

AN EDUCATIONAL BIOGRAPHY OF COACHES AND THE HISTORY OF INTERSCHOLASTIC
ATHLETICS AT ABILENE HIGH SCHOOL, ABILENE, KANSAS

by

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INTRODUCTION

Schools throughout our nation have grown considerably in enrollment during the past two decades. Most public schools have attempted to keep pace with this increase by offering a broader curriculum to fit the various needs and interests of the pupil. Extracurricular activities have been given more emphasis, and athletics have become a major part of the high school program.

Abilene High School is typical of the many high schools in our nation which have made the necessary adjustments to fulfill the needs of its community. This report will be concerned principally with the changes in the athletic program over the ninety-six years of the school's existence. It is also the intention of the writer to provide a history of the school's athletic records as accurately as possible.

The Abilene High School, the first in this Congressional District, may be said to have had its origin in 1869, housed in a stone building at the corner of Walnut and Southwest Second Street. There were no graduations before 1880. Pupils attended or quit as they pleased with no formalities. It was merely a frontier village school. In 1874 Garfield School, a four room building, was erected. This building was enlarged in 1882 and was used for the high school until 1894. From 1894 to 1906, the school was conducted in the old city hall jointly occupying that building with inmates of the city jail and the family of the city marshal. Often were the times when a lecture would have to cease because of the noise made by the drunkards below. There was one main room with two extra recitation rooms with hours from 9-12 and 1-4. In 1906, a school was built on west Seventh Street to house the growing

high school. This building, enlarged in 1908, served the community in that capacity until 1919, after which it became a junior high school building. Later a brick structure between Sixth and Seventh Street on Buckeye superseded it as the high school. In 1955 the present beautiful building was completed to provide the latest innovation in educational facilities. Upon its completion the old junior high, having served the city for forty-nine years, was razed and the building on Buckeye became the junior high school.

The present building, one of the finest in the country, is located west of Cedar at Fourteenth Street. In June, 1953, the board proceeded to receive bids for the construction of the present high school building to comply with the plans and specifications prepared by Joseph W. Radotinsky, architect. The contracts were let to Busboom and Rauh Incorporated of Salina, Kansas, general contract for \$970,938.49; Gage Plumbing and Heating Company, Salina, Kansas, plumbing contract for \$184,136.73 and General Air Conditioner and Electrical Company of Salina, Kansas, received the electrical contract in the amount of \$92,939.69. The total cost of the building was \$1,248,014.91 with an additional expenditure of \$231,485.09 to equip this fine facility.

The Abilene High School is fully accredited and listed as a Comprehensive School by the State Board of Education. It has been a member of the North Central Association of College and Secondary schools since 1908. This gives the school standing equal to that of any other school in the North Central States.

Abilene High School has grown from one to thirty-two faculty members; from fifteen to five hundred and sixty-four students, and from eleven to seventy-four curricular units offered.

Abilene graduates hold responsible positions throughout the United States. President Dwight D. Eisenhower graduated from Abilene High School in 1909. Deane Malott, president of Cornell University, graduated in 1916 and in 1917 Milton Eisenhower, president of Johns Hopkins University, graduated from Abilene High School.

AIMS AND PURPOSES

The purpose of this study is to provide a record of athletics at Abilene High School. It is hoped that this study will be of assistance to the board, administration, faculty and people of the district. It is also the intention of the writer to provide a brief and concise history of the school in the introduction.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Material for this study was acquired from several different sources. Most of the material was obtained from the school's year books and newspapers. Personal interviews were held with former and present coaches, wives of deceased coaches and some of the past players of the various coaches.

LEAGUES

Abilene played independently of a league from 1893 to 1913. In 1914 they became a member of the Solomon Valley League. That league included:

- (1) Abilene
- (2) Herington
- (3) Ellsworth

(4) Salina

(5) Lindsborg

In the fall of 1920 Abilene entered the Central Kansas League. This league included:

(1) Chapman

(2) Salina

(3) Ellsworth

(4) Abilene

(5) Minneapolis

(6) Saint Johns Military Academy

Membership in the Central Kansas League has changed in the course of years and now seven schools make up the league.

(1) Abilene

(2) Salina

(3) McPherson

(4) Junction City

(5) Manhattan

(6) Clay Center

(7) Emporia

Effective September, 1966 Abilene will join four other schools in making up the North Central Kansas League.

(1) Abilene

(2) Sacred Heart

(3) Concordia

(4) Marysville

(5) Chapman

FINANCING

Athletics at Abilene High School have been self-supporting, with the exception of coaches' salaries and maintenance of facilities, through collection of gate receipts, fees for activity tickets, and the sale of season tickets.

This money is placed in a separate fund and the athletic director distributes this on the basis of need for all athletic teams of Abilene High School. The school does not furnish individual items such as socks, undershirts and shoes. They do however, furnish game and practice uniforms for basketball, football, track, and wrestling teams.

The financial status of athletics at Abilene High School has varied from a budget of presumably nothing; to a sum of approximately \$9,000 per year.

