

Defensive headaches this fall? All-American candidate Bob Harrison (shown tackling O.S.U.'s Larry Rundle) returns, but defense may lack depth.

FAIR-HAIRED BOYS

"THEY" SAY THE SOONERS CAN EXPECT ANOTHER CHAMPIONSHIP YEAR BUT "THEY" DOES NOT INCLUDE A HOST OF VERY TOUGH OPPONENTS.

By David A. Burr, '52ba

THE FOOTBALL TEAM that has earned most of the distinctions the game has to offer kicks off September 27 against West Virginia at Norman.

With supreme confidence in the Sooner coach and the flow of material to Norman, many national forecasters have picked Oklahoma to finish the season in the top five teams nationally. One major publication, *The Saturday Evening Post*, tabbed the team as national champions.

Obviously, most of the predictors are expecting the Sooners to go undefeated again in '58 (although one forecaster predicted a tie with Colorado and another picked Texas to win).

What was the basis for optimism? Perhaps it was the statement by Coach Bud Wilkinson that "We hope to be a little

more dangerous offensively than we were last season." Perhaps it was based on the return of 13 of the first 22 starters of last season. Eight of the first team members were gone—only Jackie Sandefer, back, Bob Harrison, center, and Joe Rector, end, return. But 10 of the second team members were ready to move up.

Whatever the reason, there were also some giant-sized obstacles in the way. And few sports authorities could agree on which would be the hardest to overcome.

Listed in alphabetical order, the major threats appear to be Colorado, Oregon and Texas.

Coach Terry Brennan of Notre Dame has mentioned Oregon as the team to watch. All of Texas and some of Oklahoma think Darrell Royal may have the

best team. And no one discounts Colorado, the team that has consistently threatened the Sooners' 10-year domination of the Big Eight Conference.

What do the three teams have to offer?

Oregon, coached by Len Casanova, the man who once coached Santa Clara to a 20-17 victory over Oklahoma and later lost 28-21, gained a large measure of prestige in the last Rose Bowl game. Against a good Ohio State team, Oregon lost 10-7. In losing, the Oregon Ducks played a whale of a football game.

Their prospects for 1958 are bright. The team returns 21 lettermen, including five starters and ten second team members of the Pacific Coast championship team. Coach Casanova sounds optimistic when he says, "Oregon's prospects for 1958 are



Fairest of the fair-haired boys are Wilkinson's choices for the quarterback slot. David Baker (right), with alternate Bobby Boyd (above), will step into that spotlight this fall. Baker all but overshadowed the bowl-bound regulars last year by leading the alternate team to a pre-bowl 20-7 upset over the starters. His 94-yard pass interception runback is Orange Bowl history.

good, although we will need the same rapid development of the new men, and good game performances from the entire squad, to repeat our championship of last fall."

Texas' quick return to its once former brilliance, during the first year of Darrell Royal's coaching tenure, has caused many prophets to believe that his young charges are ready to take Oklahoma.

Royal may have trouble building a strong enough line by Oklahoma game time, he lost five interior linemen from the '57 team, but no one expected him to earn a 4-1 reading in Southwest Conference play last year either. This is certain: if desire and good coaching mean anything, Texas will be a threat of major proportions.

Colorado makes no bones about it. They want to beat Oklahoma so bad they can hardly stand it. And if Sammy Baugh is right, they will. He was hired to coach Colorado during spring training to help strengthen the Buffs' aerial game. He was impressed with the potential of the team.

"Colorado has the finest single wingback running attack I've ever seen," Baugh stat-

ed. "And they've got tremendous depth. I really believe that they can beat Oklahoma this fall."

Last year Colorado lost 13-14 at Norman and this year catches Oklahoma at Boulder. Colorado lost four first team and three second team starters. They return backs Boyd Dowler, Eddie Dove and Howard Cook. They lost the great Bob Stransky. The line will be anchored by All-American candidate John Wooten.

OBVIOUSLY three teams do not comprise the entire Sooner schedule. But these three teams are the most likely to give Sooner partisans an uneasy afternoon.

