

Basketball Five Plays Spoiler; Matmen Prepare For Defense of Title

By DAVID BURR, '52ba

Oklahoma's mid-winter sports program is providing a variety of menus to the state's hungry fans. Four sports are in varying stages of competition and more are being readied for early spring participation.

Sharing top interest among students and sports followers are the University's basketball and wrestling teams. One is playing the spoiler role and the other is shooting for its third straight national championship.

The basketball team offered little attraction to pre-season sages. No stars of the Tucker type were visible and chances for the development of any such performer seemed remote. Among the returning lettermen, only Lester Lane, Purcell sophomore, Delwin McEachern, Wellington (Kansas) junior, and Bob Waller, Oklahoma City junior, had proved their abilities. Ron Blue, Wellington junior, had showed enough promise to win a letter last year as had Tom Churchill, Oklahoma City senior.

None of the returning lettermen carried great height. The tallest, Waller (6-5) and Churchill (6-6), were modest striplings

compared to many offerings of O.U.'s opponents.

Without experience or height, Coach Bruce Drake, '29phys.ed, still thought in a pre-season statement that, "If we are playing well, we can cope with any team we meet on a given night. If our kids want to badly enough, their hustle will offset a lot of the senior experience we lack."

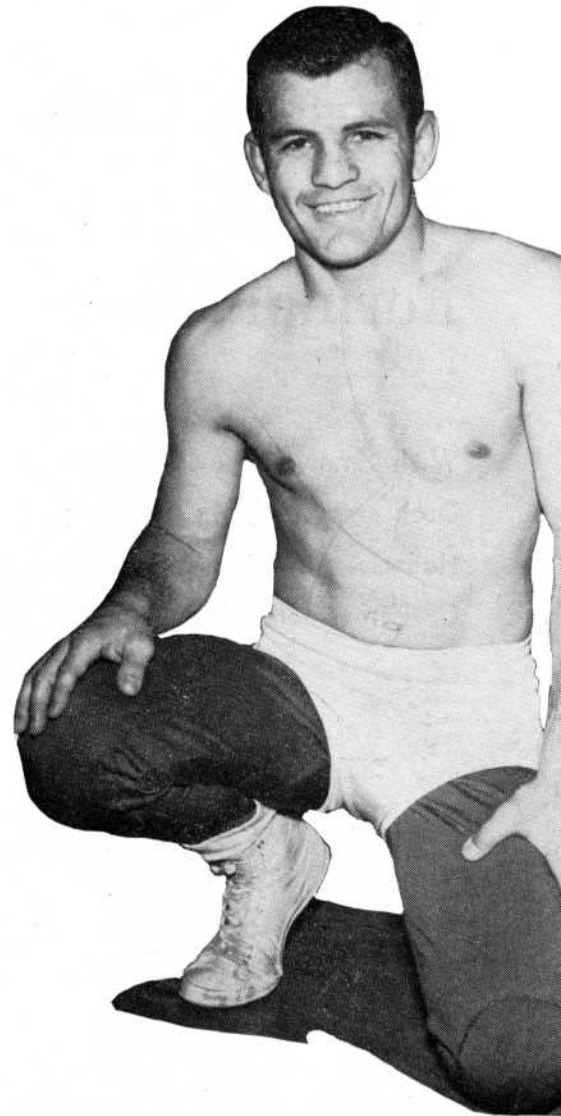
When the fans got their first look at the 1952-53 team, they were forced to agree with Drake. Opening against Iowa in early December, Drake shuffled and re-shuffled his lineup, searching for the right combination for more coaching pleasure, and found several talented performers and an entire squad that would hustle to win. O.U. won and looked good in the effort.

Three other games preceded the first Big Seven test in the conference's holiday tournament at Kansas City. O.U. lost to Texas, trimmed Southern Methodist and stomped Texas in a return match.

No one was thinking in terms of a championship season, but the roundball followers were beginning to believe that the Sooners would be no patsies. Came the opening round of tournament competition, and Oklahoma and Kansas State met. The Kansas State victory followed the form charts, but the score was startling, 93-69. The next two games in the consolation bracket were no consolation to Drake or the team. Colorado and Iowa State won by scores of 76-61 and 79-76. O.U. took last place in the meet.

The gloom hangers were busy. In Kansas City most of the first string was benched or bedded because of the flu. Still, the conferences coaches had apparently little cause for alarm. O.U. didn't have it this year.

Immediately after classes resumed following the holidays, Kansas made its appearance in the O.U. Fieldhouse. In the first conference test for both schools, K.U. was soundly thrashed, 76-61. Missouri swept into Norman at the end of the same week and received the same treatment 64-61.



