

1983

(Derived from Newspaper articles)

There's good news and there's bad news. Most people would like to hear the bad news first, so here it is. Butch Fortunato has coached his last game at Montclair High School after roaming the Mountie sidelines for the past forty-four years. Fortunato compiled a record of 115 – 52 – 8. He will be hard to replace.

The good news is that in 1983 Butch's Mountie Football team **won a State Championship on the field in head-to-head playoff competition for the first time ever.**

Prior to the opening game there was some question as to whether or not the Mountie defense was ready. The fears were dispelled when Montclair met Ridgewood on their home turf. The defense excelled. Montclair won 14-7 but nagging injuries to key players that hampered the squad during pre-season were only compounded after the clash with a tough and disciplined Ridgewood team.

The following Saturday Montclair traveled to Hackensack where the Mountie squad turned their teams' errors into touchdowns for a 39-6 Mountie victory. James "Boo" Overbey, Brandy Wells, Chester Jones, Quintus McDonald, and Lindsey Davis ALL scored touchdowns for Montclair High School with "Boo" crossing the goal line twice.

With a 2 & 0 start; Montclair played Belleville before 8,000 spectators at Woodman Field. Two Mountie touchdowns in the first quarter and a stellar defensive effort the rest of the way proved all Montclair would need as the Mounties defeated Belleville 14-6. Brandy Wells' touchdown and Dennis O'Hare's thirty-four yard interception return, along with Overbey's 127 yards rushing and strong Mountie "D" proved too much for the Bucs.

The Mounties suffered their first loss the following Saturday at Clifton. Brandy Wells took the opening kickoff 83 yards to pay dirt. Clifton tied the score at 7 – 7 in the second quarter. The two teams remained knotted in a defensive battle until the closing minutes of the contest when the Mustang defense blocked a Montclair punt out of the end zone for the two-point margin of victory. Clifton won 9-7.

The following week, Paterson Kennedy visited Woodman Field. Three Mountie touchdowns in the first half of play were all Montclair needed as Kennedy went down in defeat 20-0.

Then came a showdown with the tough Bergen Catholic squad that invaded Woodman field sporting a high ranking and a sixteen-game winning streak. The Mounties jumped out in front on a three-yard touchdown run by Overbey but the kick failed and Montclair was forced to cling to a 6-0 lead for the entire first half. In the last three minutes of the third quarter the Crusaders scored and took the lead, 7-6.

With Brandy out of the game with a knee injury suffered in last week's contest, Overbey had to carry the load in the backfield. With 7:41 left in the game, Quarterback Kevin Richberg gave the ball to Overbey. "Boo" outran All-State Mike Morgan and his BC teammates for the 12-7 victory.

Paterson Eastside came to Woodman Field and left on the short end of a 36-8 drubbing. 'Nuff, said.

The following Saturday Montclair traveled to Bloomfield and did much the same to the Bengals, leaving with a 42-0 victory.

There'd be no more of that the rest of the season. The Mounties met East Orange in the first round of the playoffs at Woodman Field on November 19th. After nearly four quarters of almos, not quites, and if onlys, from both teams, the score remained 0-0. Then with :06 beats left on the clock, Montclair's Quintus McDonald split the uprights for the first field goal of his high school career and the Mounties emerged victorious by a score of 3-0. "I was so nervous I felt like an expectant father waiting for a child to be born," said McDonald to a Star-Ledger reporter, referring to the time out East Orange took to make him sweat. "I just said a prayer and remembered to keep my head down."

Before Montclair could attempt to "take revenge" on Union, the team first had to face Craig "Ironhead" Heyward and his fellow Passaic Indians. They also had revenge on their minds.

