

**INTERCOLLEGIATE FOOTBALL RESEARCHERS ASSOCIATION™**

**The College Football Historian™**

*Presenting and preserving the sport's historical accomplishments...written by the author's unique perspective.*

**ISSN: 2326-3628 [April 2016... Vol. 9, No. 3] circa: Feb. 2008**

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**Website: <http://www.secsportsfan.com/college-football-association.html>**

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***Deadline** for content to be included in an issue of **TCFH** is the last Wednesday of the month; however, if need-be, an extension will be allowed—providing stories or notices will be sent by the first Wednesday of the month to be included in that month's issue. (Questions contact Tex, ifra.tcfh@gmail.com)*

The Value of Tangible Collections  
The Complete Library of College Football  
[www.libraryofcollegefootball.com](http://www.libraryofcollegefootball.com)

By Elliott Stark [[Estark@starkfishllc.com](mailto:Estark@starkfishllc.com)]

There is an art to collecting. Collections do more than describe the collector's passion. Collections-- especially those which are exhaustive and meticulous or otherwise one of a kind in nature—represent more than simply a pile of bound papers and printed photos.

History, and the subject matter that encapsulates it, was for most of humanity's course of being a sacred space. The preservation of history and the ability to keep traditions and memories alive were a subject to which the most learned and educated men devoted their lives. Names such as Pliny the Elder and Herodotus are remembered some 2,000 years after their deaths because they were renowned historians.

The advent of the internet has revolutionized the world in very short order. Change has come suddenly and ferociously, bringing with it both blessing and curse. For every Amazon.com that has thrived with the digital revolution, there exists a Blockbuster Video or other former titan of industry whose demise was brought about by the web.

The world of collecting has been drastically affected. While websites such as eBay and Abebooks.com (not to mention sportscollectorsdaily.com) provide incredible ease in cataloging and obtaining collections, in many ways the art of collecting has suffered from digitalization. Not too many years ago, physical copies of magazines and statistical publications were the only way to catalog sporting achievements and accomplishments. These days, tangible collections are being depleted faster than the Amazon rainforest in favor of digitized holdings held on the servers in some industrial park somewhere.

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Just as tangible holdings of historical documents seem to be going the way of the woolly mammoth, the substance of what can be collected today is changing. The NCAA stopped printing media guides in 2009 in favor of digital versions. Magazines of all ilk—not just collector publications—are shrinking in size, quality and frequency of issue. Many venues no longer print or issue physical tickets. Magazines, NCAA Guides and tickets were themselves the very substance of collections. They are what *is* collected.

The Complete Library of College Football includes an annual guide from every year that it was printed. The span runs from 1891-2009. It also contains quite a few other examples of “every \_\_\_\_\_ that was printed...” entire runs of magazines, all five editions of Camp’s American Football, the complete catalogs of media guides from dozens of universities. As time goes on, collections such as this become less and less common. In fact, were someone to want to replicate the collection in terms of size and scope, it may very well be impossible—even with unlimited resources.

Does the decreased frequency of tangible holdings make them less valuable? No. The economic laws that pertain to scarce resources dictate that the scarcer something becomes, the more valuable it is. This is true in the ocean with bluefin tuna. The damned things sometimes sell for several hundred thousand dollars per fish (despite—or perhaps because of—the fact that there aren’t nearly as many as there used to be). The Complete Library of College Football is scarce today. It will be scarcer still as time passes.

What does this mean? The College Football Preservation Project was founded on the notion that allowing the historical substance of college football to perish is a stupid thing to do. The Complete Library of College Football has been placed for sale by the dedicated collector who spent 50 years accumulating a massive treasure trove of the game’s written history. There have been many offers to purchase single pieces or separate catalogs. Some of the offers have been for healthy sums of money. They have been declined in favor of keeping the Collection together, preserving it for future generations of fans.

This approach makes the job of selling it quite a bit more difficult. It limits potential buyers, imposing restrictions of cost and space needed to house it (expect a delivery of three semi trucks). The target for acquisition shifts to dedicated, affluent individuals or institutions—university libraries or the campuses of enterprises that make money from the sport of college football.

This approach is more difficult than piece mealing it on eBay, hawking a book at a time. The owner believes keeping the entire collection intact, however, is the appropriate course of action because it is of substance. Collections do have value. History, and the ability to interact with its preservation, makes people better.

The depth of questions like “Who was Jim Thorpe?” or “Why were the Four Horsemen of Notre Dame legendary?” can’t always be answered through a quick Google search. Many times, what

was written during Thorpe's time or the college careers of the Four Horsemen hasn't been digitized and thus, important parts of the history get lost. In short, there's nothing that can replicate a depth of resources.

Perhaps more than anything else, this is what the Complete Library of College Football is all about. Keeping history alive and bettering people because of it. There is value in obscure, historical titles. The ability to look upon hand signed communications written by the minds who shaped the game inherently has worth. College football, in its evolution, has long presented some of the best America has to offer. Digitalization has its place, but that certainly does not mean that tangible collections should become a thing of the past.

If you'd like more information about the Collection, maintain a similar passion for preserving the substance of college football history, or have an idea about prospective home for the Complete Library of College Football, I'd love to hear from you.

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## The Curse of the Bad Firing

*By: Tony DeMeo*

College athletic programs can sabotage future success by making a bad firing. My definition of a bad firing is: when an institution fires a coach that is improving the program but not fast enough or flashy enough for the powers to be. They fire the coach and then sets the program back decades.

