



LEGENDS of the hilltop!

Football has been part of the athletic picture at West Liberty since the late 1800s but the Hilltoppers didn't play their first game until the Saturday after Thanksgiving in 1899. West Liberty defeated Martins Ferry (Ohio) High School, 11-0, in that contest but it would be many years until the sport was firmly established at the Route 88 institution.

College football was a far less structured activity at the end of the 19th Century. During those early years, players did not even have to be enrolled at West Liberty to play for its athletic teams. The rule requiring players to be enrolled as students at West Liberty before they could represent the Hilltoppers on the athletic field wasn't passed and enforced until 1905.

Schedules were limited and sporadic in those early years and record-keeping was virtually non-existent. That didn't change when A.D. Kenamond was appointed as athletic manager (athletic director) and football coach in 1906. After struggling through a few disappointing seasons, West Liberty discontinued its football program in 1913.

Football returned to the Hilltopper campus following World War I but tragedy prevented it from gaining a solid foothold. West Liberty played a game against Warwood (W.Va.) High School on Armistice Day in 1919. During the game, Hilltopper fullback Raymond Montgomery suffered an injury that resulted in his death. The fatality caused the school to once again discontinue its football program.

The sport finally returned to the West Liberty campus to stay in 1923 when the institution made a commitment to fund and support a true intercollegiate athletic program.



Harry Sweeney

Harry Shoup was named football coach in 1923 and led the Hilltoppers to a 1-5-2 record. West Liberty defeated Kent State, 8-6, for its first "official" intercollegiate victory but those were the only points it scored against a schedule that included two games against Bethany (W.Va.) and three games with New Cumberland (W.Va.).

Larry Stoops replaced Shoup at the Hilltopper helm in 1924 and led West Liberty to a 6-3-1 season that included a repeat win against Kent State. Stoops stayed

on to coach the 1925 season but moved on after the Hilltoppers stumbled to a 1-8 record. West Liberty's football fortunes took a turn for the better when Harry Sweeney grasped the reins in 1926. During his seven-year run, Sweeney led the Hilltopper football program to national prominence. His high-scoring teams won three West Virginia Conference championships (1927, 1929 and 1930) and posted a sparkling 19-1-1 record in WVIAC games. Sweeney's 44-15-3 (.734) overall record still stands as the best among all Hilltopper football coaches.

Not only did Sweeney's teams win, they often won impressively. Some of the numbers from the blowout victories are hard to fathom for modern-day fans.

There was a 71-0 rout of West Virginia Tech in 1927 and a 78-0 thrashing of Alderson and a 98-0 whitewash of Shenandoah in 1928.

The Hilltoppers had a five-game run in 1929 when they outscored their foes by a combined 221-0 and the 1931 team posted a 77-0 victory against Sue Bennett and an 87-0 rout of Bethel.

But Sweeney saved the best for last. On Nov. 19, 1932, West Liberty closed out the season at home with a record-setting 137-0 victory against Cedarville (Ohio). It was the last game Sweeney coached for the Hilltoppers as he decided to move on following the season.

The best-known player of the Sweeney era was Bob Campiglio, a fullback from Milton, Pa. Campiglio put West Liberty football on the national map in 1930 when he scored 102 points to rank among the top 10 scorers in the nation.

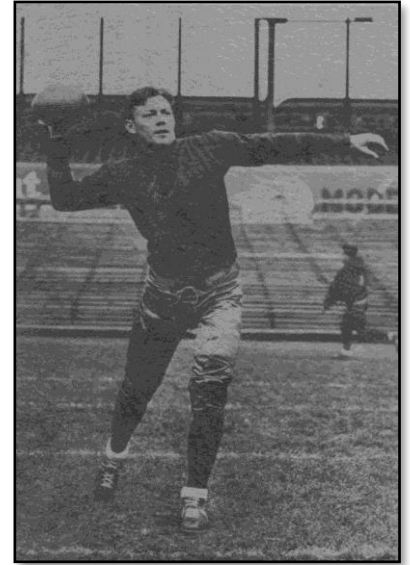
Campiglio led the nation in scoring in 1931, finding the end zone 22 times and adding 13 PATs for a then-school record 145 points. Nearly half of those points came in that 87-0 rout against Bethel when he scored 67 points on 10 touchdowns and seven conversions.

