

= 1899 Sewanee Tigers football team =

The 1899 Sewanee Tigers football team represented Sewanee : The University of the South in the 1899 college football season . Sewanee was one of the first college football powers of the South and the 1899 team in particular was very strong . The 1899 Tigers went 12 ? 0 , outscoring opponents 322 to 10 , and won the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association ( SIAA ) title .

With just 13 players , the team known as the " Iron Men " had a six @-@ day road trip with five shutout wins over Texas A & M ; Texas ; Tulane ; LSU ; and Ole Miss . Sportswriter Grantland Rice called the group " the most durable football team I ever saw . " The road trip is recalled memorably with the Biblical allusion " ... and on the seventh day they rested . "

The 11 extra points against Cumberland by B. U. Sims is still a school record . The offense was led by Diddy Seibels ; the defense by Ormond Simkins . John Heisman 's Auburn team was the only one even to score on Sewanee .

= = Before the season = =

Despite being from a small Episcopal university in the mountains of Tennessee , the team came to dominate football in the region during the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries . Like several other football powers of yore such as the University of Chicago , Sewanee today emphasizes scholarship over athletics .

Sewanee had 7 starters return from the undefeated 1898 team . Before play started , the Sewanee men trained hard for several weeks under coach Suter . With experience and weight , the team was hopeful for an undisputed southern championship .

= = Schedule = =

Source :

= = Season summary = =

Sewanee ? s 1899 season was very successful . From October 21 through December 2 , under the leadership of Coach Herman [ Billy ] Suter and future College Football Hall of Famer captain Henry ? Diddy ? Seibels , the Sewanee team , officially the Tigers but nicknamed the " Iron Men , " played and won twelve games , was unscored upon except for one game , outscored its opponents 322 to 10 , and was champion of the South . Most of their twelve opponents , including Tennessee , Louisiana State , and Texas , are among the all @-@ time powers in college football .

= = = Georgia = = =

Ormond Simkins was the star of the 12 to 0 opening win over the Georgia Bulldogs , netting the first touchdown with a fine line buck of 12 yards through center " amidst thunderous applause " . Rex Kilpatrick scored a second touchdown on a 4 @-@ yard run .

Sewanee 's starting lineup against Georgia : Sims ( left end ) , Jones ( left tackle ) , Keyes ( left guard ) , Poole ( center ) , Claiborne ( right guard ) , Bolling ( right tackle ) , Pearce ( right end ) , Wilson ( quarterback ) , Kilpatrick ( left halfback ) , Seibels ( right halfback ) , Simkins ( fullback ) .

= = = Georgia Tech = = =

Sewanee followed the defeat of Georgia with a 32 to 0 victory over Georgia Tech on the following Monday . Sewanee won easily , the first score coming soon after the kickoff on a blocked kick recovered by Quintard Gray . Gray scored the next touchdown on 25 @-@ yard end run . Just fifteen minutes had passed when Diddy Seibels scored the third touchdown . The next three touchdowns were also scored by Seibels , including pretty runs of 35 and 40 yards . The team

played its substitutes in the second half .

= = = Tennessee = = =

In a driving rain at McGee Field , " where each 5 @-@ yard line was a miniature stream " , Sewanee beat the Tennessee Volunteers 46 to 0 . Diddy Seibels led the scoring with three touchdowns . " Touchdown followed touchdown , until Sewanee finally stopped scoring from sheer exhaustion " to quote The Sewanee Purple .

Sewanee 's starting lineup against Tennessee : Sims ( left end ) , Jones ( left tackle ) , Keyes ( left guard ) , Poole ( center ) , Claiborne ( right guard ) , K. Smith ( right tackle ) , Pearce ( right end ) , Wilson ( quarterback ) , Kilpatrick ( left halfback ) , Seibels ( right halfback ) , Simkins ( fullback ) .

