

The Times Herald

## SPORTS

**Flashback****NHS Game vs. CB West Rekindles 1957 Upset Memories**

*Move over, Milwaukee. There's more dancing to be done in the streets! Out of the way, Sputnik. They'll be shootin' the moon around here, too!*

By JOSEPH P. OWENS  
OF THE TIMES HERALD

Those were the typewritten words of Red McCarthy, the late sports editor of The Times Herald, the day after the Norristown High football team realized an impossible dream on Oct. 11, 1957.

It was the year the Milwaukee Braves defeated the New York Yankees in a seven-game series and the Russians launched the first spaceship.

The highly-touted football game was held on a Friday night at Roosevelt Field and the Norristown Eagles faced Lower Merion High, a team which had won its previous 32 football games.

As you can gather from McCarthy's account, Norristown won the game in grand style. The final score was 7-6 and Norristown had to fight to hold off Lower Merion, which had a first down with less than two yards to go to the end zone in the closing minutes of the contest.

For many of the players and students of that era, tomorrow night's game between Norristown and Central Bucks West, which has won its last 40 games, resurrected memories of the big win over Lower Merion.

Roy Kent doesn't need any reminders.

"I remember that game like it was yesterday," said Kent, who coached the unbeaten Norristown team to victory in '57 — the last time an Eagle team finished the season undefeated.

"It was one of the best schoolboy defensive games I've ever seen. I still have the game ball up in my den and it's the only one I have."

Lower Merion was a powerhouse and had trounced Norristown, 34-0, the year before. It was Kent's second year as head coach and he knew his team was good, but didn't know how his players would perform against the Main Line juggernaut.

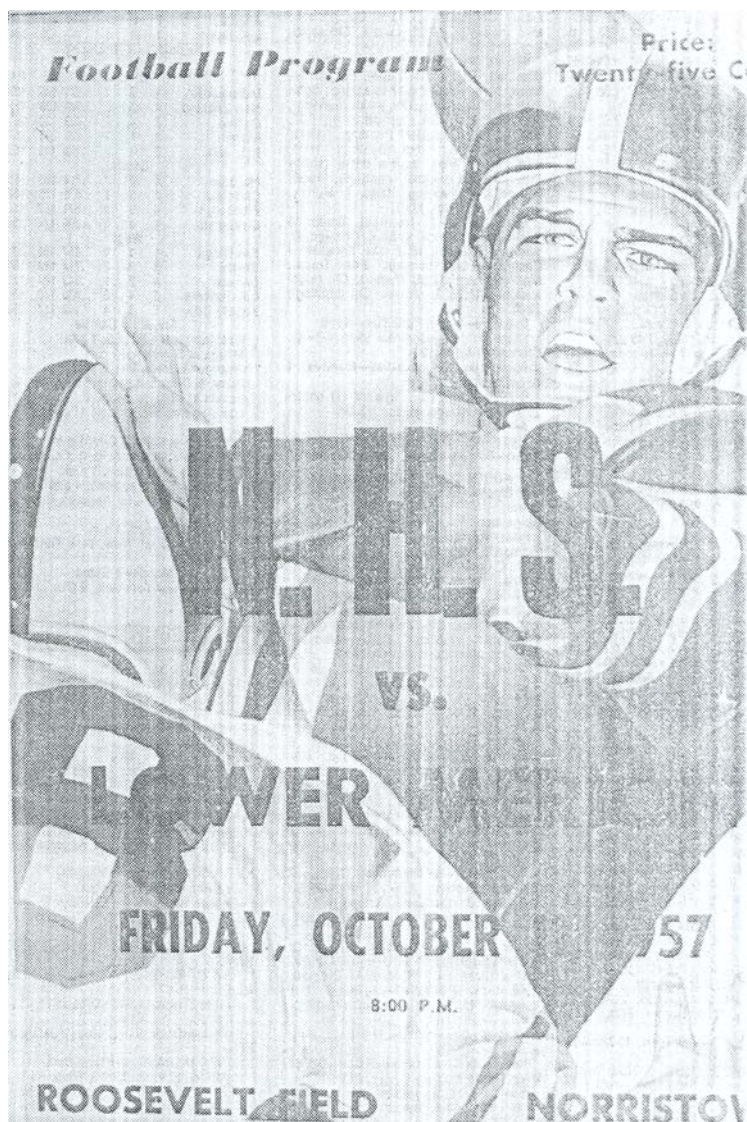
He was, however, sure that Lower Merion was very good and he knew the team's greatest strength.

"They would just about tell you they would run the fullback and they would run the ball at will," Kent said.

"I would lay awake nights just thinking of how was going to stop their fullback."

His team would need all the effort it could

Continued on Page 28



The cover from the program of Norristown's 1957 upset of Lower Merion. It upset that ended Lower Merion's 32-game winning streak.

# NHS Date With CB West Sparks Memories

Continued from Page 25

muster, as McCarthy's account indicates: "Pulling out all the stops in an effort to extend their streak to 33, LM drove from midfield deep into Norristown territory," McCarthy wrote. "There were just five minutes remaining to be played when (Lower Merion coach) Fritz Brennan's boys registered a first down only one and one-half yards from the touchdown zone defended by the Eagles.

"Grady Walters hit the line and Norristown stopped him dead. Nick Stuart got the next chance, but the NHS forwards yielded only inches. Quarterback John McMillan tried a sneak, but he was snuffed - again with only inches. Stuart was given another try at it and the entire NHS line smothered him for no gain."

It's no wonder that the packed house went wild and that the coach and many of the players and students still have fond memories of the game.

