



OUR ENGAGING GROUP OF KNOW-IT-ALLS

Four undergraduates, as personable as they are perspicacious, capture the College Bowl championship with a dashing display of celerity

Can four young men from a wet-behind-the-ears university in the Midwest find success on an intellectually demanding nationwide television show in slick, sophisticated New York City? You bet your sweet Intelligence Quotient they can.

This impelling question was clearly and firmly answered this autumn by OU's Four Horsemen of the Cerebrum, who with chilling decisiveness dispatched five hapless opponents en route to a *General Electric College Bowl* championship (*Sooner News-Makers*, Oct.).

Week after satisfying week, Oklahomans, with a mixture of pride and awe, watched as Ed Balsinger, Ralph Doty, Steve May, and Stephen Wilson displayed a remarkable range of knowledge and an uncannily quick recall ability in becoming the second state university team west of the Mississippi to retire undefeated with five straight wins (and \$10,500 for student scholarships).

The *GE College Bowl* may have even galloped past perennial front-runner *Bonanza* in the television ratings race during September and October in Oklahoma. Or at least *Lassie*, let's hope. Anyway, it became a pleasant Sunday afternoon habit to watch OU's "bright young team of varsity scholars" on *College Bowl* at 4:30 as well as the Sooner football playbacks an hour later.

Ignorance was no deterrence to the thousands of us who tuned in to watch the literate feats of two University students from Oklahoma City and two from Madill and Rush Springs, of all places. The viewers with college educations may have felt a bit self-conscious about their inability to "match wits with the champions," as the announcer challenged each week. (One paranoid friend detected sarcasm in the invitation.) But one learned to dismiss one's vast ineptitude at the game and identify strongly with the team.

How well we members of the home audience fared is quite irrelevant, really. The thoroughly enjoyable point

Not even breathing hard and looking poised and confident after a brief workout in Coach J. R. Morris' office are our undefeated College Bowl championship team of (left to right) Doty, Balsinger, Wilson, and May.

was in watching the dashing performances of the OU team. The team, to a man, had class. It won with élan. It was good for a state university which heretofore had been known far more, and unfairly so, for her football than for her academic excellence, to receive such recognition. And though winning a television quiz show doesn't automatically make the University of Oklahoma a great institution, it's nice to remind the people of the state and the country that OU is primarily a center of learning.

Scoreboard

OU 265 Drury	95
OU 320 Scranton University	95
OU 375 North Dakota State	75
OU 290 Auburn University	125
OU 225 McGill University	95

Of 291 colleges and universities which have competed since 1959 OU was the sixth state university and the second (with Rice) west of the Mississippi River to win a General Electric College Bowl championship. In all, 22 colleges and universities have won championships. In winning its trophy, OU finished fourth in offense in College Bowl history with 1,475 points, and second in defense with 455 points.

BALSINGER—Age 19, pre-med, chemistry major, interest in math, history, 3.7 grade average. Valedictorian at Madill High, National Merit finalist, played basketball, football, track. Member, ISA Council, Student Senate academic affairs committee. Hobbies: ham radio, chess, coin collecting.

DOTY—Age 21, Oklahoma City, spent freshman year at Duke. At Classen High he won National Merit Scholarship, active in debate, honor society, Latin club, received Classen Award. His major is letters, 3.6 grade average, candidate for Rhodes scholarship, plans to teach philosophy in college. Hobbies: Fencing, billiards, philosophy.

MAY—Age 19, Oklahoma City, St. Francis de Sales High, student council and choir there as well as captain of the debate team, director of several plays, intramural athletics, and class valedictorian. At OU he has a 3.4 grade average, is philosophy major, Phi Eta Sigma, Honors Program. Hobbies: Swimming, reading, handball.

WILSON—Age 19, letters major, 3.7 grade average, University Scholar, Honors Program. Graduate of Chickasha High, lives now in Rush Springs. Hobbies: Reading, movies.

Superb coaching was a strong factor in the team's successful showing. Dr. J. R. Morris, acting dean of University College, devoted many hours in getting the team ready, and the close rapport between coach and team was important. Coach Morris quickly came

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Backstage with the Brains

By SUSAN WALTZ

The Oklahoma Daily

How do members of OU's brainy College Bowl team score in the personality department? Do they fit the stereotype of the "brain," the dull introvert who trudges across campus with his head in the clouds and his nose in a book? Do they date? Or are they too busy with books to worry about social life?

Like nearly everyone else on campus, I crowded in front of a TV to watch the boys think their way past their opponents on *College Bowl*. And like everyone else I wondered what they were really like. So when I was introduced to Ralph Doty the week before their match with Auburn and he mentioned a team meeting with Dr. Morris, the coach, I begged to be included.

The meeting was in Ralph's room in the Towers (Adams Center), and he met me downstairs to escort me through the boys' dorm. When I walked in his room, Ed Balsinger was lying on a bed, his crutches propped on a chair beside him. Steve Wilson was sitting in a desk chair, toying with an ascot that he held throughout the meeting. Dr. Morris, in shirt sleeves, moved from chair to bed to standing position as the evening progressed. Ralph switched off a tape of the last College Bowl program, introductions were made, and I sat down on a corner of a bed.