What kind of a team will Oklahoma field in '58? More offense, less defense and multiple offensive formations. The first unit will be experienced, with three first team and ten second team lettermen ready to begin the season. In addition, Wilkinson will start the season with an experienced quarterback of great promise—David Baker.

He has All-American candidate Bob Har-

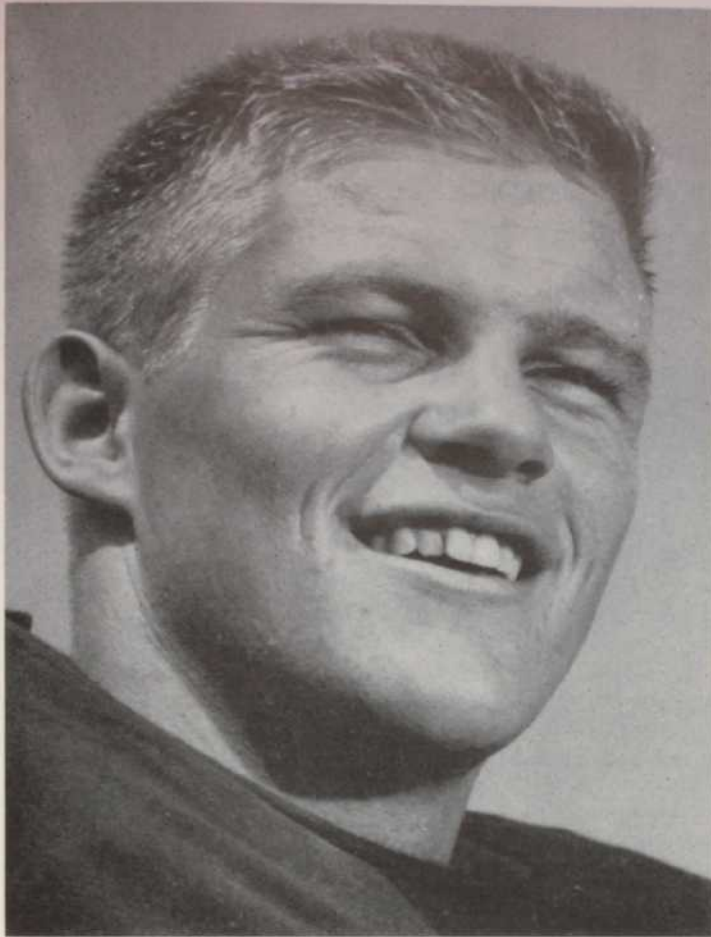
rison at center and a fleet of halfback and fullback speedsters to choose from. Co-captain Joe Rector will man one end position.

Perhaps the greatest weakness of the team is an experienced second unit, and in the words of Wilkinson, "We can not possibly be as strong defensively. We lack experience, particularly in the line."

