

Ben G. Owen's years as football coach still stand as the "golden era" in the history of the gridiron sport at Soonerland. Today, as director of intramural sports, he remains keenly interested in Oklahoma's athletic welfare.



Forty Years of Football

A NEW ERA

LEWIE HARDAGE'S reign as head football coach closed simultaneously with Oklahoma's first forty years of football.

Four distinct eras are recorded in Sooner gridiron history and a fifth period will be started when Captain Lawrence McCeney "Biff" Jones steps to the helm in September.

A glance through the pages of football history shows that Bennie Owen's years of gridiron directorship remain the "golden era" of Soonerland. When Owen stepped down as head coach after the 1926 season, he left a record that undoubtedly will never be approached in the matter of games won and lost.

For, his wonder teams in twenty-two years won 128 games, lost 52 and tied 13 for a grand average of .697, practically seven victories in every ten games.

Now, as director of intramural sports at the University, he has watched two complete changes in coaching personnel in eight years. Adrian Lindsey had an even break in five years, winning 19, losing 19 and tying 6.

Lewie Hardage was slightly below an even break, winning 11, losing 12 and tying 4.

The first ten years, 1895 to 1904, of football on the campus found the coaching position changing frequently. Those were the days when the neck of a head coach was not as vulnerable as it seems to be today. Football was not the organized sport then that it is now. Scores of thousands of people did not swarm to stadiums and show the keen interest that makes for a demand for winning teams.

John A. Harts took the Sooners through their first season in 1895. The following year there was no coach at all. Vernon L. Parrington, a member of the English department faculty, was in charge of coaching duties for the next four years, 1897 to 1900. Fred Roberts was football mentor in 1901, and Mark McMahan was at the helm in 1902 and 1903. Dr. Fred Ewing had charge of football activities the following year.

This period may well be called a single era since the coach was not the dominant figure he is today. He was more of a spon-

sor, especially during the earliest days.

Ben Owen had been coaching an all-victorious Bethany college team up in Lindsborg, Kansas. For three seasons, the "Terrible Swedes" were unbeaten. In 1904, the Swedes trounced the Sooners, 36 to 5.

Then, something happened.

Fans began to take football seriously. Coach Owen was asked to come to Oklahoma to take charge of the Sooners and teach them some of that technique for which he was becoming nationally famous.

He came in 1905 and started his brilliant record by winning seven games and losing three.

Great days followed for the Sooners. In 1908, Coach Owen was hitting his stride. The Oklahomans walloped eight rivals that year, dropped a game to Kansas and tied Washburn.

In 1911, his team was undefeated and untied in eight games. The Sooners scored 288 points to 15 for their opponents. In rapid succession, the Sooners whipped Kingfisher college, Oklahoma Christian college, Oklahoma Aggies, Washburn,

ALL-TIME SOONER FOOTBALL RECORD

| COACH | YEARS | GAMES | WON | LOST | TIED | PER CENT | POINTS | OP. PTS. | AV. PTS. | OP. AV. PTS. |
|-----------------|----------------|-------|-----|------|------|----------|--------|----------|----------|--------------|
| (Changing) | 10 (1895-1904) | 48 | 29 | 15 | 4 | .646 | 867 | 372 | 19 | 8 |
| Ben Owen | 22 (1905-1926) | 193 | 128 | 52 | 13 | .697 | 5,132 | 1,426 | 26 | 7 |
| Adrian Lindsey | 5 (1927-1931) | 44 | 19 | 19 | 6 | .500 | 511 | 425 | 12 | 10 |
| Lewie Hardage | 3 (1932-1934) | 27 | 11 | 12 | 4 | .481 | 237 | 194 | 9 | 7 |
| All-Time Totals | 40 (1895-1934) | 312 | 187 | 98 | 27 | .642 | 6,747 | 2,427 | 22 | 8 |

Missouri, Kansas, Alva Normal and Texas.

In 1915, an even more impressive record was written in the annals. The Oklahomans under Coach Owen won every one of nine games, that included contests with Missouri, Texas, Kansas, Arkansas, Kansas State, and the Oklahoma Aggies.

In 1918, a short six game schedule was played with the Owen boys taking every game, and scoring 278 points to a bare 7 for their opponents.

In all of Owen's twenty-two years as head coach, only twice did his teams get less than an even break during a single season. And in every five-year period the Owen Sooners were well ahead of a .500 percentage.

In the 1923 and 1924 seasons, Oklahoma slipped, but rallied in 1925 and 1926 to win 12, lose 5 and tie 1 for the pair of years.

Remembering those all-victorious seasons, the last one of which was in 1920, fans began to say that younger blood was needed in the coaching position.

Adrian Lindsey, a great fullback at K.U., was imported to take over the coaching duties. He started with an even break in 1927 and won five and lost three in 1928. But after five years, with his record at 19 won and 19 lost, there was cry again for better football teams.

Lewie Hardage and John "Bo" Rowland, two gentlemen from the south, came in 1932 with splendid records behind them.

