

# THE FALL CONTAGION

The summer hangs on. There is no feeling of autumn in the air. But coaches and players are preparing for Oklahoma's annual, contagious, sports festival — the football season.

By DAVID BURR, '52ba

THE SPECTACLE and spectators were missing. But present and spread across practice fields in early September, anxious and alert athletes were listening to coaches, practicing fundamentals and fighting for a chance to show their skill when the Big Show moved to Owen Field in October.

There was little glamor in securing the necessary toughening and timing for the 1955 football season. There is no pride in the ownership of a bruise gained on the practice field. The hard work was made palatable only by remembering the past and hoping for the future.

The past is a tradition—a tradition of winning. Under Coach Bud Wilkinson, other Oklahoma teams have won 70, lost 7 and tied 3 for a .909 winning percentage, the best any football team in the U. S. could show over a similar period. The tradition included finishes in the Top Ten teams of the country for the past seven years. If anything else was needed to bolster the tradition, O.U. is currently working on a 19 consecutive win record, 47 consecutive Big Seven wins, etc.

The future contained all the germs that make sports a contagion. Teamwork. Competition. Glory. If the work was done well enough in early fall and the material was good, the future would be a fitting record to join the past.

As the players worked on the field, sports writers and fans alike were pondering what the future holds for this year's team. Many were far from the scene, but confessed to fixed opinions. In a poll of Big Seven sportswriters, Oklahoma was once again given the paper championship with general agreement that Colorado would be a close second. National football previews were predicting a high national rating for the Sooners, somewhere from first to fifth.

What were the far-from-home writers basing their predictions on? 1) Bud Wilkinson & staff; 2) the winning tradition; 3) the quality of material O.U. has been cornering for the past several years; 4) the Sooners' opponents.

Without adding reams to the Wilkinson legend, already firmly established, consider the material O.U. will have available this fall and what the Sooners' competition will

be each Saturday. First, the O.U. side of the story.

Pessimism reigns in the official outlook published by the Sports Publicity Office. A portion of it reads: "Oklahoma's staff faces its most challenging rebuilding job in the last five years. The toughest thing about success is that you have to keep on being successful. (Ed's Note: Chorus from O.U. opponents: "Ain't that tough!")"

"For the first time in his career, Coach Bud Wilkinson and his staff must build an entirely new backfield at Oklahoma. They must also construct one-half of a new reserve backfield. The line has lost its three most outstanding players of last year. Left End Carl Allison, Right End Max Boydston and Center Kurt Burris. Gene Mears, Burris' top flight alternate at center, has also graduated. Only five starters return from last year."

Purporting to be a mite superstitious, the *Press, Radio and TV Guide* also mentions that Oklahoma has its toughest winning problems in years ending in uneven digits. In addition, the solid fact remains that 14 lettermen were lost, including the entire backfield—Gene Calame, Buddy Leake and Bob Herndon through graduation, Jerry Tubbs through a move back to his original position at center.

And another reason for pessimism is the fact that Oklahoma's five opening games carry what is expected to be the toughest part of the schedule, with North Carolina, Pittsburgh, Texas, Kansas, and Colorado slated on successive Saturdays.

That's the gloomy view. Consider what Wilkinson & Co. have to be optimistic about. The line from tackle to tackle is strong. Tackles Calvin Woodworth and Edmon Gray performed well last year as members of the starting team. Guard Bo Bolinger is being touted for All-American honors and Guard Cecil Morris is just a step behind, perhaps not at all behind in efficiency. The move that brought Tubbs back to the center spot made that position one of the strongest on the team. He will be supported by Dennis Morris, an outstanding graduate of the '54 freshman team. For years coaches and sportswriters have been quoted as believing that the game is won in the

line. If so, five-sevenths of the Oklahoma line should play winning football this year. What of the other two-sevenths?

