

1957

(From the 1958 Yearbook provided by Barbara (Tango) Franciosi.)

Last fall another trophy was added to the Montclair High School collection. This was the Newark News State Championship trophy. However, the Mounties of '57 won't be remembered as just "State Champions." Instead they'll be recalled as the team with a heart, the team that bounced back.

The season started off auspiciously with a 39-0 win over Orange. Kearny (53-12), Nutley (21-6), East Orange (34-6) were easily added to the Mountie victory string that then stood at 22. Columbia rated as a county powerhouse was easily taken, 35-0.

In gaining a 27-0 decision over a weak West Orange team, the Mounties showed signs of a slump. The win was clear-cut but the team lacked its usual fire and determination.

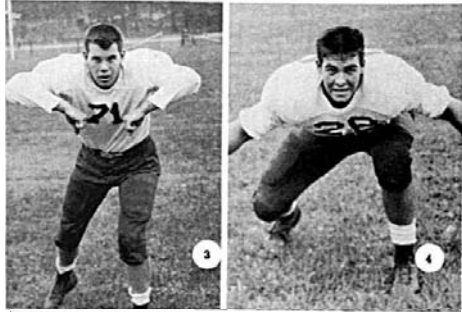
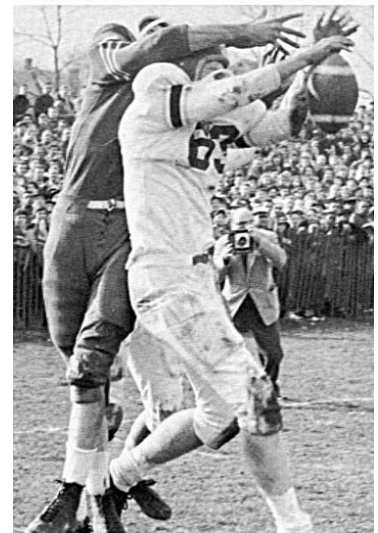
On the following Saturday the axe fell. In the closing minutes of the first half of the Clifton game, Richard Haines (high-scoring halfback and a tower of strength on defense), injured his knee badly and had to sit out the rest of the game as well as the remainder of the season. Clifton then struck for a quick seven points before halftime. Behind for the first time all season and without their star halfback, the Mounties just didn't have it in the second half. No one will forget that nightmarish last quarter in which Clifton tallied three touchdowns in as many minutes. Final score: Clifton 26, Montclair 0.

For the next five days, the Mounties ran through plays and defensive scrimmages with a reckless determination previous practice sessions had never known. They were keying for the Thanksgiving Day game with undefeated Bloomfield. Everyone knew we didn't have a chance of winning that game; everyone that is, except coaches Clary Anderson and Butch Fortunato and the players themselves.

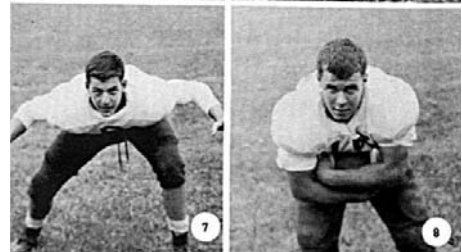
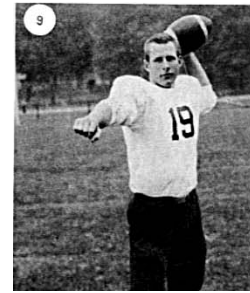
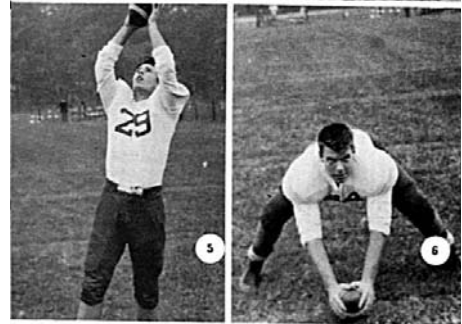
The Irvington game postponed earlier in the season because of a flu epidemic was just a warm-up for the Turkey Day game. Irvington, though eager to pick up where Clifton had left off, was never in the game and came out on the bottom end of a 52-0 massacre.

On the same Saturday something else happened that dismayed many Montclair fans but also gave an added incentive to the team. Bloomfield easily defeated Clifton 33-6.

