

1969 offensive end remembers fans, losses

By Vera Sloan

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Randy Sloan, class of 1969, said his best memories about his four years of high school football in Colby are of the tremendous crowds of fans who came to the games.

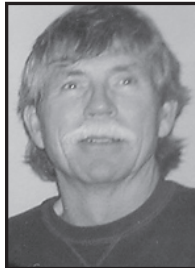
"The stands were full and so were the side lines," Sloan said. "Colby had a tradition of winning and I think the expectation of the fans was to keep the tradition going. The dads of some of the guys on the team had played together 25 to 30 years before. I guess they probably helped to set that winning tradition and they expected no less of us."

He said he recalled that coach "Mac" (Jack McCracken) had a good work ethic and the only thing he expected of his team was for them to give 110 percent to the game.

One particular memory that stands out in Sloan's mind is the National Guard in their shiny chrome helmets marching out onto the field before the games started, carrying

the American flag. He said he wore the uniform and carried the flag a few years later.

"But that's not all I remember," he said, "because I sure remember the butt whoopin' we got from Goodland. It was our last game, of my senior year, in the fall of 1968.



Randy Sloan

We played some hard football, but the game ended 31 to 0 in Goodland's favor. But the fans were still there."

The 1968-69 Colby High School football team ended the season as Northwest Kansas League Champions with six wins and two losses.

Sloan said after he had been married several years and was standing in the ticket line with his kids at Worlds of Fun in Kansas City, a man behind him in the ticket line

said, "Hey, aren't you Sloan, from Colby?"

"I said, 'Yeah, and you look familiar too,'" Sloan said. "Then he told me he was from Goodland, and that I had hit him really hard in a football game in 1968. I had remembered how bad they beat us and he remembered he'd taken a really hard hit."

Sloan lives at Dorrance, in Russell County, with his wife Sherry.

Basketball player recalls top-ranked year started slow

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The 1963-64 Colby High School Eagles basketball team was ranked by major newspapers as the number one class A team in the state of Kansas.

Team member Kerry Turner said he remembers the year didn't begin well, when his good friend Keen Young and the coach died in a plane crash in Oklahoma. Plus it was the same year that President John Kennedy was assassinated, so the memories of sports that year were marred with sad events.

He said he moved away for about a month after the basketball season started and realizing he had made a mistake, moved back to Colby, but was denied a spot on the team because he was ineligible. However, he loved the sport, as much as he loved football.

He recalled how tall Jerry Russell was and described him as being about as fat as a toothpick, but he played a good position as center for the team.

"I believe Jerry Brown went on to play college basketball," Turner said, "and that coach Wolfe had played at Kansas University about the time Wilt Chamberlain was there."

Turner was also on the football team. He

recalled the 1963 Norton game that was rescheduled to a Monday game after lights were blown out during the scheduled game the previous Friday night.

"I got to score the only touchdown in that game, and it was on a punt return," he said, "but we called it 'Blue Monday,' because it was the only game we lost all year."

From high school Turner went to McPherson college on a track scholarship and played varsity football as a freshman.

"Coach Keith Rasmussen, who had left the coaching position at Colby High School, was the Bethany College coach. When McPherson played Bethany, Ed Biggs, (class of '63) was his first string quarterback, and I intercepted one of Biggs passes and ran right past Rasmussen on the sidelines and scored a touchdown."

Turner moved on to graduate from Kansas State University, took executive training with Sears and lived in Topeka, Hutchinson and Grand Island before returning to Colby in 1975 so that his daughters could attend the Colby schools.

Today he is owner of Northwest Kansas Decorating Center at 1940 West Fourth Street in Colby.

"I love Colby," Turner said, "it's a good place to raise a family."

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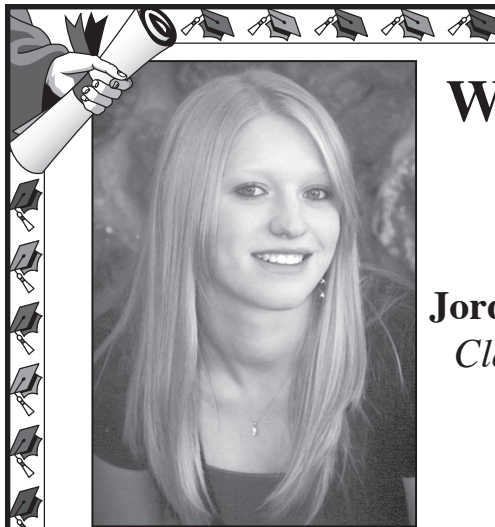
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