The University of Illinois just recently fired Bill Cubit on the new Athletic Director's first day on the job! Coach Cubit bailed out The Illini in 2015 by taking over a program in disarray. Cubit was given an interim title as Head Coach and a two-year contract. He then hired four new assistant coaches and recruited his first class in February. Now the new AD arrives and doesn't care about commitment and fires Cubit and his staff. No regard for the recruits who came to Illinois to play for Cubit and his staff, no regard for the coaches who had jobs but uprooted their families to join Coach Cubit's staff and no regard for the fact that it was too late for them to get new jobs. Illinois hired Lovie Smith an NFL coach who was out of work shortly after the Cubit massacre. This program is certainly not teaching values which is supposed to be the purpose of college athletics.

Here are some examples of *The Curse of the Bad Firing*:

The University of Nebraska fired Frank Solich after the 2003 season after finishing 9-3 to "go in a new direction" despite three Top Ten finishes in his six years as a head coach. Solich's 58 wins in six years was more than Husker Hall of Fame coaches Bob Devaney (53) and Tom Osborne (55). Solich lost in a National Championship Game in his second year as head Husker. The Huskers haven't come close since.

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Solich's sin? He wasn't flashy enough, they wanted a flashy offense, they wanted a Jaguar not a pickup truck. They found out maybe a Jag wasn't suited to win on the Nebraska plains.

Paul Pasqualoni was fired by Syracuse at the end of the 2004 season despite the fact that The Orangemen tied for The Big East Championship that year! Paul had a 107 – 59 record at Syracuse with seven Top 25 finishes. He and his Offensive Coordinator George DeLeone owned the Northeast in recruiting. They had tremendous relationships with the High School Coaches which is the life blood of college recruiting. The Pasqualoni/DeLeone tandem produced four Big East titles and had visits to the Orange Bowl and two Fiesta Bowls. This duo brought quality recruits to the heart of the New York snow-belt not exactly a destination that recruits were clamoring to get to. So what could have gone wrong? A new Athletic Director decided a new direction was in order and achieved his goal because since Paul and George was let go the closest "The 'Cuse" has come to The Fiesta Bowl was a Taco Bell on The New York Thruway. That is a new direction.

There are many other examples like at Oklahoma fired ultra- successful Barry Switzer and suffered for years until Bob Stoops ended the Curse. But Kansas University has not been as fortunate. Mark Mangino was fired after the 2009 season basically for boorish behavior and too many parking tickets! Mangino though no Prince Charles turned around a pathetic Jayhawk program and had a 12-1 season in 2007 including an Orange Bowl victory. The 12 wins were the most ever by a KU team. He was named Coach of the Year. Two years later he was boorish and a bad parker. The Jayhawks have been parked in the bottom of the Big 12 ever since.

Even NFL has been hit with The Curse. The Dallas Cowboys won two consecutive Super Bowls led by Jimmy Johnson. However owner Jerry Jones didn't believe he was getting enough credit (No I'm not kidding) and fired Johnson. The Cowboys won one more Super Bowl with Johnson's guys in 1995 but have only been to The Super Bowl as spectators since. How is Jerry Jones enjoying that credit now?

The Tampa Bay Bucs never appreciated the great job Tony Dungy did making a dismal franchise contenders and let a great coach and wonderful man slip away to Indianapolis where he led their climb to Super Bowl Champs. The Bucs won a Super Bowl with Tony's guys being coached by Jon Gruden who had basically the same record as Dungy before fleeing to ESPN while the Bucs have been plundered by the rest of the league.

Coach K suffered 3 poor seasons at Duke before becoming a genius and The great John Wooden went 14 years without winning a Championship at UCLA before becoming The Wizard of Westwood. The message have patience and don't fall victim to "The Bad Firing Curse"

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## No Christian End! The Beginnings of Football in America

*By PFRA Research*

*Originally Published in The Journey to Camp: The Origins of American Football to 1889 (PFRA Books)*

America got into football early. Colonists kicked and threw inflated bladders or sawdust-filled leather balls around long before they decided to fire on the whites of the redcoats' blue eyes. Understandably, games played a minor part in the lives of people more concerned with clearing trees and Indians off the land, but, by the latter part of the 18th Century, football had found its way onto the college campuses. Infrequent matches joined fisticuffs, wrestling, and drinking bouts as popular ways to relieve the severe mental discipline of college life. Some students were relieved right onto probation or worse.

Much as had happened on English campuses, each American school developed its own form of the sport. At Princeton, they were playing a version called "ballown" by 1820. Harvard, Yale, and others each had individual variations. However, if the diverse development echoed Britannia early-1800's, the American style of play resembled circa medieval. The only thing missing was the Dane's head. The young gentlemen attacked each other in most ungentlemanly ways. The New York EVENING POST was moved to observe that one such game would "make the same impression on the public mind as a bull fight. Boys and young men knocked each other down, tore off each other's clothing. Eyes were bunged, faces blacked and bloody, and shirts and coats torn to rags."

The usual excuse for a game was the "class rush", a joyous custom in which the sophomores demonstrated the benefit of an additional year's education by trampling the freshmen into the campus sod. The frosh proved their worthiness among halls of ivy by attempting to fertilize the sod with sophomores. Although a ball of some sort was involved, no one really kept score so long as a sufficient number of opponents were mangled.

At Harvard, "Bloody Monday" took place on the first Monday of each new college year, starting in 1827. The two lower classes vied with each other so lethally that, as a modern historian put it, "Had 15-yard penalties been handed out, it is conceivable they would have reached California." Apparently, the freshmen kicked the ball well, but the sophomores kept missing the ball and kicking the freshmen. The game, according to another account, "consisted of kicking, pushing, slugging and getting angry."

At Yale, the interclass conflict took on a more definite form. The upper classmen supervised the freshmen who were herded into a huge phalanx with the ball carrier in the center. Then the sophomores attacked this mob and tried to push, kick, throw, or otherwise coerce the ball over the goal. Meanwhile, the upper classmen stood off to one side and clucked about school spirit and sportsmanship while occasionally wiping off spatters of blood.

