

Baylor Lariat

— THE FIESTA IS JUST GETTING STARTED —

BIG 12 CHAMPS



VS



Bears win Big 12 Conference title

By SHEHAN JEYARAJAH
SPORTS WRITER

When asked during Big 12 media day back in July whether Baylor could win a Big 12 Championship, senior safety Ahmad Dixon was quick to respond.

"Can God save a hooker?"

Well, it seems as though the answer to that question is an emphatic 'yes.'

Baylor trounced No. 25 University of Texas 30-10 in freezing conditions to win its first Big 12 Championship in the 19-year history of the conference.

"If you can get great players, great people, great administration and great fan support, everything can be a reality," head football coach Art Briles said. "This is a defining moment for our program and it's one I think we'll be able to repeat many times."

It was not something that anyone expected coming into the season. The preseason Big 12 poll selected Baylor to finish fifth overall in the conference behind Oklahoma State, Oklahoma, TCU and Texas. The preseason Associated Press and USA Today polls did not have Baylor ranked.

The Bears attempted to remedy this situation immediately with their performance in non-conference. After dominant wins over Wofford, Buffalo and Louisiana-Monroe, the Bears moved all the way up to No. 17 in the AP poll and No. 15 in the USA Today poll. During the first seven games, Baylor averaged 63.9 points per game.

With each win, the bandwagon grew. With the hype came the detractors and college football pundits who claimed Baylor could not be better than the traditional powers because the Bears had not played anyone. And at the time, the pundits were right. With that backdrop, No. 6 Baylor obliterated No. 10 Oklahoma 41-12 in a matchup of top 10 teams.

After the Oklahoma game, the injury bug began to bite the Bears. At different points of the season, running backs Lache Seastrunk and Glasco Martin, receiver Tevin Reese, left tackle Spencer Drango, linebacker Bryce Hager and cornerback K.J. Morton went down with injuries.

While the offense slowed at times, it gave the defense a chance to prosper.

That is, until No. 4 Baylor struggled against No. 10 Oklahoma State on the way to its first and only loss of the season, 49-17.

With the loss, Baylor's national championship hopes were dashed and Oklahoma State was in the driver's seat for the Big 12 title.

While dreams of a national championship were over, the season was not lost.

With Oklahoma beating Oklahoma State in Bedlam on Saturday, the game between Baylor and Texas became a de facto Big 12 Championship game.

After a 3-3 deadlock at half, Baylor, unfazed by the stakes, outscored the Longhorns 27-7 in the second half en route to its first Big 12 Championship.

"Everyone in this locker room knows we can go out there and beat whoever it is, if it's Texas, if it's Oklahoma," senior cornerback K.J. Morton said. "We don't look at names anymore. We know what we're capable of. This program has grown so much. Even just from the players believing, the faith that we have in our abilities now. Everybody has confidence."

On Senior Day, Baylor reminded everyone just how far this program has come. When most of the seniors in this program were recruited, Baylor was a doormat. Since the majority of football players redshirt, most recruits came after a 4-8 season in 2009. The only highly rated player who played his last game in the green and gold Saturday night was Dixon.

"This was amazing," former three-star recruit and current Outland Trophy finalist Cyril Richardson said. "When I came here, I thought I would just give it my all and do what I can, but to see everything according to what happened tonight, it's an overwhelming feeling. I never thought that I would be standing up there celebrating a Big 12 Championship."

Baylor sits at No. 6 and is headed to a BCS bowl game for the first time in the 16-year history of the BCS.

The Bears will play the No. 15 University of Central Florida in the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl in Glendale, AZ on New Year's Day.

"I think tomorrow when I wake up and see 'Baylor - 2013 Big 12 Champs' I'm going to believe it, but right now it's crazy," senior defensive end Chris McAllister said. "It just shows what you can do with a vision, a dream and hard work."

But Seastrunk knows the season isn't over yet.

"I'm happy we won the Big 12 Championship, but we've got to get to business. Hey, we won. Cherish it. I'm not a big guy like 'oh, we did this.' I'm moving on. I'm already about to start watching film on UCF"

Ever since Briles came to Waco, his intentions were to bring Baylor a Big 12 title, even when that seemed improbable.

"I had a guy send me a quote a couple weeks ago that was something Michaelangelo said, 'the problem with people is not that they aim too high and miss; it's that they aim too low and hit.' That's the way you have to think and feel," Briles said. "We're always going to aim high."

Baylor football will focus on its next goal of winning the program's first BCS bowl game on Jan. 1.

No. 6 Baylor will play University of Central Florida in the Fiesta Bowl on New Year's Day in Glendale.



