

*The Post-Journal*

July 11, 1974

## Eagles Obtain South Dayton's Bergey From Bengals

PHILADELPHIA (UPI) --- Philadelphia Coach Mike McCormack says the acquisition of veteran middle linebacker Bill Bergey "guarantees" the Eagles a spot in the National Football League playoffs this season.

"I hope it gives the whole Eastern Conference something to think about," McCormack said after announcing the trade for Bergey Wednesday. "We're going to be in contention. We're going to get in the playoffs. I think this guarantees it,"

The Eagles' dealt their first-round draft choices in 1977 and 1978 and the second-round pick in 1978 to the Cincinnati Bengals for Bergey, 29, who signed a five-year contract with Philadelphia.

The six-year veteran, who McCormack called "one of the top linebackers in football, if not the top," had been the subject of a court battle between the Bengals and the World Football League, after he signed a pact to play for the Florida Blazers of the WFL in 1976. The Bengals were unsuccessful in their bid to stop the veteran from jumping.

Bergey's attorney, Bart Brown, told the news conference his client agreed to return any money paid by him by the WFL club and the Blazers agreed to release him from his contract.

"I don't want to bust any bubbles, but I took a cut in pay to come here," said Bergey, who said he would have balked at a deal to any other NFL team.

"I like Mike's family atmosphere here, togetherness, the team unity," Bergey said. "They're a young ball club, a sassy, spicy group of people that want to go out and hit...I wouldn't be here if I didn't think Philadelphia was a winner.

"I'm not claiming I'll set the National Football League on fire in the next five years," the 6-3, 243-pound veteran said, "but they (owner Leonard Tose and McCormack) went out of the limb to get me and I'm going to produce for them."

McCormack called Bergey a “hitting fool. He loves to hit people. Wait ‘til we go out to Pittsburgh. He’ll have to be escorted off the field. He put both (quarterbacks Terry) Hanratty and (Terry) Bradshaw out of action and people are after him.”

With the acquisition of Bergey, McCormack ends a long off-season search for a middle linebacker in which he talked to every NFL team except Minnesota. The improved Eagles finished with a 5-8-1 mark last season, featuring the leagues most explosive offense led by quarterback Roman Gabriel.

“Bill’s of equal stature and importance to our football team as Gabe,” McCormack said.  
“Now we have to leader on offense and defense.”