

Warren RABB

By Jeff Miller

The Buffalo Bills were entering their second year of their existence in 1961. The Bills' inaugural season of 1960 had been plagued by inefficiency at quarterback, with veteran Tommy O'Connell alternating playing time along with Johnny Green and the team's first-ever number one draft choice, "Riverboat" Richie Lucas of Penn State. The result? A less-than-stellar 5-8-1 record and a third-place finish in the AFL's Eastern Division. When the Bills opened training camp '61, Green was penciled in as the starter. But mid-way through camp, Green sustained a shoulder injury that forced the recently retired O'Connell back into action. Feeling somewhat insecure about their quarterback situation, the Bills' brought in an NFL castoff named Warren Rabb to bolster the depth chart.

Rabb was a two-year starter at Louisiana State, and led the Tigers to an 11-0 record and the Southwestern Conference Title in 1958. LSU faced Clemson in the Sugar Bowl on January 1, 1959, and, playing part of the game with a broken handed, Rabb led the Tigers to a 7 to 0 victory and the National Championship.

"I was running down the sideline and had the ball," Rabb recalls of the play in which he was injured. "The guy put his helmet right on the football when he tackled me, and I broke my hand pretty bad. I came out of the game and told the coach. I said, 'Coach, I think my hand's broken.' He looked at it and said, 'Aw, it's alright.' So we got back in the game, and we had an opportunity to try a field goal-35 yards or something like that. But we decided to run a fake. When the ball came back to me, the kicker kicked through it, but I kept the ball, and Billy Cannon was the up blocker on my left side, and he had run a down and out and was thirty yards behind everybody-there wasn't anybody close to him-and I threw the ball up in the stands! I couldn't hold the football. My palm was all swollen up, and I came out of the game and Coach Deitzel said, 'What happened Rabb?' I said, 'Coach, I told you, my hand's broken. I can't hold the football. I had to do the best I could to get it out there.' I didn't play after that. They brought a doctor out there to look at it, and it was broken in three places."

He led LSU to the Sugar Bowl again in '59, only to lose this time to 01' Miss. With his stock high, the Detroit Lions of the NFL picked Rabb in the second round in 1960 draft. The Dallas Texans of the new American Football League also picked him. The Texans offered more, but Rabb opted for the senior league on the advice of an old friend. "Jim Taylor and I played high school ball together," he recalled. "We also played at LSU together, and after talking with him, I just decided to sign with Detroit, even though the money was better in the AFL.

Rabb played very little in backing up Earl Morrall and Jim Ninowski. Although he appeared in seven games, he never attempted a pass. He returned to Detroit for training camp in 1961, but was released prior to the start of the regular season. "My second year in Detroit I was the last cut," Rabb remembers. "[Head Coach] George Wilson offered me a chance to be on the taxi squad at full salary if I stayed." But Rabb was a competitor. He wanted to play.

Buffalo provided that opportunity in September of 1961, when the owner himself, Ralph Wilson, contacted him. "Wilson lived in Detroit," Rabb recalled. "He called me up and offered me a little

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more money, a small bonus and a chance to play." Rabb would have the chance to compete for playing time, rather than having to watch from the sidelines as he had in Detroit.

But a weird twist of fate intervened. Just five days after Rabb inked his deal with Buffalo, the Bills signed another quarterback, Rabb's former teammate at LSU, M.C. Reynolds. It appeared Rabb would be backing up the very same guy he'd once understudied in college. But Rabb took Reynolds' signing in stride. "I wasn't concerned about that at all," he says. "I knew MC was there. He was ahead of me at LSU-I was a freshman when he was a senior."

The Bills opened the season by going to 1-2 in their first three games. Finding no consistency with Lucas and O'Connell at the helm, coach Buster Ramsey gave Reynolds the nod in week four against the Chargers. Despite losing 19 to 11, Reynolds acquitted himself well enough for Ramsey to go with him again the following week at Houston against the defending AFL champions. However, Reynolds struggled through three quarters before Ramsey decided to make a switch. Rabb entered the game in the second half with the Bills already down by a 12 to 7 score. He directed two fourth-quarter scoring drives to lead the Bills to a spectacular come-from-behind victory. The first drive culminated in a is-yard touchdown pass to end Perry Richards. After the game, Rabb remarked, "I wasn't nervous. The coach told me earlier that I might go in. I had just been mulling over what I might call."

Coach Ramsey was reserved in praising his young quarterback: "Rabb called a pretty good game." Ramsey's reservations were still evident the following Sunday when he gave Reynolds the start against the Dallas Texans at War Memorial Stadium in Buffalo. However, Reynolds and Rabb split time with Reynolds playing the first half and Rabb the second. With the Bills leading 10 to 3 at the half, Rabb came in and made an immediate impression, connecting with Glenn Bass on an 87-yard touchdown pass on just the second play from scrimmage.

Despite Rabb's on-field successes, Coach Ramsey continued to lack confidence in him. Ramsey started three different quarterbacks over the next four games-Reynolds, Rabb, and Johnny Green-before deciding to stick with Green. Rabb saw his last action of the season on November 12 against Dallas in the Cotton Bowl. "I got hurt in Dallas," he explains. "I had gotten hurt when a knee hit me in the sternum. So I came out and Johnny Green was in. I was now out of the game, but Coach Ramsey wanted me to go in to run a bootleg. Eddie Abramowski, the trainer, told him not to put me in. But the coach wanted me in. So I went in and ran the bootleg and ran into to one of their big guys and ended up separating my shoulder. That was it for that year." The Bills split their last two games and limped to an overall record of 6-8-0.

Hope for the franchise would come in 1962 in the form of Lou Saban, who was named head coach after Buster Ramsey was fired by Ralph Wilson following the '61 campaign. Shortly after his signing, Saban declared that the Bills were secure at the quarterback position with Rabb, M.C. Reynolds, and Johnny Green. When Saban traded Reynolds just before camp started, it appeared that the Bills had their two quarterbacks set. But Green was traded to the New York Titans along with defensive back Billy Atkins for quarterback Al Dorow, and it seemed that no one's job was safe.

Rabb was indeed disappointed when Dorow was named starter for the Bills 1962 season opener at home against the Houston Oilers. Dorow completed just four of 17 passes and coughed up three interceptions before Rabb entered the game and nearly brought the Bills back in spectacular fashion. With the Bills trailing 28 to 10 in the third quarter, Rabb engineered a 70-yard drive in which he completed five out of six passes, including a four-yard TD toss to Elbert

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Dubenion. With 5:25 remaining in the fourth, Rabb scored on a one-yard quarterback sneak to bring the Bills within five. But Houston was able to run out the clock and the Bills fell to 01.

Once again, despite stellar play, Rabb was drubbed in favor of Dorow when the Bills faced Denver the following week. The Bills lost, 23 to 20, as Rabb did not see any action. The Bills played next on Saturday, September 22 at home against the Titans, Al Dorow's former team. But Dorow was again ineffective, and Rabb entered in the second quarter and led the Bills to their only score, a 24-yard touchdown pass to Elbert Dubenion, as the Bills lost their third straight.

It wouldn't be until week six that the Bills finally found themselves in the win column, crushing the San Diego Chargers 35 to 10 at War Memorial. And it was Warren Rabb who led them to their first victory under Lou Saban. Despite a then-AFL record low 12 pass attempts, Rabb threw three touchdown passes, including a 76-yarder to Glenn Bass. "I got knocked out on that play," Rabb remembered. "We were in our own territory, and Bass was split out on my left side. I told him to run a deep post, and I dropped back to pass, I saw him make his cut, and I let the ball go. I led him, and I really hung it up out there, and when I did I got hit right in the mouth, and I was bleeding in the nose, and I got knocked out. Eddie Abramowski came out there, and I was on the ground, he said, 'Are you OK?' I said, 'Yeah, I think I am. What happened?' He said, 'Bass scored a touchdown.' I said, 'Good!'

Ironically, Rabb broke his own record by throwing just eleven passes the following week (October 20) against the Oakland Raiders. But they would prove to be enough as the Bills won 14 to 6. Rabb's second-quarter touchdown run of one yard had put the Bills ahead for good.

Rabb continued to shine as the Bills defeated the Denver Broncos 45 to 38 in a come from behind win at Denver on October 28. He completed nine of 16 passes for 262 yards, including touchdown tosses of 75 yards to Dubenion and 40 yards to Bass. But it was Rabb's ability to run that made the difference. The strike to Bass pulled Buffalo to within two. The Bills chose to go for the two-point conversion, and were successful as Rabb skirted right end to tie the score. Late in the fourth, Rabb connected with Cookie Gilchrist on a short pass that Gilchrist converted into a 74-yard gain, taking the Bills down to the Denver four. Then with just 2:32 remaining in regulation time, Rabb carried the ball over from three yards out, clinching a spectacular come back, and giving the Bills their teamrecord third consecutive victory. "We had this play," said Rabb, "I forgot what they called it-214 keep or something. Billy Shaw told me as we were breaking the huddle, 'Get on my ass and I'll lead you in.' And that's exactly what I did. When I rolled out, he was pulling and I just got right behind him.

The Bills returned home to face the Boston Patriots on November 3. Despite the fact that Rabb completed just 4 of 17 pass attempts, the Bills were able to eke out a tie before the largest crowd in team history (33,247). And despite his impressive four-game unbeaten string, Rabb was looking over his shoulder as Jack Kemp worked his way into shape.

During the week, Rabb attended the Bills Quarterback Club along with coach Saban. At the luncheon, he was asked about Kemp, and honestly replied, "I can't help but feel they'll put Kemp in as soon as he's ready and start getting him ready for next season. Jack's a better quarterback. He has the experience and he's smart."