Campiglio's single-game scoring record didn't last long as Joey Korshalla set a national scoring record that stands to this day with 71 points on 11 touchdowns and five PATs in that 137-0 win against Cedarville in 1932. Korshalla also rushed for a record 504 yards on just 20 carries.

Campiglio became the first Hilltopper to make his mark in the National Football League. As a rookie with the Staten Island (N.Y.) Stapletons in 1932, he ranked third in the NFL with 504 rushing yards on 104 carries while leading the league with a 4.8 yards per carry average.

Meanwhile, back on the hilltop, the search was on for the next head coach. Everybody expected West Liberty to have a hard time finding someone capable of filling the sizable shoes Sweeney had left behind. Fortunately for the Hilltoppers, another legend was waiting in the wings. His name was Joe Bartell.

Bartell served as head football coach at West Liberty for the next 24 years (1933-56). He compiled a sparkling 118-55-11 (.671) overall record while putting together a 79-31-7 (.705) mark in WVIAC play.



Bob Campiglio



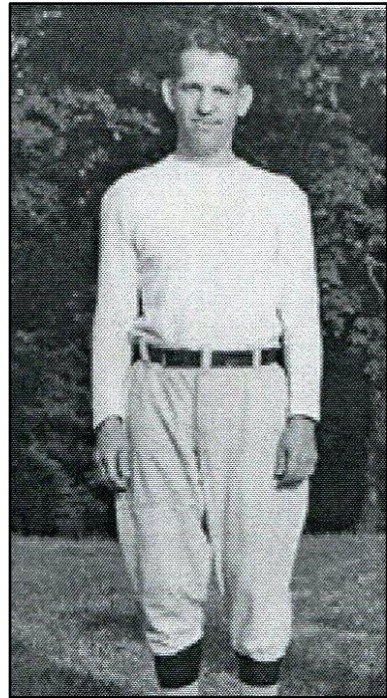
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The list of Bartell's accomplishments seems endless. He led the Hilltoppers to seven conference championships and coached three undefeated teams. He guided West Liberty to back-to-back bowl victories (1949-50) and set a conference record with a 25-game unbeaten streak that stretched over three seasons. Perhaps even more remarkable is the fact that Bartell achieved these feats on the gridiron while also serving as athletic director, head basketball coach and head

baseball coach. He was truly a man for all seasons.

Although West Liberty football was coming off a run of unprecedented success when Bartell took the reins in 1933, the nation's sagging economy was taking its toll on every facet of American life and intercollegiate athletics were no exception.

West Liberty stopped offering athletic scholarships at the same time Bartell took over the football program. Not surprisingly, his first two teams struggled to sub-.500 records – going 2-4-2 in 1933 and 3-4-2 in 1934 – but it soon became apparent that



Joe Bartell

the Hilltoppers' new coach had been laying a solid foundation for future success.

West Liberty went 7-2 in 1935 and followed that up with a 6-1-1 season in 1936 that also produced Bartell's first WVIAC title. Slow starts to the 1937 and 1938 seasons kept the Hilltoppers around the .500 mark but a four-game winning streak at the end of the 1938 campaign heralded brighter days ahead.

Bartell's teams won three straight WVIAC titles from 1939-41 and just missed a fourth in 1942 before World War II brought the program to a halt.

The Hilltoppers picked up where they had left off when football resumed in 1946, winning yet another conference crown and kicking off yet another run of gridiron supremacy.

Bartell's West Liberty program vaulted to the next level in 1947 as the Hilltoppers took off on an incredible 34-1-3 run over the next four seasons.

