

# HAMMOND CLABBYS – 1916

By Roy Sye

With the Clabbys having a strong 1915 season, the Clabby management and fans were anxious for the upcoming 1916 season. Starting right after Labor Day, the new Clabby team manager, Forrest Morrow contacted Claire Rhoades of the famous Pine Village eleven to schedule a game. Hammond was hoping for a Thanksgiving Day game to be played at Purdue. With former Purdue All-American center, Frank Blocker, scheduled to play for the Clabbys, this would certainly be a big drawing card. Even without the legendary Jim Thorpe playing for the Villagers, (Claire Rhoades was not willing to meet Thorpe's demands of \$100 per game), Pine Village was one of the strongest teams in the state.

With most of the successful 1915 team returning to play in this year, the Clabbys still went out and recruited new players. With the addition of Blocker from Purdue, the Clabbys also brought in quarterback Johnny Finn from Purdue. Finn was the backbone of the Boilermakers squad for the last 3 years.

Also joining the Clabbys was Malcolm Galvin of Wisconsin. Galvin starred at fullback for the Badgers the past 2 seasons. After an unsuccessful tryout with the Chicago White Sox, Galvin concentrated on football. Rounding out the new backfield trio was Techs Blair from Northwestern. Blair, a native of Aurora, Illinois, played his high school ball at Evanston Academy, then moved across town to Northwestern University.

With the new backfield set, the Clabbys opened the season at home against the Peru, Indiana team. Peru had a strong team last year while knocking off the top teams in the Indianapolis area. Peru has had a team for the last seven years and has only lost to the strong Pine Village team. With perfect football weather, the Clabbys embarrassed the Peru eleven 70-0! With newcomer Techs Blair scoring two touchdowns in the first quarter, it was all downhill for the Peru eleven. Half-time score was 20-0 and then the Clabbys scoring 50 more points in the second half.

Manager Wise of Peru blamed the lethargic play of his team on the long train journey from Peru and certainly a minor train wreck 50 miles from Hammond left his team in an unhappy mood. Hammond fans were not buying that as an excuse. Others offered the excuse that Peru did not send its top team, sending their

second team instead.

Next up for the Clabbys were the Rockford Badgers. The Badgers were another strong team, losing only 1 game in the past four years, that being in 1914 to the Joliet Steel Workers, Illinois Independent champions of 1914. After the Clabbys won the toss and elected to kick, they held the Badgers and forced them to punt. On Hammond's first offensive play, Galvin fumbled, but fortunately recovered in the end zone, netting a safety for the visiting Badgers. The Clabbys retaliated with 2 first quarter touchdowns by Galvin. The second quarter was scoreless, with Rockford unsuccessful on all forward pass attempts. Finn added a touchdown run in the third quarter and Kohl added another near the end of the game. The final score was 27-2, with Hammond outclassing the Rockford team.

For the Clabbys first road game, they traveled across state to Fort Wayne for an October 8th game. The game was billed as the Fort Wayne "Notre Dame" Friars vs. The Hammond "Purdue" Clabbys. With 7 former Notre Damers in the starting lineup, led by quarterback Gus Dorias, the Clabbys were in for their toughest match in years. Fort Wayne was coming off a very decisive 101-0 defeat of the Dayton Munitions. With Morrow arranging a special train to accommodate 500 fans, the Clabbys were off on the 3-hour train ride to Fort Wayne.

As 2600 fans filled the bleachers, the game was a tightly contested battle. Dorias dropkicked a 35-yarder giving the Friars a 3-0 lead, which stood until late in the game. With the Blocker brothers and Galvin out with injuries, the Friars slowly marched down the field a few yards at a time. "Coonie" Checkaye, having replaced the injured Dorias at half-time, pushed over a touchdown from the 1-yard line making the final score 9-0 in favor of the Friars. Checkaye started the season starring for the Muncie Congerville Flyers team. The Friar team was so impressed with the Clabbys, that a few days later they sent a letter to Manager Morrow inviting the Clabbys for a November 19th rematch to be played in Fort Wayne.

