

# 2008 FOOTBALL UNDERFROGS?



## No attention, no problem for Frogs

By Billy Wessels  
Sports Editor

So the spotlight is turned off, and this is the only time TCU and BCS-Buster will be used in the same sentence, but this is a team that doesn't mind the lack of national recognition.

"The only time we won a conference, we were picked sixth," head football coach Gary Patterson said. "We have never won one when we were picked first."

Even some of the players agree with the coach that the lack of fanfare can be a good thing.

"This year we can play with a chip on our shoulder," sophomore quarterback Andy Dalton said. "We can prove to people that we can play even though we aren't under the spotlight."

Senior safety Stephen Hodge said he doesn't mind being considered an underdog.

"That just means we have to work extra hard and that means there is going to be more focus on the practice field without that distraction," Hodge said.

"We have to bump up our level of play."

The Horned Frogs enter the season under the radar on the heels of an unexpected 8-5 season in which TCU was the consensus pick to crash the BCS party, a type of season the team was not used to after notching 10 wins in the previous two.

"We were disappointed with the overall record at 8-5," Patterson said. "But we are happy with the way we started to mature in the second half of the season and how we played in the bowl game."

Four of the Frogs' losses last season were by a combined total of 18 points. Three of those four games were on the road, which is why Patterson stresses going out and taking road games.

"If you want to win a conference championship, you've got to be able to go on the road and win," Patterson said.

The coach also pointed out the difference in playing a road game as TCU compared to other teams in the conference.

"When it comes to TCU and playing on the road,

and I think it's the same for anyone that comes here, is that we are so different than say Colorado State playing Wyoming," Patterson said. "Their fan base is close enough that they can all see the game. When we go somewhere or they come here, you've got to go take ball games because you aren't going to have that crowd support."

Patterson mentioned two conference opponents that play great at home.

"New Mexico is a much different team when they play at home than when they play on the road," Patterson said about the Frogs' first opponent. "UNLV is the same way, and we have to go there (this season). Last year they beat Utah 23-0 at home."

The team kicks off a stretch of 11 straight weeks of games tomorrow in Albuquerque, but Patterson said he doesn't mind the grind.

"When we won the championship in 2005, that's what we did," Patterson said. "If you stay healthy it's awesome. If you don't stay healthy it's not as awesome."



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# 2008 FOOTBALL PREVIEW

## QB Dalton confident starting second year

By Billy Wessels  
Sports Editor

Andy Dalton's first season at quarterback for TCU might have gotten off to a rocky start, but by the end of the Texas Bowl he was hoisting an MVP trophy.

Now the young quarterback is in his second year under center and says he feels more comfortable leading the offense.

"Last year at this time, I didn't know what to expect because I had never played a (college) game before," Dalton said. "Now, going into it I see things differently. I have been there before, and it is easier to handle the expectations."

Dalton said he is now able to run the offense no matter what situation the team is in.

"We have been able to get in every formation and every different set you can think of," Dalton said. "Maybe we will run the ball more some games and maybe we will throw the ball more some games, it's just whatever we feel will help out and be best against the team we are playing against."

But depending on the situation, it might be junior quarterback Marcus Jackson who gets the ball in the backfield.

Head coach Gary Patterson said that no matter who gets the ball, there is no controversy.

"Right now they are 1A and 1B," Patterson said. "You can pencil Andy in, but the bottom line is I am very happy and they both had phenomenal, phenomenal summers."

Dalton said he and Jackson get along well and the team's success is top priority.

"Marcus and I have a great relationship," Dalton said. "It has been working fine and I think it will con-

tinue to have success."

Patterson is already noticing that his quarterback duo is getting quicker on its feet.

"There's already a big difference (from last year to this year)," Patterson said about Dalton. "Not only mentally, but physically. He ran .2 seconds faster at the end of spring (in the 40-yard dash) than he did a year ago when he ran a five flat."

Jackson also decreased his 40-yard dash time from a 4.8 to a 4.6.

"Both of those guys are stronger, faster and have a better control of the offense," Patterson said.

The coach added that speed isn't the only thing these quarterbacks have improved over the last year.

"I think if you just look at the last half of the season, you know we didn't throw the ball to the other team as much, and we won four out of five ball-games," Patterson said. "You can't

turn the ball over to the other team three or four times a game and expect to beat very many people, which is what we did during the first eight games, and I was very surprised we were 4-4."

Dalton paid attention to the coaches last season and has worked hard to fix the turnover problem that plagued the team at the beginning of the season. He showed signs of progress in the second half of last season, throwing only two interceptions over his last 96 pass attempts.

"One of the biggest things the coaches harp on is turnovers," Dalton said. "As we showed last year, we sometimes got a little careless with the ball and tried to force things. One of the biggest things in camp to work on is throwing the ball away or tucking it and go make stuff happen when there is nothing there."

