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The Centre College Football Team's Amazing Run, Climaxed by Winning the "Southern Championship" in 1924

***Rob Robertson - Author of
"The Wonder Team"***

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The Centre College Colonels had an amazing run in college football from the years 1917-1924. The little Danville, Kentucky college is probably best remembered, if remembered at all, for its 6-0 win over mighty Harvard in 1921.

Harvard at the time was one of the "Big 3" along with Yale and Princeton.

Unlike today, when the Ivy League schools make no claim to being members of the upper echelon of college football, from the first game in 1869 between Princeton and

Rutgers until the early 1920's, the Eastern colleges dominated the gridiron.

Centre initially gained national attention by defeating a West Virginia Mountaineer's team in a game played in Charleston, West Virginia in 1919. West Virginia had dominated an excellent Princeton eleven, winning 25-0 at the Tigers' Palmer Stadium.

After Centre's 14-6 win, and after the Colonels finished at 9-0 in a year which also included victories over Indiana, Virginia and Kentucky, Walter Camp, considered to be the "Father of College Football," declared that Centre was the top team in the country for 1919.

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Camp picked THE All-American team each year. While there were several other selections, Camp's was

recognized as the most prestigious. For the first time in the history of football, a small Southern college was recognized as having talent on par with that of the larger, mainly Eastern schools.

The Colonels' Alvin Nugent "Bo" McMillin was selected for the quarterback position and James "Red" Weaver was picked at center. James "Red" Roberts was placed on the third team at end.

The successes of 1919 earned Centre a spot on Harvard's schedule for 1920. A sellout crowd at Harvard Stadium watched in awe as Centre jumped out to a 14-7 lead. The half ended at 14-14, but Harvard's size and numbers prevailed and the Crimson won, 31-14.

Centre lost to Georgia Tech the week after the loss to Harvard. The Colonels were so banged up after the effort against the Crimson that the two "Red's," Roberts and Weaver, along with George Chinn, an end, all starters in Cambridge, were held out of the game.

The Colonels regular season finished with a record of 7-2 and "Bo" landed a second team berth on the Camp All-American team.

Centre played in the second bowl venue of all time (of course, the Rose Bowl was the first) after the 1920 season, beating an undefeated TCU squad on January 1, 1921. The game was called "The Fort Worth Classic," and after TCU scored early on an intercepted pass, Centre ran

off 63 straight points to win 63-7, and season ended at 8-2.

1921 was a huge year for the Colonels. The highlight was the 6-0 win over Harvard. The regular season ended at 9-0, and besides beating Harvard, significant wins were over Clemson, Virginia Tech, Kentucky, Auburn and Tulane.

"Red" Roberts was selected by Walter Camp as a first team All-American at the end of the regular season and became the third, first team player designated by Camp, joining "Bo" McMillin and "Red" Weaver from the 1919 team. "Bo" made Camp's second team at quarterback in 1921.

It was decided to reward the team with a western excursion after the season. The trip included bowl games in San Diego on December 26, 1921, and in Dallas on January 2, 1922.

Therefore, little Centre played in the third bowl venue ever held, the "Christmas Bowl" on December 26, 1921, in which the Colonels rolled over the University of Arizona, 38-0, in San Diego.

They also played in the fourth bowl venue ever, the "Dallas Classic", which found Centre losing to a very tough Texas A & M team coached by D.X. Bible, 22-14, on January 2, 1922.

The trip by train covered over 2,000 miles and took 20 days.

Centre continued to play with the “big boys” during the 1922 and 1923 seasons.

The Colonels were 8-2 in 1922, losing the rubber match to Harvard, 24-10, and going down to defeat against Auburn in Birmingham, 6-0. Notable wins were over Clemson, Mississippi, Virginia Tech, Kentucky and South Carolina, all state universities with student bodies which far exceeded the enrollment in Danville.

By 1923, the numbers able to suit up at Centre had been greatly diminished by the “freshman rule” of 1922 which had been put in place by football authorities. The rule forbade freshmen from participating in intercollegiate sports until they had been enrolled for 12 months.

Centre had taken 28 young men to play Harvard in 1921. Fourteen were freshmen. Of the 16 who got into action, 8 were freshmen. Without those first year men, Centre would have had difficulty even fielding a team, and defeating Harvard would have been out of the question.

The strong class which entered in 1921 had allowed Centre to continue turning out excellent teams during 1922 and 1923, but it was obvious that the “glory days” of what was being called “the Wonder Team” would soon come to an end.

In 1923, the Colonels were 7-1-1. The loss was to Pennsylvania, at the

time a major power, in a game played before 42,000 fans in Penn's new (1922) Franklin Field. The first half ended with the Quakers up 3-0 due to a field goal kicked just as time expired.

The Colonels were worn down in the second half, much as they had been in the 1920 Harvard game, as Penn's numbers and size increasingly took their toll. The final score was 24-0.

The 1923 season-ending tie was with a Georgia Bulldog team in Athens. Wins included victories over Clemson, Kentucky and Auburn.

Centre's coach, Charles B. Moran, “Uncle Charlie,” resigned after the 1923 season and took over the Bucknell (PA) program. Sports fans all over Kentucky and the South knew what “Unc” had meant to the Colonels' program.

Moran had taken the reins after Centre lost the second game of the 1917 season to DePauw, 6-0. During “Unc's” tenure, Centre had gone 52-6-1 and had outscored its opponents, 2113-218, for a rounded-off average score of 36-4.

As phenomenal as Centre's record was during the Moran years, it was even more remarkable due to the fact that nearly all of the major games were played on the road. The limited accommodations in Danville and the small wooden stadium (until 1923) meant that attracting programs of substance was virtually

impossible. Of the 49 contests from 1919 through 1923, 31 were played away from Danville.

