

Hawkeye Hall of Fame

If time were telescoped in some future football Valhalla, so that every University of Iowa grid-iron star could answer the opening whistle at the peak of his career, who would be selected for the starting eleven?

Not even a man fortunate enough to have seen every Iowa football game from the 24-0 loss to Grinnell in 1889 to the 35-19 victory over Oregon State in the Rose Bowl on January 1, 1957, would dare to do the picking. Not if his choices had to run the gauntlet of critical Iowa fans, no two of whom would agree on the eleven greatest Hawkeyes of all time.

Some help might be provided by nationally recognized All-American teams, although they did not mention an Iowa player until James Trickey was named to a second-team tackle spot by Walter Camp in 1912. Since then, All-American selectors have honored fourteen Hawkeyes with first-team places. Let's sift through those as we search for an all-time Iowa team.

How would a coach like to field a backfield consisting of the immortal Nile Kinnick (1939) and Willis Glassgow (1929) at halfbacks, Gordon Locke of the unbeaten 1921 and 1922 outfits

at fullback, and his choice of Kenny Ploen (1956) or Aubrey Devine (1921) at quarterback?

In the line, two great men would take charge of the ends. Lester Belding (1919) and Dick Romey (1925) were both Hawkeye ends selected for All-American honors. It would not be difficult, though, to reach down to the second-team group and choose an end from among Max Kadesky (1922), Bill Fenton (1952-53), and Frank Giliam (1956). Or maybe the 1957 captain, Jim Gibbons, will rate a niche in the Hall of Fame. Certainly the catches he made in 1956 to lead Iowa to the Rose Bowl make him deserving of mention.

Jerry Hilgenberg (1953) is the only center ever named to a first, second, or third team by an All-American picker. Fact is, Iowa has had only three other centers to be named all-Big Ten: John Heldt in 1921, Dick Brown in 1928, and Don Suchy in 1956.

The two guard spots are easy: Francis "Zud" Schammel from the 1933 eleven and the late Calvin Jones, the only Hawkeye to make All-American two years. There might be an argument over tackle, where five Hawks have been tapped for first-team posts. Latest, of course, is Alex Karras, the Cinderella boy who hit the pinnacle in 1956 after being such a complete washout the previous season that he did not even win a letter. The most famous tackle in Iowa history,

of course, is Fred "Duke" Slater, hailed as one of the greatest offensive linemen in collegiate history. Duke, now a respected Chicago judge, has become a legend in Iowa football, and much of the saga of the 1921 team is built around his exploits. Three other tackles honored were: Fred Becker, the first Hawk named to an All-American first team in 1916; Emerson "Spike" Nelson, a kingpin on the 1926 team; and Pete Westra, member of Burt Ingwerson's most successful Iowa eleven in 1928.

There is no attempt here to claim that the best Iowa players through the years were picked on All-American teams. Indeed, there are multitudes who will tell you some of the most deserving Hawks were snubbed by selectors of honor teams.

And how about S. Clyde Williams, a star at Iowa back in the days (1899-1900) before Walter Camp recognized the fact that football was being waged beyond the Allegheny mountains? Who is to say Williams and some of his 1900 teammates (e.g., Joe Warner, Willis Edson, Ray Norton, Moray Eby) did not rate comparison with the likes of the 1921-1922 and 1956 performers? After all, they outscored eight foes by 310 points to 12 and were one of only two Iowa teams to beat the Michigan jinx!

But certainly no one would object, in our shadowy Valhalla, if our all-time Iowa squad would huddle and name Nile Kinnick as its honorary

captain. No individual has brought comparable acclaim to Iowa before or since in athletics, although it is difficult to imagine greater recognition than that handed Coach Forest Evashevski's squad of 1956.

One of Iowa's most dismal years was in 1938. The Hawks won only from Chicago's dying football empire, 27-14, and played a scoreless tie with Purdue. The other games resulted in losses by 7-3, 28-0, 14-0 (twice), 27-3, and 31-13.

