

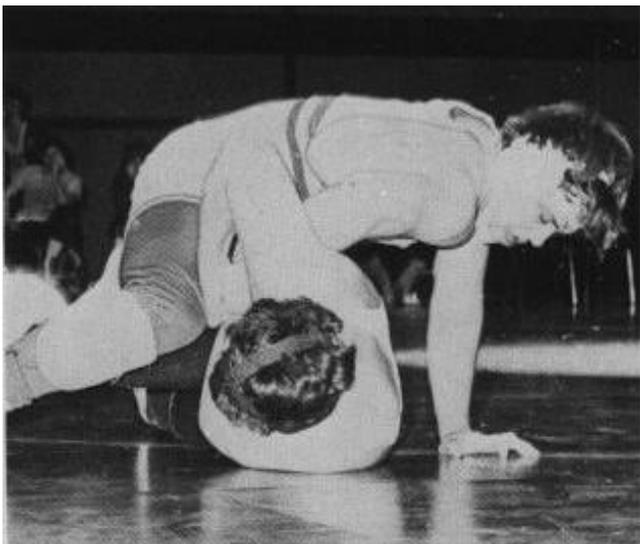
For Tom Harris, coming to CBA was a foregone conclusion. You see, his two brothers Ned and John were already CBA students so there was not much discussion involved in this decision. The only discussion, or disagreement, in the Harris household dealt with who was the better athlete, John or Tom. A case could be made for either way, since John himself was football and basketball letterman during his time at CBA. But regardless of who was more talented, young Tom was actually looking forward to coming across the county when his St. Mary's days were completed.

When Tom entered into 9th grade, he had his CBA Athletic Career planned out, football in the fall - although he never played pop warner due to weight restrictions (and limits.. sorry about that Tom!), and basketball in the winter. But things don't always turn out as we planned. First, any of us who went to school at CBA during this time period, and had to take earth science (which was all of us) had to deal with the greatest recruiter of all time, Jerry Riordan! So without any more needing to be said, Tom found a third sport, Track and Field, where he shot the disc and put the shot for the varsity for three years.

The second change in his plans came during his freshman basketball season. A new coach had been hired for the wrestling team and he must have been tutored by Mr. Riordan in how to start a program. Gary Barnaba convinced Tom to give up the hardwoods and spend his time in the winter on the wrestling mat. It was a tough call but his decision to convert to Wrestling turned out to be a great move, not only for Tom but for CBA too. As a sophomore he was immediately called upon to contribute. The wrestling team was only in its second year as a member of the CNYCL and Coach Barnaba was trying to build a program. So he was combing the halls, and the gym classes, taking any and all boys and turning them into Wrestlers. Tom found that he was a natural at the sport. Although he had never wrestled before he performed well, very well. He was the diocesan champion in 1970, defeating Bishop Ludden's Chet Delucia in the finals. He finished his first varsity season with 25 – 3 record. He followed that up with a 26 – 4 as a junior. Winning the CNYCL tournament and was the runnerup in the Diocesan championship... By his senior year, Tom had become a dominant force on the wrestling mats.

Coupled with 167 pound Mike Bongiovanni and 177 pound Ron Pelligra, the three were dubbed Murderers Row by the Syracuse Newspapers. That group dominated the end of each match that season. They compiled a sparkling combined regular season record of 44 - 2.

The highlight of that season was a thrilling victory over Watertown. With a crowd of over 1000 looking on, the Cyclones took a 22 - 12 lead going into the last three matches. Three straight wins by the "row", the last of which a pin by Harris, led CBA to win its first ever league



championship. His career accomplishments were stellar. He earned over 70 wins and was crowned CNY League Champion, Diocesan Tournament and Upstate Catholic High school Champion. Not bad for his second sport.

But Tom first love was football. But even there a change had occurred. In Tom's sophomore year, Coach Frank Cappelletti turned over the head coaching reins to Pete Vercillo. Vercillo was a fiery young coach, full of stories, football knowledge, and a unique way of motivating young men to achieve more than they felt was even possible. Coach Vercillo saw a lot of potential in Tom and not only moved him up to the varsity as a sophomore, but inserted him into the starting lineup a spot he held for the next 3

years. At 6'2, 220 Tom teamed along side of Pelligra to strike fear into the hearts of opposing linemen and running backs. As an aside, I happened to enter 9th grade at CBA during Tom's senior year and the sight of him and Pelligra coming down the hall certainly struck fear in the hearts of young freshman also! The Brothers finished the season at 5 - 3 a big improvement over the 2 -5 - 1 team of the year before . Included were two big wins over perennial powers Auburn and the then #2 state ranked Corcoran Cougars. In each of those game the Harris - Pelligra duo opened huge holes in the line for star running back Lee Rogers to get through and spear headed a defense that was the best the team had produced in years. For his efforts Tom was named first team All City on both offense and defense, a feat that few players at that time were ever able to attain. He was also named to the first team all upstate team and just about any all star team that existed.

His accomplishments attracted the interest of many colleges. It was then that he met maybe the best recruiter of all, a gregarious coach, who just happened to be from Maine, Mrs. Harris' home state. So Tom was off to UMass to play for Hall of Fame Coach Dick MacPherson. Tom helped lead his team to a Yankee Conference championship in 1974. To cap off a great athletic career, he was selected an all conference and all new England all star selection his junior and senior years.

When Tom graduated from CBA in 1972, he received, among other awards, the schools highest athletic honor the Brooks award. The inscription on the trophy read to the CBA Senior who best exemplifies the Goals of a Christian Education, Reverence to God, Leadership and Spirit. Those words described Tom forty years ago and do so even more today. Tom sets a tremendous example by the way he lives his life . He is a loving husband, devoted father and although no longer living in the Syracuse area, a staunch supporter of CBA and its values. On behalf of the entire CBA community please accept this award as token of our pride in you for all that you have accomplished

