

THE FIRST EASTERN TRIP.

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The Michigan student of today—filled with pride by the record of 1901—may think it untimely that anyone should undertake to tell the story of a football team with an unbroken record of defeats. However, when the difficulties under which the team labored and the character of its adversaries are taken into consideration, few, I believe, will be so uncharitable as to criticise.

Twenty years ago football was in its infancy at Michigan, and indeed throughout the West. Considerable interest attached to the annual class games between the freshmen and sophomores of the various departments, but the game of "Rugby," as we then called it, received but little attention. For two or three years past, games had been played with Canadian teams, but these were generally away from Ann Arbor and aroused little interest. Chicago University was not yet founded and, if I am correctly informed, the game had not been introduced at Northwestern, Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota or Iowa. Michigan stood alone and thus the spirit of rivalry, without which little can be accomplished in college athletics, had not been thoroughly aroused. The work of organizing and developing a team devolved upon a few of the more enthusiastic, while the great body of the students seemed to be indifferent, giving little aid, financial or otherwise.

At that time there was no university gymnasium, and when bad

weather prevented practice on the campus each student was compelled to take his daily exercise in his room. Efforts had been repeatedly made to secure from the legislature an appropriation for a gymnasium, but without success. It is said that one wise and economical statesman, a man who had forgotten that he had ever been young, introduced a bill to provide wood-saws and saw-bucks for the students so that they could saw the wood used at the University, in this way affording the students exercise and at the same time saving money for the state; but even this beneficent measure, for some reason, failed of passage. Having no gymnasium we had no trainer or athletic director and the training table was unknown. Each man was a law unto himself, ate what he pleased, smoked or drank, or did both if he desired. Students of today would think this poor training for a series of games with the leading universities of the East, and so it proved.

This was the condition of athletics at Ann Arbor in 1881 when it was decided to send a team to compete for football honors with Harvard and Yale. Two games were arranged, one with Harvard on Monday, October 31, and one with Yale on the following Wednesday. Steps were taken to raise money by subscription and a committee of three was appointed to select the team. All candidates for positions and all lovers of football were asked to come

to the campus every afternoon for practice and for a time many responded to the call. The prospect for a strong, well drilled team seemed good when the weather interfered and for the three weeks prior to the dates arranged outdoor practice was almost impossible. A few came out and practiced on the wet, muddy grounds, but seldom were there enough men to form two teams. The selection of players proceeded very slowly as it was difficult to judge of the merits of the various candidates, and when the day set for departure arrived but eight had been definitely decided upon. To add to our difficulties, Allmendinger, our full-back, the best kicker and one of the best tacklers in the University, sent word that it would be impossible for him to go. We found, too, that the money raised among the students was far from sufficient to pay our expenses and that it would be necessary for each player to contribute rather heavily to the fund. The committee made out a list of candidates to fill the remaining positions and two of us were sent to notify them of their selection and to learn if they would go. By eleven o'clock in the evening thirteen in all had agreed to take the trip and at about one o'clock the next morning we were on our way.

The team was composed of the following students: W. S. Horton, captain and quarter-back; R. M. Dott and R. G. DePuy, half-backs; Tom Gilmore, full-back; S. E. Woodruff, W. J. Olcott, Howard Ayers, F. F. Wormwood, Harry Bitner, John Wilson and Fred Townsend, rushers; William DePuy

and William Mahon, substitutes. At no time had more than eight of the thirteen played together as a team and only four or five had ever taken part in an intercollegiate game. None of us had had any regular training or any coaching save what had been given by Horton and DePuy. However, we were confident, but it was the confidence, we soon learned, of ignorance.

The trip to Boston was without noteworthy incidents. Most of us felt too poor to take a sleeper and spent the two nights and a day on the ordinary coach. Some of us, the writer among the number, missed our Saturday evening meal and were without food from noon Saturday until nearly noon Sunday. Then, regardless of the advice of our captain, we feasted. It was poor preparation for a week of football, but few of us realized the risk we incurred.

Monday came, a dark, dismal day, with just enough rain to make the ground slippery, but not enough to prevent the game. We secured copies of the morning papers, curious, naturally, to learn what they had to say about us. "Football today; The Michigan Giants vs. Harvard" was one of the headlines. We were described as of the "wild and woolly" West, giants in strength and stature, and a close, hard-fought game was predicted. As the average weight of our team was less than one hundred and fifty pounds, we were somewhat amused, but each man resolved to do his utmost to fulfill the prediction of a closely contested game and to give Harvard its hardest battle of the season.

