

## **FATHER KNEW BEST**

By Bob Carroll

Gino Marchetti's father knew the risks of football playing.

"Gino, whatever you do, stay out of the other boys' way so they no hurt you!" he warned his son when reluctantly allowing him to go out for the high school grid team. And, although his boy made the varsity, the elder Marchetti adamantly refused to go to any games.

He was certain that he'd see his son maimed if he ever watched him play.

Even when Gino -- grown to ample size and a World War II veteran -- starred for nearby University of San Francisco (along with the great Ollie Matson), Mr. Marchetti stayed home. When Gino became an All-Pro defensive end with Baltimore, his father avoided games on TV.

He finally consented to tune in when the Colts met the New York Giants for the NFL championship on December 28, 1958. He saw one of the great games in pro football history, a game many still call the best ever. He also saw his son play brilliantly and lead the desperate rush that stopped a late New York try for a first down that might have iced a victory.

The Colts converted that defensive gem into a tying field goal and went on to win in the first sudden-death overtime.

But the senior Marchetti saw something else. He'd been right all along. On the crucial play, a teammate -- Big Daddy Lipscomb -- fell across Gino's leg and broke it in two places!

As Gino watched the deadlocking field goal from a stretcher on the sideline, he might well have reflected on his father's advice to "stay out of the other boys' way."

During most of his career, of course, the "other boys" had to stay out of Gino Marchetti's way. No one played defensive end better. Possessing unusual speed for so large a man, he was deadly against runs and considered to be the league's best pass rusher, harder to block than a cheap hat.

Curiously, the Dallas Texans tried to make him into an offensive tackle when he joined them as a rookie. But, then, the Texans didn't do many things right. They were the last NFL team to fold, finishing the '52 season as orphans on the road.

When Gino joined the reorganized Baltimore Colts in 1953, he found his true niche, crashing past offensive tackles instead of trying to be one.

The Colts became one of the most star-laden outfits ever to grace the NFL, winning back-to-back championships in 1958 and 1959. Among their outstanding players were Johnny Unitas, Raymond Berry, Lenny Moore, Alan Ameche, Jim Parker, Lipscomb, and Artie Donovan. Marchetti more than held his own.

Veteran coach Sid Gillman called Marchetti "the most valuable man ever to play his position." He was voted All-Pro seven times and played in ten Pro Bowls (the broken leg kept him out of an eleventh). In 1969, he was selected as the best defensive end in the NFL's first 50 years.

### **GINO JOHN MARCHETTI Defensive End**

**Born:** Antioch, Calif., January 2, 1927

**Height:** 6-4 Weight: 245

**College:** San Francisco

**Pro Teams:** Dallas Texans, 1952; Baltimore Colts, 1953-64, 1966

**Pro Football Hall of Fame, 1972**