

ABBIE PAIZ

Though almost tiny (5'8", 150 pounds) by modern-day football standards, he still rates as one of the University of New Mexico's finest passers and all-time greats.

Born in Velarde, N.M., Abbie Paiz prepped at Albuquerque High and was named All State halfback in 1930, '31. His passing ability blossomed under Hall of Famer, the late F.M. (Tony) Wilson, as he combined with end Ralph Bowyer (Hall of Fame, 1976-77) to draw raves. Paiz was offered six college scholarships, including UCLA and Texas Tech, but decided to stay home (UNM).

So the Paiz-Bowyer duo took the act to Loboland and established itself as one of the finest aerial combinations in the Southwest, first under Chuck Riley in 1933, then under Gwinn Henry (1934, '35). The '34 eleven copped the Border Conference Pigskin crown with an 8-1 mark (best in UNM history), and during that season Paiz and Bowyer put together two of the longest pass plays ever seen - a 70-yarder in the 18-12 win over Arizona State and a 63-yard TD toss versus UT-ET (Texas Mines).

Paiz was named All-Border Conference wingback in '34 and '35 as the little man played both offense and defense, gaining renown for his vicious tackling in the secondary.

After service with the Navy, Paiz joined the Belen School System in 1947 following a year at Grants. He went on to become athletic director at Belen as well as head football coach, head track coach and assistant basketball skipper of the Eagles. Before retiring from the school system in 1971, Paiz served as assistant principal of Belen High School. The 63-year old Abbie is an insurance executive in the Hub City and is married to the former Josephine Ulibarri. The couple has three children.