

Righthander Jerry Haddock en route to a perfect season on the mound.

## *The Long, Hot a fractured wrist failed for Jerry Haddock, the*

**T**HE line drive—gentle but genuine—wobbled into short center field, scoring the runner from third. The batter held up at first base, fidgeting with his cap as the home crowd hailed his hit. It was a dramatic moment in a surprisingly splendid season for the Oklahoma baseball team—a moment that would have made Frank Merriwell envious.

The hero of the piece was Jerry Haddock, O.U.'s best pitcher. Wielding his bat like a sword of retribution, the tall senior had singled home the winning run to break a 2-2 tie with Oklahoma State. That a pitcher had won his own game with a hit is noteworthy (Dizzy Dean's contentions notwithstanding), but Haddock's heroics merit particular attention.

The blond right-hander played the entire season with a broken left wrist, having received the injury in January while playing basketball for the Sooners against none other than Oklahoma State at Stillwater. In driving to the basket for a layup, he was dumped to the floor with a body block in a patented Oklahoma State defensive tactic. A foul was called, but the damage had been done. Haddock lay on the floor with a fractured wrist bone. His basketball career ended—his baseball future doubtful.

Haddock reported for baseball with his left wrist encased in a plaster cast from the middle of his forearm to the upper hand. It was necessary to adjust his glove so that he could use it with only partial freedom of his fingers. He was unable to grip a bat properly and had to learn to swing it with only his right arm. By the end of the season, however, Coach Jack Baer probably wished that all his pitchers had similar handicaps if they could pitch as Haddock did.

Haddock combined the broken left wrist with a golden right arm to become an undefeated pitcher and the chief reason for the team's fine showing and strong second place finish in the Big Eight. The 6-foot 5-inch, 190-pound Haddock started six games against conference opponents, won all six and went the distance each time. No mistake about it, the Oklahoma State Cowboys had broken the wrong wrist.

The season opened in March and the Sooners played like the Mets all month. The first six games were away from home against non-conference schools. The trip turned out to be an unintentional goodwill tour. By dropping five of the six games, the Big

# Season

## to dim a brilliant campaign Surprising Sooners' star hurler

By PAUL V. GALLOWAY



Haddock, the hitter, carried an obvious burden with him to the plate.

Red looked ready for the sacrificial lamb role in the conference race. But the opening games of the college baseball season can be as misleading as the spring training schedule major league teams play. Experimentation, maturation and preparation are the key words in pre-conference struggles.

When O.U. returned to begin the chips-are-down conference schedule, the change was startling. It was as if your sweet little grandmother had turned into Wolf Man. The Sooners won their first ten conference games, and as the weather got warmer, the Sooners got hotter.

Strength at every position made Baer's job easier this year. The outfield of Mitchell, Smith and Peach was more than adequate. Dale Mitchell Jr. in left followed in his father's fine batting footsteps with a healthy .292, second best on the team, and won three games in late innings with clutch hitting. Johnny Smith in center was steady, often brilliant, afield and was second

in runs batted in. The right fielder, Eddie Peach, was the club's leading hitter at .370.

The infield played consistently well. Buzz McDonald at third led the team in the runs-batted-in department; shortstop Jann Christian and second baseman Keith Shean formed a competent combination, and Don Finkenbinder was reliable at first base. The club was well-stocked in catchers with senior Tom Walton and sophomore Doug Martin sharing the duty.

The team's question mark was the pitching staff, and led by Haddock's sterling performances, it straightened itself into an exclamation point. Doyle Tunnell and Lonnie McGuire were the club's other starting pitchers, and both turned in some well-pitched games. Larry Webber and Lynn Overton formed a capable relief crew.

In 1962 Haddock was 0-1 without a broken bone in his body. In the silver-lining vein, he believes the wrist may have helped him have a better year. "Usually I had to miss the first part of the season because of basketball," Haddock says. "This year I was able to begin working out with the team from the beginning, and I know it made a difference. This year I had my control."

Haddock made no changes in his pitching style to compensate for the cast on his arm. "The only adjustment I made was to my glove. I had to wear it practically on my fingertips. I didn't consciously change my pitching motion or try to do anything different. I just had more confidence this year. Coach Stevens (Bob Stevens, the Sooners' ebullient basketball coach) was responsible in a great degree for giving me faith in my abilities as an athlete. Playing for him was a great experience, and the winning attitude carried over for me into baseball."

Hurler Haddock throws a baseball hard, not quite Mach 1, but plenty fast. Throwing the fast ball more than half the time, Haddock struck out 51 in 56 innings. He got 20 Kansas State players on strikes in one 11-inning battle.

Haddock began the season with a 2-inning, no-decision relief appearance against Arizona in the third game of the season. He made his first start against Arizona State, leaving the game after six innings with a 2-1 lead. (O.U. managed to lose it, 5-4.)

Pitching the Sooners' conference season opener against Kansas

*continued*

# *a tight conference battle wasn't settled until the final day*

at Norman, Haddock responded to the sweet sounds of support from the home stands with a neat 3-2 victory. Trailing 2-1 going into the bottom half of the last inning, O.U. rallied for two runs to save the well-pitched game. Haddock gave up six hits, one base on balls, fanned seven and was dejectedly taking a shower when he was notified of the winning rally. There's nothing like a good shower.

