



Big Seven and NCAA baseball champs: (tow row) Omer Stephenson, Marvin McNatt, Phil McKee, John Davis, Floyd Murphy, Gene Sheets, Jim Waldrip, Trainer Ted Owen, Coach Jack Baer, '42ed (Middle row) Bat Boy Baldy Baldwin, Joe Straka, Ray Morgosh, Jack Shirley, Leon Sandel, John Reddell, Jim Antonio, Ken Stonecipher, Bill Harrah, Student Manager Eddie Ignace. (Bottom row) Jimmie Pollock, Bill Cason, Austin Bowman, Doug Yates, Roger Wich, Joe Burke, Gene Stafford and Merrill Green. The baseball team scored the third national championship for O.U. this year. The football and wrestling teams also hit the top.

Sports

Chapter 3: Baseball and the Triple Crown

Standing triumphant in three major athletic endeavors, the University has conducted an unprecedented sports sweep. For the first time in the history of modern college athletics, one school has produced three national champions within a school year.

There were few sports followers who doubted the Sooners' right to the throne

room in football (both A.P. and U.P. polls gave O.U. first place), and in wrestling (Oklahoma won NCAA meet in March). The third team to register a national championship did it the hard but convincing way—the baseball squad trimmed the nation's best in four straight games to win the NCAA crown at Omaha in early June.

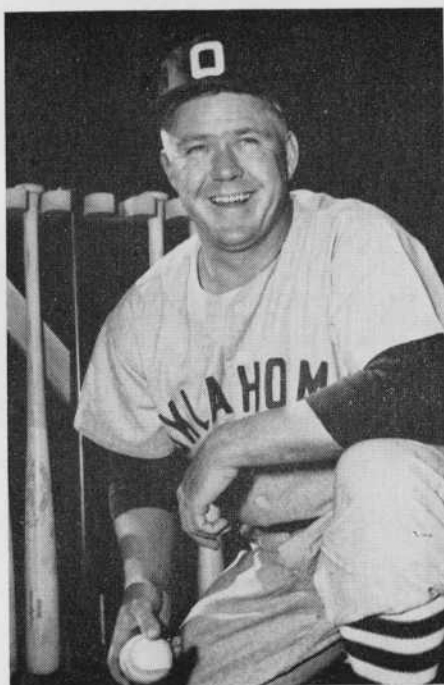
Never before had a team won the double elimination tournament in straight games. It seems extremely doubtful if any team that copped the national title had a worse early season record than did the Sooners. And yet with some effective pitching in the home stretch, they won their last six regularly scheduled games, swept the NCAA fifth district playoff from the University of Houston (three games) and dominated the championship play with four wins. That makes a total of 13 consecutive wins.

Although the season's record was only 12 wins and 9 losses (overall record of 19 wins and 9 losses) the team was capable of winning the big games and came up with a Big Seven record of 10 wins and one defeat for the right to play Houston for NCAA fifth district representative.

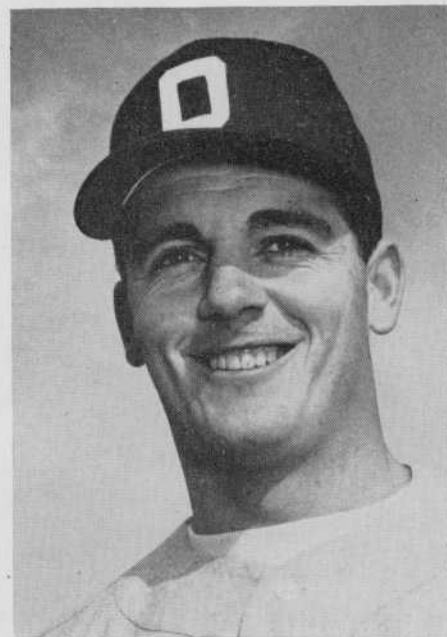
To open the season O.U. moved into Texas for four games with Texas Christian (1), Baylor (1) and Texas (2). Returning to Norman with no trace of a victory, the Sooners fared no better against an invading Minnesota U. who swept a two-game series. While six losses would seem to doom any

college baseball team, especially when that team can show no victories, the losses seemed to have had a welcomed effect on the Sooners. For following the miserable opening, the team settled down to produce 12 wins against three losses for the remaining portion of the season. Two of the last three losses were to Oklahoma A.&M. (In a

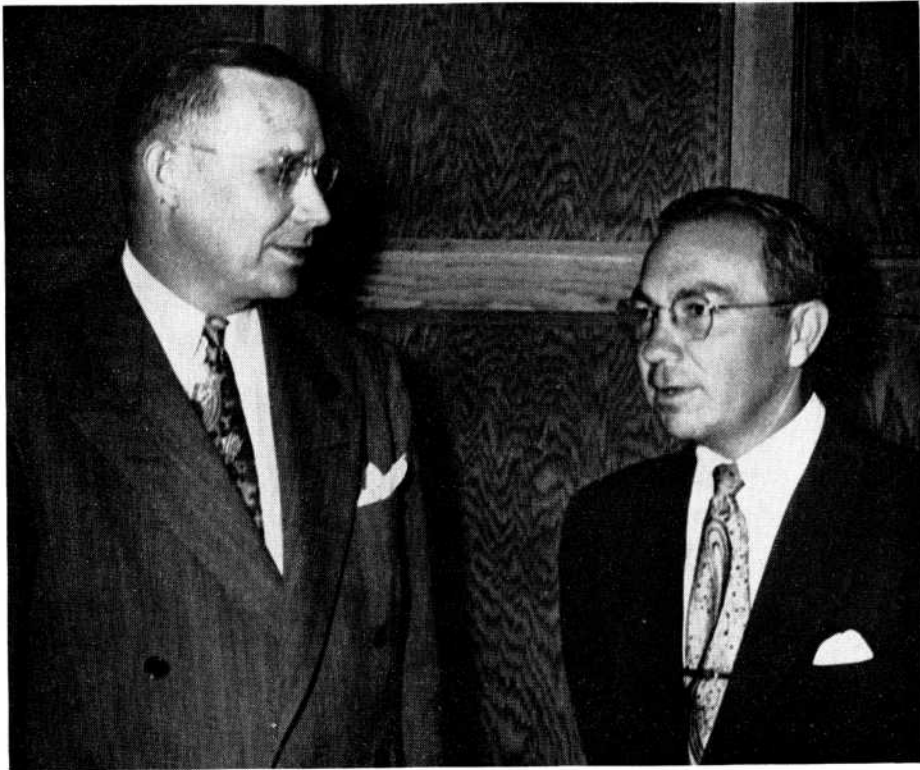
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JACK BAER
... A Solid Base Hit