Senior linebacker Eddie Lackey holds up a '2013 Big 12 Champs' sign on top of the podium at Floyd Casey Stadium on Saturday after Baylor defeated Texas 30-10 to clinch the Big 12 Championship outright.



Senior nickelback Prince Kent savors the moment after Baylor wins its first Big 12 Conference Championship after defeating Texas 30-10 on Saturday at Floyd Casey Stadium.

Bears take on UCF Knights in Fiesta Bowl

By SHEHAN JEYARAJAH
SPORTS WRITER

After winning its first Big 12 Championship on Saturday night, Baylor football earned a bid to play in a BCS bowl game for the first time in the history of the BCS. With their conference championship, the Bears are pegged to go to the 43rd annual Tostitos Fiesta Bowl at the University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, Ariz. where the Bears will face American Athletic Conference champion No. 15 University of Central Florida Knights.

"Baylor Nation and our football program are honored and energized by the invitation to the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl," director of athletics Ian McCaw said. "This is the culmination to a very special year for Baylor football, and we look forward to a great football game on New Year's night."

UCF surprised many with its dominant season in the AAC and second all-time AP ranking. The Knights started the season unranked before finishing the season 11-1, with their only loss being to No. 12 South Carolina. The Gamecocks have since moved up to No. 9.

Outside of the loss to South Carolina, UCF went undefeated throughout its conference schedule, including a road win over Big 10 opponent Penn State in State College, Penn. The Knights' signature win was a 38-35 win on Oct. 18 at No. 8 Louisville to spoil the Cardinals' shot at a perfect season.

Central Florida has outscored its opponents this season by a combined 365-215, capped off by a 62-17 explosion against Connecticut on Oct. 26. The Knights rank 45th overall in total offense with 432.0 yards per game, and rank 41st in scoring offense with 33.2 points per game.

Junior quarterback Blake Bortles is the unquestioned offensive leader of the UCF Knights, and has been called a potential first-round NFL Draft pick in the upcoming draft. Bortles has thrown for 3,280 yards and 22 touchdowns on the season. Against Louisville, Bortles led a 75-yard drive and threw a clutch touchdown pass to take a 38-35 lead with only 23 seconds remaining in the game.

The Knights have a relatively weak rushing attack that ranked 79th in the country with 152.0 yards per game. Junior running back Storm Johnson rushed for 1,015 yards and 11 touchdowns this season. Johnson added 261 yards and three touchdowns receiving. Freshman running back William Stanback compiled 410 yards rushing and six touchdowns on limited touches.

UCF's defense was rated as one of the top defenses in the country. The Knights rank 19th in total defense, giving up an average of 346.3 yards per game. Their 19.6 points against also ranks them 13th in the nation. The defense could be characterized as opportunistic, as they average more than two takeaways per game.

UCF has been one of the best

in the nation at red-zone defense. Baylor has struggled mightily in the past few games at scoring in the red-zone, and UCF may be able to take advantage. UCF is not great at getting third down stops, and a Baylor team that excels at making things happen on third down should look to take chances.

Both of these teams are solid football teams who have played great seasons, but Baylor should come out as the better football team. USA Today's Jeff Sagarin rates UCF's schedule as the 92nd in both FBS and FCS football.

Out of Baylor's 11 games against FBS teams, eight were against opponents who finished the season bowl-eligible. On the other hand, UCF played against 12 FBS teams and five of its opponents finished the season bowl-eligible. UCF's opponents finished with a combined record of 62-82. Baylor's opponents finished with a record of 70-62.

UCF doesn't have the running game to be able to try and keep the ball out of Baylor's hands. If Baylor's defense can take away the passing game from Bortles and make Johnson and Bortles' feet beat them, UCF does not have the firepower to keep up with Baylor's offense. Baylor allows only 207.8 yards of passing per game.

Baylor should get junior linebacker Bryce Hager back from injury for the bowl game after missing the last three games with a groin injury. Sophomore left tackle Spencer Drango has a chance to return from back surgery. Senior

wide receiver Tevin Reese is not expected to return from a dislocated wrist, but a return is not impossible.

The Bears have a chance to run away with their first BCS bowl win on New Year's Day. The win would be their third straight bowl victory and fourth straight bowl appearance. Both of those marks would be school records.

The Fiesta Bowl is one of five BCS bowl games, along with the Orange Bowl, Sugar Bowl, Rose Bowl and BCS National Championship. The BCS bowls are considered to be the most significant postseason action in college football in lieu of an actual playoff system. This is the final year of BCS bowl selection, as the FBS is moving to a four-team playoff system next year to determine the national champion.

