





THE HEAT IS ON

AFTER COACHING THE LONGHORNS TO THEIR WORST SEASON IN HIS 13-YEAR CAREER AT UT, **MACK BROWN** IS ON A MISSION TO BRING HIS TEAM BACK TO GLORY **BY ANDREW LAWRENCE**

W

hat exactly do you do? It's the kind of innocent question you ask at a cocktail party to break the ice. But when Mack Brown fielded a version of it while speaking at a Longhorn Club banquet two years ago, he froze for a beat. His job title—head football coach, Texas Longhorns—is obvious to the point of national envy. Still, his responsibilities are hardly straightforward. That's why Brown, having devoted most of his 59 years to a game that fancies itself as an analogy for *everything*, couldn't resist trying to neatly sum up his office for his audience of 400. "I said, 'I'm a CEO,'" he recalls, "and it's carried throughout."

Before he knew it, his quip had morphed from banquet small talk to message board fodder and hardened into full-blown sportswriter cliché. Though the constant reminders of this comparison

can leave him weary at times—none more than last year's 5-7 season, a catastrophe that Brown hopes to reduce to an anomaly—for the most part, the coach has embraced it tighter than he does the many top-shelf prospects he recruits. Inescapable details such as the Longhorns' Madoff-steady profits (a net of nearly \$69 million in 2009-10) and his underlings' fluency in corporate-speak, like first-year defensive coordinator

Manny Diaz telling me that Texas is "a great brand," only further underscore the idea of Texas as being too big to fail. Add to that Brown's \$5 million compensation package, and he can seem like just another plutocrat with his head in the clouds. What is the modern CEO caricature if it's not an antenna on a skyscraper: connected but out of touch with the situation on the ground?

But in truth, Brown is a different kind of beacon, one

high in profile, coursing with power, and yet deeply rooted in the ground. A lightning rod, yes, but Brown is less CEO than coach-in-chief. In his 13 years in charge, he has transformed Longhorns football from a team to a program to a solar-grade life source. When the Longhorns win, everything around it grows. But when they lose, you'd think that someone blew out the sun. In thriving times, Brown is celebrated like something



Brown, in battle mode, cheers on his team. He's known for mostly remaining calm and cool under pressure.

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

Deep-seeded rivalries have been a part of UT football since the 19th century. These are the big games to mark on your calendar.

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA (Oct. 8, Dallas)

The Sooners are UT's No. 1 rival. For more than 100 years, the two teams have met annually on neutral ground at Dallas' Cotton Bowl stadium for a match dubbed the Red River Rivalry. Half the stadium wears red and the other half wears burnt orange, split down the 50-yard line, creating an intense and energetic atmosphere. The rivalry is mostly due to the fact that both teams' talented football programs compete to recruit players from the same regional area. Historically, the winning team goes to the championship, like in 2005, when UT won the game and went on to beat USC for the national title. Fun fact: Out of 105 games

played over the decades, UT has won 18 more times than OU. Hook 'em!

TEXAS TECH (Nov. 5, home)

In recent years, as Texas Tech's football program has ascended, a medium-level rivalry has formed between the Red Raiders and Longhorns. Three years ago, Tech beat UT in Lubbock, bumping down UT from No. 1 to No. 4 and preventing the team from playing for a national championship. Fans and players don't easily let something like that go.

