

11th Grade

Football- Started on Offense and Defense, Team Captain

Phillip Fulmer Foot Ball Camp, June, 1998

September 1, 1998, Elizabeth ...DEFENSIVE UNIT CARRIES HOPES FOR WARRIORS--- Denise Scharding, Daily News Sports Writer... Quarterback Dave Johnson, senior, will lead the offense that returns fullback Tony Fiore, senior, and Pat Risha, junior at halfback. Risha will be the key part of the offense, just as he has been in the past. As a sophomore last year he was the team's second leading rusher. Risha will be another two way player starting at strong safety for the Warriors.

September 3, 1998, West Mifflin...ELIZABETH KEYSTONE CONTENDER?--- Mark Kaboly, Daily News Sports Writer... Elizabeth Forward returns seven starters on offense from last year's 6-4 team which missed the playoffs by one game. Among them will be junior halfback Pat Risha. "He is going to be the workhorse for us," said Bowen. "I expect him to carry the ball 20-25 times a game. We feel he is going to be a special back."

September 5, 1998, West Mifflin...RISHA RUNS OVER TITANS--- Mark Kaboly, Daily News Sports Writer... The West Mifflin Titans were all ready to christen their brand new, multi-million dollar, astro-turf stadium Friday night when they opened up Keystone-Big 9 Conference action. But Elizabeth Forward and junior tailback Pat Risha spoiled the celebration for the Titans and their near capacity crowd as they handed the hosts a 21-7 defeat. The 5-11, 195-pound Risha rushed for 212 yards on 28 carries which included touchdown runs of two, one, and five yards. Risha had a little incentive because of comments he read in the newspapers prior to the game. "They wrote in the paper that is going to be an embarrassment for us in the first game here and that fired us up," said Risha. "We just said 'if you want us, come and get us.'" By halftime, Risha had carried the ball 16 times for 154 yards and accounted for all but 18 of his team's yards. "I got a big line in front of me," said Risha. "I got a couple of blocking backs and some good blocking tight ends." ... "I just kept calling plays and giving it to the horse," said Bowen about Risha. "He did an outstanding job."

September 5, 1998, West Mifflin...EF'S "HORSE" TRAMPLES TITANS --- Norm Vargo, Daily News Sports Writer... "If you have a big horse, ride him..." That's Elizabeth Forward High football coach Rich Bowen's philosophy. And it worked last night. It was a great ride! The "horse" -- Warriors' running back Pat Risha--- trampled West Mifflin. "This was my biggest game ever," said Risha. "But I had a lot of help up front. Our line really opened some big holes. They made it easy for me." "We just couldn't stop Risha," said West Mifflin coach Ray Braszo. "We challenged Pat," said Bowen. "He's our horse, and we rode him all the way." Pat Risha, 28 carries, 212 yards, 3 TDs

September 11, 1998, Yough...CAN YOUGH HALT RISHA? TORNADO TWISTS IN TO TEST SMITH'S TIGERS---Denise Scharding, Daily News Sports Writer... "He's a determined runner between tackles," said EF coach Rich Bowen. "He isn't necessarily a speedy runner, but he can run you over, that's the key." Credit linemen Tim Como, Jered Heintz and Mark Iacone for opening the holes for Risha.

September 12, 1998, Yough...WARRIORS, RISHA OUTLAST COUGARS---Douglas Street, Daily News Sports Writer... "Patrick's the type of kid that as the game goes on he gets better," Bowen said. "He wants the ball in the fourth quarter and we're smart enough to give it to him. He ran hard, he made good cuts and he ran people over." Chris Lee's 70-yard punt return for a touchdown in the second quarter also helped the Warriors win 25-13. Pat Risha, 20 carries, 119 yards, 3 TDs

September 19, 1998, Highlands...HIGHLANDS 27, ELIZABETH FORWARD 7---Daily News ...Highlands did something that other EF opponents this year have been unable to do – they stopped Pat Risha. Risha had 20 carries for 86 yards and the Warriors' only touchdown.

