

# O.U.'s Fearful Wrestler

**Tommy Evans will probably carry more triumphs and awards into the National Collegiate Wrestling tournament than any other wrestler. Yet he says he's more scared now than when he broke in.**

When Oklahoma's Big Seven wrestling champions compete in the NCAA wrestling tournament March 26-27, the most optimistic fan will not be expecting a national team championship. Even the home mat advantage (the tourney will be held in O.U.'s Fieldhouse) should not prove too helpful.

Weak on both ends of the weight chart, Oklahoma's strength is all down the middle. And the pivot of all Oklahoma strength is Tommy Evans, 147-pound wrestler from Tulsa.

Evans looks like a better-than-average pick for a national title. Two years ago Tommy was the class of the NCAA field as he took a national championship and was voted the outstanding wrestler in the 1952 meet. During the summer of 1952 he competed in the Olympics, where he took second place.

Last year Evans did not compete due to an injured knee, but when the 1953-54 season opened, Tommy moved back onto the squad. Known for his aggressive style and speed, Evans has lost only one match in his college career that includes nearly 40 matches.

Harold Keith, '29ba, '39ma, Sooner sports publicist, says that a winning record has not given Evans a case of over confidence.

Keith writes . . .

Despite his shiny collegiate career record of 34-1 (since improved), his feat of pinning 17 opponents, his distinction of being voted the outstanding wrestler in the 1952 NCAA meet and his accomplishment of losing an unpopular split decision in the Olympic finals, Evans still raises the biggest crop of goose-pimples in the collegiate wrestling business.

"I'm even more scared before a bout now than I used to be," Tommy confesses shyly. "As a sophomore I was more relaxed. But now the pressure is greater. Everybody asks me, 'What period you gonna pin him in?'"

Speaking of being scared, Tommy says he would rather go against anybody in a bout than face Coach Port Robertson the following Monday, "especially when I've wrestled poorly."

"No matter how good you think you do, he deflates you in his Monday squad talk," grins Tommy. "I guess he doesn't want

any of us to get too cocky.

"Two years ago when we wrestled Colorado, I was the only one who got a fall. I figured this was once he wouldn't be on me the following Monday but I was wrong. When he came to my name, he said in front of the whole squad, 'Now, J. Tom Evans. You made more mistakes than the whole team put together.'

"I guess I had looked kind of ragged. When I want to pin somebody, I get kinda reckless.

"The same thing happened here two weeks ago when I failed to pin Delbert Lockwood of Colorado A&M. At our Monday soul-searching, Port scolded me good. 'You wrestled stupidly. Why didn't you break him down off his hands and knees before you tried to pin him? You've sure got a lot to learn.'

