

**HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE**  
KEEPING KIDS IN THE NEWS

555 E Downie St  
Alma, MI 48801  
(517) 202-1808

[www.highschoolsportsscene.com](http://www.highschoolsportsscene.com)

- **Publisher**  
Randy Miniard  
randy@highschoolsportsscene.com  
517-202-1808
- **Editor**  
Scott Keyes  
midmichigansportsscene@yahoo.com  
989-890-4036
- **High School Liaison**  
Paul Hornak  
paul@highschoolsportsscene.com  
989-331-1168
- **Northern Michigan Sales**  
Scott Salowich  
ssalowich@yahoo.com  
313-408-4410
- **Editorial**  
Scott Keyes, John Raffel, David Cook,  
Butch Harmon, Jeff Chaney,  
Scott Salowich, Dan Strickrandt
- **Photographers**  
Chuck Prikasky, Alan Holben,  
Zip Widman, Mike Schutt,  
Russ Pierce, Skip Traynor,  
Bob Campbell, Gary Williams,  
Phil Niekerk, Don Goostrey

Vol. 8, Issue 81 • August/September 2016

## CONTENTS

- 4 | P-W's Smith Eyes Career Rushing Record
- 5 | Rockford, Greenville Loaded
- 6 | Ithaca Back For More
- 7 | Ithaca's Woodcock Gearing Up For Senior Season
- 8 | Alma's Cornejo Has Big Game
- 9 | Sundance
- 10 | Freeland Continues To Grow Condition
- 11 | New Coaches Take Over Chesaning, Swan Valley
- 12 | Meet MLS Star Casey Williams
- 13 | Mendoza Family A Staple In Swan Valley
- 14 | M-P's Big Man On Campus
- 15 | Southern Region Report
- 16 | LCC's Field Of Dreams
- 18 | The Northern Report
- 20 | Returning Stat Leaders
- 21 | Area Conferences Gearing Up For Change
- 22 | Top Seniors To Watch
- 23 | Top Juniors To Watch
- 24 | Shiawassee County Preview
- 25 | Clinton County Preview
- 26 | Ingham County Preview
- 27 | Eaton County Preview
- 28 | Montcalm County Preview
- 29 | Gratiot County Preview
- 30 | Isabella County Preview
- 31 | Mecosta County Preview
- 32 | Ionia County Preview
- 33 | Genesee County Preview
- 34 | Saginaw County Preview
- 35 | Bay County Preview
- 36 | Midland County Preview
- 37 | Kent County Preview
- 38 | Clare / Gladwin Counties Preview
- 39 | Cooper Rush Leads Way For Cmu
- 40 | College Football Previews
- 43 | Detroit Lions Preview
- 44 | Shaheen

Find Us On  
**facebook**



### PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Hey Sports Fans. It's another great day at Sports Scene! I have to admit, starting a new year is always like a rebirth for me. You need those two months of vacation to catch your breath and reflect what transpired the previous year. Now it's time to get back to work bringing you the best possible high school sports coverage we can.

That's just what we do.

However, I need to take a minute to talk about someone that has meant a great deal to the Sports Scene team over the past six years.

When the staff decided to branch into the Lansing market, we knew we needed to find an individual that could do amazing work and was passionate about the kind of work he put out. Lucky for us Alan Holben was that guy.

For you sports fans around Lansing Catholic, Mason and Okemos you know Alan on a first name basis. Over the years, Alan was someone who was more than just a colleague within the magazine; he became a friend, a mentor, and one of the giants in the high school photography game.

Sadly, Alan and his lovely wife retired and they are beginning their next phase of their life in St. George, Utah. I am sad to see Alan leave, because not only was he great at what he did with a camera, but he also provided stability that helped Sports Scene grow in the Lansing market. So Alan, thank you for all of your hard work and dedication and don't forget that the state wrestling finals are only eight months away. We could definitely use your help those two weekends.

### Football Has Arrived

O.K. football fans, this is the issue that you have been waiting for: Sports Scene's Eighth Annual Football Preview. The complexion this season has changed a little bit as Ithaca, who is 83-1 over the last six seasons is not being talked about as much in previous seasons heading into a new season. Coach Terry Hessbrook likes flying under the radar, but you can guarantee the Yellowjackets will be right there in the end battling for another playoff berth when all is said and done.

### Smith on the Verge

Don't be surprised if Pewamo-Westphalia's Jared Smith makes history again this season as he eyes the career rushing mark for Michigan. A year ago, he set the single-season mark rushing for nearly 3,300 yards, while helping his team to the Division 7 finals. If Smith remains healthy, he is someone who can carry a team to a state championship.

### Lastly...

Here are three names to pay close attention to this season:

**Mikey Lynn:** The former Lansing Sexton quarterback has now found a new home at Lansing Catholic. Lynn is the real deal and should help the Cougars make another playoff push in 2016.

**Joey Bentley:** The Ithaca junior takes over for Jake Smith, who is headed to Harvard to continue his college career. Bentley has all the tools to make over the position that has been the key to the Yellowjackets success in recent years. Some of the people he is following include Alex Niznak, Travis Smith, David Brown and Jake Smith. All quarterbacks who were instrumental in the success of the Ithaca program.

**Robi Stuart:** The premiere lineman in mid-Michigan, the Saginaw Nouvel junior is big, strong and has very soft feet for a big guy. Stuart will play his college football at Central Michigan University.



Randy Miniard  
Publisher/Owner  
517-202-1808  
randy@highschoolsportsscene.com



**REGISTER NOW FOR DANCE & TUMBLING AGES 3 & UP**

REGISTER ONLINE TODAY! • [WWW.DANCEDDD.ORG](http://WWW.DANCEDDD.ORG) 989-46DANCE

# The Many Benefits of Dance

Many people did not have the opportunity to attend dance school as children. You are not alone if you did not have this opportunity as a child. However you may want this opportunity for your child without understanding why.

Dance education must be thought of as any other form of learning. It should be understood that learning to dance is part of a person's education and not just something to do with kids on Saturdays or after school. People often have said to me, "I don't expect my child to be a professional dancer..." No, but that is no reason to keep a child from studying dance. After all, a child studies math with no intention of becoming an accountant. We all need to learn how to add. And we all need to learn music, without the thought of becoming a professional musician. We all need to learn geography without ever becoming world explorers.

In dance class, students progress with each lesson. Students taking classes more than once a week do make faster progress. But the once a week student will find the fun and self-satisfaction which comes with learning to master steps and moving in a controlled stylistic manner (in other words, learning to look like a ballerina or hip hop dancer).

Dance training has many benefits. Students learn to be more aware of themselves and what is happening around them. They learn to control their bodies. They learn to discipline both mind and body. Dancers have better posture and move more gracefully. Dancers learn the importance of team work. The basic body awareness learned in dance classes will move into every aspect of their lives and can be especially helpful in other athletic pursuits.

Dance students are sometimes the most busy, active students on school campuses (elementary, junior, high school and college). They learn to budget their time because they know that their school lessons are important, but so are their dance lessons. So everything must be worked into that little bit of time each

afternoon after school. Because of this and the physical activity involved, dancers tend to have more stamina. And after all, it is people with stamina who win life's races, battles and challenges.

