



# DUQUESNE FOOTBALL HISTORY

Duquesne University boasts a rich and colorful football history beginning with the school's first team in 1891. In 94 recorded seasons, Duquesne has played the role of innovator, won a pair of New Year's Day bowl games, disbanded, re-emerged as a club football power and, finally, established itself as highly competitive NCAA Football Championship Subdivision program.

The 2021 season marks the 14th of an exciting era as the program continues as a scholarship-granting, associate member of the Northeast Conference.

Bowl titles (Festival of Palms in 1934, Orange Bowl in 1937 and ECAC Bowl/Classic in 1995 & 2003), a club football national title (1973), a I-AA mid-major national championship (2003) and Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference Football League (1995, 1996, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007) and NEC championships (2011, 2013, 2015, 2016 and 2018) are all part of the winning fabric that is Duquesne football.

The most recent chapter of Duquesne's football history was closed in 2007 when the Dukes completed a 14-year run as a member of the MAAC - which was founded as one of the nation's few NCAA FCS non-scholarship conferences. From 1994 through 2007 the Dukes compiled a 75-9-0 conference record which included 11 championships, a 39-game league winning streak that tied the second-longest ever by an NCAA FBS or FCS school (Dec. 23, 1999 to Oct. 28, 2006) and brought home the first national championship in league history in 2003.

The Dukes have made the seamless transition from need-based financial aid to an athletics-based model with the move to the NEC. DU has been able to carry on its winning tradition by adding five NEC titles - including the school's first NCAA FCS Playoff appearance in 2015 and first FCS Playoff victory in 2018.

Winning, however, is not new to the Duquesne football program. From its meager beginnings, Duquesne football evolved into a national powerhouse in the late 1920s under the direction of legendary head coach Elmer Layden. Layden, who earned a measure of fame as a player as one of Notre Dame's Four Horsemen, quickly made a name for himself as a head coach. Under Layden, the Dukes posted a 48-16-5 mark from 1927-33, including an undefeated regular season (9-0-1) in 1929. In 1933, Layden's Dukes capped a 9-1-0 regular season by earning a berth in the Festival of Palms Bowl (which would be named the Orange Bowl the next season) where they defeated homestanding Miami (Fla.) 33-7.

Layden, who left Duquesne to take the head coaching job at Notre Dame following the '33 campaign, laid the groundwork for the most successful era in DU history.

In 1936, the Dukes made another national splash when head coach Clipper Smith guided Duquesne to a 7-2-0 regular season and a 13-12 win over Mississippi State in the 1937 Orange Bowl. Boyd Brumbaugh keyed the win with a late-game 72-yard (69 yards in the air) halfback pass to Ernie Hefferle for the winning score. Brumbaugh, an honorable mention All-American, went on to play professionally for the Pittsburgh Steelers. Mike Basrak, the standout center for the '36 Dukes, became the first DU player to earn first team All-America honors.

DU finished the 1936 season ranked No. 14 nationally and enjoyed national rankings in the final Associated Press polls of 1939 (No. 10) and 1941 (No. 8) as well.

Former Dukes standout Buff Donelli took over as head coach of his alma mater in 1939 and posted a four-year record of 29-4-2, highlighted by unbeaten teams in 1939 (8-0-1) and 1941 (8-0-0). Donelli's 1941 Dukes - which finished the regular season as one of three undefeated, untied teams - led the nation in scoring defense, rushing defense and total defense on the way to being named the top team in the country according to that year's Massey Ratings. The '41 DU defense surrendered just 21 points. Only one other team - Mississippi with 21 points allowed in 1959 - has given up 21 or fewer points in a season since. In 1941, Donelli had the distinction of coaching two teams at the same time, as he also coached the Pittsburgh Steelers. Layden, who was by then the commissioner of the NFL, made Donelli choose between the two and Donelli elected to remain at Duquesne.



Aldo "Buff" Donelli served as captain of DU's first unbeaten team (9-0-1 in 1929) and later coached the Dukes' second unbeaten squad (8-0-1 in 1939).