"Saban felt Kemp was going to be his quarterback of the future," Rabb recalls. "Jack had a bad finger at the time he was acquired-he had jammed it in San Diego. I said Coach Saban is the

coach and Kemp is a good quarterback, and that the coach will have to make the decision as to who starts. I liked Jack—we were competitive but we were friends." Rabb's words would prove prophetic indeed.

Rabb was still in the driver's seat when the Bills met the San Diego Chargers the following Sunday at Balboa Stadium. He completed six out of 16, including touchdown tosses of 68 yards to Dubenion and 12 yards to Bass. Behind Rabb's leadership, the Bills were on a six-game unbeaten streak, and had rallied from an 0-5-0 start and were now 5-5-1. But despite Rabb's impressive record, coach Saban elected to insert Jack Kemp when the Bills faced the Raiders on November 18 at Frank Youell Stadium in Oakland, Kemp completed just 4 of 12 attempts in his Bills debut, but led the team to its only touchdown as Buffalo won, 10 to 6. Kemp would be installed as the starter the following week against Boston, and the Bills had the quarterback who would take them to the pinnacle of the AFL within two years.

He continued to see spot duty over the remaining three games of the Bills schedule, but there was no doubting who the Bills' number one quarterback was. In 1963, with Kemp entrenched as the Bills starting quarterback, Rabb had accepted the fact that he would be the back up. But the Bills drafted a cocky rookie from Notre Dame named Daryle Lamonica, and Rabb knew his time in Buffalo was running short. "I went back [in 1963] and Johnny Mazur was the offensive coach," Rabb remembered, "and that was the year they drafted Lamonica. When I went back I never got a shot. There was no doubt about Lamonica coming from Notre Dame and Johnny Mazur being from there. All that kind of worked against me.

"Buffalo cut me after three or four exhibition games. I didn't play at all. I knew the writing was on the wall," Rabb recalls that some of his teammates voiced their disapproval over his release, including the player who had beaten him for the starting job in 1962. "Jack Kemp and Cookie Gilchrist went to Saban for me. I liked Jack -- we were competitive, but we were friends. Cookie was always a big encouragement for me."

Rabb returned home to Louisiana following his release. He toyed with the idea of coaching for a while, but then something else caught his fancy. "When I came back I was pretty disappointed," he says. "I wanted to get into coaching, and I was just about to take a job as a high school coach when I got a call from a friend telling me not to take the job until I talk to him." The friend offered Rabb a chance to work in the jewelry industry. "It was for Jostens. I went to work for them instead. I have been 41 years with Jostens. I have six staff working for me. I've made a really fine living. It's been a lot of fun and I enjoy it."

Rabb still lives in Baton Rouge, along with his wife of 48 years. "I met my wife, Lynn, in the 8th grade," he says. "We got married in my junior year at LSU, 1958. We have one boy and three girls."

Looking back on his time in Buffalo, Rabb is philosophical. "In pro football," he says, "you've got to be a little lucky and in the right place at the right time." Although he maintains his disappointment at not getting a chance to compete in 1963, he has nothing but fond memories of the city, the fans, and his teammates. "The bottom line is that I just enjoyed my two years in Buffalo. The ownership was very nice to me. I have no negative feelings at all. The fans were super. We had a lot of fun on that team."

One on One - Conversation with Jim Brown – Part 3

By Roger Gordon

Originally published in The Orange and Brown Report, Summer 2006."

In this, the third and final installment of The OBR's exclusive interview with Jim Brown, The Great One discusses issues ranging from the salary cap, to rules changes, to officiating, to the Browns' chances this season.

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The OBR: On to the salary cap. In your opinion, good or bad for the league?

JB: I think the league's done very well. I think it's obvious that the league has done very well. But since you're writing the story and you want to deal with something that, to me, is very relevant, I think the pension plan has to be revisited. I think for any writer in this country not to take a look at the pension plan, it's almost a crime. How can the National Football League have a pension plan that pays somebody \$120 a month?

The OBR: Is that all?

JB: Some players only get \$120 a month.

The OBR: That's kind of sad.

JB: Yes, it is. But we're working on that now - in goodfaith manner. Now you tell me \$120 is a pension plan under *any* circumstance for *any* reason, then you have to be totally whacked. But I think most people don't even know about it. I think there's about 350 of them that get less than \$150 a month. So, like I say, I will fight all my life for a decent pension plan because that affects the lives in a real way of individuals that have helped develop this league.

The OBR: With Paul Tagliabue retiring recently, what are your impressions of the impact he had on the league? I guess when it comes to the pension, not very good, huh?

JB: The interesting thing in the research we've done ... it's almost that you can't identify who makes the decisions! It's almost like a secret. But Tagliabue has done a great job because you've got look at the overall advancement of the league. It's America's game now. It's popular as hell, they've got a great playoff system inclusion involved - they've got great TV coverage ... you look at the health of an industry, and that's how you kind of judge a commissioner. So this man has done a tremendous job. You can't nitpick him. He's done a great job for the game itself.

The OBR: Do you think the game, along with other sports - NBA, Major League Baseball - with the corporate names on stadiums and things like that, is going a little overboard to you?

JB: It's part of the times. We live in America. America is a capitalistic society, and we advance in that way. We don't advance in character and integrity, we advance in money and the commercial aspect of our lives and lifestyle. America has a great lifestyle, and so you've got to recognize that part of it. But when it comes to a certain integrity, it leaves something to be desired. So many things have to do with a profit.

The OBR: So personally, it wouldn't bother you if Cleveland Browns Stadium ever had a corporate name attached to it?

JB: No, it's not going to bother me because my head is not mired in the fans. I'm looking at the reality of money. If they named Cleveland Browns Stadium after a corporation, that's a business deal. I'll give you an example. Players go from one team to the other. Once a player changes

uniform, he's a part of you. Right? It's only a game, but it's a business.

The OBR: Anything you'd like to say about the rules changes over the years?

JB: Yeah. I heard a receiver say that the rules that they put on the defensive backs are unfair. Now, when a receiver can understand that a defensive back cannot change his position in the air when he's hitting somebody ... they've got too many rules, they're trying to make up safety, and you can't make it safe that way. People have to know how to carry themselves on the field and what to look out for, but you can't legislate everything. And they're legislating the game into touch football now.

The OBR: What about the two-point conversion? Did you think that should have come into the league in '94?

JB: I think it's fine because it doesn't have much of an effect, does it? Once in a while, it might come into play, but it really doesn't have very much of an effect. Things change. I'm 70 years old, but I'm not old-fashioned. The thing about changes ... as I said, it's a commercial thing, and when people invest their money, they want a return. And as long as the fans feel it's a popular game, then it's being presented in a manner that's pleasing.

The OBR: The officiating. Many scrutinized the officials for their performance in the last Super Bowl. Do you think there's a problem? Do you think officials should be full-time year-round, training in the off-season?

JB: Officials just can't do it in the day of technology that we have. It's almost impossible for the human eye to be able to catch everything at the split second. I think it's natural for a human being to make errors when it's one split second you have to make that decision. I'm definitely in favor of the instant replay rule because it corrects mistakes.

The OBR: What's your take on their being no professional football in Los Angeles, the second-largest city in the United States? Is that a problem?

JB: I think that the politics were very difficult, and that's the reason. It's a great market, and they had a big fight here about building a stadium, a stadium complex, and certain politicians wanted them to refurbish the Coliseum. And I don't think they were ever able to get past it. It was a money situation because I think that if they could've built a major complex, that certain businessmen wanted it. But because of the need of the city, certain politicians were able to have an influence in blocking it because they wanted the Coliseum to be basically re-done.

The OBR: Do you think L.A. will ever get a team down the road, and if it does, do you think it will be expansion or an already-existing team?

JB: I have no idea about expansion or existing, but I think that right now there are talks on the table that are very serious about getting a team here.

The OBR: Give your impressions of the Browns' brain trust of Lerner, Savage and Crennel, and where you think the Browns are headed and what they need to achieve success.

JB: Well, right now, I think in two years it's almost miraculous because when you look at the free agency acquisitions, you look at the individuals that you drafted, you look at the two individuals that were hurt Braylon and Kellen - and you look at Savage being very free to do what he needs to do, and Romeo now having the kind of players that he desires to have, it's been fantastic. It's almost like having a great start with real fine coaches and real fine players. I can't criticize one aspect of what has happened in this last year. Since the season ended, I think we have made tremendous strides. I think the last game against Baltimore [2005 finale] was a

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sign of things to come. And I don't say this because I work for the Browns. I honestly love the acquisitions that we have made.

The OBR: You got into the TV booth for a little while in the '70s doing color commentary for CBS for a few games, including a Browns-Rams game in '77 at the old [Cleveland] stadium. How long did you do that for?

JB: I think I did it about a year.

The OBR: Was it strange doing a game at the old stadium?

JB: No, not really. I actually enjoyed it. It was kind of refreshing, and it brought me back to the game, and I had a chance to offer my opinions. I basically got fired.

The OBR: You got fired?

JB: Basically, because I made a comment on the air about Jimmy the Greek. I basically said the networks were hypocritical because they say that you're not supposed to advocate gambling, yet you had a guy that sets the line on games as a part of your telecast. So they didn't like that too much.

The OBR: Were you sad to leave that position?

JB: No, no, I wasn't sad at all. Bob Stenner is a great producer, and he's my friend today, and he was the guy that wanted me there, and we've always had that friendship. It was something that I never thought I'd be there for forever anyway.

The OBR: We're going to roll off a few names for you, and we just want you to give us one or two sentences - the first thing that comes to your mind - when I give you the following names. Pete Rozelle.

JB: Pete did a great job. Pete was an individual that really helped the National Football League become what it is today.

The OBR: Bill Parcells.