Robert L. "Chief" Myers, Centre '07, had brought the nucleus of the team after the Great War to Danville from Fort Worth North Texas High School where he had been the football coach. Myers had been Centre's coach during the first two games of 1917 but moved aside when he saw that "Uncle Charlie" was available to take over the team.

"Chief" Myers continued on as the unpaid athletic director and after Moran's resignation was named the head coach for 1924.

Thus the stage was set for what many consider was Centre College's finest moment of many memorable moments in the little school's storied history – the amazing exploits of 1924.

Only 21 young men showed up for practice in the fall of 1924. The number of students on campus had dropped from 292 during the 1923-24 school year to 223. While the larger universities would hardly notice a decrease of 69 enrolled, for Centre it meant nearly a 25% decline.

Centre had a freshman team in 1924 coached by former Colonel All-American, James B. "Red" Roberts. The first-year team was also short in numbers as demonstrated by the fact that during a game with the University of Kentucky frosh in Lexington, "Red" had only 11 men available.

Only by "borrowing" a few of the freshmen could "Chief" Myers even have a scrimmage for the varsity.

Fortunately for the "Chief," the 21 team members included 7 who had been on the team since 1921. Six of the 7 were present at the famous 6-0 win over Harvard and 4 – Herb Covington, Minos Gordy, Ed Kubale and Frank Rubarth – saw action.

The seniors were dubbed "The Seven Immortals" by "Chief" Myers.

(Besides the 4 who played against Harvard, Clifton "Hennie" Lemon and Robert L. "Case" Thomasson made the trip to Cambridge. The 7th "Immortal", Howard Lynch, wasn't included on the travel squad.)

The 1924 season began not with a bang, but more like with a whimper.

Bill Shadoan, a starter at guard on the 1921 and '22 Centre teams, had taken over the coaching position at Valparaiso University in Indiana. On October 4, he brought his well-drilled squad to Danville and played the Colonels to a 0-0 tie.

Centre got back into the win column on October 18 with an easy victory over Transylvania, located in Lexington, Kentucky. The game, played in Danville, ended at 43-0.

The Centre athletics department and administration had decided after the trips to Cambridge to play Harvard that a journey to the East brought publicity like no money

could buy. The 1923 game in Philadelphia to play Penn had been scheduled for that reason, and now, in 1924, it was off to New York to play West Virginia at the Polo Grounds.

Revenge was on the minds of an excellent Mountaineer team. The 1919 loss still galled. West Virginia was 20-2-2 over the last 3 seasons, allowing only 101 points in the 24 games which included 12 shutouts.

The Colonels scored first on a 40 yard field goal by "Hennie" Lemon. During the second quarter, West Virginia scored on a "double pass" and at the half it was 6-3. The third quarter ended at 6-6 after Herb Covington, the little Centre quarterback, kicked an 18 yard field goal. Ten minutes into the last quarter, the Mountaineers began a drive which culminated in a score as the clock wound down and West Virginia walked off the field with a hard-fought 13-6 win.

The game was as statistically close as the score. Centre gained 218 yards and West Virginia picked up 234. "Chief" Myers sent in only two substitutes, a pattern which was going to define the rest of the season.

Adding to the Colonels' problems with such a small squad was the matter of injuries suffered in New York. Tackle Frank Rubarth was diagnosed after the return to Danville with a fractured clavicle and Robert Wallace, another starter, had x-rays which revealed a broken bone in his hand. Both continued to play the entire 60 minutes

against the Mountaineers, but Wallace was later declared definitely out for the season.

At a team meeting back in Danville on Monday, October 27, captain Herb Covington called a meeting of the squad. He declared that he had to come to Centre because of its winning tradition and he was determined to go out a winner. And then he made a bold declaration.

"We are Centre. We play hard. We play clean. And we play to win. We have 4 games left with Southern Conference colleges. If we win all 4, we can be declared the best team in the South. And, we will win the next 4 games and not only that, we won't give up another point the rest of the season!"

Then the captain began the chant that Centre often used to help bond the team to a common purpose.

"We are Centre!"

"We are Centre!"

"We are Centre!"

One by one, the players stood and picked up the chant.

"We are Centre!"

"We are Centre!"

"We are Centre!"

Robert W. "Red" Robertson, a senior who was "Red" Roberts' freshman team manager, later related what he

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had witnessed in Centre's tiny Boyle-Humphrey gymnasium.

"The seniors made a simple declaration. They would not lose another game. I was at Centre from 1921 through the 1924 season and sat in on every meeting during 1924 because "Red" Roberts was always in attendance and I was "Red's" shadow. Each of the seniors made a vow that they would play every minute of the remaining games, and the only way they'd not be in the action was if they were literally carried off the field on a stretcher."

(The Southern Conference was formed from the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association in 1921. The S.I.A.A. had grown to an unmanageable 30 members and it was decided to spin some colleges out into a separate conference. Fourteen colleges joined initially with competition beginning in the fall of 1921. Six other schools joined in 1922. Centre was left out, which was one of the reasons that the Danville school so relished playing and beating members of the newly established conference.)

The remaining schedule was as follows:

- November 1 Kentucky at Lexington
- November 8 Tennessee at Knoxville
- November 15 Alabama at Birmingham
- November 29 Georgia at Danville

Kentucky had built a new stadium which was available for the 1924 season. It was named McLean Stadium in honor of a young man, Prince McLean, a lineman for the Wildcats who had died after sustaining a head injury during a 1923 game with Cincinnati.

Kentucky waited until the Centre game to dedicate its new facility and designated the weekend to be Homecoming. The athletics department knew that the Colonels would fill the stadium and added 2,000 temporary seats to the 15,000 who could be accommodated in the new concrete edifice.

A Lexington "Herald" story about the game was headlined:

MONSTER CROWD TO WATCH KENTUCKIANS

*Every Seat for Centre
Game Saturday to be Filled*

*Eager Football Fans
Snapping Up All Tickets in Sight*

Centre and Kentucky had played 29 times prior to the 1924 game with the Colonels holding an 18-9-2 advantage.

