

## *Bud Wilkinson's Football Letter*

# 1952 Season Forecast

### Dear Sooner:

Boyd Gunning, our alumni secretary, has asked me to write you a letter about football at O.U. this fall. I think our team will compare favorably with the team we had last season.

How many games we will win is something else. Because of our more difficult schedule and the tough caliber of our competition it is difficult to estimate this. If the ball bounces well for us, we could be a poor team and win eight. Yet if we don't get the bounces, we could be a good team and still win only three or four.

I can be definite about one thing—the schedule presents the greatest challenge we've been up against since I became coach at Oklahoma. Pitt and Notre Dame have come on our schedule at a time when each will be very rugged. Texas always gives us a terrific test and will again this fall. The Big Seven is growing progressively better every year. Colorado, our opening opponent, will be very hard to beat. They've lost only one game at Boulder the last two years, by four touchdowns to three to our national championship club of 1950. And they return a solid front of lettermen.

Kansas will probably be the toughest of all. I honestly believe they have the best offense in America. Their 1951 backfield—Jerry Robertson, Charley Hoag, Bob Brandeberry and Bud Laughlin—returns intact and in Gil Reich, the West Point transfer who will be their new quarterback, they have a wonderful player. He looked so good in practice that two former quarterbacks, Chet Strehlow and Jerry Bogue have been changed in position to end. Kansas retains the core of its fine offensive line, headed by Tackle Oliver Spencer. The Jayhawkers expect to have their best defensive team in years. On top of all this, we play them on their home field at Lawrence.

Nearly all our toughest opponents must be met away from home this year which poses a terrific obstacle. Colorado, Texas, Kansas and Notre Dame, all of them powerhouses, will be encountered away from our home soil. Last year we found out how

hard it is to defeat a team fortified on its own field when we met and lost to Texas A&M at College Station. We'll face that situation at least four times this coming season.

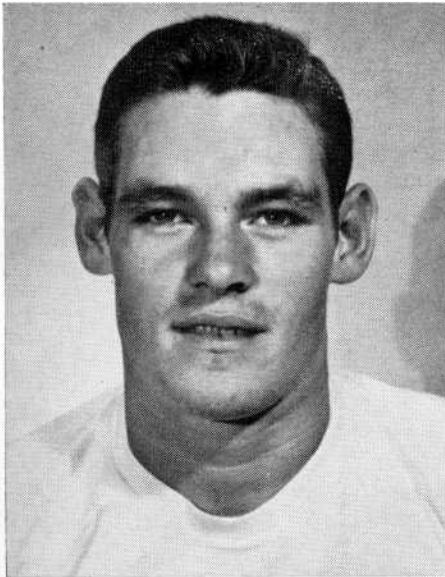
Our main problem in spring practice was to develop enough overall line strength—reserves as well as starters—to play the schedule. We spent a lot of time with our

linesmen in the spring practice and were happy to see some improvement. Several new boys you haven't heard of much—Kurt Burris, Wray Littlejohn, Ross Ausburn, Jerry Wilkes, Don Brown, Steve Champlin, and Milt Simmons—looked improved. We're counting on them to come through this fall and give us the reserve strength we'll need so badly.



SOONER COACH BUD WILKINSON

... His Team Faces Roughest Schedule Since He Arrived at Norman



MAX BOYDSTON  
... Converted to End

Max Boydston's shift from fullback to end will help us. Our end situation was very discouraging before spring practice. I don't mean to be critical of the boys we have there, but they're just not as good yet as they need to be, and our end situation remains critical.

Our problem of locating a linebacker to replace Bert Clark, our hard-hitting co-captain of last year, remains unsolved. Sam Allen of Chickasha will be one of our linebackers. Lester Lane, sophomore from Purcell, looked very promising at defensive halfback and may win a berth there. He has a pair of basketball hands that should come in handy when the opposition throws passes in our secondary. Lester tackles well, too. He may become the first O.U. athlete since Tom Rousey in 1942 to win both a football and basketball letter.

What we need most is to build up our speed in all eleven positions. We're not a slow team but we're not fast, either. Our 1952 schedule is so rough that we've got some way to have every player running a step or two faster this fall. As an example of how important speed is, take our 20-27

#### SCHEDULE FOR 1952

Sept. 27 Colorado at Boulder  
 Oct. 4 Pittsburgh at Norman  
 Oct. 11 Texas at Dallas  
 Oct. 18 Kansas at Lawrence  
 Oct. 25 Kansas State at Norman  
 (Band Day)  
 Nov. 1 Iowa State at Ames  
 Nov. 8 Notre Dame at South Bend  
 Nov. 15 Missouri at Norman  
 (Dad's Day)  
 Nov. 22 Nebraska at Norman  
 (Homecoming)  
 Nov. 29 Oklahoma A&M at Stillwater  
 All Norman games start at 2 p. m.

