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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Hello sports fans, it's another great day here at High School Sports Scene Magazine.

After a sunny and hot summer, it's time for some football!!!!

It may still seem like beach, golf course and backyard bar-b-q season, but high school football is right around the corner and what a great season it should be!

The area is loaded with outstanding teams, coaches and players this year. An outstanding group of seniors returns including several talented performers who will treat area fans to some great performances before heading off to play Division 1 college football next season. Players like Alex VanSumeren, of Essexville-Garber, Tommy McIntosh and Tyler Holtz of DeWitt, Malachi Davis of Holt and Eli Harber of Montrose are some of the super area standouts that will be showcasing their talents this season before heading off to schools in the Big Ten, SEC, ACC and Ivy League.

Along with the outstanding players are some great looking teams that will be chasing state titles this fall. Defending Division 3 state champion DeWitt gave fans some life-long memories last season and with a wealth of talent back an encore presentation may be in store.

New Lothrop won the Division 7 state title last year and the Hornets are determined to make it back to Ford Field again this season. Teams like Rockford, Pewamo-Westphalia, Lansing Catholic, East Lansing, Williamston, Montrose and Clare are awash in talent and will make deep state tournament runs as well.

Check out this year's High School Sports Scene football preview edition to catch up on all the teams and players getting ready to kick off another exciting football season and keep an eye out for our previews of the sports that are taking place this fall across the middle of Michigan.

A big thank you to all our advertisers and sponsors, without you there would be no High School Sports Scene Magazine.

See you at the games!



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Talented Returning Players Has DeWitt Football Poised For Exciting Encore

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The 2020 football season was a memorable one for the DeWitt football team as the Panthers cleared every hurdle in their path and won a first-ever state championship. With several key players from that squad returning, the stage is set for even more fun this fall.

"We are super excited," said DeWitt coach Rob Zimmerman. "We have a lot of our key guys back and we continue to get better. We are excited about the opportunity to make another run this year."

The play of quarterback Tyler Holtz was a big reason for DeWitt's success last year and the talented signal caller is back for his senior

season. The Division 3-4 Player of the Year last season, Holtz is a pin-point passer with great wheels who has committed to playing his college football at Brown University of the Ivy League.

"Tyler in my opinion is without question the best quarterback in the state," Zimmerman said.

Holtz has an outstanding target to throw to in senior wide receiver Tommy McIntosh (6-5, 210). A returning all-state player who has committed to Wisconsin, McIntosh is a dynamic blend of size and speed who is a matchup nightmare for opposing defensive backs.

Senior Nick Flegler is another college talent. A slotback with good speed and hands, Flegler has committed to Air Force. Senior Bryce

Debri (5-11, 215) is a three-year veteran who can play running back or slot back.

Those skill players enter the season in top form after winning titles at four different 7-on-7 passing tournaments over the summer against some of the premier teams in the entire state like West Bloomfield, Belleville and Davison.

Paving the way for DeWitt's myriad of skill players is a college-sized offensive line. Trevor Dennis (6-6, 265) returns to pave the way along with senior guard Tyler Nordmann (6-7, 315). Junior Matthew Neff (6-4, 270) steps in at center with fellow junior Broden Schafer (6-6, 270) stepping in at tackle.

"This is the biggest offensive line in my 23 years coaching," Zimmerman said.

While the defense does not have the number of returnees that the offense has, the Panthers will still be difficult to move the ball on. Flegler is a three-year veteran at strong safety while McIntosh is



Senior lineman Tyler Nordmann returns to anchor the offensive line for defending state champion DeWitt.

back at free safety. Debri returns at linebacker while senior Jaden Hall (5-11, 210) returns along the defensive line. Junior Blake Halle is a versatile defender who plays a hybrid defensive back/linebacker spot. Senior linebacker JJ Hoffman and junior defensive back Trent

Brandell will play increased roles this season.

"We are really excited again about out season," Zimmerman said. "A lot of things have to go right, but we are excited about our potential."

McIntosh Set For Big Year At DeWitt Before Heading To The Big Ten And Wisconsin

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

One of the premier pass catchers in the state, DeWitt senior Tommy McIntosh is primed for a big season before taking his talents to the Big Ten.

A first-team, all-state selection last year after helping DeWitt claim the Division 3 state championship, McIntosh has had a busy offseason. McIntosh was one of the most widely recruited players in the state following the conclusion of the high school season. With numer-

ous offers from Division 1 school across the country, McIntosh whittled his list down to Wisconsin, Texas, Indiana and Iowa before committing to Wisconsin.

"The recruiting process was really long," McIntosh said. "When I visited Wisconsin it really opened my eyes and it felt like home. It was the place I felt like I wanted to spend the next four years of my life at. The education, the coaching staff, it all meshed together as the perfect spot."

With his blend of size, speed

and athletic ability, along with being a standout in the classroom, McIntosh was a valued recruit by many schools.

"We're feeling very confident," McIntosh said. "We have a lot of juniors up on the team who are fitting into their roles and positions on the team along with a lot of returning guys. We are starting to take shape and come together."

We have big dreams and big goals this year but it will take a lot of hard work and giving 100 percent



DeWitt all-stater Tommy McIntosh will be attending the University of Wisconsin next season.

at practice every day. We are just taking things one day at a time and one game at a time."

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East Lansing Aiming To Continue Winning Ways This Season

David Cook Sports Scene

The East Lansing football team is coming off its second trip to the regional finals in the past four years and with plenty of veterans returning, the Trojans are poised to go even further come playoff time.

East Lansing compiled an 8-1 record last season with the lone loss coming against eventual Division 2 state champion Muskegon Mona Shores by a 24-21 in the regional finals. Plenty of talent returns and a number of promising young players are also on hand having the Trojans excited about the season.

"We have some key

returning people who have that experience," said East Lansing coach Bill Feraco. "We have some spots that need to be filled and both of our lines have to come together. We have some good athletes so we think we have a pretty good chance to be successful."

On offense, the Trojans return a strong foundation with senior tackle Ethan DeWitt (6-4, 300) and Roque Martinez. The line has plenty of upside in junior Hayden Healey, Seanpaul Johns (6-2, 280), junior Luke Foster (5-10, 215) and sophomore tackle Javon Thomas.

The East Lansing defense boasts a solid secondary with Brevin Jackson and Wilson at safety and Woods return-

Trojans are deep at receiver with senior Mason Woods and junior Evan Boyd providing big-play capability. Junior Dorrian Jackson is another option in a loaded wideout group. Carmelo Works provides good skills at tight end.

Up front, the Trojans return a strong foundation with senior tackle Ethan DeWitt (6-4, 300) and Roque Martinez. The line has plenty of upside in junior Hayden Healey, Seanpaul Johns (6-2, 280), junior Luke Foster (5-10, 215) and sophomore tackle Javon Thomas.

Senior running back Asher Gregory is a threat to take it to the house every time he touches the football.



Senior running back Asher Gregory is a threat to take it to the house every time he touches the football.

Williamston Seniors Determined To Carry On Tradition Of Post-Season Success

David Cook Sports Scene

Led by an outstanding senior class, the Williamston football team reached the semifinals for the second time in three years last season. This year, the current group of seniors is determined to carry on that legacy.

The Hornets turned in a 9-2 record last season before falling to Detroit Country Day in the Division 4 state semifinals. Several starters return from that squad and a number of other players gained valuable experience during the playoff run.

"We feel very good about this season," said Williamston coach Steve Kersten. "We brought up a lot of kid for the playoffs and they played some meaningful minutes. They got a lot of experience and

got the experience of playing in a state semifinal game."

Senior linebacker/H back Zach Painter (6-2, 215) leads the list of returnees.

"Zach is an inside linebacker on defense and H back/tight end on offense for us," Kersten said. "He is the heart and soul of our team. He's getting looks from Division 2 and small Division 1 schools."

The Hornets will have a new quarterback for the first time in three years. Junior Alex Petersburg (6-2, 195) is looking to step in behind center. Petersburg is a dual-threat quarterback with a strong arm and good mobility.

Senior Austin Davis is a running back with good vision and quickness who is stepping into the lead role at running back. The Hornets have a solid group of receivers led



Williamston is looking to build on last season's success when the Hornets reached the state semifinals.

slotback.

The defensive line graduated all four starters but has some promising players ready to step up. Connor Bishop (6-0, 200) will make an impact while Joey Bennett will contribute on both sides of the

line.

"The expectations are high," Kersten said. "These kids got a taste of it last year and they know what it takes. We had great senior leadership last year and these seniors want to continue that."

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Mason sophomore running back AJ Martel returns after earning all-conference honors last season.

Young Mason Squad Determined To Extend League Title Streak

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Mason has won back-to-back CAAC Red league titles and finished with perfect league records the past two years. Graduation hit the Bulldogs hard but the squad has a core of players determined to continue the winning tradition in the league.

Mason compiled an 8-1 overall record last spring with the lone loss coming in the district finals to eventual Division 5 state champion Dewitt.

This year's squad looks to have a solid ground game led by tailbacks AJ Martel (5-9, 165 sophomore) and Ethan Ettinger

(6-0, 176 junior). Martel earned honorable-mention, all-conference honors last season. Senior guard Connor Williamson (6-2, 240) and tackle Brett Showers are a pair of returning all-conference players that anchor the offensive line.

A trio of starters return to lead the defense. Williamson lines up along the defensive front with senior defensive tackle Hunter Lott while senior Landon Warren returns at cornerback.

Sophomore Derek Badgley, an all-state wrestler at 171 pounds last season, gained experience as a freshman. Senior Alex Bushey is another veteran returnee who is in the mix for the quarterback

spot. Senior Landon Peiffer (6-2, 215) also returns at running back and linebacker.

Newcomers looking to play key roles include Adam Gonzales, Justice Mataya, Colin Page, Kaleb Parrish, Malik Popp and Nick Wells.

