

Slippery Rock Sports: A Sports Writer's View

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SRU ORAL HISTORY

~~"SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY IN THE SIXTIES"~~

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R: Welcome.

S: Thank you. I'm glad to be here.

R: Do you have a beginning point where you would like to start?

S: My first visit to Slippery Rock College was in 1947. Being a sports editor I covered football, and one of the most memorable games that I can recall in the very early years was that Slippery Rock had a fine team. They were scheduled to play Grove City College who also had a very fine team. In fact, they had a young man by the name of Shankle who was good enough to be considered as a candidate for the Cleveland Browns who in those days were a powerful team in pro football. I think Grove City was undefeated that year, and Slippery Rock had lost maybe a game. So they played this game at Grove City College, and there were big crowds in those days. Of course, if you consider back in 1946, the population was a hundred thirty million in the United States and now it is two hundred and sixty million. So the crowds in those days were not nearly as large. I think the enrollment at Slippery Rock was only 700 or some and Grove City College was probably even less because it was a smaller school. But Slippery

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S: Rock had a fine quarterback in Paul "Red" Uram, and all of these coaches who have made a name for themselves in recent years were on this team. They were out of the service years, and they came back to college, and wanted to play and then wanted to coach. Most of them were very successful later on in life. Slippery Rock being a much smaller team was probably the underdog. In fact, it was. Slippery Rock won that day. The students were so overjoyed that they wanted to tear down the goalposts, which is all part of the game. I don't recall who was the president of Grove City College that year, but he decided upon himself to be a one man force in going out to stop this. Right out on the football field to try to prevent these students from Slippery Rock from tearing down the goalposts. Well, they didn't know who he was. So he got knocked down a few times. Probably got a few bruises he didn't expect to get, and his feelings were hurt on top of that, but they got the goalposts down. Naturally, with kind of a mob scene they prevailed. So that was the last football game that Slippery Rock and Grove City College ever played officially. Since then they have had preseason scrimmages and what have you, but they haven't played any official game, like on a Saturday afternoon. That was one of my first impressions of Slippery Rock was, that to me down through the years it's always been a minor version or smaller version of Notre Dame. The spirit of Notre Dame which you have Knute Rockne proud of.

S: Winning against all odds, and performing the spectacular.

And because Slippery Rock was so small, the physical structure of the college, and the players were smaller than any other teams, they were forever the underdogs. More often than not they would pull one or two upsets during a year, and it would be a happy occasion for them, and surprising to the other team. Here's this little Slippery Rock team knocking them around. Probably part of that history goes back to when the Slippery Rock team went to Boston and played a team from New England. I think it was Boston College or somebody they played and gave a good account of themselves. A sports editor from the New England area, I think his last name was Cunningham, brought this about. That this school ought to play Slippery Rock. Sure enough they got together and they played. I think that's the background to me of Slippery Rock football as they accomplished the unexpected when they were expected to lose, they would win. They would rise to the occasion. I think the student body had a lot to do with that. The spirit of Slippery Rock down through the years has been pretty phenomenal. The players all knew each other. The students knew them because it was such a small school. It kind of sent a chill down your back when these students would be sitting in the stands and yelling at their buddies to do something great and more often than not they would. Those are the early years

S: and down through the years it's just carried on.

R: Was there a Pennsylvania championship among the state colleges back then?

S: Not at that time. I think it started in the early 1960's and Slippery Rock did very well under Coach Chuck Godlasky.

Chuck was here for about four or five years , and he brought together some very fine talent. Again when they would go and play, more often than not it was West Chester in the eastern part of the state. They recruited major ball players from the major colleges that were turned down. So these were like retreads more or less. They were just as good a football player but perhaps it was a split second slower, maybe ten pounds lighter, maybe a couple of inches shorter. They didn't quite measure up to the physical statistics that they wanted. In those days they started using the stopwatch to see how fast a player could run or what he could do, how far he could throw a football and Slippery Rock lost a couple that year.

Probably one of the greatest victories came when East Stroudsburg came here to Slippery Rock to play. East Stroudsburg was a well organized, very powerful, strong football team, and got a lead on Slippery Rock. It was a wet, muddy day. A big football team when it gets ahead on a wet day has an advantage. They were driving for another touchdown. Probably if they would have made it they would have solidified their victory. It would have put

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S: Slippery Rock at odds with making their victory come true. But the defense came through, stopped the drive, and as you might like to say, they picked themselves up by their bootstraps and they start moving the football and before you know it they are over in midfield, and they scored. And they went on to win the football game. It was a tremendous victory in adverse weather conditions. Tony Nunes was the quarterback that year. He did some spectacular things. He did a lot of things on the field on his own. He was a thinker out there. He liked the game, loved the game, understood it, and went beyond the call of duty in running these plays. He had a great receiver in those years by the name of Jim McElhaney who set some records here and then later on coached a while and is now back to coaching Moniteau High School for the second time. There were many good ball players on that team. It was a great victory. I remember it personally because my photographer and I, who happens to be the one to watch and is now the outdoor editor of the Pittsburgh Press, well, Wendell was writing for the Eagle then and he was writing an outdoor column for the Eagle and doing football and stuff and he could also handle ~~also handle~~ a camera. So we went into the locker room, and take some shots like you do in a locker room, and ^{when} ~~we~~ you come from the cold damp of the outside into a warm locker room that fine mechanism sometimes doesn't want to work. The lens fogs up and what have you.

fogs

✓ S: That particular day the lens not only fogged up but the flash refused to work. You need to use a flash inside, indoors. Well, it didn't work. So we tried about three or four times to take a picture of these football players in their moment of glory, their celebration, but the camera wouldn't work. So one big tackle, a giant of a man, he always reminded me of Lyle Alzado who died recently with cancer. He just came growling out. He says, look you guys, you've got one more chance to make that camera work or you guys go in the shower with me and the rest of the guys. So I told Wendell, I said, Wendell, if you ever did anything right in your life, please let this camera work. I think the good Lord must have been listening because the camera worked and everything was fine. To this day Wendell still thinks about that day. It was another moment of football and sports for me, and I think a glorious page in football history here. When Chuck Godlasky left and went to Indiana, I don't know what all of the circumstances were, but I think he wanted to work on his Ph.D., and he could accomplish that at IUP [Indiana University of Pennsylvania], and the job here was open. For a while we thought that Al Jacks who had been a quarterback at Penn State and coached quarterback here at Slippery Rock would get the job, but the job was thrown open which is normal for the situation and Bob DiSpirito came into the picture. I think the spirit of Slippery Rock and the name DiSpirito kind of match each other. He had many fine accomplishments

