

# Here We Go-Go-Go Again

Two slivers of light from converging spots penetrate the darkness. The spheres quickly glide to the white "OU" on the red center circle. Imperceptibly, the band—ever so softly—begins to play. The announcer welcomes the crowd. He sounds excited. The visiting team's starters are introduced. One by one, they jog to their foul circle, fidgety and eager to begin. Polite applause. The spots following each player. The five starters nervously, automatically pat rumps and shake hands. The visitors' coach gets his subdued applause.

The band is playing louder now. The tempo seems quicker. Expectancy. "The Oklahoma Sooners," sings the announcer. Crashing applause and cheers. As each starter is introduced, he runs straight to-

ward an opponent at the opposite end of the court. For a split second—especially if this is his debut in Norman—the visitor's poise disintegrates. Startled, as the Sooner bears down on him, he instinctively offers his hand. The Sooner runs back to his foul circle, spots following. Again to crashing applause and cheers.

The fifth Sooner is introduced. The five run to the Sooner bench. Coach Bob Stevens is introduced. Thunderous applause. Cheers. The spots bathe the team in their white light. The team breaks.

The house lights flash on. The band plays *Boomer Sooner*, loudly and with feeling. All emotional systems are go. And the name of the game is basketball. Go-go-go basketball.

Irrepressible Bob Stevens has begun his

second year at the University. He and his running mate, Assistant Coach Gordon Stauffer, did a more than creditable job in their first season here. The Sooners lost 13 of their 25 games against some good basketball teams. They finished valiantly, winning the last five games, all conference battles. The finish was topped off by a heart-weakening, hand-wringing win over Oklahoma State at Norman. The score was 70-65. It was the highest total ever scored against a Henry Iba team. The victory was doubly sweet, for it gave the Sooners a tie with Iowa State for third place in the Big Eight behind Colorado and Kansas State. It also dropped the fading OSU Cowboys into fifth place. The Sooners finished 8-6, OSU, 7-7, in the conference.

The odds were against the Stevens-Stauff-



## the fast-breaking Sooners' goal is to be as offensive as possible

er combination doing as well as it did in the first season. The players had to learn a new system. Only one had a good year the previous season. The Sooners got off to an auspicious start, however, setting a school scoring record in their first game under Stevens, 96-83 at S.M.U.

Then someone broke a mirror and walked under a ladder. Farrell Johnson, a standout with the best shooting eye on the club, was lost the second semester because of grades. Starter Jerry Haddock was also lost after he suffered a broken wrist as a result of a flagrant and outrageously traditional dumping foul administered by Oklahoma State University at Stillwater.

With a 7-13 record facing them, the Sooners began to click. Morrison and Chafin played to a full 100 per cent of their

ability. Maybe 110 per cent. The Sooners won, including three close road games. After a stout, two-point win at Nebraska, Stevens told his team to sleep late the next morning. The Sooner coach, decked out with apron and chef's cap, served each man breakfast in bed.

This year Stevens hasn't served breakfast yet, but his starched apron is standing by.

The Sooners are a better team this year than last, and they set a school season scoring record in '62-'63. For one thing, there is a year of experience under the fast break. It shows. There are fewer slow spots.

There is more depth. Stevens can count on ten men instead of the seven he went with last year. Three are sophomores. Fred Fleetwood (6-2), an aggressive guard, has

started several games. Forward George Hawkins (6-5) has a fine outside shot. Bill Whitlock, six-foot three-inch forward, is a good rebounder with exceptional hands and a better-than-average shooting eye.

Three starters are back. James Gatewood, six-foot five-inch junior forward, leads the team in rebounding and scoring after twelve games. First semester senior Johnson is close behind in scoring and shooting accuracy. The smooth 6-2 forward drives well and can score from anywhere on the floor. Junior Butch Roberts serves as the catalyst in the fast break from a guard position. Roberts is small (5-11) but effective although his shooting percentage is the lowest of the starting five. Gatewood, Johnson and Roberts are all averaging in double figures.

Two other junior guards, Dick Maxey and Jack Young, see action.