The Wildcats had an overwhelming win in 1916, crushing the boys from Danville, 68-0. However, with the arrival of "Bo" McMillin and his Fort Worth teammates, Centre won 3-0 on a "Bo" field goal in 1917, and then the tide had totally changed.

- 1917 Centre 3-Kentucky 0
- 1918 No game due to the war and "Spanish Influenza"

- 1919 Centre 56-Kentucky 0

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- 1920 Centre 49-Kentucky 0
- 1921 Centre 55-Kentucky 0
- 1922 Centre 27-Kentucky 3
- 1923 Centre 10-Kentucky 0

During the 6 straight Colonel wins, Centre had outscored its much larger, in-state rival, 200-3.

In an excellently played game on November 1, 1924, Centre once again triumphed, 7-0, to win its 7th straight over Kentucky. "Immortal" Frank Rubarth, just a week after breaking his collar bone, started and played into the second quarter before finally having to come out. After being rested for a few plays, he returned to action! Two substitutions for Rubarth were the only ones made during the game. The 10 other players went the entire 60 minutes. The game was close on the scoreboard but not so close statistically. Kentucky never got beyond the Centre 45 and the Colonels had a first down margin of 13-5 along with doubling the Wildcats' total yardage gained, 206-102.

Kentucky was closing the gap, but the gap with still there.

(Centre and Kentucky played 5 more times. The Wildcats finally prevailed in 1925, 16-0. Centre won for the

last time in 1926, 7-0. Kentucky then reeled off 3 straight wins, 53-0 in 1927, 8-0 in 1928, and 33-0 in 1929. After the 1929 win, the Kentucky athletics department announced that it was dropping Centre from its football schedule in order to concentrate on Southern Conference foes. Centre, along with much of the state, was outraged. Word came out of Danville that Centre was severing all athletic contact. The two colleges later competed in the "minor" sports, but never met on the gridiron again.

The series ended with Centre up 20-13-2.)

End of Part 1 of 2

* * *

Sporting Life, 1915

Walter Camp on Foot Ball Changes

A ruling also was given on the position of linemen. Several have felt that the restriction placed upon a lineman on the attack of having one foot and the opposite hand up to or within a foot of

THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

has worked hardships on the really good and active man who could get into interference. The general impression has been that the present rule made it necessary for a lineman to bend over with that opposite hand on the ground. This is not so.

The man may stand up with one foot on the line and the other back, and then if his opposite hand is within a foot of the line he conforms to the rule whether that hand is in the air or on the ground a rather difficult thing for officials to determine, but certainly allowing the man to stand up. There was a

return to the old rules regarding running into the fullback, making

A FIFTEEN-YARD PENALTY

for this and disqualification for roughing this player. A forward pass going out of

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bounds, whether hitting a player or not, will be ruled as incomplete; the center in snapping the ball must actually let it go; substitutes must report immediately on going on the field, and in case of an illegal substitution not being discovered until play has been going on, the man is disqualified, half the distance to the goal line is penalized and a report made to the central board of the case. There were many minor changes in wording and the committee recommended numbering all players besides deprecating the sending of substitutes in for the sole purpose of carrying instructions.

* * *

IFRA Remembers...

Halls of Fame

- *Mobile (Ala.) Sports Hall of Fame* Former Alabama players **Chris Samuels and Joey Jones**
- *Utah State University Intercollegiate Athletics Hall of Fame* BYU Head Coach **LaVell Edwards**; along with defensive back **Henry King** and running back Rick Parros
- *SMU Athletics Hall of Fame* **Craig James**
- *University of North Alabama* coach **Bobby Wallace, George**

"Gobber" Lindsey and Michael Edwards

Obituaries

Gary Wichard, LIU-C.W. *Post* (N.Y.) age 60. . . Longtime NFF Nebraska Chapter treasurer and officer **Bob Billings**; he was 75...*Oklahoma* player **Lindell Pearson** at 82. . . . Former *Oklahoma, Texas A&M and New Mexico* sports information director **John Keith**; he was 78. . . . Former *Georgia Tech* wide receiver **Drew Hill** was 54...former *Oregon* player **Mickey Bruce**, was 72... **Murray Warmath**, who led *Minnesota* to its last National Championship in 1960. He was 98... **Jim Erkenbeck**, who played at *San Diego State* and later was an assistant coach there; also coached, collegiately at *Utah State, Washington State and Cal.* He was 81... **Vada Murray**, Michigan, 43.

Awards

The *Texas Associated Press Broadcasters* have recognized TCU radio broadcasters (**Brian Estridge, play-by-play; John Denton, color; Jeff Williams, sidelines**) for calling the state's best live broadcast during the Horned Frogs' win over Baylor on Sept. 18.

Florida will unveil statues of three NFF honorees at its spring game on April 9. **Steve Spurrier, Danny Wuerffel** and **Tim Tebow** will have

statues located on the west side of Ben Hill Griffin Stadium.

* * *

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Bo Carter remembers the heroes from the *College Football of Fame on their date of birth and passing*—for **April**

