



THE 1955 OBERLIN RED DEVIL FOOTBALL TEAM remained undefeated and won the league championship. This picture appeared in the 1956 yearbook. Front Row: Jack Carver, Larry Guinn, Forrest Paddock, Eldon Johnson, Don Richardson, Ray Corcoran, Bill Schwab. Second Row: Derry Bishop, Allen Jeffus, Rusty Addleman, Jerry Baker, Jack Kelley and Bob Vernon. Third Row: Lynn Johnson, Richard Anderson, Walt Fortin, Clint Corder, Jim Carver, Jerry Macfee and Richard Hayes. Fourth Row: Jim Alexander, Stanley Moberly, Larry Brainard, Norm Richards, John Schultz and Jim Kelley. Fifth Row: David Musgrave, Larry O'Toole, Charles Kelley, Roy Unger, Larry Rathbun, Gary Erickson and Billy Soderlund. Sixth Row: Bob Tally and Gary Anthony.

Red Devils refused to lose in 1955, taking Northwest Kansas League

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**

At the beginning of the 1955 season, the Oberlin Red Devils were tagged as the top threat in the Northwest Kansas League, and that turned out to be true, as the team swept through the season undefeated.

It hadn't happened before, and it hasn't happened since.

The team had 35 players, nine of them lettermen returning from a 1954 team that won six games and lost three.

Of those, 11 were starters, but players said Coach Jack Hague made sure the others knew they helped the team out in each victory.

"I have fond memories of being a part of the 1955 undefeated football team at DCHS," said Lynn Johnson, now a real estate agent and auctioneer in Oberlin. "I was not one of the star players, but I will always remember what Coach Hague told me: He said if it were not for the rest of the guys pushing for a position on the team, the stars probably wouldn't be so good."

Players included Mr. Johnson, Larry Guinn, Norm Richards, Gary Erickson, Walt Fortin, Don Richardson, Derry Bishop, Jerry Baker, Clint Corder, Jim Alexander, John Schultz, Charles Kelley, Forrest Paddock, Ray Corcoran, Allen Jeffus, Bob Vernon, Richard Anderson, Jim Carver, Stanley Moberly, Jim Kelley, Roy Unger, Billy Soderlund, Eldon Johnson, Bill Schwab, Rusty Addleman, David Musgrave, Walt Fortin, Richard Hayes, Larry O'Toole, Larry Rathbun, Gary Anthony and Jack Kelley. Jack Carver, Jerry Macfee, Larry Brainard and Bob Tally played on the team and since have died.

An article in the Sept. 1, 1955, paper said, "Hague can field nine regulars from last year's team that surged strongly late in the year and possibly was the Northwest Kansas League's best team at year's end despite its fourth-place finish."

A week later, headlines said the Oberlin team was a "top threat" in the Northwest Kansas League.

The Red Devils kicked off the season against Phillipsburg, the traditional opening game for 20 years. On Sept. 23, the boys brought home



Coach Lyons

their first win, 28-0.

Players ranged from freshman to seniors. Mr. Fortin said he was a freshman that year, but he played enough to earn a letter. After the 1955 team took the league championship, he said, he continued to play throughout high school.

On Sept. 29, a story in *The Oberlin Herald* said that the team was "hoping to better their convincing 28 to 0 win over Phillipsburg last week," which they did, beating Hoxie 32-13.

Not until the third game of the season did the men meet a team on their home field. The Colby Eagles traveled to Oberlin, but the Red Devils didn't let them get a point on the board. The final score was 19-0.

Oberlin had not beat Colby since 1948, and *The Herald* said the boys ended "a six-year drought against Colby, by bulling over two third period touchdowns and passing for an insurance counter in the final period of play with the Eagles 19 to 0."

In the fourth game, the squad played St. Francis in Oberlin.

"Fresh from their best showing of the year," the paper said, "the Oberlin Red Devils will tangle with the St. Francis Indians at Smick field tomorrow night in the annual homecoming affair."

The Devils stomped the Indians, 32-7.

Next it was on to Oakley. The Oct. 20, 1955, paper proclaimed, "With four consecutive victories gained, the Red Devils need this fifth one to keep pace with the likewise unde-



Coach Hague

feated Atwood and Goodland."

The boys whipped Oakley 46-20.

The following week, the team met the Atwood Buffaloes at Smick Field, and won 21-0.

That left one game for the team, against Norton.

With excitement high in town, and a rivalry going back 45 years, businesses downtown closed as people headed 35 miles east for the last game.

Before the last game against the Norton Blue Jays, *The Herald* featured two players, Mr. Jeffus and Mr. Kelley.

Mr. Jeffus was a senior and played quarterback.

