

Football

1970

By Bill Hancock

"Your mission, Mr. Fairbanks (you have already chosen to accept it) is to defeat the enemy. You have been supplied with a young but eager army which you must train yourself. Good luck."

That's the problem facing Oklahoma football coach Chuck Fairbanks as he prepares to lead his 1970 Sooners into action.

Speed and size abound in Soonerland like never before, but color the Big Red green with only ten starters back from 1969. Weaknesses cropped up during the spring in such key areas as the offensive line and the defensive secondary — both manned largely by newcomers — and game experience will probably be the only tonic.

That game experience will come in a flood for the secondary, when the Sooners invade Texas for a September 12 match with Southern Methodist. SMU coach Hayden Fry witnessed last spring's Varsity-Alumni contest, and licked his chops at the holes drilled in the Varsity secondary by Bob Warmack.

About the only thing Fry and any other scouts can gain from a spring game is a sunburn, however, because most coaches don't like to put all their wares in the case too soon. Such was the situation at Norman.

Fairbanks admitted concern over the Alum's passing success, but reminded that changes would have been made "in a real game" to stop Warmack's fun. The new zone coverage is talked about with confidence by those in the know.

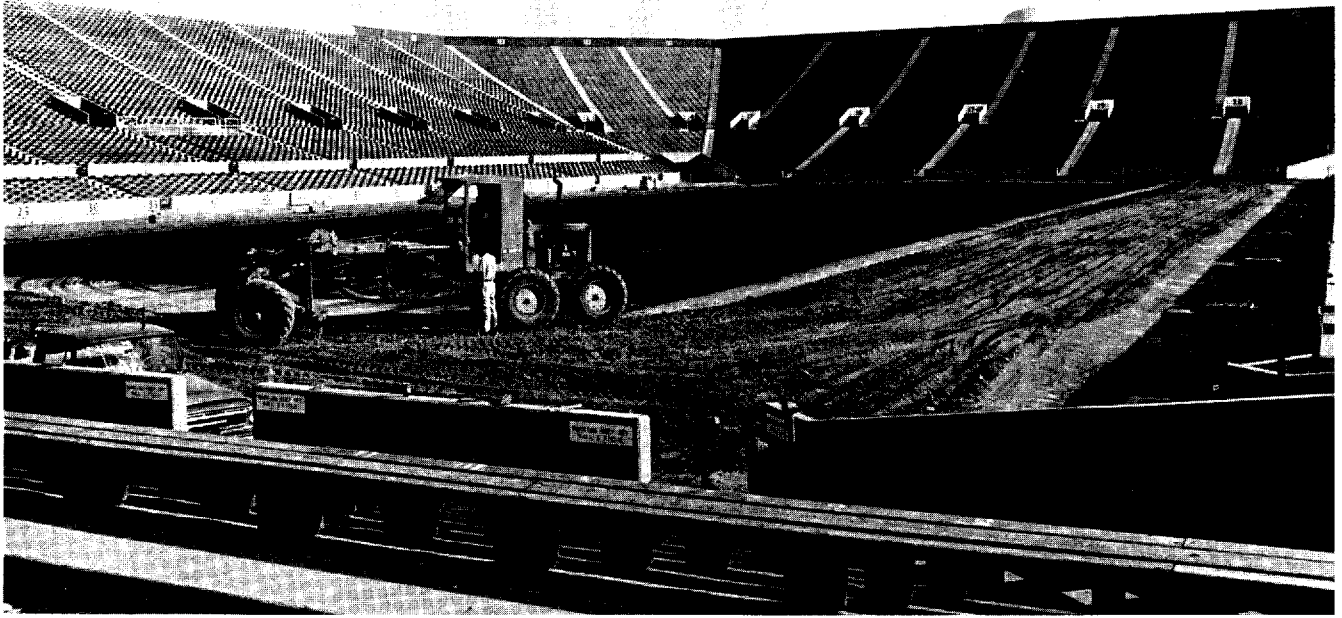
The offensive situation is questionable. Potential talent is there at every position, but unless that talent becomes kinetic soon, the Sooners may still be the proverbial "year away."

