

By Marco Smolich L  
 Class of 1939 L

When ~~was~~ <sup>CONSIDERING</sup> writing the sports history of a school, particularly one celebrating its centennial, like Christian Brothers High School, two things quickly come to mind -- first, you realize there is no way to touch all the bases, and, second, you don't even know where to start.

But, start you must.

Christian Brothers College at 12th and K, where now stands Weinstock's, was represented on athletic fields ~~for~~ for many years without a recognized coach. That was changed in 1919 when Peter Mitchell, back from St. Mary's College, accepted the task of coaching football, baseball and basketball, along with teaching classes.

"That was shortly after the switch from rugby to American football," recalled ~~the~~ the retired member of the California Public Utilities Commission. "We played the old Harkness Junior High School, at 10th and P, and Sacramento High, at 19th and K. And I remember Willows.

"Nobody thought about uniforms. Sometimes we didn't even have a football."

Mitchell's coaching ~~was~~ <sup>WAS</sup> for free. The distinction of being the first paid ~~coach~~ <sup>MENTOR</sup> went to Paul ~~O'Neill~~ <sup>O'NEILL</sup> in 1924. He ~~coached~~ <sup>The same</sup> three sports -- to which this article is limited.

The amount O'Neill was paid during a two-year tenure is

*over*

unknown. Perhaps it's just as well.

A research crew which understandably requests anonymity recently tried to gather names of all coaches who followed Mitchell and O'Neil. Admitting the likelihood of voids, ~~it~~ it submitted the ~~following~~ following, hopefully in order of succession:

Football -- Joe Tatti, Russ Dickson, Joe Rooney, Steve Porcella, ~~Coleman Mitchell~~, Robert A. ZARICK, Jim Flynn, Les Groux, Ernie Jorge, Johnny Ohrt, John Giannoni, Brother Eugene Ward, Lilio Marcucci, Spud Spalding, Ray Curry, Ray Clemons, John Stremple, Frank Callen and Dick Sperbeck, ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

Basketball -- Tatti, Dickson, Rooney, Porcella, <sup>Jim MARSHALL,</sup> Wes Scott, Flynn, Bud Hanna, Giannoni, Brother Bertram Coleman, Roy Misfeldt, Brother Eugene, Jack Buick, Regis Hurley, Jack Witry, Sperbeck and Witry, ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

Baseball -- Herb Morebeck, Rooney, Porcella, <sup>Joe GIDEON,</sup> Flynn, Hanna, <sup>Brother ODON,</sup> Giannoni, Brother Bertram, Brother Patrick, Bill Gregory, Misfeldt, Curry, Brother Eugene, Buick, Bill McGiltry, Bob Rodness, Witry, Sperbeck and Ron Limeberger, ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

Picking a highlight for each sport <sup>ISN'T</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>Actually, though</sup> ~~is~~ easy. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ it's not ~~not~~ that difficult in football, where the first Gael victory over the Sacramento Dragons in 1935 sticks out. And the Flynn-coached ~~any~~ gridgers also won the following year, after which <sup>It should be mentioned,</sup> ~~it should be mentioned~~ Jim joined the SHS faculty.   
 *Lucas*

Another lengthy drought followed until the Gaels, under Clemons, dealt the Dragons a 19-0 defeat in 1954. Then came another 14-year stretch before it happened again, 26-24 in 1968 under Sperbeck, and that season also marked the first in which Brothers ~~won~~ won ~~over~~ <sup>BOTH</sup> Sacramento and McClatchy in football. *No DROUGHTS SINCE THEN.*

Back to that 1935 contest. It ended 6-0 with the ~~touchdown~~ ~~made~~ made by Bobby Williams on a six-yard run in the third period following Adrian Bennett's passes to George Gillette and Bill Stewart.

That club had ~~the~~ Gillette, Vic Martinelli and ~~the~~ Lewis at ends; Jack Coughlin, Ed Katsulis and Charlie Schanz at tackles; Dave Simmons and Manny Soares at guards; Bill Palm at center; Williams and Stewart at ~~quarterback~~ quarterback; Bill Diage, Jim McPartland and A. Bennett at ~~half~~ the halves, ~~and~~ and Leo Bennett at full.

~~the~~ In 1936 the score was 14-0 as Lewis tallied on an end-around and Pete Archerda -- called by Flynn <sup>g</sup> "The best all-around athlete I ever saw" -- from six yards out. L. Bennett ran for the extra points.

Playing were G. Gillette and Lewis at ends; Martinelli, Schanz, Bob Shorrock and Frank Barbaria at tackles; Simmons and ~~Marion~~ Marion Puliz at guards; Palm at center; ~~Ralph~~ Ralph Gillette -- in Flynn's opinion <sup>g</sup> "The best blocking back, pound for pound, that you could find" -- at quarterback; Archerda, Ted ~~GARDNER,~~ GARDNER, Joe Puliz ~~and~~ and Pat Tappan at the halves, and L. Bennett at full.

