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# *Sourisseau Academy*

*Smith-Layton Archive presents:*

# Football!

by Libra Hilde

*Les Amis (The Friends)*  
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[98] **William Meese, San Jose Normal School Football Team, 1898-1900.** The origins of intercollegiate football date to an 1869 contest between Princeton and Rutgers. The game evolved over the next decade from a gentlemanly pastime into a competitive sport. The Ivies established a football association in the mid 1870s, and the game spread westward. The Ivies established a football association in the mid 1870s, and the game spread westward. The early uniform consisted of a front-lacing canvas jacket (hidden under the sweater), knee-length canvas pants, and cork shin guards covered with leather or canvas. Cotton or wool padding worn inside the uniform varied based on player preference. There was no headgear and players often grew their hair long because they believed it would offer protection. William Meese, son of a pioneer ranch family from San Ramon, graduated from San Jose Normal School in 1903 with a General Education degree and taught for a short time at the San Ramon School. He spent his life as a rancher.



[99] **Louis Stein and William Meese, 1898.** This posed photo of two Spartans punting a football shows the early importance of kicking in the college game. The players would also often bounce the ball off the ground and then kick it on the rebound, with the aim being to kick the ball between the goal posts to score what we would now call a field goal. In 1898, Wisconsin's Pat O'Dea kicked a record-breaking 60-yard goal off a drop kick. Early scoring in football favored kicking. Over the years, 132 Spartans have gone on to play professional football in the NFL.



[100] **San Jose Normal School Football Team, 1898.** Football started at San Jose Normal School in 1893, and the Spartans played local high school and college teams. Stanford became a traditional rival. As the game became increasingly lucrative, East Coast schools started recruiting players and hiring coaches. The emphasis on winning and the violence of the game provoked a heated debate in the 1890s. University of Georgia player Richard Von Gammon died from a fractured skull in 1897, and Georgia moved to outlaw the game. Gammon's mother fought to keep the sport alive. Criticism continued, with faculty members often denouncing the sport and politicians such as Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge insisting that football maintained American masculinity. Moves to ban or reform football made little headway due significant revenue and publicity generated by the sport, and its popularity among students and alumni.





1, Cutter; 2, Swain; 3, Campbell; 4, Chadbourne, Coach; 5, Bianche; 6, Ridley; 7, Coombs; 8, Foster; 9, Swain; 10, Mahelona; 11, Prof. Smith, Mgr.; 12, Hill; 13, Castro.  
Mack, Photo.

**PACIFIC COAST BUSINESS COLLEGE. SAN JOSE.**

[101] **Pacific Coast Business College Football Team, 1904.** When the Stanford and University of California football teams began to draw large crowds in the 1890s, Midwestern schools traveled to the West Coast for games. Football became increasingly popular, with the first ever Rose Bowl game held in Pasadena in 1902. As schools adopted the sport, the emphasis on money and publicity drew criticism from faculty members across the nation, and college football led to a debate, particularly heated at Harvard, over the place of athletics within a university. The Pacific Tigers football team of the College of the Pacific was organized in 1895. Now known as University of the Pacific, the school was established in San Jose in 1851 and relocated to Stockton in 1922. The football team was disbanded in 1995. The Amos Alonzo Stagg Memorial Stadium at UoP is named for one of football's outstanding athletes and coaches.





[102] **Santa Clara College Football Players, Circa 1907.** This photograph offers another example of the early uniform, which offered little physical protection. The Santa Clara Broncos first played their traditional rivals, St. Mary's, in 1896. In a controversial move, the Broncos football program was disbanded in 1992. While some argue this resulted from new NCAA rules on Division I sports, Santa Clara's president noted that the focus on football had overshadowed academics at the school.



