

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS

1917 -
1976

Football History



PREFACE

The ensuing account of the History of Christian Brothers High School Football is not to be presented as all encompassing, but rather as a work in progress. Information for many of the years is nonexistent or incomplete. Any editorialized material is not meant to be the final work on the subject, especially in the area of “all time teams” category. There may be sound argument for including other opinions in many parts.

We would welcome information on any teams, herein included or not, and on athletes’ whose performances may be worthy of “all time” or “honorable mention” status, of that such information may be added to make this account more inclusive.

This History was embarked upon as a start, to begin coalescing the lore of Christian Brother’s Football, and to give additional substance to the school’s long and glorious existence.

Any opinion or factual information that any reader can provide would be welcome and if valid, will be edited into this account. Please submit any such material to the Alumni Office, addressed to “Football History.”

HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN BROTHERS FOOTBALL 1917-1976

1876 was a memorable year in the history of both the United States and Sacramento, California. Alexander Gram Bell invented the telephone; the Battle of the Little Big Horn was fought; the United States was 100 years old; horse drawn cars on wooden rails ran down K Street; the National Baseball League was formed; California had been a State for 26 Years; the Civil War had only been over for 11 years, and the Christian Brothers opened up a High School in Sacramento. But Football for the School was a few years away.

With a history as rich as it is in football, Christian Brother High School of Sacramento had a rather inauspicious start. There was an article in "The College Times" in 1910 in which the sports editor felt obliged to explain, "Every other form of manly sport is encouraged and in season is participated in by the boys of CBC, but football, because of its roughness and danger to life and limb is not permitted by our athletic manger. And perhaps it is well for us that it is not, for our boys seen to go into everything they undertake so earnestly, that the chances are some of us would be numbered among the hundreds that have been maimed...if not among the thirty whose lives have been sacrificed to the cause of football during the late football season." This did not auger well for the school to ever field a team. The school had been in existence 41 years. But it was not until 1917 that the antipathy and fear of the sport was overcome, and the first football team to represent 'Brother's College' took the field.

Stephen R. O'Neil wrote in the 1918 yearbook, "Brothers Albian and Baldwin got the boys together in the summer of 1917, raised some funds and the team was born. There were only a few large boys to choose from and some of these did not want to play at first."

Brother Albian secured the services of Herbert "Red" Bowden, a veteran St. Mary's College quarterback as coach. The first game ever was a loss to Harkness Jr. High School with Peter Mitchell scoring the first ever touchdown for the Brothers. There were only three teams playing American Football at the time. Harkness, Stanford Junior High, and Brothers College. CB tied Stanford 12-12 and finished 0-1-1. Some names of players on the first squad who lent many descendants to future years at the school were O'Neil, Mitchell, Lagomarsino, and Doyle. Peter Mitchell's daughter, Sister Peter, was to become a principal of the "girl's side" when the school was co-institutional in the mid-fifties.

There are no records for the years 1918-1923. If readers have any knowledge of that era, information would be welcome and incorporated into this history. We do know that Peter Mitchell was head coach in 1920. The Rooney Family is another name for the Brother's ages and in 1924 Paul Rooney, a Cal Grad of 1923, took the football reins after a year of grad work at Georgetown. The squad went 3-4, with victories over Nevada City, San Juan, and Gridley. They lost to Oroville, the Nor Cal Champs, 25-0 and also to Williams, Marysville and then Sacramento High School --- who was to be a nemesis for years --- 34-0. Lou Lagomarsino missed the Sac game which hurt the Gaels. Louis Slakey another historical name in

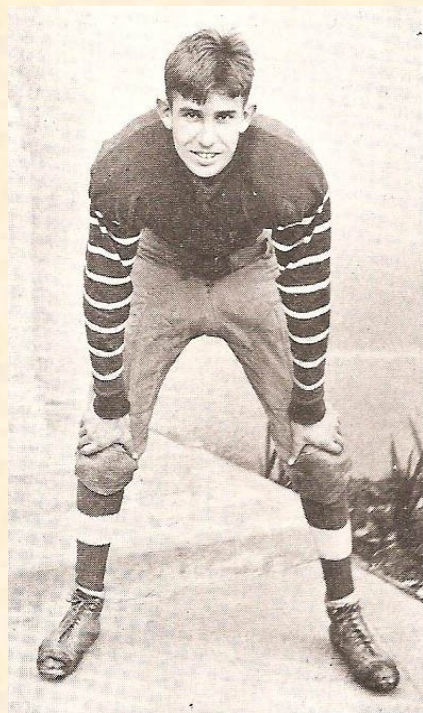
Brothers' annals was outstanding during the '24 year but the star of the team was Joseph Rooney, later to become Police Chief of Sacramento.

The Sacroformian, the name of the yearbook, during these years, reported that Joe Tatti replaced Paul Rooney in 1925. It was a rough year for Coach Tatti as the team cancelled the balance of the schedule after losing 55-0 to Willows, due to too many injuries in that game. Earlier they beat Oroville 6-0 and the Sacramento Junior College "B" team twice 12-0 and 18-0. They lost to Marysville 6-0. They forfeited to College City when the team walked off the field to protest "poor decisions" by the officials. In retrospect, this was probably an even poorer decision by Coach Tatti.



Coach Joe Tatti

As the 1926 season rolled around Coach Tatti greeted some 35 candidates for his squad. After the previous season's debacle, this was a much better year for the "Fighting Irish" as they were often called in those days. The only defeat came at the hands of Marysville, 18-6. But according to news accounts: "The stage in which the team was riding was struck by a touring car, leaving George Burt with 3 broken fingers and Patrick Wamsly with a broken arm." Marysville had an outstanding squad led by 3 players, Dutch Rubel, Charley "Crazy Legs" Baird, and Dick Sperbeck Sr. who all went on to star at St. Mary's College for Slip Madigan.



Captain Vic Bordes

Other than that loss, Brothers beat Oroville, Elk Grove, Courtland, Preston, Pierce, Sac J.C. "B" squad and tied St. Mary's (Stockton) 13-13, finishing 6-1-1. Coach Tatti said, "Our victories over Elk Grove and Courtland on successive days brought offer from Bakersfield and Scott High School of Portland, showing we were one of the strongest teams in the section of California."

Coach Tatti was back again in 1927, but did not enjoy the same success going 2-3-2 in seven games. About 30 turned out for the "Fighting Irish". They were able to beat Galt 18-0 and Roseville 15-0 but lost to Courtland 25-0, Sutter Creek 36-0 and Sacramento High School 83-0, probably the worst loss in the school's history. They tied Gridley and Sac J.C.'s "seconds" 6-6. They were led by Captain Bordes and every man played at top speed: according to the Sacraformian. This was Coach Tatti's last year. In 1928 the United States saw a Catholic defeated by Herbert Hoover for the Presidency and a new football coach for CB in the person of Russell Dickson. Neither Hoover nor Dickenson had much success. Brothers went 2-2-2 in a 6 game schedule with victories over Placerville and Saint Mary's of

Stockton, and losses to San Juan and Vacaville and ties with Jackson and St. Vincents of Vallejo. Jim Flynn, later to be a CB Coach, and Bud Hanna, a noted sports figure in later years, were on the squad.

THE SEASONS 1929-1945

Joe Rooney, later to become Police Chief, and also a St. Mary's College Graduate took over as head coach in 1929.

Apparently the school did not publish yearbooks during these years as there are none in the school's archives. We were able to piece together some information about the era from clippings from the Sacramento Bee and Union. In some cases the years are not noted on the clippings so we will present a synopsis from these articles and items. Most of these came from the Flynn Family file, Flynn being the deceased Jimmy, who coached the Gaels during this era before moving to Sac High. Records from most of this period are not available.

One part of CB lore for this period was related in a November 1969 Bill Conlin column in the Sacramento Union. He wrote:

For that matter, how about the "fair catch play", which old Christian Brothers School turned a game around against Jackson High more than 35 years ago in Amador County? It made "Turtles" Valine a legendary Figure in CBS history, not so much because he won the game but because he caused a stricter interpretation of the rule book all over the nation. Here's what happened: the Brothers were trailing Jackson and desperately needed a touchdown in the waning seconds. Fellows like Al Flynn (Jimmy's brother) and Jack Casey had played their hearts out, but it didn't seem like the Gaels could prevail. But Turtles Valine had the answer. He went into the huddle and told Gene Sullivan to throw a pass on the left flank. The pass was delivered, but at least 2 Jackson Defenders were moving in to intercept, whereupon, Turtles threw his arm in the air and loudly screamed: "fair catch!" The defenders backed off. By the time they realized they had been duped, Turtles caught the throw and calmly stepped across the goal line for the winning score. You have to watch the Brothers. They're wily ones.

Both the Bee and the Union offered extensive coverage of the city's four high schools during the 1930's. Many feature stories on coaches and players and pre writes of upcoming games were prevalent.

Vasco Pucci was the head coach in 1934 without much success. He was replaced in 1935 by Jimmy Flynn who was greeted with an array of pictures and articles when his announcement was made. He had played at St. Mary's College under legendary coach Slip Madigan and local Gael supporters were buoyed by hope that he was the messiah to put CB at the top of the football heap.

Flynn whipped his troops into shape and on the morning of Friday September 20, 1935, The Sacramento Union, with a kneeling Jim Flynn, and caption of "puts out chin", announces "Flynn sees victory for Brothers", in it's pre write of the Sac High game and indeed the di-

minutive Irishman was a man of his word as Brothers', beat "The High" 6-0. A jubilant time for the Brothers' supporters. And many years before Joe Namath had the audacity to predict a Super Bowl victory for his Jets, Jimmy Flynn had stolen the thunder for his band of Gaels. They went on and beat Sutter Creek 25-0, lost to Grant 13-0, whipped Jackson 26-0, tied St. Mary's 6 to 6, and beat St. Vincent's of Vallejo 11-0.

The starting lineup for most of 1935 was George Gillette and Vic Martinelli at ends, Ed Katsulis and Charles Schanz at tackles, Captain Manny Soares and Dave Schanz at ends, Captain Manny Soares and Dave Simmons at guards, Bill Palm at center, Bill Diage and Adrian Bennett at halves, Leo Bennett at fullback and Bill Stewart at quarterback. Martinelli was a standout and would go to St. Mary's College and star for Slip Madigan. He later would coach for a long time as an assistant at El Camino High, against Brothers teams, in the 60's and 70's.

And in 1936 Flynn and his Gaels came back with another victory over Sac High, this time by a 14-0 count, before 3,001 fans who paid 50 cents each to watch. Touchdowns scored by Pete Archerda and Bob Lewis on an end around that caught the Dragons by surprise. Jimmy Flynn was the toast of the town among the CB Alums. Brothers started Gillete, Shnatz, Puliz, Palm, Simmons Martinelli, Lewis, R. Gillette, Gardner, Tappan, and Bennett.

In other games that year, CB beat St. Vincent's 12-0 and St. Mary's in the finale with no score available on that one. Depending on any points St. Mary's scored, the Gaels did not otherwise allow any rushing scores on the year, and only a TD pass vs. Sutter Creek who tied them. The Little Irishman did a yeoman's job in his two years on the job, winning 5 and tying 1 in his last year.

But the headlines, under a Kurt MacBride byline in a February 1937 edition of the Sacramento Bee proclaimed "Unbeaten grid mentor will enter U.S.C." Coach was resigning to go back to school for a teaching credential. He did so and was hired a year later by Sacramento High who decided to have Flynn join them, rather than try and beat him. He quit Brothers immediately, not finishing the school year.