The present coaches' salaries are based on the school's salary schedule. This schedule includes a base pay of \$4,700 with yearly increments of \$200 for each step up to ten steps. Head coaches in golf, tennis, cross country and wrestling receive an additional \$250. The head basketball and football coaches receive \$400 additional salary. The head track coach receives an additional \$300. Assistant coaches in football, basketball and track receive from \$100 to \$200 additional salary. The board of education also has a policy to award an additional \$400 to the head of the family and also reserves the right to hire any teacher above the salary scale.

FOOTBALL

W. A. Matteson (1893)

Abilene boasts of its first competitive football team in 1893. The team was under the direction of W. A. Matteson, who had played football and graduated the previous year at Kansas University. All but three of the squad members were high school lads, the others being citizens of Abilene. Coach Matteson compiled an overall record of sixteen wins and no losses.

W. W. Brown (1894)

Mr. Brown was primarily hired as high school principal but also coached the football team. He had a winning season but the exact record was missing.

Frank D. Parent (1904-1907)

Mr. Parent was not a professional teacher or coach; he was a graduate of Abilene High School in 1897. He was very much interested in the local high school team and volunteered his services as football coach. Mr. Parent coached his teams to two undefeated seasons in 1906 and 1907. No overall record was recorded.

John McDonell (1910)

Mr. McDonell had seventeen players out for football. His team won three, lost one and tied one.

Orrin Snider (1908-09 - 1911-14)

Mr. Snider was a local fan who had an abundance of enthusiasm for football. In 1912 and 1913 his teams won ten and lost six.

J. W. White (1915-1917)

Mr. White taught Manual Arts in Abilene High School as well as coached the local high school football team. His teams compiled a record of twenty-three wins, four losses and two ties. One of the highlights in the fall of 1915 was the win over Junction City on their home field. This was the first time this had happened in six years.

David Stanly (1918)

Nothing could be found regarding Mr. Stanly's duties as a teacher or coach except he compiled a record of seven wins and two losses. One interesting game of the season was the win over Hays College 13-7.

Raymond Markley (1919-1920)

Coach Markley was a graduate of the College of Emporia, Emporia, Kansas. During his playing days at C of E he was a star tackle and in 1913 was named the captain of the allstate football team. Mr. Markley also did some graduate work at Harvard University and at Kansas State.

Mr. Markley taught physical education and coached football during his two years at Abilene High School. Many of his players were veterans of World War I and were a group of dedicated athletes. They compiled a record of fourteen wins and four losses.

Frank P. (Mandy) Mandeville (1921)

Mr. Mandeville was a star halfback for three years at Kansas University where he earned the honor of being selected as an all-Missouri Valley halfback his junior and senior years.

Mandy also taught physical education while winning one and losing five football games. On November 2, 1921, Sim Barber was fatally injured after crossing Clay Center's goal line for the first time that season. Abilene lost the game 31-7. This was the only athletic fatality in the history of Abilene High School.

Lloyd McGahan (1922)

Mr. McGahan graduated from Kansas State Normal, Emporia, Kansas, where he earned fifteen varsity letters; three in football and four in each of the following: baseball, basketball and track.

Although Coach McGahan did not have a winning season, he had the respect of the players and fans. He recorded three wins, four losses and one tie.

C. R. Enlow (1923)

Mr. Enlow was a graduate of Kansas State Agriculture College, Manhattan, Kansas. While attending college, Mr. Enlow won three letters in football, three in track and made the basketball squad two years.

Coach Enlow had a record of four wins, four losses and one tie.

Ronald L. Smith (1924)

Coach Smith graduated from Baker University, Baldwin, Kansas, in the spring of 1923 and attended the Kansas University Coaching School in 1924. While attending Baker University, he won four letters in track.

Mr. Smith had a successful coaching debut at Colony High School before coming to Abilene. His record at Abilene was three wins, five losses and one tie.

Marvin VanOsdol (1925-1933)

Mr. VanOsdol was a graduate of Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia, Kansas, where he won three letters in both football and basketball. Mr. VanOsdol was also captain of the basketball team and president of the K-Club.

In his nine years of coaching at Abilene High School, Mr. VanOsdol compiled a glossy record of fifty-five wins, twenty-two losses and three ties. Some of the other highlights of his tenure were; winning the Central Kansas League championship in 1926, 1929 and 1930 and was the first to coach night football in 1930.

In 1933, Mr. VanOsdol was both athletic coach and principal. In the spring of 1934 he resigned as athletic coach to devote full time to his job as principal of Abilene High School.

Elvin McCoy (1934-1937)

Mr. McCoy graduated from Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia, Kansas. Mr. McCoy was a fine athlete for the teachers college; he was chosen to play in the annual East-West football game held in the Rose Bowl

in 1932. While attending college he won four letters in both football and basketball and one letter in track. After graduation he was given a position on the coaching staff at Kansas State Teachers College while he worked toward his Master's Degree.