TEXAS A&M (Nov. 24, away)

Like the rivalry with OU, these two teams compete for players from the

same regional area. However, most people say that because of UT's excellent football program, the Longhorns are more of a rivalry for the Aggies than the other way around. This battle goes back more than 100 years. It's school lore that Bevo, UT's mascot, got his name after the Aggies branded the longhorn with the score 13-0 in 1916 (not true). And in 1941, UT students consulted a local fortune-teller in hopes of breaking an 18-year losing streak with the Aggies. They were told to burn red candles, and the streak was broken. Today, the students burn red candles at the annual "Hex Rally" before the big Thanksgiving day game. —MITCHELL ALAN PARKER

MEET THE NEW COACHES

Let us introduce you to the seven guys helping Mack Brown revamp the Longhorns this year

BY A. LAWRENCE

THE PLAY CALLER **BRYAN HARSIN**

For most people who watched the heart-stopping, mind-blowing clash that was the 2007 Fiesta Bowl between Boise State and The University of Oklahoma, the game came down to three big plays. First was the 50-yard hook-and-lateral touchdown pass that tied the game at 35-all and forced overtime. Then there was the five-yard halfback option-scoring pass that pulled the Broncos within 42-41 in the extra period. Finally, there was the Statue of Liberty play that the Broncos called for the ensuing two-point conversion to seal a 43-42 upset for the ages.

But for Mack Brown, that game came down to one man: Bryan Harsin, the 35-year-old coordinator who made all of the bold calls that night. "The fact that he was so young and so aggressive was impressive," Brown says. But it was impressing Running Backs Coach Major Applewhite that may be what ultimately brought Harsin to Austin. When longtime Offensive Coordinator Greg Davis resigned at the end of last season, Brown sought Applewhite's counsel in his nationwide search to find a replacement. Applewhite figured he was plenty qualified for the job, but if he couldn't have it, the next best man was Harsin. In his 10 years at Boise—five as an assistant coach and five more as offensive coordinator—Harsin helped build the Broncos up from a mid-major force

into a national powerhouse (see: Boise's 41.4-point scoring average, 61-5 record and two Fiesta Bowl wins) by being unexpected but also unabashedly conventional.

"With all of the fun stuff we did at Boise," says Harsin, who in January was introduced along with Applewhite as the Longhorns co-coordinators, "the foundation was that we were physical, we ran the ball well and our quarterbacks played well."

Before the Longhorns settle into their own offensive identity, Harsin must first strike a balance between what he can do and what

his new players can handle. Ultimately, what that comes down to is a whole lot of patience—for Harsin, for the players and for everyone expecting the Longhorns to instantly morph into Boise East. "There are a lot of good ideas,"

“We’re going to do what fits our personnel the best and create the offense based on that.”

Harsin says, “but we’re going to do what fits our personnel the best and create the Texas offense based on that.”

“We want to be the type of team that people don’t want to play against.”

THE RISING STAR **MANNY DIAZ**

Armchair coaches take heed: If you're thinking about making the big move from the sofa to the sideline, consider the unlikely career path of Longhorns Defensive Coordinator Manny Diaz. Fifteen years ago, he was a newly minted communications major at Florida State who had gotten an internship with ESPN as a production assistant for NFL shows such as *Sunday Morning Countdown* and *Primetime*. The gig consisted of watching hours of tape, rubbing elbows with some of the game's biggest names and being a fly on the wall for their doctoral-level discussions of the sport. It was a dream job by any football junkie's standards, and Diaz had few complaints. "It was a great life and a great way to make a living," he says.

Still, the more the 37-year-old Miami native hung around those gridiron greats, the more he couldn't help dreaming bigger. Sterling Sharpe, a former Packers receiver turned ESPN analyst, was the first to whet Diaz's appetite for coaching. The two would go out to dinner and watch Monday night games, and Sterling would go on about his own coaching dreams and how Diaz would always have a spot on his staff if he ever abandoned TV to pursue them. "That type of mindset really started to stoke my imagination," Diaz says.

His drive and locomotive-sized ambition has taken him from whistle stops as a FSU student volunteer in 1997 to linebackers coach at N.C. State in 2002 to defensive coordinator at Middle Tennessee State in 2006. But it's Diaz's most recent position as the defensive coordinator at Mississippi State, where he guided a unit that ranked 21st nationally in scoring (19.9 points per game allowed), rushing (119.1 yards per game allowed) and finished with its highest win total (nine) in a decade, that landed him on the Longhorns' radar as a replacement for former Brown heir Will Muschamp, who left at season's end to succeed the retiring Urban Meyer at Florida.

