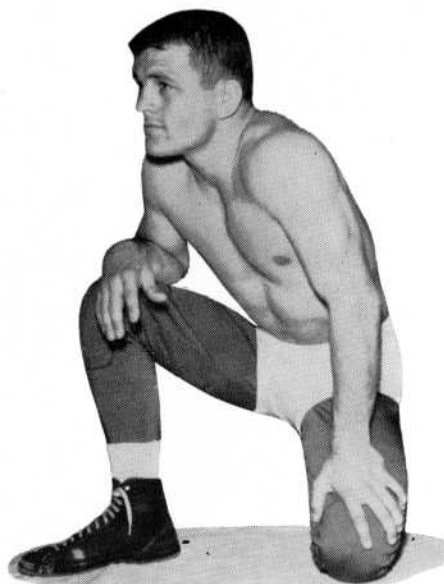




DANNY HODGE
... Second Try for a Medal



TOMMY EVANS
... Out to Correct Upset



DICK DELGADO
... Likes Olympic Style Best

For the Glory of Sport

The competition for gold medals will have been completed by the time this is read, but win or lose, five O.U.-trained athletes and two coaches will have given their best efforts in 1956 Olympic Games. Seven-member delegation is largest O.U. has ever sent to the international competition.

By DICK WENTWORTH

ON THURSDAY, November 22, at a time when thousands of Oklahomans were enjoying their traditional turkey dinner, 6,000 of the finest athletes in the world filed into the Main Olympic Stadium in Melbourne, Australia, for the ceremonies which began the 1956 Olympic games.

While dozens of bands boomed and an overflow crowd of more than 100,000 roared, the cream of the amateur athletic crop of many countries marched through the stadium entrance and started around the circular field. In the midst of the 375-member team of the United States, which followed Russia in the alphabetical procession, were three of the greatest wrestlers in O.U. history—Tommy Evans, Danny Hodge, and Dick Delgado.

Up ahead a few hundred yards were two other Sooners, trackman Neville Price and swimmer Peter Duncan, marching with the small squad from the Union of South Africa. Watching the parade from special stands near the field were former O.U.

greats Gerald Tucker and Bruce Drake, coaches of the U. S. basketball team.

When the last team—Yugoslavia—had entered the stadium, all of the marchers turned to face the giant Hellenic torch in the center of the field. The 21-gun Olympic salute was fired and a runner entered the stadium carrying a flame lit four weeks earlier on Mount Olympus, 12,000 miles away. As trumpets sounded he ignited the torch and the Olympic games were officially begun. Then, speaking in scores of different tongues, 6,000 men and women repeated the Olympic oath in unison:

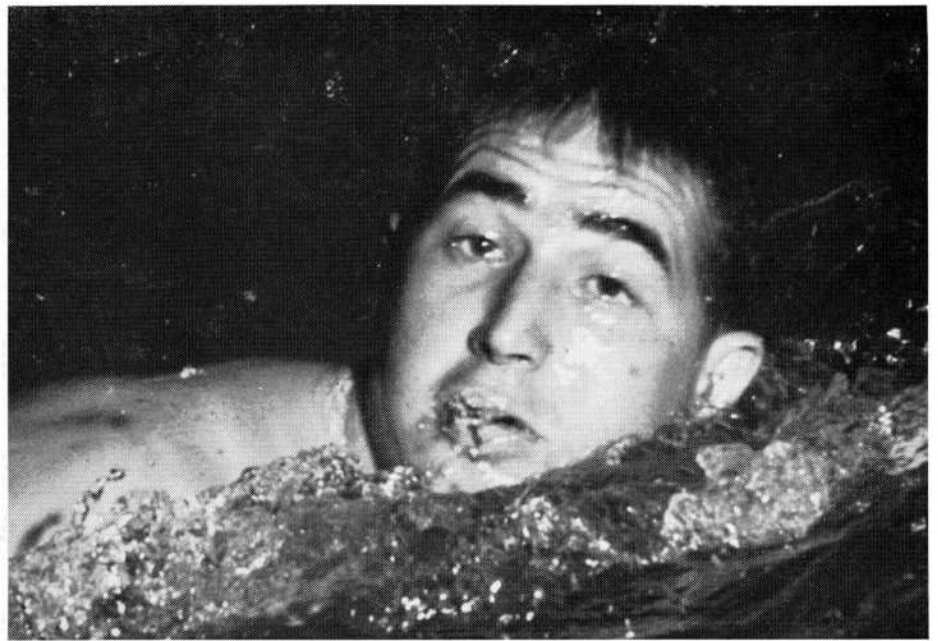
"We swear we will take part in the Olympic games . . . in the true spirit of sportsmanship for the honor of our country and for the glory of sport."

For Evans, Hodge, Price and Duncan, the ceremonies were not new; all were veterans of the 1952 Olympics at Helsinki, where Evans took second place in the light-weight wrestling competition to win the only silver medal ever awarded to an O.U.

athlete. Other Sooners in the 1952 games were wrestler Billy Borders, swimmer Graham Johnston, and basketballers Wayne Glasgow and Marcus Freiberger, members of America's championship basketball team of '52.

