



ONCE A BRICKIE, ALWAYS A BRICKIE

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THE HISTORY OF LOBART FOOTBALL

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H THE HISTORY OF HOBART FOOTBALL

*By Paul R. Condry and
the Indiana Football Digest Staff
School City of Hobart*

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For my mom and dad, and all of my family

and

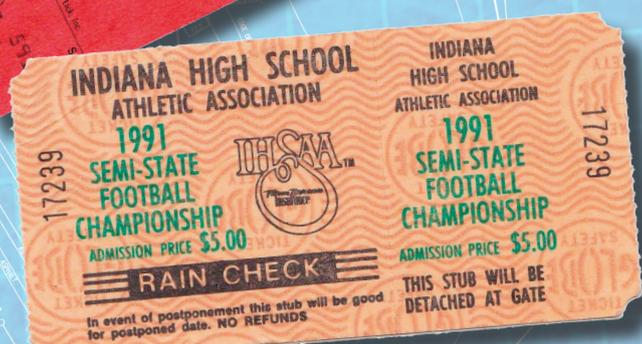
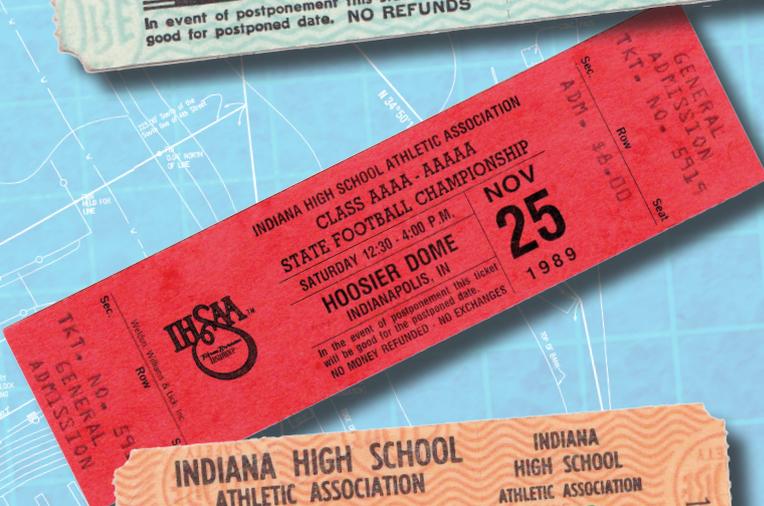
To those who have played and coached at Hobart, we salute you.
For all those who have ever wanted to play or coach at Hobart, this one is for you.

Paul R. Condry (HHS Class 1974)



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Acknowledgments

Where do you start chronicling more than 900 games and eight decades of Indiana football history? Of course, you start with the people who saw it and lived it. What if they're no longer living? For Once a Brickie, Always a Brickie, we turned to the next best thing: newspapers and school annuals.

Until 1930, the Hobart High School Aurora chronicled the year at the high school. After that publication ceased operations during the Great Depression, the HHS Memories began in 1942 and continues to the present. The student newspaper, Ho-Hi Life, bore the brunt of the load for the school's budding journalists from 1936 to 1941. Without these publications documenting the goings-on in the walls of the school building, we could not dream of telling the story of Hobart football.

In the "grown-up" world, the archives of the Gary Post-Tribune, Hammond Times (previously the Lake County Times and later only the Times of Northwest Indiana), Hobart Herald, Hobart Index-Commonwealth and Hobart Gazette have proven invaluable in describing the play on the field and the context of the community. We owe a debt of gratitude to the Lake County Public Library, the Indiana Football Hall of Fame, Bruce Webber at the Hobart Historical Society, and Bob Glover at the high school itself for the access they provided.

Personal collections and anecdotes formed another important leg of our proverbial research tripod. The scrapbooks and memories of longtime assistant coach Tom Kerr, current head coach Ryan Turley, and coach's wife Roz Howell, to say nothing of the dozens of others acknowledged below filled in innumerable gaps of events that happened but never found their way to print.

We regret that some of Hobart's rich history cannot be accurately represented within the 248 pages of this book. Especially in the early years, when the men and boys who donned the colors of Hobart no longer walk on this earth, we have had to take the records of those eras at their word. While we believe that much of it (Mark Candler's "Northern Indiana Football" website and many of the sources above) is accurate, the story can only be as accurate as those who tell it.

In any case, Hobart's 590 wins, 87 seasons of varsity football and tradition of excellence spanning generations is a story we are proud to tell here.