"A 140-pounder, he completed a phenomenal 75 percent of his passes last season but had thrown very little this season until the Goodland contest—all in the clutch—completed five of eight tosses.

They beat Goodland 33-13.

"Kelley is one of the few juniors on the team to see frequent action. Jack is a handyman, playing offensive end or center and both offensive and defensive tackle. Determined and gritty, he reached a defensive peak of nine tackles against Hoxie."

The story the next week told it all:

"Undefeated, United: Devils Finish With Calm 32-13 Victory Over Norton," read the headline. "The Jays fumbled the opening kickoff, Jack Carver recovered and the Red Devils were ahead 7 to 0 before 75 seconds of playing time had elapsed."

The Devils scored in every quar-

ter, and ended the game with a final score of 32-13.

The Red Devils had been trying to beat the Jays for 25 years, and after 12 near wins, they finally made it happen at the end of the season in 1955.

Playing their final game as Red Devils against the Jays were Mr. Addleman, Mr. Guinn, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Bishop, Mr. Carver, Mr. Schwab, Mr. Jeffus, Mr. Corcoran, Mr. Paddock, Mr. Macfee and Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Addleman, who was a senior that year, and went on to play college ball, said he played all four years in high school. When he was a freshman, he said, a lot of the guys had never played football before because they lived in the country and then moved into town to go to school.

That first year he was in high school, he said, they had a good team. Mr. Addleman said it meant that the freshmen had to play against the seniors in scrimmages.

By the time the boys grew to be seniors, some of the men in town volunteered to come and scrimmage the team. Mr. Addleman said men like Elmer Zodrow, Gene Lindemann, Bob Russell and Charlie Lyons would come to the field at night and they would scrimmage under the lights to prepare the 1955 team for a game. The two assistant coaches would also scrimmage against the boys.

Mr. Zodrow, a longtime Oberlin sports fan who died last week, recalled that the first year the men from town scrimmaged with the players, the men could run over them, but by the second year, the players were "like a freight train."

He said he remembered that Derry Bishop could "move good."

Mr. Addleman recalled that Mr. Bishop gave a "100 percent all-out effort," and made "some of the most classic tackles."

Mr. Rathbun, a freshman in 1955, said the guys were big to him as a small freshman, but he knew that some day he would be a senior.

"We were all a team," he said. "They were great guys, they were tough and they knew what the game was about and played it that way."



G. Anthony



R. Addleman



J. Baker



D. Bishop



R. Corcoran



C. Corder



G. Erickson



W. Fortin



L. Guinn



L. Johnson



J. Kelley



D. Musgrave



F. Paddock



L. Rathbun



N. Richards



Richardson



J. Schultz



B. Schwab



R. Unger

Team members moved away after graduating here

The 1955 football team is the last undefeated team from Decatur Community High School.

This year, the men and their families celebrated the 50th anniversary of the winning season. Most of the players moved away from home after high school, and today they're scattered across the United States.

- Larry Guinn graduated 1956, lives in Denver.
- Don Richards, 1956, lives in Bailey, Colo.

- Derry Bishop, 1956, lives in Dresden.
- Jerry Baker, 1957, lives in Berryton.
- Lynn Johnson, 1956, lives in Oberlin.
- Clint Corder, 1959, lives in Oklahoma City.
- Jim Alexander, 1959, lives in Littleton, Colo.
- John Schultz, 1960, lives in Oberlin.
- Charles Kelley, 1959, lives in Lamar, Colo.

- Gary Erickson, 1959, lives in Oberlin.
- Forrest Paddock, 1956, lives in Rose Hill.
- Ray Corcoran, 1956, lives in Oberlin.
- Allen Jeffus, 1956, lives in Topeka.
- Bob Vernon, 1958, lives in Newport, Wash.
- Richard Anderson, 1958, lives in Greeley, Colo.
- Jim Carver, 1959, lives in Granite Falls, N.C.

- Stanley Moberly, 1959, lives in Washington state.
- Jim Kelley, 1958, lives in Lawrence.
- Roy Unger, 1959, lives in Oberlin.
- Billy Soderlund, 1959, lives in Tarentum, Pa.
- Eldon Johnson, 1958, lives in Newport, Tenn.
- Bill Schwab, 1956, lives in Norcatour.
- George "Rusty" Addleman, 1956, lives in Oberlin.

- David Musgrave lives in Lenexa.
- Walt Fortin, 1959, lives in Oberlin.
- Richard Hayes, 1958, lives in Atwood.
- Norman Richards, 1959, lives in Oberlin.
- Larry O'Toole lives in Andover.
- Larry Rathbun, 1959, lives in McCook.
- Gary Anthony lives in Norcatour.
- Jack Kelley, 1957, lives in Junction City.