

Colorado College Special Collections
Oral History Tape Transcription R17

Clark, Earl H. "Dutch"
Colorado College Class of 1930

CASSETTE ONE - SIDE ONE

FINLEY: This is tape recording number 17 of the Colorado College Archives Oral History project. It is an interview with Earl H. "Dutch" Clark by Juan Reid at the latter's home in Colorado Springs. The date is June 4, 1977. Dutch Clark, who graduated from Colorado College in 1930 as a biology major, remains CC's most famous athlete. In 1928, he became the first football player from the state of Colorado to be named All-American. He is a charter member of the Intercollegiate Football Hall of Fame, Rutgers, the National Professional Football League Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio, the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame, and the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame. He was an all-time all-pro quarterback on many selections. Following a career as a pro football player and coach, and later with the Michigan Tool and Die Company, Clark is now retired and living in Canon City, Colorado.

REID: Dutch, what high school did you attend?

CLARK: Central High School in Pueblo, Colorado, Juan.

REID: You graduated there what year?

CLARK: 1926.

REID: You played a number of sports as a high school student, didn't you?

CLARK: Played almost everything, I guess, Juan--football and basketball and baseball and even made a tennis letter! [laughter]

REID: How about track?

CLARK: Track, yes.

REID: What were your events in track, by the way?

CLARK: Well, I ran the 100, and I ran the high hurdles, and I was, in fact, considering things in those days, but in the South Central meet, I ran the 100 in 10 flat, which was--

REID: Not bad, in those days! [both talking at once; can't understand]

CLARK: In those days, it wasn't bad.

REID: What was your first contact with Colorado College?

CLARK: Well, as far as I can remember--that's a long time back, you know. As far as I can remember, it was when Bully [Bully Van de Graaff] and some other gentlemen from Colorado Springs, and I don't know exactly who they were--there were three or four of them--came down to interview me. And I had made up my mind to go back East to school at the time that they came down and talked to me. But I did talk to them, and that was when Bully was first coming to Colorado College, and I liked him very much, and got the information from the gentlemen that if I wanted to leave the school in the East and come back to Colorado College, that they would bring me back.

REID: What school was the school in the East?

CLARK: It was Northwestern University.

REID: You went back there, did you?

CLARK: I went back there and took my entrance exams. I was back there about two weeks, I guess, Juan.

REID: And you changed your mind--what caused you to change your decision?

CLARK: Well, I probably was in love, and was away from home, and they had a thing set up--their fraternities were all in a kind of a quad; I stayed in the Sigma Nu house. But they had things arranged for me for breakfast and for lunch, and for dinner, and maybe I was a little bit shy.

REID: Was this rush week, you think?

CLARK: Well, no, I don't think it was rush week--could have been, but anyway, somebody was standing beside me [can't understand] window [?] I sneaked off, I know, went over and watched their early football practice, and while standing there, a couple of gentlemen came up and put their hands on my shoulders and started talking to me. They didn't want me to get away, I guess! [laughter]

REID: Well, you at least changed your mind. Who did you communicate with when you decided you were going to--was it Bully, or the other person?

CLARK: No, it was someone that told me--now, I don't know exactly who it was, Juan, and

I don't remember it. But someone had told me that if I wanted to come back to Colorado College, to send him a wire. Now who it was, exactly, I don't remember, but I do know that I got very homesick, and I went downtown in Evanston to the telegraph office, and sent a wire to--

REID: It wouldn't have been Charlie Short, would it--he was the--

CLARK: Well, I think Charlie Short had something to do with it. Whether he was the man I sent the wire to or not, I don't know. I presume that it was.

But I went down to the telegraph office and sent the wire, and it didn't come back, and so I went back up to the fraternity house and told the man at the telegraph office that I would be up at the fraternity house.

But I guess I didn't tell him which fraternity house, and before I got out of there, why, he had been calling all the fraternity houses, and there were quite a few people there that were anxious that I stay, and I had a little trouble getting out of there, although it wasn't anything that was bad at all. If I wanted to go, they let me go.

REID: Did they send you any money to get home on, by the way?

CLARK: Well, yes, they sent me money to get home on, or I probably wouldn't--I didn't have any money, so I'd have never made it. So--at that time, you rode trains, you know, and it wasn't too much, and somebody sent me a check to pay my train fare home.

REID: Well, when you came into Colorado College, was this your first--when you came back from Northwestern, was this your first visit to the campus?

CLARK: As far as I know it was, Juan. I don't remember particularly whether I was up here before or not. I don't think I was.

REID: Did you ever play at Central High School? Didn't you ever play the Terrors in a game?

CLARK: We played the Terrors--

REID: Up at--

CLARK: Yes, and probably someplace up here in the Springs, and we also played them in Pueblo.

