

# **MSR: montgomerySPORTSreport**

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## **Celebrating 100 Seasons Of Purdue Football At Ross-Ade Stadium**



*Photo courtesy of Purdue Athletics*



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Columnist

### Part 3

The 1940s for Purdue football was a roller-coaster ride that saw the Boilermakers field one of their poorest teams, then 12 months later one of their greatest.

Coming off a 1-8 record in 1942, Purdue's fortunes changed dramatically when the Marine Corps and U.S. Navy sent some very talented football players to campus for training before going off to fight in World War II. Combined with a handful of civilians, the Boilermakers went 9-0 and earned a share of the Big Ten championship with Michigan.

The decade also birthed Purdue's Cradle of Quarterbacks tradition with a teenager who shocked the nation in 1945.

Bob DeMoss led the Boilermakers to a 4-0 start and a No. 9 national ranking entering a trip to No. 4 Ohio State. Purdue races to a 28-0 lead and goes on to a 35-13 victory.

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Best Ross-Ade games of the 1940s

Oct. 2, 1943: Purdue 40, Illinois 21 – Tony Butkovich scores four touchdowns and rushes for 207 yards on just 12 carries against his former teammates.

Lafayette Journal and Courier sports editor Gordon Graham wrote that two of the former Fighting Illini, All-American guard Alex Agase and fellow co-captain John Genis were spotted on the Illinois bench visiting their friends when the score had grown to 34-7. When Illinois scored two quick touchdowns, Purdue coach Elmer Burnham had to summon

Agase and Genis back into the game.

Oddly, each team fumbled 10 times. The Fighting Illini and Boilermakers combined to lose 15 fumbles.

Purdue would go on to outscore its nine opponents 214-55 that season. To read more about the 1943 Boilermakers, pick up a copy of Cory Palm's "Perfect Warriors."

Oct. 25, 1947: Purdue 14, Illinois 7 – DeMoss' 6-yard touchdown pass to Bob Heck in the third quarter stunned the reigning Big Ten and Rose Bowl champions, who had come in with a 10-game winning streak.

Graham compared this victory to three of the biggest in school history: the 30-16 win over Michigan in 1929, the 7-0 triumph over Northwestern at Soldier Field in 1931 and the 35-13 victory at No. 4 Ohio State in 1945.

Nov. 20, 1948: Purdue 39, Indiana 0 – Here's a lead paragraph from Graham that readers would never see today:

"The cattle were lowing contentedly in the barns of 'Cow College' today, but students were still emitting piercing shrieks of elation of Purdue's 39-0 rout of a futile Indiana eleven in a game which threatened records at Ross-Ade Stadium Saturday afternoon."

It not only was the most lopsided defeat in the Purdue-Indiana series since 1902, the victory also ended Indiana's four-year possession of the Old Oaken Bucket. Harry Szulborski rushed for 197 yards on 34 carries, while Norb Adams picked up 148 on 24 rushes.

As for Graham's reference to "Cow College?" Here's this from the Nov. 18 front page of the Journal and Courier:

"An airplane was flown over the campus several times Thursday noon, and thousands of handbills were dropped. The bills, about 5x8 inches and in varied colors, and with 'Courtesy Bloomington Herald' printed at the bottom, had the following to offer:

"What the hell can you expect with a kid prexy from deah old Oxford with a bunch of hick students with no spirit with an inexperienced high school coaching staff with eleven old men? IU 40, Cow College 0."

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Top players of 1940s Ross-Ade  
Alex Agase – An All-American both at Purdue and Illinois sandwiched between a two-year stint in the Marine Corps during World War II.

Agase won three league titles with the Cleveland Browns during a six-season pro career. He would return to Purdue

as head coach in 1973. His biggest wins were 31-20 at defending national champion and No. 2 Notre Dame in 1974 and a 16-14 triumph over No. 1 Michigan in 1976.

He was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame as a player in 1963 and is a member of Purdue's all-time football team.

Tony Butkovich – Came to Purdue with Agase in 1943 and broke a 21-year-old Big Ten scoring record with 78 points (13 touchdowns) in nine games before heading off to the Marine Corps.

