

## **1994 MCKEESPORT TIGERS FOOTBALL**

The 1994 McKeesport Tigers pitched four shutouts and permitted just 7.8 points per contest. And so it is fitting that the defense is remembered for the goal line stand in the PIAA Quad-A Final against nationally-ranked Downingtown that secured a perfect 15-0 season for Coach George Smith and his club. Brandon Short, who went on to a stellar career at Penn State and with the New York Giants, led the surge that prevented the Whippets' two 1,000 yard rushers from scoring early in the fourth quarter. With 6:34 remaining, the Tigers' wishbone triple-option offense churned out a 9-play 67-yard drive chewing 3:50 off of the clock. Glenn Allen's 31-yard blast set up quarterback Bill Isbir's 11-yard scamper around the left end that put the Tigers up for good 17-14. A Downingtown fumble on the ensuing kickoff was recovered by Keonte Campbell and sealed the deal on McKeesport's first undefeated season since 1936, its first WPIAL title since 1938, and its first-ever state crown. That championship season galvanized a community rocked by the collapse of its industrial base as 52 busloads of fans made their way to Altoona to witness the game on a cold and rainy night.

### **ROBERT "TICK" CLOHERTY**

Robert "Tick" Cloherty sported a black and white striped shirt with pride during 25 basketball and 35 football seasons, officiating seven WPIAL Championships and scores of playoff games. Fair and precise between the white lines, Cloherty served as President of the West Penn Basketball Officials and President of the Eastern Association of Interscholastic Football Officials. He served the latter as its Assigning Secretary for a decade. A PIAA member for 50 years, "Tick" began a stellar career in education at Penn Hills in 1962. In 1970, he became the Business Manager at Swissvale and remained through the formation of the Woodland Hills School District, retiring in 1992. In addition to his high school duties, Cloherty served as the scoreboard operator at Heinz Field for both the Pittsburgh Steelers and the University of Pittsburgh Panthers. Cloherty is a 1997 inductee and member of the Executive Board of the Western Chapter of the Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame. For 30 years, he served as President. Today, the Chapter is named for him. He was also inducted into the East Boros Sports Hall of Fame in 1994 and the Clarion University Sports Hall of Fame in 1993. He was a four-time First Team All-State football star at Clarion.

### **JIM COLLINS**

If not for Jim Collins' vision, none of us would be sitting in this ballroom tonight. "This was his baby," Yough Athletic Director and longtime friend Tom Evans said. In his position as Assistant to the Executive Director of the WPIAL, Collins started the league's Hall of Fame in 2007. Tonight, he will be inducted and stand among the many star athletes for whom he worked tirelessly over more than three decades. Collins, who died in 2016, started his 35-year career in education as a math teacher at Burrell and Deer Lakes. He also was football coach at Deer Lakes and later Vice Principal and Principal at Thomas Jefferson. He also served as President of the WPIAL's Board of Control and served on the league's tennis, golf, wrestling, and scholarship committees, gathering statistics and making sure every media outlet had what it needed. When Collins became Executive Director Tim O'Malley's assistant in 1999, the job was designed to be three days a week. "He was in the office every day," Evans said. "His passion was kids and sports," said his daughter Leslie Craven. "He'd drive an hour-and-a-half to be at my son's T-ball game. "Funny story, I was born the night of a (Deer Lakes) game." The proud father made it to the hospital to see his newborn daughter, but not until the end of the game.

## **DR. LEIGH CURL**

You can call Leigh Curl one of the WPIAL's finest basketball and softball stars and a pioneer. She is the first female team orthopedic physician in the NFL. Dr. Curl earned two Super Bowl rings while attending to the Baltimore Ravens. In her days as a player, Leigh was both a Post-Gazette Fab 5 basketball star and the WPIAL Softball Player of the Year. As a senior at North Hills High School, Curl averaged 17 points and 14 rebounds in hoops. She was the starting center during her sophomore season when the Indians played in the WPIAL Championship Game. In softball, Leigh was a commanding pitcher going 33-2 over her junior and senior seasons. In 1980, she hurled five games over five consecutive days in the PIAA playoffs allowing just 14 hits in 35 innings while leading North Hills to the state title. She finished her junior year 14-0 with a 0.34 ERA and batted .380. She chose to play basketball collegiately and made an immediate impact at UCONN where she was elected co-Captain twice. With the Huskies, Curl scored 1,388 points and is still ranked 11<sup>th</sup> all-time with 834 rebounds. Leigh was also a two-time winner of the Big East Scholar Athlete of the Year Award at Connecticut.