During their first season, they won four, lost four and tied one. An identical record was made in 1933, and in 1934 they dropped just a shade under the even break by winning three, losing four and tying two.

Another cry was raised. It persisted from December until this present month when finally Captain Jones was detailed by the United States Military department to the University R.O.T.C. corps.

Many of the upheavals that occurred during the months it required to make the change were reported in newspapers. Others will never be known publicly. The battle was climaxed when a request was made to have Jones moved to O.U. from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, where the officer had experienced differences with Senator Huey Long, who himself attended the University for a semester back in 1912.

Captain Jones brings an astounding record with him from Louisiana State and has behind that four years as head Army coach and seven years as assistant coach of the Army team.

He will be forty years old shortly after the 1935 season opens. He was born in Washington, D.C., attended West Point and played three years on Army teams, holding the captaincy his last year.

From 1919 through 1925, he was assistant coach at Army. For the next four

years he was head coach. During this period, his teams won 30 games, lost 8 and tied 2. In 1930 and 1931, he attended military officers schools and stayed a year at Fort Sill.

During Knute Rockne's "wonder years" as Notre Dame coach, Captain Jones' Army team several times trimmed the Irish by a fair margin to "jinx" the Indiana school.

Back in the national football picture in 1932, he took charge of Louisiana State's Tigers. In three years, he won 20 games, lost 4 and tied 5.

His record follows:

| TEAM | YEARS | W | L | T | PCT. | PTS. | OPS. |
|---------|-----------|----|----|---|------|-------|------|
| Army | 4 '26-'29 | 30 | 8 | 2 | .775 | 924 | 327 |
| La. St. | 3 '32-'34 | 20 | 4 | 5 | .776 | 515 | 109 |
| Totals | 7 '26-'34 | 50 | 12 | 7 | .775 | 1,439 | 436 |

Debaters Are Champs

THE University debate team, coached by Walter B. Emery, '34 law, instructor in speech, for the first time won the Missouri Valley debate tournament in which twelve universities competed at Lawrence, Kansas.

The tournament, which has never been held at Norman, is scheduled to take place during the third week in March, 1936, on the Oklahoma campus.

The team that gave the University its first Missouri Valley championship was composed of Eugene White, Sulphur, Henry Lee McConnell, Altus, Donald Hickman, Kaw City, and John Horwitz, Oklahoma City.

Teams in the meet represented the University of Kansas, University of Missouri, University of Nebraska, University of Arkansas, University of South Dakota, Iowa State, Washington University, University of Iowa, Kansas State, University of Texas and Drake University.

The tournament is sponsored by Delta Sigma Rho, national forensic organization. The Sooner team won four contests and lost one during the meet. Several other schools had an identical record, but the Oklahoma team had more judges' decisions than any of the other schools had and was awarded first place on this basis.

The question debated at the tournament was "Resolved, that the nations of the world should agree to prevent the international shipment of arms and munitions."

Horwitz also won second place in the oratorical contest held in conjunction with the debate. An extemporaneous speaking contest also was held.

During a tour of mid-western states, the Sooner debaters met a number of college teams. At Kansas City, the University forensic squad debated a team from Rockhurst college before the Kansas City Lions club.

A letter from Norman Gordon, associate professor of speech and director of debating at Rockhurst college, to Coach Emery tells of the fine impression the Oklahoma debaters made at Kansas City. The letter to Emery is reproduced:

Dear Mr. Emery:

I have heard so many complimentary and laudatory reports about the debate

yesterday between the University of Oklahoma and Rockhurst College that I feel you should also be acquainted with the favorable reaction of the members of the Lions club of Kansas City.

Last year I was not able to stage a debate before this group of outstanding business men apparently because of the inexperience of the speakers. This year however it was not difficult because the word was spread around among the clubs that our debate last year before the Rotary club was voted the best program of the year by the members of the Rotary club. This was particularly significant when one realizes that Roger Babson was paid five hundred dollars to appear at a Rotary luncheon last year and other national celebrities were equally as well paid.

Getting back to the debate yesterday, the president of the Lions club, Mr. W. R. Hornbuckle, who is vice-president of the Missouri Abstract company, told me that he couldn't recall when a program was so well received as the one yesterday. He pointed out that in spite of the fact that the program ran more than ten minutes longer than it should, not one in the audience left. As you well know, business men are anxious to return to the office. Dr. J. G. Sheldon, another member, asked me if I wouldn't see to it to bring your team back again next year. I could go on and tell you how Mr. Edward S. North, a prominent attorney, praised the debate; so did Mr. D. A. Nugent, an insurance executive.

Speaking for myself, I don't know whether your two debaters, John Horwitz and Eugene White, were inspired or just naturally persuasive and convincing, nevertheless, their forensic efforts made a striking impression.

It goes without saying that your two men were gentlemen in every way. They were true representatives of the University of Oklahoma and we were mighty happy to be the host. My sincere hope is that this intellectual combat will be a yearly event and that we may next year again have the privilege of meeting your debaters on the forensic battlefield. Of course, I hope you will accompany them. Please accept my congratulations on the splendid work you are doing for intercollegiate debating.