The champion of the Big 12 historically is picked to play in the Fiesta Bowl against an at-large team. The champion of the American Athletic Conference is guaranteed at least one of the at-large bids in the BCS, and this year that team was UCF. Baylor is the fourth different team to represent the Big 12 at the Fiesta Bowl in the last five seasons. Oregon is the most recent champion after the Ducks defeated Kansas State in 2013.

No. 6 Baylor football will face the No. 15 University of Central Florida at 7:30 p.m. on New Year's Day at the University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, Ariz. The game will be broadcast live nationally on ESPN.



JOHN RAOUX | ASSOCIATED PRESS

Central Florida running back Storm Johnson rushes against Rutgers in Orlando, Fla., on Nov. 21. Johnson rushed for 1,015 yards this year.

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Floyd Casey provides 63 years of winning

By SHEHAN JEYARAJAH
SPORTS WRITER

The phrase “biggest game in Baylor history” has been used to describe many games this season, most notably at home against No. 10 Oklahoma and on the road against No. 10 Oklahoma State in Stillwater. But with Baylor’s Big 12 Championship clincher against No. 25 University of Texas in the final game at Floyd Casey Stadium on Saturday, we have a new titleholder. “It was like a dream,” senior safety Ahmad Dixon said. “All the seniors were up there and we

were telling each other, ‘Wow, this really happened.’ Nobody’s seen it happen before we came here and tonight that dream became a reality.”

And how fitting it was that the dream became a reality in front of a record 51,728 fans to cap off the final game of the final season at historic Floyd Casey Stadium.

“I couldn’t have written a storyline better than this,” senior running back Glasco Martin said. “We’ve been working on this for four years. To finally get that on the night that The Case is

being done with, it’s special.”

The Bears have been absolutely dominant at home since the beginning of the 2011 season. Including Saturday’s win, Baylor closed The Case on a 10-game winning streak. The last time Baylor lost at home was Oct. 13, 2012. Before that loss, Baylor’s second to last loss was Nov. 20, 2010. In that stretch, Baylor has won 19 of their last 20 at home. Baylor has played their best against the best. Texas was the sixth opponent in the last two years that Baylor has played at home ranked in the AP Top

25. In those games, Baylor is 6-0. During that stretch, Baylor has beaten No. 23 and No. 24 Texas, No. 5 and No. 10 Oklahoma, No. 1 Kansas State and No. 23 Oklahoma State. The Bears were considered major underdogs in three of those six games.

Baylor finished with a total record of 191-146-5 at Floyd Casey Stadium for a winning percentage of 55.8 percent. This is during a point in Baylor history where the Bears went 331-369-11 for a winning percentage of 46.5 percent. Martin loves the home field advantage that Bay-

lor fans have given Floyd Casey, even compared to earlier in his career.

“Everybody comes out now, they’re loud, screaming the whole time,” Martin said. “It gives us a boost of energy, and makes it hard to lose.”

Baylor won all of their home games this season for the second time in three years, and ended with the biggest win in school history and Baylor’s first ever Big 12 Championship trophy being presented on the turf.

“There was a lot of momentum heading into this season,

the last season at Floyd Casey being one of them,” junior quarterback Bryce Petty said. “To end the season like that, Case Closed as everybody said, was a great feeling. All the tradition, all the Baylor greats that have played before, it was great.”

Yes, the lights are now dark at The Case, but it was sent out in style. When Martin was asked whether the home field advantage would continue to Baylor Stadium, there was no hesitation.

“Without question!”



ROBBY HIRST | LARIAT PHOTOGRAPHER

Fans absorb the atmosphere in the final game at Floyd Casey Stadium on Dec. 7 against the Texas Longhorns. Baylor played its inaugural season in 1950 and closed the stadium after a Big 12 title in 2013.



PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION ARCHIVES

The Bears will play against the University of Central Florida Knights in the University of Phoenix stadium at 7:30 p.m. on Jan. 1.

Tickets on sale for bowl game; student bus tour in the works

The Baylor Bears are playing in a BCS bowl game for the first time in Glendale, Ariz. at the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl. They are set to take on the University of Central Florida.

How can students and die-hard Baylor fans attend this historic event? Baylor University has been allotted 17,500 tickets for the 2014 Tostitos Fiesta Bowl.

Lower level tickets are priced at \$230, Ring of Honor tickets cost \$194 and the upper level tickets are face value at \$144. Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased at BaylorBears.com/

tickets or by calling the Baylor Athletic Ticket Office at 254-710-1000.

Tickets can also be purchased in person at the Ferrell Center box office from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Baylor students may purchase tickets later this week at the Bill Daniel Student Center Ticket Office. Student tickets cost \$105 and will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.

