

# 500 Taking Part In Falls, Plymouth City-Wide Grade School Football

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PLYMOUTH — The line-backer weighed all of 82 pounds and he was tough.

The coach weighed over 200 pounds and he was mad.

The referee wore a striped shirt and he was tired.

It was a typical Saturday afternoon at Carl Loebe Field in Plymouth where swarms of sixth, seventh and eighth grade boys played out the age-old fall ritual of the sandlot football game.

But this was more than a pickup game played in sweat shirts and jeans. All of the boys had helmets, shoulder pads, rubber mouthpieces and jerseys. Every team had an adult coach and every game had a referee who knew his business.

The scenes could take place at any football game though.

Ken Grebe, who coaches one of the eight teams, towers over his boys like the Colossus over Rhodes. He gives advice that would be familiar to anybody who's been in a locker room at half-time.

"You gotta block. You gotta tackle. You gotta knock 'em down. That's all there is to it," he told a young player.

The boy nodded and ran back onto the field and the game continued.

Another boy, bigger than himself, came running hard around the end. The little guy charged into him, grabbed him and hung on. The bigger boy went down, and the boys on the bench were on their feet, yelling.

Philip Hellestad, a Plymouth High School coach who was refereeing the game came off the field later and wiped the sweat from his eyes. "Boy they just about wore me out," he said — "up and down, up and down."

## Up & Down Game

The boys had been giving Hellestad quite a workout. It was — as he said — an up and down game. The action had been fast and furious as

passes were thrown, and sometimes caught and sometimes fumbled.

Advice from the coaches was offered freely and loudly, but not unkindly: "How many times have I told you that you gotta get in there and if somebody gets in your way you gotta push 'em aside."

Advice from the bench was also free and loud: "Watch the pass and reverse! Watch the run!" And one desperate plea to "watch everything!"

After each of the four games was over, the players formed two lines in the middle of the field and everybody shook hands with everybody else. It was probably the most important play of the afternoon.

"What we're trying to teach is not just football, but sportsmanship," said Jerome Koene, the Plymouth man who was one of the main instigators of the Plymouth Junior Football League

## Origin In Falls

Actually the league had its origins in Sheboygan Falls, not in Plymouth, because Sheboygan Falls is in the third year of organized junior football. The results are beginning to pay off for Falls too.

Earlier this year their high school freshman team played Plymouth and beat them 26-0. Then they played Chilton and won by a score of 54-0.

"You can see the way those kids (from Falls) play — the way they block and tackle — that they didn't learn it in one year," said Koene, himself a physical education teacher.

He felt strongly that Plymouth too, should have a football league for boys in the later elementary grades. So did five other men; Robert Boll, Henry Blanke, Robert Blanke, Bud Kolpin and Donald Rortvedt.

They got together late this summer to get the league going and agreed to put up some money of their own if they had to. "We didn't have a penny to start with," Koene

said. "We ordered the uniforms anyway, even if it meant paying for them ourselves.

## Money Came In

Fortunately, Plymouth came through. Money came in from the volunteer firemen, Jaycees, Kiwanis, Lions, Rotary, Knights of Columbus, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion. Even the village of Cascade joined in with a donation from the Cascade Recreation Fund.

Two physicians, Dr. R. J. Alvarez, and Dr. William Treviranus, offered to give each boy a physical examination free. Atty. Ronald Damp donated the legal work to make the league into a non-profit corporation. The town's two banks, Citizens and Dairy State, have put up sportsmanship trophies which will be awarded at the end of the season. Businessmen have donated money, first aid supplies, equipment and talent.

Two Sheboygan Falls men who were behind the now-successful league there, Brian Dean and Keith Carpenter, gave advice to the fledgling Plymouth league and by late August the league was ready to go.

Koene and his colleagues had estimated that there were about 400 boys in the Plymouth area who would be eligible to play. They felt their program would be successful if they attracted 100, but when the parental permission slips had been counted there were 180 of them.

## A Lot Of Boys

It was nearly double what they had figured, but somehow every boy was fitted in. Nearly \$2,000 was spent for enough shoulder pads and helmets for four teams and enough jerseys for every boy on all eight teams.

"We've got good equipment," Koene said. "We don't want any cheap stuff."

The boys take turns using the pads and helmets and

they supply their own mouthpieces and supporters. This is their only cost.

The eight coaches who were recruited from Plymouth — all big men and all veterans of some kind of organized football, are Jay Pfrang, Donald Rortvedt, Ken Grebe, Lloyd Lueck, Mike Schuler, Bob Meerstein, Bill Suemnicht and David Franzen. They give up their time for two practice sessions a week and the game on Saturday. And they wear neckties for those Saturday games.

## A Few Rules

In return the boys are expected to abide by a few rules. Smoking, profanity and long hair are out. (Hair may not stick out from under the helmet.) Respect is a must. A curfew time of 10 p.m. must be observed, and a boy must practice with his team during the week to play on Saturday.

According to the league rules, every boy must play in the game for at least one 10 minute quarter.

"This is important," Koene said. "For some of these little guys, it's the last chance they'll ever have to play on a team."

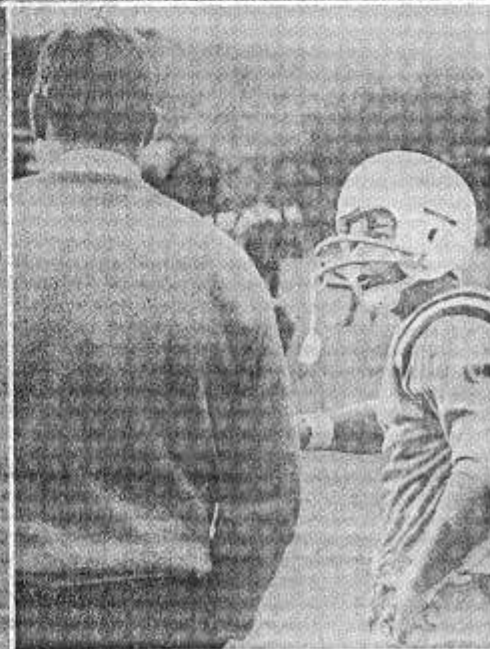
There are a few concessions and adjustments because of size. The field is a little smaller and the game a little shorter, but otherwise the pint-size Packers do everything the big ones do.

"Oh they hit — I mean they play ball," Koene said.

## 'South Night' At QB Club

South High School will be featured tonight when the Downtown Quarterback Club meets at the YMCA at 7:30, Coach Fred Goettel and his assistants and team being the subject for discussion.

Movies of South's victory over Green Bay Southwest will be shown along with the Los Angeles Rams 1968 highlights.



*Typical Action — and Inaction — On a Football Saturday at Plymouth*