JACK SHIRLEY
... Top Moundsman



Herbert L. Branan, '32ba, '38Law, Oklahoma City, and Judge Royce Savage, '25ba, '27Law, Tulsa, were elected president and vice president respectively at the June 4 Commencement meeting of the Executive Board of the Alumni Association.

homa City, trustee of the Life Membership Trust, and Bill Martin, '38bus, Bartlesville, Alumni representative on the Athletic Council.

To these men who are assuming positions of responsibility, the University and alumni alike owe a vote of thanks, for it is largely through their efforts that alumni contributions to the work of the University are made.

Sports . . .

four game series with A.&M., the home team took two and dropped two.)

What started the sharp reversal in club fortunes? It would be unwise to attribute the upswing to the hitters. Although they occasionally made their hits in the clutch, the team could support only a .232 average. Not big-time certainly. Nor could the fielding be credited with being superb. Undeniably there were moments when the team was sharp afield; they could also be pretty terrible.

It would be much safer to attribute a portion of the reversal in form to good pitching, especially the work of Jim Waldrip and Jack Shirley. Shirley, ace of the corp, hung up a 5-1 record with an earned run average of 1.97. Waldrip had a 4-4 record but twice lost heart-breakers, dropping a two-hitter to Texas and losing a

one-hitter to Iowa State for the only conference loss. His earned run average was 2.41.

A large share of the team success story was written by Jack Baer, '42ed. Coach of the team for his seventh year, Baer's ability never was more ably demonstrated. He had the team hustling and taking advantage of their every break. It was his best Big Seven percentage year (.909 on the basis of 10 wins and 1 defeat) and first NCAA championship. Since he has been coaching Oklahoma teams, his squads have only once failed to land in the money. His teams won Big Seven championships in 1946, 1947 and 1951; were second in 1942 and 1949, and third in 1950. He finished sixth in 1948 after the majors had raided his squad.

When the regular season closed, there were still many critics who thought the Sooners had gained the Big Seven championship on pure nerve. A strong Houston University squad, representing the Mis-

souri Valley, looked to many like an insurmountable obstacle to the NCAA tournament. Baer led off the best two-out-of-three series with Shirley. The right hander limited the Texas team to four hits for a 5-2 win. Waldrip followed Shirley and took credit for a 6-5 victory that landed the NCAA berth for Oklahoma. Then with the pressure off, the team played Houston for a third time and Floyd Murphy proved the Sooners' had depth as well as quality on their hill staff by allowing five hits for a 2-1 win.

As the NCAA tourney got underway the best the sportswriters covering the meet could offer was that the Sooners were a definite dark horse. Ohio State was first up to face Shirley. O.U. finally won in the 10th inning 9-8. And then the team settled down to business. Waldrip faced Springfield and beat them 7-1. Murphy took his turn with favored University of Southern California and turned them back 4-1. In the final game, Baer nominated Shirley and his good right arm came through a second time in the tourney for a 3-2 win over Tennessee and the team championship. (Shirley was later named to baseball's All-American second team.)

While three national championships were top news there were other achievements through the year that bespoke well for the University. Bud Wilkinson was named coach-of-the-year by the Associated Press, Owen Stadium press box was rated the best in the nation, 4 football players made All-American, Harold Keith, '29ba, '39ma, Sooner sports publicist, was named the nation's top collegiate athletic publicity director, and O.U. led the Big Seven in all sports competition.

There are 10 recognized sports on the Big Seven calendar—football, basketball, wrestling, swimming, tennis, golf, baseball, 2-mile run, outdoor track and indoor track. This year the Sooners tied their all-time record set in 1934-35 by winning exactly half of the 10 sports. Oklahoma has won 16 times in the past 24 years in total tabulations of results in all sports. Nebraska and Iowa State have won 3 times each, and Kansas and Missouri have won once each.

Big Seven All-Sports table for 1950-51:

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	FB	BB	2-Mi.	IT	WR	SW	OT	Ten	G	Base	Totals
Oklahoma	1	4	3	5	1	2	2	1	1	1	21
Missouri	3	2½	2	2	6½	6	1	5	4	2	34
Kansas	4	2½	1	3	6½	6	3	2	3	5	36
Nebraska	2	5	7	1	4½	3	4	7	2	3	38½
Kansas State	7	1	5	4	2	6	5	4	6	6	46
Colorado	6	7	4	6	4½	4	6	3	5	4	49½
Iowa State	5	6	6	7	3	1	7	6	7	7	55