

Maynard Brichford  
University of Illinois

### **Bob Zupke, the Dutch Master**

Robert C. Zupke established a strong rapport with players, alumni, and administrators, as evidenced by his twenty-nine year tenure as head football coach at the University of Illinois. He possessed unique oratorical skills that enabled him to capitalize on the popularity of intercollegiate football. He applied sports psychology in the training and coaching of his teams by drawing on his psychology studies at Wisconsin and collaboration with Coleman Griffith. He developed innovative plays (flea flicker), formations (huddle) and strong defenses that were suitable for smaller, faster teams. He coupled a strong defense of college football with the idea that the sport was only an incident in college life. He supplied coaches and players who were instrumental in establishing the National Football League, like George Clark, George Halas, Joe Sternaman, Laurie Walquist, Red Grange. and Lloyd Burdick. An artist, Zupke regarded football as a performing art that generated a substantial profit and favorable publicity for higher education. The “Dutch Master” drove himself and his players and played a significant role in transforming football from local recreation to massive stadium spectacles and professional entertainment.

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Andrew Doyle  
Winthrop University

### **George Denny, Intercollegiate Football, and the Institutional Modernization of the University of Alabama, 1912-1934**

The adoption of intercollegiate football by southern universities in the late nineteenth century was a manifestation of the larger movement to bring southern higher education into conformity with national standards. Progressive southern educators saw football as a cultural adjunct to such reforms as the elective system, more rigorous admissions standards, and the recruitment of more highly qualified faculties. Following the lead of northern opinion makers, they believed that football would build manly character and promote a competitive spirit in young men. Football could also bestow practical benefits to educators seeking

to expand and modernize their institutions. The favorable publicity generated by a successful athletic program could aid student recruitment, promote loyalty among alumni, and generate more funding from parsimonious state legislatures.

As president of the University of Alabama for nearly a quarter of a century, George Denny was one of the leading educational progressives in the South. When he assumed the presidency in 1912, he inherited a student body that numbered only 400, a handful of unexceptional buildings, a tiny budget, a weak alumni network, and a citizenry that generally viewed the school with a mixture of indifference and hostility. The Alabama football program was similarly moribund. Archrival Auburn was the dominant football power in the state, and Alabama was a perennial also-ran in the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association. By the time of Denny's retirement in 1934, the student body numbered over 3,000, a score of new buildings dotted the campus, the alumni association was large and politically powerful, and admissions standards had risen dramatically. Denny's achievements were not uniformly positive, however. By the end of his tenure, Alabama's academic reputation was mediocre even by the relatively low standards of southern state universities. Denny had expanded enrollment so rapidly that Alabama was forced to employ upperclassmen as instructors in freshman-level classes. Demoralized by abysmally low salaries and angered by his dictatorial administrative style, the faculty was in open revolt against him. Legislative leaders joined faculty members in denouncing him for diverting funds earmarked for faculty salaries into construction projects.

The dramatic improvement of the Alabama football program was the single most successful aspect of Denny's presidency. The program improved in fits and starts during the first decade of Denny's tenure, but it skyrocketed into national prominence under the leadership of head coach Wallace Wade. Between 1923 and 1930, Wade compiled a 61-13-3 record that included three national championships, four Southern Conference championships, and three Rose Bowl appearances.

This paper will examine the rise of the Alabama football program within the context of George Denny's overall strategy of expanding and modernizing the entire university. Denny reined in the heretofore semiautonomous athletic association and placed it

under the budgetary and administrative control of the university's athletic department. He built an on-campus stadium, purchased modern equipment, and hired one of the best coaches of the era. He consciously used football as a public relations vehicle to expand enrollment, unite fractious alumni, and obtain political and popular support.

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Tim Elcombe

Pennsylvania State University

## **Searching for an Athletic Identity: The Definition and Post-War Emergence of Penn State Intercollegiate Athletics**

On October 27<sup>th</sup> 2001, Penn State's Joe Paterno surpassed Bear Bryant's record for the most wins as an NCAA Division IA head football coach. The seventy-four year old Paterno was carried off the field on the shoulders of his players following the historic three hundred and twenty-fourth win. Penn State supporters felt great pride in the accomplishments of a man who had only coached at one institution. Further, his "Grand Experiment" – an attempt to build a dominant football power with legitimate and ordinary student-athletes – has established a sterling national reputation for "JoePa." Paterno has been credited with defining a Penn State athletic program that mirrors his image: athletic excellence coupled with academic integrity. Is Paterno the foundation that has defined Nittany Lion sports? Or did he inherit a football program in 1966 that had already put the foundation in place that would allow him and Penn State athletics as a whole to rise to the upper echelon of big time college sports?

Archival research in Penn State's Special Collections Library provides an abundance of sources for analysis. The meeting minutes of groups such as the Athletic Advisory Committee, the Board of Athletic Control and the Board of Trustees, as well as numerous newspaper clippings, personal correspondence, program yearbooks and focused historical texts provide the basis to reconstruct the critical historical elements of Penn State athletics. What surfaces from this vast assortment of primary sources are several definitive periods in their athletic history: the origins and early years (pre-1900) sanctioning of rationalized athletic practices (1900- 1917), the hiring of athletic director and football coach Hugo Bezdek and his program of