

## Day of the Game, a Tense Time for Players

By JACK KEHOE

To the average football spectator bundled-up in his or her 40-yard-line bleacher seat, the game is a bone bruising spectacle occupying four equally timed periods. Their interests and attentions are confined to the proceedings between the opening whistle and the final gun.

But to the players, the day of the game culminates a week long preparation of hard, pounding practice and a slow build-up of spirit and energies for the particular opponent.

Birmingham's normal game day was Friday. The school, like all students, goes through their everyday classwork routine, meeting friends, and holding informal discussions. Beneath the surface is a tightness and uneasiness as they think forward to the night's battle.

BIG, 225-POUND, 6-ft. 2-inch,

John Foerster, a middle guard on Birmingham's defensive platoon, was followed through his usual actions on the day of the Berkeley game. John is an even tempered senior who as he readily admits, "lives for the game." Both head coach, Carl Lemle and line coach, Lew Perry, have high praise for Foerster. They rate him as one of the most improved players on the squad with the ability to always come through with a dependable performance.

Moving to Birmingham from

Snyder, New York, a suburb of Buffalo, John's first athletic energies were directed to caving. Around the New York area crew racing is a varsity sport with immense popularity. At his former high school, the Bishop Fallon, he was a member of the eight-oar shell, winning his letter.

AS ANY ATHLETE in school, John is primarily a student with his football activity a challenging but secondary part of his total education. One of his main concerns is to complete his high school studies successfully and go on to college. His choice is Michigan State University where they have a course in his selected field—county farm agent. Incidentally, they also have from time to time, a football team of some reputation. An enthusiastic supporter of his pickup activities is his mother who faithfully attends every contest.

ON FRIDAY John attends regular class sessions, finishing up with Mrs. Richard's English class at 2 p.m. Throughout the day he'll receive some offhand queries from friends about the possible outcome of the game. Like most of the Maple gridders every game is faced with a good deal of optimism, even if they are the underdogs.

After class John heads for his girl friend, Beverly Allum's, locker where they have quick words about the day's doings. Not too much time here because he, along with the rest of the team, must report to coach Lemle in the locker room for a final chalk talk.

A QUICK RECAP of the plays and defensive styles are discussed again, so every man fully understands his job. Then the players go home where mothers, experienced in their position of football chefs, have prepared a light meal.

Relaxing around the house occupies the rest of the time, either doing homework or taking a quick nap. At 6 p.m. the players report back to the locker room for taping and dressing.

ONCE AT THE FIELD the warm-up period and other pregame ceremonies pass quickly along until next the referee raises his arm, signaling the start of the game. The next two hours become a hard, tough battle as they pit their strength and skill against their opponents. As the game progresses the score of the contest

will determine the spirit of the players. Winning, the players become more relaxed; losing, they are excited and sullen as their attack fails.

PRIDE COMES as they leave the field for the offense. From the sidelines they worry and carefully observe every play to see if their companions can continue with the results of their hard work. Within a surprising short time the game is over and all the pressure and tension built up over a week's and even season's time disappears. What remains is the proud feeling of victory or a well played game or else, the self accusation of defeat.

It is not given to each human being to be all-wise in all things. One must trust honest leaders for guidance in making many political and economic decisions. The basic problem in a democracy, then, is to be able to determine who, among a set of candidates, are trustworthy men or women of ability and honesty.



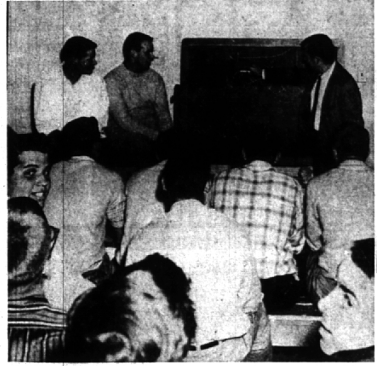
LAST CLASS on Friday is a Mrs. Richard's English class. The class had just heard a report by one of its members and a brief discussion led by Mrs. Richard followed. John (last row, last seat) is a C-plus student and expects to attend college.



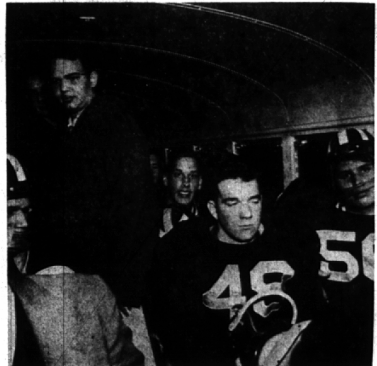
JOHN MEETS HIS "steady", Beverly Allum, at her locker before leaving for home. They talk a little about plans for the date after the game. Beverly along with Mrs. Foerster, enthusiastic Maple rooters, have never missed either a home or an away game.



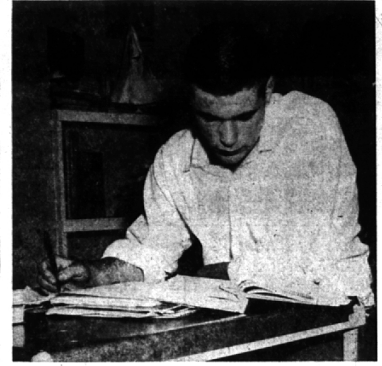
CO-CAPTAIN Jim Fry gives John a hand with his football equipment as they dress two hours before game time. Most players are quiet and nervous as they get taped and put on their uniforms.



FINAL LAST DAY chalk talk is given by coach Lemle on defensive and offensive assignments. All week the players have been studying the same details but this late 15-minute Friday briefing checks any questions.



A FULL LOAD on the school bus consisting of players, coaches and officials take the short ride to Berkeley. Players dress at the Birmingham locker room for nearby-away games. Players are normally quiet on these trips, mostly talking among themselves.



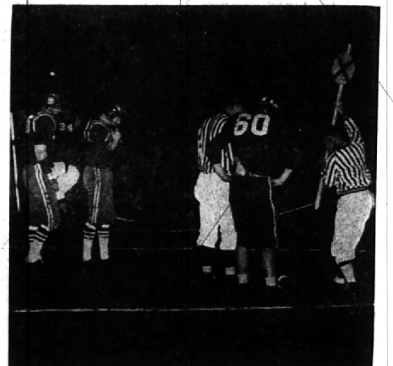
AN EXTRA MINUTE studying some homework is done by John before sitting down to eat. The long practice sessions throughout the season robs a player of valuable book pounding time, so he must use every available period.



EVERYONE UP for the kick-off. Members of the Maple squad crowd the sidelines, headed by coach Carl Lemle, waiting for the tense and dramatic moment when the game gets underway. Players shout encouragement to their teammates and size-up their opponents.



JOHN'S MOTHER prepares an early meal of light foods consisting of salad, vegetables and fish—no heavy or fat foods. Players are required to eat four hours before game time. Usually teammates get together after the game for pizza feast.



BIG NUMBER 60, John Foerster, checks the measurement as the chains are brought out for the first down. John, in his role as defensive captain at the Berkeley game, was spokesman with the officials for the Maples. Yardage casting decisions had to be made quick and certain.

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