Butkovich rushed for 833 yards on 142 carries for amazing averages of 119 yards per game and 5.9 yards per carry. He earned first-team All-America and first-team All-Big Ten honors.

He was killed in action at Okinawa in 1945.

Dick Barwegen – The guard was voted MVP of the 1943 team and a two-time first-team All-Big Ten selection in 1943 and 1946.

In six of his eight NFL seasons, Barwegen was named first-team All-Pro or chosen to play in the Pro Bowl. The Chicago Tribune ranked Barwegen 51st in its Top 100 Chicago Bears of all-time.

Bob DeMoss – The father of Purdue's Cradle of Quarterbacks was a four-year starter who threw for 2,759 yards and 23 touchdowns during an era when the passing game took a back seat to running the football.

With the exception of spending 1949 with the New York Bulldogs, DeMoss was at Purdue from 1945 to his retirement as an assistant athletic director in 1992. As an assistant and head football coaches, he tutored Dale Samuels, Len Dawson, Bob Griese, Mike Phipps and Gary Danielson.

Harry Szulborski – A four-year starter at halfback from 1949 to 1949, Szulborski set the career rushing record of 2,478 yards. Only Mike Alstott (16) and Otis Armstrong (13) had more 100-yard rushing games than Szulborski's 11.

He led the Big Ten in rushing as a sophomore (851 yards) and a junior (989).

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Welcome to the NFL

In between getting sacked seven times (six by Khalil Mack), former Purdue quarterback Aidan O'Connell had modest success in his first start with the Las Vegas Raiders.

As the 12th Boilermaker to start an NFL game at quarterback, O'Connell was 24 of 39 passing for 238 yards with

an interception. He also rushed for a touchdown in the Raiders' 24-17 road loss against the Los Angeles Chargers this past Sunday. The Raiders announced it was the second-most passing yards in his NFL debut with the team but did not state who holds the record.

"I think the magnitude of each play is what I'm learning, and what I learned today is how important each play is, how important each drive is," O'Connell told raiders.com. "Just have to do my job on each play, even if it's a little bit harder one play versus another. Just got to focus, can't look ahead or can't look behind. Each play, one play at a time."

Here's how the other Purdue quarterbacks fared in their first NFL starts:

Len Dawson: 2 of 4 for 25 yards and 3 rushes for 31 yards in Pittsburgh's 7-6 loss at Philadelphia on Dec. 1, 1957.

Bob Griese: 11 of 22 for 101 yards, 2 INT in Miami's 24-0 loss to Kansas City and Dawson on Sept. 24, 1967.

Mike Phipps: 11 of 25 for 170 yards, 1 INT and 4 rushes for 57 yards in Cleveland's 14-10 loss at Cincinnati on Nov. 15, 1970.

Gary Danielson: 17 of 32 for 129 yards, 1 INT in Detroit's 13-10 win at Baltimore on Dec. 11, 1977.

Mark Herrmann: 18 of 32 for 188 yards, 1 INT in Denver's 13-11 loss at Seattle on Jan. 2, 1983.

Scott Campbell: 18 of 38 for 275 yards, 1 TD and 2 INT in Pittsburgh's 30-24 win over Buffalo on Dec. 15, 1985.

Jim Everett: 7 of 20 for 56 yards, 2 INT and four rushes for 13 yards and a TD in the Los Angeles Rams' 26-13 victory against New Orleans on Nov. 23, 1986.

Drew Brees: 15 of 19 for 160 yards, 2 TDs in San Diego's 34-6 victory at Cincinnati on Sept. 8, 2002.

Kyle Orton: 15 of 28 for 141 yards, 1 INT in Chicago's 9-7 loss at Washington on Sept. 11, 2005.

Curtis Painter: 13 of 30 for 281 yards, 2 TDs in Colts' 24-17 loss at Tampa Bay on Oct. 3, 2011.

David Blough: 22 of 38 for 280 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT in Detroit's 24-20 loss to Chicago on Nov. 28, 2019.

