

# Malvern Prep swamps Penn Charter

Friars back Chris Downs set an Inter-Ac League career rushing record in Friday's 37-0 rout.

By Brian Miller  
INQUIRER CORRESPONDENT

MALVERN — He has 3,317 yards. Nearly two miles of carries. Chris Downs has gone a long way with the football, longer than any other back in the history of the Inter-Academic League.

So it was cruel fate when Malvern Prep's mercurial senior tailback had to limp up to accept the game ball after rushing for 210 yards on 21 carries to lead his Friars past Penn Charter, 37-0, Friday.

Downs had twisted his right ankle late in the third quarter, although the Inter-Ac's all-time career rushing mark was already in the books.

"I'm going to soak [the ankle] a lot," Downs said with a smile when

asked about his immediate plans after passing Dave Stille's former league record of 3,119 yards. Stille graduated from the Haverford School in 1992.

Downs was always better than just "all right" at Malvern. Gamp Pellegrini, who gave Downs a long, heart-felt hug after the game, called Downs "the best pure running back" he's ever coached.

Considering that Pellegrini had locked up at least a tie for his 13th Inter-Ac title in 20 years at Malvern, with a host of great backs running out of his wing-T sets in that time span, that's quite a compliment.

"Chris is such an incredible back," said Ryan Edginton, the Friars' wideout and defensive back. Ed-

ginton had his own day in the sun with three interceptions.

"Sometimes it's hard blocking for him because you don't know where he's going to go," Edginton said.

"But you only have to hit your guy on one side and he'll read the block and just go. He's just got great vision when he runs the ball. And he's a great personality on the team, too."

Downs scored the game's first three touchdowns on runs of 11, 1 and 50 yards, and was clearly too much of a load for a young Penn Charter (3-4, 1-1) team that had trouble wrapping up the elusive Downs all day.

Downs may only be listed at 5-foot-9, 175 pounds. But arm tackles aren't going to bring him down. Get a helmet on Downs, or he's gone.

"One thing that never ceases to amaze me," Pellegrini said, "is the way he breaks tackles and keeps go-

ing." Fullback Dan Bonner also had a score Friday, barreling in from 6 yards out near the end of the third quarter to make it game, set, and match at 27-0.

That was sweet justice, too, since Bonner was one of the blockers Downs nodded to when accepting congratulations on the new record.

Malvern (7-1, 3-0) should lock up the undisputed league crown this Friday at Episcopal (1-7, 0-2). And Downs, who vows the ankle will be fine by then, can further pad his record.

"Thank God he plays for me," Pellegrini added.

Penn Charter	0	0	0	0	—	0
Malvern Prep	7	13	7	10	—	37

- MP: Downs 11 run (Mastronardo kick)
- MP: Downs 1 run (Mastronardo kick)
- MP: Downs 50 run (kick failed)
- MP: Bonner 6 run (Mastronardo kick)
- MP: FG Mastronardo 25
- MP: Lee 4 run (Mastronardo kick)

## 1997 MP 37 PC 0 article and box score

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