REID: You probably played them on Washburn Field.

CLARK: Well, I think that's probably true that we did, Juan.

REID: What was your first impression of Colorado College when you arrived--it was quite a contrast, I'm sure, to Northwestern?

CLARK: Well, yes, it was quite small! But I was happy to get back here. That was more than anything else. And I went on, came into Colorado Springs, and then went down to Pueblo for a day or two, and then came back up here, and was here from then on, for the four years.

REID: Where did you live when you were--

CLARK: Well, I joined Phi Gamma Delta fraternity, but I lived with Dr. [Richard] Vanderhoof, whose home was next door to the fraternity.

REID: That would be Dr. Vanderhoof, Senior? We have another--

CLARK: Yes, it would be Senior. The doctor that you have here is an eye specialist, I believe, and he's--well, Richard, I call him. He said that his mother and I are the only ones that ever called him Richard. [laughter]

REID: And did you eat at the Vanderhoof home?

CLARK: No, I ate downtown. I had a job with Billy Jones, that ran McRae's restaurant, and I had a job with them, supposedly helping bring in other teams and so forth to eat there when they traveled into Colorado Springs to play Colorado College, and I ate my meals there.

REID: All three?

CLARK: I ate lunch always there, and I ate dinner always there, and once in a while breakfast, if I could get up that early, but it was a little bit difficult.

REID: You did enroll after the regular enrollment period, according to the records in your freshman year. You arrived a little late, and you enrolled late. Who was your faculty advisor? It would probably be your major prof.

CLARK: Well, my faculty advisor--I don't know. My major prof was Professor Gilmore--he was--he happened to be a Phi Gamma Delta, and he was head of the biology department, but whether he was my advisor or not, I don't know. I don't think that they had things organized quite like they do nowadays.

REID: You say you majored in biology under Professor Gilmore. He no doubt had quite an impact on your academic decisions while you were a student?

CLARK: Well, yes, he did. I happened to know him quite well, and I had no intentions of going into medical school, but I did like the professor, and there was enough things that you were forced to take in school--you know, foreign languages, and philosophy, psychology, and a few things like that to get out, and I just figured that the biology under Professor Gilmore would be probably as simple as anything I could take, and I wasn't--had no intentions of going into medical school. I intended to go into athletics of some kind--coaching or something of that nature, and so I don't think that the good professor was quite as hard on me as he might have been if he dreamed that I was going to med school.

REID: I remember your first year here. I wasn't in college then, but I remember that you were a member of the freshman football team, but that you didn't play a game or two because of your eye problems. You always had a little defect in your left--in the vision of your left eye. Did that affect you, do you think, to any great extent, in athletics?

CLARK: Well, I suppose it did at first, Juan. When I first came here, I had never had glasses during--I was supposed to have glasses when I was in grade school, my eyes were bad, and when I came to Colorado College I didn't wear glasses. But then there happened to be just a bit more studying in Colorado College than there was in Central High School, and my eyes kind of went bad. And it didn't affect my playing, although I had to get glasses, which I wore only if I went to a movie or something like that. And before games, there was a doctor, and I can't recall his name, which is bad, that used to come and put drops in my eyes before--

REID: I'll bet that was Grobeck--John Grobeck. In other words, even though you had defective vision in one eye, particularly your left eye, it didn't really affect you a great deal in athletics.

CLARK: No, it didn't bother me at all, Juan.

REID: Your freshman year, you made the basketball team, of course--freshmen were eligible to play basketball, but not football. And they went on to win the Eastern Division Rocky Mountain Conference title. I'm sure you remember those years. Who was the coach of that team?

CLARK: Well, a gentleman named--

REID: [Alvin G.] Twitchell?

CLARK: Twitchell was the coach. I think he was from someplace over on the--Brigham Young, or something like that, and he was the coach when I first started playing here as a freshman.

REID: You played Montana State in the playoffs.

CLARK: Played Montana State in the playoffs and won the first game and got beat the next two, so they were the champions. And they had a great ball club. I don't think, all-around club, we had near the club that they did.

REID: Joe Irish, who was the track coach, and Glad [?] was manager--I'm sure you remember him well, since he was your--competed in track. What were your impressions of Joe? Give us a little description of him.

CLARK: Well, I thought he was quite a wonderful guy. I know he was smart, did his job, and knew what he was doing, and I liked him very, very much. And anything that I wanted, that Joe could get me, why, he got it.

REID: Kind of a dapper guy--

CLARK: Oh, sure!

REID: Snappy dresser!

CLARK: He was that type of person, and very nice, along with it.

REID: You became a specialist in the 16-pound hammer throw. I assume you didn't have that in high school?