September 23, 1998, Pittsburgh...EF BACK A TRUE STUDENT OF THE GAME---Ray Fittipaldo, Post-Gazette Sports Writer...When he was interviewed on television after Elizabeth Forward's opening week victory over West Mifflin, Pat Risha looked more like a professional wrestler than the son of a football coach. But don't let the shaved head and goatee mislead you, the son embodies everything one would think comes with being the son of a coach. "You can tell he has been around the game," said Elizabeth Forward coach Rich Bowen., himself the son of a coach. "He has great knowledge of the game. He has the mentality of a football player." A bruising 5-foot-11, 190 pound junior, Risha believes the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. In other words, if you are a linebacker filling a hole, don't expect to get juiced. "I don't have a lot of moves or speed," said Risha, who runs between 4.8 and 4.9 in the 40-yard dash. "If I break a long run, I'm going to break tackles, not make people miss." "He personally destroyed us, West Mifflin Coach Ray Braszo said. "He did a number on us. He's an excellent runner, a strong runner, hard to bring down." "He knows what a commitment it takes to be a football player, to be a student athlete," said his father. "To hear the words commitment, teamwork, "suck it up", determination, when you watch game film and understand formations...It helped to understand what it takes to become a football player." By the time he was 6 or 7, young Pat was a manager at Clairton during preseason camp. He would set up the bags for agility drills, get water for the players. He used to ask a million questions," his dad said. "He'd always ask if so-and-so had heart. It was always important for him to know that." Bowen said the younger Risha had plenty of heart. "The special thing about Pat is as the game goes on, he gets stronger," Bowen said. "I don't care what he does with his hair as long as he keeps running hard for me." [See photo](#)

September 26, 1998, Mt. Pleasant...EF REMAINS UNBEATEN IN KEYSTONE CONFERENCE---Douglas Street, Daily News Sports Writer..."Elizabeth Forward, whose offense is usually led by Patrick Risha, took the lead early in the third quarter through the air. Warrior quarterback Dave Johnson connected with tight end Justin McCaffrey on a 55-yard touchdown pass to give Elizabeth Forward a 9-7 lead. Although Risha was held to 82 yards on 19 carries, Viking Coach Paul Tepper said the key to his team's loss was not his defense's ability to control Risha, but Elizabeth Forward's ability to capitalize on his team's mistakes. "We just happened to have people in the right place at the right time," Tepper said of his team's control of Risha.

September 30, 1998, Pittsburgh...EF, TJ RENEW FIERCE RIVALRY AFTER 3-YEAR LULL---Scott Robertson, Tri-State Sports & News Service... Bowen's squad will rely on Risha's running and the defensive fire of linebacker, Chuck Meehlieb.

October 1, 1998, Thomas Jefferson...IT'S BACK! THE TJ-EF RIVALRY---Paul Paterra, Daily News Sports Writer...The Jaguars first-team defense has been extremely stingy, allowing but one touchdown this season. Junior running back, Pat Risha is 18th in the WPIAL in rushing with 503 yards on 87 carries and has scored seven touchdowns. Serving as protectors for Johnson, Risha and company has been a rock-solid offensive line, made up entirely of seniors, Tim Como, Rob Rothey, Jared Heintz, Rich Rothey, Brian Bauernfeind, and Mark Iacone.

October 3, 1998, Thomas Jefferson...TJ KNOCKS OFF ELIZABETH 17-7---The Valley Independent...EF lost despite a solid performance by Pat Risha, who rushed for 141 yards on 24 carries.

October 3, 1998, Thomas Jefferson...TJ DEFEATS EF IN "RIVALRY" RENEWAL---Douglas Street, Daily News Sports Writer..."While Thomas Jefferson was getting its yards through the air, Risha was carrying the load for the Warriors. Two plays after the Jaguar's

touchdown, Risha broke off left tackle and sprinted 49 yards before being caught from behind. The Warriors were held scoreless even though Risha gained 98 of his game-high 132 yards in the first half. "And Risha's a hard runner," Cherpak said, "He carries the ball an awful lot, which can be tough on a high school kid. He's one of those that he'll get you his hundred (yards) and you just have to try and contain him and I think we did."

October 10, 1998, McGuffey...EF TAKES STEP BACK IN LOSS TO MCGUFFEY---Ken Wunderley, Daily News Sports Writer..."You can't go backwards," said Coach Bowen, after the Warriors dropped a 10-7 decision in overtime. Elizabeth Forward had only 105 yards in total offense, most of which was accumulated by Pat Risha, who rushed for 96 yards on 26 carries.

October 17, 1998, Belle Vernon...BVA OVERCOMES SLOW START TO PUMMEL EF--- Brian Herman, Sports Editor, The Valley Independent...A 24-yard screen pass from Dave Johnson to Chris Lee on a third and 14 and Pat Risha's 25-yard run to the BVA 11 were the big plays in Elizabeth's lone scoring drive. Johnson went the final yard with 19 seconds left in the first quarter. Risha had 103 yards on 23 carries.

October 24, 1998, Southmoreland...RISHA ROLLS--- Sports Editor, The Valley Independent...Elizabeth Forward shut out Southmoreland 28-0, as Pat Risha had an outstanding game. Risha, a junior, rushed for 207 yards on 26 carries and scored all four touchdowns for EF. On the season Risha has rushed for 1,058 yards on 188 carries.

