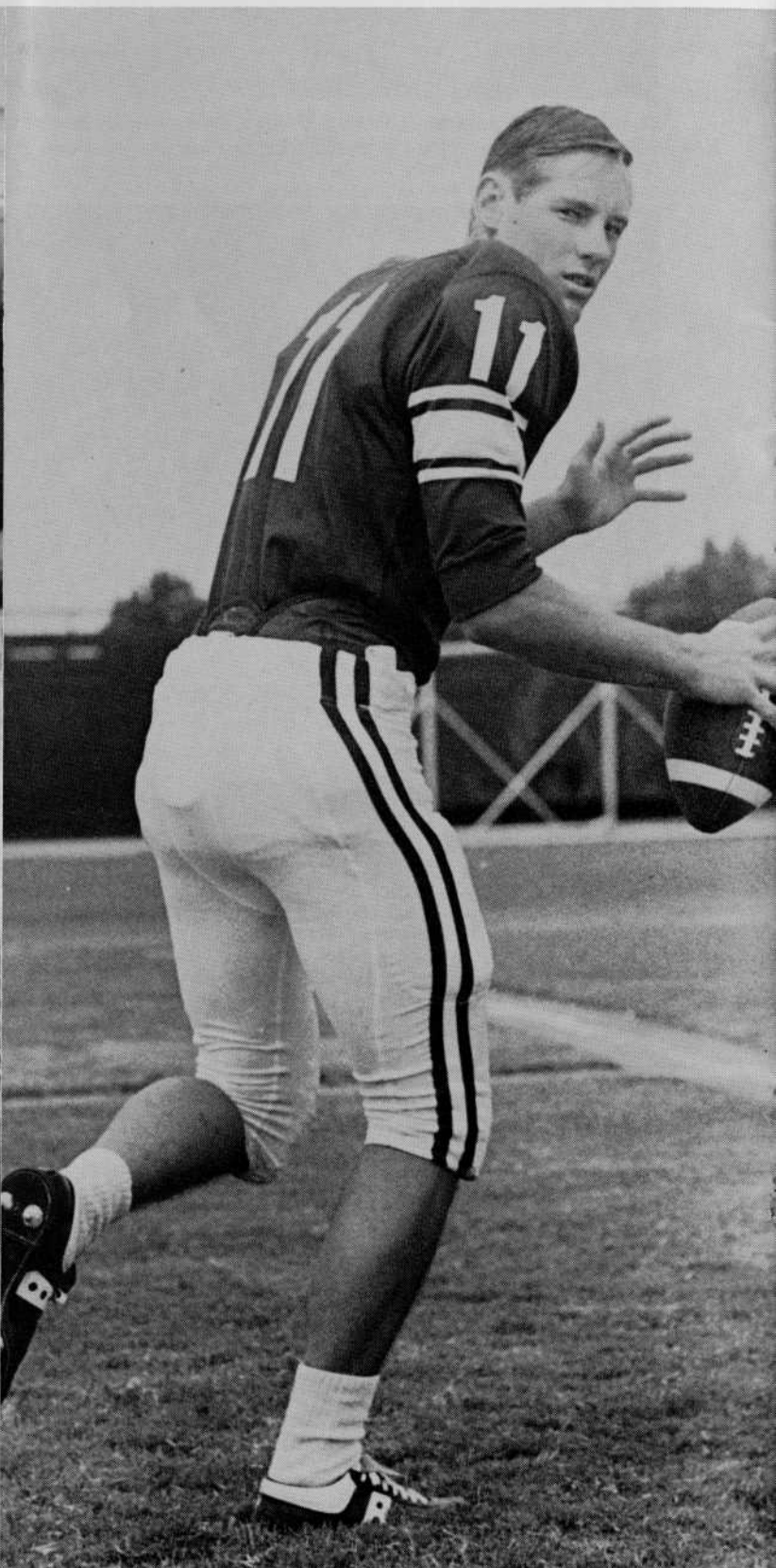
