

# OKLAHOMA SOONERS



DE Charles Tapper

## POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2014

**QUARTERBACKS** - OU has had a pair of Heisman winners from this position in the last 11 yrs (Jason White '03, Sam Bradford '08). In '09 Bradford returned but was inj'd (OFY) and rFr Landry Jones started, throwing for 3,198 (58%), 26-14. As a senior in '12 he threw for 4,267 (66%, 30-11) and they used Blake Bell (PS#3) as the Belldozer rushing for 201 (3.3). Jones left as the career passing leader here w/16,646 yds. LY was a 3-man race for the job but Kendal Thompson broke his foot in Aug (out 6 wk). Trevor Knight (PS#18) became the first OU QB to rush for 100 s/01 and was the 4th frosh QB to start an opener in the modern times joining Steve Collins ('89), Eric Moore ('95) and Bradford ('07). Knight had the lowest pass eff in the B12 in the first 2 (24-54-243, 4.27 ypa) and was inj'd and Bell took over the next 7 starts (Knight 1 pass). Bell threw for 413 and 4 td's, the most ever for an OU QB in his first start. Knight came back in for the 2H of the 1st game (Bell head inj) and guided them to 79 pts over the next 6Q's. Knight then was inj'd in Bedlam. Bell alt'd series with Thompson (2-9-17) but Bell threw the 7 yd td pass w/19 left to pull out the win. Stoops didn't announce a st'r prior to the bowl but it was Knight who threw for 348 (32-44, 4-1) giving him 819 (59%, 9-5, 445, 6.6 rush). Bell had 1,648 (60.1%, 12-5, 255 rush). After 24 rush td's in '11-'12 he surprisingly didn't have any rush td's LY. TY Bell is at TE (will run some Belldozer) and they add in rFr Cody Thomas (PS#6) but lose Thompson (trans). The Sooners dropped to just 199 ypg passing, their lowest s/'06 and Knight will improve upon that.

**RUNNING BACKS** - In '12 Damien Williams (PS#37), a power guy with speed took over the RB job early and led w/946 (5.4). Brennan Clay (PS#7, 274, 3.7 '11) had 555 (6.0). LY they added in rFr Alex Ross (PS#15) and true frosh Keith Ford (PS#7). Williams finished #2 w/553 (4.9) missing the final 3. Clay rushed for 200 in the first game of Williams' absence and led with 957 (5.5). Versus TT, OU suffered a big and underrated loss when FB Trey Millard was OFY (ACL). Stoops has often called him the best player on the team. Roy Finch (PS#16, 608, 5.5 '11) was #4 w/347 (5.9) while Ford was #6 (134, 5.4). TY they lose Williams, Clay (11 st), Millard (#7DC SF) and Finch making them a lot less exp'd but they should come close to LY's numbers as I like the talent level (see below).

**RECEIVERS** - LY OU lost over 50% of their WR/TE yds incl their top 2 rec's (#6 & #5 DC's). The leading returnees were Jalen Saunders (cleared late '12, trans from Fresno, 8 st) who was #3 w/829 (13.4) in '12 and Sterling Shepard (PS#19) who was #4 w/621 (13.8). Shepard has already passed up his father, former OU great Derek, on OU's all-time rec list. He

was inj'd vs TT and missed 2 but still finished #2 w/603 (11.8). Saunders (dangerous RM) led with just 729 (12.0) and 6'3" Lacoltan Bester was #3 w/392 (14.5). TY they lose Saunders (13 st, #4DC NYJ), Bester (8 st), TE Brannon Green (2 rec) and Jaz Reynolds (4 st, 216, 15.4) whose 82 yd rec vs Tulsa was the 2nd longest ever at Owen Field (86 yd, Wahoo McDaniel in '58). Saunders is a big loss but they are actually more exp'd than LY and after a down year, the receivers should have better combined stats in '14.

**OFFENSIVE LINE** - In '12 when I wrote the magazine OU had 102 car sts but the shoe kept dropping over the summer and by the time the season began, they were down to 43 and later lost RT Daryl Williams (knee) after 10 st. They still had 161 ypg rush (4.8) and were #10 FBS in sack % at 2.6%. LY they had to replace a 2nd Tm B12 LT (#1DC) but added in 2 JUCO's and had 85 car sts ret. The Sooners have been in a pass first offense for years but LY with mobile QB's, that all changed. OU improved to 224 (5.2), their most rush ypg s/'91 (15 sk). TY they lose 1st Tm AA C Gabe Ikard (13 st, 4Y str) and RG Bronson Irwin (9 st, 2Y str) but have 107 car sts ret incl Tyfer Evans (29 sts) who was granted a 6th yr.