A Baylor student bus trip, similar to last year’s Holiday Bowl experience, is in the works and details will be forthcoming.

Official “Baylor Bowl Tour” travel packages are available through Anthony Travel.

The travel packages include hotel accommodations for three nights, a charter flight option, a pre-game tailgate ticket, pep rally admission, game day transportation, souvenir, credential and more. To order, visit travel.com/baylor/bears-bowl/ or call 800-736-637.

The Baylor Alumni Network will also be coordinating a pep rally, tailgating and other events in Phoenix with more details still to be finalized.

I’m in Arizona... now what?



Shop

Historic Downtown Glendale has been named by USA Today & Sunset Magazine as one of the country’s ten best places for shopping.



Eat

With tastes ranging from traditional German or Polish fare to contemporary Chinese and home-style Mexican flavors. Take your taste buds on a global tour without ever leaving the neighborhood. Glendale is home to more than 450 restaurants. There is something for everyone, and your appetite is sure to be satisfied.



Be Entertained

Get your fill of arts and entertainment at the Arizona Broadway Theatre, Brelby Theatre Company, Cerrita Candy Company, Challenger Space Center, Desert Botanical Garden and West Valley Symphony.



Hike

The city offers approximately 40 miles of hiking trails open from sunrise to sunset. Trails are expansive and not very demanding. Trails include Skunk Creek Linear Park, a 3.5-mile linear trail that connects to Thunderbird Paseo Path; Thunderbird Park, a series of trails that spans 20 miles; Bridle Path, a 9-mile trail over a decomposed granite path meant for equestrian use; Thunderbird Paseo Path, a 4-mile long linear trail; and the Grand Canal Linear Park, a 3.25-mile long linear trail.

Briles delivers new stadium, Big 12 title

By PARMIDA SCHAHHOSSEINI
SPORTS WRITER

It has been a season to remember for Baylor head coach Art Briles as he saw his hard work and commitment to Baylor University pay off with the university's first Big 12 title and first trip to a BCS Bowl.

Through a season of ups and downs, Briles came out on top, building a program that was once ridiculed into a national powerhouse. For Briles, winning the Big 12 is much more than just a title. It's about building a legacy at Baylor.

"It means if you get great players, great people, great administration and great fan support, everything can be reality," Briles said. "If you stay the course and you stay consistent with what you do day in and day out, you have a chance for success at the end. It's a defining moment for our program and it's one I think we'll be able to repeat many times."

Prior to Briles' arrival, the Bears never had a winning season since entering the Big 12. Baylor struggled in Briles' first two seasons, but it was expected because of the time it takes to build a program. However, Briles promised two things: to bring Baylor football back on campus and to win a Big 12 Title, and despite the adversity along the way, it was a promise he intended to keep. After six seasons, that mission is accomplished.

"As a coach and as a player, you always expect positive results and you always feel that the opportunity is going to be out there if you work hard and stay steady," Briles said. "I had a guy send me a quote a couple weeks ago that was something Michelangelo said, 'The problem with people is not that they aim to high and miss; it's that

they aim to low and they hit.' That's the way you have to think and feel and that's what we talk to players about. We're always going to aim high."

Briles continued to do just that. He continued to recruit and instill the value of winning into his players. Slowly, Baylor continued to improve before everyone's eyes. Briles led the Bears to back-to-back bowl wins for the first time in 25 years, and is the first head coach to take the Bears to four straight bowl berths. Under Briles, Baylor received its first Heisman Memorial Trophy winner in Robert Griffin III, propelling the Bears onto the national map.

Despite going 11-1, there were some ups and downs this season. While the strength of schedule didn't favor Baylor in terms of the polls, Briles kept his players humble despite the competition on the field. Baylor continued to play well, averaging 53.2 points per game this season. Baylor has won 11 of its last 12 Big 12 games, which has never been accomplished by Baylor in Big 12 history.

Success isn't new to Briles, who has rebuilt programs before. When Briles coached at Stephenville, playoff wins were expected as he earned four state championships in 12 seasons. Briles also had success in the collegiate level prior to Baylor when he was the head coach at the University of Houston.

Briles took the Houston Cougars to four bowl games in five seasons, including three straight. His ability to rally his players, inspire to play bigger than themselves and believe sets Briles apart from the rest.

"When I was sitting in Coach's office and he was telling me what he wanted this program to be, that's when it hit me. This is what that vision was," junior quarter-

back Bryce Petty said. "To be honest, when you have someone with that much of a vision and determination for things, it's almost like it's too much. But to be in the spot we're at with this team, I couldn't be more proud."