= = = Southwestern Presbyterian = = =

Sewanee next defeated Southwestern Presbyterian 54 to 0 . The Sewanee Purple wrote " Never before in the history of football at Sewanee have we piled up such a score against an opponent . "

Sewanee 's starting lineup against Southwestern Presbyterian : Sims ( left end ) , Jones ( left tackle ) , Keyes ( left guard ) , Poole ( center ) , Claiborne ( right guard ) , Bolling ( right tackle ) , Pearce ( right end ) , Wilson ( quarterback ) , Gray ( left halfback ) , Seibels ( right halfback ) , Simkins ( fullback ) .

= = = The Road trip : 5 shutouts in 6 days = = =

The 1899 Iron Men team 's most notable accomplishment was a six @-@ day period from November 9 to 14 which is arguably the greatest road trip in college football history . Manager Luke Lea , after a disagreement with traditional rival Vanderbilt University over gate receipts resulting in the 1899 game being cancelled , sought a way to make up for the lost revenue . In response , Lea put together an improbable schedule of playing five big name opponents in six days . Playing so many games in a short period minimized costs while maximizing revenue . During this road trip , Sewanee outscored its opponents for a combined 91 ? 0 , including Texas , Texas A & M , LSU , and Ole Miss . Sewanee obliterated each one , traveling by train for some 2 @,@ 500 miles . This feat , barring fundamental changes in modern @-@ day football , can never be equaled . Contemporary sources called the road trip the most remarkable ever made by an American college team .

= = = = Texas = = = =

The train carrying the players pulled into Austin on the night of the 8th to face the undefeated Texas Longhorns the following afternoon . Sewanee won 12 to 0 . Sewanee scored five minutes into the first quarter , and a minute before the end of the game , " and the intervening time was devoted to the liveliest battle ever witnessed here " . Diddy Seibels played throughout the game , scoring both touchdowns , despite his head having split open just above his left eye , bleeding profusely . By the end of the game his head was coated with blood .

Sewanee 's starting lineup against Texas : Sims ( left end ) , Jones ( left tackle ) , Keyes ( left guard ) , Poole ( center ) , Claiborne ( right guard ) , Bolling ( right tackle ) , Pearce ( right end ) , Wilson ( quarterback ) , Kilpatrick ( left halfback ) , Seibels ( right halfback ) , Simkins ( fullback ) .

= = = = Texas A & M = = = =

Not 20 hours had passed since the Texas game before the Tigers faced the Texas A & M Aggies . The Tigers won 10 to 0 . Guard Wild Bill Claiborne was blind in one eye , and used his discolored eye for purposes of intimidation : " See this ? I lost it yesterday in Austin . This afternoon I 'm getting a new one ! " Ormond Simkins first ran in a touchdown from the 1 @-@ yard @-@ line near the end

of the first half . Quarterback Warbler Wilson got the second touchdown with five seconds left in the game . Texas A & M 's campus paper , the Battalion , reported : ... " ( the Sewanee Tigers ) are unmistakably the champions of the South this year ... "

Sewanee 's starting lineup against Texas A & M : Sims ( left end ) , Jones ( left tackle ) , Keyes ( left guard ) , Poole ( center ) , Claiborne ( right guard ) , Bolling ( right tackle ) , Pearce ( right end ) , Wilson ( quarterback ) , Kilpatrick ( left halfback ) , Gray ( right halfback ) , Simkins ( fullback ) .

= = = = Tulane = = = =

After another 350 @-@ mile overnight train leg , the Tigers beat Tulane in New Orleans 23 to 0 . Rex Kilpatrick scored first . Quintard Gray scored twice more . The lone score of the second half was another , 5 @-@ yard run by Kilpatrick . The game was called early due to darkness . The starting lineup was Sims ( left end ) , Jones ( left tackle ) , Keyes ( left guard ) , Poole ( center ) , Claiborne ( right guard ) , Bolling ( right tackle ) , Pearce ( right end ) , Wilson ( quarterback ) , Kilpatrick ( left halfback ) , Seibels ( right halfback ) , Simkins ( fullback ) .

= = = = LSU = = = =

Before the trip to Baton Rouge , the team saw a play , and then toured a sugar plantation owned by John Dalton Shaffer , rather than enjoy the nightlife of New Orleans . One source reported center William H. Poole " drank heavily " on the one day off . Sewanee then defeated LSU 34 to 0 .

