OWLOOK
Spoiler Or Doormat?
By STUART GLASS, Thresher Sports Editor

Having been relegated to the role of “spoilers” since the first
day of the season, the Rice cagers should now be about ready to
spoil some thing besides their own gate appeal.

Actually, the title “spoilers” seems somewhat generous at
this point, signifying that “dormat” might be a more accurate
term. However, the 59-56 defeat of Baylor in Waco seems to have
ruined the Bears’ chances at the conference crown—they have
since lost to both Texas and SMU. The three losses have dropped
Baylor two games behind league-leader Texas Tech, on whom the
Bears pinned the only loss—and in Lubbock, at that.

Therefore, the Owls can indeed qualify as spoilers, and they
have an excellent chance to fulfill the role Saturday night against
Texas. The Longhorns now stand in undisputed possession of
second place in the conference standings, one game behind Texas
Tech. Rice has already played Texas in Austin, falling 76-63, but
were only three points behind in the last few minutes before running
into foul trouble.

Unfortunately, there are two factors which might combine
to destroy the effectiveness of Rice’s slowdown tactics already
tried against the ’Horns. The first is a marked tendency to throw
the ball into the stands, in conjunction with an inability to handle
a good zone press.

This was demonstrated in Lubbock last Saturday, when the
Owls lost the ball 43 times against Tech’s tough press and lost
102-69. Although Rice managed to score fairly easily, whenever
they got the ball downcourt, it was only the Raiders’ own sloppy
ball handling that kept their score from reaching the 200’s.

These deficiencies could be overcome this year, but it appears
painfully obvious that the Owls had better be content being
“spoilers” just once more this season.