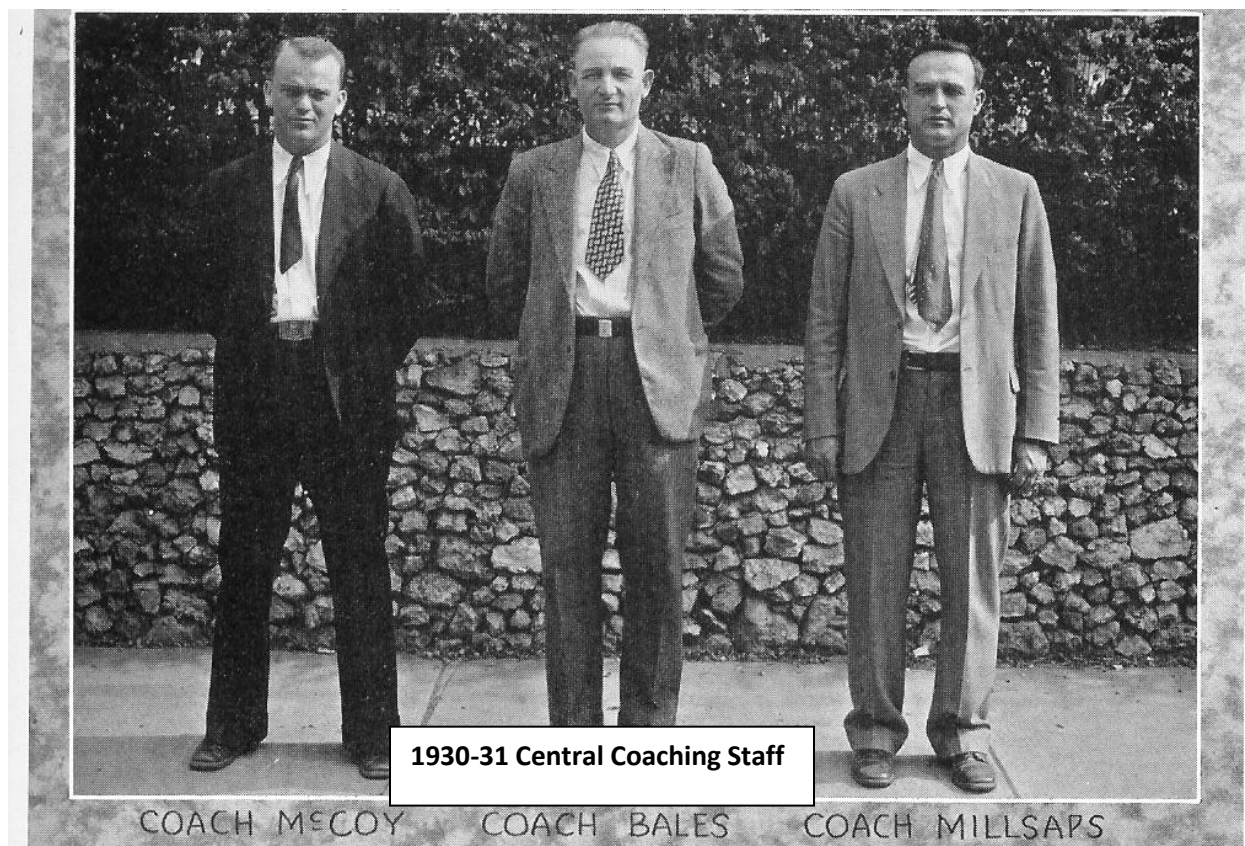


### Part 3. Rise of the Purple Pounders (1930-1942)

Before his first season as Central's head football coach, George W. McCoy hired Willard Millsaps as an assistant coach. Millsaps, a former Soddy High star athlete, had previously coached all sports at Rockwood High School and, at the time of hiring, was a professional baseball player. The tandem of McCoy, Bales, and Millsaps began the 1930 season in good fashion, beating Copperhill 9-3, but then dropped two games decisively to Etowah 19-0 and Bradley County 38-0, before squeaking by Rhea County 6-0. Consecutive shutout losses to Baylor 13-0, Knoxville Central 45-0, and Notre Dame 13-0 ensured a losing season. A victory over Lafayette (GA) 19-7 preceded the final insult, a 14-0 loss to City, ending a forgettable season of three wins, six losses. With a year to adjust to the new coaching staff, the 1931 team improved to a 7-3-1 record. Central opened with a 46-0 pounding of Oliver Springs, tied Etowah 6-6, then avenged the previous year's loss to Bradley by 13-0. Close losses to Nashville Central 7-0 and Rhea County 6-0 were followed by narrow wins over Polk County 7-0 and McMinn County 12-6. Knoxville City high administered a 32-14 beating to Central, but the 14 points were the only scores yielded by the State Champion Trojans that year. Central then ran the table with wins over Notre Dame 20-0, LaFayette (GA) 28-6 and City 2-0.



Between the 1932 and 1933 school years, Dean Petersen returned to Central, and in a most unusual fashion, re-joined the football team as a co-head coach with McCoy. From 1932-34 McCoy and Petersen are simply listed as coaches; in 1935 Petersen is once again identified as the head football

coach. The 1942 Champion states that Petersen was head coach for 16 years, so for clarity, Petersen will be considered head coach for all years 1925-1942 except for the 1930-31 football seasons.

With Coaches Millsaps and Bales still on board, Central entered the 1932 season with its first four-man coaching staff. The season started slowly with a 6-6 tie at Winchester and a 13-0 loss to Etowah, but then the staff must have lit a fire in the players which resulted in seven straight shutout victories: 25-0 over Bradley County, 16-0 over Nashville Central, 25-0 against Decherd, McMinn County 19-0, 12-0 over a powerful Knoxville City team, and then 12-0 and 19-0 whitewashes of Notre Dame and City for a 7-1-1 record. Entering the 1933 season with such momentum, Central started off strong