Not since the late Jim MacKenzie arrived from Arkansas with his red helmets has so much about OU football been so new. The Sooners will have a new turf, new formations and, most importantly, new people. Fairbanks will attempt to mold the fruits of two bountiful recruiting harvests and a smattering of talented oldsters into a contingent in keeping with his 23-9 three-season record.

It won't be easy.

Gone when the Sooners step onto their new Tartan Turf field in September will be such stars as line-backer Jim Files, tackle Ken Mendenhall and end Steve Zabel.

Bill Hancock from Hobart will be a junior in journalism this fall. He served last year as sports editor of the Oklahoma Daily and this fall will be working for sports information director John Keith.



The sometimes sodden turf of Owen Field will be gone this fall and in its place Tartan Turf

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Another fellow named Steve also will be missing. Heisman Trophy-winner Steve Owens ruled the rushing roost in Soonerland for three years. There's no sense looking for a replacement, Sooner coaches figure, because there ain't one.

Also gone are guard Bill Elfstrom, fullback Mike Harper and tackle Jack Porter, who cleared the way on most of Owen's 358 carries last fall. Split end Joe Killingsworth and defensive halfbacks Rick Hetherington, Joe Pearce and Bruce Stensrud also used up their eligibility.

Assistant head coach Pat James and coach Billy Gray, who spent four years tutoring the defense, also are gone, having resigned to enter private business. New coaches Jim Dickey and Jim Johnson will take up the slack.

Is anyone back? Well, yes.

The defense has linebackers Steve Aycock and Steve Casteel, end Bruce DeLoney, tackle Kevin Grady and safety Monty Johnson returning. Lionell Day and Vince LaRosa, defensive starters in '69, probably will play offense this fall. Glenn King and Albert Qualls, part-time starters last year, also are back.

Wingback Roy Bell, center Jeep Dewberry, tackle Daryl Emmert and quarterback Jack Mildren bolster the offense along with guard Steve Tarlton, who was injured midway through the 1969 campaign. Split ends John Shelley and Everett Marshall and wingback Geoffrey Nordgren also return, although Shelley and Nordgren may play defense.

Early in the winter Sooner coaches noticed that only four offensive regulars would be returning and realized a change must be made.

But what? Well, here's a top-flight quarterback. There are some fine young receivers coming up. Why not open it up, throw more and give the quarterback a chance to show his stuff?

Hence the new pro-style Veer-T option offense was born. The Sooners will send at least two receivers wide on nearly every play, sometimes more.

Primary reason for the advent of the Veer-T was Larry Jack Mildren, 6-0, 196-pound quarterback from Abilene, Texas. Mildren, the much-publicized high schooler who led OU's freshmen to a perfect season in the fall of '68, won the starting varsity position early in the fall of '69. He was chosen the Big Eight sophomore-of-the-year after completing 79 of 172 passes for 1,319 yards. He added 630 running but lost a big hunk of that trying to pass.

The Sooners will move into 1970 with only two quarterbacks. Dave Robertson, a Garden Grove, California, native who threw for 606 yards and six touchdowns as a freshman, will be Number 2.

Roy Bell, Clinton junior who was Number 2 rusher in 1969 with 467 yards, will play fullback in the Veer-T. Bell was slowed by an injury for much of last year, but an early-summer operation seems to have corrected the ailment.

Everett Marshall, who carried only 16 times as Owen's back-up man last fall, has inherited the running back job. A 185-pounder, Marshall makes up for Owen's size and durability with speed, as was witnessed by his delightful performance in the spring game.

Several young backs crowd in line behind Bell and Marshall. Among these are Mike Smith, a junior from Durant; Joe Wylie, the Henderson, Texas, sophomore who was unstoppable as a freshman; Steve Dodd from Lindsay and Pete Halfman, a Sacramento, California, junior college transfer.

The talented youth which will be characteristic of the 1970 Big Red pops up rapidly in the wide-receiver department.

Heading the list is split end Greg Pruitt, who turned

on freshman crowds with his 9.6 speed. He hauled in 13 passes for 237 yards as a Boomer, and returned 11 punts for 246 more. Junior John Shelley, who spent the spring fielding baseballs for Sooner mentor Enos Se-more, adds experience. He caught five for 75 yards last year.

