

The Eighteenth Game — 1928

IN RAYEN STADIUM, ankle-deep in mud, the football teams of Rayen and South battled to the first scoreless tie of the series, Saturday afternoon, November 24, 1928, the first time since the first game in 1911 this classic was played on a day other than Thanksgiving Day. It was the second tie in the last three games, and according to accounts of the struggle the crowd numbered about 16,000. This was surprising inasmuch as the crowds were increasing every year; probably the chief reason for the drop was that many people who could have attended on Thanksgiving were working on Saturday.

Captains Burt Nasman of South and Bill Renner of Rayen met for the tossing of the coin, with Bill Renner winning and electing to defend the north goal. Freddie Everth of South kicked off to Renner who brought the ball back about twelve yards. Rayen started to move rapidly and with Wilson, Renner and E. Cumiskey smashing the line and running the ends the team moved to the South 36-yard line where it ran out of gas; South took over on the 20-yard line, after Renner's punt went over the goal line. The rest of the first half proved to be a punting duel between Charlie Young of South and Renner of Rayen, with honors about even.

In the third period Rayen received a break when Big Charlie Young's punt was partially blocked and retrieved by Rayen on the South 21-yard line. This looked like the big break for Rayen, but Don Wilson fumbled on the second play and Daley of South recovered. Young kicked immediately, the ball going to midfield. In the rest of the period, play was in South territory, but the Orange and Black could not move too close and the third quarter ended in the scoreless tie.

In the fourth canto South got a break when Bill Renner,

attempting to punt from his own 10-yard line, saw his kick blocked, and South recovered on the Rayen 9-yard line. South adherents went wild; some of them came out of the stands and onto the field. Play was halted until they returned to their seats in the bleachers.

South had been kicking on first and second downs to drive Rayen back and apparently had achieved its purpose. Then "Diz" Mayer replaced McFarland and made three yards on first play. "Gunner" Burgeson hit the same spot for two yards. With the ball on Rayen's 4-yard line, Blanchard Tomlin fumbled and the pigskin bounded into the arms of Bill Renner. That was the closest either team was able to penetrate, and the rest of the game saw the teams seesawing between the 20-yard lines.

When the gun went off to end the game the crowd cheered lustily. The game was devoid of thrills offensively and the crowd seemed happy when it finally ended.

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This was the twenty-fourth game without a loss for "Busty" Ashbaugh. South was last beaten in 1926 when Struthers turned the trick, but since then they won four and tied Rayen in the balance of the 1926 season. They won all ten in 1927 and had won eight and tied one (Rayen) so far in 1928. Another game remained to be played that year, against New Castle on Thanksgiving Day at New Castle, Pennsylvania.

Rayen had the edge in first downs, 7 to 5. This was due to South's kicking on first down so many times. Playing for a break, which presented itself in the fourth quarter, a fumble spoiled any chance for a score. Rayen lost 40 yards on penalties, 25 for being offside and 15 for illegal use of hands. South suffered a loss of thirty yards for being offside six times.

Leo Murphy, South star of a few years back, and Dick Booth of Sharon were spectators, probably in the role of

scouts. Both boys were attending the University of Pittsburgh, on the varsity squad.

Before the game, students of both schools engaged in a snowball battle. They cleaned the snow off the bleacher seats in fine fashion before they ran out of ammunition and were forced to cease firing.

Rayen played the whole game without a substitution, which was rather unusual. South used two replacements, Mayer for McFarland and Crawford for Sweeney.