

Leo E. Strang
Football Coach & Innovator Extraordinaire

by Carter E. Strang

Leo E. Strang is ranked as one of the nation's 50 all-time greatest high school football coaches.¹ He won two national and three consecutive Ohio high school state at storied Massillon Washington High School (1958-1963) and had an overall high school coaching school record of 109-26-1 (80.51 win-loss percentage) over thirteen seasons.²

Strang became the second Ohio high school coach -- after Paul Brown -- named head coach of a major college Ohio football program when he became the Kent State University coach in 1964.³ His Kent State University record (1964-1967) was 16-21-2 (43.59 win-loss percentage).⁴ Since 1967, only one Kent State coach with a tenure equal to or greater than Strang's has a better win-loss percentage.⁵

Strang is a national recognized football innovator who pioneered the use of: a barefooted soccer-style kicker; summer conditioning; a defensive analyzation circuit board to help call offensive plays; vinyl helmet award decals for individual player performance; a sophisticated game film evaluation system to assess player performance; vinyl helmet team logos; rule and influence blocking for multiple offenses; assigning coaches to players based on the area they played in a formation rather than specific positions; white football shoes; a point-based high school playoff system; unique, interchangeable uniform designs; an instamatic camera during games to better assess opponent's formations and line splits; and an unbalanced line Wing-T offense.⁶

His coaching earned the praise of fellow coaches, including Paul Brown and Woody Hayes; former players that include Super Bowl Champions, All-Pros, and All-Americans; the NCAA; sportswriters; and many others.⁷

Personal History (1922-1950)

Born in Ashland, Ohio on December 12, 1922, Strang was a first-team All-Ohio football selection and a record-setting three sport athlete at Ashland High School.⁸ After graduating from high school in 1943, he served in the Navy on a destroyer escort in the Pacific Theater in World War II.⁹ At the conclusion of the war, Strang enrolled in Ashland College¹⁰ where he was a star football and baseball player, graduating in 1950 with a major in art.¹¹ While at Ashland College he married Betty Barrell, who he met in San Francisco during WWII.¹²

Coaching Record/Accomplishments

Caldwell High School (1950)

Strang began his career at Caldwell High School (Caldwell, Ohio) where his 1950 team was 5-4.¹³ At Caldwell, he coached Al Christopher who was All-Ohio, played at Ohio University, and served as head football coach and athletic director at Muskingum University for a quarter century.¹⁴

Upper Sandusky High School (1951-1955)

Strang became the head football coach at Upper Sandusky High School (Upper Sandusky, Ohio) in 1951 where over five seasons his teams were 35-10-0 (77.78 win-loss percentage) and won two conference titles outright and shared another.¹⁵ His undefeated and untied 1955 team finished 9th in the state, outscored its opponents 329-89, and was the last Upper to win a conference title for the next 48 years.¹⁶ He had five Upper players selected All-Ohio, including Ohio's Back of the Year.¹⁷ Strang finished seventh in 1955 Ohio High School Coach of the Year balloting.¹⁸

The Back of the Year was David Kuenzli, a 1953 All-Ohio selection who rushed for over 2,000 yards, led the state in points scored, and played at Ohio University¹⁹

Strang also coached Dave McClain, an All-Ohio selection who played at Bowling Green State University.²⁰ McClain coached Ball State University to its first Mid-American Conference (MAC) Championship and was the MAC Coach of the Year.²¹ As the head football coach at the University of Wisconsin, he led the Badgers to its first bowl game victory.²² In 1986, the Big 10 named its Coach of the Year Award in his honor.²³

East Cleveland Shaw High School (1956-1957)

In 1956, Strang was hired as the East Cleveland Shaw High School (East Cleveland, Ohio) head football coach.²⁴ He took over a program that sportswriters described as having been in the football doldrums after several seasons of consistent losses, including a one-win season in 1955.²⁵

When Strang was hired as the new Shaw coach, Ohio State's legendary football coach Woody Hayes said, "I regard Leo Strang as one of the truly outstanding young high school coaches in Ohio. He has a very keen technical knowledge of football. He also has a personality to go along with his good coaching. I have watched him work with his players and he does an excellent job with them getting the most out of each boy. He certainly commands each boy's respect. He carries the same capabilities into his classroom."²⁶

At Shaw, Strang was 16-3 (84.21 win percentage) and won a Lake Erie League Conference co-championship (1956) and championship (1957), the latter being Shaw's first outright league title.²⁷ The 1957 team was 9-1 and finished 8th in the state, Shaw's highest ranking.²⁸ Its only loss was to undefeated Toledo DeVilbiss (19-14), which finished 3rd in the state after defeating Shaw in the season finale.²⁹ Strang had six Shaw players selected All-Ohio.³⁰

Strang gained notoriety not only for his success, but also for his showmanship that earned Shaw the moniker of "The Greatest Show in High School Football."³¹ It included the nation's first barefooted soccer-style kicker; pregame calisthenics performed to music provided by the school band; and dazzling, multi-colored uniforms that included florescent stars on the helmets and kangaroo hide red shoes.³² The helmet stars were Strang's first use of vinyl helmet stickers, which he further developed at Massillon.³³

The nation's first barefooted soccer-style place kicker was Shaw's Marion (Mario) Gerhardt, an Austrian immigrant who impressed Strang with how well he kicked a volleyball soccer-style playing kickball in gym class.³⁴ Recognizing Mario's potential as a place kicker, Strang took Mario to the football field to see if he could place kick a football soccer-style, which Mario had never done.³⁵ After several kicks wearing a shoe, Strang had Mario kick barefoot -- which is how Mario played street soccer growing up in Vienna -- knowing that if Mario could do so, it would heighten fan and media interest.³⁶ Turns out Mario kicked even better barefoot.³⁷

In a 2021 podcast, Mario recalled that when he lined up to kick his first PAT, the opposing team members were so curious at seeing a barefooted soccer-style kicker that they "just looked and watched me kick the ball" and "didn't even try to block it."³⁸ Mario, who would run barefooted onto the field to fans chanting "Mar-e-oo! Mar-e-oo!,"³⁹ generated national and local media coverage (articles about the first barefooted soccer-style kicker appeared in over 360 newspapers nationwide) and helped led Shaw to its 1957 league championship.⁴⁰

Mario was a placekicker for the Bowling Green State University freshman football team before transferring to the United States Naval Academy.⁴¹ At the Naval Academy he switched sports and was a member of its soccer team that was runner-up in the 1963 D-1 NCAA Soccer Championship.⁴² A Masters Swimmer National Champion and All-American, Mario is Ohio's all-time winningest soccer coach.⁴³

Strang also coached Tom Matte at Shaw, who was an All-Ohio football selection.⁴⁴ Tom was a college football All-American and Heisman Trophy candidate at The Ohio State University where he played quarterback.⁴⁵ A first-round NFL draft pick by the Baltimore Colts, he was a two-time Pro Bowl selection and Super Bowl Champion running back.⁴⁶ Tom was an NFL rushing leader who was the first to run for over 100 yards in a Super Bowl (1969) and set the yard per carry average (10.5), which has not been eclipsed.⁴⁷ After his playing career ended, Matte was an NFL color analyst on CBS and radio sportscaster for the Baltimore Ravens.⁴⁸

When Strang resigned to take the Massillon coaching job, an East Cleveland sportswriter said, “He changed the dull Shaw grid squad into a classy, smooth working machine that shared the Lake Erie League title in 1956 and then waltzed to an undefeated LEL title in 1957.”⁴⁹

Massillon Washington High School (1958-1963)

Described as a 35 yr. old “ball of fire” who is “forthright, ambitious, confident, and colorful,” Strang was hired in January 1958 as the head football coach at Massillon Washington High School (Massillon, Ohio), the nation’s greatest all-time high school football dynasty.⁵⁰

It was no coincidence that Strang ended up at Massillon. In 1940 his Ashland High School coach took the team to watch a Massillon summer practice led by Paul Brown.⁵¹ Strang said, “I remember how well organized they were and how impressed I was with the Massillon program.”⁵² Years later, when he was coaching at Upper Sandusky, Strang boldly told his players and staff that someday he would be the Massillon coach.⁵³ Interestingly, eighteen years after Strang watched one of his practices, it was Paul Brown – along with Woody Hayes – that recommended Strang for the Massillon head coaching position.⁵⁴

When Strang first met his Massillon team, he had some initial second thoughts about taking the job.⁵⁵ “The most shocking memory was the team meeting,” Strang said, “standing in the gym and watching the players come in after school. Looking at them and how young they looked and how small they were in comparison with the kids I had at Cleveland Shaw. Most of the kids I had at Shaw were like Tom Matte, who played for the Colts. Tom was a running back, about 6’, 210 pounds – we didn’t have anybody like that at Massillon.”⁵⁶ However, Strang’s soon realized his fears were misplaced.⁵⁷ “When I got them out on the football field and started working with them, I could see the difference,” Strang said. “I could just tell. They were dead serious and wanted to do what you told them to do.”⁵⁸

In accepting the Massillon coaching position, he took on the challenge of returning Massillon back atop the Ohio scholastic football ranks, where it had not been since 1954.⁵⁹ Strang met that challenge, not only returning Massillon to the top of the state rankings but to the national rankings as well. He led the Tigers to two national (1959 and 1961) and three consecutive state titles (1959, 1960, and 1961) while posting a six-season record of 54-8-1 (86.51 win-loss percentage).⁶⁰ His 1961 team finished 7th in the nation.⁶¹

Strang is the last Massillon coach to win a national title and none since have won as many state titles.⁶² He holds the regular season win record (11-0 in ’61).⁶³ His 1959 team still holds the Massillon record for most rushing yards per game (338) and rushing yards per play (8.6).⁶⁴ His 1960 team holds the record for most rushing yard in a game (551 against Canton McKinley).⁶⁵ The Tigers were also outstanding defensively, posting 25 shutouts in 63 games (a remarkable 40% average) during Strang’s Massillon tenure.⁶⁶

He has the most wins (39) in the first four seasons of any Massillon coaching tenure, including state playoff era coaches.⁶⁷ During Strang's three year title stretch (1959-1961), his Tigers were 31-1 and outscored opponents 1,111-203.⁶⁸ Strang ranks second of Massillon coaches most consecutive regular season wins by a coach (20), one behind Paul Brown.⁶⁹ He is also second in winning and unbeaten streaks spanning successive coaching tenures.⁷⁰

Strang had twenty-two All-Ohio⁷¹ and fourteen high school All-American selections,⁷² two players named Ohio Lineman of the Year, and one named Ohio Defensive Player of the Year.⁷³

He was named the 1959 Ohio High School Football Coach of the Year and was selected the Stark County High School Football Coaches Coach of the Year in 1959, 1960, 1961, and 1963.⁷⁴

At Massillon, Strang was the first in the nation to use vinyl helmet team logos and individual vinyl helmet award decals, earning him the title of "the pioneer of printed helmet decals."⁷⁵ A Chevrolet marketing campaign that featured a leaping tiger served as the inspiration for his introduction of the Massillon "Leaping Tiger" vinyl helmet team logo decal in 1958.⁷⁶ He gave away the rights to the idea to the company that designed the decal, causing Strang to jokingly lament, "I should be getting a nickel for every decal put on a helmet, but I wasn't that smart."⁷⁷

Strang introduced individual vinyl helmet award decals in 1959, which consisted of small stars denoting outstanding play.⁷⁸ Ohio State was so impressed with Massillon's use of the award decals, that it consulted with Massillon before launching its "Buckeye Leaf" helmet awards years later.⁷⁹

That same year Strang outfitted his players in white shoes years before Joe Namath popularized wearing them.⁸⁰ He said white football shoes "were a psychological weapon, [and] we were the only team in the country to have them. Under the lights, particularly, the white shoes make you appear much faster."⁸¹ "The kids loved the shoes," Strang continued, "and we always threatened to take them away if they didn't play well."⁸²

He introduced V-neck jerseys and multicolored uniforms with interchangeable jersey/pant combinations, resulting in a new look for the Tigers in every game.⁸³ Looking sharp extended off the field as well where players wore Strang designed blazers with matching Tiger monograms and ties worn on game days, banquets, and at special functions.⁸⁴

Commenting on Strang's uniform innovations at Massillon and throughout his coaching career, one sportswriter said, "Many athletic authorities recognize Strang as the most influential coach in American football in the trend of outfitting and designing football "wardrobes." The writer further stated that Strang's "innovative wizardry" places him "in the class ... with the likes of Bill Veck and very few others."⁸⁵

David Whitfield -- a high school All-American selection and Ohio State captain -- said, "We loved Leo's style. The way he liked the guys to dress. Everybody loved that. Not only did you play good, you looked good doing it. Everybody wanted to go out and play. Because on Friday night, those guys looked good."⁸⁶ Charlie Brown, a high school and college All-American said, "White shoes were part of the show. The guys at McKinley didn't wear white shoes. They didn't have emblems on their helmets or V-neck jerseys Nobody had those things but us."⁸⁷ And Tiger lineman Bob Clenedin -- who went on to play at Princeton -- said, "Other teams kind of looked like Penn State does now playing Maryland or something."⁸⁸

One of his uniform creations at Massillon never made it to the field: snap-off jerseys, a further perfection of tear-off jerseys that were legal in the 1960s.⁸⁹ With tear-away jerseys, a defensive player who tried to tackle a player by the jersey was left with a piece of cloth in his hand.⁹⁰ However, the entire jersey would have to be replaced.⁹¹ The snap-off jerseys Strang designed had three panels snapped at the shoulders, front and back. "With these jerseys," he explained, "the defenseman would grab off a panel of the uniform yet not ruin the jersey. It was a great idea, but the football brains made 'tear-aways' illegal because [it] held up games too much for repairs and uniform charges."⁹²

It was at Massillon that Strang pioneered summer conditioning football camps.⁹³ He did so after presenting evidence to the Ohio High School Athletic Association -- which initially had doubts about permitting it -- that proved that summer conditioning resulted in less player injuries when players returned to start the season.⁹⁴

Another Strang innovation was the defensive analyzation circuit board, a precursor of the computer.⁹⁵ Sports Illustrated discussed it in a 1961 feature article about Massillon football, noting "Strang has three coaches in [the] booth, along with a new gadget called [the] defensive analyzation board. When [the] button is pushed, the board helps determine which play should work against opponents. Advised of the machine's opinion, Strang sends a play into the game with [a] substitute."⁹⁶