Dance class gives an appreciation for all the arts because dance class should make the student aware of music and art. And through an introduction to the stories of ballet, stimulate an interest in literature.

Parents (or students) may think their children are simply too old to start if they are already in upper elementary, middle school or even high school. This is simply not the case. You are NEVER too old to start dance training. Local dance school DuHadway Dance Dimensions has classes for pre-teens, middle school and high school age dancers along with their young children's classes. The best way to find out more is to contact DDD about registration for their fall classes.



**REGISTER NOW FOR DANCE & TUMBLING AGES 3 & UP**  
REGISTER ONLINE TODAY!  
[WWW.DANCEDDD.ORG](http://WWW.DANCEDDD.ORG) 989-46DANCE



**Mid-Michigan  
Dental Excellence**

306 North State Street  
Alma, MI 48801  
(989) 463 - 4036



[www.midmichigandentalexcellence.com](http://www.midmichigandentalexcellence.com) • Find us on Facebook!

# P-W's Record-Breaking Back Ready For Another Huge Season

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

It would be challenging for Jared Smith to come anywhere near his record-breaking 2015 season for Pewamo-Westphalia, but he's going to give it a shot in 2016.

In the Division 7 semifinals last season against Loyola, Smith became the first player in state history to surpass the 3,000-yard rushing mark in a season. He also set a state record with two more scores for a season total of 52.

His sophomore season wasn't too shabby either with 2,140 rushing yards in sparking the Pirates to the semifinals where it lost to Loyola.

The Pirates seemed on the verge of a 14-0 season and state title the following week at Ford Field when it shot out to a 16-0 lead over Ishpeming, including a 25-yard scoring run by Smith earlier in the game. Ishpeming scored 22 straight points for the 22-16 win.

Smith finished with MHSAA season records of 3,243 rushing yards and 53 rushing TDs.

Against Ishpeming, he had 149 yards on 27 carries for 5.5 per try.

"The key was his overall work ethic and how he attacks the game and the opportunity," P-W coach Jeremy Miller said. "He was very really resilient. The team did a great job of embracing his success and their success, as well. They celebrated what was going on with him, as being a part of their accomplishments as well. Jared is just a very humble guy. You'd never know he had the year he had last year with the way

he attacked the offseason. He's been a real leader. We're looking for big things out of him, for sure.

"He's been blessed with a tremendous amount of natural ability. He's 6-foot, 200 pounds. He's a tremendous athlete. He's fast. His work ethic is second to none. He works hard. It's a good mix of God given natural ability and that work ethic and vision to go along with it."

Miller was hoping for 14 wins last season.

Maybe this year?

"I think the thing I'll remember from last season more than anything is how resilient the team was in overcoming injuries, an unbelievable amount of injuries," Miller said. "We didn't start the same offensive line. I think more than two games in a row, all regular season. We kept plugging new kids into those spots and the next guy-up-kind of mentality. It all jelled together. We got some guys back healthy when the playoffs came around. That just made us stronger because a lot of those guys had playing time. They had a really special year."

Miller spent a lot of time working with his team during the offseason.

"If you're not getting better in the offseason, someone else will," he said. "We try to stress that to the kids that we expect them to be there and have (the weight room) open when they want to get up there and lift."

Many observers think this could be the year the Pirates grab the state title.

"We have a lot of guys back from that team last year and a lot of guys who, due to injuries, got a lot of play-

ing time," Miller said, adding that prior to a preseason scrimmage in Ithaca. "I'm interest to see how they all come together and where we're at against quality programs like Ionia and Central Montcalm."

But Miller's happy he has Jared Smith on his side for another year.

"I think he's going to have a great year," Miller said. "We bring back some pieces on the offensive line. We're looking for big things from him. Jared has some company in the backfield this year. We have Bryce Thelen, who actually, because of injury had to play guard and tight end for us. But I'll tell you what, he's very good running back and will play full-back for us. We have a sophomore, Cameron Wirth, who is with us this year and will give us tremendous depth at that tailback position.

"You'll see a heavy dose of Jared again but he has some buddies back there with him that are very capable. We're equally excited to see what they can do."

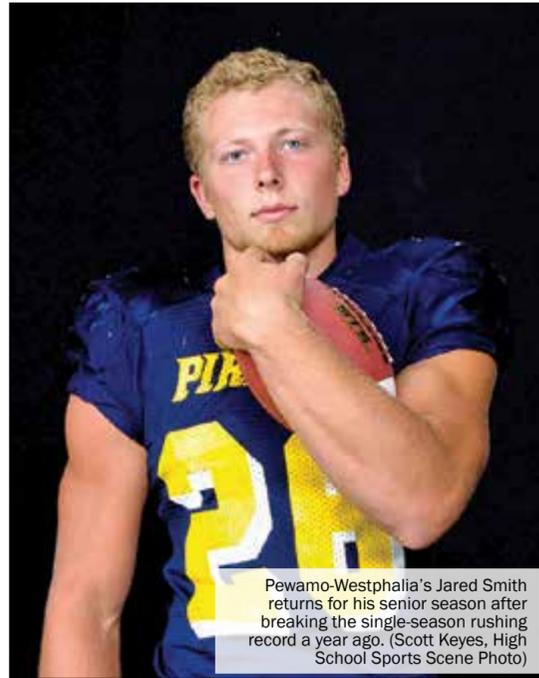
Smith was moved up to the varsity halfway through his freshman season. He admitted that his didn't quite expect to accomplish what he did.

"To put up all those yards, like that, you can't predict that," he said. "It all worked out. I had a great line and just a great season overall."

But during the preseason, Smith anticipated it could be a special year.

"Just the way the line was working together, I knew we had a special line," he said. "After the first game, it all came together. It was working great then and continued on all year."

The Loyola game was special in 2015.



Pewamo-Westphalia's Jared Smith returns for his senior season after breaking the single-season rushing record a year ago. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)

"They knocked us out the previous year and I had close to 200 yards that game," Smith said. "Just getting to (the finals) was a great accomplishment for us. To come up short really sucked. It pushed us to work hard in the offseason. We have (18) returning starters. The experience coming back will be a huge factor. To have that many kids coming back with experience will give us a head start on anybody."

Smith said he doesn't feel any added pressure about this year and agrees with his coach that the Pirates have plenty of depth.

"We can pass too, so I'm not too

worried about it," Smith said.

He runs track and did plenty of conditioning during the summer and winter.

"Overall, there's probably 30 guys in there for weight-lifting sessions every week," he said. "We had a great turnout that wanted to come."

Smith visited Central Michigan and some state Division II schools, plus Columbia in New York with the Ivy League.

"If I had the opportunity, I'd love to play college football," he said. "But my main focus is on this season."



# Talent Galore Floods Fields In Rockford, Greenville

David Cook  
Sports Scene

Recruiting success in your home state is an important key to success for any college football program. The Central Michigan Chippewas under head coach John Bonamego have made recruiting within the state of Michigan a priority, especially recruiting in the mid-Michigan area. Bonamego has enjoyed great recruiting success Greenville and has also worked hard recruiting at nearby Rockford.