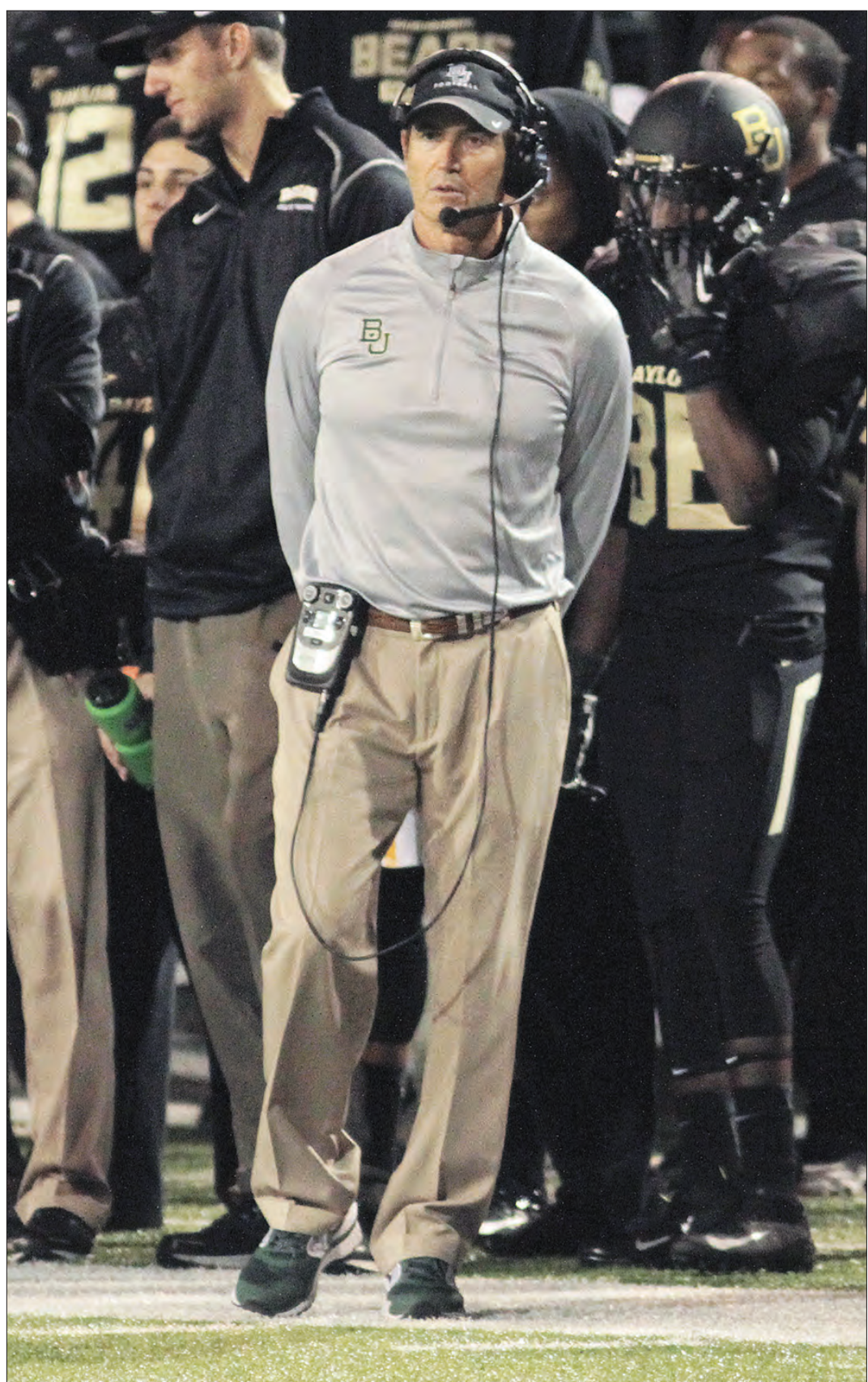
The road to success wasn't always easy. Road games didn't treat the Bears kindly as the team didn't have the comfort of the fans support (with the exception of those who traveled). Baylor faced a tough road game in Manhattan Kan., against Kansas State, but the team came out on top and found a way to win. That's all that Baylor did this season as it climbed up the polls, all the way to No. 4.

However, the road to an undefeated season was halted after a 49-17 blowout against Oklahoma State. Baylor didn't control its own destiny at the time, but Briles had faith. Briles rallied the troops and prepared the team for TCU.

Just days before Thanksgiving, Briles received devastating news that his brother Eddie Briles passed away.