Strang introduced the use of instamatic film to enhance assessment of opponent alignments using a jerry-rigged instamatic camera.⁹⁷ As he recalled, "We went to the Akron Beacon Journal [newspaper] and bought an old camera -- one of those big box cameras. We took it apart and put a Polaroid back in it. We cut a hole in the scoreboard at the end of the field. I had a phone connected to the press box and a phone connected to the scoreboard. As soon as we'd get information -- maybe it was a spread formation -- I'd say, 'Take,' and they'd snap a picture of it. Immediately they'd put the picture in a little can and with a string lower it to the sideline. My youngest son would be waiting for it. He'd grab that photo and it would be developing as he ran up the sideline. Before the next play, we knew exactly how they were defending us. We had a Polaroid picture of it."⁹⁸

He also pioneered the use of a sophisticated player evaluation system using films to develop norms for players, which most pro, college and high school teams use today.⁹⁹ Players who scored 90% or better based on the game film evaluation received Massillon's helmet awards.¹⁰⁰

Strang assigned his assistant coaches to coach areas of the formation rather than individual positions.¹⁰¹ "As a defensive end coach," he reasoned, "how can you watch both defensive ends at the same time?"¹⁰² "Our coaches coached an area" ... "for instance, 'Ducky' Schroder [a long time Massillon assistant coach] had the long side end and long side tackle on offense and the middle guard and linebackers on defense."¹⁰³

Strang brought his innovative unbalanced line Wing-T offense to Massillon, which created challenges for Tiger opponents that had only a week to prepare for the unique offense.¹⁰⁴ While at Massillon he further innovated with his offense, noting, "We were the first to add rule blocking to a multiple offense and in 1959 we added influence blocking which totally fouled up the read defenses of that time."¹⁰⁵ And each offensive play between the tackles was run to stopwatch precision. "Our dive play had to hit a .6 of a second and our off tackle hit in 1.1 seconds," Strang emphasized.¹⁰⁶

While Strang's drive and intensity were well documented, he had a disarming sense of humor. After a loss that ended his 20-game win streak, he knew he would face tough audience questioning at the next Massillon Booster Club meeting were the game films are shown.¹⁰⁷ Strang came to the meeting in a disguise (fake beard, glasses, large hat and overcoat) and sat unnoticed in the back of the room while someone else showed the film.¹⁰⁸ When the lights came back on, he got up and came down the aisle taking shedding his disguise.¹⁰⁹ In recalling it, Strang said, "Everybody just started to roar. And that took the edge off ... and I didn't get those hard questions you often get."¹¹⁰

At another Massillon Booster Club meeting, Strang was showing film of a Tigers' game in which All-Ohio and All-American back Art Hastings was almost knocked down by the opponent's defensive end.¹¹¹ As Strang tells the story, "Art went down to one hand spun around and had just straighten out when the linebacker hit him. Then another linebacker hit him, and the safety hit him. He cut back inside the safety and ran 60 yards for a touchdown. I shut off the projector and I told the Booster Club, 'Gentlemen, I'm going to tell you something about that play. That is great coaching.'¹¹²

He amazed his players with a demonstration of his kicking prowess.¹¹³ Strang -- who held his high school's place kicking record for three decades¹¹⁴ -- would set a football on a kicking tee, run at it, spin around facing away from the goal post, then kick the ball through the uprights with the heel of his foot.¹¹⁵ Recalling when he first demonstrated the kick, Strang said, "That story spread all over Massillon. This new coach down there, he kicks the ball with his heel."¹¹⁶

A gimmick Strang used to motivate his Tiger players was called "Counter-Spy."¹¹⁷ He told his players that he had a spy that knew what the opponent's scouts were saying about them in their scouting reports.¹¹⁸ One example of its use was when Strang told his star tackle that the "counter-spy" said opposing team's scout called Strang's player "a big fat tackle that they could run over all night long."¹¹⁹ Looking back at it, Strang laughed and noted, "the kids really kind-of liked it."¹²⁰

Strang's scouting reports were also innovative. As one reporter noted, "His scouting reports were run through a computer so that by the time a report on a team was ready, Strang knew more

about an opponent that the team's coach did."¹²¹ Massillon quarterback and captain Ron Swartz remembered coming to practice on Tuesday afternoon and finding a posterboard breaking down the upcoming opponent, with a photo of and scouting report about each player.¹²² "It would say if he was fast or quick, if he could be beat to the outside, if he could be beat deep, if he was a poor tackler – all that," Swartz said.¹²³ "You were up close and familiar with them by the time Friday rolled around."¹²⁴

While known for his confidence,¹²⁵ Strang revealed another side of his personality in "Strang's Story" a weekly column appearing in the Massillon newspaper.¹²⁶ In his first article published on the eve of the 1958 opening game, he confessed that he often had a case of the "gitters" before games.¹²⁷ He was so nervous before his first game at Caldwell High School that he was sick and had to leave the field before the game began.¹²⁸ And, he said, "At Upper Sandusky my debut was marked by another case of nerves. I forgot to get a new game ball. You can imagine how I felt when we had to hold up the game about five minutes."¹²⁹ At Massillon, it was the McKinley game that triggered his nerves, leading to many sleepless nights the week before the game.¹³⁰

Strang's success at Massillon led Eastman Kodak to select him to be part of a prestigious national traveling coaching clinic.¹³¹ He was the only high school coach selected.¹³² Others selected included coaching legends Paul "Bear" Bryant of Alabama, Bud Wilkinson of Oklahoma, Duffy Daugherty of Michigan State, and Jake Gaither of Florida A&M.¹³³ "The strange thing about it," he said, "I always got the most attention and the most questions [from the clinic attendees] and everything else. The reason for that was because I was from Massillon – it wasn't me. They just wanted to know about Massillon, how we did things in Massillon."¹³⁴

The Massillon vs. Canton McKinley game is the nation's greatest high school rivalry, begun 1894.¹³⁵ Strang never lost to Canton McKinley, going 6-0, which places him #1 (tie) of Massillon coaches in the series win-loss percentage.¹³⁶ He also holds the record for the largest win differential over McKinley (42-0 in 1960) and is the first Massillon coach to defeat McKinley twice during the regular season (1963) since 1909.¹³⁷

Strang was the winning head coach of the 1960 Ohio High School Football North-South All-Star Game, where he coached NFL Hall of Famer Paul Warfield.¹³⁸ NFL Hall of Famer Roger Staubach was a South All-Star team quarterback.¹³⁹

While at Massillon he led the Ohio High School Coaches Association's initial efforts to create a playoff system to determine Ohio football champions, proposing a detailed point-based plan in 1963 that is remarkably similar to the system the Ohio High School Athletic Association implemented in 1972.¹⁴⁰

Strang is memorialized in Massillon where his portrait is included in its "A Century of Heroes" downtown mural celebrating the first century of Tiger football and at Massillon Paul Brown stadium where there is a three-story photo of him included with similar sized photos of Paul Brown, Earl Bruce, and Massillon's other great coaches.¹⁴¹

Notable players Strang coached at Massillon include:

- Ben Bradley, Massillon Wall of Champions and Tiger Football Hall of Fame, All-Ohio, High School All-American, Northwood University and University of Dayton, Montreal Alouettes (CFL) lineman.¹⁴²
- Charlie Brown, Massillon Wall of Champions and Tiger Football Hall of Fame, Stark County High School Hall of Fame, All-Ohio, High School All-American, Syracuse University All-American, Chicago Bears and Buffalo Bills defensive back.¹⁴³
- Art Hastings, Tiger Football Hall of Fame, Stark County High School Football Hall of Fame, All-Ohio, High School All-American, two-time All-Ohio, Massillon's all-time leading rusher (till 2018), Morehead State University running back.¹⁴⁴
- Ken Ivan, All-Ohio, Ohio Lineman of the Year, High School All-American, University of Notre Dame, Toronto Argonauts (CFL) placekicker.¹⁴⁵
- Larry Larsuel, Tiger Football Hall of Fame, Stark County High School Football Hall of Fame, two-time All-Ohio, High School All-American.¹⁴⁶
- Hase McKey, Tiger Football Hall of Fame, Stark County High School Football Hall of Fame, two-time first-team All-Ohio, Ohio Defensive Player of the Year, High School All-American, Arizona State University lineman.¹⁴⁷
- John Mulbach, Tiger Football Hall of Fame, Stark County High School Football Hall of Fame, All-Ohio, High School All-American, center on The Ohio State University 1968 National Championship team, past chair of the NFL Pro Football Hall of Fame Board of Trustees.¹⁴⁸
- Joe Sparma, Massillon Wall of Champions, Tiger Football Hall of Fame, Stark County High School Football Hall of Fame, All-Ohio, High School All-American, The Ohio State University quarterback and pitcher, Detroit Tigers 1968 World Series Champion pitcher.¹⁴⁹
- Bob Vogel, Massillon Wall of Champions, Tiger Football Hall of Fame, Stark County High School Football Hall of Fame, All-Ohio, High School All-American, The Ohio State University All-American, first-round NFL draft selection, five-time NFL All-Pro, Baltimore Colt Super Bowl Champion who was the "blind side" tackle for Johnny Unitas.¹⁵⁰

Bob Vogel, who came to Massillon his senior year with "NFL talent and Pop Warner technique," reflected on the impact of Strang's coaching on his career.¹⁵¹ "At my other schools, I basically got no coaching," Vogel said.¹⁵² "I was getting by on pure ability."¹⁵³ Massillon's coaches -- led by Strang -- saw his potential and crammed four years' of coaching into a few months.¹⁵⁴ "Working for him," Vogel said, "was a dramatic difference in terms of what his expectations were, but it was a really great experience. It got me ready for what was next in terms of college (at Ohio State) and the NFL. My spending a year at Massillon, it was just stunning."¹⁵⁵

Charlie Brown said, "He wasn't a yeller or a screamer. He was an organizer. The assistant coaches could get loud and right in your grill, but you never felt offended by it. It wasn't insulting. It was him asking for your best and saying you didn't give him your best. Years later I understood that Coach Strang trusted those guys to dot all the 'i's and cross all the 't's."¹⁵⁶

Hase McKey said, “What he taught me on the field stayed with me. I didn’t get in a whole lot of trouble. The things he told me and the discipline he put on me, it stayed with me. He was a very super man in my life. I had a lot of friends who fell by the wayside, who got in trouble. Eventually what he taught me kept me on the right path.”¹⁵⁷

As a sportswriter noted, “Like his legendary predecessors, Paul Brown and Chuck Mather, he built his program on detail and discipline, working his players so tirelessly that Friday nights often seemed easier than the rest of the week. The approach got results.”¹⁵⁸

Another reason Friday nights often seemed easier was the quality of the Tiger players the first string practiced against all week. To that point, when Joe Sparma was asked by a reporter who was the best team the Tigers played during the 1959 national championship season, Joe said, “Our second team.”¹⁵⁹

Strang, always looked back at this time at Massillon with fondness, said, “I’d like to be remembered for having some of the best teams ever at Massillon. The old saying, ‘Once a Tiger always a Tiger’ is true.”¹⁶⁰

Kent State University (1964-1967)

When long-time Kent State coach Trevor Rees stepped down at the end of the 1963 season, Strang was hired from a list of 75 applicants as Kent State’s seventh head coach.¹⁶¹ His application was solicited by Kent State after the Stark County Coaches Association recommended Strang.¹⁶² No one else was offered the job.¹⁶³

He was tapped to take over a what was described as a “floundering Kent State program football program” in which the 1961- 1963 teams had only won eight games and had endured a seven-game losing streak.¹⁶⁴ Strang’s charge was to rebuild the program so that it was once again competitive.¹⁶⁵

Strang started by recruiting five high school All-Americans and thirteen All-State selections¹⁶⁶ that formed the nucleus of the unbeaten and untied 1964 freshman team considered by some to be one of the nation’s best.¹⁶⁷

He led Kent’s varsity to its first winning season in a half-decade and first at the major college level.¹⁶⁸ Strang also had Kent’s longest unbeaten streak since 1956, which was not surpassed until 1973.¹⁶⁹

His win-loss percentage over his four seasons was an improvement over the same number of seasons prior to his being hired, though Strang had the toughest schedule in Kent State history, which included Penn State, Kent’s first big time opponent.¹⁷⁰ And despite the passage of over a half-century, only one Kent State coach -- with a tenure equal to or greater than his -- has had a better win-loss percentage since Strang’s final season.¹⁷¹

Further underscoring the competitiveness of Strang’s Kent State teams is the fact that they outscored their opponents overall during his tenure and in all but his first season.¹⁷² Fourteen of Kent’s twenty on-the-field losses were by seven points or less, and eight of those were by three

points or less.¹⁷³ And his 1965 team came within three points of winning a share of the MAC title.¹⁷⁴

In recognition of Strang's success in once again making Kent State competitive, the 1967 Kent State Football Media Guide said, "Strang is winner.... He has done the job asked to do, that is recruiting fine players and turning the Golden Flashes into a team to be reconned with by Mid-American Conference rivals."¹⁷⁵

Strang's Golden Flashes gained national notoriety for setting two NCAA rushing records,¹⁷⁶ having the nation's second leading rusher,¹⁷⁷ and leading the nation in pass defense and PAT percentage.¹⁷⁸

He coached a Kent State first-team All-American and six honorable mention selections, Kent's first in the major college era by NCAA approved selectors.¹⁷⁹ Fourteen of his players were first-team All-MAC selections, one of whom is Kent's only MAC Offensive Player of the Year.¹⁸⁰

Thirteen of his players were drafted by NFL teams, a number unmatched by any Kent State coach.¹⁸¹ Two were second round selections, marking the first time Kent players were selected that high, and it is the highest round in which a Kent player has been drafted.¹⁸² Seven of Strang's Kent State players played pro football.¹⁸³

Excitement about "Leo's Legions" resulted in a dramatic increase in attendance. In his first year Strang's team led the nation in percentage of increased attendance, and in the next two seasons his teams broke 11 Kent State attendance records.¹⁸⁴

A sportswriter who attended a Kent home game that set an all-time Kent attendance record, stated, "Strang has apparently given the Kent campus a much-needed transformation in the football department."¹⁸⁵ He further stated that, "The spirit of the team and on the campus is sky high. The team is playing outstanding football. The stands rocked with the cheers of the fans...". "We hadn't heard such cheering at a college game in a long time."¹⁸⁶ He concluded by saying, "It's good to big time college football coming the fore so close to home."¹⁸⁷