With the Rushville, Indiana team canceling the October 15 game, the Clabbys scheduled the fast Aurora Greyhound team to come to Hammond. The Greyhounds battled the Joliet Steel Workers to a 0-0 tie the week before. With Ted Blocker, Galvin and

Volkman not playing due to injuries, the Clabbys filled in with suitable substitutes. Blair opened the scoring with a 1-yard run in the first quarter. In the second quarter Nolan was on the receiving end of a touchdown pass. With Stinchfield kicking the extra point, the half ended with the Clabbys leading 13-0. Three more touchdowns in the second half made the score 34-0. The Greyhounds avoided the shutout by crossing the goal line late in the game. Hammond walked away with an easy 34-6 victory, keeping them undefeated at home.

In the paper the next day was a letter to the editor complaining about the Clabbys bringing weak teams to Hammond. The letter wanted the Clabby management to bring in top teams; Detroit, Evanston, Columbus, Pine Village or Wabash to play in front of the hometown fans. Realizing that bringing in high-caliber teams that demand a \$500+ guarantee would translate into higher ticket prices and increased fan support, the letter urged the local Hammonites to support their team by attending the games or by donations.

The Clabbys were on the road again for their next game against the Sheridan AC, which was representing the town of Lafayette. As the Athletics were out to win the state championship, they held all of their practices behind closed gates. Hammond kicked off and after an exchange of punts and fumbles; the Clabbys threw a 25-yard touchdown pass from Finn to Blair. Near the end of the second quarter, Finn ran for a touchdown making the half-time score 14-0. Finn dropkicked a 15-yarder and a 20-yarder in the second half to complete the scoring at 20-0 for the visitors. Sheridan's only serious challenge came in the third quarter when their drive stalled at the Hammond 20 and Pierce missed a 20-yard drop kick. Quarterback Johnny Finn starred for the Clabbys as they improved their record to 4-1.

For the October 29<sup>th</sup> tilt, the Clabbys were working the telegraph wires to find their next opponent. Only on Thursday evening did the Clabbys finally find a team to come to Hammond. The Montpelier (OH) Bears were the next opponent for the Clabbys. Not much was known about the Montpelier team, except that they averaged a heavy 185 pounds and that they had defeated Byron (OH), Adrian (MI), Milan (MI) and split with a Fort Wayne (not the Friars) team, so far this year.

The game did not live up to its hype as the Clabbys skinned the Bears 56-0. Blair, Ted Blocker and Meyers each scored twice and Kohl, Finn and Talbot each added another touchdown. Hammond ran the ball 54 times for an incredible 697 yards, an average of almost 13 yards a carry. Montpelier came close only once, as quarterback Scholl of the Bears put his foot into a 30-yard dropkick, but missing by inches. The big news of the game was the poor attendance, as the gate

receipts were only \$315. With a \$200 guarantee paid to Montpelier, the remaining amount was not even enough to cover expenses. Manager Morrow was seriously considering playing the remaining games on the road to not be stuck paying the visiting team guarantees.

Sporting a 5-1 record, the Clabbys upgraded their schedule and invited the Racine Battery C team to come to Hammond for a November 5<sup>th</sup> game. The Racine team was the 1915 Wisconsin State Champion. Just before the game the Clabby management received word from Fort Wayne that the Friars had cancelled their offer to have the Clabbys play a return match at Fort Wayne. The Friars had been trying all year to pry away Frank Blocker and some speculate that Friar management was so upset about not landing Blocker that they cancelled the game. Hammond fans thought otherwise and claimed that the Friars feared the Clabbys.

As for the Racine game, the Battery C team opened the scoring with a touchdown in the first quarter, but failed to kick goal. The Clabbys responded with a touchdown run and goal kick by Meyers in the second quarter. Racine was unsuccessful on a 30-yard dropkick near the end of the second quarter. The Clabbys took the second half kickoff and Galvin and Ted Blocker marched down the field, with Blocker going over for the score and Galvin kicking goal, giving the Clabbys a 14-12 lead. If not for excellent kicking of the Clabbys (2 goal kicks made) and the poor kicking of the Racine team (2 goal kicks missed and 1 dropkick missed), the outcome of the game would have been reversed.

