

# THE HISTORY AND THE MAKING OF FOOTBALL RULES.\* CERTAIN DANGEROUS TENDENCIES IN FOOTBALL.\*

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When I received an invitation from your president some nine months ago to attend this meeting and speak to you on the history and the making of football rules, I accepted with a great deal of pleasure.

With his permission, however, I am going to depart from the subject originally assigned me, and what I have to say will be confined to a discussion of certain tendencies which, in my judgment, the friends of the game must check if we are to preserve the many good features of the game in all their wholesomeness for the boys of the coming generation.

## *The Rules.*

The rules themselves apparently require nothing but the most minor changes until the time comes, if it does, when it becomes necessary to modify the form and general style of the game itself. But there are other things connected with the game which require more immediate consideration.

I am especially glad to have the opportunity to discuss these questions with this particular group of men. You gentlemen are the teachers of the game. Through it, in whole or in part, you make your livelihood. No other group of men has such influence on the technique of the game or the spirit in which it is played. The football coaches of the country acting concertedly could, if they chose, bring the game to greater heights than ever before, or they could within the next five years bring about its elimination from practically every college in the country.

It is because you are all lovers of the game, because you are in constant contact with it, both in play and in preparation for play, and because of the tremendous influence that you can wield, that I welcome so keenly this opportunity

to discuss certain phases of the game with you at this particular time.

## *What is the Matter with the Game?*

The cold fact is that football has come in for more criticism during the last few months than for the past five years. Some of the criticism is undoubtedly justified. Much of it is exaggerated, and some is unintelligent and misdirected. But most of it is well intentioned, comes from friends of the game and seeks to be constructive.

I take it that it is not necessary for me to argue the fact to this group that in college football we have the greatest team game that the world ever produced. I take it that we are also in agreement that any developments surrounding the game which tend to become liabilities instead of assets, or tend to rob the game of its real charm and value as the premier academic sport, ought to be promptly checked or eliminated. I take it that we can also readily agree that it is to the friends of the game that the game must look for the protection of its interests. We can hardly expect much assistance from its enemies or from those who are actuated solely by selfish interests, or from those who are entirely indifferent as to whether or not college football continues. We will find, I think, that it is the friends of the game who in the last analysis are responsible for most of its trouble. That ought to simplify its correction.

The difficulty which we shall encounter is that of bringing all the friends of the game into common agreement as to what are the things that lie at the root of the trouble—if there is trouble. Precipitate or ill-considered action could easily do the game more harm, and incidentally do the colleges and schools more harm, than all the so-called evils that are creeping into the game put together. It is a time for clear thinking and for coöperative action.

Perhaps the two criticisms which are being most commonly heard are that the

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