Coach McCoy won one Central Kansas League championship in 1935. In 1937 our present stadium was dedicated. This was one of the finest facilities to be found anywhere in the state.

Mr. McCoy compiled a record of fifteen wins, twenty-three losses, and two ties.

Carl Thurlow (1938-1939 and 1942)

Coach Thurlow came to Abilene from Norton, Kansas, where he had excellent athletic teams. His basketball teams at Norton won three consecutive league championships and won two trips to the state tournament in his three years as basketball coach.

Coach Thurlow attended high school at Hill City, Kansas; upon graduation he enrolled at Kansas State College, Manhattan, Kansas. After completing his freshmen year at Kansas State he transferred to Hays State Teachers College, Hays, Kansas. During his three years at Hays he won two letters as an end on football team and three letters as a guard on the basketball team. His junior and senior years as an undergraduate at Hays he was chosen as an all-conference guard.

While at Abilene Mr. Thurlow compiled a coaching record of sixteen wins and eleven losses.

Alex Francis (1940-1941)

Mr. Francis received his bachelors degree from Fort Hays State Teachers College, Hays, Kansas. While attending Hays, Mr. Francis participated in football, basketball and track. In the spring of 1940, Mr. Francis received his Master of Science degree from the University of Missouri.

Mr. Francis is presently teaching physical education and is head track coach at Hays State Teachers College, Hays, Kansas.

During the two seasons that Mr. Francis coached at Abilene his teams won their first seven games and lost their final three games. According to Mr. Francis he never lost a game while a certain halfback named Patterson was in the lineup. Consequently, his teams won fourteen and lost six games in his two years at Abilene.

Henry Cronkite (1943-1946)

Coach Cronkite was perhaps the most illustrious individual who has ever coached at Abilene High School. Mr. Cronkite graduated from high school at Belle Plaine, Kansas. Upon graduation from high school, Mr. Cronkite entered Kansas State College, Manhattan, Kansas. While playing football for Kansas State he earned all-conference honors as well as being chosen as an all-American end in the fall of 1931. After graduating from Kansas State he coached for two years at Glen Elder, Kansas, before playing professional football for the Chicago Cardinals and the Brooklyn Dodgers. After his retirement from professional football he coached at Augusta, Kiowa, and Abilene.

Mr. Cronkite loved the out-of-doors; his main hobbies were fishing,

hunting and trapping. Although Coach Cronkite did not have the best won lost record at Abilene he had the respect of the boys, parents and fans. This was largely due to his warm, sincere, and enthusiastic personality.

Coach Cronkite compiled a record of eleven wins, eighteen losses and four ties. In 1945, he had his best team, which recorded seven wins and one loss; tying for second in the Central Kansas League.

Fred C. Perdue (1947-1948)

Coach Perdue attended high school at Slaton, Texas. After graduating from high school he enrolled in Coffeyville Junior Collage, Coffeyville, Kansas. At Coffeyville he was chosen on the all-Kansas Junior College Football Team. After completing the course of study at Coffeyville he enrolled at Tulsa University, Tulsa, Oklahoma and stayed one year, before transferring to Pittsburg State Teachers College, Pittsburg, Kansas. Upon graduation from Pittsburg in 1941, Mr. Perdue took his first coaching job at Caney High School, Caney, Kansas. He spent two years at Caney before being drafted into the service in 1943. He received his discharge from the service in 1946 and took his second coaching job at Eureka High School, Eureka, Kansas, where he coached his team to an undefeated season in 1946.

At Abilene, Coach Perdue had his problems. He was unable to win a ball game as his team compiled a record of no wins, fifteen losses and one tie.

Paul Turner (1949-1953)

Coach Turner graduated from Shawnee Mission High School in 1940, and from Kansas University in 1947. During the summers of 1947 and 1948, Mr. Turner did graduate study on his Master's Degree at Kansas University.

While playing on the Kansas University football team he earned his enshrinement in the Kansas University Athletic Hall of Fame by virtue of his kicking the winning field goal against Oklahoma in 1945.

Mr. Turner came to Abilene from Hoisington High School where he compiled a record of eight wins, eight losses, and two ties.

Mr. Turner, in his first year as head football coach, placed third in the Central Kansas League; in his second he placed second and in 1951 won the league championship. Then, in 1952 and 1953, his teams did not win a game. Coach Turner's teams, in his five years at the helm, won nineteen, lost nineteen and tied three. The team of 1951 was the last to win the Central Kansas League championship.

William Schaake (1954-1956)

Coach Schaake graduated from Liberty Memorial High School, Lawrence, Kansas. Upon graduation he enrolled at Kansas University where he won fame as a student and also as a great football player. While attending Kansas University he made the Dean's Honor Roll and in 1951 was Co-captain of the football team.

Abilene was Mr. Schaake's first coaching assignment. In his three years of coaching at Abilene, his teams compiled a record of seven wins, sixteen losses and one tie.

