

SPORTS

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Orville Henry

**Oh, No;
But, Yes**

Gazette Sports Editor

THIS PIECE IS GOING TO BE more than a trifle personal. Continued reading is optional.

Butch Henry, who is Orville Henry III, the first of our four sons, is now officially sports information director at the University of Arkansas.

Normally, only an introduction (already made in the news columns) would be required. Now that the expected brouhaha has died down, an explanation isn't inappropriate.

Last things first. As soon as Butch entered his field, upon graduation from the University, where he had excelled as assistant to both Bob Cheyne and Jim Bell, Frank Broyles and I entered into an agreement. He would never hire Butch for the simple reason that, in this state, because of his name, no one would ever give Butch credit for his own ability or accomplishments. And some might seek to embarrass one or both or all three on a challenge of conflict of interest or some other point. Agreed.

Butch and I had come to a similar understanding when he was 17. With a year to go in high school, he was asked what careers he had in mind. He said that he would like to coach basketball (he had spent two years as a manager for Jim Cathcart's Ricky Tannenberger champions), go into newspapering (he had worked on the school paper for three years and part-time at the Gazette), or try for an allied field, sports public relations. Fine, he was told. He'd be happy in any of the three, although he'd never get rich. But if he wanted to really prove himself, he'd better leave the state, so folks wouldn't say he was riding his father's coat-tails. Because he never had. And he saw the need for this.

'The Best Available'

SO IT CAME AS SOMEWHAT of a shock to me this spring when, in the midst of discussion of some problems, Frank turned to me, set his jaw, and said, "Well, I'm going to hire Butch anyway."

Our agreement?

"I don't care," Frank said. "He's a graduate of the University, he's proved himself all over the country, he's the best young man available, and I need him."

The flak?

"I'm used to that kind of flak. When you know what you're doing is right, you just ignore it."

Okay, it was done, and now Butch Henry has one of the toughest SID jobs in the country. And not for any reasons from above. Ask Bill Curl, the previous resident. At Arkansas, the SID first must accommodate three of the most aggressive, dynamic executives in athletics, Frank Broyles, Wilson Matthews, and Eddie Sutton. They want everything done right, yesterday. On the other hand, the mass media people he must accommodate are in Fort Smith, Pine Bluff, Little Rock, etc., and in Texas, Tulsa, and Memphis, etc. (The Fayetteville and Springdale newspapers are doing their best jobs in sports coverage ever, but their circulation covers only two or three counties, and there is no local TV outlet.)

Demanding Combination

THE COMBINATION IS A DEMANDING one, but it's one Butch is used to. He experienced it at Fayetteville, where he did most of the work when he was a senior, at Stillwater, Okla., where he began as an aide to the veteran and esteemed Pat Quinn at Oklahoma State, and at Carbondale, Ill., his station at Southern Illinois University the past two and a half years. In each case, he satisfied distant media, as well as the local ones. (After a basketball game at Carbondale, he would dictate stories to from five to seven papers, including those in St. Louis and Chicago).

Butch got his growth late — it runs in the family — and so he never made any impact as a player. Before he was out of Little League, though, he had launched a Teeny League team and by the time he was 16, he was managing three baseball teams of different age groups simultaneously and also working at various part-time jobs. (He integrated one league with Muskie Harris, now a defensive back at Arkansas.)

So he's been on his own, and busy, from an early age.

A Happy Return

YES, BUTCH WAS HAPPY to return to Arkansas. He had one good job, and was working with an architect on plans for a fine new house in Carbondale, and the prospect of another good one (at Georgia Tech) but Arkansas

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A Happy Return

YES, BUTCH WAS HAPPY to return to Arkansas. He had one good job, and was working with an architect on plans for a fine new house in Carbondale, and the prospect of another good one (at Georgia Tech), but Arkansas had more than just the appeal of home: "It should be so much easier working under coach Broyles," he said. "Most places, they're still trying to achieve the things he's already taken care of or that he can get done."

The happiest person at the news, however, was Mrs. Butch Henry. She is a Kansas City girl. At the behest of her parents, she spent one year at a finishing school in Denver. After that, she could go to the school of her choice. She chose the University of Arkansas. Ever since, Fayetteville has been her favorite all-time place. That is where she always wanted to rear Kyle Andrew, who will be three in October, and an addition expected in November.

It would be a shame if, over the next few years, Butch Henry were to be known as Orville Henry's son. But let me tell you how it is on my travels to various events. I'm known as Butch Henry's father. This began after his one year as sports information director of the Big Eight. At that very time, the Big Eight dominated college football decisively. Butch represented the league at a time when Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Colorado finished 1-2-3 in the polls. One of his stunts was to collect the league's head coaches at Kansas City and take them to New York for a pre-season week end with the media. That made an impact. So did his work with all the sports other than football. (Two years ago, at the age of 25, he was elected secretary of the national track and field writers' group, which widened his circle.)

Someone asked me if I was concerned about what kind of a job he would do at the U of A? I never have worried about him and that, so why now?

The person then in Arkansas best qualified for the U of A job, incidentally, was Jerry Schaeffer, Arkansas State's SID. Without question, the two schools have the two best young ones in the country.

When Butch learned that he was to be the subject of today's piece, his reaction was, "Oh, no." In true horror.

This proves that the new SID at Arkansas can't keep an item out of the *Arkansas Gazette*.