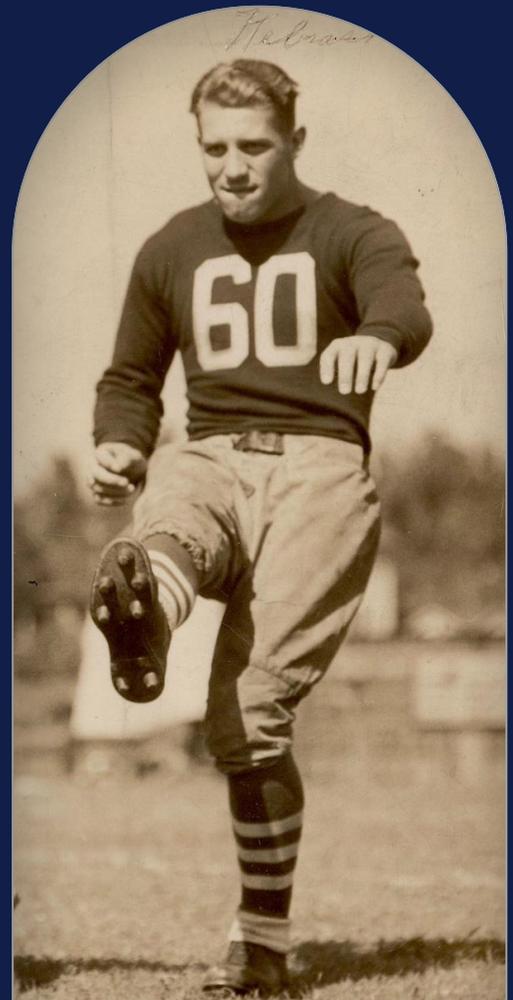


S H A W N E E   S T A T E   U N I V E R S I T Y

# LEGENDS OF TOMORROW

REVITALIZING A LANDMARK. BUILDING FOR TOMORROW'S CHAMPIONS.





*AI-generated imagining of the first Shawnee State Football team*



## ONE OF "ORIGINAL 8" NFL FRANCHISES

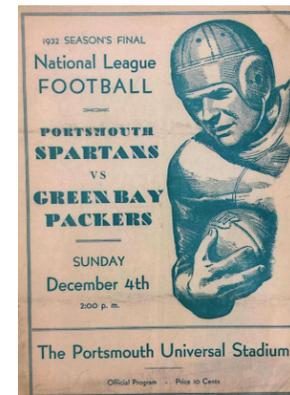
- |                        |                     |                             |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. CHICAGO BEARS       | 4. NEW YORK GIANTS  | 7. CHICAGO CARDINALS        |
| 2. PORTSMOUTH SPARTANS | 5. BOSTON BRAVES    | 8. STATEN ISLAND STAPLETONS |
| 3. GREEN BAY PACKERS   | 6. BROOKLYN DODGERS |                             |

*1932 Portsmouth Spartans*

# Introducing NCAA Division II Football to Spartan Stadium

## The Next Generation of Iron Men

Shawnee State University is making history with the launch of its first-ever football program — bringing new energy, new opportunity, and new legends to life. This is the next chapter in a story rooted in greatness. Our student-athletes will take the field in a stadium once home to NFL pioneers. On this hallowed ground, where football giants once played, a new generation will rise — and we're inviting you to be a part of that legacy.



### Portsmouth's NFL Team

A group of steelworkers and shoe manufacturers from Portsmouth, Ohio formed one of the nation's original eight National Football League (NFL) franchises in 1927 and made a permanent mark on the game. The Portsmouth Spartans played their first game in the new Universal Stadium (later renamed Spartan Stadium) in 1930. In 1932, they defeated the reigning NFL champion Green Bay Packers 19-0 without making a single substitution. The Iron Man Game, as it has since become known, set up the first postseason playoff game in the league's history, one that would resolve a tie between the Spartans and the Chicago Bears.



**Jim Thorpe**, winner of two Olympic gold medals in track and field and professional baseball and football player, came out of retirement in 1927 to serve as player-coach of the Portsmouth Shoe-Steels and develop it into what would become one of the first NFL franchises, the Portsmouth Spartans.



### Spartans Become Detroit Lions & NFL Champions

The Portsmouth Spartan franchise was sold to the Detroit Lions in 1934. Many of the Spartan players from the Iron Man Game led the Lions to their first NFL Championship in 1935.

# Mark Snyder Making History as SSU Football's First Head Coach

**Shawnee State University's first-ever head football coach is Mark Snyder, a 37-year coaching veteran.**

One of the most respected names in college football, Snyder was head coach at Marshall University from 2005 to 2009. He was a part of Ohio State's coaching staff under Jim Tressel during OSU's national championship season in 2002 and has coached at Florida State, Michigan State, Texas A&M, Minnesota, and Youngstown State. In 2022, Snyder joined the United Football League, coaching for the Houston Gamblers and Orlando Guardians.