Monday afternoon we were taken

to the Boston baseball park and at about two o'clock the game started. Harvard had the kick-off and the ball was sent nearly to our goal line, closely followed by the Harvard rushers. The "rooters" on the sidelines yelled like a pack of demons and for my part I confess to a severe case of "rattles." Others of the team must have suffered a similar attack, for the ball was fumbled and in less time than it takes to tell it, Harvard had scored a touch-down. The try for goal failed and Michigan settled down for business. Throughout the remainder of the first half the ball was generally near the center of the field. Once Wormwood rushed it near to Harvard's goal but a long punt by their full-back sent it out of danger. Dott by a brilliant run carried the ball past all but their full-back, but we were unable to score and the half ended, Harvard one touch-down, Michigan nothing.

The second half commenced. We had regained confidence and resolved to win. We tried a fake kick and gained about ten yards, but an off-side play gave the ball to Harvard. We soon regained it and commenced slowly forcing the ball towards Harvard's goal. DePuy and Dott made repeated gains around the ends and victory seemed certain. The ball was carried to within three yards of the goal and Ayers was sent against the Harvard line. Here, however, the superior training and weight of the Harvard players told, and we were held for downs. Harvard was able to gain but little and the battle waged within Harvard's ten-yard line to the close of the game. We had lost and felt it bit-

terly, but it was a "hard-fought game."

The next day we went to New Haven and Wednesday the team played Yale. Yale's team was much heavier and played a different game from that of Harvard. Steady hammering of the line was their rule, and gradually the ball was forced over for a touch-down from which goal was kicked. This was the only scoring during the first half. We had played with desperation, but were out-classed.

The second half was in some respects a repetition of the first. Yale secured the ball and avoiding end runs, steadily hammered our line. Wilson was injured and William DePuy took his place. Slowly we were forced toward our goal. Our full-back punted, the ball was caught by a Yale man and a goal kicked from the field. This ended the scoring, the game standing, Yale two goals, Michigan nothing.

A representative of Princeton was at New Haven and challenged us for a game on the following Friday. Captain Horton was opposed to accepting the challenge, contending that two games in one week were enough, and that we were in no condition to meet another first-class team. Most of us, however, were eager for the game, hoping that we might go home with at least one victory to our credit. Horton was overruled and the game was arranged. Captain Horton, however, refused to play, and Woodruff was elected captain, Mahon taking Horton's place at quarter. We went to New York by boat and Thursday evening arrived at Princeton.

Friday afternoon we played our

third game. During the first half Princeton scored a goal from the field—a long chance kick with the wind, a kick that would have failed nine times out of ten on a still day. Our boys held their own well, and while disappointed, were not discouraged. In the second half Princeton was forced to make two safeties, and once took advantage of a touch-in-goal. The ball was kept in Princeton's territory until a few minutes of the end, when a wild pass gave Princeton the ball and a touch-down. Rapid playing against our then tired and discouraged team gave them another touch-down and the game ended, Princeton, one goal from field, two touch-downs, Michigan nothing.

After the game we were given a banquet by the Princeton Athletic Association and then we started home. We did not expect to be met by a brass band, and we were not. We did not exactly sneak into Ann Arbor but I think some of us would have liked to have done so.

Looking backward, however, in the light of knowledge gained since the trip, I find little to regret. We

were a lot of inexperienced players, without team work, depending entirely on individual play. Our half-backs, I believe, were equal to any we met, but our line was weak, the men being light and having little experience. Most of us had never played in a match game and some of us had never seen a copy of the rules. Some years ago I met two college men, one from Pennsylvania and the other from Yale, and the subject of football came up. The Yale man was an athlete and at one time was a member of the 'Varsity boat-crew. I mentioned the game of 1881 and learned that he had witnessed it. He said he remembered the game distinctly for he had turned to a fellow-student and had remarked, "What a game of football those Michigan fellows would play if they knew anything about the game." The criticism was to some extent just. Aside from Horton, DePuy and one or two others, we were lamentably inexperienced. Taking into consideration all the difficulties under which we labored, Michigan need not feel ashamed of the record.