Acknowledgements

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Hobart Football Booster Club
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Introduction

by Coach Tom Kerr



When Paul Condry asked me to write this introduction, I was honored and humbled. This book goes back to the beginning of Brickie football and encompasses each year. The author and his staff have done a tremendous job putting “Once A Brickie, Always A Brickie - The History of Hobart Football” together. A special thanks goes to Dr. Peggy Buffington, Hobart coach Ryan Turley, and the Hobart Football Booster Club for supporting this endeavor.

Personally, to be a part of this storied program is a feeling of pride and honor. I know I speak for all who wore the purple and gold that this book is long overdue. As a former player and coach, it is with great emotion that I attempt to express the feelings that I have for Hobart football.

We have been blessed to have had many great players wear the Brickie uniform. People always ask me what made this program so great. I tell them that it all goes back to the young men who were not the stars or even starters, the ones who busted their tails to contribute and to simply be a part of Brickie football. To all of the players and coaches what have put blood, sweat, and tears up on the “Dust Bowl” and down in “Brickie Bowl,” I salute you and raise the FIST of Brickie unity!

The father of Hobart athletics was Frank Kurth, who put in tireless hours to develop all our sports programs. He was a great leader and was very instrumental in the success of Brickie Football.

The feelings that I have toward Russ Deal are great love and respect. When I moved to Hobart in 1954 and went out for football, I knew he was someone special. He made boys into men. He was a father figure to many of us and if you missed an assignment, you could count on a good “kick in the butt.” It was not only attention getting, but also very effective! Later, I was fortunate to be able to coach with Russ and learned to love and respect him even more.

Don Howell was one of the greatest football coaches the state of Indiana has produced. He developed championship teams and set many records. More importantly, he was a tremendous husband, father, and friend. Don was a great motivator and inspired our players to perform beyond even his expectations. When he became head coach and asked me to be one of his assistants, I knew that it was going to be a lot of hard work to live up to Coach Deal’s standards, but I think we did! Don was like a brother to me and although we didn’t always agree on everything, we always ended up with a handshake and a hug. He truly was a great coach and a great human being.

To all the players, coaches, and fans of Hobart football, I hope you enjoy this book and the DVD.

Go Bricks,

– Tom Kerr



Foreword

by Dr. Peggy Buffington



“All My Life I Want To Be A Brickie! Work! Work! Work!” is a familiar expression of people who live in Hobart, Indiana. What is a Brickie, and why would anybody want to become one? In the book, *“Once a Brickie, Always a Brickie”*, Paul Condry captures the tradition and pride of Hobart football with his Brickie alumnus heart, years of broadcasting the Friday night lights, and the spirit of a profound love for the purple and gold. He unveils the making of the legendary Hobart Brickies which will leave you wanting to become one! After all, Brickies are unique and enduring as you will soon discover.

“Once a Brickie, Always a Brickie” tells the fascinating story of how the small community of Hobart made its mark on the map playing football, along with the passion of adoring fans supporting a hometown team like no other. The reader is immediately captivated and discovers that there is a lot of history behind the renowned Brickies. The book covers the eras of incredible coaches who built the football empire such as Frank Kurth, Russ Deal, and Don Howell. True inspirations!

In the book, “The Glory Years” describes the magic of the Brickies and their four state championships, along with the thrill of winning and winning big! The Brickie Bowl could barely hold the thousands of fans who waited in long lines for tickets and camped out for hours to save coveted seats. Color the city purple and gold! Every Friday night, no one would be at home! Why? People would not want to miss the sweet taste of victory and the roar of the nearby trains passing through during the game which would only make the fans amplify the chant of “We are Hobart!” louder at the Bowl! Simply put, Hobart was football. Oh, how they loved their boys!

Every decade of football after “The Glory Years” is detailed with the quest to regain those state titles under the leadership of coaches like Charlie Boston, Wally McCormack, and Ryan Turley. Like their predecessors who founded the creed of hard work on and off the field, these coaches mentor boys and shape them into fine young men who are feverishly chasing their dreams of going the distance. The Brickie fans wait patiently and never cease their support for the purple and gold.

The book describes the incredible family bond in the community because of their love for the Brickies! It is instilled as early as birth with babies wearing “Future Brickie” clothing. Kindergarteners at the Early Learning Center embrace Yohan, the Brickie mascot, as they sport purple and gold gear. Elementary and Hobart Middle School students come in masses to the Brickyard to support their team on those wonderful Friday nights!

