

00:00 - 05:44 Introduction, football

Reverend Dr. A.W. Ramstad, who came to Pacific Lutheran University on the faculty in 1925 and was here until he retired about eight years ago.

1961.

Yeah, that's 11 years ago. Man, the time goes fine. He was chairman of the Department of Chemistry at that time when he retired. Well, Rami, as we all affectionately know him because I had him for a teacher back in the '30s, was a football player at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. You finished back there in 1914, wasn't it?

That's right.

And you played tackle?

No, I played fullback.

And then you went to seminary and came out here as a pastor in 1918, you were in Bremerton?

No, I was at Phinney Ridge.

Phinney Ridge in Seattle first. Then you moved to Bremerton. Then you came down to Tacoma to Pacific Lutheran in '25. Okay, now tell us a little bit about what was going on in sports at PLU when you first came here.

Well, the first football team we had, we didn't have enough players turn out to scrimmage two full teams.

What year was that?

1926.

Was it your idea to have a football team?

Yep. I went to the board and I said, give me \$300. And I can buy enough equipment to equip 15 players. That's all we bought for.

Then you played football out here?

Ole Stuen and I laid out the first football field right out here.

Right behind what's now Harstad Hall?

That was the athletic field, you see. That was the baseball field. So we laid out the baseball field. And the first team I had only one fellow, had ever played in the football before. That was Gerard Lane, the quarterback. And he was the second-string quarterback at Stanwood. And Stanwood had lost every game he played. So it wasn't much of a team, but we played two games against the St. Leo's.

That's Bellarmine now. And how'd you make out against them?

I guess we lost both of them. But the next year, I got some good players.

Where'd you get them?

Oh, I got two stars from Lincoln High School and Red Carson, Bill Fowler and Wilfred Hoven and Red Carson or Evans Carson. And they were good players. Then I got Arling Sandrud, and he was there the year before, to Sveramdalen, some good players. And then we would beat UPS Super Varsity, or whatever you might call it. And we beat Centralia, those were the only two teams we'd played, Centralia Junior College. And we beat them. So we were called the champions at the Junior College Division the second year.

In '27.

Then in '27, I also had Fred Shield, and he'd never played football in all of his life.

Was he a newcomer from Norway, or?

Newcomer from Norway, a fisherman. And he played guard. And Fred Shield, you had to get them, you had to get them kind of sore at somebody, otherwise he wasn't much of a player. You could talk them out of a game. So I had Bob Knutson play at Santa for me, and I had him slug him in the pile-up to get him mad because he thought the other team was doing it.

So then it'd be real tough.

Oh, then he was strong, you know, husky and strong. We played Bellarmine out here, or St. Leo's out here, and Fred took one of those fellows by the neck, under his arm, and hit him in the nose and gave him a nosebleed, with his fist. And Sverrondal said, you get kicked out of the game if you do that. Well, he said, and he called him something. He says he was dirty. He had kicked him, I guess, or something.

So one other Bellarmine fellow came in, and he was going to get even for this. So he went out with the blood in his nose, too. Fred picked him up, and they threw him about 15 feet. And he went out with a bloody nose. And the third one came in, and I guess he finished the game.

That was Fred Shield's football playing. He was a good guy, and he was fast, but he was strong, you know, and he was about 23, 24 years old.

He was a grown man.

So then in 19, the next year, Holman and Bill Fowler went to Cheney and had Red Carson. And we didn't have such a good team then, because we lost Arlene Sandwood, because we only had a junior college.

They went on to other schools.

Yeah, Sveri went to St. Olaf, and Arlene went to University of Washington.

Did they both play ball where they transferred to?

Yes, Sveri did, but Arlene didn't. He went into dramatics. And singing.

But Sveri played football at St. Olaf

And Bill Fowler and Hoban, they played at Cheney. And Red Carson stayed here.

What was his Hoban's first name?

Wilfred. And he played fullback, big husky fellow. And they played baseball.

You had enough for a baseball team?

Yeah, enough for a baseball team.

