

# Stubborn spirit

Amy Bowers runs again after nearly losing her leg in accident

By PAUL SIEGFRIED  
Sports Editor

The boat was in front of her; there was no way to avoid the collision.

In an instant, Amy Bowers' left leg was ripped apart and she floated bleeding in Salamonie Reservoir.

Less than four months after her water-skiing accident, when not many thought she might even be able to walk again, Bowers ran and finished the Blackford Invitational reserve cross country meet, covering 4,000 meters on a leg that in June many feared might be lost.

Water-skiing with her family on June 16, Father's Day, another boat came between Bowers and her tow boat. She hit the side and her ankle hit the propeller. The cavitating plate of the motor ripped up the side of her leg.

"My parents got me in the boat and 'reassembled' my leg, then took me to Pirate's Cove," says Bowers, who never lost consciousness throughout the ordeal. "From there I went to Lutheran Hospital in Fort Wayne."

When she arrived at Lutheran, she immediately went in to have the first of what would be four surgeries in a span of a week.

"At that point they were saying I might lose my leg," she says, "but after the first surgery they were thinking I wouldn't lose it, but they weren't sure how much muscle control or use I would have."

The first surgery, Bowers says, was to repair the vascular and muscular damage. Subsequently, she had a vein graft which restored some of the blood flow through the leg.

**"I thought that if I could walk,  
I could run."  
— Amy Bowers**

She spent two weeks in the hospital, during which time she understandably went through a variety of emotions. A senior-to-be at Huntington North, thoughts turned to the future, within college and beyond.

"I was very depressed thinking I would never walk again," she says, "I had been planning to go to IU. But that's a large campus and I thought I would never get to go there. I also wanted to live and work in New York City, and I knew that would be out if I couldn't walk. But my friends and my family kept telling me I would get better, and eventually I started to get that attitude."

Her father, Bob Bowers — who himself spent two months in the hospital when he was injured after being hit by a car — says things weren't easy early on.

"There were some real down times, a lot of tears," he says, "But it depends on how you look at it. It could have paralyzed or even killed her."

A constant sight in the intensive care unit was Lynn Herzog, Amy's best friend and cross country teammate.

"It was the saddest thing I could see in a friend," says Herzog. "I tried to cheer her up with my senior pictures that were so bad, and I used to tease her about her morphine button when she was in ICU. At first, I didn't really think she was going to be able to walk again. I think she thought that too, but she didn't really say it."

Amy did have her doubts, even after she was able to move around on crutches two weeks after the accident. There wasn't much rehabilitation at that point. "Mostly just vegetating," she says.

"I was bored that I couldn't do anything," she says, "I've always been someone who's been out and about doing something."

The turning point came the last week in July. "We went away for a few days," says Bob, "When we came back, Amy was walking without her crutches."

Then the clincher. "And she said she was going to run." Amy says those first steps also changed her attitude.

"I thought that if I could walk I could run," she says, "When I asked the doctor if I could



Herald-Press photo by Paul Siegfried

run there was a look of shock on his face. He said I probably wouldn't. That gave me all the more reason to do it."

But saying it and doing it are two different things, even for someone as strong-willed as Amy Bowers.

"She's real bull-headed, real stubborn," says Amy's father. "But in a quiet way. She just goes out and does it."

At the same time, Huntington cross country coach Don Cotton was sending out letters inviting girls to try out for cross country. Amy had run on the team the year before, an average runner by most standards. Cotton invited Amy to come out and be the team manager.

"I expected being a manager to be the best to hope for," says Cotton. "I never thought she would run again. I thought she'd be lucky to walk again."

Amy had higher thoughts. "I told him I was going to be there and I was going to run," she says.

Wearing a brace that supported her leg and foot and immobilized her ankle, Amy started to practice with the team midway through August, taking the leadership role as one of the seniors on the team, leading calisthenics and indoctrinating the freshmen. Her workouts were limited, but she did what she was able to do. And sometimes more.

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**AMY BOWERS, above, runs in the Blackford Invitational Saturday less than four months after a water-skiing accident that nearly cost her her left leg.**

## Howard, Michigan down Irish 24-14

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (AP) — Once again, a triple-threat star stole the show in the Notre Dame-Michigan game. Only this time it wasn't Rocket Ismail and this time Notre Dame lost.

Desmond Howard scored on a 29-yard reverse and a spectacular 25-yard diving catch as third-ranked Michigan beat No. 7 Notre Dame 24-14 Saturday to snap a four-game losing streak against the Irish.