Guy (Jack) Sharp (1957-1961)

Mr. Sharp attended Eldorado High School where he was an outstanding athlete. Upon graduation from high school he enrolled in Eldorado Junior College, where he was an outstanding end on the football team. After

graduation from Eldorado Junior College, Mr. Sharp spent the next four years in the service. Jack still wanted to play more football, so in 1946 he enrolled at Kansas State College, Manhattan, Kansas, where he obtained his bachelors degree.

Jack's coaching profession started at Hamilton Rural High School, Hamilton, Kansas. After two years at Hamilton he then returned to Kansas State College to work on a Master's Degree. He received his Master's Degree in 1951 and was again drafted into the service because of the flight training he had received during World War II. He was discharged in 1953 and went to Hillsboro High School from 1953 to 1957.

While at Abilene his football teams won twelve, lost twenty-three and tied one.

Harry (Bus) Stromgren (1962-1964)

Coach Stromgren graduated from Michigan Valley Rural High School, Michigan Valley, Kansas in 1952. Upon graduation he enrolled in the College of Emporia, Emporia, Kansas, where he won four letters in football, two letters in basketball and four letters in baseball. After graduating in 1956, he accepted his first coaching assignment at Hamilton Rural High School, Hamilton, Kansas. His teams compiled a record of six wins, one loss and one tie; tying for the league championship. After his first year of coaching he was drafted into the United States Army. In 1959 he accepted a position as head coach in all sports at Abilene Junior High School, Abilene High School. After some success during his first three years as a junior high school coach he was given the head football coaching job at the high school.

His teams at Abilene High School compiled a record of six wins, eighteen losses and three ties. One highlight was during the 1962 season his team had the best won-lost record since 1954; compiling a record of three wins, four losses and two ties.

BASKETBALL

M. D. Collins (1914)

This was Abilene's first year of competitive basketball. The team of 1914 played in the Solomon Valley League and placed fifth. They played a fourteen game schedule with only five players on the squad.

The old Redman garage served as the basketball court. The only heat it had was an old pot-bellied stove in one corner. It also had a cement floor.

No record was given for this hearty team.

Raymond Markley (1919-1921)

This was the first attempt at basketball since the season of 1914. The old Redman garage was abandoned in favor of the gymnasium in the new high school building. They compiled a record of twenty-one victories and twenty-two losses. In the season of 1920-21 the team scored 324 points.

Frank P. (Mandy) Mandeville (1922)

Mandy really had a fine group of young basketball players that placed second in the league with a record of nine wins and nine losses.

Lloyd McGahan (1923)

Coach McGahan welcomed fourteen squad members of which only three were lettermen. Abilene placed second in the league with a record of twelve victories and only six losses.

C. R. Enlow (1924)

Fifty boys reported for the first day of practice and Coach Enlow had to cut the squad to twenty boys.

Due to the lack of experience the boys started very slowly, however during one stretch they won ten consecutive games and placed third in the league. They placed second in the Salina Tourney and ended the season with a record of sixteen wins and eight losses.

Ronald L. Smith (1925)

Coach Smith had only three lettermen return, however this did not dampen the efforts of the team of 1925. This was the first time in the history of Abilene High School that the school reached the state tournament. In the first round of state tournament play, Ellsworth came out on the long end of the score, twenty-four to six. The overall record of this fine team was fifteen wins, nine losses and one tie.

Marvin VanOsdol (1926-1934)

Coach VanOsdol never had a losing season while at the helm of the Abilene High School Basketeers. In his nine years as basketball coach his teams compiled a record of 129 wins and sixty losses. In 1933, the Cowboys captured the league championship. Under Coach VanOsdol's direction the

Cowboys made five trips to the state tournament, in 1926, 1927, 1929, 1930 and 1934. Their record in state tournament during VanOsdol's tenure was two wins and eight losses.

Elvin McCoy (1935-1938)

Starting the basketball season of 1935 with only four returning lettermen, Coach McCoy developed a team of championship caliber. The team got off to a poor start, however, they did manage to win the league championship.

In 1936, Abilene made another journey to the state tourney only to lose to Chanute in the first round and later to Argentine in the second round.

Mr. McCoy's teams compiled a record, during his four seasons at the helm, of fifty-eight victories and thirty defeats.

Carl Thurlow (1939-1943)

Coach Thurlow had some lean years during World War II. In 1939, his teams won the league with an overall record of sixteen wins and four losses. In 1940, they won second in the Central Kansas League, however with the advent of World War II they dropped to the second division in the next three seasons. Coach Thurlow's teams had an overall record of forty-one wins and forty-three losses.

Henry Cronkite (1944-1947)

Coach Cronkite's teams made two trips to the state tournament. The first was in 1944 when Abilene was semi-final runnerup and the second in 1947 they beat Hugoton in the first round but lost to Buhler, the eventual Class A champions, in the second round. The overall record of Mr.

Cronkite's teams was forty-eight wins and thirty-three losses. One other highlight of the 1947 team was an invitation to play in the Annual Basketball Clinic game against Highland Park.