The faculties and administrations alternately approved and condemned football playing. On the plus side, the game revved up school spirit and decreased class sizes. But, on the other hand, there was altogether too much destruction of school property to be tolerated.

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In 1860 when the destruction began to spread into the town, New Haven officials complained to Yale authorities, and the game was abolished. Harvard banned football playing the same year. The school authorities may have been echoing all those English kings, but there was one new note -- the bans stuck. Harvard students reacted with an elaborate funeral for "Football Fightum". As they interred the game, one student read an eloquent eulogy while a chorus of mourners solemnly chanted: Beneath this sod we lay you down, This sign of glorious fight; With dismal groans and yells we'll drown Your mournful burial rite!

### **The Boston Game**

But football wasn't really dead; it had just gone away. It now became the property of New England schoolboys who took care of it much better than their older college brothers. The kids had been playing versions of football for years, of course. Unlike the college students, they usually followed some simple rules, although these might vary considerably from town to town. Primarily, they played variations of soccer, and boys could be seen on autumn days diligently practicing dribbling or "puddling" balls across fields by tapping them with their feet while school books were forgotten back by the fences. Occasionally, a locally popular game allowed carrying, making it a rugby derivative. Then the books could be tucked under arms as football-substitutes and the boys would be away dodging down lanes, eluding imaginary tacklers.

On Saturdays, groups of as many as forty or fifty boys might gather at a chosen lot or meadow, divide into teams, and spend several hours happily agitating a ball across the grass. Usually, the ball was handmade by someone's father, but, if the boys were lucky, they might have one of the store-bought rubber balls that had been introduced in 1855. These allowed for more accurate kicking, and as the use of them spread, they encouraged soccer-like games over rugby styles. These schoolboy gatherings were quite informal, but "buddies" tended to hang together and set teams sometimes were developed.

One such group of prep school boys in Boston formed the Oneida Football Club in 1862. The original Oneidas had been a tribe of Iroquois Indians long gone from the Boston environs, but the boys liked the heroic aura of the name. The mainspring of the bunch was teenager Gerrit Smith Miller, named for his maternal grandfather, the ardent abolitionist Gerrit Smith. Young Miller was a natural leader and exceptional athlete who soon had his gang practicing soccer and rugby on the Boston Common. After awhile, the boys tired of both games, perhaps because they could find no one to play. Rather than disband, they occupied their time by inventing a new game, one that combined their favorite features of both soccer and rugby. They liked goal kicking from the former and running with the ball from the latter, and both became features of their hybrid, "The Boston Game".

On November 7, 1863, the boys finally found someone to play. They lured a pick-up team of non-members to the Common and explained the rules to them. Not surprisingly, Miller's well-drilled crew zapped the neophytes. Reportedly, the score was 12-0, but just what scored how many points in the Boston Game is open to dispute.

At any rate, the Boston newspapers found the Oneidas' victory sufficiently amusing to honor it the next day with a one-paragraph write-up. Over the next three years, Gerrit Miller's gang took on anyone they

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could sucker into a game. They remained undefeated, never once allowing a point. The Oneidas credited their success to diligent practice; some suggested it was more due to their having invented their own game.

Some historians have gone so far as to call the Oneidas' victories the first games of American football, maintaining the hybrid Boston Game was neither soccer nor rugby and, therefore, was what Americans recognize as their favorite autumn sport. To call the Oneidas the inventors of American football is surely giving the little devils more than their due. Their game allowed running under certain circumstances, but it was still essentially soccer. Perhaps it should be called football's missing link.

Although the Boston Game can't be placed any higher on football's evolutionary ladder, it seems fair to say that the Oneidas themselves exerted an important influence on the eventual course of American football, particularly because several of the boys grew up and took their game with them to Harvard. And, it was the Crimson's preference for the Boston Game that proved the key in turning America away from soccer.

**Princeton-Rutgers: 1869**

By the end of the 1860's with the Civil War a thing of memory, Yale, Princeton, Rutgers, Brown and most of the other eastern colleges began experimenting with soccer as an enjoyable alternative to studying. Princeton even published a set of rules in 1867 based on those of the London Football Association. Despite slight variations, the games played on most campuses resembled each other sufficiently that sooner or later one school was bound to challenge another to a match.

1869 was a pivotal year in American sport. It was, for example, the year in which the Cincinnati Red Stockings became the first all-professional baseball team. For those interested in comparisons, baseball had reached the point where it stood only two years away from its first pro league, the ill-fated National Association. Professional football had not even been thought of for the very good reason that American football did not yet exist. However, an important step was taken in the fall of 1869 when William Leggett, the captain of Rutgers' soccer team, took advantage of the proximity of the two schools and issued a challenge to William S. Gummere, his opposite number at Princeton.

Gummere accepted and a three-game series was planned. Both schools had class teams for intramural games, but Leggett and Gummere were to captain school teams made up of the best players from each institution. The two captains worked out the details. The first game was scheduled for three o'clock on the afternoon of November 6 at Rutgers. Generally, the Rutgers' version of any rule differences was to be in force. Each team would field twenty-five men, and the first side to score six goals was to be declared the winner.

Despite a cold wind whistling over the field, about a hundred spectators showed up on the commons at New Brunswick to watch the contest. Some perched on an old board fence; others sat in buckboards. Reportedly, organized cheering was a feature. It was based on a Civil War Regiment cheer first heard when soldiers marched through Princeton.

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Spectators later told of a crotchety Rutgers professor who pedaled up on a bicycle. He watched for a few minutes and then shook his umbrella at the players, shouting, "You men will come to no Christian end!" With that, he wheeled off, missing what turned out to be an excellent game.