Duquesne's glory years ended with the onset of World War II, as DU was one of the first schools to cancel football to help with the war effort. The war sidelined a Duquesne program that was among the nation's elite. From 1933-45, Duquesne (71-22-2, .762) had the sixth-highest winning percentage in the nation behind Alabama, Tennessee, Duke, Fordham and Notre Dame.

Duquesne is noted for establishing numerous "firsts" in collegiate football. Layden is credited with devising the system of hand signals that officials use today. The signal system was put to use for the first time on Nov. 11, 1928, when Duquesne hosted Thiel College at Pitt Stadium. Layden was also the first coach to use two sets of uniform jerseys for home and away contests. In 1929, graduate manager John Holohan conceived the idea of the city's first night game at Pittsburgh's Forbes Field. On the evening of November 2 of that year, the Dukes made history by defeating Geneva College, 27-7, in front of more than 27,000 spectators.

After competing for four years following World War II, Duquesne did not return to the gridiron until 1969 after a group of students formed a team at the club level. DU struggled to a 2-4-0 mark in '69 before Dan McCann took over and quickly made the Dukes a force to be reckoned with. McCann's 1972 Dukes finished the season 7-1-0 and were ranked No. 3 nationally by the National Club Football Association. The next season, Duquesne defeated Mattatuck CC in the National Club Football Championship game at Pittsburgh's Three Rivers Stadium. The title game victory capped a 10-0-0 season for DU. McCann added three more Top 10 national finishes before the Dukes elevated to Division III in 1979.

Following a leave of absence from 1984-87, McCann returned and finished his 19-year career with a 91-74-3 record.

Greg Gattuso, a former standout defensive lineman at Penn State in the early 1980s, took over the program in 1993. The '93 season also marked the return of football to the Duquesne campus, as Arthur J. Rooney Athletic Field was dedicated on October 30 of that year.

Gattuso, who finished his 12-year career as the winningest coach in school history with 97 victories, didn't take long to leave his mark on the Duquesne program with conference titles in 1995 and 1996. His '96 squad scored more points (392) than any other team in school history and also became the first varsity team to post an undefeated regular season since 1973. In addition, Gattuso's 1995 and 1996 Dukes reeled off a school-record 19 consecutive wins. Under Gattuso, Duquesne continued to thrive, adding six consecutive MAAC titles between 1999 and 2004, including a mid-major National Championship in 2003.

Jerry Schmitt, who served as offensive coordinator for Gattuso's first championship teams, returned to the Bluff from Westminster College to take the reins of the program prior to the 2005 season.

In his first three seasons, Schmitt guided the Dukes to three MAAC championships and extended the school's streak of consecutive league titles to nine. The 2006 season saw the end of a 39-game MAAC win streak for the Dukes. The 39-game conference win streak ranks tied for second among all FBS and FCS schools trailing only a 44-game streak by Oklahoma in the Big Eight from 1952-59.

Schmitt notched the school's first NEC title in 2011 and added a second in 2013. His 2015 Dukes won a third NEC crown (the first outright title) and earned the school's first bid to the NCAA FCS Playoffs. DU added a third co-title in 2016 following by a championship in 2018 with another FCS Playoff appearance.

The 2018 Dukes would notch the program's first FCS Playoff win with a 31-10 victory at 16th-ranked Towson.

With a 30-21 triumph over Saint Francis U on Nov. 2, 2019, Schmitt surpassed Gattuso as the program's all-time winningest coach, marking his 98th victory at the helm on The Bluff.

From its days as a national powerhouse, to numerous top 10 rankings as a club team in the 1970s to its emergence as a FCS mid-major force, Duquesne football has always been synonymous with one thing: winning.

# DUQUESNE FOOTBALL HISTORY



## DUQUESNE AND THE NFL

Duquesne University, which competed at the NCAA's highest level for 31 seasons between 1902 and 1950, has had a total of 22 players drafted by the National Football League. Of the 22 draftees, eight never played in an NFL game.

