



# Bud's Fifth Quarter

For the past six seasons, Bud Wilkinson has developed four outstanding quarterbacks. Now with Notre Dame opening the schedule, he'll demonstrate his skill with a fifth.

By DAVID BURR, '52ba

All you have to do to get an O.U. football fan fighting mad is to pick a Wilkinson quarterback—say, Royal—and flatly state that he was a better quarterback than Mitchell, Arnold or Crowder. Chances are you'll find several within listening range who will think, 1) you are a thorough student of the game, or, 2) a complete moron. Whenever Wilkinson's quartet of quarters are discussed, there is always a mixed crowd.

No school in the nation has been as consistent as O.U. during Wilkinson's regime (1947-) in producing classy quarterbacks. First there was Mitchell . . . then Royal . . . Arnold followed . . . and the lately departed Crowder. All names that have figured prominently in O.U.'s record of 54 wins, 7 losses and two ties for a winning percentage of .885 under Wilkinson.

But when the 1953 season opens against Notre Dame September 26, none of the four backfield heroes of the past will be guiding the Sooners' ship. In one of the most important games of the post-war years, the quarterback will be a young man who never operated at that position before in college competition.

Soft-spoken John "Buddy" Leake, junior from Memphis, Tennessee, is expected to draw the starting assignment. Football followers will have no difficulty recognizing the name but they will have to let their gaze wander from right half to quarter to spot him.

Leake is exhibit "A" of Coach Wilkinson's ability to come up with a winner. In 1951, Billy Vessels was injured in the Texas game, leaving what appeared to be an irreparable hole in the quartet back of the line. Wilkinson inserted Leake, then a freshman and able to play under that season's Big Seven rules, in the lineup at left half and the young man sparkled with 13 touchdowns, 646 yards rushing on 132 carries, and passed for 279 yards on 23 attempts and 10 completions in seven full games.

Last year in a backfield described as one of the greatest offensive backfields ever put together in football, Leake moved over

to right halfback and rushed for 193 yards on 45 carries, scored 68 points on six touchdowns and 32 conversions, passed 75 yards on 10 attempts and four completions. He returned 5 kickoffs for 90 yards. He did not play long in the Notre Dame game due to an ankle injury and did not play at all in the three remaining games. He was selected by *Collier's* magazine as their All-American conversion kicker on the basis of his 32 conversions on 33 attempts—tops in the nation.

The statistics prove that Leake is one of the most versatile quarterback candidates ever groomed by quarterback Svengali, Wilkinson. He's a good runner, not particularly fast or powerful, but adroit at picking his spots and a good broken field performer. He shows a promising passing arm. A fine conversion kicker and, oh yes, he's been known to punt on occasion. He stands six feet tall and weighs 185 pounds.

What is lacking in the bargain package? He has yet to prove himself as a play selector, to prove his ability to spot the enemy's defensive set up and to prove his ball-handling capabilities. He'll have to go both ways but he appears fully capable of playing defensive ball.

In Spring practice, "Leake looked unbelievably good at the strange position of quarterback and tackled sharply and defended well against enemy punts and passes . . . however, he lamed a shoulder and got in only the first 12 practice sessions." That's from Harold Keith, '29ba, '39ma, Sooner Sports publicist. On the same subject, Keith also wrote: "Leake has the physical qualifications to be the greatest runner-passer of any Oklahoma quarterback Wilkinson developed."

The Memphis boy chose to attend Oklahoma over Nebraska, Tennessee, Tulsa and Ole Miss largely because of the urging of two Oklahomans who were friends of his father. They were Dr. Phil White, '22, Oklahoma City, former O.U. All-American, and Hugh Sandlin, '29ba, Holdenville attorney who

hailed from the elder Leake's home town of Collierville, Tennessee. Doctor White had played with Leake's father on the Tennessee Medic football team in 1922.

If Leake is injured or Wilkinson believes he can strengthen the team by moving Leake back to right halfback, the mantle will settle on Gene Calame, Sulphur junior who understudied Crowder last year, or a sophomore just moving into varsity competition, Joe Mobra.

However, in mid-August the betting is that Leake will go against Notre Dame at quarterback.

The shoes that he will be attempting to fill have ballooned to tremendous dimensions. Mitchell, Royal, Arnold, Crowder. Each added something to the legend that Bud Wilkinson doesn't miss on quarterbacks.

Which was the greatest? A provocative question and one that can never be settled to the satisfaction of more than a fraction of O.U.'s football strategists. Making no attempt to settle the argument, the *Sooner Magazine* presents a brief comparison by comment and statistics of Bud's quarterbacks in their final season of play. (It would be impossible to compare fairly the records of the four on their all-time Oklahoma play. Arnold and Royal were full-time quarterbacks for one season only. Mitchell and Crowder were at that position for two years.)

