

Franklin has produced three first team all-staters in football: guards Paul Beals and Fred Blackhurst and tackle Garrett Brewster.

Beals was the first to make the first team.

And, said Franklin coach Jim McCullough, "They couldn't have waited for a better boy."

A 5-10, 170-pound guard, Beals was named to the Associated Press first team in 1960. Two teammates also were picked to the squad. Tackle Ron Baughman was named to the third team and center Vince Witherup received an honorable mention.

McCullough called the three along with tackle Tom Sloss and guard Walt Miller "possibly the best high school line in the state."

All five were named to the Section 2 first team.

The five allowed the Knights to produce three straight games in which two running backs gained 100 yards or more.

Fred Yetka (119 yards) and quarterback Bill Beith (109) first did it against Meadville. Then it was Jack Schosser (221) and Yetka performing the feat against Corry. The Knights rolled up 381 yards rushing against the Beavers, prompting McCullough to declare, "(That) was probably the greatest game I've ever seen by a high school line." (It should be noted that George Case was playing in place of Sloss at tackle that game.)

Schosser (176) and Yetka (119) did it again the next week against Ford City.

Considered by many to be the best football player in Section 2, Beals was by far the smallest player on the AP's first team line.

And possibly the most unusual.

He was an A student -- tops in his class of 250 who had his eye on Penn State and scholarship feelers from Cornell, Columbia, Dartmouth and Dayton.

The son of Dr. and Mrs. Norman K. Beals of Miller Park, Beals was also an accomplished violinist and pianist.

His most famous teammate on the first team was Beaver Falls' Joe Namath, who shared quarterback with Fred Mazurek, who later starred at Pitt. Running back COMs Iacavazzi later starred for Princeton.

Only one vote separated Namath and Mazurek in the voting.

One of Baughman's teammates on the third team, incidentally, was Erie Tech's Fred Biletnikoff, later to become a Hall of Fame receiver for the Oakland Raiders. Biletnikoff was picked as a running back.

Here's a look at the 1960 AP all-state first team:

Ends -- Kirk Kressler (6-2, 179) Berwick and Tom Krzemienski (6-2, 195) Beaver Falls

Tackles -- Rich Arrington (6-0, 210) Erie East and Ray Rissmilller (6-4, 218) Georgia

Guards -- Don Croftcheck (6-2, 215), Redstone and Paul Beals (5-10, 170) Franklin

Center -- Joe Demelfi (5-11, 204) Berwick

Quarterbacks -- Joe Namath (6-1, 170) Beaver Falls and Fred Mazurek (5-11, 195) Redstone

Running backs -- Hal Yost (6-1, c185) Lock Haven, Cosmo Iacavazzi (5-11, 185) Yale and Jeff Marsh (5-8, 160) Nazareth

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Blackhurst was one of two Section 2 stars named first team all-state by UPI in 1967. The other was Warren running back Dan O'Neil.

O'Neil rushed for 1,494 yards on 208 carries-- including 313 against Jamestown, N.Y., and unheard of total at the time and scored 17 touchdowns for the Dragons. He also caught eight passes for 121 yards.

Here's what the first team looked like:

Ends -- Tom Mondell, Ellwood City and Jerry Griffin, Cedar Cliff

Tackles -- Jack Dykes, Kiski Area and Milan Vecanski, Harrisburg John Harris

Guards -- Duwayne Orris, Johnstown and Fred Blackhurst, Franklin

Center -- Phil Toney, New Castle

Quarterback -- Jim Jones, Harrisburg John Harris

Running backs -- Gregg Campbell, Altoona; Ron "Po" James, New Brighton; and Dan O'Neil, Warren

Defensive teams weren't picked back then.

Franklin's Rolland "Bay" Lawrence received an honorable mention.

Blackhurst later starred for Westminster's NAIA national championship teams along with two former high school teammates – quarterback Dave Bierbach and defensive back Rich Hancox.

Both Hancox and Blackhurst would become head coaches at Franklin,

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Brewster made the Associated Press first team in 2003 under coach Tiger LaVerde.

He once stood 6-5 and weighed 300 pounds, but didn't feel he was doing the job his first three seasons of football. After a strenuous workout program and a change of diet, he dropped to 285 and helped the Knights to a 9-2 record and a 3A playoffs berth where Franklin lost in the finals to Strong Vincent, 36-15.

The all-state selection surprised Brewster, who bench pressed 300 pounds as a freshman. "I didn't expect this at all," he told News-Herald sports editor Ed Brannon..

"I'm so proud of Garrett," LaVerde said. "He started every game at left tackle in my three years here. He's improved so much since his first year, and I couldn't be happier for him."

LaVerde said the workout program helped Brewster with his agility and mobility. "He appeared stronger and his footwork was vastly improved," LaVerde said. "There were many times during the season when he'd block down on a tackle, then go make a block on a linebacker...and then he'd go and find a safety."

Brewster said he lifted a lot during the off-season and ran a lot of sprints. "I felt a lot lighter and quicker on my feet," he said.

Brewster got a lot of credit to Blackhurst for his development. "He taught me everything I know...I also owe a lot to coach LaVerde, who called a lot of the running plays to the left."

Said Blackhurst, "As a lineman he had good shock when he hit and sustained a block from snap to whistle."

Brewster also mentioned the brotherhood he shared with fellow linemen Rob Clark, Chris Cirell, Josh Battin and Dave Mong who started all three years together. "Of course, (quarterback) Rich Cerro was a big leader for us as well. He certainly made our jobs a lot easier."

