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The Pride Of Price Hill: Cincinnati's West Side And The Elder Mystique



Synopsis

In the dawn of Queen City athletic time, what would become known all over Ohio as "The Pit" was exactly that—a dusty cow pasture on Cincinnati's West Side adorned with a manhole on the 50-yard line. It was the only known playing field in Ohio where a manhole was the home field advantage, and from that inauspicious beginning nearly eighty years ago was born one of the Midwest's most storied prep traditions: Elder High School athletics. In its steady procession of stellar teams and athletes, Elder became a West Side phenomena. There were the Thanksgiving Day shootouts with archrival West High; Bob Hoernschemeyer, class of '43, in the Guinness Book of Records for once scoring 27 points in six minutes; Steve Grote, an All-Big Ten basketballer after whom Michigan named its Hustle Award; and an astounding list of All-Staters and All-Americans. Along the way, this all-boys parochial school, nestled in a residential corner of blue-collar Price Hill, acquired a following of loyalists found in no other school in Cincinnati, maybe in no other school anywhere. A curiosity to outsiders, the lifelong object of affection and fealty to insiders, this is the mystique that created back-to-back basketball state titles, a cross country dynasty, an unprecedented eleven baseball championships, and a football team with a national ranking. Its football field was named by USA Today as one of the best places in America to watch high school football, and its graduates have populated programs from Division I all the way to the professional ranks. Equal parts championship seasons, feats of athletic derring-do, improvisational moments, anecdotes, good talk, and purpose, The Pride of Price Hill is, finally, a story about an old-fashioned neighborhood—a neighborhood most of us wish we inhabited.

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