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Celebrating 100 Seasons Of Purdue Football At Ross- Ade Stadium - Part 5 & 6



Photo courtesy of Purdue Athletics



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Columnist

This is part 5 of a series celebrating 100 seasons of Purdue football at Ross-Ade Stadium.

The best decade of football in Purdue history, the 1960s saw Purdue not only share a Big Ten championship but also reach the Rose Bowl for the first time.

Jack Mollenkopf's teams went 8-2 against Indiana and 7-3 against Notre Dame. Just as phenomenal was the Boilermakers' success against Michigan. Following a 1962 home victory against the Wolverines, Purdue won the next four matchups from 1963-66 at Ann Arbor.

A composite record of 65-28-3 in the decade propelled Mollenkopf to his eventual election to the College Football Hall of Fame. Joining him there from the 1960s were Leroy Keyes, Bob Griese and Mike Phipps.

That decade of success paved the way for the greatest recruiting class in Purdue football history. Among the freshmen enrolled in 1969 were future NFL first-round draft picks Dave Butz (5th), Otis Armstrong (9th) and Darryl Stingley (19th). Gary Hrivnak (2nd round), Steve Baumgartner (2nd round), Gregg Bingham (4th round), Brent Myers (6th round) and Donn Smith (7th round) also saw time in the NFL. Quarterback Gary Danielson went undrafted but played 13 seasons with Detroit and Cleveland.

Best Ross-Ade games of the 1960s

Oct. 15, 1960: Purdue 24, No. 3 Ohio State 21 – Willie Jones rushed for three touchdowns, and Bernie Allen's 32-yard field goal proved to be the game winner.

Oct. 28, 1961: Purdue 9, No. 5 Iowa

0 – With Bob DeMoss coaching in place of hospitalized Jack Mollenkopf, the Boilermakers shut out the Hawkeyes for the first time in 79 games.

Ron DiGravio scored on a 1-yard sneak in the first quarter and Skip Ohl added a 27-yard field goal in the third quarter on a rainy afternoon.

Sept. 25, 1965: No. 6 Purdue 25, No. 1 Notre Dame 21 – Bob Griese became a great quarterback on this day, completing 19 of 22 passes for 283 yards and three touchdowns.

"This was the finest passing performance I've ever seen," Notre Dame coach Ara Parseghian said afterward.

The completion percentage (.864), and 322 yards of total offense were among four Purdue records Griese established. Gordon Teter's 3-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter was the difference.

Nov. 19, 1966: No. 10 Purdue 51, Indiana 6 – A 34-point second quarter left no doubt that the Boilermakers would wrap up their first trip to the Rose Bowl.

Purdue led 7-0 after the first quarter on an 80-yard touchdown pass from Bob Griese to Jim Finley. The lead was 41-0 at halftime thanks to touchdown runs by Griese and Leroy Keyes plus touchdown passes of 67 yards to Bob Baltzell and 10 yards to Jim Beirne. Keyes also threw a 12-yard touchdown pass to Beirne.

Sept. 30, 1967: No. 10 Purdue 28, No. 1 Notre Dame 21 – Sophomore quarterback Mike Phipps was on the cover of Sports Illustrated following this victory after combining with Notre Dame's Terry Hanratty to throw a stadium record 98 passes.

Phipps was 14 of 24 for 238 yards, including the game-winning 31-yard touchdown pass to Bob Baltzell. Perry Williams ran for two scores, and Leroy Keyes caught an 11-yard touchdown pass from Phipps.

Nov. 23, 1968: No. 12 Purdue 38, Indiana 35 – With Jack Mollenkopf sidelined due to illness, Bob DeMoss coached the Boilermakers to victory in the final game for Leroy Keyes, Perry Williams and other key members of the Rose Bowl squad.

Keyes scored the game-winning touchdown on a 1-yard run with 95 seconds to play. He accounted for four touchdowns and 289 yards of total offense. Keyes became the first Boilermaker to rush for 1,000 yards in a season and finished with 2,090 for his career.

Oct. 4, 1969: No. 8 Purdue 36, No. 17 Stanford 35 – Mike Phipps outdueled Stanford's Jim Plunkett, completing

28 of 39 passes for 429 yards and five touchdowns. All four of those figures broke Purdue records.

