

Eyes on another national championship team, Bud Wilkinson and his Sooners are sweeping through another 10-game schedule on way to Orange Bowl.

The Tall Men

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOHN CRANE

One of the highest compliments a citizen of the Old West could be paid was to be called "a tall man." The phrase implied a man of ability who stood tall in the eyes of those who knew him.

As the 1955 football season opened, Oklahoma was nursing a victory string of 19, had played 47 consecutive Big Seven games

without defeat and had scored in 95 consecutive games, a new national record.

As the Sooners completed their first six games of the '55 schedule, all of the strings were still intact, but lengthened. Oklahoma held 25 straight victories, 53 consecutive Big Seven games without defeat, and had scored in 101 consecutive games, a new

national record for the Oklahomans.

The team was riding high in national rankings, fighting it out with Maryland and Michigan for national supremacy, and apparently on the way to another encounter with Maryland in the Orange Bowl.

The Sooners have earned the right to be called "The Tall Men."



THE TALL MEN

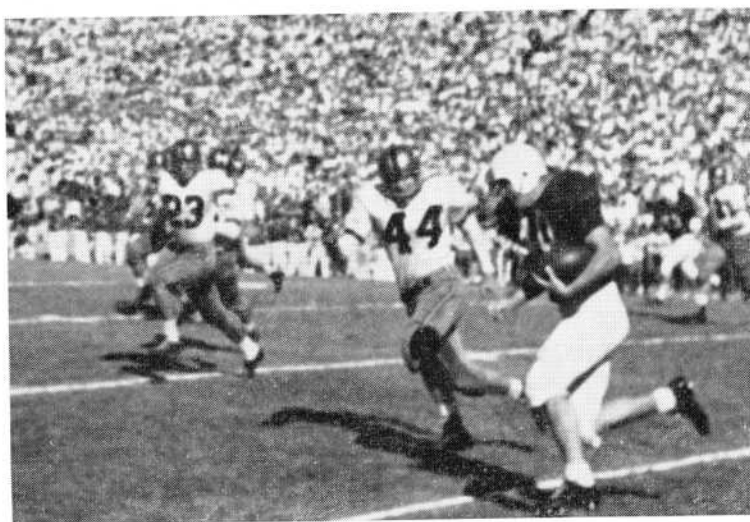
On Offense

WHEN SOONER PARTISANS discuss the Wilkinson offensive patterns, they are generally in agreement that the elements involved are deception and speed with emphasis on a ground game. All have been contributing factors in keeping O.U. near the top of the national offensive tables each year. (This year, after six games, Oklahoma was leading the nation in rushing and second in total offense.)

When Oklahoma met Colorado, October 22, a packed stadium was shocked into silence when Colorado pulled ahead 14-0. Where was the deception and speed? Then the Sooners started to move. Disdaining deception, they produced a power that pulled them together and the Colorado team apart. The final score, 56 to 21. Against Kansas a week earlier, the Sooners had also found themselves behind 6 to 0 before winning by lopsided score of 44-6.

The Sooners of 1955 put on their best shows offensively when they are pressed. This led one wit to remark, "Scoring a touchdown against O.U. is the worst blunder an opponent can make."

Tommy McDonald, O.U.'s leading gainer and scorer, faces a tough Colorado tackler in what was billed as the turning point of the Big Seven Conference race. O.U. won going away, 56 to 21.



Senior halfback Bob Burris made his father's eyes sparkle (see cover), and the team click, as Sooners overcame a 14-0 deficit to take charge of Colorado game.



Although it turned into a rout, Colorado tacklers made it tough on backs in the first half. McDonald finds no hole; is gang tackled.

