

Valiant, if not all victorious

BY HAROLD KEITH, '29

The little short fellow with the sandy hair sat behind his desk in his shirt sleeves. The interviewer entered, locked the door behind him, and advanced upon his quarry with a notebook under his arm and a long freshly-sharpened lead pencil thrust out in front of him, like a bayonet.

The man behind the desk saw there was no escaping and upon being assured that nothing would be asked him that might prove self incriminating, consented to answer questions.

What was his full name?

"Hugh Virgil McDermott."

His job at the University of Oklahoma?

"Associate professor of physical education for men and coach of the university's basketball team."

Was he satisfied with his 1931 basketball team's showing?

He wasn't. In spite of victories over Kansas, Iowa State and Kansas State at Norman and triumphs over seven non-conference foes, he wasn't. In spite of the fact his team had displayed flickers of genius that gave credence to the hope that, God willing and the material better than average, Oklahoma soon would be able to give some club a rip-snorting race for the flag, he still wasn't.

What was the 1931 team's chief weakness?

"Lack of height, especially off center. The only time we could get the ball was when the other team made a mistake. Possession of the center tip means six or eight points per game, not counting the rebound shots a tall center will make under a goal."

What else?

"Well, we ran into a mean shooting slump about mid season."

How did his 1931 team compare with his last year's five?

"We were better on floor play this year than last. And our defense this year was a little better."

What about the goal shooting this year?

"About average. We got enough shots from enough good positions to win most of our games but the sophomores on the club were usually too tense and couldn't hit. Of course any sophomore is liable to be that way," he added, with a wry smile, as he reached for several squares of pencil-defaced cardboard.

What were those?

"Scoring charts. Our manager and his assistants keep them each game we play at home. They tell how many shots each man on each team takes at the goal and how many he makes and misses."

What did they reveal?

"Plenty. They show that our team always got more shots than the other fel-

lows yet didn't always win. They show that our goal-shooters went on vacation midway in the last half of the season, a vacation that reached its climax in the Oklahoma-Missouri game at Norman. In that game Oklahoma had two shots to Missouri's one yet Missouri made ten field baskets and Oklahoma but six. In other words we were hitting only about eleven per cent of our shots while Missouri was making good on about forty per cent of its shots."

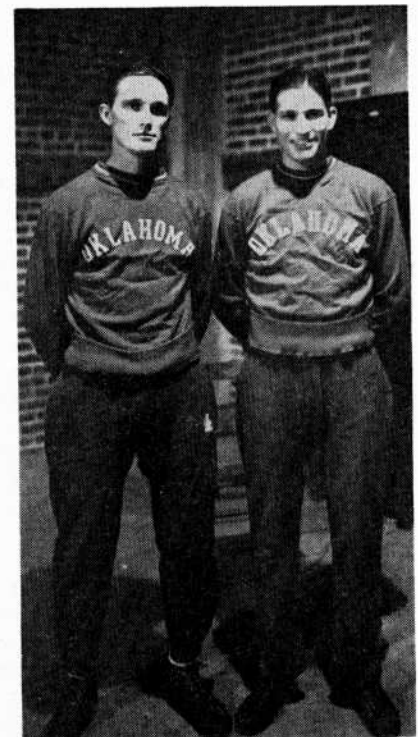
The coach then produced further statistical information. He showed that although a player may occasionally bob up with a fine exhibition of marksmanship, like Anderson in the Kansas game at Norman and Roberts in the Iowa State fray at Norman, when it came to prolonged shooting consistency, their records might not be so good. In fact the charts disclosed that only Andy Beck and Gordon Graalman could meet the official scorekeeper on the street and look at him without blushing.

Had the 1931 charts recorded any commendable shooting performances by Sooners?

