

July 21, 1949

The Mining Journal
Marquette, MI

U.P. "North" Mentor Has Outstanding Athletic Record

Negaunee-Russell E. Leksell, a graduate of the Ironwood high school, will direct the North squad in the North-South all star football game here the night of Aug. 13.

Leksell, at the time he was engaged to handle the North coaching shores, was athletic director for the Rhinelander (Wis.) senior high school. Since then, he has accepted a position as athletic director of a junior college and high school in Illinois.

He played football and basketball for the Luther L. Wright high school, Ironwood, from 1923-1927 and during that time the teams never were defeated. One year, their goal line was never crossed. He captained the basketball team for two years. He was chosen all-state fullback in his senior year.

Star At Minnesota

In 1927, Leksell entered the University of Minnesota, where he played football for three years, earning a letter each year. He alternated between left half and full back.

He graduated from Minnesota in 1931. He then taught school in Staples, Minn. During his third year in the coaching business, his team played a St. Paul high school for a mythical state title and lost.

In 1935, Leksell went to Rhinelander, where he coached until he entered the Army Air corps in 1942. During those eight years his football team placed third twice, second five times and won the championship once in the Wisconsin Valley Conference. His basketball team won five consecutive basketball championships in the Wisconsin Valley and one state title.

Service Record

From 1942 to 1945, he was with the 99th heavy bombardment group, seeing action in the African and Italian campaigns. He received 12 battle stars and two Presidential unit citations.

He re-entered the University of Minnesota in 1945 and obtained his master's degree. While there, he was an assistant to Bernie Bierman. He returned to Rhinelander in the following season.

In 1946, his football team won second place in the conference and repeated the next season. In 1948, his team was defeated only by Wausau (Wis.) by a 6-0 score.

His outstanding player was John Kotz, who made several records in football and basketball. He also had George Maktis, who played football at the University of Wisconsin. Maktis is assistant football coach to "Biggie" Munn and head boxing coach at Michigan State College.

Leksell's assistant will be Win Brockmeyer of Wausau, Wis.