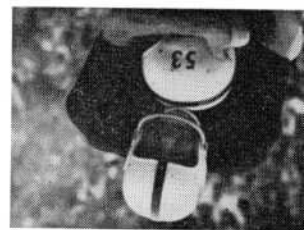




## ON TOP OR ON BOTTOM?



The Sooner Magazine's annual, fearless prognosticator, O.U. Presidential Assistant David A. Burr, makes predictions about O.U.'s harder-to-predict football team. He is assisted in this task by photographer Frank Garner, whose picture of Jim Davis' momentary elation in Dallas last year is a classic in the history of Ups and Downs.

**“W**E ARE faced,” the man said, “with the most difficult early season schedule in recent years. Our team, particularly in the line, lacks the experience of our opponents.

“If we are fortunate enough to avoid injuries, our team should improve as the season progresses, but we cannot hope to be a sound, strong team early in the year.”

The man was Bud Wilkinson, and he was talking about the 1959 Sooners. Many grad experts will agree with him. In the first three football games of the season, the Sooners meet Northwestern, Colorado, and Texas. If Bud's

Continued on next page.

team can successfully get by these three teams, it should be able to handle the remaining Big Eight competition and Army.

Perhaps the biggest assignment is the first—Northwestern. Last year, operating under Coach Ara Paraseghian, the Northwestern Wildcats were the Cinderella team of the Big Ten. They smashed Michigan, beat Ohio State and lost to Iowa's Rose Bowl champions, 20-26. Their overall record was 5-4 with late-season losses.

Northwestern will field practically the entire first three teams that played so well a year ago. Ready to pounce on the Sooners will be nine players from the first team, ten from the second and ten from the third.

And the Wildcats have great stars to lead them. Ron Burton, left half, set a new scoring record of 76 points and caught 19 passes—tops in the Big Ten. Dick Thornton, their quarterback, led the Big Ten in total offense. He completed 48 of 108 passes for 829 yards and seven touchdowns. All this and Thornton was only a sophomore.

The most important advantage and perhaps a crucial one that Northwestern will hold over the Sooners is experience. Wilkinson will be starting the season with eleven new starters on the first two teams. His biggest problem: building an alternate line. His biggest asset: the return of a fine crop of backs.

At the end of spring training, the first team line and backfield seemed good enough to satisfy almost any coach. In the backfield were Brewster Hobby and Jimmy Carpenter at halfbacks, Bobby Boyd at

quarter and Prentice Gautt at fullback. The line looked like this: Wahoo McDaniel (LE), Gilmer Lewis (LT), Jerry Thompson (LG), Jim Davis (C), Billy Jack Moore (RG), Marshall York (RT), and Jerry Tillery (RE).

The alternate team looked good in the backfield with Bob Page or Bob Cornell at quarter, Ronnie Hartline at full, Dick Carpenter and Mike McClellan at halfback positions.

The alternate team line included five sophomores—Paul Benien and Phil Lohmann, ends, Leon Cross and Tom Cox, tackles, and Kirl Milstead, guard. Two lettermen complete the line, Jerry Payne at guard and Bob Scholl at center.

Standouts on the team include Prentice Gautt, Bobby Boyd, Jim Davis, Jerry Thompson and Gilmer Lewis. Perhaps the most likely player to receive serious All-America consideration is Gautt, the first Negro ever to win a varsity letter at Oklahoma.

In the last Orange Bowl game, Gautt ran 42 yards to a touchdown on O. U.'s second offensive play (he also carried on the first offensive play). He averaged 15.6 net yards per carry and linebacked solidly. Oklahoma's coaches think that blocking is his outstanding talent. He was chosen on every All-Big Eight team selected at the end of last season.

Boyd and Lewis are co captains and excellent all-around performers. With Boyd at quarterback, Oklahomans will see some of the most colorful quarterbacking in

many years. He passes well, is an elusive runner, has trigger-quick reflexes and moves the team well. Lewis made All-Big Eight last year, rushes passers well, breaks up screens, and is very fast.

Returning at center this year will be Jim Davis. He's a fine blocker and a good line-backer. Fans will remember his special talents with kickoffs, also. Jerry Thompson plays guard as if he created the position.

From what has been written thus far, it would appear that Oklahoma has no competition except Northwestern. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In addition to Northwestern, O.U. plays the strongest outside Big Eight competition since Wilkinson has been at Oklahoma. The other outside opponents: Texas, Army and Oklahoma State (State begins Big Eight football competition in 1960).

The Big Eight is improved, also. Missouri and Kansas both are on the way up. Insiders insist Missouri will be the main threat but Kansas has demonstrated marked improvement under Jack Mitchell. All of the Big Eight teams appear stronger with the possible exception of Colorado.

The two teams most likely to beat Oklahoma in 1959 are Northwestern and Texas. Both have an edge over O.U. in experience, and experience is all-important early in the season. Missouri and Army are next in rank.

How good will the 1959 Sooners be? We will know after the third game of the season—the Texas game.



ON  
TOP  
OR  
ON  
BOTTOM?

## NORTHWESTERN . . . .

at Evanston, Illinois, 2:30 p.m., Chicago Daylight Time (1:30 p.m. Oklahoma time), September 26. Alumni breakfast in Chicago's Sherman Hotel the day of the game.

## COLORADO . . . .

at Norman, 2 p.m., CST, October 3.

## TEXAS . . . .

at Dallas, Texas, 2 p.m., CST, October 10. Alumni dance and midnight breakfast will be held October 9 in the Sheraton-Dallas hotel (*Sooner Magazine*, July).

## MISSOURI . . . .

at Columbia, Missouri, 1:30 p.m., CST, October 17.

## KANSAS . . . .

at Norman, 2 p.m., CST, October 24. Homecoming. A dance that evening in the Union.

## NEBRASKA . . . .

at Lincoln, Nebraska, 2 p.m., CST, October 31.

## KANSAS STATE . . . .

at Manhattan, Kansas, 1:30 p.m., CST, November 7.

## ARMY . . . .

at Norman, 2 p.m., CST, November 14.

## IOWA STATE . . . .

at Norman, 2 p.m., CST, November 21. Dad's Day. Quartet contest the night before, the Engineers' Show the night of the game.

## OKLAHOMA STATE . . . .

at Norman, 2 p.m., CST, November 28. Band Day.

Football lunches will be served each home-game Saturday in the Union cafeteria. The Alumni Association offices will be open for your convenience on Saturday mornings.