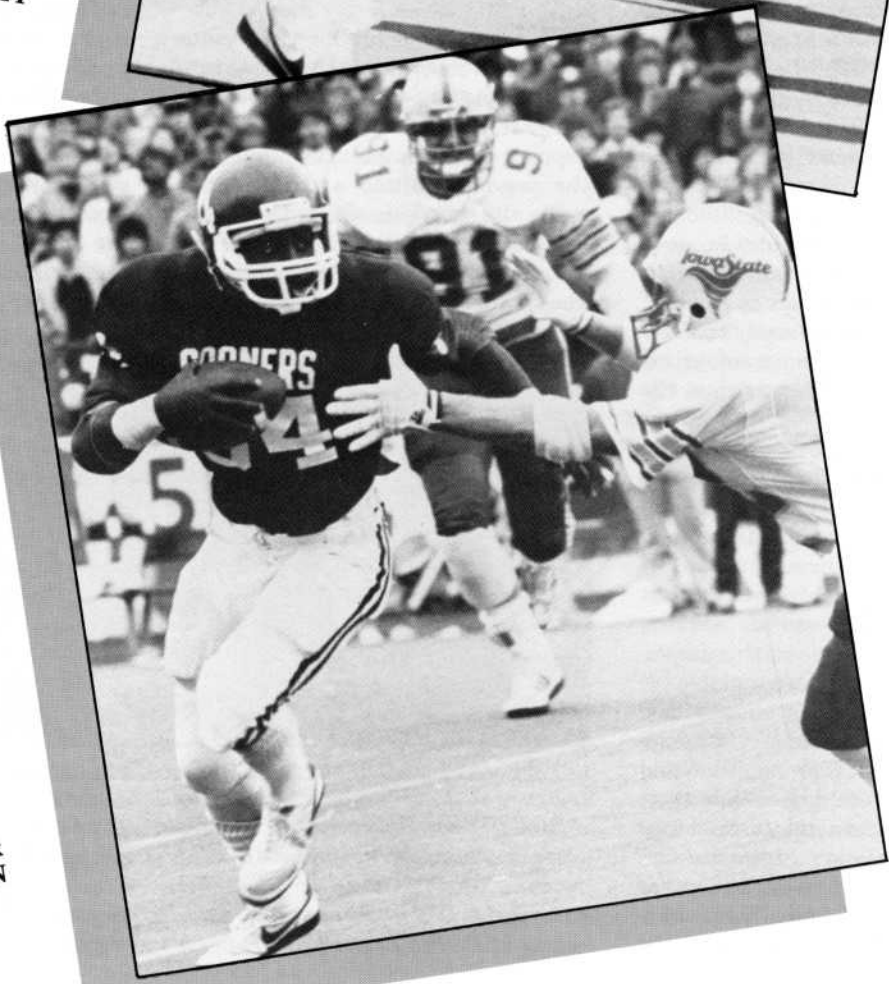


**Quarterback**  
**DANNY BRADLEY**



**Running Back**  
**SPENCER TILLMAN**

YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST:

# The Key to Success is WINNING

**Don't believe  
everything you read  
about the 1984  
new-look Sooners  
— not even in the  
following article.**

**I**t's summer. The pre-season football magazines are out. The Sooners are rated 4th — or 20th. In one, *Oklahoma State* is rated above OU.

Arrguh! But wait. Listen.

"Offense in many ways is show business. Fans come to see points scored — to see pretty plays. They like the pitch on the corner and the great run — the quarterback dropping back for a long, completed pass." *Pass?* "You throw the ball when you want to — not on 3rd and 8 when everybody in the stadium knows you're going to. You have to throw effectively on 2nd down — and 1st down."

Hang onto your OU pennants, folks. Those are the words of OU's new offensive coordinator, Mack Brown. In the cliché words of ABC's Monday night crew, "It's a whole new ball game."

There's a new atmosphere in the OU football offices these days. Assistant Head Coach Merv Johnson calls it a "re-dedication." Defensive Coordinator Gary Gibbs, with a smile that belies the problems he is facing, says, "Everybody's walking around with optimistic excitement."

Head Coach Barry Switzer says it's because of the young players.

"They're aggressive and excited. They want to win. It's their first opportunity, and they play with wild-eyed enthusiasm."

Another reason for optimism is Brown — and the return to the beloved wishbone.

