

## Floyd of Rosedale

It all started in 1934 when the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers played a football game against the University of Iowa Hawkeyes. Iowa's running back, Ozzie Simmons, who was one of the few black players at the time, was singled out to be hit with excessive force during a 48-12 home loss to Minnesota. It's said that Simmons was knocked unconscious three times before leaving the game in the second quarter.

Back then, Minnesota, coached by Bernie Bierman, was a national power. On its way to the 1934 national championship, the Gophers routed Iowa, 48-12, at Iowa Stadium. More than the lopsided score, the Gophers' tactics angered some Hawkeyes fans.

They claimed the Gophers targeted the star back and safety Ozzie Simmons, nicknamed the Ebony Eel, one of the few black players in the Big Ten. According to newspaper reports, Simmons was knocked unconscious three times before leaving the game in the second quarter. Eleven years earlier, Iowa State's first black athlete, Jack Trice, died of injuries sustained in a game at Minnesota. (Iowa State's stadium is named for Trice.)

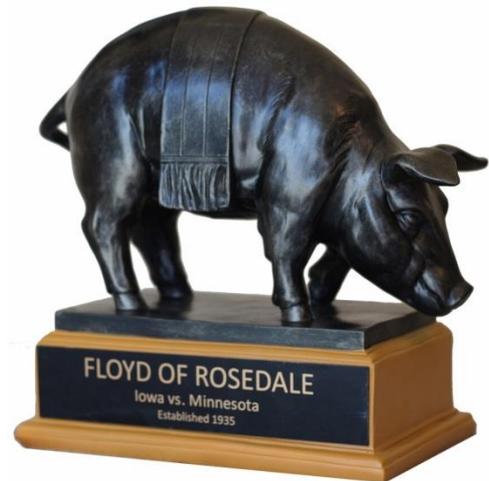
Simmons, who died in 2001, told The Star Tribune of Minneapolis in a 1988 interview that he sustained bruised ribs from late hits and piling on. "I really had the feeling they were after me because I was good," he said. "Oh, I think me being black added a little oomph to it."

Both teams were undefeated heading into their 1935 game, also in Iowa City. Iowa fans were growing impatient with opponents trying to rough up Simmons. When it happened during a 19-0 victory at Illinois, two Iowa players reportedly approached the Illini huddle and threatened to run them out of the stadium if they didn't knock it off. (That story was told by the Hawkeyes' radio announcer, a fellow named Ronald Reagan.)

The day before the game, Herring issued a statement that read: "The University of Iowa football team will defeat the University of Minnesota tomorrow. Those Minnesotans will find 10 other top-notch football players besides Ozzie Simmons against them this year. Moreover, if the officials stand for any rough tactics like Minnesota used last year, I'm sure the crowd won't."

Minnesota coach Bierman responded by moving a Gophers practice from Davenport, Iowa, across the state line to Rock Island, Ill. And, he requested police protection when the team arrived in Iowa City by train and vowed never to play the Hawkeyes again if any threats were carried out.

Minnesota Governor Floyd Olson, after reading Iowa Governor Herring's comments in the morning newspapers, sent a telegram to Iowa Governor, Clyde Herring, on game-day morning, which read, "Dear Clyde, Minnesota folks are excited over your statement about the Iowa crowd lynching the Minnesota football team. I assured them that you are a law-abiding gentleman and are only trying to get to our goat. The Minnesota team will tackle clean, but, oh! how hard, Clyde. If you seriously think Iowa has any chance to win, I will bet you a Minnesota prize hog against an Iowa prize hog that Minnesota wins today. The loser must deliver the hog in person to the winner. Accept my bet through a reporter. You are getting odds because Minnesota raises better hogs than Iowa. My best personal regards and condolences."



Herring accepted the wager. The Gophers won 13-6 without incident and Iowa star, Ozzie Simmons, played an injury-free game. Afterward, the Minnesota players went out of their way to compliment Simmons, and Simmons praised the Gophers for their clean, hard-fought play.

Herring obtained an award-winning prize pig which had been donated by Allen Loomis, the owner of Rosedale Farms near Fort Dodge. Dubbed Floyd, after the Minnesota governor, the pig was the brother of Blue Boy from the Will Rogers' movie "State Fair." A few days following the game, Herring collected Floyd of Rosedale and personally walked him into Olson's carpeted office to present him his reward for winning the game.

Floyd took up residence at the Minnesota agriculture campus. They kept him in the swine barn and he was put in his own pen. He didn't take up residence there for very long. A few months later, it was learned that the University of Minnesota had sold Floyd for \$50 to a farmer in southeast Minnesota. It was later learned that Floyd reportedly died of cholera in July 1936 and was buried on that farm, located midway between the two campuses.



Since the two schools could not continue wagering on a live pig, Governor Olson commissioned St. Paul sculptor, Charles Brioschi, to capture Floyd's image. The result was a 98-pound bronze trophy, 21 inches long and 15 inches high. Iowa and Minnesota have played for Floyd of Rosedale every year since. The winner of the game is entitled to keep the trophy until the following year's contest. Floyd of Rosedale has served as a symbol of fairness, equality and civility. The Floyd of Rosedale Trophy is one of the most recognized trophies in Division 1 college football today, and it all started with a pig from Fort Dodge.

Sources:

\* New York Times Article...Nov. 25, 2010