JB: I know Bill now. I've met him, and I really like him. He is one of a kind because his methodologies only work for him, and no one else would be able to use them and be successful.

The OBR: Jerry Jones.

JB: Maverick. Bright. Different. Great businessman.

The OBR: Art Modell.

JB: Art needs to be in the Hall of Fame. He made a major mistake in his life, to leave Cleveland the way that he left Cleveland, whatever the reason.

The OBR: Michael Jordan.

JB: Unfortunate situation. Great personality, great talent, but doesn't really stand for too much.

The OBR: Joe Namath.

JB: Broadway Joe, baby. Changed the style of football.

The OBR: Bernie Kosar.

JB: Unbelievable move to get to Cleveland. Very unselfish and loved tremendously by the Cleveland Brown fans.

The OBR: Brian Sipe.

JB: Don't know much about Brian but respect him because other people respect him.

The OBR: Carmen Policy.

JB: I would rather not comment.

The OBR: Franco Harris.

JB: Franco is an Italian masquerading as an African-American. When you know Franco, he's really a nice man. When I got to meet him, he's really a genuinely nice human being.

The OBR: O.J. [Simpson].

JB: Well, I did a chapter in my book about O.J. The Juice is the tragedy of our generation. He's a tragedy. A talent wasted in tragedy-land.

The OBR: Paul Brown.

JB: Innovator, visionary, pace-setter, trend-maker.

The OBR: Vince Lombardi.

JB: Lombardi was a master at what he did. Old school. Hard-nosed.

The OBR: Walter Payton.

JB: Walter was my dear friend. Probably the greatest heart that ever moved the football. He had so much heart. He's tough. His heart was unbelievable. Nothing shaky about it. I admired him. We had a great relationship. I knew his son, and we shared a lot of moments together.

The OBR: Gale Sayers.

JB: That's my man. Every time Gale sees me, he kisses me on the cheek. We have so much respect and so much love, it's unbelievable. We just get along. I'm so glad you asked about those two guys [Payton and Sayers] because both of them are unbelievable.

The OBR: Who's the greatest running back in the history of the National Football League?

JB: It's an irrelevant question that's not inclusive. It's an irrelevant question for a professional but not for the fans or writers. It's great for you guys because it creates whatever. The thing about greatness is that you don't have to measure it against itself. It is what it is. And Walter Payton was what he was, and that's what it is. Gale is what he is, and J.B. is what I am, and that's it. It's almost demeaning because there would be so much wisdom, and I would explain to the fans the greatness of all the players that I know and their differences, and I could give them details of their greatness.

There's so much to be learned from a professional about other professionals that has nothing to do with "being the best." It's like, if I would describe Gale Sayers, Walter would be totally different, Earl Campbell would be totally different, Hugh McElhaney would be totally different, Bobby Mitchell would be totally different, and the joy would be to explain the details of the talent. Everything can't be formed by looking at me. Some things are what they are that I don't even have anything to do with - Gale Sayers' stride and Walter Payton's heart and Bobby Mitchell's ability to move around and to be flexible. That's like art.

The OBR: You seem to have a part-time career as a professional mediator. It seems every time there's an athlete in trouble, you sort of become an advisor to those athletes. Maurice Clarett,

the Winslow, Jr., negotiations and others I'm sure. Besides trying to help these kids obviously, what's it like to work with guys who seem to be head cases? In short, does it ever become clear that some of these guys' are really past your ability to talk them down?

JB: Well, that's a great question, a very great question. You know, Mike Tyson's a dear friend of mine. Around me, Mike is humble. When Maurice Clarett is around me, he's humbled, intelligent and nice. He listens. Ricky Williams is the same way. All of these individuals have a wonderful side when they're around certain people. But most of them are two people. And usually when they're that other person, they're never around me. And then I guess if they feel they're going to be that person, they don't allow me to find them.

The OBR: You mean they have split personalities sort of?

JB: They're just like two people, that's all. The people I know listen, they're genuinely nice, they're honest and they're intelligent. *All* of them are intelligent. But somehow they don't want to see me all the time, and that's usually when something else is happening. A lot of it has to do with a lack of fathers. I think when Cus D'Amato died, it left Mike out there. Maurice doesn't deal with his father, and I don't think Ricky deals with his father.

The OBR: What about Kellen Winslow, Jr.? Did you deal with him at all?

JB: Yeah, Kellen is a friend of mine. I love Kellen. I'm a good friend of his father, but I really like Junior, I understand him. And I'm going to try to be as close to him as I can.

The OBR: You've always been one who tells it like it is. When you appeared on the Browns' radio partner, you were considered less of the independent than you've been, and more as a representative of the team. Are there any different challenges that you face now that you're officially aligned with the Browns? Has it changed what you've said? In other words, were you given any instructions before appearing on the radio?

JB: Oh no, they never give me any instructions. The great thing is, Randy came out and sat down with me, and I really got back involved with the Browns to help him bring back the tradition, and I helped him because I had so much respect for him because I knew him before his father died. So I knew him before he became powerful.

I'll tell you something that's very honest. The Browns have done everything that I thought they should do this year - in their drafting and their looking at Charlie Frye, who I've always liked. And I had a talk with Romeo and I said, "Romeo, I'm going to try to get this organization to get behind you, and really we want to follow your ideas, and we don't want to be contradicting you in the papers or on the radio because it takes a point of view. And I think you deserve for all of us to get behind you and help you develop this team rather than all of us having these independent opinions from day-to-day and week-to-week." So if that's a cop-out, then I'm a cop-out artist. But I think that's the way I want to do it because it can only be one man calling the shots when you're going on the field. And I think all of us in the organization should get behind that one man now that we know how he is, and we have seen what he and Phil have done to bring the kind of players that we respect, and every move they've made is something that I've thought should have been done.

I don't want to be Jim Brown with a bunch of different opinions from week to week. I want to be a guy that's saying, "Hey, Romeo. These are your guys now. Phil has given you these guys. Randy's set it up for you guys. We've been involved in it. Alright, baby, roll with it and we'll roll with you."

The OBR: What do you do for fun?

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JB: My hobby's my work. I love it. I'll give you an example of what I mean. In the last week, I had two major speeches in Cleveland. The week before that, I spent two days in Albany, New York. I spoke at about seven schools.

The OBR: Is this representing the Browns?

JB: Well, I represent the Browns at the speeches in Cleveland, but when I go to the schools in other places, I represent Amer-I-Can. My work is my hobby, but I also love golf.

The OBR: What's your handicap?

JB: I'm probably about an eight.

The OBR: Do you spend more hours a week working for the Browns or doing Amer-I-Can?

JB: Well, I sort of live Amer-I-Can, and I'm available for the Browns all the time. It's almost like the same work in a way because I do a lot of work with the young kids. You know, I talk to Charlie [Frye] once in a while, Dennis Northcutt and some others.

The OBR: Do you go to all the Browns games, home and away?

JB: Yeah, I go to all of them.

The OBR: Do you travel with the team?

JB: Sometimes.

The OBR: Do you ever give the team motivational talks before the games?

JB: I spoke to the rookies last week. I'm usually asked to do it.

The OBR: By lerner?

JB: No, by Romeo.

The OBR: How does Jim Brown the player want to be remembered?

JB: I want to be cremated, and I want my ashes just thrown into the wind, and I don't want any funeral.

The OBR: No, no, no. You didn't hear me right. How does Jim Brown *the football player* want to be remembered, as a *football player*?

JB: That's the same thing. It's all up to whoever feels what they feel. The only thing I love about it is I know what I did, and some people enjoyed what I did, and they enjoyed it genuinely.

The OBR: And how does Jim Brown the person want to be remembered?

JB: Same thing. I don't think about being remembered. I could care less. What I want is everything to happen while I'm here.

The OBR: What's your height and weight?

JB: Well, I'm probably about 250, and I'm about 6-2.

The OBR: Do you still work out?

JB: I'm starting right now.

The OBR: Anything else you want to say to the Cleveland fans that we haven't asked you?

JB: Well, the bottom line is, I think that they'll have Cleveland Browns football this year and from now on. I think that the Browns are back. I think the organization's clean, and I think they

deserve it. And I think they will see ... Charlie Frye, I think, is a real up-and-coming star, and I think there will be some exciting games they'll be able to witness because I think that we have the players, we have the coaching staff and we have the owner that have made all of this possible.

Luggin' The Leather

By T J Troup

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How many times have we heard a coach say how important it is to run the ball successfully during a game? With those words in mind, let us use the 100yard individual rusher as our benchmark. And see how often we win?

We can see that historically, in the National Football League, that the winning percentage will vary between 62 and 86% (depending on which team). Every team at one time or another has had a successful ground attack. Which teams have consistently won when they have had a 100-yard rusher?

Each era has had at least one team that has won consistently when they had a 100-yard rusher. The Cleveland Browns for their first twenty years in the NFL (1950-69) were that era's best team. Cleveland's record with a 100-yard rusher was an incredible 86-122 (86%).

The Steelers have had a 100-yard rusher in more victories than any other team in league history with 173. The 2005 Super Bowl champions won all six times during the 2005 season when they had a 100yard rusher. And, historically when a Steeler rushes for 100 yards they win 83.57% of the time. When they do not, they win only 43.42% of the time; this is the largest differential of all 32 teams.

The Rams are the team with the most individual 100yard rushing performances in a game. They have had 220, and nine times a Ram duo has gained 100 yards rushing in the same game. Further, the last 39 times a Ram has rushed for 100 yards in a game, the Rams have won. That streak is the longest winning streak in league history.

From September 7, 1963 through October 28, 1985 (a span of 331 games) the record for the men in Silver & Black when they have had a 100-yard rusher was, hold your breath, 59-1. The Raiders rank a close second in running the ball and winning.