"We are a young team but very talented," said Mason coach Gary Houghton. "Our team strengths this season will be our offensive and defensive lines and our backfield. How quickly we learn and apply our skills will determine the level of success. We will have to get off to a great start and learn quickly."

Miles Bell, Larry Ansari and Tealc Robinson are a trio of experienced linebackers that are making an impact.

Blending in with the

veterans are a large group of newcomers that offer plenty of upside. Ethan Barker and Colton Roach are in the mix at quarterback. Ryan Davis, Shron Nathan and Carlton Pierce give the passing game some promising targets at wide receiver. Rajbir Singh adds to the depth at running back. Elijah Porter, Robert Bledden Matt Trevino and Aidan Johnson are newcomers to watch along the offensive line with Zachary Barker adding to the depth along the defensive line.

Braeden Vrane and Francesco Casagrande give the team more depth at linebacker. Okemos also has an outstanding kicker in Trent Amundsen with Tyler Kliwer handling the punting duties.

"Our offensive line will be a

team strength," Lilly said. "The key

to a successful season for us will be staying healthy and being well conditioned."

Having a dedicated group of players to build around is a major plus for the team.

"Nearly half of the varsity team left or transferred prior to and in the days after our previous head coach resigned," Lilly said. "We've spent the past weeks picking up the pieces and putting the team back together. These players have faced the record of last year, the fact that many of their teammates and coaches bailed on them right before the season, and with the school mascot in a state of flux, we are especially honored to stand with these young men as they draw a line in the sand and fight for the game they love. The greatest game on Earth in our opinion, football."



Okemos defensive end Emeka Okwereogu returns to give Okemos a big-play performer on the edge who can get to the quarterback in a hurry.

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Lansing Area Football Teams Primed For Big Seasons This Fall

**David Cook
Sports Scene**

DEFENSE A STRENGTH FOR LANSING CATHOLIC

Despite dealing with problems created by the Covid 19 virus, Lansing Catholic was able to reach the Division 5 state semifinals.

With a large group of talented players returning, the Cougars are positioned for another big season. Senior standout Bo Poljan (6-3, 235) is a talented athlete on both sides of the ball who earned all-state honors last season. Poljan totaled 75 tackles on defense last season. Senior Alex Watters is a returning all-state defensive back. A running back and receiver on offense, Watters provides big plays on both sides of the field and on special teams for the Cougars. Last season Watters totaled three interceptions on defense, returned five kicks or punts for touchdowns and caught 26 passes for 495 yards and five touchdowns.

Senior defensive end Mason Knippen (6-3, 210) is another impact player that returns to the defense.

On offense, the return of junior quarterback Joey Baker gives

provides the team with a productive passing game. Baker is also a threat to run and pick up yardage. Junior Brandon Lewis returns after earning all-conference honors. A wide receiver and defensive back, Lewis has 4.4 speed in the 40-yard dash and can take the top off opposing secondaries. Johan Richards is a returning all-conference lineman.

PEWAMO-WESTPHALIA PRIMED FOR BIG YEAR

After seeing its playoff run short-circuited by Covid 19, the Pewamo-Westphalia football team is looking to pick up where it left off.

Division 7 state champions in 2019, the Pirates return a big-play running back in senior Tanner Wirth (5-10, 190). Paving the way for the ground game is an offensive line led by returning all-stater Corey Schafer.

Brock Thelen is a two-way back that will provide big plays on both sides of the line. The Waverly football team is looking to continue the progress it made last fall when it turned in a 4-4 record, the first time it finished .500 or better since 2012.

The Warriors are led by a pair of returning honorable-mention, all-conference players in tight end Dylan Durrett (6-4, 200) and senior running back Jakobe Resspress.

Putting the offense in gear is talented senior quarterback Tyrese Miller

Senior running back Ashton Laguire, a returning all-state player, heads up the offense and provides the team a strong running attack. Senior Charlie Gran is a returning all-conference quarterback for what should be a productive offense. Junior Braden Hill provides an excellent target at wide receiver where he earned all-league honors. Junior lineman Matt Utter (6-3, 238) is a returning all-conference pick that will help lead the blocking.

HASLETT LOOKING FOR BOUNCE-BACK SEASON

After consecutive two-win seasons, the Haslett Vikings are looking to bounce back this season.

Senior Leonard Smith (6-5, 215) is a returning all-conference tackle who is also a force on defense at a defensive end spot. The defensive line will be a strength for the Vikings as senior defensive tackle Keith Whitfield (6-0, 250) is a returning all-conference player. Senior Danny Asch (5-10, 215) earned all-league honors at linebacker while the secondary is led by Charlie Rosenbrook (5-10, 165) who earned all-league honors at safety.

Haslett is also looking for seniors Lonnie Smith at cornerback, two-way lineman Ibraheem Elhabtany (6-3, 240) and Ben Waters at wide receiver and junior wide receiver/

(6-3, 185) who has a good arm and quick feet. Junior wide receiver Mar' Tavion Robinson brings excellent speed on the perimeter.

Sophomore running back Jahi Wood (5-9, 180) is a promising young runner to keep an eye on.

WAVERLY TO BUILD ON IMPROVEMENT

The Oriole defense is anchored by a pair of returning all-league players in senior defensive tackle Gabe Wertz (5-11, 275) and senior linebacker Brendin Guilford. Junior linebacker Devon Eaton also earned all-league honors last year.

GRAND LEDGE TO CONTEND IN LEAGUE

With a number of talented players returning from a team that went 5-3 last year, Grand Ledge is looking to continue strong play in the rugged CAAC Blue Division.

Junior tight end Teddy Williams (6-6, 215) is an athletic player that will provide impact plays on offense and at defensive end. Senior running back/linebacker Nathan Edlin (6-1, 190) earned all-conference honors last season and is a team leader.

Junior Shawn Foster brings a game-breaking element to the offense while senior Caden Anderson (6-3, 265) and junior Anthony Garcia (6-1, 277) bring good size to the line.

CHARLOTTE SETS SIGHTS ON WINNING SEASON

With a large and talented core of players back, Charlotte is looking for its first winning season since 2013.

Putting the offense in gear is talented senior quarterback Tyrese Miller



Lansing Catholic will rely on a defense that propelled them to a state title in 2019 and a state-semifinal appearance last season.

defensive back Conner Bailey to make contributions.

POINTER LOOKS FOR IMPROVEMENT

On offense, senior Kellen Reed is a big-play performer at wide receiver who is receiving college looks. Ayden Vanenkort also earned all-conference honors as did junior running back Bryce Cornelius. Isaiah Foster will see action at running back with Jakari Conway and Cassius Blankenburg adding to the depth at wide receiver.

Senior all-conference player Haydon Herron returns to anchor

Clare, Gladwin Lead The Charge In Jack Pine Conference

**David Cook
Sports Scene**

CLARE OUT TO DEFEND LEAGUE TITLE

With a host of players returning, defending Jack Pine Conference champion Clare will be tough to dislodge from the top spot this fall.

Quarterback Jacob Recker (6-3, 200) is a returning all-conference player that will headline a potent Pioneer offense. Running backs Al Warner and Beau Weldon form a dynamic running game.

Talented receiver Dawson John is a dangerous target in the passing game. The Pioneers also return a solid line built around junior tackle Mike Franko and guard Connor Carmody, a pair of all-conference performers.

The defense also welcomes back plenty of talent. Sophomore Jake Puncness earned all-conference honors last season. Franko returns along the defensive line with Gage Beckner a returning all-conference linebacker. John and Warner return to head up the secondary.

YOUNG TALENT HAS GLADWIN PUMPED

With a host of talented juniors returning, the Gladwin football team is pumped for the new season. Those talented players return from a team that went 4-4 last year and have the Flying G's

poised for their first winning season since 2014.

BEAVERTON IN THE HUNT FOR LEAGUE TITLE

Beaverton dropped just one conference game last season and the Beavers will be among the teams chasing the league title this season.

Defense is a team strength as all-league linebacker Logan Love (6-2, 200) returns. Mitch Hall is also back at linebacker. William Warner will be a player to watch in the offensive backfield while Justin Uhl is a promising young lineman.

SHEPHERD LOOKS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Shepherd is poised for improvement after going 2-4 overall last season. The Bluejays defense is paced by junior Maddox Woods who was an all-conference, defensive linemen. Senior running



Defending Jack Pine Conference champion Clare returns a large group of standout players as it gears up to defend the league title.

back Logan Klumpp is a talented running back that will be a key performer on offense.

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Large Group Of Returning Starters Has Holt Optimistic About New Season

**David Cook
Sports Scene**

all-conference players return from last year giving the Rams a solid nucleus to build around.

On offense, senior Kellen Reed

is a big-play performer at wide receiver who is receiving college looks. Ayden Vanenkort also earned all-conference honors as did junior running back Bryce Cornelius. Isaiah Foster will see action at running back with Jakari Conway and Cassius Blankenburg adding to the depth at wide receiver.

Holt finished last season with a strong playoff run as it defeated Ann Arbor Skyline and Grand Ledge in the playoffs before dropping a 14-8 decision to Saline in the district title game. A total of six

the offensive line. Reese Church, Carole Speed and Jake Wriggelsworth are also back up front and along the defensive line.

The Rams also have a talented group of newcomers poised to contribute. Junior quarterback Seneca Moore looks to lead the offense.

Joseph Mitchell, Charles Thompson, Jaiden Thompson and David Vann will see action at wide receiver. Josh Lopez and Josh Hollen shore up the offensive line with Josh Terrill stepping in along the defensive front.

With 10 starters back on offense and seven back on defense, the Rams are set for a big season.



Holt returns a large group of veteran players from last season's squad.

"We are very fast and experienced but we face a very tough schedule," said Holt coach Chad Fulk. "We have the fastest overall team speed that we've seen in many years. We must battle through a tough non-league schedule and get some early wins before playing defending state champ DeWitt in week four."

