

Coach Leo Strang

**1958 - 1963 – Won 54, Lost 8, Tied 1
Years State Champion – 1959, 1960, 1963
Years National Championship – 1959, 1961**

1958

Forthright, ambitious, confident, colorful.

This is a sure-fire way of describing the fireball who has been entrusted with the football fortunes of Massillon Washington high school.

Thirty-five-year-old Leo Strong is that ball of fire. No greater challenge - that of putting the Tigers back atop Ohio scholastic football ranks - has ever been placed on his wide shoulders. He was named to succeed Lee Tressel, now head coach at Baldwin-Wallace College, last spring and since his arrival in Massillon, his name has been a by-word with Tiger fans.



Leo Strang - Massillon Record

Year	Won	Lost	Tied	Points		Ranking
				Mass.	Opp.	
1958	8	1	1	220	45	4th State - AP
1959	10	0	0	431	46	1st State - AP
1960	10	1	0	348	93	1st Nation - NSNS
1961	11	0	0	332	64	1st State - AP
1962	6	5	0	269	164	1st Nation - NSNS
1963	9	1	0	334	47	2nd State - AP
Total	54	8	1	1934	459	

Winning Percentage

87.1%

He came here with the background of a fine high school and college football player and a winning football coach. He entered the coaching field in 1950 and long the way has made quite a name for himself, not only for producing winning teams but for his flair for dashing and daring-do. He has received national publicity for his coaching gimmicks and novelties.

Winning football games for Massillon is his fondest dream. He goes into the extras and the unusual as a means to instill added spirit into his charges. His hoopla has been successful and the new look he brings to Massillon might well be the right kind of medicine for the Tigers.

Football and Leo Strang have been .constant companions since his days at Ashland high school where he was an all-state halfback. He played at Ashland college three year's, then spent three years (two years on duty in the Pacific theater of operations) in the U. S. Navy. His first coaching job was at Caldwell in Noble county end after a 5-4 record in 1950, he moved to Upper Sandusky where his teams won 35 end lost 10 in five seasons. Three times Upper Sandusky won the North Central Ohio league championship.

In 1956 Strang become head coach at East Cleveland Shaw. His first team there won seven and dropped two and shared the lake Erie league championship, last fall Shaw lost only to Toledo DeVilbiss in 10 starts and this time won the Lake Erie title outright.

Strang's assistants are Carl "Ducky" Schroeder, who also served under Tressel, Tom Harp and Chuck Mather; Nick Coso and Gaylord Lillick, who were in the Show system; and Jack Robb, former herd couch at Shelby. The sophomore coaches are Nick Vrotsos, formerly of Dover, and Bob Greenwood, formerly of Orange.

A wartime romance was culminated when Leo married Bettie Barrell of San Francisco in 1948. They have two boys, Carter 7, and David, 3.

Coach Strang and His Family

Coach Leo Strang's message to the Tiger team and fans on the eve of that fabulous fracas, the Tiger-Bulldog game, is short, concise and most pleasing to the ear..."WE'LL WIN." With this game, Strang will wind up his first year as Head Tiger Coach at Massillon. Strang says, "I like Massillon. It's a lot like my hometown, Ashland. Best of All, I like the school and football."

Coach Strang was born in Ashland, Ohio on December 12, 1922. He attended Ashland High School where he was active in football, baseball, and track. He was also named halfback on the All Ohio Football Team. After graduating from high school, he went on to Ashland College, where he played an important part in football and baseball. He majored in art and now teaches art at Washington High. His artistic ability was put to practical use when he designed the colorful Tiger uniforms this year.

After three years of service in the Navy, Strang went to Upper Sandusky where he was head coach for five years. During this time, the Upper Sandusky team were champions of their league for two years and finished second in the league the other three years.

From Upper Sandusky, he moved to Shaw High in Cleveland for two years where his teams compiled a fine record of sixteen wins and three losses to win the league championship both years.

In 1948, Coach Strang married Bettie Berrell in San Francisco, California. They have two future football players...Carter, seven: and David, three.