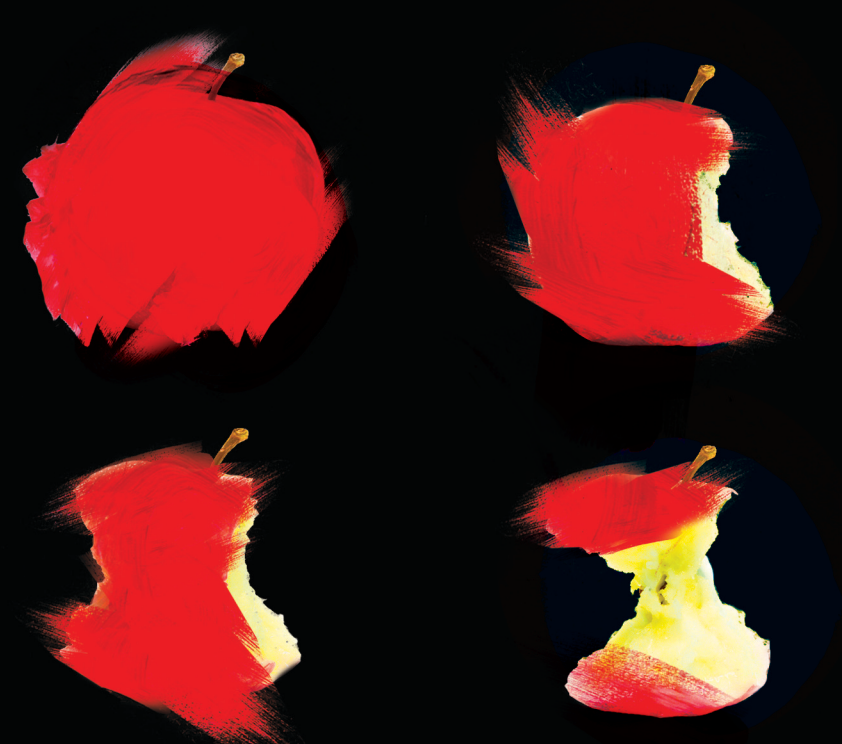
"Both of those guys are stronger, faster and have a better control of the offense."

Gary Patterson  
head football coach




Sophomore quarterback attempts a pass against the University of Texas last season. Dalton is feeling more comfortable under center in his second year.

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# TEXAS THREE-STEP



Senior Jason Phillips, top, makes a tackle in the game against Texas last season. Senior Robert Henson, right, works out with the team during practice. Junior Daryl Washington, left, assists on a play against Colorado State last year. This trio of linebackers is ranked in the top 10 in the nation, according to Athlon magazine.

## Linebacker trio to lead defense, communicate better in schemes

By Matt Syme  
Staff Reporter

In the past few years, TCU's linebacker corps proved to be the toughest and most structured segment of the entire defensive squad. This season looks to be no different.

Three well-known veterans return to spearhead the functioning of the defense — seniors Jason Phillips and Robert Henson, along with junior Daryl Washington. Phillips and Henson have both been honored as All-Mountain West Conference selections in all three seasons they have played.

Together, the three linebackers had more than 200 tackles last season. Phillips made 87 tackles himself, which led the team.

Phillips, who is one of the team captains, is also excited to see some younger players step up and make significant plays come game time. Despite losing playmakers in the defensive line from last season, he is anxious to see the defense as a whole work together.

"We have some big names, like Wayne Daniels and Jerry Hughes (defensive ends) have stepped up to the challenge so far," Phillips said.

He also stressed that communication is just as important

for the younger players to learn as perfecting their strength and speed.

"Communication is one thing we work on a lot; in our defensive scheme, we have to be able to talk out there," Phillips said. "We all know each other pretty well, which is important because we all have to know what each other are doing."

Phillips has started in TCU's last 38 games, dating back three seasons. This streak is tied for the fifth longest active one in the NCAA.

Henson only started one game in the 2007 season, but had 66 tackles of his own overall, which

put him fifth on the season tackles list. During last year's SMU game, Henson returned an interception for a touchdown. That touchdown was the first return by a linebacker since Lenoy Jones in the 1995 season.

Washington, who is also a playmaker for special teams, had 37 tackles in his sophomore year. Washington made 25 of those tack-

les single-handedly and blocked three punts, which tied Joshua Adams of Ohio University for most in the country.

The three linebackers together are ranked 10th best in the nation, according to Athalon Magazine. The Dick Butkus Award, which honors the nation's top linebacker, puts both Phillips and Henson on its watch list.

BILLY KNOWS BEST

## Senior hopes for positive end to career



BILLY WESSELS

This is the beginning of the end for me.

Tomorrow will be the first game of my last football season at TCU, and I have seen some ups and downs in my day.

Going to Oklahoma and knocking off the No. 7 team in the country was an up. The next week going to SMU and losing was a down.

