

All-time PAL sports greats

Dirks, Smith, Lacombe head Palo Alto list

By WALT GAMAGE

Clarence Dirks, star tackle and captain of the Palo Alto High School football team of 1924, was today voted the greatest athlete to ever compete for the local school.

Dirks led the lengthy list of candidates for the honor of No. 1 Viking in the selection made by Howard (Hod) Ray, veteran Palo Alto High athletic director and coach.



Clarence Dirks. . . the top Palo Alto Viking of all time.

Ray in making his choice of the top 10 athletes in the school's history limited his selection to those competing after 1921, the year "Hod" started coaching here.

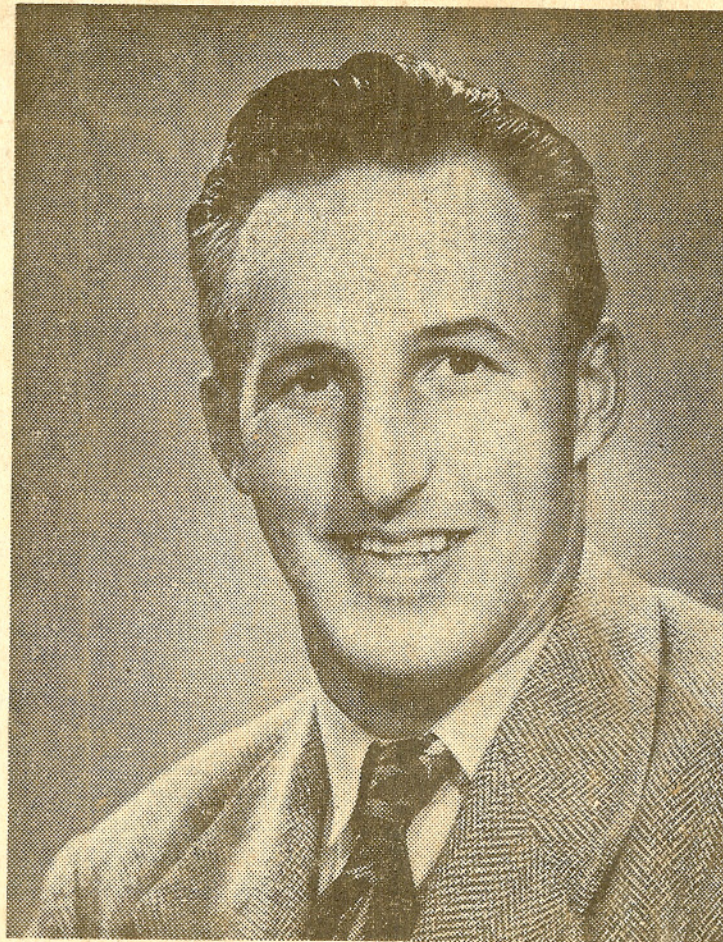
The veteran coach in naming Dirks recalled that his former tackle was a big, rough 200 pounder who was head and shoulders over any lineman in the league in his days. He was also a star performer in basketball, baseball and a standout javelin man on the track team.

Dirks later went to University of Washington where he played three years at tackle and captained the Huskies in his final year. He is now a featured columnist with Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

The second man on the list is Nelson Smith, now a local insurance executive, who was a teammate of Dirks at Paly. He was rated as one of the headiest and fastest quarterbacks to ever play in the PAL. He also set several track records in addition to starring in basketball.

Although weighing only 130 pounds he was a 60-minute man in football. His son, Barry, is a member of the present Paly track team.

The third man on the list is "Frenchy" Lacombe who was the terror of the PAL in the years of 1927-28-29. The spectacular



THE PRIDE OF SAN JOSE—Pete Kmetovic was selected the outstanding athlete to ever compete for San Jose High School. He was one of the star performers on the famed "Wow Boy" eleven and is now a member of the University of San Francisco football coaching staff.



Filling out the last three places on the honor roll are Norm Keeler, Buddy Traina and Rudy Feldman.

Keeler held the basketball scoring record for the PAL up until this past season and still maintains several swimming marks. Traina a few years ago set the PAL football circuit on fire with his sensational touchdown runs and Feldman starred as a PALy lineman in the fall and threw the shot and discus during the spring months.