When it comes to the college talent that is being produced in Greenville, Central Michigan has put up its own border around the city of Greenville. After signing offensive lineman Steve Eipper out of Greenville in February of 2016, the Chippewas have already received commitments from a pair of Yellowjackets that will be graduating from Greenville next spring.

Senior tight end Keegan Cossou (6-5, 230) and senior linebacker Evan Plate (6-3, 220) have both committed to playing their college football for Central Michigan.

to commit to Central Michigan.

Central Michigan was the first Division 1 team to offer Cossou, and the relationship he built with the coaching staff was a big reason why he committed to the Chippewas.

Plate, whose older brother Eric is a defensive back at Grand Valley State, also had looks from Big 10 teams like Illinois and Purdue, along with other Mid-American Conference rivals of Central Michigan. Like his teammate, Plate also put plenty of stock in his relationship with the Central Michigan coaching staff in making his commitment.



The Central Michigan coaching staff is also setting its sights on another upcoming talent from down the road in Rockford. Rockford junior quarterback Jason Whittaker (6-5, 200) received his first official offer last December and that offer was from Central Michigan.

Since then, Whittaker's recruiting has taken off and schools like Michigan and Michigan State are looking at Whittaker who camped at Michigan and Michigan State this summer and also attended the Sound Mind Sound Body Football Academy at Wayne State where he met Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh.

Rockford also has two other talented juniors that will be attracting college recruiters in defensive back Marcus Remtema (6-0, 185) and offensive center Cody Carone (6-3, 307).

Cossou, who is one of the top tight ends in the state, led the Yellowjackets with 40 receptions last season for 582 yards and five touchdowns last fall. Cossou was recruited by a number of Division 1 schools like Michigan, Michigan State and Minnesota before deciding

Both the Rockford and Greenville football teams enter the season with high expectations as they begin the 2016 season. (Alan Holben and Jamie McNich, High School Sports Scene Photos)

ISN'T IT TIME  
**YOUR** CUSTOMERS  
CAN READ  
YOUR PUBLICATION  
ON THE  
INTERNET?

Zoom  
ZoomPubs  
1-866-252-4449

**Evans Eye Centers**  
Dr. Lawrence M. Evans  
OPHTHALMOLOGIST

120 E. Warwick, Alma, MI. 48801 (989) 463-EYES (3937)  
1203 S. Mission, Mt Pleasant, MI. (989) 775-EYES (3937)  
102 S. Third St, Carson City, MI. (989) 584-3111

**Tim McCormick**  
Sales  
749 W. Main  
Lowell, MI 49331  
Phone: (616) 421-7615  
Cell: (616) 717-3686  
Fax (616) 897-5007  
tmccormick@grandautofamily.com

**Wittenbach GMC**  
GMC  
CERTIFIED PRE-OWNED

Supporting The Red Arrows Since 1988  
[www.wittenbachgmc.com](http://www.wittenbachgmc.com)

**JIM NAVARRE**  
Central Michigan's Fastest Growing Ford and Lincoln Mercury Dealership

**Supporting Gratiot County's Youth for Over 25 Years!**  
Our Hard Working Sales Staff.  
Bob Bechill Jim Britting Tom Wesolek TJ Hodges

M-46 • Alma • Between Alma & St. Louis • (989) 681-5776 • [www.jimnavarreford.com](http://www.jimnavarreford.com)  
We Service What We Sell, Just Ask Our Many Satisfied Customers!!!

**True Value**  
START RIGHT. START HERE.™  
PAINT SPECIAL

**ALMA**  
Alma True Value  
102 W. Superior Street  
Phone (989) 463-4921

**CARSON CITY**  
Barnes True Value Hardware  
132 W. Main Street  
Phone (989) 584-6411

**EDMORE**  
Edmore True Value  
418 E. Main Street  
Phone (989) 427-5637

**TINNEY**  
Proudly Serving Since 1954

11249 West Carson City Rd. | Greenville, MI | (616) 788-2338 | [www.tinneyhasit.com](http://www.tinneyhasit.com)



# Ithaca Set For Challenging Schedule, But Could Have Enough Talent To Make Another Run

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

Is this the season to stop Ithaca's state championship-winning football program? Nine regular-season opponents hope so, but they can't afford to be too confident, yet.

It's been a stunning run for the Yellowjackets since they were 11-2 and in 2009, the last time they suffered a regular-season loss. They then proceeded to go 14-0 in five of the next six seasons for the Division 6 state title. Their only blemish in that stretch was a 22-12 loss to Monroe St. Mary Catholic Central. But last year, an Ithaca team with a lot of returning starters regained the title with another 14-0 run and 27-20 win over Clinton in the title game.

It could be a challenging year considering, as Coach Terry Hessbrook puts it, "we lost a great deal" from graduation.

"We had a tremendous senior class," he said. "Eight of those were three-year varsity players. On paper, you look at it and could say 'holy cow.' We lost a quarterback, running back, a lineman, defensive lineman, linebacker and defensive backs. It looks pretty bleak."

But once his team takes the field, Hessbrook might be tempted to feel a little more optimistic about things.

"On offense, we have eight players that played a significant amount of time last year," Hessbrook said. "They may not have all been starters. Only three were starters. But they play significant amounts of the game and played at a high level, were members of our special teams and members of our backup team which, during the regular season, got plenty of action. That's been the secret we've had over the years. A lot of players get time as sophomores in a backup role, so when they're juniors, they're ready to go."

Greg Woodcock is a three-year returning player at linebacker to spark the Ithaca defense. Kyle Weaver is another three-year varsity player at wide receiver and defensive back.

From last year, six sophomores from the varsity are up as juniors, including Joey Bentley, a quarterback and defensive back; Seth

Davis, a receiver and linebacker; Trey Chapin, a receiver and defensive back; Nik Jones as a lineman, who started 14 games as a sophomore last year; Colton Campbell at defensive back and wide receiver and kicker Adam Culp, who booted a school record 44-yard field goal last season.

"He also hit one in the semifinals in the snow against Traverse City St. Francis that put us ahead for the first time," Hessbrook said. "You take those six kids who were sophomores last year and put them with the 12 seniors that have coming back, then it's like you have 18 kids returning. Granted, they weren't all starters, but they got to see significant playing time."

It could be the most challenging nine-game schedule Ithaca has seen in a long time.

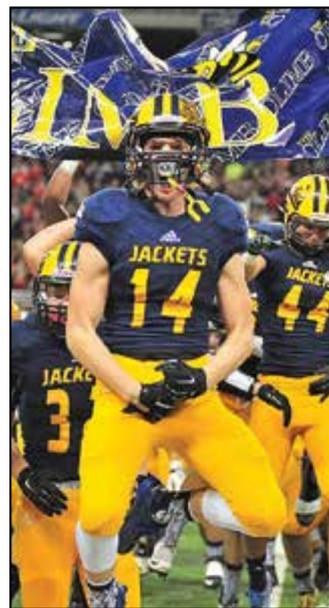
It opens with Clare and closes with Shepherd.

