



It was 1962 and Christian Brothers Academy was adjusting to its new, state of the art campus on the outskirts of Syracuse. Many changes were taking place among them an unprecedented growth in attendance. Along with that came an increase in interest in the CBA sports programs. Brother Victor was quoted in the Syracuse Post Standard saying “Ninety men tried out for the varsity football squad .... To give these enthusiastic youngsters the excellent training and the individual attention that football requires, we are fortunate in securing Pete Vercillo, an experienced man to assist Head Coach Frank Cappelletti’ ..... Who?

Pete Vercillo was a tough North Sider who honed his athletic skills with his neighborhood buddies at Schiller Park. You name the game and they played it ... but it was on the football field that Pete felt most at home. A lineman by trade, he established himself as one of the areas finest players on the 1950 edition of the North Windy Hillers. (I just loved the team nicknames back then) When he lined up against CBA’s Roy Spadafora ..... After high school, Pete continued his playing days at Morrisville State College where he continued to make his mark on the gridiron. He even helped lead his team to an undefeated season in 1952. After graduation, like many young men of the time, he traded in his letter sweater for army fatigues. While in the service, Pete continued to play the game he loved. As a member of the team in Fort Dix he distinguished himself in such a manner that he was chosen to the all army all star team, a team that travelled to play in Bermuda. Now you have to understand in those days the army teams were made up of college players the level of ball was equal to that of the college ranks

But when his tour of duty ended, so did his playing days. Pete returned to Syracuse to start his new life but football was still in his blood. He decided to give back to the game he loved and found his true calling, coaching. He started in the Pop Warner ranks, leading his St. Peters team to a 33 - 1 record and the National Championships in Athens Georgia. That is where he caught the eye of one of his old Schiller Park buddies, Frank Cappelletti..... and Pete was adopted into the CBA Family a relationship that would change the course of his life

For the next seven years the two men ably guided the Brothers to three city championships and turned out players such as Marty Domres, Walt Patulski, Dick Storto, Jay Sacco. They sent players to play for Cornell, Boston College, Dartmouth, Yale, Holy Cross, Notre Dame... many of the best programs in the country.



After the 68 season, Cappelletti stepped down from his position as Head Coach to become a the full time athletic director and it was only natural that Pete take over the program he had put so much of himself into over the previous seven years. Pete was known for his firey nature and the newspapers loved him for his candor. Although his first two year. ok, another one of my recollections... Pete was always known as a fiery competitor and in his first three years as head coach, he had never beaten the team from that green catholic school on the other side of town. Now that didn't sit well with him. So in 1972, Pete changed his entire offense before that game, stated Joe Gigintelli at quarterback and opened things up. They also set there defense to stop the Gaelic Knights star running back, Chet DeLucia (yep, another one of Mikes Brothers!!). The game plan worked perfectly. But that is not the story... see with just over two minutes to go, Chuckie Giarusso scored to make the score 48 – 16. At the time, we had Lee Rogers the most reliable kicker in

the league who had kicked the single extra point after each of the first 7 touchdowns of the night Pete did what any coach would do, seeing it was Bishop Ludden, and CBA had not beaten them in the last three years ..... He called timeout and well the paper wrote I like this..... Vercillo summarized the feelings of the rivalry when he elected to go for two extra points to reach the 50 mark. And memories of such gestures are certain to keep the CBA Ludden rivalry alive and sizzling for years to come now I was in the stands that night and I thought it was great....

After that season, Pete stepped away from the field to devote more time to his growing family and to start his business. After over 20 years away from CBA he was lured back to coach on Randall Road and help bring the football program back to its rightful place at the pinnacle of the Central New York sports world. Coaching the defense he helped lead the Brothers back to prominence and was an integral part of the 2004 State Championship team. Pete finally retired

When Pete received the Purple and Gold award in 2003 the sentiment expressed accurately sums up the ...The alumni of Christian Brothers Academy, those who have played for Pete, those who have cheered his teams, those who admire his strength in the face of adversity, and those who have been infected with his contagious enthusiasm, are pleased to salute Peter Vercillo with the highest token of their admiration..... and tonight, Pete, it is with those same sentiments that we welcome you into the LaSallian Athletic Hall of Fame

