

Football fashion

Anders Rotto | Sports Editor

For about a century now, the Wheaton College football team has taken the field together as a group of brothers playing for the glory of Christ against a common opponent. Though the team's mindset and brotherhood has not changed throughout the years, the apparel of each player has definitely undergone a major transformation.

In the earliest days of Thunder football, pads and helmets were much more optional than in today's game. There were no specialized facemasks for the helmets or cleats to help grip the ground better. However, as technology and human achievements improved, so, too, did the gear of the football players.

As of the 1950s, the helmet became more protective and a facemask was added to the front, albeit a much smaller one than those of today's game. This facemask barely covered the mouth area of the player, but did provide more protection than the leather helmets from earlier years. Pads and cleats were also adopted as pants and jerseys made especially for football became commonplace.

"I wore shoes, a helmet and rib pads since I was doing a lot of down field blocking," said former All-American Thunder football player Bob Bakke who was as a member of the 1958 team, the first in school history to be undefeated and untied. "I was kind of the exception because most guys only wore shoulder pads and not rib pads."

In stark contrast to Bakke's time as part of the Thunder football team, current junior defensive back Jared Strom has had a much different approach to his football apparel.

"It all depends on what color you're wearing on the top and bottom," Strom explained. "Usually, what I try to do is go every other. For example, if we're wearing our blue jerseys on top, then I'll wear white cleats, blue socks, white leggings, blue pants and a white loose long-sleeve shirt under the jersey."

Strom also explained that at other times he likes to wear all white or all blue for a classy look. Other times, Strom wears white on gray, just to "mix it up." As for the bottom half of the uniform, Strom explained that cleats are another way to improve and dif-

ferentiate a player's look.

"I have three or four different pairs of cleats because it's all about mixing and matching," Strom said. "I just like having fun with different combinations."

Different colored gloves are also a big part of his whole ensemble so that he can coordinate his gloves and shoes. Sometimes that coordination even includes blue or white wristbands and bracelets.

"I also have a different facemask that I ordered, which is what a lot of pro guys wear, as well as a clear visor."

As for Bakke and his teammates, they would have never have dreamed of having different colored accessories to match their jerseys. For instance, during Bakke's career, players wore clothes for functionality. If the game took place during the cold Wheaton weather? They would just put on another shirt. Nowadays, Strom explained that players will wear loose long-sleeve shirts even on hot, sunny days just to maintain their "look."

In regards to all of the football styles seen in today's football games, Bakke responded, "No, we did not have all the special stuff that they have nowadays."

For Strom and many of his teammates, though, their choices and accessory options have grown as football's popularity has increased.

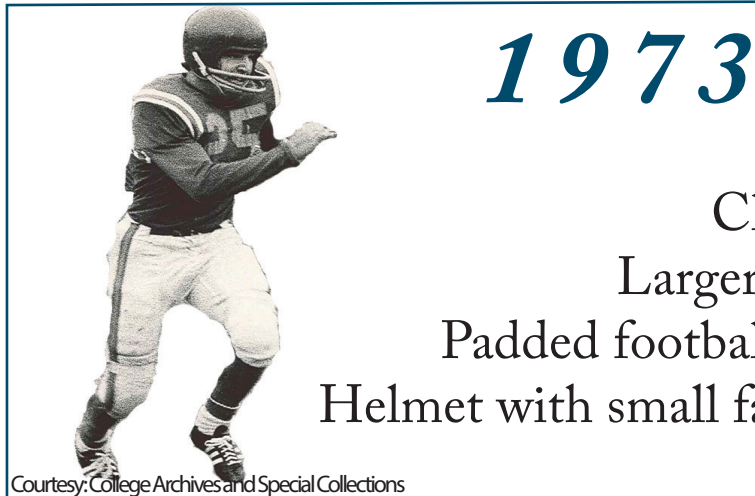
"I just try to look different from everyone else," Strom said. "You have a lot of guys who all just look the same, so I'm not trying to blend in."



1929

No cleats
Limited pads
Football pants
Leather helmet

Courtesy: College Archives and Special Collections



1973

Cleats
Larger pads
Padded football pants
Helmet with small face mask

Courtesy: College Archives and Special Collections



2007

Improved pads
Specialized cleats
Limited amount of accessories
Helmet with protective face mask

Courtesy: Michael Hudson Photography



2015

Occasional visor
Full-blown accessories
Safer helmet with face mask
Specialized lightweight pads
Lighter cleats with more colors

Photo by: Andrew Graber



Courtesy: College Archives and Special Collections
Wheaton Crusader locker room circa 1950's

Saga Table Football

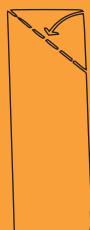
How to play

Two players at opposite ends of a Saga table take turns flicking the football across the table with the

intention of making it hang off the other end of the table. This is a touchdown — 6 pts. When a player scores a touchdown they attempt to make a field goal by propping the football up and flicking it between their opponents finger field goal posts for an extra point. Play to whatever score you wish.

Step one: Tear out along the dotted lines below.

Step two: Fold corner edge over to begin your Saga Table Football.



Step three: Continue to fold triangles until there is a small rectangle left.



Step three: Fold small corner so that extra paper can tuck into the football.



Step four: Tuck the rest of the paper into football so that it stays on its own.



Robert Caldwell

