

Special Announcements

At the recommendation of Coach Chuck Stephens, Executive Director, and Rick Hunter, President of the Flashes Football Foundation, the (FFF) Board of Directors approved a proposal to help offset the registration fee for every tackle football player signing up to play for the Franklin Township Youth Football league! This commitment of \$20,000 to our youth program will help provide the tools necessary for them to maintain a top-level program and complete with other youth programs.

FTYF is fortunate to have partnerships with community partners like FFF and will continue to work with the Foundation to help support our families in the Flashes football community. With that said, please consider visiting the Foundation website at www.flashesfootballfoundation.org to see how you can donate and play a bigger role in making our partnerships even stronger in the future.

The FTYF Board

“As a former player of both Coach Stephens and Coach Mallory, I’m inspired to give back to the football program at FC so that my boys have the same great experiences I had. I would like to join the Flashes Football Foundation and help support their mission.”

Eric Via

Message From Past Players & Fans

*My name is **Steve Civils**, and I am a 1978 graduate of Franklin Central High School. Coach Chuck Stephens became the head coach at Franklin Central in 1974, my sophomore year. At that time, we were still at the old high school next door, on the north side of the football stadium.*

In 1975, the after-school conditioning program took place in a hallway of the high school. There was no weightlifting equipment, although there was some resistance training equipment available. The basis of our strength training was doing stretching and agility exercises with lots of jump rope drills.

Franklin Central's varsity football team was scheduled for several opposing teams' Homecoming games, which was considered an easy win for the opposing team. We played a home game on October 31, 1975. The opposing teams' players wore Halloween masks and mocked our team, as they had no respect for Franklin Central's football program.

The following year (1976), we moved into the new high school just south of the football stadium. We had a small weightlifting area with very limited equipment. During the summer months, football players were required to attend 21 workout sessions. Each year, our workout facilities continued to get better, but nothing compared to today's facilities. I remember having to attend three practices per day in the preseason, just before the start of school.

All the hard work we put in helped us become a very competitive football team. We never had the superstar athletes, but we worked our butts off to reach our full potential. Coach Stephens was very good at pushing us to achieve our individual potential. If you worked hard, you earned a lot of respect as an upperclassman. I still remember the pre-game speeches from coach Stephens before every game.

Coach Stephens was great at being prepared with many handouts on our opponents' tendencies. We had lots of game film sessions as a team. I remember that I cried during my last high school football game as a senior, as I did not want the football season to end.

Coach Stephens taught me many valuable lessons: hard work, discipline, teamwork, integrity, and how to deal with adversity. I am forever grateful for these lessons that helped shape me into the man I am today.

*My name is **Rick Brewer**, in March of 1976, I interviewed for a position at Franklin Township Middle School. During that interview, I was introduced to Coach Stephens. He was focused on whatever project he had going on, so this wasn't really a convenient time for him. However, upon our introduction, he had one question for me, "What will your wife think about all the time you'll put into this job". Little did I know at the time that I was interviewing to be accepted into the Flashes Family and not just a job. It was clear we were all in this together.*

I could talk about how FC was one of the best-kept secrets in the state. I could talk about dedication, preparation, sacrifice, and we would all agree there's no hill for a climber. We all love winning, achieving success, and the accolades that come with it.

However, Chuck Stephens changed the attitude in FC athletics. The Flashes programs, Administration, Coaches, and community was admired, observed, and in many cases attempted to be copied by anyone trying to build a program. Not just football but any program.

I believe the real strength of our success was, and is, family. Everyone from the administration office, teachers, coaches, athletes, student body, parents, and community loved, cared, and supported each other. Credit was shared and acknowledged as a team. That is still displayed today in everyone's efforts to support Coach West and bringing the Flashes family tighter together.

We want today's athletes to experience the love and support that Coach Stephens created, believes in, and brought to Franklin

Central Football. When it's fourth and one on their one-yard line, time is running out, the weather is terrible, and our bodies worn, the family will provide that second wind to push us over the goal line. Carry on the Tradition!

Coach Brewer

*My name is **Don Wade** and I did not start playing football until 7th grade in Franklin Township. At 76lbs, people did not consider me football material. I couldn't blame them. But I wanted to be and that was a start. There was a buzz in Franklin Township around our football team and coaches the year I started in 1977. You could just feel it. There had been a buzz since we had moved to Franklin Township from the Howe district in 1975. My dad and I went to all the home games on Friday nights. It was exciting and I knew I wanted to be a part of it. Many of my teammates when I started, had been playing together since Pee Wee football. I was way behind and had a lot of catching up to do. Wrestling came easy but football, I had to work at. Mandatory workouts, constant pushing to be the best we could be from all the coaches and teammates, and the 100% support from our small community caused me to improve every year. I was able to be a part of two state championship teams. (I sat out my sophomore year. Long story, dumb move) Ending up as a senior right guard. Who at 5'10" 185 could bench press 405 lbs. A long way from that 76-pound 7th grader. Those memories are sacred. But the lessons I learned during those years have had a positive impact on my life as well as others I have been fortunate enough to influence.*

Mental endurance – the ability to keep pushing when you don't think you have anything left. This lesson first showed itself at age 20 in Army basic training. Playing for our coaches made basic training so much easier for me. I had already been taught how to dig deep. I could easily handle being pushed and yes, I could

easily take being trained in a loud voice by the drill sergeants as I watched others cry.

Every member of the team is important – It doesn't matter if you're an All-American, All-Stater, All-Conference, or a practice guy. Everyone on the team had a role to play that was important. And it was important as individuals to give our best in that role to support the team. The team would not be successful without everyone giving their best. Boy did I use this one a lot in the Army?

