

Sports



1982 ALL-AREA FOOTBALL — Members of The Salina Journal's 1982 All-Area Football Team are (front row, from left) Brad Lambert, Hoxie (14); Jim Maska, Hays (15); (second row) Todd Druse, Salina South (1); John Tacha, Norton (12); Mike Rogers, Smith Center (24); Bruce Garten, Abilene (67); Ray Wilson, McPherson (30); (back row) Roger Barta, Smith Center, Coach of the Year; Ken Stonebraker, Ellsworth (12); Sam Holloway, Lincoln (21); Dan Drees, Thomas More Prep (78); Larry Grieve, Osborne (76).

Barta takes low key approach

By BRETT MARSHALL
 Sports Writer

Smith Center head football coach Roger Barta is not an excitable individual.

Quiet and unassuming, Barta carefully chooses the words he uses to describe himself, his staff and his players.

He is not fancy in his work, approaching his duties matter-of-factly. It is work he does quite well.

Barta, in his fifth season at the helm of the Redmen's grid fortunes, finally reached the pinnacle of every high school coach's career eight days ago when his team won a state championship.

For taking a team that posted a 2-7 record just a year ago, turned it around to 12-1 this season and won the Class 3A crown, Barta has been selected as The Salina Journal's 1982 Area Coach of the Year.

"This is the highlight of my-coaching career," Barta said of the honor. "This is something I can share with my staff,

Past Winners

- 1977 — Ed Buller, Clifton-Clyde; Clayton Williams, Beloit.
- 1978 — Paul Dennis, Abilene.
- 1979 — Jon Bingsesser, Sacred Heart.
- 1980 — Larry Friend, Plainville.
- 1981 — Robert Teeler, Victoria.
- 1982 — Roger Barta, Smith Center.

my players, the school and the community. It was a total effort for us to win the championship."

Barta, a native of Plainville, comes from the old-fashioned school of coaching — most of which was learned from veteran coaches Earl Barber (Wakeneey) and Bob Briggs (at Atwood).

"They are both fine coaches and fine gentlemen," Barta said of his mentors. "About everything we do is what Earl taught me. I don't believe in throwing the ball much. I like to run the ball — you have to do that to be successful."

Despite last year's dismal record, Barta and his staff were cautiously optimistic things would be better this time around. They turned out to be right.

"We felt like we could be competitive," said Barta. "Our record was deceiving last year because we lost five of those games by a touchdown or less. This year, when we had fourth and one, we made it. Last year, we didn't."

Barta and his staff use some of those old-fashioned cliches that you've heard before — team unity, positive attitude and desire.

"I learned a lot about coaching kids from Briggs," said Barta. "We don't look that much for height, weight and speed. We look for a kid with heart. We try to use the positive approach and we tell our young people to be gentlemen and that they have to be coachable."

An off-season conditioning program helped Barta's team become bigger, stronger and more mature.

"These kids grew up a lot during the last year," he said. "They were beat around when they were younger and they were just tired of losing. They became very dedicated and we developed a lot of leadership from our seniors and some of our underclassmen."

Barta did acknowledge the fact that he and his staff were not so quiet at all times.

"We get kinda wild once in a while," Barta said jokingly. "Our job is to prepare the kids as much as possible."

Barta, in discussing some of his coaching philosophy, said he and his staff had a close relationship with the players — but not too close.

"I think you have to have that close feeling, but at the same time you have to keep a distance," said Barta. "They have to respect you and your staff for what you're doing."

Barta refused to take all the credit for the success of the 1982 Smith Center team.

"It's all of us together," he said of his staff. "We have an excellent group of coaches and we spend a lot of time together. It's a real close staff. In this day and age there are a lot of coaches who don't want to spend the time it takes to prepare. But our staff goes the extra yard to be prepared."

Barta described himself as "fortunate" to be a part of a state championship season.

"A lot of coaches have coached longer than I have and never won one," he said. "I just happened to come along here at the right time. We're never satisfied with everything we do and we'll just get after it again next year and see what happens."

For now, though, Barta can enjoy all that comes with winning a state championship. It's certainly a season he'll never forget.

Tacha, Rogers top All-Area team

By BRETT MARSHALL
 Sports Writer

Every football coach looks for an offense that blends a pinpoint passing attack with a powerful running game.

If every coach had John Tacha of Norton and Mike Rogers of Smith Center in his backfield, he would be able to move the ball effectively on the ground or through the air.

Those two players — Tacha a quarterback, and Rogers a tailback — are the headliners of The Salina Journal's seventh annual All-Area Top 11 Football Team.

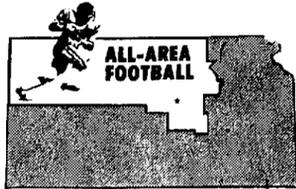
Tacha, who had to switch from a widebone attack to a pro-set offense under first-year coach Neil Melillo, took his team to the brink of the Class 4A state championship game, losing to eventual winner Wellington, 20-13, in the semifinals.

