Where The Action Is

By JOHN ALEXANDER

The consensus among many sportswriters is that Rice will finish fifth or sixth in the conference with some combination of TCU, SMU, and A&M below them. Judging from results of conference play to date, Rice will have to play better football the next seven weeks than it did against LSU and Duke, if it wants to escape the cellar.

Everyone is aware that Rice has made too many mistakes on defense. Quite often it was the offense's fault, giving the ball to the opposition inside our 30. Quite often it was defensive lapses by veterans, that probably will only occur once a season. Inexperienced people in key positions have made mistakes that they won't make later this year. The defense should have learned a lot against LSU and Duke. With two weeks of practice and the return to the starting lineup of some of the players hurt in the LSU game, they should be more like the Rice defenses of past years. If they aren't, things could be dismal in November.

What exactly then are Rice's chances in the SWC? I would have to agree with the sportswriters—Rice should finish fifth or sixth and win at least three conference games.

Someone will immediately ask, "Who are we going to beat?" When Rice decides to play football, it can play with the best. What is the fate of this year's team? If it continues to play in the same spirit it has, even when faced with overwhelming defeat, the team should certainly beat out some combination of TCU, SMU and A&M—and possibly one or two more.

Now for that part of the column that is always wrong—the next game prediction. So far this year, I have an unblemished record—0-2. Someone suggested, that since I have a propensity for picking the eventual loser to win, I should do a sudden reversal here and pick SMU—hoping of course that they will follow the pattern and lose also. As yet, I don't need to resort to such tactics; and, for the third straight week, I'll pick the Owls. I must also add that this is not only my prediction, but also the feeling of the Rice student who picked the score—28-13 Rice.