

# The Touchdown Twins

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Most schools the size of Sistersville High School would be fortunate to produce one Big Ten Conference running back in its lifetime.

Sistersville had two. At the same time. In the same backfield. It almost wasn't fair.

Bob Wable and Kenny Mikes were known as the Touchdown Twins as they terrorized Ohio Valley and Little Kanawha Conference teams in the early 1950s. Maybe it wasn't the most original name (interestingly, Sissonville High had two backs with the same nickname at the same time), but it certainly was fitting.

Mikes and Wable ran wild during Sistersville's 1953 state Class A championship season, the first in school history won on the field. (The 1939 team was the highest rated small school in the state writers' rankings, and No. 2 overall to thrice-tied Charleston.)

The 1953 Tigers (10-0-1) averaged 33.5 points per game as West Virginia's highest scoring team, and the Touchdown Twins did most of the scoring.

Wable set a West Virginia regular-season record with 153 points (though broken a week later by Sissonville back Ray Jones) and Mikes scored 111. During the 27-12 state championship game victory over previously undefeated Romney, each scored two touchdowns and the pair finished with 288 points. By themselves.

Wable got the title game at Fairmont going with an 88-yard kickoff return touchdown; there was concern before the game about Wable having the flu, but it apparently didn't prove to be an issue.

After that, Wable and Mikes saved the best for last. Literally.

With Sistersville behind going into the fourth quarter, Wable gave the Tigers a 13-12 lead with a 7-yard touchdown run. Mikes then scored the final two touchdowns to wrap it up.

Touchdown twins, indeed.

Mikes was a multi-time All-Ohio Valley selection by The Intelligencer, but Wable wasn't able to practice much or complete most games his junior season because of left leg pain.

Frustrated by the problem and the pain, Wable consulted a specialist who discovered a small bone near his little toe had splintered and a piece was lodged between two toes. Surgery resolved the problem, although he was unable to play basketball that season.

Finally healthy, Wable put on such a show his senior season that he got a full ride to Ohio State. He was curtailed by a knee injury but still played on the Buckeyes' 1955 national championship team.

Mikes starred at Purdue, leading the Big Ten in punting one season while also rushing for 347 yards and catching 13 passes during his final two seasons, when the sport was much lower scoring than it is today.

In 1957, Mikes scored the decisive touchdown as Purdue (0-3) upset top-ranked Michigan State 20-13 before the largest crowd (64,950) in Michigan State history to that time. (That wasn't a bad Purdue team, by the way; its three losses to that point were to Notre Dame, No. 3 Minnesota and No. 16 Wisconsin during a time when the Big Ten ruled college football.)

Interestingly, Wable wasn't the only Sistersville player who dealt with a serious medical condition on that championship team.

Jim Miller, a 120-pound left guard (you read that correctly) had been badly injured in an auto accident that cost him some of his hearing. However, he persevered and managed to play, and play well, by having tackle Paul Chute whisper the play into his ear just before the ball was snapped.

Miller's condition led to one problem, however; he didn't always hear the whistle ending a play, and the Tigers were assessed about 100 yards in penalties that season for playing after the whistle.

Not that it hurt the touchdown twins who, indeed, were double trouble that season. The only blemish on Sistersville's record that season was a 20-20 tie with Doddridge County (5-2-3); the top win was against Calhoun County (9-1), which otherwise went undefeated with only one other close game.

After the season, Mikes, Wable and end Bobby Joe Fisher all made the United Press first team all-state team. On the "official" all-state team, Wable — despite his record scoring — made only the second team.

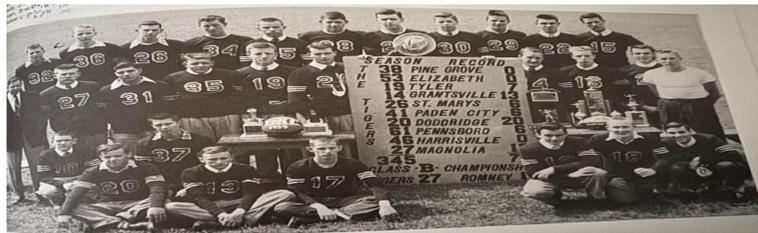
If nothing else, this might have been the most well-fed team in school history.

The 1953 team was celebrated with a dinner before the state championship game. Then the week after, the Tigers were honored at the annual Little Kanawha Conference dinner, hosted by them since they won the conference. Then, on Dec. 7, they held the official celebratory dinner, one attended by three different guest speakers.

Just like the touchdown twins, their celebration dinners came in pairs that season.

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## 'B' Playoff Lineups

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*Probable starting lineups for Class "B" title clash at Fairmont (weight in parenthesis)*

<b>SISTERSVILLE</b>	<b>ROMNEY</b>
<b>LE</b> — Allen Patterson (155)	<b>LE</b> — Mike Coleman (168)
<b>LT</b> — Paul Chute (150)	<b>LT</b> — Dave Green (170)
<b>LG</b> — Jim Milleer (120)	<b>LG</b> — Bob Saville (162)
<b>C</b> — Jim Sutton (150)	<b>C</b> — Gerald Keister (150)
<b>RG</b> — Don Stokes (155)	<b>RG</b> — Jim Quinn (170)
<b>RT</b> — Jim Baker (160)	<b>RT</b> — Clint Hott (168)
<b>RE</b> — Bob Fisher (145)	<b>RE</b> — Sam Lyons (160)
<b>QB</b> — Paul Shreves (160)	<b>QB</b> — Eddie Hartman (150)
<b>LH</b> — Emil Hanood (160)	<b>LH</b> — Ray Haines (148)
<b>RH</b> — Bob Wable (168)	<b>RH</b> — Emory Landin (155)
<b>FB</b> — Kenny Mikes (178)	<b>FB</b> — Roger Parker (165)

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*Line average — Sistersville 148, Romney 164*

*Backfield average — Sistersville 167, Romney 155*

*Team average — Sistersville 155, Romney 161*

*Team records — Sistersville (9-0-1), Romney (10-0)*

*Offensive average — Sistersville 34.5, Romney 24.1*

*Defensive average — Sistersville 7.1, Romney 9.5*

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