It was the leadership of Tacha that propelled the Blue Jays to their best season in several years.

He had a great year and is a great kid to work with," Melillo said of his 6-1, 175-pound senior. "John grasped right away what we wanted from him and he did a super job of providing us with the leadership that you always look for from a quarterback."

Tacha's statistics were perhaps tops among quarterbacks who played in the Classes 4-5-6A this year.

He completed 85-of-156 passes (54 percent) for 1,617 yards and an incredible 25 touchdowns. He was intercepted just nine times. In addition, he rushed



for 526 yards and six touchdowns for a total offensive output of 2,143 yards and 31 TDs. That came on the heels of a junior campaign when he passed for over 1,150 yards.

"I'd say his greatest strength was the confidence he had in his ability," said Melillo. "And he was able to transmit that confidence to the rest of the team."

Melillo praised Tacha for learning a complex offensive system that utilizes a read concept on pass patterns.

"We don't have preset pass routes," said Melillo. "We base our routes on what the defensive backs do or don't do. The quarterback is always reading the secondary coverage and he does it on the move and that's difficult."

Melillo expects Tacha to get better once he moves to the collegiate ranks. "John's a super passer," said Melillo. "There's a difference between a thrower and a passer. John can throw every type of pass that you'd want from a quarterback."

Rogers, a fleet-footed 180-pounder, had the kind of season that most players only dream about when he led the

Player — School	Hgt.	Wgt.	Yr.	Position
Dan Drees — Thomas More Prep	6-1	195	Sr.	OT-DT
Todd Druse — Salina South	5-11	165	Sr.	DE
Bruce Garten — Abilene	6-1	190	Sr.	OG-DE
Larry Grieve — Osborne	6-2	234	Sr.	OT-DT
Sam Holloway — Lincoln	6-1	190	Sr.	RB-LB
Brad Lambert — Hoxie	6-0	175	Sr.	QB-FS
Jim Maska — Hays	6-1	175	Sr.	RB-S
Mike Rogers — Smith Center	6-0	180	Jr.	RB-CB
Ken Stonebraker — Ellsworth	6-2	170	Sr.	QB-FS
John Tacha — Norton	6-1	175	Sr.	QB-FS
Ray Wilson — McPherson	6-1	192	Sr.	TB-SS

Coach of the Year — Roger Barta, Smith Center.

Redmen to the Class 3A state championship with a 6-0 triumph over Wellsville last week.

On offense, he rushed for an amazing 2,029 yards on 315 attempts and 25 touchdowns. He is the first 2,000-yard rusher in the seven-year history of The Journal's All-Area Top 11.

"Mike is a pretty good back for a junior," said Smith Center coach Roger Barta of his prize runner. "He's got speed, quickness and balance — all the qualities you look for in a great back. Plus, he's got the size and strength."

"But Mike will be the first one to tell you he had a good line in front of him. That's the key to a runner's success. You don't coach too many kids like him. He's a natural."

Rogers, however, used his talents on the football field in a variety of ways. He returned punts and kickoffs 10

punts for 335 yards and 3 touchdowns, 11 kickoffs for 192 yards), and he caught five passes for 86 yards.

From his defensive cornerback position, Rogers accounted for 41 unassisted tackles, 19 assists, recovered four fumbles and intercepted four passes, one of which he returned for a TD.

Here is a look at the remaining players on the 1982 All-Area Top 11 team.

Sam Holloway, Lincoln
 Holloway, a 6-1, 190-pound senior halfback-linebacker, joins an elite group with his selection to this year's team. He garnered Top 11 honors last year as a junior and now is only the fourth repeat player in the team's seven-year history.

He did it despite playing in only six games, missing the final three with a leg injury that is still slowing him in basketball.

In the six games he did play, Holloway had exhibited the skills that had enabled him to account for over 1,700 yards of total offense during his junior season.

"He's got a lot of power and he had to run with a young line in front of him," said Lincoln coach Joe Ortiz.

"When the line finally got better, that's when Sam got hurt."

He had rushed for 517 yards and scored 12 touchdowns, caught 18 passes for 216 yards and completed 7-of-12 passes for another 151 yards (884 total yards).

Ortiz said Holloway was the best all-around player he had coached. And that's saying something because he had 1980 Top 11 pick Wayne Loy, now at Kansas State University.

"Wayne was more limited in the positions he could play," said Ortiz. "Sam and Wayne are two different types of players but he (Sam) can do so much more than Wayne."

Larry Grieve, Osborne
 Grieve is the biggest player on this year's team at 6-2, 234 pounds. He is a legitimate major college prospect but he may opt for wrestling since he is a two-time state 1-2-3A heavyweight champion.

"He's a big boy — very strong, very quick — a really exceptional lineman," said his coach, veteran Dave Johnson. "I think he's the best lineman to come out of this area since Amos Donaldson