with two shutout victories, Stevenson by 19-0 and Etowah 12-0. However the injury bug began to grow and a scoreless tie with Bradley was followed by a painful loss to Morristown 7-0 in which Morristown managed only two first downs but scored the first points against Central in 11 games, enough to win. After this game Central lost its leading rusher and others to economic woes, then lost more starters to injury in a crushing 24-0 defeat at the hands of Boys High of Atlanta, eventual Georgia State Champions. Unable to cope with all the personnel losses, Central then held on to a 0-0 tie with the UC freshman team and lost convincingly to Nashville Central 20-0 and Knoxville City 25-0. The season ended back in Chattanooga with a 7-6 squeaker over Notre Dame and a 0-0 struggle with City. The tally for 1933 was a lackluster 3-4-3 record with great uncertainty for 1934, since some of the injuries to underclassmen were serious and dropouts among upperclassmen had become pandemic.

The 1933 season reflected to a great extent the economic pressures upon urban and rural families of that era. Central had begun to benefit from influxes of rural families as early as the 1920s as transportation improved and the economy allowed the sons working class families to stay in school and earn high school diplomas. The 1930s, conversely, saw an increasing number of drop-outs as families lost jobs, homes, and farms during the Depression. The number of players trying out for football dropped accordingly, as the mid-30s saw typically 25 to 30 players reporting for initial practices, compared to upwards of 50 to 60 during the mid-20s and early 30s. As the 1933 season progressed, Central lost players almost weekly to school dropouts as well as players pressured to quit playing by their families who were fearful of medical bills resulting from injuries. The 1934 Champion reported that by the end of the 1933 season, most of the players remaining were inexperienced freshmen and sophomores.

An innovation of sorts – night football – became commonplace in 1934 with a number of professional and college stadiums being retrofitted with powerful lights. This allowed or promoted a number of modifications to football such as an earlier season in the Deep South, where daytime football in late August or early September would have been risky for players and uncomfortable for fans. Night football also allowed working families to attend games, resulting in larger crowds, hence more revenue, so lighting proved very cost-effective.