David L. Shirk (1948-1959)

Mr. Shirk is a graduate of Eldorado High School and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Kansas in 1938. At Kansas University Dave participated in football and won all Big-6 honors as an end in 1936 and 1938. He was also captain of the football team in 1938.

After graduation he coached at the Haskell Institute for Indians in 1939 and 1940. In the fall of 1940 he moved to Augusta High School and stayed until he was drafted in 1943. After being discharged from the service he accepted an offer to coach basketball at Abilene High School after applying for the football vacancy.

Mr. Shirk taught a fast break type of basketball and was very successful in his twelve seasons at Abilene High School. He compiled a record of 149 wins and 109 losses.

Some of the highlights of his seasons were full of tension and pressure. Perhaps, the most disappointing game in his career came after an undefeated regular season when a fired up group of Sacred Heart "Knights" defeated the "Cowboys" fifty-five to fifty-two in the first round of district play. Clay Center went on to win the state and Abilene had previously defeated them twice by scores of fifteen points or more.

Dave, however, had two other state teams: first in 1948 when they placed fourth and the second in 1951 when they placed second to Norton.

Dave won the Central Kansas League basketball championship, for the

first time since 1939, in 1957.

Guy (Jack) Sharp (1960-1963)

Coach Sharp coached the same type of basketball as did Coach Shirk. Perhaps, the reason for this was the fact that Coach Sharp was an assistant to Coach Shirk for two seasons.

The Cowboys, under the leadership, of Coach Sharp compiled a record of twenty-nine wins and forty-seven losses. They finished second in the Central Kansas League during Jack's first year.

Calvin (Cal) Reimer (1964-1965)

Cal graduated from Chetopa High School where he won all-league honors in both football and basketball. After graduation from high school he enrolled in Coffeyville Junior College, Coffeyville, Kansas. Here he again was named to both football and basketball all-conference teams. Upon graduation from junior college he enrolled at Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia where he again won all-conference honors in both football and basketball. After receiving his Bachelor of Science degree at Emporia; he immediately enrolled in graduate school and received his Master's Degree before entering the coaching profession.

Cal brought seven years of coaching experience with him to Abilene. He coached one year at Central Junior High School of Kansas City, Kansas, four years at Roosevelt Junior High School, Coffeyville, Kansas and two years of experience from Peabody High School, Peabody, Kansas.

In his first year at Peabody they were runner-up in the state class B tourney. Then in his second and last year at Peabody they won the state

class B crown.

Due to the lack of experienced players, Cal had an over-all record of eleven wins and thirty-one losses at Abilene. One of the greatest games ever played on our local gymnasium floor was in the first round game of the 1964 Mid-State Tournament. Cal had the boys really inspired as they beat a taller and more experienced Russell crew.

The boys really learned a lot of basketball under Coach Reimer. It was enjoyable to see a team play defense the way it should be played.

TRACK

Track was started in the spring of 1905. Fifteen boys participated in track in its debut. No coach was named however, R. L. Biggart served as track manager during 1905.

In 1906, track was dropped in favor of baseball and was not resumed until 1913. The big meet for the Cowboys in 1913 was the Dickinson County Track and Field Meet. Chapman defeated Abilene by four points in the meet. Abilene took nine out of a possible thirteen first places but lost because of the lack of depth of their track squad. There were only six boys out for track that year.

J. W. White (1915-1918)

Mr. White made remarkable progress during his four years of coaching track at Abilene High School. His teams climaxed his coaching by winning the State Track and Field Meet in 1918. He also had only twelve boys on the track squad the year they won the state meet.

David Stanly (1919)

Mr. Stanly continued from where the team of 1918 left off. Mr. Stanly also coached Abilene High School track team to victory in the State Track and Field Meet. This was to be the last state championship in track in the history of the school.

Raymond Markley (1920-1921)

The goal of the team of 1920 was to uphold the achievements of the teams of the past two years. However, McPherson won the state meet that year. This was the rebuilding year for the "Cowboys." In 1921 they came back to win the local county meet and the Central Kansas League Meet. Then proceeded to place third in the Interscholastic Meet in Lawrence, Kansas. The latter being against some of the finest athletes in the state of Kansas.

Frank P. Mandeville (1922)

During Mandy's one year as head track coach they won the county meet and placed third in the Salina Invitational. No other results could be found.

Lloyd McGahan (1923)

During the season of 1923 there were only two lettermen out of a squad of thirty boys. Green was the most consistent scorer, scoring seventy-two points during the season. Six boys qualified for the state meet however, they did not place.

C. R. Enlow (1924)

Mr. Enlow had only two lettermen to build around however, the transfer of a boy named Leascher was a blessing. This boy placed third in the state meet in the 220 yard dash and was elected captain of the track team that year.

Ronald L. Smith (1925)

Leascher again was the main cog in Coach Smith's track squad. He again scored third in the state in the 220 yard dash. He also placed first at the Baker Relays in fifty yard dash and placed second in the 100 yard dash.