Rushing figures indicate that Mitchell's 4.4 average is tops for

the four in rushing. Arnold and Crowder and Royal follow in that order. The statistics:

	Att.	Gain	Lost	Net Gain	Average
Mitchell, 1948	108	507	30	477	4.4
Royal, 1949	74	311	103	208	2.8
Arnold, 1950	93	376	85	291	3.1
Crowder, 1952	80	331	105	226	2.8

(The statistics can only serve as a guide. Such things as quality of line each of the four performed behind must be taken into consideration.)

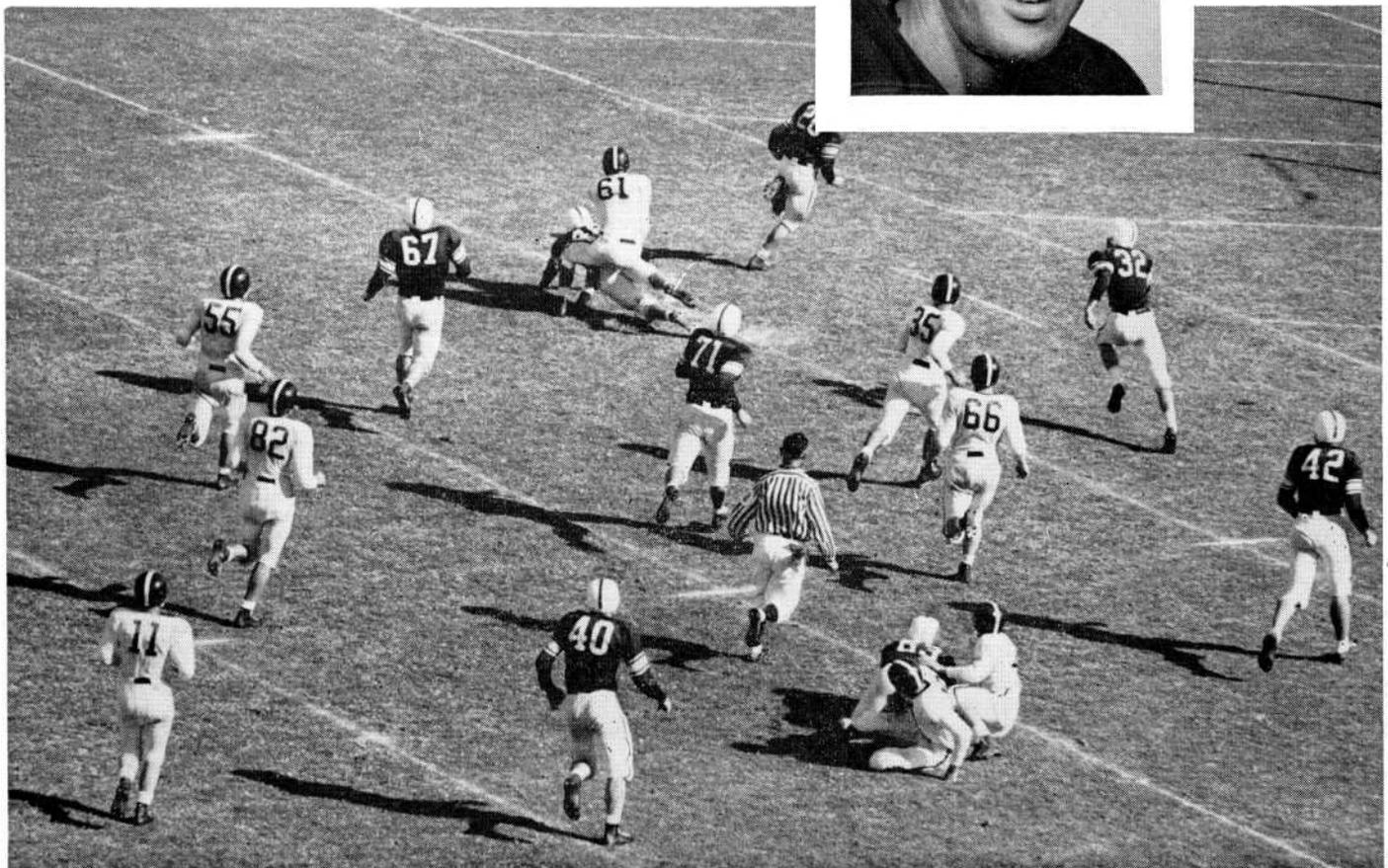
Forward passing has a different leader. Arnold, quarterback of the 1950 national champions, leads by a good stretch in touchdown tosses and yards gained by air. He also holds the national record for low percentage of pass interceptions. Crowder shapes up as the second best passer followed by Royal and Mitchell. The statistics:

	Att.	Comp.	Had Intc.	Yds.	Tds.	Pct.
Mitchell, 1948	21	9	1	114	0	44.7
Royal, 1949	63	34	1	509	4	53.9
Arnold, 1950	114	57	1	1048	13	50.0
Crowder, 1952	52	30	3	704	6	57.7

A capsule comparison of the four Wilkinson quarterbacks shows each had different talents but all fitted well into the T-model style of play.

**Mitchell:** Smart signal-caller who had the confidence of his teammates. Best runner off the keeper play. Slickest kick-runback-

JACK MITCHELL, (No. 26) Wilkinson's first quarterback at O.U., is shown in this action picture at the end of a 33-yard run to a touchdown against the Texas Aggies in 1947. O.U. won 26-14. Mitchell is now head football coach at the University of Wichita.



er of modern times at Oklahoma, returning enemy punts and kickoffs a total of 1,592 net yards during his career at Norman. (He's head coach at the University of Wichita, Wichita, Kansas.)

**Royal:** Best all-around football player of the four. Fine on defense as well as on offense. Good signal-caller, good passer, fair runner, best spot punter of modern times at Oklahoma. He was Oklahoma's best pass defense man of modern times (holds school's career modern record of 17 interceptions). Good kick-runbacker. (He's coach of Edmonton, Canada, professional team.)

**Arnold:** Best forward passer of Wilkinson's days. As noted in the table above, he pegged 13 touchdowns and 1,048 yards in passes alone during his senior season although Oklahoma was a running team. Did a fine job of calling signals despite fact that Oklahoma team he quarterbacked, national champs of 1950, wasn't as strong as the ones Mitchell and Royal called plays for. (He plays under Royal in Edmonton.)

**Crowder:** Best ball handler of the four. Fine signal-caller.

Good at spotting enemy defense and checking signals. Fair runner, good passer (as indicated in table, he has the highest percentage of completions of the four) and could play defense capably. Caused television announcers and fans to believe in magic. (He is also playing under Royal in Edmonton.)

No arguments have been settled but new fuel has been supplied to back up arguments in favor of any one of the four. They were named to one or more first team All-American rankings except Arnold. Without exception they were great quarterbacks.

Now comes a new season and a new quarterback. No one will be surprised if the new candidate is stamped with the Wilkinson trade-mark of something in the neighborhood of greatness.

The armchair crystal gazers think it will be Leake. When quizzed on the subject of how his new role is developing, Leake said, "I just hope I can do it like the coaches want me to."

Against Notre Dame in the second installment of the dream-game, it looks like he'll get his chance.

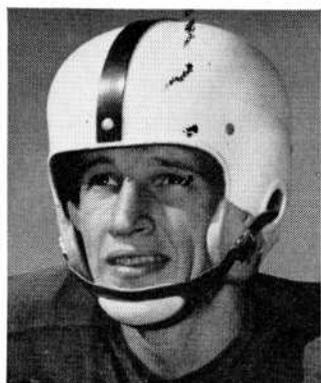
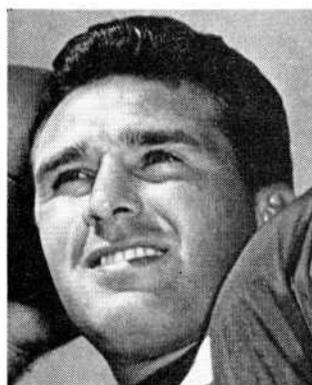


DARRELL ROYAL'S blockers begin to form in front of him as he makes a 14-yard gain in the O.U.-Missouri game of 1949. O.U. won 27-7. Royal is No. 11 in center of the picture. He is now coach of the Edmonton Eskimos of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.





CLAUDE ARNOLD scores Oklahoma's first touchdown against Nebraska on a 16-yard keeper play in the first quarter at Norman in 1950. O.U. won 49-35. Arnold quarterbacked Oklahoma's national championship team. He's with Royal at Edmonton, Canada.



EDDIE CROWDER (note arrow) keeps the ball in the Pittsburgh-O.U. game of 1952 for a short gain. Oklahoma won 49-20. Crowder's faking caused sports writers to call him the magician. He is also playing with the Edmonton Eskimos under Royal's coaching.