Phipps pulled Purdue within 35-34 late in the game on a 14-yard TD pass to Stanley Brown. Coach Jack Mollenkopf went for the win, and Phipps passed to Greg Fenner for the two-point conversion.

"There was a little bit of luck there," Phipps said in 1998. "I scrambled and threw across the grain, which is not a good idea."

Plunkett, who would win the Heisman Trophy in 1970, was 23 of 46 for 355 yards and four touchdowns.

"It was probably one of the most exciting games I ever played in," Phipps said.

Top players of 1960s Ross-Ade
Bob Griese – The future College and Pro Football Hall of Famer almost didn't play quarterback at Purdue.

Assistant coach Bob DeMoss, who knew a thing or two about throwing the football, struggled to correct Griese's wobbly passes during his freshman season. So, DeMoss turned to his old coach, Cecil Isbell. The former Green Bay Packers record-holder watched Griese throw two passes on film.

"Turn it off," Isbell said to DeMoss. "Here's what's wrong with him. He's not turning his wrist out."

DeMoss put Griese in front of a mirror and had him practice the proper form. Griese became the starting quarterback in 1964 and earned All-America honors in 1965 and 1966. Purdue went 22-7-1 with Griese at the helm.

Griese should have been Purdue's first Heisman Trophy winner in 1966, but former Indianapolis Star sports editor Bob Collins speculated in his book "Boilermakers: A History of Purdue Football" that a national magazine article stating Florida's Steve Spurrier was the better NFL prospect was the difference in the voting.

Spurrier became a career backup in the NFL while Griese earned two Super Bowl rings with the Miami Dolphins.

"To Bob DeMoss, I feel I owe my football life," Griese said in the 1972 book "Great Quarterbacks." "He taught me how to throw. Really. Without him, I'd still be a side-armed playing catch with my son on Sunday mornings."

Leroy Keyes - "The Greatest Player in Purdue Football History," as voted by fans on the 100th anniversary of Boilermaker football in 1987, seldom needed motivation against any opponent.

Notre Dame fans, as well as most of

the national media, fueled Keyes on the eve of a rare No. 1 vs. No. 1 matchup. The Boilermakers were atop the Associated

Press poll, while the Fighting Irish led the UPI rankings going into the 1968 matchup at South Bend.

"We were the kids on the block who got no respect," Keyes recalled in 1998. "Most of them wrote, 'if Leroy Keyes stays healthy and matches his junior season when he won the national scoring title, Purdue can win.' We believed to a man when we came to spring ball that we could win the national championship."

Some Notre Dame students came up with the idea of plastering "Most Wanted" signs on campus with Keyes' photo underneath. "I wondered, 'what did I do to these guys?'" he said.

The next day he did plenty, scoring two touchdowns and throwing a touchdown pass in the convincing 37-22 victory.

Elected to the College Football Hall of Fame in 1990, Keyes' school records include scoring 19 touchdowns during the 1967 season.

"When I was on the football field, my job was to be the best player on the field," Keyes said. "It became a will game to me. Who had the greater will to get the job done? I willed myself not to get beat."

Bob Hadrick – The shifty end was the first Boilermaker to be selected first-team All-Big Ten three times.

As a junior, Hadrick was Purdue's Most Valuable Player. As Bob Griese's go-to receiver in 1964 and 1965, Hadrick caught 113 passes for 1,391 yards.

Perry Williams – The third man in arguably the greatest backfields in Purdue history from 1966-68 (Bob Griese or Mike Phipps at quarterback and Leroy Keyes), Williams rushed for 2,049 yards and scored 30 touchdowns.

During his time as a Boilermaker, Purdue went 25-6 with a Rose Bowl victory and a share of the 1967 Big Ten title.

Williams scored both touchdowns in the 14-13 victory against USC in Pasadena.

"Great blocker, fantastic runner, great hands as a receiver and one hellacious competitor," Keyes recalled in 2004.

Mike Phipps – The first quarterback to lead his team to victory three consecutive years against Notre Dame, Phipps was voted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2006.

