



Coffin Corner

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A CALL FOR HELP!

Despite the amateurish attempt to make the head of this page look impressive, this is really nothing much more than a chatty letter to my friends. The purpose is to spark some progress toward the establishment of a pro football research society, similar to the Society of American Baseball Research.

I think some such organization is long overdue, but what all it might entail is not so clear to me. What benefits might accrue? What disadvantages? Should there be certain requirements for membership? If so, what? Exactly what should be the objectives of such a society?

In hopes of bringing about a discussion of these and other questions, I'm sending out this letter. Please, write and inundate me with suggestions. I'll publish your replies (or, parts of them) in the next issue of The Coffin Corner.

But, first let me bore you with my own opinions.

Such an organization would prove invaluable if it only introduced researchers around the country to each other. And, if we were to publish a monthly newsletter, members could write in telling what areas they were researching and -- even more usefully -- asking for help. Additionally, we should be able to help each other to avoid duplication of effort.

I think the newsletter should carry a research feature in each issue. Members might try out a piece before publication or just share it. Possibly, such a feature might be used for pure speculation about what might have happened with the idea of finding some proofs from readers.

Such an organization might serve as a catalyst whereby members might all get together in a kind of "pro football researchers' convention." And, on that subject, how many of you out there could make it to Canton for a few days in June to talk this over face-to-face?

Personally, I believe that the society should work closely with -- but be independent of -- the Hall of Fame. By the way, I've already received assurances that the Hall would give such a group plenty of co operation.

But let me hear your ideas. Address all replies to: Bob Carroll, [REDACTED]

A FEW OF MY FRIENDS

Let's get started with some introductions. I'm going to list the names and

addresses of the researchers that I know, along with a few words about their pro football interests. It's been my experience that one researcher is always glad to hear from another. I'm hoping that this will be the first step in a dialogue.

Additionally, each of you probably knows at least one other nut who'd be interested in all of this. Send him the extra copy of The Coffin Corner and urge him to write me. Next month, I'll include his name and address.

But enough of these "next months." Let's get on with the introductions.

Bob Braunwart () is the man who can tell you the score of just about any game, including exhibitions, played by a major pro team in the U.S. or Canada since 1920.

Jim Campbell () was for several years the research librarian at the HOF. Jim was the first guy to go back and work out the NFL draft list from its earliest days.

John Hogrogian () was the editorial consultant on Pro Football: The Early Years. He's written about the Providence, Hartford, and Staten Island franchises of the '20s.

Joe Horrigan () makes the world's worst puns, but when he's sober (i.e., not humorous), he's tremendously helpful at finding and supplying information from the HOF's voluminous files.

Steve Murfin () is a member of the Society of American Baseball Research. He's interested in pro football research projects in the Baltimore-Washington area.

Milt Roberts () knows more about the Ohio years of pro football before 1920 than any man alive. He's also the authority on early black football players.

Jim Stewart () is the "scrapbook king" and has one of the most complete collections of PF memorabilia in the world, dating back to before 1930.

Bob Van Atta () is the number one guy when you want to know about pro football in Western Pennsylvania around the turn of the century, particularly Greensburg and Latrobe.

And, as a personal footnote, I'd like to thank all of the above for their help and interest in my research projects. I think you'll like each other.

THE FIRST ALL-STAR GAME

The following is an account of what seems to have been the first pro all-star game. It was published in The Pittsburgh Press on December 4, 1898. The game was apparently the brainchild of Dave Berry, the same promoter who had organized the Latrobe football team in 1895 and paid John Brallier his famous ten dollars. Apparently the D.C. & A.C. was far and away the class of the Pittsburgh gridiron scene in 1898. Berry came up with the idea of opposing them with an all-star team

culled from Latrobe, Greensburg, W. & J., P.A.C., and Pittsburgh College. Like so many of Berry's ideas, this one seems to have been too far ahead of its time. The game was a flop.

The headlines told the story: WERE DOWNED. D.C. & A.C. wind up a brilliant season with a clean record. The attendance not large. No team work in Berry's combination of kickers. It was very fast football. Mathews and Ingles, of W. & J., were not in the game - Lawler had to retire early in the contest - Barclay, Lewis, Trenchard and Rhinehart did fine work."

For those who wanted all the details, the story continued:

"The All-Star - D.C. & A.C. game yesterday at Exposition park wound up the football season of 1898. The attendance was not what it should have been for an all-star contest.

"There were probably 1,500 people present when the game began. The attendance would have been much larger but for two circumstances. In the first place the football season was considered, by most people, to be at an end after Thanksgiving day and the weather since that day has been so uncertain that the majority of them did not care to take chances of being caught in a blizzard at a gridiron contest. Secondly, but not least, the iconoclasts of this section, particularly in the town of Greensburg, have been at work with large sized hammers knocking against the all-star scheme ever since the game was arranged. The 'knockers' left no stone unturned which they could throw in the way of Manager Berry, who handled the stars. Viscious reports were circulated to the effect that this player or that player announced in the line-up would not play and influence was brought to bear upon the men themselves to dissuade them from taking part in the game. Just why the knockers should try to interfere with the plans of players who are free from their season's contracts and at liberty to play where they please, is not clear and can only be attributed to one cause, smallness and desire to meddle in other people's affairs. They may have the satisfaction of knowing that their 'knocks' materially diminished the number of half dollars taken in at the gate, but the persons who manipulated the hammers have diminished in the public estimation to a much greater extent than did the gate receipts.