"We'll run the option out of the 3-back wishbone concept," he says. "But we'll combine a lot more throwing and misdirection with it. We'll also run it out of 1-back and 2-back sets, with a lot more sophisticated passing game."

Some fans may faint — or giggle — at these words, for it seems OU has been promising more passing since the Cowboys were called Aggies. In truth, recently the Sooners have passed more. But frequently it *was* 3rd down, with the quarterback fleeing for his life behind look-out blocks ("Look out, here they come!") and flinging in desperation.

"The key to offensive success," the coaches say almost in unison, "is quarterback Danny Bradley."

"Danny had an excellent spring," Johnson says. Brown says Bradley "made a lot of progress, and we feel really good about Danny and (No. 2 quarterback) Mike Clopton going into the fall." Brown also cites wide receivers George Rhymes and Derrick Shepard and running backs Spencer Tillman and Earl Johnson as assets.

The 1984 schedule is what Brown calls "one of the toughest ever." Switzer concurs and wishes otherwise.

"I've always advocated playing teams that you know you're better than they are," he says. (How about letting this man make up the schedule?) "Coach (Bear) Bryant said it years ago: 'You don't play for national championships; you schedule them.'"

Given the defensive losses (Bryan, Shipp, Benson, et al), no one would blame Gibbs if he sobbed his way to the locker room. But even his sense of humor is intact as he speaks of the offensive evolution in college football.

"The mad scientists on offense

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By MARY LYLE WEEKS

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create havoc and try to confuse the defense."

Gibbs reiterates the importance of the young players.

"The biggest asset," he says emphatically, "will be the blend of young, inexperienced players, who have the desire to perform well and will lay it on the line every day, with the experienced, quality players." The quality players include end Kevin Murphy, UPI Big 8 Defensive Player in 1983, and nose guard Tony Casillas, of whom Gibbs says, "He may be the best down lineman in our conference." Gibbs also calls the experience of defensive backs Keith Stanberry, Jim Rockford, and Brian Hall "a definite plus."

The second area of great concern is the kicking game. Fans probably would agree with Johnson's description of OU kicking in 1983.

"It was inconsistent," he says. (How about scary?) Danny Atyia returns as punter and Tim Lashar, place kicker. Johnson says part of the inconsistency was because they were freshmen in '83. "Both made progress during the season, but this is an area that we still are not satisfied that we have improved as much as we wish."

The television picture for fall is mind-boggling. The Big 10-Pac 10 combo signed with CBS and say they will broadcast cross-over games. The College Football Association, composed of OU and everyone else, signed with ABC and ESPN and say they won't permit cross-over telecasts with the combo. The Big 8 signed with Katz Sports of New York for 10 to 14 conference games. Plus OU apparently has the option to schedule some broadcasts on its own.

Some experts (if there are any these days) say as many as five of the OU games analyzed below could be telecast.

#### *September 8, Stanford at Norman*

Television possibility: It's a cross-over game via KATZ.

Johnson described Stanford as "traditionally dangerous." Bad news: the Cardinal (refers to color, not bird, says the OU Press Guide) returns 35 lettermen. Good news: these guys lost 10 of 11 games last year.

Brown says John Paye is a "John Elway type" of quarterback. If so, the fans may sob. Believe it when it happens. Think of the Cardinal as more

traditional than dangerous.

Tip for the fans: Temperature at kickoff is likely to be 102° in the shade. Bring suntan lotion and at halftime, join the students at the pub across the street.

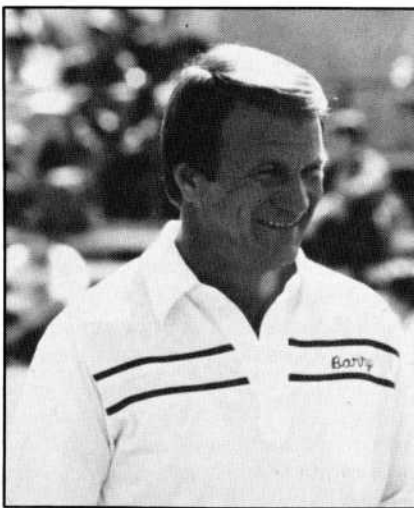
#### *September 15, Pittsburgh at Pittsburgh*

Television possibility: ABC for sure.

In 1975, OU crushed the Panthers 45-14. Don't bet your Billy Sims autograph on a repeat. Ranked anywhere from 3rd to 12th, Pitt returns 14 starters including quarterback John Congemi.