"It's an amazing feeling to finally beat Notre Dame," said Howard, a speedy junior who catches passes, returns kicks and occasionally runs the ball. "Last year, we were ahead by the same score in the fourth quarter and let it get away. This year, we controlled the ball in the fourth quarter like we should have last year."

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# Spo

Paul Siegfried, editor/35

Sunday, September 15, 1987

## Franks p

Senior runs for

By PAUL SIEGFRIED  
Sports Editor

PORTLAND — Lightning up the start of Friday's Huntington North-Jay County football game, but once it got started was the Vikes' Jason Franks stole the Patriot's thunder.

Franks rushed for 217 yards in three quarters of play, including a 98-yard touchdown run that broke the game open as Huntington won its first game of the season 21-6 at Portland.

The 98-yard TD run broke school and conference records for runs from scrimmage. The Huntington North record was a 91-yarder by Jim Thorne against Tipton in 1974, and the OAC record was an 87-yard run by Andy Highland's Tony Kletthelm in 1987.

With the Vikings (1-2, 1-1 in the Olympic Athletic Conference) leading 14-0 in the third period, the Patriots (0-3, 0-2) tried to take advantage of a bad punt snapped by the Vikes, taking over at the Huntington 10 but they were stopped by the Vikes on a fourth-and-play, giving Huntington the lead at their own two.

On the first play, Franks broke through the middle and was able to outrun everyone for the score despite running with a thigh injury that kept him out of the game of the year. The run aggravated the injury and Franks missed out the remainder of the contest.

"My leg just went out about the 40 yard line," said Franks, "I admitted he was only about 50 percent healthy for the game. I wasn't even able to walk after the run."

While the leg hurt prior to the game, Franks said he wasn't going to miss the game.

"I wanted to play so bad, but I didn't think about the pain," Franks said.

Huntington North pounded the ball at the Patriots all night long, rolling up 365 yards of total offense. The Vikings had their problems, however, racking up 100 yards in penalties, actually accumulating more yards in penalties than Jay County had in total offenses (122 yards).

"I wasn't happy with the offense," said Huntington coach



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## Golden Bears bury Boilers

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) — Mike Pawlawski threw for three touchdowns and California's defense

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...ater by not e scored two touchdowns, then  
host Ohio State, which led 16-0 in the fourth  
quarter, turned back a last-minute march by  
Louisville. The Cardinals (1-2) drove to the  
Ohio State 12 on their final possession, need-  
ing a touchdown and two-point conversion to  
tie the score. But Erik Watts' fourth-down pass  
fell incomplete in the end zone.

Watts, a graduate student making his first  
collegiate start in his fifth year in the program,  
completed 22 of 43 passes for 303 yards with  
three interceptions.

**No. 20 Texas A&M 45, LSU 7**  
Greg Hill, the highly touted replacement for  
All-American Darren Lewis, set a major-col-  
lege record for rushing yards in his first game  
with 212 and also scored twice for host Texas  
A&M. Hill erased the record for a freshman in  
his first game of 207 yards, ironically set  
against Texas A&M by Baylor's Walter Aber-  
crombie in 1978.

Hill, who carried 30 times, scored on runs of  
22 and 7 yards and added a twisting 35-yard  
run in the Aggies' opener. It was A&M's  
biggest victory over the Tigers (0-2) since a 47-  
0 beating in 1922.

**No. 24 Pittsburgh 26, Temple 7**  
At Pittsburgh, Alex Van Pelt threw for two  
touchdowns and the Panthers (3-0) scored  
their first 20 points following Temple  
turnovers. Pitt matched its victory total from  
its 3-7-1 season of a year ago.

Oklahoma broke open a close game when  
linebacker Mike Coats blocked a punt and  
John Anderson recovered at the 1. Gundy  
sneaked in for the score on the next play.

Coats then intercepted a pass at the 16 and  
returned the ball to the 8. McKinley scored on  
a 1-yard run to make the score 20-2.

**No. 11 Tennessee 30,**  
**No. 21 UCLA 16**  
At Knoxville, the Volunteers made some big  
plays to take control. Substitute defensive back  
Tracy Smith returned an interception 38 yards  
for a touchdown and Darryl Hardy's block of  
a punt resulted in another score.

Smith, a converted tailback, stepped in front  
of the Sean LaChapelle at the UCLA 38 to pick  
off Tommy Maddox's pass on the first play of  
the fourth quarter for a 23-9 lead.