The increased fan interest spurred expansion of Kent's Memorial Stadium to be the largest in the MAC and sparked plans for construction of its present stadium.¹⁸⁸ It also led to creation of a thirteen station Kent State Radio Network that reached a potential audience of 5.5 million listeners.¹⁸⁹ Kent's exposure expanded to television when in 1967 Kent State participated in the Mid-American Conference's first appearance on ABC-TV's "Game of the Week," in which Kent defeated MAC co-champion Ohio University.¹⁹⁰

Adding to fan appeal were Strang's eye-catching Kent State uniform designs featuring helmets with a blue "K" framed by yellow lightning bolts, and pants and V-neck jerseys trimmed on the shoulders with matching yellow lightning bolts and "KENT STATE" across the chest.¹⁹¹ One commentator said was a "great uniform design" that "cut a sharp figure on the field."¹⁹²

At Kent State, Strang continued his use of the Wing T offense incorporating an unbalanced line which was unique among major college programs and described by a football historian as “innovative and noteworthy.”¹⁹³

After winning the final three games of the 1967 season -- victories over Louisville, Marshall, and Xavier -- Strang retired from coaching and became a Kent State administrator and successful businessman.¹⁹⁴ He remained a Kent State Football supporter to his death in 1996 at age 73.¹⁹⁵ In honor of his contributions to the football program, Kent State created the Leo Strang Award for the upper-class football player who had the highest GPA.¹⁹⁶

Notable players Strang coached at Kent State include:

- Bill Asbury, Kent State Varsity K Hall of Fame, All-MAC and MAC Offensive Player of the Year, Honorable Mention All-American, Pittsburgh Steelers running back, NFL's longest run from scrimmage in 1967.¹⁹⁷
- Jon Brooks, Kent State Varsity K Hall of Fame, two-time first-team All-MAC, an Honorable Mention All-American, 1967 College All-Star Game selection (played offensive tackle against the Green Bay Packers), NFL second-round draft pick of the Philadelphia Eagles.¹⁹⁸
- Jim Corrigan, Kent State Varsity K Hall of Fame, three-time first-team All-MAC, first-team College Football All-American, NFL second-round draft pick of the St. Louis Cardinals, jersey retired by Kent State, Toronto Argonauts defensive end, Canadian Football League Hall of Fame member.¹⁹⁹
- Don “The Human Hammer” Fitzgerald, Kent State Varsity K Hall of Fame, two-time All-MAC, Honorable Mention All-American, set two NCAA D-1 rushing records, nation's second leading rusher in 1966, NFL scout said he was “the best big man in the country inside the 10-yard line,” fourth-round pick of the St. Louis Cardinals.²⁰⁰
- Pat Gucciardo, Kent State Varsity K Hall of Fame, two-time first-team All-MAC, Honorable Mention All-American, New York Jets defensive back.²⁰¹
- Lou Harris, Kent State Varsity K Hall of Fame, two-time first-team All-MAC, Honorable Mention All-American, his 19 career interceptions is still the Kent State record, and he did it in only 23 varsity games, Pittsburgh Steelers defensive back.²⁰²
- Don Nottingham, Kent State Varsity K Hall of Fame, two-time All-MAC, Baltimore Colts and Miami Dolphins running back, Super Bowl VIII champion, ranked in the top 10 for NFL rushing touchdowns in 1974, 1975, and 1976.²⁰³

Don Fitzgerald said, “When I first came to Kent State, I guess I gave Coach Strang and some of the others a tough time. He straightened me out and it made me a better football player and person.”²⁰⁴

Ron Swartz, who played quarterback and was a captain for Strang at Kent State, after having done so at Massillon as well, said, “I wouldn't say you feared him, but you respected him. You knew you had to produce or you would lose your starting job.”²⁰⁵

Jim Corrigan said he came to Kent for one reason: Leo Strang.²⁰⁶ “I'll probably always remember being recruited to Kent State by that man, his mannerisms and his style.”²⁰⁷ “He kept the whole process light and enjoyable, and it was a great time for everyone involved.”²⁰⁸ “But

best of all,” Corrigan continued, “after I became coach (in 1994), Leo was one of the first people to step forward and congratulate me. I always had great respect for Leo.”²⁰⁹

Kent State won its only MAC title in 1973, with former Massillon quarterback Don James as its coach.²¹⁰ Strang’s successful effort in making Kent competitive in the MAC caused James to consider the Kent job.²¹¹ James said, “I watched the movies and Leo Strang came within one inch of making it real big at Kent State University, and that was the reason I was interested in taking that job.”²¹²

Honors

Coach Strang is a member of the Ohio High School Football Coaches Hall of Fame, the Stark County High School Football Hall of Fame, the Ashland College Sports Hall of Fame, and the Ashland County Sports Hall of Fame.²¹³ He was named the 1959 Ohio High School Football Coach of the Year and the 1961 Ashland College Alumni of the Year.²¹⁴ Coach Strang was also named Stark County Coach of the Year in 1959, 1960, 1961, and 1963.²¹⁵ The NCAA honored Coach Strang posthumously in 1997 with a resolution recognizing his contributions to intercollegiate athletics.²¹⁶

Strang Family

Strang and his wife Bettie had sons Carter and David and three grandsons, Steven, Carson, and Kevin Strang.²¹⁷

Leo Strang College & Pro Football Coaching/Administrative Tree²¹⁸

Al Christopher: *Kent State University, Muskingum University (Head Coach and Athletic Director); Jim Corrigan:* *Kent State University (Head Coach); Nick Coso:* *Kent State University, Ferris University (Head Coach); Joe Dean:* *Ohio University; Fred Gissendaner:* *Kent State University; Pat Guchardo:* *Adrian College, Kent State University; Tom Heckert Sr.:* *Adrian College (Head Coach), Cleveland Browns (scout), Miami Dolphins (President of Player Personnel); Gaylord (Hap) Lillick:* *Kent State University; Larry Lorton:* *Kent State University; David McClain:* *Bowling Green University, Cornell University, Miami University, Kansas University, Ohio State University, Ball State University (Head Coach), Wisconsin University (Head Coach); Santo Pino:* *Kent State University, Washington University; Chuck Reisland:* *Kent State University; John Riley:* *Kent State University; Frank Smouse:* *Cincinnati Bengals (coach and scout).*

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¹ Askeland, Kevin. “50 Greatest High School Football Coaches of All-Time.” *MaxPreps*, 19 September 2018, www.maxpreps.com/news/4rMI-KsPIUqi1ggpjKhamA/50-greatest-high-school-football-coaches-of-all-time.htm . Accessed 17 January 2023.

² Seaburn, John. “Strang a storyteller, coach extraordinaire.” *The Akron Beacon Journal*, 17 April 1996, p. B-5; Perkins, Olivera. “Leo E. Strang, 73, Kent State Football Coach.” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 17 April 1996, p. 9-B; “Coach Leo Strang.” *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, https://massillontigers.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/coach_leo_strang.pdf .

Accessed 1 January 2023 (page numbers in the article are not numbered. However, there are eight unnumbered pages which in the article will be referenced as if they were numbered); “Strang Named Kent Grid Coach.” *The Daily Kent Stater*, 1 January 1964, p.1, dks.library.kent.edu/?a=d&d=dks19640109-01.2.2&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN----- . Accessed 17 January 2023.

³ “Strang’s Selection Boost for High School Coaches.” *The Record-Courier* (Kent, Ohio), 10 January 1964, p.16.

⁴ *Kent State 2023 Football Record Book*. Kent State University, 2023, pp. 2-5, 7-8, s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/sidearm.nextgen.sites/kentstatesports.com/documents/2023/8/28/2023_Football_record_book.pdf. Accessed 3 January 2024. Note that the official NCAA Kent State win-loss records for Strang are 17-20-2, a .462 win-loss percentage. “Leo Strang.” *NCAA Statistics*, https://stats.ncaa.org/head_coaches. Accessed 17 January 2023. The NCAA does not recognize Kent State’s forfeit of its 1967 21-14 win over Mid-American Conference (MAC) co-champion Ohio University, which arose from a Mid-American Conference -- not NCAA -- eligibility violation due to a Kent State Administration & Records office mistake. Dietrich, Phil. “Strang Quits as Kent State Coach.” *The Akron Beacon Journal*, 21 November 1967, www.newspapers.com/article/the-akron-beacon-journal-strang-quits-as/6910220/. Accessed 4 February 2024 -- via newspapers.com; Boal, Pete. “Kent Offers Forfeiture, Football Race Still On.” *The Post*, Volume 57, Issue 26, 1 November 1967, media.library.ohio.edu/digital/collection/studentnewspapers/id/39790/. Accessed 17 January 2023.

⁵ *Kent State 2023 Football Record Book*, *supra.*, p. 5 (Don James is the sole Kent State coach with a higher win-loss percentage since 1967 who served an equal or greater tenure).

⁶ Strang football innovations are further discussed *infra*. with citations from these and other authorities: Mistrovich, Chuck. “Leo Strang: An Adrenaline Junkie.” *AC’cent*, Ashland College, Spring 1985, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 8; Beaven, Chris. “Heavy 1980s Influence on New Stark County High School Football Hall of Fame Class,” *The Canton Repository* (Canton, Ohio), 1 January 2019, www.cantonrep.com/story/sports/2019/01/27/heavy-1980s-influence-on-new/6188386007/. Accessed 17 January 2023; White Jr, John E. (Jack). *The Massillon Tiger Story, The First Hundred Years*. Classic Press, 1994, pp. 140-149; “Coach Leo Strang,” *supra.*, pp. 1-8.

⁷ Praise from fellow coaches, his players, the NCAA, sportswriters, and others is further discussed *infra*.

⁸ “Leo Strang.” *Ashland County Sports Hall of Fame*, www.ashlandcosportshof.org/Leo_Strang.html. Accessed 1 January 2023 (first-team All-Ohio in football, hit .500 in baseball, and set the school’s shut put record that stood for 26 years); Dienstberger, Paul. *History of Ashland Arrows Football*. 1973, p. 43 (Strang set school career place kicking record that lasted till 1972, and the back cover of the book has two photos of him); Haidet, Doug. “2011 Times-Gazette All-Area Baseball.” *Times-Gazette* (Ashland, Ohio), 8 June 2011, <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=NewsBank&docref=news/1625C3BC98BC88E8&f=basic>. Accessed 14 June 2024 -- via news.bank.com (references Strang’s school record of 19 strike outs in a game which was tied in 2011); Dienstberger, Paul. “Baseball.” *The New Ashland Arrow Addendum Website*, www.arrowaddendum.com/Baseball.html. Accessed 27 January 2024 (references Strang’s .500 batting average and 19 strike outs against Willard); see also Dienstberger, Paul. “A Century of Ashland Arrow Football,” November 2022 (last modified), <http://www.centuryarrowsfb.com/index2.html>. Accessed 6 July 2024 (Strang’s high school photo (#66) on the cover and listing Strang as the second All-Ohio football player in Ashland’s history).

⁹ “Coach Leo Strang,” *supra.*, pp. 2, 7; “Strang Named Kent Grid Coach,” *supra.*, p.1; Seaburn, *supra.* The author of *Leo E. Strang Football Coach & Innovator Extraordinaire* has a certified copy of Strang’s DD-218 verifying his service in the Navy from 21 June 1943 till 28 February 1942 serving on the USS Darby which received two battle stars for its service. See “USS Darby.” *Wikipedia*, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Darby. Accessed 23 March 2024.

¹⁰ Ashland College became Ashland University in 1989. “Ashland University.” *Wikipedia*, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashland_University. Accessed 17 January 2023; “Leo Strang.” *Ashland County Sports Hall of Fame*, *supra.*

¹¹ “Coach Leo Strang,” *supra.*, pp. 2, 7; Seaburn, *supra.*; Perkins, *supra.*

¹² *Id.*

¹³ “Coach Leo Strang,” *supra.*, p. 2. It was at Caldwell that Strang began experimenting with the unbalanced line Wing-T offense that he utilized - with some additional innovations -- successfully throughout his coaching career. School in 1950 and utilized it, with some modifications. Keating, Mike. “Strang found a home in Massillon.” *The Sunday Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), 2 September 2001, pp. B-1,7 (Strang discusses experimenting with the offense at Caldwell and innovations added at Massillon).

¹⁴ “Al Christopher – Class of 1998.” *Mid-Ohio Valley Sports Hall of Fame*, <https://midohiovalleysportshalloffame.com/al-christopher/>. Accessed 19 April 2024; Hannahs, Brandon. “Al Christopher’s Impact Reached Beyond the Course.” *The Times Recorder*, 8 September 2022, www.zanesvilletimesrecorder.com/story/news/local/2022/09/08/al-christopher-impact-beyond-golf-course-zanesville-country-club/65474865007/. Accessed 17 January 2023. Christopher is also a member of the Muskingum University Athletic Hall of Fame. See “All Christopher.” *Muskingum University Athletic Hall of Fame*, <https://www.fightingmuskies.com/honors/hof/bios/christopher>. Accessed 24 April 2024.

¹⁵ Muskingum College became a Muskingum University in 2009. “Muskingum University.” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muskingum_University. Accessed 17 September 2023. Any accolades of players listed in this article include those that ever played for Strang, regardless of their year of graduation.

¹⁶ “Coach Leo Strang,” *supra.*, p. 2.

¹⁷ “1955 Upper Sandusky football, 2016 WSHF inductee.” *Wyandot Sports Hall of Fame*, www.wyandotsportshof.org/1955uppersanduskyfootball.htm. Accessed 17 January 2023; Beaven, *supra.* Upper’s state ranking was even more impressive given the fact that all Ohio high schools were in the same division until 1965. See Hudak, Timothy L. “Looking Back at the OHSAA’s Football Championships, Feature Article No.1-Popularity.” *Ohio High School Athletic Association*, www.ohsaa.org/sports/history/tim-hudak-features/football. Accessed 14 January 2024.

