

# Sooner Scene

## COLD, WET WEATHER COULDN'T KEEP SOONER FANS AWAY FROM THE O.U.-MISSOURI GAME

ON NOVEMBER 17 a capacity crowd of 61,826 came to Norman to see Oklahoma and Missouri football teams battle for season honors. The Oklahoma Dad's Day crowd came prepared to stay throughout the wet, chilling afternoon. Blankets, umbrellas, parkas, tarpaulins and foul-weather gear of all sorts gave the appearance of a stadium full of huddled duck hunters.

Never before did so many people come to a football game in such inclement weather in this part of the country and stay until the final gun was sounded. But they came, they stayed, and they saw a Sooner team that on this particular day was a great team. The Missouri team came into the game with the nation's best ground-gaining average, 287.6 yards a game. Yet, they were stopped in their tracks with only two first downs in the first half, one on a penalty and the other on a pass in the final seconds of the half when it did not matter. For Missouri, it was a long afternoon. Joe Don Looney brought the opening kickoff back 45 yards. On the next play Monte Deere completed a screen pass to Virgil Boll for another long gainer. This set up a scoring situation, and on the fifth play, Looney slanted in for three yards and a touchdown. Another touchdown for O.U. at the beginning of the second half completed the scoring in the 13 to 0 game.

Aside from the solid-wall defense of the Sooner line and the quick-scoring ability of Oklahoma, this game had several other memorable features. Jim Grisham, O.U.'s fine sophomore fullback, played so well both on offense, gaining 116 yards, and defense as a linebacker, that he was named national back-of-the-week by Associated Press. For the first time in several years, Oklahoma was placed in the top ten teams by A.P. and U.P.I. Joe Don Looney punted five times for an average of 44.6 yards to retain his number one position in the nation as a punter. Sooner fans had the feeling that the team had improved enough to be rated with the best, and the improvement came sooner than anyone anticipated.

The current rise of Oklahoma football actually began with the Missouri-Oklahoma game at Columbia last year when Oklahoma won after suffering five straight defeats. This fall, pre-season injuries caused last moment adjustments, but there is no doubt about the poise and balance of the present Sooner crew.

The key to the situation is probably in the fact that the Oklahoma sophomores learned their lessons fast and well. After the Missouri game Gomer Jones, commenting on the difficulty of rating the various lines he has coached, stated, "but I'd say our first two lines this season compare favorably with the ones we had in 1955 and 1956." This is high praise, indeed, coming from the best of all line coaches and in mid-season. The sophomores who are making the difference are linebackers, John Garrett, David Voiles and Jim Grisham. Four of the five top ends are sophomores, Rick McCurdy, John Flynn, Glen Condren and Allen Bumgardner. The middle is adequately manned by Newt Burton, EdMcQuarters and Ralph Neeley. The rapid development of these young linemen is also due to the excellent leadership provided by four stalwart seniors, Wayne Lee, Leon Cross, Duane Cook and Dennis Ward.

Also not to be overlooked in assessing the effectiveness of the Oklahoma defense is an air-tight secondary provided by Paul Lea, Charles Mahue and Melvin Sanders-field.

There is another reason for the success of Oklahoma football. For 15 years Bud Wilkinson and Gomer Jones have met all comers. They have been matched against the great coaches of the era and proven, beyond a doubt, that they are the best in the business.

Behind the scenes in Norman on a football Saturday is another interesting story, one unsuspected by the average visiting fan.

For Dad's Day Norman grocery stores had the biggest rush of the season. With a capacity crowd expected, all organized student houses planned special events for the dads. Norman residents expected guests in

undetermined numbers, and many people were involved in helping as hosts for scheduled activities. Beginning with a meeting of the Dad's Association Executive Committee on Friday night, 21 planned events were held in the Union Building in connection with the football weekend. Every dining area was crowded, and it is estimated approximately 3,000 meals were served in the Union on Saturday.

The football game itself is a production of major proportions in showmanship and pageantry. In addition to the players and coaches, more than 1,500 people are involved in the presentation of a game in Norman.

In this number is included ushers, guards, ticket handlers, reporters, photographers, policemen, musicians, concession salesmen, and so on.

It is all part of the work and excitement of the day. And when the home team wins, everyone in town shares in the victory.

The 3,000 O.U. alumni living in southern California are looking forward to an active year with several interesting events being planned by the officers of the Los Angeles Alumni Club. The new officers of this club are Mrs. Pearl Henry of North Hollywood, president; Dr. O. W. Davison, Redondo Beach, vice president; Mrs. Frances Butler, Los Angeles, secretary; James Harrison, El Monte, treasurer.

The first meeting of the new year will be a dinner on Thursday, December 13, for the O.U. basketball team and its new coach, Bob Stevens. The Sooners are scheduled to play U.C.L.A. Friday, December 14, and U.S.C. on the following day. Another exciting weekend will be next fall when football Sooners play U.S.C. in the Los Angeles Colosseum on September 28. If these teams continue to perform at the current level, this game may bring more Oklahomans to southern California than they have seen since the late 1930's and fill the more than 100,000 capacity Colosseum for the first time in years.

—RBG

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