#### 1951 RESULTS

49 William and Mary	7
7 Texas A&M	14
7 Texas U.	9
33 Kansas	21
55 Colorado	14
33 Kansas State	0
34 Missouri	20
35 Iowa State	6
27 Nebraska	0
41 Oklahoma A&M	6

defeat in the spring game with our alumni here last April 5.

Jack Jacobs of the Alumni threw a forward pass to George Thomas. One of our boys almost knocked Thomas out of bounds. If he had reached him we would have led 14-7 at the half. But he didn't quite reach him and Thomas scored, tying the game 14-14 at the half. Multiply that step through an entire football game and you see how disastrous it can be. If every man on our squad would run a step faster next fall than he ran this spring, we'd be a 20-percent better football team.

This is roughly the way we will line up on offense when our autumnal practice begins late in August:

LE—Max Boydston, Kay Keller, Dick Ellis, Merle Owens, Reece McGee, Jennings Nelson.

LT—Roger Nelson, Jim Davis, Steve Champlin, Kurt Burris, Jerry Wilkes.

LG—Dick Bowman, Doc Hearon, George Cornelius, Don Brown, Chet Bynum.

C—Co-Captain Tom Catlin, Sam Allen, Gene Mears, David Shelton, Jim Acree, John Washington.

RG—J. D. Roberts, Bobby Gaut, Milton Simmons, Jerry Ingram, Ray Powell.

RT—Ed Rowland, Melvin Brown, Ross Ausburn, Wray Littlejohn, Ron Thompson.

RE—Carl Allison, John Reddell, Bob Berendzen, Mickey Imel, Bill Coffman.

QB—Co-Captain Eddie Crowder, Gene Calame, Billy Ballard, Lester Lane, Jack Van Pool.

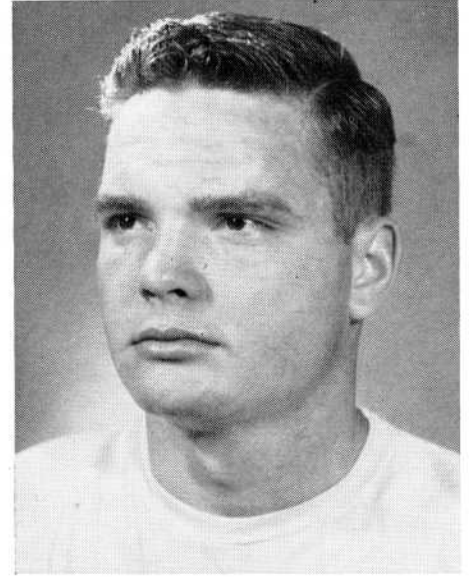
LH—Billy Vessels, Buddy Leake, Larry Grigg, Bob Herndon, Juel Sweatte.

RH—Tom Carroll, Merrill Green, Jack Santee, Jack Ging, Dale Lawyer, Bob Pyle.

FB—Buck McPhail, Joe Gaynor, Jerry Donaghey, Chuck Baker, Bob Santee, Pat O'Neal.

Our losses include Ends Jack Lockett and Hugh Ballard, Tackles Jim Weatherall and Art Janes, Guards Fred Smith and Bert Clark, Center Bill Covin, and Backs Dick Heatley, Frank Silva and Billy Bookout.

For the first time in three years, we will have to develop new punters and PAT kickers to replace Heatley and Weatherall.

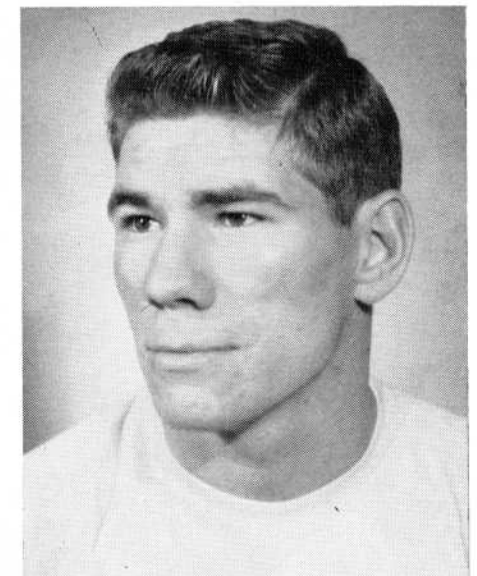


SAM ALLEN  
... Fine Linebacker

Buck McPhail and Buddy Leake will probably do most of both varieties for us.

The designation of special days on our home schedule is as follows: the Kansas State game at Norman, October 25, will be Band Day, the Missouri game at Norman on November 15 will be Dad's Day, the Nebraska game at Norman on November 22 will be Homecoming. We hope to see you at all of our games and we are very grateful to you for your support.

*(Ed's Note: Wilkinson's Season Forecast is the only Football Letter that will be carried in the Sooner Magazine. His letters commenting on individual games will be mailed within 72 hours after the game is played. No portion of this letter may be printed by newspapers or broadcast by radio stations.)*



DICK BOWMAN  
... Strength at Guard