

Remember Jack Mitchell and Darrell Royal and Claude Arnold and Eddie Crowder and Gene Calame and Jimmy Harris? Well, Forget 'Em.

By Paul Galloway

Well, don't really forget them, that's impossible and unnecessary. Just watch a rising star who will likely surpass most statistically and maybe even in other ways

I have a friend who contends that if you gave a fellow the choice of changing places with, say, (A) Bart Starr, (B) Johnny Unitas, (C) Joe Namath, (D) Don Meredith, (E) Lyndon Johnson, (F) Dick Nixon, (G) Gerald Ford, or (H) Hubert Humphrey, he'd more than likely choose, A, B, C, or D instead of E, F, G, or H. He believes this explains why it seems that the United States has more good quarterbacks than politicians. Admittedly, there are a few rather gaping holes in his conclusion, but even if many take issue with this unquestionably dubious proposition, most people will probably agree that there is an undeniable glamour, a charisma if you will, associated with those who do all the talking in the huddle, squat behind the center, chant those symbolic numbers, and dominate offensive football. And remember that layman football experts are called Monday morning *quarterbacks*, not armchair nose guards.

Good football teams invariably have good quarterbacks, and the University of Oklahoma, in its great days since World War II, have had some crackerjacks. What Sooners won't glow with nostalgia when they recall the snaking runs of Royal and Mitchell off the quarterback option, the precision passing of Arnold, the non-pareil deception of Crowder's fakes, the gutsy, reliable direction of Calame, the overall brilliance of Harris?

In recent years, however, quarterback has sometimes been more a dilemma than a delight. At the beginning of last season the position was still a source of uncertainty, but in the first game against Oregon an unprepossessing

teenager named Bobby Warmack ran the new Oklahoma I with enough poise and promise to end any doubts about where the next man-under was coming from.

That Saturday the Ada sophomore hit 7 of 9 passes and ran 6 times for 38 yards, setting up the second touchdown with a 36-yard run to the 2, in leading the Sooners to a 17-0 win and establishing himself as the starting quarterback. In the next week's 33-11 victory over Iowa State, he connected on 7 of 13 throws for 124 yards and two TD's and ran 41 yards to the 2 again to set up another score. In the third game, the marvelous defeat of Texas in the Cotton Bowl, the wispy Warmack broke the school individual total offense record by connecting on 12 (an OU game mark) of 21 tosses for 220 yards and rushing for 60. He ended the season with 335 yards rushing and 843 passing (57-103 for 55 percent) to finish second in the Big Eight, behind Tim Van Galder of Iowa State, in total offense. If he continues his pace, he'll end his career as the top all-time passer and total offense leader for OU quarterbacks.

More importantly, like his most outstanding predecessors, he has the qualities of a winner. As quarterback he led his high school team to state championships in 1963 and 1964, and he displayed the same intangible ability to win in his debut with a college team that was rebuilding after its worst season in history and under a new offense. His first season also developed added maturity and confidence, if his improved play in practice and in the Alumni game this spring is an indication.

During the summer, while most of us in Oklahoma were occupied with avoiding heat prostration (although something went wrong in August—it was almost temperate) and sweating out the American League race, Warmack didn't wander far from a football, staying in Norman and solitarily honing his condition and passing each weekday afternoon on the empty, sunburned OU practice field.

On one searing, humid July afternoon, a writer and a photographer ventured out into the Oklahoma sun to record one of those workouts. A Five-Day Deodorant Pad wouldn't have lasted for five minutes, but there he was, shirtless and in gray shorts and football cleats, jogging around the field along the line of water sprinklers by the baseball diamond, then turning east along the covered fence adjacent to Lindsey, and finally circling in toward the field entrance.