That surge was capped by back-to-back undefeated teams in 1949 and 1950. Those two years also saw West Liberty make its postseason debut as the 1949 team beat Western Carolina, 20-0, in the Smoky Mountain Bowl at Bristol, Tenn.

and the 1950 squad knocked off Appalachian State, 28-26, in the Pythian Bowl at Salisbury, N.C.

The popular Bartell decided to step down after the 1956 season and his players presented him with a nice going-away present – a 7-2 season and West Liberty's first WVIAC title since the undefeated 1950 team.

After coaching the West Liberty basketball team to a 23-6 season that winter, Ollie Olson took the football reins from Bartell. Olson's football teams won only four games over the next two seasons and he returned to the hardwood sport, where he enjoyed several more successful seasons.

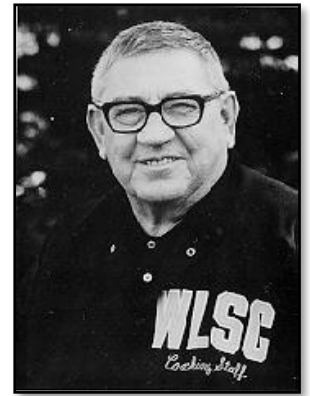
Former Hilltopper grid star Al Blatnik replaced Olson at the football helm and got things headed back in the right direction. Blatnik went 12-12-1 over the next three years, finishing up with a 6-2 record in 1961.

George Kovalick picked up the pace with three straight winning seasons from 1962-64. Kovalick's 1963 team went 7-1-1 to win another WVIAC title.

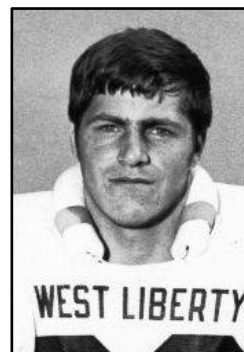
Bob Roe followed with a highly-successful stint at the Hilltopper helm. Roe went 50-25-6 (.654) over the next nine seasons, won a pair of WVIAC crowns and led West Liberty to back-to-back NAIA playoff berths in 1970 and 1971.

The Hilltoppers dropped a 12-6 decision to Wofford (S.C.) in the 1970 NAIA national semifinal, which was played in Greensboro, N.C. After winning a second straight WVIAC championship, West Liberty was chosen to "host" a 1971 NAIA semifinal against Livingston (Ala.) at Harding Stadium in Steubenville, Ohio. The Hilltoppers came out on the short end of a 25-2 score in that contest.

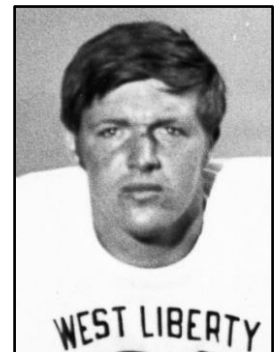
That 1970 team featured West Liberty's first two NAIA first-team All-Americans in middle guard Tom Priest and linebacker Dennis Knight. Priest became the school's first two-time All-American in 1971 when he was honored as a first-team linebacker.



Bob Roe



Tom Priest



Dennis Knight



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With his left arm in a sling, Jeff Eppley boots the game-winning field goal against W.Va. State in college football's first overtime game on Oct. 7, 1972.

The bespectacled Roe was on the sidelines on Oct. 7, 1972 when college football history was made at West Liberty.

In a mid-season meeting of the unbeaten, the Hilltoppers and West Virginia State had battled to a 14-14 tie after four quarters on Homecoming at West Liberty. In previous years, that's how the game would have ended but the NAIA had adopted college football's first tiebreaker rule in 1972 – two years before the NFL went to overtime and more than two decades before major college football embraced the idea.