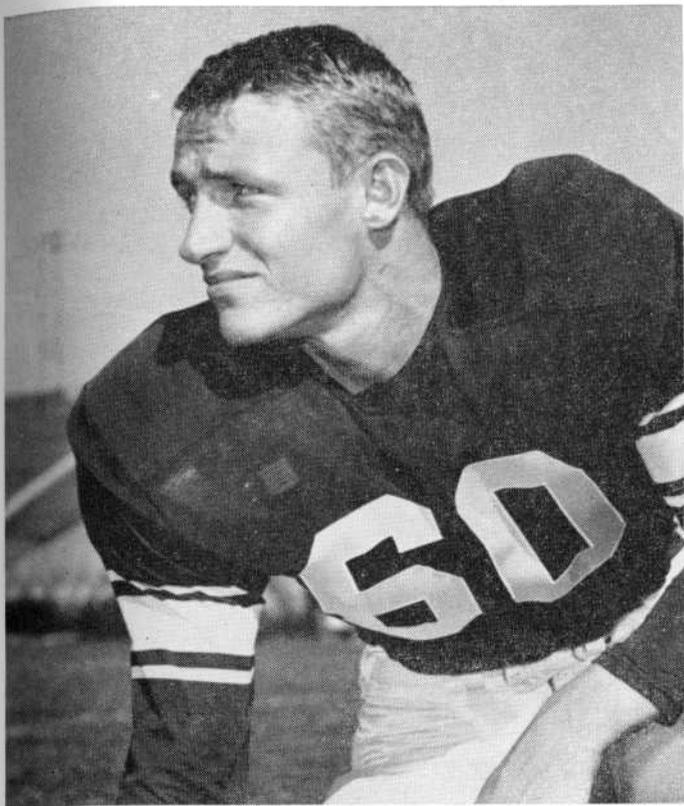
It would be expecting too much to believe that replacements could be found of comparable strength to the late-departed Boydston and Allison. However, Oklahoma is deep in reserve ends from last year's varsity, and has promising freshmen moving up. Some of the more likely to succeed are Joe Mobra, 2-year letterman; John Bell, letterman and outstanding prospect on basis of play as a sophomore (he's best remembered for setting up winning touchdown against Texas last year with his pass catching); Letterman Bob Timberlake, and Letterman Tommy Pearson. Moving up from freshman team are Fred Hood, a speedy 6-4, 200-pounder, and Don Stiller, 6-2, 194-pounder.

The backfield picture is not as clearly defined. The entire first string was lost but there is a letterman at every position available. Jimmy Harris, the substitute who took over when Calame was injured early last year, has the experience of quarterbacking O.U. past T.C.U., Texas and Kansas last year. It should show in his '55 performance. He's an excellent runner, and is improving his play-calling and timing. His running on the keeper play should be dangerous.

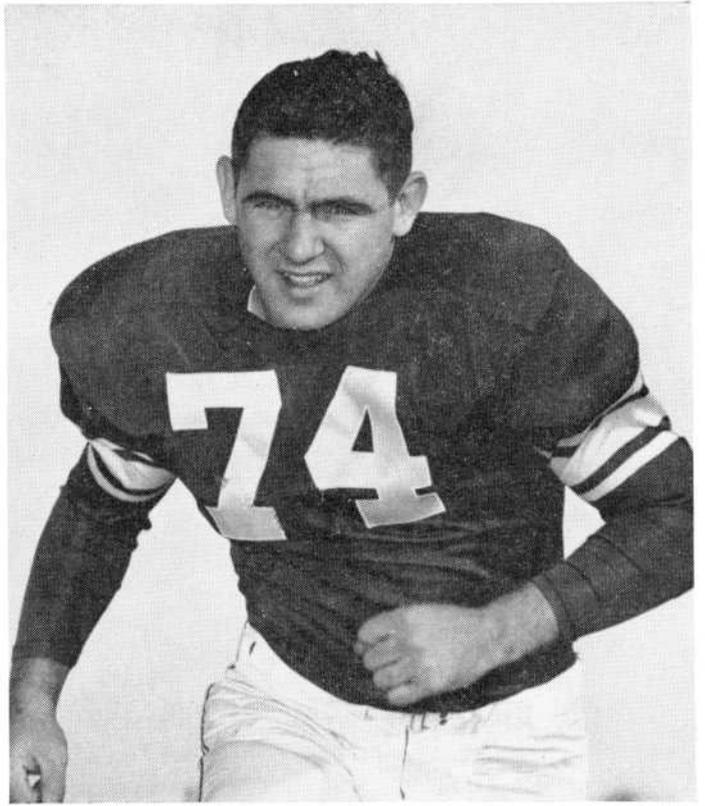
Tom McDonald and Bob Burris are the leading prospects for the two halfback spots. Both are good runners. McDonald shapes up as a good passer. Burris has picked up weight to go with his speed. Behind them are a flock of good candidates. Included are Delbert Long and Robert Derrick, both lettermen, and Clendon Thomas, Carl Dodd, and Dale Sherrod, who are making the move up from the frosh team.

