



~ Part 29 ~

Reflections on a Common Theme

Role of Sports

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Cloud County

Growing a Lifetime Sport: History of the Glasco Country Club

Sports are often defined by discipline and long-range goals. Glasco's sport contribution lifts up a life-time sport, golf, and the ongoing work of the community of golfers to make it a reality. This history was written by Dorothy Martin for the 1991 Cloud County Historical Book.

The first nine-hole sand green golf course was begun in 1905. It was located approximately one half mile north of the sale barn. The course was there till 1914 when it was moved to a pasture east of the Glasco cemetery where golf was played till 1925.

From 1925-1930 the course was located north of the present VFW building. In 1930 the course again moved one mile north and one half mile west of Glasco to a pasture east of the Reed Griest home. The course stayed at this location until 1941. After World War II began, the golf course was disbanded.

In 1955 the present golf site was established on land belonging to Cecil O. Martin, located one and one-half miles east of Glasco on Highway 24. The farm where the golf course was situated was sold to Elwyn Teasley in 1970 and a committee of golfers tried to purchase the land, used by the golf course, from Mr. Teasley but to no avail.

The old City pump house roof, located on the corner of Elm and Cemetery Road was moved to the golf course in the mid 1960s. This roof was the beginning of the present club house, with sides being enclosed as money became available through the years. In 1974 electricity was installed.

In 1977 the club house was remodeled and a well was dug. A cart shed was erected in 1978 for members to house their golf carts at the course. In 1979 a kitchen was built in the clubhouse and cold running water was also added. Modern restrooms were built in 1982 making the facilities at the course "top notch."

Glasco Golf course incorporated in 1985 and became the Glasco Country club, Inc.

In 1988 the land of the present course, 36.26 acres, was purchased from Elwyn Teasley for \$8,000. An experimental grass green was built in 1989 making nine sand greens and one grass green. Hot water was also installed in the club house that year.

In 1990 new fairways were established for #1, 2 and 6 greens. The fall of 1991 work was begun on building new grass tee areas and moving the greens for #3,7, and 8.

The Glasco Country Club is governed by a nine member Board of Directors. There are currently eighty members and the club is a very progressive and active organization.

Mitchell County

Simpson High School

by Barbara Axtell

Sports have been an important part of Simpson High School, which was organized in 1911 and closed in 1966, following the statewide school consolidation.

In 1916-1917 Simpson's first girls' basketball team played 17 games and lost three games. The boys' team that year lost a little number but played only seven games in all.

The 1924 girls' basketball team, coached by Hattie Betz, later Guard, lost only one game.

The year, 1947, produced an apparently unbeatable football team. The boys, coached by O. W. Pankratz and captained by Leroy Spicher, won all their football games except one, taking second place trophy in the Pike Trail League. That year, the first basketball team, tied with Jewell for first place in the Pike Trail League.

The 1950s saw Herb Baker's Coyotes going to the State Tournament for three consecutive years. In 1953 the boys took first in the Pike Trail League, first in Burr Oak's Invitational tournament, first in the district tournament, first in the Regional, and second at State.

In 1954, the team again fought its way to the State Tournament, coming out third.

The school's third try at State should have been the charm, but they emerged second again, being defeated by Montezuma, 70 to 57. The first 10 players that year were Jerry Heidrick, Blaine Cook, Gary McDaniels, Gary McClintock, Ivan Prochaska, Jerry Burnette, Verne Marler, Lanny Robertson, Larry Sams, and Lewis Carlin.

This same year Simpson's undefeated football squad won the Pike Trail League Championship trophy.

In 1964 the boys' football team won four games and lost four games.

The 1963-1964 boys' basketball team placed third in the Pike Trail League. Members of the team included Robert Ottinger, David Emmot, Sheldon Pearson, Richard Prochaska, Russell Carter, Bill Davidson, Rollin Abernathy, Richard Miller, Terry Gentry, Danny Leinen, Darrell Abernethy, Jerry Carlin, Homer Davidson and Steve Motes. The coach was William Anderson.

Rooks County

A Lesson in Sportsmanship

by Leo E. Oliva

In the early 1950s when I was a student at Woodston Rural High School, we had a new basketball coach. We played in a tough league and didn't win many games that year, but we learned the fundamentals and had a better team the following year. The coach knew his job, and he taught us that sportsmanship is an important part of life. One game we learned that with a lesson by example.

Portis, one of the best teams year after year, came to Woodston to play with only six boys due to illnesses that sidelined several players. The first half was a close game, and the referees were calling many fouls. Some of their players may have been ill or still recovering from a malady that had hit their school.

In the second half some of their players began to flag, and then they started fouling out. In the final quarter they had two fouled out and four players left. They were a few points down, too. Our coach pulled a player and we continued four against four. Another Portis player fouled out; coach pulled another and we were three against three. The boys from Portis began to gain on the scoreboard, and there were Woodston parents and fans who began to berate our new coach, urging him to get more players on the court. He would not consider it; we would not take unfair advantage of an opponent. At the final buzzer we were ahead by a few points. We were glad to win a game, but it did not seem that important when we realized our coach had taught us an important lesson by example that is still a guiding principle some 60 years later. Sportsmanship is more important than winning.

