

## An Epitaph

The adjacent story quite obviously was written prior to the tragic air crash which took the lives of an undetermined number of Marshall University football players, coaches, athletic department personnel and fans. To have rewritten the story, to have pretended that the game had never been played, would have been a disservice to those who took part in it. Therefore, it is being presented in its entirety as an epitaph.

Down In Front

**Ernie Salvatore**

Executive Sports Editor

## The Tragedy

What do you write at a time like this?

You believe that it can never really happen to your own people. Others go down in air crashes. Entire teams are wiped out. Individuals with well known names go down in their isolated tragedies and you mourn briefly for their misfortune.

But, never to your own people.

Then, it comes into the news room, silently, swiftly, in a simple report that a chartered airliner carrying the Marshall University football team home from its ninth game of the season has crashed against a soggy West Virginia hillside, two miles short of the runway.

And, the report says, it immediately exploded into flames.

"Ambulances are requested from all points in the area," the police radio crackles.

You can't believe it. Twenty-five years in the newspaper business notwithstanding, you can't believe it. But, soon, the mounting truth of it all forces you to believe it. There is nothing else you can do.

Reports Include Friends Names

The first fragmentary reports include the names of your friends. Coaches, athletic department people, players, just plain loyal friends who went where the Thundering Herd went in all kinds of weather, under all kinds of conditions, win, lose or draw.

Indeed, less than two months ago a large portion of the Marshall team was laid out in a similar tragedy.

Now, it's our own beloved Marshall.

Who'll be next? How many more tragedies of this kind are going to occur before a way is found to stop them?

An honest question, asked and it deserves an honest, straightforward answer. Fatalism has no place in these circumstances; at least that is what you tell yourself.

The Marshall air tragedy is the worst in the history of West Virginia. It is the third involving a college football team within the past decade, the second indirectly involving a Mid-American Conference team, indirectly because Marshall is no longer a member of that athletic body but was for 15 years. The first involved the California Poly team on a boat-tragedy at the Toledo Airport after it had played Bowing Green, a MAC member.

This is the sum and the substance of the crash.

Perhaps The Final Chapter

And, in that blinding explosion, another and perhaps the final chapter in the worst era in Marshall athletics has been written.

It began with the athletic recruiting scandal that hit the campus in 1969. It continued with the suspension from the Mid-American Conference, and the almost total overhaul of the athletic department. Probation from the National Collegiate Athletic Association of one year's duration followed.

Though an application for readmission to the Mid-American was denied last February, the tides began to shift in Marshall's favor. Money was allocated by the state to remodel Fairfield Stadium, cover it with AstroTurf, and improve other facilities on the campus.

This year's football team was to take the first step in that direction. Consisting of holdovers from last year's Thundering Herd which, along with the scandals, had to suffer through a winless streak that reached 27 games before ending with a three-game winning streak, it got off to a good start.

But, injuries to the thin forces, never numbering more than 48 players in this age of specialization, took their toll. Nevertheless, except for losses to Toledo and Western Michigan, the Herd was in contention in every game it played.

Won Three Lost Six

When the end came against that Hillside Saturday night, it had won three games, and lost six — two by three points, and one by two points. Always against superior forces. Always against the odds. That seemed to be this ball club's luck. That seemed to be Marshall's luck in recent years.

There was a touch of irony in Greenville, N. C., Saturday where Marshall bowed to East Carolina before imploring on its ill-fated trip. Watching his old school for the first time since his graduation in 1935 was one of the greatest football players in Marshall history, John Zontini, "The Sheik of Seth."