Within five minutes of the kickoff, the better organized Rutgers men scored the first goal. Princeton came right back, using superior size and muscle, to tie the game. Except for red stocking caps worn by a few of the Rutgers players, neither side was in any kind of distinctive uniform. However, the crowd had no trouble distinguishing between the smaller, quicker Rutgers team and the taller but slower men of Princeton. Rutgers speed and superior kicking skill paid off in a second goal, but once more Princeton's greater strength tied it up. It was a classic confrontation.

At one point, two players pursuing the ball crashed into the board fence, spilling spectators hither and yon. For a few moments, Rutgers pulled away, scoring twice. Then, in a moment of confusion, a Rutgers player aimed a shot at his own goal. A quicker-thinking teammate blocked the kick, but Princeton was on the ball immediately and kicked a legitimate goal. Before Rutgers could completely recover, the Tigers added another goal to tie the score yet again at 4-4.

During a break in the action, Leggett instructed his men to keep the ball low to negate Princeton's height advantage. The strategy worked. Rutgers quickly knocked in two goals against the baffled Tigers to win 6-4.

The contest is usually called the first intercollegiate football game. American fans celebrated football's centennial in 1969. They were mistaken. The game played was not American football, nor even its more direct ancestor rugby. Rutgers' historic victory was in soccer. Despite that little confusion, the game was notable on two counts. It came three years before an equivalent intercollegiate match was held in England, and it instituted the practice of one American school playing some kind of football game against another.

A week later, November 13, everyone went over to Princeton to play by the Tigers' rules. The Princeton version favored height by allowing a player to catch the ball in flight and then take a free kick. The taller Tigers booted eight straight goals to none for Rutgers. A spectator at the second game reported that the ball used was never quite the regulation shape. It constantly lost air. Several times during the game the players took turns blowing it up, but by the time the last man was out of breath the ball always remained lopsided.

The third game, scheduled for November 29, was cancelled. Most likely the captains couldn't agree on whose rules to use for the rubber match.

Several of the players in those historic games went on to better things. Captain Leggett, the first American strategist, became a respected clergyman of the Dutch Reformed Church. His Rutgers teammate, George H. Large, was later elected to the state senate. On the Princeton side, Jacob E. Michael became Dean of the Faculty at the University of Maryland, and Captain Gummere served as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New Jersey for over thirty years. Others enjoyed distinguished careers in business, law, and medicine.

So much for the dire predictions of one crotchety old Rutgers professor!

### **The First Rules**

The idea of intercollegiate matches didn't exactly spread like wildfire. Columbia tried it in 1870, losing to Rutgers, who in turn lost again to Princeton. A pair of games was hardly a bumper crop.

The next year, the total number of intercollegiate games dropped by two. Supposedly there had been criticism of rough play the year before. The games were nothing like the old class rushes, but they weren't exactly pattycake either.

Even so, a good deal of intramural soccer was going on. The Cornell Football Association was organized in 1870, and, that same year, Yale students started playing again on the New Haven green. When the police moved in, the students moved out and found a vacant lot for their class games. On October 15, 1871, Tiger students formed the Princeton Football Association and adopted rules.

In 1872, intercollegiate matches were back in style. Columbia played four games, tying Rutgers, losing twice, and defeating Stevens Tech. Rutgers, in a return match, handed Columbia one of its defeats but lost to Princeton again. The Tigers and Yale each had 1-0-0 records. Yale's win, a 3-0 victory over Columbia, drew 4,000 people at 25 cents a head to Hamilton Park in New Haven.

Rules still varied from campus to campus. Hours were wasted before each match deciding who could do what to whom under which circumstances. On October 19, 1873, representatives of Yale, Columbia, Princeton, and Rutgers met at the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York to thrash out the first set of intercollegiate rules in America. Compared with today's voluminous and exquisitely worded rule book, the twelve rules they came up with seem almost absurdly brief. A player could memorize them on the way from the dressing room.

*1. The ground shall be 400 feet long and 250 feet broad.*

*2. The distance between the posts of each goal shall be 25 feet.*

*3. The number for match games shall be 20 to a side.*

*4. To win a game 6 goals are necessary, but that side shall be considered victorious which, when the game is called, shall have scored the greatest number of goals, provided that number be 2 or more. To secure a goal the ball must pass between the posts.*

*5. No player shall throw or carry the ball. Any violation of this regulation shall constitute a foul, and the player so offending shall throw the ball perpendicularly into the air to a height of at least 12*

*feet and the ball shall not be in play until it has touched the ground.*

*6. When the ball passes out of bounds it is a foul, and the player causing it shall advance at right angles to the boundary line, 15 paces from the point where the ball went, and shall proceed as in rule 5.*

*7. No tripping shall be allowed, nor shall any player use his hands to hold or push an adversary.*

*8. The winner of the toss shall have the choice of the first goal, and the sides shall change goals after every successive inning. In starting the ball it shall be fairly kicked, not "babied", from a point 150 feet in front of the starter's goal.*

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9. *Until the ball is kicked no player on either side shall be in advance of a line parallel to the line of his goal and distant from it 150 feet.*

10. *There shall be two judges, one from each of the contesting colleges, and one referee; all to be chosen by the captains.*

11. *No player shall wear spikes or iron plates upon his shoes.*

12. *In all matches a No. 6 ball shall be used, furnished by the challenging side and to become the property of the victor.*

The No. 6 ball was imported from England where it was used by the London Football Association. It was 30 inches in circumference, entirely round, and very strong. It was NOT pigskin. Rather, the covering was heavy canvas thoroughly saturated with rubber.

It's worth noting that the goal posts had no crossbar. Another interesting provision, or lack of one, was that a game went on and on until darkness unless one team managed to get six goals. The game was a test of endurance as much as skill.

Rule number ten, providing for two judges and a referee, proved a bit naive. Each school had its own judge, and, in effect, the referee invariably made all the tough decisions.

