

THE FIRST ALL-STAR GAME

From the *Pittsburgh Press*

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 brain child of Dave Berry, the same promoter who had organized the Latrobe football team and paid John Brallier his famous ten dollars. The Duquesne Country & Athletic Club (D.C. & A.C.) was far and away the class of the Pittsburgh grid scene in 1898. Berry came up with the idea of opposing them with an all-star team culled from Latrobe, Greensburg, Washington & Jefferson, the Pittsburgh Athletic Club, and Pittsburgh College. Like so many of Berry's ideas, this one seems to have been 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 Inglis, 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. Vicious 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.

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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 Duquesnes, 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 [Babe] Rhinehart [formerly of Lafayette] 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 Stars' many failures to gain ground. Rhinehart, Mullen [of Pittsburgh College], [Grennie] Lewis [of Latrobe], [George] Barclay [formerly of Lafayette] and [Doggie] Trenchard [former Princeton All- American] 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. [Eddie] Wood and Trenchard were fast in getting down the field, but could do little against Duquesne's interference.

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For the red and black Jackson, [John] Gammons, [Ed] 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, [W.D.] Inglis and [Tex] Mathews [both of Washington & Jefferson] were not in the game. Mathews was on the grounds but was notified by Captain Theurer [of W. & J.] not to play and [he] 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 [Jack] Gass [of Latrobe], 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 [former Penn All-American Charley] Gelbert, who fumbled and Doggie Trenchard fell on the ball. [In 1898, only three downs were allowed to gain five yards for a first down.]

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 [Datz] Lawler suffered a severe injury to his leg and retired. Winstein took his place. Young kicked 25 yards to Barclay, without return. Barclay 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 ten yards. [Bill] 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-Stars' 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 [Don] McNeill tried a quarterback kick, which Jackson caught and carried over the line in the corner of the gridiron for the touchdown. A punt out failed and the score stood Duquesne 5, All-Stars 0.

[A "quarterback kick" was a primitive forward pass in which the QB in a T-formation, but a few yards back of the center, took the snap and punted. The backs standing behind him could recover the ball if they outraced their opponents to it, as Jackson did here. But note that he scored at the corner. The goal after the five-point touchdown had to be kicked straight out from where the goal line was crossed. To avoid a bad kicking angle, a team could punt the ball out of the end zone. If it was caught, the receiver could then have a free kick from that spot.]

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 [lateral] 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 [Walter] Okeson [formerly of Lehigh]. 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. [W.] Farrar [formerly of Penn] 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 five yards. [Harry] Ryan [of Latrobe] failed. Mullen kicked to Young on Duquesne's 30-yard line, where he was downed with no gain. Winstein brought a round

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of applause from his Woods Run [local village] admirers by making a run of 20 yards through left tackle. Lewis brought him down hard, 'Winnie' 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 [laterally] 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, Winstein | LG | Rhinehart |
| Jennings | C | Hammer |
| Smith | RG | Comerford |
| Farrar | RT | Ryan |
| Okeson | RE | Trenchard |
| McNeill | QB | Mullen |
| Jackson | LH | Gass |
| Gammons | RH | Barclay |
| Young | FB | Lewis |

Touchdowns: Jackson 2, Gammons.

Goal from Touchdown: Young.

Referee: Dr. Bull. Umpire: Ned Brainard. Timekeeper: J. D. Callery.

Linesmen: H.E. Becker and Ed Abbaticchio.

Time: 20-minute halves.

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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 Latrobe players. He got out by coughing up \$33 and then turned around and had that player and another jailed for false arrest!

Why did W. & J. captain Theurer order Tex Mathews 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 Mathews 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 Mathews' eligibility at a school that regularly played against pro teams. It's worth noting that Theurer played for Greensburg before he played for Washington & Jefferson. Several other Presidents regulars had starred for pro teams earlier in their careers.

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One social note: That night at the Schenley Hotel, W.C. Temple, donator of baseball's Temple Cup, chairman of D.C. & A.C.'s football committee, and the man who actually paid the players' salaries, 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. The "representatives" were, no doubt, the All-Stars. The *Press* noted "There were no set speeches, but the absence of this feature was not regretted."
