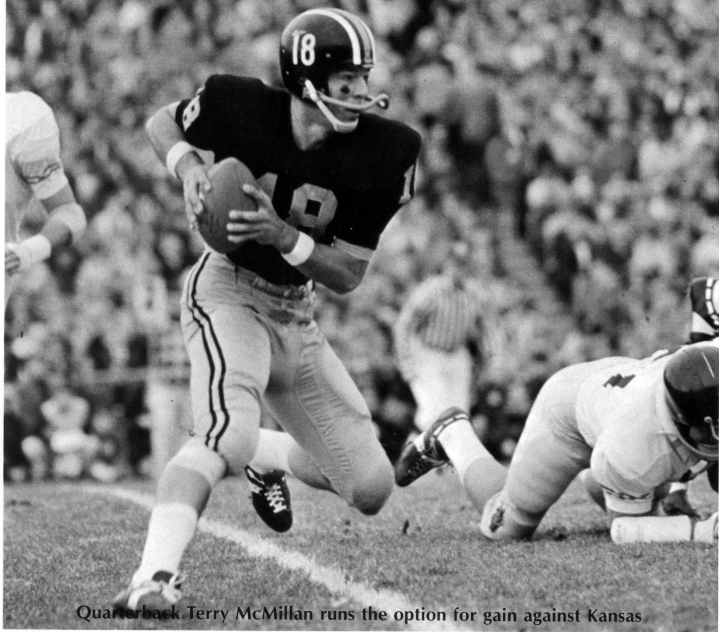


# TIGER TIME



Quarterback Terry McMillan runs the option for gain against Kansas

## Spring practice starts again for the Tigers on August 29.

If that seems a little late this year, consider what happened those 20 days in April and May. Bad weather, injuries, and a certain, hard-to-define team listlessness left Coach Dan Devine with about as many unanswered questions as he had at the start of the sessions.

He had hoped to get a good look at James Harrison — last year's powerful and surprisingly fast No. 2 fullback — at tailback, but Harrison pulled a muscle on opening day and sat out the entire spring. He had hoped to try Ty Walls at tight end — a position that needs more depth — but regular slotback Jon Stagers suffered a broken leg and Walls had to stay in the back field. He needed to replace the starting defensive guard tandem — Carl Garber and Roger Boyd — but three of the top contenders — Adam Vital, Steve Mizer, and John Cowan — missed much of spring ball with minor, but persistent, injuries. The defensive backfield, which must operate this season without All-American Roger Wehrli, received a setback in Dennis Poppe's broken arm.

Therefore, the coaching staff must set the team during the first three weeks of September and still get ready for Air Force. The Falcons matched Missouri's 7-3 regular season record in 1968 and finished by walloping Colorado, 58 to 35. The other non-conference foes for the Tigers are Illinois at St. Louis and Michigan at Ann Arbor.

But even with all the question marks going into September, the Tigers still appear to have the ingredients for a highly successful season — at least the diehard Mizzou fan thinks so and most of the professional forecasters tend to agree. They see either the Tigers or Oklahoma as favorites in the Big Eight title chase, with Kansas — bolstered by junior-college transfers and solid help from the track team — as a dark horse.

The forecasters base much of their regard for Missouri on an experienced quarterback in Terry McMillan, voted the most valuable player in last year's Gator Bowl, and good front-line strength and quality depth in the rest of the backfield. They know that Devine likes senior-led teams, and there will be more senior lettermen on the 1969 Tigers than any other squad in Devine's 12-year tenure. Seventeen of the 28 returning lettermen are seniors, and 14 of them are the two-year variety.

The typical Missouri fan is likely to be less scientific. He relives the 35-to-10 conquest of Ala-

bama in the Gator Bowl — tabbed the most important Tiger victory in its football history — and has visions of Mel Gray getting the ball more often and flashing down the field with his :9.3 speed. He overlooks the fact that Gray passed up spring football to concentrate on track, and that without the Alabama victory, the 1968 Missouri season would have been just another good one.

Both the expert and the fan tend to overlook defensive weaknesses, largely because over the years the defense just seems to be there. In the 1960s, the defense has allowed an average of just under 8.7 points per game. No other Big Eight team is within three points of that record. The Tigers' average per-game point spread also is the best in the conference during the 60s — so give the offense a little credit, too.