Wealth Of Returning Talent At The Skill Positions Has Portland Looking Strong

**David Cook
Sports Scene**

Plenty of experience and talent return in the skill positions for the Portland football team this season and those athletes will be needed as the Raiders face a gauntlet of a schedule.

The returning veterans were part of a Portland team that went 7-2 last season. The lone losses came against Division 3 state champion DeWitt and a forfeit loss due to Covid 19 protocols in the district title game against eventual Division 5 state champion Grand Rapids Catholic Central.

"Athleticism and depth in the skilled positions are team

strengths," said Portland coach John Novara. "We return all six skilled players on offense and five defensive backs with playing experience on defense. Staying healthy and the development of the offensive and defensive line newcomers will be key to successful season."

The Raiders also return a pair of starters along the offensive line in Parker Mills and Drew Morris as eight starters total return to the offense.

A total of six starters return on defense. Getchell, Meyers and Patrick return to the secondary with Brady Krausz back at linebacker. Bronson Goodman and Reis Phillips are returning starters along the defensive line. Senior Braden Kehr is another veteran that will contribute on the offensive and defensive lines.

Several newcomers are poised to step up this season including Brady Bush, Aidan Marowelli, Andrew



Portland faces a rugged schedule this season including a matchup with defending state champion DeWitt.

Maynard, Drew Miller, Marc Nobis and Noah Simpson.

Portland will need all hands on deck as it faces a loaded schedule this season. The Raiders face a pair of defending state champions in non-league games in DeWitt and Montague, a state runner-up in Cadillac and a state semi-finalist in Lansing Catholic in what should be a showdown for the league title.

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Returning Standouts Determined To Return St. Johns To Winning Ways

David Cook Sports Scene

After turning in a 2-5 mark last season, the St. Johns football team is on a mission to get back on the winning side of the ledger this fall.

Before last season, the Redwings had not experienced a non-winning season since 2005. With several veterans back along with a promising group of newcomers to the starting lineup, St. Johns enters the season with an optimistic outlook.

"We're somewhat unproven this year," said St. Johns coach Andy Schmitt. "We have a lot of guys stepping into some different roles and into the starting lineup for the first time. These guys have been

working hard and they have put themselves into a position to be successful."

St. Johns also returns several talented veterans who provide a solid foundation to build around. Senior Adam Waszak (6-5, 260) is a returning all-state player with the talent to play on the college level. Waszak is a tight end on offense and anchors the defensive line at an end position.

The Redwings will look to establish the ground game on offense and senior running back Murray Palmatier is a focal point of the rushing attack.

A pair of talented athletes are battling for the starting quarterback gig. Senior Carter Nobis and junior Carson Pieters have both strength as Matthew McCastle and Jack Ballard bring more experience to the field.

"We are looking pretty good on defense," Schmitt said. "They guys

are showing that toughness that we want to see on defense. We've seen that toughness in practice and we hope to see it throughout the season as well."

are showing that toughness that we want to see on defense. We've seen that toughness in practice and we hope to see it throughout the season as well."

Departures included Brady Hessbrook, a four-year varsity starter on defense, and a three-year starter at QB. "He was a great leader and hard worker who was a tremendous dual-threat QB in our offense," Hessbrook said. "He allowed our offense to operate at a high level."

Also gone is Zach Poff, a three-

year with a broken elbow, is back bigger and stronger this season.

Up front, the offensive line is young with several

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Sophomore Nate Moore has come back

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Orta-Vasquez is an aggressive blocker with

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Having senior quarterback Reece Giles

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"Our linemen have been doing a very

good job in practice," Paksi said. "They are

very coachable kids and they like to hit."

On defense, the Sharks boast a talen-

ted secondary led by senior cornerback

Gavin Wenzlick, who has good quickness

and coverage skills, and junior Wisdom

Zanquo. Jackson and Dew man the safety

positions where they bring great range to

the field.

At linebacker, Dousuah brings out-

standing strength and quickness to the

field where he can track down ball carriers

from sideline-to-sideline. Freshman Mar-

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linebacker with his all-around athletism

along with his quick grasp of the defensive

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At tight end, senior Ben Dousuah

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Alma Football Coach Confident Of A Banner Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Alma coach Dan Falor is anxious to have a stronger football season after slipping to 3-4 in last year's campaign, which was affected by COVID-related restrictions.

Key players who graduated were Dametrius Castillo, a 3-year starter for the program; David Apple a "great leader and hard worker, and two-way starter for two years, Falor said, adding Andrew Omans was also a way-starter."

There are five talented seniors returning including senior two-way lineman JB Couch at offensive and defensive line; Jacob Munger and Holden Davis at lineman and linebacker; Landon Bethka and Harrison Seeley at wide receiver and defensive back and Jaiden Morrow and offensive and defensive line.

"I expect us to be competitive in one of the toughest class B leagues in the state," Falor said. "Our experience on defense and our offensive line should be our strengths

this year. We need some of our youngsters to fill in the skilled position holes we have on the offense.

"The Tri-Valley conference is one the toughest football leagues in the state: Frankenmuth, Freeland, Essexville-Garber, Swan Valley are the tops. We fit in the middle of the pack."

Falor and his team has liked not having to deal with COVID restrictions.

"It has been nice getting back to some sense of normalcy," he said.



Alma's football team will be bidding for title contention this season.

Former Alma Standout Pauly Seeley Making Smooth Transition To Georgia Football

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The Covid-19 pandemic took its toll on high school football last fall. Along with losing entire seasons and games, area players were also on the move. One of those players was former Alma quarterback Pauly Seeley.

A starter for Alma as a freshman, the uncertainty of the 2020 high school football season led to Seeley and his family making the move south to Georgia where the high school football season had the green light.

"The move to Georgia was mostly covid related," Seeley said. "Michigan was unsure that it would have a season and Georgia was going ahead with their season. I didn't want to miss an entire season of high school football so we made the move."

Seeley has had a busy summer competing at several football camps while also working on becoming bigger, stronger and faster.

"It was a really good year," Seeley said. "I split time with a senior quarterback and we won the Savannah City Title. This year I've taken over the starting job and we're looking for an even better season. Georgia high school football is a lot different than Michigan. The guys are bigger and faster. Georgia is a lot more like college football."

New Hampstead head coach

move."

That moved to be a fruitful one as Seeley split time with a senior quarterback at New Hampstead high school in Savannah, Georgia. Seeley completed 59% of his passes last fall and passed for 993 yards with eight touchdown passes and no interceptions.

New Hampstead went 6-1 during the regular season playing in 4A football with 7A being the largest classification in Georgia.

Seeley gave a glimpse of what is in store for this season in New Hampstead's opening game this year as he led the team to a 41-12 win by completing 15-of-27 passes for 322 yards and four touchdowns.

Along with playing football,

Seeley also played his first year of basketball down in Georgia for New Hampstead.

"The basketball season went really good," Seeley said. "I was the starting point guard for a state-ranked team. It was a lot of fun and a really cool experience."

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Kyle Hackman is also looking for a strong season from Seeley. Some of those camps have been at collegiate football programs that are showing recruiting interest in the 6-foot, 185-pound junior. Heading into his junior season Seeley already holds college offers from Bowling Green, Western Kentucky, Middle Tennessee State and Elon.

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CLASS OF 2022 PLAYERS TO WATCH

- 1) Alex VanSumeren, 6-3, 300, DL, Essexville-Garber: Dominating lineman who is ranked among the top defensive tackles in the country. Committed to Michigan State after receiving offers from big-name programs like Michigan, Alabama, Clemson and Texas A&M.
- 2) Tommy McIntosh, 6-5, 205, WR, DeWitt: A tall, talented wide receiver who made a number of highlight-reel catches during DeWitt's run to a state title last season, McIntosh will play his college football at Wisconsin.
- 3) Levi Harber, 6-5, 265, OL, Montrose: One of the premier wrestlers in the state, Harber is also a dominating blocker who will play college football in the Southeastern Conference at Vanderbilt University.
- 4) Malachi Davis, 6-5, 245, DE, Holt: Davis wreaks plenty of havoc on opposing offenses from his defensive end position. This talented defender will play college football for Syracuse in the Atlantic Coast Conference.
- 5) Tyler Holtz, 5-11, 190, QB, DeWitt: Holtz turned in a memorable junior season as he passed for over 2,100 yards in leading the Panthers to a state championship. This talented passer is headed to the Ivy League to play football at Brown University.
- 6) Ambrose Wilson, 6-0, 190, DB, East Lansing: A versatile all-around athlete, Wilson is a ball-hawking safety on defense and a big-play threat on offense. Wilson will stay local for college as he committed to Central Michigan University.
- 7) Bo Poljan, 6-3, 235, OL/DL, Lansing Catholic: A versatile lineman on both sides of the football, Poljan has received college offers from Central Michigan, Eastern Michigan, Cincinnati and Tulane.
- 8) Kade Kostus, 6-3, 248, DL, Rockford: The Rockford program consistently produces college talent and Kostus is the next in line. A big-play talent on defense with plenty of potential, Kostus will play college football at Central Michigan University.
- 9) Tyler Vroman, 6-4, 190, WR, Rockford: Vroman poses plenty of problems for opposing defensive backs with his combination of size, skill and speed. Vroman will serve his country and play his college football for Army.
- 10) Evan Sunderman, 6-2, 180, P, East Lansing: A returning all-state punter, Sunderman is ranked among the top punters in the nation and averaged 43.7 yards per punt last season.
- 11) DJ Voltz, 6-2, 170, WR/DB, Carrollton
- 12) Jordan Clerkley, 6-0, 175, DB, Holt
- 13) Nick Flegler, 5-11, 185, WR/DB, DeWitt
- 14) Alex Watters, 6-0, 185, DB, Lansing Catholic
- 15) Ethan DeWitt, 6-4, 300, OL, East Lansing
- 16) Bryson Huckaby, 6-4, 215, TE, Freeland
- 17) Zak Ahern, 6-3, 200, QB, Rockford
- 18) Tyler Nordmann, 6-1, 270, OL, DeWitt
- 19) Zach Painter, 6-2, 225, LB, Williamston
- 20) Kellen Reed, 5-10, 175, WR, Holt
- 21) Alex Duley, 6-5, 200, WR, Freeland
- 22) Bryce DeBri, 5-11, 185, WR/DB, DeWitt
- 23) Robert Knapik, 5-9, 182, RB, Hemlock
- 24) Samuel Watts, 6-2, 210, DB, Rockford
- 25) Josh Rau, 6-3, 215, DE, Lowell
- 38) Logan Anthony, 5-8, 165, WR, Essexville-Garber
- 39) Jaden Herrick, 6-3, 175, QB, Corunna
- 40) Chad Pratt, 5-10, 150, WR/DB, Ithaca
- 41) Connor Williamson, 6-2, 240, OL, Mason
- 42) Matt Oswald, 6-4, 240, TE, Beal City
- 43) Matthew Garcia, 6-1, 190, LB, Saginaw Nouvel
- 44) Joe Wiedyk, 5-10, 230, RB, Bay City Western
- 45) Cole Jankowski, 6-3, 190, ATH, Frankenmuth
- 46) Ashton Laguire, 6-0, 170, RB/DB, Charlotte
- 47) Brock Thelen, 5-10, 170, RB/DB, Pewamo-Westphalia
- 48) Tyrese Miller, 6-3, 175 QB, Lansing Waverly
- 49) Jesse Sorsen, 6-4, 180, WR, Ithaca
- 50) Dylan Durrett, 6-4, 200, TE, Lansing Waverly