CLARK: I learned it--Joe--they didn't have it in college when I started here, but it did come about my second year, that they brought the hammer throw in. And I didn't know how to throw it, and Joe didn't know how to throw it, but he read books on it, and took me down on the field and taught me how to throw it, and I used to work--I used to work so hard throwing that hammer that when I'd come up in the dressing room to take a shower and comb my hair, I couldn't hold my arm up, my arms would be so tired. But it eventually paid off, because I got to the point where I could throw the thing fairly well. Not great, but for those days it was pretty good.

REID: Well, you held the conference--

CLARK: Yeah, it wasn't very far, either!

REID: The other thing I remember was that you were a member of the United States AAU team, an alternate member that met the British in a competition.

CLARK: Yes, I went to the AAU meet in Pittsburgh, and was chosen there as an alternate member against the British Empire games that were held in Chicago.

REID: Back to your first varsity year in football--it was a pretty good year. You had lost

only one--I don't think you had lost a game, up until the championship game against Colorado Aggies in 1927, which was played in Washburn Field for the championship. What are your recollections of that game?

CLARK: Well, I don't--Juan, you go back a long ways!

REID: That was 50 years ago!

CLARK: That's a long time, though, and the only thing that I recall about the Aggies, particularly, was that they were big! They were big, and they used to run that off-tackle, and not exactly like we used to run it, but they used to go out and set their foot, and boom! Off they'd come, and they had a halfback playing defense that was supposed to murder you when you broke off that side of the line, and tried to run during [?] the field, and we had no particular trouble with him, although we had trouble with the whole ball club. I mean, they were big, and fast, and well-coached by Harry Hughes.

REID: Harry Hughes, right.

CLARK: And that was--

REID: Actually, I think--that was a good season, no question about that. You made the All-Conference team as a sophomore, but I think the 1928 season was the big season as far as your performance was concerned. You recall--I'm sure you recall quite a few things, particularly the game against Utah, over at Salt Lake City?

CLARK: Well, we led Utah most of the time, and Utah--Utah was a great ball club--

REID: Yes, they were.

CLARK: --and we finally got beat right towards the end of the ball game. I don't know, something like--you could tell me the score better than I could--it was 20-something to--like 26-20, or something like that. But they were great ball clubs.

And '28, I guess, would be the best year I had, and then the Associated Press man here in Colorado Springs, Frank Crawley was his name, and he went to bat for me through Allen Gould, who was the sports editor of the Associated Press, and that's how--it helped me a lot in making the All-American Associated Press team.

REID: That year, according to the records, you led the Rocky Mountain Conference scoring all three years that you played, but this was your best year--105 points. But I think what is remarkable about that particular year--you played eight games, and you gained 1351 yards from scrimmage, which is 169 yards average per game.

In these days and times, that's still considered a tremendous amount of yardage. Anyone that goes over 100 in one game, or over 1000 in one season--but you are gaining 1351 yards

in eight games was quite a remarkable record. Can you pick out any one particular game or games--

CLARK: Not particularly, Juan. The only thing about it might be one of the reasons that I made a few more yards than maybe someone else made is the fact that we didn't have many ball players, as you know, and you just didn't get out of the ball game. When he put you in there, you were in and stayed. And then, if he did take you out, the crowd would all scream and holler and want you back in. One game I think that I ran for several touchdowns against the University of Wyoming. I remember Bully telling me beforehand that the coach there said that the passing of Clark might hurt them a little bit, but the running wouldn't, and I think I ran for four or five touchdowns against them.

REID: Well, I'll refresh your memory a little bit. You gained 19 yards per carry in that ball game, and the first time you carried the ball, you ran 69 yards for a touchdown. Remember that? [laughter] Pretty good day, four touchdowns! By the way, you did have a little help, as you know. You had some good offensive help. How about some of the other guys on that 1928 team that you--particularly on the offense, the ends and the fullback?

CLARK: Well, Juan, I--that's way back for me. I remember a few of the people--I remember Doc Weaver, I think he was center. He chased me all over the backfield trying to get that ball when I wanted to punt, and Dick Leggett, who played tackle, and there was a boy that came from Alabama that played the other tackle, and they were both 175-pounders. And we were going up against teams much larger than that.

REID: Swede Vandenburg was a pretty good--

CLARK: And Swede--well, yes, sure, the backfield--Vandenburg, and the Phelps boys were excellent ballplayers, Juan, and I think Swede kind of ran the offense at that time.

REID: You had a couple of ends on that team, too, that weren't too bad--Arlie [Arlington] Berry and Osburn--remember the two ends?

CLARK: I remember Arlie Berry real well, and Osburn, I should know.

REID: I remember the remark that when you were selected All-American by Allen Gould, who was the national director of the Associated Press, some wisecracker in the east said, "Who in the hell is Dutch Clark, and where in the hell is Colorado College?" I don't know whether you remember that or not, but you kind of made them eat those words.

