

Shandra was determined to make a comeback

By JOHN HOINSKI
Staff Writer

The real test of an athlete's endurance and love for a sport is the ability to come back after a serious injury. That point is accentuated in the case of Dallas' Joe Shandra.

Two years ago Shandra, now a junior, was involved in a motorcycle accident that was so serious there was a 50-50 chance he would lose his left leg. But, after a one year layoff, he has not only returned to the team, amazingly, he will be the starting center, the one position where a football player takes the most pounding. Yet, despite the traumatic experience, the possibility of reinjuring the leg doesn't bother him.

"You can't worry about being injured," the 6-0, 185 pound Shandra said. "I do wear a knee brace and it's supposedly the strongest type made. But I've been playing football since I was eight years old. I just love the sport."

For a while, though, it looked as if he would never play the game again.

On the Fourth of July two years ago, Shandra was operating his motorcycle through the woods of the Back Mountain when he encountered some soft terrain. Shandra swerved to avoid hitting a tree, but the bike went out of control, entan-

gling his leg in the process and leaving it virtually crippled.

The injuries were mostly internal, but the leg was broken below the knee and the muscles were torn off the bone. In addition, an artery was ripped and there was also ligament damage.

Artery bypass surgery was performed as well as surgery for the bone work, and for the next three months Shandra's leg was wrapped in a cast.

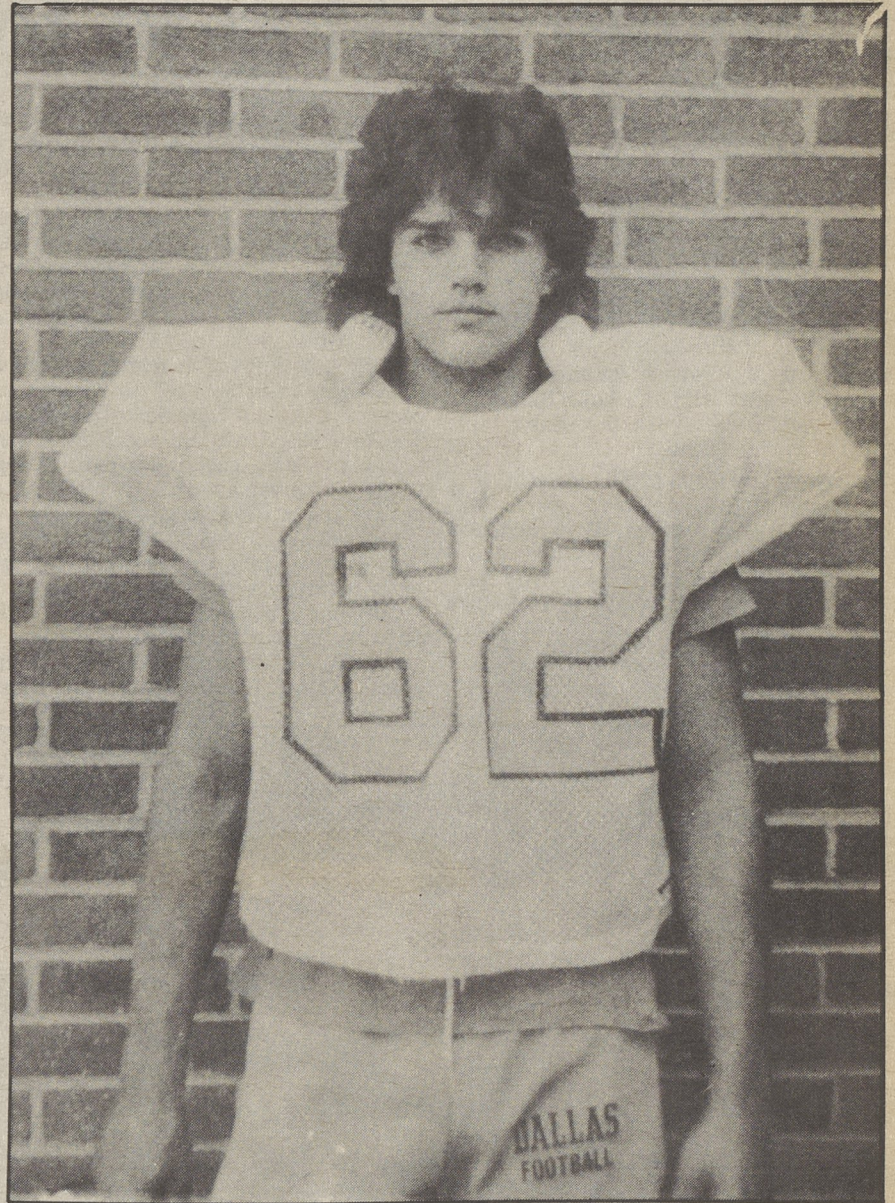
After a three and a half month period following the removal of the cast, Shandra was finally able to run. Weight training helped increase strength in the leg and now he is back and ready to contribute.

"He just refused to give up," said coach Ted Jackson. "He was very determined to play. You have to give him a lot of credit. At one time it looked like he might never walk again, and here he is back playing football."

Shandra's parents were concerned about the possibility of the leg being reinjured, but they have their accepted their sons desire to play.

"It bothered my mom," Shandra noted. "And it bothered my father too, but not as much. They knew I wanted to play."

And with the talent to match the size of his heart, Dallas is glad to have him back.



JOHN SHANDRA

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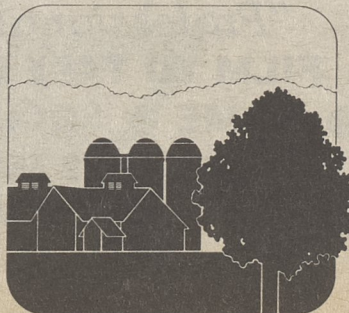
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