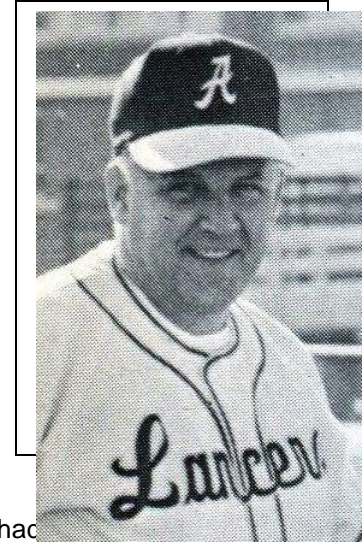


TOM BERRY

The consolidation of high schools in Amherst County brought new experiences to students, for the first time joining with people from the entire county for classes and extra-curricular activities. Sports teams were no exception and it took a while to mold the participants into successful teams; football was a new experience for most. Amherst was put onto the map in football with the arrival of Coach Tom Berry in 1963, fresh from the college ranks where he had been an assistant coach at the Air Force Academy and the University of Virginia, his alma mater.

Berry had exhibited enthusiasm and talent in sports from an early age, when he was named Camper of the Year by the YMCA in 1937. He went on to be a multi-dimensional athlete at E.C. Glass High School, winning state championships in football and basketball.



In the early years, coaches had to do it all, and Berry reportedly had with the lime-spreader, preparing the lines on the field, and completed the job by hand, using sacks of flour. Such was the complete involvement of the coach in every aspect of the game.

During his 15 seasons at ACHS, the team became a strong contender in district and later regional play. Numerous players earned college scholarships, and generally set the stage for Amherst's consistency in upcoming decades. Berry was described as a man "who knew football inside and out" and, in fact, was a bit "ahead of his time" in his offensive schemes.

An animated coach on the sidelines, Berry could be counted on to field competitive teams who knew that their coach would fight for every advantage. He was known as a master of motivation. The welfare of the players was paramount to him – he would not cut players, but they sometimes "cut themselves". He had an innate feel for whether the player needed an encouraging pat on the back or something stronger. The coach knew the families well and often counseled them in their homes, sometimes providing transportation when needed.

Future generations of Amherst football players and coaches, some with state championships on their résumés, hold a debt of gratitude to their predecessors who built the strong foundation for success.

Thomas Green Berry – April 10, 1929 - October 1, 2001

Career Highlights

- E.C. Glass High School: 3-sport athlete, 4 years – baseball, basketball, football; boxing team; state championship in basketball; All-State selection, basketball, football; member, E.C. Glass Sports Hall of Fame
- UVa: 2-sport athlete – baseball, football; winner Billy Word Leadership Trophy
- ACHS: 1975 VHSL All-Star coach; District Coach of the Year, 2 years; district championships; all-star players
- Member, Lynchburg Area Sports Hall of Fame