Actually, O.U.'s 1956 representation of seven men is its largest ever, as Hodge and Duncan had not yet matriculated when they were members of the 1952 team. As evidence of the upswing in Sooner sports over the past few years, the University has been represented by 11 different men in the past two Olympic games as compared to only two men in all of the games prior to 1952. These two were Tom Churchill, who took third place in the 1928 decathlon, and Glen Dawson, who ran the steeplechase in 1932 and again in 1936. This year's feat of placing men in four of the 17 sports is believed to be unmatched by any other college.

No athlete who wore the crimson and cream of Oklahoma has ever won an Olym-



Two South Africans, who competed as undergraduates for O. U., made the trip to Australia for Olympic games. Neville Price, left, and Peter Duncan, above, entered broadjump and swimming.

pic gold medal in an individual event, but Price and Hodge were accorded an outside chance of doing so this year. Price finished 11th in the 1952 games but has been broad-jumping better than ever before in recent months, going as far as 25 feet, 10 inches in one fall meet in South Africa. This is a full foot above the winning distance in the 1952 games at Helsinki. However, Price's competition has improved, too, and he will be up against two Americans who have cleared 26 feet on their better days. They are Greg Bell, University of Indiana, and John Bennett, formally of Marquette. The two Americans tied for first in the Olympic trials at Los Angeles in June with a jump of 25-8½, and are regarded as the co-favorites for the title.

Another South African-Sooner trackman—1956 graduate Hendrik Krueger—failed to make the Olympic team, although he polevaulted 14-3 in the trials to lead all his countrymen in that event. Because of a shortage of funds, South Africa is unable to send a full team to the games. Pocket-book troubles also kept swimmer Lin Meiring, Oklahoma's three-time Big Seven 100 and 200-yard backstroke champion, off the team. There is only one backstroke event in Olympic competition, and Meiring was passed up by the selection committee in favor of a freestyler who can double up in several races.

Duncan, another 1956 graduate, will swim for South Africa in the 400-meter and 1,500-meter races and will be a member of the 200-meter relay team. He took fourth place in the 400 and seventh place in the 1,500 in the 1952 Olympics, when he was

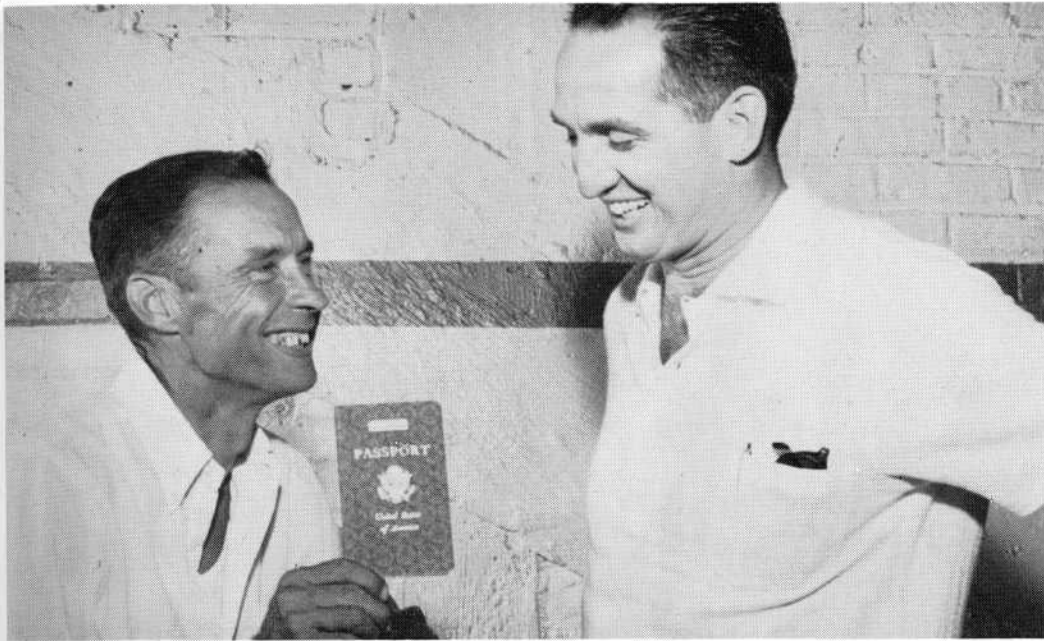
only 16 years old. Duncan finished second to George Breen of Cortland Teachers College in the NCAA 1,500-meter race last March. Breen set a new world record in the event and is heavily favored to out-distance the field in the Olympic race.

Johnston, another former member of Oklahoma's South African tank corps, was also named to his country's Olympic team but declined in order to stick with his job in the United States.