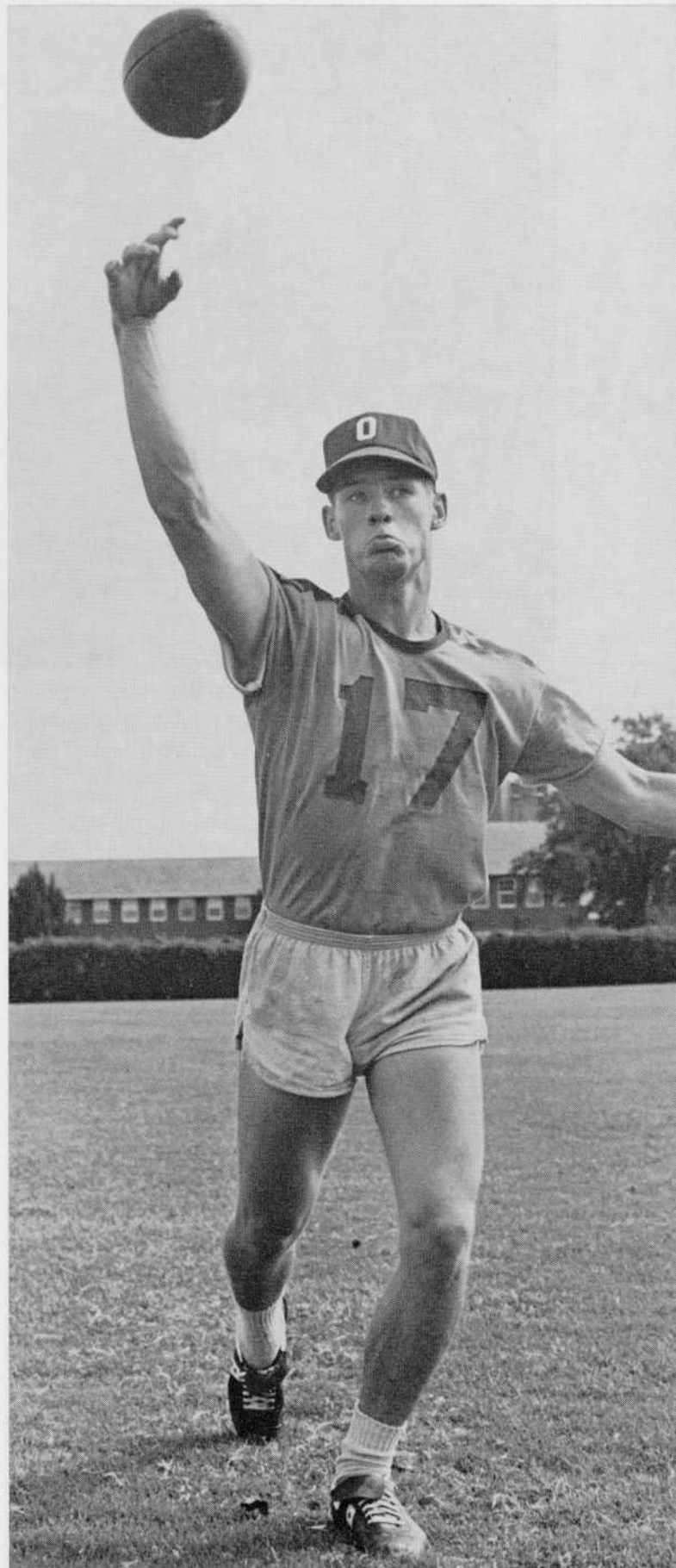
One is not awed by Warmack's size in a football uniform, and without the protective pads and paraphernalia he is even less imposing physically. At six feet and 170 pounds, he is no Twiggy, but neither is he Roman Gabriel. "I look small because I'm thin-chested," says Warmack. "I'd like to put on more weight, and if I could make 175 or 180, I'd be happy. I don't think it would slow me down any. I've been working out with weights to develop the strength in my arms—I need to be stronger so I can throw the long ball harder—but it hasn't added any pounds. I'm big enough though."