Like Muschamp, Diaz prefers to blitz first and ask questions later. "We're going to be very attack-oriented and create a lot of negative plays," he says. "We want to be the type of team that people don't want to play against." And one that gives hope to armchair coaches everywhere.

out of a Doris Kearns Goodwin biography: *He welcomed back the diaspora of Longhorns greats to the Forty Acres. He rebuilt Texas' creaky recruiting infrastructure into a five-star pipeline. He's won 133 out of 167 games he coached, including the 2005 national championship—the only title, it should be further noted, to go untainted by NCAA scandal in the past nine years.*

In 2010 under Brown, the Longhorns preserved the (now 10-team) Big 12 confer-

ence by agreeing to stay put and scored Texas a \$300 million sports network in the process. As strokes of diplomacy go, it was equivalent to turning the Cuban Missile Crisis into the Louisiana Purchase.

Subtract that and add last year's on-field failures to the ledger, however, and Brown starts to resemble the target of a smear ad. He lost control of his locker room, and it showed in his out-of-shape and entitled players. He was out of touch with his coaches, and it

was obvious in their schizophrenic game planning. The Longhorns not only lost to Oklahoma, but to UCLA, Iowa State, Texas A&M and even Baylor on the way to his worst season as Longhorns coach. The team didn't even make it to a bowl game. He allowed night to fall on the Republic.

What makes Brown a real maverick? He doesn't deny that this was all his fault.

f offering himself up as a mentee to Darrell Royal, the most prominent member of the Longhorns diaspora, was Brown's shrewdest political move upon taking over at Texas in 1998, then ignoring his advice was the dumbest. Six years ago, Royal told his apprentice about the burnout that forced him to abandon coaching after 20 years on the Longhorns sideline. The wins became relief, and the losses "just ate you up and killed you," Brown remembers Royal telling him. There was no joy. And this was coming from a man who went 167-47-5, won three national championships and is generally regarded as the George Washington on Texas' football Mount Rushmore.

Then again, if those were the spoils, Brown figured it was worth living in anguish. When his Longhorns found themselves playing for the 2009 BCS Championship against Alabama—this, after narrowly missing out on a chance a season earlier—he dared to consider his legacy too early, and that set himself up for a crushing disappointment. "It had been 35 years since we won the national championship when we won it in '05," he says. "To come back and have a chance to win two, possibly three in a five- or

six-year period was something I really wanted."

In the end it was not to be. Senior quarterback Colt McCoy was knocked out of the game after five snaps. Despite a brave effort from backup Garrett Gilbert, he played like the true freshman that he was, saving each of his four interceptions—including one that was returned for a touchdown—for the worst possible moments. (Still, other than Jordan Shipley, the Longhorns receivers didn't exactly help Gilbert's cause with all their drops.) Texas face-planted 37-21, and Brown let his whole world go dark. "They say you can't let one game beat you twice," says Brown who, after the season, made the surprise confession that the loss left him "pouting." "You've got to move forward, learn from that one, go on to the next one," he says. "And because I didn't do that as well as I have in the past, that hurt our team."

His self-indulgence was reflected in the Longhorns' 2010 roster. Ace recruiting and team building, after all, is where Brown hangs his hat. But when it was revealed that players, including a handful of key signees, had blown off spring conditioning, the deficit of locker room leaders pointed to a rare oversight by Brown. "We thought we'd just walk on the field and things would come to us," senior Linebacker Emmanuel Acho says. "We forgot the hard work guys like Brian Orakpo, Sergio Kindle and Colt McCoy truly put into the game. We forgot the process it takes to be great."