05:44 - 07:23 Baseball

Did you have baseball every spring?

Every spring.

Starting in '26 when you...

No, they'd had baseball before.

They'd had baseball before you came in.

Yeah, Stuen used to coach baseball.

Oh, yeah. Yeah, baseball goes way back to about 1910.

And the Harstads did.

Yeah, the Harstads played ball.

And Tony Brottem played here, you know. He became a great star in the big leagues. And Theander Harstad. That's the one that you're going to see.

He pitched in the big time, too, for Cleveland Indians.

Yeah, they were good players.

Yeah.

And Tony Brottem was I think, was the first man to catch a ball dropped off from the Washington Monument.

He did? I didn't know about that.

Yeah, when he played for Washington. He used to catch Walter Johnson.

Oh, he did?

He told me. And he said, you had to brace yourself or you'd knock you over.

Then he... Tony told me this himself. He said, we were playing exhibition games. You know, a bunch had gotten together and just travel around. Dave Roots was with him. And he hadn't had a home run yet, he said. And I was catching him. So he said, I told him what pitch I was calling for. So he would know. And he said he hit a home run. It didn't make a difference who won. The crowd wanted to see him hit a home run.

Yeah, they wanted to see him hit a home run.

He did. And he was quite a player.

Yeah, Brottem, he was quite a fellow until... I guess he had some problems, didn't he? Some personal problems.

He couldn't live the bottle alone. That was his problem. But he was an awfully nice fellow, otherwise. A fine fellow. And a very fine athlete.

We had baseball. You coached baseball. What about basketball?

Oh, yeah.

07:23 - 10:50 Basketball

You coached basketball, too?

Oh, yes. I coached basketball, too. And I coached girls' basketball.

Girls' basketball, too.

And I had... In two years, I coached girls' basketball. With one team I had we played 26 games and only lost three games. I had the Polly Landau playing forward for me, you know, and Agnes Wiersen and Christine Knutson played jump center and Vicky Raspersen played side center. And Stella Jacobs played one guard. And what was the name of the one that... She was from Stanwood. I can't think of her name now. She's married and lives up at Port Orchard. Anyhow...

What years was that? Twenty-eight?

No, that started right off in '25.

Oh, I see.

The first year I was here, I had my first basketball team. And Polly was the highest scoring forward in the United States. She averaged 22 points a game.

Oh, my word. Who'd you play? High school teams?

High school teams. We played one team with three professionals and beat them.

Oh, my word.

They came from Seattle. And we played another Seattle team that was sponsored by the Northern Pacific office half over there and we beat them. They were tiny players. And I had no way of comparing them. I didn't know if they were good or poor. I'd never seen a girls team before.

No, I suppose not. Did they play girls' rules?

Yeah. Three sections. And we had a game with Kapowsin for an opener. And my boys were going to play the next game afterwards. That's the first game I saw in girls' basketball where you were playing in an opposing team. And by the first five times, Polly had a nice shot. We had ten points that it missed.

Oh, my word.

When the game was over, I think one had twenty-eight points. The other one had twenty-nine points and Kapowsin had seven.

Oh, good grief.

Then I began to think they were good players. So that was that. Then somebody else had them after two years. Then I got them back again. But I never had a team like that in the first two years I was here. I never had anybody as good as Polly Lange for a forward. They were pretty good, but not like her.

What's happened to Polly Lange?

She just got married.

She just got married?

Yeah.

After all these years?

Yeah. She lives in Santa Barbara. And she married a fellow she'd gone to grade school with. He's a jeweler down there in Santa Barbara. And she was up here. And he was with her before they were married, that was. They went up to see Christy Knutson and Walter French. And then when she got married now, she wrote to Mrs. Carl Lindgren and told her, and she told her, she said to her, or wrote to her, that she should be sure to see me and write me. So she did.

Oh, chairman, Mrs. Carl Lindgren, who was she before?

Agus Glassa. She was the Sid Glassa and Joe Glassa and Bob Glassa's aunt. Their father was her brother. I wrote Polly a long letter that I haven't read from her.