The Boilermakers finished 8-2 in each

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of his three seasons (1967-69). The Fighting Irish were ranked Nos. 1, 2 and 9 at the time of those victories.

“I’m very proud of it, but I was just the quarterback,” Phipps said in 1998. “We had great players on offense and defense. We expected to win. Notre Dame just happened to be in the way.”

Phipps was a unanimous All-American in 1969 and runner-up to Oklahoma’s Steve Owens in one of the closest votes in Heisman Trophy history.

Tim Foley – As an All-American safety, Foley helped Purdue compile a 24-6 record between 1967 and 1969.

Foley then played 11 seasons with the Miami Dolphins, earning two Super Bowl rings.

Jim Beirne – A first-team All-American wide receiver in 1967, Beirne held the Purdue career receiving yards record (1,864) for 13 seasons.

Beirne was selected to Purdue’s all-time football team in 1987.

Jerry Shay – A first-team All-American defensive tackle in 1965, Shay helped the Boilermakers record three consecutive victories at Michigan between 1963-65.

A first-round draft pick of the Minnesota Vikings in 1966, Shay became a distinguished scout with the New York Giants. Among the players he was directly responsible for the Giants drafting included Lawrence Taylor, Michael Strahan, Harry Carson and Phil Simms.

John Charles – An All-American defensive back in 1966, Charles made 11 tackles on his way to winning Rose Bowl Most Valuable Player honors.

Charles was a first-round pick by the Boston Patriots in 1967 and recorded 16 interceptions during an eight-year career that included stops in Minnesota and Houston.

Chuck Kyle – Like Hadrick, Kyle was a three-time first-team All-Big Ten selection at middle guard from 1966-68.

His career highlights included a then-school record three interceptions against Iowa and 27 tackles in his final game against Indiana.

Part 6

There was no shortage of individual talent in the 1970s with the best recruiting class in Boilermaker history making its collective debut to begin the decade.

Nine members of the 1972 senior class played in the NFL. Five of them

were taken in the first two rounds of the NFL Draft: Dave Butz, Otis Armstrong, Darryl Stingley, Gary Hrivnak and Steve Baumgartner.

Team success, though, eluded Purdue until the arrival of Jim Young from Arizona in 1977. By the end of the decade, Young had coached the Boilermakers to their only 10-win season in school history.

Purdue was one point away from sharing a Big Ten championship in 1978. That 24-24 tie at Wisconsin left the Boilermakers (6-1-1) a half-game behind Michigan (7-1) and Michigan State (7-1) for the conference title.

Best Ross-Ade games of the 1970s
Nov. 25, 1972: Purdue 42, Indiana 7 – One week after Purdue literally let a share of the Big Ten title slip away on Michigan’s icy turf, the Boilermakers took out their frustrations on the Hoosiers.

Otis Armstrong, who appeared on his way to scoring the game-winning touchdown at Michigan only to lose his footing in a 9-6 loss, rushed for a Purdue record 276 yards and three touchdowns. The final carry of his Boilermaker career was a 53-yard touchdown run.

Armstrong became the Big Ten’s all-time leading rusher with 3,135 to surpass 1954 Heisman Trophy winner Alan Ameche of Wisconsin. Ameche amassed his total in four years to Armstrong’s three.

Nov. 6, 1976: Purdue 16, No. 1 Michigan 14 – The 30-point underdog Boilermakers stunned the Wolverines on Rock Supan’s 23-yard field goal with 4:20 remaining.

Scott Dierking rushed for 162 yards on a school-record 38 carries and scored both touchdowns.

“It’s the happiest day of my life,” said Purdue coach Alex Agase, who was fired 20 days later after losing the finale to Indiana.

Oct. 14, 1978: Purdue 27, No. 16 Ohio State 16 – Mark Herrmann’s 19-yard touchdown pass to Willie Harris in the fourth quarter clinched the victory.

It was Purdue’s first victory against the Buckeyes since 1967 and a sweet win for second-year coach Jim Young, who played for Woody Hayes on OSU’s 1954 national championship team.

