

Lew Newton, '28



Lewis W. Newton grew up on a farm in the town of North Norwich. He graduated from Norwich High School in 1928 and Syracuse University in 1932.

A big man, Newton played four years of football for Norwich, the first three under coach Reaves "Ribs" Baysinger, and the last for Willard "Andy" Anderson, both former Syracuse players.

He received a gold football as a freshman varsity letterman on the undefeated 1924 team. At the end of his sophomore season, he was elected captain for 1926.

The 1926 team had as seniors two more of "the boys from Akron," brought to Norwich by Baysinger from his hometown in Ohio especially to play football. They were Bill Lewton at end and Jerry Welch at fullback. They were both injured in the fourth game, however, and did not play again. The star in the backfield was George "Red" Baker, short but speedy, who was also known as an outstanding infielder for Norwich and later Indiana University, where he was chosen captain of the baseball team. Other regulars in the backfield were husky Walt Lowe and diminutive "Eddie" Sullivan.

From his tackle position, Newton led by example: "If there was one man who stood above the rest in that satisfactory battle against Cortland Saturday afternoon, it was Captain Lewis Newton. Newton is the leader of the Purple and White gridders and it was Newton who ripped mighty holes in the Cortland line, it was Newton who recovered fumbles, smeared play after play before Cortland could barely start, and it was Captain Newton who led a fighting bunch of athletes to a victory that smeared from the records that stinging defeat of a year ago." (Perry Browne, *Norwich Sun*, Nov 1, 1926.)

A few weeks later, Browne reported, "Captain Newton was a unanimous choice by the lettermen to succeed himself as captain, and they were insistent upon his acceptance. He has been a great leader during the 1926 season. Admired by his teammates, the versatile left tackle was a bulwark of strength and kept his men fighting from start to finish in every battle." (Nov 24, 1926.) The 1926 team finished with a record of 7 wins and 2 losses, scoring 207 points against

the opponents' 62.

In 1927, Baysinger was hired by his predecessor at Norwich, Lew Andreas, to coach the Syracuse University freshman eleven. He was replaced at Norwich by Willard "Andy" Anderson, and the 1927 team, captained by Lew Newton again, barely bettered the record of the previous year, going 7-1-1. Norwich scored 240 points against the opponents' 15. This team was characterized by a strong and heavy interior line, and a light but shifty group of backs. At center was Arden "Red" Skinner, with Roy Norris and Doug Breed at guards, Newton and Bob Byrne at tackles, Stan Millspaugh, Bill Horton, and Walt Quackenbush at ends. Robert "Chub" Natoli was the quarterback, with Joe Caravaglio, Leo Hynes, Howard Hale, Ed Sullivan, and Louie Schraft behind him.

(Just for historical context, Bob Byrne was a brother of recently-deceased George Byrne. Stan Millspaugh was the father of Sally Miers, and Bill Horton the father of Sally Nuzzolese. Joe Caravaglio lived on Cortland Street and worked for the IRS. "Howdy" Hale, one of three



In Norwich Uniform

brothers to play for Norwich, lost his brother Charlie right at the end of World War II when he was blown up by a bomb he was disarming. Ed Sullivan, father of Judge Howie, fought in almost every major battle in the Pacific, and was awarded the Bronze Star. Louie Schraft, it was said, went to school only in the fall—so he could play football.)

The toughest win in 1927 was against Most Holy Rosary of Syracuse, 6-2. In that game, Perry Browne wrote that Rosary's star back had a difficult afternoon: "Time after time, Newton hit the highly-touted Buffalo Pierce as he crashed against the Norwich forward wall, and time after time Buffalo Pierce failed to gain an inch of ground." Norwich's only loss came in the penultimate game against Elmira, 7-0, and the last game was a 0-0 tie at Auburn in a sea of mud on Thanksgiving Day.



At Syracuse

At the end of the season, Perry Browne summarized: "Captain Lew Newton at left tackle should be assured of recognition [on any all-star teams]. He compares favorably with any collegiate tackler hereabouts. Fighting every minute, a key man in every play and vicious in his defense, much of the glory attained by Norwich is reflected in his brilliant play." In the four years that Newton played, Norwich won 25, lost 7, and tied 2, and in

the two years that he was captain, the record was 14-3-1.

Newton also lettered in basketball and baseball, and was president of the Boys' Athletic Council, Chi Alpha (the National Honor Society), and his senior class.

Like many of Norwich's outstanding athletes before and after, he matriculated at Syracuse University. There, he won three football letters, and in his senior year, was named All-East and honorable mention All-American. After graduation, he coached and played three years for the Montreal Wheelers, where his old teammate at both Norwich and Syracuse, Hal "Skinny" Baysinger, was playing quarterback. He then played center for Toronto for one year, where he was named All-Canada and runner-up for the sportsman's trophy.

Finally making the transition from player to coach, Newton became the high school coach at Saranac Lake, Ossining, and White Plains. At Ossining, he replaced Hal Baysinger, who, in 1936 at the age of 28, was terminally ill. At the request of newly-appointed Syracuse head coach Ribs Baysinger, he returned to his alma mater to coach the line in 1947 and 1948. Fred Mirabito, who played in the Syracuse line during those years, remembers Newton as a tough coach, who had time for nothing but football. At the end of Baysinger's short tenure as Syracuse head coach, Newton was chosen from many applicants as coach at Watertown, where he had several successful teams and was honored at a testimonial dinner in 1951. He retired in 1968 and passed away in 1990 at the age of 83.

—*Jim Dunne*