Principal Brother Patrick of CB Said, "We regret Jimmy leaving and he is welcome back if he chooses. He is one of the finest young men I have ever known, and his football record speaks for itself." This appraisal of Flynn was the consensus of all who know and remember him. The 1937 schedule was Sutter Creek, Sac High, Bye, Grant, St. Vincent's, McClatchy, St. Mary's of Stockton, and Jackson. Improvements were made to the football field with a new sprinkling system. "Fifty prospective defenders of the Brothers reputation are daily working out under new coach Les Groux", proclaimed the Sacramento Union: Groux came to CB from St. Mary's College, where he was a backfield man, to replace Jimmy Flynn. There was no other info available for 1937, 1938, 1939.

In 1940 John Ohrt took over as head coach and was assisted by Brother Bertram, who was to become a legend of the High School and the Provincial of the order, and Brother Vincent. Their efforts did not produce the results they wanted as they won 2, lost 6 and tied one. They beat Jackson 13-0 in the opener but were shut out 5 weeks in a row by Manteca, Reno,

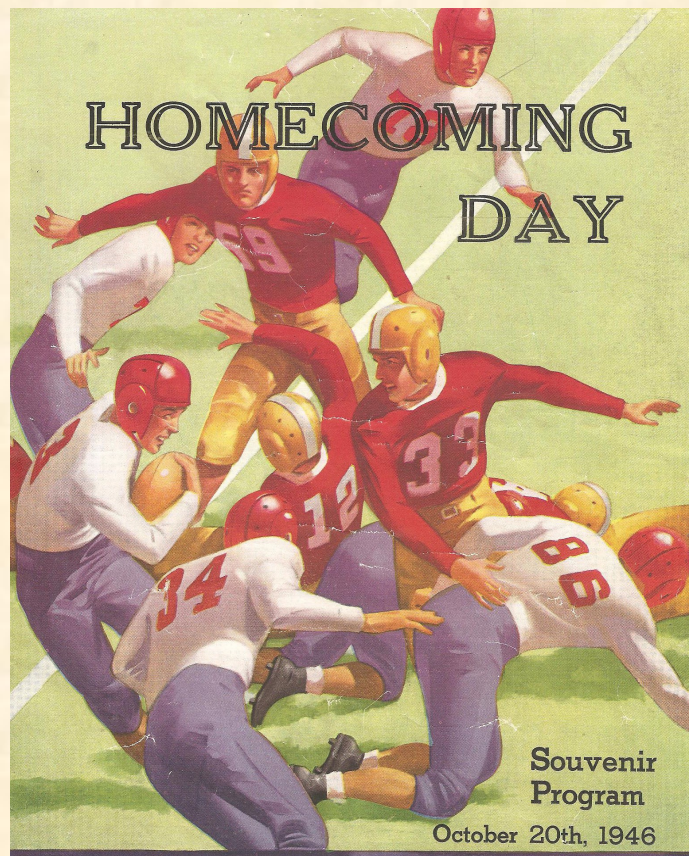
Grass Valley, St. Mary's of Berkeley, and McClatchy and showed only a tie with Reno. They came back to beat Colusa 16-0 but fell to Rio Vista 13-7 and Sac High 38-0 for the sixth shutout of their offense. Ohrt decided to go up to Yuba County and farm after the season.

By 1941 the head coach was another former St. Mary's Gael of repute, John Giannoni, who after his CB years would become a legendary coach at Lodi High School where his teams were symbolized by strong fundamentals in blocking and tackling and a feared, aggressive demeanor on defense. He replaced James V. Ware as football coach, but Ware stayed on as varsity basketball coach.

The Gaels beat Oroville 25-13 in the opener followed by a 14-6 win at Nevada City. They clobbered St. Mary's 51-8, but fell to a strong Woodland squad 25-13 and then to Grass Valley 7-0. (Grass Valley High School later joined with Nevada City High to form what is now Nevada Union). The remaining frames were against Sacred Heart of San Francisco, St. Mary's of Berkeley and St. Vincent's of Vallejo. Scores of these games were not available. CB's starting lineup for 1941 was Habecker and Brenidk at ends, Senini and Keany at tackles, Puliz and Ryan at guards, Magee at center and Lilly, Silva, Concannon, and Lou Fatur in the backfield. Fatur, who pursued a career in Law Enforcement played football into the early 1980's 40 years later, as a kicker in the annual Pig Bowl Game in Sacramento.

Gianonni returned as Head Coach in 1942. He would lose 22-0 to Jimmy Flynn's Sac High Dragons on October 3, in an afternoon contest. Flynn was quoted prior to the game, "I can't lose to that guy" and again he was prophetic. As a further irony, Gianonni was a Sac High Graduate. Both coaches employed the Notre Dame scheme learned from their mutual college coach, Slip Madigan who had played under Knute Rockne at Notre Dame. Gianonni, however, added his own touches to the team with a lot of reverses and laterals in his system.

Prior to Gianonni's success of the previous year, Brothers' officials had not scheduled Sac and McClatchy for a period as they feared they could not

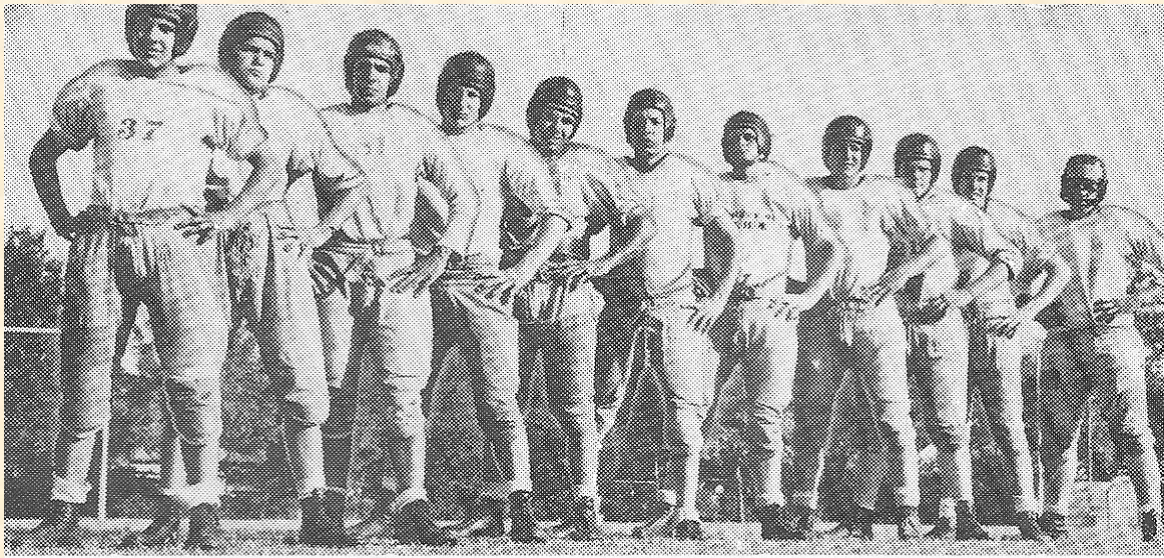


CHRISTIAN BROTHERS HIGH
vs.
ST. MARY'S HIGH OF BERKELEY

Homecoming 1946 Program

compete due to the weakening program, so the '42 game was a resumption of the series. Starting for CB in the game were Joe Babich and Tony Bakatich at ends; Ed O'Connell and Stan Tormey at tackles Tim Kennedy and Marshall Cuffe at guards, Frank Delaini at center and Jack Silva, Conway Cuffe, Roy Demartini and Achille Albouze, a candidate for the "All-Name" team, in the backfield. One of the newspaper accounts acclaimed Albouze as the best fullback in town.

The home games for CB in '42, besides Sac High, were McClatchy, (lost 19-0), Grant and St. Mary's of Berkeley. It was the first time in three years that they played local schools. On December 16, 1942—the papers announced that John Gianonni was leaving for Lodi High School. "I have a chance to go ahead and I'd be a fool not to take it" he said. He would ex-



Ray Curry coached the 1946 Gael squad to a 5-3-1 record

cel at Lodi for many years. Gianonni was replaced as head coach by Brother Eugene Ward, F.S.C. and Brother Gregory who would only coach one year. They won one, lost 4 and tied 1 in 1943.

To replace Gianonni, in 1944 the Brothers hired as Head Football Coach, Lilio Marcucci, a professional baseball catcher for the Triple A Sacramento Solons. That experiment lasted only one year. Coach Marcucci was able to win 3 and lose 3, losing to both Sac and McClatchy 28-7 and 13-0 respectively, and St. Marys of Berkeley 20-0. They beat Elk Grove 7-0, St. Vincents 14-7, and walloped San Juan 45-0 in the season ender. Marcucci was gone after one year.

Spud Spalding took over for Marcucci in 1945, and like his predecessor would only coach one season. The first half of the forties, except for Giannoni's 6-2 in 1941, was not a good one for the Gaels, and Spud, assisted by Brother Eugene, did nothing to change that, producing a 3rd straight non winning season. They led off with a win over Sutter Creek 13-0, but were shut out for 3 consecutive weeks by Sacramento High School followed by 0-0 ties with Placer and McClatchy. They beat St Mary's of Stockton 20-6 but failed to score the next two

weeks vs. Elk Grove and Bellarmine losing 0-6 and 0-14. They concluded with a victory over St. Vincent's 13-6 to finish 3-4-1.

In 1946, taking over as the fourth Head Coach in as many years was Ray Curry, a great receiver and all coast selection from St. Mary's College who promptly put his imprimatur on CB football history with 5-3-1 record. The Gaels earned victories over Sutter Creek (33-13), McClatchy (53-12), Placer (19-1), Elk Grove (14-13) and St. Marys of Berkeley (20-7). Losses were to Oroville (6-34), Sac High (0-19), and St Vincents. The tie was with St. Elizabeths of Oakland. Russ Crocco was outstanding at half-back with a 5.5 average per carry and made all city along with guard Matt Puliz and end Jerry Scheid.



Coach Ray Curry

Ray Curry returned in 1947 but could not match the previous year's success. He beat St. Elizabeth 33-7 and Elk

Grove. But losses to McClatchy, Willows, Rio Vista and Sac High, coupled with a 13-13 tie with St. Vincent's led to a disappointing 2-4-1 record. Guard Joe Concannon was selected to the All City Team by both the Sacramento Bee and Union Newspapers. The Captain that year was Jerry Mikacich, the first of three Brothers that were outstanding performers for the Gaels. Curry went on to excel as a public school administrator for many years in the Grant School District and was well known as a capable football official, working many games in the Pacific Coast Conference, now known as the PAC-10.

1948 saw the advent of the Ray Clemon's years. The next 7 seasons would see the Gaels employ the hard nosed, defensive toughness that would characterize Clemons' coaching career at Sacramento Junior College and then Sacramento State University as he moved up the coaching ladder, He came to Brothers after a stellar St. Mary's College playing career that culminated in his selection to the college all star team that annually played the NFL Champions in Soldier's Field in Chicago. He spent a year as linebacker for the Green Bay Packers before embarking on his coaching career at CB.

Ray Clemon's first game as a head coach was against the Sacramento High School juggernaut that was Brothers' nemesis for many years. Sac was held to their lowest total points in the series to that time, but CB could not score and fell 12-0. The papers called it a "Moral

Victory” for CB, but that was small consolation for the “Irish” as they were still often called in the media. The game was described as a battle between the 35 yard lines.

Overall, Clemons’ debut season was 4-3 with victories over Elk Grove 14-0, Rio Vista 43-0, and St. Mary’s of Stockton 19-0. Losses were to Bellarmine, McClatchy, and Sacramento High. Premier players for CB were Marvin Nevis, Ken Orvick and Dan Lahey, whose issue would star on Gael Gridirons for years to come. Clemons was named coach of the year by the Sacramento Bee in his CB inaugural season.