CLARK: Well, that was true, Juan, and he picked me on there, and he was criticized very severely by--especially by a man named Keck, who wrote for a Pittsburgh paper. And he was criticized by other papers around the country for picking someone unknown out here in

Colorado College, and a big man in the game, quarterback, at that time was Howard Harpster of Carnegie Tech. And anybody--for Allen Gould to pick somebody over Howard Harpster was just unheard of.

So they blasted him pretty good, and then as it turned out, when I went on to professional football, and did very well, it helped me tremendously, because Allen Gould went to no uncertain lengths to tell everybody that I was the one that he had picked for All-American in 1928. And it helped me a lot--helped me in professional football.

REID: You mentioned Bully Van de Graaff as your coach. How do you assess Bully as a person?

CLARK: Well, Bully Van de Graaff, Juan, was a great coach, and he was the most honest and most sincere man that I ever met in my life. I feel that Bully had a lot to do with all the good things that happened to me during my life. And, in fact, the big thing that I remember Bully, that was that I could always count on him as a friend.

REID: Bully, by the way, was known for his trick plays, and you were involved in a few of them--the hidden ball play, the short kicks with layouts, and a few of those. You might describe those trick plays that stand out in your mind, like the hidden ball play.

CLARK: Well, of course he had a play where the center stuck the ball behind the guard's leg, and then the halfback came over--Al Bevins, I think was playing at that time--he came over and picked it up and everybody went one way, and he went down the other side of the field. Which was an illegal play--they made him stop using it.

And then he used to swing a lot--at that time, you know, you took the ball out of bounds--when you went out of bounds, you took it in a yard from the sideline, and he had a play where you passed the ball to the side from the side line, and then we used to just line up across there, and everybody blocked to the inside, and we'd swing toward the center of the field, and he had lots of little things that it's hard to remember, but he had a mind--he had a brilliant mind as far as football is concerned.

REID: The short kicks--he had an exceptional amount of success with short kicks, and you were the person that did the kick-offing, and you may remember the--remember practicing literally hours on the short kick.

CLARK: Well, I used to practice a lot, Juan, on short kicks. I used to go out early in the afternoon--I had nothing to do, and Bully used to come out early, and he and I would play association, you know, up and down the field. I'd work a little on short kicks. At that time, they had a--your tee was a little mound of mud, kind of sticking up, and I don't know whether you could do the thing. I know that I got to the point where I could kick a ball up in the air, and it would whirl, and as it whirled, it would start coming back, and once it hit the ground, it would bounce right back into the arms of the kicking team.

REID: It had to go ten yards?

CLARK: It had to go ten yards first, but it would go ten yards over the top of the line, and still come back. But I don't know that you could do that now, with the kicking--

REID: I think the rules have been changed on that. Another thing, you used to have a short kick, and we'd have a layout in connection with the--after we'd line up, it seems to me that--

CLARK: Well, we'd have a short kick, and then we'd have a man laying out, and if they saw the man that was laying out, then he'd come back in, and he'd come back in on the run, and when he hollered "Hike," then he would block from that side, and we'd try to swing around that way.

REID: If I remember correctly, it worked pretty well.

CLARK: It worked very well.

REID: You mentioned that you were a Phi Gam. How about a little bit about the social life, particularly revolving around Phi Gamma Delta fraternity--bull sessions and things of that sort, dances, and--

CLARK: Well, I was never very active with Phi Gamma Delta as far as social life was concerned. In fact, I wasn't very active in social life anyway. And I lived next door with Dr. Vanderhoof, and while I was at the fraternity house a lot, I didn't attend the social parties and that, except when I was a freshman, and they made me go. And I thought it was quite a wonderful fraternity, but as I say, I just didn't--

REID: How about Murray's? That used to be a kind of a center of social--

CLARK: Well, sure, that's where I used to get my malted milks, and I remember that Doc said drink a hot malted before going to bed would help you out and he and Bully used to catch me over there drinking--but it wasn't a hot one--but drinking malted milks at night. And that was half of my life, was malted milks.

REID: How was the student support of the teams in those days, like pep rallies and shirttail parades, and team sendoffs and things of that sort? Do you remember the kind of student support--

CLARK: Well, we didn't have many students, and I don't remember too much about it, but I do know that we probably had as good a support, considering the population of the school, as anyone in the conference.

REID: I remember you used to get--every time you'd leave on the train, they'd always--the

student body would come down to see the team off.

CLARK: Well, there wasn't many to come down there, but they used to come down.