Coach Strang's hobbies, when he finds time to pursue them, are golf and fishing.

Strangely enough, Strang has never seen a Canton-Massillon game. He will be seeing his first one from a decidedly interesting spot...head man of the Tigers.

Adds to Tiger Fame Strang Maintains Fine Record 1961

The appointment of Leo E. Strang as head coach of the Massillon Washington Tigers in January, 1958 was the result of a careful study. When the Massillon Board of Education began looking for a successor to Coach Lee Tressel after the later was named head coach at Baldwin-Wallace College, Strang's past record as a high school grid mentor gave strong support to his application here. The Board was seeking a coach who was demonstrating annual progress in each of his years in the coaching field. Strang's ability to improve his coaching record at each school he coached swung the decision in his favor.

With two Ohio scholastic championships in the fold (1959 and 1960) in three years here, only Paul E. Brown and Charles V. (Chuck) Mather have carried the Tigers further in Ohio football competition than Strang. Both Brown and Mather directed the Tigers to six straight Ohio grid titles, Brown was here for nine years (1932-40) and Mather for six years (1948-53).

After three seasons as Massillon coach, Strang's teams have an aggregate record of 28 wins, 2 losses and one tie. After 31 games played, Strang's Tiger teams have averaged 32 points a game while holding the opposition to an average of 6 points per contest.

Massillon teams under Coach Strang employ basically a winged T offense, running from an unbalanced line, and with the right halfback being used essentially as a blocking back. Much of the blocking pattern is similar to single wing football. Defensively the Tigers use a variety of defenses, with the 5-4-2 alignment being the most popular.

One of the secrets of Strang's coaching success here has been the great amount of thought and work he has done in welding together a complete and dedicated staff of assistant coaches. The hand-picked men that form Strang's Tiger staff are: Nick Coso, short side guard and end coach; Nick Vrotsos, middle line coach; Carl F. Schroeder, long side coach; Jack Robb, backfield coach; Frank Domokos head sophomore coach; and Dale Walterhouse assistant sophomore coach.

Six Returning Letterman Coach Strang Faces Big Challenge 1962

Seeking his fourth straight Ohio Scholastic football championship here, Coach Leo E, Strang undertakes this monumental challenge with just six returning lettermen from the 1961 squad - center Ben Bradley, linebacker Ron Davis, defensive halfback Floyd Pierce, guard Jim Ehmer, tackle Roland Mercer and place kicker Wilbur Paisley. Tiger fans, remembering Massillon illustrious football history, are confident however that Washington High School will again be well represented on the gridiron.

Last year, Coach Strang took the Tigers through probably the most difficult schedule in grid history here with eleven straight victories. At the conclusion of the season, the Tigers were selected Ohio's top high school in a poll of coaches conducted by United Press – International news service. The 1961 title was the 19th for the Tigers since 1922. The 1961 season also saw the Tigers take their second national Sports News Service of Minneapolis. The Tigers had previously received this same honor in 1959.

The 1962 schedule will probably be the last eleven game slate for the Tigers as plans now call for a return in 1963 to the ten game program that was in effect prior to 1960. Missing from this year's schedule for the first time since 1918 when the game was canceled due to the World War I influenza epidemic is powerful Canton McKinley. The bulldogs were suspended from football competition this year in a ruling handed down late last year by the Ohio High School Athletic Association.

Cincinnati Taft is appearing on the Massillon schedule for the first time while Fremont Ross, Akron South, Akron East and Canton Lincoln are returning after an absence from Tiger Stadium.

Again assisting Coach Strang is the same staff of aides who have worked so diligently in the past. Carl F. (Ducky) Schroeder (Wittenberg) starts his 15th year on the Tiger grid staff. He is long side coach. Nick Coso (Western Reserve) is serving his 5th year here and is short side guard and end coach, Nick Vrotsos (Alabama) came here five years ago and is the middle line coach. Jack Robb (Ohio University) is in his fifth year as backfield coach, Frank Domokos (Morris Harvey) is in his third year as head sophomore mentor and Dale Walterhouse (Otterbein) is serving his second year as assistant sophomore coach.