The team placed third in the Central Kansas League Meet; with Junction City finishing first, and Ellsworth finishing second.

Marvin VanOsdol (1926-1934)

Coach VanOsdol averaged about fourteen boys out for track during his seven years as track coach. In the spring of 1932, track was dropped because of the lack of interest, and baseball was again part of the program at Abilene High School. Baseball was played during the seasons of 1932 and 1933. Track was resumed in 1934.

During the seven years of track under the direction of VanOsdol, the teams placed second in the league meet three times, placed fifth three times and in sixth place only once.

Elvin McCoy (1935-1938)

During the four years that Elvin McCoy was track coach there was no

competitive track program. They did have an inter-school track meet each spring, however, the only competition was between the different classes.

The track program was just a pre-conditioning process that Coach McCoy had to keep his football and basketball players in shape. It proved very successful in that they won the league championship in football during the 1935 season.

Carl Thurlow (1939)

Twenty-four boys participated in track during the 1939 season. After four years of not competing in track the squad was very inexperienced. Needless to say, the track team of 1939 was rebuilding for the future of Abilene High School track.

Marlin Beer (1940-1944)

Marlin Beer was an assistant coach in football and basketball as well as being head track coach. He averaged around twenty-five boys out for track during his five years as track coach.

His most consistent point maker was Patterson. Patterson tied the 100 yard dash record and ran with Mead, Reynolds, and Coulson on a record breaking 880 yard relay team.

Track was dropped at the end of the 1944 season and was not resumed until the spring of 1950.

Paul J. Turner (1950-1954)

During the five years under the leadership of Coach Turner, the track program was again placed on a firm foundation. In 1952 and 1953, the team

placed fourth and fifth, respectively, in the state meet. In the Central Kansas League Meets they finished third in 1952, fourth in 1953, fifth in 1950 and 1951, and last in 1954.

They averaged forty boys out for track during this period and also seventeen lettermen.

William Schaake (1955-1957)

During Mr. Schaake's three years as head track coach the "Cowboys" did not do too well in the Central Kansas League as they finished last in all three league track meets. Track was mainly a conditioning program for football and basketball. In 1955, the team managed to win fifth place in the regional meet. No one qualified for the state meet.

Guy (Jack) Sharp (1958-1963)

Mr. Sharp averaged approximately ten letterman each year. His squads averaged about forty boys trying for berths on track team.

Under the direction of Coach Sharp the Abilene Invitational Track and Field Meet was launched. This is one of the finest track meets in central Kansas. Ten to fifteen schools are invited to attend this annual event. Some of the participating schools are Beloit, Concordia, Marysville, Chapman, Clay Center, Herington, Buhler, Lyons, Sacred Heart, Marion, Council Grove and Hillsboro.

Alfred (Al) Kouneski (1964-1965)

Al was born in Baltimore, Maryland, and graduated from Patterson Park High School in Baltimore. Al chose Kansas State University for his

undergraduate and graduate work. While at Kansas State, Al was an outstanding football player under Coach Mertes and Coach Weaver. In 1961, Al was voted "Most Inspirational Player" on the Kansas State football team.

While at Abilene, Al was not only head track coach but also an assistant football, wrestling and basketball coach. I might add, from first hand experience of this writer, he was one of the most inspirational and enthusiastic young coaches with whom I have ever been associated.

Al's track squads were some of the best conditioned in the area, however, he had very little material from which to build a strong track team. Five records were broken during his two years of coaching track at Abilene High School. The records are as follows: Bill Hubnik, discus 149' 1½"; Jim Paetzold, shot put 51' 1"; Marvin Bennett, 440 yard dash 50.9 seconds; Bob McKee, pole vault 13' 7½" and High Hurdle 15.2 seconds.

BASEBALL

Baseball was played for the first time in 1907 as a part of the interscholastic athletic program. It flourished until 1912. During this period the teams won twenty-three games and lost only three games. The two most amazing things about the teams of this era was the fact that they had only nine boys out for baseball in each of the six years and they had no coach; they did have an elected captain to handle the team.

In 1913, baseball was dropped and was not resumed until 1921, when Raymond Markley coached the team to a record of six wins and no losses.

Again the sport was dropped but was not resumed on a competitive level. In 1932 and 1933, it was played on more or less an intramural level.

Baseball, on an interscholastic level, has not been played at Abilene

High School since 1933.

TENNIS

Abilene boasts of its first competitive tennis team in 1926. They had approximately 12 boys out for team during its advent.

It did not take them long to win its first Central Kansas League championship; for in 1927 they won both the singles and doubles titles.

There was only one year since 1926 that Abilene did not field a tennis team and that was in 1931, when only two boys reported for the team.

From 1926 to 1944, Abilene did not have a tennis coach. It was the duty of the principal, who more or less managed the boys and saw that they were on hand to participate in the matches. There was no regular coach or formal instruction provided for the participants.