Diddy Seibels scored first . Sewanee 's next run from scrimmage was then another Seibels touchdown . Rex Kilpatrick had one score , and Sewanee managed three further touchdowns . One account reads " In spite of their long , tiresome trip , the Sewanee men were lively as school boys out for a day off . "

= = = = Mississippi = = = =

The Tigers arrived in Memphis to play Mississippi on their third pre @-@ game overnight train ride in five days . " Ole Miss " kept the game close . Diddy Seibels scored the first touchdown with fifteen seconds left in the first half , and Kilpatrick scored the second with thirteen to go to the final whistle . The local Commercial Appeal praised the Tigers : " Yesterday 's score against ( Mississippi ) marked the two hundred and fortieth point for which the Tennesseans have scored to nothing for their opponents , during the present season . The trip of the Sewanee eleven , along with record , will probably remain unequalled for generations " .

= = = Cumberland = = =

Seemingly unfazed by the travel , next week the Tigers crushed the Cumberland Bulldogs 71 to 0 . One account reads : " For five minutes after the beginning of the game Cumberland made some good gains , but the Sewanee defense suddenly grew strong , the ball was secured on downs , and Seibels crossed the line for touchdown seven minutes after play began . " B. U. Sims had a school record 11 extra points , and Ormond Simkins rested instead of playing .

The starting lineup was Sims ( left end ) , Jones ( left tackle ) , Keyes ( left guard ) , Poole ( center ) , Claiborne ( right guard ) , Bolling ( right tackle ) , Pearce ( right end ) , Wilson ( quarterback ) , Kilpatrick ( left halfback ) , Seibels ( right halfback ) , Brooks ( fullback )

= = = Auburn : The only points scored = = =

Only John Heisman 's Auburn team managed to score on Sewanee 's " Iron Men . " Sewanee won by a narrow margin of 11 to 10 . As a witness to the game , in which the Auburn team ran an early version of the hurry @-@ up offense , and played exceptionally well on defense , sportswriter Fuzzy Woodruff wrote :

Under Heisman 's tutelage , Auburn played with a marvelous speed and dash that couldn 't be gainsaid and which fairly swept Sewanee off its feet . Only the remarkable punting of Simkins kept the game from being a debacle .

I recall vividly one incident of the game , which demonstrates clearly just how surprising was Sewanee 's victory .

The Purple was taking time out . They began this early in the game , when their athletes appeared tired and worn whereas Auburn men were full of fight and fire .

A Sewanee player was down , his head being bathed ... Suter , the Sewanee coach , and Heisman , the Auburn mentory , were walking up and down the field together . They approached this boy . The rules were not as rigid then I guess against coaches encroaching on the field of play or conversing with player or anyhow they were not enforced for Suter , evidently as mad as fire , asked the down and out player ' Are you fellows going to be run over like this all afternoon ? '

'Coach , ' said the boy , lifting his tired head from the ground , ' we just can 't stand this stuff . We 've never seen anything like it.'

Suter and Heisman turned away . ' Can you beat that ? ' Suter asked the Auburn coach . Heisman didn 't say anything , I guess he thought a great deal .

He told me afterwards that he had never felt so sorry for a man on a football field as he had for Suter at that moment .

Auburn 's Bivins scored first . Rex Kilpatrick then ran outside of the tackle a 10 @-@ yard touchdown . Arthur Feagin scored to make it 10 to 5 in favor of Auburn . A controversial fumble recovery by Sewanee may have saved the game . Reynolds Tichenor said it was a gift ; the referee awarded Sewanee the ball , but he insisted Auburn recovered it . A double pass play to Warbler Wilson got the ensuing Sewanee touchdown . B. U. Sims made the extra point to edge Auburn . Neither team managed to score in the second half . The delay from the crowd gathering on the field ran the game into darkness .

Sewanee 's starting lineup against Auburn : Pierce ( left end ) , Jones ( left tackle ) , Claiborne ( left guard ) , Poole ( center ) , Keyes ( right guard ) , Bolling ( right tackle ) , Sims ( right end ) , Wilson ( quarterback ) , Kilpatrick ( left halfback ) , Seibels ( right halfback ) , Simkins ( fullback ) .