So you had football for 26 to ...?

I had 3 years then they closed Spokane college, and Cliff came over.

10:50 - 14:40 Cliff Olson, hard times at PLU

Cliff came over here to fall of 29, didn't he?

Yeah. He and Helman came over from his school. And he took over that part. I was glad to get rid of it. I was running the boarding club. I was running a newspaper.

Oh, good night.

Then I moved out to the dormitory too, that year, in '29 and moved into the house at 120th and Yakima. So Cliff took over all that, I think, actually. And I was teaching full-time and running that booth pattern for the church.

Oh, good night.

And then I had to haul out all the groceries because they wouldn't deliver out here outside the city. I'd have to go downtown and get the groceries for the boarding. And then my first job when I came was to go down to the grocery store. And they owed 'em money. We did owe them money. And I thought, we're going to have registration on such and such a day. And we owe you money. And we will give you some money. But how much? I can't tell you. But you'll get some money. I said, on those conditions, will you let us have groceries again? And he said, yeah, you can have groceries. Then I went to the bakery. It was the same story. We owed them money. And I asked them, yeah, they had to give us bread. And they delivered the bread. Then I went to the milkman, who was a private fellow by the name of Rogers, a neighbor down here. And they owed him money. He gave us milk. We gave him some money. Then I went to John Irvin, who had a meat market.

I remember him. His daughter went to school.

Yeah. Well, we didn't owe him any money because he hadn't bought from him. So we started with a clean slate there, but he let us have meat.

And you had your own cow here?

Oh, yeah, that was in the early '30s. We didn't get any money. We didn't get paid the first 15 years I figured out that I'd given the college about \$2,000 of my salary.

Your salary wasn't even that?

No, I was supposed to start at \$1,700. And then they charged twenty-five dollars a month rent for their rooms. Then I had to go to school. In summertime, I had to borrow. I couldn't get money from them. So in 1934, my folks had a golden wedding. And we wanted to go home for it, all of us, you know? So I went to Ludwig Larson, and I said, just as soon as school's out, we had no summer school, I said, I'm going to drive east because I had the promise of the use of a car by Mrs. Johnson, whose husband had been the minister in the Augustana Synod in Portland. And he died, and she had a car and she had no place to put it. She had an apartment. She said, you can keep the car and drive it all you want to. So I did.

So I went to him, and I said, I'll have to have money just as soon as school's out. Okay. So I went to Strand to get a new suit of clothes for \$35. Tailor-made suit. And I said, I'll get some money I said, before I leave, and I'll pay you some. He said, okay. So I went to Larson and I got \$75. And I had pretty nearly \$400 coming.

So I got \$75 from him. So I went to Strand, and I said, this is all the money I got. And I promised him, he said, you keep it. He said, you can pay me later. He said, I'm working in downtown, just to get his wife. And he was getting paid downtown. So he's getting by. So I eventually made arrangements to pay him with two quarts a month for six months.

Oh, goodness. That's how you worked it out, isn't it?

Yeah, that paid for my suit. And then I sold eggs. I got some chickens, and I sold eggs. Two dozen for \$0.25. And I got a real good cow, and I sold milk from that cow in one year for \$138. And that wasn't getting \$0.20 a quart.

Probably getting what?

I sold four quarts for \$0.35.

Oh, boy. That's cheap.

14:40 - 24:10 Football, memories of athletes

Well, let's get back to football, to sports a little bit. In those early days, when you had these teams, what kind of conditions did they play under?

Well, we tried to keep, insist upon that, they had passing grades. They had to have that. And they did.

They didn't make any difference whether they were in high school or college?

Oh, they didn't make any difference. When they were in high school or college, they all played together.

They all played together.

They all played together and they played. And Carl Colton used to play for me. And Rudy Sanderson. They played basketball, and they played baseball, too. And Bill Nieman. And Water French. And something Berndon.

Knudsen?

No. No, not Knudsen. Art Knudsen played basketball, too. He played basketball and football.

How many students were there here at school at that time?