"This is an opportunity for me to take everything I've learned and accomplished over my career and put it to work to build the best DII college football program from the ground up — and to do that right here where it all started for me," said Snyder.

Coach Snyder is a South Point, Ohio native, Ironton High School graduate, and honorary Kentucky Colonel. He began his football coaching career in 1988, shortly after graduating from Marshall University. He has been called one of the best defensive minds in college football and is author of the book "101 Defensive Line Drills" published in 2000. As Shawnee State Football's first head coach, Snyder said he plans to build a winning competitive program from the start — while also building a community around SSU Athletics.



# SSU Moves from NAIA to NCAA Division II

Shawnee State University Athletics has begun the multi-year process of moving in classification from NAIA to NCAA Division II, and has received an invitation to compete in the Mountain East Conference. This transition places Shawnee State Athletics on a national stage, aligns our athletic programs with institutions that share our academic rigor and competitive spirit, and offers our student-athletes access to enhanced scholarships and resources.



## Fall 2026 Season Starts with Mountain East Conference as Provisional NCAA Institution

Beginning in Fall 2026, our athletic programs will officially compete as a provisional NCAA Division II institution in the Mountain East Conference (MEC), a 12-member powerhouse that is highly competitive and dedicated to providing opportunity and pursuing excellence. Since its inception in 2013, six different MEC programs have held the nation's #1 ranking in the country in NCAA Division II.

### Mountain East Conference Schools

Shawnee State is proud to represent the Mountain East Conference in Ohio and compete with neighboring schools in West Virginia, Pennsylvania & Maryland. The 12-member conference now includes:

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| CONCORD UNIVERSITY — MOUNTAIN LIONS   | SHAWNEE STATE UNIVERSITY — BEARS                |
| DAVIS & ELKINS COLLEGE — SENATORS     | UNIVERSITY OF CHARLESTON — GOLDEN EAGLES        |
| FAIRMONT STATE UNIVERSITY — FALCONS   | WEST LIBERTY UNIVERSITY — HILLTOPPERS           |
| FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY — BOBCATS  | WEST VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY — YELLOW JACKETS |
| GLENVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY — PIONEERS | WEST VIRGINIA WESLEYAN COLLEGE — BOBCATS        |
| POINT PARK UNIVERSITY — PIONEERS      | WHEELING UNIVERSITY — CARDINALS                 |



HISTORIC HOME.  
GAME-CHANGING FUTURE.

# Play Begins Fall 2028



AI-generated image

In preparation for Shawnee State Football to begin with the Fall 2028 season, Shawnee State is restoring a site that holds incredible sports history, enhancing facilities used by all SSU student-athletes, and investing in the next generation of athletes.

We're also building a team, a program, and a community of fans.

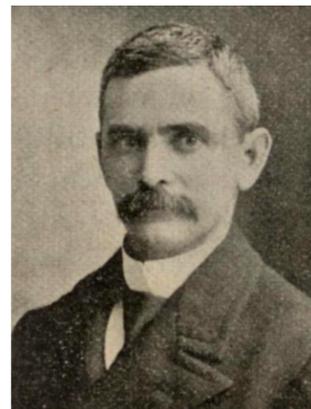
"Shawnee State Football is about more than a team for us and our community," SSU Athletics Director Gerald Cadogan said. "It's about history, tradition, and making more opportunities for student-athletes to compete at a high level while earning their degrees.

Cadogan has experience coaching, playing, and leading multiple sports and is best known for his college and professional football career. An offensive tackle in the NFL and Canadian Football League and on of the nation's top college football student-athletes at Penn State, Gerald began his career as a high school player for Portsmouth High School. Restoring the stadium at Labold Park where he earned his ranking as the #8 high school football prospect in the state, isn't just an exciting part of the job for Gerald — it's personal.



Gerald Cadogan at Penn State

## Community Support from the Beginning



Shawnee State Football's home, **Spartan Stadium**, is located in **Labold Park**, named after Simon Labold, a strong community leader, philanthropist, and entrepreneur who lived and worked in Portsmouth from 1884 until his death in 1927. He gifted Labold Park to the City of Portsmouth for the use of football, baseball, and recreation, setting the stage for the rise of professional football in Portsmouth and spurring dozens of professional baseball players from our region.

Now, his original vision continues through Shawnee State University Athletics, its new football program, move to NCAA Division II, growth of varsity sports, and support for youth programming.