## **BRIAN GENERALOVICH**

He excelled as a two-sport athlete in high school and college in a manner few others before or after him was able to do. But when Brian Generalovich was drafted by three separate professional teams; one in basketball and two in football, he decided to follow a different path. He enrolled in the University of Pittsburgh's School of Dental Medicine. Yet, few had the kind of amateur careers Generalovich enjoyed. In high school, he was All-State in both sports, leading the legendary Farrell basketball team coached by fellow hall of famer and legend Ed McCluskey to back-to-back PIAA State Championships. In 1960, the Steelers enjoyed the best record in their hoops history, finishing 31-1. A two-way tackle, he was named to the Wigwam Wieseman National High School All-American football team. At Pitt, Brian scored 1,114 career points; fifth in school history at the time. He played football for the Panthers for only one year, 1964, but he was nonetheless named to the NCAA East team that season. Dr. Generalovich currently serves on the University of Pittsburgh's Board of Trustees, a seat he has held since 2012.

## **EMMANUEL HILTON - JOHN CHALLIS COURGE AWARD WINNER**

Emmanuel Hilton is an orphan from the Democratic Republic of Congo who came to America to live with a family who wanted to care for and love him. He was born without lower legs and was missing three fingers on his left hand. Originally abandoned, he was cared for by his maternal grandmother before being placed in an orphanage where he learned to play and love the game of soccer. He had just undergone an operation to help fit him for prosthetics when two Americans on a church mission first met him. What captured the hearts of Michelle and Pastor Gary Hilton, his adoptive family, was the smile they saw in his photographs. His journey to America took four exasperating years due to the political strife in his country. Thanks to the Hiltons, the past is behind Emmanuel now. At Blackhawk High School, he is part of a four-player goal tender rotation on his junior varsity soccer team. When he's on the pitch, he doesn't consider himself disabled. Despite his physical challenges, Emmanuel can still stop opponents from scoring. Cougar Soccer Coach Bryan Vitali praises his attitude and credits him with rallying his teammates on game day and at practice. Emmanuel is an inspiration to the entire student body at Blackhawk.

## **DAN MAZZOCCO**

Though both legs often hurt, he was developing asthma, and dealing with seasonal allergies throughout his career, distance running was a breeze for Baldwin High School's Dan Mazzocco. "It's not the people who have the easiest ride who get to the top, it's the ones who continue to get back up after having a bumpy ride," Mazzocco told Penn State's Daily Collegian. Mazzocco won PIAA Championships in the 1,600-meter run as a sophomore in 2000 and the 3,200 as a senior. During his junior season, Baldwin's distance medley relay team that included Mazzocco, Ryan Sheehan, Jeff Conroy, and Mark Best achieved high school All-American status. As a senior, Mazzocco was WPIAL and PIAA Cross Country Champion and won the PIAA indoor mile. Meanwhile, a stress fracture was forming in his left femur. By the time he arrived at Penn State, the asthma flared up and he took a redshirt. Then, because he was favoring his left leg, the right femur developed a stress fracture. He often would drive home on Fridays for treatment on his leg, returning to State College in time for Monday classes. Finally healed, he became a two-time All-American cross country runner for the Nittany Lions. He punctuated his career by finishing 31<sup>st</sup> at the NCAA meet, passing 20 runners over the final mile.