TOMMY EVANS, nation's 147-pound champ, injured his leg in training. Press time information: He may not wrestle again this year.

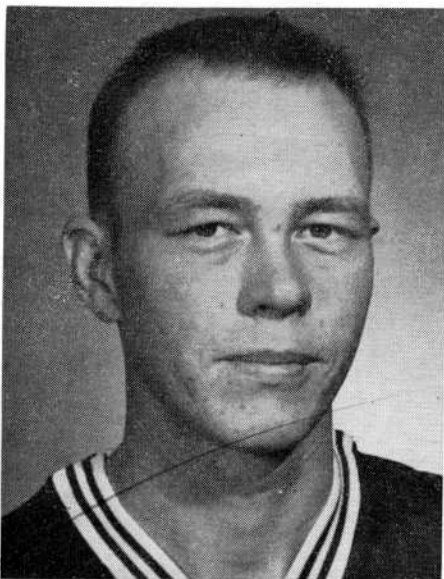
Now the fans were beginning to reassert their loyalty. O.U. was looking like a good, hustling ball club.

Colorado, already owning a tournament victory over O.U., followed on the trail of Missouri and were soundly beaten 72-63. The win was much more emphatic than the score indicates.

No one knew when the string would break, but everyone was hoping it wouldn't be in the next game, January 17. Oklahoma A&M, riding high in national ratings, was to be O.U.'s guest at a friendly little affair in the Fieldhouse.

For the first half of the game, O.U. lead, but in the second half, the Aggie's high-quality depth began to pay off, and O.U.'s inexperience and lack of height was felt. The final outcome, A&M, 76, O.U. 59.

Except for a return with A&M in March, all of the Sooners' opponents for the rest of the way are Big Seven members. As a semester exam time lag set in after the A&M



BOB WALLER
... O.U.'s Basketball Center

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Wednesday night his pastor remarked: "Well Deacon, that was a terrible experience. The Lord must have been with you all the way." "I don't know," said the deacon, "but if He was, He was goin' some!" If the next generation does more in sixty years than the past one has done, it will truly "be goin' some!"

Remarkable as have been the material achievements of a people thoroughly imbued with this Sooner Spirit, it may carry with it some elements of danger. In our abundant youth we have the faults of youth. There may be too little regard for the man of thought as distinguished from the man of action, and too little respect for wisdom that comes from training and experience. We have seen such great changes, always for the better, that we may come to regard all change as progress when change is not inevitably progress. It may be only change. There is some danger that we may come to regard magnificent buildings and costly furnishings as ends in themselves rather than as means to an end. We may tend to stress the material without proper regard for cultural and ethical values.

Yet, the old time pioneer had his vision. He saw his crude sod house transformed into a beautiful farm home, the little straw covered shed grow to a big red barn, the little nearby town with its two stores and a blacksmith shop advanced to the stature of a beautiful city, the one room school house replaced by a beautiful consolidated school. Like Christian he had caught afar off a glimpse of a Celestial City and he

worked early and late to make his dreams come true.

In his eager seeking for "things of the flesh" it is not surprising that he seemed at times to give too little attention to things of the spirit. Yet there are many Oklahomans today who have a vision of a new Celestial City. They visualize and Oklahoma with a greater and more wide-spread culture, a broader tolerance, a deeper charity, and a larger emphasis upon educational and spiritual values without which any state must be poor indeed. Imbued by the old time Sooner Spirit of their pioneer forebearers, they too are working early and late to make their dreams come true.

Recognizing Accomplishment

Achievement Day, the University's and the Alumni Association's time for honoring individual contributions to the nation, state and community, will be held April 8 on the Norman campus.

Originated in 1948, the activities are aimed at recognizing alumni and state citizens who have achieved something more than material wealth. Not more than five individuals may be awarded distinguished service citations at any one year's ceremonies. Kenneth Harris, '39ba, '49Law, executive secretary of the Oklahoma Bar Association, is chairman of the "Day."



Soonergram of the Month

The University's 60th birthday and the beginning of Dr. George L. Cross' 10th year as president of O.U. are events of great importance in Soonerland. For many years, both the institution and the man have provided outstanding service to the people of Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma Biltmore has been providing service to the students, faculty and alumni of the University for many years also. And the "Sooners' Home Away From Home" proudly joins in wishing the University and its president many, many more Happy Birthdays.

The Biltmore is proud of its record of service to the University and its alumni. This is the place *where courtesy provides its own welcome.*

H. P. "JOHNNIE" JOHNSON, *Manager*

MARTIN J. REINHART, *President*

ROLLIN C. BOYLE, *Secretary*

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