In 1949 one of the best ever defensive teams took the field for Clemons and the Gaels. They gave up 2 points in their 7 victories, shutting out St. Marys of Berkeley 30-0, St. Elizabeth 32 to 0, Marysville 34-0, Jackson 25-0, Live Oak 33-0, McClatchy 21-0 and beating Chico 19-2. However, the ever present Sac High stomped the tough Gaels 39-0 and Grant prevailed 39-0. Pete Vartanian was outstanding at running back for CB the whole season and had scoring jaunts of 86 and 46 against Chico. Co-Captains of the year were Ken Orvick, Dan Lahey and Vartanian. Clemons was hoisted on the shoulders of the team and carried off after the CK McClatchy victory, fitting for an outstanding season. Bruce Julian, Andy Smolich, Jim Winchell, Sam Vartanian, Will (Punky) Towne and weight lifting guard Dan D’Amico, an all city pick who became an outstanding Orthopedic Surgeon for many years, were also solid, contributing performers during the season. They finished 7-2 on the year.

Clemons returned for a third season in 1950 and led the squad at a 5-5 record. They beat Bishop Manogue 13-7, Amador 20-6, Chico 13-6, Yuba City 13-8 with Bob Gloyd having a great game, and Serra of San Mateo 13-7.

Losses were to McClatchy 28-2, Manteca 25-12, Marysville 12-7, Grant 25-7 and an infamous whomping by Sac High 61-13 that saw the Dragon’s Tommy Agosta run for 5 touchdowns. The 2 TD’s vs. Sac were the most since 1944.

Sam Vartanian was a unanimous all city choice, even though he missed the Sac High game. Also named to the second all city team were Gael Co-Captain’s Andy Smolich, and tackle Ron Carissmi, who became an outstanding architect after attending Norte Dame and St. Mary’s. Others having a good year included future Police Chief Jack Kearns, Pat O’Hare, Dick Traversi, Gene Lynch and Punky Towne. Towne would Scholarship to Santa Clara and play on an undefeated freshman team before transferring to

Wichita when Santa Clara dropped big time football. Bill Ross also played at Santa Clara. Ross and Towne were only Juniors in 1950. Seniors playing their last game in 1950 were: John McCormack, Noel Slakey, Jim Bamberry, Bill Warmby, Don Willows, Asa Whetstone, Bill Newberry, Vernon Horton, Phil Sapunor, Bob Gloyd, Vartanian, Jim Blakeway, Andy Smolich and Jack Kearns.



Coach Clemons with Sam Vartanian and Tom O’Donnell



The 1951 Christian Brothers Gael's Football Team was 6 and 4

21-14 victory at Sonora behind Tom O'Donnell's two scores and Lew Pebbles one. They romped Jackson 51-0 with O'Donnell scoring 3 TD's. Then Marysville was romped 32-7, O'Donnell again scoring 3 times. The next week, Bill Bell, Ed Reich, Ray Tucker, Tom Gill, George Thomas, and Bill Ross all scored in a 45-7 romp over Amador. O'Donnell again scored twice in the homecoming win over Riordan 37-0. Although Dick Traversi scored twice vs. Yuba City, the Honkers stopped the Gael's streak 19-13.

O'Donnell topped a great year, scoring 4 times in the 31-0 win over Grant. In the final 14-7 loss versus Sac High, O'Donnell scored his last touchdown to finish with 15, a school all time best. He was touted by long time Brothers supporter, Vic Bertolani, a member of the squad who became an outstanding attorney, as certainly worthy of consideration for the all time Brothers team. He said he spoke as one who was run over many times by O'Donnell in practice. The affable barrister also stated that the highlight of his career was "being thrown out of the Manteca game." We think he was being a bit modest. The final record was 6-4. They had a fine offensive team to go with the Clemon's trademark defense. A little more offense in the close Serra, McClatchy, Yuba City and Sac High games would have produced a truly great season rather than a 6-4 mark, which was respectable for the tough schedule.

The Gael's fortunes sunk a bit during the 1952 season when they fell to a 3-5 record. The Sac High Dragons spoiled the squad's opener with a 20-0 triumph. They fell again to Grant before 3,000 fans, 24-13. After beating Marysville 18-6 on the road at Memorial Stadium, they lost to Oroville 20-0 and Chico 19-12 before crushing St. Mary's 40-0. The season ended with a 20-14 loss to the Lions for McClatchy who were a heavy favorite.

The season was not without its high spots. Pat Bobo, Chuck Chatfield and Danny Sanchez were named preps of the week by the Sacramento Union. Bob Ferry, defensive tackle Dave Jesmer who would go on to be an All American at Oregon State, George Thomas and Jim Hansen were named to the all City Team. Hansen was also voted MVP and Thomas 'most spirited' for the Gael's.

The 1951 Gael's opened up with a loss to strong Serra of San Mateo 12-7. McClatchy took them down 20-14 the next week, with Dick Castro and Punky Towne scoring for CB. The third game started a 5 game win streak with a



**Team MVP and Captain
Gomez Delgado**

The 1953 Gaels were dubbed the ‘best in CBS history’, at least up to that time, by the 1954 Yearbook. Returning a host of veterans from the 1952 3-5 team, hopes were high as the team assembled for its first practice at 21st and Broadway.

They lived up to expectations compiling a 7-1 mark with the only loss coming to old foe Sacramento High 18-6 in the opener. After that they rolled over Grant, Woodland, Riordan, Elk Grove, Pine Grove, Chico and McClatchy, racking up 194 points to 65 for the opponents. After being idle for almost a month because of a polio epidemic at CB, the boys destroyed McClatchy’s hope for the mythical city championship and gained it for themselves by outscoring the Lions 29 to 27 in the finale.

There were plenty of stars. Chuck Chatfield, John Lewis, George Thomas, Dave Jesmer, Bob Ferry, John Lastufka and Bob Leonard all made All City. Dave Jesmer, who came to CB as a boarding student from the Mother Lode County developed into an outstanding lineman, and would go on to college fame at Oregon State. He became a symbol of sorts for the nay-sayers who said CB recruited athletes. His name would still be cited in the early sixties as a reason for why Christian Brothers should not be admitted to the Sac-Joaquin section of the CIF. More on this later.

1954 saw Ray Clemons return for his 6th year as the head man at Christian Brothers. He had a number of players returning from the ’53 powerhouse and a successful season was on the horizon. Led by outstanding lineman Allen Zuniga and Gomez Delgado, voted the outstanding back, Brothers opened with a victory over Roseville 18-6 and then lost to McClatchy 26-6.



Stars from the 1954 squad receive their awards from Coach Clemons: Sanchez, Chatfield, and Ferry

They wouldn’t lose again the rest of the year, although they were tied by Marysville 6-6. They dominated Chico 28-14 and Reno 33-14 with talented back Jerry Cooke scoring 4 touch downs, Shasta 27-0 with Cooke hitting pay dirt two more times and then a 14-7 win over Bal-

larmine as Cooke again scored twice, once on a brilliant 80 yard run. The Gaels won the first Northern Interstate Conference Title.

That set the stage for the Sac High Dragons. CBS was not to be denied, as Cooke again scored twice on the longest runs of the game. Frank Money, Guy Stowe, Ron Fernandez and John Lane starred defensively for the Gaels as Sac High never threatened the entire game. While this ended a long drought vs. the Dragons, Brothers still had not beaten both the two large city schools in the same year due to the McClatchy loss. They finished the season 6-1-1. Another



The 1955 Christian Brothers Gaels Team, 1955 NIC Champions

great season for Clemons and the Gaels. Cooke went on to star at Marquette after scoring 84 points for the season while Fernandez became a starter at Stanford. Frank Mooney won the sportsmanship award, selected annually by the assistant coaches. Mooney later would return to CB as an assistant to Dick Sperbeck, after coaching with much success for many years at St. Patrick's Grammar School. In the two seasons of '53 '54, the Gaels went 13-2-1.

The 1955 season would be the last of Clemons' heady era. They opened up over Sonora 7-0 behind Jerry Cooke's 2 scores and one each by Joe Genshlea and Bob Colbert. They edged out a huge Riordan squad 21-16 with more TD's by Cooke and a Bob Gatiss pass to Colbert. They took Chico 33-14, with Cooke again scoring 4 in this one and Reno 26-7, as yes, you guessed it, Jerry Cooke again got 2.



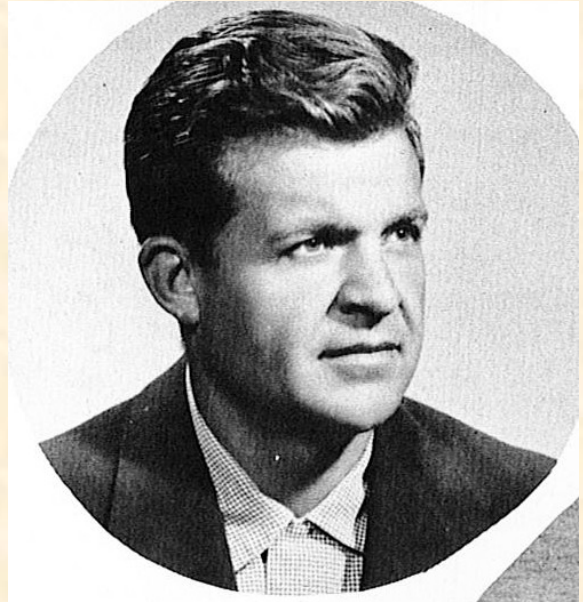
Jerry Cooke scored 84 points in 1955

They beat Red Bluff 26-0 as Cooke went to pay dirt two more times with Jim Mikacich and Bob Colbert getting a TD apiece. They were upset by a lowly Shasta team as Cooke was injured, but came back to beat Marysville 19-0 with Gary Lemmon having a 55 yard run to the Indians

13 yard line, with Cervantez scoring the TD. Lemmon scored again late in the 4th quarter and earlier Gatiss threw a 20 yarder to Lane in the end zone.

Jerry Cooke averaged 6.3 yards a carry on 95 carries. Garry Lemmon averaged 5.2, also on 95 carries. Cooke's season was spectacular and he is still remembered as one of the best backs in CB history.

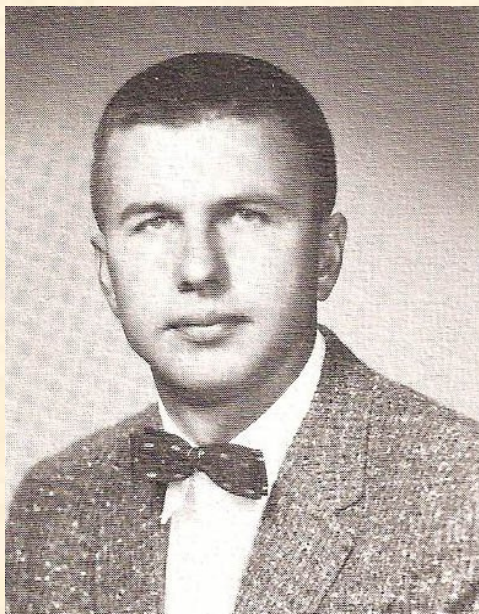
Coach Clemons finished his career at Brothers with a 7-1 mark and an impressive 45-22 overall mark for his 7 years. He became a local coaching icon as he moved to City College and then a long tenure at Sacramento State. Upon his death in the first decade of the 21st Century, he left a legacy of tough, winning football and a myriad of friends and admirers and a wonderful family. All of his 4 sons attended Brothers.



Ray Clemons won 45 games as CB Coach

The new campus opened in the Fall of 1956 under the name of Bishop Armstrong High School, which it would remain until 1963. It consisted of only Juniors and Seniors. It enrolled girls as well, occupying the north wing with the boys in the south. They did not attend classes together and the school was labeled s co-institutional rather than co-educational, a rather unique design-nation. The girls department was run by nuns, while the Christian

Brothers operated the boy's side. It was a beautiful, spacious campus compared to the old school at 21st and Broadway.