Well, the first year, we had 137 students. And 38 of those were newcomers. So and stayed a weeks to learn English.

And how many men and how many women in that bunch?

Well, about even. But most of them were high school students. We only had a junior college and four years high school.

And then you had the normal school.

The first graduate was Amrit Day. She lived up on A Street. And she only had to go to normal one semester to be accredited to teach in the grade school in outlying districts. She couldn't even teach in Seattle Tacoma or something like that. But she taught here in Parkland, Amrit Day. Then they added on, of course, later on, but she only had to take one.

And I'll get back to the football. How did things work here? Did you play your games right here on campus?

Yeah, we played them right here. And then we, the home games were played right up here. Of course, we had no stands.

Who are you, who are you, some of your opposing coaches then? Everybody that's around here now?

Well, Johnny Hydrick.

Was he coaching St. Leo's then?

Yeah, he was coaching St. Leo's. And turn it off now, will you?

[TAPE CUTS]

Well, that's a matter of whether we won or lost or something. I forgot that.

We'll go on and talk about, what other?

Oh, we played Centralia. Centralia was the only college we played. And then we didn't play Lincoln the first team, we played Lincoln the second team.

What kind of a system did you use in football? It had to be pretty simple because these fellows never played any football.

No, we had direct pass. We used, um, what do you call it? Four-man lineup without a quarterback. Direct pass to the ball.

Direct pass to the ball carrier. Kind of a Notre Dame box type of thing.

Yeah, box type. I did use quarterback the first year. I used a quarterback, but after that I used box type. I had some good players. There was Ted Fet was a good player. He was one of them. He was a good player.

He's from Bremerton, wasn't he?

No, he was from Ivan Lake. They belong to the church I had over there. North of Bremerton. The country church by Silverdale.

Yeah, that's right.

The Fet boys came over from there, Engwald and Ted. The only teams we played was Centralia Junior College in, in football. And then we played there, what you call there, Super Varsity or JV or something like that over at UPS. Or CPS it was called then. We played them.

And Arlington would hit the fellow by the name of Eddie Adio who was playing center. No, he was playing safety on a punt. And he hit him so hard he cracked his ribs. And it wasn't a dirty tackle.

He's just a real tough ball player.

Well, he weighed about two hundred and fifteen, twenty pounds at that time. And then he'd been laying track in the woods for his father, logging. And he, I saw him hold the the full back for Centralia by the ankle with his fists like that and he never moved. He just held his ankle with one hand and he held him. Because he was, he was strong with your man just slinging the sixteen pounds sledgehammer all summer.

He'd be in real good shape.

Well, I should say so. And the arms and the shoulders and the strength that he had.

And once they learned how to play the game...

Well, he learned fast.

Yeah, that'd be effective.

He went to the second year, instead of coming up here, right away, he went to Oregon.

He went early. And by the time he left and came up here again. He was the first string man down there.

But he didn't like it there?

No. He was in love with Vicki Rasmussen.

Oh, and she was coming back here.

Yeah. That made him come back. But he made first straight down there. So you imagine he was a good player

There've been a lot of good players here.

Oh, yeah. Well, he was the best.

And Carlson was a good ball player, wasn't he?

Oh. I saw him kick the football here sixty-eight yards in the air from where he kicked it.

And he wasn't a big man either, was he?

He was about, I suppose, about a hundred and fifty pounds.

He played here '26, '27, '28?

Well, then he went east and he played at Luther. Then he came back here and played for Cliff. He must have played six, seven years in college.

But how could he be eligible back here again? He didn't graduate at Luther, huh?

Well, no, he didn't graduate from Luther.

What'd he do, play a couple of years back there?

No, I think... I don't remember whether he played one or two years back there.

How did he do back there?

Well, Paul Preus saw a game back there and he was playing back there, I'd say. And so Paul said to Hans Petersen. He says, you play that fellow in safety. So he did. And from that day on, he was playing safety. Because he could run a hundred yards in close to ten seconds. And he was a dead sure tackler. And nobody could outrun him there. And a corking good punter. I would say that consistently, I believe he was the best punter we've ever had. When Cliff was coaching, he punted three fifty-yard punts in the Coffin Quarter against Ellensburg.

