

Ken Olson



Ken was an all-state basketball player at Dwight from 1931-1935. Ken was the offensive leader on each of his basketball teams at Dwight playing bang-up basketball each game of his career. Ken was known for being the most outstanding athlete in the history of Dwight during his era. He was a 4 year varsity starter and was said to have one of the most glorious prep careers in the state of Illinois. Ken attended Bradley University in Peoria to play college basketball for the Braves. He was a part of the Famous Five team at Bradley that went 52-10 over a 3 year period to elevate the Bradley basketball program. He was inducted into the Bradley Athletic Hall of Fame in 1949.

Art Mathisen



Art was a basketball and football all-state athlete at Dwight High School from 1935-1939. Art was a 6'5' 210 pound giant who played the offensive and defensive tackle in football and the center position in basketball. He led his basketball team to a 29-3 overall record and as mentioned earlier as well as 4 tournament championship wins in his senior year alone. He averaged over 20 points per game his senior year and was fortunate enough to play basketball at the University of Illinois for the famous Whiz Kids team who compiled an overall record of 17-1 and 12-0 in the Big 10 in the 1942-43 season. Art was an All-Conference Big 10 selection that year before his season was cut short when the Army drafted him and 2 of his teammates. U of I coach Doug Mills decided that the team would not participate in either the NCAA or NIT tournaments that year due to the World War 2 involvement. Many think that if they would have continued playing together they would have contended for a national championship.

Jim Finley



Jim was an all-state basketball player and quarterback while at Dwight High School. He was the MVP of both the football and basketball teams, led the football team to an undefeated season in 1962, led the team in interceptions in 62' and also averaged 21 points per game in 1962 and 22 points per game in 1963 for the Dwight basketball team. When Jim was asked about an event that had a great impact on his life he said, "Every practice and day I spent with football Coach Gilkey had a great impact on my life. He was like a second father to me and taught me many things that later in life I understood their meaning or importance. Jim continued his football career at Purdue University. As the tight end catching passes from famous QB Bob Griese, he played in the 1967 Rose Bowl and also set Purdue single season records for receptions in 1965 with 11 catches for 154 yards against Michigan, and the single game record for longest TD pass (80 yards) in 1966 vs. Indiana. Jim had a career that seemed to always follow a winning path of excellence.

Gary Marx



Gary thrived in the Dwight football and wrestling program during his 4 year playing career. Gary earned 4 varsity letters as a football player and was an all conference and Little All State selection his senior year. As a teammate of Jim Finley, Gary also was a member of the 1962 football team that was undefeated going 8-0 with 1 tie while beating Morris and Pontiac in back to back games. On the wrestling mat, Gary was a 3 year conference champion, an IHSA state qualifier in 1962 and finished in 4th place in the State of Illinois his senior year in 1963. Gary said that his freshman year Coach Gilkey the freshman basketball coach told him that he would be better off going up on the shelf (the shelf is

where wrestling practices took place. I tried wrestling, had some success, and it along with football help me to go to college. Coach Gilkey always encouraged me to do the best I could along with positive reinforcement from history teacher Mrs. Krestl and business teacher John Haegle. Gary went on to earn a letter at Northern Illinois in football as well as play in the Mineral Water Bowl and was also captain and conference champion in 1967 on the NIU wrestling team.

Brad Verdun

Brad was a 3-sport standout athlete at Dwight and was recognized as all-conference, All-area and all-state athlete in football, basketball and track. In 1979 Brad led the basketball team in scoring and rebounding and was a 1st team all conference selection. That same year, Brad was the conference champion in the shot put and qualified for the IHSA state track and field tournament in the shot put. In his senior year 1980, Brad was the football team MVP, a 1st team all conference selection as an offensive and defensive tackle, a first team all area selection in football, and was also a 1st team all state selection. In that same year, Brad was the Team MVP, an all conference, all area and 4th team all state selection for his basketball team. To top off a great senior year, Brad won the IHSA Class A Track and field state championship that spring in the shot put. Brad wanted to thank his parents for emphasizing to always compete and finish what he started. Brad stated that his grade school basketball coach Adam Gross benched him against Pontiac for not being aggressive. Brad stated, "That event pushed me to be overly aggressive and made me determined to never lose out because I wasn't aggressive enough." Coaches Jim Rucks and Gary Swartz as well as his teammates were very positive influences during his career. After graduation, Brad continued his football career at Indiana State University. He was a 3 year starter as a defensive tackle, an 8-time player of the week, special teams player of the year in 83, defensive lineman of the year in 85, a first team All Missouri Valley conference tackle in 85 and finally an Honorable Mention All-American in 1985.

Katy Koonz-Weihe



Katy is one of the most decorated track and field athletes in the history of Dwight High School. Katy was a gifted long jumper earning all conference, all-area and all state accolades for her entire high school career. From her freshman-senior year Katy was a state qualifier in the long jump, 100M, and 200M, and a 400M relay qualifier for 3 years. Her 400M relay team placed 10th in 1990. She placed 5th in the state tournament in the long jump as a sophomore and took 7th place in the 100M dash her junior year. The highlight of her high school track career took place in 1990 and 1991 when Katy was crowned the IHSA Class A State Long Jump Champion in both years jumping 18'3" in 1990 and 19' in 1991. Katy was also a stand out basketball and volleyball athlete earning 7 varsity letters, MVP honors in both sports as well as being selected to all conference, all area teams and receiving honorable mention all state recognition in basketball. Katy continued her track and field career at Purdue University as she was named the MVP of the team as a freshman, was a 1995 GTE Academic All-American as well as a Four time Academic All-Big Ten Selection. Katy also received the Big Ten Conference medal of Honor as a senior for excellence in both athletics and scholastics. And most importantly Katy had all of these unbelievable stats and championships while carrying a 4.0 grade point average for all of high school and college.

1980 Boys' Golf

Led by head coach Adam Gross this team made school history as they captured the first team state championship in the history of Dwight Township High School. The town greeted the returning heroes and led the team through town in a car caravan on that magical day in October of 1980. The Trojans shot a two day total of 647, 11 strokes ahead of Rochester to take 1st place in the state of Illinois in the class A field. What a great memory. At this time would the family members of each player please join us at this time.

- Coach Adam Gross
- Scot Banks
- Kevin Krople
- Jeff Milbauer
- Brian Bossert – 2nd place overall

1938-39 Boys' Basketball



Arguably the best basketball team in the history of Dwight, this team won 29 of 32 games and also won 4 tournaments that season: Pontiac Holiday Tour, Little Five Tour, Dwight Regional and the Ottawa Sectional, and were co-champs of the Northeast Conference tour. They advanced to the state basketball tournament in Champaign (the only team to do so in school history) and eventually lost in the first round to Champaign.

- Coach John Pace
- Harold Riber
- Elmer Riber
- John McConnell
- Art Mathisen
- Harry Smith
- Tom Devore
- Brady Wilder
- Ken Christenson
- James Orr
- Walter Gossrau
- John Weldon
- Robert Lydigsen
- John Austin
- Ray Mathisen
- Floyd Arnold
- Robert McClelland
- Body Lauhban
- Lawrence McConnell
- Don Welch
- Lavern Stevenson
- Trainer George Phillips