

AHS football teams produced college, pro standouts

"Of all the schools in Carolina, Ahoskie High's the best."

By Tommy Mitchell

Former AHS assistant coach
This quote from the alma mater sums up Ahoskie High School football from 1926 to 1988.

Through the years, many players went on to play college football, and three played professional football. They were running back Sam Harrell (class of 1974) for the Minnesota Vikings, running back Timmy Newsome (1976) for the Dallas Cowboys and defensive back Bobby Futrell (1979) for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

The proud tradition began more than 60 years ago. In the fall of 1926, 11 young men took the field for the first time in Ahoskie High School history.

The linemen were Al Early, Henry Miller Harris, Crawford Lawrence, Lloyd Britton, Vernon Cowan, Henry Clay Odom and Buck McKeel. The backs were Theo Mitchell, Dick Newsome, Whitney Saunders and Edmund Hill.

The first game was played in Williamston and was won by Ahoskie as Mitchell scored the first touchdown in AHS history. George D. Underwood coached the team to an 8-1 record.

Home games were played on the field where the old AHS band room now stands at the corner Main and Colony streets.

"Hoot" Gibson was the next AHS football coach and was followed by Ira Ainsley (1930-32), Charles Garner (1933-34), Fred Smith (1935-36), Robert Bryan (1937-38), John Bonner (1939), the Rev. J. Dunlap (last name unknown) and Arthur W. "Pitt" Edwards (1940-47).

Then John W. "Jack" Young Jr. was head coach and athletic director from 1947-62.

The main assistant coach was Julian Freeman. Other assistants were Floyd "Dutch" Overton, Jake Smith, Leonard Cashion, Joseph J. Lassiter, John Daughtry, Archie Briggman, Luther "Bright Eyes" Brake, Chet Rogerson, Carroll Daniels, Vernon Baker and Tommy Mitchell.

AHS principals at this time were R.A. Mobley, F.M. Tucker and A.W. Taylor.

Young's career highlights

1947 — Formation of the Albe-marle Conference through his efforts.

Oct. 17, 1947 — First night game in Ahoskie (AHS 18, Columbia 0).

1947 — AHS Athletic Association started by Carlton Cherry, Lowell Powell and Phil Woodley.

1947-49 — AHS has 24-game winning streak.

1948 — AHS wins state Class B championship (AHS 26, Jamestown 0).

1951 — AHS wins state Class A championship (AHS 52, Walnut Cove 0).

Jack Young, Al Vaughan and Darryl Allen were among the coaches.

1952 — AHS wins state Class A championship (AHS 48, Bessemer City 6).

1961 — AHS wins Eastern Class AA championship (AHS 33, Morehead City 7).

September, 1985 — More than 150 former AHS football players hold reunion for Young.

September, 1992 — Young is inducted into the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame.

During the 1963-64 seasons, Julian Freeman was head football coach and athletic director. The assistants were Al Vaughan, Vernon Baker, Tommy Mitchell and Richard Murray. Young was the principal.

Then Vaughan became head football coach and athletic director from 1965-70. His assistants were Baker, Mitchell, Murray and Lee Wilson. Principals were Young, Robert Alligood and J. Eley Newsome.

Vaughan career highlights

1966 — AHS wins state Class AA championship to finish with a 12-0 record (AHS 52, Clayton 7).

1970 — Full integration took place, and the Indians became the Cougars. New assistant coaches were Fred Hall and Darryl Allen.

1970 — AHS wins state Class AA championship to finish with a



Ahoskie High faithful

How many of these Ahoskie High School football fans from 1948 do you recognize? They included (front row, from left) Joe Odum, T.D. "Red" Northcott, Lillian Northcott, Henry Clay Odom and Clara Belle Odom; (second row) Ivey Johnson, Myra Basnight, Martha Hope Basnight, W.H. Basnight and an unidentified man; (third row) Frances Welch and Lela Godwin; and (fourth row) three unidentified persons, Norvin Garrett, Norman Earl Godwin and an unidentified young lady. Even today local fans still support the consolidated Hertford County Bears. (Photo courtesy of Carolyn B. Mitchell)

12-0-1 season. (AHS 28, Allen Jay 12).

Following Vaughan, Darryl Allen was coach from 1971 to 1989, and Richard Murray served as athletic director. J. Eley Newsome was principal.

Assistant coaches included Murray, Hall, Mitchell, Godwin White, Wilson, Marie Marsh, Daryl Morris, Jack Byrd, Gerald Hall, David Edwards, Paul Moore, Ben Anthony, Mike Kincaid, Vann Pennell, Bryan Ferree, David Eubanks, Jesse Dickens, Kevin Lumbard, Larry Holloman and Hancel Phipps.

Allen's career highlights

1973 — AHS loses in Eastern Class AAA final to finish 11-2 (East Bladen 6, AHS 0).

1974 — AHS wins Eastern Class AAA final but loses in state championship game to finish 13-1 (Jamestown Ragsdale 34, Ahoskie 0).

Nov. 3, 1977 — A stuffed cougar mascot was presented by County Commissioner Jimmy Flowers for school display.

1979 — AHS wins the Eastern Class AAA final but loses in the state championship game to finish 12-2 (Belmont South Point 34, AHS 13).

