

FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

WINTER 2007

RUTGERS

MAGAZINE

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Shining Knights

RUTGERS FOOTBALL MAKES
NEW JERSEY PROUD

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An unforgettable season turned the **spotlight** on all things Rutgers

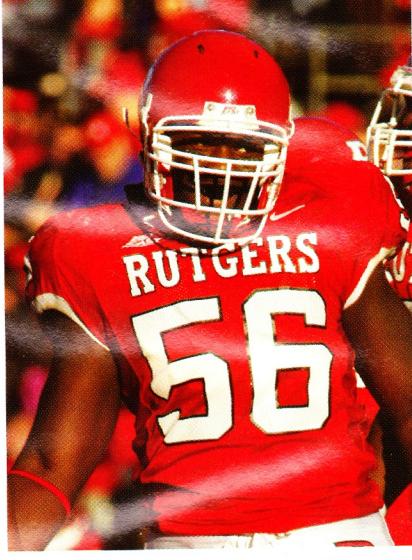
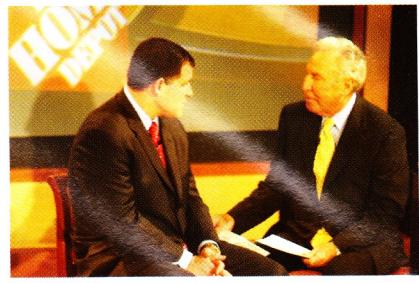
By Bill Glovin

Courtney McAnuff knows the pressure Cardinals quarterback Brian Brohm must have felt from the pass rush during the Scarlet Knights remarkable second half comeback against the University of Louisville on November 9. McAnuff, the vice president for enrollment management at Rutgers, has had to deal with a different kind of blitz. "Before the game, the most people we ever had touring the New Brunswick/Piscataway Campus in a week was 600," says McAnuff. "The week following the game, we had 3,200 visitors—and needed extra buses to accommodate them. The demand for tour guides and buses has been overwhelming—and it's all because of the media exposure we've received from football."

From Rutgers students camping out all night for tickets, to the Empire State Building being illuminated in scarlet, the success of Rutgers football has helped accentuate the university's national stature and lifted the spirits of tens of thousands of Rutgers alumni and New Jerseyans (and even New Yorkers). According to Greg Trevor, senior director of media relations, this year's historic football season has also had a positive, dramatic effect on media interest in Rutgers. "Our office has experienced a significant increase in requests from state,

regional, and national media interested in the university's academic programs and research innovations," he says while also pointing to a recent report that ranked Rutgers eighth among the 64 bowl-bound teams in the NCAA's Academic Performance Rate, a measurement of players' academic performance toward graduation.

"It began with the Insight Bowl in 2005, where we received an estimated \$16 million in free publicity," says Kevin MacConnell, deputy director of intercollegiate athletics on the New Brunswick/Piscataway Campus. "We can't even begin to measure what that number amounted to through almost three months of being undefeated in 2006. Students, their parents, alumni, and former football letter winners have rallied around the team like never before." What MacConnell can measure: season ticket sales that are up 50 percent, the Rutgers-Louisville game's rating that was the third highest in ESPN's history of televising college football, and an average home field attendance of 41,112 per game. Says MacConnell, "Rutgers football has been a great source of pride for the citizens of New Jersey and allowed the university a chance to showcase all our remarkable programs and the wonderful things that we do. What more can you say?"