For Central the 1934 season began with a team of inexperienced underclassmen, and with the strong out of state and in-state schedule unmodified, Central suffered through another one of its worst seasons, compiling a 3-6-1 record. Central started with 6-0 and 20-0 shutouts of Rhea County and Etowah but nighttime visits to Kingsport on September 28, Atlanta at Ponce de Leon Park against

Georgia Military Academy on October 3, then at Nashville Central on October 10 resulted in 6-0, 26-7, and 13-0 losses to the hosts. Central returned to home games at Patten Field to ease by Bradley County 7-6. The annual game with Baylor was frustrating as Central held Baylor in check but had a blocked punt and a fumble returned for touchdowns in a 12-0 loss. After another disappointing 0-0 tie with Notre Dame, Central stumbled through the end of the season, losing to Boys High of Atlanta 21-6 and to City 6-0 in front of 5500 fans at Chamberlain Field.

If 1933-34 were the Dark Ages of Central football, 1935 was the Renaissance. With 13 letterman returning and a new coach replacing Millsaps to the football staff- Ralph Olinger, former basketball and football star at Central and recent UC graduate - Central raced to a 9-1 season. Overcoming the night game jinx of the previous season, Central christened the new Bradley County stadium under the lights with a 17-7 beating on Thursday, September 12 that was much worse than the score. The Times September 13, 1935 edition used words like “crushing” and “wrecking” to describe Central’s domination of Bradley’s line. And in a follow-up article on Thursday, September 19, 1935, Times Reporter Springer Gibson first invoked the “P” Word as thus:

*“Coach Dean Petersen’s highly touted Central “Purple Pounders” will open what looms as a spanking good football season here as they tear into their seven-year rival, Etowah, at Patten Field tonight, starting at eight o’clock.”*

This was the first use of the term, Purple Pounders, in print, as coined by Springer (as he used it in quotations). For the remainder of that season and all future seasons the Times staff always referred to Central as the Pounders. The 1938 Champion uses the term Purple Pounders in reporting the 1937 season, showing that within two years of Mr. Springer’s innovation, Pounders had been universally accepted as the school nickname. Central had previously been called “Darrah’s Charges”, “Rikemen” , and “Purple Wave” in early newspaper accounts and during the 20s had been referred as the “Purple Hurricane” and “Purple Warriors” in the *Digest* and *Champion* accounts, but “Purple Pounders” proved to be the enduring name for the rest of Central’s football history. For the remainder of the 1935 season, the Pounders lived up to their name, losing only to Knoxville City (undefeated and unscored on for several years in the early thirties) at Knoxville, and administering one of the worst defeats ever to a Rike-coached team at Baylor, 32-0:

September 13	Central 17	Bradley County 7
September 19	Central 12	Etowah 0
September 26	Central 13	Kingsport 0
October 4	Central 38	Rome (GA) 0
October 11	Central 24	Nashville Central 6
October 17	Central 18	Stevenson (AL) 0
October 24	Central 0	Knoxville City 24
October 31	Central 32	Baylor 0
November 8	Central 7	Anniston (AL) 6
November 15	Central 7	Notre Dame 6
November 30	Central 19	City 6

Also 1935 marked the introduction of night football to the Chattanooga area, with lights added to Patten Field, Chamberlain Field, and Engel Stadium. The first three Central home games -Etowah, Kingsport, and Rome, - were played at Patten Field on weekday nights.