"Clare is a perennial powerhouse in Division 5 every year," Hessbrook said, and "Jack Pine champs about every year. You can count on them being very well prepared and they have a ton of kids returning. We get into our conference which has changed drastically. We lost (former league members) Merrill, Carrolton and Breckenridge. We added Pinconning, which is going to be a long trip. We added Hemlock and Ovid-Elsie. Both teams have been successful in the TVC Central. Our schedule got significantly tougher."

"We close with Shepherd, which is always a rivalry game," Hessbrook said.

Ithaca continues to play in the TVC West, and winning the conference title is the first objective, along with making the playoffs and having a long run. But Hessbrook realizes that opponents aren't going to feel sorry for the Yellowjackets losing a lot of starters. All nine opponents during the regular season realize what a feather in their cap it would be to defeat Ithaca. The Yellowjackets enter the season with a 55-game regular season winning streak.

"Our kids realize we'll make somebody's day if they knock us off," Hessbrook said. "We have to take care of business and prepare ourselves each day. There's a reason we've been able to do what we did over the last seven years."



The new look Yellowjackets are a young squad, but will make a lot of noise as Ithaca enters the 2016 season with an 83-1 record over the last six years. (Files Photos, High School Sports Scene)

# Woodcock Seeks Banner Senior Season At Ithaca

John Raffel  
Sports Scene

Plenty will be expected and needed from Ithaca's senior offensive lineman and linebacker Greg Woodcock (5-10, 235) this season.

But Woodcock is confident that he's ready to deliver.

He's one of the key returning starters for the Ithaca Yellowjackets who are defending Division 6 state champions and have won five state crowns in the last six years.

It's his third varsity season -- linebacker has been his main position, but he also starts at offensive line.

Woodcock made his debut for the 2014 Yellowjackets who were one win shy of their fifth straight state title and 14-0 season, falling 22-12 to Monroe St. Mary Catholic in the title game.

But the experience as a sophomore for Woodcock prepared him for major challenges as a junior when Ithaca would go 14-0 for another state crown.

"As a sophomore on the varsity, that was a little nerve racking for me," Woodcock said. "I thought we played well, but just fell a little short in the state championship game. We overcome a lot of adversity that year. It was heartbreaking to lose. At the same time, it was a lot of relief because of the streak."

As a player last season, "I improved a lot. Pretty much the whole team was there my sophomore year to help me when I needed it," Woodcock said. "I improved quite a bit (last year). If I was there for the initial hit there would be about four or five other guys that would help us bring him down. But wrapping up would be what I probably improved on most."

Woodcock was first-team all-conference TVC honors and earned other honors from area newspapers.

When the season ended at Ford Field, Woodcock was like hundreds of Ithaca players before him, preparing for the 2016 campaign with plenty of offseason conditioning.

The Yellowjackets would love to see Woodcock have his best year. But he's anticipating plenty of

support from talented teammates.

"We lost a lot of seniors, so we have to find people ready to step up and take over their spots," Woodcock said. "But this year, I think we'll have the fastest defense in a long time. I think we're fast all-around the board. We'll do some special things and I think we'll be really good this year. I think this is the hungriest in the last two years anyone has been. We're ready to do some different things."

Woodcock returns to his same positions and sees his role for Ithaca as being similar to last year.

"I need to step up a little more," he said. "I'm a leader this year. We don't have the guys we had last year to do it for us. We have to step up and make our own history and legacy this year."

Despite the graduation of several players, many are back with playing experience.

"It will be interesting to see what we can do with those guys this year," Woodcock said. "It's going to be a great season. We're going to go out on top. I wouldn't want it any other way for my senior year."

Woodcock will also be used as an offensive guard.

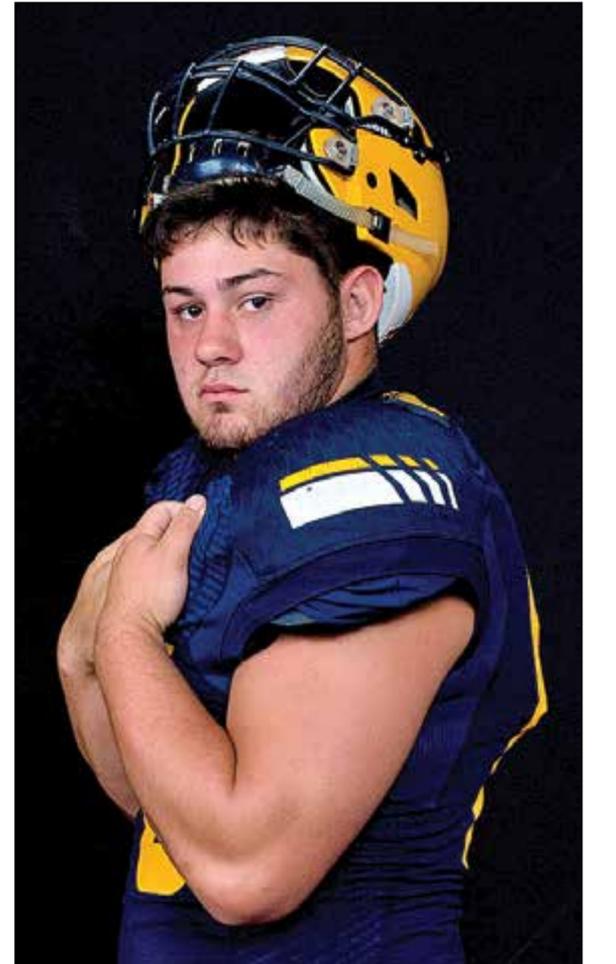
"My strength is when I get to pull and lead the running back through the hole," he said. "It's like I'm the running back without the ball and get to hit people."

He's focusing on his senior football season, obviously, but Woodcock is also looking forward to college.

"This summer was kind of crazy," he said. "I went through a lot of camps others do during their senior season. I went to Mount Hope and went to their one-day prospect camp. They said to keep up the good work and they would talk to me after the season. Adrian (College) has talked to me. They invited me for a game-day visit. Other than those two, it's been kind of quiet for now."

It won't be an easy regular-season schedule, Woodcock agrees.

"Nothing for us will change," Woodcock said. "We have to prepare mentally and physically for them. We also have a target on their back. When we put that jersey on with Jackets across it, everyone will give us their best shot."



