

Throughout the years Owosso has continuously displayed athletic excellence.

21x6 sticker



Owosso once owned the World Indoor Softball Championship. Indoor softball, a fast and popular sport, was brought to the Owosso area in the late 1800s and perfected in the early 1900s. Only amateurs were allowed to play. Speed decided most games. The skinny bat and oversized ball (thrown underhand) negated any power attempts, making it essential to place the hits – often by bunting.

In 1906 the West Side Owosso team captured the World title during a best three out of five series against the Spaldings of Chicago inside Owosso's first Armory, located at the southwest corner of Mason and Park Streets. The team consisted of **Frank Collamer, E. Sweeney, Ed Sunderhoff, Dick Chapman, Johnny Brown, Charley Symes** (manager), **William Dowling, Steve Fletcher, Johnny Shotwell** (star pitcher), **Eugene "Tuny" Young** and **Tom Dowling**.

18x22

396SQI



Lee Campione (1920-2008)

Heavy-weight boxing contender, **Lee Campione**, was born in 1920 in Owosso and was a graduate of St. Paul High School in 1938.

In the 1940s, he squared off against three of the greatest fighters of all time, **Gus Lesnevich, Tony Zale** and heavyweight boxing champion **Joe Louis** (pictured).

9x16

144SQI



Chester Brewer (1875-1953)

Chester Brewer, born in Owosso in 1875, graduated from Owosso High School and the University of Wisconsin as a student-athlete. Over the course of his career he coached more than 150 college football games for four different schools. From 1903 to 1910, 1917 and 1919, Brewer coached football at Michigan Agricultural College (MAC) – now Michigan State University, where he compiled the school's 4th best overall winning percentage (.699), making him one of the school's most prolific coaches. The football team went undefeated in 43 straight home games. He also coached basketball, baseball and track teams and became MAC's first full-time athletic director. During his tenure, Green and White was adopted as the school's official uniform colors. He was inducted into the MSU Hall of Fame in 2000.

As athletic director of the University of Missouri in 1910 and the football coach 1911-1913, he was one of the founding members of the Missouri Men's Club. He led the team in 1913, to a share of the Missouri Valley Conference title. Brewer is credited with beginning the national homecoming tradition at the University of Missouri with the 1911 Kansas vs. Missouri football game. He had sent letters to the old football players to "come home" for the game and many of them did.

He also coached the Missouri Tigers' track and field and baseball teams. Brewer Fieldhouse, which he helped build, bears his name. Following his coaching years, he served as a professor at Missouri from 1923 until his death in 1953.

18x22 396SQI



William Graham (1883-)

William Graham was born in Owosso in 1883. His grandparents were Dr. Joseph and Vilette (Gould) Graham. His cousin was Owosso's famous impressionist painter, Frederick Frieseke. As a young man, Graham worked at Estey's Furniture Factory and then at his uncle's Frieseke Brickyard. He played for the St. Louis Browns baseball team as a left-handed pitcher from 1908-1910.

9x16 144SQI

Brad Van Pelt (1951-2009)

Brad Van Pelt, born in Owosso in 1951, graduated from Owosso High School in 1969, which was then a member of the Big Nine Conference. A Flint Journal sportswriter recalled an incident involving Van Pelt: "He was like a man among boys. He was about 6'5," 220. One night, his coach from Owosso called in and said he got 32 rebounds in a game. I didn't put that in the paper. I didn't believe it. So, the next game I went out when they played Davison and I counted 42 rebounds. He was just so dominant."



In 1969 Van Pelt was named all-state as a quarterback and first-team all-league in basketball, baseball and two ways in football. The Detroit Tigers and California Angels tried to sign him directly out of high school, but he declined. Playing football at Michigan State University under **Duffy Daugherty**, he was a two-time All-American at safety in 1971 and 1972. He won the Maxwell Award as the nation's best player, the first time a defensive back won the award. Van Pelt also played basketball and baseball at MSU, earning a total of seven varsity letters.

Drafted by the New York Giants, he earned five Pro Bowl selections during his eleven years with the team. **Alex Webster**, head coach of the Giants and **Wellington Mara**, Giants owner are pictured in 1973 during the announcement of the signing of Van Pelt to a \$300,000 contract.



The St. Louis Cardinals had also tried to draft him as a pitcher. As a member of the Giants (wearing his #10 jersey), Van Pelt was a member of the Crunch Bunch, a team of fierce linebackers composed of **Van Pelt, Brian Kelley, Lawrence Taylor** and **Harry Carson**. The group is widely considered one of the best linebacking combos in NFL history. He was also named the player of the decade (1970s) by the Giants.

He rounded out his career with the Los Angeles Raiders from 1984 to 1985 and the Cleveland Browns in 1986. Van Pelt died of a heart attack in 2009 at the age of 57. He is the father of former Denver Broncos and Houston Texans quarterback **Bradlee Van Pelt**.

18x28 504SQI



John Tomac (born 1967)

John Tomac, born in Owosso in 1967, is a retired professional cyclist who competed in multiple disciplines in road racing and mountain biking during a successful career that spanned twenty years. Tomac first participated in cycle racing at the age of seven. He entered BMX events in and around Michigan in 1975 and continued competing into his teenage years. In 1984, at the age of sixteen, Tomac won the National Cruiser Class title. He turned professional in 1985.

In 1986, Tomac relocated to Southern California and left BMX competition in favor of mountain bike racing. From 1988 to 1991, he competed in both mountain biking and road racing. Regarded as a mountain biking icon Tomac was inducted into the Mountain Bike Hall of Fame in 1991 and considered a true all-rounder, having won major national and international titles in four disciplines.

He officially announced his retirement from racing in 2000 and lives in Colorado, however, he would make an occasional return to competition. In 2004, at the age of 37, Tomac won the famous Kamikaze Downhill held at Mammoth Mountain, California. Then, for good measure, he returned in 2005 and won it again.

Tomac's son, **Eli Tomac**, is a professional motocross racer competing in the AMA motocross and supercross national championships riding for the Kawasaki racing team. Eli Tomac is noted for being the first true rookie pro ever to win his professional motocross debut in 2010. His father was his coach.

18x28 504SQI

Boards are 3/4" apart all sides