West Virginia State got the ball first in overtime and the West Liberty defense held. A field goal was all the hosts needed to win but there was a problem. Hilltopper kicker Jeff Eppley had suffered a badly separated shoulder on the opening kickoff and been rushed by ambulance to the hospital in nearby Wheeling. Doctors placed Eppley's arm in a sling and he caught a ride back out to campus to watch the end of the game from the sidelines.

Starting at the State 30, West Liberty picked up one first down and drove inside the 15 before the drive stalled. On 4th-and-goal from the 12, there was a stir on the Hilltopper sidelines. A couple of teammates helped Eppley pull his jersey and helmet over his head and the injured kicker – sling and all – jogged painfully out onto the field.

The snap came back, Eppley's right foot swung through and the football barely cleared the onrushing State linemen.

For an agonizing second or two, it looked like the kick might fall short but the ball hit the crossbar and bounced across to give West Liberty a 17-14 victory in college football's first overtime game.

Not only did that 29-yard field goal earn the Hilltoppers a place in college football history, Eppley's story gained national attention later that month when he was featured as one of *Sports Illustrated's* "Faces in the Crowd."

Roe also coached West Liberty's next NFL performer. Lou Piccone, the leading rusher on Roe's 1970 NAIA playoff team, went on to carve out a nine-year pro career with the New York Jets and Buffalo Bills. Piccone led the league in kickoff returns during the 1974 season.

Roe produced another 2-time All-American in rugged DT Mickey Sworden (1971-72) before stepping down in 1973. Leo Miller, another former Hilltopper grinder, replaced Roe in 1974 and went 15-20-3 over the next four years.

Miller was at the helm in 1975 when West Liberty and West Virginia State added another page to the record books with one of the wildest games in college football history.

It was Homecoming in Institute, W.Va. and with the host Yellow Jackets racing out to a 42-13 lead in the fourth quarter, most of the home fans had gotten an early start on their victory celebrations in the stands.

With nothing to lose, Miller sent strong-armed backup quarterback Mike Flannery back into the game with instructions to fill the air with footballs. What followed was one of those magical moments that make college football the spectacle Americans love to embrace every autumn.

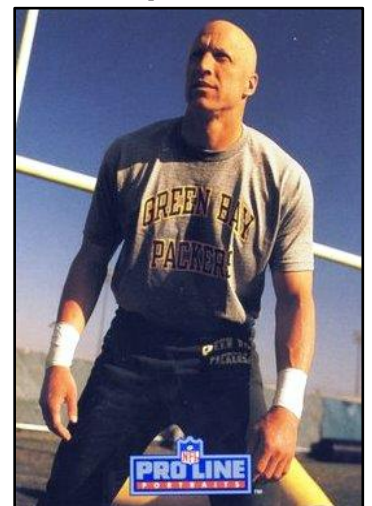
Flannery, who had thrown one touchdown pass earlier in the game, fired four more scoring strikes in the waning minutes of the fourth quarter to send the game into overtime and then threw for two more scores during the three overtime periods before the game ended in a 54-54 tie.

That set a college football record which still stands today for the most points ever scored by both teams in a game that ended in a tie. Playing in little more than a quarter and three overtime periods, Flannery had shattered both the school and WVIAC single-game records with seven touchdown passes.

John Westenhaver took over from Miller in 1978 and served as head coach for the Hilltoppers from 1978-81.

Westenhaver's best team was the 1979 squad which went 7-2-1 and won a WVIAC championship.

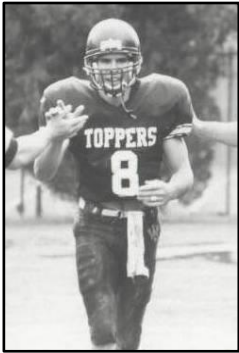
One of the star performers on that title team was a hard-hitting defensive back from Canton, Ohio named Mark Murphy.



Mark Murphy



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Greg Dailer

Although Murphy didn't hear his name called during the 1980 NFL Draft, he was signed to a free-agent contract by Green Bay and immediately earned a spot in the Packers secondary.