Be that as it may, this year the defensive problems are real. Defensive end depth is critical; some one of three or four possibilities must come through at a defensive back; and suitable replacements must be found for Garber and Boyd at defensive guard. Depth — experienced depth — is a serious problem all along both the defensive and offensive lines. (A position-by-position personnel rundown appears on the next two pages.) Last year's freshmen won three of four games and there are some good prospects among them, but at this point that's all they are: prospects.

And it takes more than prospects to play in the tough Big Eight, which just may be the best football conference in the nation. Last year, for the first time in league history, three conference teams finished in the top 10: Kansas was sixth; Missouri, ninth; and Oklahoma, tenth. This year may be even better. Oklahoma's Steve Owens seems certain to break Gale Sayers' three-year rushing mark of 2675 yards. Colorado's Bob Anderson may be the first to achieve more than 5000 yards total offense. In all, the eight teams return 110 of their 1968 starters. Missouri ranks seventh in the "starters returning" category, so the Tigers shouldn't go into the season overconfident — even if their fans are.

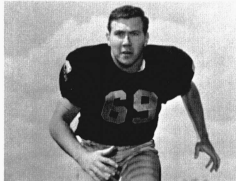
But if injuries to the experienced players are minimal, if the sophomores can be brought along slowly, if the Alabama game provides momentum instead of self-satisfaction, and if you really can have springtime in September, then 1969 might be the perfect year to break in the new scoreboard at Memorial Stadium. □

# THE DEFENSE

## Ends

*MIKE BENNETT	6-3	215 Jr.
*JOE HAUPTMAN	6-1	207 Sr.
DAN BORGARD	6-2	200 Soph.
TIM KELLEY	6-2	200 Soph.
J. L. DOAK	6-2	210 Soph.
DAVE FRIEZE	6-4	215 Soph.

Top-flight ends are critical to the Missouri style of defense. Committed 100 per cent to the rush, the ends must contain the wide plays and harass the passer. "Every year," says Al Onofrio, assistant head coach, "we've had four or five who could play, and every year we've needed them. It's a position especially susceptible to injury." Gone are two of the best, Elmer Benhardt and Bill Schmidt, and as of August 29, the Tigers don't have the four or five ready. Bennett, the quick, agile junior, could be a big-play end in the mold of Benhardt. Hauptman, while not spectacular, is a steady performer. Borgard had a good freshman spring and showed signs of producing the big play. He was too anxious, however, and must have seasoning. Kelley has no game experience and only average quickness. Doak played linebacker in the spring, but will get a shot at end this fall. Frieze was hampered by injuries in May and will be given another look. Both are big, strong, first-rate prospects who will be moved to tackle should they falter. But the Tigers need at least one of them to make it at end.

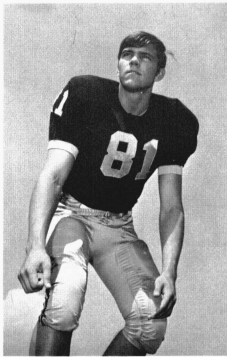


Jay Wallace

## Tackles

*JAY WALLACE	6-1	216 Sr.
*MARK KUHLMAN	6-3½	218 Sr.
*LYNN COX	6-1	228 Jr.
MARK BEATTIE	5-11	193 Soph.
MIKE WEAVER	6-1	200 Soph.

Wallace is rated as one of the best defensive tackles of the Devine era. All-conference a year ago, he has been a regular since his sophomore year. Kuhlman, also a regular in 1968, led all defenders in total tackles and was tabbed by the coaches as having his best spring. Cox, extremely strong and quick, needs more second effort in order to impress. There the experienced depth stops. Both Beattie and Weaver are rookies and Weaver did not come to Missouri on scholarship. John Cowan, being tried at guard, also could play tackle if needed.



Mike Bennett

## Guards

*ADAM VITAL	6-0	209 Jr.
STEVE MIZER	6-0	203 Soph.
JOHN COWAN	6-1	205 Soph.
TOM STEPHENSON	6-0	195 Soph.
SAMMIE BROWN	6-0	205 Soph.

