

WARRIOR REPORT

B3

HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN
● SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2001

UH NOTEBOOK

Injury to Jackson set tone early

THEY weren't a bigger injury last night than the concussion Hawaii free safety Nate Jackson suffered early in the Western Athletic Conference game won by Rice University on a late field goal, 27-24.

For sure, when quarterback Tim Chang went down with a sprained wrist at the 10:34 mark of the fourth quarter, Hawaii's chances went with him. But had Jackson been around for longer than he was, perhaps the big plays given up on defense wouldn't have been so huge.

Backup Sean Butts had his moments making some big hits and solid plays, but it was his mistakes that hurt the Warriors down the stretch. Rice quarterback Greg Henderson latched him out of his shoes on a 25-yard scoring run in the second quarter. Butts also bit on a play-action 19-yard scoring pass from Henderson to Derek Eddy, who led the way into the end zone to make it 21-14 early in the third quarter.

"To me, that was big because we gave up a touchdown right before the half," Rice coach Ken Hatfield said. "That touchdown puts to rest the third quarter was big because it got us back into the game."

Jackson was hurt on the second series of the game on a crack-back block by Gavin Boothe. Jackson came back late in the second quarter, but was hit on play-action passes by Henderson that set up the Rice quarterback's scoring margin. Butts finished with 7.5 tackles and a fumble recovery, but the big plays gave up other than.

Hawaii coach June Jones is hopeful Jackson will be back for Saturday's game at SMU. He also believes Chang has a chance to recuperate from his wrist injury suffered in the fourth quarter.

"I'm sure he's not in any real danger of a bad shoulder injury himself. He was ineffective, forcing Jones to make a decision on Nick Bollen's status. He may have a broken finger on his right hand, which would slow him to reinsert himself into the game. He's got a chance to be a Mountain, an insight as well as a punt."

Last week, Hawaii struggled in the red zone against Nevada, managing only one touchdown in four tries inside the Wildcat 20 during the first half. That wasn't a problem in the first half of last night's game. The Warriors got inside the red zone three times, scoring touchdowns on each occasion.

Ashley Lelle caught a 6-yard touchdown pass from Chang. Mike Bass scored his first collegiate touchdown from 3 yards out, and Lelle had a 15-yard touchdown grab from Chang to give Hawaii a comfortable 21-7 lead at the half.

"I thought that the first half was the best overall game we've played since I've been here," Jones said. "We just broke down in the second half. Lelle was on fire."

Lelle continues to set his own personal marks. Last night, he had 11 receptions for 181 yards and two touchdowns. Unfortunately for the Warriors, he was hit in check in the second half, managing only three catches for 40 yards.

"We decided to double team him and let the other guys beat us," Hatfield said, who picked up his 15th collegiate victory. "That kid is going to be a great one for June. Heck, he's already a great."

Paul Arnold is sports editor at the Star-Bulletin. He can be reached at paul.arnold@starbulletin.com.



Running back Mike Bass booms through the Rice defense to score a touchdown and put Hawaii up 14-0 in the first quarter. The score was the first of Bass' career.

Dawson earns redemption with key interception

By Paul Arnold

Rice linebacker Dan Dawson figured he got beat about 10 times last night. Not exactly a good game for the senior rover who had proved to be a thorn in Hawaii's side the past two seasons.

So when he stepped in front of Warriors receiver Justin Colbert on what he called a Montana slip screen and picked off the Tim Chang pass, he had a sense of winging out an opponent who had seemed on one play. Breaking tackles along the way, including a wrist attempt by Chang 12 yards into the return, Dawson took the intercept to 70 yards to the house for a 14-point deficit to secure the 27-24 victory just night of the 27th season of the Aloha Stadium.

To practice, two or three receivers always come to block me on that play," Dawson said. "So all night, when I saw these releases without blocking me, I may have a broken finger on his right hand, which would slow him to reinsert himself into the game. He's got a chance to be a Mountain, an insight as well as a punt."

"I just jumped up and saw the receiver (Colbert) coming over. I really just took a gamble. I really had been playing bad, but that's good, when you're playing bad, you are about to play worse. You know what I'm saying? I just gambled. If I got beat, so what, I've already been beat 10 times."

Last year, Dawson went out [EXTRA POINT] Change injury was key to game, Rice coach says

Some may say Dan Dawson's interception meant for a Rice touchdown was the turning point. Others might claim it was the blocked kick in the fourth quarter that kept Hawaii from regaining the lead late in the game.

