

It was a very good year — for football

ORHS Class of '59 —



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EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second in a series of articles and the life and times of the ORHS Class of 1959.

Our time at Oak Ridge High School was one of the most memorable periods of our lives that greatly influenced who we are today. Many of us probably did not realize then how blessed we were to be associated with such great people in a unique place and at a unique time; the stars were aligned like never before, or since.

Just being a part of the 1958, undefeated, state and national championship football team was such an honor. The tremendous support of classmates and the community and the school spirit at the games was unbelievable.

The success of the '58 team was not just the result of a few great players. Everyone on the team, both coaches and players, was essential to the team's success. Many players went on to play in college, but all agree that the "Unity" on the '58 team was greatest that they have ever experienced.

The honors and statistics of the team seem unreal to the former players, so it is understandable that they may be viewed with skepticism by later generations. The team was selected as National High School Champions, in competition with hundreds of other schools, and was consensus Tennessee High School Champions. We led the nation with 497 yards total offense per game and 403 total rushing yards per game. The average points scored per game was 43.8 while an average of only 2.6 points were given up per game; seven out of 10 opponents were held scoreless; the team holds the record total of 508 yards rushing against MBA. All American Jackie Pope averaged 17.2 yards per carry and had a season total of 1600 yards rushing and 800 yards passing. As outstanding as these statistics may seem, they should be viewed with the perspective that the first unit played only the first series in the second half of several games -- one can only imagine what Jackie's totals might have been.

Eight members of the '58 team have been elected to the Oak Ridge Sports Hall of Fame (three coaches; five players); seven players signed SEC scholarships; 10 of the 20 seniors played college football; three players were captains of their college teams; three players were selected first team All-State (several others were on the All-State roster); two players were selected to All American teams; Jackie was selected Tennessee player of the year. A record crowd estimated at 14,000 to 18,000 attended the final game against Chattanooga Central.

Many players participated in other high school sports and extracurricular activities. Six were elected to the National Honor Society. To briefly summarize what some of these old 1958 Wildcats have accomplished: Jackie Pope (tailback), teacher-coach, banking, state government; Mike Brady (center and captain), professor/geologist with his own company in Colorado; Bobby Mitchell (wingback and co-captain), teacher-coach in Chattanooga; Howard Dunnebacke (fullback), IBM executive, Austin, Texas; Skippy Brinkman (tackle), industrial supervisor, Oak Ridge; Woody Barwick (end), school superintendent, Kentucky; Lewis Lanter (end), deceased, professor of architecture, Georgia Tech, Atlanta; Larry Richards (guard), resort owner, Missouri; Sam Owen (guard), president of physician services company, Nashville; Paul Huray (tailback), vice president, University of South Carolina; Wilson Mills (blocking back), executive, Hoover Corp., Wisconsin; Kirk Mills (blocking back), Pilot, Florida; Larry Forrester (end) deceased, corporate attorney, Georgia; Tommy Bowers (end), engineer, Ohio; Leslie Kent (end), industrial engineer, Clinton; Jim Culp (defensive end), civil service supervisor, Ohio; Evans Webber (end), industrial supervisor, Georgia; Richard Ulm (tackle), deceased, store manager, Oak Ridge; DeWain Oliver (center), retired Navy; Coach Don Bordinger, ORHS principal, Oak Ridge City Council; Coach Jack Armstrong, deceased, high school/junior high coach (60+ wins in a row),

Florida. We have lost touch with Phil Ashcraft (tackle), who was a good guy and undoubtedly successful. There were also underclassmen who made valuable contributions to this team.

We will always cherish the memories of ORHS, with great classmates, friends and coaches. GO WILDCATS!