As was customary during the pre-war days, games were routinely scheduled with little advance notice and sometimes changed only days before the game. Again, this week's opponent changed a few days before Sunday. As of Wednesday the 8<sup>th</sup>, the Clabbys were scheduled to bring the strong Beloit (WI) team to Hammond. But by the end of the day, the schedule changed and the Ann Arbor (MI) Independents, comprised of mostly University of Michigan stars, were now coming to Hammond commanding a \$600 guarantee. With Ann Arbor not losing in over four years, they looked to be a strong opponent. However, three backfield men of Ann Arbor went with the University of Michigan squad to play at Cornell. Without these three stars, the Independents lacked any offensive punch and were shutout 30-0. Meyers scored on a touchdown pass near the end of the first quarter. Jim Talbot ran for another touchdown and the first half ended with Hammond leading 14-0. Local star Sternberg scored a touchdown in the fourth quarter and Talbot added another. Finn dropkicked from 20 yards out to complete the scoring at 30-0.

Now with a record of 7-1, the Clabbys were on a roll.

Offering a \$700 guarantee, the Davenport AC was the next team to come to Hammond for a November 19<sup>th</sup> game. The Davenport team had not been beaten in 2 years. This year they had already racked up two wins against the Moline Indians, a close 3-0 victory over the strong Evanston North Ends, and a win followed by a 0-0 tie against the rival Rock Island Independents. The rooters of the Davenport team ran an excursion train and were bringing over 130 fans. The Clabbys started out strong in the first quarter and scored on a 30-yard dropkick by Finn and then followed with a Clink Meyers touchdown run. The first quarter ended with Hammond seemingly in charge with a 10-0 lead and having the ball on offense most of the time. Davenport countered in the second quarter with an interception, followed by a 47-yard touchdown run and a goal kick.

After forcing Davenport to punt starting the third quarter, Hammond drove the ball to the 8-yard line. Davenport intercepted the next pass and returned it 91 yards before being stopped just short of the goal line. Two plays later netted another touchdown, followed by a goal kick. With less than 2 minutes left in the game, Hammond had the ball on the Davenport 3-yard line. The tough Davenport defense held and the ball went over on downs. Davenport elected to take a safety, rather than risk a punt from their end zone. Time ran out before Davenport could kick off. Final score: Davenport 14 - Hammond 12.

With a strong recommendation from C.J. Suedhoff, manager of the Fort Wayne Friars, the Clabbys offered an \$800 guarantee to the Elyria (OH) club. Elyria had played the Toledo Maroons, Massillon Tigers, Dayton Triangles and Fort Wayne Friars already this year and certainly looked like worthy opponents. Led by quarterback Ambrose, the Elyria team scored first in the second quarter on a touchdown pass by Ambrose. The Clabbys answered by taking the third quarter kickoff and going the length of the field, with Ted Blocker going over for the score. However, Galvin missed goal and the Clabbys trailed 7-6. Elyria added another score in the last quarter only after Frank Blocker, Johnny Finn and Jim Talbot of Hammond went out for injuries. Clink Meyers fumbled and Hubbel of Elyria picked up the ball and ran 73 yards for a touchdown. Elyria added goal and the Clabbys went down to their second straight defeat 6-14.

The Clabbys came out of the Elyria game bruised and battered. Johnny Finn had a severe charley horse, Frank Seliger had a broken nose and fortunately x-rays showed that Frank Blocker did not have broken ribs, just badly bruised. Hammond looked to strengthen their team for the remaining games. Manager Morrow was so impressed with the 2 halfbacks of Racine, Foster and Dory, (known as "Ten" and "Twenty"), that he wanted them for the rest of the season. With 2 games scheduled over the Thanksgiving weekend with the Detroit Harvards and the Cincinnati Celts, the

Clabbys needed to retool and strengthen their lineup.

For the Thanksgiving game, the Clabbys secured the Detroit Harvards. The Harvards were one of the stronger teams from Michigan registering victories over the Ann Arbor Independents, Detroit Carlisle Indians, Cleveland Erin Braus and Detroit Maroons. After a scoreless first quarter, the Clabbys scored late in the second quarter on a touchdown run by Talbot, giving Hammond a 7-0 halftime lead. In the third quarter, both teams exchanged punts looking for improved field position. Getting the ball near mid-field, the Clabbys drove down and scored on a Meyers touchdown. Ford missed a 20-yard dropkick, but the Clabbys scored late in the game thanks to a 64-yard interception return by Stinchfield, which set up Ted Blocker to run the final 10 yards for the score. The Clabbys handed the Harvards their first defeat by the score of 20-0.