Other quarterbacks may press Harris for his position. Jay O'Neil, playing with the third team last year, will see action. Bill Sturm, sophomore from Muskogee, also looks promising. As has been mentioned, there is a crop of halfbacks pressing for starting berths. Only the fullback spot is short on power and experience. The leading candidates appear to be Billy Pricer and

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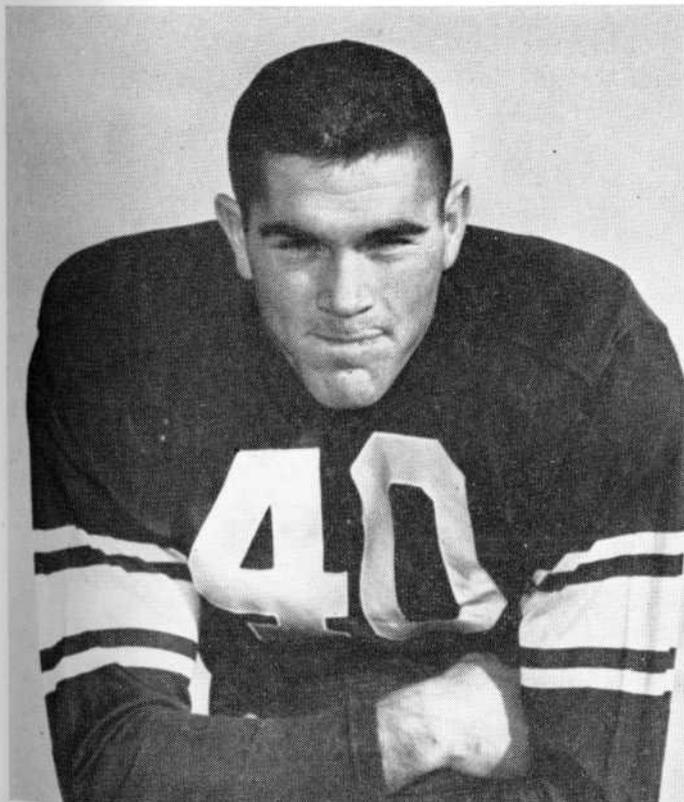
CALVIN WOODWORTH, TACKLE  
... '54 Replacement for Injured Don Brown



