

Tide And Auburn Clashed On Gridiron 50 Years Ago Today

UNIVERSITY

FEB 22 1893
Post-Season Game At Lakeview Introduced Intercollegiate Football To Birmingham

BY LAWRENCE McNEIL

FIFTY YEARS AGO TODAY, a great post-season football classic was played in Birmingham. The University of Alabama's "Tuskaloosa boys" met the "Auburns" in the first official game played between the two great Alabama schools. The game introduced intercollegiate football to Birmingham, and the headline describing that historic event said "It Was a Glorious Struggle."

The game came about in a manner not unlike many later-day athletic events. The Auburn team, coached in spare time by a member of the faculty, Dr. George Petrie, had played a Fall schedule and had gone in debt. The members of the squad were looking for a method of raising some money to balance the budget and hit upon the idea of a post-season game with the University of Alabama, which, until 1892 had never had a football team whereas Auburn had had a squad the year before.

THE MANAGER OF THE AUBURN team was authorized to go to Tuscaloosa and talk to Bill Bankhead, manager of the Alabama team who was later to become nationally famous as the speaker of the House of Representatives. As a result of their talk, a game was planned to be held in Birmingham on Washington's birthday, 1893.

Very few colleges in the South were playing football at that time and those that were playing were doing so on a very informal basis without regular coaches or players. No one at Auburn knew very much about the game of football and the Auburn squad wanted to get someone to coach them from one of the large Eastern schools that had been playing football for a number of years. The Auburn team treasury was pretty low, but the manager of the squad went to Dr. C. B. (Charley) Glenn's father, Dr. E. T. Glenn, who was treasurer of the college, and borrowed enough money to send telegrams to Harvard, Yale, Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania asking if they could recommend someone to coach Auburn in preparation for the Alabama game. It was explained that the team was unable to pay anything for this service, but that they would defray all traveling and living expenses while at Auburn. They were surprised when they received replies, giving the names of prospective coaches, from every school they had wired.

From the names submitted, they chose F. M. Balliet, a former center for the University of Pennsylvania, who was famous for originating the "Balliet Snap," a method of throwing the ball through his legs so that it hit the ground and bounced into the arms of the runner. The Auburn manager wrote to Balliet about coming to Auburn and he promptly accepted.

THE AUBURN FACULTY of that day was pretty sharply divided on the question of football and the very mention of the subject frequently brought on sharp discussions. One of those most opposed to the game was Dr. Lupton, professor of chemistry and state chemist.

The professor, returning from Washington, boarded the same "sleeper train" Balliet was on and had a berth opposite Balliet's. They had lunch together at several of the way-stations for there were no dining cars on the trains and in the course of their conversations Balliet mentioned he was going to Auburn. Dr. Lupton said "Auburn is my home; I am professor of chemistry there. What are you going to do in Auburn?" Upon learning that Balliet was going there to coach the football team, it is said Dr. Lupton "blew up" he was so opposed to the sport. Balliet, described as a big, fine looking fellow with an engaging personality, completed the trip with Dr. Lupton and they became good friends. As they left the train in Auburn, Dr. Lupton said Balliet had nearly converted him to football.

DR. LUPTON'S SON, FRANK, was in school at the time and was captain of the first Auburn football team. He is a retired physician, now living in Birmingham.

Football players of 1893 were not always chosen from the student body. Former students and faculty members were frequently allowed to play. Bill Bankhead, manager and fullback of the "Tuskaloosa boys," wrote to the Auburn manager asking if it would be agreeable for Eli Abbott to play on the Alabama team. Abbott was a former student, member of the faculty and coach of the university team. Auburn replied, saying Abbott could play. He was a star of the game and died in Greenwood, Miss., only a few days ago at the age of 73.

The Auburn team and followers came to Birmingham in two special trains by way of Montgomery. They left Auburn about 3 or 4 o'clock on the morning of the day the game was to be played and arrived in Birmingham at about 10 o'clock. The contest was held that afternoon and the two teams went out to the playing field at Lakeview Park in wagons drawn by mules.

BOTH TEAMS STOPPED at the old Florence Hotel and it is said that nothing but the greatest friendship existed between the players.

After the game, the Auburn manager told Balliet how much they appreciated his coming down to coach their team and that they only regretted they were unable to pay him for his services.

