Revamped Owls Ready To ‘Even’ With Gators

By DICK PARK

The revamped Owls will sight in on the University of Florida Gators Saturday in what promises to be a bone smashing exhibition of their hard-practiced art. The Owls will take to the field with a new attitude and their own jerseys in a hard-fighting attempt to prove to Rice fans that anybody can have a bad day.

COACH NEELY, much disappointed in the team’s showing against Georgia Tech, has been pacing the Owls through a tough workout schedule the past two weeks in an effort to get ‘em off the “rocks.” “I think we all have a different attitude,” said center Pat Gerald, “we really look like a different team.”

The Owl coaches have been concentrating on patching up the shattered Owl pass defense, in an attempt to keep the air-minded Gators in check. Tackling has also been the subject of several late sessions on the practice field and should be much improved this Saturday.

Two positions have changed hands to shape up the Rice defense and add more punch on offense. Gary Poage, 190 pound senior halfback from Happy will be the starting right half, replacing Spencer Brown who was moved to the number two unit. Poage, the fastest back on the team, has been slowed in past seasons by leg bruises, but will be in top form for the Saturday contest.

Other changes in the lineup will see George Karam taking over the number one tackle duties from John Cornett.

LAST YEAR the Owls utilized a hard nosed defense to win a 10-0 decision over the Gators, their first loss of the season and only shutout. Headed by Southeast Conference coach of the year Ray Graves, the Gators had their finest record in history in 1960 — 9 wins against 2 losses.

Coach Graves has two top-notch junior quarterbacks in Larry Libertore and Bobby Dodd Jr. Libertore, a 5 foot 8-inch 138-pounder is a light’n fast jackrabbit runner much like Johnny Saxton of Texas. A second team All-Southeast Conference selection as a sophomore, he was also voted the most valuable player in the Gator Bowl.

Bobby Dodd, Jr., son of Georgia Tech head coach Bobby Dodd, broke Florida’s passing record last year, connecting on 50 percent of his passes.

DON GOODMAN, a 205 pound senior, will handle the fullbacking chores for the Gators and is rated as one of the best in the South. Lindy Infante and Bob Hoover will be at the halfback positions; both have good speed and are considered breakaway threats.

The Gators have one of the outstanding tackles in the country in the form of 230 pound Jim Beaver. Beaver, who has been drafted by the Philadelphia Eagles, will serve as the Gators team captain. The only weak spots in the Gator lineup are the center and guard positions where experience is limited. However, impressive victories over Clemson and Tulane indicate a tough game for our rebounding Owls.