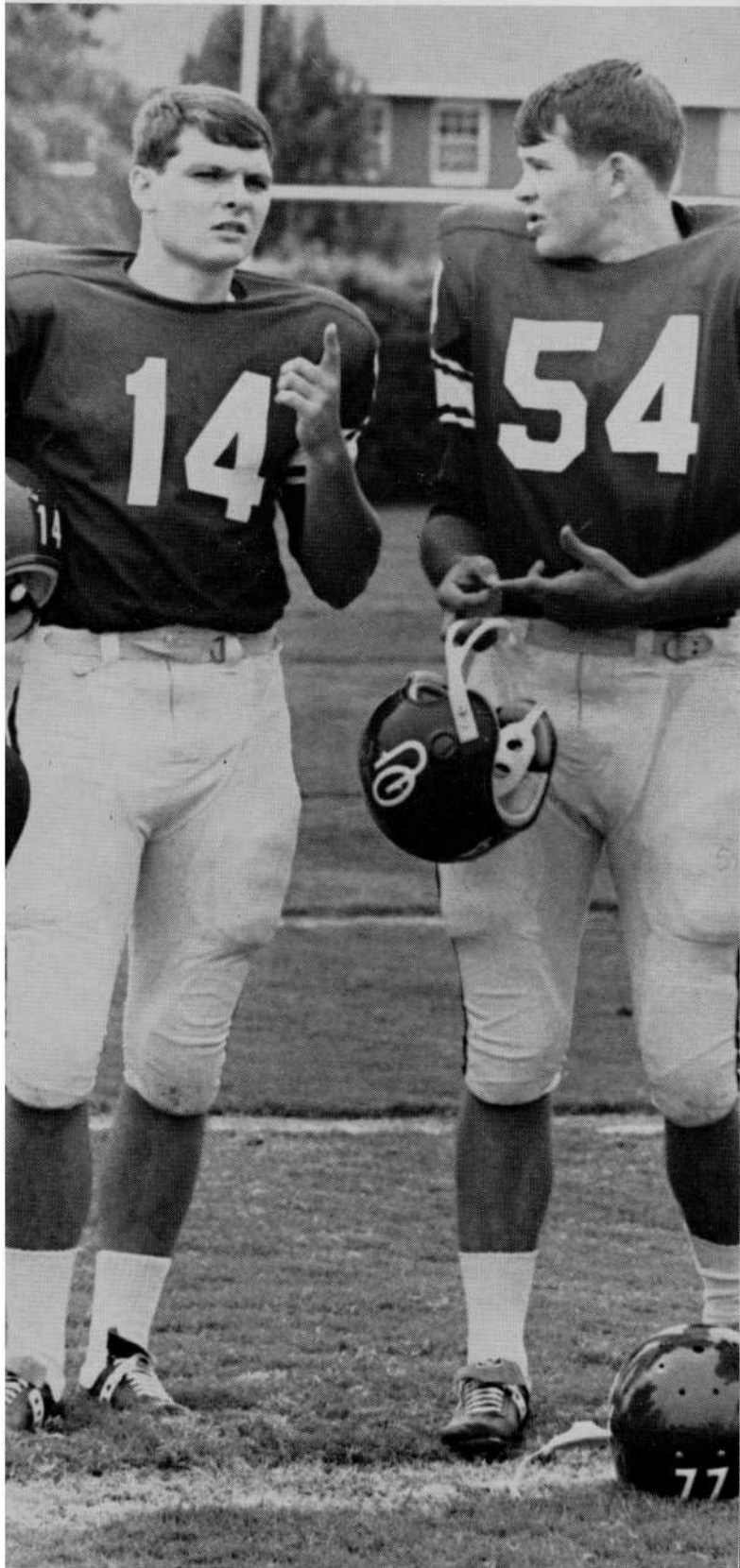