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S: here. He took his team to the playoffs three years in a row. For a period of time just dominated the conference. Naturally he had the players. You can't do it without the players. He had a lot of fine players, but he had a cohesive group there of staff and players. They all worked so well together like Mr. Clinger and Stan Kendzierski and a few of the others. They were just simply good, and it all worked out for them. Although he won a lot of championships, probably the one game that sticks out in my mind that Bob DiSpirito won was earlier, before that, before Slippery Rock became a powerhouse. Slippery Rock went to IUP to play. Down through the years, Indiana has always had great recruits, fine coaches, excellent material, and also the same could be said for their band. They used to have a tremendous band. It was always by far the best band in the league. It was large, well-trained. After the football games at home they would give these concerts and people would stay and listen to the concert. Sort of like in the summertime where you go to the park and these bands will play. This particular Saturday, Slippery Rock, an underdog team, beat IUP. One of the heroes of that game was Gene Collodi who's now coaching at Burrell, and ✓ Bob only had I think the only ^{linemen} ~~lineman~~ that he had were the ones who started the game. Everybody else was hurt that particular weekend. So Gene Collodi was one of the players who filled in some of the spots here and there. Wherever they needed him, he

S: played that day. If anybody got hurt and was out for five minutes, Collodi would fill in. Slippery Rock won and they also had the band there. Well, the Slippery Rock band in those days in the early 1960's wasn't too large. Just a handful of students. It didn't become the band that it is today. Today it matches any around, and so when the game was over and Slippery Rock had won and they started marching up and down the football field playing, they were deliriously happy. They played on and they played on and they played on. The IUP band wanted to get on the field, and I thought for a minute we're going to have a donnybrook there. The Slippery Rock band refused to budge, it was so happy, and IUP was determined at home that nobody was going to get away with this. But eventually the Slippery Rock band left, and they were happy and they wanted to go out and see the players and congratulate them. So IUP also had its moment. So that was another moment that I remember about Slippery Rock football. I mentioned this to Bob DiSpirito a few years ago, and he never knew about that because naturally he was in a locker room and never realized what was going on. But that's the way it was.

R: Does IUP have an advantage now because of its size and the availability of alumni funds and all of that?

S: I think definitely that is an advantage for them. At one period of time, IUP had been considering going up a class from the conference, and as a result they started recruiting more

S: heavily. They started giving greater scholarships, more scholarships. But once they started playing these larger schools and larger teams, they discovered that it took even much more than that. That the growing process was painful at times. It was painful because they really weren't competing on a level with these teams. They had a great coach and a former Slippery Rock graduate, Chuck KLAUSING was the coach at IUP. Chuck KLAUSING always reminded me of Knute Rockne because he was a great talker, and he could get these players to do anything. He did that in high school and then later on at IUP. He used to wear this old overcoat and an old sloppy hat and he looked like Knute Rockne standing on the sidelines on these fall, wintry days, blustery days when the wind is blowing. He has always been one of my favorite Slippery Rock graduates. I got to know Chuck because he and Red Uram were great friends. They played on that team that beat Grove City College. Chuck coached partly at West Virginia and then I think he had a year or two as an assistant at Pitt and he's still coaching at Saltsburg down at Kiski Prep. He loves coaching and he's so successful at it you can't blame him for it. Chuck's always been one of my favorites. One of the Slippery Rock greats, certainly.

R: We were told in some other interviews that when Bob DiSpirito came here that the football program was in bad shape. They had very few uniforms, equipment had disappeared, and he walked

R: into a kind of a mess. Do you remember when he first came?

S: I remember his early years. That's true, when he didn't inherit too much of a program. The players were not that good. There weren't that many of them. They played a good schedule. I remember Waynesburg coming up in the early years. Waynesburg in those years was a real powerhouse. They had some great football players. Slippery Rock lost something like fifty to nothing. It was really a one-sided thing.

R: That was his opener. That was his first game.

S: Might have been his opener, but he wasn't discouraged. He said, well, that's the way it goes sometimes. One of these days, we're going to beat somebody else fifty-six to nothing. Sure enough, the very last game that was played at old N. Kerr Thompson field, they played Lock Haven. Lock Haven came in with a poor team. Slippery Rock had a great team. They beat Lock Haven seventy something to nothing. Really, I had never seen a Slippery Rock team score that many points, but Lock Haven was so inept that even at the very last minute of play, Lock Haven was down on a five or ten yard line. Regardless what the score is and how much time is left, you have to make an attempt to do something positive like scoring a touchdown or a field goal or something. So Lock Haven had second or third string quarterback in there and he threw a pass and somebody from Slippery Rock intercepted it and he actually walked in to the end zone with about 30 seconds to

S: go. Plays like that are one of the reasons there were so many points scored because Bob had his second stringers in early, his third stringers in early. He didn't want to embarrass the other team. He's not that kind of a coach or that type of individual. If you won the football game, that was good enough for him. Fortunately, there are still football coaches like that around who don't want to. It's a matter of professional pride and they can understand what it's like to be on the other side of the fence like he was in that first game. He didn't want to embarrass the other school like he had been embarrassed the first game. Because there is more involved in winning games. There has to be some sportsmanship involved here, too. That's one of the reasons they call it sport.

B: I've been really impressed by the coaches we've interviewed, by their compassion, by their feelings for their players, more than just winning. They're wonderful role models. Bob told us about a player he kept on the team, a young fellow who had leukemia but he was in remission, and he played for a year. A coach who's out to win isn't going to let that happen. So many incidents that we've heard reinforce that. Is that something you're aware of with good coaching?

S: I remember the player. I can't remember his name, but he did have a player in that category. Even if he went out and played only one or two minutes, the coaches were proud of his contribution

S: and they would forever pat him on the back and say, nice job, you did just what we wanted, and things like that. The players that needed extra help and verbal support, they usually got it. I don't know of any case where they would pick on someone. If an athlete or a player was loafing and not doing his job, naturally that's the coaches' job to get him straightened out somehow, some way. More often than not it was a pat on the back. I think they realized and most good coaches realize that you can really accomplish more by doing it that way.

R: His style of discipline was kind of not exactly laid back. His rules were very, very clear. Like swearing, he did not tolerate any kind of swearing at all nor did any of the coaches swear, which is one example of his style. He expected the same of himself as he expected of the players in terms of behavior and all that stuff.

S: I think that's true. One of the reasons the program was so successful was that he did have an excellent staff. I'm talking about high class individuals who knew how to go out and recruit players, and as you say, they didn't swear themselves. They presented themselves in high manner. That was my observation. I didn't watch all the practices because at that time, being a one man sport staff, it was difficult to be in a lot of places at one time. So when I would come down I would merely come down for the football game and maybe leave shortly after.

