

Fessenden architect of NV success

By DAN HESS
Sports Writer

Northern Valley football coach Chuck Fessenden hasn't let success go to his head despite the fact that his teams have won two consecutive state championships and now sport the longest winning streak in Kansas football.

No, the Salina Journal's 1987 Coach of the Year remembers when times were tough, when it wasn't a certainty that the sun would come up the next day.

That was back in the dog days of 1985 when the Huskies had a "dismal" 8-1 season.

"That was a pretty rough year," Fessenden recalled in all seriousness. "We lost, yet we had to play four more games on the schedule. And we knew that we weren't going to make the playoffs."

That loss — in the fifth game of the year to Mankato — was the last time the Huskies stepped off the field a loser. Now, 29 delicious victories and two state titles later, the winning streak lives on.

So, instead of hanging their heads after the loss, the Huskies went on to

Coach of the Year

- 1977 — Ed Buller, Clifton-Clyde;
- Clayton Williams, Beloit
- 1978 — Paul Dennis, Abilene
- 1979 — Jon Bingesser, Sacred Heart
- 1980 — Larry Friend, Plainville
- 1981 — Robert Teeter, Victorville
- 1982 — Roger Barta, Smith Center
- 1983 — Dave Johnson, Osborne
- 1984 — Jeff Crockett, Minneapolis
- 1985 — Neil Mellillo, Norton
- 1986 — Roger Barta, Smith Center
- 1987 — Chuck Fessenden, Northern Valley

win the Class 1A state basketball and track titles that school year.

"As it turned out, it was pretty good for our basketball team," Fessenden said of the last loss.

Most football coaches would find little solace in the fact that the basketball team excelled at the expense of the football team. But Fessenden is different. He has a vested interest as an assistant basketball coach and the head track coach.

That fact, indeed, lends credence to Fessenden's next goal. Sure, he could win another football title to make it three in a row. Fessenden, though, would like to win the big three the hard way.

"Oh, yeah. I would like to win all three state championships (football, basketball and track) in the same year if we could," Fessenden said. "That's a pretty high goal. We did, some years ago, win all three in the same calendar year, but not in the same school year."

The good times really started years ago when Fessenden got out of school at Kansas State University in 1976 and took the job at Northern Valley.

He's compiled a 96-28 record in his 12 seasons, including losing only seven games in the last seven years.

With a record like that, it would seem like leaving the Almena-based school for the greener pastures of a big school would be high on the agenda. But for the 33-year-old Fessenden, a 1972 graduate of Clifton High School, Almena is now his home.

"I've thought about leaving and I've had guys talk to me about going to other places," Fessenden said. "But I'd kind of hate to leave. I have my family there and my wife (Jennifer) is from around here. ..."

"I enjoy it where I'm at right now because we're successful and I feel like that satisfies my needs for the moment. I don't see where going to a larger school and being successful there would be any more gratifying than it is right now."

Plus, Fessenden says, there would be a deep feeling of guilt if he left kids who had worked so hard in anticipation of a successful senior season.

"If I was to leave at that time, I feel like I'd disappoint them. I would hate to do that when I've got a kid who has worked hard only to find out that I'd moved on."