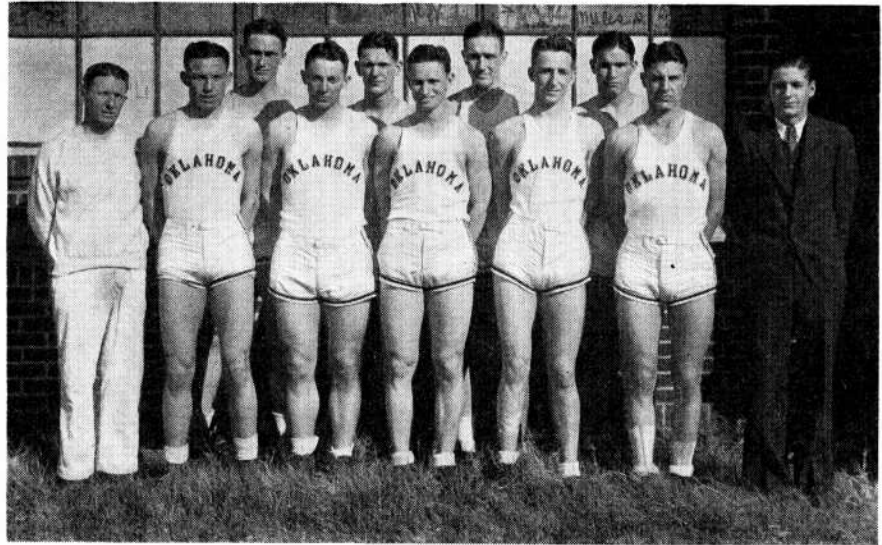
"Surely. Take 'Hi' Roberts in the first half of the Nebraska game at Norman. He snagged three out of four attempts. Then there was Gordon Graalman in the last game of the season against Kansas State. Graalman scored seven bull-eyes out of fifteen tries at the target. One shot out of four is considered a good average. Seven out of fifteen is unusual. Try doing that well some night with an enemy guard dogging you and waving his arms in your face."



At the right are Whitney Thrower in the score box, telling the result of the happy ending of the Kansas basketball game, and Harold «High» Roberts and Grady Jackson, who turned the tide against the Jayhawks



Soonerland's Macketeers played great basketball, starting with a green team that made more of an impression during the season than the records would indicate. Team members and coach are in the photograph: Front row, left to right, Coach McDermott, Potts, Anderson, Grady, Beck, Captain Meyer, Manager Johnson; back row, left to right, Roberts, Graalman, Hatman, Jackson



Who were the outstanding players on his club?

"Beck, Graalman and Captain Meyer."

What did he think of Meyer's playing during the past year?

"He did some exceptional guarding. We were forced to make him over into guard and he was a better defensive player this year than ever before. He held Fisher of Nebraska to one goal until he went out on personals in the second half. In the Kansas game at Norman he held Tom Bishop to one lone field goal. He was so good a guard that Nigro and Brockaway of Kansas State could make but two field goals over him, although he was wabbling about on a lame ankle. Charles Grady was also a forward made over into a guard. Both did mighty well."

In what positions did he plan to use Beck and Graalman next year?

"We'll probably play both of them at forward. We'll also have Anderson and four freshmen, John Olds of Dallas, Eryvl Bross of El Reno, Joe Benson of Independence, Mo. and Percy Main of Clinton. At guard we can use Grady, Jackson, Potts and four freshmen, Fred Dickinson of Independence, Mo., Bob Myers of Oklahoma City, Lynn Jackson of Altus and Elwood Brockman of Tulsa. Other usable material includes Oren Hatman, a letter winner, and two freshmen, Harold Fleetwood of Marlow and Loyett Burk of Lexington."

What about a center?

"Looks like it might blow up a rain."

Yes, but what about a center?

"Those clouds look bad."

Hang the clouds! Who was going to jump center for him next year?

"By George! I just happen to remember I promised to buy the wife fifteen cents worth of embroidery thread. See you later," and the little short fellow jumped up out of his swivel chair, brushed past the interviewer, opened the door and scurried to freedom.

Even a brief history of the 1931 season must necessarily start with the drafting of the schedule. McDermott knew that he must take a green team on the road in four of his first five Big Six contests. He knew a green team needs to have its confidence built up. Consequently the first six games on Oklahoma's 1931 schedule were against non-conference foes, the strongest of which were met at Norman.

Texas, the weakest team in the Southwest conference, was encountered at Austin in the first two games of the season. Oklahoma won each of them by one point. Beck salvaged the first one by sticking in three timely baskets in the final moments of play. Anderson's six field goals were an important factor in the second.