REID: They'd come down anyway! 1929, of course, was your last season. That was the year that we played together, and I remember that most of the games were very close, and the closest one, and the one that got more publicity than any other game probably you played at Colorado College was the game against Denver University, in which Colorado College won the game three to two. What's your version of that game--it's been written up, I'll bet a dozen times, in Denver and Colorado Springs newspapers, but it's always a little different every time you read it, so--

CLARK: Well, it's been written a lot of times, Juan, and in fact, it's been in the paper lately a couple of times. And it's practically right the way it's been written lately.

REID: Well, just--

CLARK: I made the kick, and I thought it was good, and Referee Ryder said "No good" and I took my headgear off, and I didn't slam it on the ground, but I screamed pretty loud.

And he said, "Sorry, Dutch, it went right over the goalposts."

And I said, "Can I talk to Bully Van de Graaff?"

And just at that moment, out of the blue, came a--not a little voice, but a big, big voice named Ken Pomeroy, and he said, "If it went over the goalposts," he said, "it's good!" Well, I wanted to talk to Bully. I didn't know for sure whether it was good or not. I had a hunch that it was good, but I didn't know. In fact, Ken Pomeroy was the only one that actually knew that that kick was good.

And Ryder wouldn't let me have--go talk to Bully. And then I said, "Well, can I have time out?"

And he said, "No, you can't have time out."

Well, I had to find some way, and Ken wasn't exactly quiet--he kept saying, "It's good if it went over the goalposts," and he was saying it in a fairly loud voice.

And I went to Bill Grimes, who was the head linesman at that time. And I said, "I'm allowed time out, and I'd like to have time out so that I can talk with my coach."

And he went to Ryder and explained to Ryder and they had to let me have time out, so I called Bully, and Bully came running on the field, and we explained to him, and he opened that rule book and showed that the kick was good. Ryder had to change his decision, and he was quite a nice fellow, but never worked another game in the Rocky Mountain Conference.

And Jeff Cravats, the coach of Denver University, of course, was furious but it was--that's the whole story, Juan.

REID: If I remember correctly, they had to have a cordon of police come out and escort Ryder off the field after the game.

CLARK: Well, that was right.

REID: It was played in the DU stadium, as you remember.

CLARK: It was played in the DU stadium. There were two things. One other thing in that game that I remember more than the kick. Actually, I punted one time and they came through and knocked me off my feet, and there was a little fellow named Smith that could fly, that caught the ball and took off around the right side, and I cut across the field, and I caught that kid. Now, he could run--I told you in high school that I could run--10 flat. Well, this kid was a 9.8 sprinter but I ran him down, and when I tackled him, the ball bounced out of his arms and over the goal line. We fell on it for a touchback, and that was one of the reasons that we stayed ahead. But that part of it I can still remember, and you should remember that, too.

REID: Yeah, I do remember. I'm glad you--I'd forgotten about that. Because that score would have made them 9 to nothing ahead of us, and we'd have had a hard time of it.

CLARK: In fact, that Frank Botts, who coached that Colorado team, took them to Pittsburgh that year, almost put me in the relays--he watched me run that time. But I didn't run that fast unless I was chasing somebody! [laughter]

REID: The final game of the season that year was played in Pueblo. That was at the request of your Pueblo fans, wasn't it?

CLARK: Yes.

REID: They were going to give you a new car after the game.

CLARK: Well, he was going to give me a--Mr. Hoag down there--Bud Hoag, who went to school here, his father, who owned the Pueblo Star Journal, was going to give me an automobile, and it happened to be still during the season, and it would have been against the rules, and I wouldn't have been able to compete in spring athletics. And so Mr. Joe Arrs [?] said, "You can't have it."

And so I didn't get it. But Mr. Hoag, who was a wonderful gentleman, waited until school was out, and he gave me that car. It was a brand-new Pontiac, and in fact, when I graduated from college, I was married the same day, and I started to Pueblo, and in those days, you drove a car a long ways, you know, before you drove it very fast.

REID: Right.

CLARK: And I got down about halfway between here and Pueblo, and it stuck up on me,

and I was supposed to be married in an hour, or something like that--

REID: In Pueblo.

CLARK: In Pueblo, and I waited a little while, and it started again, and I drove slowly on in, and was a little late for the wedding, but it seemed to work out fine.

REID: We haven't talked much about--or you haven't talked much about your basketball, but I think I should--I don't have to remind you; I'm sure you remember, you were All-Conference basketball player for four straight years. I remember--of course, we've spoken about the 1926-27 game, but I remember the first year that I played with you, that we went over to Gunnison to play, and there were four freshmen. I was a freshman, and there were three other freshmen and you were the starting team. We went over to play--do you remember that game, particularly?

