veteran staff.

Only one change was made in the coaching group since the closing of the 1958 grid campaign—newcomer Nick Lanza replaces Cecil Griggs as backfield coach. Griggs was named by Neely to head Rice's latest venture into the athletic world—the 150 lb. football squad.

Lanza is a graduate of Rice, and played on Owl squads of 1946-47-48. He came to Rice from Del Mar Junior College, where he has served as head coach for the past six years. Other coaching posts remain intact. Neely assistants working with the line men are Joe Davis, Charlie Moore, and Dell Morgan. Red Bale continues as end coach, and Lanza joins Bo Hagan as backfield tutor.

Davis has been with Neely for 28 seasons as line coach. Both came to Rice from Clemson, where Neely served for a decade. After building the Tigers to a Cotton Bowl champion, Neely came to the South Main campus in 1940 to produce more Cotton Bowl winners.

In August Neely was awarded one of the top honors in football—he was voted into the Helms Hall of Fame as one of football's all-time greats.

In his 19 seasons, Rice has a 113-78-5 won-lost ledger. His teams of 1946, 1949, 1953, and 1957 were all Cotton Bowl participants.

The Neely Era at Rice has seen extensive development of the physical plant of the athletic program, with area fans able to enjoy college athletics in excellent style at the handsome 70,000 seat Rice Stadium and 6,000 seat Rice Gym—both "Houses that Neely Built."

It is often said that to play Rice near the end of the season is to play Rice in "Neely November," the time when a Rice team is very rarely beaten.