Bringing the curtain down on those teams would be inappropriate without noting that in 1940 at San Francisco's Kezar Stadium the opposing captains ~~who~~ at midfield prior to the kickoff for the <sup>CLASSIC</sup> Little Big Game were Martinelli of St. Mary's and Simmons of Santa Clara.

Al Scott and Bert Silva ~~were~~ were Flynn's assistants and Bugs Fisher was the trainer -- all unpaid.

*(Signature)*

~~At least two other were Elmer assistants and Bud's~~  
~~Record in [redacted]~~.

In recent years the Falcons, as they have been called since leaving 21st and Broadway, and moving to Sacramento Boulevard in 1956, ~~the~~ <sup>have</sup> enjoyed considerable success on the gridiron. Sperbeck's record the last ~~eight~~ <sup>his teams</sup> eight years is 58-18-5, during which ~~the~~ finished first or second in the Metro League seven times, winning the title in four of the last six campaigns.

The ~~the~~ <sup>FIRST-EVER</sup> Teague title, incidentally, came during Clemons' tenure while the Gaels were in the Northern Interstate ~~the~~ <sup>-- PREVIOUSLY INDEPENDENT --</sup> Athletic Conference. ~~The~~ Brothers <sup>WAS</sup> allowed to compete in the Metro League in 1964 after a San Joaquin Section ban against participation by ~~nonpublic~~ nonpublic schools was lifted <sup>ED</sup> -- capping a long <sup>battle</sup> spearheaded by E. J. "Bud" Keema, then superintendent of the Grant <sup>Joint Union</sup> School District.

As for basketball, teams advancing the farthest were the Hanna-coached ~~the~~ <sup>OLD, OLD</sup> 1939-40 cadets, who captured the Northern California Catholic High School Tournament at St. Mary's, and the Hurley-coached quintet that lasted through three rounds in Berkeley's 1957 Tournament of Champions. In the ~~old~~ <sup>OLD, OLD</sup> days, of course, those events didn't exist.

On the NorCal Catholic title squad were John Marcellino, Joe Borich, John Foley, Frank Garcia, Bob Fretwell, Bill Gormley, Ernie Bertolotti, Bob McQuillan and Ellis Archerda. Playing in the

TOC were Jim Mikacich, Art Sanchez, Rod Amistani, Pete Bollinger, Rich Munizich, Ed Dudycha, Tom Higgins, Dal Williams, Bob Silva, Kent Gibson and Bret Pechuls.

~~Admitted~~ Not to be ~~forgot~~ forgotten, too, ~~member~~ is the ~~1950~~ ~~17-game~~ 17-game winning streak compiled by Buick's five in 1949-50. <sup>Top players on</sup> ~~that team~~ were John ~~McNamara~~ McNamara, Ken Orvick, Jim Church, Mike Hanly, Asa Whetstone, ~~Jim Winchell~~ Jim Winchell and Sal "Chado" Vasquez.

Christian Brothers Baseball has produced many outstanding performers who starred in semi-pro and pro ball -- including major leaguers like Walter "The Great" Mills, Joe Marty, <sup>WALLY WESTLAKE</sup> Schanz, ~~Joe~~ and McNamara, who manages the San Diego Padres, <sup>and belongs to the "I've Been Fired By Finley Club."</sup> Joe Kirrene in 1950 became the city's first bonus baby, signing for a reported \$30,000, while later Don Simon signed the biggest local bonus, <sup>A Reported</sup> ~~an estimated~~ \$65,000 from the Baltimore Orioles.

~~Record~~ The best ~~team~~ team record is the 25-1 registered by the 1949 Gaels under Brother Eugene. They had George Radovich at first base, Jerry Kaiser at second, George Silver at ~~shortstop~~ <sup>KIRRENE</sup> shortstop, ~~at~~ at third; Al Anicich, Pete Vartanian, Albie Brown, Al Guttman and ~~Carl Lang~~ Carl Lang in the outfield; McNamara and Orvick, catching, and Church, Bruce Wood, Bob Lehtola and Don "Ducky" Knezovich, pitching.

Khezovich was the fifth and last of the Khezovich brothers  
who put together a remarkable ~~team of baseball players~~ <sup>record by being Gael ~~varsity~~ VARSITY HURLERS</sup>  
~~team~~ for 13 straight seasons, 1937-49. Overall they compiled a  
hard-to-believe 101-16 mark with Paul, who started it all, being  
23-4; Ray, 16-3; Al, 19-2; Mel, 20-3, and ~~Don~~ Don, 23-4.

(Well, there you are, with many bases untouched....

(One thing for sure, however -- present Falcon athletes and  
~~others~~ <sup>others destined to</sup> play roles in the second <sup>century</sup> ~~centennial~~ of the  
Christian Brothers in Sacramento may be assured that <sup>THE</sup> men who  
gained <sup>Gael</sup> glory ~~in bygone eras~~ in bygone eras <sup>REALIZE HAPPILY</sup>  
~~that~~ <sup>THEIRS IS BUT A SMALL</sup> fraction of what lies ahead.

A