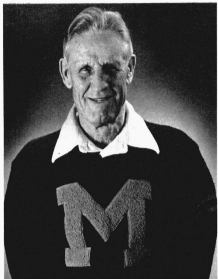


FAUROT'S



YEAR

Don Faurot's latest honor—and over the years he has received many—is the Alumni Association's most prestigious, the Distinguished Service Award. It was presented at the May commencement ceremonies to recognize Faurot's "sustained efforts and support" for the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Sustained is an appropriate adjective to describe his service to the University. Faurot lettered in football, basketball and baseball at Mizzou, graduating in 1925. He received his master's two years later.

Faurot served as Mizzou's head football coach from 1935 through 1956—with three years' out for Navy service during World War II. Although he inherited an insolvent department and a downtrodden football program, Faurot left the department 32 years later with Mizzou's athletic programs nationally respected and virtually debt-free despite continual expansion and improvement.

Before his second retirement in 1972, Faurot continued to serve the University as an assistant director of alumni activities.

The athletic department has sched-

uled a yearlong tribute to Faurot, starting this spring.

A Mizzou Athletic Scholarship Associates dinner Sept. 28 on the eve of the Notre Dame game will be dedicated to the man who is a member of the National Football Foundation Hall of Fame and the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame. The Mizzou-Mississippi State game Sept. 22 will be designated as Don Faurot Day—and other events during the year will pay tribute to the native son who led the Tigers into big-time football in 1939—Mizzou's first Big Six championship and a trip to the Orange Bowl.

Amazingly active and fit at 81, Faurot talked with Bill Callahan, Mizzou's sports information director for more than 35 years, about some of their memories. Parts of that visit are reproduced here.

FOOTBALL TODAY

Could Faurot be a winning coach in today's big-time atmosphere?

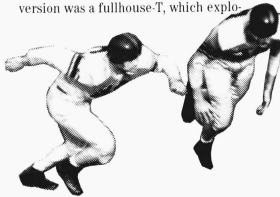
I doubt it because of my philosophy of having basically Missouri athletes play for Missouri. I'm not opposed to our recruiting out-of-state talent now. I'm against the NCAA thinking that permits the practice. It could be controlled if college administrators wanted to. Nation-wide recruiting creates a lot of problems that the NCAA is trying to eliminate.

In my time, we had just one back-

THE SPLIT T

Faurot's prime contribution to the game of football undoubtedly was the Split T. He unveiled the formation with its innovative quarterback option in 1941. Quickly, backs named Bob Steuber, Harry Ice and Maurice "Red" Wade became national celebrities. That season Mizzou led the nation in rushing. In the post-World War II era, dozens of major universities adopted the formation, and it still is in vogue today. The Wishbone, Wingbone, Veer and I attacks all use Faurot's option as their basic play. How did the Split T come about?

We used a little option series in 1939 with our short punt formation. [Paul] Christman was not a great runner, but he did get his five yards a carry with that play. Anyway, we went to the option series in the spring of '41, along with a split line, because we'd lost our great passer [Christman] and wanted to go to a running game, using the modern T-formation. The T-formation, popularized by Clark Shaughnessy, featured a man-in-motion to spread the defense—but my version was a fullhouse-T, which explo-



COACH'S ALL-STAR TIGERS

field coach, one line coach, and me—as head coach. We didn't have offensive and defensive coordinators then. In the modern era, I probably wouldn't be very effective with eight- or nine-man coaching staffs, plus part-time assistants.

I think today's game itself is a good one. The black athletes have added so much skill, speed and execution. Coaching is so much better, too—and the weight training program has developed such nimble, quick, big men. But basic plays and formations haven't changed that much.

ited the running game by exchanging the ball close to the line of scrimmage.

The option let us pressure the defensive end with what amounted to a 2-on-1 break in basketball. The option play and split line enabled us to run inside or outside the defensive end without blocking him. This technique was unheard of prior to this time. Our basic plays included a hand-off to the dive man, a keeper by the quarterback inside the defensive end, a pitchout to the halfback outside the end—and a running pass by the halfback either way.