Despite having its ground game shut down  
all day, Tennessee never trailed. Andy Kelly  
completed 25 of 35 passes for 275 yards and a  
touchdown, with three interceptions, for Ten-  
nessee (2-0). Carl Pickens had six receptions  
for 104 yards and a touchdown.

**No. 13 Nebraska 71, Colorado St. 14**  
At Lincoln, Derek Brown ran for 121 yards  
and two touchdowns, while Omar Soto and  
redshirt freshman Calvin Jones added two  
touchdowns each for the Cornhuskers (2-0),  
who rolled up 696 yards in total offense and  
529 yards rushing.

Nebraska, which had 787 yards in total of-  
fense and 617 rushing in its opening 59-28 win  
against Utah State, had 309 yards rushing and  
429 in total offense to lead 43-0 at the half.

**No. 14 Iowa 29, Iowa State 10**

**No. 18 Michigan State 3**

Smith had a 15-yard TD run for the Mid-  
American Conference team that is 2-0-1 this  
year. His touchdown came with 52 seconds left  
in the first half and put the Chippewas up 7-0.  
Jeff Bender and wide receiver Ken Ealy  
teamed for a 57-yard scoring pass, and Chuck  
Selinger's field goals of 22 and 32 yards fin-  
ished Central Michigan's scoring.

Michigan State avoided a shutout with Jim  
DelVerne's 45-yard field goal in the third quar-  
ter, and the Spartans couldn't capitalize on  
two first-quarter interceptions.

"It was a lousy game for us and a great game  
for Central Michigan. They played as well as  
they probably can play, which was good  
enough to beat us," Michigan State coach  
George Perles said.

**No. 23 Baylor 16,**  
**No. 12 Colorado 14**

Santana Dotson blocked a short field goal  
with three minutes left, setting up teammate  
Jeff Ireland's 35-yard field goal with 51 sec-  
onds remaining for Baylor (2-0).

With the host Buffaloes ahead 14-13, they re-  
covered a fumble at the Baylor 30. Jim Harper  
lined up for a 24-yard field goal, but Dotson  
stormed in from his tackle spot and blocked it.  
The ball careened across midfield, where Brian  
Hand picked it up and returned it 13 yards to  
the Colorado 30.

David Mims had a 13-yard run to help move  
the Bears into position for Ireland's game-win-  
ner that snapped Colorado's winning streak,  
the nation's longest, at 11 games.

**MORE ABOUT**  
**Stubborn spirit**

(Continued from Page 1B)

"We went out to run the hills at  
Victory Noll," says Herzog. "Amy  
said she was going to run the hill.  
She went halfway down, and  
started to run back up, but I told  
her to go all the way to the bot-  
tom. When she ran up, I knew she  
was in pain, but she didn't show  
it. It made me cry, but I knew  
that's Amy. She's stubborn. It's in  
her genes. I call her 'The Bionic  
Woman.'"

"I look at what she's been  
through, and I think if she can do  
it, I can do it. I wouldn't be out  
here if it wasn't for her."

There have been light moments  
as well. Amy's boyfriend, Andy  
Ellet, injured his knee playing  
football and was on crutches for a  
while, and still walks with a limp,  
like Bowers.

"It's kind of weird, the two of us  
walking down the halls," she  
says, "I guess we have two good  
legs between the two of us."

Since the season began, Amy  
works out before meets and prac-  
tices with the team, then goes off  
on her own to run whatever she  
can. She ran the Huntington  
course a number of times before  
her first meet at Blackford Satur-  
day.

"I want to finish the race and not  
be last," she said before Saturday.  
"I'd like to get my times down,  
but at this point that's not as im-  
portant as doing it."

She did finish, and she wasn't  
last. Despite having to wear one  
shoe a size and a half larger to  
cover her brace, she ran the course  
in 22:50, placing 45th out of 53  
runners.

To top things off, Amy's parents  
didn't know she was going to run  
competitively this year, but they  
had their suspicions.

"It doesn't really surprise me,"  
says her father. "That's the type of  
person she is. Ninety-five percent  
of all the people couldn't run that,  
but she did."

