

# Champ of the Moravians

By Bob Grube

During the many years that I have been watching and reading about football, many players have paid a heavy price in pain to play the game they love so much. Everyone knows about the Rocky Bleiers', but few people know about similar players from small colleges who played for the love of the game while continuing their educations for a career in their chosen field. One player I have in mind is Champ Storch, who played for Moravian College in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Champ was born December 11, 1929 in the small town of Catasauqua, located a few miles north of Allentown in the Lehigh Valley area of Eastern Pennsylvania. He played football, baseball and basketball for the Catasauqua ("Catty") High School "Rough Riders". During his senior year. Catty's basketball team was outstanding, losing by just one point to state champion Allentown. He entered Moravian College in the fall of 1947, and played football and basketball before leaving school after one year to join the Army.

Champ spent 15 months in Okinawa, then 6 months in Korea where he was wounded by a bullet that shattered his left arm. He was returned to the U.S. with his left arm paralyzed and with a case of malaria. After 19 months in Army hospitals, he returned to Moravian in 1954.

Champ was welcomed back by Head Coach Jim Shreve, and started the season as a 6'1", 194 pound halfback, but after injuries to a number of key linemen he was moved to center. Shreve called his playing an inspiration to the team and his attitude was contagious. He scored a touchdown on a pass interception run of 26 yards against Wilkes College, and he scored a total of 22 points for the season on 1 TD and 16 of 22 extra point tries. On defense he played linebacker and helped lead the Greyhounds to a 6-2 season, losing only to Juniata (8-0-0) and Pennsylvania Military (7-0-0).

Before practices and games, his left arm was wrapped with foam-rubber to help cushion the blows on his arm.

Champ was captain of the 1955 team, coached by Rocco Calvo (present A.D.), and he helped lead the Greyhounds to an outstanding 6-1-1 record. Their only loss was to Juniata, 14-6, in the season opener. The Indians of Juniata went on to an 8-0-0 season and played a 6-6 tie with Missouri Valley in the Tangerine Bowl. Two members of this Greyhound team received post-season honors. Champ was named as the Third Team center on the Associated Press "All Pennsylvania" Collegiate squad, while his teammate, halfback Joseph Gerencser made the First Team.

I was one of the lucky people to have known Champ while I attended Moravian College in 1954 and 1955. We all knew what a gentleman he was off the field, a very gentle person. But put him on a football field and he was to be feared. Ex-team mate Rod Miller, now a businessman in the Easton area, remembers him as a good friend and human being, but a ferocious competitor on the field of play. Today Champ is married to a Penn Hills girl he met while completing his graduate work at Penn State. He has been married 29 years and has two sons who are both in college. Champ is now a Chairman of the Department of Academic Support Services at Slippery Rock University, and he also teaches in the graduate school.

When I wrote to Champ for some data for this article, he sent a number of things back, along with the comment that wondered why anyone would want to write about him. This is his modest nature, not thinking about how good a player he was, and he was good!! This country has had a lot of men like Champ Storch after the various wars; men who felt that it was worth the personal price needed to play college football. We should be thankful we had them.