- 1 (1884) Hugo Bezdek, Prague, Bohemia
- 1 (1889) John Dalton, ?????, Neb.**
- 1 (1898) Joe Alexander, Silver Creek, N.Y.
- 1 (1929) Bo Schembechler, Barberton, Ohio
- 1-(d – 1965) Frank Wickhorst, Oakland, Calif.
- 1-(d – 1996) Bob Hamilton, Palm Springs, Calif.
- 2 (1871) Marshall Newell, Clifton, N.J.
- 2 (1880) Harold Weekes, Oyster Bay, N.Y.
- 2 (1917) Hugh Gallameau, Detroit, Mich.
- 2 (1930) Bill McColl, San Diego, Calif.
- 2 (1965) Don McPherson, Brooklyn, N.Y.
- 2-(d – 1976) Walter Gordon, Berkeley, Calif.
- 3 (1903) Andy Gustafson, Aurora, Ill.
- 3 (1926) Joe Steffy, Chattanooga, Tenn.
- 3 (1934) Jim Parker, Macon, Ga.
- 3-(d – 1994) Tom Hamilton, Chula Vista, Calif.
- 3-(d – 2006) Marshall Goldberg, Chicago, Ill.
- 3-(d – 2007) Eddie Robinson, Ruston, La.
- 4 (1891) Bob Butler, Glen Ridge, N.J.
- 4 (1907) Bill Banker, Lake Charles, La.
- 4 (1917) Chet Gladchuk, Bridgeport, Conn.
- 4 (1947) Ed White, San Diego, Calif.
- 4 (1951) John Hannah, Canton, Ga.
- 4 (1965) Jessie Tuggle, Spalding County, Ga.
- 4-(d – 1967) Guy Chamberlin, Lincoln, Neb.
- 4-(d - 1978) Jack Hubbard, Torrington, Conn.
- 4-(d – 1989) Harvey Jablonsky, San Antonio, Texas

- 5 (1871) Pop Warner, Springville, N.Y.
- 5 (1951) Brad Van Pelt, Owosso, Mich.
- 5-(d – 1982) Dick Colman, Middlebury, Vt.
- 5-(d – 1993) Skip McCain, Princess Anne, Md.
- 5-(d – 1996) Frank Hoffman, Potomac, Md.
- 6 (1901) Pooley Hubert, Meridian, Miss.
- 6 (1934) Aurelius Thomas, Muskogee, Okla.
- 6 (1944) John Huarte, Anaheim, Calif.
- 7 (1859) Walter Camp, New Britain, Conn.
- 7 (1900) Edgar Garbisch, Washington, Pa.
- 7 (1954) Tony Dorsett, Aliquippa, Pa.
- 7-(d – 1986) Bert Metzger, Hinsdale, Ill.
- 8 (1924) Jim Martin, Cleveland, Ohio
- 8 (1955) Ricky Bell, Houston, Texas
- 8 (1967) Anthony Thompson, Terre Haute, Ind.
- 9 (1871) John Minds, Clearfield County, Pa.*
- 9 (1898) Paul Robeson, Princeton, N.J.*
- 9 (1921) Vince Banonis, Detroit, Mich.*
- 9 (1947) Ron Pritchard, Chicago, Ill.*
- 9 (1966) Tracy Rucker, Atlanta, Ga.*
- 9-(d – 1980) Howard Harpster, Pittsburgh, Pa.*
- 9-(d – 1983) Jess Neely, Weslaco, Texas*
- 10 (1909) Clarke Hinkle, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- 10 (1918) Jim Daniell, Pittsburgh, Pa.
- 10 (1938) Don Meredith, Mt. Vernon, Texas
- 11 (1903) Jake Gaither, Dayton, Tenn.
- 11 (1916) Danny Fortmann, Pearl River, N.Y.
- 11 (1916) Sam Chapman, Tiburon, Calif.
- 11 (1941) Joe Romig, Salt Lake City, Utah
- 11 (1962) Terry Hoage, Ames, Iowa
- 11-(d – 1948) Jock Sutherland, Pittsburgh, Pa.
- 11-(d – 1987) Bill Morton, Hanover, N.H.
- 11-(d -2008) Bob Pellegrini, Marmora, N.J.
- 12 (1870) Winchester Osgood, Port Bananas, Fla.
- 12 (1944) Mike Garrett, Los Angeles, Calif.
- 13 (1897) Jimmy Leech, Collierville, Va.
- 13 (1915) Bob Devaney, Saginaw, Mich.
- 14 (1876) Eddie Rogers, Libby, Minn.
- 14 (1901) Mal Stevens, Stockton, Kan.
- 14 (1926) Harry Gilmer, Birmingham, Ala.
- 14-(d – 2000) Charlie O'Rourke, Bridgewater, Mass.
- 15 (1938) Richie Lucas, Glassport, Pa.
- 15 (1947) Ted Kwalick, McKees Rocks, Pa.

15-(d - 2002) Byron White, Denver, Colo.
16 (1970) Steve Emtman, Spokane, Wash.
16 (1972) Jim Ballard, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio
16-(d -1981) Lee Tressel, Berea, Ohio
17 (1905) Herb Joesting, Little Falls, Minn.
17 (1941) Bill Redell, Red Bluff, Calif.
18 (1913) Pug Lund, Rice Lake, Wis.
18 (1931) Harley Sewell, St. Jo, Texas
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18 (1962) Wilber Marshall, Titusville, Fla.
18-(d – 2005) Sam Mills, Charlotte, N.C.
19 (1883) Germany Schulz, Ft. Wayne, Ind.
19 (1892) Ernie Godfrey, Dover, Ohio
19 (1907) Jack Cannon, Columbus, Ohio
19 (1925) Chuck Klausing, Wilmerding, Ohio
19 (1936) Jack Pardee, Exira, Iowa
19 (1965) Keith Jackson, Little Rock, Ark.
19-(d – 2009) Felix “Doc” Blanchard, Bulverde,
Texas

20 (1893) Murray Shelton, Dunkirk, N.Y.
20 (1915) Eric Tipton, Petersburg, Va.
20 (1926) Hub Bechtol, Amarillo, Texas
20 (1930) Harry Agganis, Lynn, Mass.
20 (1945) Steve Spurrier, Miami Beach, Fla.
21 (1935) Jim Young, Franklin Lakes, N.J.
21-(d – 2005) Cliff Montgomery, Mineola, N.Y.
22 (1902) Eddie Cameron, Manor, Pa.
22 (1907) Barton “Botchy” Koch, Temple, Texas
23 (1916) Bud Wilkinson, Minneapolis, Minn.
23-(d – 1950) Bill Alexander, Atlanta, Ga.
24 (1915) Ed Franco, Jersey City, N.J.
24 (1921) Weldon Humble, Nixon, Texas
24 (1938) Carroll Dale, Wise, Va.
24-(d – 1978) Hunk Anderson, West Palm Beach,
Fla.
25-(d – 1973) Bud Sprague, New York City
25-(d – 1985) Ernie Smith, Los Angeles, Calif.
26 (1927) John Ralston, Oakland, Calif.
26-(d – 1974) Eddie Anderson, Clearwater, Fla.
27 (1887) Bishop Frank Juhan, Macon, Ga.
27 (1941) Lee Roy Jordan, Excel, Ala.
27-(d – 1995) Bruce Bosley, San Francisco, Calif.

