

Lone Star Conference: Decade of Dominance in the 1970s

With the start of the 2010 college football season, think back 40 autumns ago—the 1970s.

But, over the course of that 10-year period, a small college conference began its domination over ever foe that would come its way.

The Lone Star Conference during the decade of the 1970-79 saw its member schools be crowned NAIA I football champions nine of the 10 seasons—with only 1971 the only year a team failed to be the best small college in the country.

A quick research on the success of this conference in the NAIA Championship Playoffs goes back to the final season of the 1959 season when Texas A&I would hoist its initial championship Trophy.

As the world entered the 1960's the small schools within the talent-rich state would also see teams from the Lone Star State shine in their playoff contest.

Prairie View, a HBCU school but not a member of the LSC, was the second school from Texas to make the NAIA playoffs; finishing second in 1963 to St. John's MN.

Then a year later, Sam Houston became the next champion from the state; tying Concordia MN at 7-all. Sul Ross would be the next school to represent the league in the playoffs a 3-point loss to eventual NAIA Semi-final Linfield (30-27) would be league's last post-season participant till 1968.

Texas A&I would advance to the NAIA Championship game, before falling to Troy State AL, 43-35; suffering its only NAIA post-season setback.

This setback only set the stage for a Javelina comeback—and with vengeance.

Texas A&I was the small college champion during the sport's Centennial Season; before embarking on a *Decade of Dominance in the 1970s*...to make the pot even sweeter, the school was only a part of the Lone Star State's National Championship run.

Run seemed to be the key word for this conference as a whole. Over the 10-year period, 15 times the league placed a team in the Top 30 in the final NAIA per game Rushing average; with 13 in the top 20 and 7 among the 10 best—

and four first place rushing teams-- 8 total first place rankings. (Just 5 times during the era was a conference team amongst the defensive leaders.

And that one team was Texas A&I—which topped-out with a 354.6 mark in 1976.

While the Hogs were running wild down in South Texas; the Wildcats were filling the air with passes; as Abilene Christian dominated the conference airways; on its way to a pair of championship game triumphs of its own.

Texas A & I won five titles during the course of the decade; while Abilene Christian passed its way to a pair of crowns.

After failing to qualify a team for the first time since 1967 playoffs; the LSC wasn't without representation in the final 1971 poll.

Two teams finished back-to-back. Howard Payne, finishing third—its highest rank team ever in the final surveys; while Southwest Texas State was nine-points back (75-66) at #4. A&I would finish at No. 13

From 1972-79, the LSC would continue not only seeing a member hoist the championship trophy 8 more times; but also see 25 teams total be rank over those 8 seasons—compared to just 4 spots the first 2 polls.

The nine championship seasons saw the No. 1 teams combined for 110-5-1 record; scoring 3858 points for 33.3 average; allowing 1403—12.09.

Even though the decade of the 1970s would be dominated by LSC; the 1980s wouldn't be as kind.

Though the league did see a pair of Championship Banners raise the league to 14 after becoming a NCAA II member.

Southwest Texas State captured the 1981 and 1982 titles.

NAIA II football also had its share of Texas teams involved the playoffs as well.

Three teams represented the state during the 1970-79 era: Texas Lutheran, Tarleton State (a former LSC member) and Austin College.

An unusual happening took place in the NAIA Post Season during the 1974 and 1975 seasons—both champions were from within the boundaries of the Lone Star State.

While A&I won the Division I crown during the mid-seasons of the decade; Texas Lutheran captured the NAIA II title.

Austin College's 1981 NAIA II championship gave the state its final small college championship; as it tied Concordia 24-all.