Mike Basrak, the fifth overall pick in the 1937 draft by the Pittsburgh Steelers, was the first DU player drafted. The last time a Duquesne player was drafted was in the 19th round of the 1951 draft when Ralph Longmore was taken by the New York Yanks. In 2003, Duquesne saw two former players make NFL rosters when free agents Leigh Bodden and Josh Rue earned spots on the Cleveland Browns and Arizona Cardinals respectively. Bodden, who last played for the New England Patriots in 2011, had a nine-year NFL career.

Forty-four Dukes have played in the NFL, with a total of 35 suiting up for the Pittsburgh Steelers between 1937 and 1951. Bodden became the first Duquesne player to take the field for an NFL game since Al Demao played for the Washington Redskins from 1945-53. Demao was named one of the 70 greatest Redskins of all-time in the fall of 2002.

## DUQUESNE AND THE DRAFT FAST FACTS

### FIRST PLAYER DRAFTED

Mike Basrak, 1937 - 1st round (5th overall)  
by the Pittsburgh Steelers

### MOST RECENT DRAFTEE

Ralph Longmore, 1951 - 19th round (227th overall)  
by the New York Yanks - DNP

### MOST DUKES DRAFTED IN ONE YEAR

Six in 1943

### FIRST ROUND PICKS (2)

Mike Basrak (1937, 5th overall by Pittsburgh) and  
Boyd Brumbaugh (1938, 3rd overall by Brooklyn)

### LONGEST STRETCH WITHOUT A PICK

66 years (1951 to current)

### DRAFT PICKS BY TEAM (22 TOTAL)

Pittsburgh (13), Brooklyn (2), Cleveland (2),  
New York Yanks (2), Washington (2), Chicago (1)

# DUQUESNE FOOTBALL

## DUQUESNE AND THE NFL

### NUMBER OF DUKES WHO HAVE PLAYED IN THE NFL

44 total

### FIRST PLAYERS TO PLAY

Nick DeCarbo and Ray Kemp played for Pittsburgh in 1933.  
DeCarbo played in 11 games, Kemp in five.

### LAST TO SEE ACTION IN AN NFL GAME

Leigh Bodden (6 games for the New England Patriots) in 2011.

### ORGANIZATIONS WHERE DUKES HAVE PLAYED

(LAST PLAYER IN PARENTHESES)

Arizona (Josh Rue in 2003)  
Boston (Steve Sinko in 1936)  
Brooklyn (Joe Setcavage in 1943)  
Buffalo (George Kisiday in 1948)  
Chicago (John Rokisky in 1947)  
Cleveland (Leigh Bodden in 2007)  
Detroit (George Sirochman in 1944/Leigh Bodden in 2008)  
Miami (Al Wukits in 1946)  
New England Patriots (Leigh Bodden in 2011)  
New York Yanks (John Rokisky in 1948)  
Philadelphia (John Binotto in 1942)  
Pittsburgh (Chuck Mehelich in 1951)  
Washington (Al Demao in 1953)



Two-time All-America Leigh Bodden logged nine NFL seasons.

## DUQUESNE AND THE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SUBDIVISION NATIONAL AWARDS

### FCS ADA ALL-AMERICAN

(began in 2013 • 11-man team)

Christian Kuntz, Jr, LB.....2015

### ASSOCIATED PRESS

### FCS ALL-AMERICAN

Joe Rosato, Jr, specialist+.....1996  
Matt Fisher, Sr, LB+.....1998  
Leigh Bodden, Jr, DB+.....2001  
Leigh Bodden, Sr, DB\*.....2002  
Antoine Bullock, Sr, DE\*.....2005  
Bruce Hocker, Jr, WR+.....2006  
Serge Kona, Jr, DB+.....2011  
Christian Kuntz, Jr, LB\*.....2015  
Christian Kuntz, Sr, LB\*.....2016  
Ben Huss, Sr, OL\*.....2017  
A.J. Hines, Jr, RB\*.....2018  
\*second team / + third team

### FCS FIRST TEAM ALL-AMERICAN

(as recognized by the NCAA)

