

# Boston College ain't got it!

PAGE 11

By Mark Purcell

(1928 Eastern football)

In the August, 1988 Journal I presented an article on the 1928 New York U team, and in that piece I stated that "NYU, Carnegie Tech and Georgetown 1-1 among themselves and something like a tie for second in the East behind Army, which went 8-2 with a much stronger schedule. (I haven't forgotten that Boston College went 9-0 in 1928)." This opinion elicited some disagreement since I had omitted Boston College from my Top Four of 1928 Eastern football.

In determining my personal team ratings for any particular season, I go by strength of schedule, period. In 1928 Boston College played 5 "breathers" and four major opponents: Navy (5-3-1); Duke (5-5); Fordham (4-5) and Holy Cross (5-3-2). Of the other top-level Eastern teams of 1928, Army played four different teams which were stronger than anybody on Boston's schedule, and went 2-2 against these top foes on the way to an 8-2 season. Carnegie Tech played 3 teams stronger than any Boston foe, going 2-1 as part of an overall 7-1 season. How any historian can rank Carnegie Tech, which NYU smashed in 1928 by a score of 27-13, over NYU that year, I have no idea. Any college football history student who is reviewing Boston's 1928 schedule should keep in mind that, playing the same schools only 5 or so years later, BC would have had a much more formidable time playing people like Duke, Manhattan, Fordham, Catholic etc. But not in 1928. In fact, for the period of 1926-28 the strongest opponent Boston faced was Haskell in 1926.

While compiling team rankings for seasons long-since-past is great fun, the historian must recognize that the only "true" ranking authorities would be individuals who followed football at that time and who actually saw the teams in action; in other words the contemporaries of the season being ranked. In looking at the football coverage in newspapers around the country, as an indication of how highly regarded a team was, we see that in 1928 only the Boston papers gave coverage to Boston College comparable to that of teams like Army, Carnegie and NYU. Boston College never became a big national story in 1928, the way Frank Leahy's 1940 Boston College team did.

But no one is supposed to accept my opinion on anything about 1928 Boston College. What's needed is for some member of the Society to borrow the 1928 Boston papers on microfilm through the interlibrary loan services, and do an in-depth analysis of 1928 Boston College, including things such as formations, statistics and personnel. If the historian then thinks for example that BC's star player, Weston, should be rated equal to Army's Chris Cagle, NYU's Ken Strong, or Carnegie's Howard Harpster, I must disabuse him that there was any "contemporary consensus" behind this notion, but he is welcome to argue his position with me once there are facts to base these opinions on. With a definitively researched article on 1928 BC, we would all have more facts upon which to base our ideas about this team. Then we'd have a much better idea if BC would match up against a 1928 dynastic power like Army (a matchup whose 1988 equivalent I feel would be somewhat like Utah taking on Nebraska, Miami or USC).

To repeat, there is a real need for a well-researched article on 1928 Boston College. If some member would do the research work with the Boston papers that would prove BC should be considered ahead of teams like Army, NYU and Carnegie, then I would be happily refuted. Well, almost happily.

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November 24, 1910 was a bad day of football for the Indians. Nebraska ran up 1,150 yards of offense and 48 First Downs in pounding Haskell 119-0. Meanwhile in the East, Brown was upsetting Carlisle by a score of 15-6.