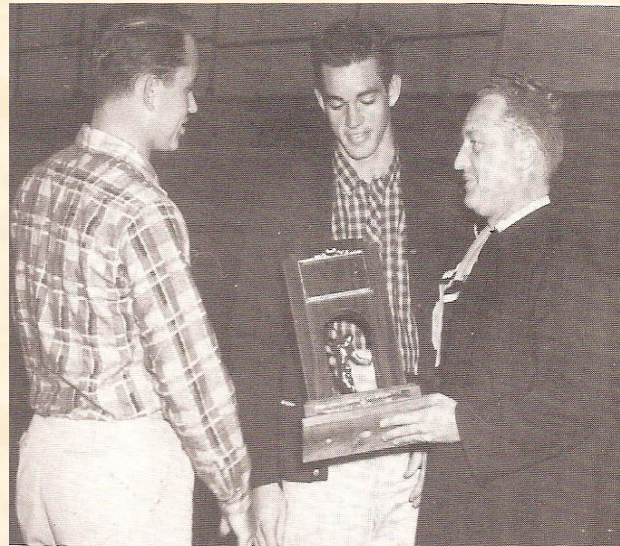


John Stemple took over in 1956

With the new campus, came a new coach. John Stemple was the mentor for the next 2 seasons and he did quite well, leading his troops to co-championships of the far flung Northern Interstate Conference in both seasons. Other conference teams were Reno High, Red Bluff, Shasta of Redding and Chico all of which were in the North Section of the California Interscholastic Federation, which admitted B.A. while B.A. was geographically in the Sac-Joaquin section, but not a member. More on that anomaly will follow in a later portion of this history.

In 1956, The Falcons, as they were now known, had arguably as much talent as any team ever to take the field for the Brothers. The "M and M wrecking crew" of Jim Mikacich and Dick Mooney plus Ronnie Garcia, all

juniors, was certainly a candidate for the best backfield ever at the school. At post season Mikacich was picked after his senior season for the 1958 North Shrine Team in the North-South All Star game in Los Angeles before going on football scholarship to Notre Dame. Mooney played in the 1958 Sacramento Optimist All Star Game and was selected as the MVP. Gatiss, a senior in 1956, was picked for the North-South Game, a singular honor for the strong armed field general who would go on to star at the then College of the Pacific.



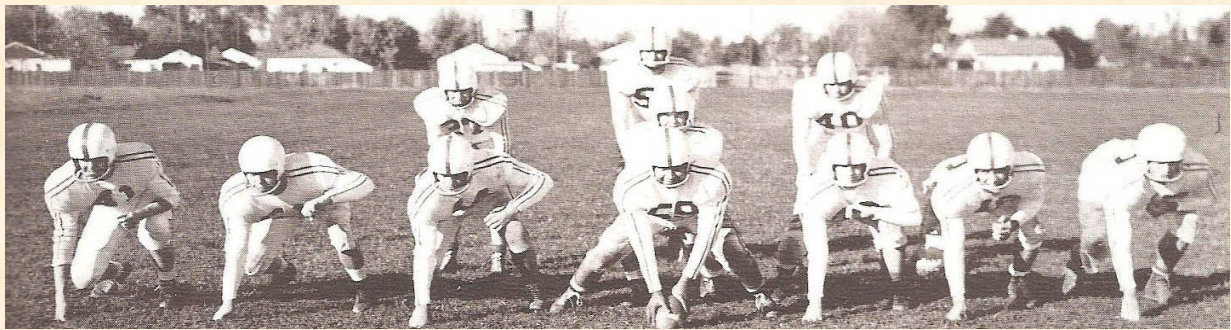
Co-captains Bob Gatiss and Pete Bollinger accept the NIC co-championship from Brother Gabriel

Mooney later led the nation in kickoff return yardage at the University of Idaho. But this was more than a team of backs. Pete Bollinger made All City at end before becoming one of Sacramento's leading developers. Sam Stassi also was All City and went on to play at Cal before studying Dentistry, which became his career. Ernie Cervantes of the famous baseball family, was named All City also. Other outstanding players were juniors—John Parmeter, and Arlen Di Bartolo. The squad was strong all through the roster.

Victories were earned over Yuba City, McClatchy, Red Bluff, Chico and Shasta of Redding. The only conference loss was to Reno, the Co-Champion. They lost the last 3 games of the year by 1 to Marysville, 7 to San Juan, and by one to Riordan of Marin County. The Sacramento Dragons prevailed 21-19 in a heartbreaker for the Falcons. In all it was an exciting year as BA was close in every game except the Reno loss 32-14. They finished 5-5.

Prospects were again high for the 1957 season with the M and M backfield returning for Coach Stremple's last year, along with Di Bartolo at end, John Parmeter at tackle and Sam Stassi, a guard, who all would make All City again in '57. Ron Garcia, another stalwart back and excellent blocker also returned. The boys won the opener over Yuba City 27-6 highlighted by a Tom Stinson TD pass to Di Bartolo. La Sierra fell 21-6 and then McClatchy 21-0 as Pete Mooney ran wild, and the Falcon's were 3-0. Reno again proved too strong as they prevailed over the Falcons 27-6. The next week Chico fell 20-0, as did Red Bluff 27-13. Willows put up a valiant battle but lost to the Falcons 6-0.

In a another league game, Enterprise went down 41-0, then Shasta succumbed 28-7 as Di Bartolo and Parmeter opened huge gaps in the line. The Falcons were Co-Champs of the NIC again, owned an 8-1 record and were ready to take on Sac High in the season's finale and finish the season for the first time ever with victories over both Sac and McClatchy. But it was not to be. Their long time nemesis shut out the Falcon's 7-0 maintaining their historic dominance. Still it was great season, recording the most wins ever, eight, till that time. Stremple's career mark in his 2 years was 13 wins and 7 losses.



The 1957 NIC co-champion Gael Offense: (from the left) Williams, Kreizenbeck, Stassi, Gonzales, Walsh, Parmeter, DiBartolo. Backfield: Mooney, Stinson, Mikacich, Garcia

John Stremple left after his two year stint and went on to a long and illustrious career in education. He became head coach at Yuba City before becoming principal at that school and then moving to Mira Loma in Sacramento in the same position. He then was named superintendent of the San Juan Unified School District and made some noteworthy changes there. His next move was to the post of superintendent of the Fresno School District. He left that position when President Ronald Reagan asked him to come to Washington D.C. and head up all the U.S. Schools in the world outside the United States. These were primarily schools for the children of American Soldiers stationed abroad. He concluded his career in that position, which as described as having ‘cabinet like’ status, thus ending a brilliant career in education. A real gentleman he was, and one that CB supporters are proud to have in their heritage.

Stremple’s replacement was Frank Callen, another former St. Mary’s Gael who like Clemons, Curry and Gianonni had played in the coach Jimmy Phelan days in Moraga. He came to BA in the summer of 1958 after having been Police Chief at Bingham Canyon, Utah. His approach to the game was definitely ‘old school’, relying on heavy emphasis on blocking and tackling and a relative disdain for the passing game and other ‘finesse aspects’ of the sport. Fundamentals ie. lots of time on blocking sleds and tackling dummies, were his trademark and his teams were a tribute to that philosophy. The Falcon’s played their home games in Edmond’s Field, which essentially was a baseball diamond called home by the Sacramento Solons of the AAA Pacific Coast League. The configuration for football wasn’t the best but it was an adequate temporary home.

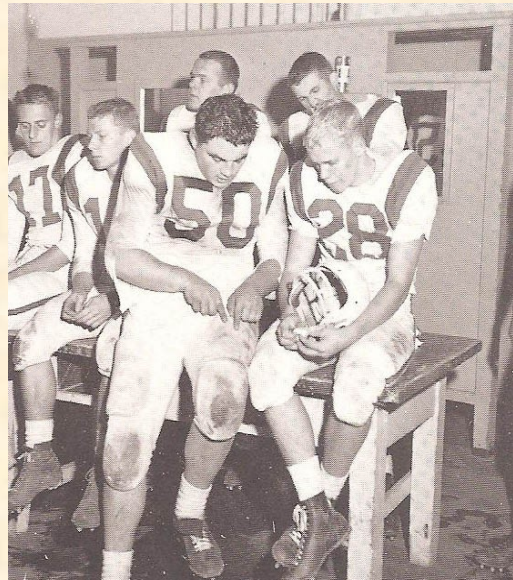


Joe Renzi on a hand off from Roger Peters in 1959

The team opened with an 18-6 win over Marysville and victories over city schools, Hiram Johnson 6-0 and the Lions of McClatchy 14-7 for a 3-0 start. Still playing in the Northern Interstate Conference, the league schedule was much tougher. They fell to Red Bluff 7-6 and then Reno 19-0, followed by Chico 34-7 and a close one to Shasta 13-12. They tied Enterprise of Redding 13-13 and in the finale won their only league game with a 27-6 win at Anderson, finishing 4-4-1 in Callen's first year. Joe Renzi, a battering fullback and guard John Stassi made the All City Team. A large number of the squad were Juniors who would form the nucleus of the 1959 team.

The 1959 squad boasted of considerable talent with a strong bunch of returning seniors joined by a formidable junior class. They beat Hiram Johnson in the opener but fell the next two weeks to the one two punch of McClatchy 19-14 and Sac High 18-0. They lost the league opener to Red Bluff 25-7 and then journeyed to Stockton and fell to a strong Stag team 31-7 in a non-league encounter. Chico shut out the Falcons 19-0 the next week, but they finished with 3 victories in a row over Shasta 25-14, Anderson 27-7 and Norte Del Rio 21-7 in the nonleague finale for a final record of 4-5.

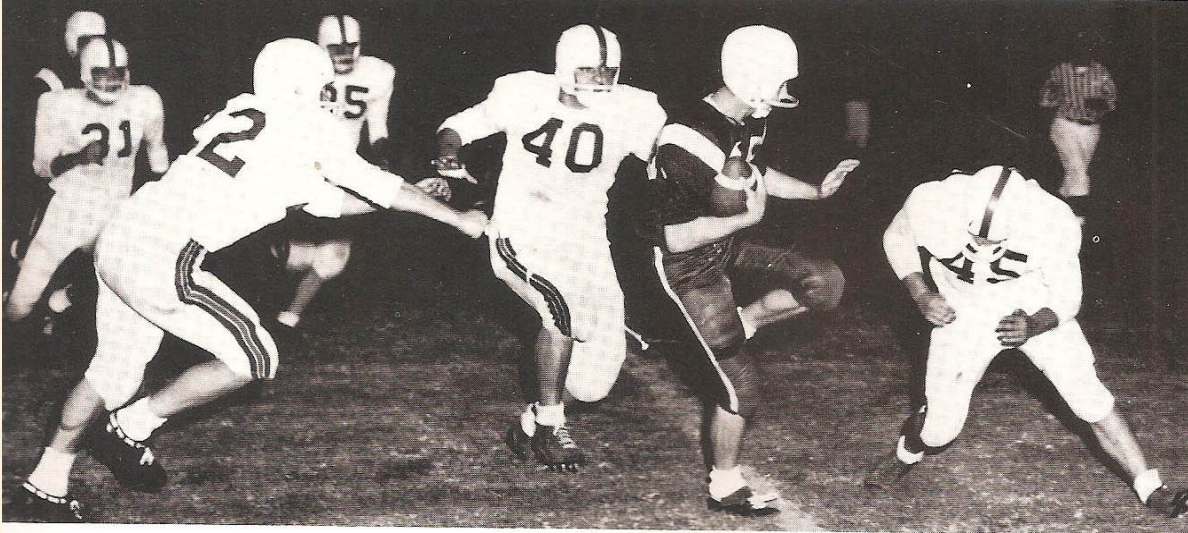
A number of seniors had good seasons including lineman Lou Porta, all city nose guard Jim Deroos, guard Mike Elorduy, Mike Flynn, a good running back who was the son of former Brothers' coach Jimmy Flynn; running back Lou Giminiez whose son would become an outstanding area high school coach, Pete Mooney, the youngest of the trio of brothers who starred at the school, and Leo (Butch) Schuering an outstanding end who went on to play at the Air Force Academy before returning and becoming an a Sacramento Attorney of note.



