



LONGHORNS FOOTBALL

Longhorns will have throwback look in opener

UT football team will wear helmets, jerseys with 1963 look.

By **Cedric Golden**
 AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF
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The Texas Longhorns would love to finish the 2005 football season like the 1963 team that captured a national title. And in this season's opener, the current Longhorns will have the look of a champion in a literal sense.

Texas will take the field for the Sept. 3 game against Louisiana-Lafayette wearing Nike-designed vintage jerseys, complete with numbered helmets and black shoes.

The idea was born during the off-season, partly from conversations involving Coach Mack Brown, legendary former coach Darrell Royal, and former player and longtime Longhorns supporter Rooster Andrews.

"The players had been talking about it for a while," said equipment manager Chip Robertson. "They wanted to honor the teams from the past and this was the best way to do it."

The jerseys are patterned after those of the 1963 team that finished 11-0 and won the school's first national football title. The jerseys have a burnt orange background with large white numbers on the front and back and two white stripes on each sleeve. Unlike the current jerseys, the word Texas does not appear and there are no players' names on the back.

The word "Texas" appeared on some UT jersey tops from 1959-61, but was not on the burnt orange jersey worn by the '63 champs. The 1981 team featured the state name on the jersey front as it is today.

The team also will wear white helmets, with individual uniform numbers above the Longhorn symbol located on each side of the helmet. The numbers first appeared on the helmet in 1957, and the Longhorn logo was introduced in 1961, at which time the number was moved to the back.



Matt Rourke/AMERICAN-STATESMAN
[\(enlarge photo\)](#)

Tommy Nobis and the rest of the 1963 Longhorns wore this uniform style all the way to the national championship. This year's Horns will wear it to open the season at Royal Memorial Stadium on Sept. 3 against Louisiana-Lafayette.



Hook 'em or hate 'em? What do you think of the Longhorns' throwback jerseys?

- I like them. Keep them all season.
- I like them, but just for one game.
- I don't like them. Throw out the throwbacks.

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"We told Coach Royal there was a reason to honor all the past players and make sure they know how much we appreciate what they did to help make this such a special place," Brown said. "And the current players have a chance to say thanks to the other players who did not get a chance to wear names on the backs of their uniforms."

Nike is picking up the tab for the venture, according to Texas officials.

Chris Plonsky, the women's athletics director at Texas, said both authentic and replica throwback jerseys and helmets will be available for purchase at Longhorns LTD., the university's souvenir shop.

Royal said when Brown approached him with the throwback idea, old memories flooded back. He coached at Texas for 20 seasons and guided three teams to national championships. Royal said Tuesday he had yet to see the jerseys but has seen the helmet.

"Mack is a great one when it comes to knowing his Texas history," Royal said. "When he first got here, he wanted to know about all the traditions and where the Hook 'em Horns came from. He really has an appreciation for the past. This is a nice tribute to those players that came before. "

Texas had preliminary discussions with the Oklahoma athletics department about using throwback jerseys in this season's 100th meeting of the Red River rivals in Dallas, but the Longhorns decided to wear the jerseys in the opener.

An Oklahoma spokesman said the Sooners, who wore throwbacks in 2003 to honor their 1956 national championship team, were resistant to the idea of changing from their crimson helmets to white helmets in the middle of the season.

The throwback phenomenon has created a multimillion dollar industry that continues to expand, thanks to the popularity of old-style uniforms and also the convenience of online shopping.

Teams in numerous sports have incorporated the throwback craze into marketing strategies designed to increase fan interest and, more important, revenue. For instance, the NFL's Buffalo Bills plan to wear uniforms that honor the franchise's 1965 AFL championship team in three games this season. The jerseys were unveiled at a June pep rally that was attended by more than 4,000 fans.

Several Texas seniors are featured on the cover of the 2005 media guide wearing the throwback jerseys. Not among them is junior quarterback Vince Young, who has already petitioned Brown to allow the team to keep the old-style helmets for the entire season.

"I like it because it's a new vibe," said offensive tackle Jonathan Scott. "It's something different that people are talking about already, and it will be interesting see what our fans think of of the new look."

The Texas throwback

Jersey: Nike designed burnt orange V-neck with white numbers on front and back, two white stripes on sleeves

Helmet: White with Longhorn logo on either side and uniform number above the logo

Pants: White game pants with burnt orange Longhorn logo

Shoes: Black

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