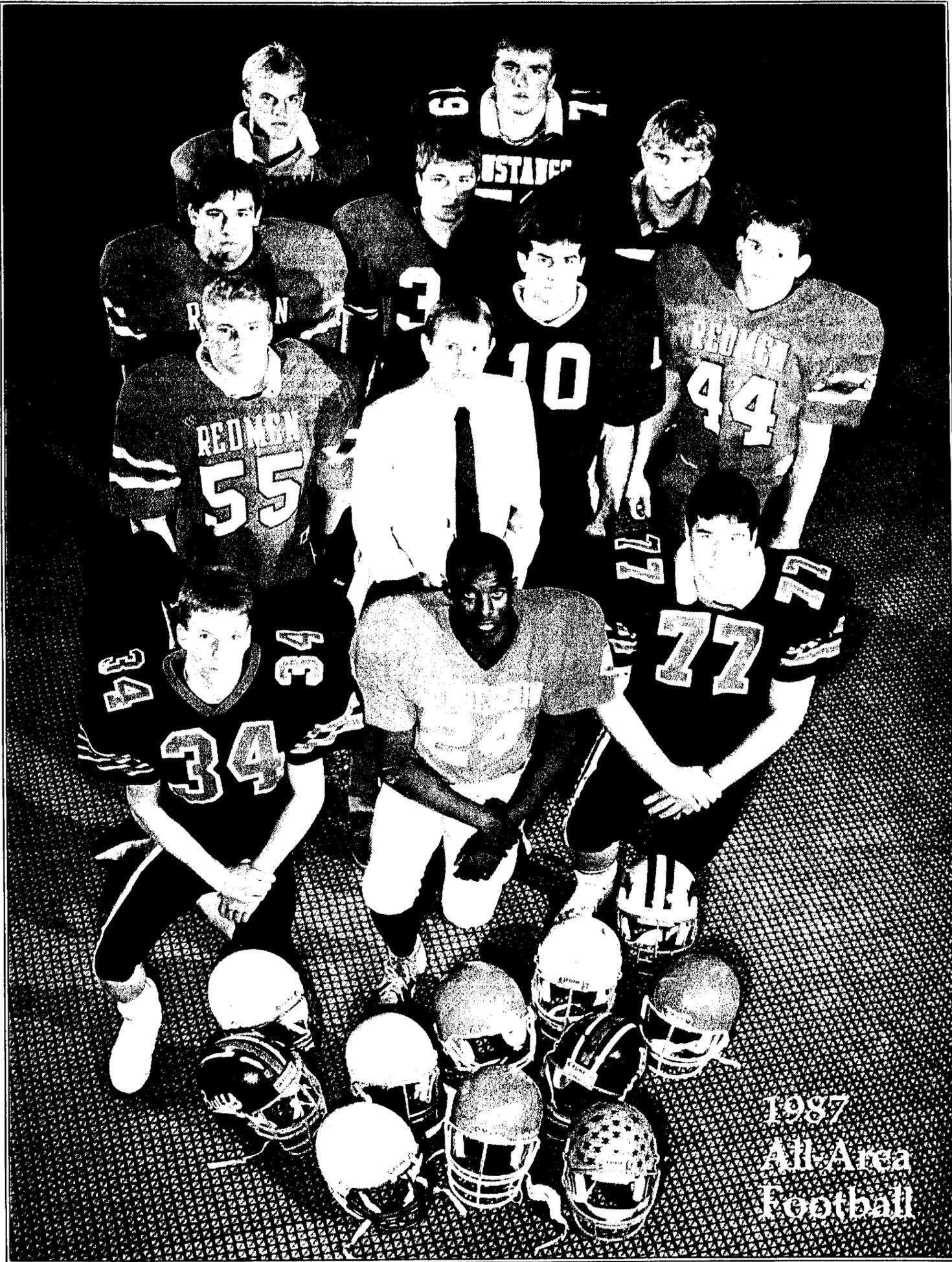
Fessenden credits about everyone for the success of Northern Valley's football team. Everyone, that is, except himself. If there is a gene in his makeup that says "I did it", it is by far a recessive trait.

He says the kids are the ones who have to play the games, that luck plays a huge role in the ultimate win-loss record. The Huskies have stayed relatively injury-free in posting back-to-back-to-back records of 8-1, 12-0 and 13-0.

The bottom line, he insists, is the kids.

"I think we've had some good athletes within the school and we've had some kids that have wanted to work pretty hard to be good football bas-

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Craig Chandler

Members of the 1987 All-Area Top 11 football team are: (front row, from left) Marc Payton, Atwood; Dwayne Chandler, McPherson; Tracy Buford, Atwood. (Second row) Randy Hull, Smith Center; Coach of the Year Chuck Fessenden, Northern

Valley; Danny Holloway, Stockton; Brooks Barta, Smith Center. (Third row) Jeff Simoneau, Smith Center; B.J. Vincent, Northern Valley; Brett Bedore, Stockton. (Back row) Kevin Dougherty, Abilene; Eric Clayton, Salina Central.

Top 11 team loaded with talent, versatility

By TIM HOSTETTER
Sports Writer

Equal representation with versatility.

