

“At 100 Years, America’s Winningest High School Football Team”

With the completion of this 2013 season, Valdosta High football, regardless of any future situation, will always be able to claim “At 100 Years, America’s Winningest High School football team.”

In tribute to this community achievement the Lowndes County Historical Society is, albeit slowly, developing a 100 Years of Football electronic exhibit on our website. The first phase will mainly include 1958 through Wright Bazemore’s last season 1971. Why these years? When the library annex was completed at the Williams Street VHS in 1958 they began compiling extensive scrapbooks of school activities. These books, which date into the 2000s, were donated to the historical museum several years ago. A very few scrapbook years were missing and not available for donation.

With so much information in chronological order, the website exhibit will first feature 1958-1971. We hope this first phase will be published to the website before the end of October.

The following article is from the 1961, Book One, Scrapbook. It was clipped from *The Atlanta Journal* in 1961. The article states written Nov. 20. Our attempt to get the exact date it appeared in the newspaper was stymied. *The Atlanta Journal* has Historic Archives from 1868 to 1945 and News Archives 1985 to Current, thus 1961 at present is not available to check electronically. The article was “A Journal Visit” by Tom Willow, *Atlanta Journal* Staff Writer.



Betty and Wright Bazemore from Sandspur yearbook



Some of the coaches of the era; Bill Bennett, Charlie Greene, Bill Davis, Joe Wilson, Wright Bazemore and Johnny B. Roland

A WINNING FORMULA

Bazemore Makes Valdosta Click on Field and Off

Valdosta, Ga., Nov. 20— By his own admission, Valdosta High Coach Wright Bazemore is a family man who loves to coach, loves to win and has few aspirations to step up to the college coaching ranks.

His 21-year coaching record [*ed. note: actually 18, WWII soldier during 1943, '44 and '45 seasons*] is as good as any coach in the country. Bazemore-coached football teams have won 206 of 238 games and have been in state championship games 10 times, winning eight titles.

However, Bazemore is not strictly a football coach. From 1947 to 1952 he was also the basketball coach and his teams won 176 of 198 games. In five of the seven years he handled the basketball reins, Valdosta went to the state finals. They won once.

Surprisingly enough, however, winning has never come easy for the 44 year old coach. His players are not super beings. They simply work hard at what they do and success follows.

“I am very happy here,” says Wright, “This is a good town and people place football ahead of other sports. The three things we have working for us are enthusiasm, spirit and tradition. And very often they make up the shortage of ability.”

Bazemore has been offered many college coaching jobs but apparently it is difficult to find a better working situation than he has here.

“Yes, I’ve thought about it seriously several times,” he said. “But this business of hanging coaches in effigy doesn’t make sense. I think if they did that to me in college I’d leave the next morning.”

There are no hanging trees in Valdosta. In fact, there is no pressure exerted from any source. The townfolks love their team and worship its coach.

You’ve never seen such a determined bunch of kids in your life.” and Lewis Blair, who operates Castle Park service station.

“Bazemore makes ‘em click. I don’t think they’d knock heads out there for anyone else.” *continued next page*