

### *The Eighth Game — 1918*

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THE 1918 annual Rayen-South football game came very near not being played. The year 1918 was the period of the tragic flu epidemic which took thousands of lives throughout the nation. Each school had played only two games of its regular schedule when orders were issued that no crowds could assemble. Schools, churches, theaters and other meeting places were closed, necessitating the cancellation of several games. South High School was converted to an emergency hospital, but within six weeks the restrictions were lifted and the fans were clamoring for the resumption of the school games. With Thanksgiving Day approaching, the big question was: "How about the Rayen-South game?"

After much discussion, Superintendent of Schools Dr. N.H. Chaney, an able and athletic-minded educator, agreed to let the games be resumed. But he warned the fans that because of the long delay and inactivity of the football squads they could expect anything but a scientific exhibition of the great autumn pastime. So, to have at least one game "under the belt," an innovation was tried that proved very successful—a double-header was staged at South Field with Rayen High meeting the Massillon Tigers at 1 P.M. in the first game and the South Warriors clashing with the Akron West Cowboys in the nightcap. This novelty was witnessed by about 7000 fans, with South downing Akron West 19-0 while the best Rayen could do with Massillon was a 7-7 deadlock.

Both schools introduced new coaches this year. Russell "Busty" Ashbaugh of South and Lou Pickrel of Rayen had entered the Army. Elgie Tobin, a local boy who played his college football at Penn State, was at the Rayen helm. Harmon Welch of Colgate and Syracuse, who had been an assist-

ant coach at South, stepped into the top spot at the South Side school.

Then on Thanksgiving Day, with about 10,000 fans looking on, the teams met on a field ankle-deep with mud, and the South High Warriors were the victors, 19-0. The Red and Blue led by Captain Dave Jenkins were simply too much for the Northsiders under Captain Denny Hough. Wally "Fat" Elliott, who had played against South in the 1916 game but missed the 1917 game while in the Army, had returned to school and he and Nick Nardicci were the big men in the Rayen backfield. But they were marked men and could not get going against the defense set up by the South High Warriors.

The first quarter was almost over before the South boys scored their first touchdown. "Dutch" Kling, South quarterback, passed to end "Chuck" Wollet for thirty-five yards to place the ball in scoring position. Moments later, "Tacks" Jacobs went over from five yards out and Captain Dave Jenkins made good on the conversion to give South a 7-0 lead. Rayen almost tied it up later when Nick Nardicci rambled thirty yards and seemed on the way, but Kling, the South safety man, hit him so hard the ball squirted out of his grasp into the arms of Jacobs of South, who went all the way to the Rayen 2-yard line before being stopped. But South could not move and the Rayenites took over on the 1-yard line and immediately booted out of danger.

In the second period the Kling-to-Wollet combination clicked again for the second South score. Kling heaved thirty yards to Wollet, who side-stepped the few remaining yards to make the score South 13, Rayen 0. The goal was missed, however, and the half ended with South leading 13-0. In the third quarter South scored its third and final touchdown. With the oval on the Rayen 45-yard line, it was "Fat" McPhee and Jacobs alternating with fullback Ray Fesler to grind out the yardage with Jacobs going over. The try for point

was missed, but South had a 19-0 advantage, which was the final score.

The Rayen Tigers threatened in the third stanza. With the aid of a 15-yard penalty the Northsiders moved to the South 5-yard line, but Elliott and Nardicci failed to dent the fast-charging South forward wall, and the threat died.

For Rayen the work of Elliott, Nardicci and Hogan was outstanding on offense, with Captain Denny Hough and end Jones starring on defense. The whole South team stood out, with Kling, Jacobs, Wollet and Fesler shining in offense and Captain Jenkins, "Curly" Johnson and Len "Crip" Persons taking defensive honors.

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South's Coach Ashbaugh, then in Service, proved himself quite a prophet that day. Just before game-time the South squadmen received a telegram from "Busty," stationed at Camp Gordon, wishing them luck and predicting they would win by three touchdowns, which they did!

A near-tragedy occurred during the game when the stands on the north side of the field collapsed. Several hundred fans were thrown to the ground, but fortunately no one was hurt. All took it with good nature and viewed the remainder of the game atop the wreckage.

### *The Ninth Game — 1919*

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ON A field better suited for ducks than football, the South High Warriors defeated a stubborn Rayen eleven 7-0 in the ninth renewal of the Thanksgiving Day classic at South Field. After two days of continued rain, the crowd of 10,000 certainly was a surprise, but it proved once again that this annual gridiron classic steadily was gaining in popularity.

This was easily the hardest-fought game of the series so far, in addition to being the cleanest. The Rayen team, under its new coach Horace Biggs, and captained by "Fats" Elliott, went into this game with a season record of 2 wins and 6 losses. On the other hand, the South team, under the leadership of Captain Harvey Brown, had 6 wins, 1 loss and 1 tie. Their only loss was to the Massillon Tigers at Masillon by a slim margin of a safety, 2-0; this game was played on a field much like the one at South Field.

Rayen won the toss and George Borts kicked off for South. Elliott brought the ball back to Rayen's 35-yard line where it was first and ten for Rayen. The first play from scrimmage resulted in a 5-yard loss. On the next play Hough circled South's left end and found himself in the clear, but a brilliant tackle by safety man Dick Barrett ended his journey after a 30-yard jaunt. It was a game-saving play by Barrett for, had Carney eluded him, he would have scored easily.

That was the only threat Rayen made during the first half. At the start of the second quarter, South worked the ball from its 40-yard line to the Rayen 6-yard line, but the Rayen forward wall stiffened and took over after a fourth-down pass failed. The key play in this South drive was a 15-yard pass from Halleck to Johnson. After seesawing up and down the field the first half ended with neither team able to score.

It seemed that nothing short of a break in luck would sever this tied score; the tension was great and something was bound to happen soon. Only a few minutes of the third quarter had been played when the break came. After an exchange of punts, Rayen had possession on its own 20-yard line. Elliott tried the line for no gain and on the next play he fumbled the pass from center and the ever-present "Curly" Johnson recovered it. The South stands were wild as the teams lined up on the Rayen 15-yard line. Norman Smith went around left end for three yards. Borts made four yards through the line.