

Former PHS coach to receive Peru State honor

- Brent Hardin / Sports Editor
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 - PERU – Norris Hale made a positive impact on the Plattsmouth High School football program for seven seasons in the 1960s.
 - The former PHS leader will be honored for a lifetime of coaching service at a special Peru State College ceremony this fall.

Peru State officials announced this past week that Hale would be posthumously inducted into the Peru State Athletic Hall of Fame. Hale spent 41 years on football sidelines in both Nebraska and Iowa. He collected a career mark of 252-132-7. Hale was born on a farm near Hallam in April 1930 and grew up in both Cortland and Beatrice. He earned first place in the written portion of the Gage County spelling contest as an eighth-grade student. He graduated from Beatrice High School and competed on the Peru State track and field team. He was also sports editor of the campus newspaper.

Hale served as a combat engineer in the Korean War before beginning his coaching career at Walnut in 1955. He spent time at both Hamburg and Glenwood before coming to Plattsmouth in 1961. Hale took over a program that had gone 0-9 in 1960 and soon turned it into a contender.

Plattsmouth finished 3-6 in 1961 and 4-4-1 in 1962. The team then went 7-2 in 1963, which was the best mark for the football program since 1948. The Blue Devils were co-champions of the Ak-Sar-Ben Conference that season.

The team went 18-10 over the next three campaigns and then won the Twin Rivers Conference title in 1967. Hale left Plattsmouth in July 1968 and became head coach at Council Bluffs Abraham Lincoln that fall. He remained there until taking over the program at Pella High School in Pella, Iowa. He went 171-66 at Pella with 15 conference/district championships.

Hale coached at Pella through 1996 and then took a job as a kicking coach at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. He passed away from a heart attack in 1999.

Hale is a member of the Iowa Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame. He is one of just 20 Iowa prep football coaches to have earned more than 250 career victories.

Peru State is inducting Hale into the meritorious service category of the PSC Athletic Hall of Fame. The induction ceremony will take place at 5:30 p.m. Oct. 25 in the PSC Student Center.