

Rose Bowl Team

Intramural Sports

NU History Boasts 15 Athletic Directors

By Leon Nyberg

The University of Nebraska has had 15 athletic directors in the last 60 years—the period from 1902-1961. Of these 15, only the last two—George "Potsy" Clark and J. William Orwig—have been full-time, permanent athletic directors with no other duties.

Seven of the directors were also football coaches for at least one of their years as director.

The first three were known as "athletic managers" rather than directors, although they handled most of the duties now associated with the director. Dr. E. J. Stewart was, in 1916, the first man to be officially director, even though at that time he shared the duties with manager Guy E. Reed.

Fred W. Luehring, who came to the University in 1920, was the first director who was not also the football coach.

R. G. Clapp
The first man which the University yearbook, the Cornhusker, lists as an athletic manager is Professor R. G. Clapp. Clapp was the head of the physical education department from 1902 until his retirement in 1946 or 1947. Clapp was at various times the wrestling, track, basketball and gymnastics coach.

When Clapp was a student at Yale University in 1898, he held the world's record in the pole vault at 11 feet, 10 1/2 inches. Gregg McBride of the Omaha World-Herald said that he thought Clapp was the first vaulter ever to clear 12 feet also.

A vault of 12 feet today would not win first place in most large high school track meets. The pending world's record is 15 feet, 10 1/4 inches, set by George Davies of Oklahoma State in the 1961 Big Eight outdoor track meet.

"Dog" Eager
Earl O. "Dog" Eager took over as athletic manager in 1905. He was a half-back on the Cornhusker football team during the years of 1900-1904. Eager held the managership for nine years, which is longer than any other manager or director ever held the job.

R. G. Clapp, who was secretary of the Athletic Board of Control in 1907 and for many years thereafter, made the following statement in the 1907 Cornhusker: "For the first time . . . the (basketball) season has been a financial success, for which Manager Eager deserves especial credit."

In the same yearbook, C. L. Morse, captain of the baseball team said: "The baseball season of 1906 . . . was probably the most prosperous season the University has experienced, a condition of affairs for which the good management of Manager Eager was largely responsible."

Eager himself wrote of a new philosophy for Nebraska athletics in the 1907 yearbook: "A decided change has come over our athletics in the last few years. Not many years ago all that was necessary was that a man be registered and this . . . did not make much difference. That is not true today; the athlete must be a student . . . and a good one,



Jones Lewandowski

Athletic Directors



Orwig

- *Prof. R. G. Clapp (1902-1905)
- *Earl O. "Dog" Eager (1905-1914)
- *Guy E. Reed (1914-1918)
- †Dr. E. J. Stewart (1916-1918, 1919)
- Prof. R. D. Scott (Acting) (1916-1918, 1919)
- Provost James T. Lees (Acting) (1919-1920)
- Fred W. Luehring (1920-1922)
- Fred T. Dawson (1922-1925)
- Herbert D. Gish (Acting) (1925-1931)
- Dana X. Bible (1931-1937)
- Col. Lawrence McCeney "Biff" Jones (1937-1942)
- Glenn Presnell (Acting) (1942)
- A. J. Lewandowski (Acting) (1943-1947, 1954)
- George "Potsy" Clark (1948-1953)
- J. William Orwig (1954-1961)

Present: No director. Dean Charles Miller and Dr. Joseph Soshnik are handling the duties of the director.

*These three were known as athletic managers rather than directors, but they handled the director's duties. †Reed and Stewart are both listed for the years 1916-1918; Reed was the athletic manager and handled many of the duties, although Stewart was officially the director. Stewart was also the football coach.

too . . . These rules have proved to be a great benefactor to our athletics. The old time professional is barred."

The 1910 Cornhusker apparently reflected the attitude of the University toward Eager in this statement: "Dog, our popular athletic manager, who has worked so faithfully for a new athletic field and has gotten it. He takes all the cussing and hands out the old clothes without hurting his conscience. Nevertheless, we all love him and glory in his work."

Guy Reed
Guy E. Reed, a track star for the Huskers in his undergraduate days, became the track coach and athletic manager in 1914. Reed, who held the position for four years, was the last of the athletic managers.

According to the following comments in the 1914 Cornhusker, Reed was a competent coach and manager. "By all he is respected and honored because of his efficiency, both as coach and manager . . . He seems to have the power of pumping the fighting spirit into a man, which is, above all, essential in track athletics."