Highlights from a history-making season. Top row, l to r: New York City's Empire State Building glows scarlet on the day of the Rutgers-Louisville game. The architect behind Rutgers' accomplishments is Scarlet Knights head coach Greg Schiano. Fans come ready with their signs to celebrate ESPN's presence. ESPN's Lee Corso (right) interviews Schiano, winner of several "Coach of the Year" honors, after being named the ESPN/Home Depot Coach of the Year. Middle row: Fullback Brian Leonard (left)—recipient of the Draddy Trophy (known in many circles as the "Academic" Heisman) and a \$25,000 postgraduate scholarship—poses with New York Giants center Shaun O'Hara LC'05 at the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame's 49th Annual Awards

Dinner. Thousands of Rutgers students assemble—many after camping out overnight—to obtain tickets to the Louisville game. Defensive tackle Eric Foster becomes the first Rutgers defensive player to be named to the First-Team All-America team in the modern era. Bottom row: Mike Francesa (left) and Chris Russo, aka *Mike and the Mad Dog*, interview Rutgers' Director of Intercollegiate Athletics Robert Mulcahy (center) after bringing their popular WFAN-AM/YES Network afternoon drive time simulcast to campus. Jeremy "the Judge" Ito breaks Rutgers' all-time record of 47 field goals. A student's sign provides advice to team Most Valuable Player and Second Team All-America tailback Ray Rice.

Before the Knights took on Syracuse in November, the team's seniors gathered around Coach Greg Schiano after practice. On hand were (front row, left to right) Wayne Morse, Darnell Stapleton, Devraun Thompson, Quintero Frierson, Ramel Meekins, Cam Stephenson, Milan Rudanovic; (middle row) Joe Giacobbe, Nkosi Remy, William Beckford, Manny Collins, Derrick Roberson, Joe Porter, Brian Leonard; (back row) Sam Johnson, Rocky Ricks, Clark Harris, Brandon Wood, and Joe Radigan.



The Turnaround

The seniors chopped their way to glory

By Bill Glovin

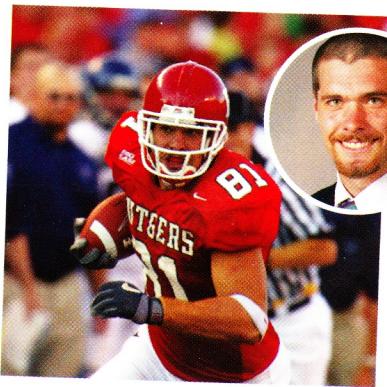
hortly before kickoff against Syracuse University on Saturday, November 25, a sellout crowd at Rutgers Stadium rose to its feet as 26 seniors ran onto the field for their final home game as Scarlet Knights. Nine had suffered through a 1-11 season as redshirts (freshmen who can practice with the team but are ineligible to play in games) in 2002. Many of them contributed to helping the team to steadily improve over the next two seasons and, in 2005, finish 7-4 and win a trip to the Insight Bowl. In 2006, they provided the leadership that would lead Rutgers to a 10-2 record and the inaugural Texas Bowl in Houston—one of its best seasons in history.

At head football coach Greg Schiano's weekly press conference at the Hale Center before the Syracuse game, he called the seniors who came in 2002 "a special group of young men." With a rare twinge of

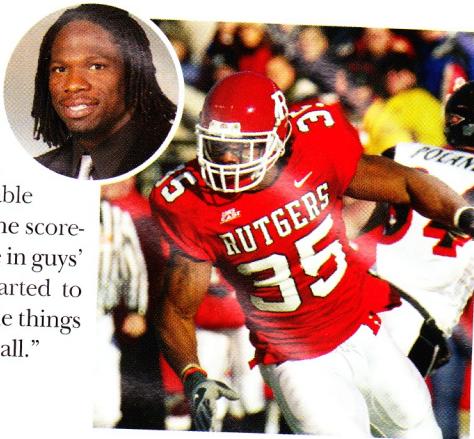
emotion in his voice, he added, "They've grown and gone through probably every conceivable emotion known to man in their time here at Rutgers. I respect them a great deal. I'm indebted to them for what they've done for the program, and I'm also very proud of them, as a father would be of his kids."

What do the seniors think was the turning point? Some describe winning a pivotal game; others believe it was a work ethic (coined by their coach as “chopping”) and a winning culture that evolved over time. All said they had no regrets about committing to Rutgers—despite the difficult season in 2002. One of the team captains, Brian Leonard, spoke for the group when he added, “I’m glad I came when I did. We can always look back and say we were the guys that turned the program around.”

