

# FOWLER

It has been 25 years since Rusty Fowler has called the cadence on the fields at Monadnock and Barnes Park, but he still keeps close tabs on the program as he lives in Sunapee, NH and works for an Upper Valley employer. One of the best quarterbacks Stevens has produced in recent memory; Rusty led the Cardinals to the CVL title in 1985. Here is his transcript:

**What is your name, graduation year, uniform number, and position(s) played?**

Rusty Fowler; 1986; #7; quarterback and safety

**Current occupation, wife and children's names and ages if you choose to share?**

Human Resources Mgr.; wife Kathy; Children: Troy (17) and Madison (14)

**Who were your coaches during your time at Stevens?**

Tom Fowler, Bob Underhill; Steve McCormack, the late Garrett Hull, Richard Boone, Jeff Campbell; Joe Nawojczyk

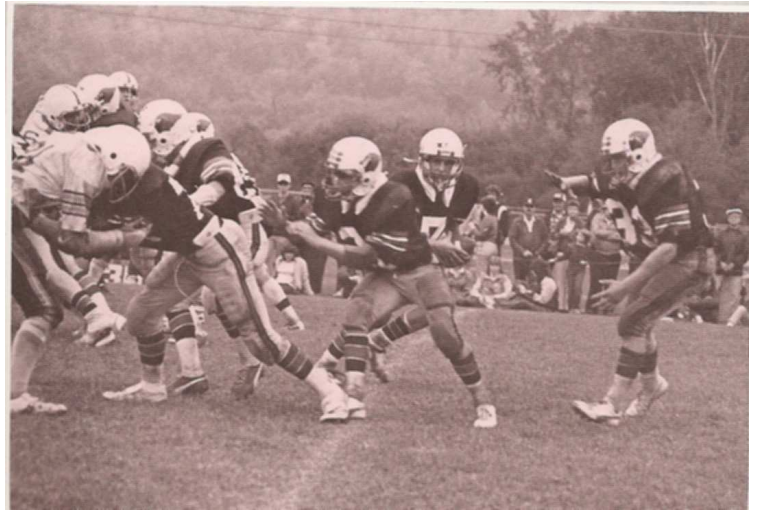
**Please describe the atmosphere of a game when you played at Stevens High School? Where were the games? Attendance? Time of day? Be as descriptive as possible-paint a picture.**

Our games always seemed to have large crowds but whether that is true or not is difficult to say as I'm sure your perspective as an 18 year old is different from that of a 40+ year old.

For my first 3 years, we played on Saturday afternoons at Monadnock Park where the weather could vary from 80+ degree days in September to rainy and cold days in late October. In 1985, our team hosted the first ever football game under the lights at Barnes Park with a win over Springfield 34-6. On another night game later in the year, I recall the crowd (mostly students) totally taking over the entire right field corner of Barnes Park. It seemed like the crowd spanned from the bottom to the top of the hill and formed from the 35 yard line and around the corner to the goal posts which the newspaper later stated there were over 2500 fans at Barnes Park that night.

**What is your greatest high school football memory? Be as descriptive as possible.**

By far, my favorite high school football memory was the very last game my senior year. The game was played at our then rival Fall Mountain field. The game was memorable for several reasons. We not only won the game 23-0 and clinched the now defunct CVL title (Connecticut Valley League which included Lebanon, Hanover, Bellows Falls, Woodstock, Windsor, Springfield and Hartford) as the sole champions, we also held Fall Mountain to negative offensive yards for the entire game. My favorite moments were our defense sacking their quarterback and rival Mark Bushway several times, Brian Pond spiking the ball in the end zone after catching a touchdown pass (and yes we did receive a penalty but it was well worth it!), and lastly having the opportunity to drop kick an extra point for the final point of the game.



**Who were some of the unsung heroes you played with during your four years at SHS? Players who went above and beyond yet never received the accolades.**

Amidst the All American season from Paul Belanger, the unsung heroes of my senior year were easily our offensive line. This group on average, weighed less than our receivers and backs, yet protected me as the quarterback and opened holes for our running backs better than any team in the league. This group included tackles Steve Chance (150 lbs) and Jim Rollins (150 lbs), guards Matt Clark (122 lbs) and Mike Derosier (130 lbs), center Mark Chase (145 lbs), and tight end Peter Wood (160 lbs). This group was scrappy, tough minded (they had to be...) and were never afraid of doing whatever was needed to create a big play.

**Just for the sake of reliving old memories, if you could have any play or mistake back, what would it be?**

Ah, another very easy question to answer. It was my senior year and we were playing an out of league game against Fair Haven VT on their field. It was a wet and rainy afternoon and our team came back on a late game drive with less than 2 minutes to go to score a touchdown with only seconds to go in the game. The touchdown made the score 21-20, we were down. Our coach called a trick play called "Pole Cat" right. This play sent our entire line including both guards, both tackles and the tight end out to the right side line of the field. Behind them were both running backs and one wide receiver. The other wide receiver was split wide to the left and of course the center was over the ball and I as the quarterback was in the shotgun position. The play required me to read the defense and judge where our best shot of scoring was. The entire defense followed our line to the right side of the field with the exception of one linebacker who was over the center and one d-back who covered the receiver to the left. The obvious play was to follow the center to block the linebacker and run to the other side of the block. As I had to step a foot or two to my right to catch the snap, I faked a run to the right and when I planted to cut back to the left, my foot slipped and I lost my footing. I recovered and starting running left however the linebacker met me at the goal line and stopped me one foot short of a touchdown. This was by far my most regrettable moment as I could have and would have done just about anything else to score the two point conversion to win the game... but didn't.

**What is your greatest memory of your experience with the Shrine Game?**

My greatest experience of the shrine game was simply being around such good people. Most of these athletes were very talented, but also very modest and at the same time showed strong character. Everyone was committed to doing the right thing for the team, even if this meant not playing as much as they were used to. As I

was coming off a back injury from the spring baseball season, I did not make quite as much of an impact at camp as I would have liked however meeting these other players, showed me how to be a class act regardless of what your role is on the team.

**From football during your high school era, what lessons do you feel you learned about life in general while playing at Stevens?**

I learned that you can do great things when you work together as a group. Our team my senior year was exactly that... A TEAM. Our head coach Tom Fowler and the entire coaching staff demanded that we all work for the better of the team and were completely committed to doing whatever it took to make us better as a whole. Many players sacrificed their own personal statistics and playing time because everyone was committed to playing their role as best as possible again for the better of the team.

Also I learned that EVERYONE has good days and bad days no matter how good you are. The key is to have more good days than bad and to never let the bad days keep you down and own you!

**Have you attended a SHS Football game recently?**

Yes, in 2009 but not yet in 2010.

**Today's athletes are a different breed so to speak. What do you feel today's student-athletes lack compared to your generation?**

Will to win. I see many players in all the sports from all the schools simply playing for their own statistics and recognition and not enough players doing whatever it takes to get better for the team to win. By this I mean, I don't see many players, or coaches for that matter, looking to take a leadership position on the team to call guys out when they are doing things to hurt the team. This could be things on or off the field. Back in the day (man I feel old even saying this...) guys on our team were competing with each other to make the team better, players and coaches were looking out for each other on and off the field and finally, speaking out even though it was "unpopular" when guys were not pulling their weight or for some reason, had fallen off the "team wagon".

This interview was conducting during the fall of 2010.