At center Stevens has been alternating

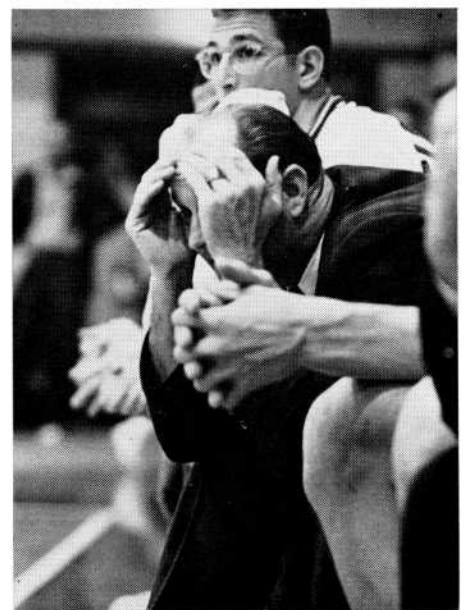
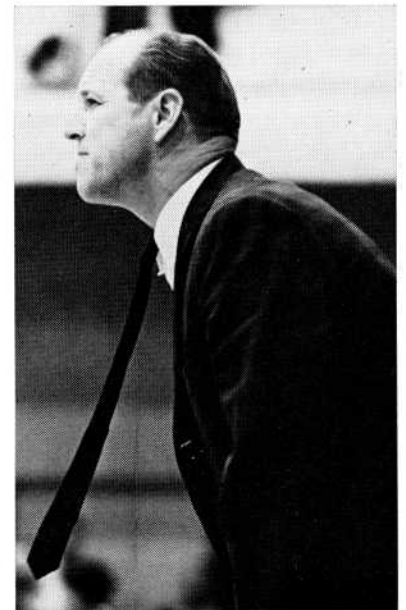
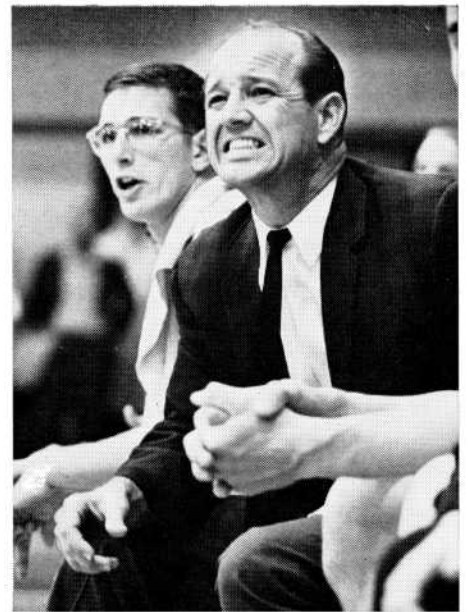
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On the Sooner bench, Stevens employs the fast break himself. Sometimes standing, sometimes leaping, kneeling, concentrating, never still, the zealous coach infects everyone with his enthusiasm. On occasion he must lend counsel to a confused official (*directly above*). Things occasionally go wrong (*top right*). His tie can't keep up with him at times (*center*). When an O.U. player shoots a free throw, Stevens uses the peek-a-boo method of watching the shot (*lower right*). Following Stevens as he follows the game is as good an indication of how things are going as tuning in a radio play-by-play. And when something good happens—well, there's that exultant leap and the clenched fist.





# Go-Go-Go

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James Kaiser and junior Willie Wilson and probably wishing he could combine the qualities of both. Kaiser, a rugged 6-9, has the physical equipment to be an outstanding center, but he isn't. Wilson has been a delightful surprise this year. As a sophomore he got into only a few games and scored a total of 14 points. This year he has been averaging 14 points a game. Wilson is only a shade over 6-4, however. He has great spring and rebounding ability, but his size makes the job difficult.

With the season not at the halfway point and conference play just beginning, the Sooners have already had as many ups and downs as a soap-opera heroine. Like the little girl with the little curl right in the middle of her forehead, when they have been good, they've been very, very good (against Illinois) and when they've been bad, they've been horrid (against Texas Tech). In the season opener they overwhelmed a mediocre South Dakota, 100-79. They lost late leads to S.M.U. and Texas and were beaten 83-72 and 81-78, respectively. Between those defeats they bounced a good Illinois team (last year's Big Ten champs), 105-104, to set another school scoring record.

Next came a road trip that resembled the latter stages of Napoleon's Russian campaign. The three-game set might have been entitled *Was This Trip Really Necessary?*, for the Big Red (for bloody but unbowed) dropped games to Texas Tech by 29 points, nationally-ranked Arizona State by 32 points and Michigan State by 18 before retreating to the Big Eight Tournament. They dropped their fifth straight in the opener to Missouri in a close one. Then came wins over Nebraska and Iowa State to take fifth place.

The shortage of big beef on the boards is enough to disqualify the Sooners as title contenders or even as first division finishers but the team is a hustling, exciting bunch, capable of spoiling anybody's title hopes.

Stevens and his Sooners will continue to fill the Feld House. There is a new enthusiasm and interest in basketball. The coaches and players have done a good job. The fans see a good brand of basketball. But the title contenders are still a good big man—or men—away.

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