"Steve May is studying," said Dr. Morris. "I tried to reach him, but he was never home." (May works as a kitchen boy in a sorority house and lives in Adams Center.) Someone switched the tape back on, and the boys talked about the last game and chuckled over their continuing failure with the music questions. "We make some pretty respectable guesses," said Dr. Morris with a laugh, "They're just not right usually."

"I saw Dr. Sutherland the other day," said Steve, "and he said, 'Would you believe Music 29!'" (A beginning course in music appreciation.)

At times there was silence as we concentrated on the tape. A band playing at a nearby dorm party blared interference, and

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Our Engaging Know-It-Alls

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to know the pressures of his new calling, and it is to his credit that he chose to retire with a perfect record. And not once was he hanged in effigy.

A combination of preparedness and growing assurance continued to benefit the OU team. The weeks of practice with a buzzer board similar to the one used on the show proved to be of invaluable help. Too, the team members complimented each other well. Doty and Balsinger were the most conspicuous, and though their speed on the toss-ups surpassed May's and Wilson's, their teammates contributed steadily and enormously on the bonus questions. As the weeks went by, the four became more accustomed to the pressure of the lights, the cameras, the growing tension before each show.

This familiarity was an advantage in the later contests, for there are subtleties in the game that are not apparent to those of us at home. A player can be disqualified from answering a toss-up even if he signals first if he or one of his teammates looks at one another. This is a rule that some players have difficulty in adjusting to, and having played before is helpful. Ironically Oklahoma was called for a violation of this "conference" rule in the last game, as were their novice oppon-

ents from McGill. (They also were called for a conference on a toss-up in their first appearance.) The reason for the rule is to prevent a player who is sure of the answer from signalling the others to let him have it.

Another refinement that must be learned is the pause by the player who has signaled for a toss-up first. He must wait until the announcer has identified him and his university before offering his answer. This rhythm doesn't come easily for some.

Each team has ample time to work on these techniques, for preparation begins at 10 a.m. on the day of the show for both aggregations. When the teams arrive at the NBC studios in the RCA Building, they first meet with Mr. Earle over a large, polished conference table in a room a floor above the studio where the show is to be televised. Mr. Earle goes over the rules, pointing out possible pitfalls, then begins reading sample questions from neatly typed 5x8 cards. After an hour's warmup, the teams take the elevator down to the sixth floor, where the show will be shot, for final practice rounds before the real McCoy, taped at 2:30 p.m. New York time (12:30 p.m. CST). There is a lot of pacing, some conversation, a team meeting with Mr. Earle to go over what each team member will say during the interviews at halftime, and just before entering the studio, some sandwiches and soft drinks materialize and are disposed of perfunctorily. No one is thinking about food.

An hour-and-a-half before show time, the teams are seated at the familiar desks, and again Mr. Earle begins a practice game with score kept for the first time. OU's four always performed well in practice, and they played even better when the chips were down. Only against Scranton did they lose, by twenty points or so, a practice game. Auburn and McGill stayed fairly close, but the scoreboard was switched off during the North Dakota State run-through when the score became embarrassingly lopsided.

During the half-hour show, only 18 minutes are taken up with the actual game, and in this time about 18 toss-ups are given. The ultimate winner must dominate these questions, which depend on speed, in order to get to the more heavily weighted and more leisurely bonus questions. OU averaged

a dozen toss-ups per game and therein lies much of the story. No contest was really close after the first minutes, though the McGill victory, since so much was riding on it, seemed closer and more suspenseful than the others.

The last victim appears to have been stung more deeply than the rest. Rather grandly proclaimed as the "Harvard of Canada," McGill University lost

in the fifth and championship-clinching match. Its school newspaper headlined its account of the loss "Oklahoma University Gives McGill Lobotomy," whereupon followed a rather blistering appraisal of the team and performance. The abashed team captain answered with a letter in which he described OU's players as "machines" and "automatons" who were

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not particularly bright, just well con-
ditioned. Such grace. And such inac-
curacy.

The "machines" of the OU team
are now full-fledged celebrities who
are receiving a good deal of well de-
served recognition for their victory.
The University has begun a special
College Bowl Scholarship Fund with
the money from General Electric
(\$9,000), from Gimbel's Department
Store in New York (\$1,500), and from
contributions from Oklahoma alumni
and friends who wish to honor the four
young men who impressed the country
with their intellectual prowess, gave
many Oklahomans and Sooners a sense
of pride, and brought some very fav-
orable attention to their alma mater.

Great credit, of course, should go
to Balsinger, Doty, May, and Wilson
who achieved success under great pres-
sure. But consider the pressure their
classmates are under. They must
"match with with the champions" not
for just half-hour a week for five
weeks, but for an entire semester. And
for grades yet. *END*