

# Rich Karlis Comes Home To Salem

by Dan DeCrow

Three, two, one... the gun sounds and Super Bowl XXII is history. The Washington Redskins have defeated the Denver Broncos 42-10 in a game that was not closer than the score indicated. It is the second straight Super Bowl loss for Denver and the third in the Broncos' history. Denver may now be compared to the perennial Super Bowl losers, the Minnesota Vikings, who are 0-4. But Rich Karlis, kicker of the Broncos and Salem native, is definitely no loser.

In Super Bowl XXII Rich made one of two field goals. His first attempt was successful from 24 yards out in the first quarter. It gave Denver a 10-0 lead and it turned out to be the last points the Broncos would score. Karlis missed his second attempt which was from 43 yards away. Denver trailed 14-10 at the time.

The missed kick was into a fairly stiff wind which Rich misread, causing him to miss the field goal. Rich felt that going into that wind his range was cut down from his normal 50 yards and in to about 45.

To Rich, Super Bowl XXI was a more difficult one to take than this year. "I contributed in one way or another," said Rich. Karlis missed two short field goals early in super Bowl XXI after making a 48 yarder which tied a Super Bowl record for longest made field goal. His misses set the tone for the first game.

To many people media week is something that can be done without. This is the week before the game that is endless hype by the media and non-stop interviews for the players. It has been suggested that the super Bowl could be played the week after the conference championship games instead of having the extra week off. Rich agrees with this point in a way, "The hype is best for the sport, but not for the game itself. A week off can really cool off a team."

The Denver defense was a team decimated by injuries and retirements. Three starters on the defensive unit retired: linebacker Tom Jackson, cornerback Louis Wright, and safety Steve Foley. Nose tackle Rubin Carter also retired. Safety Dennis Smith was lost during the season with a broken

arm. As he prepared to return, cornerback Mike Harden went down to the same injury. These were not all of the major injuries for Denver this year but you get the picture. Just to make it to the Super Bowl, Rich felt was, "A great coaching effort by Dan Reeves (the Broncos' head coach.)" All of the injuries finally caught up to Denver on the arm of Doug Williams in the second quarter of the Super Bowl.

Rich returned to Salem as he was in the area to be presented the area pro football award at the prestigious Sandalini's sports banquet at Mr. Anthony's in Boardman on February 3.

On February 4, Rich spoke to the students at Salem Junior High. He talked about setting sights on a goal and going out and achieving it. But after awhile it turned into a question and answer session. Afterwards many students lined up for autographs. Here in Salem Rich is very popular with the kids.

He is not only popular here, but is extremely popular in Denver. Every year the NFL gives out its man of the year award. It is given to the player who best exhibits community service in his area. In 1984 and 1985 Rich was one of five finalists to be named. Both years he ended up third. The finalists are determined by the fans who vote for their area team's representative. Rich received 10 percent of the fan vote nationwide.

All of this support given to Rich by the fans was a result of the support Rich gives to the people of Denver. He started a program named "Points for People." Points for People benefits the organization Family Tree which deals in family violence issues. It helps provide short term shelters (30 to 60 days) for battered women and children and also teenage boys and girls who have either run away or been thrown out of their house. He raises money on a kick per pledge basis. In the four years he has been associated with the group \$400,000 has been raised because of his kicking. Family Tree is a small organization with a budget of about one million dollars a year. Rich's contributions have

been significant as they account for 13 percent of the budget.

Rich is very excited about two new projects which are underway. One is Shalom House which is a long term care unit for young women who have been mistreated in ways such as incest. The girls live there and go to school from there. The other new program is KIDS which is an acronym for Kids in Divorce and Separation. It is a counseling program for children who are having a hard time dealing with the divorce or separation of their parents. During the Super Bowl Rich met many people who are planning on giving him help in his Points for People campaign.

After all of the help Rich has given the people of Denver, he is now focusing his sights on helping the people of Salem and the community in general. Rich feels that there is a problem here in Salem which is seen throughout small town America. The problem is that Salem is too proud to do anything about the problems which confront the city. He says, "People bury their head in the sand and the problem gets bigger as we ignore it." Some people were offended by the comments Rich made in an earlier interview in The Salem News about changes needing to be made. "The only time you make changes is to make controversy. This city has accepted mediocrity."