Malachi Davis - Holt

Ambrose Wilson - East Lansing

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- 1) Luke Zanotti, 6-3, 270, OL, Bay City Central
- 2) Evan Boyd, 6-3, 190, WR, East Lansing
- 3) Teddy Williams, 6-6, 215, TE, Grand Ledge
- 4) Nathan Rivard, 6-5, 240, OL/DL, Bullock Creek
- 5) Hayden Healey, 6-3, 300, OL, East Lansing
- 6) Carlos Harris, 6-0, 200, RB/LB, Bay City Central
- 7) Jayden Curry, 6-4, 285, OL, New Lothrop
- 8) Gabe Blanchard, 6-4, 220, DE/TE, Freeland
- 9) Joey Baker, 6-1, 170, QB, Lansing Catholic
- 10) Dylan McDonald, 6-3, 275, DT, Durand
- 11) Brandon Lewis, 5-11, 170, WR, Lansing Catholic
- 12) Bronson Bupp, 6-2, 200, QB, Ithaca
- 13) Mike Franko, 6-3, 245, OL/DL, Clare
- 14) Kade McDonald, 6-1, 170, DB/WR, Gladwin
- 15) Ian George, 6-6, 260, OT, Lowell
- 16) Seanpaul Johns, 6-2, 280, OL, East Lansing
- 17) Mason VanCamp, 5-11, 265, OL, Ithaca
- 18) Mar'Tavion Robinson, 5-11, 165, WR, Lansing Waverly
- 19) Cooper Symons, New Lothrop, 6-4, 265, OL, New Lothrop
- 20) Kanye Jackson, 5-11, 185, RB, East Lansing



CC-Crystal football is coming off a 6-2 season.

CC-Crystal Hopes To Contend For Title

John Raffel Sports Scene

Tim Swore is coaching a Carson City-Crystal football team which is coming off a 6-2 season from last year and won a district title.

"It was our first district title in 21 years and only the second in school history," Swore said. "We have 12 seniors returning."

But not returning is Kyler Stone, first team all state running.

"We will need to replace him with a couple of RBs not just one," Swore said. "He was big and very physical."

Other seniors are Owen Blackport, starter at defensive end.

Cole Briggs is a starter at offensive guard. Trevor Slee is a starter at offensive tackle and defensive end.

"We expect to have a chance to contend for a conference championship," Swore said. "Breckenridge has not lost since joining our conference and we hope to end that streak. We expect to have a chance to defend our district championship and make a playoff run."

"Our strength should be the offensive and defensive line. We have worked hard in the off-season and return all but one starter on both sides of our offensive and defensive line. Our biggest thing is to continue to learn to believe in ourselves. Average is not our goal as we are working to contend for a state championship."

"Our off-season has been great and we are thankful to have had a full summer of 7-on-7 and camps," Swore added.

linemen.
Shaymus O'brien is a defensive lineman.
Cole Podkulski is a starter at wide receiver and linebacker.
Doug Billings, Brian Curtis and Connor Royse are offensive

linemen.
Shaymus O'brien is a defensive lineman.
Cole Podkulski is a starter at wide receiver and linebacker.
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Veteran Core, Talented Newcomers Have Sanford-Meridian Excited About New Season

David Cook Sports Scene

Veterans are in short supply for the Sanford-Meridian football team but a promising group of young players has the Mustangs excited about the new season.

"We have a pretty young team," said Sanford-Meridian coach Michael Bilina. "We have a lot of new names and new faces at the varsity level. They are eager to learn and excited for the challenges awaiting them. We have had some pretty competitive practices and we are excited about the season."

On offense, Sanford-Meridian is led by senior wide receiver Dane Plichta. A team captain, Plichta will provide leadership and a solid target in the passing game.

At quarterback, junior Brayden Riley is making the move from receiver to passer.

Brayden is a real athletic kid and has a real strong arm," Bilina said. "The sky is the limit for him."

The Mustangs are also excited

about junior Luke Federer. A running back and linebacker, Federer started on Sanford-Meridian's district title team as a freshman in

2019. Federer missed last season with a shoulder injury but is back healthy this season.

"Luke is a natural talent with a nose for the football," Bilina said. "He is back bigger and faster and we are really excited about what he can do."

Junior Nick Keene is back along both the offensive and defensive line where he gained starting experience last season.

Sophomore wide receiver Nick Metzger is another promising young player to keep an eye on. An athletic, 6-foot-3-inch receiver,



Sanford-Meridian will be among the team battling for the top spot of the Jack Pine Conference this season.

Metzger played varsity basketball as a freshman last season.

Numbers are also up at Sanford-Meridian with 27 players on the varsity. The Mustangs are coming off a second straight winning season as they went 4-3 last season.

"Overall, we should be fairly quick," Bilina said. "We have pretty good team speed. We are not really that big so we will have to utilize our speed to the best of our ability."

Bilina expects a competitive battle for the Jack Pine Conference title with Clare and Gladwin coming in as the teams to beat.

Schrank Leads Coleman Attack

John Raffel Sports Scene

Connor Schrank leads the way for Coleman's football team this season.

"Our win over Montabella on our home field was special after everything these kids went through all year," coach Chad Klopf said. "So was Conner Schrank's 330-yard rushing performance against Valley Lutheran in the last regular season game of the season. We had a nice tight knit group on the offensive line led by Bryce Middleton (Northwood), Josh Kipp, and Bo Carbeno. They are senior linemen that we will miss and were huge contributors to our program."

Key returning players include Ty Klopf, senior defensive back-quarterback.

"Ty will be looked at to lead and manage games for us," Klopf said. "He will be seeing what the defense is giving us and taking it. He needs to play within himself and not get caught up in trying to do too much."

Schrank is a senior running back/strong safety "who will be called on to be our workhorse in the ground game and to be the leader of our defense," Klopf said.

Senior running back/inside linebacker Konner Carbeno "will have multiple roles in our offense, but his strongest position will be setting the tone on the defensive side," Klopf said, adding senior wide receiver/outside linebacker Ayden Ruhle "will be looked at to step up into our top receiver role and also to lock down his edge defensively."

Junior offensive lineman and defensive end Dawson Haller "shared time last year filling in for injuries behind a veteran senior dominant line. We look for him to

step up and fill those shoes left by graduation."

Sophomore kicker Brooke Falor "will again be called on to continue to put the ball through the uprights for us," Klopf said. "This group of seniors has been the core of our program for the past four seasons. Most have been playing, if not starting, on the varsity since their freshman year. We are hoping to be able to add enough around them to have a very successful season and pull ourselves out of the funk we have been in. Losing teams off our schedule and having to find games to replace them with has been a challenge and will make the task at hand even tougher."



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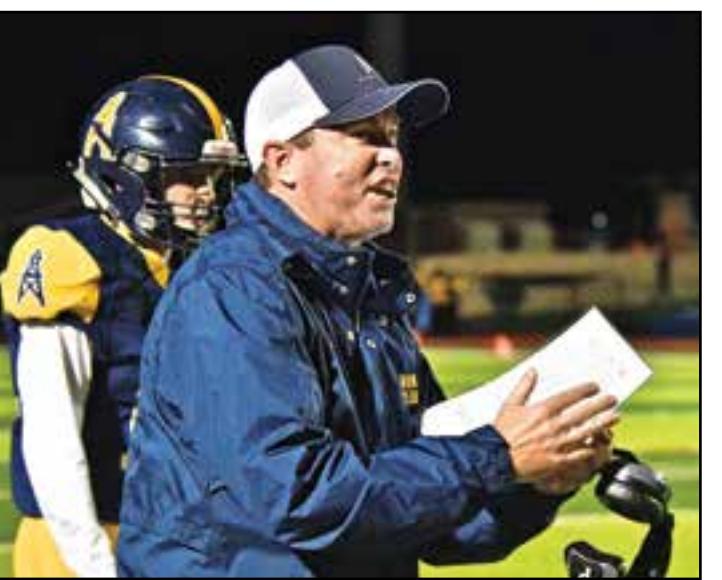
Senior Quarterback Ryan McIntyre Returns To Lead The Way For Mt. Pleasant

David Cook Sports Scene

With the return of a talented veteran quarterback and several more key veterans, the Mt. Pleasant

football team is poised to make a run at the Saginaw Valley North title this season.