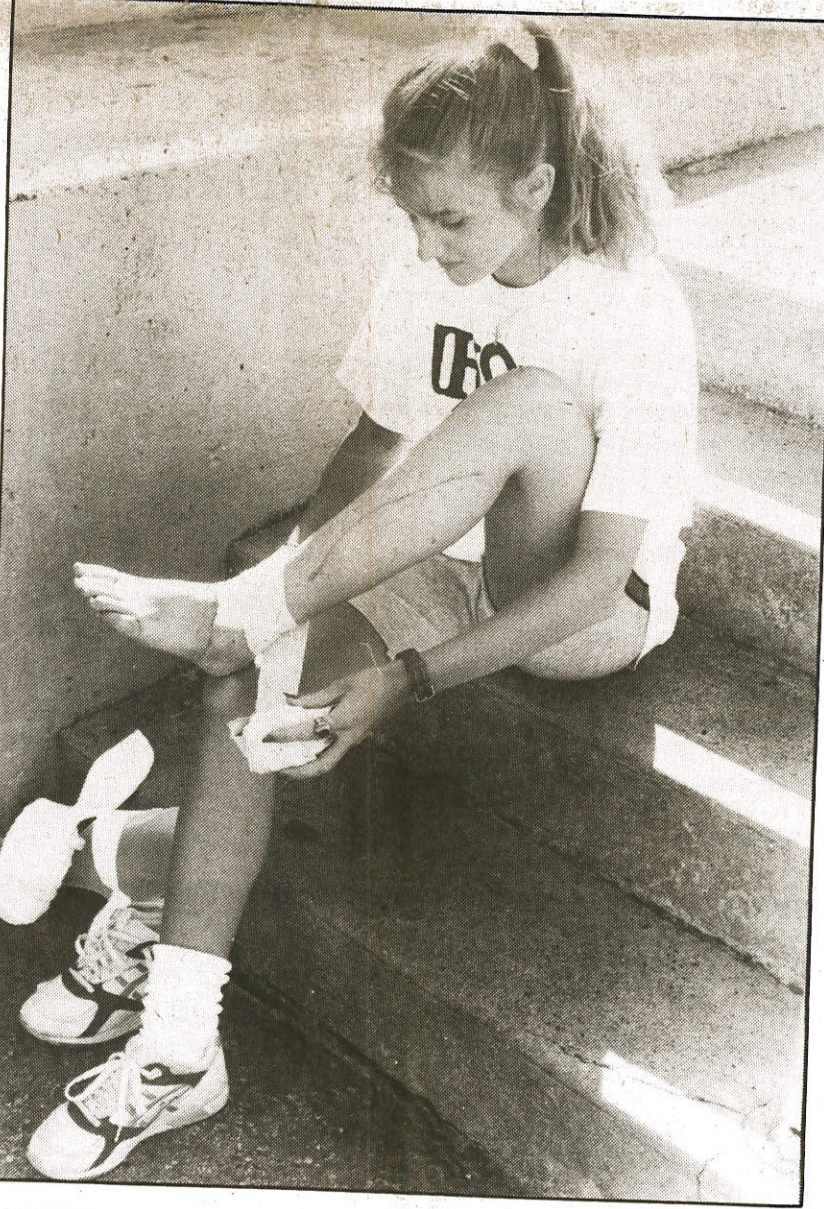
Cotton was equally impressed.

"I've come to admire her for her  
courage," he says. "She didn't  
need to finish the race to prove  
what she can do on sheer determi-  
nation. It's a miracle. I'll probably  
use her as an example of a lesson  
in determination for years to  
come."

Cotton says that Tuesday's  
Huntington Invitational meet has  
been dedicated to Bowers.

For Amy, the entire incident has  
far-reaching effects, well beyond  
running cross country, and has  
forced her to grow up sooner than  
most high school seniors.

"I've said, 'That's life and there's  
nothing I can do about it,' and go  
on," she says. "I haven't encoun-  
tered anything I can't do, except  
no marathon shopping. I've al-  
ways been strong-willed and I  
know this is probably the most  
difficult thing I'll ever have to  
deal with. Most people would  
have given up. This is something  
I'm very proud of. It makes you  
realize how unstable things are.  
I'm know I'm not an invincible  
teenager now. If I can do this, then  
I should be able to handle any  
challenge."



**AMY BOWERS** wraps her injured left leg before a cross country practice (upper right). She sits by herself (upper left) before running in Saturday's Blackford Invitational. In the photo bottom right, Bowers' best friend and teammate Lynn Herzog (157) helps Bowers after she finishes the race. Bowers' number and 45th-place ribbon, bottom left, are the mementos of an achievement many thought impossible.

Herald-Press photos by Paul Siegfried