

# OLE HAUGSRUD REMEMBERS

Sometime in the early 1940's, Ole Haugsrud sat down and wrote about his career in pro football. Haugsrud was the man who led the Ernie Nevers Eskimos out of Duluth, MN, and across the country in 1926. Like most football pioneers when writing their memoirs, Haugsrud felt compelled to give a complete history of pro football – most of it totally wrong. More surprising were the errors he made in scores, locations, and dates. We can assume he was working mostly from memory with little documentation.

In the following, we have excised those references to NFL history that have no connection with either Duluth or Haugsrud or the real world. In those places where Haugsrud made errors in dates and scores, we have simply corrected his text. Nevertheless, some of his errors of memory need long explanations.

Despite its errors, we believe Haugsrud's memoir is worth preserving. It contains material about the history of pro football in Duluth (including long lists of players) that are unavailable elsewhere.

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Professional football in the United States, afflicted during its formative years with the customary financial reverses, misconceptions, misunderstanding, misinformation and vested prejudices, always visited upon any pioneering venture – and especially sports – now rests on a solid foundation. The National League of Professional Football teams, the parent organization, is well fortified financially, powerful in membership and accepted with spirited acclaim by the American sports-loving public, now vies for popularity with the National and American Baseball leagues.

An insight into the growth of pro-football can be had from statistics which show that in 1921, 3,000 to 4,000 paid admissions was a big crowd and two paragraphs once or twice a week in the local newspapers was an outstanding publicity. Today crowds of 30,000 to 40,000 are not uncommon. The record is 74,000 that saw Harold (Red) Grange make his debut with the Chicago Bears against the Giants in New York in 1925. In 1925 the Bears could have been bought for \$500. Today the club is valued at \$500,000 and is not for sale.

## KELLY-DULUTH

Duluth enjoys the distinction of early membership on the National League roster, holding a franchise in the league from 1923 to 1929, when it was sold to Orange, N.J.

Duluth's entry into the whirl of pro-football was made during one of the wildest periods in the nation's history. American warriors had recently returned from the European battlefields, the Kaiser had skipped into sanctuary in Holland. Money was liquid in Duluth in those days. Store buildings and office rooms were at a premium. All industries were going to capacity. It was propitious time for venture into the unknown realms of a major athletic pastime.

College heads scenting the dazzling financial returns promised by popularizing football were planning and building colossal stadiums, great modern coliseums of concrete, steel and brick that in the aggregate totaled millions in financial outlay.

So, M.C. Gebert, then manager of the sporting goods department of the Kelly-Duluth Hardware Store and Dewey Scanlon, a football product of the West Duluth sandlots and later, quarterback on the Valparaiso College team, began a team called the Kelly-Duluth team. [Ed.: The name of this team is often given as "Duluth Kelleys." When it actually began playing is unclear, possibly as early as 1921.]

Material for a rather high class team was right on the ground as many players who had performed on high school teams and later with U.S. Army and Navy Service elevens were here. Russ Method, one of the greatest backs ever developed in the Northwest, and his brother, "Smoke" Method, had played on Col. Elmer McDevitt's A.E.F. team in France as had Jack Underwood, a steller end; Young Sharkey, a guard whose real name was Art Juntilla, Art Von, a hard charging fullback from the Great Lakes Navy Team; Howard Kieley, a tackle on the same eleven; Kenneth "Bunk" Harris, Duluth Central star back, who later made football history at Syracuse University; Oke Carlson, a giant lineman from Iowa State University;

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Joe Cobb, and Bill Rooney, whose spectacular performances at Roosevelt High in Virginia (MN) had put that institution of learning on the Northwest football map, Bill Stein, Art Johnson and Leif Strand, a trio of sturdy athletes who had previously starred in football and in national amateur basketball circles; Dick O'Donnell, the West Duluth electrician, who developed into a brilliant end; Doc Williams, a giant center who knew all the answers in the pivot spot; Wallie Gilbert, a triple threat star, who later came into national prominence as a member of the Duluth Eskimos and still later as third baseman for the Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team; Fred Denfeld, a local boy, who got his football fundamentals at Duluth Central and later became an All American with the Navy. Bruce Caldwell, a college performer, who coached at Denfeld and a power in the line; Daniel Coughlan, former Notre Dame back and Duluth Cathedral Coach; Hank Daughtery and Eddie Cole, who had starred in the backfield at Duluth Cathedral; Gibbons, Wick and Bratt, standouts on West Duluth grids.