1979 — Tommy Mitchell retires after 19 years of coach, including 12 as junior varsity coach, where he had a record of 60-15-3 and six conference championships.

1986 — AHS wins Eastern Class AA final but loses in the state championship game to finish 13-2 (Lexington 34, AHS 6).

1988 — AHS wins Eastern Class AA final but loses in the state championship game to finish 14-1 (Thomasville 13, AHS 10).

1989 — Ahoskie and Murfreesboro high schools were consolidated to form the Hertford County School

(See FOOTBALL, Page 20A)

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AHOSKIE

Club was chartered in 1968

FCA chapter smoothed the way for total integration in Ahoskie

By Tommy Mitchell

Ahoskie FCA adviser

During the late 1960's at Ahoskie High School, when freedom of choice and total integration came into effect, one major unifying force between the races was the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

In May, 1968, the idea of the FCA was started by the Rev. Billy Moore, the minister of First Presbyterian Church in Ahoskie, who contacted Paul Anderson, then the world's strongest man, to share his feats of strength and his Christian testimony in the school gymnasium. This event sparked the fire which created the local club.

Al Vaughan, then athletic director and head football coach, asked me as the junior varsity football coach and girls' basketball coach, to head up this group.

Principal Robert Alligood, Rev. Moore and I met with Johnny Clements, North Carolina State's freshman football coach and district director for the FCA, to organize the chapter.

Ahoskie businessman Bud Streetman was chairman, and Pete Chalk, David McCaw, Joe Bryant, Don Craft, Carlton Cherry, Harold McCoy, Malcolm Copeland, Howard Hunter, Ed Konderla, Tommy Tucker and Norman Earl Godwin served as directors.

AHS club chartered

Then in November, 1968, Ahoskie High received its official charter. The 47-member club then began with these officers: Tommy Pope, president; Winston King, vice president; Cheryl Magette, treasurer; Sherry Riddick, secretary; and I as sponsor.

The purpose of the FCA — and it still is — is to encourage coaches and athletes to follow Christ, and through them the youth of the nation in fellowship will be living witnesses.

The FCA is open to all religions, races and creeds. Locally, the chapter was opened to female students who were excluded nationally.

Club begins ministry

With these guidelines, the AHS club began its ministry by witness-

ing and speaking at civic clubs, schools, and black and white churches; collecting and distributing food baskets and money gifts at Christmas; teaching Sunday school classes; and Christmas caroling at rest homes and for shut-ins, led by junior varsity coach Godwin White and Carolyn B. Mitchell.

Youth rallies were widely attended by local citizens. Among the famous athletes who spoke were Bobby Mitchell of the Washington Redskins and Don Shinnick of the Baltimore Colts in 1969. Paul Crane of the New York Jets in 1970 and Jim "Catfish" Hunter of the Oakland A's in 1971.

Because of expenses involved, local college athletes later spoke, including C.G. Newsome of Duke and Paul Sharp of N.C. State.

Fees from local rallies were paid by proceeds from FCA projects. Male students, headed by eighth-grade coach Lee Wilson, cut and sold firewood. Female students baby-sat after school, and each girl was encouraged to bring in \$12.

Other needed money was donated by the directors and interested citizens.

In 1971-72, when Richard Murray became athletic director, the

Varsity Club began supplying funds for the FCA camp.

Athletes sent to camp

Among the major local projects was the sending of AHS male athletes to the national camp at Black Mountain. The first two to attend, in June, 1969, were President Mike Alston, now a local doctor, and Vice President Stuart Pierce, now a local businessman and farmer.

Yearly, the upcoming officers were invited to attend this spiritual retreat to inspire them to lead the members. When they returned home from camp, many spoke at area churches. Some of them included Paul Viser, Cameron Bowser, Bart Riddick, Jimmy Godwin, Russell Harrell, Jerry Aske, Louis Mizelle and Tim Turner.

Presidents of the chapter from 1971 to 1980 were Creech Newsome, Louis Newsome, Tommy Newton, Gregory Goss, Tom Newbern, Timmy Newsome, Allen Fenno, Curtis Newsome, Johnny Murray and Rodney Sessoms.

After my leadership, other coaches became sponsors. At present, coach Paul Moore, a former Ahoskie High football star, heads the FCA.

It is with the greatest of pleasure we extend our best wishes to Ahoskie on it's Centennial Celebration!

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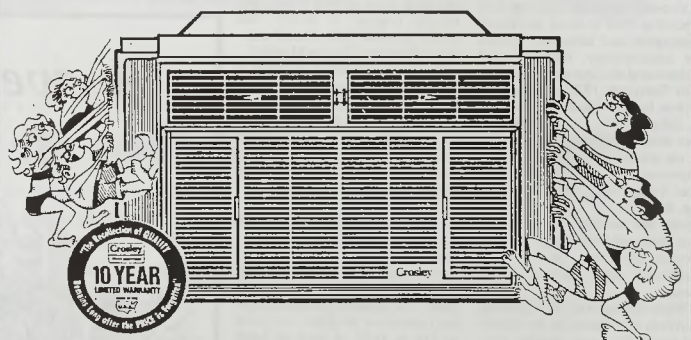
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