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Emil Klosinski

4953 Courtland Loop - Winter Springs, Florida 32708
March 13, 1998

Mr. Charles Lamb
UND Football Archives
c/o Sports Information
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556



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Dear Mr. Lamb:

I received a telephone message from Vince Gratzler regarding your desire to obtain information regarding the helmet that once belonged to Leonard "Pete" Bahan and now is in your archives.

Although Pete discussed with me his football memorabilia on several occasions, the "story" of the helmet came about during Pete's reminiscing of his ND football days and particularly, teammate George Gipp.

Rockne's first season as head coach in wartime 1918 was marred by a short schedule due to an epidemic of flu that swept our country. I believe Bahan said that Rockne in the last week of October, resumed practise sessions which were curtailed and games had been cancelled for the entire month. It was during the first scrimmage upon resumption of practise that a helmet switch between Pete Bahan and George Gipp occurred.

Rockne decided to give his first stringers a rest and had the second string take over running offensive plays against the subs. As was the custom, most players tossed their helmets to the ground and went after a drink of water from the sideline water bucket. When Rockne called for the first string to return, Gipp accidentally grabbed Bahan's headgear and put it on. He told Bahan that it was an ideal fit and would he trade with him. Pete then said, "Let me try yours," and sure enough Gipp's helmet was a good fit for Pete. So according to Pete, the swap was made permanent.

Pete said that Rockne bought new uniforms for 1919 and Pete asked Rockne if he could keep his old uniform with helmet and Rock assented. Apparently it was a courtesy Rockne extended to his captain, because old uniforms were usually handed down for incoming freshmen.

The above is Pete Bahan's version of the helmet "story" as he told me. I hope this letter of explanation is what you want; if not, please indicate precisely what you desire and I shall try to comply with your request.

My best regards to you.

Sincerely and Notre Damely yours,

Emil Klosinski
Emil Klosinski

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