Jon Harrison, a Juco transfer who played with Mildren at Abilene Cooper High, performed well in the spring. The 5-9, 157-pounder appears set at flanker.

The host of speedy backs won't be able to do much if the offensive line doesn't come around. That category was the chief concern of coaches after spring drills with only center Jeep Dewberry and tackle Daryl Emmert returning with experience.

Dewberry, a 6-1, 210-pounder from Clinton, moved in at center last year when Mendenhall was shifted to tackle. He pleased the coaches in '69 and should be a year better in '70. So should Emmert, a 220-pound junior.

John Watson, a big fellow (6-5, 237) who played defense his first two years at Norman, was tried at offensive tackle in the spring. The need for experience in the forward wall may just keep him there. Sophomore Phil Jordan and lettermen Mike Mullen and Nelson Todd are battling for the other tackle spot.

Lionell Day, another refugee from the defense, was the top offensive guard in the spring with sophomore Ken Jones also performing well. Steve Tarlton, a two-year letterman who missed the latter part of last year with an injury, wants his old job back and may move somebody out.

In one of the big spring position changes, defender Vince LaRosa was switched to offensive guard. La-Rosa, an ace on defense before becoming a member of the long list of casualties in '69, is untried on offense but could fit in.

All-America candidates Kevin Grady, Steve Casteel and Monty Johnson will form the hub of the Sooner defense, which figures to be a bunch better than last year's crew which gave up nearly 29 points a game.

Grady, who has pushed his 6-3 frame up to 239 pounds, may be the long-lost big man needed to spear-head the defense. The Santa Ana, California, senior gave the Alumni fits from his left tackle position in the spring game, and a truer test will come this fall.

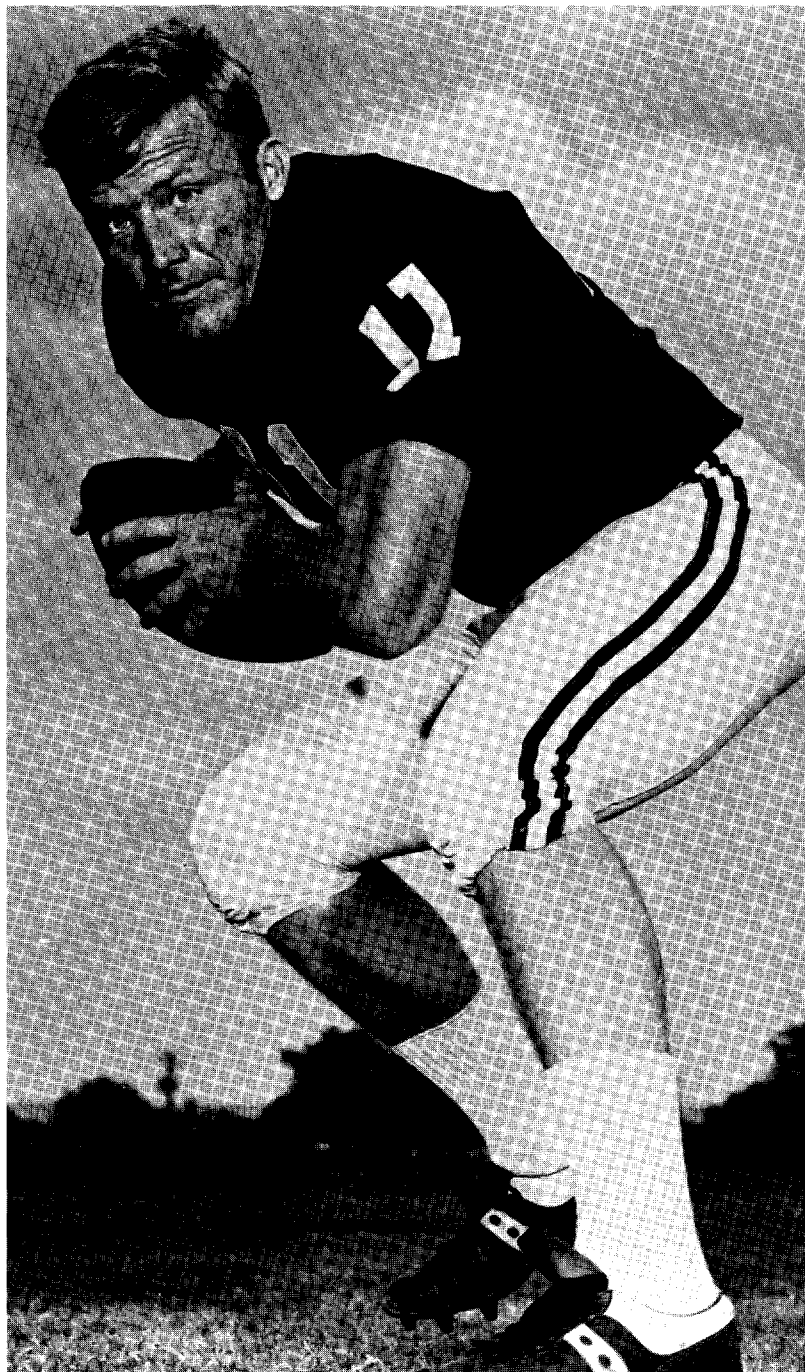
Sophomores Derland Moore, Tommy Saunders and Eddie Foster, all big, quick and young, are in the running for the other tackle spot.