Rules number five and number seven stamped the game as soccer by eliminating carrying and the use of hands. There was unanimity among the four assembled schools for the exclusion of these practices. And, it was because everyone knew that the four assembled schools felt that way about it that Harvard, although invited, chose to skip the whole get-together.

In the long run, Harvard's absence was the most important thing about the entire meeting.

#### **Harvard-McGill: 1874**

Harvard's funeral for Football Fightum turned out to be premature, to say the least. By 1871, only ten years after the burial, they were playing at Cambridge once more. The Boston Game, developed by the Oneidas, was favored by the Crimson for its class games. This, remember, was a combination of both soccer and rugby. The emphasis seems to have been on kicking, but the ball could be caught and run if the catcher was pursued. That made it just different enough to cut off Harvard from competition with other schools, all of whom played the strict kicking game.

When the invitation came to attend the 1873 meeting, Harvard had a tough decision to make: should they keep running by themselves or kick with the pack?

They decided to stay home and keep running. Some people have called it the most momentous decision in the history of American football. Some people exaggerate. Football lends itself to hyperbole -- the greatest, the best, the most, etc. Harvard's decision was important. Let it go at that.

The reason it was important is that Harvard began to look high and low for someone to play their precious Boston Game against. No other U.S. school would touch it.

Finally, in the spring of 1874, McGill University of Montreal, Canada, issued a challenge to the Crimson. Captain Harry Grant happily accepted. It turned out Harvard got more than it bargained for. McGill a

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greed to come to Cambridge for a session of Boston Game if Harvard would then have a go at a game by McGill's rules. McGill played rugby. The two teams met on May 14. Played under Harvard's rules, the game was such a rout they called it off after only 22 minutes with the home team in front 3-0. "Just wait until tomorrow when we play rugby!" warned the McGill men.

The Harvard team laughed, but when the McGill players were out of earshot they asked each other nervously, "What's a rugby?"

Years later, a member of the Harvard class of 1874 said, "There were many points of difference [in the Boston Game] from the Rugby game. It was eminently a kicking, as distinguished from a running and tackling, game. The rules ... existed only in tradition. We went to work to learn the Rugby game, but I should question if there were three men in college who had ever seen the egg-shaped ball. A drop kick was an unknown and incredible feat, and the intricacies of 'off side,' 'free kick,' 'put out,' and such commonplaces of the game seemed inextricable mysteries to novices like us."

The game played the next day, May 15, was the first rugby game on U.S. soil. Harvard acquitted itself very well and struggled to a scoreless tie. More importantly, they fell head over heels in love with rugby and all thoughts of the once-cherished Boston Game disappeared. Harvard couldn't wait until the next fall. When it came, they raced up to Montreal to play some more rugby. In addition to kicked goals, the Canadian version of the game allowed touchdowns to count in the scoring. Harvard scored three of them to win.

Flushed with success, the Crimson came home and, the next year, challenged Yale to a rugby match. The sons of Eli thought it over and decided it might be fun. The two schools scheduled a game for November 13, at Hamilton Park in New Haven, to be played under what were called the "Concessionary Rules". These had nothing to do with selling beer, hot dogs, or crackerjacks, but were instead a special set of rules agreed to in which each side gave up a little.

Harvard sacrificed counting touchdowns in the scoring. The only thing a TD gained was the right to try for a goal. Yale agreed to play with 15 men instead of the eleven they preferred. They had been won over to the smaller group two years earlier when they played soccer against a traveling team of eleven Englishmen from Eton. Yale found it made for a more open, exciting game. From then on they kept pushing for eleven on a side until everybody was sick to death from hearing about it. For Yale to agree to put four extra men on the field was a major concession and showed real sportsmanship.

In their first rugby game, Yale's nice guys finished last. Harvard ran all over them, and the poor sons of Eli, knowing nothing about tackling, let them. The final stood 4-0 Harvard, with one of the goals coming after a touchdown. Despite the one-sided defeat, Yale was completely captivated by rugby. Forthwith, they decided, they would play it themselves.

Aside from being the first game in what became one of the most famous series in college football, the 1875 Harvard-Yale encounter saw the first uniforms worn in an American football game. Yale wore dark trousers, blue shirts, and yellow caps. Not to be outdone in sartorial splendor any more than in the

score, Harvard showed up in crimson shirts, stockings, and knee breeches. From the descriptions, they looked like a couple of spiffy bowling teams.

All told, the crowd of 2,000 -- including 150 Harvard students -- got its money's worth even though the admission had been doubled from 25 cents to half a dollar for the occasion. Two fellows who paid the price were W. Earle Dodge and Jotham Potter, both of Princeton. They rushed back home singing rugby's praises to high heaven and to any Princetonians who would listen. And so, as the United States made ready to celebrate its centennial year, the coming game on at least three trend-setting eastern college campuses was that old English favorite, rugby. Anglophobes viewed the whole thing with distaste.

As for the game we know as American football, that hadn't been thought of. Or, as some would say, it wasn't even a gleam in Father's eye. But, in the fall of 1876, Father enrolled at Yale. His name was Walter Camp.

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*Source: <http://goldenrankings.com/interestingfootballgames1.htm>*

### **November 9, 1912 –West Point NY: Scalped**

The **Carlisle Indian School** in Pennsylvania was founded in 1879 as a place to "civilize" Native Americans so they could find their place in American society.

- In 1899, the school hired **Glenn "Pop" Warner** to coach football and other sports.
- In 1907, when he returned to **Carlisle** after three years coaching his alma mater, **Cornell**, **Pop** discovered a student named **Jim Thorpe**.
- **Warner** first used him in track, and the story of **Jim** single-handedly winning meets are the stuff of legend.
- In 1912, **Thorpe** won gold medals in the decathlon and pentathlon at the Stockholm Olympics. (He was later forced to return the medals when it was learned that he had played semipro baseball.)