With the addition of Ralph Young, star fullback of Washington and Jefferson College and the local Crown Point (IN) team, the 2 halfbacks from Racine, and a giant guard from Racine, the Clabbys were set for their match against the strong Cincinnati Celts. (The Celts gained notoriety by being the first team ever to beat Pine Village back on October 29<sup>th</sup> by a score of 9-6.) In a defensive struggle, over 2000 fans saw a low scoring game with the only score coming early in the first quarter. Johnny Finn elected on fourth and goal from the 5-yard line to dropkick for 3 points. This turned out to be the only score as the Celts failed on a 15-yard dropkick with only minutes left in the game. The Clabbys ran out the clock and the game ended with a 3-0 victory for Hammond, running their record to 9-3.

For the Indiana State Championship game, the Clabbys faced the strong Pine Village team. Expecting a crowd of over 5000, the game was played in nearby Lafayette the following Sunday. Rumors of the legendary Jim Thorpe signed to play fullback for the Clabbys were neither confirmed nor denied by Captain Frank Blocker of Hammond. (Thorpe did not play for Hammond.)

The game started promptly at 2:30pm with Pine Village kicking to Hammond. Cautious play by both teams resulted in a 0-0 score at halftime. In the third quarter the Clabby defense held on 4<sup>th</sup> and goal from the ½ yard line. With the ball going over on downs, the Clabbys quickly punted out of danger. Getting the ball in good field position, the Villagers drive stalled and a 30-yard dropkick failed. The Clabbys could not move the ball and punted. With the ball at mid-field, Pine Village drove down to the 15-yard line. There, the famous All-American Dick King of Harvard, was successful on a 22-yard dropkick to put Pine Village ahead 3-0. The Clabbys final drive stalled and Pine Village secured the 1916 Indiana State Championship by a slim 3-0 score.

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A few days before the championship game, there was the first meeting held to discuss a professional league in Indiana. With the big four teams: Fort Wayne, Hammond, Pine Village and Wabash to be the nucleus, the group contacted teams in Lafayette, Muncie, Newcastle and Terre Haute hoping to establish an 8-team league. As with most proposed leagues in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the idea was to keep salaries within the bounds of reason (owners translation = keep salaries down to increase profits). Also in keeping salaries down, the team could make ticket prices low enough to attract a larger following, thus increasing attendance and ultimately increasing profits. No decisions were made from these meetings and the topic would be revisited the following year.

The Clabbys ended the season with a fine 9-4-0 record. With the toughest schedule in their history, the Clabbys proved to be one of the top teams in Indiana, as well as in the Great Lakes region. With balanced scoring from Meyers, Ted Blocker, Blair, Finn and Galvin, the Clabbys posed a threat to any opponent. With high hopes for a better 1917 season, the Clabbys set out to build a stronger schedule for the next year with the likes of the Detroit Heralds, Wabash AA, Pine Village, Fort Wayne, Racine and the Cornell-Hamburgs of Chicago.

### Game Results for 1916 Hammond Clabbys

Sun 09/24	H	Hammond vs Peru (IN)	Won	70- 0
Sun 10/01	H	Hammond vs Rockford Badgers	Won	27- 2
Sun 10/08	A	Hammond at Fort Wayne Friars	Lost	0- 9
Sun 10/15	H	Hammond vs Aurora (IL) Greyhounds	Won	34- 6
Sun 10/22	A	Hammond vs Sheridan (IN) AC @ Lafayette	Won	20- 0
Sun 10/29	H	Hammond vs Montpelier (OH)	Won	56- 0
Sun 11/05	H	Hammond vs Racine Battery C	Won	14-12
Sun 11/12	H	Hammond vs Ann Arbor Independents	Won	30- 0
Sun 11/19	H	Hammond vs Davenport AC	Lost	12-14
Sun 11/26	H	Hammond vs Elyria Athletics	Lost	6-14
Thu 11/30	H	Hammond vs Detroit Harvards	Won	20- 0
Sun 12/03	H	Hammond vs Cincinnati Celts	Won	3- 0
Sun 12/10	A	Hammond vs Pine Village @ Lafayette	Lost	0- 3

Final Record    9-4-0                      Points Scored: 292    Points Allowed: 60

