

1958---THE GREATEST SEASON, PART 3

(As published in The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking column the week of October 23, 2018)

Jack Bailey brings us the third in a series of four articles about the "Greatest Season" of Oak Ridge Football.

Week 6 vs. McMinn County Cherokees in Athens, TN, Friday, October 17:

In preparation for the game, Coach Jack Armstrong assessed his team's performance year to date by acknowledging Oak Ridge's potent offense. However, it was the performance of the first-string defense that was largely responsible for the team's success.

The first team defense has not yet been scored upon, not even allowing a team to get past the Oak Ridge 30-yard line. Lewis Lanter and Woody Barwick were praised for their defensive improvement, as well.

He also announced fullback Howard Dunnebacke would miss his second straight game because of tonsillitis and the flu, or have limited availability at best. The contest will be McMinn County's annual Homecoming game, and the Oak Ridge High School band will participate in the Homecoming parade. The stadium has been expanded and new lights had been added this season.

Oak Ridge defeated McMinn County, 40-14, with the first team defense giving up its first two touchdowns of the year. The Oak Ridge offense continued its rampage through opposing defenses with tailback Jackie Pope scoring four second half td's on runs of 49, 68, 12 and 70 yards and Larry Mason scoring from 40 yards out on a wingback reverse.

Fullback Bobby Mitchell scored the first touchdown of the evening on a 1-yard plunge.

On a personal note, this game marked the first date for your writer and the former Pat Hensley, now my wife of more than 50 years. We were 9th graders at Robertsville Junior High School and rode to the game with our teacher, Mrs. Dorothy Carr. (So, that is how Jack and Pat started their wonderful life together--Ray)

Week 7 vs. Montgomery Bell Academy (MBA) at Blankenship Field, October 26:

MBA of Nashville was expected to be a tough opponent, losing only one game so far and that was to then #2 ranked Memphis Christian Brothers High School. Coaches Armstrong and Bordinger were displeased with the defensive performance vs. McMinn County and threatened personnel changes if improvements were not made.

Oak Ridge turned an anticipated close game into a rout and overwhelmed the MBA "Big Red" by a score of 56-0, notching their 4th shutout of the season. It was OR's best performance of the year, and was led by Jackie Pope, Howard Dunnebacke and Larry Mason.

An estimated 8,000 fans watched the onslaught at Blankenship Field with the Wildcats scoring twice in the first three minutes of the game. Pope scored 3 td's, Dunnebacke 2, Larry Mason 2 and Mike Brady 1. Larry Richards converted all 8 extra points.

The defense, much improved, only allowed 3 first downs and 28 yards offense by MBA. Oak Ridge piled up 508 rushing yards and 22 first downs. Guard Sam Owen was praised for his best game of the year.

Press box observers said the Wildcats' performance was the greatest they had ever seen in high school football. The 1958 team is by far the most explosive and colorful team ever assembled at ORHS, according to The Oak Ridger sports writer Gene O'Bleness.

Week 8 vs. Cookeville Cavaliers @ Blankenship Field, Friday, October 31 (Halloween):

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Halloween turned into a nightmare for visiting Cookeville, as Oak Ridge put on another amazing offensive and defensive performance by shutting out the Cookeville Cavaliers for the second straight year, this time by 54-0. Last year's score was 48-0 in favor of ORHS.

Jackie Pope racked up another 4 touchdowns, including a 78-yard kickoff return to open the second half. Bobby Mitchell, Lewis Lanter, Howard Dunnebacke and Larry Mason scored once each.

Defensive stalwarts for OR included Lewis Lanter, Larry Richards, Skippy Brinkman, Sam Owen, Jim Culp, Woody Barwick, Mike Brady, Roland Henderson, Bobby Mitchell, Richard Ulm and Sophomore David Grove. Cookeville produced -0- total offense in the second half of the game. It was complete domination by the 'Cats!

Week 9 vs. Knox Fulton at Evans-Collins Field, Knoxville, November 7:

The hype continued to build for the Oak Ridge's powerhouse football team. Dr. E. E. Litkenhous of Nashville produced a highly credible power rating for Tennessee high school football teams each week. At this point in the season, the ORHS power rating was 119 points, the highest EVER attained in the state by a high school team and Dr. Litkenhous had been publishing his ratings since the late 1930's.

According to The Oak Ridger sports writer Gene, O'Bleness, there was a new tune in Oak Ridge this week. The title: Slaughter on Blankenship Field by composers Rogers & Hart. Lyrics by Kirk Mills and Wilson Mills. Featured soloists: Jackie Pope and Howard Dunnebacke. Accompanists: Larry Richards, Skippy Brinkman, Lewis Lanter, Woody Barwick, Eddie Alexander, Roland Henderson, Mike Brady, Bobby Mitchell, Jim Culp, Richard Ulm, Evans Weber and Sam Owen.

ORHS journeyed to Evans-Collins Field in Knoxville to meet the Knox Fulton Falcons. An estimated 3000 fans attended the game to see the powerful Wildcats make their only appearance in Knoxville this season. Fans were not disappointed as the Wildcats rolled over Fulton, 61-0, recording their 6th shutout of the year.

With two minutes gone in the first period, Larry Mason scored on a 70-yard punt return. On the very next series, Jackie Pope raced 68 yards on another punt return for a touchdown. Pope scored on a dazzling 90-yard run from scrimmage in the second quarter.

Howard Dunnebacke scored three times over the course of the evening. Evans Weber scored on a 47 yard pass play from Pope. Larry Mason added two more td's in addition to his punt return td.

Pope's two touchdowns gave him the scoring lead in the state with 146 points over Buster Edwards of Erwin, who was held scoreless against OR when the two teams met earlier in the season.

Next week, we will look at "The Game of the Year" vs. Chattanooga Central for the State Championship.

Thanks Jack! The next article will wrap up the four-part series from Jack on the "Greatest Season of Oak Ridge Football!"

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Wildcat Defensive Stars



LARRY RICHARDS
☆☆☆



MIKE BRADY
☆☆☆



SKIPPY BRINKMAN



BESSY MITCHELL



WOODY BARWICK

FIGHT RESULTS

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Long Beach, Calif. -- Don Dan, 143½, Los Angeles pointed Gaspar Ortega, 143½, Juana, Mexico, 12.

Louisville, Ky. -- Wilf G 163½, Edmonton, Alta., 163½, out Billy Tuck, 153½, Louisville.

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Photos of some of the players as shown in a photo in The Oak Ridger at the time

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Tailback Jackie Pope: One part of the best 1-2 punch in the state of Tennessee

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Fullback Howard Dunnebacke: One part of the best 1-2 punch in the state of Tennessee