S: One of the biggest supporters that Bob DiSpirito had during his football stay here was Dr. Watrel. He was President of the college. Dr. Watrel played football himself for Syracuse. He was a linebacker. So he knew what it was all about to get a football program going and always supported the staff, and would ask Bob if there was anything he could do to help. He supported the program. I know there were some differences of opinion down the line sometimes, but that's another story. He started that new press box. Opened that new press box that they have. The facilities at Slippery Rock in the early years, the best way I can describe them were on a scale of one to ten, maybe a two. I don't know how many times I would come down and cover football games and the old tentlike structure that they had for a press box was wide open. The wind would blow through, the snow, the rain and it would be difficult to write on paper when it's wet, you know, but you had to do it somehow. Occasionally I would, I guess, ruffle my feathers. Some of these other colleges would come in with the radio people, and naturally all the electrical equipment and what have you has to be protected. They'd short out and what have you, somebody could get hurt. So they would take up most of the space. And with the field microphone also in there, there was very little room for the press. The thing that bothered me about the radio people was that they would come with three, four, five people strong, this engineer, that engineer,

S: this guy. And here I am covering for equal media, in my opinion, better than radio in the sense in the early days they didn't have the radio coverage for the Butler area. It was all the press. Grantland Rice and all the other boys down the line. So they would take most of the space. I would have to look over somebody's shoulder to see the game and write. I remember coming down one time for practice. Bob Storer was the athletic director. He had been the football coach. Bob Storer was another excellent figure in the history of Slippery Rock football, and sports, and becoming the athletic director. He was practically a one man staff. In those days, that's the way it was. It was no different. It's not a matter of complaint. That's the way it was in the old days. He had maybe two or three guys coaching. Somebody from the press. A one man staff. You didn't have trainers. You'd be your own trainer. You were lucky if you had a doctor at the game. These are things that evolved down through the years that they found out were necessary to be a part of the whole picture. I came down to practice one day, and Bob came over and he put his hands over my eyes and said, guess who? So I said, Bob, I think you have this backwards. Let me stand behind you and watch practice. I don't feel at home here at Slippery Rock unless I'm standing, looking over someone's shoulder watching the game or practice or what have you. So Bob took it good naturedly. That's part of the game too. You

S: can't afford to lose your temper. But slowly everything came into being now. I think Slippery Rock has won its battle. It stands right there with the best.

R: As a sports writer, did you consider yourself just a reporter reporting the game or were you also a kind of a critic? Is that a fair question?

S: That's a fair question because down through the years everybody's looked toward the newspaper reporters to sort of keep either city council or the football coach in line. I came to the Eagle in 1946 and after three or four years I started writing a column. In all my years, I only wrote one critical column about a coach. It was a local basketball coach. Now you have to be a certain type of individual to be critical. I felt that being a writer, being on the paper, I had the advantage over the coaches in being critical. I didn't think that that was completely my job to be critical of what type of play a coach might have called or whatever. If something that a coach did was not sportsmanlike, for example, like Woody Hays at Ohio State when he coached there. He struck a player. That has no business in any kind of sport, football, basketball, where a coach strikes a player, and if I became aware of that, I would always use that in my column. Although, thank goodness, in my early years, like I say, the coaches were also teachers. They were proud to be able to teach these players to

S: do something. Well, it's the same today. I didn't see too much of that so I didn't find it necessary to be critical. If they called for a pass play when some loyal fan thought maybe they should have run the football, I wouldn't second guess the coaches. Later on when you talk to the coaches you find out very directly why they called the play. There was a reason for it. And as long as the reason was very logical to me and as good a reason for running one play as the other, I didn't see any reason to be picking on any football coach.

R: So then in the process of a game you do a pregame piece about the visiting team, about Slippery Rock, and about their preparation, and then you do a postgame piece for Monday's paper?

S: Right.

R: Was that an interview process or did you go in the locker room at half time?

S: Not at half time. After the game you would go in and spend a couple of minutes. Nowadays the writers are going for more particulars. They interview more ball players than I did. As I said, being a one man staff, you didn't look for more work when you didn't have to. As it was, you did more work than you should have being a one man staff and that was after 25 years. I think in my 40 years of working, well 39 1/2, I covered personally and wrote over 5,000 events. I'm talking football and basketball

S: and some wrestling and banquets, almost everything, track.

✓ Pregame write-up in those days. Slippery Rock did not have a sports information director. Very few schools did. Maybe just a very large one had someone doing something particular in that direction. Making sure your radio people had something and newspapers had something. In those days everyone was understaffed. Slippery Rock was understaffed. So most of the preseason stuff I did on my own, what I remembered from the previous game. I would perhaps call the coach and get some information or whoever was following it on the faculty level, and then try to piece together a pregame piece. Postgame was pretty normal, I guess. One thing, fortunately for me, was that Slippery Rock had coaches that knew what the interview was all about. They liked to talk. They like to give credit to their players which is natural. So that part came easy, particularly after a victory when you wanted to give someone credit for winning a game. When you lost a football game, when they played badly, they would still talk about it. Particularly Bob DiSpirito. I marveled that he was able to control his feelings after a game, when I know that he was probably unhappy with losing. Maybe losing a game that he should have won. Someone maybe made a bad mistake, including himself or one of the coaches in the stands about picking a player. But he always talked to me, talked to other reporters, and

S: to me, that's when you find out where you separate the men from the boys and Bob was always a man. He accepted defeat and knew how to handle it. Because if he didn't, you know, his players would see that, and they wouldn't be able to accept defeat. You have to get them ready for the next game which is all part of the scene. Bob was a gentleman in that direction.

R: Were you at Ithaca when they had the Bowl game?

S: I was at Ithaca. I always heard about how beautiful the campus was at Cornell. I'm a Penn Stater. I finished at Penn State in 1942, and I always thought we had a beautiful campus at Penn State and we did, but down through the years we used to always hear that you haven't seen a college campus until you've seen Cornell. I always wondered about that because I was always proud of what Penn State looked like. Cornell was a beautiful place. At that particular time when Slippery Rock played at Ithaca it was cold, and I thought they would have a modern press box at Cornell. I sat outdoors. The seats were outdoors and I don't ^{know} of anything that was indoors, perhaps maybe the P. A. system or maybe the radio, but the reporters all sat and I froze. When I stood up after the game was over, my legs were frozen from the knees down. I had to sort of stand there and get the blood circulating back in there. The field was clear of snow. They had cleared it. There must have

S: been six to eight foot of snow on the sidelines. That's how high it was. It was a dreadful day for football. How the players could stand it and play, I just don't know how they did it. It reminded me of the day when the Dallas Cowboys and the Green Bay Packers played and it was 15 degrees below zero up in Green Bay. It just wasn't human. I felt that way that day. I thought, boy, I couldn't wait for the game to be over. It was just simply that cold. But that's part of the sport and I always marvel at the players, how they could take it. It didn't seem to bother them. The coaches would walk around and get involved in the heat of the battle and then take a jacket off and everybody is freezing and they're ~~out~~ ^{out}. It's too hot, it's too hot. That was ^{one} of the great football games. I was also at the Knute Rockne Bowl when they played in Atlantic City.