There have been many successful coaches who are linked with running the ball. Two of the most successful were Vince Lombardi and Don Shula. The highest win percentage for coaches with a 100-yard rusher is the author of "Run to Daylight." Under Lombardi, the Packers record when having a 100-yard rusher was 31-2-1.

Practicing on a daily basis as a rookie defensive back with the Cleveland Browns in 1951 against the defending league rushing champion Marion Motley was a lesson that Don Shula utilized as a head coach. He was first with the Baltimore Colts and later with the Miami Dolphins. Miami has continued after the retirement of Shula to have an effective running game. As such, the Dolphins stand by themselves at the top of the charts. Overall, the Dolphins have 98 wins and only 16 losses when they have a 100-yard rusher.

The Redskins have also had a history of successfully running the ball. Though at one point in their history during a 136 game span (November 8, 1959 through October 12, 1969) the

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Redskins had only two men rush for over 100 yards. The Washington franchise rebounded under Hall of Fame coaches George Allen and Joe Gibbs to win 55 of 63 games (87.3%) when a Redskin rushed for 100 yards under their leadership.

Only five times in their first 118 games did a Denver Bronco rush for 100 yards. Since then, the Broncos have had great success in running the ball and winning. Denver ranking seventh in win percentage when having a 100-yard rusher. The Broncos have accomplished this with a number of different men.

Each year every team's goal for the season is to play for a championship. It was 50 years ago during the 1956 season that the Chicago Bears met every team goal. The Bears are the only team in league history to have a 100-yard rusher in every regular season victory and play for the championship

Records with 100-yd Rushers

Team	Record With 100-Yard Rusher				Record Without 100-Yard Rusher			
	Wins	Losses	Ties	Pct	Wins	Losses	Ties	Pct
Dolphins	98	16		85.96%	264	226	4	53.44%
Raiders	100	18		84.75%	296	269	11	51.39%
Steelers	173	33	1	83.57%	287	362	12	43.42%
Packers	124	27	6	78.98%	399	432	15	47.16%
Redskins	139	36	1	78.98%	376	434	26	44.98%
Browns	144	36	3	78.69%	267	306	6	46.11 %
Broncos	113	30	1	78.47%	251	290	9	45.64%
Eagles	112	30	2	77.78%	347	477	22	41.02%
Seahawks	81	24		77.14%	146	217		40.22%
Cowboys	143	42	1	76.88%	230	262	4	46.37%
Oilers Titans	113	34	1	76.35%	219	320	5	40.26%
Giants	119	36	1	76.28%	401	423	24	47.29%
Ravens	37	11	1	75.51 %	41	70		36.94%
4gers	111	36	1	75.00%	327	323	12	49.40%
Rams	158	48	5	74.88%	311	342	13	46.70%
Colts	113	38		74.83%	278	360	7	43.10%
Bills	124	38	4	74.70%	203	319	2	38.74%
Patriots	91	31	2	73.39%	247	314	7	43.49%
Chiefs	102	34	3	73.38%	264	278	9	47.91%
Bears	146	53	2	72.64%	404	385	14	50.31%
Vikings	83	33		71.55%	290	263	9	51.60%
Chargers	102	41	1	70.83%	227	308	10	41.65%
Bengals	77	33		70.00%	176	293	1	37.45%
Panthers	27	12		69.23%	55	82		40.15%
Jaguars	35	16		68.63%	59	66		47.20%
Cardinals	96	42	2	68.57%	275	529	21	33.33%
Falcons	80	41	1	65.57%	165	317	5	33.88%
Buccaneers	51	28		64.56%	132	256	1	33.93%
Saints	67	37		64.42%	170	314	5	34.76%
Jets	88	49	1	63.77%	240	327	7	41.81%
Lions	104	60	2	62.65%	346	455	23	41.99%

TURK EDWARDS

Immovable Lineman Made "Big" Impact in NFL's Early Years

By Michael Richman

Offensive Tackle, #17, Washington State NFL
Career: 1932 - 1940 (9 seasons) Redskin Years: 1932 - 1940
HOF Induction: 1969
Member of NFL 1930s All-Decade Team
Born: Sept. 28, 1907 (Mold, WA)
Died: Jan. 12, 1973 (Seattle)

He was dubbed the "Rock of Gibraltar." At 62, 265-pounds, Redskins lineman Turk Edwards was a mountain of a man for his day.

Edwards, who played for the Boston BravesBoston Redskins-Washington Redskins for nine seasons (1932 to 1940), was one of the NFL's first "big" tackles. A devastating blocker and tackler at a time when many single-platoon players stayed on the field for 60 minutes, he toyed with opponents using overwhelming strength and power, yet he had the speed and agility to chase down ball-carriers. He was also a smart player and possessed excellent leadership skills. He claimed All-NFL honors in 1932, 1933, 1936 and 1937, and was a cornerstone on the 1937 Redskins team that became NFL champions.

Edwards was inducted in 1969 into the Pro Football Hall of Fame, which described him as a "steamrolling blocker and smothering tackler." He "played with such immovable and impregnable tendencies and, thus, became the best of his era," the Hall of Fame noted. "Like many of the pros of that period, Edwards was an iron man. In one 15-game season in Boston, Turk played all but 10 minutes of the entire season. "

"Turk was the biggest man on the field and the fastest lineman on the field," said Clyde Shugart, a Redskins guard from 1939 to 1943. "He kicked *off*, too. I always said that's one man the opposition got out of the way of. He'd run right into a man and knock him over. He was a really good leader. He was captain of the team. He just had a really nice personality."

Albert Glen Edwards also overwhelmed opponents on the college level. A native of Washington state, he played at Washington State University, becoming a first-team All-American tackle as a junior. That season, he blocked a punt and returned it for a touchdown, helping the Cougars preserve an unbeaten season and gain a trip to the 1931 Rose Bowl. Cougars coach Babe Hollinberry gave Edwards his curious nickname by saying one day when the tackle was late for practice, "I wonder where that big Turk is."

When Edwards finished playing college ball, no draft existed in the upstart NFL. After receiving offers in 1932 to play for the New York Giants, Portsmouth (Ohio) Spartans and the expansion Boston Braves, he chose the Braves, who submitted the highest offer: \$1,500 for a 10game season. From Washington state, he chauffeured a busload of fellow rookies to training camp near Boston.

Edwards proved to be one of the prize catches for Braves founder and owner George Preston Marshall, anchoring the offensive and defensive lines. With his gargantuan frame, he opened holes in 1932 for rookie Cliff Battles, who gained a league-high 576 yards rushing. The following year, he played 710 of a possible 720 minutes for the newly renamed Redskins. He was a key to fullback Jim Musick gaining an NFL-high 809 yards and Battles tallying 737.

In 1936, the 7-5 Redskins won the Eastern Division title with a 14-0 win over the Giants, a game in which Edwards tormented his foes. He used his oversized hands to block two punts, made tackles all along the line and opened gaping holes for the Redskins' runners.

Washington, in a 13-3 game, again beat the Giants on Sept. 17, 1937, the opening game for the Redskins in their inaugural season in the nation's capital. And with the Giants behind by seven late in the third period but just a few yards from the end zone, Edwards made an emphatic introduction before his new home fans, according to one newspaper account.

"Three times, (future Hall of Fame running back) Tuffy Leemans and company smashed their way at the Redskin line but didn't gain an inch. On fourth down, Tuffy crashed directly at Turk's position. The crowd was in a constant uproar, and as Tuffy headed for what appeared to be the tying touchdown, a huge red-shirted figure, with a golden number '17' on his back, collided fearfully with the Giant ace. When the ball was placed down, it belonged to the Redskins on the 3-yard line."

"Turk Edwards and his brilliant line, more than any other single incident, sold professional football to Washington that night."

In addition to Battles, end Wayne Millner and a rookie halfback named Sammy Baugh, Edwards was one of four future Hall of Famers on that Redskins squad, which finished as NFL champions. The tackle helped open holes for Battles (NFL-high 874 yards rushing) and provide a shield for Baugh (NFL-high 1,127 yards passing), while bowling opponents over with what *Washington Times-Herald* sportswriter Vincent X. Flaherty called his "exceptional tonnage."

Before the 1940 season, Edwards was named as the team's top assistant to coach Ray Flaherty, and intended to continue as a player. Despite being bruised and battered after eight seasons, he was confident about his effectiveness on the field.

"I feel as good as ever/, he said in *The Washington Star* on Aug. 16, 1940. "Can I stand up throughout the season? Well, you know that because of our two-team system, a Redskin hardly ever plays a full game and, although I can't move as fast as I did, I think my legs will carry me through. Until we started training, I played 36 holes of golf every

day since July 10, and my legs are in good shape. All in all, I'm as anxious to get started again as I've ever been."

Edwards played well in the season-opener, but his career ended in a bizarre incident before the second game against the Giants. After shaking hands at midfield with Giants center Mel Hein, a future Hall of Famer and Edwards' former teammate at Washington State, the Redskins' team captain turned to jog to the sideline. But his spikes got stuck in the turf, and his ofteninjured knee gave way. The seemingly indestructible man never played another down in the NFL.

Edwards maintained his ties to the burgundy and gold. He was a full-time assistant from 1940 to 1945, when the Redskins remained an elite team, and took over as head coach before the '46 campaign. His tenure was uneventful. He went 5-5-1 in 1946, 4-8 in 1947 and 7-5 in 1948, and left football after spending 17 seasons with the Redskins. Corrine Griffith, Marshall's wife, praised Edwards for his commitment to the organization in her 1947 book, "My Life with the Redskins."