### Part 4

The 1950s were a decade filled with amazing highs (snapping Notre Dame's 39-game unbeaten streak in 1950, win-

## KENNY From Page 2

ning a share of the 1952 Big Ten title) and lows (a pair of 2-7 seasons in 1950 and 1953).

The Boilermakers transitioned from head coach Stu Holcomb to Jack Mollenkopf in 1956, beginning one of the greatest eras of football in West Lafayette. Purdue retained the Old Oaken Bucket throughout the decade, posting a 9-0-1 mark against Indiana. Holcomb and Mollenkopf's teams combined to go 5-5 against Notre Dame.

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Best Ross-Ade games of the 1950s

Nov. 22, 1952: Purdue 21, Indiana 16 – The Boilermakers squandered a 14-0 lead but rallied for a share of their fourth Big Ten title.

Quarterback Dale Samuels led a 66-yard drive in muddy conditions. Sophomore Rex Brock scored on a 24-yard run with 4:22 remaining for the game-winning touchdown.

Indiana drove to the Purdue 2 but was penalized 5 yards for calling a timeout it didn't have with 15 seconds to play. The Boilermakers stuffed a last-second running attempt.

Purdue, though, was denied a berth in the Rose Bowl when the Big Ten athletic directors voted to send Wisconsin. The Badgers became the first Big Ten team to lose in the Rose Bowl, 7-0 to USC.

Oct. 24, 1953: Purdue 6, No. 2 Michigan State 0 – The Boilermakers snapped the Spartans' 28-game winning streak thanks to a running back who once wore the green and white.

Dan Pobjewski began his college football career in East Lansing but was told he wasn't good enough. On the third play of the fourth quarter, Pobjewski scored on fourth-and-goal from the 1.

"When I finally scored and rolled into the end zone, I just wanted to lie there and cry," Pobjewski said afterward.

For the first time since 1947, a span of 59 games, Michigan State was shut out.

Sept. 25, 1954: Purdue 31, Missouri 0 – Len Dawson's first game in a Purdue uniform was nothing short of spectacular, throwing four touchdown passes.

A holding penalty negated a fifth TD pass by the Alliance, Ohio native. Touchdown passes to Bob Springer (11 yards), Rex Brock (41 yards) and Bob Khoenle (26 yards) gave the Boilermakers a 19-0 halftime lead. Khoenle added

a second TD catch in the fourth quarter.

Dawson finished 11 of 17 passing for 185 yards, five more than the total offensive output from Missouri.

"I believed everything I'd heard about Dawson, but the kid is a great passer," Missouri coach Don Faurot said afterward.

Oct. 18, 1958: Purdue 14, No. 5 Michigan State 6 – Despite committing six turnovers, the Boilermakers prevailed behind a defense that allowed 38 net rushing yards.

A bad punt snap in the second quarter led to Michigan State's only points. Len Wilson's 6-yard run tied the game before halftime. Purdue went 53 yards on its first drive of the second half, culminating in Bob Jarus' 1-yard run.

Oct. 3, 1959: Purdue 28, No. 7 Notre Dame 7 – The Boilermakers scored 21 points in the game's first 20 minutes to earn their first victory against the Fighting Irish in Ross-Ade Stadium.

Bob Jarus capped a 10-play opening drive with a 5-yard run. The Boilermakers went 78 yards on their next drive, scoring on Ross Fichtner's 6-yard pass to Richard Brooks early in the second quarter.

Notre Dame fumbled the ensuing kickoff at the Irish 32. Six plays later, Jarus had his second touchdown to make it 21-0. Jim Tiller tacked on a 74-yard touchdown run in the third quarter.

The victory was the first of three consecutive against ranked opponents in Ross-Ade Stadium that season. Ninth-ranked Wisconsin fell 21-0 and No. 15 Iowa lost 14-7.

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Top players of 1950s Ross-Ade

Dale Samuels – The Chicago native gained notoriety for his role in the 1950 upset of No. 1 Notre Dame in South Bend.

"In the middle to late '40s if you were a betting person you didn't bet against Notre Dame, Joe Louis or the New York Yankees," Samuels said in 2018 on the occasion of being inducted into the Indiana Football Hall of Fame. "Playing in South Bend, we were decidedly the underdogs. The way the coaches told it to us, we've got everything to gain and nothing to lose. Let's go get 'em."