R: The year before wasn't it?

S: It was about that time. That was a fine football game. My boss at the Eagle had volunteered his airplane because the game was played Friday night. How do you get to Atlantic City? Well, one thing, how do you get back with all their pictures back to Butler? So the boss volunteered his airplane. We flew down and flew back right after the game. In fact, John Carpenter, who is the sports information director, he flew down along with Don DiSpirito who was the public relations director at that time. It was a good

S: trip over, and a good trip back. It was really a worthwhile weekend. It was a long weekend, but a nice one.

R: So your relationship with Bob was always on an even keel?

S: Oh, yes.

R: Nothing difficult about him?

S: No. Never. We get along real well. I'd like to say this, that if all the relationships, all the coaches, were as good as they were with Bob, it would have made my job easier. Bob was entirely cooperative, and like I say, I appreciated him mostly the way he would approach a game after losing, particularly a difficult game. You have to understand that all week long he prepared for this thing. The players. The coaches. Then you go out and you lose. Some people consider you a failure. Some coaches take it to heart and they throw things in the locker room and things like that. But Bob always had a lot of class. Always did. Made my job easier. I always appreciated that.

B: Maybe we should have started earlier asking you something about your background, before we worked up to where we are now. Were you an athlete, too?

S: Well, I was a partial athlete. I was pretty much average in everything I wanted to play them all. Football I wasn't allowed to play. My father had to sign for it, and he would never let me play. Yet I played sandlot football, which is more difficult because you didn't have the protection that you had in organized football.

S: The basketball I played was in the service. We had a service basketball team. In the midwest we played a lot of colleges. Teachers colleges in Nebraska and Kansas and that area in there. I can remember one game we played, and we didn't realize it that was a parochial school, a school for students who wanted to become ministers. One of the players on our team swore, and the coach who brought our team together, he was a physical ed. instructor. He stopped the game and he said, sorry, no swearing. These guys are all learning to be priests and we're not swearing tonight. But we had a good time. I played softball on the west coast in California. I played against Hammer Field when Hammer Field won two national championships. That's fast pitch. We played them three times. We beat them once which I thought was real good. Most of the time you say you won one out of three, that's poor, but not when the other team was Hammer Field. They had a lot of great softball players. Some of these camps would get these athletes, and once they got them they wouldn't move them on. They would keep them and building ~~ing~~ all these teams. They felt it was good for the players and good for the morale of the troops to watch a good team play. Basically, I was a writer. I went to Penn State and took up journalism, and came close to doing some journalistic work in the service, but the one officer who was in my corner got transferred the one day that I had a chance to do something, so I finished up on the drill field

S: and finally I went to school. I went to cryptographic and coding school, Chanute Field. That's what I did overseas. I was in the upper echelon ^{being} ~~because once you were overseas made a lot of~~ ✓
 a cryptographic technicians. One of the things I learned in camp ✓✓
 that year ^{was} everything ^{had to be} ~~was~~ quiet. Everything was hush, hush. ✓✓
 All these big wheels were walking around like they were walking on glass. They were tiptoeing around headquarters. Then about two weeks later we found out why. That's when they dropped the bomb on Hiroshima. This B-39 came out of the ^{Mariannas} ~~Marianna~~s so it ✓
 was important to have everything very secretive. ^{as an} ~~An~~ ordinary ✓
 G. I. knew nothing about it. This is my opinion about the atomic bomb, but it did shorten the war, and saved a lot of lives on this side. That's the only way I can look at because I had a lot of friends who were killed in the service, and that's the only way you can look at it. I know they lost a lot of lives, too, but that's the way it goes.

R: War isn't for everybody.

S: No.

R: In your experience with athletics, coaches and people who are fans are always talking about character building and then the other side of that is injuries and things that happen. Do you see athletics as a very positive force in our culture for kids?

S: Definitely. I've always felt it was the greatest thing for young men to participate in sports regardless of what kind.

S: It kept them busy. It kept them tired. It gave them goals to reach. Early goals that perhaps ~~that~~ they might not have had in early life, if they wanted to become a pitcher or they wanted to become a basketball star or whatever, regardless of the sport. It provided them with a goal and I think if you can give young people goals to achieve, then after they achieve them you applaud them, I think that carries in their character throughout. I know at the Eagle we ran a lot of Little League games. All of them. We didn't turn anybody down. We had something like 50, 60, 70 Little Leagues in the county. At first when Little League started in Butler we used to give them box scores, complete box scores for Little League games. Then every community started to have a Little League. Well, obviously, you couldn't give everybody the same thing. Then the priorities got less and less as far as box scores were concerned. We gave them the score by innings and the players who had the good games. Down through the years I've had adult men come by and say, hi, Mike, how are you doing? I remember your write-ups when I was in Little League. Most of these players really could not reach the stage of being varsity high school or varsity college, so their idea of athletics was Little League. Little League football, Little League baseball. They could play it because no one was ever turned down that I ever knew of playing Little League baseball. They could play. The father may have been the coach, but, whatever, they played and

- S: participated, had a uniform, and everybody cheered them when they did something real good. It was good. It filled a part of their life that carried throughout the years, what they did in Little League. Every year I know these stories will get better and better what he did when he was nine or ten years old. Tell his children or grandchildren, but he remembers something. Then when his grandson plays Little League ball, he's the first one there to cheer him, help him out.
- R: I know of some recent cases where youngsters would play Little League ball, they would play clear through elementary school and middle school and then get into high school and they were really good athletes and then they would suffer a kind of a burnout, and just quit. Does that say that there's too much of a good thing or they played organized ball or started too early and played too long? They got interested in girls maybe.
- S: Right. There is a certain burnout that they have, and I've noticed it, and it only happens in families where the parents are too aggressive in trying to get their children to do something. When they get a little older, they don't want to be pushed into something they don't want to do. For example, in Butler they've had the program up and down the scale. Little League, and pre-little league and T-ball and what have you, and then they go to prep ball and pony ball. When you go to prep League, naturally they're able to drive cars and what have you. But there is also a burnout there that there is too much. In the