The first three quarters at Texas last season were an up, but the last quarter of the game was a down.

But overall a 36-14 record since I have been going to classes here isn't that bad.

What will that record look like after this season?

The answer to that question is going to depend on the performance of several players.

How will Dalton do in his second season under center? Will our running backs stay healthy for the full season? Who will step up on special teams? How strong will the defensive line be without Tommy Blake and Chase Ortiz?

But those are the only concerns I have, which I bet is less than other schools have to worry about.

Dalton will be improved in his second season getting the snaps. He finished last season with the school record for most completions, with 222, and attempts, with 371, but one glaring stat concerns me.

The sophomore only threw 10 touchdowns compared to 11 interceptions last season. But as the season went on, Dalton got more comfortable in the pocket and only threw two interceptions in his last 96 pass attempts.

I can't remember the last time TCU had its running backs corps stay healthy throughout the entire season. But if there is one good thing that comes from chronic injury problems, it's that you get to see what the rest of your running backs can do.

When Aaron Brown went down last season, Joseph Turner stepped up to fill the void and lead the team in rushing last season with 597 yards.

When Turner went down, the combination of Justin Watts and Ryan Christian helped the Frogs down the stretch.

Now TCU has four able running backs, but it looks like Watts will start the year at fullback.

On special teams, the Frogs will have to find replacements for the kicker, punter and return positions.

Redshirt freshman Anson Kelton will take over the punting duties and the battle for kicker will be between freshman Ross Evans and sophomore Kevin Sharples.

As important as the kickers are, perhaps the biggest shoes to fill on special teams will be those of Brian Bonner, now with the San Diego Chargers. Bonner had been the all-conference return man the last two seasons.

Expect a combination of Brown, Christian and sophomore wide receivers Jeremy Kerley and Jimmy Young to all get shots returning kicks.

As far as replacing TCU defensive end legends Blake and Ortiz, Matt Panfil, the lone senior at defensive end position will step up and fill in the right side of the defensive line.

The Frogs will look to junior Jerry Hughes to bookend Panfil. Hughes made 29 tackles in a reserve roll last season.

With answers to all of TCU's questions this season, this could easily be a season that will send me out into the real world with another up to remember.

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2008 FOOTBALL PREVIEW

# NEW WEAPONS



Sophomore Jimmy Young runs after making a catch against BYU last season. Young had at least one reception in all but one game, including one 100-yard performance.

## Receivers learning on fly

By Reese Gordon  
Sports Reporter

Frogs quarterback Andy Dalton said he didn't like the fact that he threw more interceptions than touchdowns in 2007, which resulted in squandered scoring opportunities. In order for the sophomore leader to run a more efficient offense in 2008, he is going to have to get a little help from a young wide receiving corps.

However, youth may be made up for in skill. Sophomore Jeremy Kerley holds the distinction of being the only true freshman wide receiver to get on the field in 2007, and he produced. Kerley caught nine passes last season, but it is his versatility that

may prove very valuable to the team. Last season, he completed a 27-yard pass in back-to-back weeks against Utah and New Mexico.

When asked about whether he thinks the team has playmaking ability at the position, head football coach Gary Patterson said it would have to be proven.

"Practice is practice, and game is game," Patterson said. "You don't find that out until you play your first ballgame whether that is true or not. I'm excited about where they've progressed to and I'm excited to watch them."

One of the players Patterson said he hopes to see improve is sophomore Jimmy Young. With prototypical size, the 6-foot-1

inch, 200-pound receiver should build upon last season, in which he caught a team-best 23 receptions for an average of 14.1 yards-per-catch. He also became the first TCU receiver to have 100 yards receiving in a game in almost two years.

Junior running back/wide receiver Ryan Christian said he thinks the offense will be fine despite its youth.

"We still have a young offense, but I think we have really good chemistry this year," Christian said. "We've got a lot of good players, and I'm definitely looking forward to the season."

Expect to see Christian split time between running back and wide receiver. The coaches like his ability to stretch the defense with lightning-quick speed.

The Horned Frogs' current

group of wideouts only has four career starts, with three belonging to senior Walter Bryant and one to sophomore Bart Johnson. However, an ace in the hole for Frogs may be the play of senior tight end Shae Reagan, who has been a big-play weapon for the team in the past. Injuries hampered Reagan last season, but he could turn in a tremendous senior campaign if he is able to stay healthy.

Both Patterson and his players said youth and inexperience should not stop the team from getting back to playing the way it is capable of.

"We had a really good summer this year and pushed through even though it was really hot," Christian said. "We're going to put a lot of hard workers on offense and defense, and hopefully all of the work we've done will pay off."



MARK CORNELISON / Lexington Herald-Leader via MCT  
Georgia's running back Knowshon Moreno breaks a tackle against Kentucky last season. Moreno could lead the Bulldogs to a BCS berth and national title appearance in January.