"Not so," Rice head coach Ken Hatfield said. He believes the wrist injury to Warriors quarterback Tim Chang kept Hawaii from mounting the winning drive.

Chang went down in a heap near the end zone after trying to hit Greg Bostrom with 10:34 left. "When he went out and the other guys beat us," Hatfield said. "They weren't as big a threat on offense and we still had our guy (Greg Henderson) in there at the end. That was huge for us."

Warriors: Injury to Tim Chang too much to overcome

Continued from B1

Hawaii coach June Jones said, "Give them some credit, they're coaching over on that side, too."

Going in, one of the game's keys was Rice's whitehorse offense against Hawaii's routing defense. The Warriors seemed well-prepared to meet the game against the run, but were hurt at key junctures by defensive coordinator Kevin Lempa. Rice's defense came up with several big plays — including five sacks among seven tackles for loss. But almost all of those were in the first half as 13's front appeared to be in the second half for the third game in a row.

"I think we were on the field too long," Jones said. "After we can't do anything." The Warriors' defense was also hurt in the long run by the absence of free safety Nate Jackson, who left in the first quarter with a concussion. Sean Butts did his best, but found it hard to replace a second-team all-WAC performer.

"I made a couple of mental mistakes," said Butts, who was in on eight tackles and recovered a fumble in the fourth quarter. "I tried my best to fill that's shoes, but that's hard because he's a great player."

Lelle was a bright spot for Hawaii with a career-high 11 catches good for 181 yards and two touchdowns. He also had an apparent 30-yard TD pass from Chang called back in the first half.

"We had our chances. But it wasn't enough," Lelle said.

Sidelines: Flood of emotion can't carry Warriors

Continued from B1

quarter linemen. And Travis Laboy continues to emerge. — The guy looks like an underdog model. But when he slams an offensive lineman, there's something about him. He looks like a star. And Byron Peters, though Byron Peters, just kept running into people.

But the offense, after some early fireworks from Ashley Lelle, some red-zone punch that June Jones had told us about last week, just didn't have it. — Tommy Chang continues to test us. He continues to test. He may have one of the best games of his life — one of the worst — all on the same night."

It's good, so good. He has led the game. But then here come these sophomore moments. Throwing off his back foot. Trying to separate one in on the run. A half effort in trying to tackle on an interception

that might have been the difference in the game. And then faced to watch at the end, never suffering with an incomplete. What now? If Chang is injured what of the rest of the season? A defense that might have emerged last night will have to get bigger still.

So many questions tonight, so many stories from a game that had everything in it. Defense that was just about and as of late that started hot and then faded away and special teams that were alternately demoralized and cheerless. But there were moments, so many moments that showed what could be.

The Warriors were last night, and they beat the rest of the roof. It was comforting and exciting, all at once. It had ended sooner than they hoped.

Robert Simpson can be reached at robert.simpson@starbulletin.com.

GAME SUMMARY

	Rice	0	7	14	6	27
Hawaii	0	21	3	0	24	

Key stats

Team	Yards	TDs	Ints	Sacks	Penalties
Hawaii	388	3	1	5	12
Rice	315	2	0	7	10

Scoring summary

Time	Team	Score
10:34	Hawaii	14-0
13:58	Rice	14-7
17:00	Hawaii	14-14
20:00	Hawaii	14-21
23:00	Rice	14-24
27:00	Hawaii	24-24

Individual statistics

Player	Team	Yards	TDs
Justin Colbert	Rice	105	1
Greg Henderson	Rice	100	1
Tim Chang	Hawaii	100	1
Mike Bass	Hawaii	30	1
Justin Colbert	Rice	105	1
Greg Henderson	Rice	100	1
Tim Chang	Hawaii	100	1
Mike Bass	Hawaii	30	1

COMING UP

Warriors fly 4,000 miles to face Mustangs next

This is a team tonight over the best country line dancers wouldn't wobble for on short notice. Last night, Hawaii had to defend the multi-hundred of home of Rice. Now, Hawaii has to jump on a plane and head east 4,000 miles to play Southern Methodist in Big D. Not that the Mustangs are all that scary. They are 6-0 and looking hot. Two years ago, Hawaii proved it was for real by beating SMU 20-10 in the Cotton Bowl. That venue will be occupied by Texas and Oklahoma, meaning the Warriors will play in SMU's new on-campus stadium. Wherever the two teams play, Hawaii has to prove it's a real team, something the Warriors haven't done much of the last 10 years.