

Something for Everyone

By David Burr, '50

Friday night's rain and subsequent postponement did little to dampen the spirits of more than ten thousand football fans that moved into Owen Stadium the following afternoon (April 21) to observe the now annual windup to spring football drills—the Alumni-Varsity football game. And before the game was over the only seriously disappointed football fans were those who arrived on Friday and were unable to stay for the Saturday game.

With the ground in fairly good playing condition, beef, brawn and experience squared away against a good-looking squad of well-conditioned lettermen and varsity hopefuls.

No other game observed by Sooner fandom sported so many All-Americans in action. For the alumni, All-Americans George "Junior" Thomas, '50, Darrell Royal, '50bus, Leon Heath, '51, John Rapacz, '47, Wade Walker, '50, Frankie Anderson, '51, Stan West, '50, and Buddy Burris, '49, were ready to start. The varsity also offered its All-American, Jim Weatherall, for the encounter.

Giving weight by the buckets full, the varsity seemed a bit uncertain as they allowed the score to rest at grads 20, varsity 0 at the end of the first half. Leon Heath and Darrell Royal played brilliantly. George Thomas showed more power than ever before. Lindell Pearson was a constant threat. The dream backfield of 1949 proved once again their prowess. The old grads' line apparently had the varsity's counterpart licked to a standstill.

The third quarter was scoreless. But in the fourth quarter, the lad who was to receive the Wilkinson trophy for the game's outstanding player became a ball of fire. Billy Vessels, All-American candidate, started the scoring with a short pass to halfback Frank Silva. A few minutes later Eddie Crowder, Muskogee quarterback, flipped a pass to Jack Lockett for the second varsity marker. Within a matter of thirty seconds, the varsity was back in business. The recovery of an alumni fumble on the alumni 15 set the stage for another Vessels' pass. He faded back to throw but finding his receivers covered reversed his field and tallied the third varsity touchdown. But the alums had far from given up and had managed to add 6 points in the top of the

fourth quarter themselves. So one more varsity touchdown was needed to guarantee a tie score. Time was running out. Only 17 seconds were remaining when Billy the Kid faded back to throw once more. Again his receivers were covered and again he elected to run. From 35 yards out and time nearly up, Vessels moved through the alumni squad and skirted down the west sidelines. He raced into the end zone standing up with what he thought was the tying touchdown. But the dramatic ending reached a climax two yards out when the referee ruled Vessels had stepped out at that point. The game was over. The alumni won 27-21.

For everyone concerned the day had been most successful. The alumni had salvaged a win that had looked like a rout during much of the first half. The fans were treated to standout performances by the old heroes and a new crop of headliners. The varsity could take comfort in the nearness of the score against a team composed of the best football talent they will see all year. The coaches should have no kicks after watching their new team perform. Buck McPhail and Joe Gaynor shared full-back duties left vacant by Leon Heath's departure. Both appeared as good runners although neither demonstrated Heath's blocking ability. Vessels and Crowder showed the type of brilliance expected of them and the line play against the alumni behemoths was good. Particularly outstanding was the defensive work of line backers Tom Catlin and Bert Clark and of all all-sophomoric backfield composed of Billy Bookout, Larry Grigg and Jack Ging.

Billy Vessels' last ditch run coupled with his earlier attempt to pass that ended in a touchdown gallop brought a quip from one observer that this was Coach Wilkinson's best play.

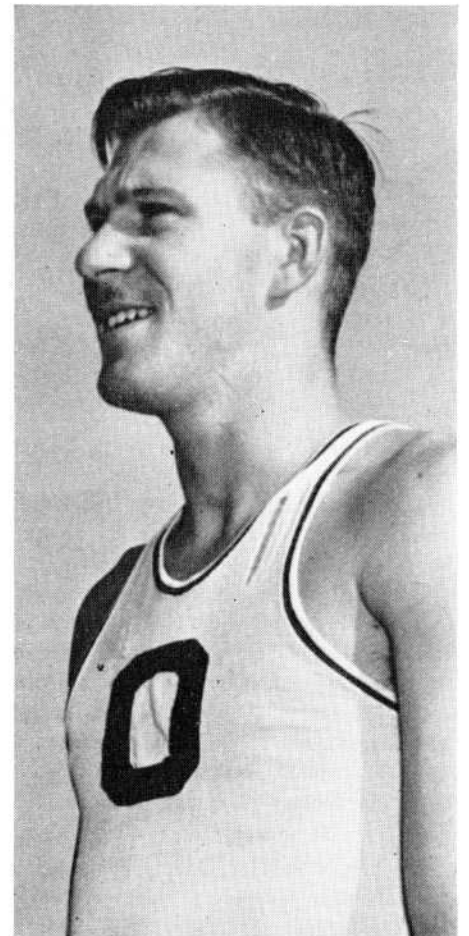
Baseball moved toward the end of the season and by early May, Coach Jack Baer's boys appeared certain of the Big Seven baseball championship. Against out-of-the-league competition the team was no puzzle. But when the chips were down for the conference bunting they were rough.

Track interest was on the rise as a result of Kansas Relays victories in April. Coupled with dual meet wins and the vic-

tories in the Texas Relays, the squad looked like coach John Jacobs' ('16ba) best postwar offering. At the Kansas Relays, the team took victories in the 440, two mile and mile relays. They took second in the 880 yard venture. Individual performers did not fare quite as well with Clair Mayes taking fourth in the shot, Dick Jones second in high jump and Jerry Lemon tie for third in the pole vault.

In the middle of May the team was to have one of its severest tests at the Big Seven outdoor tourney at the University of Missouri. Because they lacked depth, the Sooners were expected to rate no better than second place favorites. Everyone, however, expected them to cause favored Missouri trouble—perhaps enough for a team championship.

Also in mid-May, the University's golf and tennis teams were to square away in Big Seven tournaments. Both teams seemed capable of winning championships. The 1950-51 sports picture was the brightest in many years.



Neville Price, South African broad jumper who joined John Jacobs' track squad at mid-term, promises to be one of the most talented O.U. trackmen. He's been clocked at 9.6 for the century and races the 220 besides jumping.