In a pair of holiday games at Norman with Southern Methodist, Oklahoma won both, the first by 36-33 and the last by 35-30. Oklahoma led 22 to 10 between halves of the opener only to have the Ponies rally gamely and run the score to 29-30. Here Meyer went out on personals and it looked bad for the Sooners. However little Charlie Grady iced the conflict with two sparkling follow-in shots in the last three minutes of play. The Sooners also pulled the second game out of the flames after trailing 24-25 once in the second period. Those victories broke a Southern Methodist streak of six consecutive games. The Dallas quintet later gave Texas Christian a stern tussle for the Southwest conference title, finishing second.

Home spectators next got a look at the Bethany college Swedes, of Lindsborg, Kansas, semi-finalists in the national A. A. U. tournament last year. The Sooners won a surprising victory, 33 to 22. A tightly-drawn Sooner five-man defense did the work, the Swedes making but two field goals the first half, both tip-in shots.

Carl Larson, the six-foot six-and-three-fourths-inch All-American center, was a marked man. Although the Sooners se-

cured a John Doe warrant for his arrest and followed him all over the court to serve it, the big boy was still horse enough to chuck in four field goals and from the foul line he was deadly, pouring seven through the hoop. He went at his free goal shooting as though he were used to being fouled.

Captain Meyer won the game almost single-handed at the start of the second half. He fed Kroutil for a long one. He hook-passed to Beck and Beck basketed. He spoke for himself with a long heave from inside center. He faked another long one then lined a pass to Hatman, standing unguarded beneath the goal, Hatman scoring. He took a pass from Kroutil, dribbled fiercely to the goal and bucketed, and the score was 23 to 11. Surprised and spent at their failure to stop the scowling black-haired Oklahoma captain, the Bethany players never could catch up. Defeated by Oklahoma they went back to Kansas and won the championship of the Kansas conference, finishing undefeated.

The Oklahoma Aggies were next. The largest home crowd of the season, 3,000 people, saw McDermott's boys plow and harrow the agricultural students, an always popular bit of Farm relief with Sooner fans, although when it is undertaken at Stillwater the plow blade usually comes home sprung and the harrow breaks out several teeth.

The first half was close enough, ending 14-13 Sooners. The Aggies stayed up in the race by virtue of Hensley's guarding and Ley's ability to make himself a nuisance by standing on the Aggie free throw line with his back to the goal and feed his mates as they raced past. But the Sooners came out for the second half with both the Aggies' and their own flaws pointed out to them by McDermott. They tallied four field goals in two minutes time and delighted the crowd in the last eight minutes of play with a delayed of-

(TURN TO PAGE 307 PLEASE)

VALIANT, IF NOT ALL VICTORIOUS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 295)

fense that was productive of three field goals while the Stillwater boys were running about aimlessly, unable to capture the ball.

The final score was 35 to 21 yet the Aggies not only survived that fourteen-point licking, but seemed to thrive on it, for after a strong rally through the latter part of their schedule they fought up to a tie for the Missouri Valley championship.

Their morale fortified by these six consecutive victories, the Sooners gallantly invaded the north for four games with "Big Six" foes but the enemy teams, firmly enconced on their home courts, carried too many scoring guns for McDermott's inexperienced little raiding party and Oklahoma dropped all four contests, two of them by decisive scores.

Meanwhile the fans got a glimpse of the team's possibilities in the home game with Nebraska, won by the Cornhuskers 36 to 30 although Oklahoma once led, 19 to 14, and did not relinquish the lead to the northerners until Captain Meyer went out on personal fouls midway in the second half. Roberts snared three weird baskets the first half while Beck, shifted to forward, six times slid the ball through the strings for field goals and also free-goaled thrice.

That was the situation at the end of the first semester. Oklahoma had won six non-conference games yet lost all five of its Big Six contests. Unable to extend a single conference foe, the team's chance to break a two-year losing streak seemed poor. It looked like ten more defeats for Oklahoma.

