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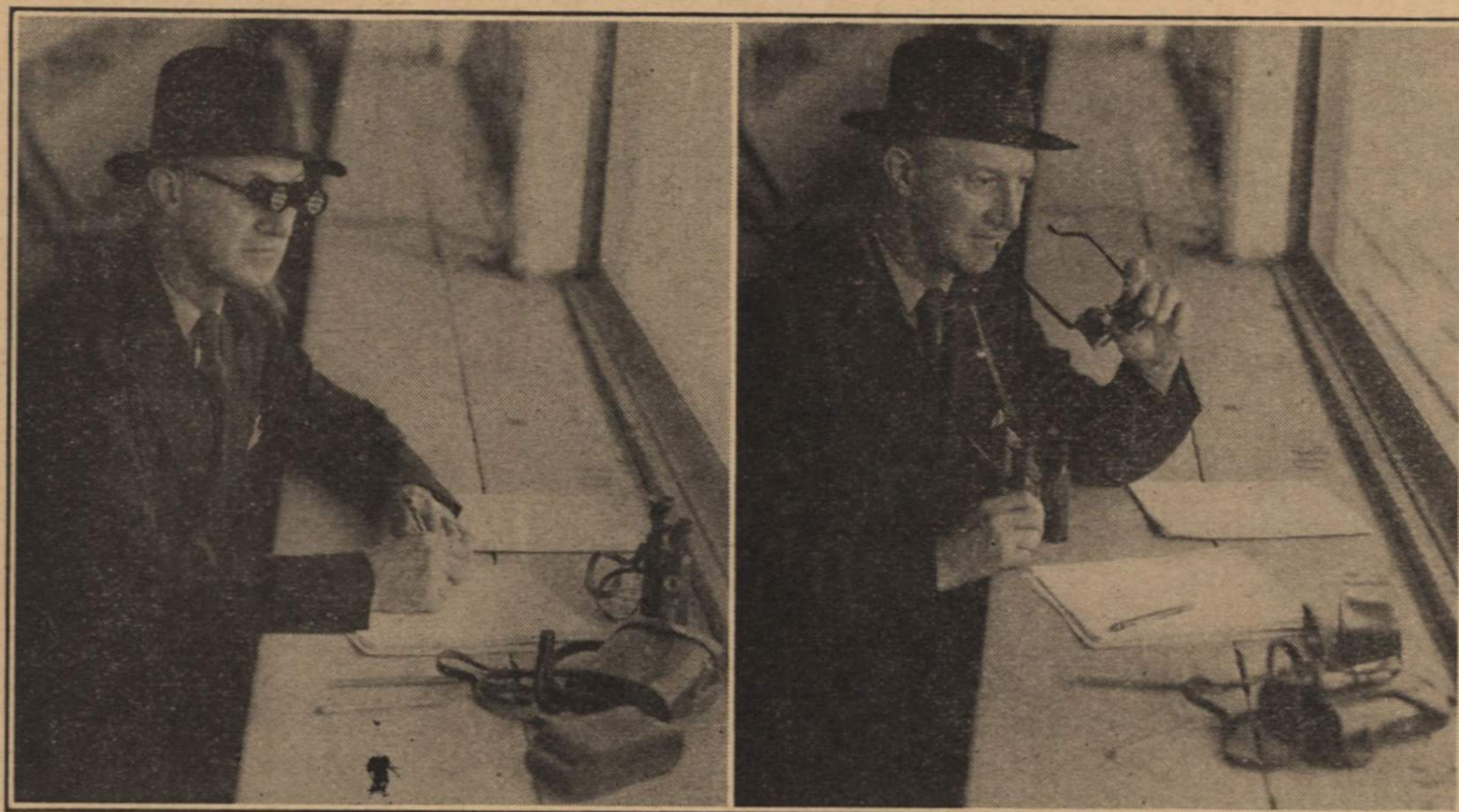
Number 4

Scouting—Football

By H. W. "Bill" Hargiss, University of Kansas

Coach Hargiss has won fame coaching football and track. His story, "Glenn Cunningham Trains," written for the "First Aider" in 1933, was a "natural" and after the first issue it was reprinted four times for a total of 71,000 additional copies that were sent out on special request. It was also reprinted in the "Amateur Athlete."

He is considered one of the "big ten" of the entire country as a football scout and spent the past summer scouting for the St. Louis Cardinals.



Coach Hargiss in action. Note particularly the sportoculars, the binoculars, the three pencils and writing paper already for action. These pictures were taken in the press box and show the equipment necessary for scouting.

The term "scouting" as applied to football means the same as in military procedure—to obtain information "on the movements of the enemy." In warfare this spying is secretive and unknown to the opposition. However, contrary to public opinion, scouting in football is known to the rival team and is a legitimate part of the contest. Most colleges and universities prescribe to well-defined rules and regulations concerning scouting, and these are respected with integrity. Usually the person or persons assigned to this work are announced to the authorities of the opposing school, who, in turn, provide scouts with seats of best vantage in the press box.

The question is often asked, "What is the reason for scouting? Would not the game be more interesting without knowledge of the opponent's strength and style of play?" Experience has proved that scouting has helped to make that game more interesting to the spectator. It enables

the coach to direct his team in a definitely planned contest, but most important of all, it encourages honesty and sportsmanship instead of the dishonesty and suspicion which are liable to arise where scouting is not sanctioned.

Qualifications of the Scout

In order to scout thoroughly a football team, one must have a technical knowledge of the game and an analytical mind. He does not see the game as a spectator. Whereas the average fan watches and follows the ball, the scout soon learns to pay but slight attention to the ball or to the player in possession of it. He should be looking for things more important than the gains or losses made by the team in possession of the ball. He must be a combination of coach, player, quarterback, spectator, and press-reporter. The most difficult problem in scouting is that of judging the intangible quality of a team's strength. Did it appear strong because of the weakness of the op-

posing team, or vice versa? Many teams have shown strength on offense, whereas a slight change in set and maneuver of the defense would have nullified their effort. I have always held a theory that when a team wins by thirty points, the one-sidedness of the contest is due to the weakness of the defense rather than to the offensive strength of the winners.

Important Points in Scouting

Coaches differ in their ideas concerning the extent of the work of their scouts. I believe that this so-called scouting is overdone in many cases. Some schools assign a special scout to each team which they are to meet. He follows it through the season, even after the game has been played, if it is on the following year's schedule. This plan is not only expensive, but I believe that it is impossible for a team to function well when it has too much information about the opposing team. The players are inclined to become too negative in their efforts instead of positive in their own offense and defense.

The average coach is concerned only about certain important points, and does not care for the habits or idiosyncrasies of the opponent's personnel. Briefly, he wishes to know the following: Is the team stronger on offense or defense? Is the kicking game strong? What about the passing offense and defense? What is the general style of offensive play? What formations are used? What are the best gaining plays? Are there peculiar formations or trick plays? Is the offense based on power, speed, deception, or all three? Do the players use the pass conservatively or as an integral part of the offensive attack? Who does the passing and who are the favorite receivers? What type of passes are used? Are they set passes to spot, or running passes thrown to optional receivers? What is the strength and weakness of the kicking offense—the kickoff, punt, place, or drop kick? What system of defense is used? How are the various offensive situations met?

Mechanical Aids in Scouting

The scout should be in his seat ready for work at least an hour before the game time. He should have newspaper comments on the game and a program with the lineup of the team, including each player's name, position, number, and weight. I use two notebooks, three lead pencils, tube of library paste, and a permanent scouting form. The University of Kansas uses a regular commercial scouting manual, I also use two field