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Sports Commentary: Small College Football in New England

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would include all the ground that Thorpe covered in his triumphant dash through an entire team. Thorpe went on to an equally brilliant professional career.

But don’t feel too badly for Army either. Earl “Red” Blaik coached his share of Army powerhouses. And he was a disciplinarian. The story’s still told about how Army during one contest was decimating its opponent in every phase of the game. Blaik sent in his third string with orders to take it easy and not humiliate the opponent. Even so, a cadet gathered in a fumble and raced unopposed for the goal line. Suddenly, remembering Blaik’s orders, the cadet stopped and carefully placed the ball on the one yard line.

Football, in its early years, holds so many memories of great Eastern teams, their players like “Ducky” Pond of Yale and “Swede” Oberlander of Dartmouth who single-handedly wrecked the until then undefeated 1925 Cornell eleven.

New England Small College Players Who Participated in National Professional Football League:

- Jack Maitland - Running Back - Williams College, Baltimore Colts
- Curtis Perry - Defensive Back - Williams College, Cincinnati Bengals
- Gene Fuget - Tight End - Amherst College, Dallas Cowboys
- Doug Swift - Linebacker - Amherst College, Miami Dolphins
- Fred Scott - Flanker - Amherst College, Baltimore Colts
- Sean Clancy - Linebacker - Amherst College, Miami Dolphins
- Mark Buben - Defensive Tackle - Tufts University, New England Patriots
- Roger LeClerc - Linebacker, Kicker - Trinity College, Chicago Bears
- Milt Kobroski - Running Back - Trinity College, New York Giants
- Joe Shields - Quarterback - Trinity College, Green Bay Packers

New England Small College All-Americans

- John Hubbard, Back - Amherst, 1905
- Ben Boynton, Back - Williams, 1917-1919
- Little All-Americans (selection started in 1934)

AMHERST
- Adrian Hasse, End, 1942
- Richard Murphy, Quarterback, 1972
- Fred Scott, Flanker 1973

BATES
- Larry DiGrammarino, Wide Receiver, 1981
It's a game; it's fun. And I like to think that what it's all about is how the Times reporter summed up a 1907 Yale defeat at the hands of Princeton. "Each and every [Yale player] left the field feeling no disgrace in such a defeat, for Yale had proved herself made of the sternest stuff, had produced an eleven that every American can be proud of as an example of the highest type of young manhood, which in the face of every discouragement refuses to accept defeat while there is strength to fight, and by pure merit won over every obstacle, when experienced football men saw no chance of the Blue gaining victory."

Of course, if you don't like high sentiments about football, there's always the coach who said to his players "OK guys, line up alphabetically according to height."

CHARLES ANGELL, Professor of English

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BOWDOIN
Steve McCabe, Offensive Lineman, 1977

NICHOLS
Ed Zywn, Linebacker, 1981

NORWICH
Milt Williams, Running Back, 1979; Beau Almodobar, Wide Receiver, 1984

PLYMOUTH STATE

TUFTS
William Grinnell, End, 1934; Tim Whelan, Running Back, 1976; Mark Buban, Defensive Line, 1978; Chris Connors, Quarterback, 1979; Mike Brown, Offensive Line 1980

WESLEYAN

WILLIAMS

TRINITY
Micky Kobrosky, Back, 1935, 1936; Charlie Sticka, Back, 1955; Roger LeClerc, Center, 1959; David Kiarsis, Back, 1970; Pat McNamara, Flanker, 1978

39-8 Middlebury win. Since 1979, the game has been played for the Wadsworth Trophy. The trophy is named for a former Norwich Vice President and Commandant of Cadets, Colonel John B. Wadsworth, Jr.

In 1919 New England started its own Army-Navy series when the cadets of Norwich faced the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. They have opposed each other fifty-one times on the gridiron—series record—CGA. 27, NU 23, Ties-1. This contest is played for a prize called "The Mug." The rivalry is best known as the "Little Army-Navy" Series.

The United States Coast Guard Academy fielded its first team in 1922. Coast Guard's 1951 team coached by Nelson Nitchman was undefeated. Hall of Famer Otto Graham took over coaching reigns in 1959. Otto's 1963 team went undefeated and went to the Tangerine Bowl. The Bears were defeated in their own bowl appearance by the Western Kentucky Hilltoppers, 27-0.

In 1960, several small college's started football and were having difficulty finding a schedule. Athletic Directors, Hal Chalmers of Nichols College, Ed Swenson of Bridgewater State College and Dave Wiggins of Maine Maritime Academy got together and organized the New England Football Conference. By 1987, the Conference has grown to twelve teams. The members are Curry College, Bridgewater State, Framingham State, Nichols College, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Worcester State, Western New England College, Maine Maritime Academy, Fitchburg, Plymouth State and the University of Lowell. The twelve teams have been organized into two divisions, North and South, and a championship game between the two first-place finishers is scheduled for November.

Perhaps the highlight of the New England Football Conference was in the 1985 season when Little All-American running back Joe Dudek of Plymouth State broke Walter Payton's NCAA all-time touchdown record with 79 touchdowns. Plymouth State and Western Connecticut State were co-champions of the conference. Plymouth played in the ECAC playoffs, and Western Connecticut earned a berth in the NCAA tournament. One of the traditional rivalries which has developed in the conference is the annual battle for the Cranberry "Scoop" between Bridgewater State and neighboring Massachusetts Maritime Academy.

The most recent conference was formed in 1965 when the New England Small College Athletic Conference was created. This conference is run by the college presidents. The coaches in this conference are not allowed to go on the road recruiting and the teams are not allowed to participate in NCAA tournaments. The members are Tufts, Williams, Trinity, Wesleyan, Amherst, Hamilton, Middlebury, Bowdoin, Bates, and Colby.

Small college football continues to grow in New England with many new teams joining the NCAA division III such as Worcester State and Fitchburg State. But the old traditional rivalries between Amherst-Williams, Trinity-Wesleyan, Norwich-Middlebury continue to flourish proving that college football can blend the old with the new.

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