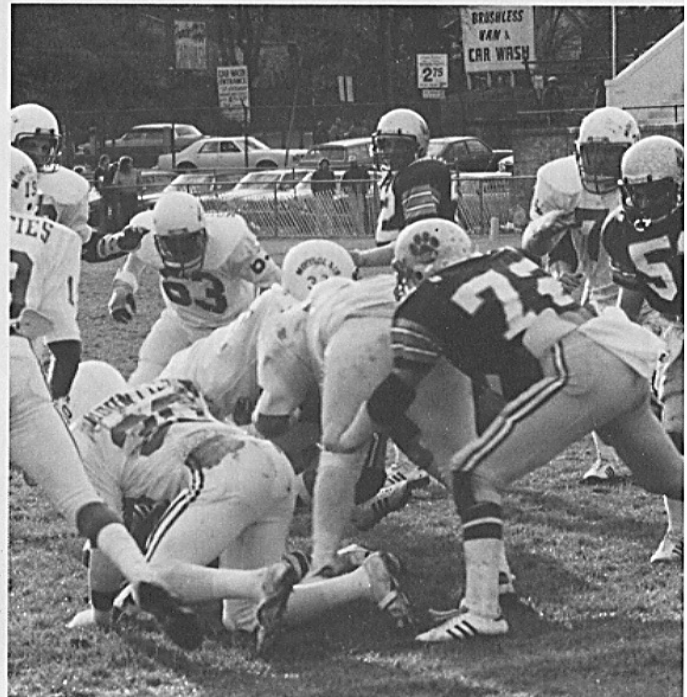
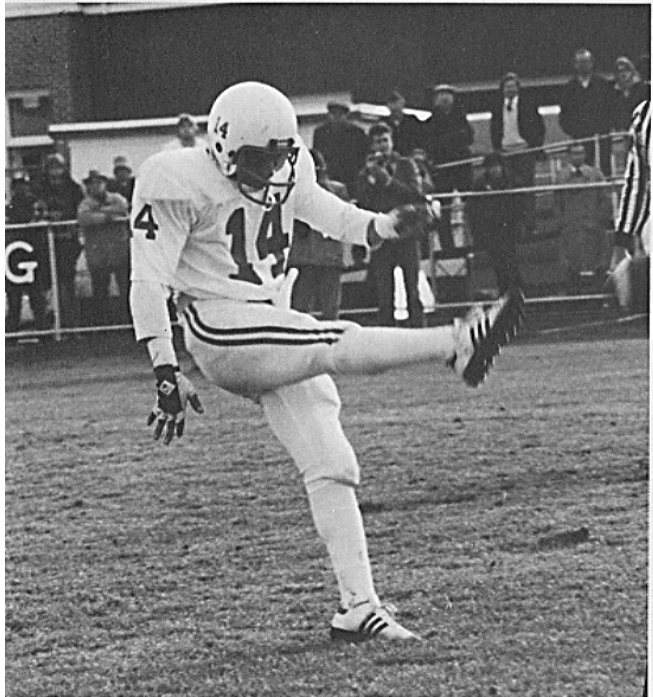
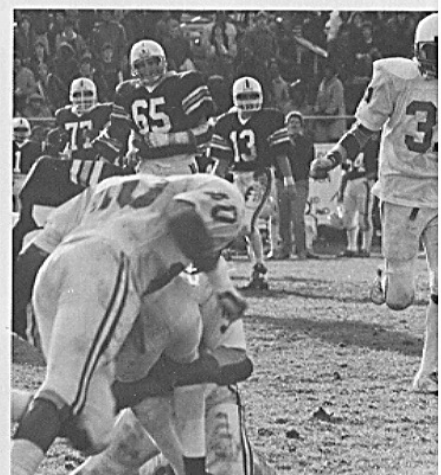
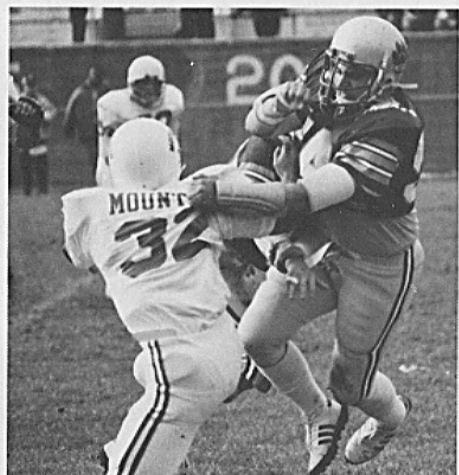
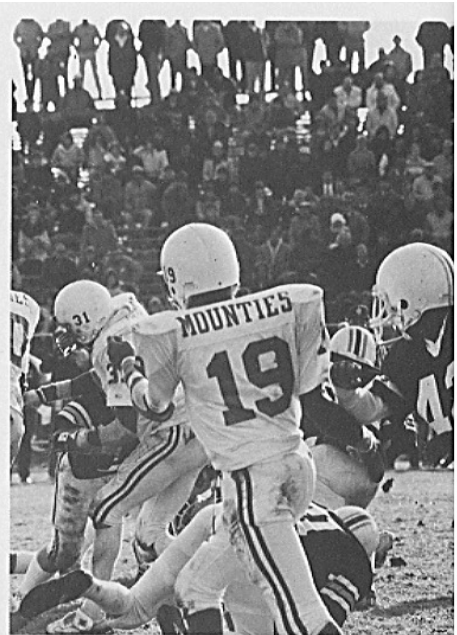
The game was played before 9,000 fans at Woodman Field on Thanksgiving Day. Undefeated Passaic (en route to the Group 4, Section 1 finals) scored in the first quarter on a 90-yard punt return by Heyward and took a 7-0 lead. In the second quarter Quintus McDonald took a thirty-three yard pass from Richberg for a touchdown. Like Heyward, Quintus also kicked the extra point. The two teams went into the locker room tied 7-7. In the fourth quarter, the Indians recovered a Montclair fumble on the Mountie's thirty-one yard line with 11:01 left in the game to set up Heyward's winning touchdown. A penalty against Montclair put the ball on the fifteen. Two plays later "Ironhead" scored and Passaic led 13-7. After the relentless Mountie defense pinned Passaic at its own seven-yard line, Heyward took an intentional safety. Final score Passaic 13, Montclair 9.