¹⁸ Strang’s five Upper Sandusky All-Ohio selection (in chronological order): Myron Rife, Dave Kuenzli, Keith Quail, Denny Gerber, and David McClain. Howell, Fritz. “Lee Lape Selected As End On All-State Team By AP.” *Lancaster Eagle-Gazette* (Lancaster, Ohio), 2 December 1952, p. 12, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/295320830/?terms=Rife+All-Ohio&match=1>. Accessed 4 March 2024 -- via newspapers.com (Rife); “More Honors For Tiger Stars.” *The Evening Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), 2 December 1953, p. 20, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/12300612/?terms=More+Honors+For+Tiger+Stars&match=1>. Accessed 4 March 2024 -- via newspapers.com (Kuenzli and Quail); Grimm, Bob. “John L. Martin in Third Team All-Ohio; Lafferty And Florence Mentioned,” *The Tribune* (Coshocton, Ohio), 4 December 1953, p.8, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/321942416/?terms=United+Press+All-Ohio&match=1>. Accessed 4 March 2024 -- via newspapers.com (Kuenzli); “1955 Upper Sandusky football, 2016 WSHF inductee,” *supra.* (McClain and Gerber); “Two Troy Gridders For Second All-Ohio Eleven.” *Troy Daily News* (Troy, Ohio), 6 December 1955, p.12, www.newspapers.com/image/947521238/?terms=Dave+McClain&match=1. Accessed 24 March 2024 -- via newspapers.com (McClain); Howell, Fritz. “Upper’s McClain Captures Third Team All-Ohio Berth.” *The Marion Star* (Marion, Ohio), 2 December 1955, www.newspapers.com/image/294735134/?terms=Dennis+Gerber&match=1. Accessed 24 March 2024 -- via newspapers.com (McClain and Gerber).

¹⁹ “Strang Signs as Head Football Coach at Shaw.” *East Cleveland Leader* (East Cleveland, Ohio), 8 March 1956, p.1, www.newspapers.com/image/886640880/?terms=new+coach&match=1. Accessed 24 March 2023 -- via newspapers.com.

²⁰ The United Press Back of the Year, Kuenzli rushed for 2,160 yards, a 9.1 per carry rushing average, had 32 touchdowns, and scored 227 points at Upper in 1953, then played at Ohio University. “Dave Kuenzli, Upper Sandusky Football Star To Enter Ohio U.” *The Marion Star* (Marion,

Ohio), 26 September 1954, p. 17, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/299537376/?match=1&terms=David Kuenzli> . Accessed 21 June 2014 – via newspapers.com.

²⁰ “1955 Upper Sandusky football, 2016 WSHF inductee,” *supra*. (All-Ohio); “Two Troy Gridders For Second All-Ohio Eleven,” *supra*. (All-Ohio); “Dave McClain.” *Bowling Green Athletics Hall of Fame*. bgsufalcons.com/honors/hall-of-fame/dave-mcclain/108 . Accessed 23 March 2024 (three-year football letterman); “Dave McClain, 2014 WSHF inductee.” *Wyandot County Sports Hall of Fame*, www.wyandotsportshof.org/davemcclain.htm . Accessed 29 January 2024.

²¹ *Id.*

²² Dave McClain, 2014 WSHF inductee,” *supra*.; see also “Dave McClain (American football).” *Wikipedia*, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dave_McClain_\(American_football\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dave_McClain_(American_football)) . Accessed 29 January 2024.

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ “Strang Signs as Head Football Coach at Shaw,” *supra*.

²⁵ “Brilliant Record.” *The Journal* (Caldwell, Ohio), 3 October 1956, p. 13, www.newspapers.com/image/883278300/?terms=Shaw_High_School_Football&match=1 . Accessed 17 March 2024 – via newspapers.com; “Massillon Banks on Ashland Grad, Strang Signs Three-Year Grid Pact.” *The Akron Beacon Journal*, 7 March 1957, www.newspapers.com/image/149584321/?terms=Strang&match=1 . Accessed 21 March 2024 – via newspapers.com.

²⁶ “Strang Signs as Head Football Coach at Shaw,” *supra*.

²⁷ “Massillon Banks on Ashland Grad, Strang Signs Three-Year Grid Pact,” *supra*.; “Coach Leo Strang,” *supra*., pp. 2,5; “Educators Defer Action On Coach.” *East Cleveland Leader*, 13 March 1958, p.1, www.newspapers.com/image/886658381/?terms=Leo_Strang&match=1 . Accessed 24 March 2024 – via newspapers.com.

²⁸ Howell, Fritz. “Final High School Rankings Delayed By Bengals’ Finale.” *The Times Recorder* (Zanesville, Ohio), 20 November 1957, p. 11, https://www.newspapers.com/image/293203734/?terms=Toledo_DeVilbiss&match=1 . Accessed 4 March 2024.

²⁹ *Id.* (final 1957 state rankings are referenced); “Coach Leo Strang,” *supra*., p. 2 ((Shaw’s two league titles and its 1957 9-1 finish is referenced).

³⁰ Strang’s Shaw High School All-Ohio selections (in chronological order): Gary Loftus, Tom Matte, Tom King, Willard Brown, Louis Vocaducci, and Earl Cipriani. “1956 - Associated Press All-Ohio Football Teams - 1956.” *Ohio High School Athletic Association*, <https://www.ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Sports/Records/AP-Polls/55-56FBAllOhioTeams.pdf> . Accessed 1 March 2024; “AP All-Ohio Football Squad.” *Ohio High School Athletic Association*, <https://www.ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Sports/Records/AP-Polls/57FBAllOhioTeams.pdf> . Accessed 1 March 2024 (showing All-Ohio for 1957); “1958 Prep All-Ohio.” *Dayton Daily News* (Dayton, Ohio), 28 November 1958, p. 18, https://www.newspapers.com/image/402323683/?terms=1958_Prep_All-Ohio&match=1 . Accessed 4 March 2024 – via newspapers.com; “AP

All-Ohio Class AA High School Grid Squad.” *Ohio High School Athletic Association*, <https://www.ohsaa.org/sports/history/FT/59AllOhioTeams.pdf> . Accessed 23 March 2024. Any accolades of players listed in this article include those that ever played for Strang, regardless of their year of graduation.

³¹ Tharp, Fred. “Cuff Stuff.” *The Mansfield News Journal*, p. 12, 5 November 1957 https://www.newspapers.com/image/294702662/?terms=Leo_Strang&match=1 . Accessed 4 March 2024.

³² *Id.*; “Hot Stuff.” *East Cleveland Leader*, 30 August 1956, p.1, www.newspapers.com/image/886652154/?terms=Shaw_football&match=1 . Accessed 20 March 2024 -- via newspapers.com. (describes the new 1956 Shaw uniforms and includes a black and white photo of a player wearing the uniform -- though the helmet shown has not yet had the stars added to it -- and notes, “There is just nothing like it in the entire area”); see also “Coach Strang ... Sees Victorious Team For Shaw’s 50th Year Of Football At Stadium.” *East Cleveland Leader* (East Cleveland, Ohio), 22 August 1957, p. 11, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/8864920> . Accessed 8 April 2024 – via newspapers.com (describes the Shaw Golden Anniversary uniforms of 1957 meant to “dazzle the opponents”); Seaburn, *supra*.; Brown, David. “Marion Gerhardt -- Shaw & Football’s first barefooted kicker.” *Shaw Cardinals Sports Podcast*, REBEL LIFE MEDIQ, September 7, 2020, <https://open.spotify.com/pod/show/shawcardinals/episodes/Mario-Gerhardt--Shaw--Footballs-first-barefoot-kicker-eovblj/a-a4bmu13> . Accessed January 9, 2024 (quoted portions can be found at 4:28-4:43, 5:20-6:23, 12:20-16:33; 17:19-17:24, and 35:45-38:15 in the podcast); Beaven, *supra*.; “Leo Strang.” *Ashland County Sports Hall of Fame*, *supra*.

³³ The author of *Leo E. Strang Football Coach & Innovator Extraordinaire* recalls the vinyl stickers as did former Shaw assistant coach Don Drebus and player Marion “Mario” Gerhardt. The author also interviewed Drebus on 15, December 2017 and he interviewed Gerhardt on 25 February 2023 and 7 May 2024. Further research would need to be done to determine whether introduction of the stars on the helmets in 1956 constitutes the nation’s first use of vinyl helmet decals of any type. The stars were not team logos (Shaw was the Cardinals) or award stickers, which Strang later was the first in the nation to develop while at Massillon, as discussed *infra*.

³⁴ Brown, *supra*., at 7:06-7:17, 12:20-15:13, and 20-20:50 (how Gerhardt became the nation’s first barefooted soccer-style kicker and his kicking at Shaw). Gerhardt also provided information to the author of *Leo E. Strang Football Coach & Innovator Extraordinaire* during the interviews earlier referenced.

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ *Id.*

³⁸ *Id.* (quoted portions can be found at 20:00-20:50).

³⁹ Dreifort, Robert. “Collamer, Collinwood and the Nickel Plate Railroad.” *East Cleveland History*, Blogspot, 21 March 2019, <https://eastclevelandhistory.blogspot.com/search?q=mario> . (referencing “the thundering cheers” and chants of “Mar-ee-o, Mar-ee-o” from the thousands of Shaw fans).

⁴⁰ Rauschkolb, Karl. “Golden Toe.” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 4 December 1957, p. 33, [infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info%3Aid/infoweb.newsbank.com&svc_dat=AMNEWS&req_dat=1082901FE0D0E9AB&rft_val_format=info%3Aofi/fmt%3Akev%3Amtx%3Actx&rft_dat=document_id%3Aimage%252Fv2%253A122AFBBA107AC9E4%2540EANX-NB-12774411679650D0%25402436177-12773BEC6A1AC995%254032-12773BEC6A1AC995%2540/hlterms%3AMario%2520Gerhardt](https://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/ohio/entry/2004&rft_id=info%3Aid/infoweb.newsbank.com&svc_dat=AMNEWS&req_dat=1082901FE0D0E9AB&rft_val_format=info%3Aofi/fmt%3Akev%3Amtx%3Actx&rft_dat=document_id%3Aimage%252Fv2%253A122AFBBA107AC9E4%2540EANX-NB-12774411679650D0%25402436177-12773BEC6A1AC995%254032-12773BEC6A1AC995%2540/hlterms%3AMario%2520Gerhardt) .

Accessed 18 May 2024 – via newsbank.com (photo with caption that referencing Mario’s 33 PATs in 1957, showing the bronze cast of Gerhardt’s foot in the presence of Coach Strang and Ohio State Head Coach Woody Hayes); Brown, *supra*. (quoted portions where Gerhardt discusses the photo and bronze impression of his foot -- that he called the “Golden Foot Award” -- can be found at 28:30-30:05). A search by the author of *Leo E. Strang Football Coach & Innovator Extraordinaire* of newspaper articles – in newspapers.com -- about Gerhardt’s barefooted kicking in 1957 resulted in locating 363 articles in newspapers in 38 different states; see Flieger, Ben. “Shaw to Get a Boot Out of Barefoot Kicker.” *The Cleveland Press*, 11 September 1967, p.71. Both the author and David Brown (as he discussed in his podcast with Mario Gerhardt) confirmed – through extensive research -- that no barefooted soccer-style kicker that predated Gerhardt. The author’s research revealed that

Gerhardt was the second soccer-style kicker of any type, just a few years behind Fred Bednarski who kicked (wearing a shoe) at an Austin, Texas high school in 1953 and 1954 and in 1957 kicked the first soccer-style field goal in a varsity college game as a member of the University of Texas. Stewart, Chip. "College Football's Forgotten "Big Kick." *The Alcalade*, November 2004, p. 53, books.google.com/books?id=LeMDAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA52#v=onepage&q&f=false . Accessed 18 May 2024.

⁴¹ Author's interviews with Gerhardt, *supra*.

⁴² *Id.*; Filipowicz, Marshal. 2022 *Navy Men's Soccer Media Guide*. United States Naval Academy, 2022, p. 48, https://navysports.com/documents/2022/8/25/2022_Mens_Soccer_Full_Guide.pdf . Accessed 27 2024.

⁴³ Author's interviews with Gerhardt, *supra*.; Dr. Marion Gerhardt." *Chagrin Falls Hall of Fame 2015 Coach Inductee*, <https://www.chagrinalumni.org/hall-of-fame/dr-mario-gerhardt/> . Accessed 27 January 2024; "Mario Gerhardt," *X*. <https://twitter.com/glidercfig?lang=en> . Accessed 27 January 2024.

⁴⁴ "1956 - Associated Press All-Ohio Football Teams – 1956," *supra*.

⁴⁵ "Tom Matte, 1960 Football Team MVP, Passes Away – Ohio State." *Ohio State Football*, 11 November 2021.

<https://ohiostatebuckeyes.com/news/2021/11/4/tom-matte-1960-football-team-mvp-passes-away> . Accessed 27 January 2023.

⁴⁶ *Id.*; "Tom Matte." *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Matte . Accessed 17 January 2024; Sandomir, Richard. "Tom Matte, Emergency Quarterback for the Baltimore Colts, Dies at 82." *The New York Times*, 2 November 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/sports/football/tom-matte-dead.html> . Accessed 27 January 2024.

⁴⁷ Matte was the first to gain over 100 yards in a Super Bowl game, and his 10.5 per carry average is still the NFL Super Bowl record. See "Tom Matte, 1960 Football Team MVP, Passes Away – Ohio State," *supra*., and "List of Super Bowl Records." *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Super_Bowl_records . Accessed 23 June 2024. In 1970 Matte led the NFL in most yards rushing, touchdowns, and carries. See "Tom Matte." *Wikipedia*, *supra*.

⁴⁸ "Tom Matte." *Wikipedia*, *supra*.; "Tom Matte, 1960 Football Team MVP, Passes Away – Ohio State," *supra*.; see also Wright, Branson.

"Cleveland Browns 1964 Championship Season: Baltimore Colts RB Tom Matte." *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 16 October 2014, https://www.cleveland.com/browns/2014/10/cleveland_browns_1964_champion_5.html . Accessed 28 January 2024 (includes a humorous story about Matte and Jim Brown). Interestingly, Baltimore Ravens coach John Harbaugh's mother attended Shaw High School with Tom Matte. See Ginsburgh, David. "Tom Matte, Baltimore running back pressed into service at quarterback, dies at 82." *The Washington Post*, 4 November 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/tom-matte-dead/2021/11/04/bdc22bb0-3d96-11ec-a493-51b0252dea0c_story.html . Accessed 23 June 2024.