S: early years of Little League baseball, I remember going to a playoff game. The game evolved into an argument between the umpires and the parents, particularly the fathers. They knew more than the umpires. Nobody wanted to umpire so they would ask somebody to umpire. Then about the second inning they would ridicule him, call him names, and challenge their ancestry *and what have you.* So they got into a pretty bad argument. This is a playoff game. There were two fields where they could play Little League ball. The young boys took their balls and bats and went over to the other field and had a pickup game of their own, these two teams, and they were playing on their own. So finally I directed their attention to this to the parents. I said, look, you people here are arguing like children, whether something is wrong or right. You want these people to umpire and then you ridicule them. If you want a major league umpire, go get one, and then you can pay them. These people are doing their best, and you're accusing them of playing favorites. This is for the kids. Take a look at the field over there. There's not one adult over there. They're playing baseball and having the time of their lives. That particular playoff was never finished. Never finished. They just could not get together over what they wanted to do. I think that's terrible. There is a need for Little League baseball, but the right kind of Little League baseball.

R: Every kid's got to play.

S: Every kid has to play.

R: And winning has to be played down, because those are incompatible goals. In the years with Bob DiSpirito, you saw a lot of high school players, of course. Did you ever recommend to Bob players he ought to think about for scholarships?

S: Not really, because they were able to keep track of the high school players. It was their job to recruit. What they would do is read the newspapers. Who was scoring. Who was doing well. What coach was saying, well, my linebacker played a great game if they were in need of a linebacker. The word gets around. They go watch them play. They don't take my recommendation. They will go and watch these high school players play. Then if they are interested in what they can do on a football field, they'll contact that particular coach and find out what he is doing in the classroom. Today it's the other way in reverse. If they have an idea that somebody is a good football player, they'll check the classroom first before they will ever waste their time on driving 50 miles here or 50 miles there to see someone play when they know his grades are low and he's not going to go to college in the first place, or if he does, he's only going to stay there one year. They want their recruits to stay there four years. To go the whole way for the benefits when they are juniors and seniors, because they're learning when they are freshmen and sophomores.

S: Unless they're such exceptions that they can play when they are freshmen and sophomores. If they would say, have you seen Bob Brown play? If I say yes, because Butler would play the larger high schools where they have better recruiting, or larger groups of kids to pick from, I would say, yes, I've seen him play. Can he do this or do that? Whatever recommendation I could give them. I tried to analyze them and give them some kind of a grading that would help them perhaps. Whether they used it or not I really don't know. I know that Bob would come to Butler and watch Butler play. Not always to watch Butler play but if Butler was playing Mount Lebanon and there were one or two players on Mount Lebanon that he might be interested in, he would come up and watch them play and then do his own work. He would know what he was looking for much more than anybody else.

B: Mike, were there ever any complaints or pressures on you for the things that you wrote?

S: If I said that working at the Eagle for 39 1/2 years that I didn't receive letters of discredit, I would be lying. I would receive one on an average of maybe, actually not too many when I talk to the other writers, maybe three or four letters a year, where they would ridicule my write-ups and then sign it, a loyal Butler High fan, loyal Slippery Rock fan. They wouldn't give me their names. I'd read what they say. Then when I retired seven

S: years ago, I saved perhaps about 40 or 50 letters. Most of them are positive, but even some of the negative ones I would save because they were unusual, and they were the ones at that particular time had gotten me angry and peeved. But there's nothing you can do about it. It goes with the territory. Like now it's election year, a national election year, and Bush and Clinton are calling each other names and what have you. They know that this is part of the game. You have to learn how to accept it. I've had parents call up, and they want to know this and they want to know that. I've had parents come up to the office and sit down and want to know why I did something. I always invited them to come down because, like the football coaches or any coach, I always had a reason for what I did. I didn't do any second guessing. I had a reason for why I did something a certain way at that particular time, and if they didn't agree with me, well, that would be their problem. But I did have what I would consider logical and reasonable opinions on why I did something. But you have to learn how to accept that and don't take it to bed with you at night. That's one thing, that when I went to bed at night I never lost any sleep over what I wrote or why I wrote it. My conscience was always clear that I did the best I could under the circumstances or whatever. Like I say, I wasn't too picky on the players. I didn't see any reason for me that I should ridicule a 15 year old boy for making a mistake on the football

S: field where he had a split second to make a decision. I could never do that. If the man was a professional making a million dollars a year and he made some stupid mistake, it's my job to point out that he played like an amateur or coached like an amateur or whatever. I won't use those words but the idea is that if you get paid a million dollars, you're expected to do much better than a 15 year old high school boy. I could never pick on them. I couldn't face them the next day. I couldn't do that to a 15 year old. I could never.

R: What about officials officiating? Were you critical of that from time to time?

✓ S: Really, no. I got to know a lot of the officials down through the years, and I knew that whatever they did, that their good conscience directed them to do something. They would go and take lessons and courses and what have you and read up on the rule books. The only time perhaps that I might be critical of an official is if he decided a certain decision on a certain rule and he was incorrect. I would point out that he made the decision because of this rule but he misinterpreted the rule and merely state that that was a fact but I wouldn't ridicule him for that. Everybody makes mistakes. A policeman ✓ could stop you on ^{Main}~~Ninth~~ Street and arrest you for some particular law that you broke and that law is not even on the book, and then you have to have the opportunity to be peeved

S: about that or complain, but if he misinterpreted a rule or wasn't a sport himself, officials have to be sports too, sportsmen. If they do something out of the way, then you have to mention this.

R: During the regular season, did you go on the road with the Slippery Rock team generally or had you been up all night Friday night?

S: Well, I did cover quite a few Slippery Rock away games. Not all of them, naturally. If they had a big game going on at IUP or Edinboro or Clarion, I went up to Clarion a few years. They used to play Clarion late in the season, so it was always an important game for one team or the other. I would go there. In the early years, like I say when I was a one man staff, it was difficult for me to do a lot of this because there were high schools playing Saturday afternoon games, and high schools then didn't have lights. It would have been better for me, looking at it selfishly in getting a story, and today it would have been better for me to cover a high school game at home because I knew even if I didn't cover Slippery Rock College, that someone there would handle it for the school and do a pretty good job of it. They would do ~~it~~ probably as good a job as if we had a stringer going out. In those days we didn't have stringers, we had me. So I would depend on someone from the college to cover some of these away games.

R: Can you say anything about the NCAA? The problems they have had over the years. Has it been bothersome to sports writers?