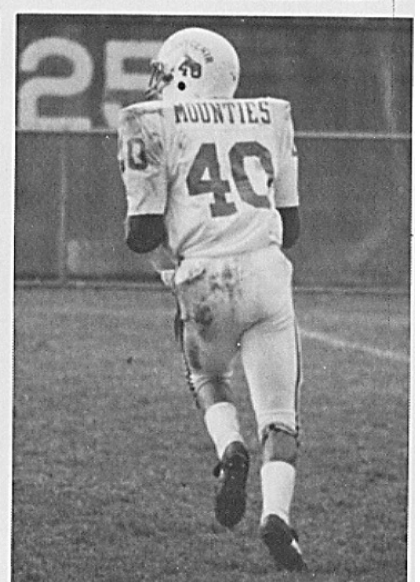
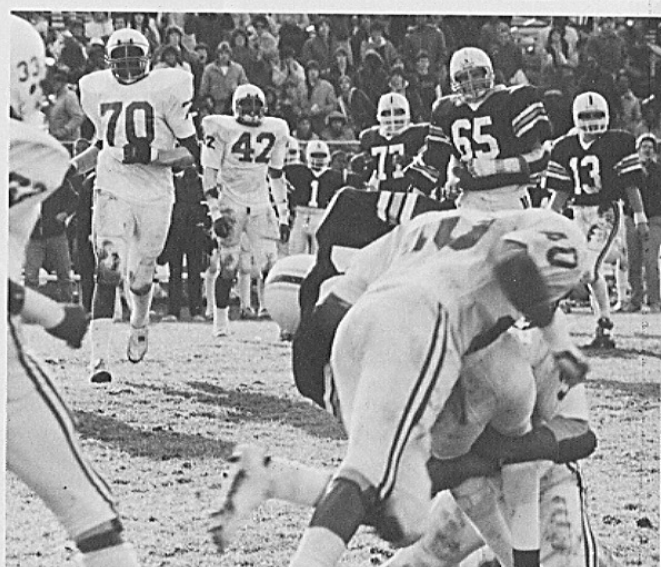
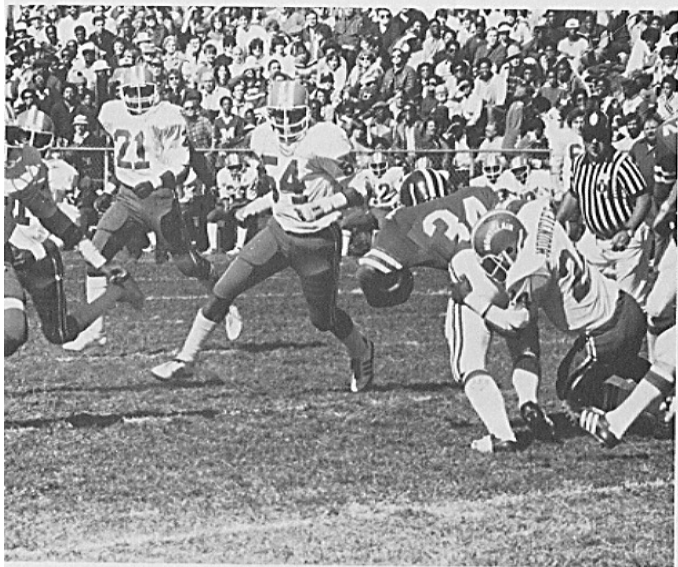
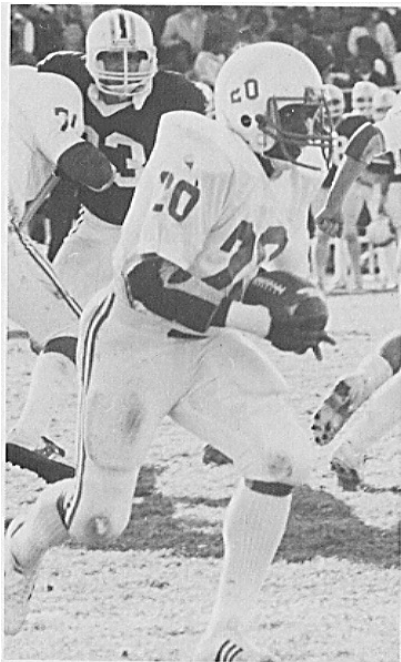
Revenge is sweet and Montclair was about to taste it themselves. On December 5th Montclair traveled to Union for the North Jersey Group 4 Section 2 State finals. The Mountie squad did not know that this game was going to be Butch Fortunato's last game as Coach. Butch wanted it that way. "Only my coaches knew," said Butch to the Star-Ledger, "I don't believe in any 'Win one for the gipper' speeches. I always told the kids to play it for yourself. Don't come out and play for me."