Slipping into a starred green-and-yellow Oil Bowl jersey, which with the red OU baseball cap he wore made an almost psychedelic color combination, he posed for pictures before resuming his conditioning program. "I begin workouts at 4:30 and follow a card which changes from week to week," he said. "Right now I start by jogging a mile, then I run ten 30-yard sprints, and jog another mile. After 45 minutes of this I lift weights for a half hour, then hang on the chinning bar to loosen my arm before throwing 100-150 passes into a net over the goal posts. I begin at 10 yards and work back to 40 yards."

A couple of days later, between bites of a chicken-fried-steak lunch at the Town Tavern on Campus Corner, Warmack talked of choosing OU and becoming a starting quarterback. He is a neat, well groomed, polite young man, throwing in a generous number of "sirs" in conversation with anyone who looks as though he was around when World War II began, a trait which though admirably respectful can also cause a wince or two from one who prefers to ignore his eligibility for such deference.

Warmack wears his hair short, parted cleanly, and combed, a style in contrast to the fashionably longer, meticulously mussed bangs worn by the well coiffed fraternity man or the flowing, anarchistic mane of the hippies. His eyes are pale blue, something which probably doesn't mean much to opposing linemen but which would not be calculated to hurt him with the coeds, whose weakness for quarterbacks is often as deep as their ignorance of football is vast.

Pleasant and unaffected, Warmack, who turned 20 a week after the season ended last year, appears to handle the attention an OU football star automatically receives in a state which turns to the sports page first with grace, humor, and a tinge of disbelief. He is quick to bestow genuine praise to the very talented back-up quarterback, Jim Bugar, by far the best number-two man since Jay



This summer Warmack worked on his passing, throwing 150 a day.



Avoiding the heat, temporarily at least, the Sooner quarterback drives to the OU practice field for a two-hour conditioning session.

O'Neal directed the 1955 and 1956 alternate teams to a number two national ranking behind the top-ranked starting OU team. "It's great to have to compete with a guy like Jim," he says. "The pressure he puts on me, I know, makes me a better quarterback, and it probably makes Jim better, too." Having such a capable replacement available could have recuperative powers also. Last year Warmack, who is not prone to injury, never having been seriously hurt, suffered a shoulder bruise in the Colorado game and played only a series of downs against Kansas State the following Saturday. Bugar looked sharp in pushing the Sooners by the Wildcats, 37-6. The next weekend Warmack was completely recovered.

Did he have any trouble deciding on OU? "No sir," he answered his wincing listener. "I kind of regret not visiting other schools, but I didn't because I had my mind made up on Oklahoma if I was offered a scholarship. Coach Mackenzie recruited me for Arkansas and asked if I was thinking about any place besides OU, and I told him, 'No, sir.'"

His freshman season was undistinguished. There were four other quarterbacks on the squad, and though War-

mack began at first team, he soon dropped back to second and third teams through the four-game schedule, playing sparingly in the first three. "I was pretty uneasy most of my first semester," he recalls. "Getting used to college and a new system was hard, and the competition was keener. I played well in the last game against OSU and this encouraged me." In January Mackenzie came to OU, and in spring practice Warmack started on the fifth team, behind Bugar, Dacon, Cagle, and Lalla. He moved up to first in a week before dropping back to second and third. He played little in the rain-marred Alumni game, which was won on a long pass from Dacon to a frosh end named Randy Meacham, and was still running behind Bugar. The spring ended on a sparkling note, however, in the last intrasquad scrimmage the next Saturday when with Bugar out with a hip pointer Warmack hit on 10 of 18 passes for 247 yards and three TD's in directing the Whites over the Reds, 25-19. Cagle of the Reds likewise had a brilliant day, and the quarterback stock soared.