Vic Cima and Lee Schuering in 1960

That would be the last year in the Northern Interstate Conference as the travel was too great, and it was ludicrous to be playing in such far flung places when so many schools were in close proximity. But the Falcons were not allowed in the Sac Joaquin Section and would play an independent schedule for the next 4 seasons.

In spite of losing a number of outstanding seniors, a large contingent of juniors would return to bolster the prospects for the upcoming 1960 squad. The starting backfield was certainly a candidate for the best ever for a Brothers/Falcons teams. QB Fred Znider was as competitive as anyone to ever to put on the uniform. Ron Peters was a huge running back that was hard to bring down and the other two, Henry Reynolds and Clark Aldrich both made All City, and Aldrich was as good a high school running back as the area had ever seen with tremendous ability, speed and agility. He scholardipped to Oregon State and finished at Sacramento State. Reynold's son Ricky, two decades later, would go on to a long career in the NFL as a defensive back at Tampa Bay.



Four All City Falcons in action: Clark Aldrich (22), Rolla Callegan (35), John De Angelis 40, and Richard Noya (45)

Other outstanding players were Rolla Callaghan who became a Junior College All American at American River before transferring to Humboldt, Richard Noya who made all city; tackle Barney Brust, who would play in college at Sac State; end Don Bradley who would start at St. Mary's College in Basketball, tackles John De Angelis and Doug Richmond, and Vic Cima, who was as big; fast and strong as anyone to play for the red and blue. There was a lot of talent on this squad.

They opened with a loss to Hiram Johnson, beat McClatchy 7-6 and tied Sac High at 14. They went down the valley to Manteca and lost 21-19 and to Stagg 33-18. Cima's renown was such that on the opening kickoff he went down the field, actually didn't hit anyone and the official said, "OK Cima you're out of the game, for unsportsmanlike conduct." They even called him by name as they administered their brand of "home cooking." Callen's troops rebounded with three straight victories over Orland 33-29, Willows 37-0 and Norte Del Rio 14-0. Orland had a real powerhouse team with many future college players, and that loss was their only one of the season. They would avenge it the following year when they would go undefeated. The Falcons finished with a 4-3-1 record.

The 1961 season would be Frank Callen's last at Bishop Armstrong before he left for the new Rio Linda High as head coach. But he saved the best for last as he had a superb team that went 7-1-1 with only a loss to Superior California number 1 Orland 14-13, and a tie with McClatchy. They held victories over Johnson 14-7, Sac High 13-6, El Camino 19-6, Fresno 26-20, St. Mary's (Stockton) 27-12, Modesto 21-12 and Highlands 32-7. They finished 2nd in the Bee's Superior California rankings behind Orland. Making All City in '61 were Aldrich again, defensive back John Zupan, end Don Bradley and tackle Barney Brust. Other seniors of note were Gene Rafferty, Tim Mullin, Glen Borges, Larry Kenobbie and a host of juniors who would be the nucleus of the 1962 team. Callen's record in his four year stint was 15-13-3, finishing on a high note. Dick Sperbeck took over as head coach in 1962. He inherited

some fine players from the previous year's squad team was a pre-season pick for high ranking in the Sacramento Bee's All Superior California ratings. The previous three years he had been the Varsity Basketball Coach and had helped Callen for a while, but Jack Witry was returning to resume that role, so Sperbeck, then the Athletic Director, readily jumped at the invitation extended by Brother Eugene to become the head football man.

But for two losses on stormy, rainy nights, '62 would have been the school's first undefeated season. They faced a formidable schedule that included 4 teams who would win their conferences, and beat all four of them. They

opened against Stremple's Yuba City Honkers, who would win the Sierra Foothill League, winning 19-13. Then came wins over La Sierra 13-6, Capitol Valley Conference Champion El Camino 17-9 and Grant, the co champion of the Metropolitan League 20-7. Metro co-champ Norte Del Rio prevailed in a mud bath 6-0. Then the Falcons scored victories over Highlands 20-7 and Fresno High, their league champion, by a 13-6 count. They then fell to Sac High 13-0 in another rain storm and finished with a victory over Frank Callen's Rio Linda Knights 40-0, to earn a top 5 Superior California ranking. There were a number of outstanding players.



All City Guard Peter Campbell



Dick Sperbeck became Head Coach in 1962

All-City guard Peter Campbell was picked for the North-South Shrine Game in Los Angeles and scholarshiped to UCLA. In the Brothers rich history, he remains one of the best ever linemen for his dominating play at the high school level. Mike Clemons, son of Ray, also was an All City selection and went on to a stellar career at Sac State, playing for his father, before a brief NFL career. He was a linebacker, tight end and excellent kicker. He would come back to Brothers as athletic director.

Jay Steiner and Jim Fink would go on to Santa Clara and play. Donn Pintar, who excelled at both running back and defense and was as tough a player that ever donned the Brothers' colors, had a four year career at Sac State. Dave Rakela was the team's leading rusher. John

McCarthy, who went on to a successful law vocation, excelled at QB and defense and would start as a defender at Sac State. Tackle John O'Malley at 6-2 and 245 pounds was strong and mobile as evidenced by his going in at running back in the Rio Linda game, after badgering coach Sperbeck the whole season for a chance, and in one play galloped 54 yards for a touch-down as no Knight wanted any part of tackling him. He accepted a football scholarship to the University of Utah. (as a tackle, not a running back)

The Falcons would play an independent schedule in 1963 for the 4th consecutive year. This was because the San Joaquin section of the California Interscholastic Federation's by laws stated that the section would consist of "public high schools", thus precluding private schools from being assigned to conferences. Although this was just prior to the Civil Rights Movement, the rumblings against all discrimination were beginning to be heard across the country. The time was right to begin an assault on this draconian situation. Then Principal Brother Eugene Ward and athletic director Sperbeck met to discuss the situation and agreed upon a strategy to force the section board of managers to eliminate the word 'public' from their by laws. Eugene started a file, aptly titled "the hassle", not yet fully aware of how prophetic the term was. The section was the only one in the state that prohibited private schools.

A letter of application to the section, asking for admission and thus assignment to a league, was submitted to the board of managers, which consisted of principals of member public schools. They responded, saying that the section submitted did not admit private schools and that they could not honor the request. They were saying, behind closed doors, that they were fearful that CB would recruit because they still had a boarding department and cited the case of Dave Jesmer, an outstanding player at CB a few years prior, who had come down from the Mother Lode County and boarded.

The press and some stubborn people, with right on their side, effected a sea of change in the way people in power operate. An egregious wrong had been righted. The issue was not completely over. The principals of the Sac City Unified School District, which comprised the metropolitan league to which Brothers was assigned, voted to make any Armstrong student who resided outside the district boundaries ineligible. Moreover, they said that under existing rules they would be ineligible to play at the school they transferred to, thereby taking completely away their right to compete.

Brother Haig Charshaf was taking over the principal duties for the next year and he and Sperbeck went to bat for the students to be eligible at the school they changed to, arguing that the section had no right to deny them participation entirely. The section finally agreed and a number of the athletes, including many football players, excelled at other schools in the next two years. It was Haig's strategy to comply with the rule to not allow participation of out of district athletes at Armstrong for one year, hoping the climate would change when the principals had a chance to get to know CB's staff. He volunteered to host the Christmas and other league meetings, which actually became banquets of sorts, during the next year at the Brothers' residence. The impression the principals had of the school was altered. After one year the

league changed the rule to allow everyone to be eligible, regardless of where they resided.

They were further influenced by the arguments of Sperbeck and Brother Haig that participation in athletics was a part of the educational process, and to deny students that was to give them less than a full education. "The Hassle" was over, although there was some diminishing of athletic talent at CB for a couple of years, due to those who did not enter the school, because of the ineligibility rule, those who left for other schools so they could play, and those who stayed and were ineligible.

Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Monsignor James Poole, had advised Sperbeck, early in the foregoing crisis that BA should move slower in attempting to force change. There was also considerable feeling that some religious sentiment was the prime mover in their position. Sperbeck was approached by a young writer at the Sacramento Union, Tom Horton, who had just been hired in their sports department. The two had been friends from their Marysville-Yuba City days. Horton asked if there were any story possibilities that he could write about. Sperbeck told him of the CIF inequity and Horton was amazed that this was the reason CB had been in the North section and currently played independently. He started the ball rolling with a column designed to arouse public interest in the situation. He kept the story alive with future articles as he further investigated. He was not allowed to enter a CIF meeting at Hiram Johnson High School and promptly wrote of that, citing the principals were violating the Brown Act, which forbade public meetings behind closed doors. After his column of the next day, the home of Hiram Johnson Principal, Bert Chappel, who was chairman of the board of managers, was festooned with toilet paper, providing more fuel to the story. Both the Bee and Union ran editorial page opinions that CB should be admitted, putting public pressure on the section.

The savior for the school and for all present and future private schools in the Sac Joaquin section, was Elwood "Bud" Keema the superintendent of the Grant School District. He met with Jim Erickson, the principal of Norte Del Rio and the district's rep to the section board, just prior to the vote on the subject. Keema was certain the section would vote down the elimination of the word "public" in the by-laws in the private vote by written ballot. He instructed Erickson to call for a voice vote when that happened. Keema proved to be prescience as the chairman counted the paper vote and announced the amendment had failed. Erickson asked to be recognized and asked for a voice vote. A pall came over the room as they realized what was happening. After much discussion the voice vote was asked for and the amendment to eliminate the word "public" passed unanimously. The sanctity of "the public school domain", a term used more than once by the principals was infiltrated by usurpers. Once again, a free rule, that time will take care of the problem. Fortunately the advice was ignored. The Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. said in his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" that the attitude that time inexorably brings change stems from the strangely irrational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will inevitably cure all ills. Time itself is neutral. Time doesn't bring change, people bring change over time. And it was thus affected.

The 1963 and 1964 football teams suffered the fallout of the preceding battle. The '63 squad

was in contention in all games excepting Yuba City 6-33, Highlands 0-24 and Rio Linda 6-32. They tied La Sierra at 6-6, McClatchy 14-14 and beat Encina 13-6. Other losses were to El Camino 6-0, Norte del Rio 13-7, and Sacramento High 12-0. There were no All City players that season but some players had strong performances throughout. The backs John Garcia, Mike Senna, Ron Noya and Mike Monroe played well. Bill Hood was an outstanding receiver while Rich Colombani was a journeyman tackle.

1964 was the first year of participation in the Metropolitan League and it was a baptism of fire. The Falcons were rebuilding and nurtured many juniors who would begin to restore gridiron dominance the next year. Seniors who played well in their final year were John Fanner, the only All League selection and Frank Cornachioli, a running back. Rich (go-go) Gomez and Dave Rasul were good linemen with the former going on to play at Sac State. Bob Luttrell and Lou Viani both had good seasons for the winless Falcons, who were competitive all year, but were still outmanned. (there were no scores listed in the 1965 yearbook and they are otherwise unavailable). This was the only winless year in CB history. But the phoenix would be rising.