Montclair struck first after Union's All-State back Tony Stewart coughed up the ball into the hands of an alert Mountie, Avery Lipman. Soon after split end Ray Puryear found himself wide open in the end zone to haul in a 31-yard pass from Richberg. Union marched 63 yards in nine plays to tie the score 7-7. A Union field goal gave the Farmers a 10-7 lead at the half. Montclair struck suddenly for the winning touchdown early in the third quarter following a Union punt. After a five-yard gain by "Boo," Richberg threw a short swing pass to his right to All-Stater Brandy Wells, who caught the ball in the backfield. Wells tore away from one defender before turning the corner and sprinting along the right sideline. Brandy raced by several Union defenders untouched before breaking another tackle with a cut inside at the twenty and ran the rest of the way untouched for the 14-10 win. The Montclair Mounties are 1983 State Champions! Thanks Team! Thank you Butch!

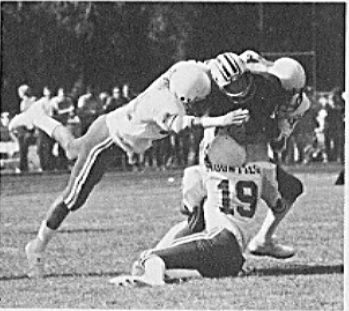
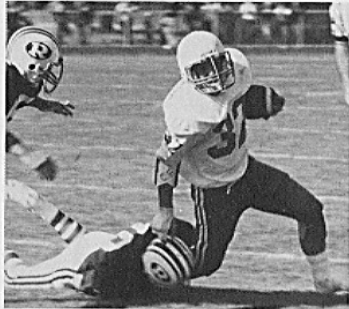
*Brandy Wells was selected to the USA Today newspaper All-USA team. Brandy went on to excel on defense for the University of Notre Dame.