THE NO. 1 Olympic sport, as far as Oklahoma fans are concerned, will be wrestling, which begins November 28, with Port Robertson's proteges slated to represent this country in one-fourth of its matches. Hodge is doing double duty by going in both the freestyle and Greco-Roman events. He got the opportunity to wrestle freestyle when Bill Smith, who defeated him in the tryouts at Los Angeles, was ruled ineligible because he has been paid for coaching.

Smith, a Rock Island, Illinois, school teacher, pinned Hodge in the finals of the freestyle division, to the amazement of every coach and wrestler present, including Smith. Despite the fact that Smith was the only American wrestler to win a gold medal in the 1952 games, Hodge was the overwhelming favorite to defeat him in the tryouts.

The Sooner strongman entered the match with a string of victories dating back to the 1952 Olympics, when he was beaten by Russian champion David Cimakuridge. Going into the tryouts he had pinned 18 straight opponents, including 14 in the national collegiate, national AAU freestyle and national



Head basketball coach Gerald Tucker, right, and assistant coach Bruce Drake of U.S. team offer unusual switch. Drake was Tucker's coach when Tucker won All-America honors on O.U. cage team.

AAU Greco-Roman tournaments—a feat without parallel in the history of amateur wrestling. Smith, on the other hand, had finished fourth in the national AAU tourney and was obviously below his 1952 form.

For the first two and one-half minutes of the championship match, Hodge and Smith played it safe, feeling each other out. Then Hodge suddenly lunged for Smith's legs. Smith went down, then rolled over atop Hodge and for a second Danny's shoulders touched the mat. Under Olympic rules, that was the match. The crowd was stunned and so were the wrestlers. Smith was more amazed than jubilant over his victory.

"If it was anyone but you, Dan!" Smith said. "I *know* you're a better wrestler than me. I would be happy if it was anyone but you." Later Smith told newsmen, "He got careless."

"He's right about that," Hodge said. "I should have waited until it was my turn to get him down on the mat before I tried to take him. I knew he was a hard man to take down with a leg hold but I tried it anyway. I'd probably do the same thing again. That's the only way I know how to wrestle."

Hodge bounced back from his defeat to win the Greco-Roman title, although he knew next to nothing about the wrestling style. The United States is entering a Greco-Roman team for the first time in this year's Olympics.

Like Hodge, Evans was the victim of an upset in the freestyle tryouts. The two-time NCAA champ lost a split decision to Frank Betucci, a Cornell graduate whom Evans defeated in six of seven previous matches.

Again like Hodge, Evans came back to win the Greco-Roman competition. However, he will be hard-pressed in the Olympic games, when he will be meeting Europeans who have wrestled nothing but Greco-Roman all their lives.

Delgado, who had a good but far from spectacular first season with the O.U. team, is probably the least well-known of the Sooner Olympians. A native of San Diego, he began wrestling in 1948 when he was a junior in high school. Because 1948 was an Olympic year, Delgado learned that style and has always been partial to it. He finished third in the Olympic tryouts for the west coast in 1948 and by 1952 was good enough to take fourth place nationally in the tryouts. This time around he swept through the field easily, winning both matches in the final round-robin by falls. While in the navy for four years, Delgado won the national AAU championship in 1953 and 1954 and participated in the world championship tournament in Tokyo in 1954.

Since there are no standards by which to compare wrestlers, as in track and swimming, it is anyone's guess who will win the gold medal in any particular weight class. However the Russians, who won the freestyle and Greco-Roman titles in 1952, are certain to have strong entries in almost every class. Turkey and Japan are also expected to be contenders.

THE JOB of basketball coach Gerald Tucker and assistant coach Bruce Drake is to maintain America's record of never having suffered a defeat in the only game this country has contributed to the Olympics. If the result of this merger of

minds is as spectacular as the last time Tucker and Drake got together, the United States team should have little trouble.

That, of course, would be the 1946-47 season when Tucker became an All-American for the second time while leading Oklahoma to the finals of the national collegiate tournament. The Sooners were defeated for the national crown by Doggie Julian's great Holy Cross team but Tucker was named player-of-the-year by the Helms Foundation. Tucker came to Oklahoma in 1941 after spending six weeks at Kansas State and almost didn't get to play basketball for Drake and the Sooners. The Big Six faculty eligibility committee banned him for life when he transferred schools, but later reduced the penalty to one semester. The coaches of the other five conference schools never forgave the committee for changing its mind.

Drake, too, was quite a basketball player for Oklahoma. In 1929 he captained Oklahoma's all-victorious club and was named to the All-American team. He also played quarterback on the football team and pole-vaulted for the track team.

Tucker earned the right to coach the Olympic team by driving his Phillips 66 club to the playoffs championship over a strong field which included the College All-Stars and Armed Forces All-Stars. In the tournament finals Phillips beat the college players, led by flashy 6-10 Bill Russell, 79-75. Drake's service team finished third.

If any team seriously threatens the Americans in basketball, it will probably be the Russians, who surprised everyone by taking second place four years ago in their first crack at the sport.