One change that needs to be made is in the sports at Salem High School. Over the years the sports program has declined. The stands at basketball games are empty and major sports teams are churning out below .500 records. Rich believes that, "If we make sports more successful, it will build civic pride to benefit the whole city." Rich would like to see more people from Salem going to college on athletic scholarships. Someone needs to start the ball rolling and Rich feels that he has to do it because no one else will. He hopes to be in town more often in short spurts but it is difficult because of the demands of football. He spent a half a day talking to Superintendent Schoffman during his recent visit about ways to improve the

community. "I have a sneaking suspicion that things are going to change; this city lacks commitment," said Rich. Rich plans on being the man to make the commitment. Rich talks tough but he only tells the truth. He does not want to be looked upon as the bad guy, "I don't want to be a negative force in the city; I want to be a positive force."

Of all the people who know that the old saying "hard work pays off" is true, it is Rich Karlis. After graduating from Salem Rich wanted to play football. He looked around and felt like the best opportunity for him would be at the University of Cincinnati. UC had a new head coach coming in and Rich walked on as a kicker. He and other walk-ons were given some footballs, and were told to go to a remote part of the field and kick them back and forth to each other. In other words they said stay out of their way. But Rich would not quit. He would go to Spinney Field, practice field of the NFL Cincinnati Bengals, and kick until he was kicked off the field. Eventually he caught the coach's eye and ended up on the squad.

Small college kickers do not often get drafted so Rich wrote letter after letter to NFL teams asking for a tryout as a free agent. Almost every team turned him down including the hometown Cleveland Browns (who may have regretted it after Rich beat them with a field goal in the 1987 AFC Championship game.) The Houston Oilers invited him to try out but he did not make the team. Next the Denver Broncos gave him a try out. There were 75 potential kickers there. At the end Rich was one of four to be offered a contract to try out for the final spot. He upended incumbent Fred Steinfort and was the new kicker for the Denver Broncos. Rich was only the second Salem High grad ever to play pro football, Lou Slaby being the other.

In 1985 times became tough for Rich. He had a new holder and it was hard for him to adjust. He began

to hear the boos. It put a lot of stress on him and his new marriage. According to Rich the holder has the most thankless job on the field. He must catch the snap, turn the ball, and get it down on the ground in 1.3 seconds. For a kicker any mess up can cause a bad result and 1985 was a down year for Rich Karlis.

In 1986 Rich rebounded and has been consistent ever since. In 1987 Rich finished fourth in the AFC in scoring with 91 points. When one is the best at his position, he is named to the pro bowl team. So far Rich has never made the trip to Hawaii for the game. But he does not think that will last forever, "I'm sure I'll get to go sometime in my career." Rich had the stats to make it in his first two years but rookies are rarely chosen to go. The reason is that the players choose who goes and rookies must prove themselves in the eyes of the veteran players. To Rich, players should not be given the responsibility of voting; it should belong to the coaches. It is difficult for him to vote for an offensive guard to go to the Pro Bowl when he does not see him play.

Rich must continue his hard work to get that Pro Bowl selection. Denver will bring in kickers every year to challenge Rich; therefore there is no letting up in training routines. During the off-season Rich does a lot of bike riding and does Tae Kwon Doe to stay in shape. He also does the Bronco three hour workout. Never let it be said that a kicker is not an athlete. Rich kicks 30 balls a day, four days a week during the off-season while in training camps he kicks 30 balls daily six days a week.

Rich Karlis is an example that many young children can look up to. He worked very hard and would not take no for an answer to get to where he is today. He now wants to give something back to the community by helping to raise civic pride and make it a better place to live. Salem should definitely be proud to have turned out such a fantastic man as well as an athlete in Rich Karlis.

## Salem Concludes Season Defeating Jackson-Milton

by Craig Reinehr

The Salem Wrestlers are now 4-8-1 after a loss to Hubbard 49-14, a win over Tallmadge 36-30, a tie with Ursuline 30-30, and a win over Jackson-Milton 39-27. The J.V.'s beat Hubbard and Ursuline 36-18 and 12-3 respectively, with a loss to Tallmadge 47-15.