When two-a-days started last September and Dacon injured his knee, a three-way dogfight among Bugar, Cagle, and Warmack ensued. No one really stuck out, however, and Mackenzie decided to narrow the field in one tension-filled afternoon scrimmage. Bugar and Warmack were his picks. "The Friday night before the Oregon game," says Warmack, "Coach Mackenzie called Bugar and me into his room at the Oklahoma City hotel where we spend the night before Norman games and told us that Jim was his starting quarterback but that I'd be put in early." Bugar had difficulty getting the team untracked after a couple of series, and Warmack entered the game and subsequently nailed down the starting position.

Before we left, Ernie Wilson came over to the table and showed Warmack a letter he had received from Ben Hart, who was in training camp with the New Orleans Saints. The

Warmack and Some Others

	Rushing					Passing			
	TC	Yds.	TD	PA	PC	Int	Yds	Pct	TD
Jack Mitchell (46-48)*	318	1,455	24	48	26	3	306	54.2	2
Darrell Royal (46-49)*	237	631	13	163	73	16	1,086	44.8	12
Claude Arnold (48-50)	139	421	6	155	81	6	1,572	52.3	18
Eddie Crowder (50-52)	180	661	8	110	61	4	1,189	55.5	11
Gene Calame (51-54)	239	683	9	43	18	3	316	41.9	0
Jimmy Harris (54-56)	225	1,187	11	75	36	4	711	48.0	10
Bobby Page (62-64)	149	438	7	90	31	10	449	34.4	5
Bob Warmack	57	335	3	103	57	4	843	55.0	4

*Includes statistics made while playing halfback (Quarterbacks like Carl Dodd, Bobby Boyd, David Baker, Bob Page, Monte Deere, and Johnny Hammond have been omitted because of their limited time at the position.)

irrepressible split end had sent his greetings to Warmack and had characteristically enclosed a Saints schedule with the predicted outcome of each game. Hart apparently thinks he is with the Packers.

That evening in an apartment Warmack shared this summer with Steve Zabel, the fine end prospect who transferred from New Mexico Military Institute this year, while he worked for a Norman advertising firm, he offered some thoughts about playing quarterback. "One of the key parts is getting the timing down and knowing your receivers. I have to set up to throw as fast as I can, within a second and a half. The ball has to be thrown in about three seconds. Before each practice the passers and the receivers work out together for about 45 minutes, practicing timing and routes. The most difficult thing I have to remember is to drive the ball as hard as I can. I don't throw a real hard ball. Mine is pretty easy to catch, but I have to watch hanging it up too long.

"Routes are important. On some patterns I have to lay the ball out there before the receiver makes his cut. We have to know each other well, and I must know he'll run the correct route. We had some fine receivers last year, especially Ben, and I don't know who'll be split end this year. Hinton might play there some. He's a fine target. He's fast, he runs a good route, and he has good hands. Killingsworth and Barr have looked good, too.

"On pass plays I generally key off a certain defensive man. I notice where he's lined up and when I drop back, I keep my eye on him. Say we're running a hook route to the split end with the tailback as safety valve. Our key might be the monster. If he goes back with the end, I'll flip to the tailback. We had a number of sprint-out passes last year. Their advantage is the pressure they put on the defensive end or the monster or the walkaway. If he goes back with the wingback or end, I duck down and run with the ball. If he comes to me, I throw."

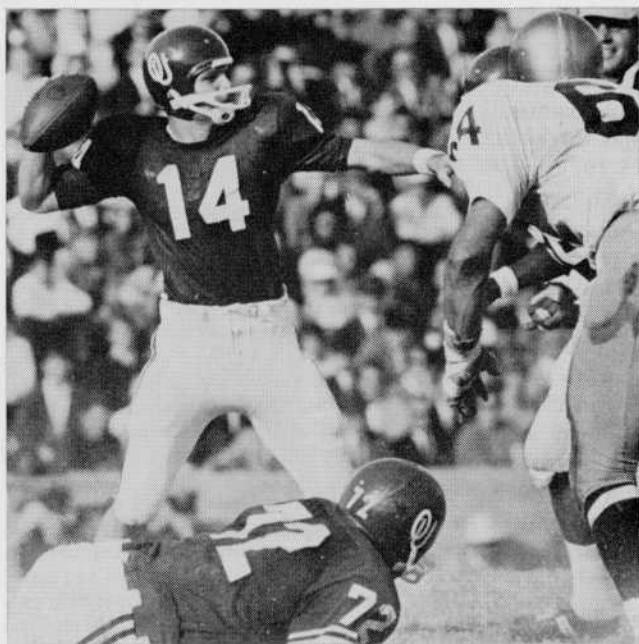
Mackenzie fondly described Warmack as a "good stumbler" whenever he was asked about his running. Warmack is far from fast, but he runs with good balance and is heady

