

Football Reminiscences and Rambles

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The Famous Harvard Football Expert

REMINISCENCES of football should be pardoned after one is eighteen years a "has-been." That is my excuse.

Football has a short season and short schedule as compared with college baseball, but there is just as much "fanning" over the former sport as over the latter, when fellow players run across each other in remote corners of the country. A big football game rarely fails to furnish some incident that especially clings in the player's memory in after years; nor did Harvard, Yale and Princeton games have a monopoly of incidents in the old days. Dartmouth was always a pleasure; and ministerial little Wesleyan did not play football in the least on the principle of turning the other cheek.

Occasionally there is an eleven that is hoodooed; not too good anyway, perhaps, but banged and buffeted mentally and physically, streaky in its play and results, and in hard luck generally. Such a team was the Harvard eleven of the fall of 1888. We were very light in weight, badly run down physically, as well as in poor shape through injuries, and we didn't know much football. At times we didn't seem to have a friend in college or out of college. In the midst of our worst slump Dartmouth called at Jarvis Field—that good old arena of hard-rolled gravel, beside which the Stadium field is as a feather-bed. The green and white always did have a monopoly on big, brawny forwards, and that especial Dartmouth line was the biggest thing we ever saw standing in cleats. Dartmouth looked us over, then chose a graduate of hers in the Harvard Medical school as umpire, and the game was on. It is the irony of things that

that umpire is now a noted eye specialist; but he couldn't have had a case from any of us in those days. We appealed to said "ump"; we pleaded with him. He didn't see it. He was trying to see it, he said, but he simply couldn't. What in the world were we talking about, anyway. It become very merry—that game—and still the umpire wouldn't "see it." Then Joe Sears, the Harvard captain, stopped the game and hunted up the Dartmouth leader. Both elevens gathered round, as they always do, and the biggest bluff in football history was sprung. "Look here, Captain Blank," fairly shrieked Sears, "I warn you now. If this thing doesn't stop right here I'll turn my men loose, and I won't be responsible for the consequences." It was horrible. Turn us loose. Honestly, I think there were times that fall, when our whole combination couldn't have broken a pane of glass—or as one of the players did actually put it—"couldn't have gained five yards against a good west wind." But Sears' talk went, and the rest of the game was immaculate. That very game was directly responsible for the introduction of the nose guard, the forerunner of much of the unnecessary football armor of today. I see that Dartmouth umpire frequently nowadays. We speak now and are good friends.

It seems odd today, in what awe the first year varsity player used to stand of the veteran player, and especially of the captain. That same 1888 team was the writer's first attempt at university football. For days at a time the "kids" of the eleven scarcely uttered a word at the training table, and I'm quite sure I always used to say, "Mr. Sears" when I addressed the captain. In the Wes-

