

## EARLY GEORGIA TECH FOOTBALL

(The following unsigned piece appeared in the New Orleans Times-Picayune in 1930)

Georgia's School of Technology, which is "Georgia Tech" for short now, was among the first Southern institutions to play intercollegiate football. The game had vague beginnings in 1892 but not until 1893 when General Leonard Wood, then a young medical officer at Fort McPherson, matriculated for graduate work at Georgia Tech, did the Engineers assume any position on the Southern gridiron. General Wood not only coached Tech's first team but played guard, there being no association and no eligibility rules. General Wood's teams won notable victories sectionally.

For years after General Wood left, the Yellow Jackets did not figure in the Southern championship. It was not until John W. Heisman, the Pennsylvania star, came to Tech Flats that the Yellow Jackets became a football power. Heisman had in turn put Alabama Polytechnic Institute (now Auburn) and Clemson college at the top of the Southern heap. As soon as he took charge of Georgia Tech, gridiron glory came to rest on the Gold and White.

Heisman brought his football team into national prominence in 1916 when the first "Golden Tornado" team opened the season by defeating Cumberland university 222 to 0. His star halfback was Everett Strupper and his best lineman was William Fincher. They won all their games by top-heavy scores and of course were awarded the title. During the war year of 1917, Heisman assembled an S.A.T.C. team with a backfield composed of Albert Hill, Everett Strupper, Joe Guyon and "Judy" Harlan. Guyon was the famous Indian star, brother of Charlie Wahoo of Carlisle fame. That team opened the season by winning a doubleheader from Wake Forest and

Furman, defeated the University of Pennsylvania (the team on which Howard Berry was a star back) 41 to 0 and finished by dividing national attention with Pittsburgh as co-champions.

In 1918 the famous halfbacks, Red Barron and Buck Flowers, played their first games behind the Heisman jumpshift. They won all their Southern engagements but lost in Pittsburgh to Pop Warner's great team of which Yom Davies was captain. "Bum Day," a center on that Tech eleven, was selected by Walter Camp on his All-America team, the first Southern player to make the grade. The victory over Pennsylvania and the defeat by Pittsburgh were Georgia Tech's first intersectional ventures, and since then the Yellow Jackets have been prominent in at least one intersectional game each year.

It was in 1920 that W.A. (Bill) Alexander, who had been first assistant to Heisman, succeeded his senior as head coach. Coach Alexander had played as a substitute end on the Tech teams in 1911-1914 and was captain of a scrub team that was a famous unit in Southern football history. On graduation he was retained as assistant by Heisman, who saw great possibilities in the quiet young man, who although no great player, was a keen student of the game and a sharp judge of men. Alexander enlisted in an overseas artillery unit during the war and returned in 1919 a lieutenant after service on several fronts. He helped Heisman in 1919 and took charge of the team in the fall of 1920.

That year the young coach took his team to Pittsburgh and lost a close game to the Panthers, 10 to 3. In that game Red Barron, his star halfback played with a broken jaw which was wired in place with gold wires, and he was warmly praised by Pop Warner after the game. Red played the rest of the season while taking liquid nourishment through a straw and playing full time in every game. That year also marked the end of the career of Bill Fincher, end and tackle, who was placed that year on Walter Camp's first All-America team, while Tech won the Southern championship.

For the next two years Tech won the sectional championship. But Tech's football fortunes sagged a bit from 1923 through 1926, while in turn Vanderbilt and Alabama were at the peak. It was in 1927 that another Golden Tornado team was developed on which Peter Pund, Stumpy Thomason, and Warner Mizell were stars. That year Georgia Tech won the Southern Conference championship. The following season (1928) the

Golden Tornado defeated all Southern opponents by convincing scores, registered an intersectional triumph over Notre Dame, and climaxed its campaign by defeating the University of California 8 to 7 in the Rose Bowl at Pasadena to win a claim to the national championship. Peter Pund was the unanimous selection that season as All-America center, while Mizell, Thomason and Speer were given wide mention.

Graduation of stars in the line and severe backfield losses left Georgia Tech stripped of its strength in 1929, and the Yellow Jackets lost six of its nine games. In 1930, with an experienced line and a fair backfield they are beginning a climb toward their former position in the national football field. Observers have not selected Georgia Tech as a probable champion in the South in 1930, but unite in rating the Yellow Jackets in the first flight of Southern Conference elevens. During the ten years to date under the direction of Coach W.A. (Bill) Alexander, Georgia Tech has won 53 games, lost 12 and tied seven against Southern opponents. Against all comers in that same period the Yellow Jackets have won 61, lost 22 and tied seven.