



For The Inquirer · BARBARA JOHNSON
Malvern Prep's Chris Downs (21) is bracketed by Episcopal tacklers Jeff Porter (44) and Dave Lavins. Downs, the Inter-Ac's all-time leading rusher, churned out 212 yards against the Churchmen and scored the Friars' first four touchdowns in Friday's title-clinching 32-0 win.

Malvern wins title with a 32-0 romp

The Friars torched Episcopal to give coach Gamp Pellegrini his 13th Inter-Ac crown in 20 years.

By Brian Miller
INQUIRER CORRESPONDENT

MALVERN — Chris Downs helped bring Malvern Prep coach Gamp Pellegrini his 13th Inter-Ac Academic League championship in the last 20 years. And Downs may also have set up Pellegrini, if he doesn't retire, for a couple more titles by helping to lure sophomore lineman Clarence Green to the school.

Downs was his usual spectacular self in the league finale against Episcopal Academy (18, 0-3), rushing for 212 yards on 29 carries to lead the Friars (8-1, 4-1) to a 32-0 victory. The league's all-time career rusher also scored the game's first four touchdowns.

Green hasn't made the headlines this season but if this 5-foot-9, 265-pound package of muscle and emotion keeps improving, he should some day be conceded to have a lot of fun, creating havoc in the Churchmen's offensive backfield as he consistently breaks through blocks at his defensive tackle position.

And what could be more fun for an offensive tackle than blocking for the speedy Downs, who needs only the barest of line cracks to jumpstart his blazing, downhill runs.

"A lot of sophomores, juniors and seniors stepped up this year," Green said. "Our captains were better this

year. And we got aggressive. We came out and threw a punch, and kept throwing them."

Green originally was at West Philadelphia High, but transferred after the Downs family sold him on the benefits of the Malvern program. He had to sit out last season's Inter-Ac games because of the league's transfer rules.

"I don't live too far from Chris, so I see him on a daily basis," Green said. "And Mrs. Downs is a real nice woman. I really owe all my success to her, my parents and my family. She really was the one who got me out here."

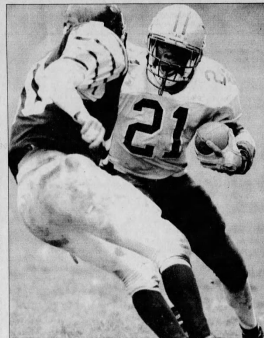
The question now is whether Pellegrini will retire after 20 years and all those titles. As in past seasons, he hedged. But he admitted it was getting tougher and tougher to get through the league seasons.

"I think about retiring a lot," the head coach said. "My coaches know I'm getting a little frizzled. I haven't decided not to come back."

"It's just that when you're winning, it should be easier," he said.

"But it's not. It's harder. You've got to defend yourself every week. Every week is a big ball game, there's no rest. And when you come to games like this, when you're such a heavy favorite, it really destroys you. It beats the heck out of me."

And it also doesn't help when your senior fullback breaks his leg



Malvern's Downs cuts back against Episcopal defender Ryan Bernier (left) in the second quarter. Malvern improved to 8-1, 4-0 league.

right in front of you midway through the second quarter. Dan Bernier was a good soldier in Malvern's wing T sets, and did a lot of the dirty work for Downs' glory.

Certainly, Green hopes Pellegrini will stay. He's one of the reasons Green came out of the city to play at Malvern Prep, which is ranked fourth in the Mainline-Delco area by The Inquirer.

"Coach Gamp kept us in this thing

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|--|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| Malvern Prep | 4 | 20 | 4 | 0 | — | 32 |
| Episcopal Academy | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | — | 0 |
| MP: Downs 2 run (rick taked) | | | | | | |
| EP: Downs 4 run (ones taked) | | | | | | |
| MP: Downs 47 run (Eagerton pass from Gallagher) | | | | | | |
| EP: Downs 4 run (Furt taked) | | | | | | |
| MP: Edgerton 10 pass from Gallagher (rick taked) | | | | | | |

1997 MP 32 EA 0 article and box score

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