CLARK: Well, I don't remember the game particularly, but I remember going to Gunnison to play. We always played two games over there. We used to come out of the Springs on a sleeper, and go to Salida, get up in the morning and take the narrow gauge up over the hill, because you couldn't get over Monarch Pass in a car, and we'd go over there, and we'd play Friday night, and then we'd play Saturday afternoon, and get back on that narrow gauge and come back to Salida, and then back into Colorado Springs.

REID: It was quite a trip.

CLARK: Yeah, I'm sure you could make it in three hours now--we used to take about a day.

REID: [can't understand] Your senior year, you decided you were going to play baseball. What made--why did you make that decision?

CLARK: Well, Twitchell was coaching baseball, and when I was out--I used to be out practicing track, and the baseball team would come down and hang around and watch. I'd stand there and knock flies to them, I could hit them a long ways, and chase them down there, and he said, "Why don't you come on out for baseball?" So I finally did.

REID: How could you play track and run--

CLARK: Welllllll, I--by the time I got to be a senior, the things that I was doing in track didn't take too much time. Just--I was throwing the hammer and discus, and that's about all, and I'd go down there and work out a half-hour, 45 minutes, and then go on over and practice baseball.

REID: Well, I remember that on some days that you would play a baseball game in the morning and run track in the afternoon. You did that on several occasions. I know you

played baseball on Friday, and ran track on Saturday.

CLARK: Usually the baseball was two days, but I always got--seemed to get it in without much trouble.

REID: Yeah. I know you played in the outfield, but you did a little pitching?

CLARK: I pitched and played in the outfield, that's right, Juan.

REID: Well, strangely enough, they picked you on an all-conference team again, which was kind of unusual for a guy to make all-conference in four sports. Now the year that you graduated, you had some decisions to make about what you were going to do, and you stayed at Colorado College as an assistant to Bully Van de Graaff in football, and as basketball and baseball coach. I know you had other offers, that you had to make the decision--

CLARK: I think also I had at that time to go to the University of Wyoming, Dusty Rhoades was the football coach, and he asked me to come up there as assistant football coach and to coach basketball. And I had to make a decision to go up there or to stay at Colorado College, where I stayed.

REID: Then the following year, you started your pro career?

CLARK: Well, I went pro ball. You know, things were--

REID: Pretty bad in those days.

CLARK: Well, financially, things were bad. It was during the Depression, and there wasn't much money around, and I have always had something in the back of my head. I wondered whether I was as good a football player as they said I was. And as long as it made no difference to the college whether I went back and played, I went back and played professional football, and then I would come back to the college and coach basketball and coach baseball.

REID: What year was that first year you played?

CLARK: Well, '31, and I played with the Portsmouth Spartans, I started with them.

REID: National--

CLARK: National Football League, yes.

REID: What was--did you have other offers or--how did you sign up with Portsmouth?

CLARK: Well, I didn't have any other offers, no. Stu Clark coached at Denver University, and his brother, Potsy Clark, was the one that took over Portsmouth. He had just taken over Portsmouth, and Stu told him there was a pretty good kid that played out at Colorado College, and so he wrote me a letter, and signed me up.

REID: What was your salary, by the way, in those days?

CLARK: Well, I made \$140 a game.

REID: How many games would you play?

CLARK: Well, you were supposed to get . . . they were supposed to have so many practice games, and you made a different salary for the practice games, and a different one for the regular season games. But as it turned out, every game you played was a regular season game, and so the amount of money you made was--

REID: Different?

CLARK: Great!

REID: Well, \$140 for one week's work was quite a bit of money, because that was about as much as you could possibly make in a month in a good job, in the Depression years.

CLARK: Well, yeah, I suppose that's true, but sometimes you didn't get it.

REID: Well, Portsmouth did pretty well; they qualified your second year there, they qualified for the league playoffs against the Chicago Bears--I remember that.

CLARK: Well, the first year, we had a chance to play against Green Bay, and supposedly for the championship, but the game was arranged tentatively, and they called it off. And I had gone home, come back to the college to coach basketball, and I was going to go back and play the game, and then they called the game off, so I didn't go back. And then the second year, when they went back and played Chicago in the Chicago Stadium, an indoor game, I came home, and I never did go back for that one, either.

REID: I thought you played in that game.

CLARK: No, I didn't.

REID: You didn't play in that game, huh? Well, those first two years, you were the leading

scorer of the league, according to the records, and also All-League quarterback, and then you quit the next year?

CLARK: Well, then, I quit the next year, because it was difficult--it was still during the Depression, and they had no money, and it was hard to get your money. You had to fight for it, and wait for it, and maybe you got it, and maybe you didn't, and so I decided to take a job at the Colorado School of Mines, and I--

REID: What did you do at Mines? What did you do up there?

CLARK: Well, I was athletic director, and coached everything that they had--football, and basketball, and baseball, and--I think that's the only sports.

REID: That was one year, wasn't it?

CLARK: Just one year.

