

= Ben Crosby =

Benjamin Lewis Crosby , Jr . (March 22 , 1868 ? December 29 , 1892) was an American football player , coach , and law student . Born in Halcott Centre , New York , Crosby attended Yale University beginning in 1889 ; while there , he was a popular student and sportsman . A member of both Delta Kappa Epsilon and Skull and Bones , Crosby was a two @-@ year starter on the football team and a backup on the crew team . During his junior year , Crosby was replaced on the football team by freshman Frank Hinkey and never returned to a starting position . The remainder of Crosby 's time at Yale was successful and he enrolled at the New York Law School after graduation .

Crosby was invited in 1892 to serve as head coach of the United States Naval Academy football program . He accepted the position , and , using a rigorous practicing regime , led his team to a 5 ? 2 record , which included a victory over rival Army in the Army ? Navy Game . Crosby was repeatedly in the news for his coaching decisions leading up to the game , which he was then commended for following the upset victory . At the end of the season , Crosby returned to New York to continue his studies , but he was hospitalized after a cold he caught while coaching worsened shortly after his arrival . He died from typhoid fever in late December , at the age of 24 .

= = Career = =

= = = Early life and college = = =

Crosby was born on March 22 , 1868 in Halcott Centre , Greene County , New York , son of David J. Crosby . As a child , Crosby attended Hopkins Grammar School in New Haven , Connecticut , the second person in his family to do so . He graduated from the school in 1888 , and the following year , Crosby began classes at Yale University . Crosby was very popular while at Yale , and was a member of both Delta Kappa Epsilon and the secret undergraduate society Skull and Bones . In his sophomore year , Crosby was the starting right end of the Bulldogs football team ; the squad finished the season with a thirteen @-@ and @-@ one record , with the sole loss coming to national champion Harvard . In his following year , Crosby joined the university 's crew team as a substitute , and was described by classmates as being " quite prominent in athletics " .

However , Crosby 's football season turned out to be a disappointment . Early in the season , both he and John A. Hartwell , the other starting end , who would later follow Crosby as Navy football coach , were injured in a game . While observing a team practice , Hartwell noticed the play of backup end Frank Hinkey . After the two watched Hinkey for a brief time , Hartwell decided that he needed to return to practicing or he would lose his starting position . Crosby did not share his view . By the next game , Hinkey had replaced Crosby as the starting end and Crosby did not regain his position . Despite this , Crosby remained popular through his senior year at the university , and he was one of three graduates presented with a class award . Upon graduation from the school , Crosby enrolled in New York Law School and joined a law office in New York City .

= = = Coaching career = = =

In October 1892 , shortly after he began attending New York Law School , Crosby was invited by former Yale coach Walter Camp to live in Annapolis , Maryland and serve as the coach for the United States Naval Academy football team . The program requested that Camp serve as coach in response to Army 's hiring of Crosby 's former teammate , Henry L. Williams , but Camp suggested that Crosby would be a better fit for the job . Crosby accepted the invitation , and became the second head coach in Navy history and the first that had been independent of the program . The prior coach , Vaulx Carter , had been a student at the academy and was responsible for the revival of the program . Crosby 's strategy for practices was one of the most intensive used at the academy during its early years ; after classes every day , the team would play two forty @-@ five minute games against a team of twenty @-@ two backup players , followed immediately by a long

swimming session in a cold pool . Shortly before the season began , he hired former St. John 's College , Johns Hopkins , and Lehigh player Paul Dashiell to serve as his assistant coach .

The 1892 season commenced on October 12 with a 16 ? 0 shutout loss against the Penn Quakers in Annapolis . The Quakers would finish the season with a 15 ? 1 record , losing only to national champion Yale . Crosby 's team played their next game just three days later , against the Princeton Tigers . Navy lost the game in another shutout , by the score of 28 ? 0 . These losses continued a losing streak that dated back to November 21 of the previous year . The following week , on October 22 , Crosby received his first coaching win after Navy defeated the Lafayette Leopards 22 ? 4 . This was followed by a victory the next week over the small Franklin & Marshall College ; Navy won in a 24 ? 0 shutout , their largest shutout win since the 1890 Army ? Navy Game . They continued the winning streak into November with a 48 ? 12 blowout of Rutgers , the biggest win for Navy since the beginning of the 1890 season . After a week 's break , Crosby received his fourth win , a forty @-@ point shutout of nearby Georgetown .

The final game of the season was the annual Army ? Navy Game against Navy 's biggest rivals , the Army Cadets . Navy had been upset by the Cadets in the previous year 's game , and came into the 1892 game as an underdog against the unbeaten Army . Despite this , Crosby expected a victory , even telling reporters that he was " of the opinion that they [Navy] will certainly win " . Crosby also caught the attention of the press with his scheduling of constant practices leading up to the game , including organizing night practices on a lighted field . He also closed all press and fan access to the practices , an unusual action at the time , because Navy officials claimed that Army had learned their plays the prior year by observing the practices . Crosby 's actions proved successful as , on November 26 at West Point , Navy led Army for the entire game and won easily , 12 ? 4 . About a month after the game , in appreciation for his coaching Navy to the win , the team presented Crosby an eight @-@ inch high sterling silver loving cup , produced by the Gorham Manufacturing Company , which was inscribed with the simple message : " Benjamin L. Crosby . Jr . ? From the officers and cadets of the United States Naval Academy , Nov. 26 , 1892 " .

= = = Death and legacy = = =

Following the conclusion of the season , Crosby returned to New York City to continue his studies at the New York Law School . However , he only attended classes for a brief time . Crosby had , reportedly , contracted a " severe cold " during his time as a head coach , which continued to affect him after the season . On December 19 , while attending one of his law classes , his illness intensified and he apparently " succumbed to an attack of typhoid fever " . Crosby was taken to St. Luke 's Hospital , where his condition progressively worsened over the following ten days . Crosby finally succumbed to the effects of typhoid fever on December 29 at the age of 24 . In his one season as a head coach , Crosby amassed a record of 5 ? 2 and his team outscored their opponents 146 ? 64 . The five wins are tied for the seventh @-@ fewest of any Navy coach , but third @-@ most of single @-@ season coaches . Crosby also has the third @-@ fewest losses among Navy coaches . His .714 win percentage is tied for the tenth @-@ highest of any Navy coach . Crosby 's coaching position was filled by Yale teammate John A. Hartwell , who was subsequently replaced by another Yale teammate , William Wurtenburg . Crosby has been largely forgotten outside of Navy football history . One event from his life that was remembered was his replacement as Yale end by Frank Hinkey , which was discussed in magazines until at least the 1920s . The most significant impact that Crosby had was through his hiring of Dashiell . The latter would serve as assistant under the following eight Navy coaches , until 1903 ; as head coach from 1904 to 1906 , Dashiell brought Navy to national prominence and won 25 games . He later became one of the longest @-@ serving members of the college football Rules Committee , helping to legalize the forward pass and ban the flying wedge , among other things .

= = Head coaching record = =