Leigh Bodden, Jr, DB.....2001  
Leigh Bodden, Sr, DB.....2002  
Jeremy Conley, Sr, WR.....2002  
Ryan Tolan, Sr, DE.....2004  
Antoine Bullock, Sr, DE.....2005  
Bruce Hocker, Jr, WR.....2006  
Christian Kuntz, Jr, LB.....2015  
Christian Kuntz, Jr, LB.....2016

### AFCA COACHES FCS ALL-AMERICAN

Leigh Bodden, Jr, DB.....2001  
Leigh Bodden, Jr, DB.....2001  
Ryan Tolan, Sr, DE.....2004  
Bruce Hocker, Jr, WR.....2006  
A.J. Hines, Jr, RB.....2018  
Jake Dixon.....2020-21

### STATS FCS ALL-AMERICAN

Antoine Bullock, Sr, DE+.....2005  
Bruce Hocker, Jr, WR\*.....2006  
Serge Kona, Jr, DB+.....2011  
Dorian Bell, Jr, LB+.....2012  
Christian Kuntz, Sr, LB+.....2013  
Chris King, Jr, WR+.....2014  
Devin Rahming, Sr, KR\*.....2014  
Christian Kuntz, Jr, LB.....2015  
Christian Kuntz, Sr, LB.....2016  
Ben Huss, Jr, OL+.....2016  
Ben Huss, Sr, OL+.....2017  
A.J. Hines, Jr, RB.....2018  
\*second team / + third team

### ACADEMIC ALL-AMERICAN

Bob Nithman, DB+.....1995  
Mike Hilliard, RB+.....2002  
Joe Pavlick, DB+.....2002  
Mike Hilliard, RB\*.....2003  
Ryan Esdale, DE+.....2005  
Sam Martello, LB+.....2015  
Spencer DeMedal\*.....2019  
Spencer DeMedal\*.....2020-21  
Jake Dixon+.....2020-21  
\*first team / + second team



# DUQUESNE FOOTBALL HISTORY

## DUQUESNE IN THE SPORTS NETWORK FCSTOP-10 MID-MAJOR POLL FROM 2001-2007

Duquesne was the only school to appear in every Sports Network FCS Top-10 Mid-Major Final Poll. The Dukes, who claimed the 2003 Mid-Major National Championship, finished in the top five six times. DU spent a total of 14 weeks at the top of the poll (three weeks in 2001, eight weeks in 2002, one week in 2003 and two weeks in 2004):

2001	8-3	No. 4
2002	11-1	No. 2
2003	8-3	No. 1
2004	7-3	No. 5
2005	7-3	No. 3
2006	7-3	No. 6
2007	6-4	No. 8

## MOST APPEARANCES IN THE IN THE FINAL POLL

Duquesne	7
Dayton	6
Morehead State	6
San Diego	6
Albany	5
Monmouth	5

## New York U's Famous Jinx Rocks Tech Hopes, 6-0 DUKES SURPRISE PITT, 21-13



**Barmak-Galu Lateral  
Produces Only Score**  
Play Goes 23 Yards for Touchdown, and

**Football  
Results**  
LOCAL  
AND  
NATIONAL

**Miracle Man Donelli**  
"Bull" Proves His Dukes for Fighting From Behind  
To Defeat "Mighty Good Football Team"

**Hilltoppers Fight Back  
To Wipe Away 13-0 Lead**  
Rokisky Furnishes Placement Points and

## DUKES DOWN NO. 1

Duquesne is one of a few schools that boasts a victory over The Associated Press' top-ranked team. On Oct. 21, 1939 the Dukes, coming off a 7-0 victory over Manhattan at the Polo Grounds, stunned No. 1 Pitt 21-13 at Pitt Stadium. The loss dropped the Panthers - who had claimed an AP national championship in 1937 - to No. 18 the ensuing week. Three weeks later, Pitt severed football relations with Duquesne ending the six-game series which the Panthers led 4-2. According to an AP story in the Nov. 8 New York Times: "No reasons were announced for the break, which became known at a meeting between athletic directors Jimmy Hagan of Pitt and Aldo (Buff) Donelli of Duquesne." Duquesne, which split its last four games against its cross-town rival (DU handed 8-1-1 Pitt its lone loss in the Panthers' 1936 national championship season by a 7-0 score) completed the '39 season ranked No. 10 in the final AP poll at 8-0-1. The lone blemish was a 10-10 tie at Detroit in the season finale. Pitt finished the year 5-4.