### Lineups for 1916 Hammond Clabbys

	Sep 24	Oct 01	Oct 08	Oct 15	Oct 22	Oct 29	Nov 05	Nov 12	Nov 19	Nov 26	Nov 30	Dec 03	Dec 10	College (if known)
Blair, Techs	LHB	LH B	LH B	LH B	LH B	LH B	-hb	-lhb			-fb	*	*	Northwestern
Blocker, Frank (Captain)	RT	C	RT	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	+	C	C	Purdue
Blocker, Ted	FB	FB	FB	+	*	*	FB	FB	FB	FB	+	*	*	Indiana
Ewert, Howard												RG	LG	Indiana
Finn, Johnny	QB	QB	QB	QB	QB	QB	QB	QB	QB	-rhb	-rhb	QB	QB	Purdue
Ford											-fb	RH B	RH B	
Galvin, Malcolm (Coach)	RHB	RH B	RH B	+	FB	*	-hb	-fb	*	RH B	FB	*	-lhb	Wisconsin
Green F.	C		C	RG	RG	RG	RG	RG	RG	RG	C	*	RG	
Herbst	*	RG	*	*	*	RG					-re	*	*	
Kohl, George "Dutch"	RG	*	*	*	LE	LE	E	-re	-le	QB	QB	RE	RE	No college
Meyers, Stanton "Clinks"	RE	*	RE	RH B	RH B	RH B	RH B	RH B	RH B	-qb	RH B	-e	-re	No college
Nolan, J. "Red"	*	RE	*	RE	RE	RE	-e	LE	LE	LE	RE	*	-re	
Phrommer, F.	*													
Plum	*	*	*	LT	LT	*	LT	*	-rt	-rg	RT	LG	*	

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Roberts, Mason "Mace"	*													No college
Ruffner, Henry VanNatta	*	RT	RG	RT	RT	RT	RT	RT	RT	RT	+	RT	RT	Purdue
Schillo	*	*	*	*	*	FB	-lg	-rg	*	-lg	RG	*	*	
Seliger, Frank	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG			No college
Sternberg								-rhb	*					
Stinchfield, Melvin "Red"	LE	LE	LE	LE	*	*	E	RE	RE	RE	RE	LE	LE	Purdue
Talbot, Jim			*	FB	*	*	LH B	LH B	LH B	LH B	LH B	LH B	LH B	North Dakota
Volkman, George "Hugs"	LT	LT	LT	+	*	LT	-lt	LT	LT	LT	LT	LT	LT	Wisconsin
Young, Ralph "Bull"												FB	FB	Wash & Jeff

Notes: Bernard Boyle and Halfman may have been on the roster for the 1<sup>st</sup> game  
 Scott McEachron and Gorman (from Racine) were possibly signed for the Cincinnati game  
 Joe Dory and Bob Foster (from Racine) were signed, but did not play in the Cincinnati game

\* – played in game, position unknown or did not start  
 + – injured, did not play  
 -aa – played in the game as a substitute at that position

### Team Scoring Summary

Player	Touchdowns and Type	Extra Points & FG	Total Points
Meyers	7 TD's (4 run, 3 unknown)	7 of 7 extra points	49
T. Blocker	7 TD's (7 run)	1 of 1 extra points	43
Blair	7 TD's (5 run, 1 pass, 1 Fumble Rec)		42
Finn	4 TD's (3 run, 1 unknown)	5 of 6 FG, 0-1 extra points	39
Galvin	5 TD's (5 run)	9 of 11 extra points	39
Kohl	4 TD's (1 run, 3 unknown)		24
Talbot	4 TD's (1 run, 1 rec, 2 unknown)		24
Nolan	2 TD's (1 rec, 1 unknown)		12
Stinchfield		8 of 9 extra points	8
Steinberg	1 TD (1 run)		6
?Unknown ?	2 Safetys	0 of 8 extra points	4
Ruffner		1 of 1 extra points	1
Schillo		1 of 1 extra points	1
Ford		0 of 2 FG	0
F. Blocker		0 of 2 extra points	0

### Sources

Chicago Tribune  
 Aurora (IL) Beacon-News  
 Lake County (Hammond, IN) Times  
 Racine (WI) Times-Call  
 Muncie (IN) Morning Star & Muncie Evening Press

"The Sunday Game" – Keith McClellan  
 "Total Football" – Carrol, Gershman, Neft & Thorn