Season	Final Stat Rankings	RK	STAT	NUMBER	PG
1970	Texas A&I	15	PO	2055	205.5
	Sam Houston State	20	RO	2774	252.0
	Sam Houston State	22	TO	4244	385.8
	Texas A&I	24	TO	3804	380.4
	East Texas State	30	PO	2063	187.5
1971	Angelo State	6	RO	2873	287.3
	Southwest Texas	9	TO	3949	394.9
	Texas A&I	16	PO	1779	177.9
	Southwest Texas	19	RO	2450	245.0
	Howard Payne	21	RO	2345	234.5
	Angelo State	24	TO	3483	348.3
	Howard Payne	26	RD	955	95.5
1972	East Texas State	11	TO	4675	387.9
	East Texas State	16	RO	2219	246.6
	Angelo State	18	RO	2461	246.1
	Stephen F. Austin	29	PO	1295	161.9
1973	Abilene Christian	1	TO	5738	478.2
	Abilene Christian	2	PO	3224	268.7
	Stephen F. Austin	27	RO	2526	229.6
	Howard Payne	27	PO	1806	164.2
1974	Texas A&I	1	RO	4308	331.4
	Texas A&I	3	TO	5914	454.9
	Angelo State	7	TO	4223	383.9
	Southwest Texas	15	RO	2510	251.0
1975	Texas A&I	1	TO	5769	480.8
	Texas A&I	1	RO	3948	329.0
	Abilene Christian	2	PO	2584	258.4
	Abilene Christian	3	TO	4291	429.1
	Southwest Texas	4	RO	2906	290.6
	Texas A&I	6	TD	2080	173.3

	Texas A&I	6	PD	840	70.0
	Angelo State	10	TO	4341	394.6
	Angelo State	12	RO	2900	263.6
1976	Texas A&I	1	TO	6269	569.9
	Texas A&I	1	RO	3896	354.2
	Abilene Christian	4	PO	2658	265.8
	Texas A&I	6	TD	2080	173.3
	Texas A&I	6	PD	840	70
	Texas A&I	7	PO	2373	215.7
	Abilene Christian	9	TO	4162	416.2
1977	Abilene Christian	4	PO	2915	265
	Texas A&I	5	TO	4546	454.6
	Abilene Christian	7	SO	346	31.4
	Abilene Christian	8	TO	4519	410.8
	Texas A&I	8	RO	2608	260.8
	East Texas State	15	TO	4111	373.7
1978	Abilene Christian	2	PO	2555	255.5
	Texas A&I	7	TO	4621	420.1
	Angelo State	10	SO	353	32.1
1979	Texas A&I	1	TO	4661	466.1
	Texas A&I	1	RO	3516	351.6
	Abilene Christian	7	PO	2491	226.5
	Sam Houston State	14	PO	2000	200.0

Season	NAIA I National Champion	PF	OSA	PA	DSA	AMV+
1970	Texas A&I (12-0-0)	342	28.5	145	12.1	16.4
1972	East Texas State (12-2-0)	329	23.5	151	10.8	15.1
1973	Abilene Christian [11-1-0]	466	38.3	206	17.2	24.5
1974	Texas A&I (13-0-0)	435	33.5	192	14.8	18.7
1975	Texas A&I (12-0-0)	437	36.4	102	8.5	27.9
1976	Texas A&I (13-0-0)	592	45.5	105	8.2	37.3
1977	Abilene Christian (11-1-1)	405	31.2	210	16.2	18.4
1978	Angelo State (14-0-0)	454	32.4	139	9.9	22.5
1979	Texas A&I (12-1-0)	398	30.6	153	11.0	20.7

+Net points in Games won/victories

Season	Final NAIA I Poll Finishes	Rank	Poll Pts	FPV
1970	Texas A&I	1	160	16
1971	Howard Payne TX	3	75	

1971	Southwest Texas State	4	66	
1971	Texas A&I	13	0	
1972	East Texas State	1	192	16
1972	Angelo State TX	12	0	
1973	Abilene Christian TX	1	192	16
1973	Howard Payne TX	8	77	
1974	Texas A&I	1	192	16
1974	Stephen F Austin TX	5	129	
1975	Texas A&I	1	240	16
1975	Angelo State TX	6	149	
1975	Abilene Christian TX	16	0	
1975	Southwest Texas State	17*	0	
1975	East Texas State	19*	0	
1976	Texas A&I	1	240	16
1976	Abilene Christian TX	4	179	
1976	Angelo State TX	19	5	
1977	Abilene Christian TX	1	240	16
1977	Texas A&I	3	205	
1977	Angelo State TX	7	141	
1977	East Texas State	13	47	
1977	Southwest Texas State	15	22	
1978	Angelo State TX	1	240	16
1978	Abilene Christian TX	11	74	
1978	Texas A&I	20	6	
1979	Texas A&I	1	320	16
1979	Angelo State TX	3	286	
1979	Stephen F Austin TX	16	74	

**Tied*