Strang who is a graduate of Ashland High School and Ashland College, resides at 818 - 17th Street, Northeast, with his wife, Bettie, and two sons, Carter, age 11 and David, age 7.

1963

In 1958, Massillon hired the colorful, innovative Leo Strang, a former art major at Ashland College, who had produced outstanding football teams at Caldwell, Upper Sandusky, and Cleveland Shaw. By the fall of 1959, Strang had decided to throw out the old regime and introduce a unique style of high school football. He is recognized nationally as a football trendsetter for his many innovations.

Strang was struck by Chevrolet's leaping tiger advertisement, decided on it as all insignia for Massillon's helmet, and became the pioneer of printed vinyl decals on helmets. Leo gave away the rights to the idea to the company which designed it for him. "I should be getting a nickel for every decal put on a helmet now, but I wasn't that smart," he jokingly lamented.

He introduced colored football shoes at Shaw High School in 1957 with a red and white striped shoe. After a year of "testing the waters" at Massillon in 1958, Strang unveiled the white shoes in 1959. Leo recalled, "the kids loved the shoes and we always threatened to take them away if they didn't play well." The white shoes, he continued, "were a psychological weapon; we were the only team in the country to have them. Under the lights, particularly, the white shoes make you appear much faster."

"The 1959 squad never had to wear the same uniform twice," Strang explained. "We had three pants, white, black, and orange, and three jerseys of the same colors, giving us nine combinations for nine games." He introduced other new uniform concepts with multi-colored stripes, V-neck jerseys with triple stripes and outlined numbers.

Tiger opponents had the difficult task of preparing for a totally different offensive formation and attack than what they saw all year. Venerable Massillon assistant coach Carl "Ducky" Schroeder told this reporter "Leo was responsible for bringing back the unbalanced line after years of dormancy." Strang had additions to the unbalanced line as he explained, "we were the first to add rule blocking to a multiple offense and in 1959 we added influence blocking which just totally fouled up the read defenses of that time."

The Tiger offensive system relied heavily on the input of three spotters upstairs, who on each play studied the defensive rotation and reaction to the play action. Using a circuit board, a kind of precursor of the computer, these coaches would key particular defensive reactions based on what the circuit board indicated for them to watch. Strang elaborated, "if the long side defensive end closed down on our off-tackle ride, our spotter would immediately call down for the quarterback to fake the off-tackle and bootleg the football around the end. We took what the defense gave us." The coaches upstairs were constantly studying a third of the defense, looking for opportunities to exploit four blockers on three defenders.

Each offensive play between the tackles was run to stopwatch precision. "Our dive play had to hit a .6 of a second and our off tackle hit in 1.1 seconds," Leo emphasized.

Area Coaches - Most if not all teams used position coaches such as an end coach, etc, The independent-thinking Strang questioned us, "as a defensive end coach, how can you watch both defensive ends at the same time?" He continued, "our coaches coached an area: for instance, "Ducky" (Schroeder) had the long side end and long side tackle on offense and the middle guard and linebackers on defense."

Coach Strang left Massillon in 1964 to become head coach at Kent State University, and was there thru 1967.

Leo's loyalty to Massillon never ceased, as he was a regular spectator at many Tiger games and never missed a McKinley game.

Leo Strang died in 1996. He once made a statement "Coaching in Massillon was the greatest experience I ever had:"

Coach Strang will be missed, but Massillon will never forget Leo or his great Tiger Teams.

Now in Sixth Season with Tigers 1963

Coach Leo E. Strang starts his sixth campaign with the Massillon Washington Tigers and by the end of the 1963 season will have coached the Tigers in more games than any other Massillon mentor except for Paul E. Brown.

Brown directed the Tigers in 90 games over a nine year period from 1932 through 1940, while Strang will have coached the Tigers in 63 contests in a six year tenure that started in 1958.

Chuck Mather (1948-53) and Jack Snavely (1914-19) also coached the Massillon team over six year periods, however the number of games played, 60 and 51 respectively, were less than during Strang's coaching period.

