

Magazine Feature Section

SPORT DEVELOPS FIGHTING BLOOD

Rougher the Game the Better the American Youths Like It, as Shown by Rugby and Soccer Football of Today

BY J. B. SHERIDAN.

THE year about this time we read the following dispatch sent from Minneapolis, Minn.:

"W. W. Hefelfinger, star guard of the Yale team of the early 90s leaves tomorrow for New Haven, Conn., to coach the Yale line-men."

Just what this dispatch may mean to the young football players of today, the veteran of twenty-five years of football will say that the "greatest football player of all time," now aged 47, is on his way to show boys who might be his sons how to play the game.

The mighty "Hef!" Who of the old-timers does not remember him? He was the "greatest of the great" then, and taking them all by and large, averaging them up, great and small, Hefelfinger is still the greatest of the football players of all time.

This is said with Butterworth, the Yale full-



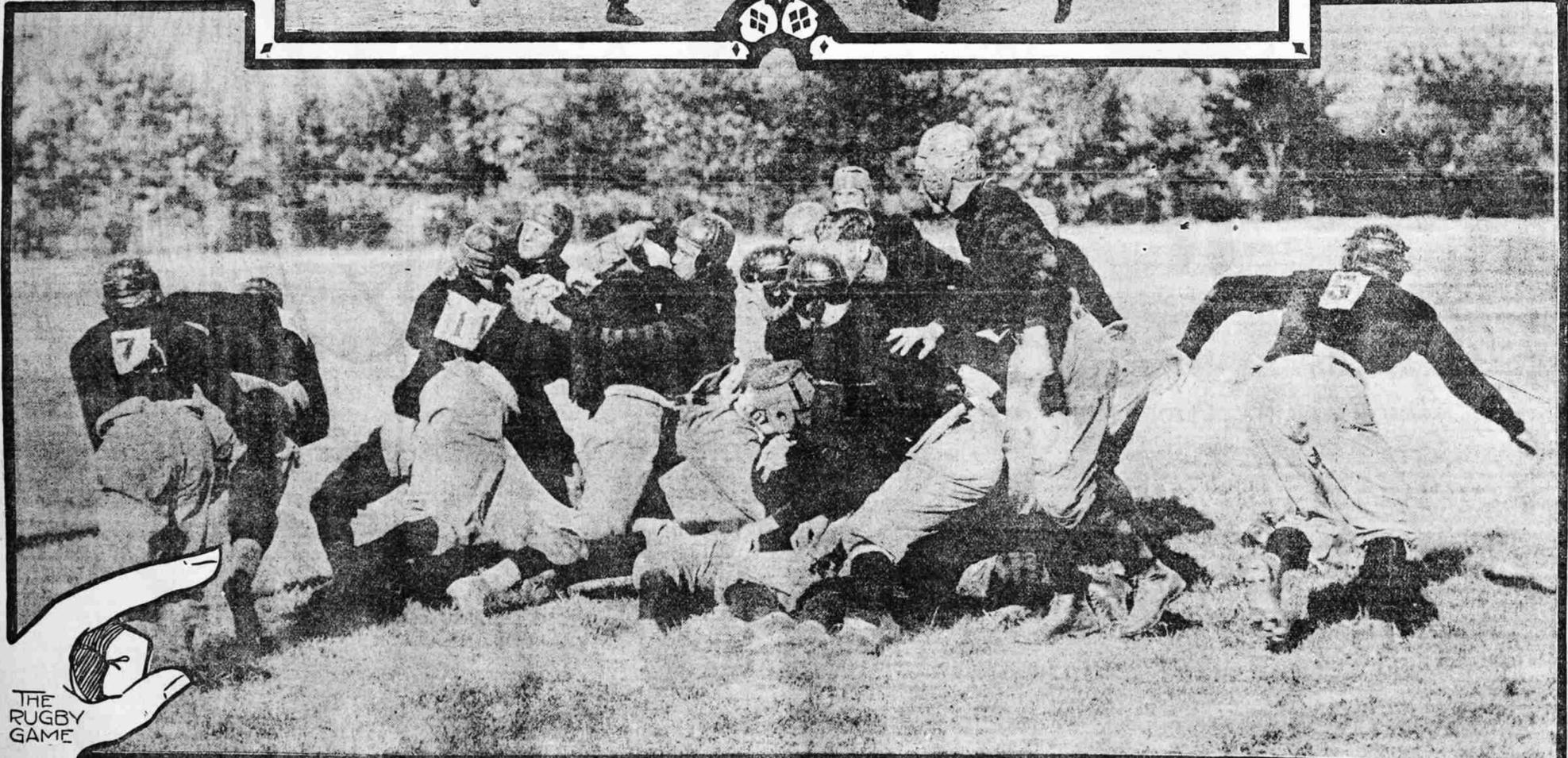
THE SOCCER GAME.