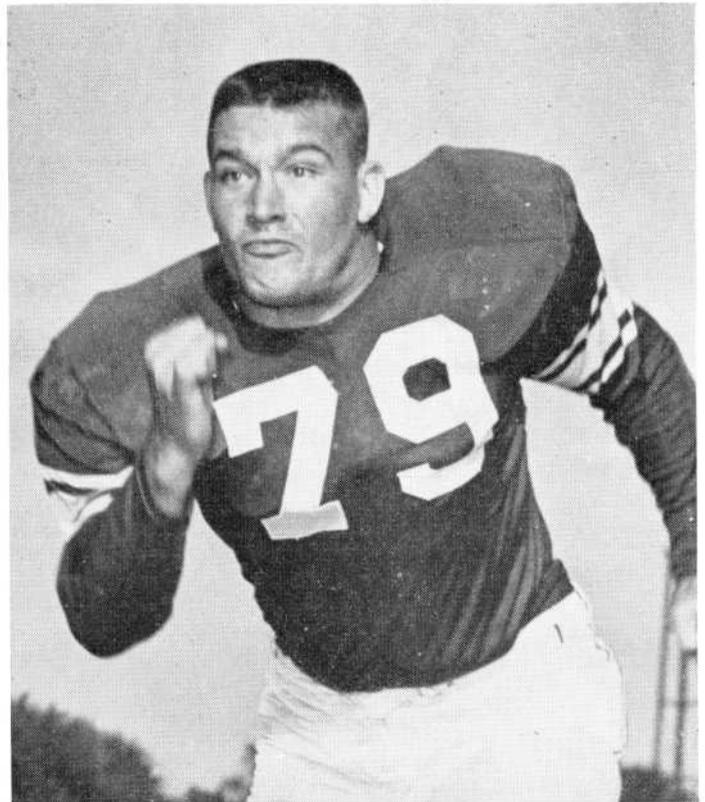
CECIL MORRIS, GUARD  
... Makes Position One of Strongest on Team

## THE SEASONED SENIORS

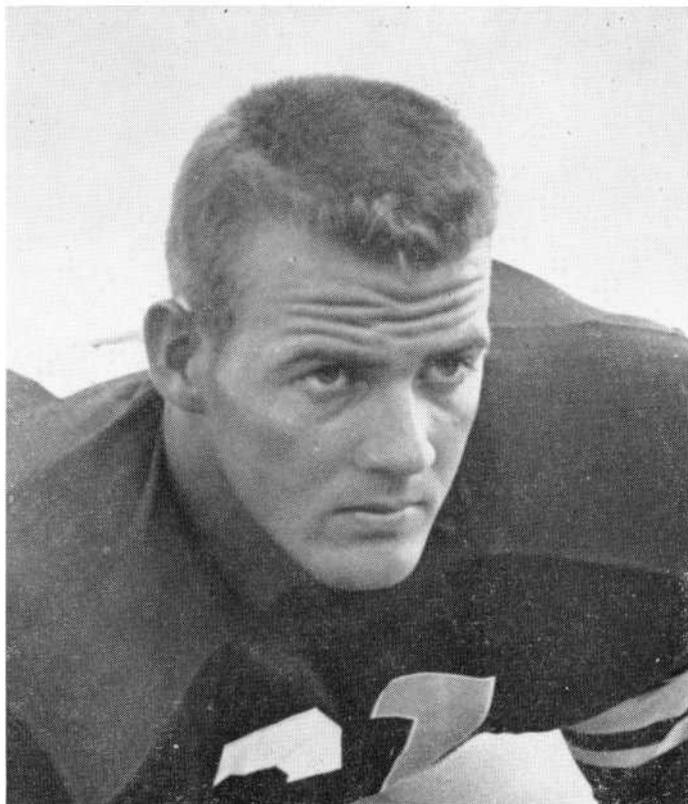
*A Representative Portfolio of 1955 Varsity Candidates*