Balliet replied that it was entirely all right, that he had not expected payment, that it was his first trip to this section and he thoroughly enjoyed it. He only regretted he could not see more of the South.

UPON LEARNING that Auburn's manager conferred with the team and they decided they had enough money to give Balliet a trip to New Orleans. Balliet was delighted with the idea of making the trip, so Auburn's first full-time, paid coach received a trip to New Orleans as salary for grooming the Tiger team for their historic post season classic with the University of Alabama on Feb. 22, 1893.

AUBURN WON!

Blue And Gold Were The Winning Colors.

Tuskaloosa Fought Desperately, But Auburn Was The Strongest And Won By 32 To 22

It Was A Glorious Struggle

Yesterday by 2 o'clock all Birmingham was on the move.

Every private vehicle, stable turn out, and public hack was filled with people on the way to Lakeview Park.

The dummies and electric cars were crowded with lovers of the manly sport of foot ball.

Men and women who heretofore have jeered at such exhibitions of brawn and muscle were eager to see the contest.

Little children just beginning to toddle about were anxious to see the big boys fight.

Every train which arrived at the station brought in foot ball enthusiasts from all parts of the State, and there were over a thousand visitors in the city. All came to see the great game.

Outside The Grounds.

The crush around the ticket window was simply fearful, as the crowd was too big to be handled by one man and tickets had to be sold on the outside. The vast surging throng kept its temper and the women took being jostled about good naturedly.

On The Grounds.

As soon as the crowd got on the inside the men unaccompanied by ladies made a rush for both sides of the grounds and soon were ranged a dozen deep around the ropes which were put up around the grid-iron.

The Carriages.

The east side of the field had been set apart for those in carriages, and soon from one end to the other it was filled with vehicles of all descriptions, gaily decorated in blue and gold, and in white and red.

The Grand Stands.

Both the grand stands were literally packed with people, making a most artistic picture as the colors of the schools in conjunction with women blended most artistically.

The Bleachers.

Were filled with as jolly a lot of men as ever sat on hard planks, and from their faces and their merry talk it was evident they had come out to make a happy afternoon of it.

Chief Norton

with four officers was there to represent the law and keep the pushing crowd on the outside of the ropes, and although they had the assistance of a number of the members of the Athletic Club, they were powerless to keep the spectators from rushing under the lines and covering the field, so intent were the onlookers to see every point of the game.

On the Grid Iron.

A little before 3 o'clock the Tuskalooa Cadets went too the grounds. Their uniform was white with red stockings and large red letters U of A on their sweaters. And then every man woman and child who wore the red and white rose and shouted themselves hoarse.

Shortly after the Auburn boys made their appearance in white with blue stockings and a large orange A on their blue sweaters. This gave those wearing the blue and orange an opportunity and they yelled until they almost got "blue" in their faces.

The Practice.

Both teams went to work at once kicking, catching and falling on the elusive pig-skin. Their handsome face, broad shoulders, strong lithe limbs, and powerful arms were the admiration of the young and old of each sex. As the boys would pile up on one another the ladies would get alarmed, fearing they would have their bones broken, but their gentlemen friends would kindly assure the timid sympathetic women that the athletic youths could be dropped from the top of the grand stand to the ground without sustaining any injury.

The Players.

It was nearly 3:30 before time was called, when the teams lined up as follows:

Auburn	Positions	Tuskaloosa
Riggs	Left End	Ferguson
Redding	Left Tackle	Abbott
Brown	Left Guard	Little (Capt.)
Shafer	Center	Pratt
McKissick	Right Guard	Cope
Buckalew	Right Tackle	Savage
Foy	Right End	Grayson
Dunham	Quarterback	Walker
Dorsey	Right Half Back	Kyser
Shackleford	Left Half Back	Smith
Daniels, (Capt.)	Full Back	Bankhead

Substitutes for Tuskaloosa: McCants, A G; Johnston, D B; Powers, J P; Walker, M P; Graves, B; Nesmith, C C; and Maxwell, H.

Substitutes for Auburn: Stephens, Lovelegs, Wills, Schafer, G A; and Smith, H H.

Mr. Daniels, the captain of the Auburns, and Mr. Little, the captain of the Tuskaloosas, tossed up, and Auburn won the ball and chose the north goal. There was no advantage gained, as the wind was blowing across the field.