That fall, **Thorpe** returned to the gridiron for the **Indians**. (Was their nickname politically incorrect since the players were, in fact, Indians?)

- Allowed to play football reluctantly by **Warner**, who feared injury to his track star, **Jim** earned All-American honors in 1911 when he scored all his team's points (four FGs and a TD) in an 18-15 upset of mighty **Harvard**.
- **Carlisle** finished that season 11-1.
- The 1912 team defeated **Penn**, **Harvard**, **Pittsburgh**, and **Syracuse**. But no victory attracted as much attention as the one at West Point.

**Warner** had developed the *single wing* offense that would dominate football until the 1940s.

- The formation allowed **Thorpe** to run, pass, handoff, or punt.

- For **Army, Pop** unveiled the next evolution of his offense: the *double wing*.
- According to a newspaper account: "The shifting, puzzling, dazzling attack of the **Carlisle Indians** had the **Cadets** bordering on a panic."
- The *New York Times* wrote that **Thorpe** "simply ran wild, while the **Cadets** tried in vain to stop his progress. It was like trying to clutch a shadow... **Thorpe** tore off runs of 10 yards or more so often that they became common."
- On one play, he ran 92 yards only to have the TD nullified by a penalty. He then ran 97 yards to paydirt.
- Newspapers reported the final result in headlines such as "**Indians** Scalp **Army** 27-6" and "**Jim Thorpe** on Rampage."

One of the **Army** players who tried to "clutch a shadow" was **Dwight Eisenhower**. Many years later, **Ike** recalled:

Except for [**Thorpe**], **Carlisle** would have been an easy team to beat. On the football field, there was no one like him in the world.

Many people agreed, as evidenced by the fact that an Associated Press poll in 1950 voted **Thorpe** the *greatest athlete of the first half of the century*. (**Babe Ruth** finished second.)

\* \* \* \*

SOURCE:

FOOTBALL DAYS MEMORIES OF THE GAME AND OF THE MEN BEHIND THE BALL ©1916

BY WILLIAM H. EDWARDS, (Princeton 1900)

### ALEXANDER MOFFAT

Every football enthusiast who saw Alex Moffat play had the highest respect for his ability in the game. Alex Moffat was typically Princetonian. His interest in the game was great, and he was always ready to give as much time as was needed to the coaching of the Princeton teams. His hard, efficient work developed remarkable kickers. He loved the game and was a cheerful, encouraging and sympathetic coach. From a man of his day I have learned something about his playing, and together we can read of this great all-round athlete.

Alex Moffat was so small when he was a boy that he was called "Teeny-bits." He was still small in bone and bulk when he entered Princeton. Alex had always been active in sport as a boy. Small as he was, he played a good game of baseball and tennis and he distinguished himself by his kicking in football before he was twelve years of age. The game was then called Association Football, and kicking formed a large part of it. At an early age, he became proficient in kicking with right or left foot. When he was fifteen he created a sensation over at the Old Seminary by

kicking the black rubber Association football clear over Brown Hall. That was kick enough for a boy of fifteen with an old black, rubber football. If anybody doubts it, let him try to do the trick.



Wanamaker Belknap Finney Travers Harlan  
Kennedy Lamar Bird Kimball De Camp Baker Alex Moffat Harris

### **ALEX MOFFAT AND HIS TEAM**

The Varsity team of Princeton in the fall of '79 was captained by Bland Ballard of the class of '80. He had a bunch of giants back of him. There were fifteen on the team in those days, and among them were such men as Devereaux, Brotherlin, Bryan, Irv. Withington, and the mighty McNair. The scrub team player at that time was pretty nearly any chap that was willing to take his life in his hands by going down to the field and letting those ruthless giants step on his face and generally muss up his physical architecture.

When Alex announced one day that he was going to take a chance on the scrub team, his friends were inclined to say tenderly and regretfully, "Good night, sweet prince." But Alex knew he was there with the kick, whether it came on the left or right, and he made up his mind to have a go with the canvas-backed Titans of the Varsity team. One fond friend watching Alex go out on the field drew a sort of consolation from the observation that "perhaps Alex was so small the Varsity men wouldn't notice him." But Alex soon showed them that he was there. He got in a punt that made Bland Ballard gasp. The big captain looked first at the ball, way up in the air, then looked at Alex and he seemed to say as the Scotsman said when he compared the small hen and the huge egg, "I hae me doots. It canna be."

After that the Varsity men took notice of Alex. When the ball was passed back to him next the regulars got through the scrub line so fast that Alex had to try for a run. Bland Ballard caught him up in his arms, and finding him so light and small, spared himself the trouble of throwing him down. Ballard simply sank down on the ground with Alex in his arms and began rolling over and over with him towards the scrub goal. Alex cried "Down! Down!" in a shrill, treble voice that brought an exclamation from the side line. "It's a shame to do it. Bland Ballard is robbing the cradle."

Such was Alex Moffat in the fall of '79, still something of the "Teeny-bits" that he was in early boyhood. In two years Alex's name was on the lips of every gridiron man in the country, and in his senior year, as captain, he performed an exploit in goal kicking that has never been equalled.

In the game with Harvard in the fall of '83, he kicked five goals, four being drop kicks and one from a touchdown. His drop kicks were all of them long and two of them were made with the left foot. Alex grew in stature and in stamina and when he was captain he was regarded as one of the most brilliant fullbacks that the game had ever known. He never was a heavy man, but he was swift and slippery in running, a deadly tackler, and a kicker that had not his equal in his time.

Alex remained prominent in football activity until his death in 1914. He served in many capacities, as member of committees, as coach, as referee and as umpire. He was a man of happy and sunny nature who made many friends. He loved life and made life joyous for those who were with him. He was idolized at Princeton and his memory is treasured there now.