**DEFENSIVE LINE** - OU almost always has a top-notch D-line but in '12 they had to replace a B12 co-DPOY DE (#4DC) and a #4DC DE then a DT (11 st '11) was susp (only 6 gm). It was shocking to me that they all'd 192 ypg rush (worst s/'81) and 5.2 ypc (worst ever recorded) with just 25 sks (fewest in over a decade). LY they had to replace 2nd Tm B12 DE (#7DC), both starting DT's, a DE (6 sts) and 3 bkp. They did return the unit's sk and tkl leader in Chuka Ndulue (45 tkl, 5 sk). They moved to a multiple 3-4 and DE Charles Tapper (2 tkl true) emerged and was 1st Tm B12 (5.5 sk, #7 tkl'r). Ndulue did not start the first 4 but had 15 tkl's vs Utah (most OU DL in 23 yrs). RFr Jordan Wade (PS#35) had 8 sts. They were expecting big things from PS#18JC Quincy Russell but he played in just 2 gm (3 tkl). They improved to 138 ypg rush (4.1) w/33 sks. Not listed below is Matthew Romar (6'0" 278 rFr, PS#129). TY with everyone back, it will resemble those strong OU DL's of old.

**LINEBACKERS** - In '12 the Sooners' LB's were #5, #6 and #8 in tkl's as often times OU played 7 DB's vs the spread. LY they had to replace their #5 tkl'r (left early NFL, UFA) and 3 bkps (1 st, 25 tkl). They appeared in great shape. Unfortunately, Corey Nelson who never came off the field (emotional leader) was OFY after 5 gms (#2 tkl'r at time). He was replaced by true frosh Dominique Alexander (PS#94) who became Big 12 Def FPOY (#2 tkl'r). Soph Frank Shannon (40 tkl rFr) was the #1 tkl'r (2 sk, 5 tfl). vs Okla St the LB corps was very banged up and walk-on Caleb Gastelum played MLB most of the 1H. TY they lose Nelson (27 tkl, #7DC DEN), Kass Everett (PS#13JC, 13 tkl, 1.5 sk) but return their #1, #2 and #6 tkl'r (all 3 st's) making them one of the most exp'd LB corps in the country. OU made some moves this past spg as DE Geneo Grissom (5 st, #10 tkl'r) is at the Jack LB spot and NB Julian Wilson (11 st, 26 tkl, 3 int) will start at CB.

**DEFENSIVE BACKS** - OU finished #8 in my PDR (54%, 18-15) in '11. In '12 they had their most exp'd unit in yrs (4 st's back) and finished #2. The area Aaron Colvin defends is known as "Colvin Island". They have had a great history of finishing high in my PDR, even with an inexp'd secondary and LY they had to replace a 2nd Tm AA FS, their SS (#2 tkl'r) and a CB (#4 tkl'r). They moved NB Gabe Lynn to FS so basically had 2 st's back. They finished a solid #13 (55%, 17-16). TY they lose 2x 1st Tm B12 CB Colvin (10 st, #5 tkl'r, 4 pd, #4DC JAX) and FS Lynn (13 st, #4 tkl'r, 4 int, 3 pbu). NB Wilson moves to CB so they actually lose less st's than they did LY and should finish in their usual area in my PDR.

**SPECIAL TEAMS** - Stoops now has 9 Top 16 ST finishes in his 16 yrs but LY they slipped to #34. LY they had to replace their top PR (299, 13.6) but Jalen Saunders, who had 5 returns (17.6) in '12 took over (308, 15.4) adding 2 td's incl a 91 yd PR which basically turned around the 1st game. New P Jed Barnett (PS#170JC) avg 41.7 but the tm net dropped from 38.8 in '12 to just 34.5 (15.6 PRD). Nick Hodgson boomed 43 TB on 68 KO. Michael Hunnicutt hit 24-27 fg's (L47) and broke the school record for career fg's which was shared by Tim Duncan ('99-'01) and Tim Lashar ('83-'86). They lose their top KR and PR but I would expect Stoops to reload as usual.