Reed was the track captain in 1912, when he was one of the Husker stars, according to the Cornhusker. "Captain Reed and Anderson were the individual stars of the season. Both did such superior work that western critics have accorded them a place on the Olympic team to represent the United States in Stockholm during the summer of 1912."

Gregg McBride, however, said that neither Reed nor

Anderson competed in the 1912 Olympics, although they attended the games.

The physical facilities for athletics were evidently in poor condition when Reed became manager. In the 1914 Cornhusker Reed emphasized these inadequacies: "Nebraska, we are sorry to say, is one of the poorest equipped universities, athletically, of any institution of her standing in the country. The athletic field is about one-fourth the size that it should be. The gymnasium is . . . a menace to the health of the health-seeking people who daily inhabit it."

Football Success
It was during this period that Nebraska football enjoyed its greatest success. The famous Stiehm-rollers, under Coach Ewald O. Stiehm, compiled a record of 35 wins, two losses and three ties in four years. The Husker gridders racked up 1,115 points while allowing their opponents only 166 points in these four years—1911-1915.

Despite this success, however, Reed apparently was not satisfied. In the 1915 Cornhusker he expressed desire for Cornhusker supremacy for all time," he said. "Nebraska's climate breeds the sturdiest of physical manhood . . . Why should not our state be supreme in every phase of athletic competition? Give us the equipment, the coaches, the proper spirit, and success if a foregone conclusion."

E. J. Stewart
Dr. E. J. Stewart became the head football coach and athletic director in 1916. Stewart and Reed together handled the athletic duties for two years. Reed resigned in 1918, and Stewart took a leave of absence to assist with Y.M.C.A. work during the world war.

Although Stewart is listed in the Cornhusker as Dr. Stewart, he actually had not earned the title "Doctor." In fact, it was rumored that the reason Stewart resigned in 1919 was related to the fact that University officials found that he actually did not hold a doctor's degree.

Stewart's football teams enjoyed two successful seasons. His two-year record was 11 wins and four losses.

Stewart outlined a new football scheduling policy in the 1917 Cornhusker. "The

adoption of the policy of playing only the big institutions in football in the future is probably the most important step undertaken by the new athletic administration. The approval of the Athletic Board, the Alumni . . . has been very enthusiastic; everybody preferring to establish permanent athletic relations with the desirable institutions and accepting the possibility of defeats, rather than adjust schedules with the smaller institutions, even though all of the games should result in victory."

The "N" Club, the lettermen's organization, was organized by Stewart during the school year 1916-1917. This club still exists on the Nebraska campus.

The 1919 Cornhusker made the following statement about Stewart: "As coach, Stewart has won the respect of every man who has come in contact with him and has received the unqualified support of the students and faculty of the University of Nebraska."

Robert Scott
When Stewart left to assist with the Y.M.C.A. work, Professor Robert D. Scott volunteered his services as temporary athletic director. Stewart returned for a few months in 1919 before he resigned. W. G. Kline filled in as football coach in the absence of Stewart.

The 1919 Cornhusker commended Scott for his work in the athletic department. "It was through the effort of Scott that the schedule was reorganized when the War Department issued orders prohibiting the long football trips, and it was he who secured the teams to meet Nebraska after the Spanish influenza . . . demoralized football teams . . ."

Further evidence of the student respect for Scott is found in the 1921 Cornhusker. "In appreciation of his interest and activity in athletics . . . and other student affairs . . . this, the 1921 Cornhusker, is dedicated (to Scott)."

James Lees
Provost James T. Lees acted as athletic director during the 1919-1920 athletic year. He assumed control of the athletic program in addition to his other duties when Stewart resigned.

Fred Luehring
Nebraska's next athletic director, Fred W. Luehring, came to the Mid-West from Princeton University in the fall of 1920. At that time, Luehring's main claim to fame was that he had edited the national collegiate swimming guide.

Luehring had been head coach and athletic director at Ripon College, Ripon, Wis., from 1906-1910. He had been at Princeton since 1911, where he was director of the department of hygiene and physical education, director of intramurals and basketball coach.

Luehring, who coached Nebraska swimmers in 1921, made the following statement in the 1921 Cornhusker: "Intercollegiate Athletics should be maintained on the highest possible standard of honesty, fair treatment of opponents, and eligibility of members of the teams. Nebraska is big enough . . . to take the lead in this matter . . . Nebraska should be willing to 'go the limit' in lifting her . . . athletic relations to the highest possible standard."