#### COACHES

S. D. PETERSEN  
Head Coach

GEO. MCCOY  
Line Coach

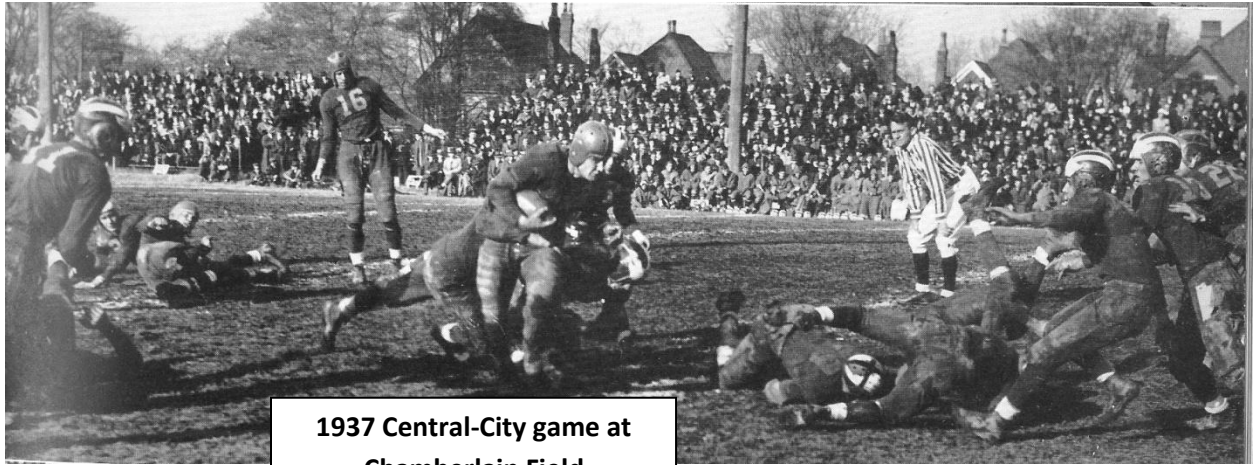
RALPH OLINGER  
Assistant

W. P. BALES  
Assistant

Coaching Staff 1935-38

In 1936, playing virtually a repeat schedule of the previous year, Central only managed a 6-4 record. Central started strong with 32-0 and 12-0 victories over Copperhill and Etowah, but was run over by eventual state champion Kingsport Dobyns-Bennett team at Kingsport 27-0. Then three narrow victories over Rome (GA) 6-0, Nashville Central 12-6 and Bradley County 12-7 preceded losses to Baylor 6-0 and Knoxville City 14-0. After recovering with a 25-0 manhandling of Notre Dame, the team inexplicably lost to an inferior City team 13-12 to end the season.

1937 marked the last major expansion of the school. By the addition of two wings paralleling Chamberlain and Bailey Avenues, the school could now serve over 2000 students, and the next decade would witness the largest senior classes in Central's history, most in excess of 400 students. It also marked the beginnings of Central's playing the better teams throughout the South and having fewer local opponents. Central began with a 19-6 win over Etowah and followed with a 25-0 trouncing of Notre Dame. Then three losses to highly ranked teams – Kingsport 19-6, Knoxville City 12-0 and Nashville Central 13-0 set the tone for a series of midseason struggles through injuries. Central got back on track with a 21-0 win at Bradley County, but then fell to an undefeated Baylor team 13-12, despite holding Baylor to three first downs- Baylor's scores coming on a blocked punt and a 75-yard punt return. Trips to Alabama and South Carolina gave mixed results with a win over a highly-ranked Anniston 18-13 but a loss to SC state champion Gaffney 7-0. A win over Rome (GA) 13-0 preceded a loss at Birmingham to Ensley 14-0. In the season finale, Central spanked City 16-0 to end a long and brutal season with a record of six wins, six losses.



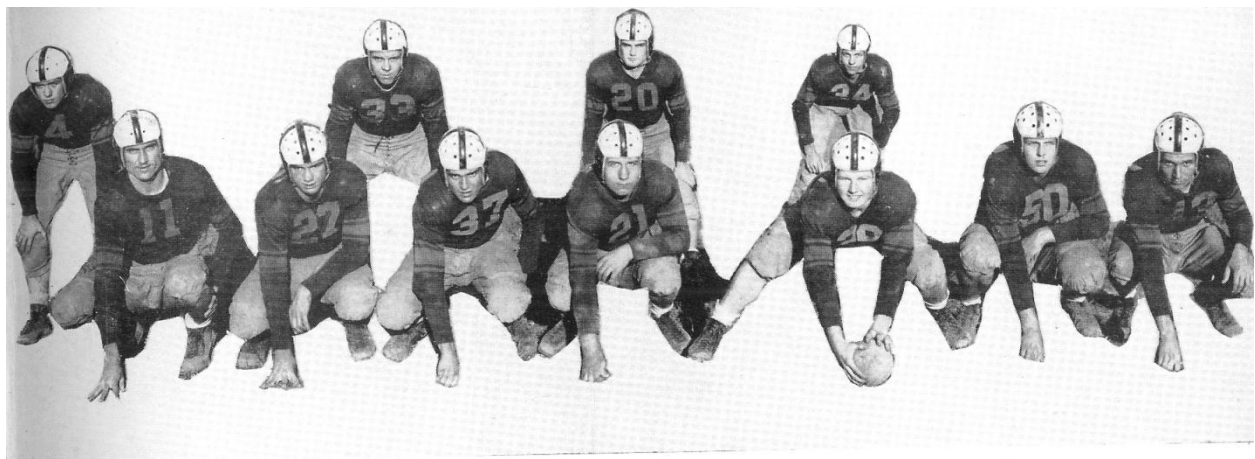
**1937 Central-City game at  
Chamberlain Field**