While the Oilers graduated a number of key players from last



year's squad that turned in a 6-2 record, the team has a skilled core to build around this season.

"We have some big shoes to fill, especially on offense and the defensive line," said Mt. Pleasant coach Jason McIntyre. "I expect the Saginaw Valley North to be tough this year with many teams improving from last year, meaning we have a tough schedule ahead of us."

The Oiler offense is led by senior quarterback Ryan McIntyre. A returning all-conference player, McIntyre is an excellent leader who can make plays with his arm and his legs.

Kory Davis and Max Humphrey provide the ground game with a pair of solid options. McIntyre has a pair of skilled receivers to throw

to in Scooter Polk and Mason Randy. Wyatt Ervin and Aidan Klein are a pair of newcomers that are also in the mix at wide receiver.

The Oilers are rebuilding the offensive line around senior guard Devine Alspaugh and veteran Thomas Narr (6-3, 190). Keep an eye on sophomore guard AJ Dennis (6-5, 230) who is already on the recruiting radar of Central Michigan University. Kyle Systema and Max Sly are also main contributors up front.

How quickly the Oilers re-tool the lines is a major key to success this season.

"The success of this team will have a lot to do with how soon we gain experience and confidence in the offensive and defensive lines," McIntyre said. "Our challenge as coaches will be how quickly we can get out young players to play at the speed and intensity that is required at the varsity football level."

On the defensive side of the ball, Alspaugh (6-0, 225) is a return-

ing all-conference defensive end. Davis and Humphrey are a pair of returning starters at linebacker. Scooter Polk is a returning starter at defensive back.

Among the newcomers making an impact defensively are Kaden Benaske and Klein in the secondary and Jesse Henrie at linebacker. Defensive lineman Andrew House and defensive end Damian Tubbs also play key roles along the defensive line.

"After the disappointments of losing parts of last season we have had positive energy and work ethics heading into this season,"

McIntyre said. "We have a small roster and will have to adapt to our talent. Our strengths are in different areas than they have been the past few seasons, which means we will have to adapt our schemes to fit these strengths. I have been really impressed with our senior leadership in the offseason, and this will be key in how we handle adversity throughout the season."



Belding players take on Ludington during a preseason scrimmage.

wrestling.

Schmid said. "His example in school and in the community is exemplary."

Belding Eyes Another League Title

John Raffel Sports Scene

Belding is coming off a football season when the Redskins were 6-2 and co-champs in the OK Silver Conference.

Key graduates from the program were Reed Willmore, Tyler Cooper, Cache Blunt, Ethan Hodges, Kyle Prosser, Tanner Smith, Ethan Sherman, Kyle Prosser, Phil Waldron, Isiah Speelman, Ethan Milanowski, Brett Dykstra and Brennen Flynn.

Key returning players include sophomore Jack Ward (RB/OLB), junior Drew Donovan, (QB/OLB), senior Matthew Massman

"Ethan was an all-conference

and all-region player for us last season," Price said. "Ethan is a weight-room fanatic. He is strong, explosive, and athletic. He continues to develop in the weight room and on the field. We expect him to be a team leader."

"We are moving him to TE, offense-ally. We hope to utilize his athleticism there. Ethan is one of the most committed players in our program."

Schmid is involved in track and

"Ethan is not only a tremendous football player, he is a terrific kid,"

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Large Group Of Returning Players Has Ovid-Elsie On Path To Winning Season

David Cook Sports Scene

Thanks to the return of a large group of veteran players, the Ovid-Elsie football team is primed to climb above the 500 mark this season.

"We look forward to having a strong season this year with many returning players from last year's team," said Ovid-Elsie coach Travis Long. "Our offensive backfield and offensive line are returning all but

one player from each group. Our secondary is returning three players from last year's team and we will be strong on our interior offensive and defensive lines."

Senior Eddy Evans (running back/cornerback) led the team in rushing last year and picked off five passes on defense. Junior Kevin Ley, who came up as a freshman, is the team's best offensive and defensive lineman. Junior running back Logan Thomp-

son has also been up since his freshman year and is a physical runner. Senior two-way lineman Dylan Taylor is coming off a big summer while junior Clay Wittenberg (tight end/linebacker) is an athletic play-maker.

Ovid-Elsie has a large group of seniors contributing including Tyler Bancroft (ol/dl), Dylan Carman (qb/db), Alex Eichenberg (te/de), Jacob Schaub (wr/db), Max Spiess (rb/dl), Colin Fluharty (rb/

de) Rudy Ramirez (ol/dl) and Billy Harris (ol/dl). Junior running back/linebacker Landon Stoneman, freshman quarterback/defensive back Axel Newell and Kole Middleton (ol/de) also return.

"We return a lot of players with two years of varsity experience," Long said. "Our leadership has been outstanding in the off-season, summer and the first two weeks of practice. The key for us is to stay healthy. We also have to be physical in the trenches and on the edge and have players step up in key roles like quarterback and the offensive line."

The Ovid-Elsie football team returns a large group of players on both sides of the line of scrimmage.



Owosso Football Set To Reap The Benefits Of Building A Strong Foundation

David Cook Sports Scene

The Owosso football team has been building the foundation for success the past few seasons and this fall the Trojans are looking for that hard work to pay off.

With a promising group of juniors who have experienced success joining the returning varsity players, Owosso is optimistic about the upcoming season.

"We are coming off the first back-to-back winning junior varsity seasons in years," said

Owosso coach Devin Pringle. "There are no superstars on this team. We have a lot of grinders who will need to be disciplined and work together to find a winning Friday night formula."

Junior quarterback Hugh Doyle leads the offense.

"Hugh will be a big factor in the success of the offense," Pringle said. "He is an intelligent kid who has the ability to move the ball in a variety of ways."

Senior center Chris Ott is a returning

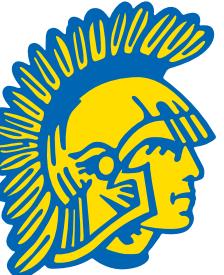
all-conference player that is the heart and soul of the offensive line. Ott will help pave the way for a promising group of running backs that includes senior fullback Charles Goldman, senior running back Cody Fields and junior running back Zach Evon. Along the offensive line, the tackle spots are manned by senior Matt Churchill and Joe Spencer while senior Chayse Zalecki and junior Jacob Lauback are handling the guard positions. Juniors Taylor Lange and Joe Kaye are slotted at tight end.

Senior Seth Hintz paces the defense from his linebacker position. Junior Alex Krawczk and Lange also start at linebacker. "Seth has a great motor and ability to

make a lot of plays," said Pringle. The Trojans have a deep and athletic defensive line led by Tim Felver, Lauback and Zalecki. Senior Bryce Johnston also contributes at defensive tackle.

The secondary is solid with Cody Fields at safety along with lockdown cornerbacks Damien Hart and Chishawn Bates. Evon also starts at a safety position.

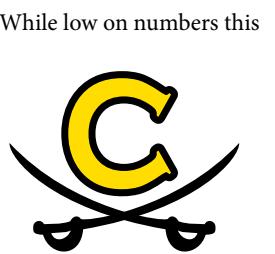
"I really like this group," Pringle said. "There are no superstars. Just a lot of grinders who are dependable and willing to put the work in."



Corunna Looking To Build On Last Season's Playoff Success

David Cook Sports Scene

The Corunna football team is looking to build off a solid season that saw the Cavaliers compile a 5-4 overall record. Corunna peaked in the playoffs winning two district games in a row before falling to eventual Division 5 state runner-up Frankenmuth in the district finals.



While low on numbers this

season, Corunna returns some talented players on both sides of

the line. Senior quarterback Jaden Herrick (6-3, 175) returns to pilot the offense with senior running back Colin Lavery joining him in the backfield. Providing the blocking is a group of veterans led by seniors Trenton Massey (6-0, 225) and Zach Worthington (6-2, 290) along with junior Kai Heck.

The Corunna defense is led by senior defensive lineman Wyatt Rosser (6-0, 300), senior linebacker

Zane Rosser and junior outside linebacker Colin Thompson.

A number of newcomers will make an impact this season including juniors Xavier Anderson (5-11, 170 running back), Jake Nichols (6-0, 235 center) and Peyton Termeer (6-0, 165 running back) and sophomores Tarek Bower (5-11, 150 wide receiver), Wyatt Bower (6-0, 175) and Jaden Edington (5-11, 190 running back).

Team speed and athleticism are strong points for this year's squad. Low

The smallest school in the conference, Corunna will battle Ortonville-Brandon and Goodrich for the league title.

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Mid-Michigan Activities Conference Loaded With Standout Teams This Season

David Cook Sports Scene

MONTROSE GEARING UP FOR BIG YEAR

Montrose went 8-2 last season with the lone defeat coming against D6 state champion Montague in the regional title game and D7 state champ New Lothrop during conference play.

The Rams have plenty of talent returning this year led by senior all-state lineman Levi Harber (6-5, 285) who has committed to Vanderbilt University of the Southeastern Conference. Montrose also returns all-conference lineman Aiden Viar (6-2, 275). Junior lineman Jerrold Atwell (6-0, 290) also

earned all-conference honors last season and returns along with senior Braxton Powell (6-3, 215). Monte Missentzis is a returning all-conference receiver who may also play quarterback while sophomore Zack O'Neal quarterbacked the junior varsity last season. Senior Johnny Mahl returns at receiver while junior Owen Emmendorfer (5-8, 170) is a running back and returning all-conference defensive back.

NEW LOTHROP SET TO DEFEND STATE TITLE

The New Lothrop football team climbed to the top of the mountain in Division 7 as season and the Hornets are determined to defend their title this season.