# A FRISKY DARKHORSE TAKES

*A new sense of pride and purpose may overcome some worrisome deficiencies and enable Jim Mackenzie's superbly conditioned team*



# ON A FAST FIELD

to run a strong race against a formidable field of thoroughbreds

Photographed by Larry McDade

Sooner football fans can never be accused of indifference when it comes to The Game, but this year an unusually intense commitment—even for them—is evident. On the week of the opener with Oregon the growing anticipation was as tangible as the new carpets in Washington House and as thick as a tackle's neck.

Our Casual Observer observes that the Rabidity Count of Big Red supporters by early September was alarmingly high, already at the level of Bowl Fever, incredible as it may seem. "I found," he reports, "that when two or more OU people meet, the subject is turning to The Game sooner, pardon the pun, than ever before—at least since November, 1956. What's even more indicative of the degree of involvement is that in 89 percent of the conversations, other subjects are avoided altogether. Vietnam, John Lennon's theology, Luci and Pat are totally ignored on most occasions."

The Casual Observer also notes that the average time in discussing The Team and The Coach has risen dramatically. "And," he allows, "I was unable to find any clearly defined geographical pattern. Whereas I expected to discover avidity increasing in direct proportion to the distance from Ernie's Town Tavern, I couldn't uncover any evidence to support this theory. The earnestness did not deviate whether the fans were in McCall's Coffee Shop in Norman (where the Townies gather), the lobby of the First National Bank Building in Oklahoma City, the Tulsa Club, Short Grass Country, the Panhandle, Little Dixie, Lapland, or our embattled outposts in Kansas City, Washington, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Amarillo, and Midland—our people are locked in on the 1966 Sooners."

The reason for such remarkable singlemindedness is, of course, Jim Mackenzie and the new system he is

installing. And the word *is* new. There is a completely new coaching staff, a new offensive formation (*see page 9*), new uniforms, and new names on the players' roster. There's even talk of having a new Little Red, the Indian student with the feathered headdress who dances authentic Indian dances when the Sooners score. It is said that last year's Little Red had so few opportunities to dance that he's forgotten the steps. But not everything will be new. Mackenzie intends to stick with the Explorer Scout stadium ushers.

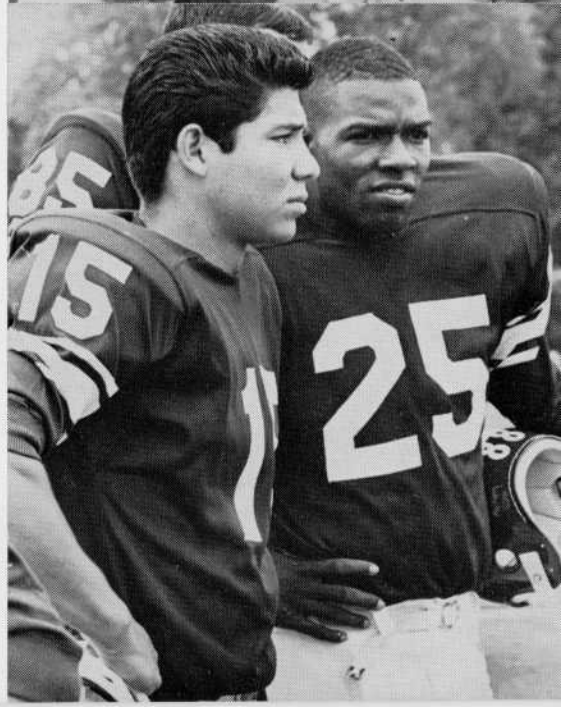
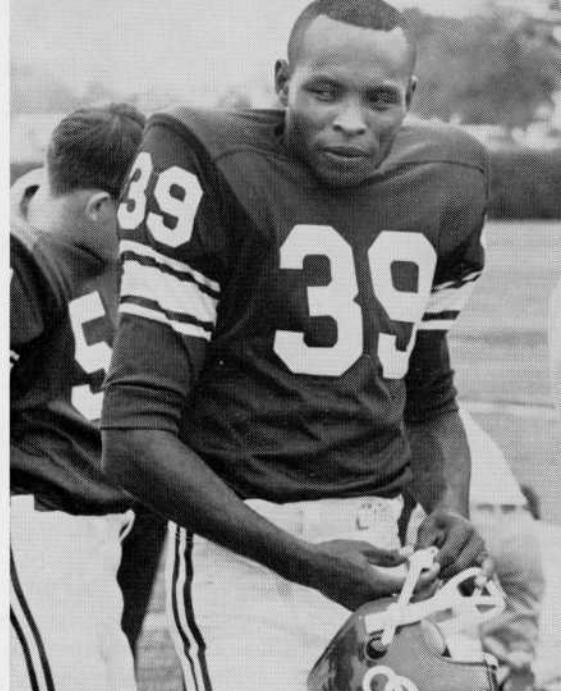
The most important *new* element, however, is the pride that is rampant in the Sooner camp. From Morris Tennenbaum, the Keeper of the Practice Gate, on up (or on down, if you listen to Morris) there is a fresh spirit of resolve and anticipation. Morris, incidentally, has a brightly painted equipment shack (which looks suspiciously like a former outhouse) for the first time in history, and he's delighted. The players also are happy, and you won't find a one in a beer joint on his off-hours. By now everyone has heard of the weight-loss program the players were put through last spring. The team lost 1,437 excess pounds, the equivalent of five Jackie Gleasons, thus improving their speed as well as their waistlines. At the August weigh-in, all came back at the prescribed weights, which indicates the spirit was undiluted by the summer's diversions.

