

Griff Q-Back Knows About a Nightmare

By BILL DICKENS

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As Joe Roth put on the football pads for the first time in 1974 Monday afternoon, he didn't want to talk about how many touchdown passes he was going to throw or make any predictions for the Griffins this fall.

He wanted to thank humanity.

Nobody is happier to be alive than the 6-foot-3, 180 pound Griffin sophomore.

Only last May Roth was stricken with cancer. Fortunately, surgery corrected the problem and Roth is back in school and on the football field.

"It was like a nightmare," recalls the Granite Hills High graduate. "The doctors couldn't say how bad the cancer was until after the surgery. And even then, I had to lay in bed for two days and nights waiting for the results from the laboratory.

"The only thing that made the waiting bearable was the interest people showed in me. I never knew how many really good friends I had until I went into the hospital.

"The phone was ringing constantly, and I received numerous cards and letters wishing me well. I heard from about 1,000 people I guess. It really made me feel great.

"There's really no way I can thank each person individually, although I appreciate more than I can express in words."

The cancer actually caught Roth by surprise. One day he went to the doctor to have a mole removed and less than a week later he was in the hospital.

"Things were passing by me so fast I didn't know what to make of it. I was in shock. One day I was throwing a football, and the next day I was in surgery."

With the nightmare now behind him, Roth says he's "reevaluated his life.

"I don't take anything for granted anymore. I'm really grateful to be able to play this game of football. Before this thing happened, I was just out on the field playing. I appreciate the game more now.

"The doctors said one reason I came out of the operation so well was because I was in good physical condition. And I guess I owe that to football."

As a freshman, Roth finished as the No. 2 passer in California Community College football. The



Joe Roth

talented righthander connected on 141 of 250 passes for 1,471 yards and a dozen touchdowns.

He was the only Griffin to throw a forward pass in 1973. However, this year he's being challenged by sophomore letterman Mike Rundle (he played for the Griffins in 1972) and freshman Jimmy Jones for the starting job.

"Joe's a fine leader and passer," Griffin coach Dave Jordan notes, "but he's being pushed especially by Rundle."

Roth welcomes the competition.

"Knowing somebody is ready to take my place should make me a better quarterback," he admits. "I think the whole team will benefit from our depth at quarterback. All three of us are good quarterbacks."

But no one wants to play football more than Joe Roth.

GRIFFIN GRAFFITI — This year's Griffin football team will be one of the smallest physical clubs Jordan's had in his four years at the Fletcher Hills campus . . . sophomore defensive end Marv Brown was clocked in :04.8 for the 40-yard dash and Jordan still believes the 26-year-old athlete is 15 pounds overweight . . . Jordan plans to have an intrasquad scrimmage Saturday.