

## Tech not wanting a repeat disaster

When Texas Tech opens Big 12 play against Oklahoma State on Saturday in Stillwater, Okla., it's going to feel eerily similar to the last time they were there.

Two years ago the red-hot Red Raiders rolled into Stillwater owning an impressive 8-1 record. They also had pounded Texas A&M the previous week 56-17. OSU limped into the game with a 3-5 record and on a five-game losing streak. The five losses came via an average of 25.2 points per game.

But the Cowboys manufactured enough big plays to upset the Red Raiders 24-17. It was the only Big 12 game OSU won that season.

This year, the Raiders storm into Stillwater with a 3-0 record, which includes a 59-24 pounding of Rice on Saturday. Meanwhile, OSU limps into the game coming off a 41-23 upset loss to Troy.

"They're coming off a tough loss last week, so they're going to be ready to play," Tech quarterback Graham Harrell said. "So we have to really be ready to go in there and try to execute.

"It's the start of Big 12 for them, too, so they're going to be excited about that, and they're going to be trying to rebound from a loss."

Tech coach Mike Leach said he doesn't plan on reminding his players about the debacle two years ago. He wants them to focus on the present.

"The last time we were in Stillwater we didn't play well," Leach said. "We underachieved. We've got to play well this time."

The Red Raiders believe if they can just play their game, they're going to be difficult to defeat, regardless of what OSU does.

"They're very confident," Harrell said of the Cowboys.

"There's no question they have talent.

"Hopefully we'll outscore them this week."

### **Harrell a leader**

Graham Harrell probably has no bigger fan than Mike Leach. As far as he can shout, Leach has been praising Harrell and telling everyone that he's a top-notch quarterback.

Harrell has been so impressive that he's first in the nation in passing yards (1,317 yards), third in completion percentage (75 percent) and 13th in passing efficiency (170.5).

"I thought he was the best quarterback in the Big 12 last year," Leach said about Harrell, who has passed for more than 400 yards in all three games this season. "But I think that part of it is that our team's developed around him.

"Our team is used to responding to him as their quarterback, so I think it helps them be on the same page a little better."

Harrell is the first Tech quarterback in four years to return to the team after starting the previous season. That meant the players didn't have to adapt to a new leader, which has been a bonus for the Red Raiders.

"He's a real driven guy," Leach said. "He works real hard no matter who's around to begin with.

"The other thing is he's smart -- he knows what's important. His dad's the head football coach in Ennis, so he grew up with a good knowledge of this stuff."

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