On the other hand, last year's 8-3-1 record includes wins over such powerhouses as Army and Navy. Only OU's 1965 team (an incredible 4-7-0 record) has lost to the Panthers, although the 1953 team was tied. OU will be tested but certainly could pass the test.

Tip for the television viewer: Turn down the TV sound and listen to John Brooks and Mike Treps on radio — they'll be better for your blood pres-



*Switzer says the excitement comes from the young players: "They want to win."*

sure than some broadcaster who thinks the Lambert Trophy means anything.

Sports trivia: The Pitt coach is named Serafino "Foge" Fazio. Really.

#### *September 22, Baylor at Norman*

Television possibility: Pray that ESPN does this one at night. It will still be 102° in the shade.

OU fans who made the trek to Waco remember Baylor fans with fondness. They're good sports, and the Bear paws they painted on Oklahoma

windshields washed right off.

Baylor was 7-4-1 last year and returns 46 lettermen, including 11 starters. The good news: they lost to OSU in the Bluebonnet Bowl. The bad news: They played Texas a lot closer (21-24) than did OU (16-28).

The Sooners can be tough at home, especially if the fans get excited. Since this one's a tossup, it's your duty to scream and yell a lot.

#### *September 29, Kansas State at Norman*

Television possibility: Unlikely unless all other games today are canceled.

This one's a laugh, right? It's hard to get serious about a team whose male fans wear purple suits. But it's the conference opener.

The Wildcats have a lot of folks coming back who earned letters — 50. However, those 50 won only 3 games in '83 and gave up 343 points.

Barring key injuries and a Schooner-full of mistakes, the Sooners should win this one.

#### *October 13, Texas at Dallas*

Television possibility: Another good bet, depending on World Series scheduling.

If the officials put their hands over their hearts when "The Eyes of Texas" is played, regard it as an ominous sign. However, with or without official help, the Longhorns are capable of beating up anyone on their schedule.

Among the 44 lettermen back are four defensive starters and seven on offense including two quarterbacks (??) and someone named Bill Boy Bryant, who's a wide receiver. From deep in the heart of, no doubt.

Texas will be tough, but if the Sooners can avoid errors and such aberrations as giving up 21 points in the third quarter, they can win.

Survival tip: Avoid downtown Dallas Friday night. It's full of children screaming obscenities about OU while their parents look on approvingly.

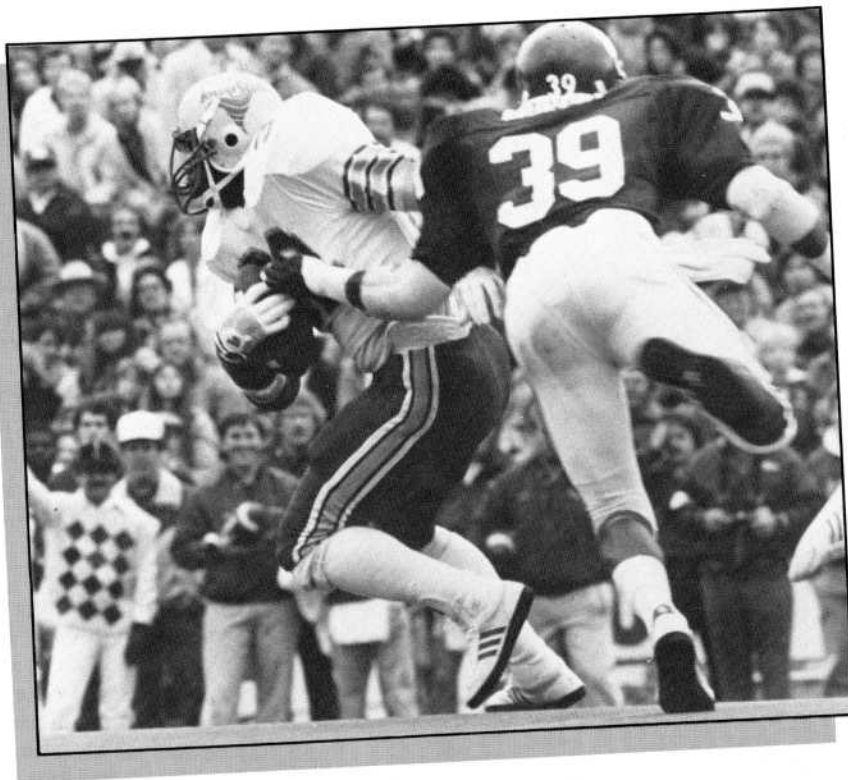
Game tip: Take a shade break during the Texas "Show Band of the Southwest" performance. It's as dull as it is big.

