

THIS ONE'S FOR DAD

Bishop McCort senior running back Josh Seidel matches a performance posted by his late father, David Seidel, in the Crushers' 69-35 victory over Richland

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For PA Football News**

Growing up, how many times can you recall playing in a sporting event and having that one game where you just dominated, where no matter what happened or what was thrown at you, you just ran through it?

It could have been that baseball game where you went 4-for-4 (or 5-for-5), or that hat trick in a youth hockey game, or a notable gridiron performance where you scored the winning touchdown and managed to find the mud puddle in the back of the end zone, giving Mom a little extra work in the laundry department before next week's game.

Ah, the memories of such events. Afterwards, there were smiles, hugs from Mom and Dad and relatives, congratulations of all sorts, and heck, maybe even a trip to the ice cream shop for a celebratory cone.

Bishop McCort senior running back Josh Seidel experienced quite the career night Friday during the Crushers' 69-35 victory over Richland at Point Stadium. He smashed the previous single-game rushing yardage record (266 yards) by more than 60 yards, totaling 327 yards on 29 carries.

But afterward, there physically was one person missing from the celebration – his father, David.

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David Seidel passed away August 21, 2009, just two weeks before Josh's senior season at Bishop McCort was to begin. David had been in a very long battle with cancer, seven years total.

He had played his high school football for Bishop McCort (1979-'81), and his college ball at IUP (1982-'85). For the last 13 years, David had been an assistant on the Crushers' football team, the only assistant to remain with the red and gold during Ken Salem's tenure as head coach.

David Seidel's name is still attached to some Bishop McCort records. Prior to Friday night, he was the sole owner of the records for most touchdowns scored in a game (6) and points in a single game (36). He once owned the single-season rushing yardage record of nearly 1,470 yards, set in his senior season. The 24 touchdowns he scored in 1981 stand as the second-highest total in school history, and his 32 career touchdowns are 3rd most.

Note the fact that the last paragraph mentioned “prior to Friday” when discussing the two records David Seidel solely owned.

Friday night, a new name tied both of David’s records. That new co-record holder is his son, Josh.

Ken Salem choked up a little bit when he was asked what it meant for Josh to tie his fathers’ records.

“It’s just the way it should be,” Salem said. “It’s the way it should be.”

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Right from the onset of Friday’s game, those in attendance could tell Josh Seidel was destined for a big night. How big, though, remained to be seen.

Seidel registered the first five carries of the game – accounting for McCort’s entire opening drive of the game. Runs of 32 and 15 yards on the drive set up a five-yard scoring run. At that juncture, Seidel had five carries for 67 yards.

He was just getting started.

Seidel scored the Crushers’ next two touchdowns, helping the red and gold build a 21-7 lead in the second quarter. His 13-yard touchdown run, his third of the night, gave him 13 carries for 170 yards at the 8:08 mark of the period. As a team, the Crushers had amassed 209 yards of offense and not attempted a pass at that point in the game.

Seidel finished the first half with 16 carries for 187 yards. As a team, the Crushers had 242 yards rushing.

He picked right up where he left off on McCort’s opening drive of the second half. Of the 10 plays the Crushers ran on the 65-yard drive, Seidel touched the ball seven times. His three-yard run, his fourth score of the night, pushed the lead to 42-21, and gave him 23 carries for 221 yards.

After Richland scored, Seidel got the first carry on McCort’s next possession, and he ran his way into the record books. The 65-yard touchdown run gave him 286 yards, breaking a single-game record of 266 yards set 13 years prior in 1996.

Seidel registered five more carries for the remainder of the game – his last carry tied him with his father. Seidel’s sixth touchdown run, an eight-yard scamper with 7:17 left in the game, gave the Crushers a 63-35 lead.

Seidel’s final stat line: 29 carries, 327 yards, 6 touchdowns. Bishop McCort won the game, 69-35.

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The local television station in Johnstown wanted to do an interview with #21. While McCort's team huddled for a postgame breakdown, Seidel stood off to the side as rain poured down steadily and recorders were thrust toward him.

"I'm honored, of course," Seidel said of tying his father's records. "I've got some help up there (in heaven)."

The performance gave Seidel 908 rushing yards and 16 touchdowns for the season. He's 10 touchdowns shy of McCort's single-season touchdown record of 26, after only five weeks of the season.

Richland head coach Brandon Bailey was impressed.

"I'm sure he'll be playing somewhere on Saturdays next year," the Rams' head man said.

The 908 yards rushing puts Seidel on a nine-game pace for 1,634 yards rushing. District 6 class-A teams have a 16-team playoff tournament, and the winner advances to the PIAA quarterfinals round the first weekend of December this year.

Did #21 expect to make that much of an impact?

"I thought I'd carry it some," Seidel said, "but I didn't expect this."

Salem described Seidel's performance as, "an inspiration to watch. Josh Seidel was absolutely fantastic tonight."

Salem didn't stop there.

"I know Dad's up there," Salem said, "and he's real happy tonight. He's happy for his Crushers, and he's happy for his boy."

So even though David Seidel wasn't physically there to celebrate his son's success Friday night, he had the best seat in the house at Point Stadium.

Those drops of rain were David's tears of joy spilling from heaven, falling on his son as he spoke with the media, almost as if he was saying:

"You've done well, son. I'm proud of you."