



It was no surprise when Billy Owens walked into CBA in the fall of 1979 that he was going to be a stellar athlete. After all, his father was a basketball standout at Central Tech in 1960. In fact it was his Lancers that gave the George Deptula led Golden Tornadoes its only two league losses of the 1959 - 60 hoop campaign. And another Owens, Billy's older brother Duane had already made a name for himself on the football field and on the basketball court at CBA. So when Young Billy came on the scene, the expectation was that he would follow in the footsteps of his family members and achieve great success in the athletic arena. And that is certainly what he did.

In 1979, CBA was going through difficult phase of its athletic history. The schools basketball program, so dominant in the mid 70's was coming off a couple of non championship years. The football team had been struggling to regain the glory years of the 50's and 60's and was in the midst of a resurgence with the hiring of a fiery new coach, Bob Campbell. The track program was going through a transition period where they could no longer count on league championships. So that is the CBA Billy was coming into. In basketball, the sport that his father had dominated twenty years earlier, Billy was a participant. He worked his way through the lower ranks was even a member of Buddy Wleklinski's first JV team during his sophomore year. As a senior, his only year on the varsity, Billy used his athleticism to help his team earn a sectional berth the one that had escaped them in his year off.

His participation in track was a totally different story. He had always been a gifted runner and fit right in on our powerful track team. He joined the squad in his junior year and made an immediate impact. He was a natural at the shorter distances and quickly became one of the top rated sprinters in the area. He also competed as a quarter miler and had one of the highlights of that track season with an impressive come from behind win in against rival Bishop Ludden which helped lead the team back to the top of the CNYCL. His senior year was even more impressive. He was considered one of the top runners in the league and for that matter the entire area. His times in the 100 and 200 were among the best in the section.. For his efforts he achieved first team all league honors and was named by his coaches as the team's top runner for the 1983 season.



But where Billy was meant to make his mark was in his favorite sport of football. As a sophomore, he joined his brother Duane in the starting backfield in the 1980 season. That year the Owens Brothers led the CBA Brothers to their best season in years as they finished in second place in the league. That year the Brothers also participated in the first high school game ever played in the Carrier Dome, a 23 - 20 loss to Nottingham in the Section III semifinals. As a junior, Billy took over for his brother as the main back in an offense run by quarterback Steve Locey. Billy showed signs of greatness, finishing near the top of the league leaders in rushing but it was his senior year when he really came into his own. Early on he showed what he was capable of doing when he scored all 26 of the Brothers points in an early season win over Watertown. In that game he gained 162 yards in only seven carries and, on a screen pass from Don McClure, galloped 91 yards after the catch for his final score. He was called by veteran coach Campbell “the best all around back I have ever coached” and earned praise from opposing coaches like then Corcoran and now CBA assistant Tom Marzullo proclaiming Owens as the best back to come out of Central New York in a long time. His numbers at the end of the season were impressive for that time. He led the league in rushing as he gained 860 yards on 106 carries in that eight game season.

He added to that 360 yards on 11 catches. For his efforts he earned first team all league and all area honors and was chosen as a third team all state player at defensive back, which was a glimpse of what was to come. The 6 - 2 195 pounder was the most highly recruited player in the area. He had his choice of college powerhouses such as Alabama, Boston College, and Syracuse along with most Ivy League schools.

He chose to continue his football career at the University of Pittsburgh, which at that time led by former stars Dan Marino and Tony Dorsett, was considered one of the top programs in the country. He went there hoping to follow in Dorsett’s footsteps and during the spring of his sophomore year it looked like that was a possibility when he earned a starting spot in the backfield.

Unfortunately he was injured late in the spring and was forced to red shirt as a junior. When he returned, the backfield was capably being manned by future NFL star Craig Haywood. So with some prodding by the coaches, and a burning desire to get on the field, Billy moved to the other side of the ball where he had great success in high school. That change of position proved to impact the rest of his life. As a safety, Billy became one of the best in college football. He earned All east honors in his junior and senior years and was chosen as a Playboy preseason All American in 1987. For his efforts he was selected in the tenth round by the Dallas Cowboys in the 1988 draft. That season, the last for legendary coach Tom Landry, Billy appeared in all sixteen games.

Following that season, Billy continued playing professional football for the next eight years, playing for Orlando for two years in the World League of American Football. He then for the spent the next six in the Arena football League scoring 34 touchdown and gaining nearly 2000 yards in his career.



Billy when you entered CBA in 1979 you had a dream and your hard work and perseverance made it a reality. Although we only a small part in your career, please excuse us for sharing in your many successes and accomplishments. Tonight, we finally have an award to share with you. It is with great pleasure that we proudly welcome you into the LaSallian Athletic Hall of Fame.