REID: Then you went back into pro ball? Who did you play for when you went back into football?

CLARK: Well, then they sold the franchise to Detroit, and I went back and played with Detroit, and in the meantime, Colorado University had lost their basketball coach, Henry Iba, and they had a man in mind, named Frosty Cox, but he wasn't available for a year, and they needed an interim coach, and so I went back and played football with the University of Detroit, then I came back to--

REID: You mean with the Detroit Lions?

CLARK: With the Detroit Lions, and then I came back to University of Colorado and coached basketball and helped out with spring football.

REID: You had a pretty good player on that basketball team, by the way, that wasn't a bad football player, as well as a basketball player.

CLARK: Pretty good man right now, too--in the Supreme Court! [laughter]

REID: What did they-- [laughter]

CLARK: Well, his name was White, Byron White, and he was a most wonderful person, and I presume that he still is, or he wouldn't be a member of the Supreme Court.

REID: Tell us a little bit about White's abilities as an athlete.

CLARK: Well, he could do almost anything, and he was a good football player, and he was a good basketball player, and he was a good baseball player. Now, maybe he was never the greatest of any of these things, but he was good at all of them. And he was a good football player, and he was a good runner. He had a bad habit of wanting to run over big people.

REID: I remember that! He would run right over them! He was a top football player!

CLARK: Oh, yeah! He was tough! But when he got into pro ball, the big ones didn't run over so easily, and he had a few problems, although he did-- [both talking at once--can't understand] --professional football.

REID: He did. Well, when you went back with the Detroit Lions, you played on the national championship team. You might recall your best--the year you did win the championship. I remember watching you play in an all-star game, and you had a pretty good football team.

CLARK: Well, we played--I went back there in '34, and then in '35 we won the championship and beat the New York Giants for the title. I think the score was 27 to 7 or something like that. And we had a good ball club, and we also had a--that was in '35--we also had a good ball club in '36, but we didn't win it, but we set a record for yardage gained as a team that lasted for a good many years.

REID: I think the Miami Dolphins just broke that record a year ago, or two years ago.

CLARK: Yeah, I think that's right.

REID: They played about twice as many games as you did.

CLARK: Yeah! [laughter]

REID: That's running--that record was ground gained.

CLARK: Yeah, ground gained.

REID: You were appointed--while you were quarterbacking the line, you were appointed coach.

CLARK: Well, I coached for two years. Potsy Clark was the coach at the time.

REID: Did you play and [can't understand] at the same time?

CLARK: Yes. Potsy used to quit all the time, and then--or Richard [can't understand] used

to fire him. Potsy would quit one week, and Richard would fire him the next week, and that went on for a couple of years, and finally, they both got tired of it, so they disagreed, and Richard made me the coach, and so I was--for two years I spent as a player and a coach.

REID: Were you the last player/coach in the National Football League?

CLARK: Well, as far as I know, I was. Ernie Nevers was a player/coach for the Chicago Cardinals, but he had quit before I did. I came in just about at the tail-end of his career.

REID: Perhaps you led the National Football League four out of the six years that you made all-pro, and you were kicking at the--were you the kicker for the team, as well as playing the quarterback?

CLARK: Yeah, for the Lions I did all of the place-kicking, or drop-kicking, and a little bit of the punting. I wasn't supposed to get--you might call it a short-punter. If we were down around the 50-yard line, or something like that, I could hit the ball out of bounds in good shape. And if we had a long kick to go, Frank Christiansen, the boy that played at the University of Utah was our blocking back, and he did the kicking, and he could kick them a long ways.

REID: You used to make a lot of long runs in the National League; you could break away for long runs, which is kind of unusual in the league. Do you attribute that to any particular type or style of play?

CLARK: No, I don't think so, Juan. I used to make quite a few runs, I think, in professional ball. But they didn't have a case like they do now. Nowadays, boy, they're all after you, from every direction. And in those days, I mean, if you got past the one guy, he'd sit and wait for you, you know, he wouldn't fool around.

REID: I remember you--lot of times where you'd reverse your field a lot, and cut back against the grain, as they called it.

CLARK: Yes, I used to do a lot of cutting, and I could cut very well, and run very well. I was a good runner. I thought I was about as good a runner, Juan, as played professional football, until this kid [Gale] Sayers came up from Chicago. I thought he was pretty wonderful.

REID: Yeah.

CLARK: Wonderful!

REID: You later on--when you left the Lions, you went with another team in the league,

didn't you?

CLARK: Well, I went over to the Cleveland Browns--Cleveland Rams, and I was a coach there for four years. I didn't play at all.

REID: And then later on, did you coach at Detroit University?

