When We Were Kings

By JOHN GORALSKI
SPORTS WRITER

It’s been more than 60 years since big Bill Albrecht has charged into defenders behind a line of childhood friends. More than six decades have passed since Southington fans cheered as the Lewis High School running back slipped through an opponent’s grasp and into the end zone.

The local high school has changed names and moved. The small farm community has swelled into one of the largest school districts in the state, but one thing hasn’t changed. Southington sports fans have maintained the argument that the 1949 football team was the best that the town has ever seen.

I think that everyone just came together. As we played, we got better and better.

Ray Michanczyk, Member of the 1949 football team

He wasn’t alone. Stan Kucinskas and Michanczyk were both future teammates with Albrecht at the University of Washington. Quarterback Roy Sabatella called the plays, while Jim Morelli, Dick Stanish, Larry Montague, Gas Merriman, and Roy Nyren anchored the line. Eddie Knapp and Bob Fortier joined Albrecht in the backfield.

“Our team was the best, I announced to be the best, I believed we had and the schools on the schedule. Our opponents were presented down the road.”

“Running constituted about 80 percent of the game, and Bill Albrecht was tough,” said Michanczyk. “He just put everything he had into it every minute that he was on the football field. He wasn’t the flashiest runner, because you didn’t have much flash when you were running the single wing. You’re double-teaming the hole in which you’re running through. It’s all power driven. To be physically fit, you did a lot to keep himself in condition.”


For more than six decades, they’ve set the standard for Southington sports. On Wednesday, Nov. 10, the team will finally be honored in an induction ceremony at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville.

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