

# cardinal sports

## Jewell 'backer mixes football and academics in leadership

by Dana Merzhon

William Jewell College is bragging about its undefeated football team and linebacker Tim Johnson is partially to blame. As defensive spokesman for the Cardinals, Johnson is responsible for calling defensive signals and relaying decisions on penalties to the defensive unit. The Cardinals' record of 5-0 is evidence that the defensive spokesman knows what he is doing.

Even the publicity Johnson recently received in the *Kansas City Star* hasn't taken his thoughts away from the team. The modest linebacker squirms when talking about personal accomplishments. However, he is never at a loss for words of praise about the team.

Defensive tackle coach Rodger LaBeth stated, "Tim is a great individual player, but what enhances his value is that he is a team player, too."

This role of "team player" is not new to the former Rockhurst High standout. Johnson

was selected to the All-District, the All-Metro and the All-State offensive and defensive teams his senior year in high school.

The sense of teamwork that Johnson has instilled in the defense may be an important factor in the William Jewell Cardinals' success. "The personalities of our defensive players blend together very well," said Johnson. "We enjoy getting off on what the others do."

"When the fans see me doing well, they should automatically recognize that defensive linemen Jan Redman and Guy Weber are doing well," said Johnson. "I depend on them to keep the big linemen off me and they seldom let me down."

Johnson also recognized defensive ends Jerry Twigg, Art Davis, Steve Montgomery and Dave Millen. Their job is to contain the quarterback in a passing situation. "They make my job easier," said Johnson.

Johnson is flanked by linebackers Steve Mattingly and Steve Ennen. Johnson gives a great deal of credit to them for his success. "I can really feel their presence beside me, and I don't have to worry about them and can concentrate on what I'm doing," he said.

Concerning the defensive backfield composed of Paul Taylor, Doug Switzer, David Armstrong and Mike Newman, Johnson simply stated, "There aren't enough words to express how good they are."

Johnson, better known as "T.J.", is also serious about his education. As a junior majoring in public relations and psychology, Johnson has a 3.6 GPA.

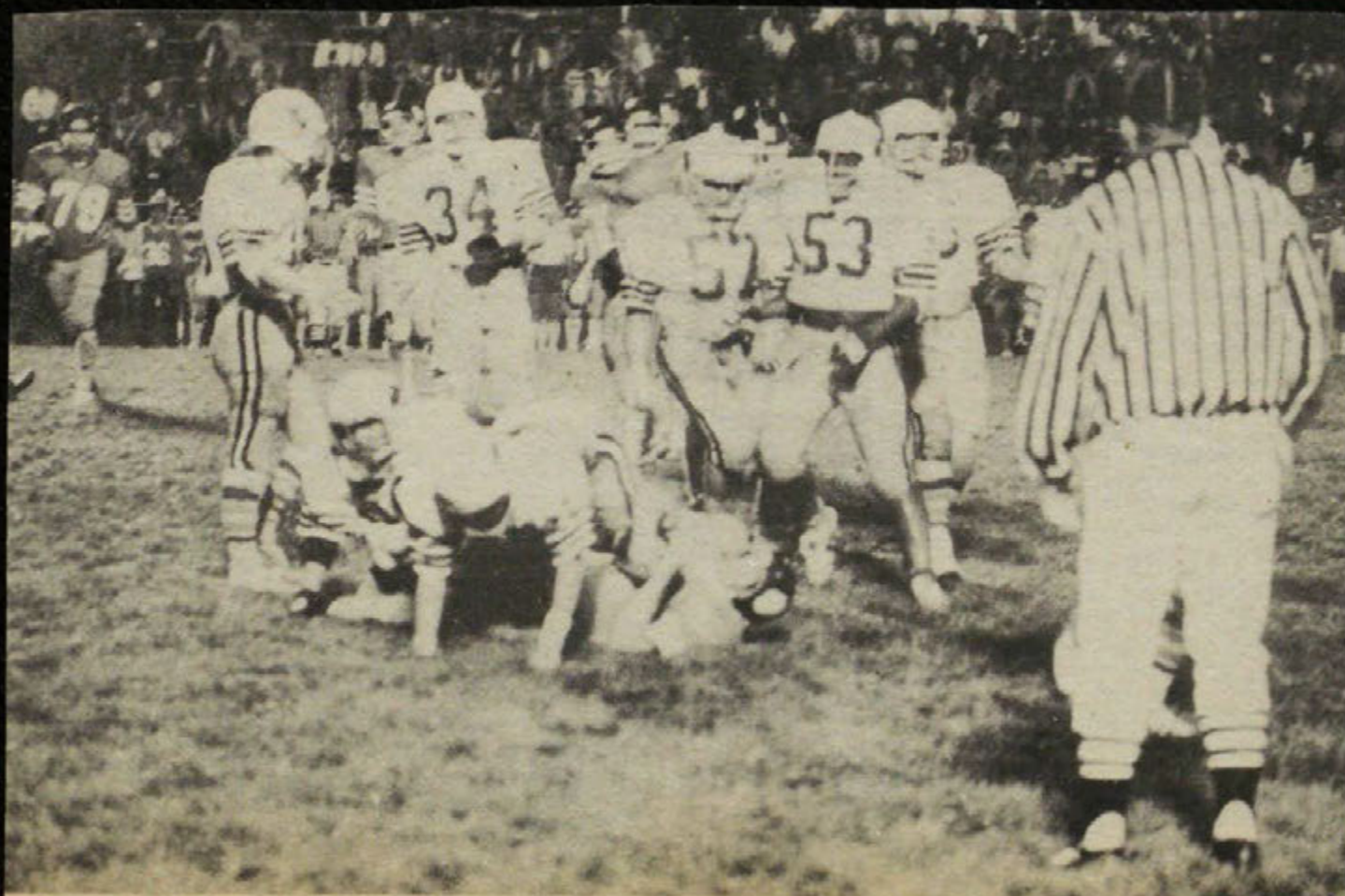
Football, however, doesn't interfere with his study time. "I usually get up around 6 a.m. and study till A period. Then, I might study some during B and D periods, and I

don't need to study any more for the rest of the day," said Johnson.

His GPA has made him eligible for study at Oxford University during spring semester. Johnson explained, "After two years of college, I feel I am now mature enough to travel abroad."

Johnson was recruited by former William Jewell assistant coach Dan Griggs. Griggs learned that Johnson had returned home after eight days of feeling out of place at Santa Clara College in California. Johnson said, "When I left Santa Clara, the football coach there told me it was the biggest mistake I'd ever make in my life. I've often thought that after I'm finished here I'd collect everything I could about my career, go out and see that coach again, and thank him for my mistake."

The Jewell defensive unit has allowed only seven points per outing. The Cardinals are ranked nationally in team defense.



(L to R) David Armstrong (39), David Millen (34), Tim Johnson (57), Jan Redmond (53) and Guy Weber (66) help give William Jewell one of small college football's best defensive teams.