

Hermantown Football is celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> Diamond Anniversary and years of tradition. Seven and a half decades and 6 head coaches have led the Hawks to numerous undefeated seasons, conference championships, section state appearances. The sport in 1941 under war two began and the “Blue and Gold” from took over in 1942 and were off and running conference undefeated season in



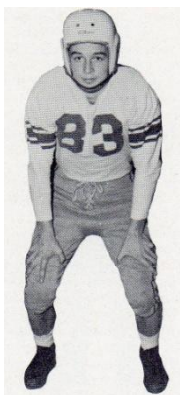
championships and several program began as a club coach Mickolajak. World Hawks took on the colors the navy. Coach Rukovina the Hermantown Hawks winning their first championship and 1948. Under new Head

Coach George Petrich in 1953, Hermantown Football continued its tough play, competitive spirit and traditions winning the conference in '53, '57, '58, '60, '61, '64, '65, '70 and '72. The 1960's were filled with undefeated seasons as the Hawks moved up to the polar conference and competing with a number of local rivals. Of course, a time where there weren't playoffs for teams, Hermantown Football certainly competed with teams like Duluth East, Duluth Cathedral and Morgan Park. Three teams from the 60's, 1964, 1965, and 1966 were inducted into the 2011 Inaugural Hermantown Football Hall of Fame. Along with their head coach George Petrich. Players from the 1960's in the Hall of Fame include Jim Swanstrom '66, James Micketts '64, Ed Dammer '61, Bruce Melin '60, James Crigler '61 and Leonard Anick '62. In the 1973, Head Coach Gary Bowen started his Hall of Fame career. The mid-70's came as tough years for the Hawks until the end of the decade. Out of the 70's came Hall of Famers Richard Bosiaski Jr. '74 and Gary Gilbert '79. In the early 80's Hermantown Football exploded into seasons of state playoffs, playing now in the Sea-Range Conference. The 1981 team also an Inaugural Hall of Fame team, also along with their head coach Gary Bowen. The Hawks finished 11-2 and runner-up in the state championship finals losing to St.

St. Peter ends Hawk title bid

Peter. This season sparked a run of Hawks teams finishing strong under the direction of Head Coach Gary Bowen. The 80's consisted of five conference championships in '80, '81, '84, '85, and '86. State tournament appearances in 1980, '81, and '84. Hall of Fame athletes from the 80's decade include Scott McLaughlin '81, Corey Veech '82, Clint Buchite '83 and Joel Heckman '86. Current Head Coach Daryl Illikainen played under his mentor Gary Bowen and years' later taking over Gary's teaching and coaching duties at Hermantown, as Gary became the Athletic Director. The 90's decade continued to be strong under Gary Bowen's brother Randy Bowen for six years winning the conference in '93 and putting out Hall of Famers like Brian McDonald '94 and Kevin Graves '92. Randy resigned in 1996 leaving the

program very healthy for new cumber and current head coach Daryl Illikainen. So healthy, that in the late 90's, Hermantown Football had undefeated seasons and conference championships in 1997 and 1998, playing in the state quarterfinals in '97. It was again in 2002 and 2003 that the Hawks returned to the state quarterfinal stage. The late 2000's were filled with some Hermantown traditional success winning the conference in '09, '11, '12, '13 and '15. Undefeated seasons in 2011 and 2015 with a state quarterfinal appearance last season. The Hawks traditions have again and again continued even still running the



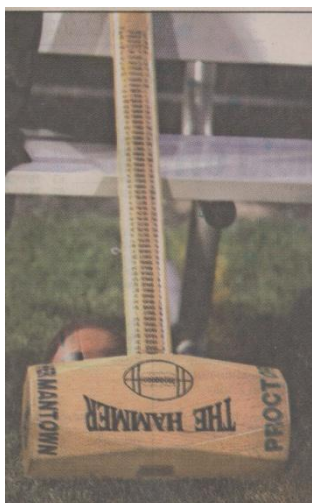
wing-T that Gary Bowen implemented in the 1980's. Coach Illikainen says "having mentors and coaches like Gary Bowen, Randy Bowen, Tom White, Frank Russ still around when he took over the football program was inspirational and motivated him to continue the traditions that were established." Not many programs in the State of Minnesota can say they have had only 6 head coaches in their history.