"Nice, big, loyal, Turk, (17) years with the Redskins/" she wrote. "He had always been nice and loyal, but he hadn't always been as big; the longer he stayed with the Redskins the more he expanded. Most people think Turk's big body is full of flesh and bones, but they're wrong; his body has to be that big to carry around all that loyalty."

DICK SCHAFRATH

By Roger Gordon

Originally published in The Orange and Brown Report

Dick Schafrath was always one for a challenge.

The former Cleveland Browns' left tackle once canoed across Lake Erie. He once ran from Cleveland Municipal Stadium to Wooster. Wooster! Both nonstop. He even wrestled a bear!

"I never trained for anything," he says. "I just did it on guts I guess." None of those accomplishments hold a candle to what Schafrath embarked upon in 1985 in what was the biggest challenge of his life.

Politics was the last thing on Schafrath's mind. It was not even a blip on the radar screen. He was in Saratoga, Wyoming, of all places, investigating a business deal in which he would manage a 50,000-acre ranch. At the time, Schafrath owned the Loudonville Canoe Livery, not far from Wooster, his home town. He had purchased the livery nearly 15 years before, following his stellar 13year career with the Browns. With the livery open only during the summer months, Schafrath also worked in public relations,

"I was maybe going to sell the livery," he recalls, "and move out to Wyoming,"

That is, until out of the clear blue sky while on his western sojourn, Schafrath was in for the surprise of his life. He was out surveying the big ranch when suddenly a cowboy rode up on a horse.

"He said, 'Your name Schadrach or something?' " Schafrath recalls, "I said, 'Yeah.' "

Schafrath had a phone message waiting for him.

"The guy said, 'Would you like to ride with me to a phone?' There was no pay phone there, so I rode on the back of his saddle back to town.

"Someone from the Ohio Senate had called, someone in a leadership position, They tracked me down. I was staying on another ranch out there, one owned by (Cleveland businessman) Jess Bell. They found out through Jess that I was out on his ranch."

Here's the 411: The Ohio Senator representing the 19th District, which covers Wayne, Ashland, Richland and Knox counties, was retiring with some 18 months remaining in his four-year term. Another Republican was needed to stand in for the remainder of the term and run as the incumbent in the upcoming primary against a gentleman by the name of Tom Van Meter. Van Meter had held the seat for about a decade before leaving to run for governor. He lost. He then made it public that he would seek his seat back at the primary the next year. Senate leaders, however, did not want Van Meter back.

"They wanted a 'name' to run against him," Schafrath says.

That "name" was Schafrath.

But why? Why Schafrath?

Schafrath had no political experience. He never even had an interest in the political arena. He was about as familiar with politics as he was with how to apply mascara.

"I didn't know the first thing about politics," he admits. "I didn't know a township trustee from a mayor. I'd never even voted before!"

Yet Ohio's Senate leaders still wanted Schafrath back in Ohio immediately to be interviewed.

"They talked me into driving back," Schafrath says, "I drove back straight through the night and the next day and got back Sunday night. Monday, I was interviewed and Tuesday I was a state senator, just like that."

An average to below-average student for the most part throughout his school days, Schafrath was not naïve, He realized he held his new position not for his political astuteness nor decision-making abilities, but rather for his name, recognition and popularity. He was okay with that, though.

"I think they thought that the people of Wayne County maybe liked me," Schafrath laughs. "So I thought, 'Well, it's a new challenge."

"Nobody could understand what the hell happened in my life, but here I am running my canoe livery, being a senator three, four months a year in Columbus - I didn't know what the hell I was doing as a senator - and trying to run for re-election! When I told my dad the next day that I was a senator, he said, 'Well, are you going to be working for Reagan in Washington or what?' "

Schafrath's undertaking was made a bit easier by the fact that he received quite a bit of help.

"I was 'adopted' by two existing legislators who had been there over 40 years," Schafrath says, "and they really taught me a lot about politics. One was even a Democrat!"

Schafrath also received assistance from some rather renowned individuals.

"I had Woody Hayes, Paul Brown and my dad as my co-chairmen," he says, referring to the year-and-a-half leading up to the 1986 primary.

"It was a whirlwind tour," Schafrath says, "of meeting people, chomping at it and chomping at it until we caught him (Van Meter). We raised \$1 million for the campaign. It was the most expensive race the primary ever had in the history of politics in the state of Ohio. There were TV ads, radio ads, mailings ... it was plug my name, plug my name. I was to everything that you can imagine that would give one penny."

Schafrath realized there were many observers who probably thought, "What's this former football player doing running for senator?"

Schafrath handled that with honor.

"I didn't try to hide anything," he says. "I said the only things I ever knew were business and football. If you want somebody that is not a professional politician, just a regular citizen to represent the people, then you've got the guy. If you want a professional politician, you've got to get somebody else."

Schafrath's hard work and diligence on the campaign trail was just enough to eke out a victory over Van Meter by 100 votes. Schafrath then won the election in November.

It was a dizzying time for Schafrath the first few years, but soon things began to fall in place.

"After I was there four or five years," he says, "I really knew what I was doing, I was really liking it and I was really feeling comfortable. And I was doing good, too. It became really fun for me. Basically, it's setting up for the budget, so you have to be there in April, May and June and then toward the fall again, September and October."

Schafrath was re-elected three more times before leaving his seat in 2002. As the years went on, he became a huge proponent of mandates that were funded only.

"You cannot pass a bill unless it's funded," he says, "because you can't put undue burden back on your county or the people by passing a bill that's not funded. Any law that's going to cost you money to follow it is wrong."

Another thing that is wrong, in the opinion of many, is that Schafrath has not been inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. He refuses to talk about it - not because he is angry but because he is humble and will not toot his own horn.

"When Gene Hickerson and a few others get in," he says, "then we'll talk about it."

A second-round draft choice of Cleveland's in 1959 out of Ohio State University, Schafrath had a fabulous career. He was voted All-Pro three times and was a Pro Bowler six times.

Schafrath remembers joining a Browns team that was awfully talented.

"The first huddle I was in," he recalls, "there were eight future Hall of Famers with two other guys who were All-Pro. So you had a lot of expectations when you stepped in a huddle like that. (Lou) Groza took me under his wing along with Mike McCormack."

Schafrath not only went from a part-time player to a starter by his second season, he also went from 220 pounds to 270 pounds.

"I started weightlifting," he says, "and I was the biggest guy on the Browns for about six, seven years. Paul Brown was mad at me because he didn't believe in weightlifting, he hated it. He liked you to run, run, run and thought weightlifting would tighten you up too much. He accepted it and left me alone because I was doing my job."

In the early part of Schafrath's career, the Browns began treading in mediocrity after years of success in the form of championships.

"I thought we had really great teams those years," he says. "We just lost out on a few of those games that were big games and we didn't come through. We had the manpower to it, the attitude I guess was not strong enough."

Then came Art Modell's legendary ousting of Brown in favor of offensive backfield coach Blanton Collier after the 1962 season. Collier's "get-after-'em" offensive philosophy was exactly what the stagnant Browns needed.

"With Paul Brown," Schafrath recalls, "you normally blocked a guy and just stayed with him and tried to drive him in the ground. You pretty much stayed with your man no matter what. That wasn't enough when you played with Blanton in those first three years, which were Jim Brown's last three. It was everybody hit ,'. we called it option-blocking. Once Jimmy would see you start with your hit on one side or the other of a guy, as soon as you hit the

guy, you didn't stay with him another two seconds. You tried to go past him because Jim Brown didn't mess around - he was goin' - and get a second block. On that offensive line, we had it going that some guys were always getting two blocks, and three blocks sometimes, on the same play. It became an obsession with the offensive line to make more than one block.

"Jimmy always says that it was fun to run with that group because every time he would turn another direction or spin out of a block, there were two or three more guys coming again. It was this wave of us coming and knocking guys down and get up and go again. Hell, even Gary Collins and Paul Warfield were sixth and seventh guys blocking!"

Utilizing Collier's revamped attack, Jim Brown gained nearly 1,900 yards rushing in 1963, nearly doubling his output from the year before. It was an NFL record until O.J. Simpson shattered it, topping the 2,000-yard mark a decade later. The passing game also became more productive. Although the yardage from it slipped a bit, the touchdown passes, most of them by Frank Ryan, increased by 10. The Browns finished 10-4 in '63, one game behind the New York Giants in the Eastern Conference. The best was yet to come, though.

The 1964 Browns won the Eastern Conference title with a 10-3-1 record but went up against the mighty Baltimore Colts for the NFL Championship Game in Cleveland two days after Christmas. Nobody, it seemed, gave the Browns a shot to win - nobody except the Browns themselves.

"That really helped a lot," Schafrath says, "them saying we were underdogs. The whole team felt we would win. If it took us eight quarters, we felt we'd win. It wasn't that we were going to blow them out or anything, it was just that we were going to win."

Schafrath was wrong.

The Browns *did* blow them out - to the tune of 27-0. Three long touchdown strikes from Frank Ryan to Collins turned the trick.

But it was the defense that shined brightest that day.

"Boy, they were great," Schafrath recalls. "When they came in at halftime (with the score 0-0) - and I'll never forget this - they were gain', 'I don't care what it takes, they're not scoring and we'll score. Offense, if you can't score, we're scorin'. It was a real up, positive group a halftime, the entire team actually."

Schafrath credits the coaching staff, as well.

"It's all about how you prepare and plan on Mondays and Tuesdays," he says. "If you don't plan and prepare right in how your attitude is for the rest of the week, that will show how you perform on Saturday or Sunday. It was preparation. And we knew on Monday when Blanton Collier gave us that game plan and laid it out and said, 'Here's how we're gonna win,' we were sold and, boy, everybody was convinced that that was the way we were going to beat Baltimore, and there was no way that we wouldn't win."

