

BAKER FOOTBALL THE BEGINNING

School year 1948-49 was the first year for football at Baker School. I remember going to an area that was cleared on the Jack Stokes Road, above and on the same side of the road as the Chelco substation, to see my FIRST football game. I will admit here now that I still don't know much more about the game today, but sure enjoy the stadium more now than in 1948. The stadium that day consist of woods grass, small trees and bushes that were just cut. Not a very level ground either. No seats.

This was 45 seasons ago that this big event happened. The game was against T. R. Miller High School of Brewton, Alabama. The game resulted in a 62 to 0 loss to Miller. Altho Coach termed this a terrific beating the boys still showed promise.

Edward Krekule was the first football coach for Baker. He said of the first game that the odds were definetly against the Baker team because the Brewton line averaged about forty pounds more than Baker's team. He stated that Brewton had an excellent team, very tricky, the blockers were strong and their around-end runs gave his boys (Baker) plenty of trouble. Coach Krekule concluded by saying: "Now that my boys have played a game and have gotten some experience I feel confident that they will make a much better showing in their next game".

Injuries was a worry even in those days. Coach Krekule was relieved to have all his football members insured against injury, one of the first squads in the county to take this step forward.

Hounded by injuries the Baker Grid played Niceville "B" team for its second game. Ray Cawthon, a regular left school for the Navy and other players were dropped because of ineligibility. Coach stated "win or lose, we'll be in there fighting until the last whistle". No score has been found as of this date. Anyone having this recorded please let the Alumni know.

The third game was played in Fort Walton Beach. According to the SPOTLIGHT ON SPORTS article in our local paper, the Fort Walton Blue Devils opened up their new field and smothered an inexperienced Baker eleven, by a score of 32 to 6 last Friday evening for the first win since the club has been organized. Coach "Buddy" Payne's boys entertained hundreds of local fans with a very thrilling victory, many of whom had never seen the team in action before.

The Blue Devils' offensive was sparked by the passing and punting attack of Captain Don Marshall.

John Davis, Baker, 180 pound fullback, was the leading ground gainer for the visitors, and supplied the crowd with plenty of thrills through his unusual left-foot kicking ability. Davis' kicking was the main threat of the visitors and caught the local eleven off guard almost everytime he attempted to punt.

First team members were:

Name	Wgt	Pos	No
Hugh Adams	145	RH	1
Morris Adams	135	G	2
Rhett Barnes	130	LH	3
Carlie Gene Carroll	157	L	4
* Parish Carter		G	
Ray Cawthon	165	LT	5
Aubrey "Bunk" Courtney	132	E	6
* John Davis (Capt)	180	FB	7
Jimmie Foster	130	LH	8
James Herndon	130	C	9
Carlis Jackson	160	RT-E	13
* Robert Johnson			
Morgan Howell	155	LT	10
Louis Kish	135	GB	11
Douglas Nichols	145	RT	
* Selma Peacock	140	LE	15
Winston Peacock	138	RE	16
Dudley Walker	125	C	17
Ted Wilkerson	140	LG	18

* seniors

Equipment is another improvement. Earlier years recall the boys cleaning the school's cesspool, and the basement to help equip themselves for the game of football. Money was not easy come by in those days. I believe Eglin AFB also helped in surplus along with a lot of other unusual techniques to secure the necessary equipment.

Much football history has been made over the years. Some well remember the Baker Gators being the FIRST COUNTY STATE CHAMPIONS. This moved into the 3rd State Champions under the regime of Coach John Ensor. Another was a state, as well as, county by winning 43 consecutive games.

The football stadium today is much improved. Remembering the cleared Blueberry field to the now track field. Thanks to our school officials for the beautiful stadium we now have.

John Blackshear was the second football coach for Baker. Perhaps Mr. Blackshear will add to our history during his regime.

Coaches that I can remember are as follows:

Edward Kerkeule
John Blackshear
Ashley "Pud" Hutcheson
Jim Striplin
Don Brown
Grover "Sunny" Hendrix
John Ensor
Gene Parish
Jeff Webb

Anyone missed please let me know.

Football has been good to a number of its athletics in scholarships over the years. Perhaps many would not have had the much needed education for today without this opportunity.

One of the fortunate ones is our own, John P. Melton, class of 1962, who also came back to serve as BAKER Principal 1990-1992.

From Alumni records
Jeanete Henderson, Historian
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