October 31, 1998, Peters Township...RISHA RUNS EF INTO PLAYOFFS--- The Valley Independent...Risha rushed for 360 yards on 43 carries and scored three touchdowns as EF won a close battle with Peters Twp. Thanks to Risha's one-man ground attack, EF had a whopping 434 yards on the ground. Risha upped his season total to 1,418 yards rushing.

October 31, 1998, Peters Township...WARRIORS RIDE RISHA INTO WPIAL PLAYOFFS-- -Douglas Street, Daily News Sports Writer...Until the beginning of next season, Peters Township will be haunted by the image of Pat Risha running through their defense and ending the Indians' playoff hopes. Elizabeth Forward Coach Rich Bowen said his back has carried the load all year and that wasn't going to change last night. "He doesn't have great speed, but he's a horse," Bowen said of Risha. "He runs and that's what you want." "I've got to give a lot of credit to my line," Risha said. "They gave me holes that I couldn't even imagine. We all have excellent chemistry. We all respect each other, give each other 100 percent and treat each other like brothers." The win puts Elizabeth Forward in the playoffs next week. Bowen said he will not prepare his team any differently, which means Risha will probably get a lot of touches again next week, even after Risha's 43 carries last night. "I'll tell you what," Bowen said, "if I have to give it up to (Risha) 60 times next week. I will"

November 4, 1998, Peters Township...EF RUSHER RISHA HAS BREAKOUT YEAR---The Valley Independent...Risha carried the football 43 times for a single-game school record 360 yards and three touchdowns in a 35-28 victory over Peters Township last night. "I had no clue I had that many yards," Risha said. "At the half, somebody said I had 196. I thought they made a mistake and that I had 96. I couldn't believe it when they told me how many yards I ended up with." For his effort, Risha is a Tribune-Review/Fox 53 Superstar. He will receive a plaque from the Pittsburgh Trophy Co. and will be featured tonight on Fox 53's 10 o'clock News. Toyota will present Elizabeth Forward with \$100. Risha is quick to point out that without his offensive lineman and the blocking of fullback Dan Meyers, he wouldn't have come close to 300 yards. Bowen was surprised at how many times he called Risha's number against Peters Township. Elizabeth Forward did not throw a pass in the contest. "I'm a big believer in running a play until the other guy stops it," Bowen said.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK...Pittsburgh Post-Gazette..."I've never had a back go over 300 yards," Elizabeth Forward Coach Rich Bowen said. "And I've had some good running backs. It was

a performance I've never seen before, just a tremendous performance. He made a lot of yardage after first contact."

November 7, 1998, West Allegheny...EF TURNS OVER WINS TO WEST ALLEGHENY--- Douglas Street, Daily News Sports Writer...Last night at Joe P. Demichela Stadium, host West Allegheny capitalized on six Elizabeth Forward turnovers en route to a 37-6 victory in the first round of the WPIAL playoffs. Risha, who was held to 26 yards on 12 carries, caught a 30-yard pass from quarterback Dave Johnson to cut the Warriors' deficit to 24-6.

November 18, 1998, Pittsburgh...AWARD WINNERS---Ray Fittipaldo, Football Notebook...Best Interview (player) Pat Risha, junior running back from Elizabeth Forward. You have to love the fact that Risha lists professional wrestling and eating as his two favorite pastimes. "I love to eat," Risha said. "Roasted chicken sub from Subway is my favorite."

December, 1998, Pittsburgh...RISHA PROVIDED LIFE TO WARRIORS' OFFENSE--- Denise Scharding, Daily News Sports Writer... This season, Risha gained 1,451 yards on 243 carries to once again lead the Warriors in rushing. In the process of averaging 5.9 yards per carry, he led all area rushers in total yardage. "His knowledge makes him a great back," Bowen said. "He is a student of the game of football. He wants to know everything." Risha wasn't just a powerhouse for Elizabeth Forward this season. He was more like oxygen for the offense. They depended on him for their survival. "Pat is a great practice player. He wants to get every rep in a game and in practice," Bowen said. "When I want him to rest, he wants to be in there working. He just wants to get better." Only two teams all season, Highlands and West Allegheny, managed to hold Risha under 100 yards. Risha was the workhorse for the Warriors. "He's a strong runner later in the game. He always wants the ball when the game is on the line. He won several games for us with touchdowns in the fourth quarter," Bowen said.

KEYSTONE BIG 9 CONFERENCE ALL-STAR

POST-GAZETTE FABULOUS 22

POST-GAZETTE ALL-CONFERENCE

DAILY NEWS ALL-DISTRICT SQUAD

DAILY NEWS PLAYER OF THE YEAR

TRIBUNE-REVIEW ALL-STAR

Track – 100 & 400 Meter Relay

KEYSTONE BIG 9 CONFERENCE TITLE, 400 Relay

ELI-MON Chapter Honor Society