Graham County

Historic Nicodemus, Kansas: All This God-Given Talent from One Small Town

by LueCreasea R. Horne

Nicodemus has produced athletes in all kinds of sports. We have Nicodemus descendants who have been Olympic qualifiers in track, NFL 1st round 4th pick, baseball players, and have excelled in many more sports. I, personally, as a fifth-generation descendant have cousins that dominated at national, state, and local levels in track, descendants that ran over and ran past people on the gridiron, descendants that had the "sweetest" basketball jump shot and could snatch a rebound from anywhere and anyone in the gym. It is legendary that one such descendant was noted as being able to "jump" out of the gym, and there is a descendant noted for being able to "hit" any and all baseballs pitched by baseball Negro League legend Satchel Paige. Our female descendants would not be left out of history as many were phenomenal athletes also.

Where did all this athletic talent come from? Honestly, no one knows because our athletic prowess is within different sub-groups of our ancestral lines. In my opinion, all is a result of hard work and persistence. One such cousin, Veryl Switzer, 1954 1st round, 4th pick to the Green Bay Packers, was noted for being a hard-working young man who would race against his farm animals.

Many of the descendants who are my second and third cousins helped on the farm because that was the family business. Many descendants that didn't live in Nicodemus yearned to visit Nicodemus for the summer where they could race and play with their farm cousins.

Although we have plenty of family members that participated and excelled in several sports, my focus will be on those excelled in football, in particular, the NFL.

Nicodemus Sports Legends: 6 NFL Players from Nicodemus

Veryl Switzer

- Green Bay Packers (1954-1955), Full Back
- US Army (1955-1959)
- Canadian League (1959-1961)

Veryl was born in 1932, reared in Nicodemus, and became one of Nicodemus's prized athletes. He was an outstanding high school athlete, and he went on to be a track and football star at Kansas State in 1951. He was considered one of the best two-way athletes in the Big Seven Conference. "Joe" was indoor long jump champion in 1952. In 1953 he led the nation in punt returns and was an all-American football player. In 1954 he was selected 4th in the NFL draft by the Green Bay Packers and led the NFL in punt returns his rookie season. Veryl played two seasons for the Packers and then entered the Air Force. After the service he played three more years of professional football for the Canadian Leagues before retiring in 1961.

Gale Sayers

- Chicago Bears (1965-1972). Running Back

Gale Sayers was known as the "Kansas Comet." He was born in 1943 in Wichita and grew up at Speed KS and Omaha NE. He is the grandson of Nicodemus Blacksmith Ed Sayers. In high school, he set the Nebraska state record in long jump with an amazing jump of 24' 11¾". Gale returned to Kansas where he attended and played football at Kansas University. In 1963 he set a NCAA Division I record with a 99-yard run against Nebraska. Gale was drafted in 1965 by the Chicago Bears. In his rookie year, he scored an NFL record 22 touchdowns. He also is tied with other players having the most (6) touchdowns in a single game. After several knee injuries, Gale retired in 1972. In 1977 he was inducted into the Hall of Fame as the youngest NFL player ever inducted. He is also remembered as Brian Piccolo's roommate in the movie Brian's Song.

Ron Sayers

- San Diego Chargers (1969), Running Back

Ron, Gale's brother, was born August 29, 1947, in Wichita and grew up at Speed and Omaha. He played one season for the San Diego Chargers as running back.

Marvin Switzer

- Buffalo Bills (1978), Defensive Back

Marvin Duane Switzer was born October 28, 1954, to Nicodemus descendants Freddie and Ivalee Switzer. He is the nephew of Veryl Switzer. He played one season for the Buffalo Bills as defensive back.

Gerald Wilhite

- Denver Broncos (1982-1988), Running Back

Gerald William Wilhite was born May 30, 1959, to Imogene Sayers, former Nicodemus resident. Gerald was selected by the Denver Broncos in the first round (21st overall) of the 1982 NFL Draft. A 5'10", 210-lb. running back, Wilhite played college football at San Jose State and for the Broncos from 1982 to 1988. He appeared in Super Bowl XXI against the New York Giants. Wilhite was born in Sacramento, California, and graduated from Cordova High School of Rancho Cordova, California in 1977. Wilhite operated GW Spices BBQ Restaurant in Rancho Cucamonga, California, for several years

Kevin Wilhite

- Green Bay Packers (1987)

Alfred Kevin Wilhite was born May 4, 1963, to Imogene Sayers, former Nicodemus resident and Gerald's brother. Kevin attended Cordova High School in Rancho Cordova, California, and graduated in 1982. He was one of the greatest running backs in California prep history, rushing for 4,901 yards and scoring 72 touchdowns. He was selected into the Sac-Joaquin section Hall of Fame. During the NFL strike season of 1987, Wilhite became a replacement player for the Green Bay Packers. In three games for the Packers, he rushed for 251 yards on 53 carries (4.7 average), with a long run of 61 yards, but no TDs.