

Skyline coaching continuity equals grid success

By Martin Renzhofer
Salt Lake Tribune

Skyline running back **Algernon Brown** paused. Trying to define football tradition isn't easy.

At that moment, assistant coach **Steve Marshall** directed the Eagles offense during the traditional Thursday afternoon walk-through inside the school's gymnasium, his strong voice ricocheting off the walls.

"He's the mean one," said Brown, whose declaration also came with a respectful smile.

Other players offered the same sentiment about Marshall in different words, yet a good many football players are at Skyline because of the coaching.

Certainly, head coach **Roger Dupaix** owns a resume that must be respected. He's won eight state football titles.

As it is with success in any endeavor, Dupaix's assistants must be given just as much credit.

Coaches such as Marshall and **Steve Marlowe**, who also wears the school's athletic director's hat, have been with the program as long as Dupaix.

Technically, however, they've been there longer, having played and won championships at Skyline. The same can be said of assistant **Ken James** and sophomore coach **Allen Hymas**.

Marlowe posted a sign in the Eagles weight room that reads: "Eagle born. Eagle bred. Eagle 'til the day I'm dead."

The players take it to heart.

"I heard so many good things about the program," Brown said. "You feel like you don't want that tradition to go away."

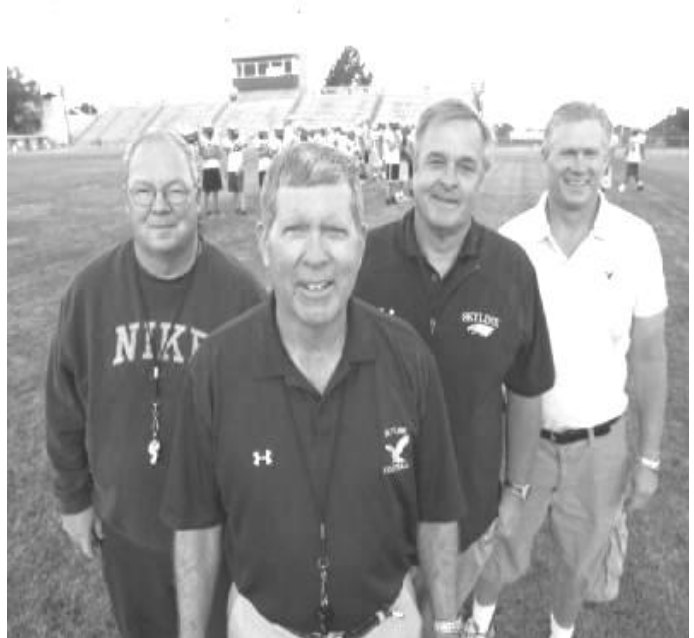
Thanks to shrinking student numbers, Skyline is not the power it once was. The Eagles have 14 football championship banners, the last coming in 2005.

"We use that for motivation," senior quarterback **Chase Dunford** said, adding that the "glory days" are not over. "We were in the semifinals last year. That's pretty dang good."

Eagle assistant coaches, the same men who played for school championship teams, bond with players because of tradition. But it's not the only reason.

There are life's lessons to be learned, ones for later, when football is a fleeting memory.

"It was nice to have 175 kids in the program," Marlowe said. "We have 100 now, but to tell you the truth, it's easier to coach and to build relationships. Maybe we don't have as many athletes and we're not as good, I feel more fulfilled now than ever before."



Skyline coaches (from left) Steve Marshall, Roger Dupaix, Steve Marlowe and Allen Hymas have been coaching together since 1986.

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Skyline first won football championships in the late 1960s under Ken Schmidt and Ron Haun. Schmidt eventually coached defenses at Brigham Young before retiring, while Haun built a successful program at Ricks College and Dixie State.

Marlowe and Marshall were part of those teams, each earning state honors. Marshall went on to play strong safety professionally for a year with San Diego before blowing out a knee.

"When I first came to Skyline in the Little League program, that pride was installed," Marshall said.

"The first championship in 1967, it brought a lot of pride and respect for underclassmen like us. I can't judge other programs, but being a sophomore, and the way I was treated by upperclassmen, it's part of the program and still there now."

The Eagles had won six football titles between 1967 and 1979. Following a fallow period, Dupaix took over in 1986 and rebuilt the tradition.

Part of rebuilding the program included hiring assistants with deep roots within the school.

"We want to pass it on," Marshall said. "I know other schools work hard, but there's something at Skyline, being part of the coaching staff, being part of the community."

So, Marshall isn't really mean. He is serious, the same way as when he began volunteering way back in 1975.

"It was good for me," he said. "I'm still here, I enjoy it."

The players really don't mind it when Marlowe or James allow their memories to stretch back in time. For some, those moments are money.

"My best moments come every day," senior receiver **Brian Orr** said.



Skyline coach Roger Dupaix joins team captains Chase Dunford (No. 1), Algernon Brown (No. 44) and Garrett Battaglia for the coin toss prior to the East game.