THE TALL MEN On Defense

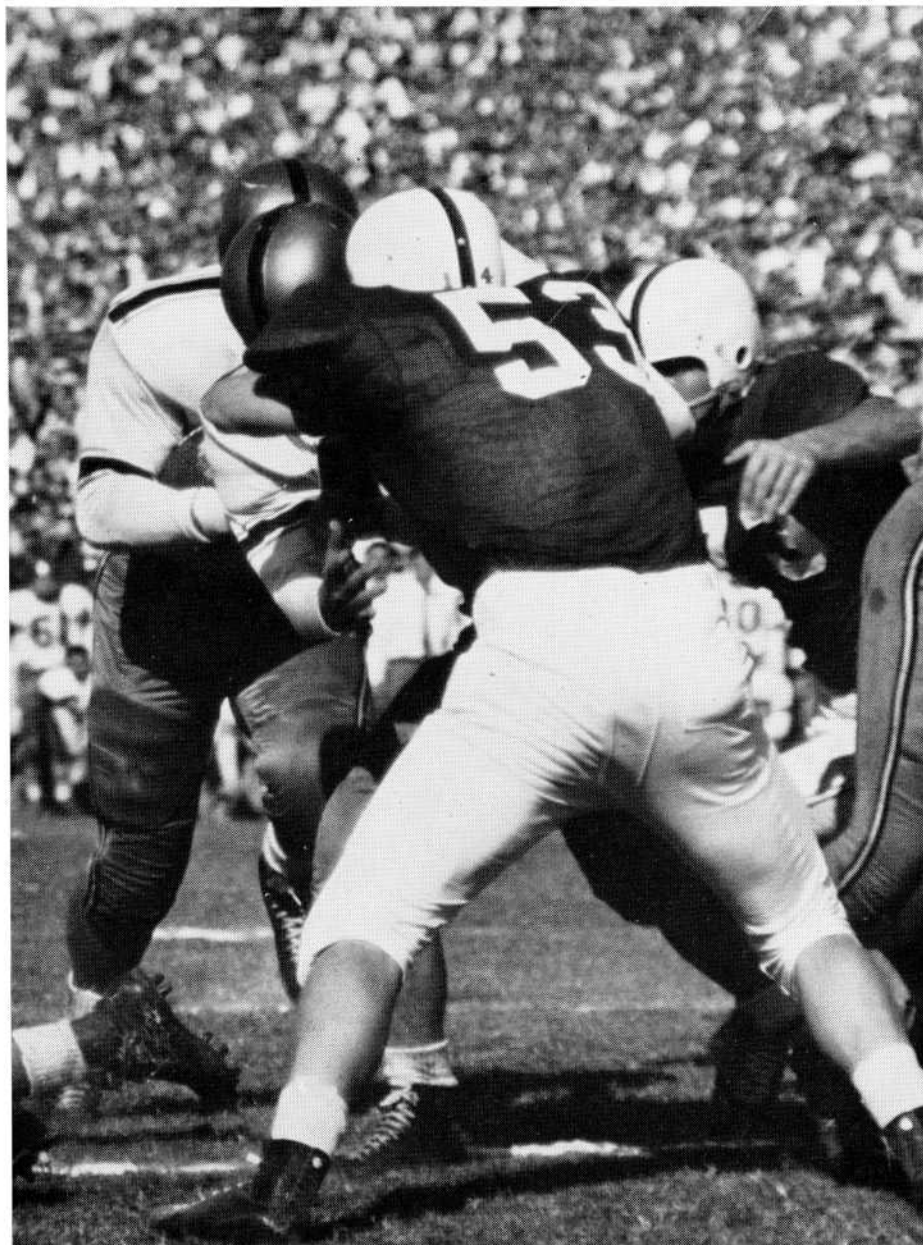
IN THE AIR or on the ground, the Sooners are proving themselves tough defensively for 1955 opponents. Through the first six games, opponents have been limited to an average 9 points per game.

Oklahoma lines are expected to sparkle on defense. They're built that way. And they're getting a fine assist from the back-field pass defenders. Thus far only two touchdowns have been scored by pass plays and less than 90 yards per game has been picked up on the average by six opponents by throwing.