Gordon Graalman's eligibility the second semester proved the turning point in the Sooner fortunes, although fact that four of the team's remaining five Big Six games were booked at home was also an advantage. Graalman had flunked a subject or two last year and had to study like the deuce all through the first semester this year to become eligible for the five conference games remaining on the schedule. But the big Blackwell boy rode herd on those lessons with the same vehemence with which he guards an opposing player. He passed his examinations with good marks and loyally chose to play out the final one-third of the season instead of saving a year of eligibility by not competing until 1932.

Coach McDermott quickly shot him into the front line of the offense with Beck, sent Hatman to center and in practice sessions used Captain Meyer and the tall veteran, Harold Roberts, together at guard for this was the lineup he secretly believed had the best chance to cope with the Kansas Jayhawkers, who with great élat and pomp were invading the Fieldhouse with

Oklahoma	28,	Texas	27
Oklahoma	34,	Texas	33
Oklahoma	36,	S. M. U.	33
Oklahoma	35,	S. M. U.	30
Oklahoma	33,	Bethany (Kans.)	22
Oklahoma	35,	Oklahoma Aggies	21
Oklahoma	25,	Iowa State	35
Oklahoma	22,	Kansas	44
Oklahoma	30,	Nebraska	36
Oklahoma	15,	Kansas State	35
Oklahoma	14,	Missouri	22
Oklahoma	33,	Kansas	30
Oklahoma	17,	Missouri	27
Oklahoma	25,	Oklahoma Aggies	30
Oklahoma	26,	Iowa State	21
Oklahoma	30,	Washburn (Kans.)	27
Oklahoma	30,	Nebraska	41
Oklahoma	43,	Kansas State	39



a record of but one game lost in nine and it by a point in an overtime period.

Despite the fact Kansas had defeated the Sooners at Lawrence three weeks previously, 44 to 22, a large crowd made ready to see the return conflict only to have an untimely rain storm lash the campus on the day of the game and cut the attendance in half. But the 2,113 spectators who splashed bravely to the fieldhouse that night saw an upset that was to stun sports fans of the entire Big Six sector as they read it in the newspapers next morning over their breakfast bacon and coffee.

The game started. Kansas began it with a field goal and with the lanky Johnson controlling every tip-off, the visitors' score began to mount. From 6 to 4 the Jays quickly ran the tally higher until the spectators marveled at the efficiency of this Kansas offense that so methodically manufactured field goals.

There was no cheering when Kansas made those goals, one after another. Just the pounding of the player's suction-soles and the beat of the rain on the roof as Doctor Allen's well-drilled team pivoted, passed and shot its way into a lead of 20 to 8.

Ted O'Leary, the doughty Kansas forward, who comes from a family of valorous Jayhawker athletes, assumed the burden of the Kansas scoring for Tom Bishop, brightest star in the Kansas constellation, was being smothered by Lawrence Meyer, the frowning Sooner captain, who was guarding grimly and tenaciously despite the ignominious trimming his team was taking. O'Leary put in four field goals and three free goals that first half, and of the eleven men McDermott had used, four tried vainly to patrol this doughty Kansas marksman.

It was a disconsolate little band of Sooners that trailed to their quarters between halves. The spectators sighed resignedly. That Kansas team was just too good.

Andy Beck, defiant as ever although he hadn't yet made a point, was the boy who touched off the Sooner scoring magazine in that memorable second half. Shortly after the first tip-off he fired a long high breast-shot that whistled through cleanly,

the cords describing a barely perceptible upward fillip as the spinning ball zipped through them.

Then Page fouled Anderson and the Swedish boy coolly pocketed both his chances. Came another tip-off, a moment of fierce wrestling for the ball, and then the white shirts surged down the floor, Beck flitting beneath the basket to take a pass from Graalman and lay the ball lightly in the netting.

The crowd awoke. Gone now was its passivity as it roared for the Sooners to reduce the Kansas margin. The play became faster and rougher. The officials began to call fouls. First Page of Kansas then Graalman of Oklahoma hit the slot from the free throw line.

Then Graalman, who seemed all over the court at once, scored two field goals in rapid succession, cutting the Kansas lead to two points, and while the startled Jawhawkers called time out and discussed the matter from the playing floor, the spectators shook the building with the clamor of their cheering.

