

Sunday Mass: in your hall chapel at the hour listed by your Rector, this week. Be on time!

University of Notre Dame  
Religious Bulletin  
November 18, 1955

Tonight: the Novena to the Sorrowful Mother at 6:45 in Sacred Heart Church. Pep Rally follows. Go to both!

Who Was George Gipp?

He came down to Notre Dame as a Freshman in 1917 from Laurium, in the Michigan copper country, at the behest of "Dolly" Gray, former University catcher, because he liked baseball, and because baseball was important at this school. Was not "Home-Run" Baker, just out of Notre Dame, and making history as the outstanding "long-hitter" in the nation? Gipp's ignorance of football was measured only by his ability to adjust himself and his strong body to the demands of any sport he took up. More than once his reflexes proved he could lend magic to the demands of the instant. Invited by Rockne -- a young chemistry teacher lately turned coach -- to try out for the team, he responded readily, and before the close of the season became an expert at punting and drop-kicking.

His Sophomore year was marred by a broken leg. But as time progressed, so did his ability. In the fall of 1919 he was regarded among the best in the West. In his Senior year, recognition developed into a paen. He was a universal choice for All-American -- in a day when Eastern critics looked askance at the hinterland. But here was a Lochinvar who came out of the West and swept everything before him. There was no alternative but to place him on a pinnacle. Sportswriters, from the smallest country weeklies to the largest of metropolitan dailies, were generous in their worship of this giant among giants. And ever since the day of Gipp, headlines and Notre Dame have become synonymous. If a great Notre Dame athletic tradition was born in 1913 with Rockne and Dorais on the plains at West Point, it came to maturity on the same field with Gipp in 1920.

But in the hour of triumph, when his star burned brightest, Gipp was struck down by pneumonia. There was no sulpha then, nor antibiotics. He lingered in St. Joseph's Hospital, with the entire campus silently and sadly hovering about hall bulletin boards for the latest reports on his condition. Later, the student body moved to the hospital grounds to recite the Rosary. But his days were numbered. For Gipp it was enough that he was born to flash the brightest and the briefest across the arch of the athletic skies. This accomplished, he went home to his Eternal Reward.

You probably knew this much about Gipp before you picked up this evening's Bulletin. Yet his story would not be complete if we did not add that the Mother for whom Notre Dame was named, and whose affection is the light of our school, saved her fairest and final gift for his last hours -- the gift of Faith. Gipp was baptized on his death-bed, and went off to the high fields of heaven with his eternal youth, trailing a glory that shall never lose its luster, on December 14, 1920.

After his funeral Mass in Sacred Heart Church on the campus, the remains of the great Gipp were taken back to his native Laurium and laid beneath the deep and solemn snows.

The legend of Gipp is part of Notre Dame and Notre Dame tradition -- like Rockne, and Sorin, the Log Chapel, the Dome, and the lakes. He was the most famous athlete up to his time on a campus swept by a blizzard of stars. Like Rockne, he left the scene of triumph at the height of his career. And so, on the eve of the last home game of this season, the Bulletin recalls for a new and younger generation a light that still shines out of the dim past wherever Notre Dame men gather to recall the heroes of the game they love most.

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PRAYERS REQUESTED - Deceased: John E. Maloney, '37; grandmother of Frank Marino of Cavanaugh; Francisco Gaston, '02; Lieut. James Joseph Finnerty, USAF. Ill: father of Jim Lyne of Alumni; George E. Ludwig, Jr. '52; wife of Phil Canale, Jr. '40.

Please Note: Late Communion Facilities in Dillon until 11:00 o'clock only, tomorrow.