## **NICO MEGALUDIS**

Whether he is swinging and missing while playing backyard baseball with his dad as a toddler, or if he is simply in the house playing video games, Franklin Regional High School's Nico Megaludis hates to lose. So, after he lost in the PIAA wrestling semifinals as a freshman in 2008, he stopped losing. After that lone defeat as a freshman lowered his 2007-2008 record to 37-1, he was victorious in all 133 matches as a sophomore, junior, and senior. Included on that list were four WPIAL and three PIAA State Championships. At Penn State University in 2016, Nico became the first WPIAL Champion in seven years to win an NCAA title after finishing second in 2012 and 2013 and third in 2014. To win the title, he scored a takedown in each of the first two periods against the University of Iowa's Thomas Gilman. That led to a 6-3 victory in front of a sellout crowd of 19,270 at Madison Square Garden in New York. Megaludis said he "brainwashed" himself to victory after putting up signs in his bathroom, the PSU wrestling room, and even on the steering wheel of his car that read, "I am 2016 National Champion."

## **MELANIE MORGAN MILLER**

She qualified for Junior Nationals at age 12 then won seven individual WPIAL swimming titles including the 50 yard freestyle all four years and the 100 yard freestyle her sophomore, junior, and senior years at Gateway High School. Melanie Morgan Miller set WPIAL records in both. At states, Melanie placed third in the 50 and 100 as a freshman then won both events in each of the next three years. She was an 11-time All-American; the certificate for the 100 freestyle from her junior year is gold signifying the fastest time in the nation. She earned a spot in "Faces in the Crowd" in *Sports Illustrated*. Melanie swam for the University of Florida and the Gators were SEC Champions all four years she was there. Melanie was a five-time SEC titlist swimming in seven different events. She capped her career with an NCAA Championship in the 4 x 100 freestyle relay. Her team broke the NCAA, US Open, and American records, all of which stood for ten years. Melanie qualified for the US National Team and swam at the World University Games. She joined the Fort Lauderdale Swim Team and competed in the US Olympic Team Trials three times. Today, Morgan Miller coaches the South Fayette Aqua Club and High School teams. Gateway High School presents the Melanie Morgan Award to a swimmer who exemplifies dedication and leadership.

## **GEORGE NOVAK**

George Novak knew how to bring people from diverse backgrounds and communities together to pursue a common goal. He was the right man and the right coach for the job when the Woodland Hills School District was molded by a federal mandate that combined eight distinctly separate former high schools. He used athletics, football in particular, as a rallying point for the school and the community and turned the Wolverines program into a respected and feared powerhouse, all while sharing life and its lesson with the student-athletes in his charge. His career record of 306-139-3 makes him one of only three coaches in WPIAL history to have won 300 or more games. He is also one of only seven coaches all-time to win six WPIAL football championships. A three-sport athlete at Munhall High School, Novak played football at Georgia Tech. Spurning a career in the business world, George followed his desire to teach and coach. As Head Football Coach at Steel Valley High School, his Ironmen won the 1982 WPIAL crown. He moved across the "Mon" when Woody Hi opened in 1987. The Wolverines won their first title in 1996 and captured crowns in 1999, 2001, 2002 and 2009. Three of his teams finished in the PIAA Quad-A Final.

## **TERRELLE PRYOR**

The WPIAL's most dominant athlete of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, Terrelle Pryor was the top football recruit in the nation in 2008. He led Jeannette to WPIAL and PIAA titles in both football and basketball during his senior season and became the first Pennsylvania high school football player to respectively run and pass for over 4,000 career yards during the Jayhawks' perfect 16-0 campaign in 2007. He was the MVP of the US Army Football game, recognized as the USA Today Player of the Year, Parade All-American Player of the Year, winner of the Maxwell Award, a two-time Pennsylvania Football Player of the Year and Post-Gazette and Tribune-Review Player of the Year in both football and basketball. A Parade All-American and one of the 20 hottest recruits in hoops in the country, he finished his basketball career as Jeannette's all-time leading scorer with 2,285 points; 8<sup>th</sup> all-time in the WPIAL. He chose to play football in college and quarterbacked the Ohio State Buckeyes to the 2010 Rose Bowl game in which he was named MVP. Drafted by the Oakland Raiders, Pryor led the Cleveland Browns in receiving in 2016. This spring, Terrelle inked a free agent deal with the Washington Redskins.