**COACHES** - Bob Stoops arrived in '99 and won a Nat'l Title in his 2nd ssn and played in 3 more Title games. LY he surpassed Barry Switzer (157 wins) and became OU's all-time winningest coach as well as being the ONLY HC to win the quartet that is the Rose, Sugar, Fiesta and Orange Bowls. His 10.7 wins per ssn ties for #1 w/Urban Meyer for all active HC's w/10+ yrs of exp. Jay Norvell is in his 5th ssn as co-OC (7th overall WR's) while 9Y QB cch Josh Heupel is in his 4th. Bob's brother Mike is now in his 3rd ssn of his second stint ('99-'03) as DC after being Ariz's HC the previous 8 years.

<b>ALSO ON ROSTER:</b>		WR Spencer Rhodes 5'11" 175 Fr	DL Chase Frazier 5'11" 285 rFr
RB Leo Luna 5'9" 220 Fr	TE Dylan Briggs 6'1" 173 Fr	DL Kane Snowden 6'0" 235 So	
	TE Joshua Bennett 6'4" 222 Fr	DL Mitch Tate 6'4" 253 Jr	
WR Austin Brown 6'5" 212 Jr	OL Riley Nolan 6'0" 284 So	K Eric Hosek 5'10" 153 Jr	

## PHIL'S FORECAST

In Stoops' 2nd year ('00) OU did not have a starter miss a single gm due to inj. They stunned the nation winning the Nat'l Title despite not being in the preseason Top 20. In the L14Y, Stoops has had 9 Top 10 finishes with 8 of those #6 or higher. They played in the National Title game in '03, '04 and '08 and came up short in all 3. The Sooners had a fast paced, pass-happy offense avg over 300 ypg from '07-'12 but that did affect their D which all'd 376 ypg in '11 and 398 in '12. LY they slowed it down a bit and led the Big 12 in total defense (350 ypg). LY they were not the preseason fav to win the Big 12 and it was the first time s/'00 that they were not in the preseason Top 10 (#16). Eight of the 13 yrs they had been pre-ssn #4 or higher so expectations were unusually low. They opened with a shutout of a '12 bowl team (ULM) but then had a lackluster win vs WV. After blowing out Tulsa they got 2 early int 1 for a td the other setting up a 32 yd td drive for a 14-0 lead and beat ND 35-21. OU shutdown TCU not allowing a FD until mid-3Q but only won 20-17. They were a 2 td fav vs Texas but were dominated trailing 36-13 after 3Q's. Stoops who is now 30-2 off a loss, beat Kansas (415-201 yds). They took on undefeated #10 TT and knocked them off 38-30 at home. They had a huge showdown vs Baylor on national tv and came in #12 vs the #5 Bears. They played great for 1.5Q's then were whipped 41-12. Stoops rebounded after the loss with a 48-10 win over Iowa St. They beat KSt by 10 and then were a 10 pt dog to Okla St. The Cowboys needed a win to claim the Big 12 Title but OU got a w/19 left to pull out a 33-24 win (Stoops 12-3 vs rival). They were a large dog vs Bama in the Sugar Bowl but controlled matters, as after tying the game 17-17 early 2Q they never trailed the rest of the way and won by 2 td's. Had the Sooners lost that game, they probably would have finished lower than their pre-ssn #16 rank but with the win (and QB Knight hitting 34-44-348) the Sooners elevated themselves to #6 at the end of LY and to the Top 5 in TY's preseason poll. They did benefit from +9 in TO's and 2 net close wins. An interesting fact is that OU has won 41 str gm when leading at half. Only Oregon (60) has a longer streak. OU is a much stronger team on both sides of the ball with 14 ret st's and are a legit National Title contender that will be favored in every game.