In 1923, Gebert and Scanlon secured a franchise in the National Football League. Joe Sternaman, a grand little quarterback, who had achieved an enviable reputation as a drop-kicker and field general while playing three seasons with Zuppke's Illinois eleven, was brought here to direct the Kelleys in 1923. He proved a big drawing card, delighted the customers with his staccato signal calling and his educated toe in lifting the pigskin over the goal post bar for the needed points in close contests.

In the early history of the Kellys, they played with fine success against the Minneapolis Marines, the St. Paul Banholzers, and other powerful Northwest elevens. The Marines had a sturdy aggregation which included Labe Santro, Harold Erickson, Fred Chicken, Rube Ursella, Water Buland, Chuck Gavin, Ink Williams, Little Twig, the former Carlyle end; Bobby Marshall, steller performer at end on the University of Minnesota for three years, and other greats. The Banholzers were owned and managed by Jack and Mike O'Dowd, the latter afterwards becoming ring famous by copping the world middle-weight boxing title, and Steve Hopkins, the colored fullback.

Gebert and Scanlon continued as owners of the Kelly-Duluths until the end of the 1923 season when Gebert dropped out and the players took over, running the team on a cooperative basis in 1924 and '25.

### **HAUGSRUD JOINS THE TEAM**

At the start of the 1924 season I was made secretary-treasurer of the team with Dewey Scanlon as coach. Each team scheduled its own games, which made it possible to avoid long jumps and thus save money. The league was still in a more or less insecure state financially and the officials deemed it best for the team owners to kind of feel their way around.

Duluth was greatly handicapped in not having anything like a modern stadium. The games were played in Athletic Park in West End. Seating arrangements were inadequate and at many of the games even the women patrons had to stand. The fans were loyal to a grand degree but after all there was a limit to the amount of punishment they should be called upon to take.

During the 1923 and 1924 seasons we played principally Twin City and Range teams here, confining most of our league games to the road. In 1925 we decided to give the Duluth fans some league games. It's possible we could have made some profit on the home games that fall if weather conditions had not gone against us. However, it was one of those cold, rainy autumns and the fans decided to remain at home. It cost the Duluth players \$11 apiece to play one game and \$33 apiece to play another.

That was the blow-off. After three games, the players sold the franchise to Scanlon and me for exactly \$1.00. We assumed the club's bills and to partially defray them, we sold Mickey MacDonnell, a great little halfback, who had starred previously at Duluth Cathedral High, to the Chicago Cardinals for \$300 and Bill Rooney, a mighty backfield man, to the New York Giants for \$100. Either of those stars would be worth up in the thousands today. We also sold Kieley to the Chicago Cardinals, and O'Donnell to Green Bay.

### **ERNIE NEVERS' ESKIMOS**

Without advertising the fact we decided to make a road team of the local eleven in the 1926 season. We changed the name of the team to "Ernie Nevers' Eskimos." Nevers, playing on the Stanford University team, had been unanimously chosen All-American fullback the previous fall. Nevers' contract called for a salary of \$15,000 plus a percentage on large gates, the highest ever paid in football.

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F.A. Patrick, a liberal-minded clothing manufacturer, who had a prosperous business here at the time and, I believe, one of the greatest boosters Duluth ever had, decked out our squad in big white mackinaws which had an artistic igloo on the back and lettered "Ernie Nevers' Eskimos." Those coats sure made a hit with the fans from coast to coast. Our schedule embraced every city of football importance from Portland, ME to San Francisco.

The squad made up of Johnny Blood, Doc Williams, Russ Method, Cobb and Joe Rooney, Bill Stein, Jimmy Manion, Oke Carlson, Walter Keisling, Jack Underwood, Wallie Gilbert, Doc Kelly, Paul Fitzgibbons, Porky Rundquist, Capt. Ernie Nevers and Coach Dewey Scanlon trained at Two Harbors that fall and opened the season there in September with the Kansas City Cowboys as opponents. Duluth turned out enmasse to see the contest, the box-office showing better than \$6,000.

Nevers was well known to Duluth fans and highly popular. He was a native of Superior, Wisconsin, a city that has produced many outstanding athletes who have gone up to Major Leagues such as Dave Bancroft and Morrie Arnovich in baseball, Tuffy Leemans and Ernie Nevers in football.

Jimmy Manion of St. Thomas, a small but fast guard and Paul Fitzgibbons of Creighton, a splendid little halfback and superb broken-field runner, were among the newcomers as was Walter Kiesling of St. Thomas and Porky Rundquist of Minnesota, two stalwart linemen, Johnny Blood, one of the greatest pro backs and one of the most colorful was obtained from Milwaukee.

