

Old School? No Just Old Values!

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I first met Charlie Weis through my attorney, the late Craig S. Kelly of Columbia, S.C. Kelly represented Coach Bill Belichick, the current head coach of the New England Patriots, as well as dozens of other coaches and athletes that date back to the days of the great Harry Carson of the New York Giants, one of his first signers.

Weis, a rotund guy with a permanent frown on his face, is the last guy in the world you would think would have a big heart. He's old school right down to his "Johnny Unitis-style flat top hair cut." You just would not think this guy would give two hoots about a ten-year old kid who had an inoperable brain tumor. But he did.

Not only did he care, but he visited Montana Mazurkiewicz just one week before he died from the tumor. Montana was one of millions of armchair Notre Dame fans. "He especially loved football," said his mother Cathy.

When Weis showed up at the Mazurkiewicz home just east of South Bend, Indiana, home of the fighting Irish, Montana was beside himself. Weis himself has a ten year old daughter, Hannah, who has global development delay, a rare disorder similar to autism.

"What can I do for you?" Weis asked Montana. The kid's response was that he wanted to call the first offensive play for the Irish at their game the following Saturday. "Throw a pass to the right," suggested Montana. "That should work."

Montana never got to see the play. He died on Friday, one day before the Irish were to play. Notre Dame was in a pickle. The Irish had to start from their own 1-yard line following a fumble recovery. Montana's call was to throw a pass. Nobody passes from their own 1-yard line. Too many things can go wrong when you pass from your end zone- interceptions, fumbles, a sack, a safety, a turnover... you name it.

True to his word, however, Weis had the quarterback Brady Quin roll right though his entire team went left. He looked for tight end Anthony Fasano, the “New Jersey Nightmare,” who caught a 13-yard pass for the first down.

That pass set the tone for the remainder of the game as the Irish went on to win. “It’s almost like Montana was ‘*willing*’ him to beat that defender and take it to the house,” Weis said. Notre Dame went on to win by a 36-17 margin.

The next day, grumpy old Charlie Weis delivered the game ball to Montana’s family. Each team member and coach signed it.

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