

Backlog

DON'T LOOK NOW, BUT O.U. FANS ARE TURNING OUT TO WATCH BASKETBALL

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Now, you'll never believe this—but University of Oklahoma fans are on the thin edge of becoming rabid about basketball. If you need proof that O.U. is not a one-sport school, just visit the Field House anytime the Sooners are at home—and if you come, come early.

There was a time—a few short months ago—when you could come late and still have your choice of seats. Coach Bob Stevens, the Piped Piper who is taking the campus by storm this season, is changing all that.

With the addition of 300 bleacher seats the Field House capacity has been increased to 4,775. All these seats were sold for the opening home stand against St. John's—the first sell-out since the 1958 encounter with Oklahoma State. Attendance since the opener has ranged from 3,700 to 4,100. Average attendance at last year's home games was 1,905.

This could be taken as proof of a favorite old adage of mine—that it's more fun to win than to lose—but there's more to it than that. No one really expects the team to win them all in Stevens' first year out with the Sooners. It would be more correct to say that it's more fun to go for broke than to play it safe. Keeping the crowd awake contributes a lot to their enthusiasm, and there are few silent spectators in Norman these days.

Unfortunately O.U. has a set of cheerleaders who are reluctant to enter into the spirit of things, but the crowd really doesn't need them. Just let the opposition threaten a Sooner lead and the spontaneous "go-go-go" chant can be heard for blocks.

Part of the reason for the spell Stevens' boys are casting over O.U. fans is a 5-foot, 9-inch guard named Eddie Evans, whose fast break sharpshooting makes him the most colorful basketball player we've had around here. His 31-point performance against Iowa State, in which he hit the first nine field goals he attempted and had more rebounds than the team's two centers combined, was almost unbelievable to Sooner fans schooled in the premise that there is something sinful about shooting for that basket.

Even at that the crowd has a tough time matching the enthusiasm exhibited by the players themselves. These boys love to play basketball; they are out there to win, but they are also there to have a good time.

In the midst of Evans' phenomenal nine straight, for instance, forward Jerry Had-

dock took a pass and had a clear shot at the basket—but so did Evans standing beside him. Haddock grinned, flipped the ball to his high-flying teammate and said, "Take another one, Eddie." And Eddie did.

Even if you don't know much about basketball, it is worth the price of admission just to watch Coach Stevens watch the game. You can depend on the excitable coach to fall off his chair at least once a game. A good fast break or a bad official call can send him into a war dance that defies description. Framing his eyes with his hands, Stevens sights in every free throw from a crouching position on the sidelines. He greets every player leaving the game with such vigor that the crowd is never quite sure whether they are cheering for the man going in or the man coming out.

Stevens has done an effective job of selling his brand of basketball to players and fans alike. Win or lose in 1963, at least, his customers are buying. One thing for certain, if O.U. is a one-sport school, someone forgot to tell Bob Stevens. —CJB

Owen Stadium Ash Trays

This 3½ by 4½ inch replica of O. U.'s famous Owen Stadium, complete with press box, in glazed ceramics is available this fall at \$1.00 each. Designed and distributed by O. U. alumni, it is available in the following colors:

- RED AND WHITE
- EMERALD
- ROCK MOSS
- BRONZE

To: University of Oklahoma Association
University of Oklahoma
Norman, Oklahoma

Please send _____ ash trays at \$1.00 each (price includes tax). Enclosed is my check for _____. (Add 10c per ash tray to cover shipping charges.)

My color choice is _____

Name _____

Address _____