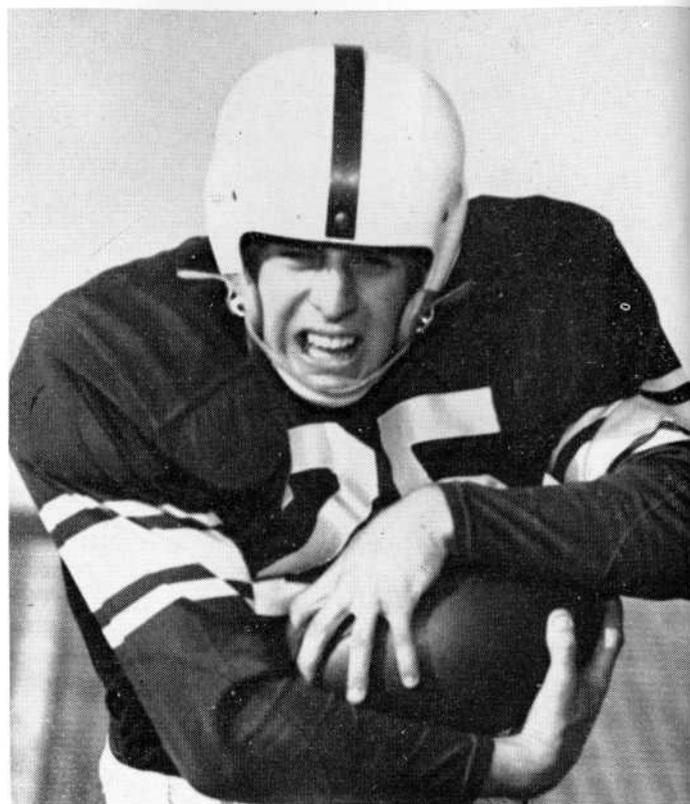
BOB BURRIS, HALFBACK  
... Could Prove Key Man in Backfield