I knew that the option play was a great one because it changed the whole concept of defense. Teams had to go to a virtual nine-man line to stop it, and this weakened the pass defense. The nine-man front eventually forced us out of the fullhouse T-formation, and we went to a flanker T. That's what most teams are in now—a flanker or double-flanker formation to counter the tight defenses. I still think the quarterback option is one of football's best plays inside the opponent's five-yard line.

Fuort has watched Mizzou football for more than 60 years as a player, coach, administrator and fan. We asked him to rank the best players he's seen during

that span. He did so, reluctantly and often painfully. Here are the coach's selections, with his apologies "to the many good men I had to leave out."



Christianman

QUARTERBACKS

Paul Christianman (1938-40)
Phil Bradley (1977-80)
Terry McMillan (1968-69)
"Bus" Entsminger (1942, 46-48)

OFFENSIVE INTERIOR LINE

Francis Peay (1964-65)
Morris Towns (1974-76)
Conrad Goode (1980-83)
Howard Richards (1977-80)

RUNNING BACKS

Bob Steuber (1940-42)
James Wilder (1978-80)
Joe Moore (1968-70)
Harry Ice (1940-41)

DEFENSIVE ENDS

Bill Rowekamp (1952)
Danny LaRose (1958-60)
Conrad Hitchler (1960-62)
Bobby Bell (1981-83)



Roland

RECEIVERS

Mel Gray (1968-70)
"Hank" Burnie (1953-55)
Kellen Winslow (1976-78)
Joe Stewart (1974-77)

DEFENSIVE INTERIOR LINE

Kenny Haas (1937-39)
Bob Brenton (1940-41)
Ed Blaine (1959-61)
Jay Wallace (1967-68, '70)

LINEBACKERS

Darold Jenkins (1940-41)
Bob Fuchs (1946-49)
Gus Otto (1962-64)
Andy Russell (1960-62)

DEFENSIVE BACKS

Johnny Roland (1962, '64-65)
Roger Wehrli (1966-68)
Bob Schoonmaker (1951-53)
Ed Merrifield (1951-53)



Goode

CENTERS

Clyde Smith (1922-24)
Bob Fuchs (1946-49)
Brad Edelman (1978-81)
Huston Beatty (1935-37)

PUNTERS

Jeff Brockhaus (1977-80)
Steve Kenemore (1967-69)
Ray West (1965)

PLACEKICKERS

Greg Hill (1971-73)
Bob Dawson (1947-48)
Charles Rash (1957-58)

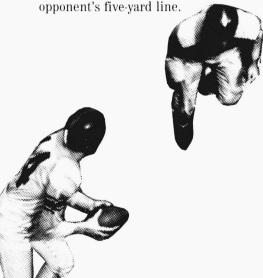
DEE-FENSE

Fuort always was known for having a creative offensive football mind. Some Fuort critics felt that in the post-World War II era, he should have left no stone unturned to hire the best collegiate defensive coach available to complement his expertise.

To answer that question directly, I did try to add Jim Tatum to our staff prior to the 1946 season—but learned that he was already earmarked as Oklahoma's new head coach. But I'd like to point out that our '41 team was a fine defensive group—gave up just 39 points in 10 games. We had the horses to play defense that year. But after the war,

recruiting got different. It was tougher to keep our good, big Missouri boys interested in coming to Mizzou.

You can move the football and score points with strategy and good continuity of plays. On defense, you need the size and toughness to play it well. You can't "create" your way into playing good defense. Jim [Tatum] was a strong defensive coach, but what made him great was his ability to recruit the type of players—big, strong and active people—who played the tough defense. I always felt that Maryland and Oklahoma had better defensive personnel than we did.



THE LOWS

What were some of the lows of Faurot's career?

Offhand, I can't remember much that was disappointing. All the things I remember were good . . . but . . . the 74-13 defeat by Maryland in the final game of the '54 season, and the 1-9 season that followed probably were two of the worst experiences. Jim Tatum [Maryland coach] suggested that we move our 1954 opening game to Thanksgiving Day, for TV money, and it was a mistake. You should never schedule anyone after the Kansas game, and we'd won that game, 41-18. I never felt that Tatum ran up the score on us. We were just playing so bad that day in College Park, and everything they did resulted

in touchdowns.