[103] **Santa Clara College Football Team, Circa 1907.** 1900 to 1905 was a period of crisis for college football. The sport faced attacks from the muckraking press and from within universities. In 1905, the New York Times published an article entitled “The Homicidal Pastime.” Attempts to reform the rules of football to address the violence of the game did little to stem the injury rate. Harvard threatened to ban football in the absence of more substantive changes; and in 1906, a revised set of rules saved the sport. The 1907 season saw the implementation of the newly legalized forward pass. Passing led to an evolution in the size and shape of the football. The Spartans have won seven of ten Bowl games, the last in 2015. From 1969-1995, they earned more Big West Conference championships than any other team. Their last year in the Conference was 1995; they currently compete in the Western Athletic Conference.





[104] **San Jose State Normal School Football Players, 1910.** San Jose Normal School football players posed wearing their school colors. The “N” on one sweater referred to the school name.





[105] **Santa Clara College Varsity Football Team, 1910.** Schools used the national visibility and popularity of football in their publicity efforts, as evidenced by this 1910 postcard of the Santa Clara College team. Santa Clara had a football team starting in 1896.





[106] **Couple at Santa Clara Football Practice, Circa 1935.** Huge stadiums built in the 1910s-1920s could seat thousands of spectators (as many as 80,000), and coaches increasingly earned substantial salaries. In 1925, Columbia offered Notre Dame coach Knute Rockne \$25,000 a year in an effort to lure him to New York. After a brief drop in attendance as a result of the Great Depression, college football quickly regained its standing by the mid-1930s.



[107] **San Jose State College Coach and Mentor Glen Scobey “Pop” Warner, March 30, 1939.** Glen Scobey “Pop” Warner (1871-1954) was instrumental in the evolution of the modern sport. He was a member of the first class inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame. Warner played at Cornell and later coached at a series of schools. He started his career at Carlisle Indian School, where he coached Jim Thorpe. He coached four national championship teams at Pittsburg and Stanford. Until he was surpassed by Bear Bryant and Bobby Bowden, Warner had the highest number of wins of any college football coach. Starting in 1924, Warner coached at Stanford for nine years. He then went to Temple University, drawing one of the highest salaries ever earned by a college coach to that date.



