

I was a freshman with Tommy Johnson in 1905. He was six and a half feet tall and weighed 152 pounds, still frail and slender, but he had an uncanny weave and hip shift that he had practiced through all these years that made it very difficult for an opponent to tackle him. He was one of the outstanding basketball players, a great catcher on the varsity baseball team, and a hurdler and pole vaulter on the track team.

Against Nebraska in football in 1906 Tommy Johnson received the ball from the snapper-back and ran 90 yards through a broken field for a touchdown. Fred Cornell, the referee, ruled that the backfield was in motion and penalized the Kansas team five yards. On the next play Tommy Johnson called the same signal and ran 95 yards on the same identical play, wormed, twisted and squirmed his way through for a touchdown over the same terrain.

In 1909 in old Exposition Park Tommy Johnson was "high-lowed" by two Missouri tacklers, Buck and Francis Alexander, and an old injury to his spine was opened up and two years from that day, on Thanksgiving Day, Tommy Johnson died at Bell Memorial Hospital in Kansas City, Mo. Never a whimper did he make. Rather, when he met his friends who visited him, he never complained. He said, "I have lived more in my 22 years than most fellows have lived in 70. I have no complaints and if I had to do it over again I would want to do it the same way. Life has been swell to me and I think the world is great."

As I said, I played with Tommy Johnson for several years and later became his coach in basketball here at the University of Kansas. He was always cheerful, exuding a lot of enthusiasm and plenty of fight, but he was clean, hard and courageous. He had no time for bickering or little things, but he gave everything that he had. No wonder, when he passed away, he was an immortal in the eyes of the Kansas alumni.

When I returned to Kansas in 1919 as director of athletics there was but one motive in my mind and that was to build a stadium in the memory of Tommy Johnson, Kansas greatest athlete, but the World War had just finished and there were 129 Kansas men and women who made the supreme sacrifice in the first world war and naturally the stadium was given the name of the World War Memorial in the name of these heroes and heroines. But if I had it to do of my own experiences and relationships, had not the war happened, there would have been only one name on that stadium, and that would have been "Tommy Johnson Memorial Stadium". He deserved such an honor.

Mr. C. E. McBride, the sports editor of the Kansas City Star, pays Glenn Cunningham a great tribute, featuring his scarred legs which have borne Glenn Cunningham, the great Kansas runner, to new records and victory. When Glenn was 8 years old he and his older brother had as their chore the job of lighting the fire in the schoolhouse. One cold winter morning an explosion occurred, and before the brothers could be rescued from the burning building they were terribly burned. The older brother died, and Glenn fought his way back to life after six months of suffering. Glenn Cunningham bears these scars on his legs today. His legs are marked by the ravages of flames from the hips down, the right leg being more scarred than the left.