⁴⁹ "Strang Bids Adieu." *The East Cleveland Leader*, 20 March 1958, p. 1, www.newspapers.com/image/886658563/?terms=Leo_Strang&match=1 . Accessed 21 March 2024 – via newspapers.com.

⁵⁰ "Coach Leo Strang," *supra*., p. 1; Kevin Askeland, "Top 50 High School Football Dynasties of All Time." *MaxPreps*, October 16, 2018, https://www.maxpreps.com/news/G5E_7vchPUC5RUx8uk40A/top-50-high-school-football-dynasties-of-all-time.htm . Accessed January 17, 2023; see also Walter Bingham. "Football from the Cradle." *Sports Illustrated*, November 13, 1961, pp. 46-51, <https://vault.si.com/vault/1961/11/13/football-from-the-cradle> . Accessed 17 January 2023 (all Massillon baby boys received a toy football in their bassinette at the hospital); see Johnson, Zak. "How the Most Fanatical HS Football City in America Played Through a Pandemic." *The Athletic*, 23 October 2020, <https://theathletic.com/2104456/2020/10/23/massillon-tigers-high-school-football/> . Accessed 12 December 2023 (when Massillon lost a game a Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club member would place a "For Sale" sign in the coach's front yard); see also Easterling, Chris. "10 Reasons Why Massillon, Ohio, is Titledown USA." *Observer-Dispatch* (Utica, NY), July 21, 2008, <https://www.uticaod.com/story/news/2008/07/21/10-reasons-why-massillon-ohio/46489284007/> . Accessed 29 March 2024 – via newspapers.com.

⁵¹ Keating, *supra*., pp. B-1,7.

⁵² *Id.*, p.7.

⁵³ Dale Walterhouse played for Strang at Upper Sandusky and was one of his assistant coaches at Massillon. Dale and the author of *Leo E. Strang Football Coach & Innovator Extraordinaire* were interviewed on 3 March 2019 for a Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club video "Nostalgic Reminiscing, *The Leo Strang Era*." The video, made by Ron Prunty, is available through the Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club. In the interview, Dale recalled Strang telling his Upper Sandusky players and coaches that he would someday be the Massillon coach. See also Engelhardt, Don. "The Bell Was Ringing for One Tiger Honorees." *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, March 31, 2018. <https://massillontigers.com/tag/dale-walterhouse/> . Accessed 10 February 2024 (Strang's longstanding ties to Walterhouse are referenced).

⁵⁴ Keating, *supra*., pp. B-1,7. At the initial Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club meeting of 1958, five hundred fans turned out to welcome Strang and heard Paul Brown introduced him by saying, "I have heard a lot of things about Leo in Cleveland. I think you are going to like him." "Crowd of 500 Gives Strang Rousing Welcome, 'Best Job I Ever Had, Says Paul Brown." *The Evening Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), 15 April 1958, p. 10, www.newspapers.com/image/13070770/?terms=Leo_Strang_and_Paul_Brown&match=1 . Accessed 6 May 2024 -- via newspapers.com.

⁵⁵ Shook, Scott H. *A Century of Heroes, America's First High School Football Dynasty*. Massillon Memories Publishing Company, 2010, p. 443.

⁵⁶ *Id.*

⁵⁷ *Id.*

⁵⁸ *Id.*

⁵⁹ White, *supra*, pp. 140, 148-149 (1954-1963 season records and rankings are listed); "Coach Leo Strang," *supra*., pp. 1, 3.

⁶⁰ *Id.*

⁶¹ *Id.*

⁶² "Coach Leo Strang," *supra*., pp. 1-8; "Head Coaches." *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, <https://massillontigers.com/history/past-players-coaches/head-coaches/> . Accessed 17 January 2023 (records of all Massillon coaches since Strang can be found); "Championship Central." *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, <https://massillontigers.com/history-2/championship-central/> . Accessed 26 June 2024 (see National Champions subsection).

⁶³ White, *supra*., p.149 (noting 1961 was the first time Massillon was 11-0 in the regular season). The Ohio High School Athletic Association limited schools to 10 regular season games starting with the 1963 season, so no Massillon team since then has played more than 10 regular season games. See "Coach Leo Strang," *supra*., pp. 4,6 (noting the OHSAA restriction effective 1963).

⁶⁴ "All-Time Team Statistics." *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, <https://massillontigers.com/history/past-seasons-games/statistics/all-time-team-statistics/> . Accessed 1 April 2024 (season rushing records are listed and the 1959 per game and per carry records can be verified).

- ⁶⁵ Engelhardt, Don. “The Legendary Art Hastings.” *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, 10 October 2020, <https://massillontigers.com/2018/10/10/the-legendary-art-hastings/> . Accessed 24 April 2024 (rushing records against McKinley are listed).
- ⁶⁶ White, *supra.*, pp. 148-149 (scores of all games 1958-1963).
- ⁶⁷ “Coach Leo Strang,” *supra.* (see listing of season by season results); Smith, Eric. “1960: Massillon 42, Canton McKinley 0.” *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, <https://massillontigers.com/tag/art-hastings/> . Accessed 4 April 2024 (as of the end of the 1960 season Strang was tied for the most wins (28) with Tom Mather in the first three years of Massillon coaching, but in his fourth year Strang was 11-0 giving him a record of 39-2-1 from for this first four years compared to Mather’s 37 wins his first four seasons); *see also* “Coach Chuck Mather.” *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, https://massillontigers.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/coach_chuch_mather.pdf . Accessed 4 April 2024 (lists wins for each season Mather coached); *see* “Head Coaches.” *supra.* (Nate Moore is second with 36 wins his first four years, which includes playoff wins). Note that Strang also won every home game his first four years. *See* “Season Reviews.” *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, <https://massillontigers.com/history/past-seasons-games/past-seasons/> . Accessed 26 June 2024 (win/loss records for the 1958-1961 seasons).
- ⁶⁸ Shook. *A Century of Heroes, America’s First High School Football Dynasty*, *supra.*, p. 439.
- ⁶⁹ “Streaks.” *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, <https://massillontigers.com/history/records/streaks/> . Accessed 26 June 2024 (Strang’s 20 consecutive regular season wins is listed).
- ⁷⁰ *Id.* Five of Strang’s eight Massillon losses came in during the 1962 season, when his Tigers finished 6-5. “1962 Season.” *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, <https://massillontigers.com/history/past-seasons-games/past-seasons/1962-season/> . Accessed 31 March 2024. A sportswriter said, “Strang’s mettle was tested when adversity cast a gigantic pall over the team.” Keating, *supra.*, p. B-7. In describing what happened, Strang said, “We had one kid fall off a train trestle and get killed. We had two starters run into each other in practice and get hurt. Floyd Pierce [another starter] couldn’t play because he had a heart murmur. By the fourth game, we had lost 13 starters.” *Id.* Nevertheless, the Tigers had a winning season, preserving Massillon’s streak of 30 consecutive winning seasons. “Season Reviews.” *supra.* (1931 season the Tigers were 2-6-1, their last losing season).
- ⁷¹ Strang’s Massillon All-Ohio selections (in chronological order): “Massillon Washington high school’s all-ohioan – Massillon ...” *Yumpy*, 20 July 2013, <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/17868321/massillon-washington-high-schools-all-ohioans-massillon-tigers> . Accessed 4 March 2024. Any accolades of players listed in this article include those that ever played for Strang, regardless of their year of graduation.
- ⁷² Strang’s Massillon All-Americans (in chronological order): Bob Vogel, Bill Zorn, Joe Sparma, Hase McKey, Lawson White, Art Hastings, Ken Ivan, Charlie Brown, Ben Bradley, Bill Blunt, Larry Larsuel, John Mulbach, Paul Marks, and David Whitfield. “Vogel, Zorn Will Start In Saturday Classic.” *The Evening Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), 31 July 1959, p.18, https://www.newspapers.com/image/16659854/?terms=Bill_Zorn&match=1 . Accessed 4 March 2024 – via newspapers.com (Vogel and Zorn); Powell, Charlie. “Looking ‘Em Over.” *The Evening Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), 11 February 1960, p. 14, www.newspapers.com/image/21763351/?terms=sparma&match=1 . Accessed 18 March 2024 – via newspapers.com (Sparma and McKey); “Two Tiger Gridders Honored On All-American Teams.” *The Evening Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), www.newspapers.com/image/36105707/?terms=Lawson_White&match=1 . Accessed 1 July 2024 – via newspapers.com. (White and Ivan); “Tiger Football Slump Big Sports Story of Year, Gridders Set Records While Losing But Cagers Win A Title.” *The Evening Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), 31 December 1962, pp. 16-17, www.newspapers.com/image/3822493/?terms . Accessed 19 March 2024 – via newspapers.com (Bradley); Porrini, Bill. “Charlie Brown – Wall of Champions.” *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, <https://massillontigers.com/history-2/wall-of-champions/> . Accessed 15 January 2024 (Brown); “Blunt Signs To Play For Former Coach.” *The Evening Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), 17 February 1964, p. 16, www.newspapers.com/image/3506890/?terms=Bill_Blunt&match=1 . Accessed 19 March 2024 – via newspapers.com (Blunt); “Larsuel, Mulbach Gain All-America, Star Tiger Gridders First Team.” *The Massillon Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), 26 December 1964, p. 12, www.newspapers.com/image/3521460/?terms=Larry_Larsuel&match=1 . Accessed 19 March 2024 – via newspapers.com (Larsuel and Mulbach); “All-American Honorees.” *The Evening Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), 23 December 1965, p. 13, www.newspapers.com/image/5147290/?terms=Parade_Magazine_High_School_Football_All-American_Team&match=1 . Accessed 19 March 2024 – via newspapers.com (Marks and Whitfield). Any accolades of players listed in this article include those that ever played for Strang, regardless of their year of graduation.
- ⁷³ Lawson White and Ken Ivan were Ohio Lineman of the Year. *See* “Two Tiger Gridders Honored On All-American Teams,” *supra.* (Lawson); “Ken Ivan On National All-Stars.” *The Evening Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), 12 January 1962, p. 16, www.newspapers.com/image/4093710/?terms=Ken_Ivan&match=1 . Accessed 18 March 2024 – via newspapers.com (Ivan). Hase McKey was Ohio’s Defensive Player of the Year. Shook. *A Century of Heroes, America’s First High School Football Dynasty*, *supra.*, p. 415.
- ⁷⁴ Perkins, *supra.*; Beaven, *supra.*
- ⁷⁵ Barkan, Jim. “Massillon Firsts.” *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, <https://massillontigers.com/history/historical-accounts/massillon-firsts/> . Accessed 6 December 2023 (article includes photos of the helmet team logo and award stickers); White, *supra.*, pp. 140-141 (stating Strang is the “pioneer of the helmet decal”); Scott H. Shook. *Massillon Memories, The Inside Story of the Greatest Show in High School Football*, *supra.*, pp. 45, 47 (includes a photo of the “Leaping Tiger” helmet logo); “Coach Leo Strang,” *supra.*, p.5; “Season Reviews,” *supra.* (1958 – 1963 season team photos show the “Leaping Tiger” helmet decals); Dr. Ken, “Kent State University – 1972 Golden Flashes ‘Matsko,’” *Helmet Hut*, <http://www.helmethut.com/College/Kent%20State/Matsko.html> . Retrieval January 19, 2024 (notes Strang was the first to develop football helmet decals).
- ⁷⁶ White, *supra.*, pp. 140-141; “Coach Leo Strang,” *supra.*, p.5.
- ⁷⁷ *Id.*
- ⁷⁸ Barkan, *supra.* (includes a photo of reward sticker decals from a 1959 game); Shook, *Massillon Memories, The Inside Story of the Greatest Show in High School Football*, *supra.*, p.45; *see also* *The Washingtonian*. Massillon High School Yearbook, 1960, p.93 (which includes the same photo shown in the “Massillon Firsts” article). As discussed more fully *infra.*, the award stickers were given based on game film player evaluation scores. The yearbook is available at the Massillon Public Library.
- ⁷⁹ Barkan, *supra.*
- ⁸⁰ *Id.* (includes a photo of two Massillon players wearing white football shoes); “Coach Leo Strang,” *supra.*, p. 5; White, *supra.*, p. 141; Shook. *Massillon Memories, The Inside Story of the Greatest Show in High School Football*, *supra.*, p. 45.
- ⁸¹ “Coach Leo Strang,” *supra.*, p. 5; White, *supra.*, p. 14
- ⁸² *Id.*
- ⁸³ White, *supra.*, p. 141; “Coach Leo Strang,” *supra.*, p. 5; “Massillon Firsts,” *supra.*; Beaven, *supra.*
- ⁸⁴ Mistovich, *supra.*, p.9; Leo Strang,” *supra.*
- ⁸⁵ Mistovich, *supra.*, p.8. Bill Veck is known as the consummate sports promoter. *See* “Bill Veck.” *Wikipedia*, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Veck
- ⁸⁶ Shook. *Massillon Memories, The Inside Story of the Greatest Show in High School Football*, *supra.*, p. 47.

⁸⁷ Scalzo, Joe. “Massillon’s Strang Built Program on Detail, Discipline,” *The Canton Repository* (Canton, Ohio), 17 July 2019, <https://www.cantonrep.com/story/sports/2019/07/17/massillon-s-strang-built-program/4672490007/>. Accessed 3 February 2024.

⁸⁸ *Id.*

⁸⁹ Mistovich, *supra.*, p. 9.

⁹⁰ *Id.*

⁹¹ *Id.*

⁹² *Id.*

⁹³ *Id.*; “Leo Strang,” *supra.*; *see also* Beaven, *supra.*;

⁹⁴ Mistovich, *supra.*, p. 9.

⁹⁵ White, *supra.*, p. 142; “Coach Leo Strang, *supra.*, p. 5. Note: Strang’s circuit board evolved from a more basic handheld wheel device first used on the sideline at Upper Sandusky and later updated at Shaw. *See* author’s interview of Don Drebus (who recalled Strang’s use of it at Upper and Shaw).

⁹⁶ Bingham, *supra.*, p. 48.

⁹⁷ Shook. *A Century of Heroes, America’s First High School Football Dynasty, supra.*, pp. 444-445.

⁹⁸ *Id.*; *see also* “Timeless Rivals” (2017), Timeless Rivals Film, LLC, Brainstorm Media, Inc. and Dave Jingo Media, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8200472/>. Accessed 25 April 2024. (movie is about the Massillon v. Canton McKinley rivalry and includes an interview with the author *Leo E. Strang Football Coach & Innovator Extraordinaire* in which the author recalls being the person that took the photos from the scoreboard to his father on the sideline.)