Charles B. Tice (1945-1965)

Mr. Tice is a graduate of Beloit High School and the College of Emporia, Emporia, Kansas. Mr. Tice also holds a Master of Science degree from the Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia, Emporia, Kansas. Before coming to Abilene High School, he taught at Clifton, Tescott, Bennington, and Osborne, all high schools in Kansas. This previous experience totaled twelve years of teaching mathematics and coaching football and basketball.

Mr. Tice has been the only tennis coach in the history of Abilene High School. During his twenty years of coaching tennis at Abilene, his teams have won the Central Kansas League Doubles championship in 1953 and 1954. In 1954 the doubles team, composed of Wilkins and Miller, also won the State Doubles championship going through the season with seventeen wins and no

losses.

In 1960, his team won the regional championship to qualify them for the state tournament, however, they failed to place as they were defeated in the first round.

GOLF

Golf was first played as an interscholastic sport in the spring of 1926. From 1926 to 1955 the school did not have a coach. It was the duty of the principal to see that the boys got to their respective tournaments. Due to the fact that the total records are very incomplete during the period from 1926 to 1955 a listing of the highlights were recorded.

Abilene won its first share of the Central Kansas League title in 1930. John Dieter and John Case tied for first with Salina in the league tournament.

In 1934, they won undisputed possession of first place in the Central Kansas League and repeated this again in 1939 and 1956.

In 1949, Abilene won its first state championship; it was not until the spring of 1963, that they repeated as state champions.

Abilene was fortunate in having both a sand green course and also a grass green course. Both of these clubs cooperate with great enthusiasm to bring the best in golfing facilities to the golfers of Abilene High School.

David L. Shirk (1955-1957)

Coach Shirk had the pleasure of coaching Martin Sanborn and Denny Buck to the two-man Central Kansas League championship in 1956. In 1955, they placed fourth in the league meet, eighteenth in the state meet and finished the season with a record of four wins and three losses.

Harold Edberg (1958-1965)

Harold graduated from Kackley High School, Kackley, Kansas, and upon graduation entered Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas. After graduating from Bethany Harold took his first coaching job at St. John, Kansas. Later he moved to Antrim High School, Antrim, Kansas. His basketball teams at these two schools compiled a record of 113 victories and fifty-seven losses.

Before Coach Edberg became head golf coach at Abilene, the teams usually participated against schools equal in size or smaller than Abilene. Now, however, the teams play approximately ninety per cent of their schedule against Class AA teams. They also take part in the toughest invitational tournaments in the state each year.

During Coach Edberg's eight years of coaching golf at Abilene, his teams have won first place in seven major tournaments in the state; including the State Sand Green championship in 1963. Perhaps, the greatest accomplishment was placing fourth in the State Grass Green Tournament in 1964. They were the only Class A team in the tournament that year; they had an excellent chance to repeat as sand green champions, however, the team chose to attend the grass tourney.

WRESTLING

Robert Holeman (1962-1965)

Coach Holeman is a graduate of Herington High School, Herington, Kansas, and of Kansas State Teachers College, Hays, Kansas. After graduation from Hays, Coach Holeman was hired by the Abilene Board of Education to teach Auto Mechanics and to initiate a wrestling program.

Although his record of six wins, fourteen losses and three ties would not impress a lay person, his enthusiasm for the sport has been very contagious. Since 1962, the number of his squad has increased from a mere twenty-five boys to sixty-five boys. The way the average town fan has accepted the sport is fantastic. If it continues to grow in the future the way it has the past four years, it could easily replace basketball as the number one attraction during the winter months.

CROSS COUNTRY

Henry Ewert (1959-1960)

Cross-country made its appearance in Abilene in 1959 through the efforts of Coach Ewert. He saw the competitive needs of boys who did not have the physical attributes to participate in football.

Mr. Ewert is a graduate of Hillsboro High School, Hillsboro, Kansas. After completing his high school education he entered Bethel College, Newton, Kansas, where he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in history. Mr. Ewert also holds his Master of Arts degree in history from the University of Kansas.

Before coming to Abilene High School, he was a very successful teacher and coach at Goessel, Smolan and Holton high schools.

Besides coaching Cross-country, Mr. Ewert also served as freshmen football and basketball coach and served as Athletic Director from 1947 to 1963.

Coach Ewert's team of 1960 placed fifth in the Central Kansas League Meet. In 1959, the team failed to win a meet, however this could be expected in the maiden season of any sport.

Robert Chatham (1961-1965)

Coach Chatham is a graduate of Harveyville High School, Harveyville, Kansas, where he was an outstanding high school basketball player. Robert earned his Bachelor of Arts and his Master of Arts degrees from Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia, Kansas. Upon graduation he accepted his first teaching job at Harveyville, Kansas, where he was an assistant coach from 1957 to 1960.

While at Abilene his Cross-country teams have been steadily progressing, both in numbers and in enthusiasm. He has compiled a record of thirty wins and twenty-two losses. He does not base his won-lost record on the number of meets he wins or loses but rather on the number of teams in the meet he defeats or loses. This was changed because they are participating in more and larger invitational meets each year.

