

The First Game — 1911

ON SATURDAY afternoon, October 22, 1911, at Wright Field, the football teams of Rayen and South high schools staged their first game of a series which, through the years, has earned the term "classic" and has grown in Youngstown's sports history. By now, forty-eight games have been played in this colorful annual event.

Rayen High, at first the only high school in the city, was glad to have another local school to compete with in athletics, even though it meant that experienced athletes who had earned their letters at Rayen would now be students at the new South High School if they lived on the south side of the Mahoning River:

South High was the winner in this memorable first game by the score of 12 to 0, consisting of two touchdowns and two points after touchdowns (in 1911 touchdowns were valued at five points and conversions counted one point). A crowd of 3500 witnessed this initial encounter; in 1911 that many fans could be rightfully termed an immense throng, when football in Youngstown was looked upon with uncertainty. But having seen the crowds that taxed Rayen and South stadiums over the years, the opening game turnout was indeed small.

Records have it that both teams played well, with South a speedy outfit and Rayen having advantage in weight. South scored in the first quarter when Fusselman blocked the attempted kick by Humes of Rayen on Rayen's 30-yard line. The ball bounced high and was caught by Walter "Red" Johnson of South who went over for the score. Johnson also

kicked the goal for the point after, and South led, 6-0. South scored again in the third period. With the ball on the Rayen 20-yard line, Johnson passed to end Jim Metz, South captain, who went over for the second touchdown. Johnson again kicked the goal for the point. The final score—South 12, Rayen 0.

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The first South team was coached by John Corbett, a 4-letter man from Harvard, and was captained by Jim Metz. The Rayen team, coached by Hugh Smith, was captained by Clarence Robinson, today a prominent attorney, steel executive and outstanding Negro citizen of our community.

On the Rayen squad, in addition to Coach Hugh Smith were E. Smith, D. Smith, J. Smith, G. Smith and John Smith. I do not recall if any of them were brothers, but it must be said Smiths dominated the 1911 Rayen High football squad!

Newspaper accounts tell us this game was an interesting contest, despite the fact that those in charge of arrangements did not have the benefit of contest experience.

The South adherents, happy over the outcome, formed a parade with colors flying and, cheering noisily, marched down Federal Street through the "Diamond," as the Public Square was known in those days, out Market Street to the new school for the big victory celebration.

The Second Game — 1912

THE SECOND game of the Rayen-South series was shifted to Thanksgiving Day in 1912 and was played at Wright Field again. The decision to play this game on Turkey Day was a master stroke. For almost a quarter of a century this event became as much a part of Thanksgiving as turkey and

cranberries. It was the absolute tops of any sports event in Youngstown, and why it ceased being played on this day I will never know.

On this Thanksgiving Day, local football dope received a jolt that will be remembered as long as memories of that game survive. South High, going into this titular game undefeated in eight contests, went down to bitter defeat at the hands of a mediocre Rayen outfit that could boast of only three victories in eight engagements. The hero of this upset victory was diminutive Tony Butchy, Rayen halfback, whose drop-kick field goal from the 20-yard line was the clincher that set the stage for the adage: "Anything can happen in a Rayen-South conflict." This 3-0 lead was increased to 5-0 later when Fusselman of South fell on the ball behind the goal line for a safety which gave the Northsiders two more points.

The most ardent Rayen rooters had hoped for a low-score victory for South, as Coach John Corbett of the Red and Blue had built one of the speediest high-school teams in Ohio. But Butchy's goal gave the Rayenites a lead which inspired great resolution to protect until the final whistle. Accounts mention that this second game was well played and was extraordinary in the generalship by both elevens.

The game marked the appearance of "Mutt and Jeff" in the Rayen backfield. Millie Warner, who towered six-four, went in for Shields in the Rayen backfield, and when he stood next to Tony Butchy, who was slightly over five feet, the contrast was striking. The leading comic strip in those days was "Mutt and Jeff," by Bud Fisher, and this Warner-Butchy duo quickly became known as the "Mutt and Jeff" of the gridiron.

The year 1912 was also the season the value of a touchdown increased from five to six points.