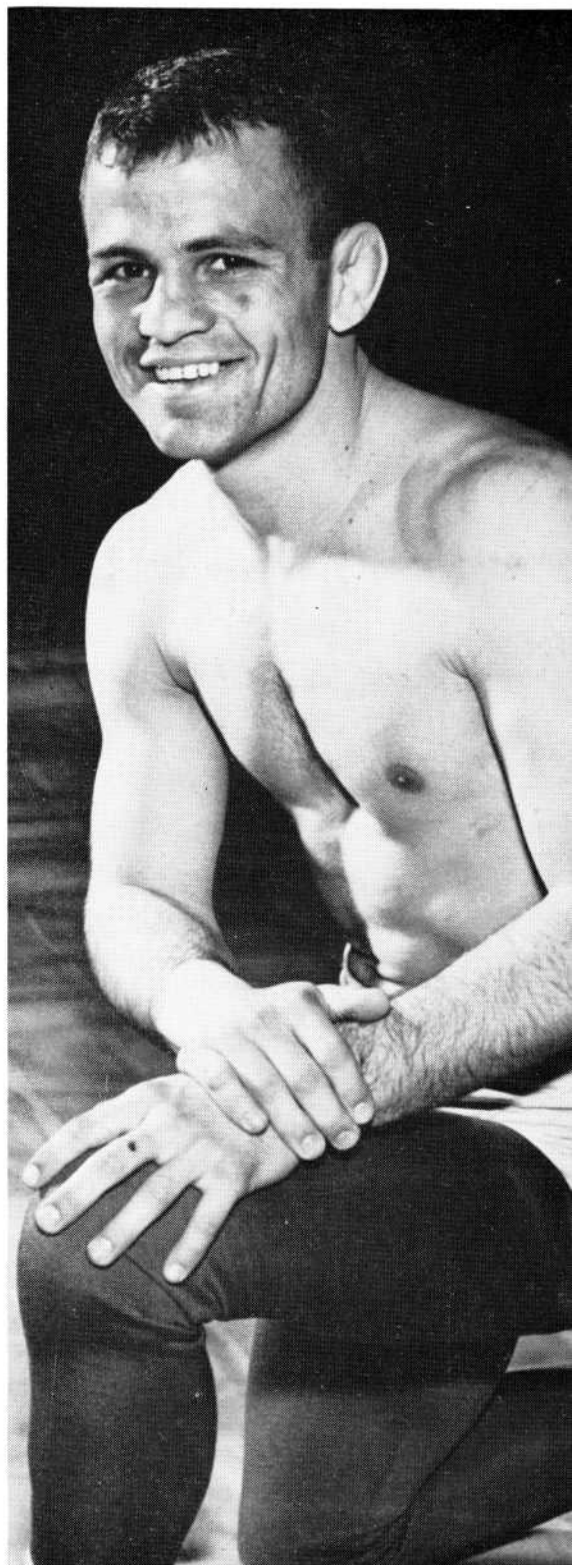
"Even after I'd won the national championship as a junior, defeating Jim Harmon of the Iowa Teachers 14-3 in the finals, Port told me, 'If you'd ever learn to put on a half-nelson, you'd a pinned him.'"

And yet every time Evans goes into action, he wrestles for his coach. "I think every wrestler has got to have somebody he wants to win for," says Tommy. "I always want to win for Port. I guess it's because I like him so well. He's so frank and honest. And he'll do anything for one of his boys.

"When my father recently became ill in California, Port loaned me the money for the plane trip and got up at four o'clock in the morning to drive me to the air port."

After sitting out last season because of a knee operation, Evans says he is having trouble getting in shape. "This year I feel tired at the end of a bout. Two years ago, after I finished a bout, I felt like I could go another nine minutes." So ends Keith's report.

Besides Evans, other strength in the middle weights should be forthcoming from John Eagleton, 157-pound wrestler from Tulsa. Eagleton finished third in last year's NCAA meet and has not lost a decision this year. Also expected to add potential points is Don Hart, 130-pounder from Oklahoma City. Evans, Eagleton and Hart all took individual championships in



TOMMY EVANS

. . . Nation's Top Wrestler?

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the Big Seven wrestling tournament in early March.

**Roundup.** Spring football practice opened in early March and will continue until the annual Varsity-Alumni football game April 10 in Owen Stadium . . . O.U.'s swimming team for the second year in a row won the Big Seven swimming championship March 13 . . . Baseball practice has been in full swing and the team opens the season March 19-20 at the University of Texas . . . First home games will be with the University of Minnesota March 29-30 . . .

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## Orange Bowl Film . . .

ma, arranged the meeting.

**McAlester.** Pittsburgh County alumni met February 25 in McAlester. Boyd Gunning, '37ba, '37Law, alumni executive secretary, Leslie Rice, associate professor of journalism, and football star Carl Allison attended the meeting from Norman. Get together was arranged by Lloyd Puckett, '37bus, club president; Don Kerr, '34-'37, vice president, and Howard Cowan, '31-'32.

**Bristow.** Alumni of Bristow broke the habit of showing the Orange Bowl film with a coke party for the junior and senior classes of Bristow high school March 4. Meeting was arranged by Bob Blackstock, '50ba, '51Law, club president; George Tyler, '22ba, vice president, and Mrs. Reba Carmen, '26-'27, secretary-treasurer. Entertainment was provided by a group of O.U. students.

**New York City.** The New York Alumni club met January 28 for a screening of the Orange Bowl film and a brief business meeting. New officers elected include Dan Miller, '47bus, president; John H. Wishnick, '48eng, vice president; Beverly Yuttal Miller, '48ba, secretary, and Maxine Fursenburg, '49bus, treasurer. The meeting was arranged by Robert W. Danielson, '43bus, immediate past president.

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