## DUQUESNE IN THE FINAL AP POLL FIRST POLL WAS IN 1936

Duquesne finished ranked among the Top 10 teams in the nation twice in a span of three years prior to World War II. The 1936 Dukes defeated Mississippi State in the Orange Bowl, the '39 Duquesne team's tie came in the final game of the season and the 1941 DU team was one of three undefeated, untied teams at the end of the regular season:

1936	8-3	No. 4
1939	11-1	No. 2
1941	8-3	No. 1

The 1941 Dukes were crowned the nation's No. 1 team according to the Massey Ratings.

## DUQUESNE AND THE STEELERS' FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN PLAYER

by Mike Macklin, Senator John Heinz History Center,  
Feb. 7, 2008 Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Fourteen years before Jackie Robinson broke professional baseball's color barrier, Ray Kemp became the first African-American player for the Pittsburgh Steelers - then known as the Pirates. Kemp, a graduate of Cecil High School, planned to go to law school following his graduation from Duquesne University in 1931, but Art Rooney asked Kemp to play for his semipro team, the J.P. Rooneys, while attending law school. When Rooney got the charter for a pro franchise in 1933, Kemp was invited to play, becoming one of just two African Americans in the NFL. Kemp's brief career lasted just four games during the franchise's inaugural season. The following year, Kemp was hired as the head football coach at Bluefield State College in West Virginia, where he led the Blues to an 8-0-1 record in the first of a 39-year coaching career. After Kemp left Pittsburgh following the 1933 season, there were no African-American players in the NFL until 1946.



Former Duke Ray Kemp was the first African-American to play for the Pittsburgh Steelers.



# DUQUESNE FOOTBALL HISTORY



## A.J. HINES WINS STATS FCS JERRY RICE AWARD

Duquesne running back **A.J. Hines** was named winner of the STATS FCS Jerry Rice Award as the Football Championship Subdivision's top freshman in 2016, becoming the first Duquesne player to win a STATS FCS major national award.

The Wilson, N.C. native tallied 333 votes, edging South Dakota State linebacker Christian Rozeboom by a single vote to capture the award. A national panel of over 150 sports information and media relations directors, broadcasters, writers and other dignitaries voted on the Rice Award, which had 23 finalists from 12 FCS conferences.

He ran for a Duquesne freshman-record 1,291 yards and 13 touchdowns, the most in either category by any Dukes running back since senior Mike Hilliard (1,544 yards, 15 TDs) in 2003.

Hines formally accepted the award at the STATS FCS Awards Banquet in Frisco, Texas in January - the night before the FCS Championship Game.



Duquesne freshman running back A.J. Hines receiving the STATS FCS Jerry Rice Award from the NFL's all-time leading receiver.

## STATS FCS AWARD FINALISTS

### STATS FCS WALTER PAYTON AWARD (Offensive Player of the Year)

A.J. Hines (RB, 2018)  
Tommy Stuart (QB, 2017)  
Dillon Buechel (QB, 2016)

### STATS FCS BUCK BUCHANAN AWARD (Defensive Player of the Year)

Christian Kuntz (LB, 2016)

### STATS FCS JERRY RICE AWARD (Freshman of the Year)

A.J. Hines (RB, 2016) \*winner\*  
Billy Lucas (RB, 2020-21)

### STATS FCS EDDIE ROBINSON AWARD (Coach of the Year)

Jerry Schmitt (2018)  
Jerry Schmitt (2015)

### STATS FCS DORIS ROBINSON AWARD (Scholar-Athlete of the Year)

Matt Fitzpatrick (OL, 2018)  
Spencer DeMedal (DB, 2019)  
Spencer DeMedal (DB, 2020-21)



The Dukes celebrate a touchdown during Duquesne's 31-10 upset win at No. 16 Towson in the 2018 FCS Playoffs.

