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GW-SS 100, continued from Page 12

17 of the last 20.

Overall, San Saba still owns a 57-38-4 lead in the series.

Through both periods of dominance, the winning team never considered dropping its weaker rival. And the team being dominated never thought about giving up and ending the rivalry.

"In the late 1960s until 1984, San Saba could have dropped Goldthwaite, but they didn't," Wetzel said. "And when the worm turned in our favor in 1984, we could always count on having a game with San Saba. They never ran away."

Jeff Pannell, who as San Saba's head coach lost seven times in eight games to Goldthwaite from 2009-2016, said, "We never had a thought or consideration about not playing Goldthwaite. We got our nose bloodied most of the time, but it's a good game for both communities."

Schulze, who has served under 12 San Saba head coaches since 1979, said that even when the Armadillos were rebuilding, they still wanted to play the Eagles. "We're not about to say we can't beat them. We're going to try," he said. "What the heck. Look at what happened in 1993."

In a rivalry in which team records, rankings and athletic talent mean little, even state championships don't mean anything. As Schulze mentioned, San Saba beat Goldthwaite in a 1993 district game before the Eagles rebounded and won 10 consecutive games and the Class 2A state championship.

By that time, Proffitt was well into his 28-year tenure as Goldthwaite's head coach. The Eagles won state again in 1994, and during a post-championship pep rally on the courthouse square, Proffitt made sure he informed the gathering that this Goldthwaite team also beat San Saba.

Sometime in the early 1990s, the rivalry became known as "The Battle of the River" since the Colorado River forms the boundary between the neighboring counties. The nickname stuck and T-shirts are sold in both

towns just for the Goldthwaite-San Saba game.

Proximity has led to countless and creative off-field shenanigans between students of the two schools that kept the rivalry strong. Students painted their school's colors on each town's railroad overpass. They also burned their school's initial in the center of the other team's field.

San Saba has accused Goldthwaite of hanging dead armadillos in its trees. Goldthwaite accused San Saba of prematurely lighting its homecoming bonfire once in the 1960s.

In the 1980s and '90s, stealing booster club signs in the players' front yards became so rampant that school officials met annually at the Colorado River bridge to exchange and return them to their rightful owners.

When Brad McCoy was San Saba's coach from 1989-1994, he wrote letters to his players and pretended they were from Goldthwaite players.

"Our players were listed with things they said they were going to do to us. Coach McCoy said he found the letters on his windshield and that they were from Goldthwaite players," said Landon Sanderson, a San Saba player at the time. "Looking back, I was naive. I thought it might have happened that way. I never thought my head coach would do something like that."

The off-field activities peaked from 1962-1985 when the Eagles and Armadillos often played in the season opener. That meant the build-up to the game lasted the entire summer. It later was moved to the third game so the junior high teams could also play, and more recently, is has been a district game in October.

Nowadays, students have found modern ways to pester each other about the rivalry.

"It's all on their iPhones now," Schulze said. "With social media, most of these kids know each other. They're texting back and forth and using Facebook to mouth at each other about the game."

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