## **JERRY ROMAN**

When the WPIAL's best golfers gather for their championships, perhaps they should bow their heads and remember Jerry Roman. Actually, the WPIAL already has done that, naming its annual preseason event at Cedarbrook Golf Club the Jerry Roman Memorial. It was a nice homage to him and what he meant to golf in his area", Peters Township High School Golf Coach Dave Kuhn said. Roman, who died last year, was the leading advocate for WPIAL golfers, serving on the steering committee for 14 years and ensuring the championship events were held at the best area venues. Last year, the WPIAL Class AAA Boys Individual Championship was held at legendary Oakmont Country Club. "That was our crown jewel," Kuhn said. "It didn't just happen. Jerry was the guy who made it happen". Other top courses that Roman targeted are Nemaquin, Diamond Run, and Allegheny. But there was more to Roman's work than scheduling tee times. He improved the quality of play at championship events, shifting the qualifying criteria from quota-based to score-based. Roman began his long career in education as a Physical Education teacher in Georgia. Back home, the Beaver County native was as assistant at Ambridge then the Head Basketball Coach at Beaver High School before serving 14 years as the Assistant Principal at Bethel Park.

## **ANNESSA SCHNUR-STEELE**

One of the most decorated WPIAL champions ever, Annessa Schnur-Steele was a four-year letter winner in track and basketball, who also lettered multiple times in soccer, tennis, and cross country at Butler High School. She was a 10-time WPIAL Champion in five different events and was a top three finisher 15-times in her career. She shattered the WPIAL record in the 400-meter run at 55.7 then held it for nine years. Led by Annessa, the Butler Track and Field team won four consecutive WPIAL Championships from 1996-2000 and was undefeated at 57-0. She was a seven-time state medalist. Currently, Annessa is listed in the top five in nine different track and field events in Butler County history. When she graduated, Annessa was ranked on the WPIAL all-time honor roll in 12 of the 18 events in the sport. She accepted a full scholarship from the University of Michigan and made an immediate impact contributing to five Big Ten Team titles for the Wolverines. She was also an All-Big Ten Scholar Athlete. Today, she is a teacher and Head Track and Field Coach at her alma mater. In her first year back, she led Butler to a WPIAL crown. She's currently working on her Doctorate of Education at Slippery Rock University.

## **JOE THOMAS**

When it comes to distance running, he is no average Joe. As a senior at Uniontown High School in 1960, Joe Thomas was one of the best high school distance runners in the nation. In 1960, he ran the third-fastest mile of any runner in U.S. high school history with a time of 4:14.9 seconds at the Mount Lebanon Invitational. To this day, Thomas is one of the most decorated distance runners in the history of the WPIAL. He claimed gold three times in the mile, two times in the 880, once as a member of the two-mile relay team, and twice in cross country at the WPIAL level. Then, he advanced to the states to take PIAA gold in the mile twice. Combined, that totals a dozen gold medals. Even more impressive, he set WPIAL and PIAA records in both sports. Thomas enrolled at Southern Illinois University and the wins followed. As a freshman, Joe won the NAIA National Cross Country Championship in record time. He also led the Salukis to an NAIA team title. While at Southern Illinois, Thomas also set a conference record in the two mile run. He returned to Western Pennsylvania and became Head Track and Field and Cross Country Coach at Albert Gallatin High School.

## **JOE WALTON**

Joe Walton was All-WPIAL and All-State at Beaver Falls High School, then earned a scholarship to play football for the Pitt Panthers. A consensus All-American tight end, he set career and single season TD marks. Walton helped Pitt to the Sugar and Gator Bowls, and was named to the Hula Bowl, and the East-West Shrine and College All-Star Games. In the NFL, Joe was known as a sure-handed tight end starring for the Redskins and Giants. He snared 178 passes for 2,623 yards and 28 touchdowns. He still shares the record for touchdown receptions by a tight end with 3 in one game, accomplishing the feat twice. The second time was when he hauled in Y.A. Tittle's recording-setting seventh TD toss of the day. An assistant with the Redskins and Giants, Walton was Head Coach of the New York Jets between 1983 and 1989. Under Chuck Noll, Joe was the Steelers' Offensive Coordinator for two seasons. Then in 1993, he created the football program at Robert Morris that eventually won two Mid-Major National Championships. His 2000 squad finished perfect at 10-0 and his 2010 team received the Northeast Conference's first-ever berth in the FCS Playoffs. The stadium that RMU constructed in 2005 is named in Joe's honor.