

Sooner Sports

By HAROLD KEITH

THE WAR seemed very close to the Sooner campus when it was learned in mid-October that Lt. John Shirk, Sooner football star of 1939, had been captured by the Germans during the battle of Salerno, Italy, and that Lt. Bill Lyda, greatest Sooner runner of all time, died in an airplane crash off the west coast.

News of Shirk's capture was intercepted from an Axis broadcast from Germany. Shirk, a droll, 6-foot 4-inch, 200-pound boy from Oklahoma City, who played end on Tom Stidham's Sooner teams of 1937, 1938 and 1939, was with the Field Artillery.

Word of Lyda's death was contained in a telegram from the flier's mother, Mrs. Nora G. Lyda of Washington, D. C., who stated simply that her son had been killed in an airplane crash in California, and would be buried in Arlington Cemetery. Lyda was a Marine flier about to be assigned to the Pacific theater.

Both Lyda and Shirk were Oklahoma City boys who carved out illustrious athletic careers at Oklahoma City Central High School before coming to Norman to attend the University.

Shirk was a pass-catcher de luxe who also blocked and tackled so savagely that Grantland Rice, who picks Colliers' All-America team, was very much interested in him until a severe muscle bruise on one of Shirk's long legs unfortunately kept the player out of action for three consecutive games.

Nobody loved a joke better. Shirk's Sooner teammates of 1939, recalling Oklahoma's 24-12 triumph over Texas at Dallas that year, tell about one of his characteristic stunts.

"Let's take it easy and not charge when the play goes the other way," Shirk proposed early in the game to Wallace Lawson, Texas end. Delighted at this temporary show of mercy from his gigantic foe, Lawson agreed. Off guard the first time the ball went around the opposite way, Lawson relaxed and just at that moment, the mischievous Shirk lifted him off his feet with a smashing block, rolling him. When Lawson looked up, Shirk was laughing at him.

"That taught me never to make a treaty of any kind with an opponent during a football game," Lawson laughed later, in re-telling the yarn, which he often did.

Lyda Was University's Greatest Track Runner

Lyda's death in a hospital in California October 19 after a plane crash near El

Toro, the Marine flying base near San Diego, took the life of the University's greatest runner.

"He was the pride and joy of my coaching career," John Jacobs, Sooner track coach, said of Lyda. Before his enlistment, Lyda ran a 1:49.7 half-mile, just a tenth of a second off the world's record, while anchoring the Sooner sprint medley relay team to a new world record of 3:23 at the Drake Relays. Lyda also won the national collegiate half-mile in 1942 in 1:50.8, defeating by three yards Campbell Kane, gigantic Indiana ace who had won the race as both a sophomore and a junior and was seeking a clean sweep.

"When he stopped off here a few weeks ago on leave, Bill had a deep personal hatred of the Japs," Jacobs recalled, "He thought that Pearl Harbor business was the worst thing he ever heard of. He was still mad about it. As a runner, Bill was always like a lion when he pointed for an opponent. He was pointing for the Japs."

Football Season Nearly Half Over

Here's the line score:

Sept. 25 Sooners 22, Naval Zoomers 6.

Oct. 2 Sooners 22, Okla. Aggies 13.

Oct. 9 Sooners 7, Texas 13.

Oct. 16 Sooners 6, Tulsa 20.

Oct. 23 Sooners at Kansas State.

Oct. 30 Iowa State at Norman.

Nov. 6 Kansas at Norman (Homecoming).

Nov. 13 Missouri at Columbia.

Nov. 27 Nebraska at Lincoln.

Sooners 22, Aggies 13

In this game Oklahoma's clever deceptive running carried the day while the savage Sooner defense stopped the running of Bob Fenimore, 180-pound Aggie freshman ace from Woodward, finest-looking Aggie back of all time.

However they couldn't stop Fenimore's forward passing. The big blond Woodward kid twice drove Coach Jim Lookabaugh's youthful Cowboys, a 17-year old all-civilian team, goalward with aerial pegging that resulted in Aggie touchdowns, Fenimore to Askey.

The Sooners scored first when Bob Brumley, Rice transfer, booted a 26-yard field goal from an angle. They led 10-0 at the half after driving 51 yards to a touchdown, all ground plays to the weak-side off single wingback, Boone Baker inside reversing for the touchdown and Brumley goaling.

They counted another touchdown with-

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LUSTER'S WINGBACK-PRAYER COMBINATION CLICKS

There was nothing wrong in the Sooners' first football game this fall with the wingback of Coach Dewey "Snorter" Luster's famous "comin' in on a wingback and a prayer combination." Boone Baker, only first-stringer returning from last year's Oklahoma team, skirts his left end for 24 yards on a reverse as the Sooners defeated the Naval Air Station Zoomers 22 to 6 at Owen Field September 25

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ident Brandt and Joe McBride, decried low salaries paid to O. U. faculty members:

Our friend, Joe McBride, publisher of the Anadarko News, has no small job on his hands as chairman of the board of regents of the University of Oklahoma. Heavy, indeed, is the responsibility of selecting a president to head the university. The resignation of Joe Brandt was a surprise to most of us. Brandt said in his resignation that the university is stymied because of inadequate financial support by the legislature.