Early in the '64 season an incident occurred which helped lighten the growing pains. Tackle Rich Gomez, had a slight speech impediment at the time. (His nickname came when he was asked his name on the first day of practice and he responded "Go, go, Go-mez" repeating the first syllable of his name.). One day Sperbeck was showing him the different block he was to

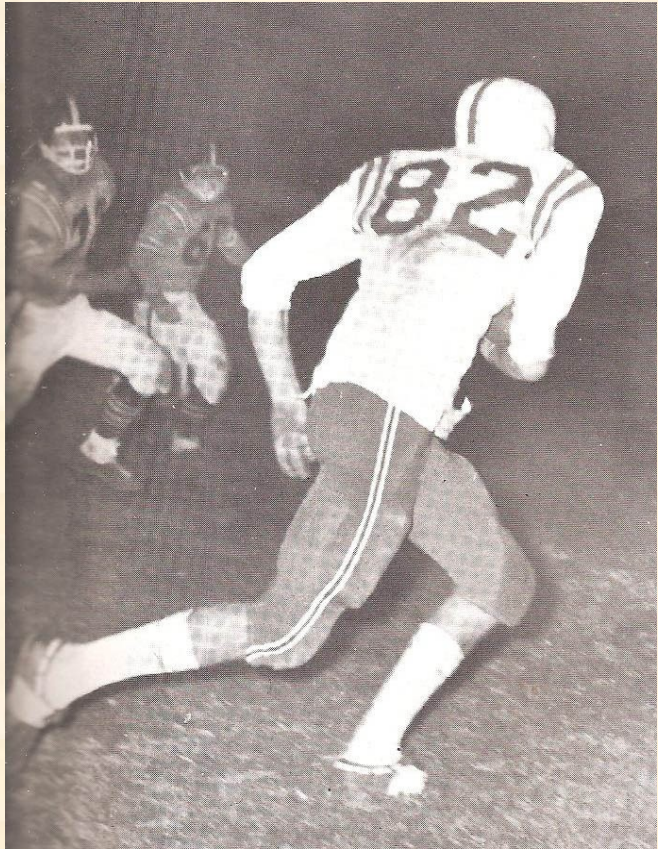


Members of the stellar 1965 Squad

execute on a certain play for that week. The coach then said to run it against dummies and Go-Go blocked the wrong man. He went over to him to point out he did it wrong. Before Sperbeck could get two words out Gomez said, "Ku, ku, coach, I b, b, blocked the wrong man on that. T,t,t, told you before you could t,t, tell me". Go-go, a smart student and able player, had the squad in stitches.

The 1965 season was the rebirth of football success for the Falcons. They were quite competitive again after a two year hiatus, opening what may have been the toughest schedule ever faced by a Brothers team up till then, with a 20-12 victory over San Juan. Then came four straight close losses to the best in the 10 member Metropolitan League. They fell to co-champion Norte, a very strong team 19-7, followed by a 13-7 defeat to Burbank, one of the best ever teams in the area, and to an able Johnson squad by the same score. Sac High prevailed 19-7 in a game that was closer than the score indicated. Then the turn around started with victories over McClatchy 7-6, Highlands 22-13, Rio Linda 21-13 and Foothill 14-0 and a 13-13 tie with Grant.

The undisputed star of the '65 team was Steve Scully, at least one of the top 5, if not the best ever, to play for the Brothers. A 6-3, 200 pounder who grew to 220 by college, he was an excellent blocker, sure handed receiver and fierce defender at safety who ran a 4.5 40. Heavily recruited, he decided on Santa Clara after turning down Cal.



Steve Scully on the move in 1965

Santa Clara Coach Pat Malley said he was told by NFL scouts that Scully would have been a first round choice in the NFL draft as a strong safety, had he not incurred a concussion that sidelined him for his senior year and ended his career. Scully, who became an attorney and teamed up with in law practice with another former CB standout, Leo "Butch" Schuering, was a man among boys, and then a man among men. He died much prematurely from a heart ailment in his late forties. He was of impeccable character and great intelligence. His wife remains Sacramento district attorney in her 4th term as of this writing in 2010.

Other players of note in '65 were running back Tom Donato, Bill Van Orman, Dave Habercker, tackle Gene Davis, tackle Roland Martin, a heady player who called all the line

blocking schemes at the line of scrimmage, and slot back Dennis Sequeira, from Holy Spirit Elementary School, as were an inordinate number of starters doing these two years. Perhaps the most starters from one Elementary School in the history of Christian Brothers. This was a tribute to the fine coaching of John Bothne and Harry Slaughter, two firemen who coached Holy Spirit for a number of years.

1966 was a disappointment for Coach Sperbeck as he felt the squad had a chance to do better than its 4th place finish in the Metro League. The program was beginning to take shape and there was a plethora of talent returning. Dave Domyancic was the fourth leading receiver in the area, and Mike Francesconi was an able running back with two runs over 40 yards vs. Sac and an 80 yard punt return at Placer. John Fletcher, Pat Clemons, later a starter at Sac State, Jim Campasano who scholarshipped to Weber State and played in the Canadian Football League and Steve Mulhern who along with Ed Bell were able linemen. Dave Downey who became a Stanford grad made the all league team at guard and was outstanding all year. Mike



Members of the 1967 team take the field

(Truck) De Angelis was a hard hitting fullback, who later played at Sac State. On defense, Louie Jelichich was a fine linebacker and John Tacosa an able db. The QB was Roger Valine, who became the CEO of the largest vision insurance plan in the country. Unfortunately Sac High, Johnson and Burbank all had some of their better teams that season, moving the Falcons to a 4 place finish. Sperbeck felt he should have done a better job of coaching that year, but there were much better days ahead.

There was to be one more mediocre season in 1967 before the ascendancy to dominance for the Falcons. The team went 3-6 but a number of outstanding juniors augured well for the future. Seniors who played well were Carl Hurtsig, Campasano mentioned above, John Fraga,

Craig Machado, and Manuel Moitosa, a three year varsity player. Bruce Olin was an outstanding fullback as well as one of the top golfers in the city. QB Tom Parilo was an outstanding passer. Bill Schaedler made all league as a defensive back, became a leader in the Alumni Association for many years and served on the school's board of regents. His son also later played for the Falcons. The team was competitive but the next year would be the turn around. An incident occurred in this era which Sperbeck again cited as a coaching point to learn from. The Falcons scored late in a game against Hiram Johnson and an onside kick was in order.

The kickoff team huddled on the sideline and Sperbeck said "onside kick", and they left for the field. Then he noticed kicker Tony Alvarado had not been in the huddle as he was down getting his kicking tee. He grabbed the last of the onside kick team and told him, "tell Tony its onside". The kid said "ok coach" and ran out. As the coaches turned to the field, hunched down, watching the middle of the field for the onside, Alvarado hit a long, booming, kickoff, and their mouths dropped open as one, wondering what happened. Sperbeck grabbed his messenger when he came off the field, and said, "I told you to tell Tony it was an onside kick". He said, "I did coach. I told Tony Jackson, ask him". Another lesson learned, make sure you get the right Tony!

SCHOOL RENAMED ---NEW FOOTBALL ERA

The school was renamed Christian Brothers prior to the 1968 season and like magic the football team, proud of its fine tradition, opened the season with a resounding victory over highly ranked El Camino 34-13. Halfback Everett McMillan rushed for 118 yards, scored two rushing touchdowns and another on a 19 yard pass play, and was named 'prep of the week'. The squad was highly ranked throughout the year and finished with a 7-2 record, to begin an 8 year reign at or near the top of local high school football.

They beat Placer 22-6, a strong Cordova team 6-0, McClatchy 20-6, Burbank 34-13. Sacramento 26-24 in an all time thriller in which they came from behind 4 times to win. Just before the half, in the Sac game both teams huddled with their coaches on the sidelines with less than a minute to go. Sperbeck told QB Rick Cabral to call a cross pattern on the right side, and look for Joe Gutierrez going to the post. Cabral started back out but Sac had already left their sideline huddle and placed Artimus "T" Parker, a 6-5 safety who would go on to an all American career at USC back on the goal line, 30 yards deep. Sperbeck called Cabral back and told him to fake to Gutierrez and hit tight end Bruce Maita on the corner route. He did, and Maita was wide open and scored his first of two TDs in the game on the same route. Sac High declared their defense too soon and it cost them. They beat Kennedy 28-0 in the finale. In the league they lost to Johnson 17-7 and Woodland 34-13. It was the first time in school history that the school beat both Sacramento and McClatchy in the same year. Sperbeck was named area coach of the year by Channel 10. He was assembling an outstanding staff on varsity, sophomore and frosh teams. More on that later.

Outstanding seniors in '68 included Ron Aurich, Frank Cima, Tim Clemons, Greg Dorr,

Larry Greenhagen who became a professional wrestler, George Lee who along with Clemons were an outstanding line backing duo with Clemons later starting at Sac State; tight end Bruce Maita with two TD receptions in the Sac game, Dave McGraw, McMillan of course, Paul Pane, Kelly O'Connor, versatile, tough Davey Page, who went on to a good career at Sac State, and J.C. Ragster, the first of three brothers who would star for The Falcons. A 9-1 sophomore team bode well for the Falcon's future.

1969 would be a banner year for CB as they tied a school record for wins in a season with 8. They opened with an 18-13 win at El Camino, the only loss the Eagles would sustain that year. They followed with a 35-21 win at Elk Grove and a 20-0 victory over Cordova, who would lose only once during the year.

In the league opener Hiram Johnson fell 23-14 and then McClatchy 31-14 for a perfect 5-0 start, making them the #2 ranked team in the area. The junior laden Falcons weren't quite ready for a strong Burbank team and went down 38-8 and then to Sac High 40 to 20. They finished strong with a 16-0 win at Woodland, a 29-8 win at Hughes Stadium over Kennedy, and then came the first ever Holy Bowl game against Jesuit. The Catholic community and the area at large were excited about the inaugural meeting and would remain so as the series ensued.

The Bee and The Union had unprecedented coverage in the preceding week and speculation ran rampant over who had the better team. Jesuit had won the Golden Empire League with a 7-1-1 record, but CB had played a tougher schedule and was ranked higher. In a good, hard fought game behind Dennis Bertacchi's two touchdowns, the Falcons won 20-13 before 6,000 fans and the series was launched.

They again finished in the Nor. Cal. Top 10 rankings. Seniors with outstanding years included Bertacchi, Lionel (Butch) Blanchard who went on to start at Stanford, QB Rick Cabral an outstanding performer who was recruited heavily and chose Santa Clara; defensive back John Cimino, tackle Mike Dennis, all city leading receiver Joe Gutierrez also a Santa Clara recruit; defensive end and guard John Hennessey, a prep of the week and All City selection; center Mike Lobue, whose career was cut short by an injury; receiver and defensive end Pat McAuliffe, also an All City pick who went to Santa Clara; linebacker Francisco Martin and fullback Jesse Silva. They would be missed, but the player pipeline was flowing as the



The 1969 Christian Brothers Falcons Squad went 8 and 2.

sophomore team went 9-0-1 and won the Metro for the second year in a row. Plus one of the best senior classes ever was returning from the '69 team.

It was during the 1969 season, that a tackle, who shall go nameless, looked at the schedule posted in the weight room and asked coach Hoskins, "where is this "bye" that we play in the third game. Hoskins answered "Nevada" which satisfied the tackle but everyone wondered if he was kidding the lad or if that was where the coach thought "bye" was.

The 1970 team is certainly a candidate for Brothers' best team ever. The 1971 yearbook gushed that this was possibly the most exciting football team ever assembled in the history of the school. Indeed, it was undefeated for 99.9% of the year losing only to Jesuit in the last minute of the season. They rolled over every opponent. In the season opener they again beat an El Camino

team 14-6, for The Eagles only loss of the season. Mira Loma, long an area powerhouse, went down 21-0 followed by victories over Encina 21-0, Elk Grove 27-6, Hiram



Johnson 28-6 and talented Sacramento High 48-8

The 1970 Offense (Front Line): Blanchard, Sarti, Havey, Blocker, Wolfe, Olsufka, Westlake. (Back Field): Russell, Galvez, Carmazzi, and Hernandez

in what was a showdown for the Metropolitan League title. The Dragons were never in the game as Brothers led 34-8 at the half after two quarters. Generations of CB fans were exultant by the one sided score, vindicating the long suffering fans for the annual dominance by "The High." At the half time break, asst. coach Mel Fontes asked Sperbeck what he should say to the boys before they went back out. Sperbeck answered: "I don't know, we've never been ahead this much before."

