

HERMAN HICKMAN: The Tennessee Terror

By Mike Gershman

Few men can recite Victorian poetry, wrestle professionally, and coach All-American linemen, but Herman Hickman managed it all with aplomb.

Once described as looking like "Friar Tuck in a high school production of *Robin Hood*," Hickman pioneered special teams, was an All-America lineman, and turned out half a dozen more to pave the way for Doc Blanchard and Glenn Davis at West Point.

Born in Johnson City, Tennessee, Herman Michael Hickman played fullback at Chattanooga's swanky Baylor School before entering the university. A small sophomore tackle (5'10", 203), Hickman switched to guard as a junior and became a standout; however, he had impressed only Grantland Rice enough to be named to an All-America team his senior year.

Then Tennessee played New York University in a charity game at Yankee Stadium. Early in the game, NYU got to the Volunteers' 5-yard line and ran four plays right at Hickman; they surrendered the ball at the 23, and football writers scrambled to change their All-America ballots. When one said Hickman was "the best guard the South ever produced," Coach General Bob Neyland snarled, "Herman Hickman is the greatest guard football has ever known."

After graduation, Hickman won All-League honors with the NFL's Brooklyn Dodgers and wrestled professionally as "The Tennessee Terror." He spent five years at North Carolina State as a line coach (and also lectured on Rudyard Kipling) before moving to West Point, in five seasons at Army, he developed six All-Americans -- center Casimir Myslinski, tackles Tex Coulter and Al Nemetz, and guards Joe Stanowicz, Jack Green, and Joe Steffy.

Hickman became Yale's head coach in 1948 and, used to larger linemen, immediately dubbed his troops "The Seven Dwarfs." The next morning, all seven wore strips of tape on their helmets, that read "Sleepy," "Dopey," "Bashful," etc. Captain Levi Jackson, Yale's first black player, went along with the gag; his strip read, "Snow White."

Even though Hickman's teams rarely finished above .500 he had a successful 1950 because Yale beat Harvard, 29-6, in The Game. He said, "We needed that one. It fits into my policy of keeping the alumni sullen but not mutinous."

When mutiny began to stir, Hickman resigned and became a regular on the *Celebrity Time* TV game show and a football columnist for *Sports Illustrated*. A member of AP's Mid-Century Team selected in 1950, he was named to the *Knoxville Journal's* All-Time Tennessee team just before his death in 1958 from surgical complications.

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HERMAN HICKMAN

Herman Michael Hickman, Jr. - G - Tennessee
HS: Johnson City (TN); Baylor Prep (Chattanooga, TN)
B: 10/1/1911, Johnson City, TN - D: 4/25/1958, Wash., DC

		GM
1932	Brooklyn Dodgers	3
1933	Brooklyn Dodgers	10
1934	Brooklyn Dodgers	11
3 Years		24