Ithaca's Greg Woodcock recorded more than 100 tackles as a junior for Ithaca. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)

**GRATIOT OIL & LUBE** **PENNZOIL**  
"Not Just Oil, Pennzoil!"  
1217 E. Center St., Ithaca  
Hours: M-F 8-6, Sat. 8-1 **989-875-7705**

**MISENHOLDER WELDING, INC.**  
John Misenhelder  
Doug Harkness  
1203 S. Country Farm Dr.  
Ithaca, MI 48847  
Shop (989) 875-7778  
Fax (989) 875-7768  
www.misenhelderwelding.com

**THE HEARTHSTONE OVEN**  
Where it's homemade... from scratch!  
 **BAKERY & CAFE**  
Specializing in homemade baked goods such as cinnamon rolls, breads, cookies, fruit pies, cream pies and more!  
We have a full breakfast menu that we serve from 6:30AM - 11:00AM.  
We offer soups, sandwiches, and salads for lunch which is served from 10:30AM - 3:00PM.  
We also sell homemade frozen meals to take a bite!  
126 S. Pine River • Ithaca, MI 48847 • 989-875-OVEN (6836)

**Good Luck Yellowjackets!**  
**MERCHANT EXCAVATING INC.**  
989.875.3691  
• Septic Systems • Foundation Work • Demolition Work  
• Trucking & Delivery of Sand, Gravel & Topsoil • Snowplowing  
4040 N. State Road, Alma, MI 48801  
PO Box 185, Ithaca, MI 48847  
**DAVE MERCHANT** 989-763-4373  
**ED TAYLOR** 989-763-4446  
Dave@merchantexcavating.com Ed@merchantexcavating.com

**Good Luck This Season Yellowjackets!**  
**S&S Remodeling**  
Denny Smith  
(989) 875-3357 - (989) 330-0964  
25 years experience  
REMODELING CONSTRUCTION ROOFING ADDITIONS

**Shaw's Services & Sales, Inc.**  
**COMPLETE AUTO & TRUCK REPAIR**  
989-875-3744  
1244 E. Center St., Ithaca, MI 48847 shawsservice@yahoo.com

**ITHACA CHEVROLET**  
1031 E. Center Street  
Ithaca, Michigan  
Phone 989 875-4181  
Fax 989 875-4841  
www.ithacachevy.com  
**Ithaca's Home Of The \$9.95 Oil Change!**  
When Vehicle Purchased From Ithaca Chevy





Freeland's Max Kubiak returns to lead the Falcons ground game this season. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)

# Freeland's Football Tradition Grows

Scott Keyes Sports Scene

Freeland High's 33 football players are aiming to take the next step after last season's 25-22 Division 5 state playoff defeat against Lansing Catholic Central -- even the 17 teammates who were sophomores a year ago on the junior varsity.

"In the playoffs, we always move up each sophomore from the JV and suit them up with the varsity," explained Coach Kevin Townsend. "And so every

member of this team knows what that loss felt like, and they're hungry."

At the same time, to keep perspective, he tells his team, "We can only control what we do ourselves. We don't get to control everybody else."

Freeland finished at 11-1, defeating foes by an average of nearly 30 points. This success followed upon a 10-2 record the previous season, which also concluded with a narrow loss, 43-35 to Menominee.

Coach Townsend, in his 11th season, is confident the school's growing tradition will continue this fall, even with the loss of 17 starters to graduation. The junior varsity compiled a 7-2 record in 2015 and is sending top-notch prospects to the varsity.

A key asset for the Falcons is that one of the five returning starters is quarterback Jake Kelsey (5-9, 165). Freeland is a classic grind-it-out running team that attempts, on average, fewer than 10 passes per game. Still, the coach takes pride that Kelsey threw only one interception last fall, and he looks forward to continued wise management of the offense. Other returnees are Drew Bakos (6-3, 217) at tight end and outside

linebacker and Chase Crook (6-0, 218), a two-way tackle. The coach's son, Zach Townsend (6-3, 170) is a wideout and defensive back, while Max Kubiak (5-11-190) is a veteran runner and DB.

Among the juniors, Coach Townsend said Falcons fans should look forward to 230-pound powerhouse Gahret Metiva, who proved himself late in his sophomore year at full-back. He also will man the key middle linebacker spot.

Main challenges on the all-ways-tough Tri-Valley Conference Central schedule will come from Swan Valley and Chesaning, along with Frankenmuth in the TVC East

# Beal City Ready For Another Huge Football Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Brad Gross is starting his second season as Beal City's football coach, and the Aggies could again prove to be a state power.

It's a team that has made 16 straight playoff appearances and is likely to do so again.

The Aggies were 8-1 during the regular season last year, but had an unusually early exit from the state playoffs after only two games, falling 48-13 to eventual state champion Muskegon Catholic Central in the district finals.

"I thought we had a successful year," Gross said. "We only lost two games. I think you

learn new things every year. There's things that maybe you want to do maybe differently. We lost to the eventual state champions, so you can't be too disappointed."

As usual, the Aggies graduated a lot of seniors, but have many returning players ready for their last season.

"I consider us predominately a pretty young team," Gross said. "The guys don't have a ton of varsity experience. We might go through a few learning curves here and there. I think we have the athletes to do some good things. We have to keep getting better every day."

Gross expects to have speed and athleticism.

"We have some fast guys and I think our offensive and defensive line will be a strength," he said. "We have some guys up front that can play. We have a little bit of depth this year. I got off the phone with somebody from (Mount Pleasant) Sacred Heart. They have 30 guys in their program. Varsity and JV; we have 60. The numbers alone will help us in the long run."

Top returning players include Kyle Yuncker at running back, Tristan Smith as an offensive lineman and Dale Farrell as an offensive lineman and inside linebacker.

The regular season schedule is challenging. The Aggies start off with old rivals Sacred Heart and Clare, then go into the High-

land Conference five-week schedule and end with two larger school non-conference rivals Morley Stanwood and Chippewa Hills.

"We're looking at our schedule as probably being as tough as it could be," Ross said. "The Highland Conference will be highly competitive. A lot of teams will be right there. A lot of teams have a lot of people back. Sacred Heart is a rival game in week one. Clare is always a good test. Last year we beat them in overtime. That was a great game. (Morley Stanwood and Chippewa Hills) are two quality opponents at the end of the season."

"If we can get through our schedule and stay healthy and make the playoffs, that's our goal and we'll see what happens from there."



The Beal City football team had an early exit from the playoffs a year ago, losing to Muskegon Catholic. The Aggies are primed from a strong run in 2016. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)

**WIDEMAN APPRAISAL SERVICE**  
Full Line Of Appraisals

1002 E. Center St. Ithaca, MI 48847  
Office: (989) 875-4544  
James J. Wideman Owner  
Service (989) 875-4838

www.widemanappraisal.com  
E-mail: jim@widemanappraisal.com

Check Out More Photos At **highschoolsports-scene.com**

**RAIL TRAIL MOTOR CO.**  
Saginaw County's Newest Dealer On M-46 In Shields!  
8235 Gratiot Rd. | Saginaw, MI 48609 | 989-401-9191

 2010 Chevy Silverado Four Wheel Drive \$22,900	 2009 GMC Sierra 1500 Four Wheel Drive, 6 Seats \$16,900	 2012 Ford F-150 XTR Automatic \$19,900
 2012 Chevy Silverado LTZ Bluetooth, MP3 \$23,900	 2011 Dodge Journey All Wheel Drive Bluetooth, MP3 \$11,900	 2014 Jeep Grand Cherokee 4WD, Trailer Wiring \$25,900
 2011 Buick Lacrosse Bluetooth, Satellite Radio \$11,900	 2011 Chevy Equinox All Wheel Drive \$13,450	 2008 Jeep Commander Four Wheel Drive, MP3 \$7,900

www.usedcarsinsaginaw.com

# New Lothrop Faces A Double Challenge

Scott Keyes Sports Scene

New Lothrop High's football squad has compiled an amazing run of six consecutive 9-0 regular seasons during this decade, but somehow the Hornets have not had the good fortune to repeat their 2006 achievement of a state championship.