## Georgia picked first in AP preseason poll

By Jeff Shain  
McClatchy Newspapers

It's a consensus. The Georgia Bulldogs get college football's preseason bull's-eye — though there's ample room for debate.

And with a solid pack giving chase.

The Bulldogs added the Associated Press poll to their summer list of No. 1 accolades Saturday, outdistancing Ohio State by just 22 points and a single first-place vote in voting by a national media panel.

Georgia also stood atop the USA Today coaches' ballot two weeks ago, as well as preseason rankings by Sports Illustrated, The Sporting News and Lindy's.

"It's exciting and fires me up that people think that about our program," coach Mark Richt told reporters after Saturday's practice. "The football world thinks we've got a shot and holds us in high esteem. That's a very good, positive statement for Georgia football."

Richt's squad won its final seven games of 2007, including a 41-10 Sugar Bowl pounding of Hawaii and Heisman finalist Colt Brennan. The streak is No. 2 among active runs, trailing only BYU's 10 straight.

The Bulldogs topped 22 of the 65 ballots cast by AP voters, finishing with 1,528 points. Ohio State was next with 21 first-place votes and 1,506 points.

Southern Cal was ranked No. 3, atop 12 ballots with 1,490 points. No. 4 Oklahoma picked up four first-place votes and No. 5 Florida topped the remaining six.

Just 113 points separated the top five places.

"It's a lot more fun for the fans to look at and speculate than for us," UF offensive coordinator Dan Mullen said after Saturday's practice. "Our guys know where they want to be ranked at the end of the year, and that has nothing to do with where you're ranked at the beginning of the year."

It's worth noting, too, that the Gators were the pick of Southeastern

Conference media to win the conference during the league's annual preview symposium last month.

South Florida was the state's only other ranked team, placed No. 19 by AP voters to complete its first set of preseason rankings. The Bulls, expected to challenge West Virginia for the Big East crown, were No. 21 by the coaches.

Florida State didn't crack the Top 25, marking the first time since 1982 - Bobby Bowden's seventh year in Tallahassee - that the Seminoles enter a season unranked. FSU tallied 86 points to stand sixth in the "also receiving votes" category.

Miami, meanwhile, completed a double shutout — receiving not a single vote in either the AP or coaches' balloting. On the AP list, that left the Hurricanes behind such teams as Tulsa, Connecticut, Virginia, Mississippi State and Arizona.

Georgia's 22-point advantage on Ohio State was the smallest in an AP preseason ranking since 2002, when UM held a 14-point edge on Oklahoma. But it wasn't the smallest of 2008 — the Bulldogs were just eight points ahead of USC in the coaches' poll.

UGA returns 16 starters from last year, including nine on defense and possibly the nation's best quarterback/running back duo in Matthew Stafford and Knowshon Moreno.

The Bulldogs scored 40 or more points in six games last season, but the offense took a hit last week when left tackle Trinton Sturdivant was lost for the year with a knee injury.

They also face a daunting schedule featuring six other Top 25 entries. UGA takes on UF, LSU, Auburn, Arizona State and Auburn away from Athens; home games against Alabama and Tennessee fall on consecutive Saturdays.

"All we can do is focus on the smaller picture," receiver Mohamed Massaquoi told reporters recently. "We can't let ourselves get overwhelmed."

Ohio State, which lost the past two BCS title games to Florida and then LSU, returns 17 starters but finds itself again behind a SEC entry.

"We didn't get over the hump," quarterback Todd Boeckman said. "To earn that respect, we have to win that big one."

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# Renovation aimed at athletes, fans

By Robert Bember  
Staff reporter

The Dutch Meyer Athletic Complex and Abe Martin Academic Enhancement Center, which will open to the public for the start of the football season, have exceeded expectations, an athletics official said.

The complex, located in the south end zone of Amon G. Carter Stadium, received a temporary certificate of occupancy, meaning all safety systems are working properly and it is no longer a hard hat area, said Ross Bailey, associate director of athletics for operations. The final touches are currently being put on the 40,000 square-foot addition.

The ball got rolling on construction to the stadium when there became a need for more academic tutoring space for student-athletes. The academic enhancement center contains seven new tutor rooms in addition to existing ones in the John Justin Athletic Center, and a computer lab with 38 computers. The additional seating came into the picture as a means to pay for the improvements, Bailey said.

Bailey said the new team community center will serve as a sort of a “home away from home” for players, featuring furniture and four flat screen TVs. The new complex has a total of 32 flat screen TVs.

“The end zone facility is great,” senior center Blake Schlueter said. “We have the new indoor practice facility, and I think these things show where our program is going and where it has been with all of the success we have had here.”

To help the team on the field as well as in the class room, a 125-seat theatre-style meeting room was put in. It’s located near both the practice fields and locker rooms for more efficiency, Bailey said.

