



Wishbone: Oklahoma Football, 1959–1985

Wann Smith

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The Oklahoma Sooners dominated the world of college football during the 1950s. Under the leadership of Coach Bud Wilkinson, the team won three national titles and established an astounding record of forty-seven straight victories that still stands today. Yet by 1959, Wilkinson's Sooners were showing signs of vulnerability, marking the start of a new and challenging era in Oklahoma football. Then along came a new offensive strategy, and OU began to dominate college football once again.

In *Wishbone*, veteran journalist Wann Smith provides an in-depth account of Sooner football from the team's final years under Wilkinson through its remarkable turnaround under Coach Barry Switzer. At the heart of this story is the phenomenal success of the Wishbone offense—a hybrid offshoot of the Split-T formation that Wilkinson employed so successfully in the 1950s. Though not without its risks, the Wishbone offense changed the face of college football and was a key factor in Oklahoma's resurgence in the 1970s with Switzer at the helm.

Drawing on firsthand accounts from coaches, players, and university administrators, many never before published, Smith takes us behind the scenes during this exciting comeback period to reveal not just what happened but why and how it happened. And he brings to life the personalities who played pivotal roles in the team's renewed success, including Jack Mildren, Greg Pruitt, Joe Washington, Billy Sims, and any, many others.

Sooner fans, indeed all fans of college football, will relish this account of the remaking of a football powerhouse and its return to glory.

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