

Doyle "Bob" Assink Athlete

"Mighty Mite", "Speed Merchant", "Sparkplug", "The Little Giant", "Watchcharm Guard".

These were just some of the many nicknames given to Bob Assink by his teammates, his coaches, and the local papers over the years. But although Assink was one of the smallest athletes to ever wear the green and gold, his accomplishments during his sports' career were gigantic. Assink learned to compete at an early age, and it didn't take long for coaches and fans to recognize that good things come in small packages.

On the gridiron, the 5'6", 145 lb. Assink excelled with his arm, his legs, and his foot. Sharing the quarterback position with his friend and classmate, Bruce Taubenheim, Assink received praise from Coach Elmer Clarkson on his passing accuracy as a sophomore. His favorite position, however, was halfback, and he soon established himself as one of the best. During his senior season, the Lions finished 2nd in league with a 7-1 record, which was their best record in at least 40 years. Assink's numbers were a big reason for that success as he was the leading scorer with 71 points total, including nine touchdowns and 17 points-after-touchdown. He also caught 20 passes for a total of 490 yards. All of this led to his being named the 1955 All-Whatcom County Football Team Halfback.

When basketball season rolled around, Assink played guard for the Lions, and what he lacked in height, he made up for in hustle. At the end of his junior season, Lynden had a 10-2 record and the #1 seed going into districts. In their first game at District, they met Mount Vernon and ended up tied with one minute left. Assink made the last three points, and Lynden won, 48-44. In their second game, they faced Bellingham. At the end of another close game and with one second left, the Raiders were forced to foul Assink, who sank both shots to win it. They advanced to the final against Anacortes, who was ranked in the top ten in state, and they ended up losing a close one in the last few seconds. In the consolation round, Lynden again faced Bellingham in a loser-out game, and this is when things got interesting. With the game tied at 47 in the final quarter, Lynden went into a two-minute and ten-second stall. After a time out and with three seconds left in the game, teammate Ken Eine fed Assink a pass under pressure; Assink put up a perfect, 30-foot swisher to break the Raiders' hearts and to send his team to



state. This was arguably one of the greatest moments in the history of Lynden sports.

Although Lynden lost its first two games at state, Assink was named to the all-district first team that year. The next year Lynden would end up with a third-place finish in league and would not return to state. At the end of the year, Assink was selected as the outstanding athlete at LHS; Coach Bergmann noted, "Assink is the best little kid in sports I have ever seen", and he put Bob in his list of the best basketball players he had ever coached.

After basketball season ended, Assink found himself on the pitcher's mound, where he once again played bigger than his 66-inch height. At the end of his sophomore year, the Lions were in a three-way tie with Ferndale and Meridian for the county crown. The next year they also finished at the top of the league, and his senior year ended with a tie for second place with Baker, behind Bellingham. Coach Bergmann acknowledged Assink's talents, saying, "I certainly can't say too much about Assink as he pitched us to two baseball crowns and a tie for second."

When he wasn't on the mound, Assink was recruited to run the 50-yard dash for the track team for a couple of years. Since Lynden didn't have a track and had to turn out on a "plowed, old field", the team was transferred to either Ferndale or Mount Baker for their meets, so Assink would go to baseball turnout and then hurry over to his next event. After graduation, Assink enlisted in the air force, where he served in Arizona for four years and where he played fastpitch, this time as a catcher, for a couple years. The best part of it was "getting flown all over the country to play." Returning to the Northwest, Assink initially got a job at Bellingham Builders' Supply. During his time in the military, Assink had used his given name of Doyle--a neighbor in Sumas had started calling him Bob when he was a young boy, and he used that name throughout high school. When he went to work in Bellingham, he was still using Doyle instead of Bob. One day a customer from Lynden came in and called him "Bob". When his co-workers heard this, their reaction was something like, "What? Are you THE Bob Assink who kept Bellingham from going to state in 1955?" He had to lay low for quite a while after they figured that out. Old wounds run deep in Whatcom County sports.

After Bellingham, Assink moved to Sedro Woolley and was hired as a dispatcher for Concrete Nor'West until he retired and moved back to Arizona, where he is currently enjoying the warm weather.

Regardless of what name he went by, "Mighty Mite", "Doyle", or "The Little Giant", Bob Assink's legacy made him a giant of a Lion.



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729 LOOMIS TRAIL ROAD LYNDEN, WASHINGTON 98264 USA