**Central High after final (1937)  
building expansion**

In 1938 Central began playing home games at an unnamed home field for the first time, the field being formally named Frawley Field later that season. The 1938 season began at the unnamed home field with a 24-0 win over Soddy-Daisy then followed with shutouts over Notre Dame 20-0 and Morristown 13-0. Probably the most anticipated game of the year resulted in a 0-0 tie at Kingsport, who had led the nation in scoring the previous year. Central then dispatched Bradley County 7-0 and

Baylor 14-7 before venturing to Louisville and losing to Louisville Male 13-7 on a late touchdown. Central then returned to pound the local teams – 32-6 over Etowah and 34-6 over Rome (GA), before losing to undefeated and state champion Ensley High of Birmingham 13-7. At this game Frawley Field was officially dedicated at halftime ceremonies. Central then crushed City 32-0 to end the regular season. In a rare state playoff game Central ventured to Kingsport for a return match where they led favored Kingsport 12-7 late into the fourth quarter, but had a punt blocked with under two minutes to play and yielded the winning touchdown with seconds to play, losing 13-12. Central thus finished another brutal schedule with an 8-3-1 record.



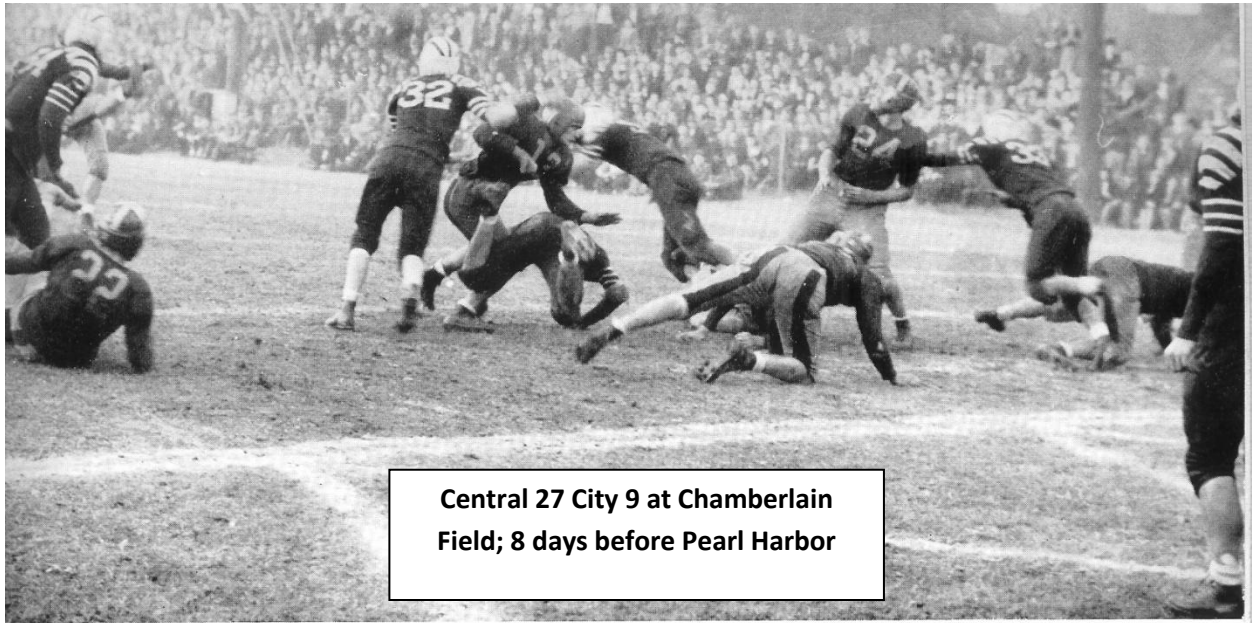
#### STARTING LINEUP

Linemen: Fred Butcher, End; Billy Carden, Tackle; Milton Tindall, Guard; Hoyt Kilgore, Guard; Paul Steinman, Center; Fred McKinney, Tackle; James Brown, End  
Backfield: John Cullom, Quarterback; Herman Morris, Halfback; Ronald Roger, Fullback; J. R. Ligon, Halfback