LOOK AT OUR M.H.S. CHAMPS

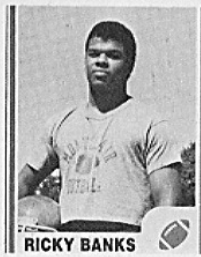




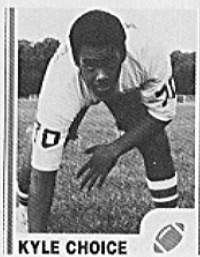
THE CHAMPS



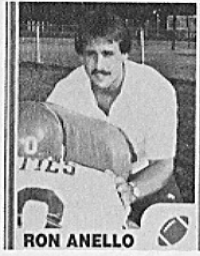
ERIC BANKS



RICKY BANKS



KYLE CHOICE



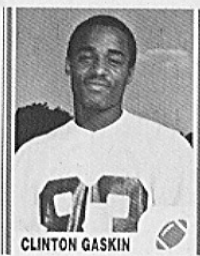
RON ANELLO



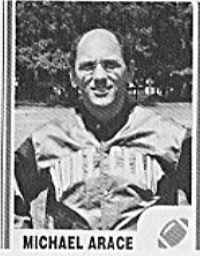
JAMES ESPOSITO



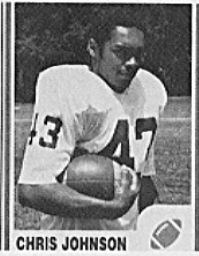
JOE FISCHER



CLINTON GASKIN



MICHAEL ARACE



CHRIS JOHNSON



CHESTER JONES



AVERY LIPMAN



STEVE DIGERONIMO



LARRY MILLER



ROBERT MILLER



DOUGLAS MOORE



TOM IMHOF



OWEN PETRIE



RAYMOND PURYEAR



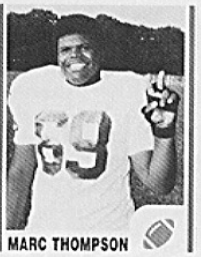
KEVIN RICHBERG



CORNELIUS NICOLL



FRED THOMPSON



MARC THOMPSON



DEVAND SUKHDEO

MONTCLAIR GOT DIS!



GARY CICHETTI



JOHN CUOZZO



LINDSEY DAVIS



HENRY GLASGOW



ARTHUR HARGRAVE



DARRYL JACKSON



WILLIAM MURRAY



WILLIAM McDANIEL



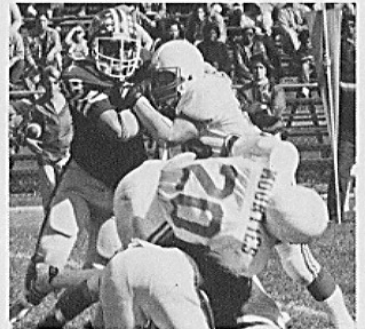
QUINTUS McDONALD



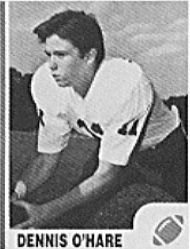
STEVEN MIKRE



JOHN PETRONACI



MARK NEWMAN



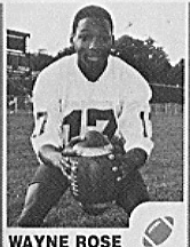
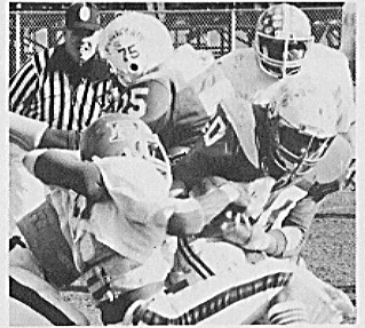
DENNIS O'HARE



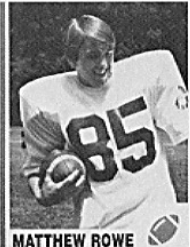
JAMES OVERBEY



HOMER ROBINSON



WAYNE ROSE



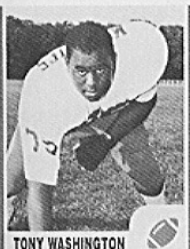
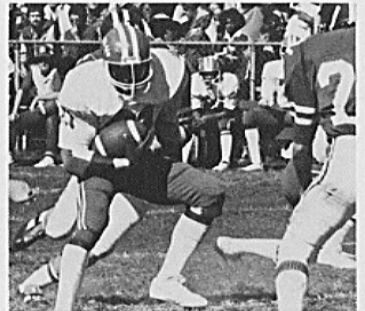
MATTHEW ROWE



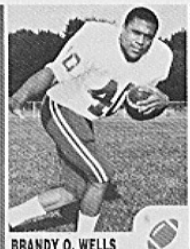
CHRISTOPHER RUSSO



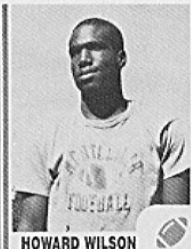
TOM CLIFFORD



TONY WASHINGTON



BRANDY O. WELLS



HOWARD WILSON



ED LEBIDA