Samuels also quarterbacked Purdue to a share of the 1952 Big Ten Conference championship. He was the first

Boilermaker to pass for 1,000 yards in a season and throw 10 touchdown passes.

Bernie Flowers – Consensus All-American end in 1952 after setting school records with 43 receptions for 603 yards and seven touchdowns.

His All-American status was likely aided by his performance in Purdue's first nationally televised football game on Oct. 25, 1952. Flowers caught six passes for 87 yards and three touchdowns in a 40-12 victory at Illinois.

Flowers also had a sandwich created in his honor at West Lafayette's Triple XXX restaurant. "The Bernie Flowers All-American" is a hamburger topped with Spanish lettuce, tomato, onion and mayonnaise.

Len Dawson – No Purdue quarterback has ever debuted more impressively than "the Golden Boy," whose nickname inspired the creation of Purdue Marching Band's "Golden Girl."

In addition to the four touchdown passes against Missouri, Dawson followed up with four more TD passes the following week in an upset of Notre Dame in South Bend. For his career, Dawson's teams went 7-1-1 in trophy games against Indiana, Notre Dame and Illinois.

He left Purdue holding the records for passing yards (3,325) and touchdown passes (29). Dawson was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1987.

Lamar Lundy – The first African-American to receive a football scholarship at Purdue, Lundy was named MVP of both the Boilermaker football and basketball teams as a senior during the 1956-57 school year.

At 6-7, Lundy was an imposing figure as a pass catcher and a defensive end. He twice was named All-Big Ten. With the Los Angeles Rams, Lundy began his career as a receiver, catching six touchdown passes. But it was on defense, as a member of the "Fearsome Foursome" with Deacon Jones, Merlin Olsen and Rosey Grier, that Lundy left his mark on the NFL.

Lundy even delved into acting, portraying the boulder-hunting cyclops in an episode of "Lost in Space."

Tom Bettis – A member of Purdue's all-time team, Bettis earned All-America honors as a guard in 1954.

He played nine seasons in the NFL and then was an assistant coach in the league for 30 years.

Leo Sugar – The eldest member of Purdue's Den of Defensive Ends, Sugar was a consensus All-American and first-team All-Big Ten selection in 1951. He went on to play nine seasons in the NFL.

Erich Barnes – One of the most versatile athletes in Boilermaker football history, Barnes was used as a running back, end, kickoff/punt return specialist and cornerback.

His five career interceptions foreshadowed his lengthy NFL career with Chicago, New York Giants and Cleveland. Barnes was a six-time Pro Bowl selection and set the Giants team record with a 102-yard touchdown return in 1961.

Barnes also appeared as an imposter on a 1963 episode of "To Tell The Truth."

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Basketball notes

Not since the 1987-88 season, when the Purdue Hall of Fame trio of Troy Lewis, Todd Mitchell and Everette Stephens were seniors, have the Boilermakers been ranked higher in the preseason Associated Press Top 25 poll.

Purdue was ranked third on Monday, one slot below the 1987-88 Boilermakers who went on to win a second consecutive Big Ten Conference championship under Gene Keady.

Kansas was voted No. 1, while Duke had 30 more points than Purdue to be rated No. 1. Michigan State, Marquette, Connecticut, Houston, Creighton, Tennessee and Florida Atlantic rounded out the top 10.

Illinois is the only other Big Ten team in the preseason Top 25, coming in 25th.

Purdue's loaded schedule includes guaranteed games with No. 11 Gonzaga, No. 12 Arizona and No. 24 Alabama. It's also possible the Boilermakers could face No. 9 Tennessee, Kansas and Marquette in Maui. Purdue also travels to No. 14 Arkansas for a charity scrimmage on Oct. 28.

Purdue's 17 straight weeks ranked in the top five is the longest streak in America and it has been ranked in at least one AP poll in nine straight years, the longest streak in school history.

*Kenny Thompson is the former sports editor for the Lafayette Journal & Courier and an award-winning journalist. He has covered Purdue athletics for many years.*



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