\* \* \* \*

**Bo Carter Presents the date of Birth and Death from members of the College Football Hall of Fame for April**

1 (1889) John Dalton, Town  
TBD, Neb.  
1 (1884) Hugo Bezdek, Prague,  
Bohemia  
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.  
1-(d – 2013) Jack Pardee,  
Centennial, Colo.  
1-(d – 2015) Eddie LeBaron,  
Stockton, 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, GlenRidge,  
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.  
6 (1965) Sterling Sharpe,  
Chicago, Ill.  
7 (1859) Walter Camp, New  
Britain, Conn.

7 (1900) Edgar Garbisch,  
Washington, Pa.  
7 (1954) Tony Dorsett,  
Aliquippa, Pa.  
7 (1961) Gabe Rivera,  
CrystalCity, Texas  
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 Rocker, Atlanta,  
Ga.  
9-(d – 1980) Howard Harpster,  
Pittsburgh, Pa.  
9-(d – 1983) Jess Neely,  
Weslaco, Texas

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10 (1909) Clarke Hinkle,  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
10 (1918) Jim Daniell,  
Pittsburgh, Pa.

10 (1938) Don Meredith, Mt. Vernon, Texas  
10-(d – 2015) Ray Graves, Tampa, Fla.  
11 (1903) Jake Gaither, Dayton, Tenn.  
11 (1916) Sam Chapman, Tiburon, Calif.  
11 (1916) Danny Fortmann, Pearl River, N.Y.  
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.  
12-(d – 2013) Frosty Westering, Puyallup, Wash.  
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.  
17 (1972) Tony Boselli, Modesto, Calif.

18 (1913) Pug Lund, Rice Lake, Wis.  
18 (1931) Harley Sewell, St. Jo, Texas  
18 (1962) Wilber Marshall, Titusville, Fla.  
18 (1970) Willie Roaf, Pine Bluff, Ark.  
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 Klausung, 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 – 1974) – Charles "Chic" Harley, Columbus, Ohio  
21-(d – 2005) Cliff Montgomery, Mineola, N.Y.  
22 (1902) Eddie Cameron, Manor, Pa.  
22 (1907) Barton "Botchy" Koch, Temple, Texas  
23-(d – 1950) Bill Alexander, Atlanta, Ga.  
23 (1916) Bud Wilkinson, Minneapolis, Minn.  
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 (1953) Rod Shoate, Spiro, Okla.  
25 (1954) Randy Cross, Brooklyn, N.Y.  
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.  
26-(d-2011) Jim Mandich, Miami, 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 (1947) Bill Enyart, Pawhuska, Okla.  
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 (1941) Jerry Stovall, West Monroe, La.  
30-(d – 1974) Claude Reeds, McClain, Okla.  
30-(d - 2012) Billy Neighbors, Huntsville, Ala.

HARPER'S WEEKLY 1896 ALL-AMERICA ELEVEN

Baird (Princeton), full-back  
Kelly (Princeton), and Wrightington (Harvard), half-backs  
Fincke (Yale), quarter and captain  
Gailey (Princeton), centre  
Wharton and Woodruff (Pennsylvania), guards  
Church (Princeton) and Murphy (Yale), tackles  
Gelbert (Pennsylvania) and Cabot (Harvard), ends

**Substitutes**

In the line. Cochran (Princeton), Rinehart (Lafayette). F. Shaw and Wheeler (Harvard).  
Back on the line. Smith (Princeton), Minds (Pennsylvania). Brown and Dunlop (Harvard).

❖ The Rules Committee meeting January 12, 1906, made the following changes:

The number of yards to be gained was increased from five to ten and one additional down was added.

The rules were amended to provide for the forward pass and onside kick with the qualifications as to the pass that it must cross the line of scrimmage at a point five yards from the center. A kicked ball was onside as soon as it passed the scrimmage line.

To bring about a more open style of play the forward pass was introduced. Everyone on the offensive side was made eligible to recover a kicked ball from scrimmage as soon as it touched the ground, and the playing time was divided into quarters, hurdling was forbidden, drawing hack tackles and guards to use as interferers was stopped, and the linemen forbidden to interchange with back unless permanently or unless he be five yards behind the line.

\* \* \* \*

## **Rockne 85 Years On: In Life and Death, He Moved a Nation**

*March 31, 2016 by Jim Lefebvre*

*After all these years, the life of the Notre Dame icon continues to inspire*

The shocking news dispatches started reaching the eastern United States around mid-day on Tuesday, March 31, 1931.

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Eight people – including Notre Dame football coach and athletic director Knute Rockne — had lost their lives in the crash of Transcontinental & Western flight 599 in the Flint Hills of eastern Kansas.



Almost immediately, there was an enormous outpouring of reaction. From the halls of academia, the fields of athletics, the boardrooms of business, the seats of government, prominent Americans expressed their shock at the news, and their admiration of Rockne.

His fellow coaches, those he worked with over the years to refine and promote the game of football, were most affected.

“They have taken our leader from our midst,” said Columbia’s Lou Little. “But his work and his memories will always be a monument that will carry us on.” From the University of Michigan, Fritz Crisler wrote, “Endeared in the hearts of all his colleagues, our great esteem and admiration for him will endure forever.”

We can find no evidence of any prominent person or organization issuing a “no comment” on that day.

“Knute Rockne’s name was a household word,” noted one editorial. “He had long since overleaped the sports page. Persons who seldom followed sports knew Rockne. Boys who could not yet read could tell you about Rockne and his Ramblers.”

In the following days, many thousands made their way to South Bend to pay tribute to the fallen paragon of athletic achievement. His former players, coaches from coast to coast, newspapermen and other prominent folks paid their respects at Rockne’s home on East Wayne Street.