I had the honor of being the manager, secretary-treasurer, paymaster and, in fact, general factotum for this squad.

I want to say here and now that the Nevers' Eskimos was the gamest, most durable, most responsive I've ever seen or heard of. We left Duluth in September, traveled from here to Portland, ME, to the Pacific Coast, covered 17,000 miles, played 14 games with National League teams and 15 exhibition contests and arrived in Duluth in February 1927 smiling. No football team, amateur or pro in world sports history has ever accomplished a similar feat. And to add to the glory of this unique accomplishment, we did it with a squad of 13 players, 75% of the time. Think that one over. Twenty-nine football battles in one season with thirteen performers. An Eastern Sports Writer dubbed the team "Ernie Nevers and his Iron Men from the North."

We were playing from one to two games a week in late September and starting the second week in November, we played five games in eight days. We met St. Louis on Saturday, Detroit on Sunday, New York on Thursday, Philadelphia the next Saturday and Pottsville the day after. That would be almost an entire season's schedule for some college teams.

All of the other National League teams had squads of 18 players, the limit under the rules. Naturally, we felt somewhat abashed with only two substitutes to hold down the bench. To relieve this, Coach Scanlon and I would also appear in moleskins and participate in the warm-up practice before contests. I usually went through the motions of drop-kicking and when the whistle blew, scurried for the bench where I remained until they called for the water boy.

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As of this writing, the total of 29 games can not be verified. The following lists includes only those games for which we have independent confirmation of scores. The total is only 22 games. What happened to the other seven? There is an unconfirmed score of 27-0 vs. "Bessemer" without a date. Haugsrud mentions Portland, ME, on several occasions and a game may have been played there, possibly between Dec. 5 and 12. Haugsrud also indicates ten postseason games, rather than the five listed below. Unfortunately, Haugsrud is not the most reliable witness.

His statement: "We played Green Bay, Milwaukee, Racine, Chicago Bears, Hammond, St. Louis, Detroit, Akron, Canton, Buffalo, Providence, Boston, New York, Portland, ME, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Kansas City and then jumped to the Pacific Coast for exhibition contests with Sacramento, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego and Fresno, playing ten postseason games. Winning 17, losing 7, tying 3."

|      |   |                              |       |
|------|---|------------------------------|-------|
| S- ? | H | *Ironwood .....              | 27- 0 |
| S-19 | H | Kansas City Cowboys .....    | 7- 0  |
| S-26 | A | *Minneapolis All-Stars ..... | 7- 0  |
| O- 3 | A | Green Bay Packers .....      | 0- 0  |
| O-10 | A | Hammond Pros .....           | 26- 0 |

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|      |    |                                |       |
|------|----|--------------------------------|-------|
| O-17 | A  | Racine Legion .....            | 21- 0 |
| O-24 | A  | Chicago Bears .....            | 6-24  |
| O-31 | A  | Milwaukee Badgers .....        | 7- 6  |
| N- 6 | A  | *St. Louis Blues .....         | 48- 0 |
| N- 7 | A  | Detroit Panthers .....         | 0- 0  |
| N-11 | A  | New York Giants .....          | 13-14 |
| N-13 | A  | Frankford Yellow Jackets ..... | 0-10  |
| N-14 | A  | Pottsville Maroons .....       | 0-13  |
| N-21 | A  | Canton Bulldogs .....          | 10- 2 |
| N-25 | A  | Buffalo Rangers .....          | Canc. |
| N-27 | A  | Hartford Blues .....           | 16- 0 |
| N-28 | A  | Providence Steam Roller .....  | 0- 0  |
| D- 5 | A  | Brooklyn Lions .....           | Canc. |
| D-12 | A  | Kansas City Cowboys .....      | 7-12  |
| D-19 | A+ | *Bay Area All-Stars .....      | 19- 0 |
| D-25 | A  | *Hollywood Generals .....      | 3- 6  |
| D-26 | A+ | *California All-Stars .....    | 7- 9  |
| J- 2 | A# | *California All-Stars .....    | 10- 0 |
| J- 9 | A+ | *Los Angeles Buccaneers .....  | 0-19  |

+ - San Francisco, CA      # - Sacramento, CA  
 \* - Non-NFL game

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They fooled me in St. Louis, however. The game had reached its final stage with the Eskimos leading 48 to 0 and the ball resting on the St. Louis 30 yard marker. Nevers called me from the bench for a drop-kick. I was nonplused, of course, but got in position to obey. I held out my hand to receive the ball, the Duluth line opened and about eight St. Louis men came thundering through knocking me for a loop. I got the joke. I'd been framed. I never did see the ball.

