



McHugh Hears The 'Noise' But It Doesn't Bother Him

By Dick Dougherty

Tom McHugh arrived at Langhorne as Neshaminy High School's football coach on Aug. 18.

It's been 43 days since he stepped into the most talked about schoolboy coaching job in Pennsylvania. The Redskins were pushing a 51 - game victory streak when McHugh took over. He inherited the string from the John Petercuskie era, which began in 1960.

Today, however, the 'Skins are 0-2-1, a record which has some Neshaminy supporters up in arms and running at the mouth.

McHugh, who has 14 years in coaching, was stepping into a hornet's nest and knew it. The ex - Maryland griddler was well aware of Neshaminy's 128-11-8 book over 14 seasons.

He wasn't sidestepping anything. He isn't walking away from today's situation, either. While some people term the collapse of Neshaminy's football dynasty as equal to the fall of the Roman Empire, McHugh views the situation differently.

"There isn't one thing that has happened that I didn't expect. Even to the rabidness

of the fans. You get that yelling regardless of where you coach."

McHugh's a gentleman from the word go. He didn't mention the abusive language flowing from the sidelines. He just wrote off the remarks by saying, "let them yell." Some Neshaminy fans, however, have been so accustomed to winning they can't swallow what's happened in 1966. And they've been directing abusive and profane language at McHugh.

The noisemakers find losing unbearable and blame the ex-Palmyra mentor for Neshaminy's current tumble from the top. Memories are short, though. The 'Skins, under Harry Franks, took a 28-2 record into the 1955 campaign. Three straight losses were absorbed to Muhlenberg Township (21-6) Pleasantville, N. J. (13-12) and Eddystone (20-6). And in 1957 Neshaminy ended with a 7-3 record.

McHugh, a strapping 6-2, 220 - pounder with graying hair, would rather talk about today.

"I know our problems. The big slowdown is we're not moving. I don't care where you go, new personnel brings



TOM MC HUGH

... Neshaminy coach

new changes and different teachings.

"Primarily it's been a case of our offense not jelling. We didn't master it as quickly as possible. They (Petercuskie's staff) were winged-T and we have a "T" with variations. We have basically the same blocking but with more variations.

"The kids are perturbed at

themselves for the small errors that are occurring. A block here or a cut there would have made a big difference to us at certain times."

McHugh has been directing the 'Skins for six weeks. He feels it has been an incubation period for him, the kids, and the staff. And now McHugh believes the eggs are ready to hatch.

"We've come a long, strong way in just six weeks. We're not the football team we were even two weeks ago. There's no question the offense is here now."

The defense hasn't worried the 40 - year - old mentor. Following the opening game shellacking that was administered by Bishop Egan (41-0), Neshaminy has played on more than equal terms with its next two opponents. The Redskins were tied by LaSalle Catholic, 13-13, and last week dropped a 13-0 decision to Easton.