## DUKES CAPTURE FIRST FCS PLAYOFF WIN

Duquesne scored 31 unanswered points and held No. 16 Towson scoreless in the second half, as the Dukes won their first Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) Playoff game in program history with a 31-10 victory over the host Tigers in a steady downpour at Johnny Unitas® Stadium.

A.J. Hines finished with 246 yards from scrimmage with a pair of touchdowns to lead the Dukes in the triumph.

Duquesne was making its second FCS Playoff appearance after first earning an automatic bid in 2015. The Dukes fell on the road in that contest by a score of 52-49 at William & Mary. DU advanced to the FCS Playoffs by winning its fifth Northeast Conference (NEC) title. The victory over Towson also marked Duquesne's first over a ranked team in the FCS era.

The Dukes went on to face perennial power South Dakota State on the road in the second round, dropping a 51-6 decision to the Jackrabbits. SDSU would move on to the FCS semifinals.

The 2018 Duquesne team, finishing with a 9-4 overall mark - in a season in which the Dukes faced two teams from the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) - became the first DU team to appear in the national rankings, closing the year 21st in the STATS FCS Top 25 and 24th in the AFCA Coaches' Poll.



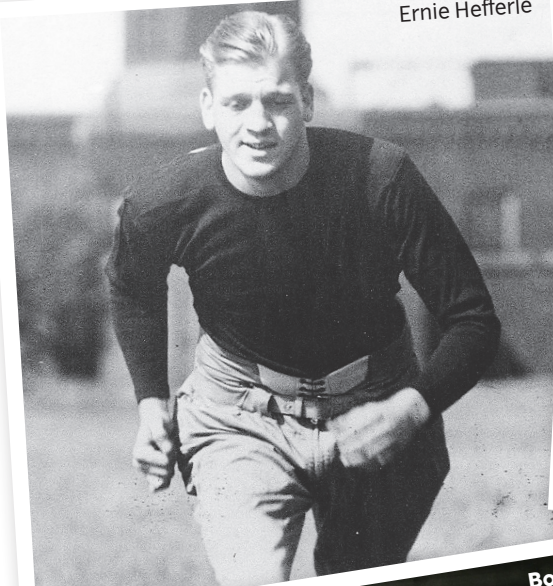
Nehari Crawford hauls in a touchdown reception in the Dukes' first FCS Playoff appearance at William & Mary in 2015.