A strong core of defensive players returns this season led by senior defensive tackle Isiah Pasik (6-2, 275). Linebacker Garrett Mangino (5-11, 175) and defensive back Rafael Woods. Junior defensive lineman Justin Webster (5-10, 290) brings more size to the defensive line.

The Hornets have a number of positions to fill on the offensive side of the football as several key standouts graduated. Senior Cannon Cromwell is a returning slot receiver while Woods returns at wide receiver. At Woods returns at wide receiver. At quarter back sophomore Jack Kulhanek (6-5, 155) is looking to step up with Mangino and sophomore Colton Symons leading the way at running back. Junior tackles Jaden Curry (6-4,



Defending Division 7 state champion New Lothrop looks to be strong on defense again this season.

earned all-conference honors. Junior linebacker Wyatt Campbell and senior defensive back Ryan Bartholomew (6-2, 185) also earned all-conference honors.

and Zack Machleit (5-10, 240)

are a trio of players looking to

make an impact in their senior year. Junior Lane Miller also brings playoff experience back to the team.

Several newcomers are

being counted on to step

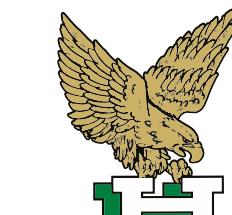
up including juniors Josh

Gotham (defensive end/offensive guard), Carson Hetfield (center/defensive tackle), Vito Maniaci (offensive tackle/linebacker) and Ian Russell (offensive tackle/linebacker). Sophomores Alec Fowler (wide receiver) and Conner Qualls (running back/linebacker) and freshman Brayden Florian (running back/linebacker) will also contribute.

"Keeping a focus on improving each week through competitive practices

Connor Everett (left) and Brenden Quackenbush (right) are among the senior that provide leadership for Chesaning this season.

will allow the squad to unlock their potential," Mimarek said. "Connecting the dots between on-going hard work and success is a great lesson for young players who are looking to veteran players for leadership."



including blocking, tackling and finishing.

"These seniors and many others will be expected to lead the program both on and off the field," said Thelen.

Saginaw Heritage Counting On Seniors To Pace A Bounce-Back Season

David Cook Sports Scene

Saginaw Heritage is looking for a solid group of seniors to help lead the Hawks to a bounce-back season this fall after going winless last season.

The Covid 19 pandemic left the Hawks with just five regular-season games last season and as luck had it,

they faced the five toughest teams on the schedule in Davison, Midland Dow, Midland, Mt. Pleasant and Pontiac Notre Dame.

"Last year was a difficult season in which we battled Covid and were left with five extremely difficult games on our schedule," said Heritage coach Justin Thelen. "We played stretches of

a strength and speed standpoint."

A solid core of seniors returns to form the nucleus of this year's squad. Colin Kraatz (6-4, 195) is a returning wide receiver on offense and linebacker on defense. Josh Braley (6-4, 205) is back at quarterback and defensive back with Darien Gumm (6-0, 210) returning at running back and linebacker. Tyrus McDole and Grant Churchill are returning wide receivers and defensive backs. Alfredo Garcia (5-11, 260) returns to the offensive line while Logan Kennedy will play both offensive and defensive line.

Depth and team speed are strong points of this year's squad. The Hawks are working on continuing to develop in the fundamentals of the game



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New Coach Boosts Chippewa Hills Fortunes

John Raffel Sports Scene

Chippewa Hills has a new football coach with Mark Pelong and high hopes for a championship football season.

Logan Davis is a senior and returning starting QB/safety.

"This year he is a team captain and will play an important role on both sides of the ball," Warrior coach Mark Pelong said. "On offense, as we go as Logan goes."

Jace LaLone is a senior right guard-linebacker. He is a team captain and will be one of the anchors of the offensive line and linebacker corp. Craig Wernette is a senior left guard and linebacker, who is a team captain and returning two-way starter.

Donivan Todd is a senior linebacker-tight end who is a returning two-way starter and team captain. Junior Jaeson Aldrich is a

returning 2-way starter on the offensive/defensive lines, who was asked to anchor the middle of the defensive front.

Nick Skinner is a junior who will be an important part of the offensive and defensive line.

Brock PeLong is a sophomore who will be asked to be a two-way starter at tight end and defensive end. Brayden Hunt, a sophomore, will be asked to be a 2-way starter at wide receiver and defensive back. Xander Fall, a sophomore will be the starting center and defensive tackle.

The Warriors and other football teams are minus the distractions which came from COVID last season.

PeLong took advantage of this. He added Chippewa Hills alum and longtime Beal City coach Brad Antcliff to his staff

"With a new coaching staff, the biggest thing for us is to install our offensive/defen-



Chippewa Hills football team gets ready for the season during a summer 7-on-7 passing camp.

sive concepts and be prepared week," PeLong said. "Being able to spend the summer in the Winning Room (weight room) was the biggest change from last season."



Beal City Expects To Be Championship Contender Again

John Raffel Sports Scene

Beal City football coach Brad Gross is looking forward to 2021.

It sure beats 2020.

"It was a tough year with all things considered," he said. "Our record was 7-2. I hope I never have to coach in something like that again. All of our seniors, I'll never forget the five that had the season

cut short."

Key performers in 2020 should be six athletes: Matt Oswald (DE/TE), Wade Wilson (RB/LB), Hunter Miles (QB/DL), Chris Whitehead (OL/LB), Peyton Sellers (OL/DL) and Cade Block (RB/DB).

"I expect all to play key roles in helping our team be successful," Gross said. "I expect our team this year to compete for a conference

title and see if we can get a playoff spot. We have quite a few guys returning this year that seen a lot of playing time last year. I see that experience being a huge plus this year even though some are underclassmen."

Gross has enjoyed the pre-season with the lessening of COVID restrictions.

"It's been great," Gross said. "Words can not describe it."



Fowler Hopes To Improve On 6-3 Record

John Raffel Sports Scene

Fowler has traditionally enjoyed a competitive football team and this season isn't expected to be any different for coach John Spicer. Fowler was 6-3 a year ago.

Dominic Horak, Defensive MVP of the league, was a key graduate.

Key players back are Chase Pung (QB/DB), Evan Curtiss (OL/DL), Nate Halfman (OL/DL) Zach Goerge (OL), Ryan Snyder (OL/LB), Carson Sillman (LB), Andrew Piggott (RB/DB), and Peyton Fol-

lick (halfback/LB).

"We want to get better every week," Spicer said. "We will be a little more experienced this year. We will work on playing faster."

Fowler will be in the CMAC. "It's a tough league every year,"

Spicer said. "Favorites would be Pennsauk Westphalia and Laingsburg."

Spicer and his team has enjoyed not having any COVID restrictions.

"It's been a good summer for us, the weight room has probably been one of our best years," he said.

Chase Pung is quarterback for Fowler.



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DAN SEELEY

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Drummond Leads Ashley Attack

John Raffel Sports Scene

Ashley's Logan Drummond has a lot of talent and is expected to be a force in the 8-player football division.

He's the Bears quarterback and in his third varsity season.

"Logan has grown into a leader and a force to be reckoned with," Ashley coach Kevin Saylor said. "He's a very elusive runner and finds holes in the defense to get through. During 5-on-5's this season he has shown me that he's been working on his craft and has grown into a very accurate passer. He works hard on and off the field and he has good chemistry with the coaching staff to try different things and suggest things that we may not see."

"I look for his accuracy to be way better this year and being a year bigger and stronger, the turnovers should come way down. Logan showed how explosive he can be in the special teams game last year. I think he had three or four returned for touchdowns. We hope to expand on that this year."

Saylor's expectations are high.

"I expect more leadership this season, more confident passing and working on more explosion through the running game," Saylor said. "He's been in the weight room during the offseason and the 5-on-5's were a big help that we weren't able to have last year."

Drummond plays basketball and baseball.

"I believe Logan could go onto Division 2 or 3 and do well," Saylor said.

Ashley competes in the North Central Thumb League but last year made the playoffs for the first time in 11 seasons.

"We lost Jimmy Fabus and Aaron Drummond last year, and both were all-conference and all-state athletes. Their leadership helped turn our program around."

This season, "we will ride heavily on Logan Drummond (QB) and Bailey Long (RB) this year in the backfield. Both are juniors and both are quick, elusive type runners. We're returning Jordann Huntoon (OG/DL) on the line, a senior,

who should be even more dominant this year than last. Dillan Beebe, another senior, will be returning at either wide receiver or fullback and we're expecting good things from him at linebacker also."

The Bears are short on numbers.

"A lot is going to depend on injuries. If we can stay healthy, eligible, and committed, then we should compete for a playoff spot and hopefully make a push for the league," Saylor said. "I think we'll rely heavily on the run and maybe some short passes. We have a few elusive guys this year that if we can get in space, should do some damage."

His team needs to work on conditioning.

"We have nine committed so far and we have to be in good enough shape to play every part of every game," Saylor said. "We need leaders to emerge, we lost three good ones last year and we have to find the new ones. And finally strength, we have to get stronger, which we've made some good strides towards but we have to keep going further."



Logan Drummond expects to have another huge season for Ashley.

Montabella Hopes To Be 8-Man Contender

John Raffel Sports Scene

Montabella's football team has switched to 8-man from a lack of numbers, but still has to replace talented people from last year.

"Kyle Russell was a tough senior who did a lot for our team," coach Tim Webb said. "He played multiple positions, and was a solid contributor on offense," Webb said. "He is poised to have a great season."

Rayce Sackett is a returning starter (RB/LB).

"Rayce has great speed," Webb said.

"We're expecting a big year from him."

"Sophomore Chase Burggren played quarterback as a freshman in our win against Lakeview last year," Webb said. "He should have a good year leading the offense."

Key seniors include Jakob Perkins a returning starter (OL/DL).