At this point Doctor Allen withdrew Ramsey, whom he had started at center the second half, and sent Bill Johnson back in. His judgment was immediately substantiated when Johnson led a Jayhawker rally that saw the Kansans run the score from 21-19 to 28-21. The arch-villain Forest Cox, muscular Kansas guard, hooked one half the length of the court to start it, Oklahoma's only tally during this spurt being another long goal by Beck.

The crowd sank back disappointed. It looked like the Kansas team had recovered its first half mastery and was pulling safely away. Anderson gave them hope by capturing the ball from center, wheeling suddenly, and scoring from the center of the floor but Johnson countered with a rebound effort and Kansas still held its seven-point lead, 30-23.

It was then that McDermott's strategy in capturing the tip-off, delivered to his men between halves after he had had an opportunity to study the Kansas formations, began to pay dividends. Johnson always out-jumped Graalman but the Sooners were so strategically stationed about the center circle that Anderson's ability to drive in shoulder to shoulder with Bishop, hub man in the Jayhawk tip-off plays, usually prevented the Kansas guards from taking the ball.

Seven minutes of play were left when the Oklahoma players pulled open the throttle. With little Grady bringing up the ball, the white-shirted Sooners began to break like lightning for the Kansas goal. Twice they worked the ball in for shots and missed but on a third excursion Anderson took a jewel of a bounce pass from Beck and scored point-blank.

Then Beck nearly brought the house down. Twice he elevated long breast shots from way out in the jungles near the center circle. Each time the upward flirt of the strings told his aim had been true.

Now the score was Kansas 30, Oklahoma 29 and Doctor Allen was taking long draughts from the Jayhawk water bottle as the crowd bellowed insanely.

Two minutes of time remained. Kansas had the ball. Its players tried to stall but were hemmed in beneath their basket by the Sooners, in whose blood the virus of victory now flowed strongly. A Sooner slapped the ball from a Jayhawker's hands and first one team then the other carried it up and down the floor. Then the indefatigable Graalman passed perfectly to Anderson who took one dribble and scored. Oklahoma led by a point!

Now Oklahoma retreated to its back court to stall and it was the turn of the Kansas players to charge down the court and get the ball. Only a few seconds were left to play. Kansas shots were striking all around the Sooner goal but they were thrown too hurriedly. Then little Grady swooped down upon a loose ball, swept it up with one hand and dribbled up the floor.

A path seemed to open for him as he sprinted past the center circle, bouncing the ball fast in front of him. Now his way was clear. Another player in white was hot on his heels. It was Anderson. Grady drove straight for the basket and laid the ball squarely in the ring but is refused to be tamed and leaped out like something wild. But the roar of disappointment from the crowd became a scream of joy when Anderson, closely pursuing Grady, lifted himself into the air and flipped the descending ball back into the meshes. Then the gun and with it the hilarious realization that Oklahoma had broken its long losing streak and won, 33 to 30.

It was a game not to be forgotten overnight. Details of it doubtless still linger in the minds of those who saw it. Grady's pugnacious yet clean curbing of O'Leary that second half, holding him scoreless. Meyer's stern guarding of Bishop. The cold ferocity with which Graalman threw himself into every play. Anderson's quick breaking and his deadliness on short shots. Beck making those four long goals as easily as a fellow cutting himself a piece of pie.

And three weeks later this same Kansas team won the championship of the Big Six conference.

McDermott's men had slain another giant.

The Missouri defeat at Norman, the arithmetic of which has already been described, resulted in Captain Meyer twisting his ankle so severely that he was held out of the Iowa State game. Those Iowa State players came to Norman fresh from conquests over Kansas State by 46-31, over Missouri by 29-19 and over the league-leading Nebraskans, 42-28. They were cocky and straining at the leash. With Meyer out it looked bad for the Sooners.