28 (1876) Frank Cavanaugh, Worcester, Mass.
28 (1955) Wilson Whitley, Brenham, Texas
28-(d – 1962) Arnett “Ace” Mumford, Baton Rouge,
La.
28-(d – 1981) Cliff Battles, Clearwater, Fla.
28-(d – 1993) Ben Schwartzwalder, St. Petersburg,
Fla.
29 (1914) Darrell Lester, Jacksboro, Texas
29 (1920) David Nelson, Detroit, Mich.
29-(d – 2005) Bob Ward, Annapolis, Md.
30 (1871) Fielding Yost, Fairview, W.Va.
30 (1887) Doc Fenton, Scranton, Pa.
30 (1895) Bernie Moore, Jonesboro, Tenn.
30 (1918) Augie Lio, East Boston, Mass.
30 (1935) Jon Arnett, Los Angeles, Calif.
30-(d – 1974) Claude Reeds, McClain, Okla.

* * *

A Change in History

KICKING FIELD GOALS

In the last 46 years of intercollegiate foot ball only two men have kicked goals from the field at a distance exceeding 50 yards. In 1882 J. Triplett Haxall, of Princeton, in a game against Yale, shot a place kick through Yale's goal posts from the 65-yard mark.

In 1892, P. J. O'Dea, of Wisconsin, delivered a drop-kick from the 62-yard mark above Northwestern's crossbar.

The season of 1915 contributed not only a third goal to this rare class, but in

doing so presented the world's record from a drop-kick. This goal was scored from the 63-yard mark by Mark Payne, of Dakota Wesleyan, against Northern Normal School, October 16. This great kick

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was scored in scrimmage and from the regular kick formation. This phenomenal young kicker in 1914 also kicked goals from the field at the amazing distance of 55 and 53 yards against college teams.

[SPORTING LIFE](#)

Sporting Life, 1915, Volume 66
Number 16 Page 24

A RECORD CORRECTED **Philadelphia "Evening Ledger"**

✓ On page 214 of the 1936 *Official Spalding Foot Ball Guide*, noted historian Parke H. Davis, has also included that Hazall's kick was the good from 65 yards away. It was noted that he made a place kick.

*

(Otis L.) Guernsey's wonderful drop-kick from the center of the field for Yale against Princeton has caused a sports writer to go back over the files to verify previous record kicks. In doing this it was discovered that Haxall's kick, made for Princeton against Yale, on November 30, 1882, was not made from the 65-yard line, but from the 35-yard mark.

Through a misprint, which stated that Haxall made his kick from his own 35-yard line instead of from Yale's 35-yard line, he has been credited for 55 years with a mark he never made. This leaves Mark Payne's recent drop-kick of 63 yards as the longest field goal at any description.

[THE COLLEGE FOOT BALL SEASON](#)

Sporting Life, 1915, Volume 66 Number
14 Page 5

Mark Payne's 63-yarder was next, a yard farther than the *Kangaroo Kicker*, Wisconsin's Pat O'Dea who converted a 62-yarder in 1898 against Northwestern.

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The World of Sport, Outing 1913.

NUMBERING FOOTBALL PLAYERS

THIS is a step which is advocated by Parke H. Davis, the patron saint of football at Princeton, and Albert Sharp, late of Yale, and now the

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guarantee of "better times to come" at Cornell.

The reform would probably be acceptable to many people, but it is to be doubted if it would be of great service.

Most of us are too intent on watching the play to bother with constant reference from player to program.

The enthusiasts for the Blue are not so much concerned in knowing who carried the ball over as in seeing that it is carried over.

Furthermore, it would deprive the onlooker of the great satisfaction that he now has in assuring the young lady with him that the young man who just made that great tackle was Jim Jones. To be sure, Jim Jones was probably sitting on the side lines wrapped up in a blanket and swearing under his breath at the coach because he wasn't being given a chance, but that is a small matter.

* * *

Outing Magazine, 1915

FOOTBALL ROLL OF HONOR

The Men Whom the Best Coaches of the Country Have Named as the Stars of the Gridiron in 1914

Ends

Bradlee, Harvard
Hardwick, Harvard
Mahan, Harvard
* Merrilat, Army
Knowles, Yale
Stavrum, Wisconsin
Moore, Princeton
* O'Hearn, Cornell

Toolan, Williams
* Cherry, Ohio State
Mayer, Virginia
Robinson, Auburn
* Gray, Chicago
Macomber, Illinois

Tackles

Pogue, Illinois
Sikes, Vanderbilt
Halligan, Nebraska
Wilkenson, Syracuse
Burton, Kansas

Tolly, Sewanee
Ballin, Princeton
Taylor, North Carolina
*Talbot, Yale
Trumbull, Harvard
* Buck, Wisconsin

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Quarterbacks

Keeler, Wisconsin
Logan, Harvard
Shull, Chicago
Glick, Princeton
Cody, Vanderbilt
Tow, Amherst
Kelly, Tennessee
* Prichard, Army
Dobbins, Sewanee
Paddock, Georgia
Curry, Vanderbilt

Guards

* Wilson, Yale
White, Syracuse
Gooch, Virginia
* Pennock, Harvard
Russell, Chicago
Chapman, Illinois
Clark, Illinois
Shenk, Princeton
* Barrett, Cornell
* Hughitt, Michigan

Centers

Gross, Iowa
* Hightower, Northwestern
* Des Jardien, Chicago
Pickerel, Ohio State
Rosenthal, Minnesota
Cool, Cornell
Raynsford, Michigan

Fullbacks

Journey, Pennsylvania
Calac, Carlisle
Pitts, Auburn
Whitney, Dartmouth
Kenan, Wesleyan

Halfbacks

Legore, Yale
*Rutherford, Nebraska
Philippi, Cornell
Chamberlain, Nebraska
Benfer Albright
Maulbetsch, Nebraska
Solon, Minnesota
Maulbetsch, Michigan
* Graf, Ohio State
Rose, Syracuse
* Brickley, Harvard

* Men so marked were on the honor list for 1913.