“You couldn’t ask for anything more,” senior defensive end Matt Panfil said. “It’s too bad that we get it right when I am about to leave, but I am glad we got it.”

Although the academic enhancement center was the initial need, the athletic complex is far from an afterthought.



ROBERT BEMBER / Staff Reporter

The new 40,000 square foot addition to Amon G. Carter stadium contains a 125-seat theatre-style meeting room, computer lab and more than 150 seats in suites.

**“TCU has such a rich history and heritage. We need to share it with the young people and visitors.”**

**Ross Bailey**  
associate director of athletics for operations

Guests will be treated to suites closer to the field than most others in America that will provide a unique perspective to the action from the end zone, Bailey said.

The King-Roach Suite Level has six suites, with more than 150 seats associated with them, and they are located at the top section of the complex. Each comes with

a kitchen and at least one bathroom. The Chancellor’s Suite, which is almost three times the size of the others, will be used to entertain donors, Bailey said.

On the lower level is the Moncrief Club. It contains 250 seats as well as a 165-seat dining area and a cash bar. The club will be the only place in the stadium serving alcohol. Suites may have alcohol as well.

With a door connecting it to Daniel-Meyer Coliseum, basketball fans will be able to use the club, but parameters as to who can use it have yet to be made, Bailey said.

The construction on Amon G. Carter Stadium was slowed when a section of seats collapsed early on February 8. The project, initially expected to be finished by June 1, took an additional two

months, but did not hurt the university financially as the accident was covered by insurance.

“The architects, the builders, the engineers, everybody came together and rallied around and figured out how to fix it and really moved forward with it from there,” Bailey said.

The university will only profit from the complex, Bailey said. The cost of the additions was covered by \$13.3 million in donations from nine donors.

“The nice thing about having it totally funded is that their

gifts really become the gift that keeps on giving because all the revenue from the club seats and the suite seats, all of that revenue goes back into financial aid,” Bailey said.

Each suite costs the same as a full scholarship, and the new seating will bring in \$800,000 per year directly to Frog Club, the financial aid division of the athletic department, Bailey said. All suites and club seats are sold out this season.

The donors also decided on the names of the complex as a way

to honor coaching legends Abe Martin and Dutch Meyer. Plaques with biographies of the two can be found in Letterman’s Plaza, located on the concourse below the new seating.

“TCU has such a rich history and heritage,” Bailey said. “We need to share it with the young people and visitors.”

The new complex will serve as a “model home” for more renovations to the stadium, Bailey said. They are currently in fundraising and development stages of the project.

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## 2008 FOOTBALL PREVIEW

# Fresh faces forced to shine on special teams



BILLY WESSELS / Sports Editor  
Redshirt freshman Anson Kelton boots a punt toward a returnman in practice. Kelton will be replacing Derek Wash this season.

“We know what we are doing and we know what we have got. We are going to be a pretty fast line, so yeah, I’m excited.”

**Ryan Christian**  
junior return man

**By Matt Syme**  
Staff Reporter

The kicking side of special teams has made some changes in the offseason. Chris Manfredini, TCU’s placekicker for the past three seasons, graduated in 2008, leaving some competition to fill his kicking shoe. Sophomore Kevin Sharples will face off against freshman Ross Evans for the spot.

Evans is also competing with senior Drew Combs for kickoffs. Combs was the kickoff specialist for TCU last season and recorded six touchbacks.

Redshirt freshman Anson Kelton will replace Derek Walsh, the punter from last season. In Kelton’s senior season at nearby Aledo High School, he was awarded all-state honors after completing the season with an average of 44 yards per punt.

On the defensive side of special teams, junior linebacker Daryl Washington returns as a significant playmaker. Last season, he blocked three punts, one of which was returned for a touchdown by safety Stephen Hodge against Utah.

On the receiving end, the torch will also be passed to younger players such as sophomore Jeremy Kerley.

Kerley will be replacing Brian Bonner, who handled the job last season and graduated a first-team all-Mountain West Conference punt returner.

“Kerley has been fantastic at camp,” said head coach Gary Patterson.

Patterson said wide receiver Bart Johnson and cornerback Nick Sanders would also get reps in for returns.

Senior Aaron Brown, junior Ryan Christian and sophomore Jimmy Young are all names in consideration to fill the kick return spot.

Christian said he is excited to see action at the position and that special teams speed will be a dominant factor.

“We know what we are doing, and we know what we have got,” he said. “We are going to be a pretty fast line, so yeah, I’m excited.”

# BYU favored in conference

**By Steve Megargee**  
Rivals.com

The 25th anniversary of BYU’s 1984 national championship comes next season, but the Cougars could give their fans reason to celebrate a little bit early.