In 1937 (3-6-1) some of the alumni were unhappy, critical of our backs and the running game, but just a few years later, Chauncey Simpson [backfield coach] developed Ice, Steuber and Christman, and all was forgotten. Then, there was my first varsity game against Iowa State in 1923. Our punter, Forrest Fowler, was hurt. I was the next-best punter and was sent into the game with the ball on the two-yard line. The pass from center was a little low—but we're not going to say that. I fumbled it, and I lost the game on a safety, 2-0. I never thought that Coach [Gwinn] Henry would play me again—but he was patient and forgiving, because I played 60 minutes in the next six games.

THE HIGHS

Aside from the on-the-field victories, what were some of Faurot's greatest thrills as a coach and athletic director at Mizzou?

After our bad season in 1955 [1-9], the alumni gave me a testimonial banquet in St. Louis. That certainly was a memorable event. Another great thrill was to see the football stadium expanded from its original 24,000 capacity to its present size. To have the field named for me [1972] ranks as probably the greatest satisfaction of my career in athletics.

I didn't make much money as a coach and athletic director, but I came away with a lot of rich memories. Some of the things that happened to me were worth a lot more than money.

HOW SWEET IT WAS

Faurot's best teams at Missouri? He picks the 1941 Sugar Bowl and the 1939 Orange Bowl teams, but admits that the '41 Tigers would not have been as good without the Split T. What were his top victories during his 19 years as head coach?

I'd say that the 7-6 win over Oklahoma in 1939 was the most gratifying and meaningful to me. It brought us our first conference [Big Six] championship and put us in the Orange Bowl. We hadn't won a title since 1927. That SMU game here in 1948 was a great win for us, too. Matty Bell brought a team in here that had won 16 straight, including the Cotton Bowl championship, led by Doak Walker, and we won it, 20-14. It was their only loss in another Cotton Bowl season. Another highlight was the victory over Kansas, 15-13, in my final game as head coach.

Offering his congratulations afterward, KU Coach Chuck Mather said, "You ought to give me a letter."

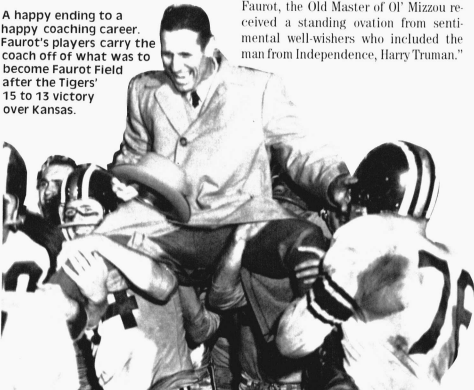
In his book, *Ol' Mizzou*, Bob Broeg describes that last victory:

"Before 28,000 on a homecoming for which the campus decoration had been dedicated to the retiring coach, the Kansas Jayhawks were spoilsports until the final minutes. Then Dave Doane, understudy to the injured [Jimmy] Hunter, ducked a pass rush on fourth down

and fired to top end Larry Plumb, who made a spectacular catch of the 14-yard pass for a touchdown. But a foulup on the snap kept placekicking sharpshooter Charley Rash from a winning conversion.

"With little more than a minute left, a letdown tie seemed certain. Kansas had the ball on its own 20. Even when KU quarterback Wally Strauch was thrown for a 16-yard loss as he tried to pass, how could Missouri score without the ball?"

A happy ending to a happy coaching career. Faurot's players carry the coach off of what was to become Faurot Field after the Tigers' 15 to 13 victory over Kansas.



"Mather, the KU coach, misread the distance. He thought the Jayhawks were on the nine-yard line, not the 4. He sent in a daring reverse, Strauch to Bobby Robinson, but Chuck Mehrer, playing defensive left tackle, read the misdirection. He barreled across the goal line and threw his 230-pound bear-hug onto Robinson. The ballcarrier dropped in the end zone. Safety! Final score: Missouri 15, Kansas 13.

"As the goalposts went down and the Tigers carried off a happy, grinning Faurot, the Old Master of Ol' Mizzou received a standing ovation from sentimental well-wishers who included the man from Independence, Harry Truman."