All the men on the above list were named as worthy of special mention by at least two prominent coaches who have seen them in action.

* * *

The Outing Magazine, 1900

(1900) ANALYSIS OF PLAY

	(12)	(0)	(28)	(0)
	Yale.....Princeton		Yale.....Harvard	
<i>Touch-downs</i>	5	0	4	0
<i>Goals from touchdowns</i>	4	0	3	0
<i>Goals from field</i>	0	1	1	0
<i>Gains in rushing including</i>				
<i>Running back kicks</i>	684	97	531	150
<i>Fumbles</i>	6	2	3	4
<i>Punts</i>	6	12	11	12
<i>Gained from Punts</i>	159 yds.	508 yds.	332 yds.	366 yds.
<i>Average length of Punts</i>	26.7	42.3	30.2	30.6

Editor's Note: It's interesting that the rushing yardage and kick return yards were all one stat.

* * *

The Sporting Life, Nov. 1916

By Thomas D. Richter

Johnny Poe's mother has offered to present annually to a member of the Princeton foot ball team a silver cup in memory of her son. Mrs. Poe wishes the Board of Control to award the cup to the man who during the

season not only has shown himself to be a fine foot ball player, but who in addition has proved his loyalty,

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courage, self-control, determination, sportsmanship and his devotion to Princeton's foot ball interests.

* * *

Teammates Combining for Most Points in a Single-Game

Research by Tex Noel, Editor of TCFH

St. Viator started to score as soon, as its game with Lane Technical School began, at Kankakee, Ill., on October 14, 1916, and kept it up until the game closed, piling up a score of 205 to nothing.—[Sporting Life, 1916, Volume 68 Number 9 Page 18.]

- 100 Al Schick, St. Viator (12 Touchdowns, 28/29 XP)*
- Finnegan added 60 points

Most Points in a Single-Game since 1912—*the season when touchdowns were first awarded 6 points for each score.*

Score Team (Opponent) and Season

- 222-0 Georgia Tech (Cumberland TN), 1916
- 206-0 King TN (Lenoir), 1923
- 205-0 St. Viator (Lane Technical School), 1916
- 187-0 Roanoke (Randolph Macon), 1922
- 183-0 Oklahoma Central Normal (Oklahoma Methodist) 1916
- 179-0 Oklahoma (Kingfisher), 1917
- 178-0 Albion (Detroit Navy), 1919
- 167-0 Arizona (Camp Harry Jones), 1920
- 163-0 St. Bernard (Limestone County High School), 1922
- 163-0 Decatur Baptist (Bridgeport High School), 1923

Source: *Stars of an Earlier Autumn* © 2007 (*A PressBoxPublication*)

As previously reported in *TCFH*, Oklahoma City Normal's points were scored on Oct. 6; then the next

afternoon, Georgia Tech established the single-game mark for points scored in a college football game.

* * *

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- **November 4, 1916:** Going in, Minnesota was 4-0, having won 41-7, 47-7, 81-0 and 69-0. Afterward, Minnesota would play two more games, winning 54-0 and 49-0. Going in, Illinois was 2-2, averaging 13 points a game. Afterward, Illinois would play two more games, losing one, tying one. The game was played on Minnesota's home field. The score was a shock: Illinois beat Minnesota, 14-9. The Chicago Herald carried this headline on its game story: "HOLD ON TIGHT WHEN YOU READ THIS." (Originally published by NFF; in *This Week in College Football History*.)

1890 The Outing Magazine

Athletics At Cornell

By G. H. Lohmes

Football was played the first term of college, but possessed very few of the finer points which have distinguished the game of late years.

The number on a side varied according to previous agreement, ranging from twenty to whole classes.

The settling of the question of class athletic superiority by football games was begun in '70, and has continued ever since. A change from the old kicking

game to the Rugby has been made, however, within a few years. In the old game the goal posts were 250 yards apart, and the ball was placed in the centre of the field and rushed and kicked between the posts. The game consisted of best three in five goals.

In '85 a few Rugby games were played.

The game was one of the tests of superiority of '89 and '90 in '86. In '87 a university team was formed, but was beaten by everybody. A game with Lehigh at Elmira marked the close of the season of '88.

The improvement in the play of the Cornell team was most marked.

Where in '87 Lehigh won 38-10, this year—with a better team from Lehigh—the score was 4-0, with a claim on the part of Cornell of 4-8.

Games were also played with Williams, Lafayette and others, with varying success, encouraging on the whole.

Sporting Life, 1892

PRINCETON'S TEAM

Its Exact Disposition Not Yet Determined Upon.

PRINCETON, N. J., Oct. 12. Of course, the all-absorbing interest at present in Princeton is foot ball. A large proportion of the 1000 undergraduates assemble in college daily on the university field to watch the team practice with the reserve eleven. No definite idea can be formed as yet as to the playing ability of the team and its comparative strength with other elevens. The large number of new candidates trying for the team are simply learning the game.

It is Capt. King's policy to give every man a fair competitive chance for a position on the

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Another year will find a strong team in the field, as the game has taken a firm hold of the student body, and has recently been put on the same footing as boating and baseball by being allowed a member on the athletic council.