It was darkest just before the dawn, and one can imagine what a surprise the 1939 team pulled on the football world with a complete reversal of form. Kinnick, who had been injured much of 1938, blossomed out under Dr. Eddie Anderson to lead Iowa to a record of six wins, one loss, and one tie, missing the Big Ten title when Kinnick was injured in the Northwestern game.

Few who saw the Hawkeye Iron Man team will ever forget some of Nile's exploits: Three touchdown passes in the see-saw Indiana game, including one to Erwin Prasse that won the contest, 32-29, in the closing minutes; three more touchdown tosses in the 19-13 win over Wisconsin; the four-yard plunge and decisive dropkick that beat Notre Dame, 7-6; the famous punt that traveled nearly the length of the field to ruin the last hope of the Irish; and two great passes, to Prasse and Bill Green, to beat Minnesota, 13-9.

Kinnick's teammates will tell you he was more

than mechanically great. He was an inspirational leader who helped hold the battered little band of Hawks together beyond the limits of physical endurance. Kinnick himself went six straight games without relief before being carried off the field on that dark and dismal day at Northwestern.

Kinnick became Iowa's first Heisman Award winner, and soon he proved himself as promising a speaker as he was an All-American halfback. An outstanding scholar, Nile was working on his law degree at Iowa when World War II came along. Flying as a naval aviator, he was forced to "ditch" his plane in the Caribbean, and Iowa's most famous Iron Man died before he could be reached by a crash boat from the aircraft carrier.

The Hawkeyes of 1956 who gave Iowa its greatest record in twenty-five years will tell you that Kenny Ploen was "another Kinnick." Not only were his deadly passes and twisting runs vital to Iowa's Big Ten championship achievement, but he resembled Kinnick in the respect he commanded among the Iowa players and for his gentlemanly ways off and on the field.

Younger football fans of today are apt to forget too quickly that there were sterling deeds by the 1921 and 1922 teams, the only unbeaten, untied elevens in Iowa history. Glancing back at those pages in Iowa gridiron history will show why Gordon Locke, Aubrey Devine, and Duke Slater rate pedestals in our Hall of Fame.

Locke was an All-American fullback in 1921, but he played both fullback and quarterback the next year. In 1922 he scored 12 touchdowns — 72 points — in five Big Ten games to post the scoring record that stood until Tony Butkovich rang up 78 points while playing for Purdue's servicemen-dominated wartime team in 1943. Butkovich's record is still standing.

Devine gave Iowa its greatest individual performance in the long series against Minnesota. Aubrey accounted for 29 points as Iowa won by its widest margin in history against the Gophers — 41-7. He scored four touchdowns, made five of six place kicks for extra points, and threw passes of 43 and 25 yards to Lester Belding for Iowa's other two scores. His afternoon's work included 162 yards on returned punts and kick-offs. The Minnesota-Iowa rivalry has been a bitter one, but the Gopher fans arose in a thrilling tribute to him when he left the field.

Glassgow rates with the greatest breakaway backs in the annals of University football. His sparkling play helped Iowa whip through a difficult schedule only to lose out because of ties with Illinois and Michigan, a 7-6 loss to Ohio State, and a 7-0 setback by Purdue. Fans of that era will never forget Glassgow's 55-yard touchdown run against Michigan in 1928 and his 78-yard ramble that tied Illinois in 1929.

But how can we pick an all-time Iowa team by

ignoring players whose exploits are still part of the Hawkeye song and story? One would have to start by giving a bow to the memory of M. V. Sampson, who captained the first University of Iowa team to play an intercollegiate game — the 24-0 loss to Grinnell in 1889.

Modern Hawkeyes who have found Michigan a rugged jinx to crack will listen jealously when the old-timers tell about Moray Eby's three touchdowns in fifteen minutes of playing time against the Wolverines in 1900. That was Iowa's first year in the Western Conference.

How about a niche for Willis O'Brien, who kicked field goals of 52 and 50 yards against Minnesota in 1911? Try that sometime, even with a 1911 football that was rounder than our present-day elliptical spheroid.

I. J. "Stub" Barron, star lineman and captain of the 1915 team, probably would be only a sub on our all-time Iowa team, but he made Walter Eckersall's All-Western team in 1915 and was an All-Conference selection in 1914 and 1915. Stub was on hand for his forty-sixth straight opening day of fall practice this year.

