

Texas Tech Mascot Traditions

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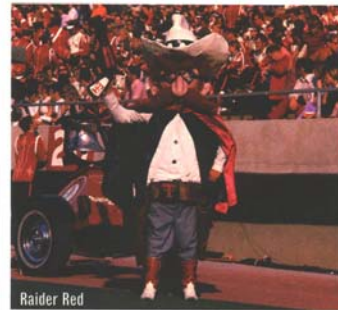


Imogene Higginbotham

In 1928, Imogene Higginbotham, daughter of assistant football coach Grady Higginbotham and known as Little Miss Higginbotham, was the mascot of the Matadors. She dressed in a Matador outfit and was on the field before every game that year. She helped the pep squad with their stunts and won the hearts of all players and fans.

After 1929, there is no evidence of a mascot until the Saddle Tramps' masked rider in 1936. This first masked rider was George Tate. After 1936, there was not another mascot until the reemergence of the official Masked Rider, which debuted at the Gator Bowl game in 1954. Joe Kirk Fulton was the first Masked Rider.

The Masked Rider was the only Tech mascot until 1971 when Saddle Tramp Jim Gaspard, created Raider Red from a Dirk West drawing. Raider Red was created because the Southwest Conference prohibited live mascots from traveling out



Raider Red

of town with their team. The two main aspects of the Raider Red tradition are that he is always a Saddle Tramp and his identity is kept a secret. At one time, Raider Red had a short-lived partner. In 1983, Raider Rose, a female version of Raider Red, was created to counter the tradition that only males could serve as Raider Red. However, Raider Rose was not popular and soon disappeared.



Raider Rose

According to several people and organizations on campus, the above mentioned mascots are the only ones known to exist throughout Texas Tech's history. With the Masked Rider and Raider Red, Tech has two of the most recognized and enduring mascots in the nation. ■

This past year Texas Tech celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the Masked Rider. The Masked Rider is the predominant mascot at Texas Tech. After reading many stories about the Masked Rider the question arose, what other mascots has Tech had over the years?

The earliest account of a Texas Tech mascot dates back to Sept. 17, 1925. That year, the Tech football team had been scoreless in its first two games. On this date, Tech not only scored, but won the game 30-0. In celebration of Tech's first victory, the team was given a black and white calf with the game's score branded on its side. The calf was popular throughout the rest of the year. During halftime, fans would attempt to ride the calf, but all were thrown off. At the completion of the season, the calf was slaughtered and barbecued. The hide was going to be preserved and hung in the athletic office, but it did not survive the slaughtering process. Tech's next animal mascot was a bull named "The Black Invader," but it was viewed as a jinx and replaced with a horse.



The Masked Rider