**1941 -1942 (Coach George Rukovina), 1942-1953 (Coach Mickolajak), 1953 –1973 (Coach George Petrich), 1973 –1991 (Coach Gary Bowen), 1991-1997 (Coach Randy Bowen), 1997 – Current (Coach Daryl Illikainen)**

One of the strengths of the Hermantown Football program is the experience, professionalism, dedication, comradery and continuity of the coaching staff. The program has continued throughout its years to have educators, professionals, and dedicated people continue to coach for all the right reasons. Assistant



coaches in the 1960's and 70's were Dick Veech, Dave Olson, Dick Zell and Tom Ling. Other assistant coaches like Tom White coached alongside Gary Bowen, Randy Bowen and Daryl Illikainen stretching over 33 years. Tom solidified the JV program for all those years as well as helping on Friday nights. Assistant coach Frank Russ coached with Gary Bowen in the 1970's and 80's. Coach Randy Bowen was the assistant for his brother for 19 years before taking over head coach for 6 years. Current Assistant Coach Tad Forsell has coached football for 37 years. Tad has coached for 27 years at Hermantown starting in 7<sup>th</sup> grade football under Gary Bowen in 1989. Tad, as well as Tom White have coached alongside three different head coaches. Tad continues to be the Head 9<sup>th</sup> grade coach with Dale Mundle and does an



outstanding job developing young players. Current Assistant Coach Mike Sweeney has coached football for 33 years. Twenty four years with Hermantown starting under Randy Bowen in 1992 through the current. Former players Mike Zagelmeyer and Dale Mundle have joined the staff and bring not only great experience but have "Blue and Gold" Hermantown Football traditions in their blood. Assistant Coach Mundle has coached 22 years for the Hawks and continues to teach Freshmen the fundamentals of the game and prepares them to be future varsity players. Assistant coach Mike Zagelmeyer has coached football for 20 years and 19 of them for Hermantown. Starting out in the 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> youth program and has been at the varsity level for 12 years. Coach Daryl Illikainen has only replaced 2 positions going into his 20<sup>th</sup> season for the

Hawks. Assistant Coach Tyler Homstad replaced Tom White and has coached football for 13 years, 5 years as head coach for Wrenshall and 8 years as JV coach for the Hawks. All-in-all, Hermantown head coaches have positioned great people around them and will continue to hire educators who are dedicated to Hermantown student/athletes.

Other strengths of the Hermantown Football program is a solid youth program, committed 2 and 3 sport athletes, great school support, committed parents with good values and a community backing like no other. A community with an abundance of Hermantown Football alumni and great community support. Throughout the years, the school district and head coaches have supported and maintained a 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade program with educators who start young Hermantown Football players with basic skills, teaching them the game and following the programs philosophy and systems. Coach Illikainen started a youth 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade flag football 14 years ago and has since added 3<sup>rd</sup> grade flag. Having added flag football has not only started kids earlier learning and practicing their football skills, but has kept football participation up throughout the years. Dedicated parents coaching and flag football coordinator Richard Cora have been a continued strength to the program. Supporting their youth philosophy of developing skills, teamwork, respect, sportsmanship and fun! Coach Illikainen believes that youth players need to develop their confidence in these areas before adding the element of contact.

Current Head Coach Daryl Hermantown in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. His football was their 2<sup>nd</sup> place and coaches. After High School, continue playing on a football University in 1984. Freshmen year with 4 years of eligibility to team in 1985 as the punt and



Illikainen started playing football for greatest memories of Hermantown finish in 1981, his teammates, friends Illikainen had the opportunity to scholarship to North Dakota State entering N.D.S.U. typically redshirt a follow. Illikainen traveled with the extra point center. Followed by

starting for the Bison as an offensive linemen for the next three years. Coach Illikainen was privileged and honored to be a part of such a tremendous field of athletes who went on to win National Championships in 1985, 1986 and in his senior year in 1988. The whole experience and opportunity at N.D.S.U. and Hermantown Football has molded his career to be become an educator and coach himself. Not only did football mold his career path, but Illikainen remembers and appreciates all of the friendships, memories and humbling experiences along the way. With college success can also mean individual success. Being selected for the NFL combine camp was quite an honor. Being in the same stadium with the top 320 athletes in the country can be pretty humbling. Illikainen had tryouts with the Pittsburg Steelers and New York Jets before signing with the Houston Oilers in the spring of 1989. Being an NFL free agent can be a difficult climb. His NFL career was limited to three pre-season games before being released. Now, when faced with a decision of continuing to train for football or start your career, Coach Illikainen utilized his degree in Health and Physical Education and started a career in teaching and coaching in Fargo, North Dakota. After teaching and coaching in West Fargo for two years, his goals were to eventually get back to his Alma Mater someday. The path led him to take a teaching and coaching job at Duluth Marshall School for four years before eventually leading to a position at Hermantown in 1995. Coach Illikainen credits his former coaches, teammates and his wife Joy of 27 years for making him who he is today.



