

Ashley Stopped One Game Short Of Silverdome Dream

This year, for the first time ever, the Bears aspired to the state football playoffs. At the beginning of the season, Coach Sherm Hendricks had two goals in mind: to have a regular season record of 7-2 and to make playoffs. Although these goals weren't out of reach, who would have expected the Bears to roll over two teams in their first ever post-season play? The school and community showed a strong sense of support and pride. Cory Gavenda stated that the best part about playoffs was seeing all the people in the stands. Of the after-season games played, Coach Hendricks most enjoyed the shutdown of Britton-Macon's passing game and an awesome ground offensive that charged 300 yards to win the regional championship.

After each winning game, the Bears knew they would be up against tougher competition and Coach Hendricks had to reorganize his troops into a stronger team each week; they knew that any mistakes could cost them a well-deserved victory. Over the three weeks of after-season practice, reporters and television crews became a familiar sight and often led to interrupted practices.

On Saturday, November 17, the Bears boarded a charter bus as onlookers waved Ashley paraphernalia and wore "Just Do It" sweatshirts. The Bears were on their way to a game that will be forever engraved in their hearts and minds.

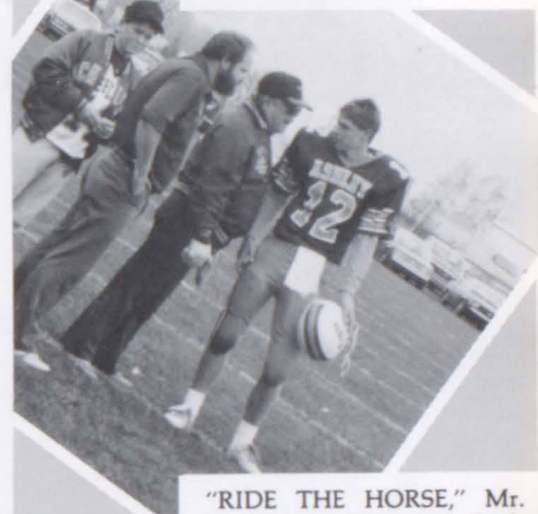
At Stockbridge the Bears trotted onto the field feeling eager, excited, and scared, as butterflies danced in their stomachs. Ashley elected to receive but was abruptly halted by the Tigers' domineering defense. By the end of the quarter the Bears were down by six and at halftime they were down by 12. At halftime Coaches Hendricks and Andersen revised the strategy and the Bears were ready to take control of the second half. Shortly after Ashley kicked the pigskin, Lawrence had scored another touchdown on an eleven play drive. Lawrence gained more momentum as they scored three TD's in the third quarter. The Bears didn't let up, and Kevin Klatt scored a nineteen yard run with 10:03 left on the clock in the fourth quarter, making the score 30-6. Lawrence then took the kickoff to its own forty-five yard line and then rushed the final thirty yards for another touchdown and threw in a two point conversion.

As the community gathered around the defeated team, an emotional Coach Hendricks stated, "I don't want you players walking off this field with your heads down because you have nothing to be ashamed of. You have made the school and community proud. You've done good."

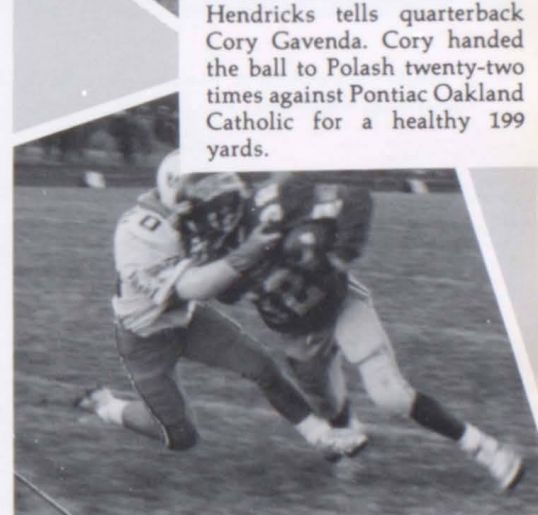
Although the dome hopes were shattered, the Bears played with dignity, pride, and excellent sportsmanship that earned them the first Ashley regional title.



PLOWING THROUGH PURPLE AND GRAY, Jim Drummond breaks tackles put on by Lawrence defenders. Jim rushed for 93 yards over the season and averaged 4.2 yards per carry.



"RIDE THE HORSE," Mr. Hendricks tells quarterback Cory Gavenda. Cory handed the ball to Polash twenty-two times against Pontiac Oakland Catholic for a healthy 199 yards.



SLAMMING A TIGER TO THE GROUND, Kurt Densmore takes down a Lawrence running back. Kurt ended the season with 15 solos and 53 assists.