BYU has legitimate hopes of earning a BCS bid by going undefeated and winning its third consecutive Mountain West title. The Cougars have won 11 games in each of the past two seasons and return the nucleus of an offense that helped BYU end the ‘07 season on a 10-game winning streak.

The Cougars enter the season as favorites to win the Mountain West, but a third consecutive title won’t be easy. Utah enters the season with its own BCS hopes and could dethrone BYU if quarterback Brian Johnson stays healthy. The Utes lost last-minute heartbreakers to BYU the past two seasons and get the Cougars at home this season. TCU also seems likely to bounce back after posting a relatively disappointing 8-5 record last season.

Will the Cougars spend the holidays celebrating a BCS bid or bemoaning the end of their reign as Mountain West champions? This rundown of the Mountain West could help you make a prediction.

### The Players

**Best offensive player:** BYU QB Max Hall. Hall, who began his career at Arizona State, threw for 3,848 yards last season, the most by a sophomore quarterback in Mountain West Conference history. He also threw a league-high 26 touchdown passes. In addition, Hall proved he can deliver in the clutch by leading BYU on a dramatic game-winning touchdown drive in a 17-10 victory over Utah.

**Best defensive player:** BYU DE Jan Jorgensen. Indiana’s Greg Middleton and USF’s George Selvie are the only active players who averaged more sacks per game than Jorgensen last season. Jorgensen set an MWC single-season record with 14 sacks and recorded at least one sack in each of his final seven games.

**Offensive player on the spot:** Utah QB Brian Johnson. Nobody questions what this guy can do. The only concern is how long he can stay on the field. Johnson missed the 2006 season with a knee injury and sat out two games last season after hurting his shoulder in the opener. The Utes enter the season with high hopes, but they can’t win the MWC title unless Johnson stays healthy.

**Defensive player on the spot:** TCU DT James Vess. After compiling four sacks in the final seven games of 2006, Vess sat out the 2007 season for violating a team policy. Now that Vess is back, the Horned Frogs are counting on him to deliver big things. TCU needs Vess’ strength on the inside to compensate for the loss of firepower on the edges now that star DEs Chase Ortiz and Tommy Blake have completed their college careers.

**Players with biggest shoes to fill:** Air Force QB Eric Herbert and RB Kyle Lumpkin. Herbert and Lumpkin have no varsity experience, but the Falcons are counting on them to help fill the void created by the

departures of QB Shaun Carney and Rivals.com third-team All-America all-purpose player Chad Hall. Lumpkin exited spring practice as the Falcons’ starting quarterback. Lumpkin ended spring as the No. 1 tailback after playing defensive back on the junior-varsity team last season.

**Breakout offensive star:** Utah WR Brent Casteel. After leading the Utes in all-purpose yardage two years ago, Casteel, a senior, suffered a knee injury in the second game of the 2007 season and missed the rest of the year. Now that he has recovered from knee surgery, he could emerge as one of the conference’s top receivers.

**Breakout defensive star:** Utah DE Paul Kruger. Kruger capped a solid redshirt freshman season last year by collecting 10 tackles and a sack in a Poinsettia Bowl victory over Navy. The Utes would love to see him pick up where he left off last season.

**Best offensive newcomer:** San Diego State QB Ryan Lindley. Lindley, a redshirt freshman, ended spring practice as the Aztecs’ likely starter. Lindley threw for 3,521 yards and 35 touchdowns his senior year at El Capitan (Calif.) High. If Lindley doesn’t win the job, it likely will go to fellow newcomer Drew Westling, who transferred from

at least four games in each of his five seasons. But he hasn’t produced the kind of success he enjoyed at Division I-AA Montana, where he went 39-6 before coming to Wyoming. The Cowboys have posted only one winning season in Glenn’s five seasons, which is causing some impatience.

**Best coaching staff:** BYU. Bronco Mendenhall has wasted no time helping BYU reclaim its status as a national power. He’s done it with help from offensive coordinator Robert Anae, a player on BYU’s 1984 national championship team. The Cougars also have plenty of stability on their staff. Assistant head coach Lance Reynolds, the father of star OT Dallas Reynolds, has been at BYU since 1983.

**Best offensive coordinator:** BYU’s Anae. The Cougars have led the Mountain West in yardage and scoring in two of his three seasons as offensive coordinator.

**Best defensive coordinator:** TCU’s Dick Bumpas. TCU has made a habit of stopping the run and delivering big plays on defense since Bumpas’ arrival. TCU ranked second in the nation in run defense and total defense two seasons ago, and the Frogs led the nation in turnover margin in 2005.

Assistant in this league with the best chance to be a head coach at this time next year: Utah offensive coordinator Andy Ludwig. Ludwig’s creativity and familiarity with the spread offense should make him an attractive head-coaching candidate for any school needing to add juice to its offense. Ludwig previously worked as offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach at Oregon, where he tutored current New York Jets quarterback Kellen Clemens. Ludwig also has helped Utah overcome injuries to Brian Johnson the past two seasons.