BO BOLINGER, GUARD  
... All-America Selectors Watching

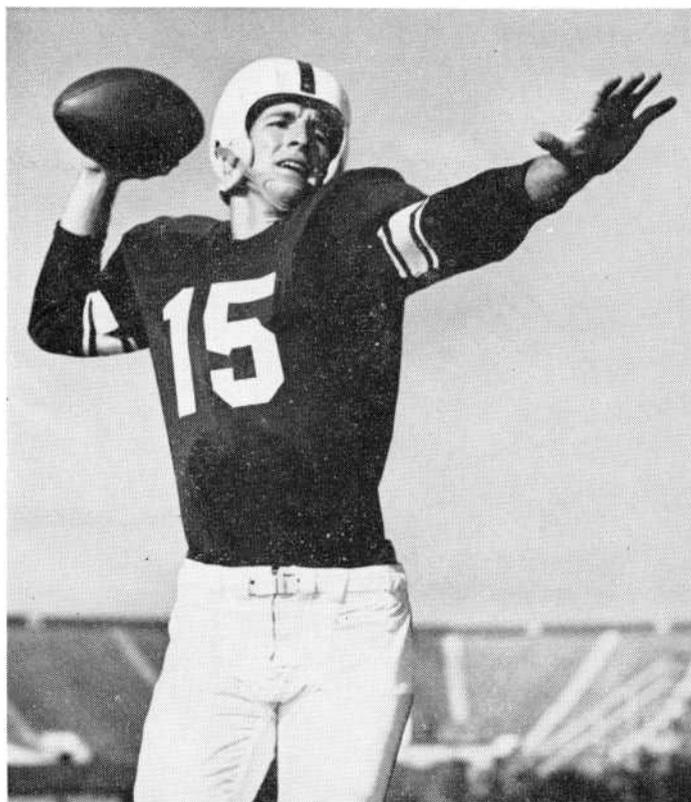


JOHN BELL, END  
... Texas Remembers Him from '54

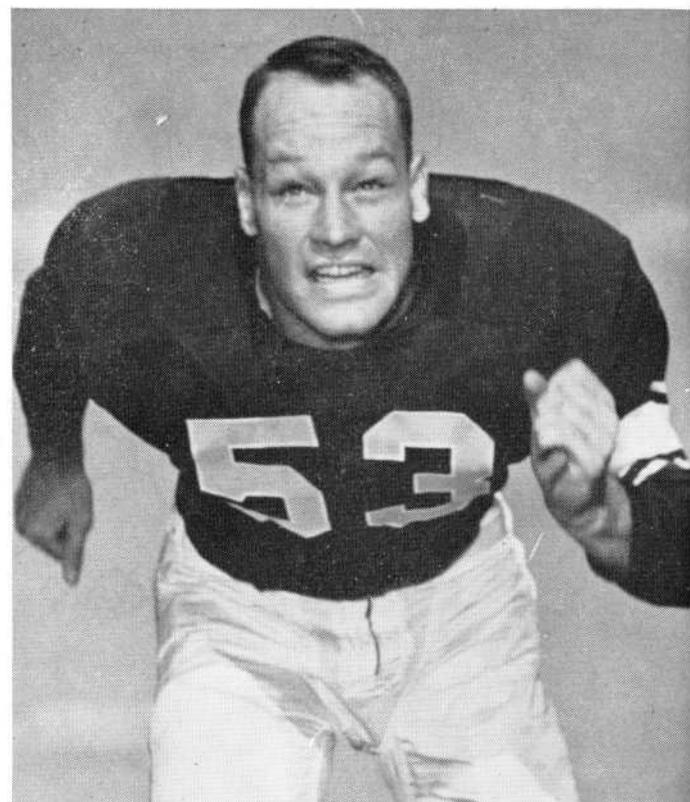


TOM McDONALD, HALFBACK  
... Has Ball, Will Travel

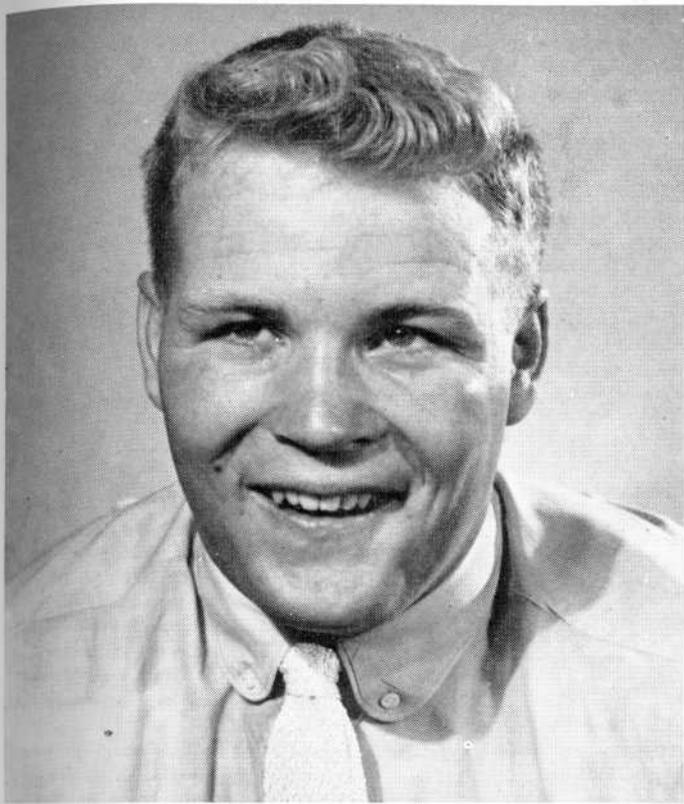
## JUNIOR BRIGHT SPOTS



JIMMY HARRIS, QUARTERBACK  
... May Be Finest QB Runner Yet



JERRY TUBBS, CENTER  
... Fine Replacement for Kurt Burris



BENTON LADD, TACKLE  
... Capitol Hill Grad Looked Good in Spring

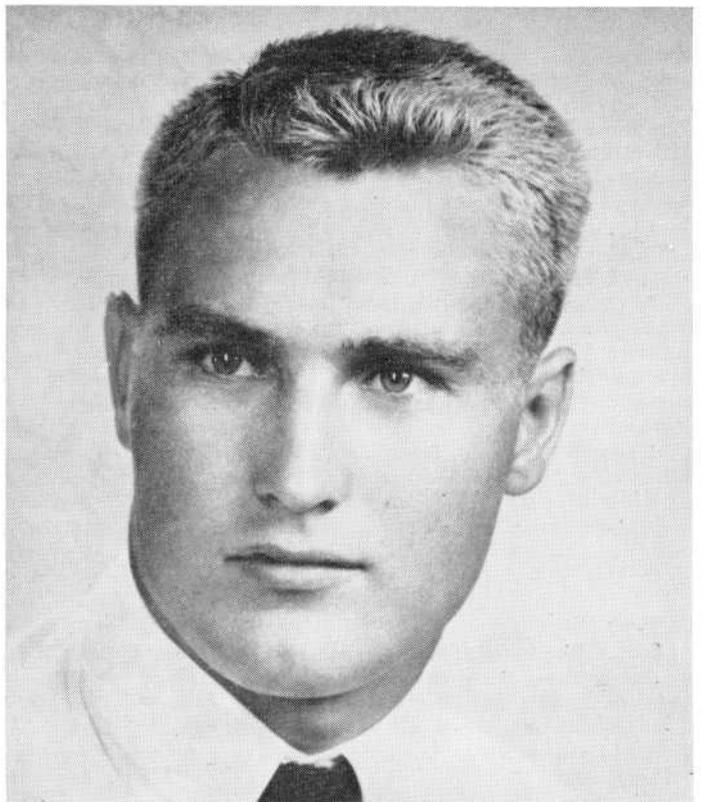


CLENDON THOMAS, HALFBACK  
... Ran Second String in Spring Drills

## NEW FACES OF 1955



BILL STURM, QUARTERBACK  
... Learned Football at Muskogee



DENNIT MORRIS, CENTER  
... Ready When Tubbs Needs Replacement

'55m.Lib.sci, Oklahoma City, and Calvin Brewer, '55m.Lib.sci, Stillwater, have accepted positions as librarians with Oklahoma A&M College, Stillwater.

Lamar Smith, '55m.Lib.sci, Reno, Nevada, has accepted a position as circulation librarian at the University of Nevada.

Jackson Hill, '55m.Lib.sci, Norman, has accepted a position as librarian with Lockheed Aircraft in Burbank, California.

### *The Fall Contagion . . .*

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Wayne Greenlee, who has been switched to fullback after a sophomore year as guard.

SUMMING UP: Line is strong from tackle to tackle; good end material a little short on experience; capable performers at three backfield spots who may need a bit more seasoning, and a question mark at fullback. Team should be a good ground team in the Wilkinson tradition. With Tubbs calling defensive signals, line should be tough, excellent line-backing by Tubbs, and adequate secondary defense.