The Game.

The game was not only intensely interesting to those who understood the fine plays in foot ball, but fortunately it was a game which from the start caught those who were uninitiated into the fine points. The team work on both sides was good, and yet there were a number of brilliant individual plays. A marked feature of the game was almost a total lack of punting on each side. The game was an offensive one, neither side cared to be on the defensive. This was shown by the few times which the ball was lost by either team on 4 downs. The reason the Auburn team never punted was the fact that they found they could make better gains by runs. The interference by both elevens was good. Both teams had fine runners. Auburn snapped the ball quicker

than Tuskaloosa, as Balliet, their coach, put them on to his method, which is very swift. Goal kicking on both sides was good, but Tuskaloosa's was the best.

Auburn won by a score of 32 to 22.

Auburn's Team.

Riggs' strong point was his tackling and on his bustling interference.

Redding was a fine tackler. As a running tackler he has no superior in the South.

Brown played the strongest game of any man on the team, with the exception of Daniels. His tackling behind the line as a guard was one of the features of the game. His work did much towards the defeat of the Tuskaloosa boys.

Shafer's centre plays were exceptionally good, and although not showy, were most effective.

McKissick, who is a professor, is a big, powerful, good-natured fellow, who by his weight and bustling interference, greatly aided his team.

Buckalew is an instructor, and was particularly noticeable for his fine openings.

Foy, although a new man, is a strong fellow, and made an excellent tackle.

Dunham had only two days' practice, but no one would have ever known it by his playing.

Shackleford's great playing was by his strong interference.

Dorsey's running was a feature of the game. His all-around playing was good.

Daniels, the captain, was simply a phenomenon. He played everywhere. He is a brilliant runner, tackler and is very tricky.

Tuskaloosa's Team.

Abbot excels in rushing, and is hard to down while on the run. He is Tuskaloosa's best all-round player.

Little, the captain, has no superior in holding the line. He is good natured, keeps his temper and does good head work.

Ferguson, "our own Burr," caught the crowd by his hard playing. When he tackled Daniels and threw him every woman, old and young, on the grounds who wore white and red, wanted to kiss him. Burr, as a tackler is superb.

Pratt held the center well for a boy who is only 16 years old. He is going to make a rattling good center.

Cope is the strong man. He does magnificent work, and his strength is Samson-like.

Savage, who weighs only 156 pounds, is one of the strongest men on the team, and is the pet of the University. Everybody in Tuskaloosa loves Savage.

Grayson is the grey-hound of the eleven, and his tackling is of the highest order.

Walker is a Birmingham boy, and yesterday when he made a thirty yards' gain and went down under the crowd and had his arm torn, everybody on the grounds admired his pluck and sympathized with him in his hurt.

McCants, who was put on in Walker's place, is certainly "The Artful Dodger."

Smith is as fleet as a deer, and is one of the best ground gainers on the team.

Kyser excels in running around the end. If he gets half a show, he generally makes a touch-down.

Bankhead is one of the hardest and most conscientious players at Tuskaloosa. He excels in goal kicking.

Referee and Umpire.

Prof. J. W. Taylor was the referee, and E. L. Simonds the umpire. Both are old Yale football players, and are new members of the Birmingham Athletic Clubs eleven. Their decisions were most satisfactory to Auburn and Tuskaloosa, and the crowd never once yelled at the umpire.

The Presentation.

Captain Daniel and his victorious team gathered around the drag in which was seated Miss Delma Wilson, who had been elected to present the cup. Miss Sara Rogan and Miss Mamie Morrow, her maids, were with her. Miss Wilson then said: "Gallant and victorious Captain, in the name of the city of Birmingham I present you the cup. Drink from it, and remember the victory you have won this day. May you and your team live to see many more victories."

Captain Daniels responded as follows: "We feel proud of the honor, and assure you it is a great pleasure to receive this cup from the city of Birmingham and through your hands."

A series of cheers rent the air and then the sun went down, blotting out the day on which the greatest football game was ever played in Alabama.

(Editor's note: The above article from The Daily News, Birmingham, Alabama, of Thursday, Feb. 23, 1893, describes the first official football game played between the University of Alabama and Auburn and is reprinted here on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of that historic post-son classic.)