Coming back to that abbreviated squad, when we got into New York Tim Mara, owner of the Giants, drove up to our hotel with a big sightseeing bus and invited us to hop in and see the Metropolis at his expense. This was a much appreciated gesture and we climbed into the conveyance – all fifteen of us. Still the bus didn't start.

Finally, after considerable delay, Mara says "tell the rest of your players to hurry and get in, we have to get under way." I explained the other boys were tired of riding and desired to rest in their rooms. "Very well," he agreed, "let's go."

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Haugsrud's squad total of 13 men (plus Scanlon) is essentially correct, but 26 players actually appeared in the 14 games against league opponents: Fitzgibbons, Nevers, and Cobb Rooney (14); Blood, Kiesling, and Stein (13); Method, Underwood, and Williams (12); Carlson, Johnson, and Joe Rooney (11); Manion (10); Gayer, Larson, and Murray (7); Kelly and Suess (6); Rundquist (4); Murphy (3); Buland and Gilbert (2); and Heinrisch, Quam, Scanlon, and Sullivan (1).

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We had some novel experiences, some discouraging, some humorous but none too serious. At Pottsville, Pennsylvania, a mining city in the Pennsylvania coal hills, where they enjoy Sunday sports contrary to the state law, we ran into some grid officials who gave us a disquieting afternoon. In those days the home club paid the officials and had the right to choose their own referees, umpires, head linesmen and field judge. Today the league selects, assigns and pays all officials.

The Pottsville officials in the game with the Eskimos were all "homers". Time after time Duluth would get into scoring position only to be penalized anywhere from ten to fifty yards for some trumped-up rule violation. Toward the end of the game the Eskimos became exasperated. Capt. Nevers felt the pressure of the gathering storm and admonished his players if they pulled any skull-cracking or mayhem they might be thrown out of the league. On the next play, Duluth advanced the ball to the Pottsville five yard line with first down coming up. Promptly Duluth was penalized fifty yards.

About this time Bill Stein who was about the most cool-headed player on the club, said, "This is the payoff." On the next play Method, one of the hardest blockers in the league, crashed into the referee, knocking the latter giddy. Stein, Williams, Rooney, Underwood and Johnson went into action with elbows high and swinging and five Pottsville players were carried to the sidelines. Jimmy Manion, our midget guard, had a perfectly developed specialty in which he hurled himself through the air then threw his feet at his adversary. Jimmy's feet caught the umpire in the mouth and drove out more teeth than a blacksmith-wristed dentist could pull in half an hour. Exit Mr. Umpire. The headlinesman was the only one left with a whistle. He quickly blew same and called the game off. It ended 0 to 13.

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In Detroit, Gus Sonnenberg, world heavyweight champion wrestler, was playing in the line opposite Doc Williams. Gus gave Williams the up and down for defects and decided Doc's ankles were vulnerable. Promptly he crashed into one of them, nearly breaking it.

"You try that trick again and we're both going out of the game," Doc warned him. Shortly afterwards, Gus dove toward Williams' other ankle. Doc sidestepped, grabbed Sonnenberg by the seat of the pants with one hand and the back of the neck with the other, raised the squirming champion high in the air and crashed him head foremost against the frozen turf. The officials sent both players to the showers. This irked Doc, for he and Stein had a \$25.00 bet on, which of course, Doc lost. [Ed.: News accounts of this game do not mention this incident. They do show that Williams left the game at some point, but indicate that Sonnenberg played a full 60 minutes.]

In Los Angeles, Coach Scanlon was called upon to sub for an injured half back. In his hurry to get onto the field, he picked a headgear that was too small. A play or two later, Scanlon's headgear went flying and Brick Muller's piked boot carved a semi-circle on Scanlon's head that half scalped him. The medico who attended Dewey wrapped yards of white gauze around Scanlon's head and the squad christened him "The Turk".

Many of the boys doubled on duties on and off the field. Stein had the responsibility of all the suits and baggage. Every man packed his own baggage. There were no prima donnas on this ball club. Russ Method was our trainer. Blood, Williams, and Nevers were the after-dinner and radio speakers. Blood also helped out with the publicity and I filled in here and there as needed, besides looking out for correspondence, schedules, hotels, finances and so on. It was a lot of work and a lot of exciting fun too.

