The basketball team could field only one starter from the '53-'54 team, but there was an even greater obstacle to a successful 1954-'55 campaign. For they had

No Big Man to Lead Them

FOOTBALL for the University of Oklahoma came to a slow halt in December. The last game of the season was November 27 at Stillwater, but O.U.'s all-victorious contingent was still the talk weeks later as All-American teams kept the football fire going. As was correctly forecast, Max Boydston and Kurt Burris were mentioned on nearly everyone's team.

Meanwhile, basketball was making its move into the sports spotlight. The Sooner assigned the task of summing up the Sooners' personnel and possibilities to Hal Heller, student sportswriter. Here is his report:

By HAL HELLER, '55

"Oh, where, oh, where have the big boys gone?" might be Coach Bruce Drake's lament.

Bruce, starting his 17th season at the Sooner helm, appears to have his work cut out for him as this will probably be the shortest team he has had since 1944. It could, however, very easily be the most colorful in quite some time.

Just how the Sooners will fare as the season progresses, only time will tell. Their first four games will be some of the toughest, and may furnish enough experience to make O.U. pretty rugged by the time they embark on their conference schedule. Those first four include games with Wisconsin, Ohio State, and two with Baylor. Then comes the Big Seven Tournament at Kansas City, which promises to be a dilly, and after that the conference race begins.

The Sooners will be missing four starters this season. Forwards Ron Blue and Sterling Jones, guard Dink McEachern, and center Bob Waller have all graduated. However, they will have eight returning lettermen from last year's squad, but only one, Les Lane, was a starter. Of these returning, the tallest man is 6-3 Fred Muller. Drake received a big blow when he learned that the only really big man on the team, 6-10 Walt Morrison, was giving up basketball to concentrate on his studies. That leaves two sophomores as the tallest men on the squad, Ed Abbey and Gene Wheeler, both 6-4.

The O.U. height problem will be bolstered with the coming of the second semester when 6-6 LeRoy Bacher becomes eligible. Bacher is a returning navy veteran with four years of service basketball on the San Diego navy team under his belt. He will be eligible to play eight of the twelve conference games and both Oklahoma A&M games, so he is being counted on to carry much of the load during the last half of the season.
They Had to Swim
For the Touchdown

In the 1904 O.U.-A&M game, every Sooner made a touchdown. But that isn’t the reason football fans still chuckle and remember the game.

By FRANK LONG, ’08ba, ’09ma

(Frank Long, ’08ba, ’09ma, was one of the University’s early sports stars. In addition to participating in football, he also made the track team. After graduation, he made a fine career for himself in YMCA work. He is now retired and lives in Norman.)

“If my friend Hall hadn’t invited me to Oklahoma University, I’d take the next train back.”

That was how Fred Ewing, O.U.’s first paid coach, felt when he arrived in Norman in the fall of 1904 and looked over the material he was supposed to mold into a football team.

Up to that time, the team, such as it was, had been coached by faculty members, some of whom even played when there weren’t enough husky students available to make up an eleven.

Ewing’s first afternoon out, only four regulars showed up. The key men had been lost to the farms or just hadn’t come back. It took several days before he rounded up enough men to make a team.

I was a freshman from Pond Creek High School, a green farm boy who had never played a game of football. I had been coached by my music teacher—Drake, that is. I couldn’t go back on him. Finally I agreed to try out, and Drake told me what I could turn in my suit if Dad still said no.

When they left, I sat down and wrote Dad all about it. For a wonder, he answered me at once. He wrote, “You have gone further in life than I have, I don’t have a right to tell you what to do; use your own judgment, son.”

I played in the next game and in every game thereafter for the five years I was in the University. (I finished in the prescribed four years, but took a graduate degree.)

We’d won two games and lost one when we went up against the Oklahoma Aggies that year in the first game between the two schools. It brought a lot of speculation and worrying on everybody’s part. How good a team were they? We didn’t have scouting in those days. Could we beat them? All we knew about them was that they were coached by their music teacher!

The game was to be played at Guthrie, November 5, 1904. The Aggies came by wagon; we went by train.

Cottonwood Creek made a loop around the playing field, and recent rains had swollen it with muddy, rushing water almost thick enough to walk on.

We won the toss, kicked with the wind. Tom Matthews’ boot sent the ball high in the air and the wind did the rest. The ball went to the Aggie goal line. Their music teacher-coach hadn’t told them what to do in such a situation. Instead of downing the ball for a touchback, they tried to carry it out. We stopped them ten yards from their goal line.

The crowd was yelling itself hoarse. Hold ’em! Hold ’em!, our rooters whooped. We

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