In 1939 Central added another assistant football coach, John Michael, reducing Bales duties to basketball and baseball, but the momentum from 1938 never materialized. An opening tie 7-7 with an inferior Soddy-Daisy team and a tough 6-0 win over an unimpressive Notre Dame portended a long season. Five consecutive losses to Morristown 25-18, Kingsport 20-14, Evansville (IN) 40-6, Asheville(NC) 19-0, and Bradley County 7-6 were difficult to overcome. Some easy victories followed: 19-6 over Rome (GA) and 53-0 over Etowah. But a 7-7 tie with a small Erwin team was followed by excruciating losses to Birmingham Ensley 14-13 and City 7-6, for a most forgettable 3-7-2 season. The 1940 team improved somewhat with wins over Soddy-Daisy 39-0, Notre Dame 44-0, Morristown 21-6, and Stevenson (AL) 42-0 to start the season. Central then was heavily favored over Bradley but lost 14-0 in Cleveland, but rebounded at home to beat Asheville 7-0 and Rome (GA) 20-6. After a 51-0 debacle over Spring City, Central was again upset 19-6 by Erwin. Central then surprisingly handled Birmingham Ensley 19-6 before being handcuffed by City in a 12-12 season-ending tie. The 1940 tally: eight wins, two losses one tie.

The Fall of 1941 saw many changes as two coaches left for military service due to the impending war – Ralph Olinger and John Michael and a third, George McCoy, became coach at Red Bank. Two new coaches - Lester Newton and Walter Newland – came on board. After an opening 40-0 thumping of Morristown away, the Pounders then journeyed to Louisville, KY where they lost to Male High 7-0,

despite threatening to score on several occasions. In the home opener at Frawley, Central led Bradley County 6-0 well into the fourth quarter, but fumbled and yielded the winning touchdown and extra point in the last minute, losing 7-6. Central began anew the following week by scoring two late touchdowns to beat Birmingham Ensley 12-0, then easily dispatched Notre Dame 24-6 the following week. Central then ventured to Rome (GA) for a 13-0 victory, but then dropped two games to highly ranked Knoxville City 33-13 at Frawley Field and Dobyns-Bennett 7-0 at Kingsport. On November 29, Central claimed a tie for the City Championship with Baylor and a season record of 5-4 by pummeling City 27-9 at Chamberlain Field before 7000 spectators.