* * *

eleven, consequently the make-up of the 'Varsity changes nearly every play. During the last week Hall, a strapping fellow, reported to weigh 200 pounds, has been tried as right guard in Riggs' old place, but, although he is powerful, he does not understand the game very well. Vincent, last year's end rush, who sprained his ankle early in the season, is back again and will play in a few days. Les, McCauley and Trenchard the other promising candidates for end rush.

The position of right tackle is also very uncertain. Fiscus, '96, Davis, '93, and Flint, '95, are among the most likely candidates.

Johnny Poe continues to do very poor work at quarter-back, but it

is thought he will become accustomed to his new position after a few weeks' practice.

King, Barnett and (Fulner) are playing a strong game at half-back.

The backs are learning to play a good interfering game, but the men in the rush line show very little team work and decided inability to block their opponents.

Some of the candidates are improving so rapidly that does definite idea can as yet be formed

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as to the final composition of the team. Captain King is not decided in his own mind about the make-up of the eleven which will play in the championship games.

* * *

The first year for official statistics

Major College (1937-77)
California Community Colleges (1947)
Small Colleges (1948-57/College Division, 1958-72)
NAIA 1956; again since 1997;
-Division I, 1970-96
-Division II, 1983-96
NJCAA, 1970
NCAA II, 1973
NCAA III, 1973
NCAA 1A, 1978; Bowl Subdivision, 2007
NCAA 1-AA, 1978;
-Championship Subdivision, 2007

The NCCAA, 2004 From 1937-2001 the NCAA kept season and bowl stats separate. Beginning in 2002 all stats compiled includes every game a team or player participated in.

This issue of The College Football Historian will be read by 316 subscribers!

This article originally appeared on duckdowns: oregon football history (<http://www.benzduck.com/>). (It is used by permission of the author.)

Mickey Bruce: Every picture tells a story

By Paul Land

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I found this wire service photo of an Oregon defensive back from the early 60s, Michael "Mickey" Bruce, on eBay in 2009. It was listed at \$5.99.

Without the caption at the bottom of the photo, this is just another picture of a healthy-looking mid-20th-century football player. Not mentioned in the ebay listing itself, the caption refers to Mickey Bruce being [offered \\$5,000 by two Chicago gamblers to help throw the 1960 Michigan game.](#)

An event that created national headlines and Senate hearings, and ended with a scandal of sorts, along with the first brush with fame of *avery* interesting individual, has its 50th anniversary this year.

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This is the story of how an Oregon pre-law student fingered a future Hall of Fame gangster in a Senate hearing, then essentially told the legal system to go fly a kite.

Len Casanova's 1960 team was pretty good. With Dave Grayson and Dave Grosz in the backfield, along with a 5'3" (yes, 63-inch) receiver with the perfect name of Cleveland Jones, the Ducks went 7-2-1, with losses at Michigan and to eventual Rose Bowl champ Washington and a tie with OSC; this was good enough

to gain a Liberty Bowl invite to play Penn State. Oregon lost the bowl, played amid 2 feet of snow in freezing temperatures in Philadelphia, 41-12, but the biggest news during the season was made during a trip to Ann Arbor to play Michigan early in the year.

On arrival in Dearborn, where the Ducks were staying before the game, a 27 year old Brooklyn schoolteacher named David Budin approached Mickey Bruce, a starting junior halfback/defensive back, in the airport terminal. Bruce said Budin introduced himself as "a friend of Jim Grenadi", who had played basketball at Oregon and was a friend of Bruce.

According to Bruce, Budin asked him for two tickets for the Michigan game. Bruce said he sold Budin a pair of tickets for \$50. (Of the many things football players in 1960 could get away with, selling comped \$6 tickets for \$50 was one of them.)

Later that day, after Bruce had checked into the team's hotel, the Dearborn Inn, Bruce said he was approached by Budin and two other men, identified as "Frank" and "Bobby". Bruce said he was told he could earn \$5,000 if he "let a pass receiver in behind him", and influence Oregon QB Dave Grosz to "call the wrong plays." They told him to meet them at their room at the Dearborn Inn to finalize the deal on

Saturday morning before going to the stadium with the team.

No fool -- his father was a Chicago attorney -- Bruce said thanks but no thanks, and told Len Casanova about the conversation. Cas told Oregon AD Leo Harris; Harris called the FBI, who contacted state police. Meanwhile, Cas called an unusual late-night pre-game meeting. Dick Arbuckle, a receiver on the team (and future football coach at Sheldon High), recalled that it was "very unusual.. They told us the situation, asked if any of the rest of us had been approached, and told us to be alert and report any unusual contacts."

The next day, Michigan state police detectives accompanied Bruce to the

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gamblers' hotel room, only to find they had apparently been tipped off -- "Frank" and "Bobby" had checked out. The cops hung around long enough to arrest Budin when he showed up, who was probably not all that surprised to see his "friends" had cheesed it.

Bruce proceeded to the Big House, where he did everything *but* throw the game, playing by all accounts outstanding pass defense, even intercepting a pass and returning it to the 32 yard line. It was as far into Michigan territory the Ducks would

get during the game, which they lost 21-0; they had been 6 point underdogs. Cas later recalled the episode shook the team's focus; the team played miserably, with Grosz overthrowing receivers all day, and in the hot humid conditions the team really didn't have a chance.

It's possible that "Frank" and "Bobby" knew that merely *attempting* to bribe the team might have a negative impact on Oregon's chances against the spread. All we know is that they got off scot-free this time. As for Budin, without sufficient evidence of a crime, he was charged with registering at the hotel under a false name, and paid a \$100 fine.

**

Mickey Bruce had been drawn into what turned out to be a [nation-wide scandal](#). Basketball and football games were being influenced on a wide scale by gambling interests. Eventually, Senator McClellan of Arkansas convened his select committee to investigate gambling in collegiate athletics. A year after the Michigan interaction, Bruce was called to testify before McClellan's committee.