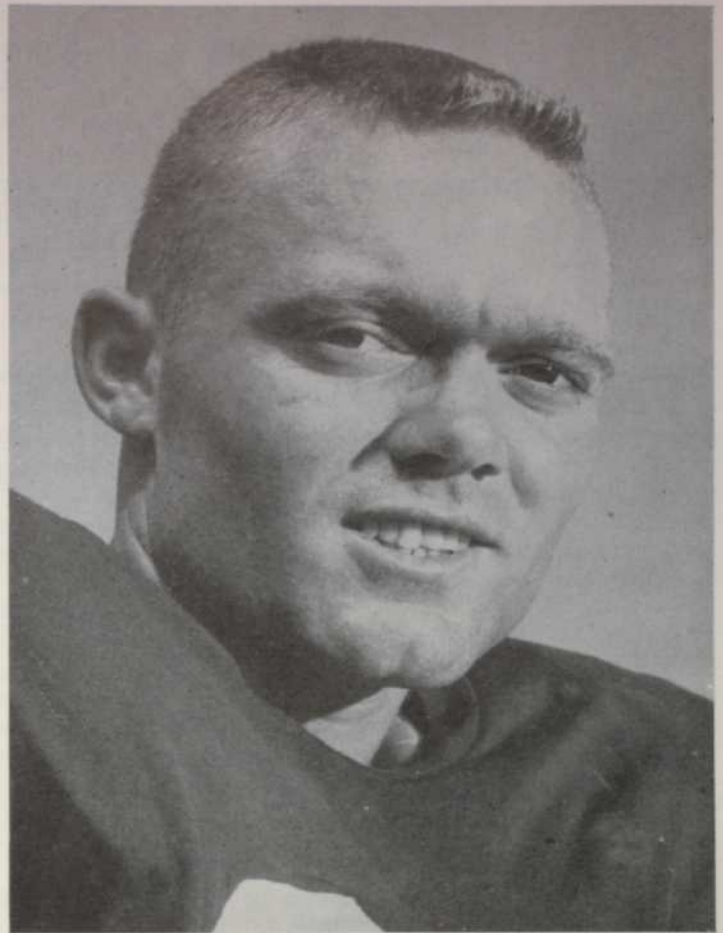
Some of the names that probably will make fall headlines include Baker, Harrison, Rector and new quarterback Bobby Boyd, fast-rising halfbacks Brewster Hobby and Jackie Holt.

Oklahoma fans will see something new this fall in addition to the multiple offense. It is the new conversion rule that scores kicks made from placement at one point, and point-after-touchdowns made by rushing or passing at two points.

With the new rule change, the addition of a multiple offense, three BIG games and a generally improved Big Eight Conference, the Sooners face a new season. It promises to be one of the most exciting in a long line of exciting football seasons.



END JOE RECTOR



HALFBACK BREWSTER HOBBY

Game Previews

West Virginia at Norman, September 27: Last year won 7, lost 2, tied 1. Team returns four starters and seven members of alternate unit. Their Coach Art Lewis says, "We will be shooting to approximate last year's 7-2-1 record." He likes the way his backfield is shaping up but states his problem is to build a line for them. He has stated also that his schedule is divided into two parts, Oklahoma and the rest of the schedule.

Oregon at Norman, October 4: Last year won 6, lost 3, tied 1 and won Pacific Coast championship. Twenty-one lettermen return. Coach Len Casanova says, "The line appears strong but we will need immediate help from our rookie backs to give us a well-balanced team." Notre Dame Coach Terry Brennan and a number of other authorities have picked Oregon as one of the year's strong teams.

Texas at Dallas, October 11: Last year won 6, lost 3, tied 1 to finish second in Southwest Conference. Lost nine members of first two teams. Emphasis is still on youth. Only three seniors are listed in top

22 for '58. Coach Darrell Royal says, "I think we will have a pretty good ball club with a lot of youth and enthusiasm, but one that could wind up most anywhere in the team standings, depending on the breaks." Texas will play three teams before playing Oklahoma.

Kansas at Lawrence, October 18: Last year won 5, lost 4, tied 1. Team is considered the darkhorse of Big Eight Conference. With new coach Jack Mitchell, most observers believe Kansas capable of challenging for place finish in conference. Team has lost 13 lettermen but returns outstanding halfback Homer Floyd. Mitchell says, "We expect to be a fairly respectable organization by mid-season. The boys worked hard to make spring practice a success. But we will not be ready to contest a good football team."

Kansas State at Norman, October 25: Last year won 3, lost 6, tied 1. Played well last half of '57 season, holding Oklahoma to 13-0 and Michigan State 27-9. Kansas State lost 15 lettermen but gained a large crop of capable sophomores. Coach Bus

Mertes says, "We have good depth—all of it real green. But for the first time since I have been head coach, we have strong competition at all positions . . . We are playing a lot of teams that probably are better than us, but we will make them prove it."