#### *October 20, Iowa State at Ames*

Television possibility: Slim and none.

Unlike New York, you not only wouldn't want to live here, you don't want to visit.

The Cyclones (unlike the Cardinal, this *is* a bird) run the Multiple I on



**Defensive End  
KEVIN MURPHY**



**Running Back  
EARL JOHNSON**

offense and something called Multiple 30 on defense which gave up multiple 385 points in '83. Given last year's 4-7 record, it's hard to be excited about the 43 returning lettermen.

Although they tied OU in 1981, the Cyclones' last win over OU was in 1961. That record should stand.

Tip for the fans: Don't go to Ames. And call Mike Treps and tell him we don't want impartiality on the Sooner broadcasts.

*October 27, Kansas at Lawrence*

Television possibility: Probably not.

Kansas is probably the second most beautiful Big 8 campus. KU has the best mascots, Jayhawk and Baby Jay, and the worse yell — Rock, Chalk, Jayhawk. The Kansas colors — crimson and blue — draw mixed reviews, but their band gets a B+ for their running entry down the stadium steps. Just don't get in the aisle.

The 37 returning lettermen all lost to OU last year, 14-45. They also allowed OU to rush for 375 yards, and we're talking after the departure of what's-his-name. KU's record last year was 4-6-1.

The last time they beat OU was the shocking 23-3 upset of the 1975 National Championship team, so miracles do happen. The last KU victory before that was in 1964. OU's dominance should continue.

Tourist tip: Go to the stadium early; it's a perfect place to tailgate. And Lawrence boasts two really fine restaurants, The Eldridge House and Don's Steak House.

*November 3, Missouri at Norman*

Television possibility: A semi-good bet.

Of late, Missouri has had goal post problems. The rampaging — not to say rioting — Tiger faithful ripped them down in '81 and '83 after the Sooners' 0-10 and 14-19 losses. The OU coaches shouldn't have any trouble getting the team skyhigh for this one.

Unfortunately Missouri returns seven defensive starters. Last year these guys held OU to 84 yards rushing and 117 passing. Even more unfortunately, talented quarterback Marlon Adler returns as does his top receiver, George Shorthose. If OU's defense can't pressure Adler, Missouri will score some points — maybe a lot.

The question is — can OU's new offense keep up?

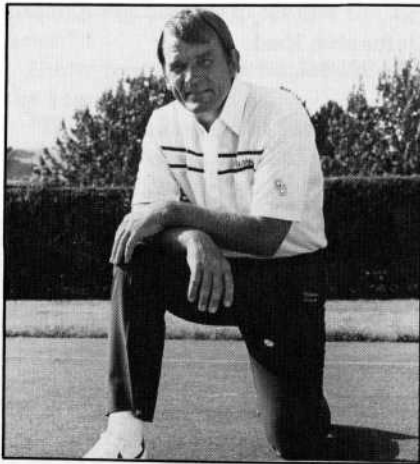
Advice for rabid fans: Hijack the Missouri team bus.

*November 10, Colorado at Boulder*

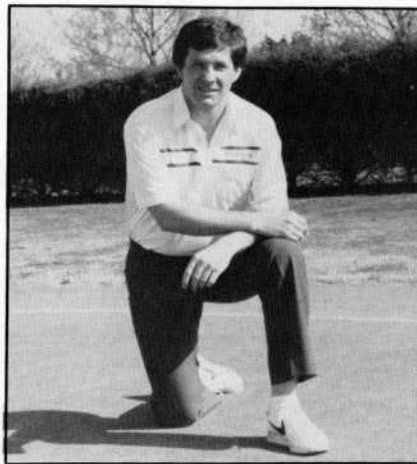
Television possibility: Unlikely.