Despite a No. 2 preseason ranking, Brown's confidence in the team was shaky from the start, and he said as much as early as last September's season-opening game against

PAST PLAYER PROGRESS REPORT

Find out which former Longhorn football stars have traded touchdowns and tackles for yoga and steaks



EARL CAMPBELL

Nicknamed the "Tyler Rose," a tribute to his hometown's love of the flower, this running back was the 43rd recipient of the Heisman Trophy in 1977, the same year he led the nation in rushing yards. These days, 56-year-old Campbell has traded the pigskin for pig meat as the president of Earl Campbell Meat Products, Inc., a company famous for its smoked sausage and barbecue sauce, located right here in town.



RICKY WILLIAMS

Just 13 years after his last UT football season, this 34-year-old all-pro running back has already retired from the NFL, played the sport in Canada and returned to play for the Miami Dolphins. The 64th Heisman Trophy recipient, who has been suspended for violating the NFL's substance abuse policy, has recently sought out yoga as therapy. Williams, a San Diego native, received his yoga instructor certificate while traveling in India and sometimes teaches classes in Florida.



VINCE YOUNG

Best known for his leadership in the 2005 BCS National Championship, this famed Longhorn quarterback can't seem to stay away from the capital city. After a five-year career with the Tennessee Titans, he opened Vince Young Steakhouse in the former downtown *Real World: Austin* house last winter and recently announced he is returning to UT to finish his degree in education.



COLT MCCOY

This former Longhorn golden boy spent his first year in the pros showing promise as a Cleveland Brown. The NFL may be in a lockout these days, but things are going well in his personal life. Last month, the 24-year-old quarterback celebrated his one-year anniversary with college sweetheart Rachel Glandorf. —JORDAN SCHRAEDER





“It’s fun to go out there and flip the ball around and run a triple reverse and pass to the tackle.”

THE YOUNG GUN MAJOR APPLEWHITE

Major Applewhite is either a Jedi-level office politician or completely mismanaging his coaching career. How else to explain how the 33-year-old Baton Rouge, La., native ended up sharing the Longhorns offensive coordinator job with Bryan Harsin? Nothing against Harsin, whose sleight-of-hand offenses put Boise State on the BCS map, but how was Applewhite *not* the perfect fit? A Longhorns quarterback from 1998-2001, he played for Brown and went 22-8 as a starter, set school records for, among other things, passing yards in a game (473), a season (3,357) and a career (8,353), all while helping Texas to four straight bowl appearances. When his NFL career went bust after 2002, he returned to Texas as a graduate assistant for two years, then coached quarterbacks at Syracuse in 2005 before spending the next two seasons coordinating the offenses at Rice and Alabama. In 2008, he left that plum job on Nick Saban’s Crimson Tide staff not to take over at the University of Houston, where he had interviewed for a head coaching vacancy, but to take a position as the Longhorns running backs coach and apprentice under Greg Davis, the same man who put together the game plans he executed as a player.

When Davis resigned at the end of last season, Applewhite seemed to be the shoo-in replacement. But ultimately, Applewhite was too young to manage the job by himself, and splitting it with a more seasoned play-caller like Harsin made sense. Together, they form a brain trust that blends institutional knowledge with fresh ideas. “The thing I like about him is he doesn’t put himself in a box,” says Applewhite of Harsin. “Defenses now are so multiple in the looks they give you that you have to be able to get to some things that make them feel insecure about calling certain plays.”

Insecure would be a good way to describe last year’s Texas offense, which wavered from dynamic spread passing attack to power running game and finished ranked 88th in the country as a result, but not Applewhite. Not only is he truly convinced that he will be better for his collaboration with Harsin, but his players will be able to know that levity is actually built-in to the game plan. “They’re so serious all the time, between interviews and going to class,” he says. “It’s fun to go out there and flip the ball around and run a triple reverse and pass to the tackle. Something to get their juices going. They’re still, like, 20, you know?” In other words, there’s still time for them—and for Applewhite, too.