"The all-star team was beyond a doubt a fine lot of players, and the individual work of the men was quite up to that of the Duquesne, but their team work was sadly amiss. To tell the truth there was no team work in the star combination. Duquesne on the other hand was almost perfect in this respect and therein lies the story of the snug score run up by the red and black.

"Before the game a consultation was held and Rhinehart stood out for the adoption of the Princeton style of play, but the odds were against him, as the majority favored Pennsylvania tactics, so the quaker's style was used. As to whether or not a different formation would have had any effect on the result is an open question, but one thing is certain, and that is that the stars as a whole would have been more at home in the regular game, as was evidenced by numerous misunderstandings which occurred all through the contest.

"These mixes were responsible in a large measure for the star's many failures to gain ground. Rhinehart, Mullen, Lewis, Barclay and Trenchard all played fast and at times brilliant football. The whole team played well as individuals, but that is all that can be said of their work. Rhinehart's long kick-offs were good and Mullen's kicks back of the line were all right. Wood and Trenchard were fast in getting down the field, but could do little against Duquesne's interference.

"For the red and black Jackson, Gammons, Young and Winstein were the big men. The Duquesne line held in great shape and was really impregnable. Some good gains were made around the ends by the all-stars and once it looked as though Lewis was going to get away from the bunch. Much to the disappointment of the crowd, Ingles and

Matthews were not in the game. Matthews was on the ground but was notified by Capt. Theurer [of W. & J. College] not to play and heeded the warning. The detailed account which follows tells the story of the contest.

"The All-Stars won the toss and decided to defend the west goal. At 3:30 Young kicked off to Gass, who returned 25 yards to the 40-yard line. Gass took the ball for two yards at left tackle. He tried again at the same place and failed. Mullen kicked 10 yards to Gelbert, who fumbled and Doggy Trenchard fell on the ball.

"Rhinehart hit center for 10 yards. Lewis tried with no gain. Gass took the leather five yards and the next pass Duquesne was given the ball for off-side play. Young kicked to Lewis on the 20-yard line. Mullen kicked to Gammons in the center of the field.

"Gammons gained a yard and Jackson went for five yards. In the scrimmage Lawler suffered a severe injury to his leg and retired. Winstein took his place. Young kicked 25 yards to Barclay, without return. Gammons gained a yard at left end. Gass made another yard through right tackle. Mullen kicked to Gammons in center of field. Gammons made no return. Smith gained 10 yards. Church took the ball for four yards more and Winstein added five yards by a plunge through the line. On a fumble Rhinehart secured the ball.

"In the next play Winstein fell on the ball after another fumble, but it was returned for off-side play. Mullen then kicked to Duquesne's 30-yard line. Gammons caught the ball, with no gain. Smith failed. Winstein moved up five yards, and Jackson tried and failed. Young kicked to Lewis, who returned five yards. Lewis went 35 yards through the left tackle. Gass made four yards, bringing the ball to Duquesne's 40-yard line. Gass made three yards through center. Lewis failed. Duquesne then got the ball on downs. Its line held like a stone wall. Winstein pushed for six yards through center and tried again with a gain of four yards at right tackle. Smith hit center for a six-yard gain.

"Gammons now brought out a storm of applause by getting away with the leather and making a run of 35 yards around left end to the All-Star's 40-yard line, where Barclay brought him down. He went out of bounds, however, at the 30-yard line and the ball was returned. Winstein made the next attempt with a 15-yard advance. Smith moved for a yard more. In the scrimmage Winstein was laid out for a minute. Gammons, in a mass play, placed the ball on the two-yard line. The next pass resulted in a fumble but Gammons was there and fell on the ball. Gammons then failed at left end and McNeill tried a quarterback kick, which Jackson caught and carried over the line in the corner of the gridiron for the next touchdown. A punt out failed and the score stood Duquesne 5, All-Stars 0.

"Rhinehart kicked over Duquesne's line but the ball was brought back and kicked off again from a mark five yards farther back, as a penalty for off-side play. The second attempt Rhinehart kicked 40 yards to Gammons, who returned to Duquesne's 45-yard line before being downed. Jackson covered five yards. Smith did the same, bringing the ball to the center of the field. Winstein failed. Young made a pretty run to the 10-yard line on a delayed pass, but the ball was brought back and given to the All-Stars on the 50-yard line for holding in the line. Wood failed to gain and Mullen kicked to Young, who returned 25 yards to the center of the field. The whistle then blew for the end of the first half. Score, Duquesne 5, All-Stars 0.