Oh boy.

And that's good punting.

Yeah, I should say. He's out at Sumner now, isn't he?

He's retired. He was a junior high school principal. I used to substitute out there for a while.

Oh, you did?

Yeah, I was there many times. And he did a good job in his schoolwork job.

Did he get his degree from us?

Yeah, he got his degree to teach.

He came back and he played for Cliff in the early 30s, huh?

Yeah, he played for Cliff.

I didn't know that.

Yeah, he played for me and he played for Cliff and he played for Hans Peterson. So he must have played at least six years in college. You see, ours, he was playing with high school kids here and college kids. And when Cliff came, he had high school and college kids.

To begin with, yeah. Til he started playing college teams, then he had to have college kids.

Well, then we got enough college players.

Sure. We got enough college players.

But in the beginning, he was playing high school kids. You remember Jack Leisner?

Leisner, I remember the name.

Well, he was a high school kid. And John Fadness was high school. Leisner, they were playing center.

Well, Fadness played an awful lot of college football.

Well, he played here. Then he went to Washington. Washington State and that crazy coach over there put him in at end. He was too slow for an end, but he was the best center that you could ask for. I never saw Fadness make a bum pass from center to the back field at any time. And then he was fast, and he was dead sure at backing up line on defense. He was corking good on that.

Well, he went to Washington State.

Then he went to UPS. Then he went to UPS. And he played center for them. He beat out Perkins, who was regular center for them.

Then he came back here after he finished at UPS, because I remember he played with, when I was here in '33, he was the starting center on the team then.

Yeah and he was a good one.

So he must have played about six years about.

He must have played in five, six years. And he was a good center. He was a good center. Oh, he was strong. And he was smart. You could be strong and all that if you were dumb but you're no football player.

We had a few of those around here when I was here. They were strong as all get out, but they couldn't do it. People just run right around him and everything else they could never run.

I remember when Elton was playing, he was playing tackle alongside a fellow playing guard. That fellow never learned the plays.

Elton had to tell him which way to block.

Elton had to tell him which way to block. He had to tell him what to do. He was a big, husky, strong fellow. He was a good guard. But he never, he didn't know any of the plays. He didn't know any plays. He didn't bother about it. He said, what do I do now? Well, that was that. But it was lots of fun.

24:10 - 31:06 Team spirit, hard times

What kind of spirit was there amongst the players in those days?

Good spirit.

They loved it.

Oh, yeah. Whether we won or lost. Good spirit. We had good support from the student body. All of us. I think we had a hundred percent support from the student body. I should say.

They were all behind the athletic program.

Yeah, I should say they were.

It's been that way at PLU for years, hasn't it? Pretty good spirit.

It's always been good spirit, as far as I know. It's always been good spirit. But they, to haul our team around, you know, we didn't have any money for it. But Ed Iverson had a car down here, one of our students. I used to give him a dollar to buy gas to haul a short holster out of here like to Fife for baseball or to the Kapowsin or Eatonville or something like that. You'd get enough to buy gas. Then I'd take my car. And that, of course, I didn't get any money for that.

You didn't?

Oh, no, no. I didn't get any money for hauling the groceries home, even.

You didn't?

No.

They wouldn't even give me a board. They made me board in the boarding club and charged me twenty dollars a month board. They wouldn't give me my transportation, hauling all the groceries home.

This was supposed to be part of your job, huh?

Yeah.

Who was that? Was that the board?

The board.

I asked them, I said, couldn't you at least give me ten dollars? I said, allow me ten dollars for hauling it. No they couldn't do that. I said, if I hire somebody to haul it, I said, well, of course, you haul a lot more, isn't it? I never did hire anybody to haul it from there.

Yeah, those were rugged days, weren't they?

Well, if Stuen and Hauge and Xavier and Mrs. Kreidler and I had quit, they wouldn't have been a school.

No, I suppose not.