On 10 consecutive Saturdays, opponents will attempt to batter their way to a win over the Sooners. How good is the O.U. opposition? Unless some coach comes up with a near miracle, Pittsburgh, Texas, Colorado and Oklahoma A&M figure to give the Sooners their strongest competition. Off their showing in recent years, Texas and Colorado seem the most formidable.

Texas Coach Price says: "We look to 1955 as an opportunity for a comeback, and we are pleased with the way the boys are facing the challenge." He has seven of last year's starters available. In addition, Texas has one of the most highly rated quarterback prospects in the nation moving up from the freshman squad. He's Walter Fondren. Lettermen are available at every position.

Colorado looks tough as usual. Twenty-seven of thirty lettermen return. Every line letterman is back. Frank Bernardi and Carroll Hardy have been lost, but backfield prospects appear good. Line that was all new last year has added experience. This game should decide who wins Big Seven title and trip to Orange Bowl.

Pittsburgh has a new coach but lots of experienced performers. Every starter is a letterman and seven more are available for the second unit from the team that trimmed Navy 21-9 last year.

Oklahoma A&M has a new coach, Cliff Speegle, '41ed, and a new line. Back for his senior year is Earl Lunsford, outstanding fullback. Lack of experience may hurt in early stages of season, but should be gained by time A&M plays O.U. in last game of the season.