This very real sense of dedication the team has is probably the best thing Mackenzie has going for him. The schedule is certainly no help. About the only thing to be said in its favor is that the Green Bay Packers aren't on it. It does have four of the nation's top eleven teams as picked by *Sports Illustrated* (Texas, Notre Dame, Colorado, and Nebraska).

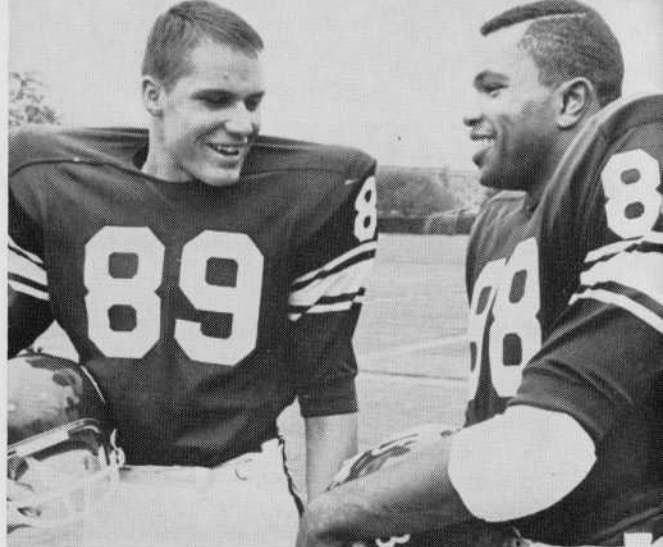
The non-conference schedule is suffocatingly short of breathers. Oregon had the eighth best passing attack in

*The 1966 Sooners will be forced to go with a number of inexperienced players, particularly at the crucial quarterback slot where sophomores Jim Burgar (14), at far left with Rick Burgess, another green soph who will back the line, and Bob Warmack (11) open the season.*

*At the top, this page, is senior Eugene Ross, set as Monster man of defense. In the center are middle guard Granville Liggins (right) and surprise find James Jackson, tailback. At bottom are two injury-plagued future stars, sophs Chebon Dacon (left) and San Toi DeBose.*







Mackenzie is obviously and understandably happy to have veterans Jim Riley (left) and Ed Hall as anchors at tackle in the defensive and offensive lines, respectively. At right are the starting ends, Randy Meacham (left) at tight end and the redoubtable Ben Hart at split end.

the nation last year, and our defensive secondary will be trying to learn a new zone coverage. The Webfoots have an end who caught 51 passes in 1965, only 14 shy of the entire Sooner total. Notre Dame is so good that their coach does national television commercials for the Voice of Music, and Texas is now boasting of a superhuman sophomore at quarterback.

Conference opponents are no easier. Nebraska and Colorado deserve their lofty ratings, and Missouri is almost as good. Even Iowa State can beat you now. As a matter of fact, they almost did last year. We won't even discuss Stillwater.

To face such foes Mackenzie and his men will throw a disproportionate number of sophomores into the fray,

including his two quarterbacks (see page 6). Bob Warmack of Ada and Jim Bugar of Lindsay (note the absence of the prefix "Super" before their given names) are this year's answers to The Problem which perennially causes such agony in Norman—who to play at quarterback. These two youngsters beat out last year's man-under, Gene Cagle of Lawton, who showed vast improvement this fall and cannot be conclusively ruled out despite his new secondary defense position. Of the two quarterbacks Bugar is the better passer while Warmack is the better runner and has been more consistent thus far.