An unusually strong McClatchy tied the Falcons the following week 8-8, but they followed with wins over Burbank 20-14 and Kennedy 28 -8, to win the Metro League undefeated. There were no playoffs yet, but the Jesuit game in the season's finale had all the makings of a major bowl game. Both teams came in as league champions and with stars on both sides. As the fog rolled in ominously, Jesuit scored on a long drive which was aided by a pass interference call on a ball that had been touched before the contact, but the officials didn't see it. With seconds left the Marauders scored making it 7-6 and decided to go for two in an all or

nothing effort. They brought in a seldom used sophomore Dano McGinni, who ran an option play, keeping for the score and victory, ruining the Falcon's undefeated year. They finished ranked 2nd in the North State.

John Blanchard, co captain with Dan Carmazzi, was the MVP and made all the All Star teams. He went on to stardom at Stanford and is currently an assistant athletic director at The University of North Carolina. Jim Sarti was picked for the North South Shrine Game in Los Angeles, made every All Star team, was Channel 10 player of the year and won All American honors by Coach and Athlete Magazine. He would definitely be on any all time all star team of Christian Brothers players. He went on to stardom at Santa Clara along with fellow tackle Stan Olsufka, both of whom had solid pro tryouts, as did Blanchard with the 49er's. Carmazzi was an outstanding QB at UC Davis, once throwing 5 touchdowns in a game.

The most inspirational was Tom O'Neil, a center and defensive end, who had a good career at St. Mary's. A teammate of the above group in their freshman year was current Federal Judge, Morrison England, who transferred to McClatchy. He went on to a great college career at UOP and had a stint with the New England Patriots. Had he stayed, CB's line might have been the best ever. As it was, it was right up there. Another good tackle was Dan Dillion who played less than he liked due to the tough competition. But he told Sperbeck after the season, "Coach, I would rather be 2nd team here than first team anywhere else". A great example of Brothers' spirit.



The powerful 1970 Christian Brothers Falcons outscored their opponents 220 to 76.

All league players besides the preceding, were Pat Blocker, Steve Kitlas, John Montoya, David Hernandez Mark Russell and sophomore tackle John Cartwright. Other seniors contributing significantly were George Domich, Danny Galvez, Tom Franzoia, Mike Pach, Ken Lewis, Mario Trejo and Denis Zilaff.

1970 was also memorable for having introduced "Mexican Motion" to CB lore. Sperbeck had initiated a nuance, called flex, which meant that any back not involved in the play as a carrier or faker or blocker could go in motion, just as a nuisance factor for people scouting the Falcons. It worked well on occasion and in effect gave opponents scouting the team something to worry about, even though it meant nothing. Except the coach did not anticipate a QB sneak. Both Davey Hernandez and Danny Galvez "flexed" motion when a sneak was called, both within Sperbeck's parameters as they were not runners, blockers or fakers on the play. But only one man in motion is allowed and the Falcons were penalized on Carmazzi's sneak for two men in motion. Sperbeck always cited it as a "coaching point", i.e. of making sure to cover all possibilities before putting something in the playbook.

Coach Sperbeck, ably assisted by Mel Fontes and Dave Hoskins, was named area coach of the year. The Falcons in 1970 scored 220 points to their opponent's 76. Only two opponents scored twice against them. A great year for the Brothers.

The Falcons now had a target on their back with their program rapidly establishing itself as the best in the area. The weight and off-season program was now in its 4th year and was making the boys bigger, stronger and faster. It included weight lifting in the new weight room equipped with many individual machines which was featured in a Sacramento Bee article and hosted many visiting coaches who came by to witness its use and get ideas. Clinics were held for parochial athletic league feeder schools and many of them were using drills and terminology similar to Brothers. Spring practice had been legalized prior to the 1968 season and while it was non-contact it was an excellent teaching situation and contributed heavily to the Falcons' early season readiness. Many schools opted not to hold Spring Practice because there was no contact allowed, but Sperbeck thought it was an excellent opportunity to teach footwork and technique for the fundamentals of the game. He made a training film of the practice, in color, and used it to teach new players and coaches in the system.



Tackle John Cartwright, one of the finest linemen in CB history.

Thus, the 1971 season approached with optimism high for continued success. The season started slow with a tie in the opener

vs. powerful El Camino and a 7-0 loss to equally tough Mira Loma in the second game. The 0-1-1 beginning was of particular disappointment to the players and they asked coach Sperbeck if they could have a player's only meeting to discuss the season. They did some serious soul searching and after an hour of discussion, in which they talked of not letting down the school, the program and themselves, they vowed to win the rest of the games and reported back to Sperbeck with their decision.

They became a latter day version of the famous Stanford "vow boys" as they allowed only 5 touchdowns in the remaining 7 games, winning the Metropolitan League for the second year in a row, and finishing 7-1-1. Along the way they beat Encina 40-0, Elk Grove 28-0, Sac High 6-0, and McClatchy 20-8 in one of the most exciting finishes ever. The Lions were on the Falcons 5 yard line, trailing 13-8, with time running out and first and goal. A score would virtually insure the game for the Lions. They were held for three downs and were penalized giving McClatchy another first down at the 2 yard line with a minute to go. Sperbeck tells of hoping they would score right away so CB would have time to come back. But the "vow boys" were not to be denied. They held three downs and on 4th down, Tom Santiago intercepted in the end zone and ran it 103 yards for a touchdown, allowing Brothers to win 20-8. Ho-hum, easy game.

Sperbeck met with the defensive unit after the game and asked what they were thinking with their knuckles on the goal line down after down. To a man they responded: "Coach, each huddle we reminded ourselves of all the work we did since last August, how hard we ran and sweated, because we wanted to own the 4 quarter in every game and we vowed not to let them score." An example of how physical work can strengthen personal character.

The next three weeks were 28-0 over Johnson, 7-6 over Burbank and a 7-7 tie with Kennedy giving them the title. They slaughtered a strong Jesuit team in the Holy Bowl 40-7 behind Mark Gabrielle's 4 td's. Running back and linebacker Mark Russell was the man of the season for CB and was named league MVP and all of the All City teams and all Northern California honors. He would go to Cal Poly on scholarship. All City honors also went to linebacker Frank Aiello and tackle John Cartwright, now a junior, who would finish his career as the most decorated of all Brothers players. Making all league were the above plus Kelly O'Neil, Brica Ragster, Steve Westlake, and Steve Kitlas for the second year in a row, as a defensive back, but outstanding all season at QB well.



Kelly O'Neil, All City in 1970

Playing their Brad Bento, Jim Havey, Cesar Maurtua,

Steve Olin, Bill Rosse, Santiago, Suarez and Tom Wolfe, the toughest 140 pound defensive end to ever don the red and blue. Joe Medina concluded a fine kicking career, hitting 52 out of 54 extra points during his tenure. The 1971 team scored 190 points against only 51 allowed, with 4 shutouts. Again, a top 5 ranked team and metro champs.

1972 was a "down" year for CB as they went 6-3 with a 16-13 loss to Sac High, preventing them from winning 4 metro titles in a row. They won the rest of the league games over McClatchy 27 to 0, Kennedy 8-6, Johnson 20-8, Elk Grove 19-0 and Burbank 6-2, giving up an intentional safety late in the game in order to punt from the 20 and hold on for the win. In the non league opener they again beat a good El Camino team 14-7, and fell to powerhouse Mira Loma the second week 28-7. The Sac High loss was in a rain storm as was the season finale loss to Jesuit 20-0.

Two of the outstanding players in Brothers history were among the seniors who played their last game in '72. Kelly O'Neil was a superb athlete who shined at defensive end, running back and tight end and in fact could have played any position on the field. He was very highly recruited and literally could have gone to any school in the country that he chose. He signed with Cal but then decided to go to Sac State where he played one year and then dropped football for personal reasons. The other, John Cartwright, a two way tackle, was the most decorated football player in the school's history, being picked on numerous All American squads, besides all the local all star teams since his sophomore year. He was the first Northern Cal player ever featured on the cover of cal prep magazine. He was nationally recruited and chose the University of Colorado where he captained the freshmen. He wasn't happy at the school and concluded his career as a 6 -3, 220 pound linebacker at Santa Clara. Other seniors graduating were Leon Manich, Rich Rodriguez, Mike Zenovieff, Bob Jelichich, Mike Scully, Lon Buford, Bill Whithall and all metro league center, Bill (Zodiac) Pierson. They were still a top ten team.

The 1973 team would win more games than any Brothers team up to that time as they went 9-2-1 for the season, showcasing a number of outstanding players. As usual, they beat El Camino in the opener 33-6 and then a powerful Mira Loma team 19-13. On Monday, of the week they were to meet powerful Vacaville, one of the senior players



The 1973 Metro League Champion Christian Brothers Football Team

(Brica Ragster) came to Sperbeck and said he was worried about the team's attitude.

He said some of the guys were talking about their individual statistics and the publicity they were getting, and he felt it was injurious to the team. Sperbeck told him thanks and started thinking about a way to handle this. He said nothing to the team about it, but when it was time to board the bus for Vacaville, he told Mel Fontes and Dave Hoskins that he had a plan and told Mel to go the back of the bus when they boarded and then play along with what he was going to do.

Just before departure, Sperbeck, stood in front of the bus, and said, "Coach Fontes, I want you to go up to the press box during the game tonight", Mel, said, "Why me, Hoskins can do it." Sperbeck responded, "Don't argue, he has to handle special teams on the field." By this time the entire bus was silent, and awe struck, as they heard discord among their coaches for the first time ever. Coach Fontes got off the bus, which wasn't in Sperbeck's script.

Finally, one of the players Randy Wilson, said, "Coach will you tell Brica (who was crying) that you were just fooling?" The coach then proceeded to tell them that he staged the event so they can see what happens when people start thinking about themselves and not the team. They were disheartened to see their coaches arguing, but it brought them together and made the point. It was a much more unified Falcon team that got off the bus that night and clobbered eventual city champ Vacaville, 34~20 on their home field. (as a sidelight,. Sperbeck had to get off the bus to find Coach Fontes, who was a few feet a way from the back of the bus, upset about the incident. He said, "Great job, Mel, let's go." Fontes who was crying was a bit standoffish. They joke to this day about whether or not Mel was acting.) McClatchy fell 35~18, Kennedy 21-0, and Johnson 12-9. They were upset at Elk Grove 9-6, and came back to beat Burbank 21-6, setting up a battle with powerful Sac High for the metropolitan crown before 10,000 fans at Hughes Stadium for the second year in a row.



The indomitable Brica Ragster

The Falcons, behind QB Jeff Tisdal prevailed 20-12 in a thriller and took the title. Sac had an outstanding performer in Lee Overton who went on to a great career at Oregon and played in the NFL. They used him in different positions from play to play in order to maximize his effectiveness. Sperbeck and staff had predicated their defense to stop him by shifting a certain way according to where he lined up.

In the middle of the third quarter nose guard Brica Ragster came excitedly to coach Hoskins and was mumbling something that sounded like "snot lee, snot lee". Hoskins sensing his frustration, but not understanding him, brought him to Sperbeck, who listened

once and told him to take out his mouth-piece. He did and was instantly lucid. He was saying, "That's not Lee", meaning Overton whom he knew from his neighborhood. Coach Dave Hotell had switched Overton's jersey with Andrade, another running back, to foul up the Falcon's defense. It would have worked if Ragster had not been alert.

The Falcons adjusted and went on to win the game. In another mud bowl contest, they were tied by Jesuit in the Holy Bowl 0-0. This was the first year of an expanded playoff format and the Falcons headed to the post season to meet the Capitol Valley Conference champ, El Camino. The second meeting was much like the season opener as CB won 32-13, behind Bob Bingham's 195 rushing yards on 7 carries from his slotback position, a playoff record that stood for a number of years. They met Vacaville again in the "city championship" game and fell 12-0 as their passing game was completely negated by the rainstorm it was played in.



