Neely November Prayed For By Rice Boosters

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For nineteen seasons Jess Neely has been head coach at The Rice Institute, and for most of that time the following phrase has echoed around the SWC—"Fear Neely in November." Although it is debateable whether anyone is going to fear the Owls this November, we thought we would take this opportunity, before the November opener with Arkansas this Saturday, to reflect on some of the brighter Novembers of the past which brought the famed November legend to South Main.

Since beginning his long tenure in 1940, Neely has won 58% of his encounters and brought home four conference championships—'46, '49, '53, and '57. Note that with the exception of the first, the interval between the titles is four years—thus giving rise to the legend of Neely's four year plans.

65% In November

While Neely's victory percentage over the years is 58%, his Owls have won 46, lost 27, and tied 3 in November, which means the Owls have won 65% of their November games. This percentage is even more remarkable when one considers that the vast majority of this Thanksgiving month opposition came from the SWC.

Even more striking than the percentage of games won in November, is the effect which successful November games have had on previous Owl records. For example, consider the four conference titles won by Neely coached elevens.

15-1 Record

Of the sixteen games played in these four Novembers, the Owls won fifteen while dropping only one. On four other occasions the Owls went through November without a defeat. One such untainted November in 1952 came after five successive defeats (any resemblance to 1959 is intended) to give the Owls a season's record of six and four.

Thus the month for giving thanks is here again. And Mr. Neely's 20th edition of Blue and Gray, much too good a football team to be without a victory this late in the season, despite an overpowering schedule, has just four more opportunities to pull itself together, get mad as hops, and beat the hell out of somebody in an effort to salvage its season and preserve a cherished Rice tradition.