Coach Dewey Scanlon was a big asset to our ball club, with his ability to substitute at the right time, changing position of players on defense and offense. In 1925, Scanlon was chosen by the sports writers of pro-football as one of the best coaches in pro-football, the other two being George Halas and Jimmy Conzelman.

Quoting Grantland Rice, "Ernie Nevers' Eskimos had a dynamic line and a colorful backfield, both on and off the field."

I can never forget the stellar performance which Nevers put on in every game on our memorable cross-country jaunt. I agree with Coach Glenn Warner that Nevers is the greatest all-around-backfield man that ever graced a gridiron.

Here are some of the feats he performed while playing with Duluth and with the Chicago Cardinals. He hurled 17 consecutive pass completions that brought a total of 27 points against Pottsville. [Ed.: In the 1927, not the 1926, game against Pottsville, Nevers completed 17 passes for four TD's; they were NOT consecutive completions. according to the play-by-play account in the Pottsville *Republican*.] He place-kicked five goals against Hartford, Connecticut, to give the Eskimos a 15 to 0 win. [Ed.: This was reported in several midwest newspapers, but the Hartford Courant reports three field goals (one of 45 yards) and a touchdown plunge plus extra point, for a 16-0 score.] He scored six touchdowns and made four conversions in whipping the Chicago Bears 40 to 6, the worst beating the Bears ever had to take.

Playing against the Giants at the New York Polo Grounds, Nevers intercepted a pass on his own 45 yard line and then carried the ball over in nine running plays. Playing against Milwaukee he stood on his own 40 yard line and fired a pass to Joe Rooney in the end zone for a winning touchdown.

Nevers made \$65,000.00 in the year of 1926. After he returned from the Pacific Coast he got \$25,000.00 on a contract calling for a winter schedule of games some land booster was promoting in Florida. He played only two games for that money as the promotion blew up after the opening contest. Earlier, the St. Louis Browns paid him \$10,000.00 to sign up as a pitcher and \$10,000 more for his season's work. He was with the Browns three seasons.

### THE ESKIMOS AFTER '26

We found the going tougher in the National League in 1927. Our players were getting older and could not be expected to go through such another grueling season as the previous one. We did not win as many games, but we came through all right financially.

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We didn't operate in 1928, but the league permitted Duluth to keep its franchise. [Ed.: This was a common practice of the time and many teams took advantage of it by laying out a year or two.]

The next year before the National financial crash blasted everything, we sold our franchise to Orange, New Jersey for \$2,000. We sold Johnson, Cobb Rooney, Underwood, Kiesling, Nevers and Stein to the Chicago Cardinals, Scanlon going to the same team as coach and I in a business capacity. Blood went to Green Bay and Fitzgibbons to Philadelphia. [Ed.: Although he doesn't mention it here, Haugsrud had a personal, rather than team, contract with Nevers and possibly the others. Dr. David Jones had purchased the nearly-dead Cardinals franchise from Chris O'Brien before the '29 season. By employing Scanlon and Haugsrud, he obtained the services of Nevers and the others. Before the 1930 season, the league ruled against such personal contracts, thus ending Haugsrud's connection with the Cards.]

George Preston Marshall of Boston bought the Orange franchise in 1931 and later took it to Washington, D.C. where his "Red Skins" have since become nationally famous. [Ed.: This appears to be an oversimplification. The Orange franchise moved to Newark in 1930 and went bust. On 7/12/31, the Newark franchise was forfeited to the league. On 7/9/32, Marshall and his partners were granted a franchise for Boston.] Marshall, the husband of the former well-known and popular movie star, Corinne Griffith, is a master showman and has bought a ton of popularity to pro-football. Personally, he is a most likable fellow and all his friends are sincere boosters. Much credit should be given Marshall for the way he handled the former Duluth franchise and developed it to the point it is today in Washington.

The Eskimos were the last pro team Duluth had in the National League. A semi-pro league, made up of Ironwood, Superior, Duluth, Eveleth, Virginia International Falls, Cloquet held the local boards after we took to the road in 1926 and continued to do so up and through 1935.

### HOWARD KIELEY: LOCAL CHARACTER

Howard Kieley, known and liked by many Duluth fans of the early '20s and who was dubbed the "All American Talking Tackle" by George Halas, owner of the Chicago Bears, did not accompany us on our record 1926 trip, having been sold to the Chicago Cardinals at the close of the 1925 season. When Kieley heard that we had signed Nevers and of the schedule we were going to play the coming season, he wired offering his services. It was not ethical for us to talk terms with Kieley whose contract belonged to the Chicago Cardinals. Kieley, growing a little impatient, picked up the phone and called me long distance collect. Picking up the receiver, I heard a voice say "Swede, you and Bananas (meaning Dewey Scanlon) put the sugar on the line and I will make the swing with you".