MORE NEW BLOOD

There are four other key coaches who are also stirring things up this season

If Mack Brown was going to be forced to overhaul his coaching staff (which included more than a few veterans who had been around him for a decade or more), then he was going to make sure he surrounded himself with familiar faces. Offensive Line Coach **Stacy Searels**, who won a national championship at LSU in 2007 with former Longhorns coach Will Muschamp, then the Tigers’ defensive coordinator, is about as familiar as they come.

Ditto for Defensive Tackles Coach **Bo Davis**, who was on staff with Searels at LSU as assistant strength coach and coached opposite ‘Horns Co-Offensive Coordinator Major Applewhite at Alabama. **Darrell Wyatt**, a respected Longhorns rival on the recruiting trail and as a receivers coach at Kansas, Oklahoma State and Oklahoma University, among many other stops, now brings his talents to UT. Likewise, Strength and Conditioning Coach **Bennie Wylie** has had his clashes with Texas while whipping the boys at Texas Tech into shape. He’s also trained players for the Dallas Cowboys and Desperados, so he not only knows what it takes to hack it at this level but at the next one as well.

Still, for all of their familiarity, what this new staff ultimately offers Brown is a freshness that the program hasn’t seen since the coach arrived in Austin in 1998. “We wanted new energy,” Brown says. “It’s been a lot of fun to see the new ideas and change some things up and get the players excited. And I feel like the fan base is excited too.” They’ll be even more charged if the ‘Horns can get back to their winning ways.



Bennie Wylie

Bo Davis

Stacy Searels

Darrell Wyatt

Rice, a cupcake opponent that the Longhorns struggled to beat 34-17. “This isn’t a 10-win team right now, much less a championship team,” he told his assembled charges in the locker room afterward as ESPN.com’s Pat Forde took note. Seven weeks later, after the Longhorns lost at home to Iowa State in an upset felt ’round the college football world, Brown called out his coaches. “I told them if one of your guys is playing bad, I can change them,” he said in his news conference the following Monday. “If three of your guys are playing bad, I change you.” But the situation continued to spiral out of control, as Texas lost three of its next four games by an aggregate score of 102-52. That includes a 30-22 defeat to Baylor, the



Last year, the Longhorns struggled to top Rice, typically an easy opponent, during the season opener.

Longhorns’ first loss to the Bears since 1997. On Thanksgiving Day, Texas entered its season finale with Texas A&M needing just one win to keep a streak of 13 straight bowl appearances alive. The Longhorns began the game with

a sense of urgency, scoring a touchdown on their opening drive, but then only managed 10 points the rest of the way to a 24-17 loss. The streak was over, and, for many, so was the world as we know it. But ironically, that was

hardly the case for Brown, who eventually summoned the resolve to pull the Longhorns—and himself—out of a deep depression. The sorry season didn’t hurt his recruiting touch. He signed a top-five recruiting class that includes the nation’s best tailback prospect (Malcolm Brown of Cibolo) and a wide receiver with a familiar last name (Brownwood’s Jaxon Shipley, younger brother of Jordan, McCoy’s go-to guy). He challenged Gilbert to fight off a trio of green players for his starting job. He called on Acho and senior defensive tackle Kheeston Randall to galvanize a locker room in the midst of an awkward phase. The Longhorns return 12 starters, but a raft of departures has left them thin and inexperienced at key areas such as offensive line (senior center David Snow accounted for 19 of the unit’s 36 career starts), wide receiver (the loss of leading receiver James Kirkendoll leaves the Longhorns without a proven playmaker) and in the secondary (top cornerbacks Aaron Williams, Curtis Brown and Chykie Brown were snatched away in the first five rounds of the NFL draft). Still, emerging pass rushers like junior Alex Okafor and

HOME GAME HANGOUTS

If it’s football season, and it’s Saturday, then it’s time to party

BEVO BOULEVARD

When the ‘Horns are playing, there’s no place more lively outside the stadium than 18th Street and San Jacinto Boulevard, where scores of local food vendors, musicians and students throw a smashing block party. Each university department has its own tent and unique party scene. Live pre- and post-game broadcasts by AM 1300 The Zone offer game predictions from the experts, and vendors donate 10 percent of sales to the Bevo Endowment, which finances scholarships and takes care of the team’s bovine mascot.

