

And we swung away with a mixed joy and fear such as I never before had known in my 30 years of coaching.

The Kansas field house was packed. Already the radio reports were giving Kansas State a lead of 8 points over Missouri. Surely the outcome of the local struggle would determine the championship.

As the Kansas varsity swarmed on the floor, the partisan rooters gave them a great ovation. Oklahoma had arrived early. They drove through their warm-up drills with skill and confidence. Keyed to the minute, these Sooners from Oklahoma looked formidable. Without Johnson, Kansas partisans still hoped that some magic power would aid the stricken Kansans.

The Oklahomans scanned the personnel of the alert Kansans to make sure that Johnson was not among them. Just 12 minutes before game time! Feverish excitement everywhere. Sweaters flung aside. Timers, scorers, and officials hurrying to their places for a final check-up. Oklahoma's coach was still wary, as if fearing an unseen phantom.

Bedlam broke loose! Look! Kansas rooters went wild. Standing, cheering, shouting like maniacs, they beheld a sight that brought tears to their eyes. Was that Bill Johnson's ghost? No! It was Kansas' own Bill Johnson in the flesh!

Pale and wan, even thinner than usual, Bill strode into the arena just 6 minutes before eight o'clock. Joan of Arc's spirit rekindled.

The roof fairly blew off. Kansas players, stunned for the moment, suddenly recovered their equilibrium, and showered their haggard teammate with ecstatic adulations of joy. Kansas rushed into a huddle in her dressing room, just off the arena.

But 4 minutes remained before the game. Kansas now had more than her own strength. She had something indefinable. One could not measure it accurately but could feel it in the air. A positive psychic force! I shouted, "All right, boys, sit here on this bench,--Bill, Ted, Lee, Elmer, and Dick.

"Boys, words must be few. I merely want to remind you that 43 years ago a young man challenged the dangers of the great southwest and carved a home out of it for Bill Johnson to grow up in. Bill's father was a daring and courageous pioneer.

"Tonight over exactly that same trail came the same conquering spirit to answer the call of duty. Churning his lonely way over 400 miles of dangerous terrain through strong head winds and treacherous air pockets in a small droning plane, Bill Johnson has fought his way to you. It was his father's last wish. His mother sent him.

"Ted, Lee, Elmer, and Dick, go out there and fight your hearts out for this cause that Bill represents.

"Bill, God bless you, my boy. You are wonderful."

We flung ourselves together in determined embrace. For a brief moment, the iron bands of love held us together. Then we tore apart for the business at hand. But the bond of our singleness of purpose still held.

Referee Ernie Quigley's whistle started the game and with it he introduced a Kansas tornado that, in the first few minutes of the game, fairly swept