Star Quarterback Jeff Tisdale

Again, there were numerous outstanding players. QB Jeff Tisdale, who matriculated to Nevada and was picked for the Shrine East West Game after his senior year there, was picked on the New World Prep All American first team as well as the local all star teams. He later would return to Brothers as head coach before moving to City College and then Nevada as head coach. Brica Ragster was the Sacramento area lineman of the year by the Sacramento Bee and the player of the year, the only lineman ever so honored, by the Sacramento Union and was also a new world first team All America, as well as a similar honor from Scholastic Coach Magazine. He still is regarded as one of the finest all round linemen to don the red and blue.

Dan Farrell, only a junior, was also first team All America after catching 65 passes in his first two varsity campaigns and was also All City. Linebacker Bill Boughton led the area in tackles in his third varsity season and was another all city pick as was Bob Bingham, an outstanding defense back and receiver who scholarshipped to USC and won a national championship ring his freshmen season. Tight end Eason Ransom, who later starred at Washington State and then in the NFL for five years, earning two Super Bowl rings, was picked All City also. The receiving corps was quite likely the best ever assembled on a Sacramento area gridiron.

Linebacker Chris Gandy, also a fine running back, who was picked as an all section player, was offered a scholarship to Washington State but signed a baseball contract with the Dodgers instead. Other seniors contributing heavily were Dennis Gautier, Eric Scidmer, and John Hurtsig. The line backing Corps of Ransom, Gandy and Boughton could also vie for the best ever group at that position.

The final game loss was a huge disappointment, especially after having beaten Vacaville handily in an earlier game, but all in all it was a memorable season. League Champions and ranked # 2. During the 4 preceding years, Brothers lost 2 league games and only 6 in the last 6 years and the Metropolitan league at the time was arguably the best in the area.



The Line Backing Corps of Eason Ransom, Bill Boughton, and Chris Gandy

The 1974 season began with Cal Prep's Preseason Magazine featuring CB receiver Dan Farrell on its cover and his senior year would justify his selection. The previous six seasons under coaches Sperbeck, Fontes and Hoskins. Christian Brothers had dominated the area with a 46-10-3 record, three championships and 3 second place finishes. Fontes would leave for Elk Grove High and be replaced by long time parochial league coach, Frank Mooney, an Alumnus from the Ray Clemons ' days. But 1974 was going to be a down year before coming back to another championship.

It was one of the smallest teams to take the field for the Brothers but line coach Dave Hoskins molded another good unit, especially at pass blocking, as the squad would rely heavily on the air game, with the run being supplied by third year varsity running back Joe Greco, the school's student body president. The quarterback would be a transfer from West Sacramento, John Ramirez, who would throw for over 2,000 yards for an area record at the time, and make All City. The lack of line size made the running game difficult although Greco rushed for over 800 yards primarily on draw plays. He finished his varsity career with over 1500 yards. Also absent was the lock down defense that had been the school's trademark.

El Camino bested the Falcons in the opener for the first time in many years 12-6 but CB bounced back with a big 28-21 win over powerful Mira Loma in a game dominated by Ramirez passing and Farrell receiving and the Brothers passing on their first 15 plays, prompting Mira Loma defensive coach, Gerry Kundert, to state after the game, "i didn't think you were ever going to run one." they lost at Vacaville 21-7, then traveled to Elk Grove for a 20-20 tie. Sac High won 23-6, but they bounced back for a 28-6 win over Johnson. Burbank won 26-13 but McClatchy fell 19-7. Kennedy prevailed 14-8 but the squad salvaged the season with a 53-25 drubbing of Jesuit in the Holy Bowl as running Steve Sules had a great game and Dan Farrell caught 10 passes while being guarded by Jesuit standout, Matt Bouza, who went on to a fine career at Cal and 7 years in the NFL the final record was 4-5-1.

Besides Ramirez, Greco and Farrell, other contributing seniors included third year starter Randy Wilson, a defensive back and receiver who would go on and play in College, Tom Neri and John Slaughter.

Dan Farrell was chosen as a parade All American, one of the highest accolades given. He was also twice chosen to the Helms Foundation All Northern California team in both his Junior and Senior years and was chosen as the cover boy for Cal Prep Magazine prior to his senior year as well as garnering all the local honors. He set area records for a single season with 69 catches his senior year and 134 for his brilliant CB Varsity career. His football sense, precise route execution and great hands earned him high praise from everyone who had seen him play. He chose Santa Clara for College and strangely was switched to linebacker, where he excelled for 4 years. He had great intuitive football sense. Sperbeck would consult him on the sidelines as to what passes he would be open on and he was always right. Once, he said, "fake to me going across and throw to Bingham underneath, behind me and he'll be open." he was right as usual as Bingham picked up 25 on the play.



Dan Farrell had 134 receptions in his storied Christian Brothers' career

Farrell was also involved in a near tragic incident at Vacaville that year. He incurred a hard hit after catching a pass and did not get up. The game physician was on the Vacaville sideline and got to Farrell, along with Coach Tom Zunino, and immediately knew that he had swal-

lowed his tongue, stopping the breathing process. He went into euphoria with his arms showing a floating motion as he lost air. Fortunately, the Vacaville student trainer had an "oral screw" in his medical kit. (there was also one in the CB kit, which was on the way out) the doctor asked coach Zunino to pry his jaw open so he could insert the device enough to begin turning it against Farrell's clenched teeth. Zunino did so even though he was bitten badly, the doc inserted the oral screw and turned, which forced the mouth open and he then put his hand in, grabbed the tongue and pulled it out of the windpipe with a loud pop, giving Farrell air, and almost immediately he was himself again. Sperbeck thought he would hold him out but Farrell's father asked him to put him back in so he wouldn't think there was a problem, and make it easy for him to play again. The coach did so, and he never had any after effects from it. If not for the oral screw the physician would have had to perform a tracheotomy. A scary moment in CB football history. Also a near 4.0 student, he studied accounting and pursued that profession.

After the 1st non winning season in many years the local football "experts" did not expect much from CB as the 1975 season approached. But they were in for a surprise. The Falcons upended always tough El Camino in the opener 21-6, but fell to Mira Loma 14-0. Then they upset Max Miller's Rio Americano raiders with two returns for TD's to prevail 14-7 before going into the league. Their defense was perhaps the best in their history, allowing only 65 for the season. They went from a 5-3 to a 4-4 from play to play, depending on down and distance, without substituting. It sufficiently confused offensive blocking to allow for allowing only 65 points on the year. On the 5-3, outside backer Pat Saberina versatile player, would become a strong safety in the secondary on passing downs.

A humorous incident happened in the Rio game. When the staff was watching the films of the 14-7 win, and the camera focusing on about the fifty yard where Keith Fontes was returning a kickoff for the Falcons, Rio coach Max Miller, a local coaching legend, was shown on the sidelines with his clipboard in his hand and he went off camera as team photographer Ron Limeberger followed Fontes on his way to a touchdown return, moving his lens to the 40 yard line or so. But then as Fontes continued on his way for the Falcon's second kickoff return for a TD in the game, Coach Miller's clipboard is seen high in the air over Fontes' head and also on the way to the end zone, but falling short, dropping harmlessly to the turf at around the 25 yard line. A classic moment!

They went through the league in '75 winning at Elk Grove 7-6, Sacramento 19-6, Johnson 9-0, a loss to Burbank 12-0 followed by wins over McClatchy 6-0 and Kennedy 18-0, winning the league and going back to the playoffs. First was the Holy Bowl, and Jesuit prevailed 7-6. They met Highlands in the playoffs and the teams played to a virtual standoff the whole night, with the Scots scoring on a screen pass during the only total blitz the Falcons called all night; a perfect call by Highlands at the wrong time for CB and the final was 7-0. The Falcons threatened a number of times but could not score and the season was over with a final 7 and 4 record, but they were again Metropolitan League Champs for the 4th time in 5 years. Their 8 year record since 1968 was 56-20-5.

Some of the main contributing seniors in '75 were Jim Boyle, Keith Fontes, all city tackle Kevin Gallery, Dennis Kennedy, Jim Pierson, Lindy Smith, and Steve Sules who played two solid years at running back.

There were ominous clouds on the horizon for CB football in the summer of 1976. During the next year, Coach Sperbeck and his entire staff would be gone, and the holy bowl would be cancelled for 1977 and 1978. Factions would develop over how much "emphasis" would be placed on football at CB. Local newspapers would devote considerable space asking "what's wrong at CB?" and numerous players would transfer to other schools, particularly the new Valley High School where Mel Fontes, Dave Hoskins and Sperbeck would coach in 1977. To put it succinctly and charitably, a polarization developed over teaching philosophy, both on the gridiron and in the classroom, as the "humanities" program, was experimented with by the current administration.

The '76 season, Sperbeck's finale after a successful run, was disappointing. He had an outstanding varsity staff, with the veteran Hoskins, who would go on and become a local coaching icon at Valley and Elk Grove, John Fletcher up from the sophs where he had done an outstanding job and who later win 4 section championships at Del Oro, his former QB, Dan Carmazzi,

who would go on to fame as Jesuit's head coach, and all time CB great, Jim Sarti from the '69 and '70 teams, helping Hoskins with the offensive and defensive lines where he had great success.



Dick Sperbeck, center, flanked by his 1976 staff: Dave Hoskins, John Fletcher, Jim Sarti, and Dan Carmazzi

They beat El Camino, as usual, in the opener 21-7 but fell to Mira Loma

28-7 and Rio Americano 28-0 the next two weeks. They went 2-3 in league, beating Kennedy 17-14 and McClatchy 14-7 but could not beat the league powers. Cordova, now in the league, beat them for the first time ever and they lost to Jesuit in the Holy Bowl 13-7 finishing 3-7. The final record was an anomaly, as they had expected to continue their winning ways.

Playing well on the season were seniors Mark Bonner, Who would start at Oregon State as a defense lineman, Rick Jasso, Mike Jablonsky and his cousin Dale who would scholarship to Nevada and finish at Sac State as an offensive lineman, RB Jeff Muljat, receiver Kirk Murphy, linebacker Pat Saberi, and running back Richie Sims, an excellent runner who would come back and teach at the School.

The juniors on the squad who all would leave at the end of the school year were quarterback Marshall Sperbeck who set state passing records at Valley as a senior and would start at Nevada; his four year receiver Kevin Fontes who came within one pass of breaking Dan Farrell's single season pass reception record the next year at Valley and became a division in All American at Sac State; Mike Barbee who would make all city the next year at Rio Americano and become a three year starter for UCLA; center Jerry Pelfanio, a steady performer who started at Valley the next year and linebacker Ted Kangianas who made All City at Del Campo as a senior. Receiver Lawrence Taylor stayed at CB and became a starter at Washington State later on. Other underclassmen in the program were sophomores Kenny Rose who had a ten year NFL career and tackle Gary Hoffman who started at Green Bay after playing at Santa Clara. Brent Littlejohn was an outstanding sophomore lineman who transferred to Valley. As did linebacker Jim Slabaugh. Also going to Jesuit for ids last year was Rick Vasile who started at db as a senior and wide receneras a junior for Sac State. Lino Cedros, from the freshman team became an outstanding player at Kennedy.

Also leaving from the frosh team was Chris Fontes who finished at Valley as an outstanding back and the third Ragster brother, Schiroshel, who went to Sac High and starred at running back. What may have become the best CB team of all time in 1977 was scattered to the winds. A lot of resentment was created toward those who contributed to the temporary demise of the program. It was definitely a huge distraction to say the least and should never have happened.

All told, from the previous two brothers' football seasons, Mark Bonner, Mike Barbee, Kevin Fontes, Marshall Sperbeck, and Dale Jablonsky along with Kenny Rose and Gary Hoffman from the sophomore team were all in NFL training camps after their senior year in college. Coach Sperbeck, despite always seeking out the toughest non league opponents available, and playing in what was the toughest conference in the area at the time, ended his Brothers career with an 81-67-5 record, the winningest coach in Brothers' history. His teams earned 4 league championships, also a record.