J. BLACK’S

With its dark interior vibe and upscale food, this West Sixth lounge doesn’t seem like a place where a crowd of rowdy fans would gather. But the pulled pork Frito pie, Mexican martinis and a complimentary shuttle to the stadium keep things packed.



POSSE EAST

First it was a 1930s-era gas station, and now it’s one of the best burger-and-beer joints for game day revelry. The outdoor seating allows for a good view of the stadium, and if there’s a lull in the action, there’s a slew of board games and more than 300 novels and textbooks inside. Hopefully, this football season won’t be less interesting than a game of Chutes and Ladders or Jenga.

CROWN AND ANCHOR PUB

Juicy burgers, a wide selection of beers, plenty of TVs and a big patio make this pub perfect for relaxing and game-watching.

CUATROS

The 20-foot “Cuatrotron” TV on the main patio is enough to satiate those who don’t have tickets to the actual games. Plus, you can branch out from standard football fare with dishes like ahi tuna tacos.

SCHOLZ GARTEN

This is the biggest party for pre-gamers as well as ticketless diehards who want to stay out of the heat. A beer’s throw (not recommended) from the stadium and shouting (recommended) distance from the tailgate party, the biergarten offers 20-ounce beers, cheap food and a friendly vibe—for those rooting for the home team, of course.

—KIMYA KAVEHKAR

J. BLACKS PHOTO BY CORY RIVADEMAR; GAME PHOTO FROM GETTY IMAGES.

THE QUARTERBACK QUESTION

Will Garrett Gilbert get the nod to start as QB this season, or will the honor go to a newbie?

The Longhorns are looking for the usual traits in their starting QB: smarts, toughness, an accurate arm and an indefatigable work ethic. Does the team have a guy like that on its depth chart? They should by now. After a spring arms race between junior **Garrett Gilbert**, sophomore **Case McCoy** and freshmen **Connor Wood** and **David Ash** ended in a stalemate, offensive coordinator Bryan Harsin extended the contest to the end-of-term offseason period in which coaches are forbidden by NCAA rules from supervising player meetings, workouts and practices. "Right now all those guys have an opportunity," Harsin says. "They know their preparation is going to be key."

The hope is that in that time, one of the four have eked out enough of an edge for Longhorns coaches to pick a starter before preseason camp begins this month. How Gilbert let the race get this tight in the first place boggles the mind. He was the heir apparent after all, the slam-dunk pick to not only succeed Colt McCoy but also wipe out his many passing records. Gilbert has it all: pedigree (his dad, Gale, was an NFL backup in Super Bowls XXV through XXIX), size (6'4" and 218 pounds) and the credentials (he won consecutive 4A Division I titles at Lake Travis High). Plus, he had recruiters swooning, then seething when Texas signed him in 2009. How confident were the Longhorns that Gilbert would ease into burnt-orange lore? They didn't sign any other quarterbacks that year and converted a Longhorns backup, senior John Chiles, to receiver. That left junior also-ran Sherrod Harris as the only obstacle between Gilbert and the No. 2 job, and Gilbert easily beat

him out before opening day. In subsequent games, most of Gilbert's on-field experiences were of the clipboard-holding, earpiece-wearing vicarious variety, with a few mop-up duty exceptions. That sample size—15 of 26 passing, 124 yards and no touchdowns in eight limited appearances—was too small for anyone to form any strong opinions.

