

1979 Tigers

1979 (7-3) · Coach: Lou Noicda

Date	Opponent	SHS	Opp	W/L	Record
Aug. 31	at Williamstown	16	30	L	0-1
Sept. 7	at Harrisville	33	0	W	1-1
Sept. 14	at Valley	29	6	W	2-1
Sept. 22	Paden City	6	7	L	2-2
Sept. 28	at Gilmer County	27	0	W	3-2
Oct. 6	at Pennsboro	28	0	W	4-2
Oct. 12	Bishop Donahue	0	18	L	4-3
Oct. 19	Tyler County	49	3	W	5-3
Oct. 27	West Preston	42	14	W	6-3
Nov. 2	Cameron	40	0	W	7-3

The 1979 Tigers were among the most under-appreciated teams in school history. They lost three times: to Double-A power Williamstown (whose captain, Jeff Deem, started for WVU on its 1981 Peach Bowl team) and Class A state finalists Paden City and Bishop Donahue on absolutely horrible, muddy fields that neutralized Sistersville's speed advantage.

Remember, this Sistersville team featured the 1980 W.Va. Class AA 100-meter dash champion Brian Swisher AND 200-meter champ Joe Heintzman.

Once the fields dried up and the weather cooled, the Tigers heated up, winning their final three games by a combined score of 131-17 — giving a preview of what was to come in 1980 and 1981.

And something to remember: the Tigers lost 7-6 to Class A champion Paden City on a blocked punt in the end zone. In three games in the 1979 and 1980 seasons, two of the best in Paden City history, the Wildcats scored ZERO touchdowns on offense against Sistersville. And two of the games were on their home field.

Sistersville finished .1 away from the eighth and final place in the SSAC Class A rankings. If they'd somehow made it into eighth place, the Tigers would have played — guess who — Paden City on the road in the first round of the playoffs. Want to guess who would have won?

Brian Swisher, a sophomore, caught at least one pass in every game (just as he would do during every game of his 36-game, three-season career) and became the first sophomore football all-stater in school history. Strong-armed junior Tom Archer did the throwing. It would turn out to be a pretty lethal combination.

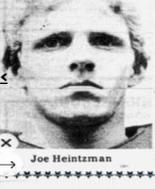
Sistersville Seeking Replacements For Seven Vets From 11-1 Squad



Coach Lou Nocida



KENNY STEAD



Joe Heintzman

Lou Nocida was surprised to say the team, with last year's super performance at Sistersville. The Ohio Valley Athletic Conference's coach-of-the-year is hopeful he'll be just as surprised after the 1979 season is over.

Sistersville turned a 1-0 record of 1977 into a 11-1 state and a West Virginia Class A playoff appearance last season, but gone from that team are seven veterans, including two all-staters.

Workhorse C.R. Howdyshell led the Tigers down the victory trail with an amazing performance of power run and determination—306 carries good for 2,315 yards and 23 touchdowns. Howdyshell anchored a tight defense that won several close games in the waning moments as Sistersville completed the regular season at 10-3. Both were all-state honorees.

Also gone are quarterback Bob Patterson, who handled the controls for three seasons; Carl Swartzmiller, Joe Eddy, Jeff Howard and Emil Hanson, an all-conference offensive guard. The loss of such talent gives Nocida some cause for concern.

"When you win 11 straight ball games you have to be alert," noted the former Morgantown and Oak Glen mentor. "You've got to have some back and the ball has to bounce your way a couple of ways."

Nocida was surprised by last year, because we began the year with seven starters who had never played before," he continued. "But they contained the opposition well and were just a pleasure to coach."

"This season, we'll have to use five or six more sophomores and we'll be young and inexperienced again, especially in the backfield. You can't replace a guy like Howdyshell, who we were lucky to keep healthy for all but one game during the year."

But, he'll miss Patterson just as much, because he could throw the football and he didn't fumble all year.

Junior Tom Archer (15-10, 160) and sophomore Rick Glover (15-135) are being counted upon by Nocida from among the 54 varsity candidates to fill Patterson's shoes.

They'll have senior veteran Matt Wagner (15-180), who rushed for 216 yards and two touchdowns last season, to hand off to at fullback. Senior Rich Wilson (15-9, 185) and freshman Tom Hamilton (17, 160) will try and supply some of Howdyshell's rushing output.

Sophomore Brian Swisher (15-6, 135) will be spotted at flanker by junior Randy Stead (17-110) with sophomore Tom Shepherd (17, 180) available for any of the running back spots.

"We have good speed on the outside," with Swisher and senior Joe Heintzman (15-9, 185) on the outside, but I don't know whether our quarterback can get the ball to them," explained Nocida. "It doesn't matter if you send them 100 yards down the field in a couple of seconds, if you can't get the ball there."

Despite backfield inexperience, the Tigers return a strong veteran line anchored by senior Kenny Stead (16-190), John Chute (15-8, 165) in back at nose guard, with senior Roger Howdyshell (16-190) at the other end of the line. Bill Williamson (16-210) marks a tackle post along with sophomore Randy Kehler (15-2, 175). Sophomore Mike Silliman (15-9, 185) will back up Stead at center, while seniors Greg Brown (16-1, 195) and George Eddy (15-10, 200) could find themselves starting at guard or tackle. Senior Brian Stiers (16-1, 180) and sophomore Mike Salmon (16-3, 180) are locked in a battle for the starting call at tight end.

Heintzman, a first team all-state veteran, will handle all the kicking chores again. Two years ago the team, until a knee injury requiring surgery, defined him. He decided to come back last season and concentrate on kicking chores, booting a pair of field goals, 19 extra points, and over 41 yards a punt. So far this season, he has been working at split end. He will be a tremendous deep threat in that role.

Wagner and Kenny Stead give the Tigers strong linemaking on defense, while Chute heads up the line from his middle guard spot. Williamson, Howdyshell, Brown and Eddy will spell each other at the defensive tackles, while Kehler and Tom Shepherd will man the ends with Tom's twin brother, Jerry (16-1, 225), seeing action at either linebacker or end.

The secondary will be first-hand, able with Stiers, Heintzman, Swisher and Wilson available for duty, along with junior Steve Smith (15-9, 180).



MATT WAGNER

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