All the other teams will be pointing for O.U., which usually means they play their

best game against Oklahoma. Missouri will prove tough in Columbia, but the other opponents—North Carolina, Kansas State, Kansas, Iowa State and Nebraska—don't figure to beat Oklahoma.

SUMMING UP: Texas, Colorado and Pittsburgh will be the BIG ONES. O.U. has advantage of playing on home field for the latter two. Oklahoma A&M and Missouri could provide real threats.

This is the way the season looks to one paper quarterback. It looks considerably different to the coaches, who prefer to play one game at a time, and the team. Now they're getting into shape, doing the hard work that makes a winning team, and trying desperately for a place on the team. There is little glamor on the practice field.

### *The Change Is Welcome . . .*

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somewhat less dogmatically hidebound by the predestinarian Marxian dialectic, and perhaps feeling none too secure in their seats of power: then the switch in policy is understandable.

To be safe we must continue to act on the hard lesson we have learned at great cost—that no mere paper agreement with Russia can be trusted. Agreement can be based only on the confidence of each side in its own defense establishment. This is of course precisely the operating basis of the stalemate of the past ten years in great power relations, so the suggestion that it must continue as the basis does not introduce any startling or novel idea. What is new is rather a tendency on each side to concede that the other may conceivably be mainly interested in defense rather than aggression. In measure as this tendency grows—if it does—more substantial progress may eventually prove possible.

The topics on which such progress may be first tested are those delegated to the foreign ministers conference. These include the questions of German unity, a security pact for Europe, disarmament, a partly demilitarized zone along both sides of the Iron Curtain, and the exploration of ways to eliminate barriers to free communication and peaceful trade between East and West.

Of these items, the German question will most likely be the key. Intransigence on that will be the significant line to watch in future negotiations with the Russians, for without a German settlement the remainder of the agenda will be meaningless.

Disarmament must be linked inevitably with security. No state can be expected to let down its defenses unless certain that

the defenses which remain are adequate. The proposal for a semi-demilitarized zone is a happy semi-solution to this age-old dilemma. No complete answer, it nevertheless would carry the assurance that each side would retain unimpaired quantities of forces, but with reduced positional advantage for unprovoked aggression. There would also be markedly less danger of unintended but inflammatory incidents at the borders of East-West power.

**A** LESS OBVIOUS TREND in world politics pointed up at Geneva is that away from the bipolarity which has been the basic pattern since World War II. By bipolarity is meant that the world has been dominated by two *and only two* centers of power—Russia and the United States. Factors which created the pattern included the tremendous increase in American and Russian power during World War II, the defeat of four of the prewar seven great powers (France, Italy, Germany, and Japan), and the ideological conflict between our western liberal democracy and Russia's totalitarian communism. The bipolar pattern was new in modern history: it gave us a new type of balance of power, in which there was no room for diplomatic maneuver. An obvious result was the complete stalemate in negotiation of a peace settlement for the war, as well as a deadlock in all major United Nations attempts at working out specific plans to implement the high promise of its Charter.

For about a year signs of a breakup in this bipolar pattern have increased. Governments other than the two superpowers have become steadily more important. In the summer of 1954 the first major settlement of an East-West issue was reached without American initiative or active participation—the Indo-China agreement. The plan for German admission to the Western European Union and to NATO was worked out mainly by Britain and France, and was a substitute for the long-pending American plan for a European Defense Community. Much of the early spadework and almost all the early enthusiasm for the summit conference came from Britain and France. New major independent powers have emerged in Asia, and evidence of independent policies on their part was supplied by the Bandung conference. Germany and Japan have all but completed the process of reestablishing themselves as major factors in world affairs. The force of neutralism operates as an additional restraint—dominant in much of Asia but important even in such countries as France, Germany, and Britain, where though minority opinion it must be weighed by responsible govern-