A torn hamstring kept Schafrath out of the Browns' bid to repeat in the next year's league title game, a 23-12 loss to the Packers in the sludge of Green Bay.

"That was the most frustrating, biggest disappointment in my life," Schafrath says. "That's the killer that's always bothered me is I didn't get to play in that Green Bay game. And to think I could have helped ... but (replacement) John (Brown) played a good game."

During Schafrath's final six seasons with Cleveland, the Browns knocked on the door but continued to play the role of bridesmaid, falling short in the NFL Championship game two more times - in 1968 and '69.

According to Schafrath, The Great One's departure to Hollywood made all the difference in the world.

"Jim Brown," he says, "was the actual tilting force in that group because we had some great players before and after him, but he just made that little difference. If he'd have stuck around, I think we might have got that Super Bowl."

Schafrath, also an insurance salesman during his playing days, will never forget playing in front of the crazed Cleveland fans.

"I just loved playing in front of that hometown crowd," he says, "that was just great. The difference then was you really had a good relationship with them (the fans) because you parked in the parking lot (with them) and walked to the stadium 100 yards, and everybody was signing autographs and taking pictures with you. The fans really were in very close contact with you, so it was like the whole family experience. That stadium was something to play in ... wow!"

Schafrath was quite familiar with the Browns' tradition when he joined the team. His interest in the Browns began at a young age growing up on a farm near Wooster.

"We didn't have a television and I never heard the radio until I was a junior or senior in high school, 50 mom and I would ride down to the corner store once in a while and we'd watch a Browns game."

Schafrath was an all-around athlete as a young boy and into his teenage years. In fact, he was All-Ohio in football *and* baseball at Wooster High School. He also ran track and played basketball.

"The problem with basketball," he says, "was they just didn't allow you to push and hit. I'd foul out in the third quarter."

Recruited for football by such celebrated universities as Oklahoma, Kentucky, West Virginia and even Notre Dame, Schafrath simply did not have an interest in going to college. His true love was baseball. In fact, he was drafted by the Cincinnati Reds. After graduation, he was all set to report to one of the Reds' farm teams.

Then, as Schafrath puts it, "My mom and dad were intercepted by Woody Hayes."

"Woody came on Sunday," he recalls, "and he had a trick. He decided he was going to try to see if he could take us all to church. Somehow, he knew we belonged to the catholic church. So we all went to church with Woody in his old station wagon. When we got back from church, Woody put on an apron and helped mom cook lunch. After we had lunch, he went down to the barn with dad and talked about all of the animals and his farm career. They came back up, Woody kissed mom on the cheek and got in the car and left. Never said a word to me for the five hours he was there. I came in the house a little bit later and I said, 'Boy mom, I wasn't very impressed with Woody Hayes and Ohio State.' And she said, 'I'll tell you what, son, you're going to Ohio State.' "

Schafrath was disappointed. Although he enjoyed football, he wanted to give the baseball career a go. And his grades in Columbus proved it.

"I tried to get out as fast as I could," he laughs. "I was failing courses, and Woody would make me live with him. I

actually lived in Woody's home for three quarters at different times, and his wife Anne tutored me."

Schafrath's major league dreams slowly faded away. By the middle of his sophomore year, he was starting for the Buckeyes. Schafrath was a member the Ohio State team that won the 1957 UPI national championship that was sealed with a 10-7 victory over Oregon in the Rose Bowl. He also got to enjoy two wins over archrival Michigan.

"The Michigan games were pretty good and that (Ohio) stadium rocked. That was beautiful," he says, "but I'd say that the Rose Bowl had to be the Camelot of college football."

Schafrath's lasting memory of his Buckeye days, however, came in his final game in 1958. With Ohio State ahead by six with 40 seconds to go, Michigan had the ball fourth-and-one at the Buckeyes' four-yard-line. Wolverines halfback Brad Myers was hit hard by Schafrath. The ball popped loose and the Buckeyes recovered. Schafrath's big hit helped preserve the 20-14 triumph.

In addition to acquiring the canoe livery after his final season with the Browns in 1971, Schafrath also coached under George Allen with the Washington Redskins from 1973-75. He sold the livery in 1996.

These days, the 69-year-old Schafrath resides in Ostrander, some 25 miles from Columbus. A heart and cancer survivor, he is taking after the recently passed on Rodney Dangerfield. Just as the former actor and comedian went *Back to School* 20 years ago, Schafrath is doing the same. He left Ohio State in 1958 46 credit hours shy of graduation. He has returned to Buckeye Land as a full-time student to earn his bachelor's degree that he began his quest for some 50 years ago, the longest period by far for an Ohio State student leaving school and returning to earn their degree.

"They have a program now," explains Schafrath, "where if you're a scholarship athlete again and you've got 45 hours or less still to go and a 2.0 average, you can return and continue your education under the same scholarship. So after I did that one hour, I qualified and they're paying for my education."

Schafrath, who also holds down a scholarship-required job in a campus computer room, is majoring in leisure sports, which focuses on marketing sports and motivating kids to be physically active. He is set to graduate in December.

"I love learning," he says, "but I can't remember diddly. I'm in classes with 17-, 18-year-olds. It's really int-resting how to motivate people, and it's kind of down my alley."

Schafrath is not getting his degree to go out and start a career.

"I'm hoping to be a good example," he says, "for my seven children and 11 grandchildren and anyone who is thinking about going back to get their degree. Woody, until he died, was like, 'Go back to school, get your degree.' (Jim) Tressel was on me, too. He thought it'd be a good example to set for all the football players.

"I told Tressel I didn't get to play here as a freshman, so I'm eligible. He said he'd call me his secret weapon."

Besides hitting the books, Schafrath also is writing a book. His autobiography, entitled *The Heart of the Mule - Bred to Compete*, is due out this summer. Schafrath earned the moniker "The Mule" in high school, and it stuck through the years. He says he was given the nickname because he was raised on a farm and had a tremendous work ethic.

Schafrath, a devoted Christian, said his experiences playing professional football actually helped him become a better senator.

"It helped," he says, "in terms of being organized, being a planner, being a visionary. I saw what Woody, Blanton and Paul Brown did as coaches. You've got to put people in the positions that you trust, and everybody I had on my (political) team was smarter than me and better than me, and I trusted them. All I asked was, they stayed with me two years, and if they could stay two years I'd promote them into another job. We really had a loyal team and they really did great jobs for me.

"You can also get caught up in the power and prestige of that position. When people are always saying, 'Hey, the senator!' and everybody stands up and claps, you can get carried away with it get a big head - and a lot of people do. But thank god I had been humbled by football, so it didn't bother me a bit. If you're not the star of the team, that's okay. There are not many stars. The team is the star. You have to realize the team comes first and you win as a team. It was that kind of attitude that helped me."

Schafrath changed a great deal in being a senator.

"I have a lot more pride in our country," he says. "I think we're losing a lot of our rights, and I became more sensitive to those founding fathers who fought for what we have in this country. And we're losing it little by little by people not having responsibility of their own and always wanting something for nothing. I get very sensitive to those things."

By the time he left his Senate seat in 2002, Schafrath had come a long way from 1985 when he was first appointed and was politically illiterate.

"You know what it was like?" he laughs. "It was like playing in the Super Bowl and never having seen the game of football."

Schafrath, however, scored a touchdown during his days as a senator.

Not bad for a left tackle.

This Game is Going into Sudden Death

by Steven M. Brainerd

Overtime didn't just come about to help end the 1958 NFL championship game. Minor league football first used it long before the NFL even thought it was necessary.

The 1937 American Association championship game matched the Newark Tornadoes against the White Plains Bears. The game ended in a 3-3 tie. Newark suggested an extra period to end the game. The commissioner thought it was a good idea, the Tornadoes wanted to finish the game, but the Bears felt that half a loaf was better than none. Overtime would have to wait.

1940 was an important year for overtime. It was finally used by Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. The league used a Shaughnessy playoff. That's where the first four teams engage in a playoff for the league championship. The EPFC had a problem: two teams were tied for fourth place and there had to be a winner. One of fourth place teams: the Philadelphia Seymour Athletic Association or the Chester Pros was going to get to play the Conshohocken Boilermakers. The game was played in Philadelphia before 800 frozen fans in a blizzard. At the end of the game, there was no score and someone had to win.

So for the very first time, a football game went to overtime to decide the contest. At the end of the fifth period, there was still no score, so the teams played on. The sixth quarter came to an end with the score still knotted at nil. Due to the inclement weather, the contest was ended at this time. As there still was no score, the game was decided by first downs, with Chester winning 15 to 8 and advancing to play the Boilermakers. It would be nice to tell you that the Pros won the league title, but Conshohocken beat them on Sunday 3-0.

The same season, the American Association had the same problem and decided to resolve it the same way; with an extra playoff game. The game was played in the same blizzard that hit Philadelphia with the same result. No score after four quarters. Again the AFA chose not to use an overtime period to finish matters. The league used a best-of-five coin flip to advance Newark into the regular playoffs. Did the commissioner use a quarter to decide who advanced?

The 1945 NFL championship game ended with Cleveland defeating Washington, 15-14. However, but for a rule no longer used and a bad PAT by the usually reliable Bob Waterfield, the NFL would have a tied championship game and no way to untie it. The game turned on an incomplete Sammy Baugh pass from the end zone that bounced off of the goal post. In 1945 that was a safety (for that season only) and provided Cleveland with its winning edge. In the winter meetings that followed, the league changed the rules to provide for overtime.