OFFENSE	JERSEY # IN RED	2014 PROJECTED STARTING LINEUP	JERSEY # IN RED	DEFENSE
QB	9	TREVOR KNIGHT SO. 6-1 196 PS#18. 5 st, 819 (59%, 9-5), 445 rush (6.6) as a rFr. Was just the 4th frosh OU QB to start a season opener. 14 Cody Thomas (6'4" 215 rFr) PS#6. 4 Justice Hansen PS#12. IFS. 5-11 202 PS#7. 10 gm, 134 (5.8) true. 28 Alex Ross (6'1" 221 So) PS#15. 10 gm, 19 (6.3) rFr. Joe Mixon PS#3. 34 Daniel Brooks (5'8" 176 So). 25 David Smith (5'10" 204 So) PS#52. Samaje Perine PS#27. 8 STERLING SHEPARD JR. 5-10 190 PS#19. 4 st, 621 (13.8) true. 12 st, 603 (11.8) LY. Michiaiah Quick PS#7. FB 48 Aaron Ripkowski (6'1" 261 Sr) 8 st, 34 gm 3Y. 47 Joe Palange (6'0" 235 So). 36 Dimitri Flowers is PS#85. IFS. WR 5 Durren Neal Jr. 5-11 199 PS#9. 10 gm, 75 (15.0) true. 2 st, 176 (13.5) LY. Jordan Smallwood (6'2" 210 rFr) PS#85. 8 Austin Bennett (6'0" 164 So) PS#78. 7 gm, 23 (11.5) true. 1 KJ Young (6'0" 175 rFr) PS#135. WR 12 Derrick Woods So. 6-1 186 PS#21. 11 gm, 29 (14.5) rFr. Dannon Cavil (6'4" 212 rFr) PS#86. Mark Andrews PS#2. 84 Grant Bothun (5'11" 191 Jr) 13 gm holder rFr. Clay Rhodes (6'0" 185 Fr). 88 Cody Chancellor (6'1" 181 So). TE 88 Taylor McNamara So. 6-5 240 PS#5. MedRS '12. 3 rd, 1 rec rFr. 10 Blake Bell (6'6" 264 Sr) PS#3. 8 st, 1760 pass (59%, 12-6) 3Y. TE spg 14. 80 Isaac Ijalana PS#89JC. IFS. 89 Connor Knight (6'4" 230 So) 4 gm rFr. C 56 Ty Darlington Jr. 6-2 298 PS#22. 1 st, C, 8 gm as true. 3 gm bkp LY. Alex Dalton (6'4" 280 Fr) PS#55. LS Wesley Horky (6'6" 235 Fr) PS#61OL. Late signee. Under Armour AA in HS. 60 Brendan Northcutt (6'7" 220 So). RG 54 Nila Kasitaji Jr. 6-4 319 PS#105. 4 gm (ACL) rFr. 7 st RG, 12 gm LY. 75 Tyfer Evans (6'5" 331 Sr) PS#122. 29 st RG 3Y. Knee inj LY. 2Y 6th yr '14. 65 Nick Hardaway (6'2" 311 So). 84 Dylan Hartsook (6'5" 303 So). LG 74 ADAM SHEARD SR. 6-4 318 PS#44. 5 st LG, 10 gm, 62 kd rFr. 13 st LG '12 (10 st) (inj) LY. 77 Dionte Savage (6'4" 339 Sr) PS#210JC. 1 st, 12 gm LY. 78 Kyle Marrs (6'5" 318 So) PS#77. 53 Tony Feo (6'3" 295 Sr). RT 79 DARYL WILLIAMS SR. 6-6 332 PS#56. 1 st, 9 gm rFr. 10 st, HM B12 '12. 13 st. 2nd Tm B12 LY. 72 Derek Farniok (6'9" 335 Jr) PS#87. 10 gm rFr. 1 st LT LY. 70 Christian Daimler (6'7" 279 Fr) PS#128. John-Pth Hughes (6'7" 276 Jr). LT 71 TYRUS THOMPSON SR. 6-5 320 PS#37. 5 gm rFr. 5 st OT, 13 gm '12. 1 st LT (inj) LY. 55 Josiah St. John (6'6" 284 Sr) PS#50JC. DNP LY. Kenyon Frison is PS#48. 78 Sam Grant (6'7" 267 So) PS#31TE. DNP rFr. K 18 MICHAEL HUNNICUTT SR. 6-1 174 PS#52. 38-45 fg, L/53, 2Y. 24-27 fg, L/47, 16 KO, 2 TB, 2nd Tm B12 LY. 36 Daniel Schwarz (6'2" 213 So) PS#17. 12-18 fg, L/45 true at Tulsa. Trans LY. 39 Nick Hodgson (6'2" 191 Sr) 70 KO, 43 TB 2Y.		DE 98 CHUKA NDULUE SR. (6'2" 289 rFr) PS#165. 29 Rashod Favors (6'1" 259 Sr) PS#51. 