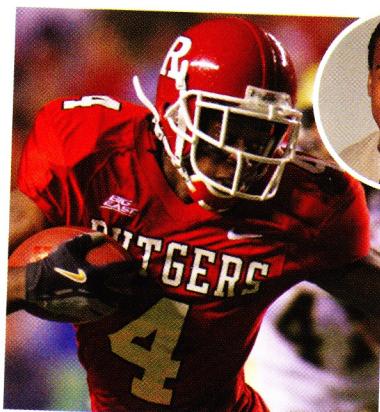
PHOTOGRAPH BY BOY GOETHEMING; PHOTOGRAPHS FACING PAGE: LARRY LEVANT



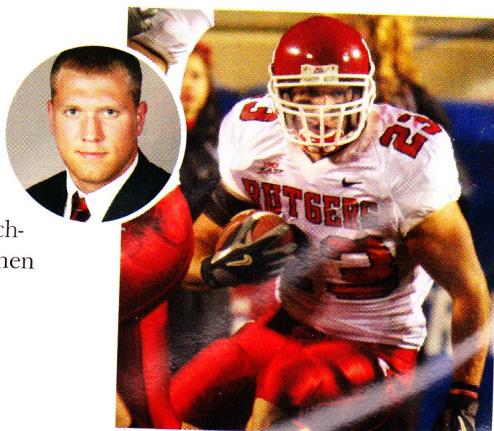
Clark Harris LC'07, tight end: "Coach Schiano told us from the beginning that it wasn't going to happen overnight; that we needed to focus on what we were able to control, like hard work. My first year we won one game; then we won four, five, and seven—and then there's this year. Most coaches on our staff have some kind of championship ring and we realized that if we listened to the people who have been there—we could get there also. Sometimes we talk about how far we've come in five years, but it's more important to concentrate on the task that's right in front of you."



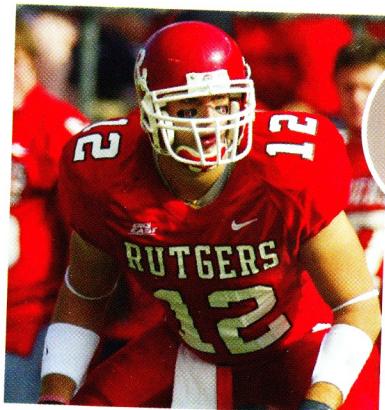
William Beckford UCNB'07, defensive end: "I saw the spark in the second half of the Vanderbilt game in 2004 [a 37–34 come-from-behind victory in which Rutgers trailed 27–3 in the third quarter]. We were able to come out and just focus on one play at a time, not worrying about the scoreboard or anything else—just the next play. On the way home, I could see in guys' eyes that they really believed. That's when the senior leadership started to really take over. We got to a point where the leaders took care of the little things on and off the field and Coach Schiano was able to just focus on football."



Shawn Tucker RC'07, receiver: "As a younger player, I saw that the older guys who bought into Coach Schiano's philosophy were the ones making plays. So I followed. The things we were doing off the field also began to pay off. After the Insight Bowl, we could have become complacent, but, as seniors, we wouldn't let that happen and put even more time and effort into the off-season program. We also did a lot of things together off the field, which created more of a family-like atmosphere."



Brian Leonard RC'07, fullback: "The Navy game at home in 2005 changed our mindset. We knew we had to win that sixth game to become bowl eligible. It was kind of a seesaw game, but we surged ahead. That was the moment—when Ray [Rice] scored that last touchdown. It also showed us that we could finish a game. After that, when games were close, we knew how to finish and expected to win."



Anthony Cali RC'06, tight end: "I sensed it was turning around when the older guys started taking more of a leadership role. When we came in, the older guys weren't that interested in the younger guys. One of the most rewarding experiences has been persevering with people I'll be friends with for the rest of my life. We got there together. And we've shown the younger guys how hard you need to work to win in the Big East." □

Assistant alumni editor Mike Basford contributed to this story.