⁹⁹ Mistovich, *supra.*, p. 9; “Leo Strang,” *supra.*

¹⁰⁰ Scalzo, *supra.*

¹⁰¹ “Coach Leo Strang,” *supra.*, p. 5; White, *supra.*, p. 143.

¹⁰² *Id.*

¹⁰³ *Id.*

¹⁰⁴ “Coach Leo Strang,” *supra.*, p. 3; White, *supra.*, p. 142; Keating, *supra.*, p. B-7; Englander, Don. “The Changing Landscape of Massillon Football – Part 1: Offensive Formations.” *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, <https://massillontigers.com/2024/03/15/the-changing-landscape-of-massillon-football-part-1-offensive-formations/>. Accessed 5 April 2024 (noting Strang’s modification of the Wing-T by use of an unbalanced line); Dietrich, Phil. “Strang Hiring ‘Friendly Persuasion.’ Coaches’ Recommendation Led Kent State to Leo.” *Akron Beacon Journal*, 1 October 1964, p. 24, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/150404237/?terms=Strang&match=1>. Accessed 7 April 2024 (Strang notes his use of the Wing T with unbalanced line during his entire coaching career); Toms, Jim. “Drills Open, Sunlight Beams on Grid Hopes.” *The Daily Kent Stater*, April 1964, Vol. XLIX, No. 81, p. 4, https://dks.library.kent.edu/?a=is&oid=dks19640409-01&type=staticpdf&pdffaccesscode=PdRd5007dJvXhZgUomMHPylytghzZO/a6mslAd4rXzmUQ=&submitted=1&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN---&g-recaptcha-response=03AFcWeA61Ydu9eaFdchKMbBHvxCBPmAPLp_417znE28-NPGmTSS5pZfqH4he1i439LWzzum0G1IDLrvovIgvthaRWNpHeYhg7p061MbENUWX2_gdSAyJcVZvk57TPM17DtvZ6p1ekhY06QqqtRaHoMNMbR2v-ERNL-8S7okTZhJSWaYLDGmdszMheiR135sHD_4PwyHM7g6wUy-3Px5tasyuMhTVb7LzjCp5ORyW8NgHDRzqo1ZGuH1bvSdM-zkxzy9ervrPMziRzub_mqCK_gw9nbiZ6913AJ_LJkBjyw5dlnFG1hAPfm1EOLDdoTqodDcgwKTeNCzsu5Oh9Okzj_8d707Gxvs7Md9IGkvJ8mgsatsH3O8mhSrD-NB_Styb6TuJpP8WPdkalTx6KH7jhdWK6NDvSzW_vHinHHYHJHCu6149izKZZLPd34JJ1diqaiOASuSgJzaaTBit_m7WG-JhjEps9lhED2bEFjcVrWj_tTVCjFKLwQ_2lxeHoizXmS_3rKGlEzboeBdGf7Lk2pTP-vNakiCtX33uulmfi2KsJitjVIOhddx9ldkw-zxCeihfOyx3iPXD2L_ybomnQnx0JQXqDjoq5IRMfkO0S-8BswQaMTOxE9YfUBE9RZ9SNWOVEG_W0mHw4_YRX0F17OZAnDmQUEmA64BuSkH4F0JL9N4hH-lddV0kTRSSNh5uuOom9HcHiRTRUVHGX6hjV96R6o20s2hsM2N6EMBX-iugyLehM18U. Accessed 7 April 2024 (Strang says his offense creates a “greater problem for the defense” because “[y]ou have power on the long side and can get out quickly on the short side.”); Perkins, *supra.* (noting Strang’s innovative use of the unbalanced line); *see also* Dr. Ken. “Kent State Redux.” *Helmet Hut*, July 2011, <http://www.helmethut.com/Features/Dr.Ken93.html>. Accessed 5 July 2024 (Strang’s use of the Wing T unbalanced line offenses was an innovation worthy of note); *see also* Durham, Paul. “Unbalanced lines still play today for preps.” *The Wilson Times* (Wilson North Carolina), 23 November 2019, <https://restorationnewsmedia.com/articles/wilsontimes/unbalanced-lines-still-in-play-today-for-preps/>. Accessed 6 April 2023 (author discusses the advantages of the unbalanced line).

¹⁰⁵ “Coach Leo Strang,” *supra.*, p. 5; Keating, *supra.*, p. B-7 (provides a description of rule and influence blocking); *see also* Scalzo, *supra.* (where rule blocking is referenced).

¹⁰⁶ “Coach Leo Strang,” *supra.*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁷ Shook, *Massillon Memories, The Inside Story of the Greatest Show in High School Football, supra.*, p. 128.

¹⁰⁸ *Id.*

¹⁰⁹ *Id.*

¹¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹¹ *Id.*, p. 130.

¹¹² *Id.*

¹¹³ Shook. *A Century of Heroes, America’s First High School Football Dynasty, supra.*, pp. 418-420 (references Strang demonstrating his “heal kick” for Hase McKey, the Massillon place kicker).

¹¹⁴ *See* endnote 8 (Strang’s Ashland High School records).

¹¹⁵ Shook. *A Century of Heroes, America’s First High School Football Dynasty, supra.*, p. 419.

¹¹⁶ *Id.*, p. 420. The author of *Leo E. Strang Football Coach & Innovator Extraordinaire* also recalls seeing his father demonstrate his “heal kick” at Massillon practices.

¹¹⁷ White, *supra.*, p. 144.

¹¹⁸ *Id.*

¹¹⁹ *Id.*

¹²⁰ *Id.*

¹²¹ “Tigers’ Strang Named Kent State Grid Coach, Succeeds Trevor Rees Effective Immediately.” *The Evening Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), 9 January 1964, p. 12, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/3477648/?terms=Strang&match=1>. Accessed 7 April 2024 – via newspapers.com.

¹²² Scalzo, *supra.*

¹²³ *Id.*

¹²⁴ *Id.*

¹²⁵ *Id.*, p. 1

¹²⁶ Strang, Leo. “Strang’s Story.” *The Evening Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), 11 November 1968, p. 14, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/13136712/?terms=Strang &match=1>. Accessed 10 April 2024 – via newspapers.com.

¹²⁷ *Id.*

¹²⁸ *Id.*

¹²⁹ *Id.*

¹³⁰ The author of *Leo E. Strang Football Coach & Innovator Extraordinaire* recalls his father’s nervousness and insomnia leading up to every McKinley game. He also recalls his father telling him that upon accepting the East Cleveland job and driving back to Upper Sandusky, Strang stopped his car and sat in it for a long time contemplating returning to East Cleveland to tell them he had changed his mind.

¹³¹ Shook. *A Century of Heroes, America’s First High School Dynasty*, *supra.*, p. 441.

¹³² *Id.*

¹³³ *Id.*

¹³⁴ *Id.*

¹³⁵ “History of the Rivalry.” *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, <https://massillontigers.com/history/massillon-vs-canton-mckinley/history-of-the-rivalry/>. Accessed 17 January 2023; Easterling, *supra.*, p. 3. (a rivalry which is an “unparalleled “high school sports rivalry).

¹³⁶ *Id.*; “Massillon-McKinley Series Results.” *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, <https://massillontigers.com/history/massillon-vs-canton-mckinley/series-results/>. Accessed 1 January 2023; White, *supra.*, pp.148-149, 247-248.

¹³⁷ *Id.*

¹³⁸ Quilty, Jim. “Strang Squad Has Talented Back, North Stars Not In Best Condition.” *The Evening Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), 3 August 1960, p. 18, www.newspapers.com/image/21812770/?terms=North+South+game&match=1. Accessed 21 March 2024 – via newspapers.com (pregame article includes a photo of Strang with four North All-Stars from Massillon and one from East Cleveland Shaw who Strang coached in 1957); Howell, Fritz. “Ohio’s All-Stars Turn To College After North Wins At Canton, 18-8.” *The Evening News* (East Liverpool, Ohio), 15 August 1960, p. 15, www.newspapers.com/image/62105339/?terms=Ohio+North-South+High+School+Football+All-Star+game&match=1. Accessed 21 March 2024 – via newspapers.com (North wins and Paul Warfield named the game MVP).

¹³⁹ Porter, Todd. “Stark County High School Football Hall of Fame: Joe Sparma.” *The Repository* (Canton, Ohio), 21 July 2024, www.cantonrep.com/story/news/local/massillon/2011/07/21/stark-county-high-school-football/42198362007/. Accessed 21 March 2024 (noting that Sparma led the North to victory over the South and its quarterback Roger Staubach); see also Engelhardt, Don. “Joe Sparma - Wall of Champions.” *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, <https://massillontigers.com/2021/12/30/joe-sparma-wall-of-champions-2/>. Accessed 15 January 2024.

¹⁴⁰ “Strang Asks Comments On Grid Playoffs.” *The Evening Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), 2 January 1963, p. 18 (Strang did so as chair of the Ohio High School Football Coaches Association committee investigating a playoff system).

¹⁴¹ Riter, Sherry. “Eric Grohe Murals – 3D Artist.” *The Redhead Rider*, <https://theredheadrider.com/2012/08/eric-grohe-murals-3d-artist/>. Accessed 12 February 2024 (see “A Century of Heroes” mural that includes Strang’s portrait – one of five past coaches so honored); see also, Olmstead, Scott. “Massillon High School, Massillon, Ohio” *Scott Olmstead Photography*, <https://www.scottolmsteadphotography.com/Football-Stadiums/High-School-Stadiums/Massillon-High-School-Massillon-Ohio/i-zKnLkqx>. Accessed 12 February 2024 (Strang stadium banner is the 15th of 78 photos).

¹⁴² Engelhardt, Don. “Ben Bradley Was a Giant of a Man On and Off the Field.” *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, 4 January 2024, <https://massillontigers.com/2018/07/19/ben-bradley-was-a-giant-of-a-man-on-and-off-the-field/>. Accessed 30 May 2024. (Ben was named the Outstanding Freshman Football Player at the University of Dayton before he transferred to Northwood University, where he was all conference and was drafted by both the Kansas City Chiefs and the Montreal Alouettes). *Id.* Northwood University was originally Northwood Institute. “Northwood University.” *Wikipedia*, https://www.google.com/search?q=northwood+university+history&client=safari&sca_esv=9ef43ef143c24271&channel=mac_bm&sxsr=ADLYWJYdHZvdQynR-V3MnA-0GSp4if2Q:1717083464954&source=hp&ei=SJIYZsf5M7u1wN4PtPuW8Ac&ifsig=AL9hbdgAAAAAZlirWARNcaomNhbEddIjpUoF3o_nJy&oeq=no&gs_lp=Egnd3Mtd2l6lgJubyoCCAAyBBAjGCcyBBAjGCcyChAjGIAEGCcYigUyChAuGIAEGEMYyUyChAuGIAEGBQYhwlyCxAAAGIAEGJECGloFMhMQLhiABBhDGMcBGloFGI4FGK8BMgoQABiABBhDGloFMgoQABiABBhDGloFMgoQABiABBhDGloFMMcUOYOWO8QcAF4AJABAJgBfaAB6wGqAQMWLjK4AQHIAQD4AQGYAogOgAo8CqAIKwglHECMYJxjqAslCCxAuGIAEGLEDGIMBmAMNkgcDMS4yoAeQHg&scient=gws-wiz. Accessed 30 May 2024.

¹⁴³ Porrini, *supra.*; “Charlie Brown (defensive backs).” *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlie_Brown_\(defensive_backs\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlie_Brown_(defensive_backs)). Accessed 15 January 2024.

¹⁴⁴ “Two Tiger Gridders Honored On All-American Teams.” *The Evening Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), *supra.*; Shook. *America’s First High School Football Dynasty*, *supra.*, p. 450-455 (where Strang says he had great runners, including Tom Matte, but that he had none better than Hastings); Engelhardt, “The Legendary Art Hastings,” *supra.* (noting Hastings rushed for over 3,000 yards in three pre playoff era seasons); “Class of 2018 is packed with impressive credentials.” *The Canton Repository*, 10 October 2002, <https://www.cantonrep.com/story/sports/2018/01/01/class-2018-is-packed-with/16703053007/>. Accessed 3 May 2024 – via newspapers.com (noting Hastings was selected to the Stark County High School Football Hall of Fame).

¹⁴⁵ “Ken Ivan On National All-Stars,” *supra.*, (Ivan All-Ohio, Lineman of the Year, and All-American); *2023 Notre Dame Media Guide*. Notre Dame University, p. 186, <https://fightingirish.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2023-24-Notre-Dame-Football-Media-Guide-FINAL-3-1.pdf>. Accessed 29 March 2024 (listing Ivan as a varsity player 1963-1965 seasons); “Pro Players, Massillon Alums who were Professional Players.” *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, <https://massillontigers.com/history/past-players-coaches/pro-players/>. Accessed 29 March 2024 (Ivan identified as playing for the Toronto Argonauts). Strang said Ivan was “the finest football player I have had at Massillon.” Williams, Hymie. “Massillon Solid Choice for 3rd Straight Crown.” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* (Cleveland, Ohio), 15 November 1961, p. 1, <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNFWs&docref=imate/v2:122AFBBA107AC9E4@EANX-NB-12ADEE672BD93BEA@2437619-1276EBC88D420103@16-1276EBC88D420103@&hlterus=LeoStrang&f-basic>. Accessed 15 May 2024 – via newsbank.com.

¹⁴⁶ Engelhardt, Don. “Football Hall of Fame is Next Stop for Larry Larsuel.” *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, 7 June 2023, <https://massillontigers.com/2023/04/10/football-hall-of-fame-is-the-next-stop-for-larry-larsuel/>. Accessed 31 May 2024; Easterling, Chris. “Larry Larsuel led by example in helping power Massillon football to 1964 state title.” *The Canton Repository* (Canton, Ohio), 28 July 2020,

<https://www.cantonrep.com/story/sports/high-school/football/2020/07/28/larry-larsuel-led-by-example-in-helping-power-massillon-football-to-1964-state-title/113367222/> . Accessed 2 June 2024. Any accolades of players listed in this article include those that ever played for Strang, regardless of their year of graduation.

