

The Increased Value of the Kicking Game

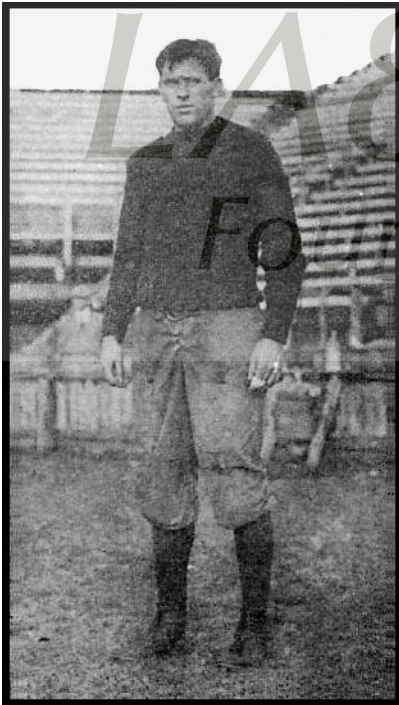
By Walter Camp

Illustrations from Photographs

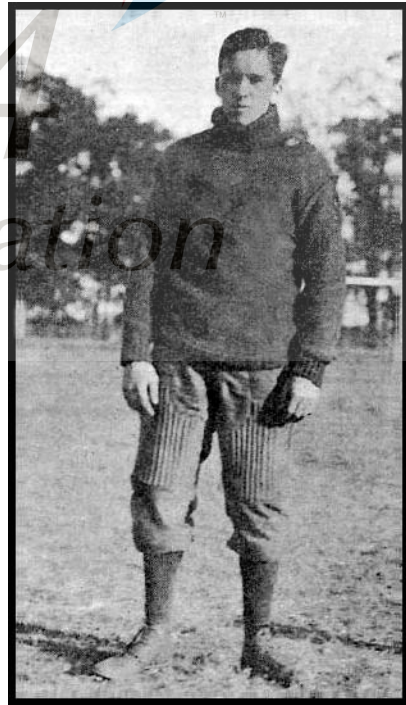
WHILE football, the present American game, has usually many attributes other than that of kicking, nevertheless the art of using the foot in propelling the ball is still a large factor in the result of games. How large, only those can realize who have faced an accurate placement kicker and seen three or four field goals mount up against them, or who find themselves short of sufficient kicking ability in their teams to protect themselves in an interchange of punts. In the first place, one side or the other, by the toss of a coin, has possession of the ball in mid-field, but

by modern rules they are not allowed to scrimmage it there, but must kick off.

This means that the side receiving the kick-off always has the first opportunity to make a try of their running game, but that opportunity, provided the side that kicks off has a good kicker, is minimized by the fact that the best those receiving the kick can do is to begin their running game under the shadow of their goal posts, and with something like 100 yards of steady gains to make in order to put the ball across the opposing goal line and thus secure a touchdown. As the



BROWN—Tackle, Yale



PHILBIN—Half Back, Yale

side which wins the toss usually takes the wind, thus giving the opponents the kick-off, that kick-off is made against the wind, which, if it is direct and strong, plays a considerable part in the struggle.

It is easy to see, if the two sides are equally matched in kicking ability, that the side which receives the ball when kicked, having the wind in its favor, will usually gain when they come to kick, and will thus put the ball past the center of the field on a punt.

Now, if both sides are equally matched in both the running game and the kicking game, the chances are that, barring flukes, certain exchanges of punts will take place always favoring the side which has the wind, and, therefore, after a certain length of time, the position of the two teams

will be reversed, that is, the side that received the kick-off in their own goal will have possession of the ball in mid-field, having gained, by the benefit of the wind, say eight to ten yards by five or six interchanges of punts.

This takes place early enough in the half so that the side having secured the advantage with the wind can, by making let us say fifteen or twenty yards on their running game, establish themselves in a position where drop-kicks or kicks from placement are possible at the opponent's goal, and where, whenever the opponents are forced to a touchback, fair

catches are possible with more tries at goal. This is all on the supposition that the sides are equally matched in both respects, that is, in the running and in the kicking game.

If one side is stronger than the other in the kicking game, and it happens to be the side that receives the kick-off, the gain may be more rapid. If, on the other hand, the side that kicked off has the stronger punter, that side may be able to so neutralize the effect of the wind as to keep the ball in the enemy's territory the greater part of the half.

Even then, however, the superiority in the kicking against a strong wind does not usually establish a position for a try at goal such as is secured by the side that has the wind favoring it.

But there are several other elements entering into the kicking game which may turn the tide. For instance, if a punter, when kicking with the wind, kicks so far that he outkicks his ends, that is, his ends cannot get down in time to stop the man who receives it from running the ball back, that individual may not only neutralize the effect of the wind's advantage, but may even turn it to his own advantage if the man who is a good runner back of kicks gets a certain amount of start, for when once under way he may gain twenty or thirty yards, which will then count for additional gain to that he may later make by a kick.



FIELD CAPTAIN COY, YALE, PREPARING TO KICK