The graduation of Captain Carl Garber, a three-year mainstay, and underrated Roger Boyd, another three-year letterman, leaves Vital as the only experienced guard. Continued progress could put him in the all-star class. Cowan and Mizer will battle it out for the other spot. Mizer has the edge going into fall practice as Cowan missed almost all of the spring with an injury. Mizer showed steady improvement but lacked consistency. And his guard is a position that demands consistency. Stephenson will understudy Vital. Brown is a sophomore who exhibited better-than-average potential in the spring.

## Linebackers

*NIP WEISENFELS	5-11	200 Jr.
*STEVE LUNDHOLM	6-0	191 Sr.
*JERRY BOYD	6-3	202 Sr.
SAM BRITTS	5-11	202 Soph.
RON STOECKEL	6-0	185 Sr.

Last year this position was hurt by inexperience; this year the linebacking should be better. The top four 1968 linebackers return, joined by Britts, a promising sophomore who is expected to help this season. Weisenfels, rated as smart and tough, had a good spring until injured. Lundholm, the other starter, is small, but gets the job done. Boyd started as a sophomore, but did not have a strong junior year. Stoeckel is a conscientious worker who will provide needed depth.

## Secondary

*BUTCH DAVIS	5-11	183 Sr.
*GEORGE FOUNTAIN	5-9	175 Jr.
*DENNIS POPPE	6-3	205 Sr.
GUY GARDOCKI	5-11	176 Soph.
LORENZO BRINKLEY	6-0	175 Soph.
JOHN HAMILTON	5-9	158 Jr.
REX BRINKMAN	5-11	150 Jr.
RICCI STOTLER	6-1	183 Soph.
PETE BUHA	6-3	190 Soph.
BOB McLEAN	6-0	180 Soph.

How do you replace Roger Wehrli? Answer: You don't. "A Wehrli comes along very infrequently," says Clay Cooper, the No. 1 assistant coach. "He was at his best on man-to-man coverage and often gave you the big play." The 10-man list of defensive backs is not an indication of strength, but one of uncertainty. Davis, a two-year regular who passed up spring practice for baseball, is a fixture, as is Fountain, who looked better in the spring than he ever had as a starting sophomore, even at the end of the season. Poppe, who played the fourth back on passing situations, may have that role again — if one of the other seven can play a halfback or safety. If not, Poppe will be at safety. There's her long on effort but short on speed. Fountain could move to safety if Brinkley, who has great potential, or Gardocki, the converted quarterback, come through. Neither, however, is ready now. Another possibility is McLean, a 10 second speedster from Fort Scott Junior College. Stotler will get a long look for a reserve spot. He may be the best of the place kickers.

\* Indicates number of years lettered.

# THE OFFENSE

## Receivers

Split Ends			
* MEL GRAY	5-9	169 Jr.	
* JOHN HENLEY	5-10	180 Soph.	
* HENRY BROWN	6-2	198 Sr.	

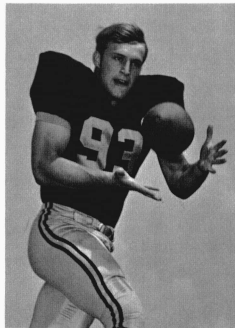
## Tight Ends

** TOM SHRYOCK	6-0	199 Sr.	
** STEVE KENEMORE	6-3	210 Sr.	
CHUCK COLCLASURE	6-2	187 Jr.	
JOHN BROWN	6-1	225 Soph.	

## Slotbacks

** JON STAGGERS	5-10	185 Sr.	
* TYRONE WALLS	6-3	215 Jr.	
MIKE FINK	5-10	180 Soph.	

At split end, Gray gives the Tigers great speed. The Big Eight 100-yard and 220-yard dash champion ran a consistent :9.3 century and was caught once in a wind-aided :9.1. He missed spring practice, however, and this may slow his development. Henley, held out of competition a year ago, also has good speed and quickness. He shared the position this spring with Brown, a converted slotback who also doubles as a place kicker. The hard-working Shryock had a good spring, maintaining his blocking efficiency at his tight end position while improving his receiving. Kenemore, the Tiger punter shifted from split end, needs to develop more blocking ability. Brown, two-time all-state fullback from Poplar Bluff, is a Fort Scott Junior College transfer who will be tried at the depth shy tight end position. Another possibility is Walls, a much improved player this spring who will open practice as the No. 2 slotback behind Staggers. Staggers appears recovered from his broken leg, although it will require further testing. Missouri's best all-around back, Staggers, will double at tailback. Fink, with sprinter speed, is a good sophomore prospect.



