

# MARK'S REMARKS

The story goes something like this...Back in 1982 Sioux Center had Iowa's top ranked 2A football team. A team that displayed speed, depth, and size finished the regular season exactly as they began, undefeated. Three games marked this team.

In an Iowa downpour lasting the better part of a day, Boyden-Hull floated into Sioux Center only to see a last minute touchdown wash the Comets hopes of victory away. A game consisting of short runs and long watery slides was hard fought and as the pictures of mud and water-soaked uniforms displayed, a game soaked into the memories of each player and spectator. A dripping scoreboard confirmed a 6-0 Warrior victory.

Halfway through the season introduced the second marker for this team. This was a media filled, energized, finish chores early, call the relatives; pick up grandpa and grandma battle with undefeated 2<sup>nd</sup> ranked West Lyon. While the Sioux City Journal stood shoulder to shoulder with the Des Moines Register on the sidelines, reporters and photographers recorded Sioux Center marching to a solid decisive 24-7 victory. It appeared Northwest Iowa would be represented well at the UNI Dome by the orange and blue of Sioux Center. One could almost envision the school custodian dusting and reorganizing the trophy case.

Yet, there was a third. Under the radar, Sibley waited in the first round of the playoffs. An unseasonably cold autumn day saw an 80 yard opening march by Sioux Center; 7-0. It would prove to be their final scoring drive of the season. Within the span of minutes, centered on two key plays, Sibley went up 14-7. Final score 24-7. Stopped cold...end of game, end of hopes, and end of dreams for many never-ending fans of the orange and blue. A game Sioux Center should have never lost was a game many would never forget.

This became apparent a few weeks ago in Stone Soup. The defensive coach of that 8-1 Sioux Center team approached one his starting defensive backs. Not having seen each other for nearly 22 years, one would expect to hear "Good to see you" or "How are things going" but the words that had evidently been locked up within this once lean, athletic coach suddenly escaped, finding the ears of the one to whom they have been waiting. "I think you should have played tighter defensive on Krogman" (Sibley receiver), the coach said. Following some pleasantries and a handshake, they once again went their separate ways. Both, I'm certain, reliving that cold autumn day containing the power to yet frustrate.

To fully appreciate that comment, one needs to understand both scoring plays happening within minutes included this former defensive back. Blocked passes and broken up plays could not erase those two crucial, momentum swinging plays.

I find it sadly ironic how, like that coach, I have relived that game in my mind as often as the winds blow in Iowa. "Only if" and "I should have" whipped through my mind like blasts of cold air. Four years of football and only tasting defeat three times seems insignificant when the last meal served was on the plate of "What should have been."

Unfortunately I defined a large percentage of myself by that event for several years. At some point I realized while these events will forever be a part of me they did not define me.

Question...Are you holding on to a painful memory or have a painful memory seizing you? As we journey in the pursuit of goals and dreams may the past not limit or define us but serve as a springboard, teaching and preparing us for new adventures, marking us as those who persevered into the new.

*"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a new thing" (Isaiah 43:18, 19a)*

A former defensive back,

Pastor Mark