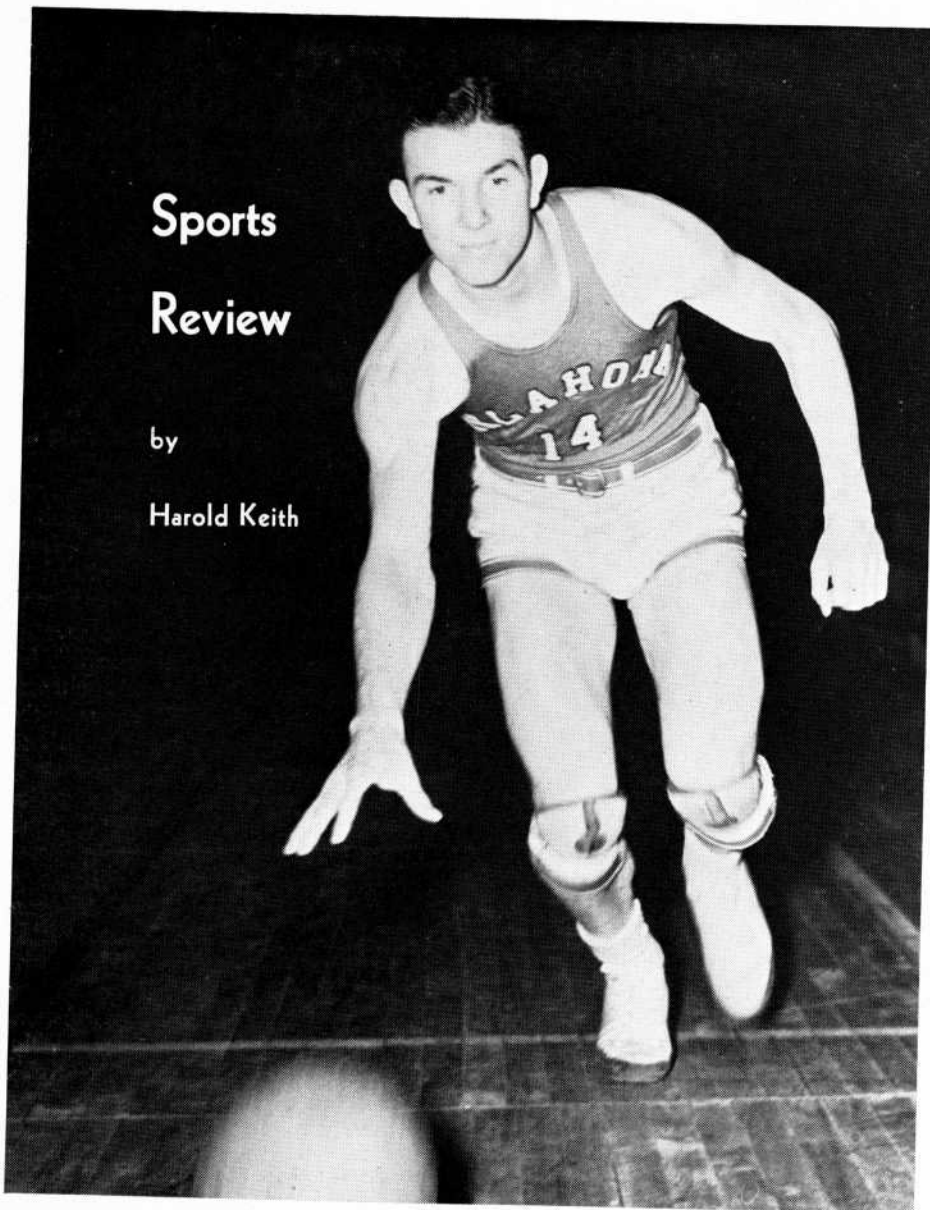


Sports Review

by
Harold Keith



Jimmy McNatt, Sooner forward from Norman, shown in the picture is one of the finest players in Oklahoma basketball history. Easily one of the best scorers in the Big Six this year, McNatt was also the finest passer on the Oklahoma club, a skillful dribbler and perhaps Oklahoma's fastest breaking player of all time with the possible exception of Bud Browning.

This year's feat gave Bruce Drake, youthful coach of the Oklahoma team, the distinction of tying for a championship in his first year of coaching. Usually young coaches don't do so well their first year.

Oklahoma and Missouri, co-champions, divided a pair of hard-fought games, each winning on its home court. At Columbia early in January the Tigers defeated the Sooners in a brilliant overtime game, 37 to 33. Playing without Marvin Mesch, who was injured, the Sooners led 19 to 8 once in the first half and were ahead 10 points with the game three-fourths gone when Herb Scheffler and Garnett Corbin, Oklahoma regulars, fouled out. Then Missouri rallied to tie the score and although Oklahoma scored the first goal of the overtime period, Missouri came back and won.

