

Jesse Loffer
GPHS Athletic Director 1947-1980
Inducted 2021



A longtime Oregonian, moving here as a one-year old, Jesse grew up in Tiller on his father's prune orchard and goat farm. As a young man, he and his older brother Ron weren't aware of the Depression and spent their days fishing, riding horses, purloining watermelons, and camping out wherever dusk found them

After conquering Polio, Jesse earned a baseball scholarship from Oregon State University and gained his master's degree from the University of Oregon. After college, in 1942, Jesse joined the US Navy.

In 1947 Jesse was hired as a teacher at Grants Pass High School where he taught math and coached the Caveman baseball and football teams. In 1947 Jesse was appointed Athletic Director and remained in that position until his retirement in 1980.

Jesse Loffer served as Athletic Director for 33 years during the Golden Age of Grants Pass High School sports. Throughout Jesse's tenure, Grants Pass High School earned ten state championships. His work during those years was recognized by others around the state when Jesse was honored as the Northwest Regional Athletic Director of the Year in 1976 and in 1978. He was also one of 6 finalists for the National Athletic Director of the Year in 1978.

While Jesse Loffer was an outstanding coach and athletic director, his legacy includes true heroism. On December 4, 1948, while returning home from winning the state football championship, the team bus crashed on Mount Sexton. Two young men died in the tragedy, Sterling Heater and Al Newman. Several more players were hospitalized with serious injuries. Jesse Loffer took control! His quick thinking and confident, calm leadership helped rescue many players and prevented many more serious injuries and loss of life.

Jesse belonged to several service clubs in Grants Pass and is remembered by his friends, colleagues, and students as a man who "helped make this town what it is". In his spare time, Jesse enjoyed fishing, camping, hunting and golf.

Jesse Loffer created a wonderful legacy. Many future athletes and coaches honor Jesse Loffer and model his behavior and leadership.

He was one of the best ever at Grants Pass High School.