

## The 1974 NYA Football Team

During a time in the history of North Yarmouth Academy when the school was not only a coed day school, but also a successful post graduate boarding school, the 1974 NYA football team was the Academy's last and most successful squad on the gridiron. A member of the newly created Yankee Prep School Football Conference, the 1973 NYA squad achieved a record of 3-3-1, which the 1974 team significantly improved upon.

Coached by future Maine sports Hall of Famer Mort Soule and assisted by Clint Merrill, the team, dubbed the "Angry Panther" by the local newspaper, started the season strong with a preseason scrimmage win against The Boys Training Center. They defeated the Hyde School 38-16 in their first conference game with stellar performances by quarterback Bruce Bernier, offensive lineman Lindsey Ross, and halfback Mike Murphy. The Panthers then went on to beat 1-0 Thompson Academy of Boston 42-8, putting together a series of three long touchdown passes. They followed that up with an out of conference win against New Hampton. During the New Hampton game, co-captain Steve Wood opened up the scoring by returning the second half kickoff for 82 yards, which helped the team win 46-12.



Before their Homecoming game, The Portland Evening Express ran a story about the NYA team and their upcoming game against Winchendon-Cushing. After years of unsuccessful Homecoming games at NYA, the paper predicted a hard fought game between the first ranked "Angry Panther" and the hungry 0-1 Winchendon-Cushing team. A close game initially, the score was tied 0-0 at the half, but NYA pulled away in the second half, winning 22-6. The team's only loss that season came at the hands of the Bates College JV team.

Fryeburg Academy forfeited the next game, and "The Angry Panther" ended its campaign with a win at Hebron. Both teams were playing for the conference championship, and after an early injury to their star running back and safety, NYA managed to pull together and crush Hebron 42-0. Strong defensive performances by David Cogswell, Greg Cuffee, Lindsey Ross, Bob Almeida, and Doug Ritchie backed up the offensive output of Mike Murphy and Karl Parker. Referring to themselves as "The Family" because of their very strong bonds and total trust in each other, they collectively decided not to award an MVP designation at the annual Sports Awards Banquet that year because it was not one person over all others who led the team to the championship. The 1974 NYA football team left an indelible mark on NYA athletics, emphasizing teamwork and leadership, and the idea of a sports team as a family.

Members of the squad included Clemens Joos, Joaquin Eguilior, Charles (Chip) Patterson, David Illingworth, Stephen Wood, Lindsey Ross, Steven Hubbard, Gregory Cuffee, Douglas Ritchie, Harrison Richardson III, David Braisted, Tobias Roller, Michael Murphy, Robert Almeida, Bruce Bernier, Martin Foley, Karl Parker, David Donahue, Timothy Griffing, Assistant Coach Clint Merrill and Coach Morton Soule. North Yarmouth Academy is proud to induct the members of the 1974 football team into the inaugural class of the Edgar F. White '38 Athletic Hall of Fame.