

Coach Bob Commings

1969 - 1973 – Won 43, Lost 6, Tied 2 Years State Champion - 1970

Bob Commings always stayed one step ahead of the game. He had to. After all, Commings was a 180-pound guard on the University of Iowa team that won the 1957 Big Ten Championship and the Rose Bowl. He was the Most Valuable Player for the Hawkeyes, and among his teammates was an All-American tackle, Alex Karras. Bob Commings looked for, played for, and coached for, the edge.



It was that search for the competitive advantage that made Commings an unqualified success on the coaching ladder. He led a Struthers High School program to two consecutive undefeated seasons in 1967-68 and two straight Steel Valley Conference Championships with an innovative style. In an era of "three yards and a cloud of dust", Commings disdained status quo for a multiple passing attack blended with a variety of trickery. He recognized skilled athletes and put them in positions that best could help a team. He then utilized systems that were appropriate for the skill level. It was Bob Cummings' way of gaining the edge.

Bob Commings - Massillon Record						
Year	Won	Lost	Tied	Points		Ranking
				Mass.	Opp.	
1969	7	2	1	298	107	
1970	10	0	0	412	29	1st State - AP
1971	8	2	0	300	33	
1972	10	1	0	193	46	1st State - AP
1973	8	1	1	245	74	
Total	43	6	2	1448	289	
Winning Percentage						
87.8%						

Massillon sought these qualities when it searched for a new head coach in 1969. Massillon paid close attention to the press clippings Commings was earning in the Youngstown region.

Coach Bob Commings possessed one of the most knowledgeable football minds to appear on the Ohio scholastic grid scene in many years.

Bob's background as a coach was equal to the challenge here. His seven year coaching record (1962-68) at Struthers while competing in the strong Steel Valley Conference was a remarkable 50-16-4.

His ability to evaluate personnel, motivate players, understand people, instill confidence, analyze opponents and instruct his gridders in subtle techniques of football were outstanding.

Perhaps Commings had an added advantage over many members of the coaching fraternity in that he was an outstanding player in his own right.

Commings' winning habits took hold immediately here. His first club in 1969, although not blessed with outstanding talent or an experienced quarterback fashioned a respectable 7-2-1 record. In 1970 he took it all with a 10-0-0 season, 412 points and both the Associated Press and United Press International Class AAA Polls.

His 1971 club had two, one point losses in an 8-2-0 campaign and finished first in the initial "trial run" computer poll for the Southeastern Ohio District.

In 1972 his Tigers went 10-0-0 and captured the Associated Press Poll title only to drop a heart breaking decision in the first semi-final game ever played in the Ohio scholastic grid play-offs by a 17-14 margin that was decided on a 47 yard field goal by Cincinnati Princeton's Rick White. His final team in 1973 had an 8-1-1 season and was edged out by less than two points by Youngstown Cardinal Mooney as the Southeastern District's playoff representative.

Bob's greatness can really be measured in his won and loss record here. He compiled an excellent, 43-6-2 record during a period of very keen competition and this will always stand as a tribute to his coaching ability. His winning percentage was a very high .877. In Massillon's long grid history the only former Tiger mentors who coached here five or more years and maintained a higher winning percentage were Charles V. Mather (.950 in 6 seasons) and Paul E. Brown (.909 in 9 seasons).

Bob coached without fanfare and motivated his players to overcome any obstacle and to accomplish team goals. This style was especially successful on defense. His Tiger Teams allowed only 5.7 points per game over his 6 year sting, which ranks 2nd only to Paul Brown's teams.

Coach Commings sincerely loved Massillon and the young men he coached. He loved the Massillon tradition and always spoke warmly about it.

Bob left Massillon to become head coach at the University of Iowa. We lost Bob Commings to cancer in 1992, while the head coach at GlenOak High School. Those of us who knew Bob, feel so privileged that he passed our way.

Uncle Bob, "We Loved Your Way,"

Massillon Coach Already Working
The Independent

Youngstown – Robert Commings is ready to work right now as head football coach of the Massillon High Tigers. He's in the midst of selecting six assistants and hopes to persuade his Struthers' aide Leroy Lewis to join him in molding future greats at Massillon.

Bob already has studied the roster, noting the size and ability of the returning lettermen.

"We'll be a running team but may throw any time. My man will be the quarterback who throws the best," said the 36-year old mentor, former East High and Iowa University guard.

Massillon's varsity quarterback Marc Malinkowski graduates. The burden will fall to understudies John Fromhoktz and Gary Herring. "I'll watch movies of their play, look over the statistics and plan for next season," said Commings.

Commings will have six lettermen available at Massillon. They include end Elijah McLin, middle guard Dave Hunt, and linebacker Pat Midgley of the defensive unit and alternate fullbacks Mike Autrey and Darnell Streeter, tight end Bill Dorman of the offensive squad.

From Scott Shook's "Massillon Memories"

"There are so many people in this town that football has saved. And it has no racial preference. You know as many white young people and black young people who are walking these streets, making their way, because football has touched them. They are good, solid human beings, and when things get tough they can rely on the values they learned at Tiger Stadium. That may sound gungho to some people, but I believe that with all my heart."

Bob Commings – on football's profound positive effect in Massillon

"The difference between the people of Massillon and people in other places is that Massillon people care more. The legacy was started with Paul Brown and it continued. There were a few times it faltered. Never fallen – faltered. The things my predecessor, Bob Seaman, didn't grasp was that you've got to adhere to tradition. You've got to call on that. You don't just send a Massillon kid out and assume that because he's a Massillon kid he's going to play well. You've got to make that kid aware of what he stands for. Aware of what he's responsible for. Don't take your tradition for granted. You have to work a little harder. You have to understand when you go out there every Friday night you have to play to your tradition."

Bob Commings – on the head coach's responsibility for carrying on the Massillon tradition.