

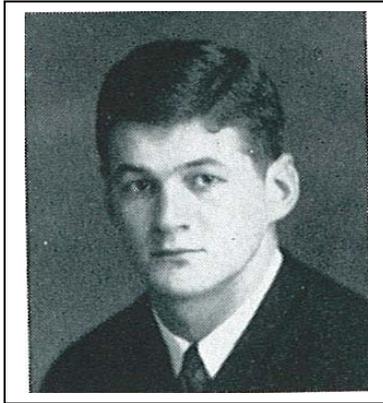
M-CLUB ALUMNI ASSOCIATION SPORTS HALL OF FAME

JOE VETRANO

CHARTER MEMBER

FOOTBALL: 1940-42/BASEBALL: 1948

Inducted: February 20, 1965



There may not have been a finer halfback to have ever played for Southern Miss than Joe Vetrano. As a star for Coach Reed Green's teams from 1940-1942, he was responsible for heading the offense, which proved to be one of the most productive in school history.

The key to being an outstanding running back in the early 1940s wasn't a whole lot different than being a good one today. You had to be a fearless runner, one who wasn't afraid to stick his head in a pile of tacklers, yet at the same time had the speed and quickness to put moves on a defender and pick up big yardage.

That's the type of runner Vetrano was and because of it he was able to lead Southern Miss to 20 wins, four losses and a tie

over a three year period.

Vetrano first burst onto the scene in 1940 and although there were other players who had much more experience than the rookie did, it didn't take him long to prove that he could make a contribution.

First on the special teams and occasionally as a reserve, Vetrano slowly but surely proved to be a valuable part of the football team.

That 1940 team went on to finish the year with a 7-4 record, and towards the end of the year, when Vetrano was in the lineup, the offense really began to click. They outscored the opponents 94-6 over the final three games of the season, shutting out two of the teams.

Vetrano was being counted on to be the workhorse on the 1941 team and he responded with an outstanding year on one of the best teams in school's history. With Vetrano leading the offensive attack, Southern posted a 9-0-1 record with the only blemish on the record a 0-0 tie with Southwestern Louisiana. Vetrano was a part of a team that averaged over 24 points per game and allowed only 40 points all season.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor a large portion of the team enlisted in the service, but a few including Vetrano remained to play an abbreviated schedule in 1942. The team only played four games that year, all against service teams, but they won them all.

After the war, Southern tried to restart the football program in time for the 1946 season, but the pro football teams talked a number of players returning from the war to turn pro.

Vetrano, after much thought, decided to sign with the San Francisco 49ers and played with the team from 1946 to 1949. He remained with the 49ers for a number of years in several different capacities after his playing days were over.

He even returned to Southern Miss to help coach the backfield for Coach Thad (Pie) Vann during the 1967 season.

Vetrano also played baseball during the 1948 season.