With emotions high, the players dedicated the game against TCU for Briles. Baylor won the game with a game-ending interception from sophomore safety Terrell Burt and the Baylor's Big 12 hopes were alive. After a win over Texas, Baylor got what is so desperately wanted — a conference title and national relevancy. Briles did the improbable. He built this program to high heights with expectations of topping this season next year. Through the highs and lows, Briles remained a Baylor Bear.

"He weathered the storm. He was here when it was horrible. He weathered the storm. It finally all came together with us. I'm very happy to be a part of this," junior running back Lache Seastrunk said.



TRAVIS TAYLOR | LARIAT PHOTO EDITOR

Baylor head coach Art Briles strolls the sidelines during Baylor's 41-17 victory over Oklahoma on Nov. 7 at Floyd Casey Stadium. When Briles was hired by Baylor in 2008, he promised a Big 12 Championship and a new stadium.

Baylor defense anchored record 11-1 season

By PARMIDA SCHAHHOSSEINI
SPORTS WRITER

Baylor's hard-nosed, physical defense played up to its potential. After begin the laughingstock of the nation last season, this year's unit rose up and backed up the hype with smashmouth, aggressive play to propel the team to its first Big 12 Title.

After giving up an average of 37.2 points per game last season, the Bears reduced that number significantly — allowing only 21.2 points per game this season. After a dominant showing against Kansas State on Nov. 17, 2012, this defense has turned its play around.

"This program has grown so much," senior cornerback K.J. Morton said. "Even just from the players believing, the faith that we have in our abilities now. Everybody has confidence. Everybody knows we can go out there and beat whoever it is, if it's Texas, if it's Oklahoma. We don't look at names anymore. We know what we're capable of."

Defensive coordinator Phil Bennett took a lot of heat last season, with many fans screaming for his termination, but head coach Art Briles believed in him and rightfully so.

Bennett had success prior to Baylor, coordinating top 20 defenses at Kansas State and Pittsburg, in addition to Oklahoma as a secondary coach.

In 1997, Bennett also helped TCU earn its highest defensive rankings in five years. Bennett had the pedigree as a successful defensive coordinator, but it was up to the players to mature and buy into his system.

This season, Bennett's unit was determined to be better. Seniors stepped up as linebacker Eddie Lackey led the way with 13 tackles for loss, 97 tackles, and two interceptions, one of which was a critical pick-6 against TCU.

Morton reeled in his second and third interceptions of the season against Texas, one of which came in the fourth quarter to seal the deal for the Big 12 Champions.

"It's crazy right now and it hasn't really set in," senior defen-



TRAVIS TAYLOR | LARIAT PHOTO EDITOR

Senior defensive end Chris McAllister returns an interception for a touchdown against Wofford on Aug. 31. Baylor defeated Wofford 69-3. Baylor's defense was the No. 19 scoring defense in the FBS, allowing 21.2 points per game.

sive end Chris McAllister said. "I think tomorrow when I wake up and see 'Baylor — 2013 Big 12 Champs' I'm going to believe it, but right now it's crazy. It just shows what you can do with a vision, a dream and hard work."

Late in the season as injuries piled up and Baylor faced tougher opponents, it became more critical for the defense to step up. Since the game against Oklahoma on Nov. 7, Baylor's offense has had slow starts to every game. Against Texas, it

was no different as Baylor was only able to muster three points in the first half.

"We felt like we were not performing offensively like we needed to and we felt like we were moving the ball and just kind of self-

destructed," Briles said. "We knew that the defense was playing well enough that we were going to be in the game, it was just going to be a low-scoring game."

Baylor limited third down conversions to 33 percent and was

7-for-28 on fourth down, which is the second best in the nation. The defense forced 92 punts this season, which is the most in Baylor history.

The main ingredient allowing this ball-hawking, aggressive defense to be successful was turnovers.

The defense forced two or more turnovers in 14 of the last 19 games and is 16-3 in that span. The defense intercepted the ball 17 times, while giving up 19 passing touchdowns.

Baylor scored five touchdowns on its interceptions and one touchdown on a fumble recovery after senior linebacker Bryce Hager returned one 91 yards against Buffalo. Baylor is 24-2 when forcing two or more turnovers.

After a targeting call during the third quarter against TCU, Dixon was forced to miss the remainder of the game and the first half of the Texas game.

Despite being a marquee player in the secondary, the other guys were able to step up to hold Texas to three points.

"Those guys were doing a great job and I almost got flattered by watching them instead of getting out there with them," Dixon said. "These young guys stepped up and everybody stepped up."

Sophomore defensive end Shawn Oakman gave the Bears an added boost with 12 tackles for loss, two sacks, two forced fumbles and blocked a first quarter field goal attempt against Texas this season.