¹⁴⁷ Shook. *A Century of Heroes, America's First High School Football Dynasty*, *supra.*, pp. 415-420 (where Shook said McKey may be the finest lineman in Massillon Tiger history); Harpster, David. "Tigers' McKey was small only in stature." *The Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), 13 July 2003, <https://www.indeonline.com/story/sports/2009/07/13/tigers-mckey-was-small-only/42829317007/> . Accessed 22 April 2024 (noting McKey's injury in the New York Jets training camp ended his pro aspirations); Powell, Charlie. "Looking 'Em Over," *supra.* (High School All-American); *2023 Sun Devil Football Media Guide*. Arizona State University, 2023, p. 9, https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/sidearm.nextgen.sites/asu.sidearmsports.com/documents/2023/8/28/Updated_History_Records_Section_-_2023.pdf . Accessed 22 April 2024 (listing McKey as a letterman in 1963 and 1963).

¹⁴⁸ "Tiger Football Hall of Fame." *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, <https://massillontigers.com/history/past-players-coaches/tiger-football-hall-of-fame/> . Accessed 31 May 2024; Easterling, Chris. "Massillon was always a second home for Earl Bruce." *The Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), 20 April 2018, <https://www.indeonline.com/story/sports/college/2018/04/20/massillon-was-always-second-home/12601240007/> . Accessed 31 May 2024; "Five New Members Elected to Pro Football Hall of Fame Board of Trustees." *Pro Football Hall of Fame*, <https://www.profootballhof.com/news/2018/08/five-new-members-elected-to-pro-football-hall-of-fame-board-of-trustees/> . Accessed 31 May 2024. Any accolades of players listed in this article include those that ever played for Strang, regardless of their year of graduation.

¹⁴⁹ Engelhardt, Don. "Joe Sparma - Wall of Champions," *supra.* (where it notes Sparma still holds the Massillon record for yards per passing attempt at 23.6); Smith, Eric. "Joe Sparma Wall of Champions," *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*, 19 October 2020, <https://massillontigers.com/2020/03/21/joe-sparma-wall-of-champions/> . Accessed 31 May 2023; Porter, *supra.*; "Joe Sparma." *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Sparma . Accessed 15 January 2024.

¹⁵⁰ Engelhardt, Don. "Bob Vogel - Wall of Champions," *Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club*. 19 October 2020, <https://massillontigers.com/history-2/wall-of-champions/> . Accessed 15 January 2024; "Bob Vogel," *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bob_Vogel . Accessed January 15, 2023.

¹⁵¹ Scalzo, *supra.*

¹⁵² *Id.*

¹⁵³ *Id.*

¹⁵⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵⁵ *Id.*

¹⁵⁶ Shook. *Massillon Memories, The Inside Story of the Greatest Show in High School Football*, *supra.*, p. 237.

¹⁵⁷ Shook. *A Century of Heroes, America's First High School Football Dynasty*, *supra.*, p. 418.

¹⁵⁸ Scalzo, *supra.*

¹⁵⁹ Shook. *Massillon Memories, The Inside Story of the Greatest Show in High School Football*, *supra.*, p. 237; Engelhardt, "Joe Sparma - Wall of Champions," *supra.*

¹⁶⁰ Shook. *A Century of Heroes, American's First High School Football Dynasty*, *supra.*, p. 449.

¹⁶¹ "Strang's Selection Boost for High School Coaches," *supra.*, p.16; Lebovitz, Hal. "Kent Post Challenge to Strang." *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* (Cleveland, Ohio), 10 January 1964, p. 29, https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info%3Aid/infoweb.newsbank.com&svc_dat=AMNEWS&req_dat=1082901FE0D0E9AB&rft_val_format=info%3Aofi/fmt%3Akev%3Amtx%3Actx&rft_dat=document_id%3Aimage%252Fv2%253A122AFBBA107AC9E4%2540EANX-NB-12C56248950E28FD%25402438405-12C5620B76BEA7DF%254028-12C5620B76BEA7DF%2540/hlterms%3ALeo%2520Strang . Accessed 4 May 2024 – via newsbank.com.

¹⁶² Lebovitz, *supra.*

¹⁶³ *Id.*

¹⁶⁴ Dr. Ken. "Kent State University," *Helmet Hut*, June 2006, pp. 1-2, <http://www.helmethut.com/Dr.Ken32.html> . Accessed 17 January 2023 (Dr. Ken states that as a result the outcome of the 1961- 1963 seasons it was determined that it was time for Rees to retire); *see also Kent State 2023 Football Record Book*, *supra.*, p. 7 (Reese win/lose record). Despite his struggles the last several years of his coaching tenure, Trevor Rees (1946-1963), was a very successful coach. He still holds Kent's record for most wins (92) and is second in all-time win-loss percentage (.591). *Id.*, p. 5, *supra.* Reese is also a member of the Kent State and the Mid-American Conference Halls of Fame. "Trevor Rees." *Varsity K Athletics Hall of Fame*, <https://kentstatesports.com/honors/hall-of-fame/trevor-rees/10> . Accessed 6 February 2024.

¹⁶⁵ Keating, *supra.* B-7; *see* Beidl, Rich. "Strang Has 109-26-1 Record, Leo in First Year at Kent." *The Record-Courier* (Ravenna, Ohio), 2 October 1964, p. 27 (the article is in a *GIVE US THE BALL, LEO* special supplement that references Kent's stated goal of being competitive in the MAC and states that Strang had already successfully made the transition from high school to major college football).

¹⁶⁶ Dietrich, Phil. "Kent Yearlings Look Awesome On Paper." *The Akron Beacon Journal* (Akron, Ohio), 15 October 1964, p. 48, https://www.newspapers.com/image/151270078/?match=1&terms=Ben_witukiewicz . Accessed 12 April 2024 – via newspapers.com.

¹⁶⁷ The undefeated 1964 Kent State freshman team outscored its 5 opponents 128-46, including a thrashing of Pitt 50-20. *1965 Kent State Football Media Guide*. Kent State University, 1965, p. 26 (note that the Kent State Football Media Guides for 1965, 1966, and 1967 are available through the Kent State University Library, Special Collections & Archives). It was the first undefeated Kent State freshman team to go undefeated since 1955. *Id.*, p. 26. As to being the best 1964 freshman team in Ohio and one of the best in the nation, *see* "Many High School Stars Give 1965 Team Promise." *The Record-Courier* (Ravenna, Ohio), 2 October 1964, p. 29 (in the *GIVE US THE BALL, LEO* special supplement); Dr. Ken. "Kent State Redux," *supra.*, p. 2 (Dr. Ken note the "buzz" the Kent State freshman team was good enough to face-off against any freshman team in the nation); Dr. Ken. "Kent State University," *supra.* (further discussion of Kent's "super-freshman team" that was one of the best in the country); Kent State does not keep statistics on the number or high school All-Americans it recruits, but a Google search by the author of *Leo E. Strang Football Coach & Innovator Extraordinaire* revealed that few other high school All-Americans have ever attended Kent State, much less five in one season.

¹⁶⁸ The 1965 team had Kent State's first winning season in a half-decade and its first at the major college level. *Kent State 2023 Football Record Book*, *supra.*, pp. 3-6; *1964 Kent State Football Media Guide*, Kent State University, 1964, p.44 (noting Kent and other MAC schools play a major college schedule and have since 1962).

¹⁶⁹ *Kent State 2023 Football Record Book*, *supra.*, pp.7-8 (where Strang's 1965 four game unbeaten streak -- three wins and a tie -- is shown, as well as his two three game winning streaks, both of which can be compared to other Kent seasons).

¹⁷⁰ Strang's win-loss percentage over his four-year tenure was .436 (including the Ohio University forfeit) compared to a .395 win-loss record for the four preceding years (14-22-1 record). *See Kent State 2023 Football Record Book*, *supra.*, pp. 2-3, 5, 7-8; 19. During Strang's tenure, Kent no

longer played small college programs as it had as late as 1961. See *Kent State Media Guide 1964, supra.*, pp. 38-39, 44. As to the Penn State game, a Pittsburgh sportswriter reported, “most everybody thought it [Kent] would be a breather for Penn State. And after the Nittany Lions scored two quick touchdowns ... fans at Beaver Stadium sat back and expected a rout. It never came.” “The visitors from Ohio cut Penn State’s lead to 14-6 at halftime and continued to dominate the game in the third period.” Doerge, Will. “Lions Hand Kent State 21-6 Loss, Penn State Tallies Two Touchdowns in First Quarter.” *The Pittsburgh Press*, 7 November 1965, Section 4, pp. 1,4.

¹⁷¹ *Kent State 2023 Football Record Book, supra.*, pp. 3-5, 7-8 (showing Strang’s .436 win-loss percentage compared to other coaches of an equal (4 years) or greater tenure since 1967). College Football Coaches Hall of Fame member Don James is the only Kent State coach of an equal (4) or greater tenure since 1967 that has a better win-loss percentage (.567) than Strang. *Id.*; see also “Don James.” *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_James_\(American_football\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_James_(American_football)) . Accessed 3 December 2023.

¹⁷² *Kent State 2023 Football Record Book*, pp. 7-8, *supra.*; “1964 Kent State football team.” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1964_Kent_State_Golden_Flashes_football_team . Accessed 4 February 2024; “1965 Kent State football team.” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1965_Kent_State_Golden_Flashes_football_team . Accessed 4 February 2024; “1966 Kent State football team.” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1966_Kent_State_Golden_Flashes_football_team . Accessed 4 February 2024; “1967 Kent State Golden Flashes football team.” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1967_Kent_State_Golden_Flashes_football_team . Accessed 4 February 2024. Kent State outscored its opponents 637 to 540 during Strang’s tenure, and the only season it did not outscore its opponents was his first season. *Id.*

¹⁷³ *Id.* Note that “on-the-field” losses excludes the Ohio University forfeit by Kent referenced *infra*.

¹⁷⁴ “1965 Kent State football team.” *Wikipedia, supra.* Kent’s two league losses were to Bowling Green 7-6 and Toledo 3-7. It tied Western Michigan 10-10. A win over Western Michigan and Bowling Green (a three-point swing) would have resulted in a MAC record of 5-1-0 and a MAC Co-Championship with Miami University. Interestingly, Kent defeated Miami 24-13, which was coached by College Hall of Famer Bo Schembechler. And a swing of fifteen points in 1966 (applied to Kent’s losses to Ohio University 10-12, Miami 0-7, and Western Michigan 20-23) would have resulted in Kent winning the 1966 MAC title outright at 5-1 in league play. See “1966 Kent State football team.” *Wikipedia, supra.* Kent’s 1967 team beat co-champion Ohio University 21-14 (but had to later forfeit it), lost to co-champion Toledo 13-14, to Bowling Green 6-7, to Western Michigan 7-16, and Miami 21-7. A swing of 14 points in the Toledo, Bowling Green and Western Michigan games would have resulted in Kent finishing 4-2 in the MAC, tied with Toledo and Miami for second place. If the “on-the-field” win over Ohio University is counted as a win, the fourteen-point swing would have resulted in Kent finishing 5-1 and sole 1967 MAC champion. “1967 Kent State Golden Flashes football.” *Wikipedia, supra.* A sportswriter reflecting on the close losses and key injuries, including to All-American candidate Don Fitzgerald -- said, “Strang must be regarded as the ‘hard-luck king’ of the collegiate coaching ranks.” Zitrin, Rich. “Coach Leo Strang Resigns.” *The Daily Kent Stater* (Kent State University), Vol LIII, No. 34, p. 1, 22 November 1967, [dks.library.kent.edu/?a=d&d=dks19671122-01.2.2&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN-----](https://www.kent.edu/dks.library.kent.edu/?a=d&d=dks19671122-01.2.2&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN-----) . Accessed 4 February 2024.

¹⁷⁵ *1967 Kent State Football Media Guide*, Kent State University, 1967, p.4; see also Wagner, Don. “Sports Ways.” *The Daily Times* (New Philadelphia, Ohio), 4 December 1967, p.5. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/86903989/?terms=Strang&match=1>. Accessed 10 April 2024 – via newspapers.com (notes Strang’s successes when compared to the three years before he became Kent’s coach in 1964).

¹⁷⁶ Don “the Human Hammer” Fitzgerald set 1966 NCAA D-1 records for the most rushes in a single game and a season, and he finished second in the nation that year in total rushing yards. See *1967 Kent State Football Media Guide, supra.*, pp. 2 and 31; “Don Fitzgerald,” *Kent State Varsity K Hall of Fame*, <https://kentstatesports.com/honors/hall-of-fame/don-fitzgerald/55>. Accessed 16 January 2024; Dr. Ken, “Kent State University,” *supra.*; see also Dr. Ken, “Kent State Redux,” *supra.*; “Don Fitzgerald,” *Beaver County Hall of Fame*, <https://beshof.org/halloffamers/fitzgerald1998.htm> . Accessed 19 January 2024 (note that while the Beaver County Hall of Fame says Fitzgerald played in the NFL, I could find no independent confirmation he did, and Kent State does not include him in its list of players who played pro).

¹⁷⁷ *Id.* As is noted in the sources cited, Fitzgerald led the nation in rushing the entire 1966 season, only to be eclipsed in the final game of the year.

¹⁷⁸ *1965 Kent State Football Media Guide, supra.*, p. 6 (states the 1964 Kent State team led the nation in both categories).

¹⁷⁹ *Kent State 2023 Football Record Book, supra.*, p. 43 (Kent’s All-Americans are listed). Jim Corrigan, who Strang recruited and coached in 1966 and 1967, is identified as a 1969 first team All-American selection by Newspaper Enterprises Association. *Id.* Bill Asbury, Jon Brooks, and Pat Gucciardo were 1965 honorable mention All-American selections by Associated Press, as were Jim Corrigan, Lou Harris, and Don Fitzgerald in 1967 by that same selector. *Id.* There are many All-American teams, but only some are officially recognized by the NCAA, and the Newspaper Enterprises Association and Associated Press All-American selections are two of those that are so recognized. See “1969 College Football All-America Team.” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1969_College_Football_All-America_Team . Accessed 5 July 2024 (Corrigan a 1969 first-team All-American selection of the National Enterprise Association and a third-team All-American selection of the Associated Press, which are noted as officially recognized by the NCAA); see also “Football Award Winners.” *National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)* (2016), pp. 1-4. http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/stats/football_records/2016/awards.pdf . Accessed 13 February 2024 (lists the NCAA officially recognized All-American teams by year and explains that those team selectors listed are considered national in scope). Any accolades of players listed in this article include those that ever played for Strang, regardless of their year of graduation.

