

## Shula's football lessons hit the grill

At his eatery in Upper Saucon, coach says secret is to avoid errors.

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Of The Morning Call

May 16, 2008

Don Shula could always boast of having Lehigh Valley native Larry Seiple as a player on his undefeated Super Bowl championship team, the 1972 Miami Dolphins, and now the coach can boast of another tie to the area.

The Hall of Famer spent Thursday at the Promenade Shops in Upper Saucon Township, where he promoted the opening of the 28th restaurant to carry his family name, Shula's Steak House at the Promenade Shops that will operate as a franchise owned by the Valley-based Kostas Kalogeropoulos Partnership Group.

It didn't take long for Shula to find a common theme between coaching a championship football team and helping to oversee a burgeoning national restaurant chain.

"We never beat ourselves with penalties and mistakes -- that was the trademark of our success," Shula said of the Dolphins team that went 17-0 in '72 and, thanks to the New York Giants' upset of the previously unbeaten New England Patriots in the most recent Super Bowl, still stands as the only undefeated team in the Super Bowl era.

In the restaurant business, Shula said "my whole thought is consistency. We want people to get the same [high-quality] experience every time."

Shula is due in Houston next week to help open the 29th restaurant in the chain that started with his reluctant participation in a Miami-area restaurant in the late 1980s. But he admitted he is only "involved," while his son, former Cincinnati Bengals coach David Shula, actually oversees the chain as president.

Kalogeropoulos, the Lehigh Valley-based hotelier and philanthropist, said it was dealings with David Shula on potential projects elsewhere that led to them forging a deal.

After accepting a donation for one of his charitable ventures from the Promenade Shops' owners during the upscale mall's grand opening ceremony in October 2006, Kalogeropoulos said he noticed a blank wall while walking a sidewalk. He learned the wall hid an undeveloped lot facing the Center Valley



Parkway.

"I said, 'That would make a great place for a steakhouse,' and I called David [Shula]," Kalogeropoulos said.

Kalogeropoulos and David Shula discussed the initial details of the partnership over dinner at Lehigh Country Club, and after a year of planning broke ground in early January.

The result is a 2,500-square-foot facility that seats up to 215 people for dinner and is the only Shula franchise not anchored by a hotel. The decor is Shula- and Dolphins-themed, featuring 92 photos of action and individuals from Don Shula's 1970-95 run as Miami's coach, plus other memorabilia including trophies and game balls.

Don Shula reminisced about many of the players and events in the pictures.

"Any time you needed a yard or two on third down or fourth down, Larry Csonka would always get it," he said with a wave to a 1970s photo of the big running back.

"Bob Kuechenberg should be the next one [of the 1972 Dolphins] in the Hall of Fame," Shula said of the 1970-84 Miami guard.

Shula also recalled the play that was one of the highlights of Seiple's 1967-77 career as the Dolphins' punter and part-time tight end. Seiple, an Allen High graduate, decided to run with the football out of punt formation during the 1972 AFC Championship Game against Pittsburgh, and the result was a 37-yard gain.

"He did it on his own," Shula said. "He was always told he could do it, but he better make sure he would make it because his [butt] would get a beating if he didn't make it. He took a step, looked, saw them [peeling] back to block, took another step, and took off."

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