Iowa athletes through the years have found a cheerful friend in Waddy Davis, and many of them did not know he was one of the greatest dropkickers in Iowa history. The rugged little guy played on the 1915, 1916, and 1917 teams, and one of his big days came when he booted two

perfect dropkicks to beat Iowa State, 6-3, in his senior season.

Glenn Devine played in the shadow of his All-American brother, Aubrey, and seldom handled the ball in his blocking role. But Glenn had a big moment in 1919 when he caught a toss from Aubrey and scored Iowa's only touchdown in a 9-6 loss to Chicago, then a powerhouse.

In the years following the 1921-1922 unbeaten teams, Iowa fans lauded the deeds of such colorful performers as Nick "Cowboy" Kutsch, who led Iowa to a 12-10 upset of Illinois in 1925 after the immortal Red Grange had run the opening kickoff back for a touchdown.

Then there was Mayes McClain, the Indian star who came from Haskell Institute to help Iowa in 1928 and later figured in the case that caused the school to be ejected from the Big Ten for one year.

Ill-fated Oran "Nanny" Pape was only a lowly sub in 1928. But he came off the bench for a 67-yard touchdown run against Minnesota. Another sub, Irving Nelson, dropkicked the extra point to give Iowa a 7-6 upset win. Revengeful Minnesota assembled a 7-3 edge the next year, but Pape zipped six yards around end in the final two minutes to let Iowa repeat, 9-7. A few years later Pape, a member of the Iowa Highway Patrol, was killed by a bullet from a fugitive's gun.

After Iowa began recovering from its Big Ten

ouster in 1930, such stars as Joe Laws, Francis "Zud" Schammel, and Dick Crayne came into prominence. And how could we come this far without a mention of Ozzie Simmons, the Ebony Eel, who terrorized Hawkeye foes in 1934, 1935, and 1936? You can find any number of Iowa fans who will describe the way the confident Ozzie would offer tacklers the ball, then twist around them for long gains. They will never forget the electricity that crackled through the stadium whenever he got the ball.

Homer Harris deserves a paragraph. Not only was he a fine end, but in 1937 he was elected captain, marking the first time a Negro led a major college football eleven.

Kinnick had some fine help in 1939 — Iron Men like Mike Enich, Jim Walker, Max Hawkins, Bill Diehl, Bill Green, Ray Murphy, Al Couppee, Dick Evans, Chuck Tollefson, Wally Bergstrom, Ham Snider, and Captain Erwin Prasse.

You will never be able to convince Michigan fans that Dick Hoerner does not belong on the all-time Iowa team. They'll never forget his plunging in the 1946 game, won by Michigan, 14-7.

In the years before Forest Evashevski took over at Iowa in 1952, there were men like Earl Banks, Jack Dittmer, Bill Kay, the rugged Shoener twins, Bob Smith, Bob Sullivan, Emlen

Tunnell, Al DiMarco, and Bill Reichardt, to name a few.

In the Evashevski era the brightest names have been Jerry Hilgenberg, Cal Jones, Alex Karras, Ken Ploen, Frank Gilliam, Dusty Rice, and Jerry Reichow.

Reichow never played with a championship team, but he won the Coffman Trophy for being named the outstanding player in the 1956 East-West Shrine game. Eddie Vincent was the Big Ten's leading ground gainer in 1954, and Earl Smith was the leading scorer in the Conference the same season.

GUS SCHRADER

IOWA ALL-AMERICANS*

Fred Becker, t, 1916	Francis Schammel, g, 1933
Lester Belding, e, 1919	Ozzie Simmons, hb, 1935
Aubrey Devine, qb, 1921	Nile Kinnick, hb, 1939
Gordon Locke, qb, 1922	Mike Enich, t, 1940
Richard Romey, e, 1925	Jerry Hilgenberg, c, 1953
Emerson Nelson, t, 1926	Calvin Jones, g, 1954, 1955
Willis Glassgow, hb, 1929	Alex Karras, t, 1956

*Big Ten Records Book 1957-1958