### The Games

**Game of the year:** BYU at Utah, Nov. 22. BYU has delivered classic comebacks to beat Utah in the final minute in each of the past two seasons, including scoring the winning touchdown as time expired in ‘06. Could a BCS bid be on the line when the two teams meet this season?

**Toughest schedule:** New Mexico. The Lobos and UNLV are the only Mountain West teams that won’t face a single Division I-AA team this season. New Mexico opens the season with home games against TCU, Texas A&M and Arizona before going on the road to face a dangerous Tulsa team. New Mexico also must go on the road to face BYU.

**Easiest schedule:** Air Force. The Falcons are the only Mountain West team that doesn’t face a single opponent from one of the “Big Six” conferences. Air Force also gets the conference’s two toughest teams - BYU and Utah - at home.

**Worst non-conference schedule:** Air Force. As we mentioned above, the Falcons don’t face any teams from major conferences. Air Force opens the season with Division I-AA program Southern Utah and later faces Houston, Navy and Army.

**Biggest mismatch:** Stephen F. Austin at TCU, Sept. 6. Stephen F. Austin is a I-AA team that went 0-11 last season and began pre-season workouts with only five seniors on its roster.

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## 2008 FOOTBALL PREVIEW



SKIFF ARCHIVES  
Aaron Brown escapes a tackle during last season's opener against Baylor. Despite an injury-plagued junior season, Brown rushed for 490 yards in nine games.

# Frogs have solid mix at tailback

By Travis L. Brown  
Staff Reporter

No matter what situation the TCU offense might face, it has men in the backfield ready to fill the role.

TCU enters the 2008-2009 season extremely deep at the running back position. With no definite starter because of many injuries last season, the Horned Frogs seem to be working with a running back by committee style.

Senior tailback Aaron Brown said he likes the system because it enables different players to thrive in different situations.

"Everyone kind of complements everyone," Brown said. "I'm not a big guy. I'm more of a fast guy, we

have Joseph Turner who is more of a power guy and some younger guys who are like me."

Turner, a junior, took over the running game last season while Brown battled injuries that limited his playing time. Turner finished the season as the leading rusher with 597 yards, including a 226-yard, four-touchdown performance against San Diego State, the most rushing yards in a single game by any TCU player since Lanta Hobbs ran for 287 yards against Memphis in 2002. A knee injury sidelined Turner during the Houston Bowl against the University of Houston, leaving a question mark about his health going into this season. When Turner was healthy enough to play, the Frogs went 6-2. Turner is still re-

covering from the injury as the season begins and will miss at least the first game, but head football coach Gary Patterson said he expects him to return later this season.

Brown still had a productive year last year, rushing for 490 yards and averaging 4.6 yards per carry. He began the 2007 campaign as the preseason Mountain West Conference Offensive Player of the Year. Brown's success usually meant success for the team, as the Frogs went 5-0 when he rushed for over 100 yards.

Patterson has started tinkering with different options in the backfield, including moving wide out Ryan Christian to the backfield last season. Christian has worked with both the wide receivers and run-

ning backs this fall, and he took some handoffs with the first team during the "Meet the Frogs" mock game.

"We're working a lot of different people right now," Patterson said about the running back position.

With this much possible shared playing time, the running backs are working to build a lot of chemistry as a corps, Brown said. Brown also stressed the importance of the run game to the Horned Frog offense.

Two redshirt freshmen, Jai Cavnness and Jercell Fort, will also join the competition for backfield playing time.

"A lot of our team success is based on the running backs," Brown said. "You can't establish a passing game without a running game.

## Secondary combines youth and experience

By Billy Wessels  
Sports Editor

Preseason All-American Stephen Hodge will anchor the secondary for the Horned Frogs, but the remaining safety positions will be up for grabs.

Hodge, a senior strong safety, won't have the familiar faces of Brian Bonner and David Roach lined up next to him this season, but there are several options to fill their shoes.

"We can't replace them," Hodge said. "We can only hope that other players coming up can do what they have done."

Senior Steven Coleman started eight games at free safety last season and has 10 starts total, making him the most experienced of the safeties.

Behind Coleman at free safety are two redshirt freshmen, Johnny Fobbs and Chez Thomas. Fobbs was TCU's scout team Defensive Player of the Year last season.

Junior Corderra Hunter is the most experienced of the players at free safety, having appeared in all 13 games last season.

But sophomore Tejay Johnson and redshirt freshman Tekerrein Cuba could also see some playing time. Johnson was one of only four true freshmen to see action last season.

Head coach Gary Patterson said experienced safeties are important to his defensive scheme.

"We have to grow up at a couple of the safety positions," Patterson said. "They are very key in our defense."