Who could resist the wonder and sheer delight of being a part of this Hobart Brickie phenomenon? Imagine the following: The pre-game scoreboard showing video of the legacy and tradition from previous decades! The JROTC presenting the colors! The Hobart Brickies running through their domed football helmet tunnel onto the turf! The sea of purple and gold adorned fans all geared up! Every “FIRST” down! Every Cheer! Every score! Every *Hobart Fight Song* sung by the fans with a score! Every shout of “Let’s go D (Defense)!” The halftime show with the band! The third quarter singing of Neil Diamond’s *Sweet Caroline!* The WIN! The running of the team to the old victory bell! The team belting out the *Hobart Fight Song* to the crowd with their helmets raised high before heading to the locker room! No one can resist the charm of the Brickies and their story! Again, simply put, this is Hobart and football! Brickies rule! Their boys are No.1! Their fans are tried and true! They believe the words of their fight song’s grand beginning, “Our boys will shine tonight, our boys will shine!”

Are you wishing you were a Brickie already? Brickie UP! Believe it can and will happen! You too can then quote that famous *“Once a Brickie, Always a Brickie”* mantra! You will also discover how the purple and gold will dominate you with a sense of pride and tradition as you embrace the true essence of being a Brickie! There is nothing like the community of Hobart coming together as a family of people supporting their beloved Brickies! See you at the Brickyard! Let’s Go Bricks! And remember, *“Once a Brickie, Always a Brickie”!*

Peggy Buffington, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools
School City of Hobart
Brickie Super Fan



Letter from the Publisher

by Paul R. Condry



The making of *“Once a Brickie, Always a Brickie - The History of Hobart Football”* is really 50 years in the making. I am sure it goes back to when my father, Paul J. Condry, took me to my first football game at Brickie Bowl in the early 1960’s. Now, fast forward to the present day. The process of accumulating memorabilia, researching, interviewing, planning, designing, and writing for this project was really three years in the making. The hard part of a project like this is making an executive decision on what goes in and what does not. The buck stops here. The quality of memorabilia, photos, video and film varied by generation.

It would have been impossible without the generous and selfless help of people like Tom Kerr, Ryan Turley, Dr. Peggy Buffington, Bob Glover, Brent Martinson, Jerry Hicks, Bruce Weber, Mark Deal, Rick Welton, Dick Marconi, Pete Cortese, Tom Ling, Bob Guerrero, and the first lady of Hobart football, Roz Howell.

First of all, I must thank my team at the Indiana Football Digest and the Regional Radio Sports Network who have earned my respect and admiration as they worked long and hard to tell the story of what I had a privilege to experience firsthand. My utmost thanks go out to Pat Doherty and Jim Cox for their amazing design work. The heart and soul of the book is the season by season summaries. The countless hours we spent in the library and at the Hobart Historical Society going through microfilm, reading old newspaper accounts, yearbooks, interviewing, and finally writing has given us a new appreciation on how lucky we have it today doing research with the advent of the “world wide web”. Thanks goes out to our research and writing team of Tonya Condry, Leah Condry-Osika, Adam Demaree, Frank Kielpikowski, Jason Kuntz, Duane Lewandowski, Tony Miller, Nathan Kizer, and Tyler Biller. Special thanks also goes to senior editor Matt Kopsea, who I really cannot imagine doing the writing portion of this project without his help and guidance.

I must also acknowledge a hearty thank you to the entire Brickie family for sharing with us your scrapbooks, pictures, letters, and memorabilia. This project was based upon what you shared with us! For the last decade, I have been blessed to have a pair of Brickies on my team in Steve McIntyre and Otto Shragal. When I think of Brickies, I think of you!

“Once a Brickie, Always a Brickie” is dedicated to the memory of coaches Don Howell, Russ Deal, Frank Kurth, Stew Mattix, and Jim McGee, along with Ray Shudick, Dr. Robert Wylie, Dennis Vargo and so many others who have inspired, challenged and mentored us all.

Finally, this project has been a labor of love! Each and every day when I went to work on it, I had thoughts of two people in mind. My father Paul, who is a 94-year-old World War II Navy veteran, as well as my son and former Brickie, Randall Ryan Condry, who just finished up his active duty career as a member of the United States Marine Corps. Both have fought and provided a cover of freedom for us all to enjoy this great game of American tackle football in Hobart since 1927.

Our Brickie family could have written another 1,000 pages of stories and anecdotes, but for now, we hope you enjoy this trip down memory lane. I can still hear you chanting in the press box at the RCA Dome, “WE ARE HOBART! WE ARE HOBART!” We hope you enjoy *“Once a Brickie, Always a Brickie - The History of Hobart Football.”*

– Paul R. Condry