

homa, and Kansas were facing their final games in the Big Six Conference Championship race, with possibilities of a triple tie for honors.

Kansas was scheduled to meet Oklahoma at Lawrence, Kan., and on the same night Missouri was to meet Kansas State at Manhattan, Kan. Should Oklahoma defeat Kansas and should Missouri win from Kansas State, the Big Six would be deadlocked with the three state universities in a dogfall.

Kansas had lost her first two conference games of the season, but after the loss of these games had remained undefeated. Oklahoma was cruising along at a terrific rate, and Missouri was looked upon as a most dangerous contender. The Kansas team seemed to pick up increasing power with each victory.

Upon Bill Johnson, a senior and an elegant and versatile raper of the basketball court, Kansas pinned her chiefest hopes. For two years, Bill had shown the way to all Big Six centers. He had no peers in his position. And since Kansas had held the Big Six Conference Championship for the two preceding years, the race took on a Kansas hue.

As the season advanced, the Kansas Jayhawkers were moving in high gear--mowing down all opposition with relentless and ruthless regularity. This hectic struggle for the championship had gripped the imagination of the entire region of the great plains states. Column after column of newspaper space was devoted to this unusual race, and everybody was on edge over the outcome.

But, as is so often the case in man's best laid schemes, something happened. On Wednesday afternoon, the Kansans had their last grueling workout. We had planned to polish off during the remaining three days. Our scrimmage was most satisfying. In fact, too satisfying. Everything clicked. The machine glided with no lost motion. Johnson and the rest of his teammates were superb, shooting, passing, and hitting with uncanny skill. Surely if they could function like this on their game night, just three days away, no Oklahoma team could stop them.

But, even then, I had a premonition that everything was too perfect. After practice, press correspondents queried me as to the probable outcome of the game. A strange foreboding gripped me. I seemed to feel that something would happen to my ace, Bill Johnson. The bugbear of injuries haunted me. I told them, "If Bill Johnson doesn't break a leg, Oklahoma will be in for a busy Saturday night."

On that same Wednesday night, while I was at dinner, the telephone rang and a friend informed me that Bill Johnson's father had died suddenly in his home at Oklahoma City, 400 miles away.

Bill left on the night train and with him, so it seemed, went Kansas' chances for its third consecutive Big Six Championship.

Norman, the home of the University of Oklahoma, is just 18 miles from Oklahoma City, the home of the Johnsons. The athletic authorities at the University of Oklahoma were besieged by the press throughout this conference area to postpone the game until the following week, so that the two teams could meet at full strength. But the Oklahomans wanted to play the game on schedule.

The funeral hour of Bill Johnson's pioneer father, originally set for Friday, was changed to Saturday at 2:30 p.m. in order to accommodate relatives from a distance.

All Kansas home games were scheduled at 7:30 p.m. Apparently there was