"He's had a great summer and we're expecting him to lead our offensive line this year," Webb said, adding Caleb Theisen is a returning starter (WR/DB). "Caleb has great football instincts and is a great athlete. He will lead the defense and play a major role on offense."

I think we have decent overall ath-

Juniors include Dakota Dykhuis, a returning starter (WR/DB).

"Dakota led the team in interceptions and was a solid contributor on offense," Webb said. "He is poised to have a great season."

Webb added: "The first thing we're trying to improve on is our commitment level. Attending practice is not optional. So far this year we haven't had a practice with 100 percent attendance. That's the first issue that needs to be fixed. Right now we're just trying to find as many games as we can. Hopefully we can get close to nine games but we'll see."

Not having COVID restrictions has been a key.

"Football wise last year was about as bad as it gets," Webb said. "Practicing and playing with masks on was something I never want to experience again. It's really nice to be able to do things like have team dinners, camps, fistbump the players, etc."

Caleb Theisen is a returning starter (WR/DB).



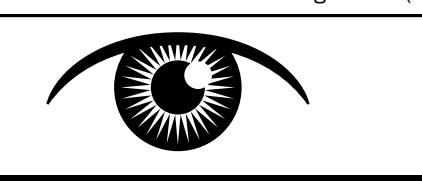
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Saginaw, Bay, Midland Area Football Teams Gearing Up For Success This Season

David Cook
Sports Scene

FRANKENMUTH AIMS TO RETURN TO FORD FIELD

It was a memorable season for the Frankenmuth football team as the Eagles overcame numerous hurdles to turn in an 11-1 record and reach the Division 5 state finals.

While a number of key players graduated from that squad, a strong nucleus returns to lead a host of younger players determined to make another deep playoff run. Senior Cole Jankowski (6-3, 190) is a returning all-conference defensive back that is in the mix at quarterback. Senior running back Cole Lindow is a returning all-conference and all-area running back that provides plenty of production on offense. Senior running back Hunter Leddy is another running back that offers big-play potential.

Paving the way for Lindow and the Eagle runners is a line anchored by returning all-conference player Alec Martin.

A solid core of veterans returns to anchor the Eagle defense. Seniors Ashton Benkert (5-10, 195) and Michael Carter are a pair of returning all-conference defensive linemen that make moving the ball on the Eagles a challenge. Senior Floyd Atwood returns in the secondary along with Jankowski and Leddy.



Bay City John Glenn returns several players on both sides of the ball this season.

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streak going. Quarterback Jack Backus (6-5, 200) is a returning all-conference quarterback with a strong arm. Backus has a pair of all-conference wideouts back to throw to in seniors Carter Kohtz and Tucker Pomranky. Up front, the line is anchored by returning all-conference lineman Danny Kowalczyk.

The Charger defense is led by all-conference defensive back Chritz. Linebackers Dawson Studebaker and Evan Chronowski are a pair of second-team, all-conference returnees. Senior defensive tackle Danny Watkins returns up front.

MILLINGTON LOOKS TO CONTINUE WIN STREAK

The Millington football team has not suffered a non-winning season since 1988 and with a large group of seniors back the Cardinals are in position to keep that streak going. Putting the offense in gear is senior quarterback Issac Slough who is a poised passer with the ability to run for yardage. Jerrando Bailey (5-11, 160) is a dynamic slot back that is dangerous in the open field. Senior Leyton Mays returns at running back and is a starter at linebacker on defense. Drew Kihn is back at a wide receiver position and is a defensive back. Logan Curtis returns at wideout and defensive end with senior Jared Legue at linebacker and senior Kadyn LaChapelle at defensive end. Senior Avery Barron returns along the offensive line along with junior Dominic Novelli.

BAY CITY CENTRAL POISED TO IMPROVE

With several talented young players returning, Bay City Central is in position to improve this season.

A healthy Kyle Sporman at quarterback has the Wolves primed for improvement on offense.

Junior Luke Zanotti (6-4, 285) is a returning all-conference player and one of the top young linemen in the state. Senior running back Jomar Griffin (5-7, 180) is poised for a breakout year running the football.

The Central defense is led by a pair of returning all-conference junior linebackers in Carlos Harris (6-1, 190) and Ben Sporman (6-0, 205).

BAY CITY WESTERN AIMS FOR WINNING SEASON

With a veteran senior class leading the way, Bay City Western has its sights set on its first winning season



Senior running back Cole Lindow is one of a number of key returnees for Frankenmuth.

since 2012.

The Warriors hit the .500 mark last year and returns veterans like running back Joe Wiedyk (5-10, 210) and cornerback Cole Melick, a pair of returning all-conference players. Defensive end Josh Charbonneau (6-1, 235), defensive lineman Trevor Cianek (5-8, 220), linebacker Trey Cianek, Patrick Ivan and Trevor Rajewski bring more experience to the field.

BAY CITY GLENN LOOKS TO BOUNCE BACK

John Glenn is aiming for a bounce back season after posting a 1-6 record.

The Bobcats have some strong returning players on the defensive side of the ball led by senior linebacker Joseph Maier (6-1, 215). Senior quarterback Wyatt Weyrowski (5-8, 185) returns to pace the offense at quarterback.

Seniors Carson Dabrowski and Mitchell Nesbitt return at wide receiver. Senior offensive tackle Cole Strieter (6-5, 260) anchors the offensive line.

SAGINAW CO-OP READY TO DEBUT

The co-op football program of Saginaw High School and Saginaw Arthur Hills kicks off this season. Senior quarterback Wyatt Weyrowski (5-8, 185) returns to pace the offense at quarterback. Seniors Carson Dabrowski and Mitchell Nesbitt return at wide receiver. Senior offensive tackle Cole Strieter (6-5, 260) anchors the offensive line.

SAGINAW NOUVEL EAGER TO HIT THE FIELD

After having to forfeit their first playoff game last season and see the season come to an end due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Saginaw Nouvel is eager to kick things off this year.

Returning all-conference linebacker Matthew Garcia (6-1, 215) leads the way for the Panthers. Senior defensive lineman Jon Tunney (6-1, 190) also earned all-conference last season. On the offensive side of the ball, junior lineman Hayden Simerson (5-10, 220) is a returning

all-conference player. Junior Beau Hausbeck and sophomore Preston Otter are in the mix at quarterback. Junior running back Ayitech Sowah leads the ground game.

SWAN VALLEY LOOKS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Swan Valley will have a young and improving team this season after turning in a 4-4 mark last season.

Freshman Colton Klein is stepping in at the quarterback spot. Senior Dee Bond (6-3, 270) anchors the offensive line. The Vikings have a pair of solid linebackers in Drew Kaecmeister and Trevor Grandy.

SAGINAW CO-OP READY TO DEBUT

The co-op football program of Saginaw High School and Saginaw Arthur Hills kicks off this season. Senior quarterback Wyatt Weyrowski (5-8, 185) returns to pace the offense at quarterback. Seniors Carson Dabrowski and Mitchell Nesbitt return at wide receiver. Senior offensive tackle Cole Strieter (6-5, 260) anchors the offensive line.

CHANGE IN STORE FOR BIRCH RUN

The Birch Run football team has a new look to it this season. Along with several new players, the Panthers have a new coach in Nick Maksimchuk.

The Panthers do return a veteran at quarterback in Jacen Torres (6-0, 185). Torres is an excellent passer who is also a threat when he runs. Cos Davis and Dom Huyck are a pair of experienced pass catchers while Riley Staley anchors the offensive line. Davis is also a ball-hawking defensive back.

Midland Hoping For Another Special Season

John Raffel
Sports Scene

Midland High football coach Eric Methner is entering his 24th season with a record of 105-34.

The 2020 season was special with an 8-1 overall record and 6-0 mark for first place the SVL Blue Division.

Key losses were Al Money (QB), Drew Johnson (RB/LB), Eli Gordon (DB/WR), Chase Mahabir (LB/OL), Ty Fegan (DB), Hunter Kruger (DL), Nick Dauer (DB), Jarrett Wagner (LS), Parker Winter (C) and Zach Wilder (OL).

"I like our overall team speed,"

Methner said. "Offensively, we have some good athletes at our skill positions. Defensively, we want to play fast, and we have some guys plugged in who are capable of doing so. We place a lot of emphasis on special teams. We have a couple of guys vying for the kicking duties. Everyone is excited to start practice. We have a nice mix of senior veterans and some very

talented juniors and sophomores.

"We are like everyone else...we need to avoid the injury bug. We have some depth, but currently it is not a strength of ours. We have the potential to be a good team. Our goal will be to practice hard each day, and try to be a better team each and every day all season long. We have some potential underclassman starters who will need to successfully make the adjustment to the pace and physicality of the varsity level. We will strive to build overall depth moving forward. Our schedule is tough. There will be great competition each week in the SVL, with multiple teams vying for the top spots."



Midland will have a big home game on Oct. 15 with Saginaw Heritage.



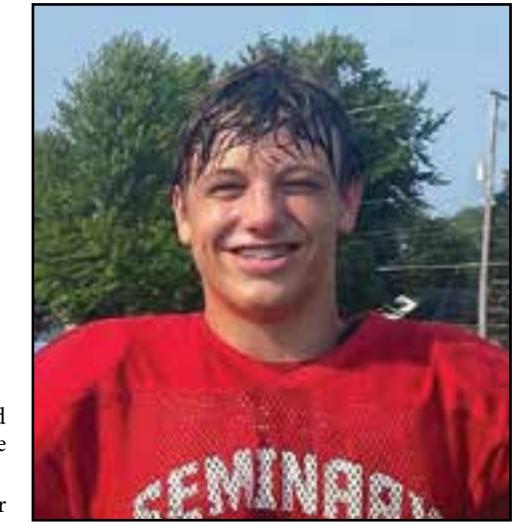
took reps at quarterback last year. It's nice to be back at that spot."