There are a number of proven veterans returning. Mackenzie has singled out six as having star quality. One

is Ben Hart (above), a focal point every time he steps onto a football field. The able and often spectacular Hart is back at split end and eager to make up for two extremely frustrating years. He will be the prime pass target, and a better one there is not. Another bulwark is Jim Riley (above) who after a year on defense and a year of offense is back at defensive tackle, anchoring a fairly experienced line. The All-American candidate on defense is, of course, the cobra-quick middle guard, Granville Liggins (Page 7, center photo), an exciting example of black power. Whenever Liggins is in the game, the defense is noticeably better. The offensive stars are Robert Kalsu, the strong side tackle; sopho-

*Continued on page 29*

On the new coaching staff are (left to right) Galen Hall (receivers) Barry Switzer (offensive line), Homer Rice (offense), Mackenzie, Pat James (defensive line), Chuck Fairbanks (defensive secondary), and Swede Lee (linebackers, defensive ends). Frosh coach is Larry Lacewell.



The Sooners were best noted for their great ground attack under Wilkinson, but Jimmy Harris, a terrific runner in his own right, could throw as well as anybody. And he proved it. In 1956, he completed 23 of 37 attempts for 482 yards and 8 touchdowns and an amazing percentage of 62.1. Only one of those 37 was intercepted. Unsung Harris played professional ball for awhile and now is working in Shreveport, La., for oilman Roy Guffey, a Sooner football star of 1926.

The ends of OU a decade ago were John Bell, currently head coach at Oklahoma City Southeast High School, and Don Stiller, who returned to his home town of Shawnee to enter the real estate and insurance business. Emerson today is Dr. Tom Emerson, a recent OU PhD recipient, with the physiology department at Michigan State University's Medical Center, while his counterpart, Ed Gray, owns an oil field welding firm in Odessa, Tex. Former guard Ken Northcutt owns a private club in Oklahoma City and Bill Krisher runs a boys' camp in Vermont. Billy Pricer, the great blocking fullback and linebacker, now owns and manages a service station in Oklahoma City.

Bill Brown played some good fullback for the Sooners in 1956, as did Dennit Morris and David Rolle. David Baker and Carl Dodd were the alternate team halfbacks who teamed up with headknockers like Delbert Long and Bob Timberlake at end; Byron Searcy and Benton Ladd at tackle; the Jennings boys, Doyle and Steve, and Buddy Oujesky at guard. Bob Harrison was a sophomore center who alumni thought would become a cinch All-American. Supporting roles came from men like Dale "King of the Cowboys" Sherrod, Jakie Sandefer, Dick Corbett, Joe Rector, Ross Coyle, among others.

This is a squad which combined its efforts to lead the nation in rushing with a 391-yard per game average, set a national record for first downs in a season (222) and outscore all opponents by an average of 46.6 to 5.1. By winning its second consecutive national crown, OU retired the coveted O'Donnell Trophy.

Touchdowns and victories and titles were habit forming. If a fan had any complaint, it was because things came too easy. No team ever dominated its sport any more than the Sooners did in 1956. For those of us who were not around to see Jack Dempsey fight or Babe Ruth hit a baseball, this is one of the stories we'll tell our grandchildren. **END**

## Frisky Darkhorse

*Continued from page 8*

more Eddie Hinton, a cinch for stardom as the wingback breakaway threat, and Ron Shotts (*page 9*), the junior tailback. Shotts will share the tailback position with James Jackson, (*Page 7, center photo*) a senior who has seen scarcely two minutes of action in two previous years, languishing on the bench. Jackson, it seems, was a victim of one of those myths built to explain why someone isn't playing. Jackson's story was that he "couldn't turn the corner" and was "afraid to hit." If he couldn't and he was, well, he can and he isn't now. His play at tailback has been one of the bright spots of the spring and fall practices. He can have a very good year.

Also ready for a final go is the new

Monster man, Eugene Ross (*page 7, top photo*) who plays the free-lance secondary position that is a key part to Mackenzie's defense. He appears to have found a home there. Ed Hall (*page 8, top photo*) another senior and one of the best blocking linemen last year, is set at offensive tackle.

The defensive secondary will be small but quick, and sure tacklers. How well they have learned the new pass defense remains to be seen.