CLARK: Well, yes. I went out on the coast, and I coached out there for a little while with the Los Angeles Dons. Jimmy Phalen was the head coach, and I was an assistant coach to Jimmy Phalen, and I coached there for a while, and then that league joined with the National League, and the Los Angeles Dons were eliminated. So I went back to the University of Detroit, and I was back there for five years as assistant coach the first year, and then I was athletic director, and head football coach after that.

REID: That was a good experience, wasn't it?

CLARK: Oh, yes!

REID: You finally ended your coaching career--what prompted you to leave coaching?

CLARK: Well, actually, Juan, coaching was bothersome to me--it got to be bothersome. I mean, you had to spend half your time with luncheons, and half your time at dinners and you had to go to boys' homes, and the recruiting was extremely difficult. And my wife passed away, and my boy was old enough to take care of himself. He was still in school, but he could take care of himself if something happened, so I thought, "Well, if I'm ever going to get out and do what I want to do, why, this is the time." So I just resigned from there, and went to work for a tool company.

REID: A tool and die company in Detroit?

CLARK: Yes, a machine--

REID: What was the name of the company?

CLARK: Colonial Broach and Machine Company.

REID: Did you know anyone on Colonial Broach that caused you to go with them?

CLARK: Well, not particularly, but the one that got me the job was George Christiansen, who played tackle for the Lions, and he was in a die and tool business.

REID: That same Christiansen that played on Utah?

CLARK: No. This one played at Oregon. There were two of them. One played at Oregon; one played at Utah. And this was a big tackle--wonderful, wonderful person, and a wonderful football player.

REID: Played with you. Well, we've covered the ground pretty well, from the time you started at Colorado College til your--you did retire, I know, from--what year did you retire from the Colonial Broach Company?

CLARK: Well, I wish I could remember.

REID: Well, it was about five or six years ago.

CLARK: I had a couple of strokes, and--not bad ones, but enough so that I couldn't get around as well as I should, so--

REID: Let's go back to your athletic career. You're bound to have some highlight that gave you the most satisfaction, whether it was pro or college. What do you think are the highlights of your career, in your opinion?

CLARK: Juan, I've had people ask me that dozens of times--the highlights, and something that stood out for me in my career. And those things--I don't remember anything. The only thing that I remember that stood out for me was coming from a small school, being selected on the All-Professional team for five straight years, and that stood out for me more than anything else.

REID: It meant more to you?

CLARK: Yeah.

REID: And justifying Allen Gould's--

CLARK: Yeah! And justifying Allen Gould's selection, yes.

REID: Well, there must have been, of course, I'm sure, many, many pro games that stand out in your mind. How about college games--besides the 3 to 2 game against DU, what other game stood out mostly in your mind--football, particularly?

CLARK: Well, I don't recall that any of them were--I just--football, basketball, athletics of any kind. I enjoyed playing, and as far as standing out, it didn't make--

REID: You just liked them?

CLARK: I just liked to play, and while a lot of kids would be out doing something else, I

used to run--in other words, I'd go down on the field at 2: 00 in the afternoon, if I didn't have classes, and take the ball around, even if I was by myself.

REID: Uh-hum.

CLARK: Of course, we had a coach that was very unusual, and he'd sneak down there too. And so he--Bully and I would--

REID: I remember back then they only allowed two hours of practice, but those were considered just games! [laughter]

CLARK: That was--

REID: Between you and Bully! Bully was a great person, and I agree with you. His standards--we've talked about him a little bit, because he had a high standard of conduct and integrity that seemed to rub off on the guys that he was associated with, the men that played under him.

REID: I think you're right, Juan. He was high class, and he was honest, and he was sincere, and you just gotta like a man like that, and you gotta give your heart to him! If he asked for something, you gotta give it to him!

REID: He was a very inspirational coach.

CLARK: Yes, he was.

REID: I'll say one thing about Bully, he was about ten years ahead of his time on defensive line play. He'd put his line down and he really placed them in.

CLARK: Yeah, I know.

REID: You played--if you remember, in those days, you had to play both defense and offense, because--

CLARK: Yeah, I used to play--I used to back up the line. I was never a good linebacker, because I never went into the ball carrier, like most people did. I was always a good tackler, and I'd tackle them, always. But usually with--

REID: Didn't crush the field!

CLARK: I didn't crush them!

REID: Well, I think when I remember you, you played safety most of the time. You'd come

up to back up the line only when the going got tough down on the goal line.

CLARK: Well, that would be true.

REID: Well, this has been an interesting talk here, and I certainly have enjoyed visiting with you again, and hopefully, you can get you back up. You're living in Cañon City, now, which is only about 55 miles away, and hopefully, we can get you up here next year and see a few Colorado College football games. It might bring back a few memories.

CLARK: Juan, I'm definitely going to be up here next year for one of the games--maybe more than one!

END