

One spring evening fifty years ago, Buddy Small hit a baseball that his friends and teammates can vividly recall. This home run is a stand alone legend. Against Columbia High, at the old Legion Field next to Zemp Stadium, Buddy turned a fast ball into a towering drive that either brushed or cleared the lights in left field. Anything traveling that high and fast should have a stewardess handing out peanuts and cokes.

To celebrate Buddy's recent birthday, several lifelong friends and teammates recently got together for lunch at Mad's Restaurant. The meal turned into a seminar on local history and zany characters who resided here in the late 50's and early 60's. It was nice to be invited because my only athletic contribution to these guys was that I provided them a warm seat during timeouts.

Pop Small, Buddy's father, coached his way to a Hall of Fame career at Camden High. His career basketball record of ----wins and --- losses looks like a misprint. Pop was an Auburn graduate and his contacts with his alma mater allowed young men like Foy Thompson, George Beleos, and Ernest Baker the opportunity to play ball and get a college education. Pop was instrumental in establishing the recreational youth leagues in Kershaw County. The original youth fields were located where the Camden City Hall was built in the 50's.

Pop started Buddy at an early age learning the fundamentals. Pop would get John and George Koumas to come catch Buddy. George must have paid attention because his grandson, Forrest, was the S.C. High School Player of the year in 2010.

The early benefactors of the local youth program were kids like Harold Robinson, Tommy Cobb, Bobby Robinson, Richard Ammons, Jimmy Roller, Henry Team, and Willie Mickle who in the mid fifties played in the Pony League World Series. Robin Richards, whose father Tom operated WACA, can recall that people would come to the radio station and listen to the games on a public address system as the games were played in Pa. These same kids later pulled the extraordinary feat of winning the state championship in football, baseball, and basketball in the 57-58 school year. The Rockettes, the CHS girls basketball team also won the state championship that year.

Colorful characters such as Charles Griffin, Bruce Jackson, Henry DuRant, Tommy Massabeau, and Andy Denton were in attendance. Andy Denton was riding on his bicycle at the corner of DeKalb and Mill Steets when Speaks Oil Company exploded and caught fire. Andy hastily began furiously pedaling his way home and barreled over some gentleman who was running away from the fire. This gentleman's tumble ended with him having a broken arm. Andy did not bother to stop. Forty years later Andy overheard this same gentleman recounting the story of how some young whippersnapper ran him over and left him with a broken arm. He was not a priest, so Andy still did not confess.

Camden High football heroes such as Horace Turbeville were remembered. There were many former Bulldog players such as Butch Lily, George and John Koumas, David Ives, Lett Carroll, and Harvey Clarke. The discussion mostly centered around opponents who stood out. Some opponents who carried around a can of 'whoop butt' and could leave you with a snot ball are always remembered, although not affectionately.

Harvey Clarke was the football captain in 1962 when one of the most infamous gridiron incidents occurred. Neither Camden or Brooklin Cayce's football team were any good when we played that October, but the bands were outstanding. The stands were filled to capacity for the half time show. The BC band took the field as the second quarter was still being played. One of our traditions was to run through the goal post, so Buck Priester told us to run through the band. The big drummer was still spinning when I got there. The home fans booed us when we came back to start the third quarter. The locals met that night on the court house steps and fired Priester as the coach. Harvey had to go apologize to the BC student body.

In the late 50's, Buddy, Johnny McCarney ( who hit over .500 as a high school junior), Jimmy Sutphin, and H.B. Flora lead a little league team to the Dixie World Series. Two years later, this same group with Larry Robinson, Stanley Champion, JoJo Denton. David Ives, Earl Rush, Robin Richards, and Jimmy Bohelor took a team of Pony League all stars to a third place finish in a world tournament. Robin and Johnny can recall talking with the Cuban players about some guy named Fidel Castro who was trying to take over the country.

Buddy was a gym rat like his good friend Butch Jordan. Butch and his sister Vera Andrews were two of the best

players to ever letter in basketball for the 'Gold and Black.' Butch played at USC and now is a PhD professor at his alma mater. When Butch was playing at Carolina, they ran the Mongoose offense and one Feb. the team was six and one in the ACC, only one **game** behind the hated Duke Blue Devils. The coach got fired and the season went south.

When Butch was a student at USC, he gave several of us a severe ego deflating moment. In 1963, USC asked Red Lynch to send Billy Ammons, Arthur Hudson, Bob Lynch, Ray Robinson, and me on a recruiting trip. The coaches wanted to see us 'on the hoof.' We put on our Bulldog blazers, met the players and coaches, ate at the training table. and felt secure that four or five coeds would fall in love with us.

We were strolling around campus, feeling like hot **shots**, when from out of a dorm window Butch yelled an old Camden High cheer:

BIG DOG

LITTLE DOG

FLOPPY EARED PUP

COME ON BULLDOGS

EAT 'EM UP

Thank you for your attention.