

125

★ YEARS OF ★

RUTGERS FOOTBALL

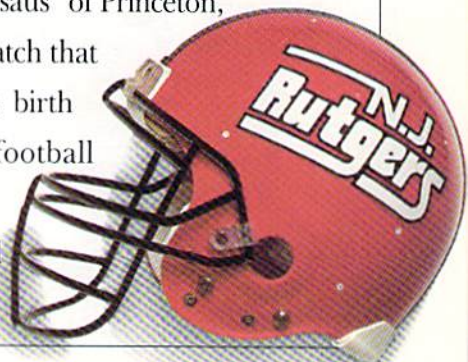


By Bill Glovin



arriving over a cannon that had mysteriously disappeared from Rutgers' campus and a lopsided

baseball game in which Princeton embarrassed Rutgers 40-2, the rival schools decided to settle matters once and for all—on the athletic field behind what is now the College Avenue gym. On November 6, 1869, the “Queensmen” of Rutgers defeated the “Nassaus” of Princeton, 6-4, in a match that marked the birth of college football for both Rutgers and the nation.



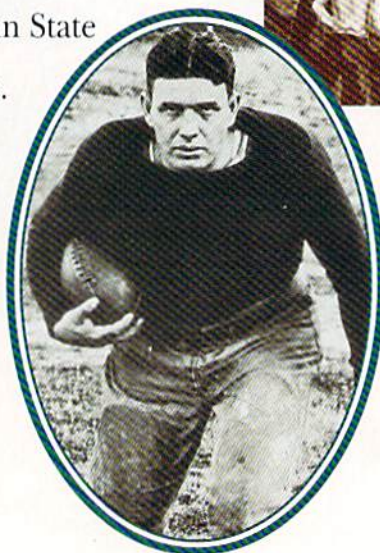
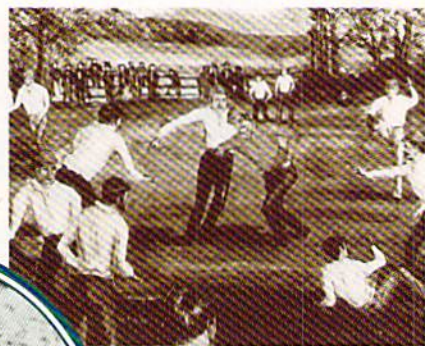
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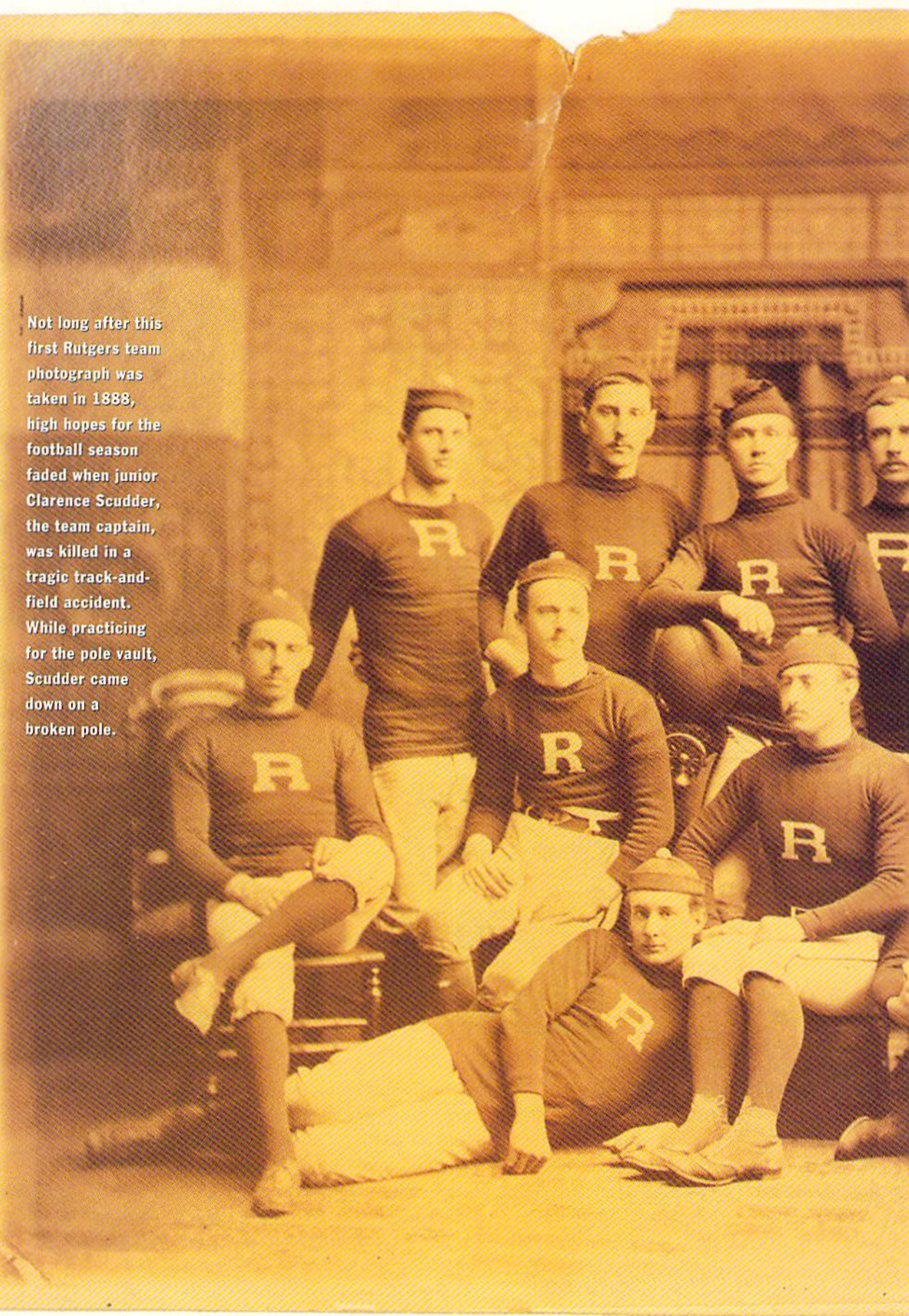
Little did those 1869 players realize that they were pioneering a tradition of competitiveness and school spirit that would someday become an integral part of Rutgers and hundreds of other universities throughout the nation. In the intervening years, the rules, nicknames, equipment, playing surfaces, and even the rivalries would all change. Between the defeats and victories, a succession of legendary coaches and athletes would make their mark: Paul Robeson, George Foster Sanford, Homer Hazel, Frank Burns, Bill Austin, John Bateman, Alex Kroll, Rich Policastro, Deron Cherry, and many others. There would also be the unforgettable triumphs: the 43-7 upset win over Rose Bowl contender Lafayette in 1924; the 20-18 Rutgers Stadium dedication game victory over Princeton in 1938; Rutgers' first undefeated season in 1961, when the team went 9-0, capping the season with a fourth-quarter, 25-point comeback win over Columbia; the centennial celebration in 1969; the 1976 11-0 season; and wins in subsequent years over national powers such as Penn State and Michigan State.



