

WILKES BARRE FATS

Fats at The Basement Bowl



FISH RECORD—Officials of the Pennsylvania Fish Commission told Chester Williams, 156 Center Hill Road, Dallas, that his catch of two muskies two hours was the first such catch in their recollection. Williams took the two fish from the Susquehanna River near Tunkhannock last Wednesday and saw a third fish of similar size get away. One of the muskies was 37 inches long and weighed 14 pounds, the other 34 inches long and weighing 11 pounds. Williams daughter, Virginia, posed with the fish after the record catch.

by Lee L. Richards
Here's some of our thoughts and notes from conversations on our Thanksgiving Day trip to Knoxville, Tennessee to visit with our Vol coaching friends and see them win their final game:
We got a warm reception from Avery Lewis, owner of the University Travel Inn, when we arrived in Knoxville. The Inn is smack dab in the middle of UT campus. He surprised us by having "Welcome Lee Richards" on marquee in front of Motel. It's first and last time we'll have our name in lights.
Watched Vols go through final drill Turkey morning and could sense they were mentally ready for arch-rival Vanderbilt. After workout we sat down to a super turkey dinner with members of coaching staff and team at Gibbs Hall. You couldn't ask for a better meal.
The rest of the afternoon we watched the Hogs of Arkansas with Coach Bobby Roper and family. He's an Arkansas grad and played on 1964 National Championship team.
Friday we picked up several gifts for Christmas. My son, Doug, informed me he wanted a Vol jacket as an Xmas present and we obliged. After the shopping, we took Doug and headed for the football office. Kate wasn't finished as she headed out with Sue Roper to do more work for Santa.
We made trip to Vol game for a specific reason. Last year when Coach John Majors was winning we had some of the best times, but when you're 3-7 baby, you know who your friends are. Besides, we had planned trip since Coach Majors party Labor Day. Meanwhile, we made it a point to visit with trainer Tim Kerin. He came from Pitt and is a mat buff. He also had our Vol coaching jacket and we'd need it if the weather changed. He told some keen stories

about his brother-in-law John Peterson, the Olympic gold medalist. He was wrestling in a tourney in Georgia.
It was going to be a busy afternoon with 40 of the top prep stars in country expected. It's finest collection of grid prospects we've ever seen.
Coach Majors was his affable self. We talked about the season and did a little reminiscing about Pitt. "We've got a lot of things going for us recruiting wise. Most important factor right now is players coming here will get an early chance to play. There's no place in the country that needs players more than we do," he said.
Had quick bite at training table with Kerin's assistant, Kevin O'Neil. Some of Vol coaches joined us and we got the low down on Vandy.
Coaches had game billed as the "Basement Bowl." Loser would take over SEC cellar. They also had NFC sign, brackets and all, for mythical Tennessee state championship.
Later that afternoon we sat through final meeting with defensive personnel. Coach Roper, defensive coordinator, started the meeting by saying, "The Vandy people say that Vol red-necks turn Orange in the fall of the year. Well, my neck is damn Orange for tomorrow."
Viewed films of Vandy offense in action in two games. After films were complete the big door dividing the room was pushed back. Coach Majors talked for about 15 minutes to the entire team. He stressed to Vol pride and not to allow themselves to be triggered into any verbal or physical battles. Seems last year both teams went at it tooth and tongue during pre-game.
After the meeting Coach Majors gave us a button with "Follow Me to Tennessee" on it. Tourist people are using it to push the state. He said he was going to use it in recruiting. He got permission from the Governor.
It was on to the press party after we dropped our son off at the Inn. We just floated around and listened to the remarks by the Vol press. We conversed with Henry Lee Parker, Coach Majors right arm. The

more we get to know Coach Parker the more impressed we are with his knowledge of organization and personnel.
While there was little traffic in the morning, Friday night was the gathering of the Vol buffs. They were coming from all over for the final battle. Met Coach Roper at the Inn after picking up wife Kate at Roper's. We just made small talk the remainder of the evening and viewed the USC-UCLA game. USC still has the great athletes, but UCLA is closing fast. Things were buzzing around the Inn with parties.
Saturday was the game day and it was crisp and cold. It was low 30s and very cold for Knoxville. We loaded up the car to head home. Trip would be short with a "W" and I kept telling Kate and Doug. Coach Roper called and was heading in from teams' motel and wanted us to meet him at the office.
We walked to the offices and the fans were heading for the game and it was only around 11. We put on our game face as we walked to meet the coaches. Everyone was cranked up. Bid wife and son goodbye and headed for the Vol dressing room. They grabbed a bite at the training table.
While the players got ready we made small talk with the coaches. Majors was exuberant. He was preparing the delicate psyches of his players.
Student managers Al Huffaker and Bob Langan reminded us how much they disliked Vandy as we strolled on to field for pre-game. The 83,126 had started to fill the big stadium. We thought "another sellout" and how great it must be to play before such loyal fans.
When Vandy came running on the field we knew why the Vols thought they were bush. The verbal remarks tossed at the Orange players would make a dock worker blush. The Orange weren't intimidated and continued loosening up.
Minutes before the game Coach Majors gave the final instructions. "We've got a better kicking game and we're better prepared. If the breaks start going

against you, remember you are representing Tennessee. You've got character. Concentration and execution. When we create a turnover we've got to take advantage. When I played against Vandy I ran a little harder and tackled a little harder just because it was Vanderbilt."
The Vol marching band had formed a "T" from the locker room to the bench. After the seniors were introduced the team streamed out. Then the injured players and yours truly tried to run. The band was playing the UT fight song and 83,000 fans were on their feet. If you weren't ready to play by the time you hit the far sidelines, you weren't a football player in our book. It was exhilarating!
Vols took charge early, showed more poise and

were more precise in their execution than in Auburn game we saw back in September. They were in absolute control after stopping Vandy early and driving over 70 yards on the ground for TD. By the half it was 28-zip.
Second half they got in trouble. Vandy got a turnover inside the Vol 20. Then ran a screen pass with 12 men on the field. The refs missed it but Coach Roper protested. He got flagged and Vandy had first and goal at the four. The Vols just put out their lights and held.
With seconds remaining we worked our way close to Coach Majors. As we congratulated him he said, "We played football today like you're accustomed to seeing our teams perform."
Our friends had put one

up in the "W" column. As we walked across the field we couldn't help smiling. Last year they were No. 1 and the toast of college football. They romped in the Sugar Bowl. On Nov. 26, 1977 Coach John Majors' Vols had just won their first and last "Basement Bowl".
Injured stars Craig Puki and Bill Marren summed it up best on sidelines when they said, "You'd better start saving your coins Mr. Richards because the Vols will be in a bowl next year."

L-L Board meets

The reorganization meeting of the Lake-Lehman board of school directors will be held on Monday, Dec. 5 at 8 p.m. in the Music Room of the Lehman-Jackson Elementary Building, Lehman.

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Dallas High juniors chosen

Robert L. Dolbear, principal, has announced that Lori Baird and John Prater have been chosen to represent Dallas Senior High School on the Heart Association of Northeastern Pennsylvania Youth Assembly.
Lori Baird is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robertson Baird of Cliffside Avenue, Trucksville. John Prater is the son of Rev. and Mrs. John Prater of Pioneer Avenue, Dallas.
The Heart Association Youth Assembly is composed of two junior students from each high school in the valley. These students will be active in the various activities of the Heart Association and will be available to their respective schools for disseminating information.

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