

**Coach Earle Bruce**  
**1964 – 1965 – Won 20, Lost 0, Tied 0**  
**Years State Champion – 1964, 1965**

**Ohio's Coach of the Year**  
**Earl Bruce Brings Fine Record to Massillon**  
**1964**

Earl D. Bruce, Ohio's scholastic football coach of the year both in 1960 and 1963, now joins the impressive list of top flight coaches to direct the football fortunes of the famous Washington High School grid team.



The 33-year old Bruce has taken over the Tigers well grounded in the fundamentals and strategy of football. He started his grid career as an outstanding player at Allegany High School, Cumberland, Md. He played three years of scholastic football there and was named All-Star fullback in his senior year in 1948.

In the fall of 1949 he enrolled at Ohio State University and played tailback in Coach Wes Fesler's single Wing - T formation offense. When Coach Woody Hays took over the Buckeyes in 1951, Bruce was playing right halfback and was in for a starting assignment until sidelined by knee injuries. Two subsequent knee operations forced him to forego football during his senior year in 1952.

Earle Bruce - Massillon Record						
Year	Won	Lost	Tied	Points		Ranking
				Mass.	Opp.	
1964	10	0	0	297	48	1st State - AP
1965	10	0	0	247	78	1st State - AP
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>126</b>	

**Winning Percentage**  
**100%**

Upon graduation from Ohio State in 1953, Coach Bruce joined the Mansfield Senior High School coaching staff as backfield coach under Bill Pederson, present head coach at Florida State University. When Pederson left Mansfield after the 1954 season, Bruce continued on as an assistant to head Coach Bob McNea, now the new coach of the East Liverpool Potters.

In 1956, Bruce was summoned to take over at Salem where he remained as head coach for four years before accepting the assignment as mentor of the Sandusky Blue Streaks, a Buckeye Conference school. His eight year composite record as a head coach shows 62 wins, 12 losses and three ties. In 77 games his teams have averaged

29 points per game to the opponents 10, He either won or tied for the Buckeye Conference Title in each of his four years at Sandusky.

Coach Bruce subscribes to the Woody Hayes philosophy of football. He stresses punting, defense and offense in that order. Offensively, he favors Hayes' balanced line split T offense, He uses the pass sparingly as his average of about eight aerials per game during the 1963 season at Sandusky would indicate, Defensively, Bruce employs primarily the Oklahoma University developed 5-4-2 alignment. This is the same type defense used here during the past six years by departing coach, Leo Strang.

Some of the grid stars developed by Coach Bruce during his eight year tenure as a head coach include fullback Lou Slaby of Salem and the University of Pittsburgh, halfback Ben Espy of Sandusky and Ohio State and fullback Stewart Williams of Sandusky and Bowling Green.

Coach Bruce's 1964 Massillon coaching staff is composed of Carl (Ducky) Schroeder, end and tackle coach; Nick Vrotsos, guard and center coach; and Dale Walterhouse, sophomore team backfield coach, New assistant coaches that Bruce has brought to Massillon to complete the staff are John Behling, defensive backfield coach; Blaine E. Morton, offensive backfield coach; and Anthony Munafo, head sophomore team coach. Behling and Munafo were with Bruce at Sandusky in 1963 while Morton served as an assistant coach at East Liverpool last year.

## 1966

Forever, Earle Bruce holds the prestigious No. 1 spot as Massillon's all time winningest coach. After all, who can better 1,000 percent? And, in 20 straight games?

The Bruce Era in Massillon, albeit, a short stay - two years - was a perfect one: Twenty games, twenty victories, two State Championships.

The pressure to uphold the greatness of Leo Strang's six year run - a 54-8-1 record and three State Championship and two National Championship teams - was as intense as a Massillon-McKinley matchup. Bruce, however, came as good as advertised. From 1960-63, his Sandusky High School teams were 34-3-3, and in eight seasons as a head coach (Salem from 1956-1959), he was 62- 12-3. He was named head coach and athletic director at Massillon on March 11, 1964.

Bruce kept much of the Strang influence with the T-formation, but he adjusted by going with a balanced offensive line. In 1964, Bruce had the advantage of a strong line, led by all-state choices John Mulbach at center and guard Tom Whitfield.

The stamp of greatness for this team, however, was on defense. Led by All-Ohio First Team tackle Larry Larsue, this unit allowed just 34 points through the first nine games as the Tigers breezed through an undefeated season heading into the season finale against the Bulldogs.

For the first time in this storied rivalry since 1938, both teams entered the game with perfect records and a state title on the line. A record Tiger Stadium crowd of 22,685 sat stunned as McKinley jumped to a 14-0 lead after three quarters. Massillon rallied for 20 points in the last 11 minutes of the fourth quarter and held on to a 20-14 win as Bruce defeated another future college coaching great, Don Nehlen.