Central 27 City 9 at Chamberlain Field; 8 days before Pearl Harbor

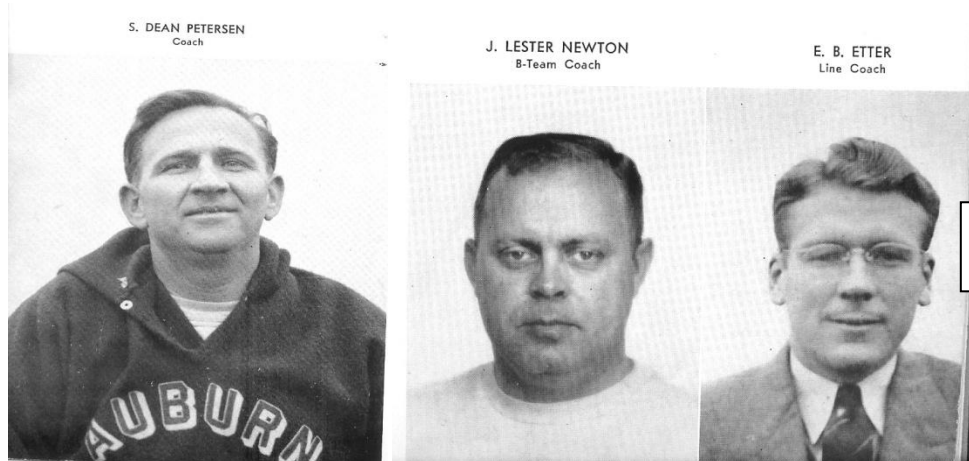


LESTER NEWTON, WALTER NEWLAND  
Assistant Coaches

Coaches added in 1941

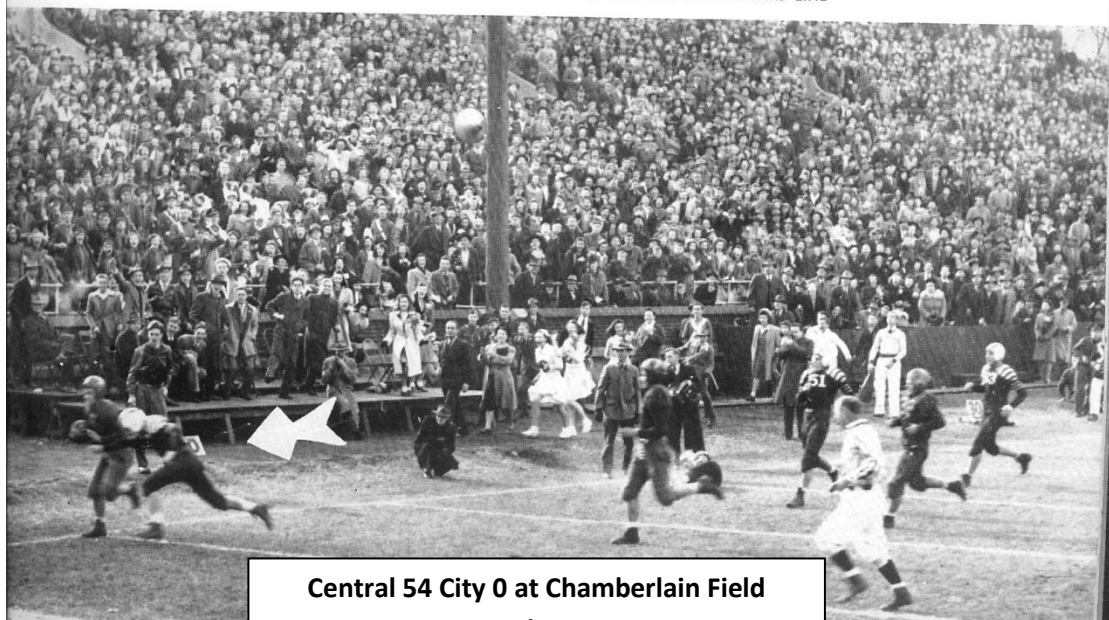


In 1942, another coaching change brought Brainerd Junior High coach E.B. Etter on board as the new line coach, replacing Walter Newland, who had been called up for military service. The Etter magic was immediately realized as Central came within one game of a perfect season. After routs of Red Bank 53-0, South Pittsburg 33-6, Valley Head (AL) 60-0, and Kingsport 41-0, Central ventured to Louisville and surprised a nationally recognized Louisville Male 14-12, their only loss in three seasons. Then Central repeated the feat in Birmingham by embarrassing a strong Ensley team 33-6 at Legion Field, before returning to Frawley Field and whitewashing Notre dame 38-0. Another trip to Rome, GA resulted in a 21-6 win. Then in the game that determined the state champion, Central struggled with eventual state champions Knoxville City for three quarters before falling 41-20 at Knoxville. Central took out its frustrations on Tech High of Atlanta 32-13, Erwin 33-6 and City 54-0, and in doing so, set a scoring record for local teams of 432 points in 12 games with an 11-1 season record. This was to be Dean Petersen's last year as head coach, as he was also called to military service before the 1943 season. In his 16 year tenure, Petersen's teams won 105 and lost 48 games with 14 ties.



1942 Coaching Staff at Central

ALMOST A T. D.—BILLY CARTER RETURNS PUNT 35 YARDS TO CITY'S 5-YARD LINE



Central 54 City 0 at Chamberlain Field  
November 1942