

MANSFIELD MEMORIES: ‘No gamer bunch of boys:’ 100 years of MHS football

By Kevin McNatt and Andrew Todesco

Dec 9, 2019

MANSFIELD - Mansfield’s decisive Division 2 Super Bowl victory left many observers convinced they are the best team in Massachusetts for 2019. It was also a bookend to an historic milestone: 100 years of MHS football. This gives us a perfect opportunity to consider the program’s humble roots.

Mansfield High fielded a football team as early as 1895, but was unable to do so every year. While filled with the love of the game, those early teams were essentially composed of interested students who banded together to form ragtag teams. They weren’t “organized” like we know them today.



In 1919 football became an official sport at Mansfield High and has been played continuously since. Mansfield was shut out in eight of its games.

In 1919 football became an official sport at Mansfield High and has been played continuously since. That year a 10-game schedule was arranged by Manager George Jackson. The team was coached by Harold "Sid" Drew, a 21-year old teacher at MHS. Mansfield was shut out in eight of its games. They played several schools that were much bigger and more experienced. They managed to win the other two games.

Mansfield kicked off its inaugural season on Saturday, Sept. 27, 1919 at Norwood. The result was a 37-0 loss, although Mansfield was driving when the final whistle blew. The following Saturday resulted in a whopping 77-0 loss at Brockton, who started their second team only to bring in the first team later. Brockton's size and experience was too much for the fledgling MHS squad.

Mansfield's first home game was played on Oct. 11, a 32-0 loss to Dedham. Home games were played on a newly created gridiron at Fuller's Field. It was at the end of Wilson Place where we would now find the Cedar Court senior housing. At that time the high school was on Park Row in what is now the town hall, so Fuller's Field was just down the street.

Next was a 38-0 defeat in Fall River at the hands of Durfee High School, who made good use of the forward pass.

"Our boys played a good game ... while Durfee started an aerial attack which lasted the entire game," according to Coach Drew.

The team returned home on Oct. 25th to record its first official victory in the program's history, a 21-6 victory over Westboro.

"Westboro was outclassed in all departments of the game," said the yearbook. "They scored their only touchdown by a fluke play, after which Mansfield took the ball down the field on line plunges and [Kenneth] Patterson made the first touchdown that a High School player has made for many years."



Mansfield High School's first official football team was coached by Harold "Sid" Drew, a 21-year old teacher at MHS.

Next came a 14-0 loss at Taunton High School. Mansfield played well and held Taunton's offense largely at bay. Just three days later, on Nov. 11, 1919, came MHS's second win. This was another home victory, this time over Boston Trade School by a score of 13-0. The highlight was a 50-yard forward pass to Patterson who was tackled at the 1-yard line.

Next came a 24-0 loss at Weymouth and a 14-0 home loss to Milford. Mansfield closed out the season with a 47-0 loss at Needham on Thanksgiving Day, described as a "stubbornly fought contest." Mansfield's captain [Donald] Pike along with Patterson played well in "unfavorable weather conditions."

Coach Drew accentuated the positive when reflecting on the season. He said the players were crude and inexperienced and "soon found out that football is no tea party." But he felt by the end of the season they were playing up to their ability.

The coach concluded his remarks as follows: "The team gave its best in every game, played clean football, and never quit. No gamer bunch of boys ever played the game, and I am proud to have been their coach."

Kevin McNatt and Andrew Todesco are members of the Mansfield Historical Society. They can be reached at mansfieldhistoricalsociety@yahoo.com. Follow the society on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.