

GLANCING BACK FIFTY YEARS AT WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN: THE 1960 NPHS FOOTBALL SEASON

By
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Background Information: In 2008, The NPAAA Hall of Fame honored the Championship Teams of the first year of the jointure, the teams recognized as "The Fabulous Four of Fifty-Six." They were:

- Boys Soccer - Tri-County Champions, 1955
- Boys Basketball - Bux-Mont Champions, 1956
- Boys Track and Field - Bux-Mont Champions, 1956
- Girls Softball - Bux-Mont Champions, 1956

This year, we honor the 1960 NPHS Football Team. This is their story:

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The Bux-Mont League, established in 1932, has changed several times as a result of increased school populations and jointures.

- In 1951, Doylestown High School became Central Bucks High School
- In 1953, Sellersville-Perkasie High School became Pennridge High School
- In 1961, Ambler High School became Wissahickon High School, and
- In 1955, North Penn High School was created from the blending of Hatfield High School, Lansdale High School, and North Wales High School

As the various committees of the North Penn Alumni Athletic Association researched the sports history of North Penn High School, they verified that the first NPHS football team (1955) finished in third place in the Bux-Mont League with a very respectable 7-2 record under Head Coach Bob Chubb. Four disappointing seasons followed.

However, in 1955 a promising group of seventh graders came out for the football team and played together throughout their junior high school years. They completed their ninth grade season in 1957 with an undefeated Bux-Mont League Championship. This group was the first to come through the new jointure as a team unit as they entered tenth grade. They continued to play as a cohesive group through their senior year.

In 1960, with a seasoned group of seniors, great anticipation arose for a Championship Team at North Penn. Even today, some football evaluators believe that the 1960 team was the strongest and most talented team to represent North Penn prior to the Co-Championship team of 1968 and the last Bux-Mont Championship Team of 1983. (In the late 1980s, the State of Pennsylvania established a playoff system for District and State Champions.)

As the 1960 season progressed, North Penn was certainly playing championship football. Their record going into the Quakertown game at home was 5-0, and the contest promised to be a battle to the end. Prior to the game, NP celebrated Parents' Night, honoring the mothers and fathers of the team members.

As predicted, the game was highly competitive. After a fumble recovery by Ed Rambo, North Penn had the ball on the 13 yard line. Three plays later, John Knoll plunged in for the TD (NP 6 - Quakertown 0). Quakertown tied the score on a long drive. After a NP punt, Quakertown drove 53 yards for a score to take the lead, 12-6. On a nice 50 yard drive featuring runs by Terry Rodenhaver and Ron Hangey, capped with a John Knoll touchdown and extra point by Rodenhaver, North Penn led at halftime, 13-12.

In the second half, Quakertown scored a touchdown in the third quarter and took the lead, 18-13. Then, with Quakertown deep in their own territory, a forced fumble was recovered by North Penn's Dan Drissel at the 27 yard line. Again, North Penn drove for the touchdown and recaptured the lead, 19-18.

In the fourth quarter, Quakertown punted out of bounds at the North Penn 25 yard line. On this final drive by North Penn, Ron Hangey scored on a 7 yard run which featured a key block by Ed Rambo. The successful extra point kick by Terry Rodenhaver made a final score of North Penn 26 – Quakertown 18. As 1:33 ran off the clock, the Knights remained undefeated at 6-0. Expectation for the first North Penn Football Championship was extremely high as the team and coaches returned to school Monday.

On Saturday night, October 22, 1960, Claude Deiley, the father of North Penn's starting left guard Boyd Deiley, suffered a heart attack and was recovering at Grand View Hospital. Following football practice on Tuesday, October 25, five North Penn starters went to visit Mr. Deiley at Grand View. On the way back to Lansdale, the players' car was involved in an accident with another car at Happy Hill Farm on County Line Road. All the players were ejected from the car, and all had to be hospitalized. Involved in the accident were Quarterback Bill Zinsmeister, Halfback Terry Rodenhaver, Guards Boyd Deiley and Ed Rambo, and Tackle Bob Grimes. As a result of the head-on collision, the driver of the other car was killed, and a passenger (her mother) sustained serious injuries. The sobering tragedy stunned the entire North Penn community.

North Penn had four games remaining on its schedule. The remaining senior class team members were Frank Robison, Ron Hangey, John Knoll, George Loux, Kurt Gehringer, Ron Koehler, Al Eddy and Ray Townsend. Since none of the injured starters were able to return to play those last four games, younger and less experienced players were required to meet the challenges of the remaining contests. Without a doubt, this calamity had a profound, life-long mark on the entire 1960 team, bringing them closer together and hastening their maturity.

Souderton and Upper Perkiomen, always scrappy teams, could never be taken lightly. Indeed, Souderton surprised North Penn's shaken team with a 21-0 win. The Knights played a better game against Upper Perkiomen, winning 45-19, and regained some of their confidence and composure.

The remaining schedule included two very strong opponents – Pennridge and Central Bucks – who had played each other to a 19-19 tie.

The North Penn at Pennridge game ended with North Penn on the 2 yard line ready to tie the game, but the snap was fumbled, leading to a painful 19-12 loss.

The Thanksgiving Day game against rival Central Bucks was next in line. The Bucks scored 13 points in the first quarter, followed by 18 points in the second quarter, with strong efforts by their very fine running backs Nathaniel Duckett, Ron Kramer, and John Fonash. Score at half time: CB 31, NP 6. The sole North Penn touchdown was provided by a Flea Flicker Pass from Ron Lacher to Ron Hangey.

In the fourth quarter, Central Bucks scored three more touchdowns, while North Penn scored twice on two Ron Hangey TD runs, making the final score Central Bucks 50, North Penn 20. The year that had started with a hope of 10-0 finished with 7-3. An entire team had risen to maturity and experienced the hard vagaries of life in the short span of a month.

In recognition of a great try at "what might have been" the first Bux-Mont Championship by a North Penn football team, and – more importantly – in recognition of great courage in battling back following a tragic auto accident which claimed one life and injured six, we salute the 1960 North Penn High School football team. They will never be forgotten. They had "the right stuff."

THE 1960 NORTH PENN HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SCHEDULE and RESULTS

NORTH PENN VS. OPPONENT

20	Pennsbury	12
34	Springfield	7
12	Hatboro	6
25	Ambler	13
27	Upper Moreland	0
26	Quakertown	18
0	Souderton	21
45	Upper Perkiomen	19
12	Pennridge	19
20	Central Bucks	50

North Penn Knights finished 7-3

★ NORTH PENN HIGH SCHOOL ★



THE 1960 NORTH PENN HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

Deiley, Boyd	—————	LG	Koehler, Ron	—————	C
Breil, Bob	—————	E	Krum, Harold	—————	QB
Burgess, George	—————	QB	Lacher, Ron	—————	HB
Drissel, Dan	—————	C	Loux, George	—————	RE
Eddy, Alf	—————	T	McIntyre, Roy	—————	G
Fry, Gary	—————	HB	Moats, Ray	—————	E
Gehringer, Kurt	—————	LT	Rambo, Ed	—————	RG
Goodolf, Fred	—————	G	Robison, Frank	—————	LE
Grimes, Bob	—————	RT	Rodenhaver, Terry	—————	RHB
Hangey, Ron	—————	LHB	Townsend, Ray	—————	DT
Knoll, John	—————	FB	Zinsmeister, Bill	—————	QB