"There was no change in the line-up of either team in the second half. Rhinehart kicked over the goal line. Young kicked from the 25-yard line to Gass on the All-Stars' 35-yard line. Mullen punted to Young, who returned five yards to the Duquesne's 40-yard line. Gammons tried and could only make a yard. Young kicked to Lewis, with no return. He was downed by Okeson. Mullen kicked to Gammons, who, with good interference, went down the field for a run of 60 yards and scored the second touchdown. Young kicked goal. Score: Duquesne 11, All-Stars 0.

"Rhinehart kicked to Gammons on the 10-yard line. Gammons got through for a long run, but went out of bounds at Duquesne's 35-yard line, to which mark the ball was

returned. Smith pushed up six yards. Farrar went at right end for a yard. Winstein pushed through center for four yards and Young kicked to Lewis. McNeill downed him on the 40-yard line after he had run five yards. Ryan failed. Mullen kicked to Young on Duquesne's 30-yard line, where he was downed with no gain. Winstein brought a round of applause from his Woods Run admirers by making a run of 20 yards through left tackle. Lewis brought him down hard, 'Winny' got up rather dazed but insisted on going on with the game.

"A fake was then tried by Young dropping back as for a kick, but he passed the ball to Jackson, who made 30 yards around left end. Gammons made another good run of 20 yards to the 10-yard line. Jackson went over on the next pass for the third touchdown. Young failed to kick goal. Score: Duquesne 16, All-Stars 0.

"Rhinehart kicked to Gammons, on the 26-yard line. Gammons ran 45 yards before he was downed by Lewis, in a fine tackle. Winstein took a turn through right tackle for five yards and Jackson went six yards around right end. The whistle then blew and the game and the season of 1898 was at an end, with the ball in Duquesne's possession on the All-Stars' 34-yard line.

D.C. & A.C.		All-Stars	
Gelbert	LE	Wood	
Church	LT	Krebbs	
Lawler	LC	Rhinehart	
Jennings	C	Hammer	
Smith	RC	Comerford	
Farrar	RT	Ryan	
Okeson	RE	Trenchard	
McNeill	QB	Mullen	
Jackson	LH	Gass	
Gammons	RH	Barclay	
Young	FB	Lewis	

Referee: Dr. Bull. Umpire: Ned Brainard. Time-keeper: J.D. Callery. Linesmen: H.E. Becker and Abbaticchio. Time: 20-minute halves. Touchdowns: Jackson 2, Gammons. Goal from touchdown: Young. Substitutions: Winstein for Lawler."

As almost any piece of research will, this story raises as many or more questions than it answers. For example, why were the Greensburg people so violently opposed to this game? Was it simply another example of the old Greensburg-Latrobe rivalry, with Greensburg against anything that had Latrobe's manager Dave Berry connected with it? Or was there some more personal reason concerning Berry? Dave seems to have spent a great deal of time in courtrooms being sued. As a matter of fact, Dave was arrested at noon on the day of the all-star game for his failure to pay in full one of his players. He got out by coughing up \$33 dollars and then turned around and had the player and another arrested for false arrest!

Why did W. & J. captain Theurer order Tex Matthews not to play? A story in the press on the same day noted that W. & J. would elect a new football captain the next Tuesday and that Matthews was favored. "He does nothing except play football, and he is probably better posted on the ins and outs of the game than any other player on the eleven," the paper commented. Perhaps this election had some bearing on Theurer's order, although it is hard to believe that anyone worried about Matthews' eligibility at a school that regularly played against the pro teams. It's worth noting that Theurer played for Greensburg before he played for Washington & Jefferson.

One social note should be added. W.C. Temple, donator of baseball's Temple Cup

and chairman of D.C. & A.C.'s football committee, gave a banquet for his team and "representatives of the W.&J., P.A.C., Greensburg, Latrobe and the Pittsburgh College elevens" and a few of his friends that night at the Schenley Hotel. The representatives were, in all probability, the all-stars. The Press noted, "There were no set speeches, but the absence of this feature was not regretted."

WHO?

One last tidbit for thought. The Cardinals have always listed Marshall Smith as their coach for 1920. Several researchers have suggested that Paddy Driscoll was the actual coach, but proof is lacking.

Does anyone have any hard evidence either way? And, just who was Marshall Smith anyway?

And, lastly, who coached the Cards before 1920?

P.F.R.A. DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Mail to: [REDACTED]

Note: Please circle any information that you would prefer not appear in Directory.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PLEASE PRINT

TELEPHONE _____

OCCUPATION _____

PRIMARY AREAS OF PF INTEREST (i.e. certain eras, teams, players, stats, etc.)

PUBLISHED BOOKS OR ARTICLES ON PF I HAVE AUTHORED OR CONTRIBUTED TO:

OTHER SPORTS-RELATED ORGANIZATIONS OF WHICH I AM A MEMBER:

THE FIRST PF GAME I EVER SAW WAS _____

THE GREATEST THRILL I HAVE HAD RELATING TO PF IS _____

OTHER INTERESTS OR HOBBIES _____

Please note: Most of the above information will not be used in the Directory, but may be used in short biographies in The Coffin Corner. Any additional ideas for such bios may be added at the bottom or on the back. The Corner editor understands that he may use any uncircled information.