¹⁸⁰ *Kent State 2023 Football Record Book, supra.*, pp. 43-44 (which includes Don Nottingham, who Strang recruited and coached before Nottingham won that honor). Kent’s first and only MAC Offensive Player of the Year was Bill Asbury. *Id.* at 43. Any accolades of players listed in this article include those that ever played for Strang, regardless of their year of graduation.

¹⁸¹ *Id.*, p. 48 (where Kent’s NFL draft choices are listed, Zenko through Nottingham). Included in that number are any that Strang coached before they may have graduated. While not grouped by coaches, matching the years to the coaches reveals Strang had, by far, the most NFL draft choices of any Kent State football coach to date. Any accolades of players listed in this article include those that ever played for Strang, regardless of their year of graduation.

¹⁸² *Id.* (Strang’s two NFL second round selections -- Brooks and Corrigan -- are listed and are Kent’s first players selected that high in the draft). Any accolades of players listed in this article include those that ever played for Strang, regardless of their year of graduation.

¹⁸³ *Id.*, pp. 48-49 (Kent’s pro football players are listed, including the seven coached by Strang: Asbury, Corrigan, Gucciardo, Harris, Nottingham, Maich, and Michaluk). Any accolades of players listed in this article include those that ever played for Strang, regardless of their year of graduation.

¹⁸⁴ *1965 Kent State Football Media Guide, supra.*, p. 26 (Kent led the nation in percentage attendance increase in 1964 and did so playing only 4 home games compared to 5 the prior year); *1966 Kent State Football Media Guide*. Kent State University, 1966, p. 40 (9 attendance records were set in 1965); *1967 Kent State Football Media Guide, supra.*, p. 3 (states two attendance records were set in 1966). The Kent State University Library, Special Collections & Archives cannot locate the *1968 Kent State Football Media Guide*, so it is unknown if it would reference any attendance records set during the 1967 season. See also “Add Seats, KSU Stadium to be the Biggest in the Mid-Am.” *The Daily Kent Stater*, 15

July 1965, p. 4, <https://dks.library.kent.edu/?a=d&d=ksn19650715-01.2.29&> . Accessed 17 January 2023 (Kent State attendance records set and stadium expansion plans).

¹⁸⁵ Hess Jr., Chuck. “CHUCK “n” SPORTS.” *The Evening Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), p. 12, 9 October 1964, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/4149201/?terms=Strang&match=1> . Accessed 7 April 2024 – via newspapers.com.

¹⁸⁶ *Id.*

¹⁸⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸⁸ *1965 Kent State Football Media Guide, supra.*, pp. 9, 26; “Add Seats, KSU Stadium to be the Biggest in the Mid-Am,” *supra.*; *see also* “Memorial Stadium (Kent State)” *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memorial_Stadium_\(Kent_State\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memorial_Stadium_(Kent_State)) . Accessed 17 January 2024; “Dix Stadium.” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dix_Stadium . Accessed 17 January 2024.

¹⁸⁹ *1967 Kent State Football Media Guide, supra.*, p. 7. Research by the author of *Leo E. Strang Football Coach & Innovator Extraordinaire* did not reveal anything close to a similar radio network covering the Kent football games since the Strang era.

¹⁹⁰ *Id.* (as noted, Kent later forfeited the victory).

¹⁹¹ Dr. Ken. “Kent State University,” *supra.*; Dr. Ken. “Kent State University – 1973 ‘Matsko,’” *supra.* (discussion of Kent State helmet uniforms during the Strang, Puddington, and James coaching eras); Dr. Ken. “Kent State Redux,” *supra.* (includes photos of Kent State’s uniforms); *See also 1965, 1966, and 1967 Kent State Football Media Guides, supra.* (additional uniform photos are shown). As noted in the Helmut Hut articles, Strang changed the uniforms in 1967 to a solid gold helmet, matching pants, and a navy-blue jersey with white lettering spelling “Kent State” across the chest, which was the basic Kent State uniform for several years to follow.

¹⁹² Dr. Ken. “Kent State University,” *supra.*

¹⁹³ Dr. Ken. “Kent State Redux,” *supra.* Internet research by the author of *Leo E. Strang Football Coach & Innovator Extraordinaire* of “unbalanced line” and “Wing T” failed to locate any major colleges using as their primary offense during Strang’s tenure or since.

¹⁹⁴ *Kent State 2023 Football Record Book, supra.*, p.8; Mistovich, *supra.*, p. 10 (Strang’s career after coaching is discussed.)

¹⁹⁵ Perkins, *supra.*

¹⁹⁶ *Kent State 2023 Football Record Book, supra.*, p. 47 (Leo Strang Award recipients from 1998 till 2017); *see also* “KSU Football Spring Awards Given to Four Players Saturday,” *Akron Beacon Journal* (Akron, Ohio), April 28, 2013, <https://www.beaconjournal.com/story/sports/college/kent-state/2013/04/28/ksu-football-spring-awards-given/10612529007/> . Accessed 16 January 2024.

¹⁹⁷ “William Asbury.” *Kent State Varsity K Hall of Fame*, <https://kentstatesports.com/honors/hall-of-fame/william-asbury/30> . Accessed 28 January 2024; *2023 Kent State Football Record Book, supra.*, p. 43; Dr. Ken. “The Rise and Further Rise of William Asbury.” *Helmet Hut*, April 2014. <https://helmethut.com/Features/Dr.Ken26html> . Accessed 19 January 2024; “Bill Asbury, Steelers Running Back, 1966-1968.” *Steeler Take Aways*, April 9, 2012. <https://steelerstakeaways.com/willie-asbury-steelers-running-back-1966-1968/> . Accessed January 28, 2024; *1965 Kent State Football Media Guide, supra.*, p. 23 (notes Asbury’s his return to the roster in 1964 after a near fatal kidney failure during the first practice of 1964). Note: Bill Asbury was also known by first names Willie and William.

¹⁹⁸ “Jon Brooks.” *Kent State Varsity K Hall of Fame*, <https://kentstatesports.com/honors/hall-of-fame/jon-brooks/99> . Accessed 10 February 2024; Zitrin, Rich. “Brooks in Eagles’ Nest, Pros Select Four Kent Stars in First NFL-AFL Draft.” *The Daily Kent Stater*, Volume LII, Number 77, p. 7. <https://dks.library.kent.edu/?a=d&d=dks19670404-01.2.33&e-----en-20--1--txt-txIN-----> . Accessed 10 February 2024 (states that Brooks was the second offensive lineman selected in the entire NFL draft).

¹⁹⁹ “Jim Corrigan.” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Corrigan . Accessed 15 January 2023; *2023 Kent State Football Record Book, supra.*, p. 43; “Jim Corrigan,” *Canadian Football Hall of Fame*, <https://cfof.ca/members/jim-corrigan/> . Accessed 15 January 2023; “Jim Corrigan,” *Kent State Varsity K Hall of Fame*, <https://kentstatesports.com/honors/hall-of-fame/jim-corrigan/4> . Accessed 15 January 2023 (notes Corrigan was the first Kent player to be a captain two years in a row and first to be 1st team All-MAC three years in a row. Any accolades of players listed in this article include those that ever played for Strang, regardless of their year of graduation.

²⁰⁰ *1967 Kent State Football Media Guide, supra.*, pp. 2, 31; “Don Fitzgerald,” *Kent State Varsity K Hall of Fame, supra.* (quotes an NFL scout who said Fitzgerald was, “the best big man in the country inside the 10-yard line.”); Dr. Ken. “Kent State University,” *supra.*; *see also* Dr. Ken. “Kent State Redux,” *supra.*; Don Fitzgerald.” *Beaver County Hall of Fame, supra.*

²⁰¹ “Pat Gucciardo.” *Kent State Varsity K Hall of Fame.*, <https://kentstatesports.com/honors/hall-of-fame/pat-gucciardo/61> . Accessed 21 April 2024.

²⁰² “Lou Harris.” *Kent State Varsity K Hall of Fame*, <ps://kentstatesports.com/honors/hall-of-fame/lou-harris/123> . Accessed 29 May 2024 (holds the Kent State interception record which he did playing in only 23 varsity games); *2023 Kent State Football Record Book, supra.*, pp. 26, 43, and 48.

²⁰³ “Don Nottingham.” *Kent State Varsity K Hall of Fame*, <https://kentstatesports.com/honors/hall-of-fame/don-nottingham/45> . Accessed 15 January 2023; “Don Nottingham.” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_Nottingham . Accessed 15 January 2023 (NFL nickname was “The Human Bowling Ball”). Any accolades of players listed in this article include those that ever played for Strang, regardless of their year of graduation.

²⁰⁴ Schlemmer, Paul P. “Prized Bull Runs Rampant: Shock Treatment For The Enemy.” *Buckeye Football*, 1967 Edition, p. 15

²⁰⁵ Scalzo, *supra.*

²⁰⁶ Seaburn, *supra.*

²⁰⁷ *Id.*

²⁰⁸ *Id.*

²⁰⁹ *Id.*; Jim Corrigan was Kent State head coach from 1995-1997. *See* “Jim Corrigan.” *Wikipedia, supra.*

²¹⁰ Shook. *A Century of Heroes, American’s First High School Dynasty, supra.*, pp. 276-284, 449.

²¹¹ *Id.*, p. 449.

²¹² *Id.*

²¹³ Perkins, *supra.*; Beaven, *supra.*

²¹⁴ Perkins, *supra.*

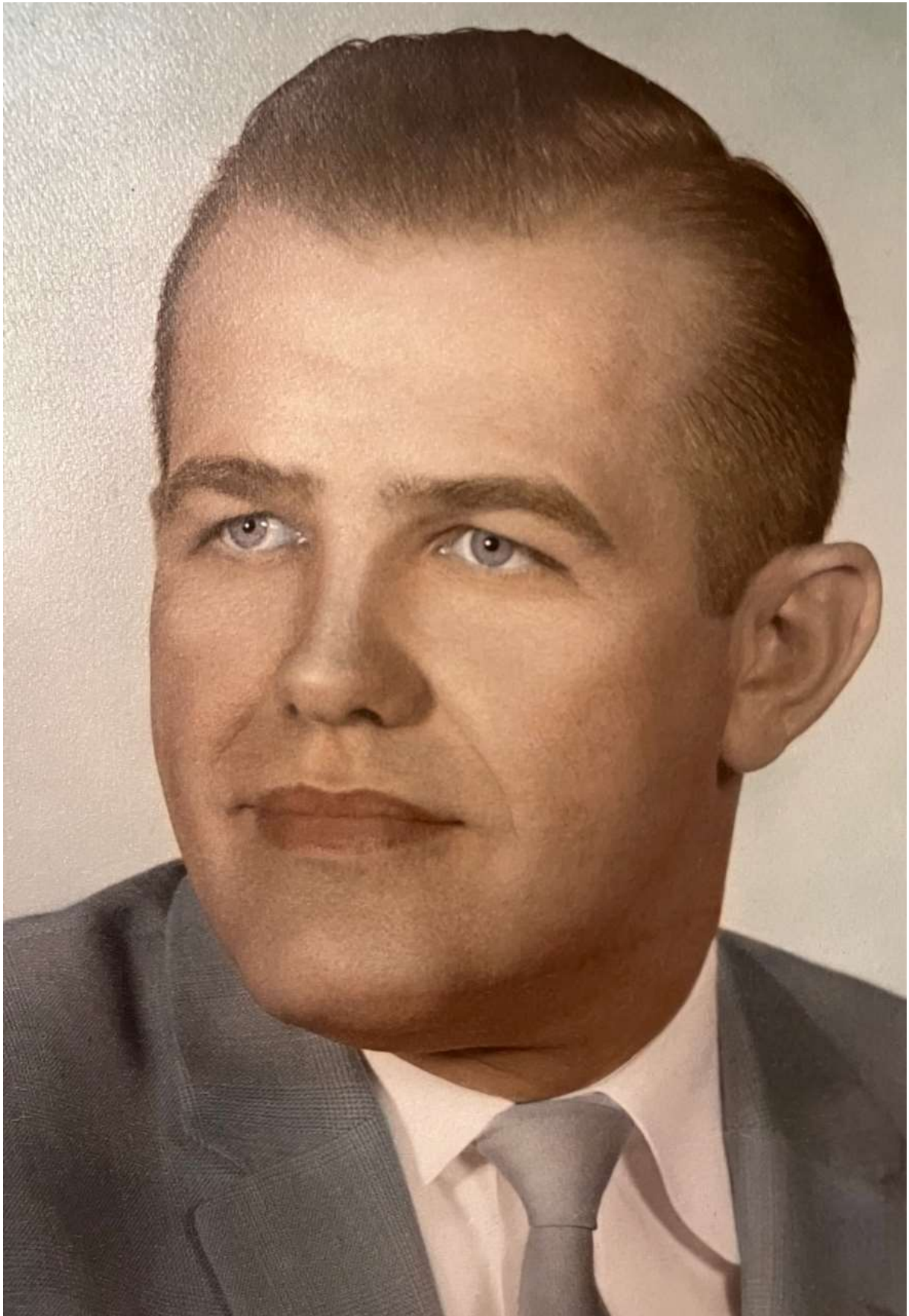
²¹⁵ Beaven, *supra.*

²¹⁶ The author of *Leo E. Strang Football Coach & Innovator Extraordinaire* is in possession of the NCAA proclamation.

²¹⁷ Perkins, *supra.*; *see also* Cusick, Bob. “She Doesn’t Mind Football Widow Title.” *The Record-Courier* Ravenna, Ohio, 2 October 1967, p. 38 (of the *GIVE US THE BALL, LEO* special edition section of the paper).

²¹⁸ The coaching tree includes professional football front office and scouting positions as well, as can be seen. Not included is Robert Greenwood who was an assistant football coach under Strang at Massillon who later coached basketball at: Rider College (Head Coach), Washington

University (Head Coach), Washington State University (Head Coach), and Iowa. While high school coaches are not listed in the coaching tree, there were many that coached with or played for Strang, including Marv Moorehouse, an assistant coach at Upper Sandusky and head coach at Upper Arlington High School (Ohio) where he won three consecutive state titles in the 1960s.





Leo Strang
4-Year Letterman
1st Team
All-Ohio 1942









Leo Strang awarded
outstanding play with
black stars for helmets