Ending streaks were not unusual for this Tiger squad. Massillon stopped Altoona's (PA) 21-game win streak with a 34-18 win. Also, the Tigers, in perhaps the game of the year, detonated Niles' 48-game streak with a 14-8 triumph before 30,128 at the Akron Rubber Bowl.

The '65 team faced a double-edged sword - duplicate the 10-0 record of '64 against a schedule that featured nine of the same opponents. Massillon was THE game for everyone. The romps of '64 became hard-fought successes in '65, but Massillon did win. The Tigers took All-American Conference wins over Alliance (22-6), Niles (22-8), Steubenville (20-13), and Warren Harding (16-12). Also, the Tigers went to Altoona, PA. and before a record crowd of 16,000, posted a 14-0 win.

Once again, an undefeated, state championship bid was on the line against McKinley, this time at Canton. For a second straight year, the Tigers trailed at halftime, but, in what proved to be Bruce's last game as Tigers' coach, Massillon rallied for an 18-14 victory. The defense, led by All-Ohio linebacker Paul Marks and end Dave Whitfield, gave up just 7.8 points per game enroute to a second straight 10-0 record and state title.

Bruce's incredible high school record of 82-12-3 at Salem, Sandusky and Massillon was noted by Woody Hayes who hired him as an assistant coach in 1966. Bruce was the offensive coordinator on Ohio State's last National Championship team in 1968 before becoming head coach at the University of Tampa and Iowa State. In 1979, Bruce followed Hayes as head coach at Ohio State. Bruce served as head coach at Northern Iowa University for one year, then directed Colorado State University for 4 years that included a victory in the Freedom Bowl.

Earl Bruce's perfect mark remains a lasting impression at Massillon

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Prior to coming to Massillon in 1964, Bruce coached at Sandusky High School from 1960-63 and at Salem from 1956-59. Earle kept much of the Strang influence with the T-formation, but he adjusted the approach by using a balanced offensive line. Both the Massillon Tigers and the McKinley Bulldogs entered the

**“I had never seen such an attitude on a football team that they were going to win every football game. Every time they went out there.”**

**Earle Bruce**

Massillon Championship Coach, 1964-65

State Champs, #2 in Nation, 1964-65

Head Coach, Ohio State University, 1979-1987

-On Massillon's will to win

1964 and 1965 season game with perfect records. For the first time since 1938, the state title was on the line, and Massillon won both years. Woody Hayes hired Bruce as an assistant coach in 1966. In 1969, he became the head coach at the University of Tampa, Florida and then became the head coach at Iowa State. In 1979, Bruce followed Hayes as head coach at Ohio State University. Other coaching jobs include Northern Iowa University for one year and Colorado State University for four years.

## **The Evening Independent Thursday, May 19, 1966**

### **Massillon Still A Stepping-Stone**

"Earle Bruce to resign; headed for Ohio State," This headline in The Evening Independent Tuesday evening was read with surprise by Massillon citizens.

Usually there is some advance warning – a period of negotiation in which names of applicants for a coaching vacancy are bandied around.

Such was not the case with Bruce.

The offer came over the weekend and was a well-kept secret until the acceptance announcement Tuesday.

Massillon residents read the announcement with mixed emotions. They are sorry to see Bruce leave Tigertown but they are also happy that he is being given the opportunity to progress.

Bruce came to Massillon in the spring of 1964 from Sandusky high school and in 2 years as athletic director and head football coach of Washington high school he has set a record unequalled by any previous Massillon coach. He is undefeated and untied. His teams won all 20 of their games and no other coach accomplished that feat in his first two years at Washington High School.

Bruce now has a record of 43 victories without a loss. This includes 22 games while he was coach at Sandusky, and a victory as coach of the North in the annual North-South high school game.

His Massillon teams were voted champions of Ohio in 1964 and 1963.

Losing a coach with such an outstanding record comes as a blow to Massillon and in particular to those dyed-in-the-wool football fans who cheer the Tigers in the autumn.

However, mixed with the emotion of regret is the feeling of joy and happiness for Bruce in achieving an ambition – a place in college football. There is also a tinge of pride in knowing that one of the big football powers of the nation has again turned to Massillon for coaching talent.

A factor in Bruce's decision to move from Sandusky to Massillon was the knowledge that Massillon has been a stepping-stone into college for 6 of its last 8 coaches. Paul Brown, William Houghton, Chuck Mather, Tom Harp, Lee Tressel and Leo Strang all moved into college football from Washington High School.

Bruce is ready too!

He is actually ready for a head coaching job. He was a candidate for 2 college head coaching positions this spring, but found that colleges seeking head coaches are more and more making their selections from the staffs of other colleges. He hopes to benefit from experience at Ohio State.

When Dr. John Ellis, superintendent of schools, announced Bruce's decision to resign, he said, "I regret very much losing Earle Bruce. He has been a tremendous teacher and coach. He has had a marvelous record of winning football games and has been an excellent example for our students. We wish him every success in his endeavor and look for him to go on to even greater heights."

Dr. Ellis' words express the thoughts of most Massillonians.  
Good, luck Earle!