Of course, that all changed after the 2010 BCS Championship. When McCoy was knocked out of the game on the fifth play from scrimmage and Gilbert nearly rallied Texas to victory against Alabama despite throwing four interceptions, Longhorns fans came away optimistic, applauding the courage Gilbert showed under fire in the 37-21 defeat. But when fans continued their vigil for Gilbert into last year, the QB made his supporters look self-deceiving, posting the kind of performances that are best charted by polygraph. Pyrrhic victories like Gilbert's 4 of 16 outing in a win against Nebraska followed career performances in crushing losses, like the 344-yard, two-touchdowns effort he had in the Longhorns' first ever loss to Iowa State.

In 21 games, Gilbert has completed 290 of 507 passes for 3,054 yards, 12 touchdowns and 21 interceptions. Not bad, but not great either. In the spring, the Longhorns stacked the quarterback competition in Gilbert's favor, giving him a top-shelf cast and pitting him against backups in reduced personnel drills. And *still* Gilbert couldn't distinguish himself. That opened the door for Case McCoy, Colt's kid brother. The 6-foot-2, 200-pound player doesn't have Gilbert's big arm, but a fraction of Colt's big heart could be its own advantage. Wood, at 6-foot-4 and 220 pounds, has the size, steps and throws, but he's hampered by having to play behind an inexperienced line. Ash, an early freshman enrollee, is just as green.

How will this all play out? Gilbert will likely start, though he'll be on a short leash. And it could be another year before the Longhorns find their perfect match. —A. LAWRENCE



sophomore Jackson Jeffcoat and reliable run-stuffers like Randall and Acho at least give hope to a defense that ranked sixth overall in 2010. Contrarily, the Longhorns offense, which averaged the fewest points (23.8) in 19 years and remains a work in progress, is another matter for a new staff. This one was revamped in the way that most are in the aftermath of meltdown—with heads rolling and plenty of ambiguity about who was fired and who quit. For the record: Offensive Coordinator Greg Davis resigned, while Offensive Line Coach Mac McWhorter and Defensive Tackles Coach/Special Teams Coordinator Mike Tolleson retired. Defensive Coordinator Will Muschamp, who was in line to take over at Texas when Brown retired, left Austin for the next best job: head coach at the University of Florida. In a flash, 37 years of institutional knowledge was out the door, but Brown figured it'd be for the best in the long run. "I was fortunate that we probably had some change because of the year that we had," says Brown, without a trace of irony.



Longhorns mascot Hook 'Em keeps the crowd pumped up regardless of the score on the board.

His new coaching cabinet plays to the burnt-orange base and gives Texas the potential to reach far beyond. The junior assistants are as familiar as they are new, and the coordinators are easily the best Brown's ever had. He split the offensive coordinator post

between a pair of 30-some-things: Major Applewhite is a former Longhorns star quarterback who has risen quickly through the coaching ranks in previous stops at Rice, Alabama and most recently as the Longhorns running backs coach. Bryan Harsin was the

genius behind the gridiron Globetrotter show that is Boise State and the architect of one of the sweetest victories over Oklahoma in recent memory. Combined, they strike the right blend of inventiveness and infectious energy that Brown felt he needed to

MACK'S TRACK RECORD

A look at the team's ups and downs under Brown





resuscitate an offense that was terrible on third down, worse in the red zone and co-led the Big 12 in turnovers. And Brown has largely left them alone to hatch a fix. “I think what he really wanted was just to get a different take on things,” Harsin says. “He’s done an awesome job as far as allowing me to implement this system the way that I know.”