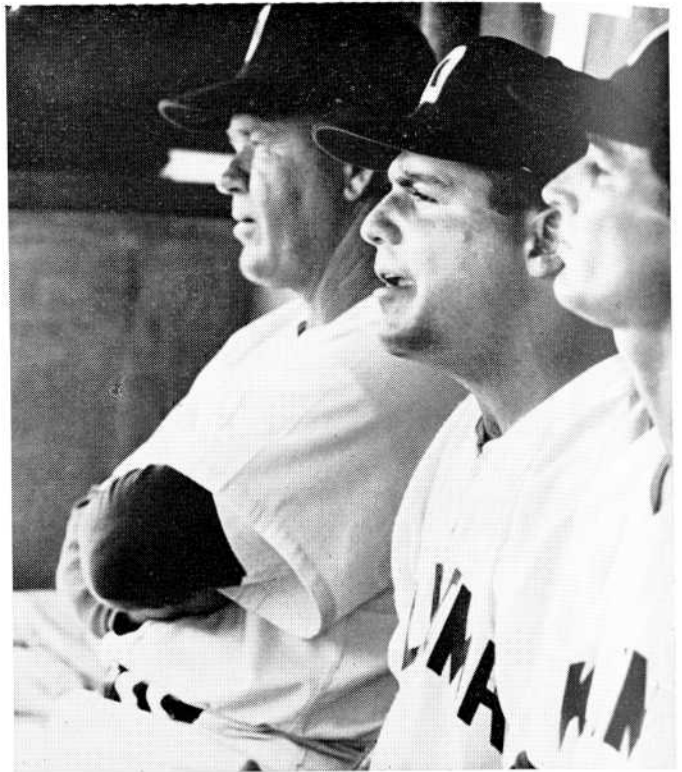
McGuire shut out Kansas, 5-0, in the second game, and Overton won the third game in relief of Tunnell, 2-1, when Mitchell tripled home the winning run in the tenth inning.

"We won those one-run ball games this season," Haddock points out. "A winner has to take the close ones. The greatest factor in our success, I feel, was our defense. It's nice to know that when the other team hits a ball, your team will catch it. Last year at times you couldn't be sure. This year we had a tough defense and that won us ball games."

In his next start Haddock shackled Kansas State with five hits and two walks. This was the game in which a score of Wildcats went down swinging. Smith won the game in the last of the 11th with a grand slam home run, 6-2. The Sooners took the next one with K-State, 3-2, with Mitchell knocking in the clincher in the last half-inning. McGuire again went the distance. Tunnell made it a sweep in the third game with the Wildcats, 5-1, for the sixth straight conference win.

On the road at Nebraska the next weekend Haddock once again got the Sooners off to a good series start with a 6-hit, 9-2 beauty. The club completed the series sweep with 2-0 and 7-1 victories behind McGuire and Tunnell, respectively. Rain cancelled the Colorado series at Norman the next weekend.

Going into the key series against Missouri, the nation's num-



Tension from the diamond begins to build in the dugout as (from left) Coach Baer, Buzz McDonald and Don Finkenbinder watch the action.

ber one team and the conference favorite, O.U. was undefeated and aware of the challenge. The series was played at Columbia and Haddock started the opening game. "I am proudest of the game I pitched against Missouri," he says. "They were the nation's best and the game meant a lot in the standings."

Haddock beat Missouri, 3-2, with a 5-hitter and started the winning rally with a 1-armed single. "It went about 25 feet," admits Haddock, "but it was a hit."

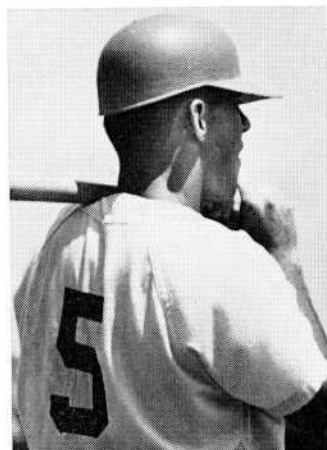
Missouri took the next two to tighten the race. Oklahoma returned home to meet Oklahoma State. The first game opened a Friday doubleheader, and Haddock drew the starting assignment. "Naturally, this was the one I wanted badly because of the wrist," Haddock relates. "When I came to bat with the leading run on third, I thought I could do it, but I was still surprised. Ferguson (the Cowboy pitcher) threw the first two over and I must have missed them by ten or fifteen feet. The next one he made the mistake of throwing up around my eyes."

You know the rest. Haddock fittingly and properly administered the *coup de grace* with his single, settling an old score with a 5-hit, 3-2 win. The Cowboys salvaged the last game of the 3-game series, and the season entered its final week with Missouri on top in the standings. Oklahoma still had a run at the money with a second place 12-3 record. Haddock came through like Cooper in O.U.'s final series with Iowa State at Ames, winning 7-4. On the last day of the season Oklahoma finally had a bad day, dropping two games and a chance at winning the Big Eight. The Sooners finished 13-5 and six of those wins were Haddock's. He compiled a 1.75 earned run average to lead the team.

Whether Haddock touches another baseball or not, he can look back on the season of 1963 with pride. And the Oklahoma State Cowboys might remember the old saying, "Never knock a man down. He might get up."



Outfielder Eddie Peach was second among hitters in loop play.



Like his father before him, Dale Mitchell Jr. was a clutch hitter.