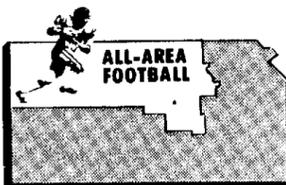
That best describes The Salina Journal's All-Area 1987 Football Team.

Offensively, the 11-player squad has three quality linemen in Stockton's Brett Bedore, Smith Center's Randy Hull and Atwood's Tracy Buford.

Behind those linemen are four running backs — Smith Center's Jeff Simoneau, Atwood's Marc Payton, McPherson's Dwayne Chandler and Northern Valley's B.J. Vincent — who rushed for a combined 5,600 yards this season, two powerful fullbacks in Smith Center's Brooks Barta and Kevin Dougherty and a heady, polished quarterback in Danny Holloway of Stockton.

Defensively, 255-pound Eric Clayton anchors the line, which also contains Hull, Bedore and Simoneau.

Barta, Vincent, Buford and Chandler make up a strong line-backing corps and Dougherty, Hol-



loway and Payton provide a strong secondary.

This year's elite team is the heaviest since 1980, averaging 200 pounds.

Barta and Simoneau are the only players to make The Journal's Top 11 for the second straight year. Clayton and Chandler are the only juniors.

Players on the Top 11 team are selected on the strength of their performances in high school, not their potential for college football careers. Here's a closer look at the 12th annual Top 11 team.

BROOKS BARTA

In three years as Smith Center's fullback, Barta was good for at least three or four yards 99 percent of the

time. Most opposing coaches credit Barta with making the Redmen's wishbone attack so potent.

The 192-pound All-Mid-Continent League player rushed for 2,500 yards over the last two years, averaging 5.3 yards per carry. He also scored 42 touchdowns in that time.

Barta was even more respected for his defensive exploits at middle linebacker in Smith Center's 6-1 formation.

He led the Redmen in defensive points for three straight years.

Barta recorded 81 solo tackles in Smith Center's state championship season of 1986 and came back with 70 solo tackles and 40 assists in nine games this season.

"Brooks was a steady player for us and a good leader," said Smith Center coach Roger Barta, Brooks' father. "He has always worked hard at making himself a better player. He was a big part of our success the last three years."

Barta, like Simoneau, is being sought after by major colleges. Kansas, Kansas State, Wyoming and Arizona State are among the schools courting him.

1987 All-Area Top 11

| Player, School | Hgt. | Wgt. | Yr. | Position |
|-------------------------------|------|------|-----|----------|
| Brooks Barta, Smith Center | 6-2 | 190 | Sr. | FB-LB |
| Brett Bedore, Stockton | 6-2 | 195 | Sr. | C-DT |
| Tracy Buford, Atwood | 6-2 | 230 | Sr. | OT-LB |
| Dwayne Chandler, McPherson | 6-2 | 190 | Jr. | RB |
| Eric Clayton, Salina Central | 6-6 | 255 | Jr. | DT |
| Kevin Dougherty, Abilene | 6-1 | 185 | Sr. | FB-SS |
| Danny Holloway, Stockton | 5-10 | 165 | Sr. | QB-DB-P |
| Randy Hull, Smith Center | 5-10 | 210 | Sr. | C-DG |
| Marc Payton, Atwood | 5-11 | 165 | Sr. | RB-DB |
| Jeff Simoneau, Smith Center | 6-2 | 210 | Sr. | RB-DE |
| B.J. Vincent, Northern Valley | 5-11 | 185 | Sr. | TB-LB-P |

BRETT BEDORE

Arguably one of the best centers in the state, Bedore, a 6-2, 195-pounder, was Stockton's best lineman the last two years, which saw the Tigers reach the 2-1A state championship game each season, winning the title this season.

"Brett was also our best defensive player," said Stockton coach Phil Wilson. "We don't keep a lot of defensive stats, but he was our leading tackler."

Like Barta, Bedore was a steady and reliable performer for the Tigers. He anchored a strong of-

fensive line which allowed Stockton running backs Robert Winters and Shane Sammons to each rush for more than 1,000 yards this season.

Bedore and Co. especially shined in Stockton's 54-28 victory over Frontenac in this year's Class 2-1A state championship game when the Tigers rushed for 547 yards.

TRACY BUFORD

Atwood coach Dan Lankas knows a good linebacker when he sees one. After all, Lankas was an All-1B

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