In his playing days with the Kelly-Duluth team here Kieley did furnish a lot of amusement. He and Art Juntilla, a middle-weight fighter who boxed under the name of Young Sharkey, and who played next to Kieley in the line, indulged in verbal fireworks, before and after every game.

Kieley always insisted that Juntilla wasn't as dumb as an ox, but that he wasn't any smarter, either. Juntilla circulated the report that Kieley had said the Missouri Compromise was a sex problem play. One day in the line, Kieley looked at Juntilla and said, "Your face would make a good blue print for an idiot". And Juntilla came right back with "I've seen better looking pans than yours under ice boxes. Your folks told me that when you were born you were so homely they went into mourning".

In the meantime, Juntilla was getting peeved from all this ribbing. The blow-off came one evening in the Sam Kernes McKay baths after a squad workout. While the boys were taking their showers the manager passed around the program for the next game. Juntilla saw the initials, C.H. before his name and inquired why.

"They stand for Cement Head", roared Kieley. Juntilla swung at Kieley and chased him up to the old post office building that stood at the corner of First Street and Fifth Avenue. Both boys were naked. Kieley hid in some shrubbery and Juntilla returned. Later one of the players took a robe and slippers up to Kieley's hiding place making it safe for him to walk down the avenue.

Kieley had relatives in nearly every city in which the Kelly's played. Without consulting the relatives, he invited his teammates to join him in a visit. One day Kieley announced he was going down to the Herald office and erase the sports department. He was particularly peeved at one Hemlock Peterson, the football expert on that paper. Kieley called up Sandy MacDonald, the sports editor, to prepare him for the invasion and announced what he was going to do to Hemlock.

Seems that MacDonald was the only sports writer on the Herald at that time. The publisher insisted upon all sports stories carrying by-lines, so while Macdonald really wrote the football he ghosted through Peterson, rather than have his own name appear more than once on the page, Willie Howell signed the kennel column and Tamrock Thompson handled the skiing, as I recall it.

"I'm taking exception to what Hemlock Peterson said in his article about me last evening, and I am coming down there to punch him on the whistle", roared Kieley over the phone to Sandy.

"Well, Hemlock is right here and I'll have him stay until you arrive."

"What kind of a guy is he?"

"Just a big agile fellow who loves to battle better than a baby likes pop. I'm sure you'll cheer him up with a challenge. His home's in Split Rock. They used him up there for skidding logs when the work got too heavy for horses. He shaves with a blow torch and picks his teeth with a Bowie knife. He says for you to bring your wings with you for when he finishes fanning the hilltops with you, he'll toss you so high it will take two hours to glide back to earth. Hurry along bruiser."

Kieley, I'm told, never visited the Herald office. We all liked Kieley. He was amusing in a rough sort of a way and a good-hearted cuss.

### **JOHNNY BLOOD**

The colorful character on the Eskimos squad was John Blood. He was truly brilliant, both physically and mentally; but a trifle unpredictable. One night in San Francisco he and Cobb Rooney visited a Chinese museum. Blood came home with a wealth of material which he whipped into a story that sold for several hundred dollars.

Another night he and Cobb had two girls out for dinner. After the feast they went to a cab stand. There was a taxi there but no driver. Blood piled his party into the cab, delivered the girls to their respective homes and returned to the cab stand. There was still no one around so Cobb pinned a dollar to the steering wheel and sauntered home.

One Sunday we were playing an exhibition game at Sacramento, Cobb Rooney was injured and taken to the hospital in an ambulance for treatment. Before the squad was to leave for San Francisco, where we were to play our next game, I inquired from the hospital as to Rooney's condition. The superintendent in charge informed me that Mr. Rooney would have to be hospitalized for a week. Two days later the superintendent called me to inform me that Rooney had left the hospital without permission and that was not all, the special nurse that had been taking care of Rooney could not be accounted for. I no more than hung up the receiver and in walked Cobb and a beautiful lady whom he introduced as his wife to be.

### **EARLY YEARS OF FOOTBALL IN DULUTH**

Duluth had semi-pro football back in 1910 – '11, when the Superior Badgers and Big Duluths of this city staged intercity games. The players were recruited mostly from former members of Duluth Central, Blaine and Nelson-Dewey High School squads. Some of the Badgers were Roy Grimsrud, Stykles, Nord, Frank Ennis, Otto Zeeman, Snake Van Arman, Felker, Mike Sitek, and Ray Maley.