The best defensive showing of the season came against Texas in the Cotton Bowl. For the first time since 1938, an Oklahoma team held a Texas team scoreless. Texas gained but 67 yards rushing.

Other notable defensive performances: 1) North Carolina was held to 145 yards gained by rushing and passing, and 2) Colorado was held to 78 yards rushing.

But such worthy performances were not good enough for team members. They were in general agreement that "We've not played our best game yet."



A good indication that the Colorado ball carriers didn't have an easy afternoon is this shot of Jerry Tubbs, junior linebacker, breaking up the interference to get to the ball carrier.



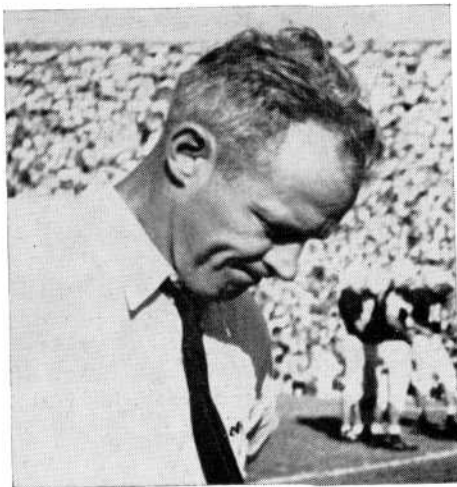
Oklahoma's light-weight, quick line limited Colorado University's fine single wing offensive to but 78 yards on the ground.



Near the O.U. goal line, a Colorado lineman submerges his way forward. Colorado scored twice in the Dad's Day game before O.U. took charge.



Following every play in Colorado game, Bud Wilkinson watches Colorado receive O.U. punt. There's no time to relax, as he mentally plays each play.



Things are not going well. Something is wrong. Now, let's see. What can we do to get going?

THE TALL MAN

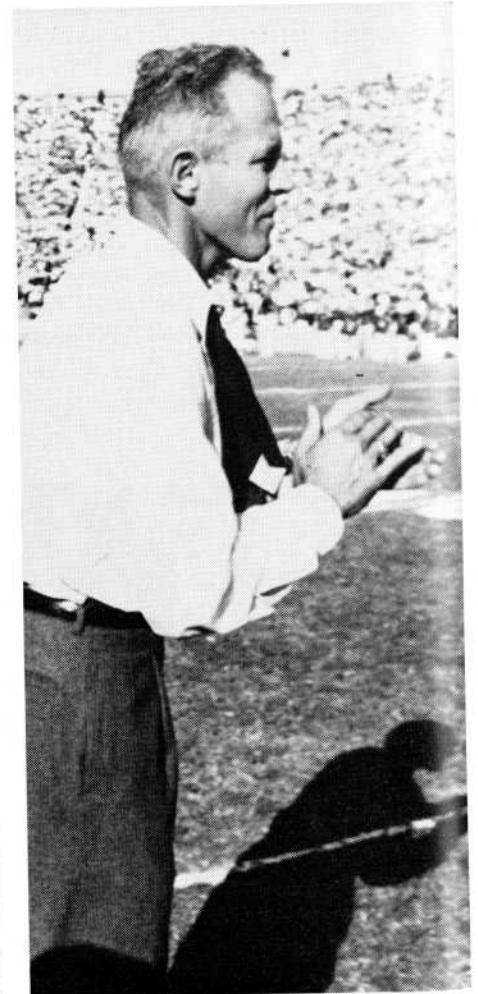
Coach at Work

The most useful comment in a coach's repertoire when asked to predict the outcome of subsequent games is the pat answer, "We play one game at a time."

The statement is supposed to convey the idea that the team must keep its collective eyes on the current assignment and not on future objectives. It is not intended to imply that the coach actually plays a game anytime. The pictures on this page offer proof that Bud Wilkinson does play each game with his players—mentally.



Perhaps a little different combination will help. Bud turns to bench for replacement.



Now they are rolling. This is more like it. Bud's still anxious, but team is now rolling.