

BILL PATTERSON

Bill Patterson probably never met a sport he didn't like. Because he certainly was very good at the sports he did play.

Patterson was a catalyst in the Ray Barnhart-led turnaround by Sistersville basketball in the mid-1970s, playing on one state tournament team and nearly taking his senior year team to another.

He also made all-state football twice as a defensive end, including his junior year when Sistersville went 8-2 in 1974 — its best record in an 10-year stretch from 1967-1977.

Patterson was the first Sistersville athlete since Kenny Mikes in 1953-54 to make first team all-state in two sports in the same academic year.

Mikes was first team in football in 1953 and basketball in 1954; Patterson was first-team all-state in football in 1974 and 1975 and first team all-state basketball (and co-captain of the team) in 1976. He'd made second team all-state basketball in 1975.

Patterson wasn't the flashy scorer that Richard Summers was or a stat sheet loader in football like the Swishers were. What he did was excel in multiple ways in multiple sports; as a consistent scorer, rebounder and defender in basketball and as a run-stopping quarterback harasser in football (he was credited with 11 sacks and multiple turnovers generated as a junior).

He played very few bad games and a whole lot of very good ones.

Patterson was first noticed by Barnhart during his freshman year for being a gym rat ... the one guy who hung out in the gym or the outdoor City Park basketball court even out of season. You could set your clock to it if you listened very closely; around 10 a.m. every summer morning, you could hear the pound-pound-pound of the basketball by Patterson shooting on his own.

He played on the varsity as a freshman, then helped Sistersville transition from a 13-9 team in 1972-73 to a 23-2 state tournament team (the best record in school history) in 1973-74 as a sophomore starter. His breakthrough game was a 35-point effort in one of the Tigers' two losses that season, to Paden City.

As a junior, Patterson averaged 20.7 points and made The Intelligencer all-Ohio Valley team even though Sistersville regressed to a 10-11 record.

Barnhart revamped his offense after that to create more scoring opportunities for Patterson and on-the-rise sophomore scorer Richard Summer. And to put faster and more athletic players on the floor, and better defenders. And to get the ball into the hands of heady point guard Randy Shuman as much as possible.

Patterson responded by averaging 22.7 points and 16.1 rebounds on a much more balanced team that went 18-2 in the regular season and 22-3 overall. He had a season high of 39 points.

But, with a team certainly capable of reaching the state tournament (like the 1973-74 team and the 1976-77 team that would follow), the Tigers were ousted from in the regional finals by Rivesville 59-50.

It can be argued this was the best basketball team in school history but, unfortunately, it ran into one of the best Class A

teams in state history. The Rivesville Rams not only went undefeated and won the state title in basketball, they were 10-0 in football but somehow missed out on the four-team state playoffs.

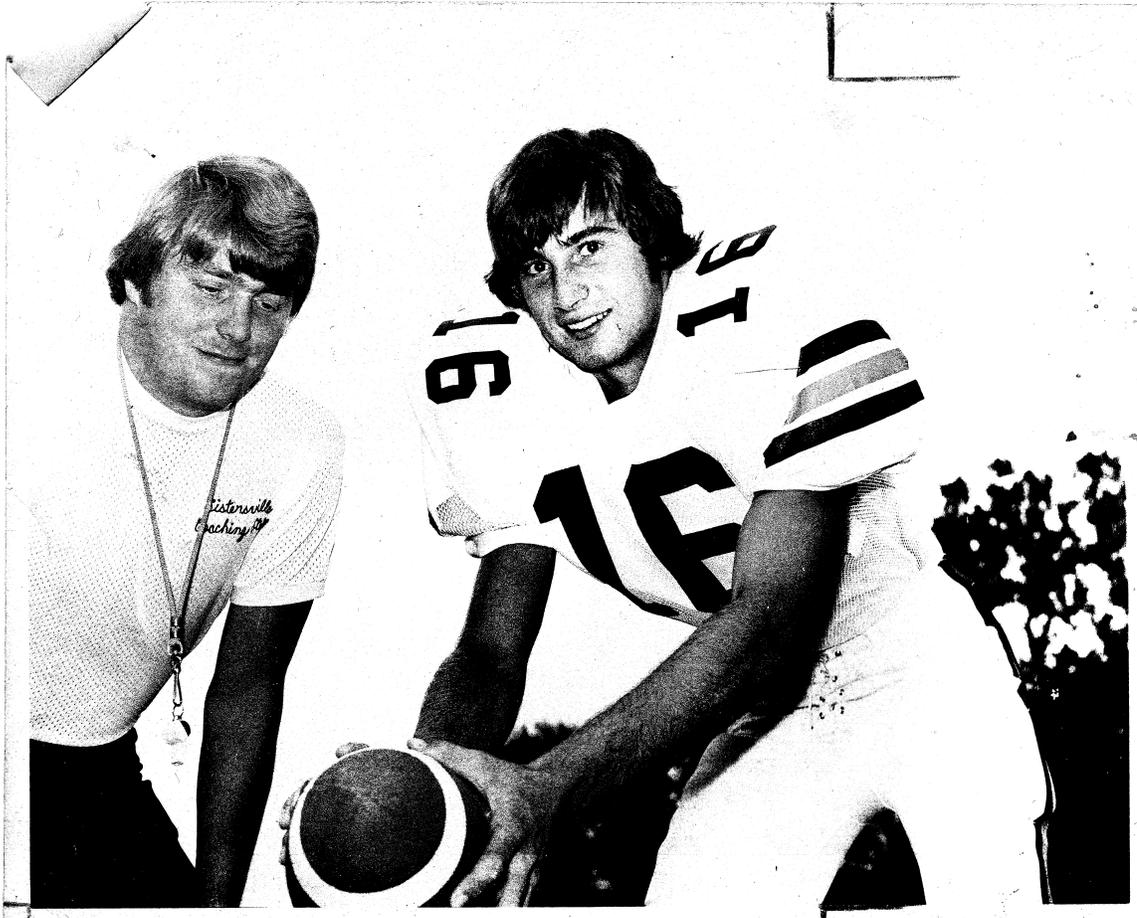
And what's especially discouraging is the Class A state tournament field wasn't nearly as stacked as it often was, and Sistersville - if it somehow could have gotten past Rivesville - might have had its best shot ever at winning a basketball title.

Patterson was recognized for leading that team not just statistically but also on and off the court by being selected as the all-state and all-Ohio Valley first team coach captain.

He went on to be a multiple-year starter at Salem College, where he finished his career by playing again for Barnhart. He played more of a sixth man role as a senior after being a consistent starter and scorer as a sophomore and junior, yet still ended his career with more than 1,000 points.

No surprise there. No matter what role or what position he was asked to play, Bill Patterson played it and played it well.

Salem later added a water polo team. Too bad he wasn't in school then — he might have been very good at that sport, too.



No matter the sport, Bill Patterson could play it, and play it very well