Norristown's seven points came on a "slashing 13-yard bolt by fullback Charlie Holmes," according to McCarthy, and a "perfectly executed extra-point placement boot" by kicker Gene Bishop.

Lower Merion's extra-point attempt was blocked by the Eagles.

Ted Avery, a Norristown resident who now works as a mechanic, can recall the blocked extra point that provided his team with the one-point margin of victory.

"It was a rough, tough battle," said Avery, who was a starting lineman as a junior in 1957. Avery said the entire team was well-prepared for Lower Merion and he credits Coach Kent for the level of intensity.

"Everybody really liked the coach and listened to what he said," said Avery. "I don't think it would have happened the way it did if he didn't have us as ready as we were.

"When we got there the night of the game, we were ready to hit people. We felt we were going to get them. There was a full house and we were psyched."

Both Avery and Kent, while admitting that the odds are long, say that this year's Norristown team has a chance against C.B. West and should go into the game with that attitude.

"It's a similar situation," said Kent. "This

team has a chance at greatness.

"They have to force C.B. West to do something they're not as good at."

Kent accurately points out that the Bucks don't appear to have many weaknesses.

"It seems like they're perfectly balanced, so (Norristown) might have more mental problems than I had against Lower Merion. It presents a greater diagnostic problem than I ever faced. "But, unless they're perfectly balanced, they must have some weaknesses.

"I know our guys loved a challenge, and that night they played the game of their lives." There's no telling how many people will show up tomorrow night, but some of the more ardent supporters will definitely be there.

"Well, we did it to Lower Merion, we can do it to them, too," said Lou Spinelli, longtime Norristown High fan and the borough's unsurpassed Eagles football historian.

Confidence is something that current Norristown coach Roger Grove believes must be on his team's side this week.

"I'm not going to lie to you: this is an extra-special game," said Grove. "We'd love to stop their streak. We know it's a tough game and it would be a great feat to beat them, but we don't want to give our kids the feeling that we'd have to be lucky to do it.

"We want our kids to realize that they have to play well to beat them." A tall task?

"They just have to decide that they can do it," Avery said.

What will it take to beat the Bucks?

You must go back, once again, to McCarthy's story the day after the fabled '57 game: "The goal-line stand was one of the epochal moments in Norristown High sports annals. Seldom will you find the likes of this one on any foot ball level, scholastic, collegiate or professional. The determination with which it was executed was the story of a determined ballclub's will to win the big one."

## Unbeaten Streaks

### Lower Merion High 1953

Lower Merion 21, Haverford 6  
Lower Merion 7, Cheltenham 0  
Lower Merion 6, Upper Darby 6  
Lower Merion 21, Chester 0

Lower Merion 26, Radnor 7  
1954

Lower Merion 33, Ridley 0  
Lower Merion 18, Easton 0  
Lower Merion 14, Abington 7  
Lower Merion 26, Haverford 0  
Lower Merion 40, Cheltenham 0  
Lower Merion 61, Upper Darby 0  
Lower Merion 41, Norristown 7  
Lower Merion 39, Chester 7  
Lower Merion 33, Radnor 7

### 1955

Lower Merion 45, Downingtown 13  
Lower Merion 40, Ridley 0  
Lower Merion 38, Norristown 0  
Lower Merion 36, Chester 14  
Lower Merion 33, Upper Darby 6  
Lower Merion 40, Abington 0  
Lower Merion 53, Cheltenham 0  
Lower Merion 39, Haverford 7  
Lower Merion 27, Radnor 7

### 1956

Lower Merion 42, Ridley 6  
Lower Merion 34, Norristown 0  
Lower Merion 28, Chester 6  
Lower Merion 60, Upper Darby 0  
Lower Merion 27, Abington 0  
Lower Merion 41, Cheltenham 6  
Lower Merion 12, Haverford 6  
Lower Merion 33, Radnor 12

### 1957

Lower Merion 19, Camden 9  
Norristown 7, Lower Merion

### C. B. West 1984

C.B. West 42, William Tennent 0  
C.D. West 35, Conestoga 0  
C.B. West 35, Quakertown 0  
C.B. West 21, Souderton 0  
C.B. West 54, Perkiomen Valley 0  
C.B. West 27, Hatboro-Horsham 0  
C.B. West 28, Pennridge 0  
C.B. West 27, Upper Perkiomen 14  
C.B. West 10, North Penn 7  
C.B. West 28, C.B. East 0

### 1985

C.B. West 32, William Tennent 2  
C.B. West 49, Conestoga 0  
C.B. West 28, Neshaminy 16  
C.B. West 18, Quakertown 0  
C.B. West 27, Souderton 7

C.B. West 42, Perkiomen Valley 0  
C.B. West 41, Hatboro-Horsham 0  
C.B. West 21, Pennridge 0  
C.B. West 46, Upper Perkiomen 14  
C.B. West 41, North Penn 0  
C.B. West 6, C.B. East 0

### 1986

C.B. West 3, Downingtown 0  
C.B. West 51, Hatboro-Horsham 0  
C.B. West 27, William Tennent 7  
C.B. West 3, Council Rock 2  
C.B. West 16, Neshaminy 14

C.B. West 14, Abington 0  
C.B. West 16, Pennridge 14  
C.B. West 27, Norristown 13  
C.B. West 10, North Penn 0  
C.B. West 9, Souderton 6  
C.B. West 23, C.B. East 15

### 1987

C.B. West 33, Downingtown 0  
C.B. West 35, Souderton 9  
C.B. West 31, W.C. Henderson 14  
C.B. West 42, William Tennent 7  
C.B. West 48, Council Rock 14  
C.B. West 25, Neshaminy 0  
C.B. West 17, Abington 7