Boulder is the most beautiful Big 8 City. However, Folsom Field is not a warm, friendly place. Here in 1976 Sooner fans discovered that happy-go-

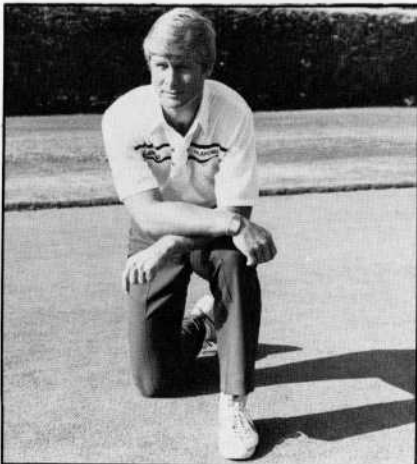
*EDITOR'S NOTE: Freedom to negotiate one's own television contracts apparently comes with freedom to endure chaos. With announcements of new schedules coming almost daily, there seems to be no way known to man — or woman — to be accurate by press time. Sooner viewers are urged to consult TV listings — or local psychic.*



**MERV JOHNSON**, above, calls the new atmosphere a "re-dedication" and points with optimism to quarterback Danny Bradley's excellent spring.



**MACK BROWN**, above right, promises a return to the option out of the beloved 3-back wishbone, but with a lot more sophisticated passing game.



**GARY GIBBS**, right, as defensive coordinator, seems to have his share of problems, but he still has a smile, a sense of humor — and Kevin Murphy.

lucky Colorado supporters had poured white, sticky syrup on the Sooner bleachers. Here is where the infamous Ralphie-the-Buffalo breaks loose from his/her handlers and roams wherever he/she wishes. Here is where beer is sold, and undergraduates are seated on a first-come basis beginning at noon. By game time, they are also happy-go-lucky.

Colorado may be some improved over last year's 4-7 record but not much. Quarterback Steve Vogel returns, and linebacker Barry Remington showed potential before being injured last year. Coach Bill McCartney says they have "momentum."

Not enough to beat the Sooners this year.

Survival tip: Go to Colorado. Just don't go to the game.

*November 17, Nebraska at Lincoln*

Television possibility: If it isn't, the NCAA should be put in charge again.

The Nebraska campus is stuck right in the middle of downtown Lincoln and has been described as "nondescript." Sports broadcaster Al Eschbach says

the sun never shines in Lincoln. Certainly it hasn't beamed on the Sooners in their last three meetings with the Cornhuskers.

The good news: Gone are Fryar, Rozier, Steinkuhler and — best of all — Turner Gill. The bad news: seven defensive starters return. Still, awesome as Nebraska was, the Sooners gained 420 yards and came within inches, near the end of the game, of scoring and gaining an opportunity to go for two points and a win.

With the advantage of being the only university in the state (I mean, would you build a college in Nebraska?) and with their famed walk-on and red-shirt program, Nebraska always has plenty of bodies from which to choose. This year is no exception, but there has to be some drop off on offense because of key losses.

The Sooners will pull out all the stops on this one.

Survival tip: Don't go. It will be cold enough to freeze your hot dog before you take a bite. Turn on your radio early and listen to Eschbach's pre-

game broadcast. He'll tell you all you need to know about Lincoln.

*November 24, Oklahoma State at Norman*

Television possibility: Could be a regional or state telecast.

Since this one is in Memorial Stadium, fans will not be subjected to the juvenile signs that always adorn Lewis Field. Nor the obscenities painted on Highway 51.

Jimmy Johnson is gone, but his optimism lingers on in *The Sporting News* pre-season magazine which came out in July. By which time Johnson had departed for Miami of Florida.

Fortunately, the optimism seems warranted. With 16 returning starters, the Cowboys will be a good football team. They were good last year when OU escaped with a 21-20 victory after the Sooners drew 15 penalties, lost 6 fumbles, and had an attempted punt bounce off an OU blocker into an OSU player who had to go only 14 yards to score.

The Cowboys have beaten OU only 12 times, including a forfeit. They will have a chance in '84. But — out on a limb — the Sooners will prevail again.

Reminder: Don't forget to wave your arm from side to side when you chant "Poor Aggies" at the end of the game. [7]

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*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Once upon a time in the '50s, a fledgling Oklahoma Daily reporter named Mary Lyle Childs (later Weeks) was denied the sports beat because she was a woman. Undaunted by such blatant chauvinism, this congenital Sooner fanatic has spent the last 30 years bringing new meaning to the word "rabid" as in "sports fan." While holding down real jobs in news reporting and public relations, she has freelanced both fact and fiction, much of it centered on sports, including a Cosmopolitan feature titled "Football for the Faltering Female" and semi-regular articles for Sooner Magazine. At present she is the wordsmith for the office of University Relations and coordinator for the University of Oklahoma Associates program. (Editor's Note: The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and should not be charged against the editor in this life or the next.)*