= = = North Carolina = = =

The season closed with a 5 to 0 victory over the North Carolina Tar Heels and the championship of the south . Sewanee 's defense was strong , and Diddy Seibels 's punting gained 10 yards on each exchange of punts . A single free kick from placement proved the difference . Ormond Simkins had signaled for a fair catch , but North Carolina 's Frank M. Osborne collided with him . Sewanee was awarded fifteen yards and the free kick . The star for the Tar Heels was Herman Koehler .

Sewanee 's starting lineup against North Carolina : Simkins ( left end ) , Jones ( left tackle ) , Keyes ( left guard ) , Poole ( center ) , Claiborne ( right guard ) , Bolling ( right tackle ) , Black ( right end ) , Wilson ( quarterback ) , Kilpatrick ( left halfback ) , Seibels ( right halfback ) , Hull ( fullback ) .

= = Postseason = =

= = = Awards and honors = = =

W. A. Lambeth of Virginia in Outing and Coach Suter both posted All @-@ Southern teams . Included on Suter 's All @-@ Southern : Richard Bolling , Wild Bill Claiborne , Deacon Jones , Rex Kilpatrick , William H. Poole , Diddy Seibels , Ormond Simkins , Warbler Wilson . Wilson was also selected All @-@ Southern by Lambeth . B. U. Sims made Lambeth 's team and was a substitute for Suter .

= = = Legacy = = =

By the end of the season , eleven of Sewanee 's victories were against SIAA conference rivals , setting the record for the most conference games won in a single season by any team before or since . On College Gameday , November 13 , 1999 , ESPN featured the University of the South with a four @-@ minute segment on the 1899 football team , and CSX Railroad provided a short train ride in Cowan , which was a re @-@ enactment of an early leg of the Sewanee to Texas train ride .

Several writers and sports personalities consider this Sewanee team one of the greatest football teams to ever play . Former Penn State coach Joe Paterno once said " While there are some who would swear to the contrary , I did not see the 1899 Sewanee football team play in person . Winning five road games in six days , all by shutout scores , has to be one of the most staggering achievements in the history of the sport . If the Bowl Championship Series ( BCS ) had been in effect in 1899 , there seems little doubt Sewanee would have played in the title game . And they wouldn't have been done in by any computer ratings . " Tony Barnhart in Southern Fried Football : The History , Passion and Glory of the Great Southern Game listed Sewanee as his number 1 Southern football team of all @-@ time . A 16 @-@ team playoff to determine the best team in college football history with winners decided by fan votes was run by the College Football Hall of Fame , called the " March of the Gridiron Champions . " Sewanee , starting at the lowest seed , won the tournament .

= = Personnel = =

= = = Varsity lettermen = = =

= = = = Line = = = =

Ralph Peters Black , end  
Richard E. Bolling , tackle  
William " Wild Bill " Claiborne , guard  
John William " Deacon " Jones , tackle  
Henry S. Keyes , guard  
Joseph Lee Kirby @-@ Smith , tackle  
Hugh Miller Thompson " Bunny " Pearce , end  
William H. Poole , center  
Bartlet Et Ultimus " The Caboose " Sims , end

= = = = Backfield = = = =

Charles Quintard Gray , halfback  
Ringland F. " Rex " Kilpatrick , halfback  
Henry " Diddy " Seibels , halfback  
Ormond Simkins , fullback  
William " Warbler " Wilson , quarterback

= = = = Substitutions = = = =

Preston S. Brooks , back  
Harris G. Cope , quarterback  
Albert T. Davidson  
Andrew C. Evins  
Daniel B. Hull , fullback  
Landon R. Mason  
Floy H. Parker

Herbert E. Smith

== Coaching staff ==

Head coach : Billy Suter

Manager : Luke Lea

Trainer : Cal Burrows

== Scoring leaders ==

The following is an incomplete list of statistics and scores , largely dependent on newspaper summaries .

== Endnotes ==