ON TOP OR ON BOTTOM?

The Sooner Magazine's annual, fearless prognosticator, O.U. Presidential Assistant David A. Burr, makes predictions about O.U.'s harder-to-predict football team. He is assisted in this task by photographer Frank Garner, whose picture of Jim Davis' momentary elation in Dallas last year is a classic in the history of Ups and Downs.

"WE ARE faced," the man said, "with the most difficult early season schedule in recent years. Our team, particularly in the line, lacks the experience of our opponents.

"If we are fortunate enough to avoid injuries, our team should improve as the season progresses, but we cannot hope to be a sound, strong team early in the year."

The man was Bud Wilkinson, and he was talking about the 1959 Sooners. Many grad experts will agree with him. In the first three football games of the season, the Sooners meet Northwestern, Colorado, and Texas. If Bud's

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team can successfully get by these three
teams, it should be able to handle the re-
maining Big Eight competition and Army.

Perhaps the biggest assignment is the
first—Northwestern. Last year, operating
under Coach Ara Parseghian, the North-
western Wildcats were the Cinderella team
of the Big Ten. They smashed Michigan,
beat Ohio State and lost to Iowa's Rose
Bowl champions, 20-26. Their overall
record was 5-4 with late-season losses.

Northwestern will field practically the
entire first three teams that played so well
a year ago. Ready to pounce on the Soon-
ers will be nine players from the first team,
ten from the second and ten from the third.

And the Wildcats have great stars to lead
them. Ron Burton, left half, set a new scor-
ing record of 76 points and caught 19 pass-
es—tops in the Big Ten. Dick Thornton,
their quarterback, led the Big Ten in total
offense. He completed 48 of 108 passes for
829 yards and seven touchdowns. All this
and Thornton was only a sophomore.

His biggest asset: the return of a fine
quarter and Prentice Gautt at fullback. The
line looked like this: Wahoo McDaniel
(LE), Gilmer Lewis (LT), Jerry Thompson
(LG), Jim Davis (C), Billy Jack
Moore (RG), Marshall York (RT), and
Jerry Tillery (RE).

The alternate team looked good in the
backfield with Bob Page or Bob Cornell at
quarter, Ronnie Hartline at full, Dick Carpenter and Mike McClellan at halfback
positions.

The alternate team line included five
sophomores—Paul Benien and Phil Loh-
mann, ends, Leon Cross and Tom Cox,
tackles, and Kirl Milstead, guard. Two
lettermen complete the line, Jerry Payne at
guard and Bob Scholl at center.

Standouts on the team include Prentice
Gautt, Bobby Boyd, Jim Davis, Jerry
Thompson and Gilmer Lewis, perhaps the
most likely player to receive serious All-
America consideration is Gautt, the first
Negro ever to win a varsity letter at Okla-
ahoma.

In the last Orange Bowl game, Gautt ran
42 yards to a touchdown on Oklahoma's second
offensive play (he also carried on the first
offensive play). He averaged 15.6 net yards
per carry and lined up solidly. Oklahoma's
coaches think that blocking is his out-
standing talent. He was chosen on every
All-Big Eight team selected at the end of
last season.

Boyd and Lewis are co-captains and ex-
cellent all-around performers. With Boyd
at quarterback, Oklahomans will see some
of the most colorful quarterbacking in
many years. He passes well, is an elusive
runner, has trigger-quick reflexes and
moves the team well. Lewis made All-Big
Eight last year, rushes passers well, breaks
up screens, and is very fast.

Returning at center this year will be Jim
Davis. He's a fine blocker and a good line-
backer. Fans will remember his special
talents with kickoff returns. Also, Jerry Thomp-
son plays guard as if he created the posi-
tion.

From what has been written thus far, it
would appear that Oklahoma has no com-
petition except Northwestern. Nothing
could be farther from the truth. In addi-
tion to Northwestern, O.U. plays the
strongest outside Big Eight competition
since Wilkinson has been at Oklahoma.

The other outside opponents: Texas, Army
and Oklahoma State (State begins Big
Eight football competition in 1960).

The Big Eight is improved, also. Mis-
souri and Kansas both are on the way up.
Insiders insist Missouri will be the main
threat but Kansas has demonstrated marked
improvement under Jack Mitchell. All
of the Big Eight teams appear stronger with
the possible exception of Colorado.

The two teams most likely to beat Okla-
ahoma in 1959 are Northwestern and Texas.
Both have an edge over O.U. in experience,
and experience is all-important early in the
season. Missouri and Army are next in
rank.

How good will the 1959 Sooners be? We
will know after the third game of the sea-
son—the Texas game.

NORTHWESTERN . . .

at Evanston, Illinois, 2:30 p.m., Chicago Daylight Time (1:30 p.m. Oklahoma time),
September 26. Alumni breakfast in Chicago's Sherman Hotel the day of the game.

COLORADO . . .

at Dallas, Texas, 2 p.m., CST, October 10. Alumni dance and midnight break-
fast will be held October 9 in the Sheraton-Dallas hotel (Sooner Magazine, July).

MISSOURI . . .

at Columbia, Missouri, 1:30 p.m., CST, October 17.

KANSAS . . .

at Lincoln, Nebraska, 2 p.m., CST, October 31.

NEBRASKA . . .

at Manhattan, Kansas, 1:30 p.m., CST, November 7.

KANSAS STATE . . .

at Norman, 2 p.m., CST, October 24. Homecoming. A dance that evening in the Union.

ARMY . . .

at Norman, 2 p.m., CST, November 14.

IOWA STATE . . .

at Norman, 2 p.m., CST, November 21. Dad's Day. Quartet concert the night before,
the Engineers' Show the night of the game.

OKLAHOMA STATE . . .

at Norman, 2 p.m., CST, November 28. Band Day.

Football lunches will be served each home-game Saturday in the Union cafeteria. The
Alumni Association offices will be open for your convenience on Saturday mornings.