Despite the loss to Hubbard, Joe Good at the 119 pound class won by pin and Jeff Swartz at 140 won by a 24-9 decision. Greg Marple at 171 won by an 8-5 margin and Chris Nichols grappled for a tie at 189. With Salem winning only three classes and losing eight, the result was a 49-14 loss.

Tallmadge was thrown for a loss in the next match with Aaron O'Brien pushing a 22-9 win at 112, Joe Good pinned his opponent and Larry DeJane ended up with a 19-8 win. Jeff Swartz, Greg Marple, and Chris Nichols all swept the Tallmadge opposition with pins. In the end it was a 36-30 win for Salem.

Salem grudged a 30-30 tie against Ursuline having wins again from Joe Good, 11-0, and Jeff Swartz, by technical pin. Larry DeJane scrapped for a 9-9 tie, Clarence Fields won by forfeit, Derek Brant excelled over his 165 pound opponent with a technical pin, and John Cope won by forfeit at the heavy weight class. The tough-fought match by both teams ended in a deadlock.

Salem concluded its regular season by defeating Jackson Milton 39-27. Winners were Aaron O'Brien, Joe Good, Mike Hazelbaker, Jeff Swartz, Tim Blasiman, Derek

Brant, and Chris Nichols. Brant and Blasiman had pins.

Sectional Tournaments will begin this evening at Louisville.

### Girls' Varsity Basketball

by Mary Rush

The Girls' Varsity Basketball team under coach Jim Shivers ended their season with a 5-14 record. The seniors on the team are Michelle Baker, Amy Breckenridge, Melinda Wilms, Tara Zeigler, and Gretchen Schlueter. The juniors are Julie Ehrhart, Andrea Engle, Jenny Herron, Steph Headland, and Kerry Thorne. The sophomores are Jenny Sommers, Michelle Ganslein, and Linda Stanley. When Mr. Shivers was asked if he was pleased with the girls season, he replied, "Record-wise no, but effort-wise yes at times." The girls are now practicing for tournaments. Their first game was yesterday, against West Branch. When asked how the girls' playing looks for going into tournaments Mr. Shivers replied, "Pretty good, they are working hard, and the experience from playing all the season games will help." The Girls' Varsity Basketball team has worked hard this season and will be working even harder for tournaments, so give them some support and wish them luck.



Basketball Sweetheart Queen and her Court (L-R) — Kim Muntz, Michelle Baker, Amy Breckenridge, Queen Christine Neidhart, Colleen Lora, Lisa Reed, and Maria Zimmann.

## JV Basketball Team Wins MVC Title

by Dave Hahn

With a final overall record of 17-3, the Salem J.V. Basketball team captured the 1987-88 Mahoning Valley Conference crown with an 11-1 conference record. This year's team consists of sophomores Shawn Binsley, Mark Burrier, Charlie Honeywell, Lance Miller, Dave Reed, and juniors Burt Capel, Dickie Cochran, Scott Jones, Tom Wiggers, Tim Steffen, and Rob Wiggers. The highlight of the year came 4 weeks ago when Salem played host to Poland. The Quakers,

needing the win to clinch the M.V.C., fought back from a 14 point fourth quarter deficit to beat the Bulldogs, 49-46. The win was especially sweet, as Salem avenged an earlier loss to Poland.

Despite the league championship, the J.V. squad will not play in any post-season tournaments. "It would be nice," said coach Jerry Allen, "but there would be a problem of where to play and who to invite. It would also interfere with the girls' and boys' varsity tournament games." Coach Allen attributes the

outstanding season to the fact that the team improved greatly throughout the year. "Their best qualities are that they move the ball very well, play well together and never give up," he said. The latter of the 3 qualities, never giving up, is easily proven when you realize that they won 3 of their last 4 conference games in the final quarter. The team also reached the 15 win goal which was set at the beginning of the season. Congratulations to both the players and Coach Allen on a very fine season.