Osgood, Pennsylvania, 1897; De Witt, Princeton, 1904; Coy, Yale, 1906; Larsen, Wisconsin, 1901; Heston, Michigan, 1905; Eckersall, Chicago, 1906; C. D. Daly, Harvard, 1901; Baldr, Princeton, 1897; Capron, Minnesota, 1907; Minda, Pennsylvania, 1897; Brickley, Harvard, 1912, and Mahan, Harvard, 1915, are a few of the great backs I have known. Of all these great backs, Ted Coy must be ranked first. Coy had everything that all the others had, speed, dodging and plunging ability, and, added to all these, tremendous physical power. Coy has been known to take the ball and hit five first-class players in the course of his run. Every player he hit stayed down. It was not that Coy roughed his men, it was that he ran so strongly and so powerfully that when he hit them they went down as if struck by a locomotive.

Heston was much the same sort of a runner, a fellow who could carry a team on his back and about his legs and still make gains. Heston was everything that a good back should be, and then, like Coy, added tremendous physical vigor to his other talents. Tackling Coy or Heston was like tackling a horse. Strength added to their equipment, which was at least equal to that of other backs. They could kick and catch punts and play defense. They were first-class players and a first-class man can always do these things.

Larsen, Wisconsin, 1901, was another of these strong men who have speed and football ability. Larsen could pack an entire team on his back and make his gain. He could kick, punt and play defense, too.

Osgood, who was a star with Pennsylvania in the early 90s, was a third of the strong-backed strong-limbed brotherhood. He could dodge and duck, and when tackled could hold his feet most wonderfully. Osgood, I think, was killed in Cuba while serving with the rebels about 1898. Minda, who was in Penn about the same time Osgood was, played a strong back. Minda was a tremendous worker and strong as Osgood, but strong enough to bend in a line when he hit it.



THE RUGBY GAME.

back of the same period; Ted Coy of recent memory, Tom Shevlin, Heston of Michigan, Hinkey, Hef's end at Yale; Cochems, Wisconsin; Eichenlaub and Dorals of Notre Dame, Mahan and Brickley of Harvard, Donnelly of Princeton, Kelly of Yale, Eckersall of Chicago and Olyphant of West Point, and Acker of St. Louis University in mind. Every year that two-line dispatch, informing the world that "Hef is on his way," sets one to thinking of the greatest of football players. There have been many, some 200 in all, for every year must turn out ten or twelve players who are entitled to be called great.

Going away back to the beginnings of American football in the early 80s we first come to Walter Camp. Camp was some ten years before the writer's time. Comparing him with the stars of years that were to come, Camp did not attain rank as a great football player. He was slim and light and clever. They did not play a heavy plunging game in Camp's time. American rugby was much on the order of the English game, from whence it sprung. Indeed, it was purely English until Camp, animated by the desire to win, to "winch things," really created it into the machine-like game that it is today. Camp figured illegal plays and put them into operation. Camp was the first man to employ interference. This was due to his inability to advance the ball in open play. To Camp's time football interference was off-side, and, of course, foul and not permissible. It is "off-side" in English rugby today. To my mind, interference is always foul. But without it there would not be any American rugby. I am hypnotized enough to imagine that the English game would have done more good to Americans than the American derivative. In other words, I believe and always have believed that Walter

Camp, the so-called "father of American rugby," ruined a good game because he was not strong enough to advance the ball under the open system of the English game. Thus I have always felt that American rugby, fathered by Walter Camp, has been an illegitimate child, and for this reason.

Interference, invented and applied by Walter Camp, makes the game heavy and bruising so that players cannot play it oftener than once a week and then for only short annual periods of two months. The complicated drill, also developed by Camp, calls for more time and practice, the dullest sort of practice, than students and young men in business can afford.

So Camp's improvements have really made football a professional game, to be played only by picked men highly trained by professional coaches for a short annual season.

By highly specializing football Camp has made it a game that cannot be played by the mass of young men for any length of time.

I have digressed to discuss Walter Camp as a football player. Most people regard him as a great football player and as a greater coach. I do not regard him great as either. He was a light, slight fellow, who needed help of larger and heavier men to help him advance the ball. So he pressed the rules, broke them, got his illegal interference legalized and spoiled the game of rugby football. Later on, when he began to coach Yale, he kept on "pressing" the rules, always trying to stretch them.

Had Camp been in baseball instead of football, he would have been pulled from his pontifical position in a hurry.

I had a conversation with Jim Wear, a former Yale quarter, on this subject some years ago when Camp's interference system had been

developed so that President Roosevelt and the whole United States was up in protest, and the rules had to be fundamentally changed.

"If there is anything wrong with the game let Camp fix it up," said Mr. Wear. "Camp knows all about football."

Camp had ruled football for twenty years and had got it into the sad mess it was in. Whatever Camp's grade as a football player may have been there can be no doubt of Hefelfinger's merit. All in all "Hef!" is pretty close to the greatest of all football players. Of course, there will be many protests against this. The claims of the great backs will be advanced. Backs get more newspaper notice than linemen, hence are deemed better players. This is very far from the truth. Very often linemen are much better players than the backs, but they do not get the ball to carry so often as the backs do and newspapers speak only of men who carry the ball.