They have gone deep into the playoffs during these past

half-dozen campaigns, but have not managed to make a championship game at Detroit's Ford Field.

This means Coach Clint Galvas faces twin challenges: (1) Don't take the regular season for granted, and (2) Build confidence that the team can go farther in the postseason.

"We try as a coaching staff to make each game equally important," Coach Galvas ex-

plained. "We practice the same way, game plan the same way, and go into each game as if it were our last. We try to express to the kids to play every play as though it were our last."

A reason for optimism?

"We have lost the last five seasons in the playoffs to the eventual state champs so it has been tough being second best," the coach said. "This has motivated this (2016) group to try and get over the hump this season. We as a team all know what our ultimate goal is, however, it something we don't really talk about. We try to stay focused on the task at hand."

"Right now our task is our week-one matchup against Saginaw Nouvel," he said. (New Lothrop prevailed 48-21 in last fall's first-ever meeting.) "After that we will move on to our week-two matchup and so on. We will continue with our offensive game plans as we have in the past with a predominately run-first approach. However, our passing game should be good with Erik Birchmeier returning at quarterback."

In addition to Birchmeier, returning starters include Brayden Bitterman at wide receiver and free safety, Ryan Hafner as a two-way

lineman, Carter Hemgesberg on the offensive line, Nathan Clolinger on the defensive line, Luke Krupp at linebacker and Mason Ruddy at strong safety.

New Lothrop will focus on program development and tradition, with a 33-man roster that includes 11 seniors.

Aside from Ithaca, New Lothrop has been one of the most dominating teams in mid-Michigan over the past seven years. (Mike Schutt, High School Sports Scene Photo)



# New Swan Valley Coach Comes Home Again

Scott Keyes Sports Scene

At Swan Valley High, Kevin Gavenda is a new varsity football coach unlike most new head coaches.

He already has invested a dozen seasons with the program.

The former Ashley High running back and linebacker

(Class of 1997) was the Vikings' offensive coordinator for the past five years. His track record begins with seven combined seasons with the freshman and jayvee squads.

All along, he has taught science and chemistry at the high school, with a bachelor's degree from Central Michigan University and a master's degree from Saginaw Valley State.

Gavenda said he was not intending or imagining to switch schools to become a varsity head coach, but Ken Bourbina's retirement opened the door for him to do so without moving.

Swan Valley is Saginaw County's youngest public high school, opening in 1971, and the school's football teams have compiled a 288-140 record under only three coaches -- Chuck Koons, Rich Bell, and then Bourbina.

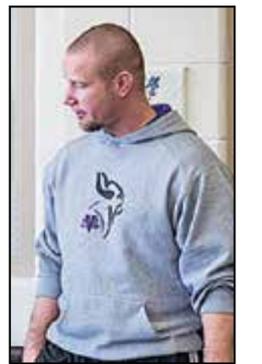
During those years, the Vikings were old-time Woody/Bo-type running game juggernauts. Coach Gavenda aims to

follow trends and toss in some more passes, but he says Swan Valley fans should not expect a sudden air show.

"We're going to let the run set up our pass," he said, emphasizing a need for quarterback prospects to first practice passing during their younger years.

Hard-nosed Vikings football will continue. "We compete at everything we do, beginning with summer practices and workouts," Coach Gavenda said, "so that when we get out there on Fridays during the fall, we are prepared."

Last season's record was a subpar 5-4, by Swan Valley standards, but Coach Gavenda sees potential for revival with returning regulars, including two-way linemen Jack Martin, Tristan Branch and Matt Werle. Other vets are Trey Cheney at wideout and cornerback, Garrett Rozich at tight end and safety, Nick Sulen at tight end and linebacker, Cameron Toth at tight end and defensive line, Terryon Liddell at running back and cornerback, and Emmett Boehler at running back and safety.



Kevin Gavenda

# New Chesaning High Coach Aims His Team For A Return To Glory

Scott Keyes Sports Scene

John Mimeranek, Chesaning High School's first-year varsity football coach, reflects a pair of contrasting time spans:

He became an Ithaca High School assistant coach in 2007, near the start of when his alma mater launched an incredible run with five state championships and a record 69-game winning streak.

The year 2007 was also the last time that former powerhouse Chesaning -- state champions in 1998 and 2001 -- made the playoffs.

"This is a community that know was it is like to have a winning tradition with its football team," he said. "Hopefully, we can restore that pride."

Last June, when he accepted the offer to coach and teach at Chesaning, Coach Mimeranek acknowledged that the decision to depart his hometown school (Class of 99) and football team

was difficult. Now that the decision has been made, his focus is laser sharp.

"This is a phenomenal opportunity. You couldn't ask for a better community," he said, noting that Chesaning residents showed their support during May 2004 when they voted in favor of a pair of property tax bond issues for school building improvements, including athletic facilities.

He does not know how many of his players are fully aware of the Ithaca program's accomplishments, but he has not hesitated to mention them during preseason workouts.

For example, Chesaning High

School has basically been a running team, both during its glory years and during the seasons, with less success. Coach Mimeranek, even with his experience of an offensive line coach, is incorporating more of an Ithaca-style run-pass mix.

"All I know is Ithaca football," he said. "In trying to rejuvenate Chesaning football, I hope I'm not referring to Ithaca's program too often, or to a fault. I know the diverse coaching staff I've hired will allow us to evolve into our own way of doing things, while at the same time I'll continue to refer to my experience of coaching for Ithaca football, one of the greatest examples of a successful high school sports program in the country."



John Mimeranek

PLUMBING • HEATING • AIR CONDITIONING • ELECTRICAL  
FREE ESTIMATES  
**Powell's Service, Inc.**  
760 East Monroe Road (M-46)  
St. Louis, Michigan 48880  
Phone: (989) 681-5751  
Fax: (989) 681-3583  
1-800-576-3555

DAN SHERWOOD  
Owner/Manager

**YORK**  
It's time to get comfortable.

**GRAFF**  
CHEVROLET DURAND  
Jason Saunders  
Sales Professional

(989) 288-2657  
Flint (810) 232-9157  
Fax (989) 288-2347  
jsaunders@bankgraiff.com

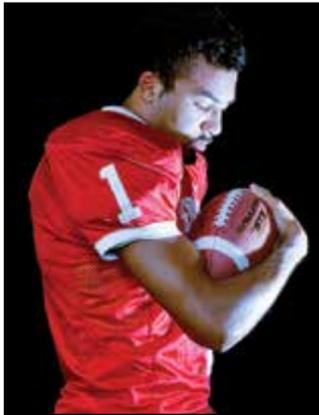
9009 Lansing Road  
Durand, Michigan 48429  
www.graffchevydurand.com

Capitol Bowl Val's PIZZA HOT SPOT  
Your Family Fun & Entertainment Center  
Open/League/Cosmic Bowling, Parties, Arcade, Proshop  
Val's - Dine In, Carryout Delivery  
CB's Hot Spot - Sports Viewing, Pool, Weekend Bands/DJs  
219 S. Washington St. Owosso, MI 48867 capitolbowl@yahoo.com  
989-725-7717 989-725-VALS (8257)  
www.capitolbowl.net Become a Facebook Fan Today!