S: I really never bother myself too much with the NCAA because covering one college I never got involved in all the rules that were necessary to be touched upon.

✓ This has nothing to do with the NCAA, but I remember in the early years when teams, colleges, used to play, I remember one year when Penn State was going to a playoff game down in Louisiana. Penn State had two, three black ball players, and the teams in the south refused to play, refused to accept Penn State or the players. I thought that was the most negative years of sports. It would happen in major league baseball and all these sports that this went on. Now it's pretty much wide open, which I give credit to partly to NCAA, the coaching. The idea of growing up and being human and being right. Those years were wrong. Those things were all wrong.

B: Did you get to know some of the other coaches besides Bob DiSpirito?

S: I got to know some of the basketball coaches and Bob Barlett, of course, coaching basketball now. I remember when he played here at The Rock, and when he started his career at Moniteau High School. Bob is talented in his work, and like Bob he knew how to talk to the press which is one of the reasons that he got more ~~rank~~ ^{rank} than the other coaches because when he would

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S: call up with his games from Moniteau, he was well prepared with what he had to report about the game and about the players. Bob was always good for a lot of quotes, probably more quotes than I needed. Believe me, I would rather have that side of the coin than to talk to some coach who would absolutely say nothing, and you try to drag something out of him. But Bob was cooperative that way. He was very good at it. He was a very good coach because he could talk to the players and he helped to build the program there at Moniteau and got it better. He went to Butler Community College over Westminster, and wherever Bob coached he had good results simply because he knew basketball. He knew how to coach. He knew people. Just one of the good people in sports.

Bill Lennox, your athletic director, I got to know him when he was in Butler. He coached in Butler. Came here and coached and now the athletic director, and a man of high principles and belongs in the field. Belongs in the operation of athletics where he can do what he does best. These are fine people that you have down here.

Bob Storer was another one. He used to come to Butler in the early days when I was there, and he used to watch an independent team by the name of the Butler Cubs play. The Butler Cubs were organized after World War II. ~~so~~ were a ~~number~~ of many other communities and they had a football league that was sponsored by

S: the Pittsburgh Sun-Tele, the old Pittsburgh Sun-Tele. He used to enjoy that. Red Uram, who was his quarterback, came and played for the Cubs, and Jim Gazetos who used to play here as a freshman and then he got hurt, then he became an assistant for Bob Storer. These are all people who have something to do with the program here and doing things right at Slippery Rock.

Of course, John Carpenter. I met John years ago when he used to work for the Ellwood City Ledger. He was doing sports. We got to know each other, and John and I see pretty much eye to eye on how the sports program should be run and conducted. John is tremendous at his job. Like I say, when you have a sports information director like John you don't have to worry about whether you're going to come down and cover a game because you know that John is going to handle it the right way. These are people that make sports programs successful and bring a name to the college, school, or Slippery Rock out in the front. John's won awards for the work that he does. John Carpenter, very good.

B: Give us a composite picture of what you think of a wonderful coach. What qualities should he have? Any sport.

S: I think a good coach should learn something about every player that he has. Not only what he can do on the field, but what his interests are in life. What he's doing in the classroom. His

S: grades. Not only what his grades are, but what his interests are. Whether he is interested in mathematics or becoming a pilot. I think if he learns to understand the ambitions that the young player has, he can probably direct him a lot better. You should always give these young people all the encouragement you can. Don't play any mistakes they might make. I mean honest mistakes. If they're out doing drugs or drinking, then you have to discipline them, and if they still want him on the team they've got to give him a set of rules ~~they~~ he has to go by. They should learn to know the parents if they can. It is more difficult in college. It may be difficult to understand what kind of problems he may be facing in college because it's ^{like} ~~a step up from~~ night and day from high school to college ⁱⁿ ~~of~~ what they expect of you. I've told this to a lot of high school coaches about their players. If you have an athlete in high school, you also have to make sure that he has some fun. It's a fun time in life so it should be a fun time in athletics also. Because when they go to college, expectations are entirely different. Maybe they are on a scholarship or what have you, and it's a little more difficult. They're going to have their fun in college, but a different kind. They're young men. They're going to be adults almost, particularly by the time they're seniors. But when they are 14, 15 or 16 years old, if that coach can't see that these children, you might as well say, with muscles on them, want to have a little bit of fun.

S: Because they act like children. You look at some of these football players that are 240 pounds and have these helmets on and you can't see their face, but the minute they take those helmets off, particularly in high school you realize that this is a 15 year old boy that is out there playing football. He may have a lot of size and all, but he is still 15 years old, and he looks 15 years old when you look at his face. Probably not even shaving yet, and would cry at a drop of a hat because he's still a young teenager if his feelings are hurt. It's a responsibility that really is awesome because they form their lives. A lot of these athletes that come out of school, they mirror their coaches. I talk to some coaches who are really brutal and I'll say, well, gee, why do you do it that way? They'll say, well, when I was in high school, my coach did this, he did that, and he says, it didn't hurt me. So I have to explain to them that obviously it did hurt you because you wouldn't be doing what you are doing to these young people out in the field now. That's not a way you treat another human being. Everybody wants to win, but I think you have to win a certain way. I think you have to win a certain way.

R: I remember the McKeesport coach that they had the film on five years ago or seven or eight years ago, beating on those kids. Just really outrageous. Had one of them been your son or

R: my son, well, I wouldn't allow my son to play under those conditions.

S: That's true.

R: I saw that in the Y.M.C.A. You see that at kind of all levels where there are some mentalities that have no business being around kids.

S: That's true.

R: But they are fairly rare, I suspect.

S: I think maybe some of the more difficult problems that they have in coaching now were not there in the early years now because you've got girls in sports now more than ever. Now you do have a lot of women coaches, but you also have a lot of men coaches, and for a man to coach a woman, I think his philosophy can't be entirely like it is when he coaches a man. It has to be just a little different. I remember when they first got girls playing sports in high school. In those first couple of years, the girls weren't really that serious about athletics. They would go out and they would play and earn a letter, but they were girls and they did a lot of giggling. They were just different than boys. They would giggle, and they would talk about boys like boys talk about girls, but they really weren't that serious about playing. If they made a mistake out on the floor or on the field, mostly basketball, it didn't bother them that much because

S: to them basketball was just a stopover thing. It was a student activity more than really a game. But in recent years, they have the same intensity that the boys have. They want to win, and they practice and they work hard. They do everything that the boys do. Their coaches, as a result, have to see they do the same things, but still you have to treat them a little different. I don't think you can be as brutal with the girl, I don't mean to beat up on them, but you can't talk to them the same way that you can talk to maybe a football player who's knocking the other guy down. In football, the players learn to become meaner. As they all grow in a sport, if you're not knocked down, that means that you have to knock the other guy down. That's just part of the game. I remember a young man who played football at Butler High School. A very good athlete. Big, big size. He had everything. But he was too nice of a player, too nice of a kid. So the coaches wanted him tough. They would pick on him. So finally by the time he got to be a senior, he was not only big but he was tough. That carried over into basketball. First three basketball games he played he was thrown out. The first game he played he was thrown out in the first quarter. The second game the second quarter. The third game the third quarter, so he got progressively better. But the basketball coach finally had to put him down and talk to him to explain to him that there was a difference between football and basketball. There were just a

S: few different rules and you just didn't knock people down in basketball like you did in football. He straightened out and became an excellent basketball player, but you have to talk with these people. You have to know what you're doing, and you have to help them any way you can. Sometimes you really have to yell at them, but sometimes a pat on the back.

