

MCHS Honors 40-Year Anniversary Of State Runners-Up Football Team From 1982

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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ALTON – During a Marquette Catholic High School boy’s basketball game Saturday night, athletic director Brian Hoener announced that the 1982 football team would be honored during halftime.

The team was recognized for its 40th anniversary. Over 40 members from that year's team were introduced in front of the large crowd on hand to watch the Explorers take on Breese Central.

The 1982 group is the only football team in Explorers' history to have made it to the state championship game. The team was made up of 19 seniors, 27 juniors, and 19 sophomores and was coached by hall-of-famer John Rogers. They finished the regular season undefeated at 9-0.

“We have had many undefeated teams; some teams that were ranked #1 in the state; teams that reached the quarterfinals and the semi-finals - the Final Four; but the 1982 team is the only one to have played in the state championship, a distinction only a few teams in the Metro East region can claim,” Academic Dean Beth DeCoursey said during the halftime segment.

During the postseason the Explorers beat Carlinville (28-20), Monmouth (35-0), and Greenville (17-0).

In the state championship game at Illinois State University vs Bishop McNamara, the game was tied 6-6 entering the 4th quarter. Bishop Mac went on to win 17-6, and the Explorers finished the season 12-1.

“These gentlemen here tonight were a catalyst for a great decade of football here at Marquette, with the 1980's having 8 winning seasons and 6 teams that qualified for the playoffs,” DeCoursey said.

The entire team was introduced including the following notable players:

Jack Wickenhauser --- All Metro East 1st Team Running Back

Mike Mancewicz --- All Metro East 1st Team Defensive Line

Michael H. Peipert --- 1st Team Linebacker

Steve Jackson --- 1st Team Defensive End

Tim Mathews --- 2nd Team Quarterback, 2nd Team Placekicker

Brad Jun --- 2nd Team Defensive Back

PJ Reed --- Honorable Mention Tackle

John Grove --- Honorable Mention Wide Receiver

Marty Johnes --- Honorable Mention Punter

Eric File --- Honorable Mention Linebacker

Ron Wisnasky --- Honorable Mention Defensive Back

After the team was introduced, coach John Waters spoke about the team. He was head coach from 1984-1993 and was an assistant coach on the 1982 team.

“The team was well supported by classmates, parents, alumni, cheerleaders, the dance team, and the community at large, often having more fans at away games than the home team - and always packing the stands at Public School Stadium,” DeCoursey said.

Since the football program’s inception in the 1970s, it has played almost 500 games and reached the IHSA playoffs 25 times.