Of course Hefelfinger was a ball carrier, too. Whenever there was a necessity for a gain on the fourth down Hefelfinger was often given the ball. He rarely failed to make his gain. A giant of a man, 6 feet 4 inches tall, weighing 230 pounds, hard as nails, Hefelfinger was light on his feet as a ballet dancer. He could run 100 yards in 11 seconds. He was so strong that heavy football togs and shoes did not slow him up a bit. He could run with the ball in the open and he was a line plunger beyond all praise. As a defensive man "Hef!" was a wonder. He played defense by being offensive. He was in the opposing play before it was very well started.

Two years ago Hefelfinger, then 45 years old, went down to Yale to lend a hand in the coaching. He put on a suit ("Hef!" keeps in fine condition), and they say that he bent

back the left side of the safety line greater ease than he bent it back twenty-five years before.

He could do everything on a football field, play guard, tackle, center, end, run with the ball, kick, tackle, everything. I think that he was the greatest football player that has ever stepped on cleats.

I have always been a great admirer of the line player rather than of the back. The linemen does the heavy work and the back merely carries the ball when, under Camp's scheme, the linemen opens the way for him. George Chadwick, a tackle, also of Yale, was, I think, next to "Hef!", the greatest of all players. Chadwick could do all things, run with the ball, play defense, tackle and kick. He was a wonder to block and pick up punts and he has some great runs of picked-up punts and fumbles to his credit.

Marshall Newell, who, I believe, has since died, played a great tackle for Harvard in the early 90s, at a time when Glenn Warner was playing tackle for Pennsylvania. Newell was a short, stocky chap and could do everything on a football field. He was an all-America man for many years. Fred Murphy, a Yale guard of the later 90s, was also a grand all-around player, and while he does not rank with Hefelfinger, who, indeed, outranks them all, I have a lively recollection of him as a great player.

Hinkey, of course, was a star. I doubt that there ever was such an end to dive in and pull a runner out of a cloud of interference that would stun the ends of today. It must be remembered that in Hinkey's day they played "flying wedges," "cris-cross wedges," etc., in which as many men as you wished could be taken back and started as far back of the line of scrimmage as was deemed best. In these

reference on an end run. They had some good long way off and had a full head of steam by the time they reached the line of scrimmage. Hinkey was a ferocious tackler, too desperate, indeed, always hurting his victim, and such was his hardness and endurance, never hurting himself. He was the model of all ends doing this, yet Sport Donnelly, who was at Princeton when Hinkey was at Yale, was a great end, and, like Hinkey, an unnecessarily hard-playing one. Donnelly bore the reputation of inclining to foul, while of Hinkey it could be said that he was unnecessarily fierce. They were both stars and, save Shevlin, neither before or since have such ends been seen on a football field. E. B. Cochems, Wisconsin, 1901, was a wonderful end. Cochems was a cleaner player than Hinkey or Donnelly, and a better man to carry the ball. Shevlin was the peer of any end that ever lived, a great man on defense and a better ball carrier than Hinkey, Donnelly or Cochems. There was a center at Missouri University about 1895, Ben Thompson, who was as good as any center, save one, I have ever seen. Thompson was a slender chap, weighed but 160 pounds, but was tough as barbed wire and an eagle to cover ground. He could snap the ball surely, take care of his man, go down on kicks as fast as the ends and tackle all over the field. He was better than most ends on end runs.

I have spoken of the great linemen first, for I have always felt that the linemen do the real work and are robbed of due honors by the flashy but less hard-working and less meritorious backs.

There have been innumerable great backs in newspapers. I suppose the truly great backs I have known would be going a long way back.

Shevlin, Ames of Harvard, Lee of Princeton and Bull of Yale. They were all clever, dodging runners, and good kickers rather than strong "line-busting," tackle-breaking chaps. Bull was simply a kicker. Ames earned his nickname of "Snake" by his ability to squirm through an open field. Moffat was mostly a kicker, though he has some good runs to his credit. McClung and McCormick of Yale, men who have since climbed high in politics, were kickers and clever rather than strong runners. They earned fame in their days because they won close games by a drop kick or a smart run. Football was different in the days of Moffat, Ames and Bull to what it was in the days of Coy, Heston, Osgood, Brickley and Mahan. Camp tightened up the game in the late 80s and it became harder to gain ground. Prior to the early 90s snaky running around the ends was the chief method of advancing the ball. With the 90s came the wedges, the famous Yale "V," which was improved into the "flying wedge" or "V" of Walter Deland, the Harvard tactician, heavier line plunging and a general weighting up of the game. Therefore, American rugby as we now know it practically began with Hefelfinger, Hinkey, the Illinois of Yale, Newell and Lewis of Harvard, Woodruff in Pennsylvania, and Stagg in Chicago.

For an all-American all-time team I would choose: Ends, Hinkey, Yale, '94, and Shevlin, Yale, 1900; tackles, Newell, Harvard, '94, and Hildebrandt, Princeton, '87; guards, Hefelfinger, Yale, '93, and Hare, Pennsylvania, '97; center, Lewis, Harvard, '94; quarter, Eckersall, Chicago, '90; halves, Coy, Yale, 1910, and Heston, Michigan, '05; full back, Brickley, Harvard, 1911.