O. U. faculty members are underpaid. They deserve a great deal of credit for remaining loyal to the university during these times when they could command salaries 100 percent higher than they now receive.

Brandt is a progressive. His practical experience has been in the newspaper field. He is a leader and an organizer. Perhaps he felt that the position with the University of Chicago press offered greater opportunity for service as well as a promotion personally.

We should like to see an Oklahoma man head the university but it isn't advisable many times to use a home man in a home position. We think the board might do worse than persuade Dr. W. B. Bizzell to again accept the presidency. At least he is the logical man to serve temporarily until a president can be selected.

The *Ryan Leader* declared the University's appropriation is ample, concluded that there is something behind President Brandt's resignation "that has not been brought into the light of day":

Joe Brandt, president of Oklahoma University, has resigned to take a better paying place at Chicago University. And for that, nobody blames him. A man must look after his family's welfare. And a public man must save something in his productive years if he is not to spend his old age in humiliating poverty.

But in reading President Brandt's statement, one wonders if there is not something behind his resignation that has not been brought out into the light of day. The president's statement sounds like that made by an angry man. Now, he could not have been angry at the size of his appropriation, because that appropriation was ample, considering the size of the present faculty, and the number of students attending the University at this time.

No, either the president is a shortsighted man, who wants his pound of flesh, war or no war, national safety or no national safety, or he has been wronged, and for some reason fails to tell what the wrong is, and who is to blame. If somebody at the state capitol is forcing him out of his job by some underhanded means, he ought to tell it. Leaving things as they stand, he is hurting himself irreparably.

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out surrendering the second half kickoff, wheeling 65 yards to the double chalk with Brumley sweeping left end. Heard's 27-yard reverse to the Aggie seven set up a third Oklahoma touchdown, Brumley taking it over on a weakside buck and kicking goal.

The Sooners rushed 261 net yards on the soft field at Taft Stadium in Oklahoma City. It was the first night game of the University's history. The crowd went over 13,000.

Sooners 7, Texas 13

Coach Dana Bible's Longhorns had too many fresh reserves and the enervating heat of the submerged Cotton Bowl was

hard on the Sooner first team, but that didn't excuse Oklahoma's poor tackling on both Texas touchdowns.

Texas scored first on a 37-yard run from scrimmage by Tailback Ralph Park, but missed goal. Oklahoma then dominated play through all the rest of the first half, wasting long drives of 53 and 65 yards that Texas desperately stopped on her one and six-yard lines, but finally scoring on a smash by Fullback Derald Lebow one minute before the half ended. Brumley goaled and Oklahoma led 7 to 6.

But just as the time-keeper raised his gun to end the half, Texas scored again on a long desperation pass, Lee to Ellsworth, that play going 65 yards. Ellsworth caught the ball standing on the sidelines. Two Sooners tackled him there but slipped off. Pivoting inside them, Ellsworth raced across the goal and that was the ball game although Oklahoma drove 58 yards in the final three minutes, traveling from her 20 to the Texas 22-yard line when time ran out.

Sooners 6, Tulsa 20

Greatest factor in the success of Henry Frnka-coached Tulsa football teams is pass protection. The chubby Tulsa coach teaches his big linemen to retreat in a protective cup about the passer, rooster-fighting off all opposition and giving the passer plenty of time.

"They shield him so well that he has got time to roll a Bull Durham cigarette before throwing each pass," is the way Snorter Luster, Sooner coach, describes it.

But for one half at Oklahoma City on the night of October 16 before 13,000 fans, the 177-pound Sooner first team reached Clyde LeForce, great Tulsa passer. Gambling everything on breaking down that gifted Tulsa pass protection, Luster dreamed up a seven-man rush that fought its way to LeForce on nearly every down, driving him off his feet and wooling him in the thick Bermuda of Taft stadium.

Meanwhile the light Sooners led at the half 6 to 0, introducing their first A-formation running plays of the season to a befuddled Tulsa defense that couldn't find the ball. With a 51-yard march Oklahoma scored in 13 consecutive ground plays, upon nine of which, including the touchdown, Lebow, the tousled-haired piano-legged sophomore fullback from Okmulgee, lugged the leather with horizontal velocity that was literally unstoppable.

But Tulsa's greater reserves wore Oklahoma down in the last half as nine Sooner starters had to play 50 minutes or more. The weary Sooners grew tired rushing that Tulsa pass protection. Soon LeForce was back in the groove, with time enough to roll a Bull Durham cigarette and get his passes off too. Twice he tossed to Ed Shedlosky for touchdowns and Jim Stegman counted a third by running 20 yards with a blocked Sooner kick.