Veterans Albert Qualls and Rick Mason look best at defensive end with powerful sophomore Raymond Hamilton also capable of playing.

Casteel, a senior from Garland, Texas, who sat out spring practice with an injury, heads a group of talented linebackers. Also back are juniors Bruce De-Loney and Steve Aycock who like to hit and do a good job of it.

The secondary, leaky to say the least last fall, boasts two of the most solid returnees on the team in Johnson and Glenn King.

An Amarillo, Texas, product, Johnson played in 1969 with the type of controlled abandon that adds years to coaches' lives. The 194-pound senior picked off three enemy passes last fall and returned for 67 yards.



Jack Mildren

One of the best Sooner athletes, physically, is cornerback King. The Jacksboro, Texas, junior played well last year despite punt-handling troubles and opened many eyes in the spring with his ball-hawking. Manning the other cornerback spot may be Geoffrey Nordgren, who wingbacked for the Sooners of '69. He seems pleased with the new position and should perform well.

Junior Steve O'Shaughnessy and sophomore Leon Crosswhite will battle for the other deep spot in OU's new 4-3-4 defense.

With so many young folks in so many positions, things are liable to change before the season opens, and the coaches will experiment right up until the Big Eight chase, which should be wild as usual, begins October 17.

Although it'll be impossible to beat the 4-0 performances of the 1968 and 1969 teams, the OU freshmen of '70 should have talent to spare. Among the signees are Grant Burget, who led Stroud to the Oklahoma state class B championship in 1969 and Richard Mildren, brother of the OU quarterback from Abilene.

A complete list of signers of Big Eight letters of intent follows. (* indicates all-state; # indicates all-district)

ENDS—*John Carroll (6-4, 192) Norman; *Wayne Hoffman (6-4, 205) Spiro; *Ron Hull (6-4, 210) McCook, Neb.; #Kirk Killion (6-4, 215) Houston, Tex., Memorial; *Jim Taylor (6-4, 210) Walters.

LINEMEN — #Drake Andrakes (6-3, 218) Burkburnett, Tex.; *George Davis (6-4, 220) Enid; *Kyle Davis (6-3, 205) Altus; Randy Erickson (6-3, 210) El Paso, Tex., Eastwood; #Gary Gibbs (6-1, 200) Houston, Tex., Spring Branch; *Randy Hartman (6-2, 212) Victoria, Tex.; *Mark Lundquist (6-4, 215) Pryor; Tim McGhee (6-3, 250) Oklahoma City Star Spencer; *Jerry Perkey (6-0, 210) Hobart; *Sid Riley (6-2, 215) Henderson, Tex.; *Rickey Stokes (6-1, 200) Brownwood, Tex.; #Jimmy Teston (6-5, 225) Sweetwater, Tex.; #Perry Thompson (6-3, 210) Sweetwater, Tex.; *Brad White (6-3, 218) Rush Springs; #Chris West (6-3, 235) El Paso, Tex., Address; *Joe Whitaker (6-3, 238) Throckmorton, Tex.; *Dennis Woods (6-2, 220) Albuquerque, N.M.

