Jeff Morgan, the volunteer football announcer who sounds like a pro, calls games in an entertaining way that boosts the Port High Pirates and (jokingly) sales of a certain candy

Perched high atop Al Urness Field next to Port Washington High School overlooking the gridiron sits the press box, providing birds-eye views of the action. For nearly 15 years, one smooth voice has been calling the football games from this perch, along with honoring parents, youth, homecoming courts, policemen, firemen and others at halftime, and recommending Skittles candy as a snack. Jeff Morgan has become synonymous with Port football.

Morgan announced another Pirates’ football game Friday in record-setting heat for late September, but he got his start in a much colder place. When Morgan’s son played hockey, he stepped up to announce at the Ozaukee Ice Center in Mequon and Kettle Moraine Ice Center West Bend.

Morgan had no training in broadcasting or announcing, but he saw a need and filled it. “Either no one would announce or whoever took the mike wasn’t very good at it,” Morgan said. Hockey announcing lasted a few years, and then, nearly 25 years ago, the high school’s soccer moms approached Morgan and requested he expand his repertoire. Being the voice of Port soccer lasted a couple of more years. Then, the late legendary Len Friede, communications and English teacher, student newspaper adviser and public address announcer, retired from Port High School. That left a vacancy in the press box.

Morgan stepped up to fill it, and he’s been the voice of Pirates’ football ever since. “Oh, I just really enjoy doing it in the first place,” Morgan said, “and the fact that I grew up here and went to high school here makes it more special.” Morgan is a member of the class of 1974 and has lived in Port Washington for nearly his entire life.

He attended Purdue University, along with is future wife, Rose Flack, before the couple moved back to Port. Morgan then attended Marquette Law School, and Rose began her career in engineering. Now, Morgan is an attorney by day and, come each fall, Port football announcer by night. Port’s press box, he said, provides a unique setting. Press boxes at most high schools are located at the top of the stands. Port’s is perched many feet above those bleachers, accessible by four sets of steps up the steep hill.

“This is a great setting, a great scene,” Morgan said. It provides Port’s announcers an advantage others do not enjoy. “It’s iconic because you don’t have traffic going by bothering you. It’s really neat,” Morgan said. If there’s a downside, it’s when the weather cools and the mist and fog begin to roll in. “Those last couple of games you don’t often cheer for the sun to go down,” Morgan said. That wasn’t the case last Friday, when the setting sun warmed the west-facing press box before kickoff.

Morgan has to come prepared to wether all kinds of weather from the open-air windows of the press box. “If the wind is from the west, one of the few downsides of the venue is it really captures the most
air,” he said.
For the past six years, Morgan has had a spotter to help with identify names of teens making big plays. Mike Bendt, who also grew up in Port and is president of the popular City Band, catches some of Port football action through binoculars.
Bendt’s services, Morgan said, are especially helpful when teams run hurry-up offenses.
“You try to get the words out before the next play,” Morgan said.
After seeing high school football for a decade plus, Morgan said said he can tell early in the season if the Pirates with be a force with which to contend or not.
“You can quickly get a sense,” he said.
So far this season, Morgan said he likes what he sees.
“This year it’s evident they’ve got a quality team,” he said.
Morgan has fond memories of last season’s Pirates that advanced to the playoffs for the first time in years, including watching offensive and defensive lineman Tyler Beach and star running back and linebacker Matt Ruppel. Beach, the most recruited lineman in the state, is an offensive tackle on the top-10 ranked Wisconsin Badgers.
But Morgan said he didn’t get to call Beach’s name too often.
“An offensive lineman doesn’t stand out,” he said.
But Morgan’s effort does. He is often told he has a radio voice.
“Jeff is the velvet voice,” Port High School Principal Eric Burke said.
And as school districts pinch pennies to invest as much money as possible in classroom education, Morgan provides a benefit beyond his smooth voice.
“I do it free,” Morgan said.
Burke said that’s no shock, given Morgan’s character.
“He has always been a giver in this community,” he said.
Morgan has another unique quality from his several years as president of the Athletic Booster Club at the high school. He uses his mike to promote the purchase of Skittles at the concession stand.
“Skittles were always really popular,” he said. “It’s just something fun I started, so I try interjecting that when I can.”
Fans have at least one more chance to hear Morgan’s voice and devour some Skittles at a home football game. The Pirates host Grafton in the homecoming game on Friday, Oct. 13. Kickoff is 7 p.m.
“People should come to the games and buy Skittles,” Morgan said.