The 1948 Empire League adopted overtime rules to finish not just playoff games, but regular season games also. A five minute extra period was to be added in case of a tie. On September 26th, the Waverly Valley All-Stars and the Syracuse Bisons game ended in a 13-13 tie. So the league's new overtime rule came into play. Neither team scored, but Syracuse won the game on first downs. Two weeks later the league had its second OT game when the Rochester Red Raiders and the Geneva Gliders game ended in a zero-zero tie and they went to overtime. Rochester got a touchdown to win the game and for the first time in football history, a game was

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decided on the field, by a score and in overtime. It would be sixteen years before another league would use regular season overtime.

The 1953 Western New York League used overtime in its Shaughnessy playoffs. The Buffalo Bills and the Niagara Falls Merchants semifinal game ended in a tie. Overtime continued from where Niagara Falls had the ball on the Buffalo 41. They did not score, but neither team did in the first overtime period. The second overtime saw Buffalo punch in a touchdown to win the game after 26 minutes of extra play.

This "win" was turned into a nongame after the Merchants protested that the officials did not follow the rules for OT. Instead of continuing the game from end of regulation, there should have been a coin toss, kickoff, etc. The league upheld the protest and the game was replayed November 22 in Niagara Falls. The end of the fourth quarter saw the same result as the first game, a 13 all tie. The fifth period saw no scoring. Fourteen minutes into period two, John Jank smashed over from the one to give Buffalo the win.

In 1956 the Bills went to double overtime to beat the Medina Bulldogs in a playoff game. Oddly enough, after using games to decide playoff spots, the Western New York Conference went to coin flips in 1960 to decide playoff positions.

The United League adopted overtime for its 1963 season, using the same rules that the NFL would start using in 1974. The UFL would have only two extra period games in its last two years of existence.

The newest wrinkle in overtime is the Kansas tiebreaker. You get the ball on the other team's 25 and four plays to get a first down or a score. When your turn is done the other team gets the ball on your 25. Each team gets the same number of turns with the ball until some one fails to score.

The Eastern League changed from overtime to tiebreakers in 1977. This was after a quadruple overtime game (longest in minor league football) with the Providence Kings beating the Marlboro Shamrocks 12-6. The first year of tiebreak, in the playoffs, the Plymouth Rocks and the Hyde Park Cowboys used five periods to decide the game with Plymouth rolling to a 20-19 win. The Rocks won their quarterfinal playoff, in overtime, beating the Shamrocks, 13-7. The Rocks then finished a playoff trifecta by beating Middleboro's Cobras 27-13, but not in overtime.

Starting in 1997, the Cobras and Hyde Park Cowboys started a series of overtime games unprecedented in football. The final game of the season ended in a 15-all tie including the overtime. The following year the two clubs meet in the playoffs with the Cowboys winning 32-26 in a tiebreaker. In 1999 the two teams went to overtime three times. Middleboro won twice including a playoff victory over the Cowboys.

The Empire League has used overtime since 1977 with the Watertown Red and Black being involved in nine, winning three, losing five and one tie. No other team has been involved in more. Another Empire team, the Hudson Vikings, have the second most with eight.

Overtime is now very common in the minors. The Frederick Falcons went to overtime in four 1986 games, going three and one. Their three wins helped propel them to a Continental Interstate League championship. The 1994 Lockport Invaders also played four overtime games, but won only two, losing and tying one.

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Of all the overtime games ever played, possibly the best was the 1969 Continental League title game between the San Antonio Taros and the Indianapolis Capitols, won by the Caps 44-38. *Pro Football Weekly* said "the teams traded miracles like two sorcerers flexing their muscles at each other."

"The Taros, down 38-28 with 30 seconds left, pulled 10 points out of thin air." They scored a touchdown and after recovering the on side kick, a 38-yard Jerry Moritz field goal sent the game into OT.

"The Toros then fought their way into field goal range and lined up for a 25 yarder nine minutes into the overtime. The Caps were on the gallows with the noose around their necks. But when the Toros pulled the lever, the trap door refused to drop. The kick slid off to the right."

"Little more than five minutes later, at 14:51, John Nice blew through a hole bigger than Mammoth Cave and chugged 13 yards into the end zone to give the Caps the title."

Games like this don't come along very often and are hard to top.

THE CLUES WERE THERE

By Timothy Holland

Whenever a team pulls off a so called "upset", there is always a thread or clue somewhere along the line that should tip people off that it may happen. Take the case of Super Bowl XXXVI won by the New England Patriots over the St. Louis Rams, 20-17.

The Patriots came into the game as 14 point underdogs. But if any of the so-called experts had done some research, they would have found that not only was it possible that the Patriots would win, but also probable because of their head coach Bill Belichick. For Belichick is proof positive that a good defense, along with solid special teams, will always beat a good offense when it matters the most. In his case, his resume backs him up.

In 1986, the New York Giants won their first Super Bowl with Bill Parcells as their head coach and Belichick the defensive coordinator. During the course of that season, the Giants played the Joe Gibbs coached Washington Redskins three times, winning them all. In those three games, the Redskins point totals went from 20 in the first game, to 14 in the second, to zero in the NFC title game. In the first round of the 1986 playoffs, the Giants held Bill Walsh's San Francisco 49ers with Joe Montana at quarterback, Roger Craig in the backfield, and Jerry Rice at wide receiver to 3 points.

The Giants would win the championship again in 1990. Along the way, they played the defending champion 49ers twice, both on the road. The Giants held San Francisco to seven points in the first game and 13 in the NFC championship game, which they won. Then a week later, they defeated a Buffalo Bills team which had defeated them during the regular season, 20-19, to win Super Bowl XXV. The Bills had scored 17 points in the regular season game and were coming off of playoff wins in which they had scored a total of 95 points in two games. Just like with the Redskins and 49ers, Belichick had the Bills on film against his team and was able to stop them and control the tempo of the game. 2001 would be no different.

During the regular season, the Patriots played the Rams and lost by a score of 23-17. So going into the Super bowl, history was once again repeating itself. For Belichick was coaching against another high powered offense that he had faced during the regular season and had on film. And just like he had with the Redskins, 49ers and Bills, Belichick was able to form a game plan where his defense dictated the pace of the game and the Rams were held to 17 points. And the Patriots came away with their first world's championship.

Davey O'Brien

By John Maxymuk

Adapted from *Eagles By the Numbers*, Camino Books, 2005.

Although diminutive for a football player, Davey O'Brien was a mighty mite who produced big things on the gridiron. As a 57" 118-pound sophomore tailback, he led Dallas' Woodrow Wilson High School to the Texas state football playoffs in 1932. Three years later, he enrolled at Texas Christian University where he sat on the bench behind All American Sammy Baugh for two years as the long and lean Slingin' Sammy led the Hornfrogs to 12-1 and 9-2-2 seasons capped off with victories in the Sugar and Cotton Bowls.

When Baugh graduated to the pros in 1937, O'Brien succeeded him as a seven-inch shorter signal caller. Davey was now filled out to a whopping 150-pounds, and he was named All Southwestern Conference quarterback although the team slipped to a 4-4-1 record.

In his senior season, though, O'Brien outshone Baugh's legacy by completing 55% of his passes for 1,733 yards and 19 touchdowns while running for 10 more scores. TCU won the Sugar Bowl and the National Championship with an 11-0 record that year. Dutch Meyer who coached both TCU stars considered Baugh the better all around player, but thought that O'Brien was an unequalled field general and play selector.

For that 1938 season, O'Brien won the Walter Camp Memorial Trophy, the Heisman Trophy, and the Maxwell Club Award as the best player in college football. While accepting the Maxwell trophy in Philadelphia, Davey declared that he had no interest in furthering his athletic career and that it was geology not pro football that he was thinking of for the future.

Bert Bell had already selected O'Brien with the Eagles first pick in the draft and pursued him fiercely. An offer of \$10,000 plus a percentage of the gate persuaded Davey to change his mind. Bell also took out an insurance policy with Lloyds of London that would pay the team \$1,500 for every game that the slightly built O'Brien could not play. Despite playing both offense and defense against players who towered over him, Davey never missed a game for the Eagles.

Philadelphia had finished 5-6 in 1938 so Bell was very optimistic as to what O'Brien could do for the club, saying, "The boys think O'Brien can pass them to a championship." Reality set in quickly - the Eagles did not score their first touchdown until the fourth game and finished 1939 1-9-1

Appropriately, the season began with Philadelphia hosting Sammy Baugh and the Redskins, but Sam got the best of his former teammate as Washington won 7-0 on a Baugh TD pass in the fourth quarter. Things would not get better for Davey in Philadelphia. For his two years as an Eagle, the team went 2-19-1 and were outscored

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411 points to 216. Although there was an immediate boost to the attendance in the first couple of games, it did not last as soon as the team revealed itself to be the same lousy Eagles. The Philadelphia offense behind O'Brien threw the ball more than any team in the league. They went from passing the ball 36% of the time the year before Davey arrived to 45% in his first year and 53% in his second.

O'Brien was a single wing tailback - he did not line up under center - but he did not run the ball by design very much. In effect, the Eagles single wing with Davey was analogous to a team playing entirely from the shotgun today. It was not successful. Bell had promised to surround Davey with "10 big men to look after him," but Philadelphia had a perennially weak offensive line; their first interior lineman to make All Pro was guard Dick Bassi in 1940. When a passer was sacked in those years, the loss was counted a running attempt for the passer. Thus, O'Brien's rushing statistics show him "running" the ball 208 times for minus 194 yards, an average "gain" of -.9 per carry. While he may have run the ball on occasion, most of his "runs" were scrambles and sacks as Davey scampered for his life behind a porous line.

O'Brien broke Baugh's league record for passing yards in his rookie season and earned himself a \$2,000 raise, but how good was he? Let's take a look at the passing statistics for his contemporaries, all players who threw at least 125 passes in 1939-40.