Barrie feels comfortable as a running and passing quarterback.

As a passer, "I'm a taller guy (6-4) so I'm able to see over the line pretty well," Barrie said. "I have power running the ball. I'm a basketball player as well."

The Chemics "are going to be a real good team," Barrie said. "We're a younger team. We need to get better as we go along. One of our goals is winning the district."

Senior quarterback Drew Barrie leads the way for midland's football team.



Evan Wakefield is a junior quarterback for Michigan Lutheran Seminary.

Lutheran Seminary Eyes Winning Season

John Raffel
Sports Scene

in recent years. Eli Slango was an all-conference running back."

Key players for Seminary include junior quarterback Evan Wakefield.

"This is his second year at QB so I expect much improvement," Schmugge said. "Dan Hilgendorf, senior guard-linebacker, is our team leader. Senior Hunter Frederick at guard defensive line should be much improved but was a starter on the line last year. Ryan Dabe, a junior running back-linebacker, will be an important contributor and is a versatile athlete."

Key players graduated from last season's team.

"Tobias Edgett was running back-linebacker and our best overall player," Schmugge said. "Nathan Seafert at defensive back and Drew Reif at offensive tackle were some of the biggest players we've had

Team strengths will be "our offensive line, great team chemistry and decent team speed," Schmugge said. "We will need to work on our skill positions as we lost all of those starters from last year. We also need to be in great shape as we have the lowest number of players on our team in many years."

It's going to be a tough conference, Schmugge predicted.

"Ithaca is always vying for the top position, as is Nouvel," Schmugge said. "I would hope that we can fit in toward the top of the conference, as we usually do."

Not having to deal with COVID is "super wonderful. It is best for the mental health of our athletes to just enjoy being a kid and playing a sport for fun."



Freeland Expected To Be Title Contender

John Raffel Sports Scene

It was a memorable season for Freeland coach Kevin Townsend and his players in 2020.

Just wait for 2021.

Freeland was 9-2 in 2020 and lost in the state semifinals. The two losses for Freeland were to Frankenmuth and Grand Rapids Catholic Central and both teams played for the state crown in Division 5.

"It was a pretty good season, which included a lot of COVID testing and a ton of emotional ups and downs," Townsend said, noting among the key graduates were Ben Wellnitz, "a tough kid on both sides of the ball." He was a Saginaw Dream Team linebacker and MHSFCA All-State tight end.

Easton Armstrong "was probably our most improved player last year," Townsend said, adding Cole Wiese "was one of our best offensive and defensive linemen. He stepped in and played center when our starter broke his hand on the first play of our first game. Jake Watson was another improved player at defensive line. He really bought into the weightroom and changed his diet. Nolan Vanloo is as tough as

nails as a three-sport stud and will play baseball at Lawrence Tech next season."

Senior quarterback Bryson Hukeby "will lead the team like he has for the past four years," Townsend said, adding "Jacob Kundinger is a senior running back/linebacker three-year starter at LB. Last year he was all region and we expect nothing less this season."

Alex Duley is a senior wide receiver/defensive back "who broke his ankle week five last year. He is out to prove how good he can be this season. Matt Bakos is a senior wide receiver "who is a really good possession receiver and quick," Townsend added.

Garrett Pistro "is an emotional player. He will give everything he has on every play, that is a guarantee," Townsend said, adding Nathan Leviston, as a senior running back and defensive back "is a tough cover corner. He could be the one of the best players on both sides of the ball for us."

Junior running back/defensive back Evan Vasicek "is one of the fastest kids in our program. We are excited to see him put up some yards this year," Townsend said, adding senior offensive lineman and linebacker CJ Schultz "might be the strongest kid in our program. He will definitely be playing with a chip on his shoulder this year."

Not to be forgotten is junior offensive line-man-linebacker Gabe Blanchard.

"Gabe has started at outside linebacker since he was a freshman," Townsend said. "He is tough, long, and physical."

Losing in the regionals, then the semi-finals, we have 18 seniors that are hungry. Our goal is to play Clare week 1, then Alma week 2, and so on."

Depth and senior leadership will be team strengths, Townsend said. But the team needs to take care of the ball and create turnovers."

It's a new season, thankfully, for Freeland.

"The boys are excited," Townsend said. "We played from Aug. 10 until Jan 16 last season. There was lots of extra practice and lots of ups and downs with emotions. Hopefully they stay this way."

Junior running back/defensive back Evan



Freeland's Bryson Hukeby.



Freeland's Jacob Kundinger.

Ionia Hopeful For Strong Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Ionia football coach Chad Rhynard is looking to overcome the challenges his team had to endure with the restrictions from COVID in 2021.

"It was a difficult year to get much installed with the restrictions, but our players worked hard throughout the year and helped to lay the groundwork to what we hope will be an improved 2021 season," said Rhynard, who graduated some key people. "Blake Bookie was a three-year starting quarterback who graduated. His arm will certainly be missed. Aiden Clute was a two-year offensive

line-defensive line starter and his toughness will be missed as well."

Trevor Tooker is a senior running back safety "who will be a three-year starter and will slide from slot to running back this year," Rhynard said. "He is a very well-rounded player whom we will lean heavily on this year on both sides of the ball."

"We want to win more games. Ahead of that, though, I'd like to see our team turn the corner with the physicality we play with this year in each game."

Having a preseason like this with the lessening of COVID restrictions "has been fantastic," Rhynard said. "His size and speed give us excitement for the potential of player he may be this year."

Senior Austin Hillabrant is a quarterback-linebacker.

Trevor Tooker will be a key player for Ionia.



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Senior quarterback Zak Ahern heads up what will be a potent air game at Rockford.

West Side Area Football Teams Feature Plenty Of Talent

David Cook Sports Scene

ROCKORD PASSING GAME SET TO TAKE OFF

With one of the top quarterbacks in the state and the arrival of a big-play receiver in the offseason, the Rockford football team is prepared for lit off.

Senior quarterback Zac Ahern (6-3, 200) is a polished passer who turned in a big junior season. Junior Alex McLean is a slippery target in the passing game and the Rams picked up a big addition during the summer when former Lowell all-conference receiver Tyler Vroman (6-3, 185) transferred in for his senior season. Vroman is a tall, talented receiver who has committed to Army for his college football.

Rockford has another Division 1

player on the roster is senior defensive end Kade Kostus (6-3, 245) who provides impact play on the defensive side of the ball. Senior safety Samuel Watts (6-2, 210) is another Ram with college potential.

The Rams have a large and versatile team with plenty of experience and will again be in position for a deep post-season run.

DEFENSE, LINE PLAY KEY FOR LOWELL

Lowell with lean on an experienced defense and strong line play as it looks to contend for the title in the rugged Ottawa-Kent White Division.

Senior defensive end Josh Rau (6-3, 215) earned all-state honors and returns to anchor the defense. Senior Carter Blough (6-2, 210) is back at middle linebacker.

On the offensive side of the ball, junior tackle Ian George (6-6, 260) returns to anchor the offensive line. Junior Carson Crace (5-11, 185) returns at linebacker and fullback on offense.

GREENVILLE LOOKING TO BOUCHE BACK

The Greenville football team is looking for a bounce-back season after turning in an 0-6 record last season.

The Yellowjackets are building the defense around senior defensive end Carter Merritt (6-5, 215) who brings good size and quickness to the position. Junior Kameron Cooper (5-10, 200) looks to step in at middle linebacker.

On offense, senior quarterback AJ Fox (6-2, 185) will lead the attack with junior running back Isaac Dailey primed to head up the ground game.

that has a small core of guys that have really embraced the struggles of the last year. They haven't given excuses, they show up and work hard and that will reflect on the field. The players that have shown up this summer have done very well. We have gotten better as players and as a team because of their commitment to the process of improvement. What I'm impressed about most with this team is that they aren't looking at who we don't have, they are working hard and appreciating what we do have."

Wotta



Carrollton Looking For Championship Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Carrollton's football team is coming off a disappointing 2020 season after having to put up with COVID and other distractions.

But coach Nathan Wotta is promising things are going to be very different in 2021.

"With the distractions and the mental and emotional strain of the COVID shortened season, the start and stops, the restrictions, all made for a very difficult season on top of playing in a very talented and difficult TVC schedule," Wotta said. "The shortened time frames and the rush to prepare really caused the coaches and players to feel rushed and not spend the usual time to install, prepare, and care for our student-athletes. We were thankful to have a season, but it did not meet the expectations that we had set for ourselves."

But there is plenty of talent returning for Carrollton.

Senior DJ Voltz is a returning All-State performer.

"His role has changed this year, and he has embraced his new role on the team and is doing a great job of working with his teammates and holding himself and them accountable," Wotta said. "Arthur

Francisco Flores will start his third year as an offensive lineman on the varsity team. A very bright player with a very high football IQ, he is the anchor of our offensive line and is a 'coach on the field' type guy. This is a team

schedule is incredibly demanding each week. You need to bring a well-prepared and well-executed game plan every week if you want to compete in this league. You can look at any division in the TVC and the schools which are members and you recognize names of the programs there because of their rich traditions of success. The TVC is such a tough conference, with very good players and some great coaches, if you find yourself at the top of your division, you have really accomplished something."

It's been refreshing for Wotta to go through a preseason without COVID concerns.

Wotta

team's

strengths are being driven by competitive ness.

"I'm hoping that also creates a more demanding culture of grittiness," he said. "We really need to continue to work on communication. Players are starting to understand how important it is off the field, and I'm hoping that it translates to what they do and say on the field."

Top to bottom, the TVC

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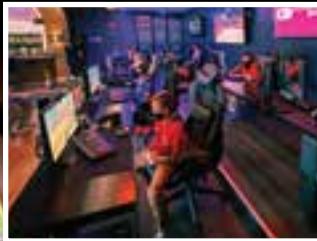
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