

Rutgers to honor 1961 football team

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COURIER-POST

It was the last quarter in the final game of an otherwise undefeated football season.

Rutgers University trailed 19-7.

After a pep talk from coach John Bateman, with the clock ticking, the Scarlet Knights rallied. They scored 25 points to beat Columbia 32-19 and became the first undefeated team in Rutgers history at 9-0.

"It was fantastic, jubilant," recalled former lineman Addison Bradley, of that 1961 game.

"We helped the fans pull down the goal posts at the stadium in New Brunswick," added the Gloucester Township resident, who described the coach as a "fantastic leader."

Bradley and other teammates — including All-American center Alex Kroll — will be honored this weekend with induction into the Rutgers Athletics Hall of Fame.

Other South Jersey team members are William Craft, formerly of Riverside and now living in Easton, Pennsylvania, and Richard Lawrence of Egg Harbor.

They will be introduced on the field Saturday during a televised game against Indiana University. Other inductees are Shaun O'Hara, who won a Super Bowl with the New York Giants; gymnast Courtney Turner; and the late baseball pitcher Charles Bert Garrett.

Julie Hermann, Rutgers athletic director said it is a privilege to induct such an exceptional class.

"All exemplify the fabric of Rutgers University," she said.

While Bradley is humbled the team will be inducted, he is more excited by the prospect of reuniting with teammates, the way he did three years ago on the team's 50th anniversary.

"We had a marvelous time then, and now I will get to see them all again," said the 73-year-old, a 1959 Woodrow Wilson High graduate who received a four-year academic scholarship to Rutgers.

He became a landscape architect, received a master's degree in public administration and served as president of the now-defunct Camden County Park Commission. He still operates the Funeral Manor in Gloucester Township.

For Craft, who became a high school teacher and sports coach, the undefeated season was not as exciting as it was for other players because it was not his first. He was on the 1958 undefeated football and basketball teams at Riverside High School.

Bradley believes college players were more versatile in his time. He recounted significant ways that game basics have changed.

"We played both offense and defense, we could only block with our forearms — we could not push anyone with our hands like today — no coaching from the sidelines was permitted and fewer player substitutions were allowed," remembered Bradley, who played offensive running guard and defensive guard or linebacker.

He recalled the quarterback decided plays and discussed them with team members who gave input in the huddle.



DENISE HENHOEFFER/COURIER-POST

Addison Bradley, of Gloucester Township, holds a photo of himself from his days on the Rutgers University football team, on Wednesday, November 12, 2014. Bradley is an alumni member of the undefeated 1961 Rutgers football team, which is being inducted into the Rutgers Hall of Fame.

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ADDISON BRADLEY
MEMBER OF THE 1961 RUTGERS FOOTBALL TEAM



"We had two teams within a team. Each played 7.5 minutes of the 15-minute quarter and had to play both offense and defense when the ball changed hands."

The players of yesteryear, he added, were great tacticians.

Equipment was less elaborate and provided less protection, but players were smaller. Bradley's helmet had only one protective face bar but also one advantage: It was harder for an opposing player to grab than today's

cage.

Team manager Tony Oliva of Cranford offered an observation about college football from Bill Austin, one of the former Rutgers players.

"Sports was part of college. Today college is part of sports."

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