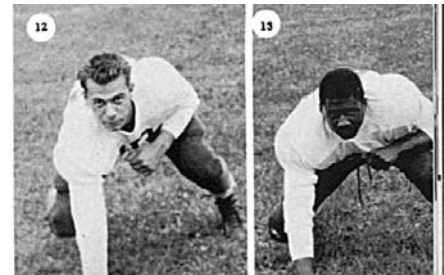
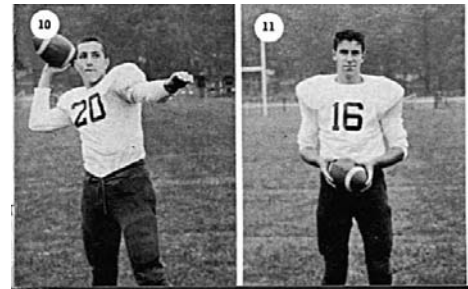
The stage was set for a comeback. The Montclair-Bloomfield tilt was the talk of the town. An unprecedented metropolitan telecast was arranged (televised in COLOR with Chris Shenkle announcing) and tickets just weren't obtainable unless you knew the mayor. The Mountie team, which had lost to Clifton, was a thing of the past. It was a new team that took the field that morning, a team with desire. Running the multiple offenses to perfection, Bobby Haines, Dave McKelvey, Butch Foster, and company rolled to a convincing 21-3 victory. A flashy offense wasn't the only reason for Montclair's success by a long shot. An ingenious defense devised by Coach Fortunato and the superlative play of lineman such as Earl Spivey, Bill Byrne, Mark Gerardi, and Eric Graber were invaluable. The Bloomfield game was a magnificent team effort and climaxed another great season.



1957 FOOTBALL



- 1 ROBERT HAINES
- 2 RICHARD HAINES
- 3 RICKY PELS
- 4 BILL BYRNE
- 5 WILSON GREEN
- 6 LES BURNS
- 7 JOHN TENUTO
- 8 JULIAN LONGUA
- 9 DAVE McKELVY
- 10 VITO CETTA
- 11 STUART HEYDT
- 12 MIKE GERARDI
- 13 EARL SPIVEY



This article would not be complete without a farewell to the outgoing seniors. It goes without saying that the Haines twins, Richie and Bob, are the greatest pair of halfbacks ever to don Montclair uniforms. They could do everything well and certainly were “All-Stars” in every respect. Both players were selected All-State and Richie was selected by Teen Magazine as an “All-American” high school player. (Richie and the All-American team were on a Los Angeles television show hosted by Eddie Fisher where the “team” was given their awards). Dave McKelvey, a triple threat quarterback and Julian Longua, a hard-running, hard-blocking, fullback, rounded out what many fans believe to be the best Mountie backfield ever.

The offensive line was led by All-County tackle, Bill Byrne. Ricky Pels did a fine job going both ways at the other tackle. Ends Stuart Heydt and Wilson Green were good pass receivers and could block as well. At the guards, John Tenuto and Mark Gerardi, could be counted on to open up that line. Les Burns, biggest man on the squad, could more than hold his own at center.

Defensively, Earl Spivey at end and Vito Cetta at safety were standouts. Brian Christaldi and Carl Newman made many key tackles from the linebacking posts. Pat Caggiano filled in admirably at tackle, both on offense and defense. Three boys who came into their own in the Bloomfield game were tackle Eric Graber, fullback Butch Foster, and end Andy Barrett.

All these players will be missed next year but fourteen junior lettermen are ready and able to defend our championship title.



