



**TURN BACK THE CLOCK...
GANG GREEN** *(continued from page 3)*

The next two members of the "Gang Green" defense who made the anniversary team came to the Eagles as late-round gems of the '86 draft. Taken in the 8th and 9th rounds respectively, Seth Joyner and Clyde Simmons went on to stellar careers in Philly before following their beloved coach to Arizona at the onset of free agency. Joyner went on to become the NFL Defensive player of the year in 1991 and is one of only nine players in NFL history to record over 20 sacks and 20 interceptions.

After striking late-round gold in 1986, Buddy Ryan looked to the top of the '87 draft for the next giant piece of his defensive puzzle. With the 9th pick of the first round, Ryan selected Jerome Brown out of the University of Miami. The loquacious defensive tackle became one of the most beloved players in team history before his untimely death in June of 1992.

The final piece of the defensive puzzle was acquired in the 2nd round of the 1988 draft. Eric Allen was touted by Buddy Ryan from the beginning and he didn't disappoint. The author of one of the most exciting interception returns in NFL history went on to record a franchise-best 34 picks during his seven year stint with the team. The six-time pro bowler is the only player in NFL history to run back three interceptions for scores in two seasons.

In addition to the six players who made the anniversary team, a seventh player from that vaunted defense finished 2nd to Brian Dawkins at the free safety position. Wes Hopkins was one of the hardest hitters in NFL history and helped make the Gang Green defense one for the ages.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

(continued from page 2) Another record that stood the test of time was his 196-yard performance in the 1949 NFL championship game. Prior to the contest, Van Buren and his teammates had to endure a five-day cross-country train ride to Los Angeles due to their head coach's fear of flying. "I was so tired I couldn't play," Van Buren joked. Despite his weariness and the rain-soaked playing conditions in LA, Van Buren led the Eagles to a 14-0 victory and the team's second straight championship.



One year earlier, the Eagles won their first title in franchise history on the strength of a fourth quarter touchdown by Van Buren. It was a contest played in a fierce snowstorm that almost kept "The Moving Van" from making it to the game. "It was snowing and I didn't want to get out in the snow and I thought... they're not going to play." With that, Van Buren went back to bed only to be awakened later by a phone call from head coach Greasy Neale. "Get over here... you better get here," snarled the desperate coach. With just minutes to spare, Van Buren arrived at Shibe Park and any chance of a Cardinals victory departed. After losing to Chicago in the championship game the prior season, the victory in 1948 was sweet revenge. "I jumped up and down and fell down," Steve remembered with glee as he reflected upon his reaction to the victory that day. The back-to-back title game shutouts were unprecedented and nearly sixty years later, have still never been duplicated.

In addition to his title game memories, Steve Van Buren fondly remembers the teammates that helped him become a champion and the coach who drove him to greatness. "I loved our coach...Greasy Neale," Steve said. "The only thing I didn't like was the time he said 'it's gonna be you or me around here' and everybody said goodbye Greasy!"

One final thought that brought a smile to his face was the memory of the fans that pulled for him then and now. "They were the best!" Van Buren said of the Philly faithful... "Nothing compares to Philly fans!"

UPCOMING EVENTS



75TH ANNIVERSARY THROWBACK GAME

75th Anniversary Team will be honored at halftime of Lions game.



2007 OTHO DAVIS SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON

Reunite with old teammates in honor of Otho Davis on Monday, September 24th. For details, call Marie Solano at 856.939.1743.

THE PHILADELPHIA EAGLES ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

NovaCare Complex • 1 NovaCare Way • Philadelphia, PA 19145 • 215.463.2500

SEPTEMBER TRIVIA QUESTION

Which Philadelphia QB was a member of the L.A. Rams team that the Eagles beat in the 1949 NFL Championship Game?

- 1. Ron Jaworski
- 2. Roman Gabriel
- 3. Norm Snead
- 4. Norm Van Brocklin

(Answer from last month: Seth Joyner)



In a continuing effort to celebrate their 75th season, the Eagles conducted an online poll to determine the greatest players at each position in franchise history. Starting in April, candidates were presented to the public one position at a time, one week at a time, until the final results were determined. After 600,000 votes were cast via the team website, the 75th Anniversary Team was announced on September 7th and here it is:

HEAD COACH

Andy Reid

DEFENSE

Defensive Ends

Reggie White
Clyde Simmons

Defensive Tackles

Jerome Brown
Charlie Johnson

Middle Linebacker

Chuck Bednarik

Outside Linebackers

Seth Joyner
Alex Wojciechowicz

Free Safety

Brian Dawkins

Strong Safety

Andre Waters

Cornerbacks

Eric Allen
Troy Vincent

OFFENSE

Quarterback

Donovan McNabb

Running Back

Steve Van Buren

Fullback

Keith Byars

Wide Receivers

Harold Carmichael
Tommy McDonald

Tight End

Pete Pihos

Left Tackle

William Thomas

Left Guard

Wade Key

Center

Chuck Bednarik

Right Guard

Shawn Andrews

Right Tackle

John Runyan

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kicker

David Akers

Special Teamer

Vince Papale

Punter

Sean Landeta

Kick Returner

Timmy Brown

Punt Returner

Brian Westbrook

2007 REGULAR SEASON SCHEDULE

Sunday, Sept. 9	@ Green Bay	L 16-13
Monday, Sept. 17	Washington	L 20-12
Sunday, Sept. 23	Detroit	1 p.m.
Sunday, Sept. 30	@ Giants	8:15 p.m.
Sunday, Oct. 14	@ Jets	1 p.m.
Sunday, Oct. 21	Chicago	4:15 p.m.
Sunday, Oct. 28	@ Minnesota	1 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 4	Dallas	8:15 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 11	@ Washington	1 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 18	Miami	1 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 25	@ New England	8:15 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 2	Seattle	1 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 9	Giants	1 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 16	@ Dallas	4:15 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 23	@ New Orleans	1 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 30	Buffalo	1 p.m.



IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

COVER STORY

Fans pick 75th Anniversary Team

HEALTH & FINANCES

New \$7 million fund to provide joint replacement surgeries

TURN BACK THE CLOCK

The Gang Green Defense

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

#15 Steve Van Buren

IN THE COMMUNITY

Alumni lend a hand at annual Eagles Carnival and Auction





HEALTH & FINANCES

NEW \$7 MILLION FUND TO PROVIDE JOINT REPLACEMENT SURGERY FOR FORMER PLAYERS

NFLPA Executive Director Gene Upshaw and NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell have announced a new \$7 million fund to provide joint replacement surgery to uninsured retired players. The two also announced a commitment to new procedures to speed up disability awards to retired players. The announcement came as part of a new initiative by the NFLPA & NFL aimed at addressing the concerns and needs of retired NFL players. The program announced by Upshaw and Goodell includes the following important features:

RETIRED PLAYERS MEDICAL FUND

The NFLPA/NFL recently-formed alliance to coordinate medical support services for retired players in need of care – comprised of the NFLPA Players Assistance Trust, the NFL Alumni Association's Dire Need Fund, and the Hall of Fame Enshrinee Assistance Fund – has established a new initial \$7 million unified fund to pay for joint replacement surgeries and to address other financial hardships of retired players. Additional funding will be provided by current and retired players, and NFL clubs. The joint replacement surgeries will be available at no cost to retired players without insurance. The NFLPA/NFL are in the process of identifying 10-15 hospitals across the country to provide these surgeries.

IMPROVE & EXPEDITE DISABILITY BENEFITS PROCEDURES

The alliance announced they are committed to improving the process for obtaining disability benefits, including the expediting and simplifying of the application procedures to ensure that players entitled to benefits receive them as quickly as possible. The recent decision to apply Social Security guidelines to the NFL disability plan is an important element of this effort.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW? #15 STEVE VAN BUREN

Like Superman, he was from another world. A descendant of genuine pirates of the Caribbean, he left his home on the coast of Honduras and ventured to the United States at the age of ten. New Orleans was his new home and the gridiron his new playground. The game of football would open doors to a college education at LSU, and open the hearts of a generation of Eagles fans. His name was Steve Van Buren. His sir name had been a recent creation in an effort to distance his family from their buccaneer heritage. He came to be known by many names... "Supersonic Steve" "Wham Bam" "Moving Van" "Weavin' Steven" "Louisiana Lightning"... and which nickname was his favorite?

"I didn't like any of them," said Van Buren, as we sat together last month on a beautiful day in Central PA. What he did like was the news that he had recently been named to the Eagles 75th Anniversary Team and selected by a panel of writers and former athletes as the greatest player in franchise history. "That's great," said the record-setting running back as the news of his election brought a smile to his face. That he was selected to the team by thousands of fans who weren't even alive when he played is a testament to the lasting impression he made on the parents and grandparents of today's Eagle zealots.

