

# The REFEREE

By Bob Husted

## *The Lieutenant Speaks His Piece*

Lt. T. E. Brady, USNR, and based in New York, drops us a line in which he writes: "Got quite a kick out of your article, building up the morale of Ohio State. One need go back only briefly to the era when prosperity was in O. S. U.'s corner, but one is inclined to smile a bit now that the big baron of Ohio college football is confronted with the same problems our smaller Buckeye schools have faced annually the last 10 years.

"The problems of the little fellow were brought about in no small way through the depredations of the larger institutions who raided the high schools for talent to the extent that boys who normally might have gone to the smaller colleges, played a lot of football and had great fun out of it, wasted away on the player benches of bigger universities.

"I happened to be in Otterbein during lean years when we were lucky to have a squad, let alone talent in either respectable numbers or quality. Yet we played through a schedule against stronger foes such as Case, Muskingum, Denison, Wooster, Mt. Union and the like, taking our shellackings, bumps and bruises in stride. And we were but one of many in the same boat. Yet no one sought to glorify the losing ways of such smaller schools or give passing thought to their problems or how they survived them if at all.

"But we did the best we could. Got the very most enjoyment out of traditional rivalries and carried on, come what may. Defeats may have overshadowed victories, but if we had to lose we got the very most out of being on the short end."

## *Little Fellows Had Tough Going*

We appreciate Lt. Brady taking time out to write us and expressing his views on a subject that we feel sure he does not share alone. The football problems of the smaller college were rapidly approaching a crisis when the war came along. The going was getting tougher and tougher because the lack of material, lack of gate receipts, lack of most of the things needed to continue functioning.

Time was when schools like Oberlin, Case, Denison and Western Reserve were on par with Ohio State in football, but that era has long since passed. State left the ranks of the Ohio conference for that of the Western conference in 1913. It wasn't but a few years later that the immortal Chic Harley sparked the Buckeyes to the Big Ten championship. It was about this time that Henry Ford improved on the old G. O. P. slogan of "a chicken in every pot," to "an automobile in every garage." Interest in Ohio State football no longer was confined to Columbus alone. It became statewide. Then it was that a brand new concrete stadium blossomed out on the Ohio State campus, one with an actual seating capacity of 62,110. Henceforth Columbus not alone was to be known as the capital of the state, but the mecca for Ohio football as well.

Big-time football is big business and is conducted as such through smoothly-knit organizations that operate with the same precision as its well-drilled grid elevens on a Saturday afternoon. But of course the piece de resistance of the show window is the football team, plus the 100-strong maneuvering band that takes over between halves. The result is a football extravaganza that draws from near and far, especially if the football team is in the thick of the championship race.

It is no longer a secret that excellent grid material just doesn't wander onto the practice fields of the major football universities. It is on hand because the necessary contacts and inducements were made to bring it there.

The smaller schools have no way to combat such methods. Jobs are scarce in the towns and villages that house most secondary colleges. So they take whatever material happens to be available and do the best they can while living in the shadow of the big fellows.

## *Some May Not Be Back At All*

As Lt. Brady pointed out in his letter, the manpower shortage that fell to the lot of Ohio State this year, long has been an old story with the smaller schools even if such a state of affairs didn't create a ripple on the surface of public interest at large.

It also will be the same story after the war. In fact some of the smaller fry who had to suspend for the duration may not be back at all. Most of those who are still struggling to field some kind of a team, despite the inroads of war and age-old problems, are doing so because they fear if they abandon the game it will not be for the duration but for keeps.

What prompted Lt. Brady's missive was a recent column we wrote in which we commented on the unusualness of the football situation at Ohio State that found the Bucks short of both material and victories. We can assure the lieutenant that in doing so we were not trying to build up the morale of Ohio State. That is the task of Coach Paul Brown and it must be said for him that he has done nobly in this respect. It just so happens the football that Lt. Brady champions and with every justification, is a victim of the times, or was when the war leveled the college game for both the big and the small.

We wish we could see a brighter future for it when things get back to normalcy, but there is nothing in the wind to indicate the picture will be much different.