23 gm, 10 tkl 3Y. 49 David Driskill (6'1" 258 Sr). NT 80 JORDAN PHILLIPS JR. 6-6 341 PS#12. 11 gm, 12 tkl rFr. 4 st (inj) LY. 93 Jordan Wade (6'4" 312 So) PS#35. 8 st, 17 tkl rFr. 95 Quincy Russell (6'4" 320 Sr) PS#19. 13 gm, 2 tkl LY. 34 Torree Peterson (6'3" 309 Sr) PS#71. 1 st, 7 tkl 3Y. DE 91 CHARLES TAPPER JR. 6-4 269 PS#87. 5 gm, 2 tkl rFr. 13 st, 49 tkl, 9 st, 1st Tm B12 LY. 87 DJ Ward (6'2" 246 Fr) PS#19. 90 Matt Dimon (6'2" 264 So) PS#74. 12 gm, 5 tkl true. 84 Mike Onuoha (6'5" 249 So) 4 gm true. RS LY. JAC 85 GENE GRISSOM SR. 6-4 257 PS#102. 1 st, 9 tkl 2Y. 5 st, 41 tkl, 8 tfl, 5 pd LY. 5 Devante Bond (6'1" 232 Jr) PS#28JC. IFS. 40 PL Lindley (6'2" 261 Jr) PS#52. 4 tkl true. 10 tkl LY. 93 Ruben Hunter (6'1" 205 So). ILB 20 FRANK SHANNON JR. 6-1 234 PS#48. 2 st, 40 tkl, 3.5 tfl rFr. 13 st, 92 tkl, 7 tfl, 1 int 2nd Tm B12 LY. 26 Jordan Evans (6'3" 214 So) PS#137. 8 gm, 12 tkl, 1 pbu true. Tay Evans (6'2" 200 Fr) PS#82. 78 tkl, 7 sk, 13 tfl as HS Sr. ILB 1 DOMINIQUE ALEXANDER SO. 6-0 217 PS#94. L/8 st, 13 gm, 80 tkl, 3.5 tfl, B12 D Frosh of Yr true. 25 Aaron Franklin (6'1" 218 Sr) PS#63. 34 gm, 31 tkl 3Y. 31 Londell Taylor (6'0" 224 Jr) PS#292. Not w/tn rFr. 10 gm LY. OLB 19 ERIC STRIKER JR. 6-0 217 PS#57. 13 gm, 6 tkl true. 13 st, 50 tkl, 10.5 tfl, 2nd Tm B12 LY. 82 Ogbornia Okoronkwo (6'1" 237 rFr) PS#88. Curtis Bolton (6'1" 192 So) PS#48. Trans from Houston LY. LB 53 ZACK SANCHEZ SO. 5-11 164 PS#196. 13 st, 46 tkl, 13 pbu, IR Id. FWAFA Fr AA. 17 Dakota Austin (5'11" 151 So) PS#209. 5 gm, 4 tkl true. Jordan Thomas PS#75. 37 Ashton Bennett (5'10" 165 So). 42 Cameron Cotton (5'11" 196 Fr). CB 2 JULIAN WILSON SR. 6-2 202 PS#108. 2 st, 33 tkl 2Y. 11 st, 26 tkl, 4.5 tfl, 6 pd LY. 5 Stanvon Taylor (5'10" 170 So) PS#18. 1 st, 4 tkl, 2 pbu true. 22 Cortez Johnson (6'2" 205 Jr) 2 st, 16 tkl true at Ariz. Trans '12. 2 st, 16 tkl LY. SS 10 QUENTIN HAYES SR. 6-0 184 PS#66. 8 gm, 3 tkl rFr. DNP '12. 13 st, 75 tkl, 4 tfl, 8 pd LY. Steven Parker (6'1" 186 Fr) PS#17. OK POY as HS Sr. Marcus Green is PS#95. 39 Darius Owens (5'10" 180 So). FS 4 Hatari Byrd So. 6-1 195 PS#29. 5 gm, 3 tkl true. 13 Ahmad Thomas (6'0" 218 So) PS#78. 12 gm, 9 tkl true. 86 Brandon Kitchens (5'11" 155 So) DNP rFr. 38 Brandon Young (5'10" 178 Sr). 41 Brian Walker (6'1" 187 Fr). 6-2 229 PS#170JC. PS at Cal '10. To JUCO. 13 gm, 65 punts (41.7), L/56, 22 In20, 16 TB, 22 FC, 11 50+, 34.5 net LY. 38 Jack Steed (6'5" 210 So) PS#156. DNP rFr. 46 Jack Braught (6'2" 175 So) PS#82.



**Enrollment: 21,109 (#62)**

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RESULTS (11-2)		POST #6
	LINE	SCORE
Virginia	-21'	34-0
	-21	16-7
Game - #22	-24	51-20
	-3'	35-21
	-8	20-17
	-12	20-36
	-22	34-19
Game - #10	-6'	38-30
Game - #5	+16'	12-41
	-23'	48-10
St	+5	41-31
na St - #6	+10	33-24