OWLOOK

Stats No Consolation

By STUART GLASS

Three Rivers Sports Editor

The clock ticked off the last second. One by one, three Texas
innens raised themselves off of Rice fullback Gene Walker,
and not far behind, two Owls players walked slowly into their respective dressing rooms: victorious
losers beside defeated winners. Dan Hunt, defensive guard for the
Owls team which had so thoroughly beaten the Longhorns as no other team had done in over two years, slammed his helmet to the ground in
disgust.

Darrell Royal, coach of the Horns, gazed at the scoreboard
almost in disbelief, and placed a stick of gum into his mouth to
be seen later as his teams poverty became more and more obvious. As if that of a coach with a 0-10 record, he hurried off the field before
the scoreboard had time to change its mind.

But it didn't. As 73,000 Rice and Texas followers filed out of
Rice Stadium, its lights continued to shine on a 6 beside Texas, a win
that, if the Longhorns ever did win a game, would forever have be-
lieved that the Longhorns had won the game.

Texas had been brutally outplayed for the final 60 minutes. The
Owls' defense, led by Malcolm Walker, Russell Wyatt, Hunt, and
two others, was the main reason why Texas, which, according to
fans and sports analysts, would be expected to win the game, lost
by such a huge margin.

But comparing statistics offers no consolation; enumerating
the small mistakes which stopped Rice's scoring thrusts, and
eventually cost the game, is of no utility. The record book will
show that Texas was outplayed by Rice, and that Rice should have
won because they played a better game. Win or lose, when the game ends there is but one thing to do: start
looking toward next week. For Rice, there are five "next weeks"
remaining. Any one of five. There can be one more: the Cotton Bowl
on New Year's Day.

Cotton Bowl Chances Still Good

It takes a certain amount of nerve to look at a team with a
2-3 record and claim to see a conference contender. Those who
disagree are the same ones who believe that the Owls played over
their heads against Texas. They feel that everyone gets "up" for the
Texas teams and the Texas games.

We feel differently. We have already picked Rice to take
the conference championship, and we won't back down now. When
we predicted a first place finish, we were looking at a team which
has been a 6 beside Texas for the past two years. The hard
core of the team — Walker, Wyatt, McReynolds, Fleming,
Hale, Hubbard, Callihan, et. al. all have two years of experience,
and nearly all were members of one of the best freshman crops
ever seen at Rice.

They are potentially the best in the SWC, and we believe
they played up to their potential for the first time this year
against Texas. A team which plays over its head cannot help but
let down eventually. But a team which learns what its potential is
should be able to take advantage of it. And if Wojecki's two years' experience at Rice doesn't know how the team is feeling,
no one does.

In addition, we are convinced that the Owls' best effort is
better than the average of those teams who play the schedule
they have. By winning the next five games, Rice can do no worse than
finish in a three-way tie for first with Texas and Arkansas. And in
this case, the Owls will go to the Cotton Bowl, since the other
two schools have played there more recently.

Tech Game May Prove Turning Point

So Rice has the potential, as we proved to at least the 73,000
who bordered Rice last week remains on the schedule.

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Tech has a 3-2 conference record so far, against Rice's 1-1
mark, and both teams should be at near full strength for the
remainder of the season. And, it should definitely the man the Owls
have to stop. He is the leading ground gainer in the SWC, and can
pass, catch, and kick. Behind him, Tech runs a variable wing-T and some I-formation.

The Raiders will prove to be a tough team, but Rice
should be able to hold them all week before the Owls' defensive
power. As play as well last week. In other words, it takes a desire to prove that the perform-
ance against Texas was no fluke.

The goal of a share in the conference championship and Cotton Bowl berth is still within reach. Rice has shown us what it can do; now we can expect no less. New Year's Day in Dallas is but five good games away.