

Former OSU Coach Was Someone Who Was Larger Than Life

They Don't Make 'Em Like Woody Anymore

By MARK REA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Some called him "The Old Man." Others simply knew him as "Coach."

But the nickname that fit him best was the one he received as a youngster in Newcomerstown, Ohio.

Wayne Woodrow Hayes, the man everyone knew as "Woody," was one of the last true legends of college football. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, before our living rooms were overrun with cable television sports from everywhere in the world, Hayes was one of those figures who was larger than life.

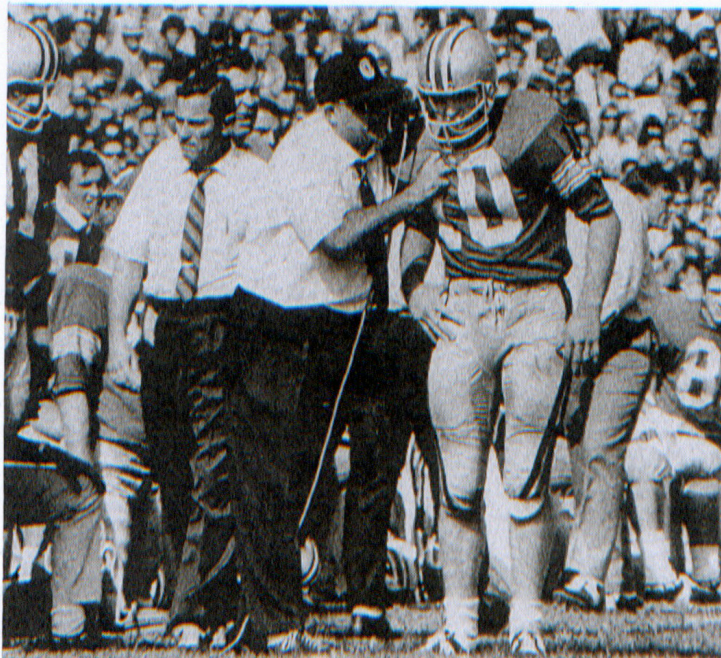
Like Amos Alonzo Stagg and Glenn "Pop" Warner before him, and contemporaries such as Bud Wilkinson and Paul "Bear" Bryant, Hayes was cut from a different cloth. He was stern but fair. Tough at times, but gentle when the time was right. Feisty with some, good-natured with others.

But the public persona of Hayes, sometimes a raving lunatic on the sidelines when things didn't go his way, was much different from that of the private man. Why else would his former players have just as many fond memories of him as they do horror stories of the way he acted during practice sessions?

Perfect examples are two stories from players who starred on the 1968 national championship team.

"If we had a rainy day, we would still practice until there was thunder and lightning," said former safety Mike Sensibaugh. "Only then would he get us out of there. Then he would go out onto the field, stand in the middle of the storm and look up at the sky. It was, like, all of a sudden everything would stop.

"He did that on more than one occasion. And if the rain didn't stop, he would become furious, feeling like he didn't get his way. But I can't remember ever playing in games where it really rained that hard. It was like it didn't



RELAYING SIGNALS — With assistant coaches Lou McCullough and Bill Mallory behind him, Ohio State head coach Woody Hayes gives a play to quarterback Rex Kern. Hayes was in his 18th year at OSU when it won the 1968 national championship.

rain because Woody didn't want it to.

"It sounds crazy, but it really seemed to work. He wouldn't let the weather stop him."

Quarterback Rex Kern recalled a time when Hayes took his own words to heart.

"I remember a time after a practice, we were talking about environmentalists and car pollution and stuff like that," Kern said. "Woody got so wrapped up in that talk that he went out and sold his car and walked to practice

every day. He did it because that's what he believed in. He said, 'If you believe in something, then back it up with your actions.'"

Hayes was a simple coach and a complex man all wrapped up into one. The fact that he even survived as head coach at Ohio State, let alone prospered, was a testament to his persistence.

When three-time All-American Wes Fesler decided that he had had enough of being head coach at his alma mater following the 1950 season, Ohio State went in search of a young, dynamic

coach who could take the Buckeyes on a road to greatness.

It wasn't that Fesler had done badly. His record over four years was 21-13-3 and included the Buckeyes' first-ever win in the Rose Bowl, a 17-14 win over California following the 1949 season. But one year later, after a 9-3 loss to Michigan in the now famous "Snow Bowl," Fesler was fed up with the criticisms of his coaching style. He resigned.

Fesler's successor would become the sixth different head coach at OSU in a dozen years and the university was getting a reputation as the "Graveyard of Coaches." Nevertheless, several prominent candidates emerged for the job, including former OSU head coach Paul Brown, who was then piloting the Cleveland Browns. There was much support for Brown to return to the Buckeyes, but in the end the university decided on Hayes.

At the time, he had only five years of college coaching under his belt — three at Denison and two more at Miami (Ohio). He survived a rocky beginning, posting a 4-3-2 record during his first season in 1951, a mark that included a 7-0 loss to Michigan.

But three years later, Hayes directed the Buckeyes to a perfect 10-0 record, including a 20-7 win over Southern Cal in the Rose Bowl, and claimed the 1954 national championship. It was the first of many championship seasons under Hayes.

In all, he guided the Buckeyes for 28 seasons, the third longest tenure in Big Ten history. Only Stagg, who coached at the University of Chicago for 41 years, and Bob Zuppke, who was at Illinois for 29 seasons, surpassed him.

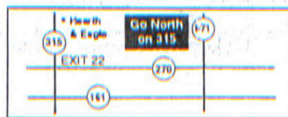
His overall record at OSU was a sterling 205-61-10. The victory total is the most ever for a Big Ten head coach. And he led the Buckeyes to 13 conference titles or co-titles, including a league-record six in a row from 1972-77.