Colorado at Boulder, November 1: Last year won 6, lost 3, tied 1. Although halfback Bob Stransky is gone, backfield is solid with three holdovers of great ability. John Wooten, guard, is a prime All-American candidate. Coach Dal Ward reports, "It looks like Oklahoma again in the conference race. They'll be as tough as ever and should be more potent offensively than they were last year. Kansas and Missouri are in the next flight. I have to rate at least three teams above us. We have big problems at center and ends." Ward's testimony does not jibe with that given by Sammy Baugh (see opposite page).

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PRIDE

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throughout all of the United States. The schedules of the teams have been of advantage because they have included games from Boston to the West Coast, and from Indiana to Florida.

"This Oklahoma football record has been noted, favorably, in every section of the country by people in almost all walks of life—because football, especially college football, has attracted the interest of people in every stratum of business and social life. Thus Oklahoma has benefited because our state's name has become known to untold thousands who heretofore would have been unable to pinpoint the geographic location of Oklahoma without searching over a map.

"But the winning of football games is not the only benefit Oklahoma's fine football teams have brought to our great state. The conduct and attitude of Oklahoma players and coaches has made a deep impression on millions of football fans.

"The team-work of the players: the humility blended with confidence—all leave a favorable impression, even on those who are extremely partisan during football contests.

"Business men, industrialists, leaders in the economic fields of our nation and those in other professions or occupations who influence investment and determine business and industry policies, are favorably impressed with the name "Oklahoma" through knowledge and contact with our splendid O.U. football teams.

"Yes, University of Oklahoma football teams have made a fine contribution to our state over the past ten year period. They represent success. They represent fine individual qualities of Oklahomans. They represent teamwork. What finer qualities could anyone seeking a new home, or, considering business expansion, desire from the citizens of a prospective state? People make up a state—and Oklahoma's 'Big Red' has shown the nation the finest group of citizens they could find in any state in the Union.

"These contributions, although perhaps intangible, are of far greater importance than most Oklahomans realize."

DAN PROCTER, '36m.ed, '43ed, former President of Oklahoma College for Women (now vice-president for Star Engraving Company, Houston, Texas):

"As Paul once said, 'I'm Saul of Tarsus, a citizen of no mean city.' In reference thereto, Abraham Lincoln said, 'Yes, it is good to be proud of your home town, but it is better to so live that your home town will be proud of you.'

"Bud Wilkinson has 'so lived' that Oklahomans are proud of him and his 'works.' Everyone loves a winner, IF he abides by all the rules of fair play, and Bud Wilkinson does just that! As Darrell Royal, head coach of Texas University, said, 'Bud Wilkinson has the respect and admiration of his players, because of his insistence upon every player adhering to a code of ethics which will build high morale for any team.'

"Having known Bud Wilkinson personally for the past ten years, having worked with him in Boy Scout finance drives and other youth projects, I have learned some of his personal qualities which inspire those who work with him. His quiet, unassuming manner, his cleanliness in speech and living habits, and his magnetic smile are an inspiration to all who associate with him.

"Yes, Bud Wilkinson and his Big Red football teams have won the hearts of Oklahomans—at home and abroad—and especially those who live in Texas, the state which boasts of the 'biggest and mostest' of everything but football!"

FAIR-HAIRED BOYS

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Iowa State at Ames, November 8: Last year won 4, lost 5, tied 1. With a new coach, Clay Stapleton, and an outstanding back, Dwight Nichols, the Cyclones may be an improved ball club. Team lacks depth and experience to be a real challenger.

Missouri at Norman, November 15: Last year won 5, lost 4, tied 1. Team lost 12 lettermen from '57 team and a coach. New coach is highly regarded Dan Devine. Excellent tailback Hank Kuhlmann returns.

Nebraska at Norman, November 22: Won 1 and lost 9 last year. Team lost 14 lettermen and will be inexperienced and lacking in depth. Coach Bill Jennings says: "We hope to improve as the season progresses."

Oklahoma State at Stillwater, November 29: Last year won 6, lost 3, tied 1. With an open date before meeting Sooners, Aggies are expected to field best ball club in many years. Team returns 18 of top 22 lettermen from '57 and nine additional lettermen.

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