

1970-81: Familiar faces, going places

Having coached the likes of Len Dawson, Bob Griese and Mike Phipps, it's no wonder Bob DeMoss was famed as a "Quarterback Architect." And, after 20 seasons as a loyal assistant under Stu Holcomb and Jack Mollenkopf, it virtually was a forgone conclusion that DeMoss would assume the reins as head coach when Mollenkopf retired.

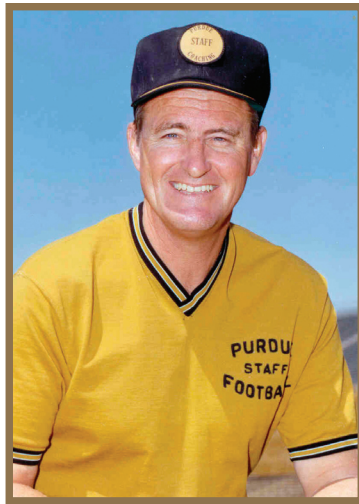
An affable gentleman, DeMoss' first order of business in 1970 was finding a quarterback to

replace Phipps. "DeMo" settled on Chuck Piebes, who had joined the Boilermakers a year earlier as a walkon defensive back and flanker. But after six games, Piebes was replaced by Gary Danielson. The Boilermakers mustered merely one victory in four games with Danielson under center to finish with a 4-6 record, but DeMoss had found the next member of the "Cradle of Quarterbacks."

After losing a pair of non-conference heartbreakers to open the 1971 season, Purdue won its first three Big Ten games and was ranked 17th in the Associated Press poll. Danielson became the first quarterback in school history to pass for 300 yards in a game during a 27-13 Homecoming victory over Minnesota on Oct. 9, and he did it in three quarters before being knocked unconscious and suffering a separated left shoulder. With Danielson in and out of the lineup, the Boilermakers lost their final five games to finish with a 3-7 record.

Nevertheless, there was enough talent and depth returning in 1972 to legitimize murmurings of the Rose Bowl. DeMoss decided to instill the wishbone offense, which was growing in popularity around the country. The Boilermakers lost their first three games and then opted to bring back their conventional Power-I formation. Purdue rebounded to finish 6-5 overall and 6-2 in the Big Ten, good for third place behind co-champions Michigan and Ohio State (7-1). The Boilermakers had a chance to share the title before losing to the third-ranked Wolverines 9-6 in Ann Arbor on Nov. 18.

Despite coming off a winning season,



Bob DeMoss

DeMoss resigned as coach on Dec. 3, 1972, saying he and the football program needed a change.

Alex Agase, an All-America guard at Purdue in 1943 while on campus for the V-12 Navy College Training Program, was named head coach on Dec. 15. He returned to the Boilermakers from Northwestern, where he was an assistant under Ara Parseghian for eight years before beginning a nine-year run as head coach. Agase became

the first individual in the 76-year history of the conference to serve as head football coach at two member institutions.

Agase, who served in the Marine Corps in 1944 and 1945 and won a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart while on the Japanese island of Okinawa, had to replace 15 starters for the 1973 season. The Boilermakers failed to win consecutive games but never suffered more than two straight losses, and the end result was a 5-6 record.

After starting 0-1-1 in 1974, Agase got his first signature win at Purdue with a surprising 31-20 victory over second-ranked and defending national champion Notre Dame in South Bend on Sept. 28. But the inconsistent Boilermakers again did not win back-to-back games and wound up 4-6-1.

Purdue lost its first five games of the 1975 season, despite having a chance in all of them. The Boilermakers went on to finish in a third-place tie in the Big Ten with Illinois and Michigan State at 4-4 as part of a 4-7 overall record.

After a 3-2 start that included a pair of Big Ten wins in 1976, Purdue lost three games in a row. Then the "Spoilermakers" pulled off another upset, knocking off top-ranked and Rose Bowl-bound Michigan

16-14 at Ross-Ade Stadium on Nov. 6. They went on to finish with a 5-6 record for their sixth losing season in seven years since Mollenkopf retired.

Purdue officials announced on Nov. 26 that Agase, who had a four-year record of 18-25-1, would not have his contract renewed.

Nine days later, Purdue hired Jim Young, head coach at Arizona. Young was an assistant under Bo Schembechler at Miami of Ohio (1964-68) and Michigan (1969-72). A native of Van Wert, Ohio, Young attended Ohio State for one year – playing on the Buckeyes' 1954 national championship team – before transferring to Bowling Green.

The 1977 Boilermakers started 2-4, won three games in a row and then lost their last two to finish 5-6. But what followed was arguably the most successful three-year run in school history. Purdue went 9-2-1 in 1978, 10-2 in 1979 and 9-3 in 1980 and played in – and won – three bowl games: Peach, Bluebonnet and Liberty. With 28 victories during that stretch, the Boilermakers won more games than Ohio State (27) and Notre

Dame (25) and matched Michigan. In Big Ten games, Purdue was 20-3-1, just behind the Wolverines and Buckeyes at 21-3.

Quarterback Mark Herrmann was the Most Valuable Player of all three bowl games and finished his career as the NCAA record holder for passing attempts, completions, passing yards and total offense.

Young faced a rebuilding project in 1981 – dubbed A.H. as in After Herrmann – yet the Boilermakers won five of

their first seven games. But a season-ending four-game losing streak saddled Purdue with a 5-6 record.

Three days prior to the season finale at Indiana on Nov. 21, Young announced he was resigning as coach. He said he wanted to devote all his time to the associate athletics director position he had accepted in August.

Next: 1982-96



Jim Young