Big Duluth had among others Paul Turn, Frank Summers, Lum Gordon, Allen Macauley, Gordon Falconer, Frank McGray, Tom Fogarty, Joe Berini.

In the early days of Pro and Semi-Pro Football in Duluth and Superior, the equipment consisted of nose guards, shim guards, some wore tassel caps for headgears. Some of the boys wore suites that looked as though they had been poured into them.

I was just a little kid at that time and more concerned about carrying Dave Bancroft's bat into Hislop Park than seeing football games.

John Geistman organized the Adams Athletic Club in the West End in 1915 and promoted football, baseball and hockey for several years, most of his teams being outstanding. Players on his football team

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were among others Fat Anderson, Art and Harvey Buchanan, Shark Hanson, Whittle, Gib Ryan, Andy and Helmer Grenner, Charles Foster, Ralph Caulkins and Mike Atol. The Adams played Superior and Mesaba Range teams.

Allan Robert Macauley "The Silent Scot" managed the Superior City Team 1916-17 while Frank (Cub) LaJoy was at the head of the Duluth City team. Their biggest games were with the St. Paul Banholzers, Minneapolis Marines, other Twin City elevens and between themselves. Special trains plied between Duluth and Superior for these games.

Playing with Superior were Redge Haley, Art and Harvey Buchanen, Horn Rhenstrand, Ray Walter, Art Aubin, Frank Ennie, Nick Hirsch, Vic Holman, Russ Rill, Dick and Bill Bradley, Stub Underhill and others.

On the Duluth team were Hank Daughtery, Ralph Caulkins, Hank Barry, Fat Anderson, Chuck Darling, Eddie Cole, Brayden, Shark Hanson, Pal Ryan and others. Lorin Solon, University of Minnesota fullback, was brought in by Duluth to perform in several games.

Superior Y.M.E.A. represented Billings Park and on its roster were Kid Billings, Thompson, Waseen Brothers, Fat Anderson, Bert Haskel, Culhane, George and Frank Brew, Marty Christoferson and Joe and Art Olson.

Both these teams operated on a cooperative basis and drew large crowds.

The first World War broke up these teams but they were followed by a four team league made up of war workers in the Superior and Duluth shipyards and the Minnesota Steel Company plant at Morgan Park. Prominent among the players on these teams were Dewey Scanlon, Walter Gilbert, Freddie Clarke, Nelson, Fat Ausland, Dick O'Donnell, Harry Grant, Rudy Hanson, Bill Ausland, Webb and Earl Monoghan, George Brew and Joe and Art Olson.

The Christies of Superior played with varying success for several seasons starting in 1922. Playing on this eleven were Hown Anderson, Leo Kranisch, Ike Simstad, Al Simstad, Gip Patrick, Manley Christiansen, Jim Welsh, Coach Carlson and Manager Northcott. Ole Sorenson made his debut into football by making a touchdown for the opposition which this day was Ironwood, Michigan.

The Duluth Zephyrs, which played a number of semi-pro games in the late '20s had among other players, Tore Gernander, Willis Jeffery, George Ryan, Hart McDonald, Vern Nygard, Angelo and Frank Puglisi and Art Stephen. George Martinson was the manager and Bill Anderson the coach.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the fans for the support they have given professional football in this vicinity.

### **MORE ABOUT THE 1920'S**

Coming back to the 'roaring 20s' of local professional football history, social, industrial and athletic life at the Head of the Lakes was about as boisterous as in other parts of the United States. The first World War clouds were dissipated, the U.S. warriors had been returned to their respective homes, everyone had much lucre than ever before. The European battles had left their wild imprint on the minds of all Americans, especially those in the adolescent stage. In that weird and hilarious scramble, college football took on a financial status that caused a great rush for student talent into every highway and by- way of the land. Many of the college coaches were not over-particular as to the purity of the amateur standing of much of the talent and, as a result, some colleges that had never before been heard of in gridiron warfare were ringing up surprising victories and copping the screaming headlines in the newspapers. The lineups of some of these teams sounded like the roll call in the Russian army.

There was money, big money, in college football and the heads of the schools realized this fully. Thousands of sports loving fans who were well up on baseball, basketball, rowing, swimming and other athletic pastimes, but who didn't know a forward pass from a drop-kick, began wheeling their various ways to the pennant-decked stadiums to get in on the excitement.

Duluth, which had always been football minded, was quick to get in on the popular strain. West Duluth had semi-pro teams of all ages as did the West End. The East End started with several teams, but soon

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dropped from the picture. Superior with a raft of high school graduate talent also had many semi-pro elevens.

