



**COZY PAIR,** Wilt Chamberlain, the Kansas star, and ex-coach Phog Allen, who brought him to Kansas, have a few words through netting in gym.

# WHAT IT TOOK TO GET WILT

Old recruiter, army of workers, rich alumni helped Kansas land star

The University of Kansas has had the finger of suspicion pointed at it ever since it enrolled 7-foot-tall Wilt Chamberlain, who was sought by a hundred campuses and is now the most spectacular of all college basketball players. Every time Kansas wins with "Wilt the Stilt" (it has lost only once this season) gossipy stories of how he was recruited grow stronger—of under-the-table deals, of a trust fund of \$10,000 (or \$25,000) which waits for the big fellow when he graduates.

It sometimes takes money in one form or another for a college to get a great star today. Because one college can usually offer as much as the

next, it often takes something else. In this case it took the man talking to Wilt above, aggressive, crafty Dr. Forrest C. ("Phog") Allen, who for 39 stormy years had survived as coach at Kansas. How he mapped the strategy that brought Wilt to Kansas and led the small army that carried it out is told on the following pages. The triumph turned to ashes for Allen last year when, kicking like a steer, he was forced to quit as coach at the compulsory retirement age of 70. When he is asked what he used to recruit Wilt, Phog has a blunt answer: "Of course I used everything we had to get him. What do you think I am, a Sunday school teacher?"





WILT CONTINUED

## THEY SOUGHT BETTER RACE RELATIONS



**JOURNALIST** Dowdal Davis, general manager of *Kansas City Call* and one of Midwest's most influential Negroes, arranged first Kansas approach to Wilt. He wanted national Negro figure for his old school.



**CONCERT SINGER** Etta Motten (Kansas '31) wrote letter to Chamberlains extolling the advantages of a U. of K. education for Negroes. Her support was enlisted by Allen through ex-dean of music.



**AFFLUENT FRIEND** of Kansas, Lloyd Kerford, whose son and daughter are Kansas grads, visited Wilt's parents and entertained the boy in Atchison, Kan., where he owns limestone quarry.

WILT THE STILT, grilled by reporters in rare interview, reflects before answering. Asked what he was getting at Kansas, he replied, "An education."



## Stalking Stilt, job for many

At Overbrook High in Philadelphia, Wilt had scored a fantastic 39.9 points a game and become basketball's biggest prize. Phog Allen, the master recruiter, went after him with one of the biggest crews ever turned loose on an impressionable schoolboy. He enlisted the aid of influential Kansas Negroes, educators and wealthy businessmen. A stream of letters, visitors and phone calls flowed into Philadelphia telling Wilt that Kansas was the place for him. Finally, Allen himself showed up to charm Chamberlain's mother. "I always head for the mother, you know," Phog explained. "I'm a mama's guy."

By the spring of 1955 competition for the prospect of the century had boiled down to Kansas and Indiana. Indiana held a slight edge for Wilt's favor but Phog Allen was not perturbed by it. He had snatched another prime prospect, Clyde Lovollette, from Indiana a few years before. "The worst rushers in the world, the Indiana bunch," confided Phog.

No one could have been treated better than Wilt was when he visited the Kansas campus the second time. "Where we outrushed Indiana is we showed him how successful the Negro in Kansas was," said Allen. Even before the final negotiations, Wilt had decided to go to Kansas.

"Let's be realistic," says Allen with refreshing candor. "Until 1946 I never had any help. Then alumni started to sweeten the pot. Well, I heard that another coach charged us with giving Wilt \$5,000. Well, if he charges \$5,000—and he's sore about it—why then that must mean someone was dickering for less, huh?"



**LOYAL ALUMNUS** Skipper Williams helped to entertain Wilt during vital recruiting period. Wilt stayed at Williams' home on two visits to the campus, drove his car, played his guitar and was served steak for breakfast.



**ATHLETIC DIRECTOR** at K. U., A. C. ("Dutch") Lonborg, was member of strategy committee which plotted to get Wilt. He outlined scholarship benefits and helped others, he says, to "kill the boy with kindness."







**EDUCATOR** Franklin D. Murphy, chancellor of U. of K., was eager to improve racial integration in Kansas. He had thought about attracting a top Negro athlete to Kansas before Allen ever heard about Chamberlain.



**PROFESSOR** of chemistry at Kansas, Calvin Vanderwerf, visited Chamberlain in Philadelphia and made a deep impression. A supporter of integration, he is Wilt's faculty adviser. The boy's big personal problem, he says, is "too much publicity."



**OLD CHEERLEADER** Roy Edwards, class of '42, Kansas City seed merchant and ardent basketball fan. Prominent in an alumni group which helps the athletic department get talent, he wrote to Chamberlain almost every week before he finally came to Kansas.



**FORMER STAR** Clarence McGuire, "fighting guard" for Kansas in 1929, met with Allen and two others in Kansas City hotel to discuss strategy for pursuing Wilt. He helped get prominent Negroes behind project by introducing Allen to Dowdal Davis.



**THE OLD COACH**, unmindful of the frenzied spectator behind him, watches stonily from stands as Wilt performs against Kansas State. "I go to games out of habit," Allen says. "I'm like the postman who takes a walk on his vacation."



**NEW COACH** Dick Harp, formerly Allen's assistant, uses chess men to explain play to Wilt. Wilt openly gets standard athletic help—free board, room, tuition and books, plus \$135 for selling football programs and sweeping the stadium.





CHAMBERLAIN ATTENDS 8 A.M. RELIGION CLASS. HE MAJORS IN BUSINESS, IS A C STUDENT



YOUNG ADMIRER, 11-year-old R. A. Edwards III, clutches Wilt's hand on way back to hotel after tournament in Kansas City. In bag are basketballs.

## A big pay-off by a big man

"Chamberlain has one weakness," says Nebraska's Coach Jerry Bush. "He doesn't handle the ball too well with his left foot." Despite his tremendous height, Wilt is extremely well coordinated and seems to spend most of his time suspended in mid-air (*opposite*). He jumps for rebounds, jumps when making shots and jumps just for the sheer joy of it.

The only team to beat Kansas this year was Iowa State and they did it by ganging up on Wilt and holding him to 17 points. But Chamberlain leads the nation in scoring with a 30.6-point-a-game average, and deserves an assist for many points his teammates score. As a decoy he takes two or three opponents assigned to guard him out of a play. Says Phog Allen, "I could win games with two sorority girls, two Phi Beta Kappas and Wilt Chamberlain. He's the greatest basketball player I ever saw."

SPRY AT 71, ALLEN GIVES ANIMATED VERSION OF PLAY BEFORE STARTING HIS TV SHOW



A GIANT ON DEFENSE. Wilt consistently makes it difficult for opposition to shoot. Here he leaps to block a shot by Oklahoma's Monte Simpson (*top*) and deflects ball (*upper left, second from top*) downcourt. The play is reversed as teammate Maurice King (No. 8) breaks for basket. By the time King had shot, Wilt was under the basket (*bottom*) waiting for rebound.

SURROUNDED BY RIVALS, WILT VAULTS TO GET A REBOUND →