When I first arrived at his home just outside of Lancaster, Steve was on the phone with his younger brother Ebert who followed in his big brother's footsteps at LSU before being selected in the first round by the Eagles in 1951. Unfortunately, one season after his brother joined the team, Steve suffered a freak injury during a scrimmage in Hershey, PA. "They took me off in a wheel barrel," Van Buren recollected of the broken leg that ended his career. "They put my leg in a cast... I couldn't bend it for years."

Despite the premature end to his playing days, Van Buren had rewritten the record books during his eight years in the league. He left the game as its all-time leading rusher and his record for rushing touchdowns held up for nearly twenty years. Those 69 scores still stand as the best mark in Eagles history 55 years later. He continues to hold the Eagles record in several other categories including most rushing yards in a game (205), most rushing touchdowns in a season (15), and most consecutive games with a rushing touchdown (8). No player in history has scored 70 touchdowns faster than "Supersonic Steve" or won more consecutive rushing titles. *(continued on back page)*



TURN BACK THE CLOCK... THE GANG GREEN DEFENSE

When the Eagles announced the final results of the online poll to determine the 75th Anniversary team, one era stood out above the rest. They didn't pile up post-season victories like the current squad or bring championships to the city like the teams from the late forties. Nevertheless, the Eagles defense of the Reggie White era accounted for six of the eleven defensive positions on the 75th Anniversary squad. Despite the lack of playoff success, it is clear that those teams from the late eighties and early nineties hold a special place in the hearts of Eagle fans everywhere. The players who were selected to the anniversary team came to town with varied pedigrees and backgrounds, but joined together to form one of the most feared units in NFL history.

The first of the six to wear Eagle green was Andre Waters. He came to town as an undrafted free agent in 1984 and went on to a long career that included ten seasons in Philadelphia. His fearless play won him a place in the hearts of Philadelphia fans but the physical toll may have played a role in his untimely passing in 2006. His selection by the fans was comforting evidence that though he is gone, he will never be forgotten.

Soon after Waters joined the fold, Reggie White came to Philadelphia. On June 5, 1984, the NFL held a supplemental draft to designate the rights of USFL players. The first selection belonged to Tampa Bay who claimed future Hall of Famer Steve Young. After Houston chose Mike Rozier with the second pick, the fate of NFC East supremacy hung in the balance. With Reggie White on the board, the New York Giants opted instead for Gary Zimmerman, an offensive lineman who would go on to a fine career with the Minnesota Vikings and Denver Broncos. With the very next pick, Philadelphia claimed the rights to White. Once Reggie started wreaking havoc on the division, Giants coach Bill Parcells was left to wonder how many more Super Bowls New York could have won with White rushing the quarterback alongside LT. Instead, the Big Tuna had to watch helplessly as the greatest defensive end of all time tortured his quarterbacks twice a year and drove the Eagles to nine victories in ten meetings between the two teams from 1988 until his departure after the 1992 season. When White retired after the 1999 season, his 198 sacks were the most in NFL history. His death in 2004 was a devastating blow to the legions of fans, friends and teammates who came to love the minister of defense. *(continued on back page)*



ALUMNI REUNITE AT ANNUAL EYP CARNIVAL

Last month, former members of the Eagles traveled through the rain to Lincoln Financial Field for one common goal: Helping young people in the community through the Eagles Youth Partnership. The franchise's non-profit charitable wing was founded in 1995 by owners Jeffrey & Christina Lurie, who also serves as president of EYP. Reaching over 50,000 children each year, EYP provides mobile services via the Eagles Eye Mobile and Book Mobile, including free eye exams, free prescription eye-glasses; and free books to children in schools, shelters, parks, recreation centers and more.

The Eagles Carnival and Auction is the primary funding source for the charity and not even the steady rain could put a damper on the event. The Thirteenth Annual Carnival and Auction exceeded its goal and raised \$1,040,783.

"Everyone brought their 'A' game -- the Eagles, volunteers, corporate partners and amazing fans. We are so grateful to all," said Sarah Martinez-Helfman, executive director of EYP. "There was no dampening of spirit, despite the rain. We surpassed our goal, helping to keep our Eagles Eye Mobile, Book Mobile, Playground Build and other programs running strong."

Eagles Alumni members played no small part as the line of fans waiting to meet their former heroes stretched hundreds of feet down the stadium concourse. Later this fall, the former players who participated will be treated to a night at Chickie's and Pete's with the current crop of Eagles rookies as a thank you for their contribution to the carnival. Stay tuned for news about the annual Alumni/Rookie dinner.