The cornerbacks will continue to be led by juniors Rafael Priest and Nick Sanders. The two juniors are about to begin their third season as starting cornerbacks. Both have started all 26 of the team's games over the last two seasons.

Sanders and Priest will receive support from sophomore Alex

"We are known for speed, but I think we have a little size on us now to go with our speed so everyone can rally the ball,"

**Stephen Hodge**  
Senior strong safety

Ibiloye and redshirt freshman Greg McCoy. McCoy clocked a 4.32 40-yard dash — fastest on the team.

Hodge thinks all of these players can help adjust the image of TCU's defense.

"We are known for speed, but I think we have a little size on us now to go with our speed so everyone can rally to the ball," Hodge said.

The speed and strength of the defense could help lead to more forced turnovers this season.

"In my freshman year we had 29 takeaways," Hodge said. "We need to get back on that level and at least get 20 takeaways."

Hodge also added that the defense can't wait for the opponent's offense to make mistakes.

"We got to force and make turnovers," Hodge said. "We can't count on the offense to give us turnovers. We have got to go take them."

Patterson said forcing turnovers comes from experience.

"Older guys usually get a lot more take always because the game slows down for them, and they have been doing it longer; they have gotten their reps in," Patterson said. "For the younger guys, the game is faster and they are more worried about doing their job than try to steal the ball."

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# 2008 FOOTBALL PREVIEW



SKIFF ARCHIVES  
The Horned Frogs opened the 2005 season at Oklahoma with a 17-10 win. Tickets to this year's game against the Sooners will go on sale Sept. 2 at the TCU ticket office.

## AD: student support wanted in Oklahoma

By Michael Carroll  
Staff reporter

Students wishing to attend the Frogs Sept. 27 away game against the Oklahoma Sooners will have an opportunity to purchase tickets beginning Tuesday.

The tickets are \$62 and will go on sale at 8 a.m. in the Daniel-Meyer Coliseum ticket office.

Sean Conner, director of ticket operations, said students will be limited to one ticket per student ID but can bring up to 10 IDs to the ticket office at the time of purchase.

"If their friends can't make it because they're in class or off-campus, they can get their friend's ID and we will give them a ticket as well," Conner said.

According to the ticket office, there will be slightly more than 400 tickets available to the game. Students will receive their tickets at the time of purchase, so students who want to sit together at the game will need to buy their tickets together.

"It's always nice to have purple in the stands," athletics director Danny Morrison said.

The Horned Frogs opened up their 2005 season in Norman with a stunning 17-10 victory over the Sooners, who were ranked No. 7 in the nation at the time. TCU finished the year with an 11-1 re-

cord, which included an undefeated run through the Mountain West Conference.

Head coach Gary Patterson knows the Sooners, who begin this season ranked No. 4 in the nation, will present just as much of a challenge this time around.

"We know it's going to be a sea of red. You gotta go in and keep your helmet down and you gotta go play," Patterson said. "They're a very good football team. They're ranked in the top five in the nation and they've got about 12 pre-season All-Americans."

Patterson believes Oklahoma head coach Bob Stoops won't overlook the Horned Frogs next month.

"They've got an off week before we play them this year," Patterson said. "He got smart, so he'll take two weeks to prepare for the ball game."

"We know it's going to be a sea of red. You gotta go in and keep your helmet down and you gotta go play"

Gary Patterson  
head coach

# SMU series extended through 2017

By Michael Carroll  
Staff reporter

The historic Battle for the Iron Skillet has been extended through the 2017 season, according to Southern Methodist University's athletics Web site.

The next game in the long-running series will be Sept. 20 at 7 p.m. at Gerald J. Ford Stadium on the SMU campus.

The two teams have failed to meet in just six seasons since the cross-town rivalry began in 1915. The most recent gap in the series occurred in 2006.

"It's been a great rivalry for a long, long time," TCU's athletic director Danny Morrison said. "I think it's really an expectation among the fans at both schools that this rivalry game will be on the schedule every year."

TCU has won seven of the last eight meetings, including last year's 21-7 homecoming victory at Amon G. Carter Stadium.

With its victory last season, TCU claimed a one-game lead in the all-time series with a 40-39-7 record.

After last year's 1-11 season, SMU made a significant change in its football program with the hiring of new head coach June Jones.



SKIFF ARCHIVES  
Head football coach Gary Patterson celebrates last year's homecoming win over SMU with members of the team. TCU and SMU have extended the battle for the iron skillet until at least 2017.

Known for the immediate impact he made on a struggling Hawaii team, Jones arrives at SMU with high expectations.

"I think it was an excellent hire," Morrison said. "June Jones is an excellent coach and will do a very good job at SMU."

Head coach Gary Patterson was also

happy to hear about the extension of the series.

"You don't have to travel far and it's like a home game one way or the other," he said.

Student tickets for the matchup will be available at the Daniel-Meyer Coliseum ticket office for \$24.

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