R: And nothing is automatic.

S: Nothing is automatic.

✓ R: Now Bob had a discipline committee on his football teams. They had a representative of freshmen, sophomores, junior~~s~~ and senior~~s~~, and then Bob, and then anytime a player was in so much trouble that he risked being kicked off the team, this committee went into action, and the players made the recommendation. Bob had the final say, of course, but he had a kind of a democratic process, at least a partially democratic process that he believed in, because the players could speak more effectively to a teammate than sometimes the coach could. That seemed like a healthy thing.

✓ S: I think so. I think the ~~players~~ ^{player's} outlook is different than a coach's. As the saying goes, they know where he's coming from, so to speak. Your teammate, if he's upset and not playing as well. It could be a bad grade. It could be a girlfriend or the fact that a coach has changed him from one position to another. Most of these athletes like to play a certain position, and when a coach decides that someone else is better, and puts him there, but

S: the original player has enough talent to be playing someplace, so he puts him in another position, that's not always acceptable. The player may not say anything, but maybe the way he plays, the way he responds to other discipline may be different. Regardless of who plays the sport, they want to be recognized for being pretty good at this sport. They want to be recognized for their success. Just like someone who goes to college and goes extra years and gets his master's and Ph.D. It's recognition that the school gives the student. But the player, they give him letters and all that. That's why I guess they have these all-star teams. Most of the all-star teams, I don't know if they really accomplish the original purpose because once you say that player A is better than player B you're separating the two, and sometimes you don't agree. There are obvious choices like we talked about before like Doak Walker. Everyone agreed Doak Walker was an All-American. He was in a class by himself so there was no argument there. But maybe one or two players on that team contributed to a really healthy season, to the success, and didn't receive the recognition from the coach, from the press, all-star teams or what have you, and then it's a different situation. It's a different problem. Everybody has a fertile mind and when they consider themselves, everybody is positive. They think of themselves as being really good. About the only area probably where you're brought down to earth

S: is maybe going out to play golf. You can tell anybody in the world you're a good golfer and then you go out and play and the good Lord decides that one.

R: Probably more frustration out on the golf course.

S: More frustration. You want to know a man's personality or a person's personality just go out on the golf course with him and see how quickly they adjust to the bad moments. Everybody has bad moments in golf. If they don't, they don't play. I do.

R: It's a game. Merely a game.

S: It's a game.

B: I thought that was supposed to do away with your frustrations?

S: Sometimes not. I don't know where professional sports is going because it's so expensive now to own a team, to run a team, to pay the ball players, and pay television is just around the corner. How they're going to do that I don't know. But I think that they are going to lose a lot of good fans. I think professional sports are going to lose a lot of fans, and they in turn are going to turn to amateur sports like college, high school. They are going to be more a part of it.

✓ R: I'm told that it is impossible to get a ticket to a Steelers game. That the same families ^{have} ~~that~~ controlled the seats for twenty-five years. Kansas City has the same problem and they have a bigger stadium but they are a sellout for the entire year. So a kid can't go to see the Chiefs or the Steelers.

✓ S: The thing that I don't understand and maybe it's beyond me, but most of these professional teams, like New Orleans plays in the Dome in New Orleans and it seats around 70,000 and for years this has been a sellout whether all the people are there or not, but every seat is bought. You wonder. These are millionaires that own these teams and you recognize their ability to be good businessmen, otherwise they wouldn't be millionaires. And yet before the season even starts they are losing money even though every seat is sold. Now there is something wrong some place when you have that going on. And then somebody comes out of college and demands five or six million dollars like that young player did in Louisiana and went to the Miami basketball team. O'Neal? Shaquille O'Neal.

R: He got 20 million dollars for six years?

S: I don't understand that.

R: He's not broke anymore.

S: I just don't understand when it's gone to that level.

R: The economics of it is just baffling. Like the Pirates. It has something to do with television markets and all kinds of stuff.

S: Yes, that's right. You can argue like Barry Bonds who's considering the Pirates. I don't really know what he's going to do. They just signed Cal Ripken yesterday. I think he got 32 million dollars for six years. Now Cal Ripken was one

✓ got

S: of the big free agents. Now where does that put Bonds? He was one of the big people also. Is he going to be satisfied with six million dollars when Ryne Sandberg got seven million dollars a year? I don't know. There's a mental outlook there that you have to try to understand.

R: Which is a problem we don't have.

S: Which is a problem we don't have and it's hard to understand why they do some of the things that they do. But if you were in another man's shoes, then what would you do? I would say that most people would do the same thing. They have a limited number of years in which they can do this, and that's the way it goes.

R: The brass ring's there, you grab it.

S: It's like this McGuire from Oakland. Now he's had a lot of ^{home runs.} ~~home runs.~~ He's having a great season, his best season ever. He got hurt the other day, and now he's on the disabled list. He's also a free agent. But suppose his injury was such that he could never play again. So you can see where they are coming from. They want to be protected. So I guess you can't blame them. In most cases, you can't blame the coach for what he does and in most cases you can't blame the player. In most cases, they all have pretty good reasons.

R: Well, it's kind of the American dream to be a part of a free market economy. You sell your wares. If you happen to be a

R: magnificent baseball player and someone wants to pay you three million dollars a year, that's lovely. Doesn't happen to many of us, but it sure is happening. I've never seen anyone write very clearly about all that. I've seen them write emotionally about all that so I guess there is a lot of foolishness, but it's not foolishness to the guy who's signing the contract nor to his agent.

S: No, when you get ten percent of millions of dollars that's another story too.

B: The fans support it too. They go to see these players.