Four days later, at his funeral at Sacred Heart Church (now Basilica), Rev. Charles O’Donnell, C.S.C., asked the assembled, “What was the secret of his irresistible appeal to all sorts and conditions of men? Who shall pluck out of the heart of his mystery and lay bare the inner source of the power he had?”

Rockne would be sorely missed, by Notre Dame and by the larger world. But his impact would continue for decades – even, it can be argued, through the present day. Some of Rockne’s influences on football and athletics in general include:

**The Lifelong Value of Athletics.** It may seem obvious to us today, but Rockne was one of the first to articulate – passionately and precisely – how participation in athletic development and competition carries dividends far beyond the playing field.

Sports, said Rockne, teaches the athlete “responsibility – responsibility as a representative of his college; responsibility to his teammates; and responsibility in controlling his passions, his fear, his hatred, jealousy, and rashness. It brings out the best there is in one.”

Rockne felt that his athletes were receiving an education through sports that was just as important as what they learned in Notre Dame’s classrooms.

**The Democratization of Football.** Beyond its value to the participants, Rockne early on seized on the potential for football to be a spectacle attracting thousands, then millions, of American spectators.

His view was shaped by his experience as a Notre Dame player, and the pivotal, historic game against Army on Nov. 1, 1913. On the “day that changed football,” Rockne and Gus Dorais used the forward pass as never before, to open up the game, bewildering the heavily favored Cadets, 35-13. A new, “open” game had been created, in which a team could score from anywhere on the field, as opposed to the long, slow slog offered by the customary “mass play” of 11 bodies slamming into 11 bodies.



Knute Rockne: Coach For A Nation

Rockne knew and appreciated performance, and audience appeal. As Notre Dame coach, he developed an entertaining style of play, with the Notre Dame Shift creating a stunning array of possibilities for each play. At the same time, Rockne used his personality and knack for promotion to help create unprecedented interest in the game nationwide.

A gradual shift was occurring. In the earliest years of football, power was concentrated in the East’s Big Three – Yale, Harvard, and Princeton. Games were mostly attended by those with a close connection to each college. As the game shifted westward, to Michigan under Fielding Yost, the University of Chicago under Amos Alonzo Stagg, and Notre Dame under Rockne, its appeal

broadened beyond campus, to local business leaders, and as the work week shortened, to workers themselves.

Rock was always at the forefront, seeking the largest stadiums, keeping ticket prices affordable, and using every possible means to promote the game he loved. When he took his 1924 Fighting Irish to play in New York City (vs. Army), Chicago (Northwestern) and southern California (Stanford), he had literally taken the game from coast to coast.

**It's About More Than Wins and Losses.** That may seem a strange phrase, given that Rockne achieved the highest winning percentage (.881) of any major college or pro football coach in history. Of course he wanted to win, and drilled his teams thoroughly, covering every possible detail to put them in a position to triumph.

But the greatest victory, he felt, was gained over oneself. Like the ancient Greeks, he knew the first rule of any achievement was to “know thyself.” In athletics, that meant identifying one’s weaknesses, and making those your strengths. With his strong background in track and field, striving for one’s personal best was the first rung of success.

He coached one of the greatest individuals in the game’s history – George Gipp – but he excelled at drawing out of lesser talents the most they could give. It was assembling a team that drove him. “The secret of winning football is this: Work more as a team, less as individuals. I play not my eleven best, but my best eleven.”

And when the games (mostly victories) were over, Rockne did not rest on his laurels. Can you imagine a coach today sitting down with his defeated counterpart after a game – and diagramming the plays he just used to beat them? For Rockne, success was something to be shared, not hoarded.

He did it best at his summer coaching schools. Held on college campuses from Williamsburg, Virginia to Corvallis, Oregon, from Superior, Wisconsin, to Dallas, Rockne shared “the Notre Dame system” with thousands of high school, prep school, and small college coaches over the course of his career.

The ultimate goal? To create a winning program, sure. But moreover, to create an experience in which young athletes could learn about themselves, the value of hard work and perseverance, teamwork, sportsmanship and a host of other lessons.

For this, Rockne truly became “coach for a nation.”

Jim Lefebvre is author of the national award-winning, comprehensive biography **Coach For A Nation: The Life and Times of Knute Rockne**. He writes at **Forever Irish** ([www.NDFootballHistory.com](http://www.NDFootballHistory.com)) and [www.CoachForANation.com](http://www.CoachForANation.com).

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During his career at Michigan, Fritz Crisler became known as the "father of two-platoon football."

**Prior to 1941**, virtually all football players saw action on "both sides of the ball," playing in both offensive and defensive roles in a one-platoon system.

**From 1941 to 1952**, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) allowed unlimited substitution.

The first known use of the so-called "two-platoon" system was by Michigan head coach Fritz Crisler in 1945 against an Army team under head coach "Colonel" Earl "Red" Blaik. Michigan lost the game 28–7, but Crisler's use of eight players who played only on offense, eight who played only on defense, and three that played both, impressed Blaik enough for him to adopt it for his own team. Blaik, a former soldier himself, coined the "platoon" terminology in reference to the type of military unit. Between 1946 and 1950, Blaik's two-platoon teams twice finished the season ranked second in the Associated Press polls and never finished lower than 11th.(AP's National Champions 1944-45.)

**In 1954**, the NCAA emplaced a set of new rules requiring the use of the one-platoon system, primarily due to financial reasons.

**After the 1964 season**, twelve years since the mandate requiring one-platoon, the NCAA repealed the rules enforcing its use and allowed an unlimited amount of player substitutions.

**Starting with the 1965 season**, teams to form separate offensive and defensive units as well as "special teams" which would be employed in kicking situations.