Tom Shryock

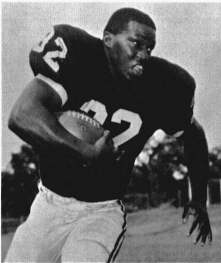
## Running Backs

Tailbacks			
* JOE MOORE	6-1	205 Jr.	
* JAMES HARRISON	6-4	230 Jr.	
BILL MAUSER	6-1	195 Soph.	

## Fullbacks

** RON McBRIDE	6-0	205 Sr.	
MIKE McKEE	6-0	200 Soph.	
CHARLES BARNES	6-1	220 Soph.	

Moore, dedicated and durable, will open fall drills as the No. 1 tailback. He faces a challenge from Harrison, the fast, bruising runner who has been slowed from reaching his potential by nagging injuries. Both men need work on concentration, largely in the area of receiving the ball. Staggers also will be a spot player at tailback, and Mauser will double at fullback. McBride, of course, will be the No. 1 fullback, as he was last year. If he should be injured, Harrison probably would be moved from tailback. McKee is a fine blocker, but missed much of the spring. Barnes has outstanding potential and someday should be a good one.



Ron McBride

## Quarterbacks

* TERRY McMILLAN	6-1	185 Sr.	
** GARNETT PHELPS	5-11	183 Sr.	
MIKE FARMER	6-2	188 Soph.	
CHUCK ROPER	6-1	185 Soph.	

Coming strong at the end of the season (including the Gator Bowl), McMillan gives the Tigers an experienced I-formation quarterback who fakes and runs the option about as well as anybody. His passing has been spotty, but he read coverage better in the spring. He throws the short, play-action pass best. Phelps is an experienced back-up signal caller who passes better than he runs, although he has been bothered at times by inconsistency. Farmer had an average spring and must improve to help. Roper is a fine young prospect who should develop into a Big-Eight caliber quarterback. He has a good arm and fair speed.

## Centers

** TIM CRNKO	6-0	200 Sr.	
BOB WILSON	6-1½	198 Jr.	
TERRY MOORE	6-5½	215 Soph.	

Missouri appears to be in good shape at this important position. Quick and intelligent, Crnko can play either center or guard. Wilson proved he could play in the Gator Bowl and provides excellent backup depth. Moore, transferred from end after an ankle injury, is a hard worker and a good athlete.

## Guards and Tackles

### Guards

** SAM ADAMS	6-0	202 Sr.	
DAN KELLEY	6-0	200 Jr.	
MICKEY KEPHART	6-0	220 Soph.	
SCOTTY BELL	6-1	220 Soph.	
KURT GEBHARD	6-3	215 Soph.	

### Tackles

** MIKE CARROLL	6-3	235 Sr.	
* LARRON JACKSON	6-3	244 Jr.	
* ERIC LOWDER	6-4	215 Jr.	
LOU CAPUTO	6-4	215 Soph.	
RON SLOAN	6-2	197 Jr.	
JOHN BURNS	6-4	220 Soph.	

Moving from defense to offense at the end of last season, Adams is a solid performer at guard. Kelley made good improvement in the spring, but needs more strength. Kephart, a second-year sophomore, appears ready to help, and Bell, once he gets game experience, should be a good one. Gebhard, an all-state end in high school, has found his position a little tough, but made considerable improvement in the spring. Carroll could be one of the best offensive tackles in the past 10 years at Missouri. He's a fine one-on-one blocker and excels at pass protection. Jackson, whose development was slowed by injuries last season, should have a good year if he stays healthy. Lowder gives good effort, but is hampered by lack of speed. Sloan gives good effort, but is hampered by lack of size. Both Caputo and Burns need game experience.

\* Indicates number of years lettered.