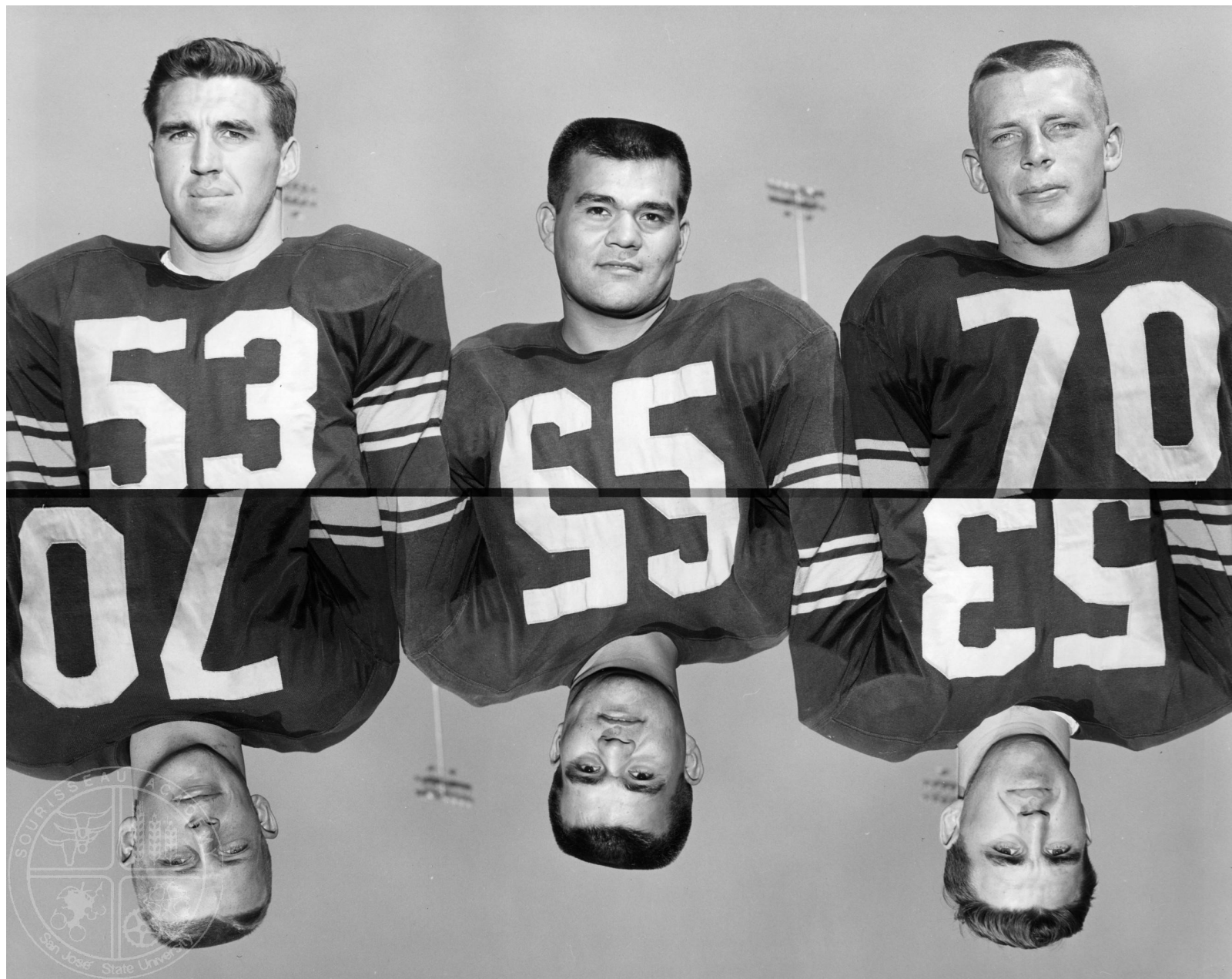


[108] **Glen Scobey “Pop” Warner Giving Advice, September 3, 1940.** When Warner retired from coaching in 1938 and returned to California, the head coach at San Jose State, Dudley DeGroot, brought him on as an advisor. Warner took charge of the offense. In 1939, the Spartans went undefeated. Warner also helped develop and promote Pop Warner Little Scholars, a national youth football program still in existence. Football remains a popular youth sport, but participation at the high school level is falling.





[109] **San Jose State College Football Game, 1950s-60s.** The size of the crowd in this photograph highlights the popularity and lucrative nature of college football. ESPN recently paid \$5.64 billion to broadcast the first 12 installments of the revamped College Football Playoff. However, football is entering a new period of instability.