In his visits to alumni meetings over the state and region, Mackenzie listed three areas which could prevent Oklahoma from having an outstanding team. They are (1) inexperience at quarterback and the inability of any player to dominate that position; (2) the lack of quickness in the line which can mean defeat, and (3) a lack of depth. Mackenzie is not just throwing out the usual alibis. These are obvious and critical weaknesses. This knowledge, of course, fails to diminish the great expectations that dwell in the chests of all Sooner fans, who can never forget those two winning streaks and keep asking, "Why can't we do it again?"

To offset these conspicuous shortcomings, Mackenzie has a well drilled, proud bunch who have shown willingness to sacrifice. And sometimes this is just enough.

One thing he didn't list that he would now is the inordinate amount of injuries. Knee hurts have sidelined a number who could have been helpful, most prominent being Thurman Pitchlynn who came out of nowhere in the spring to become an outstanding linebacker. Two prime sophomore backs who face careers of mispronunciation have been knocked out with knee injuries. Chebon Dacon (pronounced Shh BONE DAY cun), a fine quarterback, and San Toi DeBose (rhymes with Man Boy the Rose), tailback (*page 7, bottom photo*), may be red-shirted this year.

The defensive ends and linebackers were at one time almost extinct because of injuries, and if such unforeseen catastrophes persist, the record will suffer.

Predicting the national collegiate football season is intrinsically futile, and attempting to do the same with one team is almost equally foolish. The bones of last year's prognosticators are strewn everywhere. But one can make observations and from them

## SOONER MAGAZINE recommends

*these hotels, motels, clubs, and restaurants to Sooner alumni and friends*

### Coronado Inn

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Norman—JE 6-6220  
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Fine Food—Free Parking  
Short Walking Distance to Campus  
Singles \$5 up—Doubles \$9 up  
Suites \$20 up  
F. D. "MIKE" BEHRINGER, '35, MGR.

### Will Rogers Cafeteria

Excellent Food  
Variety of Choice  
Reasonable Price

OKLAHOMA MEMORIAL UNION

### Ming Room

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Gracious Service  
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form highly qualified conclusions. On paper (without figuring in a few factors like tradition, morale, and locale) it is indicated that OU will almost assuredly defeat Kansas and Kansas State. They hold a slight edge over Oregon, Oklahoma State, and Iowa State, and could win those, also. They are inferior to Texas, Notre Dame, Colorado, Nebraska, and Missouri (slightly) and thus should lose. A 5-5 season would not be surprising. A 6-4 season would be a great improvement over the 3-7 1965 showing, and the Sooners can conceivably attain such a mark. But football is a funny game, a marvelously unpredictable game, and the best advice is to wait and see. The Sooners are two years or so away from being a power again, but attend the Norman spectacles if you can and enjoy, enjoy. The 1966 Sooners are going to be an interesting team, so let your Rabidity Count soar and Talk Football all you want. *END*

#### THE 1966 TEAM

Evaluation: *Offensive Line*—Weak last year, question mark but stronger this year. Ade-

quate. *Offensive Backfield*—Good except for quarterback which remains in question. Strong runners, only drawback being the new system that must be learned. *Offensive Ends*—Hart is one of best ever here, but Meacham is green, good blocker, rather slow, and could improve receiving. Hart makes ends better than adequate. *Defensive Line*—Riley and Liggins could make a green line hold. Adequate if those two stay healthy. *Defensive Ends and Linebackers*—Uh oh, here's the big question mark. Weakest spot on team. How they perform is key. *Defensive Backs*—Promising but questionable.

#### DEPTH CHART

Asterisks denote letters, italics denotes sophomores

As of Sept. 14

#### OFFENSE

WE—*Meacham, Denton*  
 WT—Hall\*\*, Butts\*  
 WG—Winfrey\*, Butts\*  
 C—Kindley\*, Craig\*  
 SG—Kosmos\*, Burns\* and Burkett\*\*  
 ST—Kalsu\* and Bigby  
 SE—Hart\*\*, *Malone*  
 QB—*Warmack and Burgar*  
 TB—Shotts\* and Jackson  
 WB—*Hinton* and Crowder\*  
 FB—*Gary Harper* and Stan Henderson\*

#### DEFENSE

LE—Robinson\*, Haynes\*\*  
 LT—Riley\*\*, Poslick

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