Brown’s hiring of Diaz, formerly the coordinator at Mississippi State, was even more genius: His SEC experience gives him credibility with diehards, his Cuban-American heritage will go far in a state that has the country’s largest Hispanic population and his family’s political legacy will serve him in a post that comes with parallel pressures. His father, also named Manny, was a two-term mayor of Miami who rose to fame serving as the attorney for the Miami

relatives of Elián Gonzáles. The similarities between the fields of the father and the son are not lost on the Longhorns coach, especially when it comes to framing public perception (“Usually when you’re being praised or critiqued, the people who are doing it only have half the information,” Diaz says) and big rebuilding jobs. When the elder Diaz first assumed office in 2001, Miami was crippled by debt. Eight years later he left with the coffers bursting. His son hopes to spur a similarly dramatic turnaround at Texas. “Miami had all the potential to be a great city, and this place has all the potential to be a great program,” Diaz says. “Ultimately, it comes down to having a vision, and then you’re trying to sell others on what your vision is. You have to be unwavering and steadfast in your belief and let people understand that sometimes in the short term, even when they don’t see what you can in the future, you have to convince them that it’s going to work out.”

These days, so many teams produce news conferences that are designed to make their coaches appear almost presidential, but Brown is the only one who truly inhabits the role. His in-season Monday morning briefing sessions could be broadcast on C-SPAN. Seated behind a dais inside a sprawling ninth-floor luxury box at Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium with a mic and a stat sheet as his only props, he articulates the state of his team with the clarity of a general in front of a congressional panel. In his remarks to the assembled media, Brown opens with a

THE GAME CHANGER

In a first-of-its-kind TV deal, UT gets ready for its close-up

Move over CNN, there’s a new 24-hour network in town. Thanks to a whopping \$300 million, 20-year deal with ESPN, UT will, as of Aug. 26, become the first school to have its own exclusive channel, though only two live football games will be shown due to existing contracts with other networks. The aptly named Longhorn Network will be dedicated to the coverage of UT athletic events, featuring 200 live broadcasts of all sports and pre- and post-game shows with on-air personalities from ESPN. “The network makes sense at UT because the athletic program is so successful,” says Stephanie Druley, vice president of productions.

Programming will also include *Longhorn Extra*, a *SportsCenter*-style news and information show on weeknights at 10 p.m., an in-depth look into a team or group via *Texas All Access*, and game previews and recaps with Coach Mack Brown on Thursday and Monday nights, respectively. There will also be academic and cultural coverage, including spotlights on university research, student films and a speaker series.

Despite the \$247.5 million guaranteed to UT in its contract (the details of which were spotty at press time), students and alumni won’t be getting a discount. The channel will have to be special-ordered, and Druley says negotiations with service providers are still underway. —J. SCHRAEDER

few talking points, then makes some assumptions about its curiosities and wraps it all in a bow that frames him and the program in the best possible light. What’s more, he rarely strays from the script. Still, for as much as Brown spins, he is frank in a way that most in his profession are not. He seems genuine, especially in the way he points out mistakes, and rarely gets rattled when his honesty is used against him.

He knows the “gotcha moments” come with the territory. “People always say there’s too much coach-speak, that coaches are too political and don’t say what they think,” Brown says with a laugh. “And then when they *do* say what they think, [the media] jump on you about it. I’m at a point in my life where the best method for me is to say what I feel when I feel it.”

What does Brown make of this year’s team? He won’t say the r-word (*rebuilding*), but you get the sense it’s on the tip of his tongue. He loves his roster, and his new

coaching staff is first-rate. But with so little time to forge so many disparate elements, the most Brown can promise is that this year’s team, which will be considered a disappointment if they don’t make it back to a bowl game, will be better than the 2010 outfit.

For his part, Brown swears his unwavering leadership and commitment to the cause. The office has grayed his hair and slumped his 6-foot frame, but it hasn’t doused his fire. As for his vision for the Longhorns, it’s farsighted: The future is clear, but the present’s a blur; the only thing he can make out for certain are the growing pains in the distance. “We’re going to quit talking about how many we’re going to win and what we’re going to do, because we lost that right last year,” he says. “We’re going to try and be a team that plays hard, is innovative and fun to watch.” The dawn of a new Longhorns Nation is here, and Brown is seizing the day again. ●