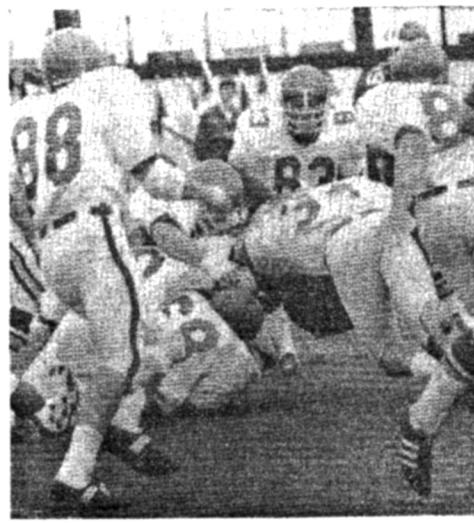
Last week Zontini was elected to the West Virginia Sports Hall of Fame. The entire 1970 Marshall team should be inducted with him next spring in Morgantown along with those people who went down with it.

These deaths have to be given some kind of meaning. Perhaps there will be one in this gesture.

## Bobcats' Hess 'Shocked' . . .

ATHENS, Ohio — "It's the about the Saturday night most shocking news I've ever heard," said Ohio University football coach Bill Hess. "It's just a terrible, terrible tragedy."

When Hess was asked about the Ohio U-Marshall game, he said, "The game is insignificant. It's not important to play to Marshall University this weekend, had just heard & discuss it at this time."



Action From Saturday's Marshall-East Carolina Game Before Tragic Crash Here Last Night

At left: The Herd on defense . . . Al Saylor (88), Larry Brown (88), Art Shannon (34), Pete Naputano (84), Scottie Reese (83) . . . at right: Bob Harris (12) prepares to pass as Art Harris (22) blocks (AP)

## Controversial Call Ends Chances For Tie

# East Carolina Nips Herd 17-14

*(Editor's Note: Mike Brown, who covered Saturday's ill-fated Marshall - East Carolina game, was not aboard the plane that took the Thundering Herd and its traveling party to their deaths. He motored to Greenville, site of the game, with his wife.)*

By MIKE BROWN

Associated Press Writer

Marshall, N. C. —

East Carolina University

place kicker Tony Guzzo

kicked a 24-yard field goal

with 12:27 left and that

proved to be the difference as the Pirates shaded Marshall University, 17-14, Saturday afternoon before a turnout of 8,711 at Ficklen Stadium, including ex-Marshall great John Zontini.

Zontini, who was recently inducted in the West Virginia Sports Writers Hall of Fame, was seeing his alma mater play for the first time since his graduation in 1935.

Marshall, which has had its share of tough breaks this season, was another come-up way with a controversial in the contest when quarterback Ted Shoebridge was called for intentional grounding, a call which left the Thundering Herd and its small group of fans puzzled.

The controversial call all but ended Marshall's hopes for gaining at least a tie on a day in which it turned in a sub-par performance.

Shoebridge, who didn't get into the game until the second half, had driven the Herd 63 yards in less than one

minute and was knocking on the door when the call came.

On a third and 10 at the ECU 13, Shoebridge failed to pass and was collared by the Marshall Jim Judge at the East Carolina 27. Shoebridge got off the pass but was called for grounding the ball which carried a five-yard penalty from the spot of the call.

The pass was intended for Marcelo Lajerman who fielded it at the bounce.

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With only hopes of a game-winning field goal by Marcelo Lajerman now snuffed out, Shoebridge threw a full

fourth-down pass deep down field and it fell incomplete, giving the Pirates the football with only 11 seconds left.

"We had a nice flight down, but we played like we were still flying," said Tolley, who had a 24-yard run with the Herd's overall play.

"We had a number of opportunities to win it," he continued, "but we couldn't capitalize."

"Our offensive execution was not as good as it has been and defensively, we just gave up too many yards on the ground. It appeared to me that East Carolina wanted it more than we did."

East Carolina, which didn't throw a single pass in the second half, ground out 302 yards rushing with 78 of it coming in the second half.

Shoebridge picked up 142 yards on 28 carries and Billy Wallace added 132 on 27. Joe Hood was Marshall's leading rusher as he picked up 111 yards on 23 carries.

Quarterback John Casaza added 16 yards for the Pirates, getting six of them on a touchdown run in the second period.

The performance by the East Carolina running backs overshadowed fine defensive performances by Marshall linebacker Jerry Stainback and defensive guard Larry Brown. Stainback was in on 22 tackles, nine of them unassisted, and Brown was in on 18, seven unassisted.

