

SEPTEMBER 15, 1976

POOL REPORT #3

THE PRESIDENT'S DINNER WITH THE MICHIGAN FOOTBALL TEAM
AT THE MICHIGAN UNION

After the President left the fieldhouse he visited the practice field where the University of Michigan football team was practicing. For a short time he watched a passing drill from the sidelines, then walked out on the artificial turf with head coach Bo Schembechler for a closer look at the drills. He spent about 15 minutes at the practice field altogether. In the presence of the President the players seemed nervous, quarterbacks threw interceptions and receivers dropped passes. As the President left the field, he commented that "the players are "an awful lot bigger than when I played here. Not only bigger but better."

Ford drove to Inglis House, a gray stone home perched atop a hill surrounded by trees and bushes which serves as the official guest residence of the University. He changed into a gray pinstripe suit, and a blue and maize tie, the Michigan colors, while there.

After an hour at the residence Ford drove to Michigan Union to have dinner with the football squad at their training table. Coach Schembechler introduced the President and "one of Michigan's all time great centers. And Ford replied that "the longer you get away from reality the bigger these stories get." -- in reference to the coach's introduction. He urged the players to "make all your fame now"; the longer you are away from campus "the fewer the number of people who tell the truth about you." He praised them for the "great record that you have" describing himself as a "Monday or grandstand quarterback", praised them for the fact that "you play to win".

Then Ford toyed with the steak while the Michigan players were wolfing immense portions. Steak, baked potato, macaroni, cole slaw, chocolate pie. A second string center for Michigan, Steve Notta asked him whether he had ever centered the ball over somebody's head. Ford replied "many times more than I'd like to". Then they passed out old pictures of Ford as a Michigan football player and Schembechler got a good laugh at his haircut.

During Ford's visit to the training table, a TV crew filmed him to be shown on Schembechler Sunday afternoon television program.

Dean Fischer, Time
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