EPH LEGEND – FRED STORZ ’01

Williams Football Taught Me that Resiliency is the Key to a Happy Life

Fred Storz ’01 almost didn’t end up in the Purple Valley. He attended Deerfield Academy as a post-graduate at the urging of several Ivy League football programs. Then, in the winter of 1996, Storz received a recruiting call from Eph head coach Dick Farley. “My response was something to the tune of, ‘Thanks coach, but I’m going to play in the Ivy League.’”

Interest from the Ivies waned and Storz was facing a predicament. “After lacrosse practice one day, Eric Widmer, Headmaster at Deerfield and a Williams alum, was sitting in our dorm common room,” recalled Storz. Widmer suggested that Storz give Coach Farley a call about visiting Williams.

That call didn’t go as Storz planned. Coach Farley said he’d need to think about Storz visiting and would call him back. “I was getting a glimpse into one of the greatest leaders to ever walk a sideline,” Storz noted. “Farley, I suspected, wanted me to understand that we had an NFL quarterback in Sean Keenan, a Division I receiver in Matt Sigrist, and a physical offensive line led by Ken Becker. We were the epitome of a team. We worked hard for each other. I was truly lucky to be a part of such a great group.”

Entering his senior year Storz was already a two-time First Team All-NESCAC back, the Ephs’ all-time leading Division III rusher, and well on his way to expanding the record book. The 2000 season started off with an uncharacteristic upset at the hands of Colby followed by a solid victory over Trinity.

The following week, on a cold day in Lewiston, Maine, Storz carried the ball off right tackle and fell awkwardly while being tackled, suffering a severe shoulder separation that sidelined him three weeks. “It was devastating,” said Storz. “It’s senior year and I’m in a sling staring down the barrel of the end of my football career. I missed being on the field with my teammates. I missed the brotherhood. I promised myself that I would do everything I possibly could to make it back for the Little Three games and finish the season with this team the right way, beating Amherst.”

Storz did return to the starting line-up for the Little Three opening victory against Wesleyan, rushing for 95 yards and 2 TDs. After celebrating the Homecoming win with “The Walk,” Storz and his fellow seniors focused their sights on Amherst.

The seniors’ dream didn’t come to pass, though. Amherst downed the Ephs 20-12 in Dick Farley’s first loss to Amherst in 14 games. “Almost 20 years later it’s still hard to describe the feeling of that day,” said Storz. “We weren’t used to that feeling. Little did I know at the time that I would learn more about myself as a person from that defeat.”

Prior to the dedication of the Ephs’ Farley-Lamb Field on October 11, 2014, Storz wrote Farley a letter stating: “I count my time on Cole and Weston fields as the most transformative aspect of my life.” Storz wanted Coach Farley to know how much of an impact he had on his life.

“I shared with coach Farley the story about when we lost to Amherst senior year,” continued Storz. “I was one of the last players in the locker room and was in an emotional state. Farley sat down next to me and reminded me, “There’s more to life than football and this loss will make you a better person.” “It was at that moment I was reminded of what it meant to be an Eph,” Storz said.

From the elation of beating Amherst in dramatic fashion freshman year to coming up short in the game as a senior, Storz has drawn on those experiences throughout his life. “Along with the values and work ethic instilled by my parents, what I learned from my coaches and teammates at Williams is a big part of the foundation of who I am and how I approach every day,” stated Storz. “I’ve always felt one of the major keys to living a successful, fulfilling, and happy life is resiliency. Not everything happens in a straight line and you need to be ready for life’s challenges. Throughout my life, I’ve felt up to every challenge due in large part to what I learned from Coach Farley and the amazing teammates I was fortunate enough to share the Williams uniform with.”