QUARTERBACKS — *Mike McCurdy (6-2, 190) Purcell; *Richard Mildren (5-11, 185) Abilene; James Stokley (6-0, 175) Haltom City, Tex.; Chuck Taylor (6-1, 185) Ft. Worth, Tex., Arlington Heights.

RUNNING BACKS — Bob Berg (6-1, 185) Wewoka; *Grant Burget (6-1, 180) Stroud; #Dexter Bussey (6-1, 190) Dallas; Mike Dulan (5-10, 168) Oklahoma City Douglass; Doug Griffey (6-3, 210) Ft. Worth, Tex., Arlington Heights; Mike Hronopolis (6-1, 210) Enid; #Bill Merideth (6-0, 215) Lubbock, Tex., Dunbock; #Kenneth Pope (6-0, 194) Galveston, Tex., Ball; John Reddell (6-1, 185) Arlington, Tex.; *Lucius Selmon (6-1, 210) Eufaula; David Shaw (6-1, 185) Ft. Worth, Tex., Paschal; DeWayne Smith (6-0, 170) Ada; Ron Waters (6-0, 185) Oklahoma City John Marshall; *Gary Weibert (6-1, 225) Limon, Colo.; *Tim Welch (5-11, 185) Bowie, Tex.; *Gary Young (6-0, 175) Clinton.

Sept. 12
Sept. 19
Sept. 26
Oct. 10
Oct. 17
Oct. 24
Oct. 31
Nov. 7
Nov. 14
Nov. 21
Nov. 28

Southern Methodist at Dallas (night)
Wisconsin (Band Day)
Oregon State
Texas at Dallas
Colorado at Boulder
Kansas State (Dad's Day)
Iowa State at Ames
Missouri (Homecoming)
Kansas at Lawrence
Nebraska at Lincoln
Oklahoma State

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Jim Dickey



Jim Johnson

Editor's Note: In early July Dr. James L. Dennis, who on June 25 had been given added authority by being named executive vice president for Medical Center affairs, announced his resignation. In September he is returning to the University of Arkansas where he was an administrator and teacher before coming to OU. Dr. Dennis made no bones about his feelings when he announced his decision to leave. He did not feel that he could work well with President Hollomon nor did he feel the medical education facilities were getting the care and attention they needed. In some quarters his fight for more money and better facilities for the Medical Center was billed as a personal feud between Hollomon and Dennis that some saw as a "him or me" stand off. Few remembered the times when Dr. Dennis lashed out with equal vigor at Dr. George L. Cross and his administration. There is no denying that Dr. Dennis' constant prodding has meant growth for the Medical Center. He has been an able administrator. Undoubtedly, however, he will be followed by another able administrator who will build on the groundwork laid by his predecessor. The following story is about one of those foundations. — CBR

Wakita:

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Wakita, Oklahoma: Population 452, a dot at the top of the map in the north central part of the state at the end of Highway 11-A.

That's the picture presented by the road atlas.

But during the past four years, Wakita has become known across the land to persons concerned with the increasing problem of delivery of health services to the medically deficient areas of the nation.

To health leaders, Wakita is synonymous with the "Oklahoma Plan" or "Project Responsibility," for here, in this prosperous Grant County community, is located the pilot project of the University of Oklahoma Medical Center's unique study to determine the most effective means of providing health services for rural peoples. Results of this "in vivo" research will be widely studied for years to come, if present interest is an indicator.

The Community Health Center of Wakita — embracing a 16-bed hospital, 13-bed extended care facility, 22-bed nursing home, clinic and pharmacy — went into full operation in December 1969 upon arrival of Dr. Donald Graves, the project's first full-time physician, from Lynchburg, Kentucky.

Medical Center officials describe Wakita as a "medical care experiment station," a demonstration unit in the packaging and delivery of medical services to rural areas.

It is operated as a wing of the University, a satellite of the University of Oklahoma Hospitals, with Robert C. Terrill, OU Hospitals director overseeing the hospital administration.

Experiment in Health

By Imogene Patrick