S: They do. The fans support it although I think I've heard more times in recent years about a parent, a father, who may have two boys and wants to take his wife and his two boys or a boy and girl or whatever, his children, to a ^{ball game.} ~~ball game.~~ Then he tells me he spent a hundred dollars on his family to go see one baseball game. Now I find that hard to understand because when I grew up you paid a dollar in the bleachers and hot dogs were a quarter and every time you went to see a ^{ball game} ~~ball game~~ it was always a double header because you got your money's worth. Now they play very few double headers unless it is absolutely necessary and their prices are out of this world. I told a young man who is going to college now in his senior year, and he told me what he is paying for a room with three other roommates, and I said when I went to school I was paying three dollars a week, this was in the early 1940's, and

S: that's fifty years ago, but I said you weren't making as much either. So it is all relative. I guess everything is just relative.

B: It's not the same money it was.

R: When you ran into a coach like DiSpirito, do you compare him with other coaches that you've known, or do you think of him as one of the best you have seen?

✓ S: Well, definitely I think Bob is one of the best I have run across because as I say he has been ^{handling} ~~handle~~ all facets of the job. It's a job because somebody hires you and they pay you for it, but here you have to have a certain love for the sport whatever it might be. Basketball or football. And you do many things beyond the call of duty. I think the average person in America doesn't realize it, but what they get, outside of a handful, most of them get less than minimum wage for all the hours and time that they put in there. All of these citizens and the town all look at what we're paying our coach. He's getting four or five thousand and he's making all this money as a teacher, but they don't realize all the time that it takes during the season and coaches like Bob and Art Bernardi in the off season. Just because the season's over doesn't mean they stop working or doing things. I know of cases where they've gone even to basketball games, a football coach has gone to a basketball game, to see an athlete that plays both sports. To see what he does in basketball. To see

S: how he moves around because it's important to him and his own judgement, of course, is better than somebody else's. I mean he respects it more, I should say. These are all things that are a part of the job that you do. They go to banquets and they talk and most of the time it's for free. They don't get anything. A free meal. Most of the time it is chicken, but it's all part of the whole thing, and they enjoy going out and meeting the players. It's the way the game is played.

R: I had a lot of his football players in class over the years, and some of them I knew very well, and have seen them since. Dennis Tilko for instance. Dennis is an old, old friend. Tom Yaksic who was a guard alongside Tilco. Their admiration for him is really sort of spectacular.

S: Yes. I think there was a mutual admiration society between Bob and Denny. Bob appreciated Denny because he had a great intensity. I don't know too many football players who sort of were gung ho about their sport. They just loved it, loved it, and still do. Bob appreciated what Denny brought to his team. Not only his ability, but his intensity and he fired up the other players and the team. And I think Denny appreciated what Bob did for him. It was good for both of them. Denny still comes down here on Alumni Day and watches the team play. For him, of course, the coach is Coach Bob. He's already at the age where ^{he's} twenty years beyond his college, but those things happen. It's like I came

S: down years ago for Alumni Day when I was working on a full time basis. They have a special award they have on Alumni Day in honor of one of the football players. I really can't remember his name now, but the player presenting the award that day was Jim McElaney. The gentleman who usually did it wasn't attending. He couldn't make it so he asked Jim McElhaney to present it. Jim was a great star at Slippery Rock in the early 1960's. He played all the championship teams, but here he was 15 years later and he's presenting this thing and they mentioned his name and just a ripple of applause and this is only 15 years after he played. They didn't remember him. Well, 15 years ago these kids were three, four years old. How could they? They weren't following Slippery Rock football. They were playing and probably getting ready to go to school. But these things you carry through your life like Denny and Bob that have this feeling for each other. They respect each other, and that is what you get out of the games. You get more than just wins and losses. You get to know people. Sometimes you get to know them under adverse conditions and your team is losing and the odds are against you and then somebody stands up and does something real good that you remember all your living days. These are the things you carry on. Not the wins and losses sometimes. Sometimes they won't even agree 20 years down the road what the score of the game was and who they played,

S: but they'll remember the incidents. These are the great things that sports give to people.

R: More so at the amateur level than when it becomes business.

S: I think so. At one time professional sports, particularly baseball before they brought the free agents in, you would be on a team for 15 to 20 years and you got to know some of them. You would be friends for life. But now you might play for three or four different teams before your career is over. Play two and three years here and play two or three years there. Almost any time you turn the television set on there's a pitcher throwing to a batter and the announcer will say, they were teammates somewhere else three years ago. They should know each other. He should know the pitcher, particularly if the guy is a catcher. But they know each other, and they respect each other. They have fond memories, but I think it's deeper when you go a whole career with somebody like that. I think, for example, some of these coaches who are in the pros, they have a player who is retiring and later on maybe a few years down the line you will see him as a coach helping him coach because they know he knows the sport. They like the way he does things. I know of some players who were pretty good as players, and you would think they might have been picked as coaches later on, but their living habits are not such that you would want them to coach the players that you

- S: have. So they lose all that when they leave the field. It's what you do off the field that's important, too, in any sport. In college, what you do in the classroom. You can be a football hero, but if you don't treat your other people the right way you are going to be some kind of snob to them.
- R: When I first came here in 1971, I was so impressed that the coaches were all a part of the faculty. They were all in classrooms teaching, and I had never seen that before. It gave them a kind of solidarity with the other faculty which was a very, very healthy thing because they weren't set apart from us. They were a part of us, and it was different.
- S: I think you have it a lot of places and it is good. Of course, in high school, in scholastic sports you're losing that, and it's all a matter of economics. Someone coaches for two or three years, he's coaching football and the young man gets married and he has a family, so he wants to devote his extra time to his family or to other areas where he might make more money, but he still stays on as a teacher. He's on the faculty. But you can only keep so many people on the faculty. If you have 75 or 125, you can't keep adding a coach and then have him fall off and then remain a member of the faculty. So they developed this new rule where someone in the community could coach these high school teams, and that started in the Catholic schools, parochial schools. Down in North Hills, the girls basketball coach is the

- S: chief of police for 20 or 25 years. There wasn't anybody on the faculty. Of course, they are screened pretty well, but that changes. It does lose some of the in depth stuff because while he's out in the community doing his job at Armco or police work, the kids are in class. But if he's a teacher, he sees them in both ways as a student and as an athlete. That's a great advantage there for both the student and the teacher. So I'm sorry it had to develop in that way, but then you also have to recognize the fact that if they keep hiring all these coaches and they stay on the faculty, your taxes are going to go up sky high. So there is another factor you have to consider.
- R: Well, I want to thank you for doing the interview with us.
- S: Thank you very much for inviting me. I hope that it will help you somehow.