Others who just missed making the first 10 were Bud Shreve, 1929; Glenn Millar, 1945; Wes Fisher, 1940; George Kerrigan, 1925; Omar Cowles, 1941; Don Smith, 1940; Don Patch, 1947; Henry Cordes, 1936; Dick Misenhemer, 1933; Grant Denmark, 1940; Harry Plymire, 1930.

According to those close to the Palo Alto sport scene before 1921 a number of the following names belong among the school's first ten:

Feg Murray, Cy Davidson, Clark Bulware, Grant Olaine, Bert and Ernie Risling, Rick Templeton, Otto Lachmund, John Norton, Gene Snell, Avery Howe, Lockhart Card, Lindly Murray and Maurice Kirksey.

Here are Palo Alto's top ten athletes:

1. Clarence Dirks (1924), football, basketball, baseball, track;
2. Nelson Smith (1924), football, basketball, track;
3. Frenchy Lacombe (1929), football, basketball, baseball;
4. Gordon McLachlan (1929), football, basketball, baseball;
5. Les Steers (1938), basketball, track;
6. Hank Norberg (1939), football, basketball, track;
7. Lyle Taggart (1938), baseball, track;
8. Norm Keeler (1942), football, basketball, swimming;



Clarence Dirks. . . the top Palo Alto Viking of all time.



LINCOLN'S BEST — Holbrook Boruck, who is now playing football for Stanford, was rated the greatest athlete to ever play for Lincoln High School of San Jose. He was all-league choice two years in a row in football and in his final year was selected "Player of the Year."

of Washington where he played three years at tackle and captained the Huskies in his final year. He is now a featured columnist with Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

The second man on the list is Nelson Smith, now a local insurance executive, who was a teammate of Dirks at Paly. He was rated as one of the headiest and fastest quarterbacks to ever play in the PAL. He also set several track records in addition to starring in basketball.

Although weighing only 130 pounds he was a 60-minute man in football. His son, Barry, is a member of the present Paly track team.

The third man on the list is "Frenchy" Lacombe who was the terror of the PAL in the years of 1927-28-29. The spectacular Frenchman played no favorites in his sports participation, he was equally sensational in football as well as basketball and baseball.

It's going to be pretty hard to convince the former Paly teammates of Lacombe that there was ever a better athlete in the PAL than "Frenchy." He is now a real estate salesman in San Leandro.

Big Gordon McLachlan won fourth place on Ray's list of all-time Paly sports greats. According to reports McLachlan was plenty good in football, basketball and baseball. He has been described as "an athlete with plenty of guts."

The fifth man on the parade of stars is Lee Steers, who was a star basketball and track performer, and later went on to Oregon where he set the world record in the high jump with a mark of 6 feet, 11 inches.

Hank Norberg was selected as the sixth man on the roll for his standout play in football, basketball, and track at Paly. He later starred in football at Stanford and pro ball with the 49ers and Chicago Bears.

Lyle Taggart, who set a PAL record in the pole vault, was number seven on the list. Coach Ray said, "He was a wonderful athlete." Lyle later lost his life in the war.

THE PRIDE OF SAN JOSE—Pete Kmetovic was selected the outstanding athlete to ever compete for San Jose High School. He was one of the star performers on the famed "Wow Boy" eleven and is now a member of the University of San Francisco football coaching staff.



VERN STERLING—Aggressive Santa Clara guard.

Bert and Ernie Rising, Rick Templeton, Otto Lachmund, John Norton, Gene Snell, Avery Howe, Lockhart Card, Lindly Murray and Maurice Kirksey.

Here are Palo Alto's top ten athletes:

1. Clarence Dirks (1924), football, basketball, baseball, track;
2. Nelson Smith (1924), football, basketball, track;
3. Frenchy Lacombe (1929), football, basketball, baseball;
4. Gordon McLachlan (1929), football, basketball, baseball;
5. Les Steers (1938), basketball, track;
6. Hank Norberg (1939), football, basketball, track;
7. Lyle Taggart (1938), baseball, track;
8. Norm Keeler (1942), football, basketball, swimming;
9. Buddy Traina (1947), football, basketball, baseball, track;
10. Rudy Feldman (1948), football, track.



RALPH ROMERO

Walt Williams, San Jose State baseball coach, is in his 29th year of coaching, 25 of which were spent at San Jose High School.