Hard work pays off – To achieve requires consistent hard work, sacrifice, and dedication. We were not all blessed with great athletic talent. On many occasions, we were not the most athletic team on the field. Many. But we had put in the work. We were stronger because of the required work in the weight room. We executed well because we had practiced over and over to meet high expectations. We were encouraged to keep working in the offseason by participating in other sports. There was no specialization. The coaches encouraged us to improve being better all around. When I started in military recruiting, I was terrible at public speaking. Red in the face, fidgety, and spoke too nervously and fast. But I had no choice, I had to get better with hard work. So, I did and became very successful at it. Becoming the top recruiter in Indiana and then Michigan. I reflected many times on starting off as that 76lb 7th grader. The feeling was similar.

Losing with dignity and winning with honor – Losing with dignity by the constant teaching of "What you give today is yours and what you don't give is lost forever". We did not like losing. I do not believe anybody should. But there was a focus on giving everything you had. That is where the focus was. There was no dishonor should you lose because the other team was just better, and all played their hearts out. Winning with honor was stressed.

There was no smack talking tolerated...if the coaches could hear. Give it all on the field and shake hands at the end. That was always expected and required. This ties into the last lesson I will mention.

Give general respect to everyone. In my senior year we were to have new students bussed in from the inner city. Our coaches addressed us on this. They stressed to us that we were to do our best to make them feel welcome. And they also stressed that we better not be part of any issues. It was a short speech but impactful. I've used this approach my whole life and have found that people respond so much better when you start off by giving general respect. No matter the differences.

*Hello, My name is **Jody Melady**: The reason I'm such a fan of Coach Stephens and the football program at FC is the type of people they all are. All the folks I have run across involved in the football program in Franklin Township at all levels have always treated me and my family very well. They are very giving people in multiple ways and they know a lot of the game of football, which I have enjoyed learning from them through the years.*

*Why I volunteer! My name is **Leo LaGrotte** and I am a 1981 graduate of Franklin Central High School.*

I remember being a scrawny freshman in high school, not sure what sport to participate in and not having any confidence in myself or my athletic abilities.

I decided to go out for the freshman football team and continued playing my entire high school career. We had a very small coaching staff, and I spent all my time with Coach Cougill and Coach Stephens.

These men taught me many valuable lessons on the gridiron, teamwork, discipline, success, failure, and never giving up on a dream. I learned that if I was willing to work hard, sacrifice, and focus on a goal, I could achieve anything in life. Always give 100% and have no regrets. They taught me how to believe in myself and for the first time in my life, I had confidence.

Those valuable lessons I learned on the gridiron continue to serve me well today. I am forever grateful to these men and I love them for what they gave me, that no one can ever take away.

*Hi. My name is **Mike Otto**, FC Class of 1976. To say that Chuck Stephens started from scratch when he first came to Franklin Central in 1975 would be an understatement. While the previous years had fielded a team at each game, there was no football program. The two years preceding Chuck's arrival had seen senior participation drop to nearly nothing; the two years before his arrival had recorded a combined 4 and 16 record, with most of the losses being absolute ass whippings. In addition, the program had no weight room and no off-season conditioning. Nevertheless, players showed up for two-a-days, learned the basics, and did what they could on game day, which was not much.*

Chuck had the support of four great men who had long been at FC and all desired to see FC become a competitive team once again. Principal Art Morgan, Vice Principal Al Nowak, AD Larry Hanni, and Assistant Coach Extraordinaire Jeff Cougill were all that he had but were all that he needed.

The 1975 season, Chuck's first at FC, was my Senior year. I was 16 years old when that season started, and I turned 17 in the middle of it after starting school a year early at St John's. Trust me. I have expressed my displeasure many times over the years

to my parents for that decision. It unintentionally deprived me of the opportunity to play one more year for a man who is undoubtedly the best football coach and molder of men that I have ever known.

The 1975 season saw FC post a 4 and 6 record, not a vast improvement, but of the six losses, we were in all but 2 of them until the end and were crowned County "B" Division Champions, something big had happened. Instilling an attitude of winning and being the best that you can be is hard for anyone when those that they are teaching have known nothing but losing and getting by with minimal effort. I admittedly did not realize it at the time, but I realized it as I would visit FC when I was home from college and see the consistent improvement to the program and the incredible results that FC was posting.

Think about it, 1975 was a 4 and 6 record, and just six seasons later, the first of 3 consecutive State Championships that would be followed by one more in 1990. It takes much more than excellent knowledge of X's & O's to accomplish this. It takes an ability to get into the head of a teenage boy that has many distractions. It takes an ability to sell something and instill a desire to be the best that you can be. While I have often wished that I could have had a few more seasons playing under Coach Stephens, I am forever grateful for the season. Under his leadership, boys became men, and like me, they found a friend for life.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of my Senior class that decided to give Chuck a chance in 1975. Unfortunately, we weren't around for any state championships, but I think we helped it get started. Sadly we have lost a couple of them in Jeff Massengale and most recently David Levi. Thank you to Jeff and David and Jim Rash, Mike Green, Jerry Green, Larry Wilcher, Don Nickleson, Brian Hultquist, Jeff Rayhill, Joe Pittman & Bob Silvey. Legacies must start somewhere, and I am sure that all of

these men were very proud to have been there at the beginning of this one.

I wish success to Coach West as he embarks on this mission to restore quality football to Franklin Central High School and its community.

*My name is **Aaron Boyle**, and I am a 1981 graduate of Franklin Central High School and a member of the 1980 State Championship team. Coach Stephens has had a positive impact on my life as he has on hundreds of men over the years. During my time as a football player under Coach Stephens I did not always appreciate the lessons I was learning however as I got older the lessons I learned were always there and always made me a better person. The number of lives that Coach has touched in a positive way are countless and we all are indebted to him for that.*