Michael Bruce, 20, U. of Oregon football player, points an accusing finger at Frank Rosenthal as they sit at the witness table Friday before the Senate Investigation Subcommittee in Washington probing organized gambling. Bruce said Rosenthal offered him \$100 per week for the rest of the season if he'd phone Rosenthal in Miami Beach each Monday and give the gambler reports of injuries on the Oregon team. Rosenthal also offered Bruce a \$5,000 bonus if he could bring QB Dave Grosz into the arrangement, for which Grosz would also receive \$5,000. Bruce left, and returned to the hotel with detectives the next morning to see Budin being led away in handcuffs.

Mickey Bruce fingers Frank Rosenthal, US Senate hearing, 9/8/61

On September 8, 1961, sitting at a Senate hearing witness table with Frank Rosenthal -- the "Frank" he'd met at the Dearborn Inn -- Bruce, literally, fingered Rosenthal as one of the men who had attempted to bribe him.

Bruce told the senators that Jim Grenadi had asked him to get the tickets for two gambler friends, who wanted to attend a game that they would be betting heavily on. On

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meeting the gamblers in their hotel room, he learned of their desire that he take a backfield dive. Bruce said he'd "played along", telling Rosenthal he'd be back later that evening to arrange the deal; instead, Bruce reported the incident to Cas, setting the law in motion.

On Bruce's return to the gamblers' hotel room, he testified, he was given \$50 for the two \$6 tickets, and asked to help ensure the Ducks lost by at least 8 points by playing bad pass defense, *and* told he'd be given \$100 per week for the rest of the season if he'd phone Rosenthal in Miami Beach each Monday and give the gambler reports of injuries on the Oregon team. Rosenthal also offered Bruce a \$5,000 bonus if he could bring QB Dave Grosz into the arrangement, for which Grosz would also receive \$5,000. Bruce left, and returned to the hotel with detectives the next morning to see Budin being led away in handcuffs.

Rosenthal, as was his right, plead the 5th Amendment.

**

In October 1961, the Wayne County (Michigan) district attorney's office announced that it wanted Mickey Bruce to come to Detroit and swear out a complaint against the three men who had attempted to bribe him. As Bruce was the only witness to the attempt, without his complaint there would be no prosecution of the gamblers. The Ducks had a game scheduled against Ohio State in mid-November, and the Michigan authorities thought it would be convenient for the team to bring Bruce along so he could file the complaint.

But Bruce was out for the season -- he separated a shoulder during a loss to Stanford -- and had not planned to make the trip to Columbus.

Cas and Harris urged him to come along. But Bruce now said he wanted to be done with the whole matter. In an interview with the *Register-Guard*, Bruce said "as far as I'm concerned, this whole thing should have been dead a month after it happened." He had conferred with his father, the Chicago attorney, and concluded that he could not be compelled to swear out a complaint. He said he didn't have time to go -- he was president of his fraternity, immersed in study, and just didn't want to take the time to travel cross-country. In his opinion the Michigan police had botched the whole situation from the start. He didn't want to have any more to do with what he considered

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a poorly run prosecution that had little chance of success. And it had been so long, he hasn't sure he remembered everything

correctly; it was "a little hazy...as to who said what."

In refusing to go along, Bruce stood up to AD Leo Harris, who had assured the Michigan DA that Bruce would be available for "interrogation." But Mickey Bruce was tired of the whole thing, of the "taken any bribes lately?" jokes, and wanted to get on with his life. Harris even appealed to Oregon prexy Arthur Flemming, who said that although it would be *nice* if Bruce would go, Flemming certainly couldn't *force* him to do so.

And that was that. Bruce stayed home, Oregon went to Columbus and lost to the Buckeyes 23-12, and the Wayne County DA dropped the case against Budin and Rosenthal for lack of evidence.

Frank Rosenthal and David Budin were eventually indicted by a North Carolina grand jury in 1962, charged with offering a \$500 bribe to a NYU basketball player to shave points at a NCAA tournament game against West Virginia in 1960. They plead no contest; Rosenthal paid a \$6,000 fine, and Budin received two years probation.

Does the name Frank Rosenthal ring a bell yet?

It should. He was credited with inventing the sports book industry in Las Vegas, and was called the "greatest living expert on sports gambling" by *Sports Illustrated*.

The colorful life of Frank "Lefty" Rosenthal, who died in 2008, was the inspiration for Martin Scorsese's movie "Casino". Rosenthal was played by Robert DeNiro.

There's a great [obit](#) on the Las Vegas *Review-Journal's* web site.

Frank Rosenthal was not a guy most people wanted to mess with.

The football history of Mickey Bruce ends with that Register-Guard interview. The '61 Stanford game was his last appearance in an Oregon uniform. That injury-shortened senior year dampened his career statistics; in three seasons at Oregon, he rushed 29 times for 128 yards and one TD, and caught 10 passes for 113 yards and 3 TDs. Defensively, he intercepted six passes in that fateful 1960 season, and returned 6 punts for an 11 yard average. Bruce was drafted in the 24th round of the '62 AFL draft by the Oakland Raiders, but did not

pursue a professional football career.

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As we expect of the great Ducks, Michael J. Bruce's story goes beyond the gridiron. He is on that short list of individuals who have implicated gangsters and not only survived, but prospered under their own good name. In 1981, Mickey Bruce received the UO Leo Harris Award, presented to an alumnus letterman who has been out of college for twenty years and who has demonstrated continued service and leadership to the university. Other Harris winners include Bill Dellinger, Dan Fouts, Tinker Hatfield, Alberto Salazar, Dave Wilcox, Ahmad Rashad and John Robinson.

That's a much better lifetime achievement award than a [car bomb](#).

Editor's note: Sadly, Mickey Bruce passed away before this issue of *TCFH* was published; from complications of cancer Sunday, March 27. He was 72.