

Sooner Sports

By HAROLD KEITH

O.U. High-Jumpin' Drama Student Beats Jacobs' Best Two-Milers

"Things have come to a heck of a pass when a high-jumper beats all my best two-milers," laughs John Jacobs, Oklahoma's track and crosscountry coach.

And when the high-jumper is also a drama student (dray-ma, Professor Jacobs calls it) who stays up half of each night practicing his part for the next play, the confusion grows even more complete.

Anyhow, Bill Weaver of Joplin, Missouri, a discharged Naval Air Corps fighter pilot, was the Sooners' number one runner in the Big Six Conference crosscountry meet at Norman on November 16.

Yep, Weaver is both a drama student and a high-jumper and what he's doing out there with the two-mile team is quite beyond everybody's comprehension.

Because most high-jumpers can't run a lick. Moreover, they don't like to. Almost without exception they're lazy gents who ride in a car to the stadium for the track meets and sprawl out comfortably on the grass while awaiting their turn to jump. The only time they break out of a walk is when they take the last four steps approaching the crossbar at a silly little trot. Then they flop down again exhausted.

Although Weaver jumped 6 feet-2 inches in the Kansas-Oklahoma indoor dual last year, he yearned for more action in sports. He went out for spring football, quarter-backing the third team. Last summer he began running. All summer long he ran and this fall, when the long-winded Sooner cross-country boys began practice, Weaver just fell in behind them and presto! Now he's on the team.

Weaver's dramatic career, which reached culmination here October 31 when he played the part of Lenny in "Kiss and Tell," the first major campus production of the season, was even more freshly-launched. Until last spring he was never in a play in his life. Lonny Chapman, another Sooner runner and drama major who will also race Saturday, talked Weaver into enrolling in the Drama School.

Weaver's first role was as the sheriff in the play "On Borrowed Time." It was only a minor part. The cast hazed Weaver by locking him in his own handcuffs and refusing to find the key until just seconds before he went on.

Jacobs often goes to the student plays in which Chapman and Weaver are cast. And it's okay with him that they chose drama for a major.

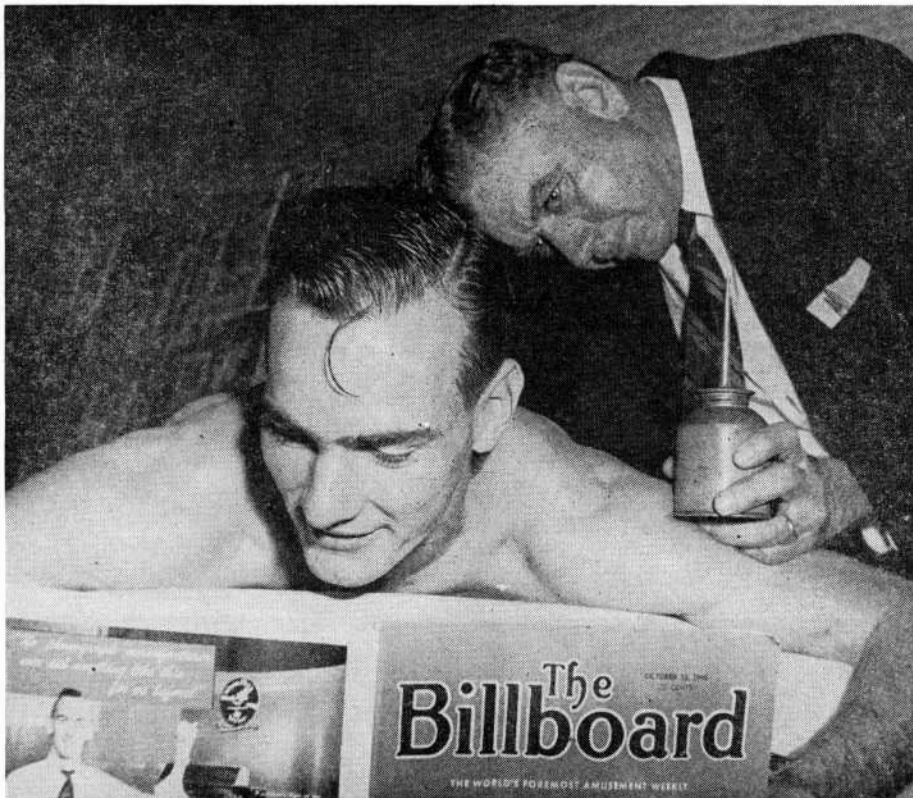
"I'm always glad to get dray-ma students," the coach says, "I never have to worry about their eligibility."