At Norman the Tigers were the front gallopers, leading 20 to 7 at one point of the first half. However Oklahoma staged one of the thrilling rallies it is noted for and at one point of the second half led 36 to 26, only to have Missouri launch a fighting rally in the final moments, Oklahoma barely winning, 43 to 40.

Coach Drake's Oklahomans set a new Big Six scoring record of 46.2 points per contest on their way to the title and Jimmy McNatt, junior forward, established a new individual scoring record of 29 points in the Iowa State game.

Oklahoma's complete Big Six record this year:

*Oklahoma 43,	Kansas	31
Oklahoma 33,	Missouri	37
Oklahoma 42,	Iowa State	51
*Oklahoma 56,	Nebraska	39
*Oklahoma 37,	Kansas State	35
*Oklahoma 43,	Missouri	40
*Oklahoma 60,	Iowa State	41
Oklahoma 45,	Kansas	59
Oklahoma 53,	Nebraska	45
Oklahoma 50,	Kansas State	39

*home games.

The season had its humorous moments, right along with its serious ones. For instance, the final road trip into Nebraska and Kansas brought out the fact that in Herb Scheffler, 6-foot 3-inch 185-pound center, the Sooners have a player of rare histrionic talent.

FINAL BIG SIX STANDINGS

	W	L	Pct.	Pts.	Opp. Pts.
Oklahoma	7	3	.700	462	416
Missouri	7	3	.700	450	373
Kansas	6	4	.600	399	413
Iowa State	5	5	.500	427	445
Nebraska	3	7	.300	414	457
Kansas State	2	8	.200	363	412

AFTER tying Missouri for the 1939 Big Six Conference basketball championship, the Sooner team last month added to Oklahoma's national athletic prestige by going to the western finals of the basketball tournament conducted by the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Oklahoma whipped the Oklahoma Aggies in the district elimination tournament at Oklahoma City, thus earning the trip to the western regional tournament at San Francisco. There the Sooners defeated Utah State in the first round, but

bowed to a rangy Oregon team 37-55, in the regional finals.

The Sooners tried everything in the book in an effort to stop the gigantic West Coast champions, but Oregon's superior heft was a telling factor. Oklahoma stayed up through most of the first half, even taking the lead away from the Ducks twice, but the Oregon zone defense was a puzzler. The Sooner screens, ordinarily effective, wouldn't work, chiefly because working the ball past the big Ducks was like trying to pass it through a tree.

The Sooners won the Big Six conference co-championship with smashing road game triumphs of 53 to 45 over Nebraska at Lincoln and 50 to 39 over Kansas State at Manhattan.

It was the first time in ten years that a Sooner club had bitten into the conference basketball cake. Back in 1929 Hugh McDermott's Oklahoma club won a clean-cut championship with ten victories and no defeats.

Scheffler is the arch villain of the Oklahoma team when it plays on the road, a fellow who likes to devil the "hot shot" of the enemy team with a teasing flow of verbal razzberries or vex the enemy spectators by looking outraged as a pro wrestler every time the referee calls a personal foul on him.

This will be news to Oklahoma fans who have watched big Herbie toil through the Norman contests with an expression of utter nonchalance on his handsome mug as though the game bored him. But on the road the Oklahoma center is a changed man. He delights in inviting the wrath and hostility of foreign crowds. Probably no man in collegiate basketball today can do more with a nasty look.

Take the final Oklahoma-Kansas State game at Manhattan March 6, for example. Homer Wesche, Kansas State's all-Big Six center, was out to score 20 points and break the Big Six individual scoring record for a whole season. It was the last game of Wesche's career and every fan in the Wildcat gym wanted to see him achieve his goal.

Since Kansas State is a one-man team and Wesche, when "hot" enough, frequently beats an enemy club single-handed, Coach Bruce Drake instructed Scheffler to guard Wesche closely and stop him if he could.

As the Oklahoma team walked out on the court to start the game, Scheffler noticed Wesche pause before a mirror in the Kansas State gym corridor and brush his hair. That gave the Oklahoma center inspiration.

"Well, Homer," he said pleasantly to Wesche when they took their positions for the opening tip-off, "You know I consider it an honor to play against you tonight, an all-conference center and the league's leading scorer. You've sure got your hair slicked down fine, haven't you? I'll bet all your folks and your best girl are here tonight to watch you crack Groves' record, aren't they?"

The remark may or may not have affected Wesche, but with Oklahoma leading by 20 points and ten minutes of the second half gone, Wesche had but one field goal and the Wildcat fans were resentful and blamed Scheffler. So when the officials called the fourth personal foul on Scheffler, disqualifying him from the game a roar of delighted boos went up from the Kansas State fans.