Oklahoma was leading, 18 to 17 late in the second half when Coach McDer-

mott made ready to replace Roberts with Hatman. In fact Hatman had peeled off his sweat clothes and was crouching at McDermott's side for instructions when Roberts began an exhibition of driving and shooting that resulted in McDermott's leaving him in the contest and culminated in a Sooner victory, 26 to 21, and six field goals for the tall Deer Creek boy. Grady Jackson did an excellent job of guarding that night.

A trip into the north brought a victory over Washburn college, of Topeka, 30 to 27, and a defeat by Nebraska, 30 to 41, after which the team returned home to face the Kansas Aggies in the last contest of the season. The Wildcats needed a victory to tie Nebraska for second place. They had overwhelmed the Sooners 35 to 15 at Manhattan five weeks earlier.

They didn't do so well in the Fieldhouse. The Sooners were capturing Cronkite's tip-off so regularly that they ran up a 20-to-8 lead at one point of the contest and held a 33-to-18 advantage in the second half. Kansas State had lost Alex Nigro, its captain, in the first two minutes of play through an ankle injury yet when George Wiggins, a substitute guard, went in late in the second period he led a Purple rally that saw the courageous visitors pull up to within four points of Oklahoma at the gun.

Graalman's seven baskets set the scoring pace with Beck, Grady and Meyer feeding nicely and Roberts restricting Cronkite to three goals.

Practice for the 1932 season has already begun. Each afternoon at the Fieldhouse Coach McDermott and the outstanding freshmen performers, who will be varsity squad members next year, toil two hours daily. Few spectators watch as the black-shirted yearlings sprint up and down the court, trying to master the intricacies of the block and pivot, for the fans are naturally fed up on basketball and want to see the outdoor sports.

Perhaps the freshmen basketekers, too, are fed up on basketball and would much rather pound a tennis ball or stroll shirt-sleeved down a locust lane with a co-ed on one arm. It's almost a cinch that McDermott would welcome a temporary divorce from the sport. However he isn't satisfied with the team's showing this past season so the long spring practices go on.

There are easier ways of spending an April afternoon.

WET AND DRY

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 298)

right out of those huge rocks. Mr Copeland looked for a pipe organ, but there was no place for one out there. So we began to ask questions, and found out that the Western Electric Co. had installed a musi-

cal apparatus near the top of the bridge and that that was responsible for the pipe organ music we had been hearing.

We went back to the college, and that night we debated on our favorite subject of prohibition. The debaters from Washington and Lee let it be known in no uncertain manner that they were opposed to the eighteenth amendment, and that if a man wanted to drink a little that it was his own business, and it was apparent that he was expressing the sentiments of most of the student body. Mr Epton rejoined by saying that it would not be so bad if they would drink just a little, but the fact was that before prohibition most people who drank didn't know when to stop. They replied "that some people ate too much, and didn't know when to stop, but that we didn't hear anyone suggesting that we ought to pass a law against eating." So back and forth the arguments went, and when the debate closed the Oklahoma debaters were convinced that prohibition was a good thing, and the Washington and Lee debaters were convinced that prohibition was a bad thing, and the audience was convinced that hard chairs and seats were not suitable for a person to sleep in.

In spite of all the arguments in favor of drinking we left Lexington completely sober. We were in a hurry to get back to Soonerland. We had been away practically a month, and were getting kind of tired of travelling all over the country. We were glad to get back to the University of Oklahoma, and we arrived here with the feeling that in spite of the excellence of eastern schools, and in spite of the charges of immorality that this school was the best after all.

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FROM THE OSAGE HILLS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 280)

the reflection of trees and cattle crazily animated.

Then as the sun slides down the hazy blue bowl of the sky, the pastel colors of summer come forth to paint pictures never seen on canvas. The haze of heat softens the colors and outlines of the trees and the hills, until the former appear as indistinct clumps on the distant ridges and the latter seem intangible in mauve and lilac. They become more evanescent and unreal as the sun approaches the horizon and changes to orange, adding to the dream picture a touch of pink. The foreground is dotted with cattle, grazing with that detachment that is peculiarly bovine.

The heat of the day is over. Soon the great red moon appears on the eastern horizon, as material and distinct as a plaque of brass; brick-red as though scorched; climbing out of the prairie to liberate itself from the earthly heat.

It climbs higher and soon becomes a