Sophomore defensive end Jamal Palmer played in all 12 games coming off the bench, contributing with 10 tackles for a loss, five sacks and four forced fumbles.

Freshman defensive linemen Byron Bonds and Andrew Billings have made their mark on the team. Bonds started in seven games, contributing 20 tackles, 3.5 tackles for loss and a forced fumble while Billings started in one, adding 19 tackles and 3.5 tackles for loss.

With younger guys getting more reps, Briles recruiting better talent, and players maturing in Bennett's system, this unit can get better.

“It’s not just a family in the locker room. It’s a family outside. Baylor Nation came together in a big way, not just in this season, but also in past seasons.”



PHOTOS BY MATT HELLMAN | LARIAT MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

Petty rises up to lead Bears to first BCS bowl

By PARMIDA SHAHHOSSEINI
SPORTS WRITER

Good things come to those who wait. It couldn't have been scripted any better for junior quarterback Bryce Petty. After waiting behind former quarterbacks Robert Griffin III and Nick Florence, Petty relished his opportunity, leading the Baylor Bears to its first Big 12 Title.

“I kind of just started crying uncontrollably and I don't really do that much, but it's just been a process and it's the fact that when you put your trust in God and he's faithful, things work out and it's a great feeling,” Petty said.

Petty came into this season with big shoes to fill, but he believed in himself. Last season, Baylor's offense was ranked second with Florence setting the mark for most passing yards in a season at 4,309. While Petty didn't eclipse that record, he did lead the No. 1 offense in the country, averaging 624.5 yards per game. Since the beginning of the season, Petty has made it known that Baylor had a chance to win the Big 12 and backed up his talk with his play on the field.

Petty averaged 320.3 yards per game, throwing for 30 touchdowns and only two interceptions. At 61.8 percent completion, he surpassed Florence's percentage at 61.6. Petty's ability to throw the deep ball has kept defenses honest. Petty leads the nation with 9.5 yards per play this season.

“[Petty's play] is just phenomenal,” head coach Art Briles said. “You would like to expect that, but to see it be a reality is really good. The numbers are good, but the thing I'm so impressed with is just

his leadership ability. The guys is a natural leader and he's got so much compassion, poise, maturity inside of him for the limited amount of reps he's had prior to this year. It's pretty remarkable quite honestly.”

Petty's road to being a quarterback wasn't easy. Prior to Baylor, Petty committed to Tennessee, but destiny had other plans for him. Petty ended up coming to Baylor, but saw no action. In his first year, he was on the practice squad, but redshirted to retain eligibility. In 2012, he saw a little bit of game action, playing in six games, finishing 7-for-10 with a touchdown. After Florence finished his eligibility, it was Petty's time to rise up.

“I have waited a long time for this,” Petty said. “I think some of those fans were crying more than I was and that's what it's all about. It's not just a family in the locker room. It's a family outside. Baylor Nation came together in a big way, not just in this season, but also in past seasons. There have been rough times, which is what makes being on top here so great.”

Petty started out the season strong, leading his team to three straight games scoring 70 points or more. He even led the Baylor Bears to their first road win over Kansas State in Manhattan, Kan. Petty threw for 342 yards and three touchdowns in the win. Petty finished the season passing for more than 200 yards and two touchdowns in all of 12 games.

Despite the adversity late in the season, Petty's teammates were confident that he could finish the job. Junior wide receiver Antwan Goodley thrived as his chemistry with Petty propelled him for a 1,000-yard season.

“Don't you see what he's doing?” junior running back Lache Seastrunk said. “If there wasn't a feature back, he could run it, throw it, shovel it. I don't know he could probably shoot a pass to somebody. Bryce is the whole quarterback in one. That's what people would drool and dream about.”

This season, Petty has given Baylor Nation what it wanted. With a chance to play in Baylor's first BCS bowl, Petty is able to cement his spot in Baylor history as one of the program's best quarterbacks.



Versatile offensive attack sparked Baylor's Big 12 title run

By PARMIDA SHAHHOSSEINI
SPORTS WRITER

Controlling the clock was not a goal for a Baylor offense that outscored opponents by 32 points per game despite opponents winning the time of possession battle by five minutes per game. Baylor's ground game was vital to finish out games.

Baylor has plenty of depth at the running back position, beginning with the elusive, electrifying, junior running back Lache Seastrunk. Seastrunk led Baylor with 1,060 rushing yards this season. Seastrunk averaged 7.5 yards per carry, averaging 106.0 yards per game, with 11 touchdowns.