Sept. 22, 1979: No. 17 Purdue 28, No. 5 Notre Dame 22 – A record crowd of 70,567 fans – 1,367 above Ross-Ade’s

capacity at the time – saw the Boilermakers rally from a 13-point deficit in the third quarter.

A pair of Wally Jones touchdown runs gave Purdue the lead entering the fourth quarter. Mark Herrmann made it 28-20 with a 6-yard touchdown pass to Bart Burrell with 8:21 to play.

Nov. 10, 1979: No. 14 Purdue 24, No. 10 Michigan 21 – Bill Kay intercepted three passes and the Boilermakers made a defensive stand in the final minute.

Kay’s first interception set up a 2-yard Ben McCall touchdown run. Mark Herrmann scored only his second rushing touchdown in three seasons to make it 14-0. An interception by linebacker Mike Marks allowed McCall to score his second touchdown on a 9-yard run to up the lead to 24-6 with 10:27 to play.

Top players of 1970s Ross-Ade

Otis Armstrong – The Chicago native rushed for 3,315 yards from 1970-72 and was a first-team All-American and 1972 Big Ten Conference MVP.

Armstrong still holds the Purdue single-game rushing record of 276 yards in his final game against Indiana on Nov. 25, 1972. He was elected to the College Football Hall of Fame in 2012.

Dave Butz – Elected to the College Football Hall of Fame in 2014, the 6-foot-7 Butz was a consensus All-American defensive tackle as a senior and a Lombardi Award finalist.

Darryl Stingley – Like Armstrong and Butz, Stingley was an NFL first-round draft pick in 1973.

The wide receiver was elected to the Purdue Intercollegiate Athletics Hall of Fame in 2004.

Gary Danielson – The third of three consecutive Purdue quarterbacks to play in the NFL, Danielson may have an unbreakable Boilermaker record. Danielson set the Boilermaker single-game QB record by rushing for 213 yards against Washington in 1972.

Gregg Bingham – Twice a first-team All-Big Ten selection at middle guard, Bingham went on to a 12-year career in the NFL.

Larry Burton – One of the fastest to ever wear a Purdue football jersey, Burton was a first-team All-American wide receiver in 1974.

A former world record holder in the 60-meter dash, Burton finished fourth in the 200 at the 1972 Olympics.

Mike Pruitt – His combination of

power and speed (4.4 time in the 40-yard dash) made him one of the Big Ten’s top running backs from 1973-75.

He earned two Pro Bowl honors during his career with the Cleveland Browns, retiring as the team’s third-leading career rusher behind Jim Brown and Leroy Kelly.

Scott Dierking – Rushing for nearly 3,000 yards at Purdue, Dierking is best remembered for his heroics against No. 1 Michigan in 1976. He went on to play eight seasons in the NFL.

Keena Turner – One of Purdue’s all-time greatest defensive ends, Turner was a first-team All-Big Ten selection as a junior and a senior. He went on to win four Super Bowl rings with the San Francisco 49ers.

Mark Herrmann – During his Purdue career, Herrmann set 23 Purdue, six Big Ten and nine NCAA records. Herrmann was the first quarterback to pass for 8,000 and then 9,000 yards.

The former Carmel standout was the MVP of the 1978 Peach, 1979 Bluebonnet and 1980 Liberty bowls and guided Purdue to a 33-13-1 record in his four years as starting quarterback.

Herrmann was elected to the College Football Hall of Fame in 2011.

Dave Young – The first tight end to lead the nation in receptions per game, Young earned All-America honors as a senior in 1980.

Noteworthy

For the fourth time this season, Westfield graduate Dillon Thieneman has been selected Big Ten Freshman of the Week.

The Purdue safety becomes the first defensive player in Big Ten history to win the award four times. Boilermaker great wide receivers Rondale Moore (2018) and David Bell (2019) also were four-time winners on the way to being named Big Ten Freshman of the Year.

Thieneman led Purdue in tackles for the sixth time, collecting nine in the 49-30 victory against Minnesota. As the nation’s leading freshman in tackles (88), solo tackles (60), interceptions (3), and forced fumbles (2), Thieneman is the only Big Ten player to make the semifinal list for the Shaun Alexander Freshman of the Year Award.

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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