and quick. Says Warmack: "When the passer is dropping back, he's most vulnerable. When I set up, I'm wanting to throw, but if the receivers are well covered and those 230-pound linemen are coming at you, you've got to do something. Some quarterbacks might say they run only out of fear, but I like to run. I enjoy it. I'd run a lot more if they'd let me.

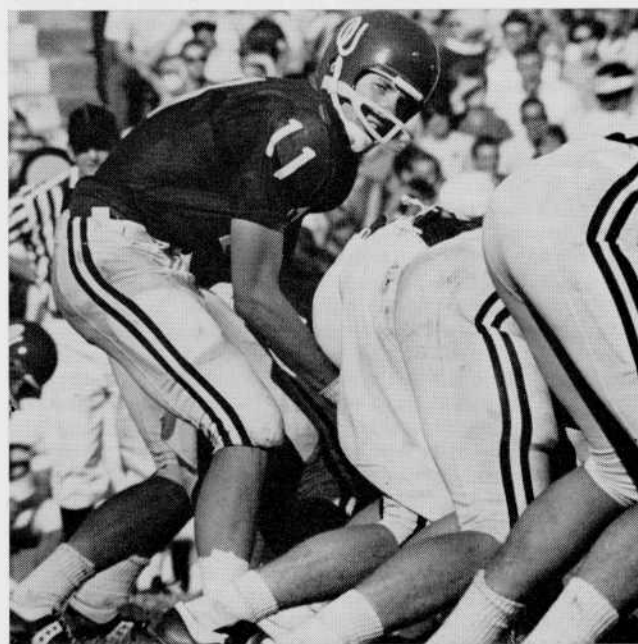
"There are some things I had to work on last year. One was a tendency to tip off the direction a play is going by my position. If a play is going to the right, I have to be careful that my hands or body doesn't point to the right. I had to watch a habit of lining off a bit toward the right of center if the play was heading that way. A good lineman or linebacker can pick up these things.

"Last year I thought we should have done better. With a little luck we could have been 9-1. This year I think we can have a fine team. We've lost our three best guards in the offensive line, and these are going to be the hardest places to fill, but I know we're going to work awfully hard at being a good team."

What the Sooners will do in 1967 *will* have a lot to do with the offensive linemen, but at least the quarterback position is securely in good hands. Warmack promises to take his place in the line of masterful OU quarterbacks. It is enjoyable but misleading perhaps to compare statistics as proof of his relative excellence, because most of Wilkinson men-under called the shots for teams which were rushing powerhouses and which passed about as often as they called time-outs. Thus their passing yardage is less than remarkable. On the other hand, the real mark of a good quarterback is his ability to bring home a winner, and Warmack's job is considerably more challenging than any of the predecessors because of a Big Eight with seven *real* opponents and a young OU club woefully lacking linemen like those of yesteryear. Warmack's task is a formidable one, but if you asked him if he was overly concerned, he's sure to answer "no." "No, sir," that is. And my friend still maintains that you'd rather be Warmack than, for example, Henry Bellmon. END



Jim Burgar is the best back-up quarterback OU has had in a decade.



A lot depends on those fellows who line up in front of Warmack.