Hayes also had a great eye for raw talent and knew how to mold it. A total

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of 42 of his players earned first-team All-American status and two of them — Howard "Hopalong" Cassady and Archie Griffin — won the Heisman Trophy.

Perhaps his best array of talent, though, was the one he assembled for the 1968 season. Hayes had recruited what many consider to be the finest class of high school stars in history the year before. The fact that he was always reluctant to play sophomores makes it even more amazing that nearly a dozen rookies started for the Buckeyes in '68.

Three years later, four members of that sophomore class — fullback John Brockington, running back Leo Hayden and defensive backs Tim Anderson and Jack Tatum — became first-round NFL draft choices.

But Hayes' expertise was not limited to recruiting talent on the field. As he headed into his 18th season as head coach at Ohio State in 1968, he had assembled a coaching staff that is regarded as one of the best in college history.

It included defensive coordinator Lou McCullough, end coach Esco Sarkkinen, offensive tackles coach Hugh Hindman, guards and centers coach Earle Bruce, defensive line coach Bill Mallory, defensive backfield coach Lou Holtz, offensive backfield coach George Chaump, freshman coach Glenn "Tiger" Ellison and cadet coach Rudy Hubbard.

In 1968, McCullough was beginning his sixth season with the Buckeyes and was also in charge of recruiting. Hayes called him "the finest recruiter in the country." He came to Ohio State after a 14-year career as an assistant at Wofford, Wyoming, Iowa State and Indiana. He later became commissioner of the Trans-American Conference.

Sarkkinen was starting his 23rd season as varsity end coach and head of the scouting program. He played college football for the Buckeyes in the late 1930s, earning All-American honors with the 1939 championship team. Sarkkinen was an assistant at Ohio State longer than any other coach, serving from 1946-77.

Hindman was beginning his sixth year at OSU. Before coming to Columbus, he spent five years as offensive line coach at Ohio University under Bill Hess, a former Ohio State assistant. He went on to succeed Ed Weaver as athletic director at Ohio State.

Bruce was starting his third season in charge of the Bucks' offensive guards and centers. He was an extremely successful high school coach in Ohio, posting a coaching record of 82-12-3 which included a 42-game unbeaten streak. Bruce later became head coach at Tampa, Iowa State, Ohio State, Northern Iowa and Colorado State.

Mallory also was beginning his third year with the Buckeyes, as defensive line coach. A native of Hillsboro, Ohio, Mallory came to OSU after serving as an assistant at Bowling Green and Yale. Mallory later became head coach at Miami (Ohio), Colorado and Northern Illinois and has been at Indiana since 1984.

Holtz and Chaump were the newest additions to the coaching staff. Holtz came to the Buckeyes after assistant coaching stints at Iowa, William & Mary, Connecticut and South Carolina. Chaump was a successful high school coach in Pennsylvania, leading John Harris High School in Harrisburg to a six-year record of 58-4, which included a 35-game win streak.

Holtz has been a college head coach at Minnesota, North Carolina State,

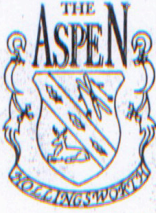
William & Mary and Arkansas and spent a short stint in the NFL with the New York Jets. He is currently head coach at Notre Dame. Meanwhile, Chaump has been head coach at Marshall and now serves in a similar capacity at the U.S. Naval Academy.

Ellison had been a member of the OSU athletic staff for five years. Before that, he spent 30 years at Middletown High School as a football coach. He retired to Florida after the 1968 season. Ellison is the only one of the assistants who is deceased. He passed away Aug. 3, 1990.

And Hubbard was named to the coaching staff for the 1968 season. He is designated "cadet coach" because he had not graduated when the appointment was made in May of 1968. A


halfback on the 1965, 1966 and 1967 teams, Hubbard devoted his full time to football during the fall quarter before

returning to school in the winter to complete work for his degree. He later became head coach at Florida A&M.



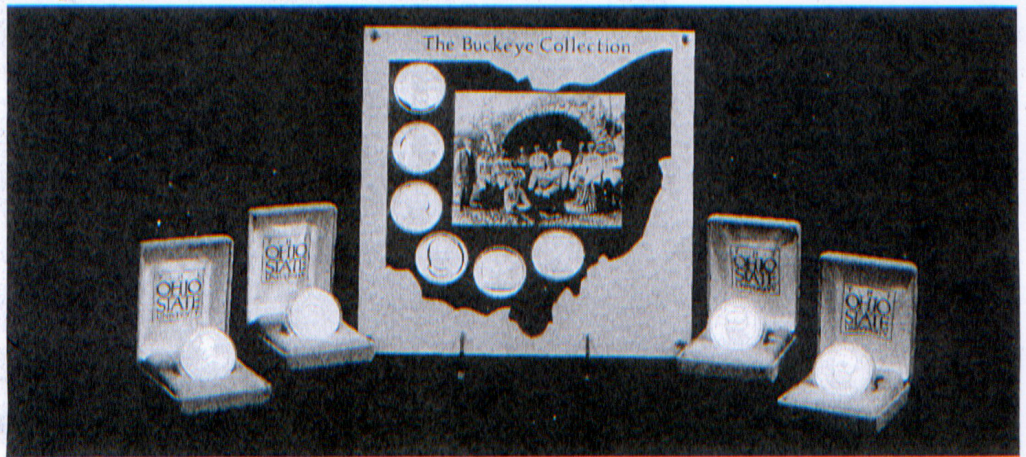
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