	ATT	COM	Pct	YPA	YDS	TD	IN
Davey O'Brien	478	223	46.7	5.5	2,614	11	34
Parker Hall	391	183	46.8	6.0	2,335	15	29
Sammy Baugh	273	164	60.0	6.9	1,885	18	19
Ace Parker	268	121	45.1	6.9	1,842	14	20
Cecil Isbell	253	111	43.8	7.1	1,786	15	17
Arnie Herber	228	95	41.7	7.3	1,667	13	16
Hugh McCullough	216	75	34.7	4.5	972	6	33
Sid Luckman	156	71	45.5	10.1	1,577	9	13
Dwight Sloan	148	63	42.5	6.2	918	2	11
Billy Patterson	145	83	31.0	4.9	756	6	19
Frank Filchock	143	83	58.0	10.8	1,554	17	16
Bernie Masterson	136	53	38.9	8.3	1,126	10	12

This impressive group of a dozen passers includes four Hall of Famers (Baugh, Herber, Luckman, and Parker) and three All Pros (Filchock, Hall and Isbell) besides O'Brien. From these numbers, we can see that Davey was tops in pass attempts, completions and yards for those two years and his 46.7 completion percentage was the fourth highest rate. On the downside, he was seventh in touchdown passes despite throwing many more passes than anyone else, and he was last in interceptions. His interception rate would be lower than many others because he threw so many passes, but that's still a lot of turnovers. Perhaps of greatest significance is his tenth-rank on yards per pass. A 5.5 average gain represents a dink-and-dunk approach that did not lead to a lot of points. While the Eagles had some quality receivers, their backs and linemen were not very good. Furthermore, it is extremely difficult for a passer to overcome such a severe height differential -- 5'8" Eddie LeBaron and 5'10" Doug Flutie would discover this in later eras as players got even bigger. All three deserve acclamation for their accomplishments, but none would ever come close to winning a championship in the NFL.

Davey closed his brief tenure as an Eagle with his most memorable game. The final game of the 1940 season matched O'Brien once again with Sammy Baugh in a game Washington needed to win to clinch the Eastern Division. The Redskins spent most of the day running the ball and built a 13-0 lead in the fourth quarter. Meanwhile, O'Brien was passing the ball on almost every down - he would complete a record 33 of 60 passes for 316 yards that day. However, Philadelphia did not mount a scoring drive until the last quarter when Davey completed a 98-yard drive with a 13-yard toss to Frank Emmons for the score. The Eagles got the ball back at their own 31 late and drove to the Redskin 22 as time ran out. This game was a microcosm of O'Brien's career - lots of short passes, but few points resulting in a loss. After the game, Bell thanked Davey with a plaque inscribed, "To the greatest player of all time. Small in stature with the heart of a lion. A living inspiration to the youth of America."

After two disastrous seasons running for his life and passing constantly to no avail, O'Brien quit the game in 1941 to join the FBI. He spent a decade with the Bureau, as a firearms instructor and a field agent. He left the FBI in 1950 and went into land development and the oil business and returned to the spotlight by serving as an NFL official in 1952 and being elected to the College Football Hall of Fame in 1955. In 1971, he contracted cancer and fought that disease with his customary fire for six years before passing away in 1977. Most of all, Davey O'Brien should be remembered as a thoroughly decent human being who claimed his most prized accomplishment was winning the Best All Around Camper award when he was a school boy struggling to overcome a bad temper. He attributed much of his success to football. It may be corny and very old school, but he felt the game taught him discipline, cooperation, loyalty and appreciation - qualities that lead to a good life.

The "Other" MVP

By Patrick Gallivan

In January 2003, the Oakland Raiders, listed as four-point favorites, brought one of the most powerful offenses into the Super Bowl. The Raiders had plenty of weapons. Jerry Rice and Tim Brown could be considered the best set of receivers in the game at the time. Rich Gannon was enjoying his best season spreading the ball over the field. Many prognosticators would have predicted a big Raider offensive explosion.

Instead, Super Bowl XXXVII slid into a onesided affair very quickly as the Buccaneers defense returned three of a record five interceptions for touchdowns. The three defensive scores propelled Tampa Bay to beat the Oakland Raiders 48-21 in San Diego. During such a defensive game, it was no surprise that the Most Valuable Player came from that side of the ball.

But, was the right player selected? There is plenty of room for arguments on the selection of the Most Valuable Player awards in nearly all of the forty Super Bowls we have seen to date. In this one, Dwight Smith returned two interceptions for touchdowns but wasn't named the game's top player. Dexter Jackson received that honor. Jackson had two picks in the game, but neither scored. A third choice may have been Derrick Brooks, who took the other errant pass back to the house. Why wasn't Smith the MVP? His second pick came with only seconds on the clock. The ballots may have been counted by the time he crossed into the end zone with the second interception.

Perhaps the polls were held open late in Super Bowl 25. During that game, the Bills and the Giants took turns holding the lead in a very close contest. Had Scott Norwood's 42-yard field goal attempt not drifted a few feet wide of the post, the Bills would have been crowned victors in their first Super Bowl contest and the MVP may have come from their roster.

Ottis Anderson was named the top player after rushing for 102 yards on 21 carries and one score. The best player on the field, by most accounts, was the Bills' Thurman Thomas, who accounted for 190 yards on the twenty times he touched the ball. He rushed 15 times for 135 yards and caught five passes for fifty-five yards.

Thomas ran 31 yards for a score early in the fourth quarter that gave the Bills a 19-17 lead. After the Giants re-gained the lead, Thomas broke a 22-yard run in the final drive to set up Norwood's fateful kick. Even Anderson was quoted as having said Thomas would have been MVP had the Bills won the game.

The controversy over Super Bowl most valuables isn't a new thing. Even if we look back to the earliest contests in the series, we will see some controversy. In the first Super Bowl, an unlikely hero came off the bench to catch seven passes for 138 yards and two

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touchdowns as the Packers marched to a 35-10 victory over the Kansas City Chiefs. Max McGee didn't expect to play in that contest. He had only caught four passes that season, but was pressed into duty when Boyd Dowler suffered a shoulder injury in the first quarter.

A couple years later, Joe Namath backed up his guarantee by leading the upstart Jets to the victory over the Colts. He was named the game's MVP. The vote could not have been unanimous. Jets running back Mat Snell rushed 30 times for 121 yards and the Jets' only touchdown. George Sauer caught 8 passes for 133 yards. Namath completed only 17 passes for less than 200 yards passing.

Jets owner Sonny Werblin may have voted for another MVP if he had been given the opportunity. Werblin wanted Snell to know how much he appreciated his effort in the game. He awarded Snell a mint green Cadillac El Dorado to recognize his effort in the game.

In Super Bowl VII, the Dolphins completed their perfect season. Their defense dominated the big game holding the Redskins scoreless until late in the game. Jake Scott stole passes, including one in the end zone to stop a Washington drive. He was voted the most valuable player.

The award could easily have gone to defensive tackle Manny Fernandez, who dominated the line of scrimmage with 17 tackles. Half of those stops were unassisted. Fernandez, who played at about 250 pounds, used his agility and quickness to penetrate into the backfield and disrupt Redskins' plays before they got started.

In Super Bowl IX, the Steelers' Steel Curtain defense dominated the Vikings. They held Minnesota to record lows of 9 first downs, 119 yards of total offense, and only 17 rushing yards. They held the Vikings offense scoreless as their only touchdown came on a blocked punt. With such a dominating defensive *effort*, the Steelers should have been rewarded with a defender receiving the MVP nod. Dwight White, who recorded a safety when he tackled Fran Tarkenton in the end zone, would have been a good selection. Instead, voters tabbed running back Franco Harris for the honor. Harris ran for - a then Super Bowl record - 158 yards and a touchdown.

Everybody remembers Doug Williams' heroic performance in Super-Bowl XXII, when he passed for 340 yards, a Super Bowl record at the time. Receiver Ricky Sanders caught nine of those passes for 193 yards, which was another game record at the time. The big surprise in the game came from an unheralded player who had played in only seven games and rushed for 126 yards during the regular season. Timmy Smith ran for 204 yards, a Super Bowl record, and scoring on touchdown runs of 58 and 4 yards.

Nobody was going to rain on John Elway's MVP performance in Super Bowl XXXIII. The victory was the last game of the star's long career. He passed for 336 yards and a touchdown in the game. The Broncos secondary also had a strong game. Cornerback Darrien Gordon intercepted two passes and returned them 108 yards. The yardage set a Super Bowl record.

What about the most recent Super Bowl? Late in the game, with the Steelers in control, there wasn't a clear favorite. Willie Parker broke a record 75-yard touchdown

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run. Ben Roethlisberger, after some strong play-off games, wasn't having a MVP-type night. Jerome Bettis was the sentimental favorite but he rushed for less than fifty yards in the game.

With about nine minutes remaining in the game, one play happened that made the MVP picture clearer. Versatile receiver Antwaan Randle-El, who played quarterback at Indiana, took a handoff from Parker, reversed right and threw a perfect spiral to Hines Ward. The play covered 43 yards, gave the Steelers a clear margin of victory and was the first touchdown pass in the big game by a receiver.

But, do you pick the first receiver to throw a touchdown pass or the one who caught it? Voters selected Ward, who finished the game with five catches for 123 yards. Football is a true team sport with many contributors to a team's success. That is why it is difficult to signal out one player for the highest honor. Even after one is selected, there is plenty of room to debate the selection.

Football is a team sport with eleven players from each team on the field at a time. It takes a real cohesive *effort* for a team to climb to the Super Bowl and come out victorious. Nearly every year it is difficult to single out one player for his performance in the contest. Once a player is selected, it leaves room for sports fans to debate the merits of the selection. After all, that is one of the best things about sports: we get to talk it over on Monday morning.