Rutgers football came into its own in 1913 when coach George Foster Sanford (left), arrived to usher in the era of the "Scarlet Scourge," 1913-1924, in which Rutgers became one of the most feared programs in the country.

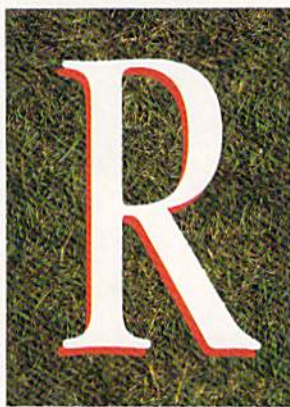
W.M. Boyd's 1932 rendition of the first intercollegiate football game between Rutgers and Princeton (above) depicts the players, wearing street clothes in lieu of uniforms, engaged in the game that bore more resemblance to rugby.

Not long after this first Rutgers team photograph was taken in 1888, high hopes for the football season faded when junior Clarence Scudder, the team captain, was killed in a tragic track-and-field accident. While practicing for the pole vault, Scudder came down on a broken pole.

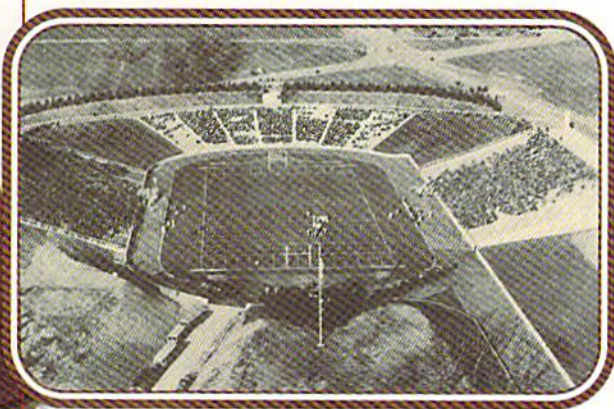


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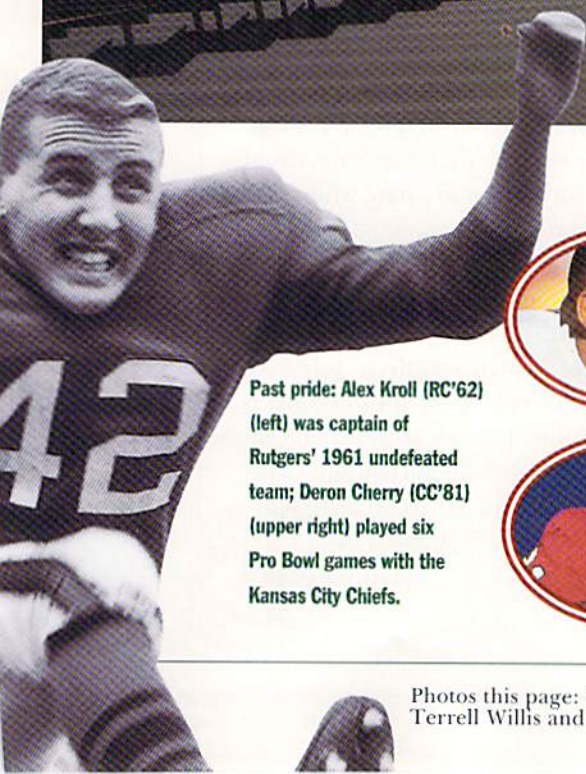
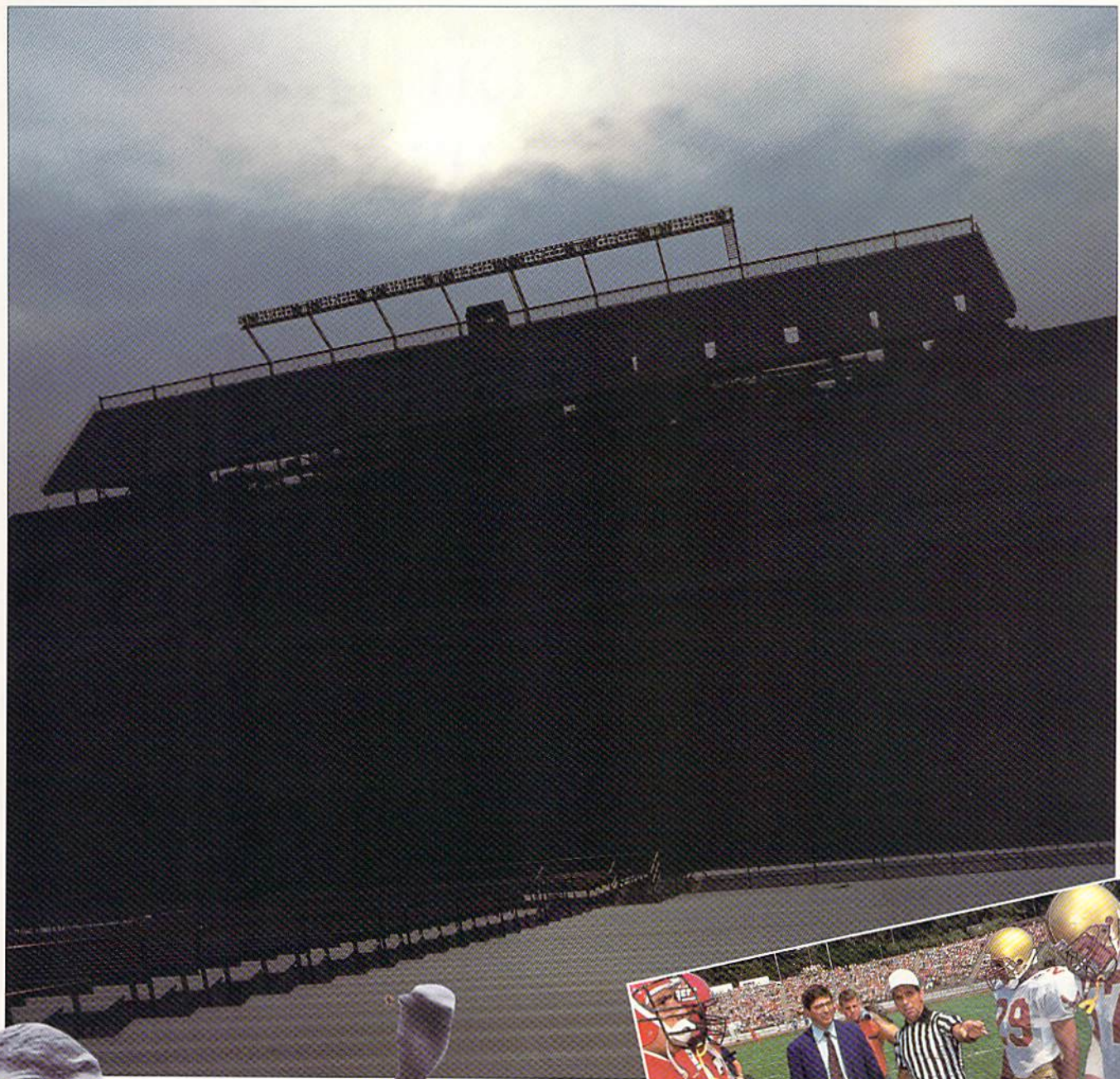
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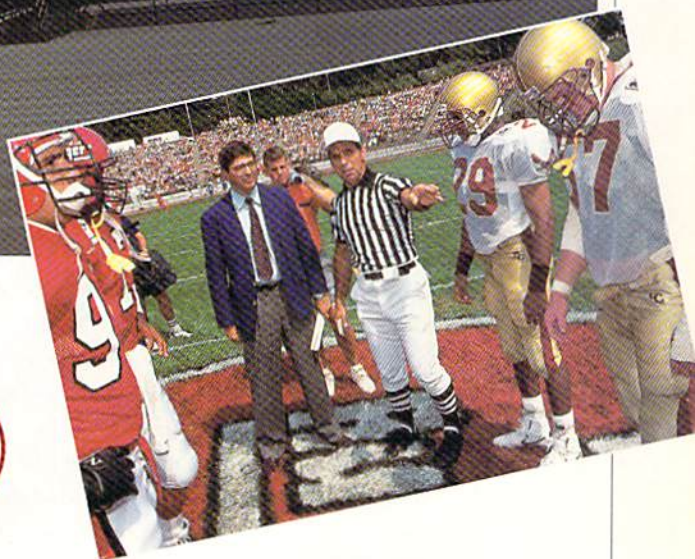
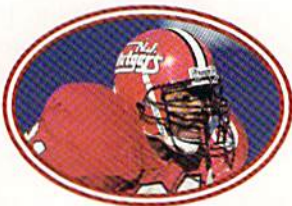
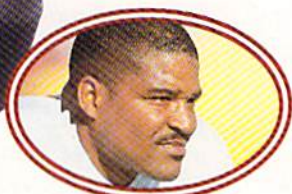
Rutgers' triumphs in football have occurred off the field as well. A major boost to the program came in 1984 when New Jersey contributed \$3 million towards the construction of Rutgers' artificial-surface practice fields; the practice bubble; and the Hale Center, which includes offices, a weight-training area, and medical facilities. In 1991, current coach Doug Graber's second season, Scarlet Knight football was invited to enter the prestigious Big East Conference, joining such football powerhouses as the University of Miami and Boston College. The newly renovated and expanded 45,000-seat Rutgers Stadium, with its state-of-the-art concessions stands, press box, and lounge/dining area, ushers in a new era for Rutgers football with its debut for the 1994-1995 season. After its \$28 million facelift, the new stadium offers a setting quite different than the one in which the first college football game was played. Unchanged, however, is the spirit and tradition of collegial competition that was founded that historic day in 1869 and continues stronger than ever today. □



The original Rutgers Stadium (left), built with grants from the Federal Works Progress Administration, was dedicated on November 5, 1938; the expanded stadium (next page) will be rededicated at the September 10th game against West Virginia.



Past pride: Alex Kroll (RC'62) (left) was captain of Rutgers' 1961 undefeated team; Deron Cherry (CC'81) (upper right) played six Pro Bowl games with the Kansas City Chiefs.



Future hope: Running back Terrell Willis (lower left), a candidate for the Heisman Award, led the Big East in rushing last year.

A ceremonial coin toss (above) commemorated Rutgers' first game as a member of the Big East conference in 1991.