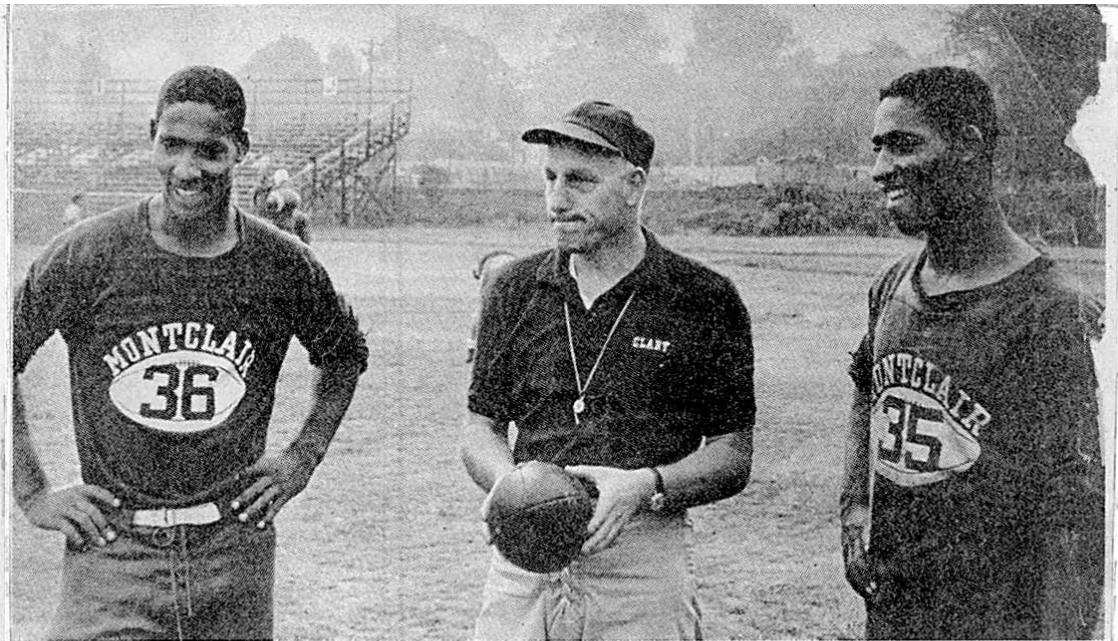


Photo courtesy of Ebony magazine

ILLUSTRIOUS HALFBACKS—In this 1957 photograph, Robert (left) and Richard Haines (right) stand with Coach Clary Anderson at Woodman Field. “Without any question,” Anderson stated in the December 1957 issue of *Ebony* magazine, “these twins are in the top bracket of the country’s schoolboy athletes...They are two of the greatest prospects for college football I’ve seen in years.”

The Canvas Of Memory

By Vincent Tango
Special To The Times

Some Montclair people might know me through my memories of Montclair art, but I want to share one personal memory I haven’t recorded on canvas. At least not yet.

It happened when I was in the eighth grade at George Inness Junior High School. It started out as a typical fall day back in 1957. I was walking up Chestnut Street approaching the bridge. The students from Bloomfield High had already painted their “Beat Montclair” slogans on the face of the bridge, in bright red paint. I remember that, because it was a bit early. We still had to play Clifton before we were to meet Bloomfield on Thanksgiving Day. The street was quiet except for the distant sound of music. It was the Mountie Band practicing on the football field at Woodman. The band was just starting to play “Sound the Call of Battle” when it happened—the experience that made my day, and was to become a fond memory.

When I reached the bottom of the hill, just under the bridge, I looked up and there he was, walking toward me. At first, I could only see it was a guy wearing a Montclair football jacket and carrying a gym bag. Obviously, a Mountie football player on his way to practice. As we neared each other, I realized, “Wow! It’s

Richie Haines! And he’s going to walk right past me!!!” When he did, he looked me in the eyes and said, “Hey, how ya doin’, man?” He—Richard Haines—actually talked to me!

I couldn’t wait to tell my friends.

I’m now a 54-year-old man, yet I remember that day as if it were yesterday.

Role models start early and last forever. To today’s star athletes who claim not to want to be looked at as role models, I say: You have no choice. You are, simply by virtue of your talent. Conduct yourselves responsibly, whether you’re a star on a high school gridiron or about to play in the Super Bowl.

Oh yeah, please don’t forget to smile and say, “How ya doin’, man?” to some skinny little kid. The memory could last a lifetime.

We lost Richard Haines recently, but I’ll remember this high school All-American always, for more reasons than one.

P.S. Oh yeah! He wasn’t his talented twin brother Robert, because his jacket displayed his first name and No. 35. Bobby wore No. 36. Either one, the thrill would have been the same.

Formerly of Montclair, Vincent Tango is a resident of Los Angeles, Calif. He is a professional artist who has done numerous paintings of Montclair vistas.

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