In 1921 Luehring started the student season ticket program for the purpose of making it possible for more students to attend athletic contests at a reduced price. This plan greatly increased attendance at University sports events. It was also in

1921 that Luehring developed the intramural sports program.

Luehring coached Nebraska's first competitive swimming team in 1922. After two years in Lincoln, he left to assume the directorship at the University of Minnesota.

The 1922 Cornhusker noted the advancement of the athletic program since Luehring came to Nebraska. "Athletics at Nebraska have made very rapid progress the past few years . . . Nebraska is developing the best teams in all lines of sport that are to be found in any part of the country. Much of this progress can be traced directly to Director Fred W. Luehring."

Fred Dawson
Fred T. Dawson, whom Luehring hired as football coach in the spring of 1921, took over the directorship when Luehring left. Dawson's football teams had a four year record of 23 wins, seven losses, and two ties.

The 1924 Cornhusker commended Dawson for his leadership in athletics with

won nine Big Six titles, the first in 1928 and the last in 1940.

Dana Bible
The immortal Dana X. Bible, who had been football coach for two years, was named athletic director in 1931. Bible turned out six Big Six champions in eight years as Cornhusker coach. He coached the West team three times in the annual East-West shrine football game in San Francisco. Bible was president of the American Football Coaches Association in 1934, and he served on the rules committee of the Coaches Association for many years.

The 1934 Cornhusker listed the duties of Bible as athletic director: ". . . his duties cover a wide scope in the field of sport. He is the general supervisor of the entire department. Arranging schedules and places for athletic contests are but two of his many tasks . . . It is not entirely for his ability as a coach, however, that Coach Bible is noted. His personality has won for him a place in the

also the football and golf coach.

According to the 1938 Cornhusker, it did not take Jones long to become a favorite with the Nebraska fans. ". . . 'Biff' Jones came here with the hard task of trying to make all Nebraskans forget . . . Dana X. Bible. However, 'Biff' soon won over all with whom he came in contact. His popularity reached unforeseen heights last fall . . . due to the greatest victory . . . in many years, the defeat of the great Minnesota team . . . It was not until the opening game of the season that everyone recognized the fact that Nebraska had a truly great football coach, for . . . that day a . . . band of red shirts defeated the . . . Minnesota team."

Biff's popularity was even greater a few years later when his 1940 team played in the 1941 Rose Bowl game. According to the 1941 Cornhusker, "The 1940 aggregation . . . rose to unparalleled heights in Nebraska history . . . in three short



these words: "Athletics at Nebraska have grown steadily since he has been at the head . . . Under Fred T. Dawson . . . was a force of football experts who developed a great football machine."

In 1923 the yearbook also saluted Dawson: "Never discouraged by adverse conditions, he always finds a way of getting what he wants . . . His fairness . . . and conduct of players . . . is often commented on by other coaches . . . Dawson is a natural leader and one Nebraska can be proud of having . . ."

However, Dawson held the role of director for only three years. Ill health forced him to resign in March, 1925.

Herbert Gish
A former Nebraska track star, Herbert D. Gish, was appointed acting athletic director in 1925. Gish had been assistant director for two years under Dawson. James Lewis assisted Gish for several years.

Gish continued as athletic director until he resigned in 1931. During this time the Big Six conference was formed. The original members were Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Kansas Aggies, Iowa Aggies and Nebraska. Cornhusker football teams

hearts of Nebraska students and faculty which few others have ever attained."

In his eight years as football coach, Bible's teams recorded 50 victories, 15 losses, and seven ties. He resigned January 23, 1937, to go to the University of Texas as football coach and athletic director.

"Biff" Jones
Before he left, though, Bible assisted the athletic board in the search for a new director. Just five days after Bible submitted his resignation, Lawrence McCeney "Biff" Jones was named director. Jones was

years the Cornhuskers have come from the depths to scale the football heights . . . However, Stanford University defeated Nebraska 21-13 in the Rose Bowl game.

Jones was the athletic director for five years. In January, 1942, he was called into active service because of World War II. His five year coaching record shows 28 wins, 14 losses, and four ties.

Glen Presnell
Glenn Presnell assumed the coaching and directorship duties in 1942. He was only the acting director, (Continued on Page 4)

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