Murphy was a 12-year regular at Green Bay, splitting time between free safety and strong safety. He was inducted into the Green Bay Packers Hall of Fame in 1998.

Fate wasn't as kind to Westenhaver. Injuries decimated his 1980 squad, which went 0-10-0 for the only

winless season in school history. Westenhaver resigned after the 1981 season and Larry Shank took the reins.

Shank was in charge from 1982-89, compiling a 28-49-3 record. He had a winning season with a 6-4 team in 1987 but stepped down in 1989 after back-to-back 4-6 campaigns.

Bob Eaton, a Glenville State graduate who had been Shank's defensive coordinator, then embarked on what turned out to be the third-longest head coaching stint of any West Liberty football coach.

The son of a former Hilltopper football standout, Eaton served for 15 seasons as West Liberty's head coach. He is No. 3 all-time at West Liberty with 70 coaching wins overall (70-80-1) and 48 conference victories (48-53-1).

His 2000 team went 8-2, earning the Hilltoppers their first taste of a WVIAC championship since 1979. Eaton was voted the 2000 WVIAC Football Coach of the Year.

West Liberty had been a driving force behind the WVIAC's move from NAIA to NCAA Division II status during the 1990s. One of many standouts recruited and coached by Eaton, WR Greg Dailer became the Hilltoppers' first NCAA Division II first-team All-American in 1997.

Roger Waialae, who had been the team's offensive coordinator for several years, replaced Eaton in 2005 and remains at the helm. A former small-college All-America quarterback at the University of Dubuque (Iowa), Waialae led West Liberty to six straight winning seasons for the first time since Sweeney strung together seven consecutive winning years from 1926-32.

Waialae's first team in 2005 was led by Derrick Stickle, who won his second WVIAC rushing title to highlight a 6-5 campaign. The 2006 Hilltoppers stunned NCAA Division I-AA Duquesne, 21-19, in Pittsburgh and reeled off six straight wins to earn a runner-up finish in the WVIAC standings. Sophomore cornerback Darren Banks was a first-team All-WVIAC, All-Region and NCAA Division II All-America pick.

West Liberty went 8-3 in 2007 to again finish second in the WVIAC.



Darren Banks

Freshman QB Zach Amedro set the school's single-season passing record (299.7 ypg.) while Almonzo Banks was a first-team All-American who led the nation in receiving (121.0 ypg.). Darren Banks – no relation – had a school-record 13 interceptions to earn his second straight first-team All-America honor.

The 2008 Hilltoppers posted their third straight WVIAC runner-up finish. Darren Banks once again led the WVIAC in interceptions and became the first three-time NCAA Division II All-American in league history. Eddie Hills, who had back-to-back 1,100-yard rushing seasons in 2006 and 2007, switched to slot receiver in 2008 and earned first-team All-WVIAC honors again as the conference's receiving leader.

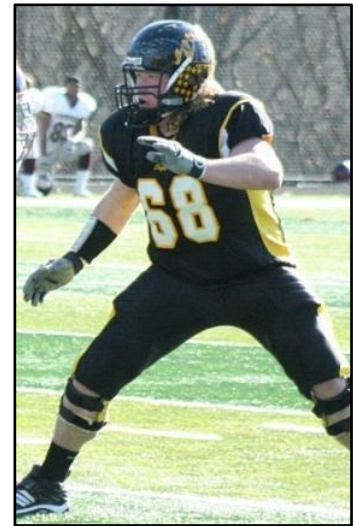
Junior LB Nick Harding led the league in tackles to earn his second straight first-team All-WVIAC honor while sophomore LB Clay Beeler was named NCAA Division II National Linebacker of the Year by Don Hansen's *Football Gazette*. Amedro battled through injuries to throw for more than 2,400 yards.

