

Sports Thru The Lion's Eye

By JAKE HIGHTON
Collegian Sports Editor



It almost seems as if the measure of greatness in the sports world is determined by the number of anecdotes handed down from generation to generation.

Certainly Penn State's Hugo Bezdek, who joined the Happy Sporting Grounds after a heart attack last weekend in Atlantic City, has had his share of greatness through anecdotes.

The story most typical of Bez—perhaps the most famous Penn State sports figure of them all—is the one told by Nittany baseball coach Joe Bedenk:

Bedenk, All-American for the Lions in 1923, was playing in a particularly rough game against North Carolina. Out of a terrific pileup emerged a Red Sea flowing from Bedenk's jaw. While the team physician administered to Bedenk, Bez barked, "Is it broken?"

The physician's "no" was enough for Bezdek who headed for the sidelines while Bedenk headed for the huddle. Bez, a firm believer in the virtually extinct 60-minute player, wouldn't stand for a player leaving the field unless it was under the power of a wheel barrow.

A stern taskmaster, Bez piled up scrimmage on scrimmage right up to game time. He operated on the theory that such punishment made Saturday's game easy. By carrying his logic one step further, Bez figured that the team that worked hardest during the week had the greatest success Saturday. (A good theory, under Bezdek anyway; his teams through 1918-24 won 40, lost 10 and tied 7.)

In addition to being a rugged man with the whip, Bez was a spellbinder and a psychologist of the Knute Rockne school. Lou Bell, Head of College public information department and former sports editor of the Collegian, tells the following:

Bez hated to see anyone receive praise or headlines which might inflate the ego. So, during any scrimmage when a player had made a long run Bez would always recall the play with his fog horn voice—Bedenk claims it was audible from the practice field to the Corner Room. One day at a scrimmage a back broke loose for a 40 yard touchdown run. Promptly Bez bawled, "Offsides."

The irate scoring team indignantly asked who the culprit was. "Greenshields," snapped the ever ready Bez. At his name, Captain Don Greenshields grabbed for his helmet and leaped off the bench.

Other Rockne-like traits were evident in Bezdek. Bell recalls that during the halftime of Penn State games, the Lion dressing room had an onion smell rising above the perspiration odor—to this day it is strongly suspected that Bez squeezed onions over his eyes to help the players' emotions.

The deeds and accomplishments of Bezdek would truly qualify him for America's Sports Hall of Fame—were there such a thing.

It probably wouldn't be too much an error to call Bez the pop of Nittany grid coaches. Perhaps it was natural. After all, he began his career as a player at Chicago U. under the Grand Old Man himself, A. A. Stagg. With so illustrious a coach to start his career, Bez turned out four All-American's at State. Two of them, Bedenk and Bob Higgins, succeeded Bez as Nittany head coach.



But football wasn't the only forte of this remarkable Penn Stater. Bez is still the only college grid coach to manage a major league baseball team. During the 1916-19 seasons he piloted the Pittsburgh Pirates from last place to a first division berth. Nittany baseball teams were one of the tops in the East. On the diamond in 1920-21, Bez's teams won 29 straight for a school record in the sport. Doubling in triumphs at the same time, Bez's football teams between 1919-22 went 30 games without defeat—also a school mark.

A recount of Bez's other deeds would take a tomb. Here are a few: Served as Phys Ed dean at the College from 1929 to 1936 . . . Head coached Arkansas and Oregon grid teams . . . Led the Lions to the Rose Bowl in 1923 . . . Coached the Cleveland Rams of the NFL . . . Under Stagg at Chicago U. he was named to several All-American teams . . . With Penn State short a basketball coach during World War I, Bez took over the quintet which won 11 and lost 2.

Bezdek doesn't need anecdotes to prove his greatness. His achievements speak louder. Yet, one incident meant more to Bezdek than many of his outstanding feats. Under fire during his closing years as head coach, Collegian writer Jim Coogan—current College sports editor—wrote an editorial defending Bez. That framed editorial still hung on the wall of Bez's country home near Doylestown, Pa., at the time of his unfortunate death.

Sophs, Tough Schedule Give Wernermen Big Task for '52

By JOHN SHEPPARD

Penn State's cross country coach, Chick Werner, has a task mildly complicated by a predominately sophomore corps plus what might easily be the East's most difficult hill-and-dale schedule—Army, Michigan State, New York, and Manhattan.

Although not dismayed by the situation, Chick has set to work with his crew of second-year men and has high words of praise to offer at this early date.

Time Trials

For the past two weeks, his team has been concentrating on the conditioning process, which is so essential to a harrier. The daily diet has consisted largely of distance jogs and calisthenics. Werner and his assistant, Norm Gordon, haven't sent their charges through any clock workouts yet, but next week it'll be another story. The first time trials of the season are slated for next Monday afternoon.

The Nittanians open up their '52 card against Cornell at Ithaca Oct. 11.

May Be Good

According to Werner, the squad has been responding rather well to the daily sessions. "This is the duller part of the season for the boys, as their daily workouts are a repetition of distance jaunts without any speed work."

"If the sophomores can get over that second year jinx which is usually a plague," Werner said yesterday afternoon, "we may have a good team."

Sophomore Corps

"We feel this is the most promising bunch of sophomores we've had in quite some time," Werner was quick to qualify his optimistic statement when he quipped, "This doesn't mean anything, for only competition will tell."

In mentioning his corps of sophomores, Chick was referring to Lamont Smith, John Chilrud, Jim Hamill, Don Austin, Al Terrall, Tom Demboski, Skip Slocum, and Dave Leathum.

Of the group, Smith, Hamill, and Chilrud were letter winners last fall.

All, according to Werner, have been coming along better than expected. At the beginning of the pre-season drill two weeks ago, Werner thought that veterans Smith, Captain Jack Horner, and Red Hollen would be alone in their workouts; that is, no one pushing them. However, sophomores Hamill, Chilrud, and Austin, juniors Bob Gehman and Jim Cressman, and seniors Stan Lindner and Bob Roesler, look as though they'll support these three returnees.

Gene Wettstone, Penn State gymnastics coach, served as a judge at the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki, Finland.

Sports Briefs

Jersey Joe 'Unretires'

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Jersey Joe Walcott "unretired" from a 13-hour retirement yesterday to set up a return bout with Rocky Marciano, who knocked him off the heavyweight throne in Tuesday night's sensational bout.

Crowd Pays \$504,645

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—A crowd of 40,379 paid \$504,645 to see Rocky Marciano dethrone Jersey Joe Walcott as the heavyweight boxing champion with a 13th round knockout blow.

Buc's Renew Agreement

PITTSBURGH (AP)—The Pittsburgh Pirates renewed a working agreement today with the Batavia, N.Y. team of the Class D Pony League but dropped Mayfield, Ky. in the Kitty League and Pittsburgh, Kan., in the Kansas-Oklahoma-Missouri League.

Lewistown H.S. Leads

JOHNSTOWN, Pa. (AP)—Lewistown High School held the Western Pennsylvania Football Conference lead with 475 points.

Both of Lewistown's victories are over Class A opponents. In second place is Bellwood-Antis with 465 points, holding a win each over a Class A and Class B rival. Hollidaysburg is in third place with two Class B victories and 455 points.

Eighteen-year-old Warren Gitlen, Harrisburg, district junior golf champion, is a Penn State sophomore.

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