The big question to be answered in 1963, is whether the 17 returning lettermen and several highly regarded sophomore prospects from the ill fated 1962 team have gained sufficient experience and finesse to restore the Tigers to the pinnacle they are accustomed to.

The 1963 schedule has been reduced to ten games in conformance with recent OHSAA regulations. In 1960, 1961 and 1962 the Tigers had played eleven games each year. All opponents appearing on this years schedule have played the Tigers before, however Cleveland East is returning for the first time since 1936, while Struthers hasn't played the Tigers since 1954. Canton McKinley appears on the on the schedule twice this year for the first dual series since 1909.

Coach Strang is again fortunate to have the same staff of assistant coaches available for this year's campaign. Carl F. (Ducky) Schroeder (Wittenberg) starts his 16th year on the Tiger staff and sixth under Strang. He is long side coach. Nick Coso (Western Reserve) starts his 6th year and will serve as short side guard and end coach. Frank Domokos (Morris Harvey) starts his fourth year on the staff and will again serve as head sophomore coach and Dale Walterhouse (Otterbein) is serving his third year as assistant sophomore coach. Jack Robb (Ohio University) returns for his sixth year here as backfield coach. Nick Vrotsos (Alabama) in his sixth year here in middle line coach.

The Man Called Strang

Picture Leo Strang, fishing pole and tackle box in hand sneaking out to the country on a lazy summer day.

Find this hard to imagine. Probably you do because when most of us see Coach Strang he is more likely to be carrying complicated diagrams of football plays for the next game.

During the school year, and especially the football season Mr. Strang is probably the busiest man in town. Certainly he must worry the most. In study hall for instance he starts pacing the floor on Thursdays and doesn't stop until each game is in the bag.

But away from the gridiron, Mr. Strang leads another life. Since you know all about the public side of him let us now tell you a little about the other side.

Mr. Strang is in charge of the athletic programs of all Massillon Schools as well as their physical education program. Many of his evening hours are spent speaking at banquets and clubs on athletics, so he really has very little free time. If he had more, he says he would spend them with his family. The Strangs enjoy bowling, swimming and traveling together.

Coach Strang met his wife, the former Betty Barell, in San Francisco coming back from overseas duty during World War II. The Strangs have two active sons, Carter, a seventh grader at Longfellow and David a third grader at Whittier. Each summer Strang and his family try to get away from it all for a week of relaxation in Treasure Island Canada.

Mr. Strang attended Ashland College and Western Reserve University majoring in physical education and minoring in art and social science. He holds an Institutional Major in art and taught it for seven years.

According to one of his fans the only thing needed to break Mr. Strang's usually stern countenance is a friendly greeting or a wish for "good luck" on Friday. Why don't you try it sometime? It isn't hard to find the human side under Mr. Strang;s rough appearing coaches profile.

Summary of Strang's Opposition at Massillon					
Opponents	Won	Lost	Tied	Points	
				Mass.	Opp.
Akron East	1	0	0	42	16
Akron Garfield	4	1	0	129	37
Akron South	3	0	0	120	12
Alliance	4	1	1	90	64
Barberton	2	0	0	122	0
Canton Lincoln	3	0	0	120	16
Canton McKinley	6	0	0	153	48
Cincinnati Roger Bacon	2	0	0	20	0
Cincinnati Taft	1	0	0	43	6
Cleveland Benedictine	5	1	0	141	44
Cleveland East	1	0	0	46	0
Columbus Central	1	0	0	28	0
East Liverpool	1	0	0	42	0

Fremont Ross	0	1	0	7	8
Mansfield	3	0	0	106	14
Mansfield Senior	3	0	0	114	12
Newark	1	0	0	50	6
Parma	1	0	0	21	20
Springfield South	1	0	0	62	32
Steubenville	5	1	0	171	49
Struthers	1	0	0	74	0
Toledo Libby	1	0	0	56	0
Toledo Waite	1	0	0	56	14
Warren Harding	3	3	0	121	61
Total	54	8	1	1934	459