

Summers at Ford Meter Box

Ford Meter Box has a long-standing tradition of hiring college student workers during the summer months. Summer students earn money to pay for school and have the valuable opportunity to gain real-life work experience. Ford Meter Box benefits from the fresh perspectives of these young people who are often backfilling open positions as full-time employees take summer vacations. Many current employees have fond memories of spending their summers at Ford Meter Box.

Company president, Steve Ford, recounted his memories of working at Ford Meter Box right out of high school. One assignment to ensure product integrity required the application of compressed air in an underwater testing environment. “‘Water testing’ assignments were a mixed blessing,” he recalled. “A tank big enough to dunk large setters is big enough to soak a summer student. After a surprise shower or two, I suspected friendly sabotage, but it wasn’t entirely unwelcome on a hot July afternoon.”

Another story comes from a former summer student employee who reached out to Ford Meter Box from Paraguay. Engineer Luis Bobeda, a water works consultant, recently contacted Ford for product information for a project. Because of his previous experience, he was familiar with the products Ford Meter Box manufactures. He recounted, “I learned how to build practically all the brass accessories they made at the Wabash factory.”

Luis worked at Ford Meter Box during the summers of 1968-72 while he was earning his engineering degree at Purdue University. Luis came to Purdue and Ford Meter Box through contacts his father made while serving as the president of water works in Asunción, Paraguay. He fondly remembers the time he spent in Wabash during the summers. “They were very nice people, and I will never forget how much they helped me.”

Ford Meter Box is grateful to Mr. Bobeda for reaching out and for his service as a summer student. We are thankful for each summer student and wish each of them the best in their future endeavors.





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“One for the Gipper...”

George Gipp, the central figure in what is probably college football's best-known and most perplexing legend, died one hundred years ago in South Bend, Indiana. He died on December 14, 1920, when he was only 24-years-old and at the peak of an already storied football career.

Gipp was born on February 18, 1895, in the hardscrabble country of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. He worked at odd jobs and attended Calumet High School where he was a remarkable athlete. His best sport was baseball, and he was good enough at it to earn a scholarship to Notre Dame. Until he arrived at college, Gipp had played only sandlot football.

Gipp, who never graduated from high school, did not enroll at Notre Dame until 1916. Once Gipp was there, then-assistant coach Knute Rockne convinced him that he had a bright future in football.

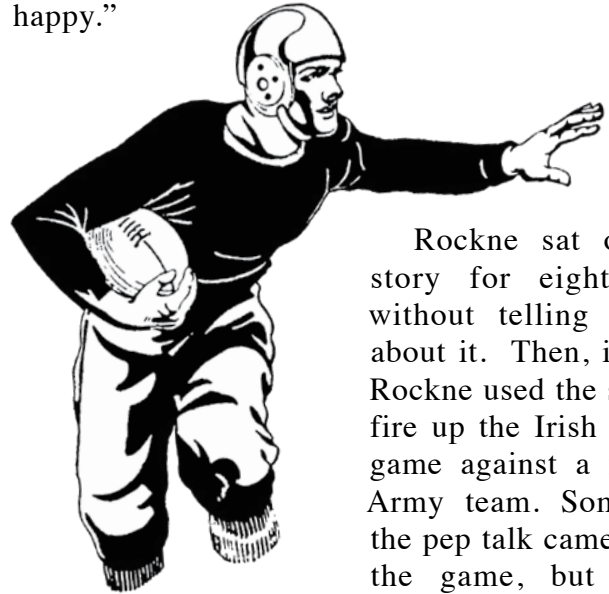
A bright future it was for Gipp. In each of his last three seasons, he led the Irish in passing and rushing. His career rushing mark of 2,341 yards was a school record that stood for 58 years. And he was the first Notre Dame player to be named an All-American.

Throughout his years at Notre Dame, Gipp maintained a fiercely independent lifestyle, and Rockne, by now head coach, tolerated it. The freedom-loving football star shunned life in the dormitories, even though his athletic scholarship covered room and board. He took up residence at the Oliver Hotel in downtown South Bend, and he honed his skills at poker in nightly games at the hotel.

Gipp became a darling of many of the nation's top sportswriters, including Grantland Rice and Ring Lardner. Rice, for example, wrote often about Gipp and considered him one of college football's most remarkable players. “His kicking and ball carrying was about as fine as anything I have ever seen on a football field,” Rice wrote. Lardner was equally impressed, and thought Gipp was the most dominate player of his era. “Notre Dame has one formation, one signal: pass the ball to Gipp and let him use his own judgement,” Lardner said.

Late in his senior season, strep throat, a serious illness in the days before antibiotics, sent Gipp to the hospital. Gipp's condition grew worse as time went by, and when he died Rockne apparently was the only one with him. It was then that the seeds of the legend were cast.

Eight years later, Rockne related what he said Gipp told him. According to Rockne, Gipp said, “I've got to go, Rock. It's all right. I'm not afraid. Some time, Rock, when the team is up against it, when things are wrong and the breaks are beating the boys, tell them to go in there with all they've got and win one for the Gipper. I don't know where I'll be then, Rock, but I'll know about it, and I'll be happy.”



Rockne sat on that story for eight years without telling anyone about it. Then, in 1928, Rockne used the story to fire up the Irish in their game against a favored Army team. Some said the pep talk came before the game, but others, such as Grantland Rice, maintained that Rockne delivered the talk in dramatic fashion at halftime with the score tied 0-0. No matter the timing, Notre Dame won, 12 to 6, but controversy still surrounds the tale because some sports authorities say Gipp never made those deathbed comments. Nevertheless, “Win one for the Gipper” became a great sports legend.

Many who don't follow sports know of the story through the movie Knute Rockne, All American, which starred Ronald Reagan playing the part of George Gipp and Pat O'Brien as the famous coach. “Win one for the Gipper” was an identifying slogan for Reagan in the eight years he was President.

by Pete Jones