That set the stage for West Liberty to explode onto the national scene in 2009. After stumbling out of the blocks with a 42-30 loss at nationally-ranked Edinboro (Pa.), WLU closed out the regular season with 10 straight wins – including a perfect 8-0 run through the WVIAC to claim the school's 16th league crown.

The Hilltoppers cracked the Top 25 for the first time in school history and went on to earn West Liberty's first NCAA Division II playoff berth. After a first-round bye, the Hilltoppers avenged their only regular-season defeat in style with a record-setting 84-63 rout of Edinboro before coming up short at home the following week against California (Pa.) in the national quarterfinals.

Amedro rewrote the West Liberty and WVIAC record books by throwing for 4,945 yards – the second-highest total in Division II history – and 49 TDs as the Hilltoppers led the nation in scoring and total offense. Runner-up for the Harlon Hill Trophy as the NCAA Division II national Player of the Year, Amedro was the WVIAC and Atlantic Region Offensive Player of the Year and was chosen as West Virginia's Amateur Athlete of the Year.

The Hilltopper QB wasn't the only player in the national spotlight. Ben Staggs won the 2009 Gene Upshaw Award as the nation's top NCAA Division II lineman. TE Ryan Travis



Ben Staggs

2009 Gene Upshaw Award



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and CB Derrick Evans also earned first-team All-America honors while All-Region TB Kevon Calhoun ran for 1,529 yards and 22 TDs – both school-records – for a Hilltopper team that finished the year ranked No. 9 in the nation.

The 2010 West Liberty team became the only Division II school ever to lead the nation in scoring and total offense in back-to-back years but at 7-3, fell just shy of postseason play.

Amedro averaged a WVIAC-record 405.8 passing yards a game and was the Harlon Hill Trophy runner-up again in the closest vote ever. He repeated as the WVIAC and Atlantic Region Offensive Player of the Year and once again was honored as West Virginia's Amateur Athlete of the Year. Amedro was named National Player of the Week after breaking Flannery's 36-year-old WVIAC record with 8 TD passes in an 82-36 rout of Seton Hill.

Travis was a consensus All-American again, leading the nation with a school-record 126 catches for 1,402 yards,



Clay Beeler



Ryan Travis

while Beeler also earned All-America honors after leading the WVIAC in tackles and earning the league's Defensive Player of the Year Award.

In addition, offensive tackle Larry Wriedt was a second-team All-American and defensive back Alec Wood was the WVIAC Defensive Freshman of the Year.

A rash of injuries led to a disappointing 2011 campaign but the Hilltoppers rebounded to go 6-5 in 2012, knocking off two regionally-ranked foes and leading

the nation with 6 interception returns for touchdowns. DB Marco Ricchetti earned third-team All-America honors.

West Liberty has been unable to climb back into playoff contention in recent years but the Black and Gold have certainly had their moments – including a season-opening upset of No. 9 Concord in 2015.

Individually, Bryan Arbes was No. 3 nationally with a school-record 19 field goals in 2013 while TE Daree Goodwin was a second-team All-American in 2015 with 13 TD grabs and nearly 1,000 receiving yards.



MOUNTAIN EAST

From 2007 to 2010, two-time All-American and Harlon Hill Trophy runner-up Zach Amedro virtually rewrote the NCAA Division II record books. Here's a look at some of his records that can still be found in the NCAA books:

ZACH AMEDRO IN THE NCAA RECORD BOOK

- 14 consecutive 300-yard passing games – NCAA Division II record
- 14 consecutive 300-yard total offense games – NCAA Division II record
- 30 300-yard passing games – No. 2 all-time
- 29 300-yard total offense games – No. 2 all-time
- 14,733 passing yards – No. 2 all-time
- 334.8 passing yards per game – No. 2 all-time
- 126 touchdown passes – No. 2 all-time
- 331.8 total offense yards per game – No. 2 all-time
- 1,079 pass completions – No. 3 all-time
- 14,598 total offense yards – No. 3 all-time