



Frank M. Long, '08 arts-sc., M. A. '09, general secretary of the Y. M. C. A. of Porto Alegre, Brazil, was one of the most loyal Sooners when in school and is one of the most loyal alumni. A great Oklahoma athlete when in school (he is the only Sooner with five football "O"s) he has kept true to his old form, as the two photographs here show. The upper photograph shows three football stars of 1906, from left to right, Willard Douglas, Cleveland Thompson and Mr Long; the lower photograph shows Porto Alegre 10-kilometre relay team (Mr Long is in the center of the front row); twenty five years after the first photograph was taken, Mr Long still remains the fine athlete he was then, having run (in October, 1931) his kilometre in fine time. The editor asked Mr Long to set down his impressions of what we need to build up loyalty to our teams. His letter follows

Helping to win

TO THE EDITOR:

YOU asked me about the "spirit actuating football in your day." I will have to confess that it is the same as today, only it was on a smaller scale. We had fewer alumni and friends boosting for the team.

The 1907 *Mistletoe* tells the story. In 1904 we had a bum team. In 1905 we had a new coach. That year the team improved. Bennie (Owen) held his job. And Bennie continued to put out a very good team and hold his job. Now when the team slumped Bennie almost lost his job. A little later the job got bigger, we had to have several coaches, the alumni and "friends" got the habit of backing Bennie.

In the early days we had another problem. Christmas, 1904, John Darling introduced me to his father as "My friend Frank Long, the first football man to stay after the Thanksgiving game." That was not *all* truth nor was it all of the truth. Some of the men bothered little about their class work up to Thanksgiving, and when an *overzealous* professor suggested that athletes ought to do some studying, there was an uproar. As student member of the athletic council and athlete I got it on both sides. The professor won. Page 84 of the *Mistletoe* for 1909 gives part of the result. Only one man lost part of the season and this perhaps for his own good. He has made good in life since. Another result that

I was transferred to the "scrubs." Bennie may not remember this but it made an impression on me. Then I had to make an *impression* on some of the varsity in order to get back. I got back. But out of it all came teams with good class work and made the game more of a student's game.

The professor wanted a good team. Alumni wanted a good team. Backers wanted a good team. It is a perfectly legitimate desire. The difficulty is, however, that they go about it in the wrong way. As a rule they defeat their own end. Now it does not take supermen nor a super-coach to develop a good team. A winning team, if you please. Just an average bunch of men and an average coach, all working together, with *no outside help*, and there you are.

The year 1908 saw L. S. U. with an all Southern football team. Alumni and friends were spoiled. The next four years L. S. U. had better men on the average but not so good a team. And they had *four* different coaches, with alumni and friends *helping* on all sides. Most every one meant well but it did not work. At the same time the second team, then called the "Baby Tigers," never lost a game and often in practice ran rings around the varsity. Why? No one gave a whoop about the "Baby Tigers" and they were let alone with their Y. M. C. A. secretary for a coach. They had some outlandish plays, no one save them and the coach knew what was to come next, but they all got a lot of kick

out of it, and several of the men later made all Southern players. The Y. secretary had not even been a star player. He really learned the game with the "Baby Tigers."

The best possible backing is to back away and boost the coach by claiming, till you believe it, that he is the best coach going, and exact absolute loyalty on the part of every man on the squad, *loyalty to the coach*.

But after all, it is a bit selfish to want to be conference champions *every* year. Really it is not the best sportsmanship. There is a lot of kick in beating a better team but unless a team has a conference championship to go up against now and then, it is not much sport. I have played tennis since leaving college and I get much more out of losing to a better man than winning from a poorer man. Of course I like to beat a better man now and then, and it sometimes, so happens.

Let us back the team by backing the coach and let the coach have the team to himself. After all, since he is working directly with the men, it is possible that he knows more about them and their playing than we. But even if we do know more, it is better for the team if we keep the fact to ourselves.

With best wishes for you and O. U. and my many friends there, I am,

Sincerely yours,

FRANK M. LONG, '08.

Porto Alegre, Brazil, May 2, 1932.