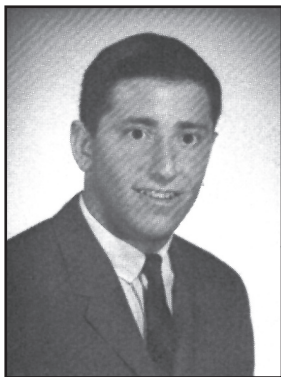


# Story of the Decade 1960s

## Quarterback Controversy: In 1964 It Was Kanner and Sheegog and Everyone Had an Opinion

Head Coach Earle Bruce led the Tigers to 20 straight wins and two state championships during his two seasons in Massillon. It must have been all peaches and cream in Massillon for the coach who never lost a game...right?



*Steve Kanner.*

In Massillon, life is never *easy* for the head coach. And Bruce had his share of stress as Massillon's head man, to be sure. But the biggest issue of Bruce's tenure—by far—had to do with his choice of quarterback in 1964.

Steve Kanner was the senior starter. His father owned Kanner's Men's Store in Massillon.

Junior Dave Sheegog was a natural—a quick and shifty triple threat quarterback. Sheegog was black, and his father worked in a steel mill.

They were the central figures in the quarterback controversy of 1964. It was a controversy that was not lost on the coach.

“Yeah, that got back to me,”

## A CENTURY OF HEROES

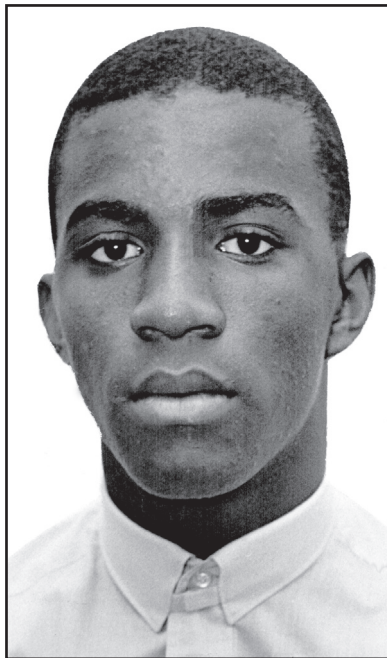
Bruce said, “But there was no pressure to play Sheegog. You’d have to understand a couple of things. First of all, Steve Kanner was not a great, talented athlete, as such. But he was a good leader. He led our team to victory.

“It’s tough to replace a guy at quarterback who’s taken you to victory every week. How can you take the winning quarterback of a 9-0 football team and change the

quarterback? You can’t do that. That’s kind of a no-no,” Bruce said. “How can you

bench a guy who’s doing so good?”

“I had my doubts about who should start, too. I could question that. But I wasn’t going to make any changes that would hurt our football team. And there weren’t any pressures. I never felt any pressures. I think that was talked about by people, I’m sure.



*Dave Sheegog delivered perhaps the most heroic performance in the history of the Massillon-McKinley game.*

worked hard in practice. He did everything he was asked to and everything he

“The fact that Kanner was a good person. He

## A CENTURY OF HEROES

was supposed to do.”

Teammate David Whitfield, who was captain at Massillon in 1965 and Ohio State in 1969, had strong feelings about Bruce’s choice at quarterback.

“Earle’s offense was more conservative than previous coach Leo Strang’s offense,” Whitfield said. “Leo was wide open. Earle was more the Woody Hayes Three yards and a

Cloud of Dust type of football. That’s why he went with a quarterback like Kaner. He was a little more settled. Then Bruce found out he had a quarterback like

Sheegog who can scoot this way, scoot that way. Throw the football. And then scoot up the middle. But that’s too wide open for him. It should have been Sheegog all the way.

“Sheegog proved it on the practice field,” Whitfield asserted. “We had grown up to believe that if you do well in practice, you’re going to be the starter. You prove yourself on the practice field. But Sheegog never got

that opportunity. We kind of resented Bruce a little bit for that. We got in some jams sometimes, and we knew we had the most mobile quarterback sittin’ on the bench.

**“We had grown up to believe that if you do well in practice, you’re going to be the starter. But Sheegog never got that opportunity.”**

**David Whitfield**

## A CENTURY OF HEROES

“Kanner was a little slow handing off, a little slow getting back. He’s kind of slow-in’ down the backs. If you’ve got somebody who’s a little more mobile, you’re going to make those backs look a little better. There was a little animosity. We brought it to Bruce’s attention.

“I remember it was Larry Larsuel, my brother Tom and Brock Herring, they explained a couple of things to him. They said, ‘Wait a minute Coach, you came in talkin’ that if you proved yourself on the practice field, you’d start. It almost looks like you’re

getting some push from some outside forces. Because we see some people that should be starting. Like Sheegog and Jim Lawrence. Those two guys proved themselves out there. Nobody can stop

those two guys from doing what they want to out there on the practice field. And now we come to the games and you’ve got some other people out there in front of them.’

He put ’em in there. At least Lawrence went in. Sheegog was subbing in more.”

The quarterback controversy came to a head in the final

1964 MASSILLON SCHEDULE

Tigers 14	Chase East	0 8723
Tigers 14	Millers	0 30729
Tigers 20	Woodsdale	0 9109
Tigers 20	Albans	0 13000
Tigers 20	Shubert	0 9109
Tigers 25	C. Bonafantini	0 13542
Tigers 25	Albans, Pa.	0 13542
Tigers 12	Warren	0 13000
Tigers 24	Wilfong's N.	0 9109
Nov. 14	Canton McKinley*	

\*All-American High School League game.

1964 WASHINGTON SCHEDULE

McKinley 21	Albans Warren	0 9109
McKinley 24	Warren	0 13000
McKinley 10	Albans East	0 9109
McKinley 10	Compton Lenoire	0 9109
McKinley 22	Canton Chase East	0 9109
McKinley 82	Chase East Tech.	0 9109
McKinley 28	Madisonville	0 9109
McKinley 28	Albans	0 9109
McKinley 28	Chaparral Falls	0 9109
Nov. 14	All-American High School League game.	

SEVER EVENTS

CANTON WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIP

This year's game marks the 75th anniversary of the four Greater Cincinnati Independent Schools Association. The game is held at the home of the champion, the University of Cincinnati. The game is held at the home of the champion, the University of Cincinnati. The game is held at the home of the champion, the University of Cincinnati.

THANK YOU

The Superintendent of Schools, the Administration, the Massillon City Board of Education, the Teachers and Student Body of Washington High extend the Athletic Association, the Booster Club, the Staffers, the Student Officers, and Coaches their deep appreciation to the citizens of Massillon for their loyal support.

EASTLAKE WILBOUGHY NORTH AHEAD 61 WINNES

Player of the Week **SEVER KANNER**  
 Back of the Week **PAUL GARDNER**  
 Linebacker of the Week **DAVE WHITEHEAD**

SAT., NOV. 14, 1964  
 TIGER STADIUM  
 MASSILLON, OHIO

OFFICIAL SOUVENIR PROGRAM 25¢

*Great crowd!*  
*Earle Bruce*

*Massillon-McKinley game program, 1964, signed by Earle Bruce.*