

The sports review

GRADUATION TIME HAS ITS
HEARTACHES FOR ATHLETES
WHO CLOSE THEIR CAREERS

By Harold Keith, '29

THERE'S always something melancholy about a great athlete graduating from a university, never again to sun-fish through a broken field or make a long solo dribble down a basketball court or stride powerfully through a 440-yard dash with the roar of the crowd a satisfying din in his ears.

It's a cruel but necessary transition from the grand carefreeness of boyhood to the serious responsibility of adult life.

Usually this metamorphosis comes just when the athlete reaches his physical prime. It cuts him off without the recreation that has been food and drink to him all through adolescence and young manhood. No matter how promising his business prospects, there never was a graduated athlete who didn't long to feel the shock of a punt off his instep when the cool days of autumn come, or the biting crunch of spiked shoes into a carefully barbered cinder track when spring's warm lazy afternoons arrive.

The university's outgoing crop of athletes isn't any heavier this year than usual. Nor any more brilliant. The incoming hordes of freshmen will in time fill their places, just as other freshmen hordes will in turn fill the places of the 1937 freshmen three years from now.

But it's tough to see them go anyway, most of them into business and professions, others into coaching, some into professional sports and a few into jobless obscurity that will give the reformers food for talk, although their proportion is no heavier than that of the failures among non-athletic students who enroll at every university but whose passing is seldom noticed because they never made the headlines.

Sooner sports throngs have taken their last look in collegiate competition at the following men:

FOOTBALL—Connie Ahrens, Ferd Ellsworth, Ralph Brown, Bill Breeden, Elmo

"Bo" Hewes and William "Red" Conkright.

BASKETBALL—Tee Connelley, Jerome "Shocky" Needy, Herman "Red" Nelson, John Paul Remy, Jay Thomas, Ed Otte and Don Gunning.

TRACK—Lawson Burke, Nelson, Hewes.

BASEBALL—Ira Monroe, Johnny Hunter, Connelley, Thomas.

WRESTLING—Billy Carr, Bill Keas and Port Robertson.

CROSSCOUNTRY—Floyd Lochner, Loris Moody and Denzil Boyd.

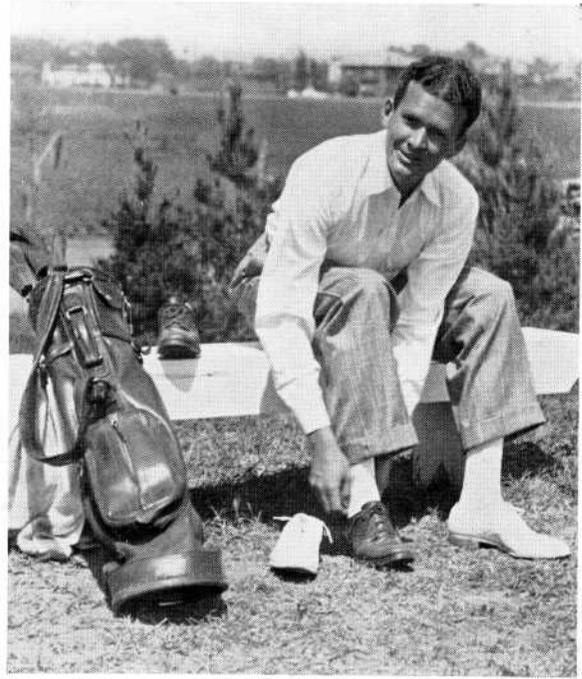
GOLF—Billy Simpson.

TENNIS—Ed Carpenter.

They won't be remembered long. Although their feats are green in the memory of today's fans, there will be later generations of fans to supplant today's, just as there will be later generations of athletes. And each new group of athletic heroes crowds the preceding ones down a little deeper into nameless dust.

Today's fans like to talk about Brown's ferocious blocking of punts, the speed and impact with which Breeden could hit on a spinner, Conkright's spirited all-around play, big Connelley's coolness and stubborn work under the defensive backboard, little Needy's jabber and blind passing, Gunning's hustling in the 30-to-24 defeat of Hank Iba's Aggies, Monroe's clowning on the baseball field, Robertson's smooth confident wrestling and Lochner's 9:26.9 in a great two-mile last fall.

Yet how many of the fans today know



Billy Simpson, Sooner golfer and senior from Nowata, changes from street shoes into golf shoes so he can play nine holes on the University's new intramural course between classes.

who Joe Merkle or Fred Roberts was? How many of them ever heard of John Darling or Everett Noble? Who was Elmer Ponder, Paul Darrough, Ernest Lambert, Lee Field?

An Englishman named Housman wrote the truest description of old-time athletes I have ever read. He called them:

"Runners whom renown outran
And the name died before the man."

In his poem "To An Athlete Dying Young" Housman contends that it's best for an athlete to quit while he's on top, "before he wears his honours out." His third stanza reads:

"Smart lad, to slip betimes away
From fields where glory does not stay
For early though the laurel grows
It withers quicker than the rose."

He's right about the laurel withering, and he's probably right about it being best to quit in one's prime. But it's hard to suddenly give up a sport you've played and lived and liked all your life. If you were ever an athlete, you know it's hard.

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Sigma Chi's meet

Stewart Harral, '36ma, instructor in journalism in the University, was toastmaster for a dinner held recently at the Biltmore in Oklahoma City in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Norman chapter of Sigma Chi. Approximately 150 alumni members were present, in addition to fifty members of the active chapter.