Coach Chatham started his first season with approximately twelve boys out for the team and it appears he will have approximately forty boys out during the 1965 season.

SUMMARY

Since 1869, the students of Abilene High School have attended school in six different locations. These schools ranged from two room structures to the present modern structure located at the corner of Cedar and Fourteenth Streets.

The athletic program at Abilene has supported itself through gate receipts during most of its existence. However, no record was evident of the financial status of the early athletic programs.

At the time of writing, Abilene has had twenty-two different head football coaches, thirteen different head basketball coaches, fifteen head track coaches, no head baseball coaches, one head tennis coach, two head golf coaches, one head wrestling coach, and two head cross-country coaches. The first coaches were not professional teachers but rather interested fans from the community who gave their time to the betterment of athletics at Abilene High School. Raymond Markley was the first professional coach hired by the board to coach its athletic teams.

Abilene High School has been a member of only two leagues in its ninety-six years of existence. In the Solomon Valley League (1914-1915 through 1919-1920), the school participated in football, basketball and track. In 1920, they joined the Central Kansas League where they have participated in all the sports. Effective September, 1966, the school will join the North Central Kansas League made up of Abilene, Chapman, Marysville, Concordia and Sacred Heart of Salina.

League championships have been won by Abilene as follows:

Central Kansas League

(1919-1965)

Football -- 5 -- 1926, 1929, 1930, 1935 and 1951

Basketball -- 4 -- 1933, 1935, 1939 and 1957

Track -- 1 -- 1921

Tennis -- 3 -- 1927, 1953 and 1954

Golf -- 3 -- 1934, 1939 and 1956.

Abilene never won a championship while a member of the Solomon Valley League.

State championships have been won by Abilene as follows:

Track -- 1918 and 1919

Tennis -- 1954

Golf -- 1949 and 1963

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Miss Margaret Wardrop, Secretary to the Superintendent of Schools, helped in obtaining much of the information for the history of Abilene High School.

The present coaches Calvin Reimer, Al Kouneski, Robert Holeman, Charles Tice, Harold Edberg, and Robert Chatham also furnished much needed information.

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AN EDUCATIONAL BIOGRAPHY OF COACHES AND THE HISTORY OF INTERSCHOLASTIC
ATHLETICS AT ABILENE HIGH SCHOOL, ABILENE, KANSAS

by

HARRY L. STROMGREN

B. A., College of Emporia, 1956

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Physical Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1965

The main purpose of this study was to provide a record of interscholastic athletics at Abilene High School, Abilene, Kansas. It was also the intention of the writer to provide a brief history of the school and also a brief history of each of the head coaches before accepting their respective coaching jobs at Abilene.

The results of this investigation may be used as reference material by the faculty, administrators, board of education and patrons of the school.

Material for this study was secured from several different sources. Some of the material was obtained from the school's year books and newspapers. Personal interviews with former and present coaches and players of Abilene High School provided additional material.

Abilene has been a member of two leagues at the time of writing. In the Solomon Valley League (1914-15 through 1919-20), the school participated in football, basketball, and track. At the time of writing, Abilene has been a member of the Central Kansas League since the fall of 1920. In the course of years the membership has changed and at present this league boasts of seven members including: Abilene, Clay Center, Emporia, Manhattan, Salina, McPherson, and Junction City. At present football, cross country, basketball, wrestling, track, golf and tennis are the interscholastic sports that are offered at Abilene.

League championships have been won by Abilene as follows:

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Abilene never won a championship while a member of the Solomon Valley League.

State championships have been won by Abilene as follows:

Track -- 1918 and 1919

Tennis -- 1954

Golf -- 1949 and 1963.

This investigation showed that the school has had twenty-two head football coaches, thirteen head basketball coaches, fifteen head track coaches, no head baseball coaches, one head tennis coach, two head golf coaches, one head wrestling coach, and two head cross country coaches.

The first coaches were not professional teachers or coaches but merely interested fans from the community who gave their time to athletics at Abilene. Raymond Merkley was the first professional coach hired by the board of education to coach its athletic teams.

The present coaches' salaries are based on the school's salary schedule. This schedule includes a base pay of \$4,700 with yearly increments of \$200 for each step up to ten steps. Head coaches in football and basketball receive an additional \$400. Head coaches in golf, tennis, cross country and wrestling receive an additional \$250. The head track coach receives an additional \$300. Assistant coaches in football, basketball and track receive from \$100 to \$200 additional salary. The board of education also has a policy to award an additional \$400 to head of the family and also reserves the right to hire any teacher above the salary scale.

The facilities for athletics at Abilene are among the best in the

Central Kansas League. In 1937 the present modern football and track stadium was completed with a seating capacity of 2,000. In 1955, a new gymnasium with a seating capacity of 3,000 replaced the city auditorium as a playing site. In 1962, a new 20 candle lighting system was installed at a cost of 6,000 dollars.