The bright spot offensively (Please Turn To Page 24)

## 'Great Potential' Gone

By The Associated Press

A team with "excellent potential" led by a gallant, aggressive quarterback. "The 1968 losing record was somewhat misleading," said the Marshall University football brochure.

This was the 1970 prospectus of a team wiped out in the crash of a DC9 Southern Airways plane in Kenova, W. Va., Saturday.

The mishap occurred after an other losing effort, 17-14 to East Carolina.

The Thundering Herd had expectations of a better season than last, when they won only three games in 10. But highly-touted quarterback Ted Shoebridge was unable to get the

team untracked and Marshall had a 3-6 mark with Saturday's loss.

Marshall was not an easy victim but fell to hard-hitting clubs. The Toledo Rockets beat the Thundering Herd 23-3 in the second game of the season.

Shoebridge, a junior from Lyndhurst, N. J., had broken several school records as a sophomore. In one season, he

missed a career mark for most touchdown passes with 13.

"Ted is an excellent football player," Coach Rick Tolley had said, "and, in general, a real outstanding athlete in every respect."

Two injuries hurt Shoebridge Saturday, his seasonal marks falling off almost 50 per cent in the important categories of complete passes, yardage gained and touchdown passes.

Art Harris, a sophomore from Passaic, N.J., was a bright spot for Tolley. The youngster was the team's leading rusher, pass-catcher and kickoff specialist.

Other top ground-gainers included Joe Hood, a sophomore from Tuscaloosa, Ala. and senior Kevin Gilmore, from Harrison, N.J. Hood was also used as a target for Shoebridge's passes.

Tolley was in his second season as head coach. He had taken the team north to the series and ignited the Irish momentum with a 24-0 win from Joe Theismann to Ed Guyas, who made a sensational catch sitting on the ground at the tech 34-yard line.

A two-yard run by Dennis Alton brought the Irish the score with 6 minutes 28 seconds left.

As if the chill of 30-degree weather, 20-mile winds and the determined Tech defense were not sufficient distractions, the partisan sellout crowd of 59,073 had to survive the decisive touchdown. The play that started the series and ignited the Irish momentum was a 24-yard pass from Theismann to Ed Guyas, who made a sensational catch sitting on the ground at the tech 34-yard line.

A two-yard run by Dennis Alton brought the Irish the score with 6 minutes 28 seconds left.

The Irish then ran out the clock to insure their eighth straight victory.

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Toledo, then beat Xavier. In succession, came losses to Miami of Ohio, Louisville, Western Michigan, and Bowling Green. MU then defeated Kent State before bowing to ECU.

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Tolley faced a monumental task," the prospectus said. "He needed coaches, players and an overhaul of team morale . . . he brought his coaching staff up to full strength but he could never get enough players together to cope with the schedule."

"If the team wins just one game, it would be regarded as a modern miracle."

Mistong Gallops

To \$29,500 Win

LOUISVILLE, Ky. —

Linebacker Dick Farley intercepted a fourth-quarter Syracuse pass and ran it back 46 yards to set up

a West Virginia touchdown and a 23-19 victory, halting a gallant comeback bid by the Orange men.

Farley's steal came with three minutes remaining in the game, when it appeared West Virginia's 12th-ranked team was fading before a furious Syracuse onslaught.

The West Virginia win snuffed out the Orange's string and the Mountaineers record to 7-3. It was Syracuse's fourth setback in nine games.

WVU quarterback Mike Sherwood engineered this victory with pinpoint passing

that accounted for 204 yards and three touchdowns. The senior stalwart hit on 15 of 25 attempts.

Sherwood found senior Wayne Porter on five occasions, two of which were two yards remaining. A one-yard keeper by Sherwood in the second quarter accounted for the fourth Mountaineer score.

The Orange men then stormed back, scoring first in the third quarter on a six-yard run by tailback Roger Praetorius. Syracuse scored again early in the fourth quarter when quarterback Paul Pollio tallied on a one-yard keeper.

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