Seastrunk's longest touchdown was an 80-yard scamper against West Virginia on Oct. 5. His ability to find the holes and exploit the defense is what sets him apart from other backs.

Seastrunk isn't the only running back contributing in the backfield.

The physical ground and pound, downhill senior power back Glasco Martin scored his 24th rushing touchdown on his Baylor career against Texas, which tied him for second all-time with Walter Abercrombie.

Martin rushed for 490 yards this season, averaging 4.3 yards per carry. Martin also added six touchdowns this season. While his numbers may not be flashy like Seastrunk, Martin does all the dirty work.

When Baylor needs a back during short yardage situations, Martin gets the nod.

His physical style of play also forced opponents to defend him differently than they would Seastrunk, adding more pressure on the other team.

Against Texas, with 3:35 remaining in the game, Baylor was up by 20 points, but there was plenty of time left on the clock. Martin ran for back-to-back first downs to take time off the clock for the victory.

“I'm very happy for Glasco finishing out the game,” Seastrunk said. “He's a senior. He deserved it. We finished out the Case in style.”

While Seastrunk and Martin are the primary backs, Baylor has depth on the bench. When Seastrunk and Martin got



PHOTO BY CONSTANCE ATTON | LARIAT PHOTOGRAPHER

No. 8 senior running back Glasco Martin celebrates with fellow teammate No. 25 Lache Seastrunk after scoring a touchdown against University of Texas on Dec. 7. The Bears celebrated a 30-10 win over the Longhorns, earning the title as Big 12 Champions.

injured during the game against Oklahoma on Nov. 7, freshman running backs Shock Linwood and Devin Chafin were forced to step up.

Linwood has given the Bears much needed production, rushing for 862 yards and eight touchdowns.

Against Oklahoma, Linwood rushed 23 times for 182 yards as the defense did not have an answer. Nine days later, Linwood followed his performance rushing for 187 yards on 29 carries and a touchdown.

In addition, he also holds the Baylor

freshman rushing record, breaking Robert Griffin III's record of 843 yards in 2008.

Chafin had his first 100-yard rushing game against Texas Tech and rushed for 304 yards this season averaging 5.8 yards per carry.

“I didn't expect any of this to happen, but it happened and I prayed to God that I can continue doing what I do and play the game like it's meant to

be played,” Lindwood said.

Senior wide receiver Tevin Reese and junior wide receiver Antwan Goodley have blazing speed and can outrun their opponents, but the running game gives receivers a one-on-one matchup. The ability to run the ball prevents Baylor from being one dimensional, making the offense more potent.

“I love watching those guys play. It's thunder and lightning. They can't be stopped,” Goodley said.

As talented as these running backs are, it has been a collaborative effort. The relationship between the running backs and receivers is mutual because while the backs allow for the one-on-one match ups, the speedy receivers stretch the field forcing defenders to pick their poison. This opens up the offense completely, making head coach Art Briles' offense a quarterback friendly system.

While the backs, receivers and quar-

terbacks garner the most attention, it's the blocking scheme on the offensive line where the offense starts.



PHOTO BY TRAVIS TAYLOR | LARIAT PHOTO EDITOR

Games are won in the trenches and if the blockers do their assignments, running backs can break through holes and get big gains as they pass through the line of scrimmage.

When Baylor lost sophomore left tackle Spencer Drango to a back injury, the running game struggled.

While Seastrunk and Martin were injured, the dominance on the line of scrimmage wasn't the same.

Senior guard Cyril Richardson added a physical presence the team needed, giving the ground game a boost en route to a Big 12 title.

“It was amazing. I never thought that I would be standing up there and doing that,” Richardson said. “When I came here I thought I would just give it my all and do what I can, but to see everything according to what happened tonight, it's a really good feeling. It's an overwhelming feeling.”

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to the coaches, players and support staff
who made this year's historic
Baylor football season so memorable.
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**BAYLOR HAS WON 11 OF
ITS LAST 12 GAMES -- A
FEAT NEVER BEFORE
ACCOMPLISHED BY
BU IN THE BIG 12**

CHEER UP MY STATS

Bryce Petty is
7th in the nation
in passing yards
with 3844 yards

Baylor has the 2nd
best passing yards
per completion in
the nation with an
average of 17.46

Baylor is 7th in
the nation with 95
tackles for loss

Bryce Petty has the
2nd best passing
efficiency in the
nation at 179.2

Baylor is the best
scoring offense in
the nation with
53.3 points per game

Antwan Goodley is
7th in the nation
with 13 receiving
touchdowns

Antwan Goodley is
9th in the nation
with an average of
109.9 receiving
yards per game