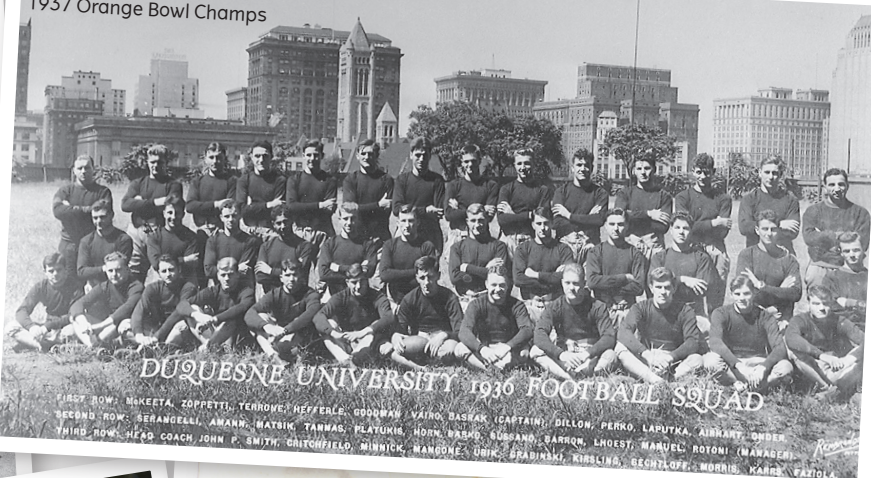


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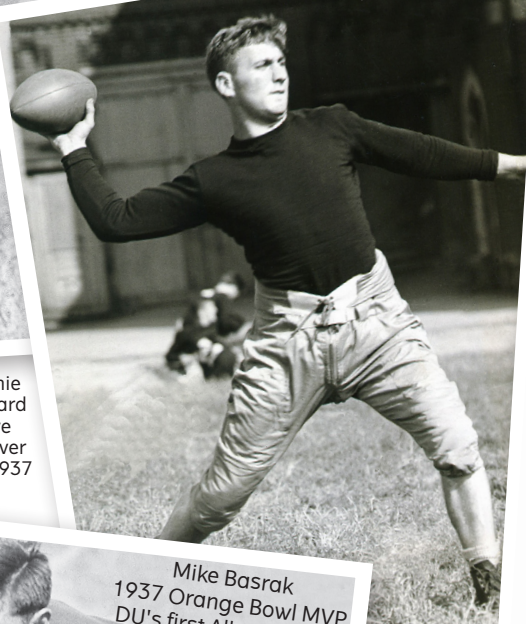
Ernie Hefferle



1936 Dukes  
1937 Orange Bowl Champs

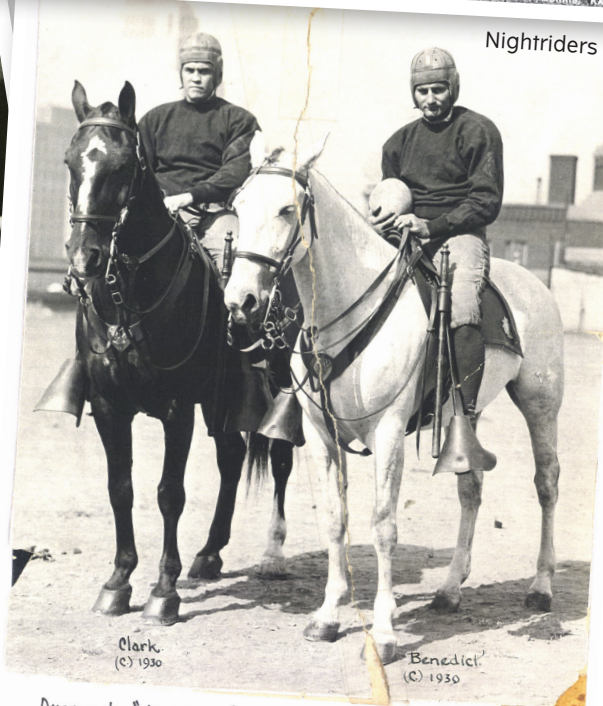


Boyd Brumbaugh



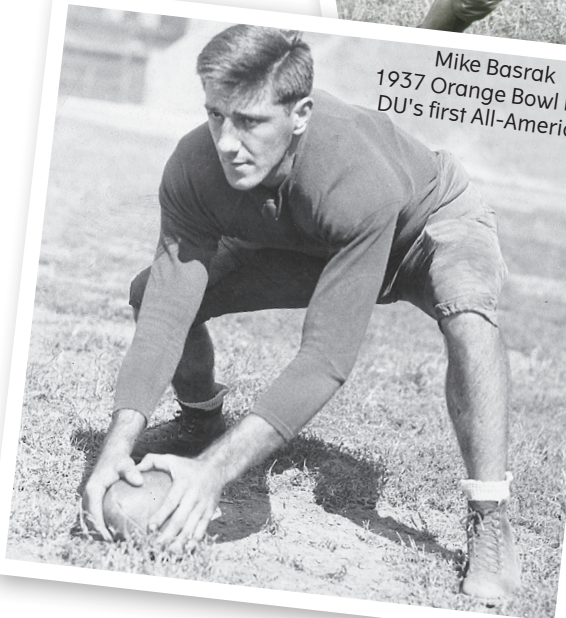
Boyd Brumbaugh hit Ernie Hefferle with a late 72-yard touchdown pass to give the Dukes a 13-12 win over Mississippi State in the 1937 Orange Bowl.

Nightriders



Duquesne's "Night Riders" play first night football game in Pgh.

Mike Basrak  
1937 Orange Bowl MVP  
DU's first All-American



1973 Club Champs