In this era Harvard, Yale and Princeton were known as the big three in college football. The college boys would play for their Alma Mater on Saturday and on Sunday they would play under an assumed name in some other city for a semi-pro football team. One of the games I recall was the famous contest in the coal regions of Illinois, when Notre Dame represented Carlinville and the entire Illinois team represented Taylorville. Another game was played in Detroit when the Michigan University team played under the name of the Detroit Heralds against the Ohio State team playing under the name of the Toledo Maroons.

Many of the boys were reprimanded and were expelled from their various schools. Coaches were likewise given a lesson.

George Trafton, former Notre Dame center, was playing with the Chicago Bears and coaching the line at Northwestern and he along with many others who played professional ball on Sunday were told to make their choice either college or pro-football.

About this time Stubb DuMoe of the West End who was then coach and scout for Fordham University came to the Head of the Lakes and induced such boys as Art Johnson, Bill Stein, Leif Strand and Jack Woodward to play for Fordham. They performed for Fordham on Saturday afternoons and Charlie Brickley, the famous drop-kicker from Harvard who was then head coach at Fordham, would take his entire team over to Patterson, New Jersey and play on Sunday. After several seasons for Fordham this quartet joined the Kelly-Duluth and naturally added to the strength of the team.

Times changed quickly and you were either amateur or professional. I recall of one instance when the Cardinals were traveling East from Chicago on the same train with the Chicago University team which was going East to play Princeton and we were playing in New York that weekend. Our train coaches happened to be next to each other and the Chicago University players were great admirers of the boys playing for a salary. This irked Coach Alonza Stagg to the point where he asked the train conductor to lock the doors between the coaches.

This feeling went on between professional and college ball pretty well through the '30s and today there seems to be an understanding which is mutual and on a very friendly basis. Pro-owners respect the college and colleges reciprocate. Today in fact the National League will not sign a boy whose class has not been graduated from college. In many big cities, the pro-teams play in college stadiums and I see by the paper the other day that the owner of the San Francisco franchise in the new professional league has offered the services of his coach, Buck Shaw, for the season of 1945 or until his team operates in 1946.

### **QUICKIES: DID YOU KNOW ...**

That the four Horsemen played as a unit for the Brooklyn Tigers in the American Football League in 1926.

That Ernie Nevers used 10 yards of tape for his ankles for each game. He would start taping two hours before the game.

That Bobby Marshall used washboards for rib protectors.

That Russ Method broke his nose fourteen times in fourteen years of football.

That Wally Gilbert was one of Wrigley's best customers. He would chew two packages of gum before each game.

That Doc Williams needed two berths to take care of his six-foot five-inch overall length.

That the Eskimos had two guards whose weight were 100 pounds different. Jimmy Manion weighing 165 and Walter Keisling 265.

That Mickey MacDonnell was the lightest man in professional football, weighing 155 pounds. Mickey also holds the distinction of calling signals the day that the Chicago Bears were defeated by the Chicago Cardinals 40-6.

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That Art Von once held the option for Wrigley Field for football.

That Oke Carlson while in training at Two Harbors ate 23 eggs at one sitting and had steak for dessert.

That Bill Stein greased his elbows before every game so that the opposing linemen would slide off without leaving a scratch.

That Duke Slater, former star tackle at Iowa U., never worried about anyone borrowing his shoes. He wore size fourteen.

That Red Grange wore the number 77 and Ernie Nevers wore the number 11 all through their college and professional career.

That the Northwest has been well represented by its officials in the National Football League. Art Von, until retirement, officiated many of the prominent games in the National League. Today, Ronald J. Gibbs, a former coach on the Range is considered one of the leading officials in the National League and last year was chosen to referee for the All-Star game as well as the World's championship professional game in New York.

That three former members of the Eskimo's squad have been service in World War No. Two. Ernie Nevers has recently returned from action in the South Pacific. He is now athletic director of the Marine forces at San Diego. Johnny Blood is with the Armed forces in China. Oke Carlson recently returned to Duluth from service in the infantry.

That the Eskimos were the first pro-football team to establish a training camp. In 1926 they trained at Two Harbors, Minnesota. [Ed.: Apparently the New York Giants also established a training camp in 1926.]

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[Ed.: Although Haugsrud does not mention it here, part of the agreement when he sold the Duluth franchise was that he would receive a part of the next NFL franchise in Minnesota. As a consequence, thirty years later he became a part owner of the Minnesota Vikings.]