**wmlm** 1520am  
News • Sports • Weather  
Real Country Music

Your Voice For Local High School Football & Basketball Games!

The New **Z 92.5** THE CASTLE  
**KROL** COMMUNICATIONS INC.



## Seminary Star Aims To Be A Cool Cat On The Gridiron

### Scott Keyes Sports Scene

Casey Williams is ready for his third season as a triple threat for the Michigan Lutheran Seminary football team.

One of his career highlights is a game in which he caught a touchdown pass, threw an option pass for another TD and returned a punt for a third score.

For his senior campaign, Casey expects to line up about half the time as a flanker and the other half at tailback. Never shy with Coach Karl Schmutge and the assistants, he's also attempting to talk them into taking some direct

snaps as a quarterback of sorts in what is known as a modern-day creative "wildcat" attack.

"The coaches keep telling me, 'Yeah, yeah, we have that as part of the offense,' he said, with a chuckle. "Anywhere that I'm positioned, my mindset is that I just want to do my part to contribute to the team. My favorite part is the punt and kickoff returns, but then it seems like the other teams are always kicking away from me."

Coach Schmutge said the idea of deploying Casey in a wildcat offense, "is something we joke about sometimes." But then he also concedes, "It's not too far-

fetched."

Casey Williams is a 5-foot-11, 177-pound speedster who racked up more than 1,100 all-purpose yards as a sophomore, and then during the following spring he won a state championship in the long jump for the Cardinals' track team, in addition to achieving all-state status in sprint events. He's also been a standout for the Seminary basketball squad.

A serious knee sprain, followed by a twisted ankle, sidelined Casey for his portions of his junior football season and subsequently slowed him down in hoops and on the track. A year later, he's still wearing a knee brace, despite his protests to his cautious parents and the team trainer.

His father, Leon Williams, was a backup running back at Mich-

igan State University during the mid-1970s (Kirk Gibson was a teammate) and his mother, Tammy, ran high school track during an era before girls' sports became popular. The family hails from Lansing. His older brother, Travis Williams, preceded him by three years at MLS, concentrating on music rather than sports.

Casey is popular on the Seminary campus, known for playing catch with children who attend the home games on Seminary's old-time neighborhood football field. He has given some thought to a career as an early elementary school teacher, but his main focus is on physical therapy.

"Anything to do with sports," he summed up. "I'm still going to dream big. My dream is to get to the NFL, but my goal right now is to get to college and to continue playing."

When healthy, Michigan Lutheran Seminary's Casey Williams is one of the most exciting players in mid-Michigan. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)



## Slate Is Sacred Heart's New Football Coach

### John Raffel Sports Scene

It's Jamie Slate's football team now at Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart. The Fighting Irish assistant has taken over for the retired Rick Roberts.

At the end of last season, Roberts decided to step down as Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart football coach after 23 years. He also had a 40-year career in high school football coaching overall.

Sacred Heart finished Roberts' final season at 6-4.

The Irish won the state title in 2010 with a 13-1 record.

The Irish have qualified for the playoffs 19 of Roberts' 23 seasons. They also won 18 Mid-State Activities Conference titles.

Roberts reached his 200th career win this season.

Enter Jamie Slate, who had coached with Roberts since 2010 when the Irish were state champions. Slate started out as a linebacker coach and in most recent seasons was the defensive coordinator. He was hired in late December. It's his first head coaching job. After graduating from Hemlock High School, he started coaching there. He was there three years, then went to

Sacred Heart.

"I teach here at Sacred Heart and have become a part of the community," Slate said. "It's definitely my home now. When Rick spoke to me about the possibility of leaving and retiring, I had given him notice that I was interested in the job. It's always been a life-long goal to be a head coach. I didn't anticipate it coming this soon. I feel like I'm ready and Rick felt I was ready too. We went forward with it."

There was a lot of work for Slate after he got the job to prepare for this season.

"We lost a lot of seniors last year," Slate said. "We're only returning five seniors. Of those five, only four were starters. We're going to be fairly young."

The returnees are Ryan

Ervin, a senior offensive lineman defensive end; Christian Maloney, a senior offensive lineman and defensive tackle; Abe Hollenbeck a senior running back and center and Joe Ervin, a senior offensive lineman and defensive tackle.

The Irish enter the season with a 15-man roster.

Slate said the style of play he'll bring to the team will show some differences.

"Ever since I've been here, we've kind of had a backbone based on the T offense," Slate said. "We've also mixed in some spread with that. With me taking over, and I've looked at the type of kids we have coming up to the program, the T offense doesn't make a whole lot of sense. I'm getting away from the T and focusing more on the spread part of the game."

**Downtown Auto Services Inc.**  
 Scott Nevins  
 President  
 110 W. Newark St. Ithaca, MI 48847  
 Shop Hours M-F 8-5:30  
 989-875-4261  
**Auto Value CERTIFIED SERVICE CENTER**

Bumping & Painting • Glass Repair  
 Insurance Work • Custom Painting  
**FREE ESTIMATES**  
**TIM'S BODY SHOP**  
 Domestic and Foreign  
 Most Deductibles Waived Or Reduced  
 Adam Musselman  
 Monday-Friday 8:00 am-5:00 pm  
 phone/fax 989-681-3577

**"We Care Enough To Make A Difference"**  
 Helping people stay home with dignity and independence.  
**Daily Living HomeCare, Inc.**  
 Non-Medical In-Home Services  
 145 E. Center St. P.O. Box 133  
 Ithaca, MI 48847  
 Kim Hodge, President Phone: (989) 875-7405  
 Locally Owned & Operated Fax: (989) 875-9685  
 www.dailylivinghomecare.com Toll Free: (800) 834-1915

## Swan Valley's Mendoza Family Shows Value Of Sports

### Scott Keyes Sports Scene

Carrie Mendoza never expected that her three sons would get so totally involved in sports and fitness. Her husband, Michael Mendoza, had been a high school athlete, and while she was an active youngster, sports were not a highlight, other than four years of high school pom pon.

She is simply pleased and proud that Zach (Swan Valley High Class of 2014), Alec ('16) and Chase (entering his sophomore year) have made these choices.

For all three, three sports: Football in fall. Hockey in winter. Baseball in spring.

"The three of them have a really tight bond," said Carrie, a Shields-area lifer, and

a secretary at the high school. "This keeps them focused, so they're not looking for trouble. We started them at such a young age. I only wish more kids would be more active."

She described a recent late-summer evening near sundown at the family home.

"The boys were in the kitchen, and I was listening as they discussed the workout that they had just done together," she said. "It always makes me proud as a parent, just to always see how they are looking out for one another."

