

Schulz Can't Wait to Come Home

By Paul Seebeck

Kurt Schulz was featured in the fall '89 issue of *Perspective* in a story about Eastern's up-and-coming students of the '90s. In it, the accounting major from Yakima said he dreamed of playing professional football and maybe, if things worked out okay, having a good job in business afterward.

Dreams do come true.

Schulz – Eastern graduate, NFL veteran and now a Merrill Lynch stockbroker in Buffalo, New York – hasn't forgotten his days at Eastern or forgotten the school that took a chance on him by offering a football scholarship to the student who played only one year of high school football and who broke a leg during his senior year.

"I still remember the first game I started as cornerback at Eastern, when I had three interceptions and took one back 90 yards for a touchdown," says Schulz. "I remember thinking, 'wow, I'm pretty good,' even though all I did was catch it in the flat with no one around me."

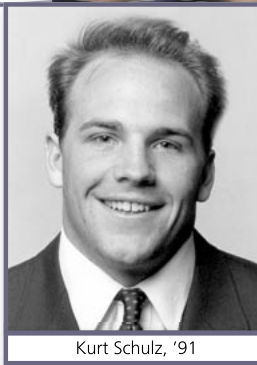
Now Schulz generously supports Eastern's football program by funding a scholarship and through financial gifts to the football locker room and Woodward Field renovation projects. And by coming back. He expects to be in the stands for the Governor's Cup game Oct. 16 against Montana.

"I have a lot of pride for Eastern Washington University," Schulz said. "I want to keep it that way. A university becomes great by its alumni giving back."

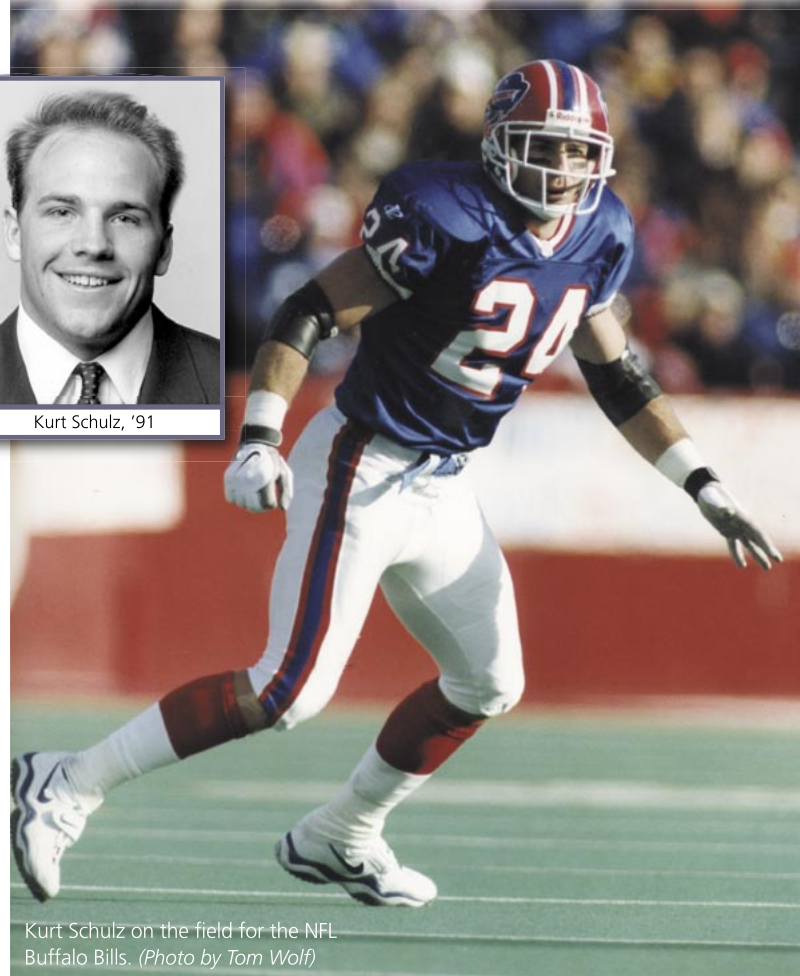
He was last on campus a year ago. "I was so impressed with the locker room and weight room and the way they redid the entrance to the stadium," he said. "It's like this is *our* house now, this is where we play, this is *us*."

Schulz played at Eastern, 1988-91, and was drafted by the Buffalo Bills of the National Football League in the seventh round of the 1992 draft. He played for the next eight seasons, starting all 16 games for the Bills in 1999.

"As a free safety, I was quarterback of the defense," Schulz said. "I had one situation where one of the cornerbacks didn't know the hand signals. So – as the 6-foot-tall slow guy on the team – I had to guard (star receiver) Randy Moss, man-to-man, for one play. I got



Kurt Schulz, '91



Kurt Schulz on the field for the NFL Buffalo Bills. (Photo by Tom Wolf)

burned. And then I got blamed by ESPN, all because that one guy hadn't studied the signals."

He follows and appreciates what's happening with football at his alma mater. "Football coach Paul Wulff has things going in the right direction," he said. "They've put a lot of money and effort into it. The recruits are in place. They're building a powerhouse program."

Schulz finished his own playing days in Detroit. He lasted two seasons before a ruptured disc did him in. "The only things I miss are the Thursday and Friday practices," he remarked. "That's when your body finally starts feeling good and you can enjoy the smell of the fall grass as you get a nice, cold sweat going."

Schulz said he doesn't miss playing and is quite content to come home and watch the Eagles play.

"The Governor's Cup is the way it should be," said Schulz. "I can sit back and smell the roses, with 11,000 other fans, watching Montana play in Cheney, and not worry any more about only being as good as my last play."