



## Steve Chomyszak

Year of Induction: **2014**

Year of Graduation: **1962**

It was September of 1960 when JCHS junior Steve Chomyszak was approached by Francis “Moon” Mullins who, in addition to being his homeroom teacher, was the head coach of the Johnson City varsity football and track teams. With a little convincing, Mr. Chomyszak joined the football and track teams, and as they say, the rest is history. With only two years of playing experience, Steve Chomyszak would earn an athletic scholarship to Syracuse University for both football and track and field, and he would eventually end up going onto a very successful career as a professional football player with the Cincinnati Bengals.

The bulk of Mr. Chomyszak’s athletic accomplishments occurred after his time as a Wildcat. However, after being “recruited” by Coach Mullins, Steve starred on the varsity football teams of 1960 and 1961. He led the team as a bruising fullback. However, it was in field events where Steve’s potential immediately shined forth. He broke through on the discus and shot put scene by shattering Johnson City records in both events, and he finished off his varsity career by breaking the Broome County record in the shot put with a distance of 56 feet, 3 ¼ inches. Overall, Mr. Chomyszak earned four varsity letters as a Wildcat; two each in football and track and field. His accomplishments at JCHS were truly just the tip of Mr. Chomyszak’s athletic iceberg.

Entering Syracuse University in the fall of 1962, Mr. Chomyszak quickly made an impact on the track and field team. He would eventually break the Syracuse University records for distance throws in both the shot put and discus. He also earned a varsity letter as a member of the Syracuse football team, where he played with Syracuse legends Floyd Little, Larry Czonka, and Tom Coughlin. At a staggering 6’ 6” tall and 270 lbs, It was at Syracuse that Steve polished his skills on the defensive line, earning him notice from NFL scouts. Steve was drafted by the New York Jets in the 1966 NFL draft, but it was in Cincinnati where his NFL career really took off.

Mr. Chomyszak played for the Cincinnati Bengals from 1968-1973. In those six NFL seasons, he starred on the defensive line. Playing for Paul Brown, one of the most famous coaches in NFL history, Mr. Chomyszak totaled 77 games played for the Bengals, including one standout performance in the playoffs vs. the Baltimore Colts and quarterback Johnny Unitas in which he recorded 12 unassisted tackles. His total of 79 NFL games played currently ranks 2nd most in the history of graduates of section IV schools. Steve’s feats of strength were legendary in the NFL. Nicknamed ‘The Gentle Giant of the Gridiron’, Steve was widely considered the strongest man in professional football. At the height of his career, Steve bench pressed over 600 lbs and could squat over 900 lbs!

No one could have predicted the success that would result from that fateful conversation between Coach Mullins and Mr. Chomyszak in a JCHS homeroom in 1960. His accomplishments earned Mr. Chomyszak the honor of having April 29th, 1971 to be declared "Steve Chomyszak Day" in Johnson City. The Johnson City Athletic Hall of Fame is proud to welcome the most successful professional football player to ever graduate from our district, Mr. Steve Chomyszak, JCHS Class of 1962.