Out on the court the big Oklahoma center decided to have some fun and give them a show. He pretended to explode with indignation. No tragedian ever put forth a greater effect of outraged scorn and injustice.

"Coach, I never touched him!" Scheffler yelled, grandly, as he stalked to the Oklahoma bench and as the boos increased in volume, the center faced his tormenters, pointed significantly to the score posted on the north wall, and

grasping his nose between his thumb and forefinger, waved the crowd back with a long arm, gesturing his disapproval of their tactics.

Scheffler has learned, through necessity, to do his best playing when the booing is loudest. This is in contrast to most players, who realize their best efforts when the crowd cheers. But Scheffler gets no cheers on the road, so he has had to learn to do his stuff with jeers flying thick and fast around him.

Take the recent Missouri-Oklahoma overtime game at Columbia, for instance. With three personal fouls chalked against him, Scheffler was awarded a foul shot. As he limped to the charity line (he always walks like his feet are hurting him) the aroused Missouri fans whom he had been badgering, booed him so vociferously that Referee Parke Carrol placed one hand on the ball.

"Do you want me to quiet 'em down for you?" the official shouted in Scheffler's ears.

But the Sooner center only grinned and shook his head. As the booing swelled into thunder, he coolly sank both free throws and trotting back to his position, waved a long left arm defiantly at the Missouri mob.

Swimmers finish second

Two other Sooner sport teams wound up Big Six competition for the year in March.

Coach John Jacobs' Sooner indoor track team finished fourth in the conference meet at Columbia, Mo., Eddie Toribio winning the 60 yard dash and Jack Morris the 60 yard high hurdles. Missouri won the meet, Kansas was second and Kansas State third.

Coach Robert "Doc" Erskine's Sooner swimmers finished second in the annual Big Six splash at Lincoln, Neb. The Sooner medley relay team of Bill Clegern, back-stroker; Louis Surber, breast-stroker; and Jack Chism, free-styler, won their event.

Football tickets in demand

Approximately 1,500 football season tickets to Sooner football games next Fall already have been reserved, reports Bill Cross, business manager of athletics.

"All the middle section on the west side of our Stadium is sold except a few seats at the top and bottom," he said.

The Sooner business manager mailed out letters to all persons who have bought a Sooner season ticket in the past, warning them to make their reservations at once.

"Orders for 1939 season tickets are pouring in so fast that we are afraid our regular season ticket customers won't be able to secure choice locations.

"Don't send any money. We can't announce a season ticket price because Athletic Director Tom Stidham is still trying

to book a fifth home game. Just write in and make reservations."

Contest prizes

Season tickets to O. U. football games this fall will be used as prizes in the annual membership drive of the Seminole Chamber of Commerce, Fred L. Yates, manager, has informed Sooner officials.

Yates ordered fourteen season books to be used as awards.

Baseball

Coach William "Uncle Billy" Disch's Texas Longhorns, Southwest Conference baseball champions, may play Oklahoma at Norman in April, according to Coach Jap Haskell.

Haskell also is trying to line up a series at Norman with Baylor University. Oklahoma meets both these clubs on their home fields in Texas. Last year the Sooners licked Disch's Texas team twice at Austin, but were held to a split by Baylor at Waco.

The Sooner schedule as it stood at mid-March:

March 31, April 1—Kansas State at Manhattan.
April 3, 4—Baylor at Waco.
April 5, 6—Texas at Austin.
April 11, 12 or 13—Baylor at Norman. (tentative)
April 17, 18 or 19—Texas at Norman. (tentative)
April 21, 22—Oklahoma Aggies at Stillwater.
May 1, 2—Kansas at Norman.
May 11, 12—Oklahoma Aggies at Norman.
May 15, 16—Iowa State at Ames.
May 18, 19—Nebraska at Lincoln.
May 22, 23—Missouri at Norman.

National football leadership

With the statistics of their Orange Bowl defeat by Tennessee mercifully eliminated, the Oklahoma Sooners led the nation in four football departments during the 1938 campaign, according to statistics just released by the American Statistical Football bureau.

Coach Tom Stidham's Big Six conference champions permitted their opponents an average of only 43.3 yards rushing per game to lead the country in this regard. Alabama was second with only 45.6 yards per game against it, and Duke third with 56.4.

Oklahoma also had the greatest margin over all opponents in first downs, with 80, held their opponents to the lowest gain per each completed forward pass, 7.61 yards, tied Texas Christian for the most forward passes completed, 108, and in Fullback Hugh McCullough had the nation's most accurate passer, McCullough completing .631 per cent of all his flips.

The Sooner showing in the national forward passing department was one of the surprises of the national tables. Oklahoma not only tied Texas Christian for the most completions, but also ranked second to the Horned Frogs in percentage of completions, third to Arkansas and Baylor in total number of passes tried and seventh in yards gained forward passing.