

“The Time Machine”

Article #33

Housekeeping

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Wadena County area schools are open and student activities are in full swing. A bittersweet time of the year. For me, I like summer, but I like fall even better. So, bring it on.

In today's TM article #33 I have an eclectic collection of odds and ends. First off let's go back to article #31, where Harry Harrison ('52) was correctly claiming to be coach Conzemius' No. 1 quarterback. Early in the article I assumed he meant he was coach's best QB. I thought of some past QBs that were randomly popping into my mind. Randy Stofer ('63) was one, and he was quick to contact me to point out an error in my reporting and an obvious oversight as well. First the error. I stated he had earned 12 letters, four each in football, basketball, and track. Randy said, "I earned three letters in each sport." Defending my error would be boring. Suffice it to say that either the methods were different in the mid-1970's or the athletic department owes me a bar. The defense rests.

The oversight is a bit embarrassing. John Conzemius had a 31-year run that started in the fall of 1951. He had many great teams, but only one undefeated team. In the fall of 1961 WHS ended with an 8-0-1 record. The QB was Dave Zosel, named to the Mid-State all-conference team, along with six of his teammates. Backs Mike Sather and Mike Merickel and linemen Wayne Herzog, Joe Jovonovich, Bill Heather, and John Geiser.

Moving on to some feedback I received from our loyal readers I now have a clearer understanding as to why Don Tabery did not go onto play college football. To bring "Squeak" Johnson into the story one more time to do a compare and contrast exercise. Both Johnson and Tabery were great backs. The Minnesota Gophers were consistently one of the best teams in the country. Every Minnesota high school football player wanted to be a Gopher. The legendary coach, Bernie Bierman, may have been a little stingy about offering scholarships to the local talent. He would recruit the locals deemed talented enough to become a Minnesota Gopher, but no scholarship. Bierman was betting that the locals he would recruit would want to be part of the Gopher dynasty so bad that a lack of financial aid was no problem. As it turns out Don Tabery was recruited by the Gophers. I had asked the late Keith Tabery ('77) about this issue and as I recalled Keith had indicated that Don was recruited by Bierman. Since publishing article #32 I have heard from one other family member and one close family friend. Each confirmed Don was recruited but no scholarship was offered. We might recall that "The Great Depression" had its grip on the American economy from 1929-1941. Johnson and Tabery each lived a good part of their youth during that stretch. In spite of no scholarship for Johnson, he was able to attend the University of Minnesota. For Don Tabery his options were fewer. No scholarship, no college, no football.

Our final agenda item has to do with "The Time Machine" articles 1-30.

Go to the new WCHS website: wadenacountyhistory.org

Click "Resources" on the main menu

Scroll down to "The Time Machine," click it and you will have access to TM articles 1-30.

Periodically I will have new articles added to this site.

Lastly, on the WDC website there will soon be a link to "The Time Machine" articles 1-30 as well. That will join the six WHS Football (4) and WHS Basketball (2) Scrapbooks 1900-80, found under "Athletics & Activities."

See you soon!