O.U. Has Airport "Hangout"

No longer do the campus hangouts attract University of Oklahoma students in their off-hours. Now in an air-minded age they flock to the University's Max Westheimer airport for flight training or to renew old acquaintances with planes they flew during the war.

The first class of University students taking flight training number 140, almost all of whom are enrolled under the G.I. bill. Three flight courses are now included on the regular University curriculum for the first time.

The airport has been used on Saturday as a terminus for many football fans flying to the Sooner home games. The hangars are being used for storage, repair and maintenance shops. The national guard plans to base one fighter squadron and the 45th Division's Field Artillery liaison aircraft at Max Westheimer.



The theatrical profession is all a deep mystery to John Jacobs, Oklahoma's long-time track coach, as he peers curiously over the shoulder of Bill Weaver, his drama student-footracer, while massaging Weaver on the rubbing table. Conversely, running is something of a puzzle to Weaver, a "reformed" Sooner high-jumper.

'Jake's Boys' Honor Jacobs

"There's something about JOHN JACOBS," the O.U. band appropriately sang between halves at the O.U.-Nebraska game during the celebration honoring the popular Sooner track coach starting his 25th year at Norman, and after counting the "loot" presented to him by his boys, you tried to evaluate the unique JACOBS character.

What's this lanky Oklahoman got that makes scores of enthusiastic Sooner track alumni buy him an expensive Belgian-made automatic shotgun with all the trimmings and better yet, even find a new shotgun to buy in these unsettled times?

Probably a little bit of everything. JACOBS, '16ba, is a plain, friendly, humble fellow known for his coaching skill, his clean sportsmanship and his dry, singular humor delivered in the twang of the typical Southwesterner.

"JAKE," as all his boys call him, hails from MANGUM, out in Greer County. Much of what JACOBS says is not only spontaneously funny but possesses the additional quality of bearing the stamp of truth. His quips are neat and pat.

For example, there's that time JOHN CLAY, the Texas high school discus king from PAMPA, visiting the Sooner campus last spring, picked up the Sooners' college-sized discus and hurled it 132 feet.

HARLEY "DOC" LEAVERS, NORMAN High coach, burst into the Sooner dressing room and announced the unusual feat. PLATO ANDROS and HAROLD BENHAM, burly Sooner weight-tossers who are only indifferent discus-peggers, were putting on their uniforms nearby.

"Yeah," said JACOBS, nodding towards ANDROS and BENHAM, "I'm getting me up a relay team to throw it back to him."

Or his remark to JOHN GOUGH, rangy Canadian half-miler whose long, black pompadour always fell down into his eyes when he crouched on his marks.

"You're either gonna have to learn a standing start or I'm gonna plait your hair and tape it to your back," the coach told GOUGH.

Unlike any other coach in the land, JACOBS

achieves results almost as much by kidding as he does by actual coaching.

"You back up like a freight train before you start," he once told a hurdler noted for his poor start. Or "If you could have broke into a pert walk that last 100 yards you'd have won," he told a distance man who didn't sprint at the end of a race.

Like most good coaches JACOBS isn't cocky. Hands full of stopwatches, he was sitting on the fender of his old tan Chevrolet timing a Sooner cross-country workout. It was the day before the Army-Oklahoma football game.

"Isn't your cross-country team running in New York this week against Army?" somebody badgered him.

"Shoot, boy," he replied. "I don't have to go that far to get the hell beat out of me."

Despite all the hard work connected with staging the recent Big Six two-mile meet at NORMAN (incidentally, his boys won it) JACOBS found time to mix fun with the work. Part of the Sooner football crowd surged down on the track between halves, threatening to stop the race. Expecting it, JACOBS had asked the Ruf Necks, O.U. pep body, to surround the track and keep the fans back.

"And if any of my boys get behind in the race, hit 'em in the seat of the pants with your paddles," he privately told the red-shirted Sooner pepsters.

Afterwards his written apology for the crowd incident to the other five Big Six track coaches bore the characteristic blend of JACOBS humor: "Am sorry it was a little congested at the half, but none of our drunks took any laps with the boys, and there wasn't a dog in the race, so we are proud of that."

Yep, PROF. LEONARD HAUG'S Sooner band was right. "There's something about JOHN JACOBS."

Iowa State lists the University of Oklahoma as one of its wrestling opponents for the year. If present plans are completed, the conference will re-adopt grappling as a letter sport.