You couldn't go out and hire five teachers with the conditions they had, because they never paid them. I never got paid. We never had a payday until Eastvold came.

Never knew when you were going to get paid.

You never got paid unless you were going to ask for it, and then you never got it. If you'd asked for fifty dollars, I'd get ten, fifteen dollars.

Well, how in the world did you live then? You had the cow I know, but –

Yeah, I sold milk and I sold eggs, and then I had a church, usually. I served in South Tacoma in all for two years, in North Tacoma. That's now Hope and Emmanuel. Well, they gave me thirty-five dollars a month. So I got that little money, and I got paid there. Then I served Our Savior's Church for one whole year, when they opened up again after their union, and became to Memorial Church. And then I served for nine months, and I served for three months, so that was two years. And I got paid there, thirty-five dollars a month. Then I went to a Swedish church in Hopeman for a whole year, and they gave me twenty-five dollars. And that included my transportation.

Twenty-five dollars a Sunday?

Yeah.

That was good money then.

Yeah, you betcha.

Then I served Bellingham. One of the churches in Bellingham, the Central, I served there three months. Then I served in South Bellingham for three months. Then I served Kent for three months. And so on. So I was better off than Xavier was, because he didn't have these things. And Stuen didn't have these things. Now, Hauge went to Alaska, fishing. He used to go to Alaska fishing. So later, so he made money along there.

Who ran the summer school when he was gone then?

Well, he ran the summer school from there, but we didn't have many, Stuen maybe had about fifty students or something. And he set up the courses. Stuen and I would teach one class.

Did you get paid anything for that?

We were supposed to. But we didn't. As I say, we never got our full salary at any time until Eastvold came. And that was from 1925 to 1943 when he came. I think it was 1943 when he came.

Yeah, 1943 came in the summer of 1943.

Up to that time, we never got paid everything. Tingelstad used to come around at the end of the school year, and I can remember once I had almost \$600 coming. \$575, \$85, whatever it was. And he said, to balance our books and not close them in the red, he says the teachers will have to give half of their salary to the school. Well, I said, I've got a bills, too, to pay. Well, that's what we'd have to do. So that was it.

You had all these bills around to pay. Dahl I suppose, helped a lot of you, didn't he?

Well, they guaranteed to pay our grocery bills.

Oh, they did, didn't they?

But one year, I got \$300 from the college for myself. Plus, what they paid down. That was extra. I got \$300 in cash for myself from them. That's all. That's \$25 a month. And I made the rest on the side, you see.

Well, it was pretty rough going.

Yeah, it was rough going. When I went home that time, you could turn this off.

[TAPE CUTS]

If a few folks hadn't stuck it out. We wouldn't have this school. Like you said, it hadn't been for the five

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You couldn't have hired five new teachers. No. You couldn't. Because they hired Ms. Parr, when she stayed about a year and she left. They had another teacher like that, and she left. They stayed about a year.

And Ms. Johnson, when I was here, and she stayed here for a year or two, and went up to Western, and she's still up there.

Yeah, well, there you are.

Vivian Johnson.

Yeah, that's right. Vivian Johnson, sure.

She was an outstanding teacher.

Of course they were.

And Louise Taylor was here for a while, but she couldn't.

No, and Ms. Sigisrud, her sister, you know.

Yeah, her sister was here, too.

They were there for a while. They left, you see. But Mrs. Kreidler stuck it out. And Xavier and Stuen and Hauge and I, we stuck it out. And if it hadn't been for that, I don't see it.

And Hong stuck it out.

Well, Hong came in again, and he stuck it out until he retired. He died.

How long was he gone?

I think he was gone for about ten years.

Was he teaching in Tacoma then?

He was head of English department at Lincoln High School. And it was Tingelstad that got him back. But Hong wasn't here so very long. And for Hong, it wasn't hardship because he had a regular salary all the time from Lincoln for years. And so he got along fine. And it's just he and his wife, but the rest of us had growing families.

Sure, yeah. All had kids.

We had three children, and Xavier had two, and Stuen had four, and Hong had two.