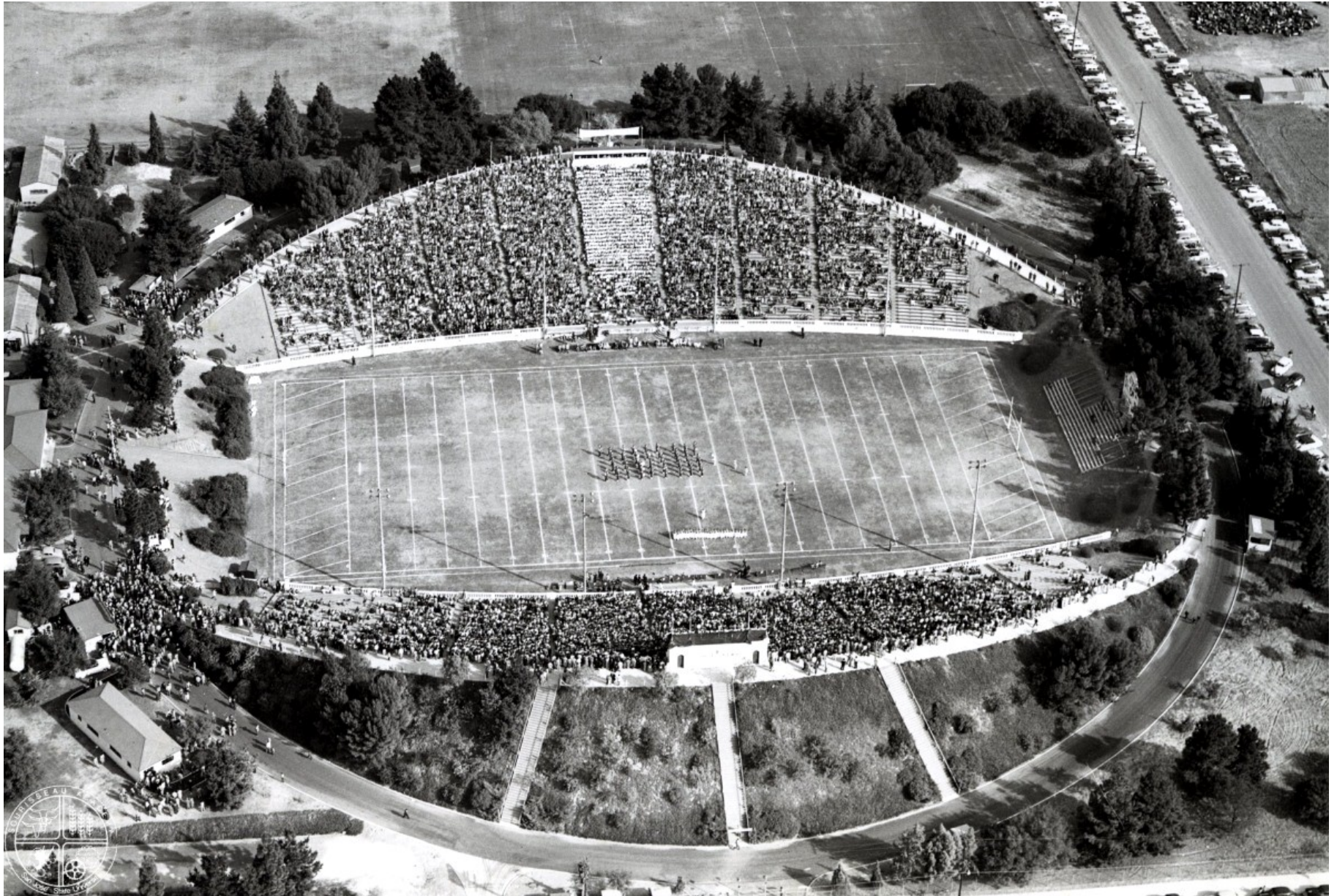
[110] **Three San Jose State College football players, 1950s-60s.** Shoulder pads are now a standard part of the football uniform. Harness shoulder pads were introduced in the 1940s.



[111] **Two San Jose State College Football Players, 1950s-60s.** Helmets were first used in the 1920s and constructed of leather with minimal padding and no facemasks. In 1939, the first plastic helmets appeared, an innovation of the Riddell Company in Chicago, and these included a facemask. The NFL required that players wear helmets starting in the mid-1940s. Helmet construction and materials have evolved considerably over the decades. As football enters a new period of debate and potential crisis, this time surrounding concussions and the impact of repeated head trauma, there has been an increased focus on new helmet designs. Concussions as a result of participation in football have been linked to Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE), a degenerative disease.



Images on file at the Smith-Layton Archive, Sourisseau Academy for State and Local History  
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[112] **Aerial View of Spartan Stadium, 1953.** San Jose State University's stadium, formerly named Spartan Stadium, is now named CEFCU Stadium. The home of the University's Spartan football, it was originally built in 1933 with a capacity of 18,000. After several renovations, it has been expanded to seat 30,356.