

# SPORTS



IF YOU PLAYED FOOTBALL at Marblehead High back in 1962, you probably wore a whiffle. Shown above are (front row, from left) Phil Harvey, Ken Maitland, Richie Salinsky, Scott Dittrich, Ray Katz, Steve Routh and Stu Shattuck. (Back row) Skip Arnold, Butch Bradford, Dana Prince and Ken Eldridge.

## Still 7-1-1 after all these years

The 1962 Marblehead football team huddles one more time

By ANDREW MIGA

Twenty years later, they still talk about Richie "Slinky" Salinsky. The team's wild man. The crazy 5-foot-5, 148-pound nose guard. The smallest kid on the team.

They tease him about biting a Salem running back in the arm. Or the time he tore a clump of hair from the leg of a quarterback he had sacked. Or the night he totaled his Corvair drag racing out on the Causeway, slamming a telephone pole in the process.

When the 1962 Marblehead High football team huddled at the Marblehead Elks for its 20-year reunion the Saturday night after Thanksgiving, the storytelling lasted until four o'clock in the morning.

"It's strange at first," Salinsky said. "You haven't seen most of these guys for 20 years and you just don't know what the hell to say. But after about 15 minutes it all melts. You start to talk about the old times and it's like 20 years never happened."

Sometime after the second or third drink, the talk turned away from careers, marriages, mortgages and kids.

Someone had brought a pile of faded, yellow newspaper clips of game stories and left them on a table by the door. Someone else had special T-shirts made up reading: "Marblehead High Football, 1962 Northeast Conference Champs."

The clips and the shirts were good for a few laughs, but things got serious

when they dimmed the lights to show the game films.

Head coach Noel Reebenacker was there to narrate, stopping the action mid-frame to point out a key block or a game-deciding mistake.

With the film winding halfway down on the reel, a figure wearing No. 88 flashed on the screen.

After hauling in the second half kickoff, Kenny Eldridge cut his way through a swarm of Swampscott defenders for the only touchdown in the Thanksgiving Day showdown. The 7-0 win gave Marblehead the Northeast Conference title.

Scott Dittrich, 37, a co-captain with Eldridge and the main organizer of the reunion, remembered sloshing across the muddy field in Swampscott that morning.

"It was raining, a downpour for the entire game, but there were still somewhere between 12,000 and 15,000 people there," he said. "No one was gonna walk away from a 7-0 game that was gonna decide a league title."

Marblehead began the season as underdogs. The line—averaging about 160 pounds across—was considered small, even by 1962 standards.

Coach Reebenacker ran his backfield out of the old Wing T with a slot and two passing-minded quarterbacks—Dana Prince and Don Geryman. Pulling guards and traps were central to the offense.

"Reebenacker was ahead of his time when it came to formations," Ken Maitland, a tackle, said. "He geared his

offense to the type of personnel he had."

"The team was a mixed bag that blended together," said Bob Roland, a first-year backfield coach in 1962 and the current Marblehead High hockey coach. "The line was small but tough. Eldridge was the game-breaker back and Skip Arnold, a walk-on, had the crazy legs. He ran like a street fighter."

The lone loss, 18-3, came against Salem in the second game of the year.

By that time Dittrich (left guard), Salinsky (right guard) and Ray Katz (left tackle), all Jewish, had become known as the "Kosher Middle."

"The three of us were pretty tight," Dittrich said. "I was only the second Jewish captain the team had. A lot of Jewish kids were on the basketball team, though."

The game against Salem was scheduled on a religious holiday for Katz, Salinsky and Dittrich. Their families wouldn't let them play.

"I remember my grandmother telling me, 'If Sandy Koufax can't pitch in the World Series, you're not playing football,'" Salinsky said.

"It still sticks out in my mind," Dittrich said. "I'm still pissed that the Marblehead School Committee didn't change the date. The team lost without us, three starters."

After graduation in 1963, many of the players went on to college. A few, like Dana Prince at Parsons College, were starters.

"No one went on to be a star in college," Dittrich said. "That's not the kind of talent we had on the team."

Today, most of the team still lives on the North Shore.

John Palmer, the starting center, is the Marblehead Police Chief. Karl Person, a tackle, works under him as an officer.

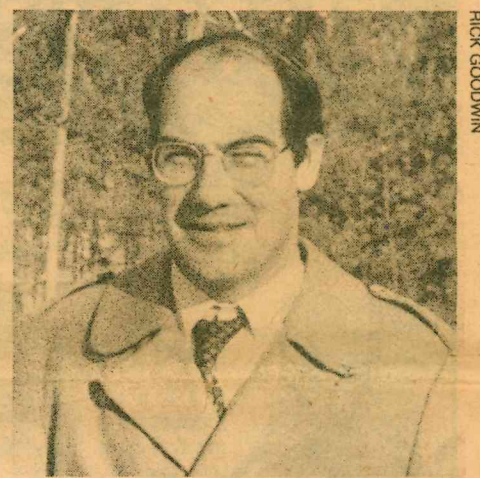
Ken Maitland, another tackle, lives in Marblehead and installs elevators. Stu Shattuck, a wide receiver, works in a Marblehead boat yard.

Salinsky owns a chain of retail gas stations based in Lynn. His daughter is a cheerleader for Swampscott High.

Dittrich, a former school administrator, runs his own financial planning firm in Wrentham.

Linebacker John McGooley, recently married, works for a security agency and lives in Danvers.

Guard Bob Bohannon and quarterback Don Geryman have settled on Cape Cod. Geryman owns a plumbing business and lives in Centerville. Bohannon, a resident of Cataumet, sells hospital beds.



FINANCIAL PLANNING is Scott Dittrich's game these days.

Ray Katz and Skip Arnold are living in California. Katz, a dentist, has a practice in Oakland. Arnold owns a lithographic company.

The running backs all work in the computer field.

Eldridge lives in Marblehead and is an engineer at Raytheon. Fullback Kent Bradford, a former international manager for IBM who lives in Marblehead, has started his own computer company. Hugo Gottlich, wingback, runs a consulting firm in Danvers.

An element of tragedy also runs through the team's history since 1962—at least one player has died and another is said to be serving time in jail.

"Paul Fleming died in a plane crash a few years ago," Dittrich said. "The family of the guy in jail has been through a lot already, so I don't want to give you any names."

Another member of the team is rumored to have died in Vietnam, but no one has been able to confirm that.

Dittrich spent about a month this fall pulling plans together for the reunion.

He put notices in local newspapers, sent letters and spent a lot of time on the telephone tracking down old teammates.

"I had gotten the idea two years ago when the class of '60 team had theirs," he said. "A lot of the organizing was done through word of mouth. The idea behind it is pretty simple, we just want to get everyone together again to bring back some memories."

"Katz even flew in from California to be there," he added. "When you play football for four years with the same guys, you get pretty close. You end up spending a big chunk of time together. You just want to be able to see some faces and say, 'Hey, wasn't it fun 20 years ago?'"



RICHIE SALINSKY, a nose guard back in 1962, points to himself in an old team picture. Salinsky now owns a chain of retail gas stations based in Lynn.

RICK GOODMAN

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