Carrie and Michael Mendoza -- who works in quality control at Bridgeport's Orchid Unique Orthopedic Solutions -- received their first clue that theirs' would be a sports family when first-born Zach still was

a toddler.

"He would watch NASCAR religiously, every single Sunday," she recalled.

In what seemed like a blink of an eye, Zach as an adolescent (he recorded a golf hole-in-one at age 12) with a pair of younger siblings to join in the family driveway for hockey or baseball, or in the yard for football.

And then, of course, there were the organized team youth sports. Carrie became the household Secretary of Transportation.

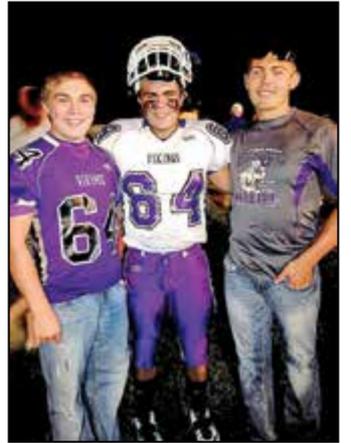
"Not so much a 'soccer mom.' Maybe say, 'hockey mom,'" she noted. "I was driving all over the place. It did get tough when we had three different players (sons) at three different places for three different games. At those times we were always very fortunate to always have good supportive friends."

While Chase focuses on his high school years, Zach and Alec both are employed at Freeland's Sports Zone gym, where Zach helps to organize and oversee bodybuilding camps. Zach is studying at Saginaw Valley State University with a major in exercise sciences, while Alec is studying nursing at Delta College.

Zach describes his field of study as focusing on proper muscle use in particular body movement, involving specific aspects of exercise training, physical therapy and even kinesiology. In a nation with reports of shortcomings in physical fitness, he aims for a career helping both adults and children improve -- and he figures it would not have taken place if not for the emphasis on sports that his parents established.

"It could be everything from seeing NASCAR on television, like my mother said, or playing games during recess on the playground and on the elementary teams, or later watching a Michigan football game on TV, or then being taken to the Swan Valley varsity games as Viking Stadium, until my chance came to play," Zach explained.

Without sports, youngsters may become out-of-shape, but also importantly, they have no chances for career highlights. Zach's top memory is as a senior in football, when



his last-minute quarterback sack helped the Vikes nip Yale High, 14-13, in a playoff game.

Carrie and Michael Mendoza have witnessed their sons make scores of big plays through the years. Here in 2016, Carrie does not find herself behind the wheel nearly so often, but she still looks back and says, "I miss those days."

Enjoy the view.

The Mendoza family has become a household name within the athletic program at Swan Valley High School over the last decade. (Submitted Photos)

**Lux-Moody-Wolfel Funeral Home**  
 531 N State St.  
 Alma, MI 48801  
 Phone: 989-463-8970

**Lux and Whiting Funeral Chapel**  
 156 W. Saginaw  
 Breckenridge, MI 48615  
 Phone: 989-842-3547

**Lux and Schnepf Funeral Home**  
 521 S. Main St.  
 Crystal, MI 48818  
 Phone: 989-235-4212

**Dodge Funeral Home**  
 404 S. Newton  
 Middleton, MI 48856  
 Phone: 989-236-7270

**www.luxfuneralhomes.com**

**IN YOUR HOUR OF DARKNESS LET US BE YOUR LIGHT**

**Lux Funeral Homes, Inc.**  
**Funeral Directors**  
 Paul C. Lux  
 Scott Kilgo  
 Nicholas P. Lux  
 Laura E. Krebs  
 Chris Krebs

**Lux Funeral Home**  
 228 W. Center  
 St. Louis, MI 48880  
 Phone: 989-681-2982

**Lux and Schnepf Funeral Home**  
 6479 N. Lumberjack Rd.  
 Riverdale, MI 48877  
 Phone: 989-833-7352

**Lux and Schnepf Funeral Home**  
 816 E. Main St.  
 Carson City, MI 48811  
 Phone: 989-584-3504

**GI-TEC Students**  
 Bring this coupon to ICCU's Student-Run Credit Union for a free prize!  
 ICCU Student-Run Credit Union Branch  
 ICCUonline.com  
 \*One prize per person

**NEXT LEVEL Graphic & Design**  
**SCREEN PRINTING - EMBROIDERY GRAPHICS - SIGNS - SPORTS APPAREL**  
**989-681-0009**  
 nextlevelgd@gmail.com  
 118 N. Mill St. St. Louis, MI.

**EFAW BUILDERS**  
 COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL  
 FULL SERVICE BUILDING AND REMODELING  
 LICENSED & INSURED  
 Charles Efav  
 Cell: (989) 763-0916  
 efawbuilders@msn.com

**COVENANT CENTER FOR ADVANCED ORTHOPAEDICS**  
 specializing in—  
 SPORTS INJURIES • SHOULDER REPLACEMENTS • ADVANCED SHOULDER SURGERY  
 JOINT PAIN • HIP AND KNEE REVISIONS • TOTAL HIP AND KNEE REPLACEMENTS  
 FRACTURES • ACETABULUM AND PELVIC FRACTURES • NONUNION FRACTURES  
 COMPLEX INTRA-ARTICULAR JOINT FRACTURES

**Anthony de Bari, MD**  
 Board Certified Orthopaedic Surgeon Fellowship Trained

**B.C. de Beaubien, MD**  
 Board Certified Orthopaedic Surgeon Fellowship Trained in Adult Reconstruction

**Colleen Linehan, MD**  
 Board Certified Orthopaedic Surgeon

**Michael Tucker, DO**  
 Board Eligible Orthopaedic Surgeon Fellowship Trained in Orthopaedic Trauma

**Bryon Chamberlain, MD**  
 Board Certified Orthopaedic Surgeon

**Jason Maxa, PA-C**

**Lindsey Pilling, PA-C**

**SAGINAW**  
 4701 TOWNE CENTRE, SUITE 301  
**989.921.3500**

**SAGINAW**  
 3875 BAY RD., SUITE 2-5  
**989.793.1372**

**SAGINAW**  
 800 COOPER, SUITE 5  
**989.583.7450**

**FRANKENMUTH**  
 600 NORTH MAIN ST.  
**989.921.3500**

**MIDLAND**  
 1549 WASHINGTON  
**989.921.3500**

Center for Advanced Orthopaedics

# Oilers' Lineman Plays Offense Like He's On Defense

Scott Keyes  
Sports Scene

Sean Fitzgerald, Mount Pleasant High School's 6-foot-3, 295-pound tackle, has been the biggest kid in his classrooms going all the way back to kindergarten.

But that doesn't mean he had it easy on the football field in early elementary school.

"Because of my size, I had to play against boys who were in seventh and eighth grade," Sean said. "They were five years older than me, so I did used to get beat up."

For sure, he's done his share of dishing it out, as well. As a result, he has earned a scholarship to the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. He was considering the military in the first place, and the opportunity to continue his football playing days sealed the deal. After his four years of academics and training, he is committed to at least six additional years of service, which means he will be nearly 30 years old when he faces the option of continuing with a lifelong Air Force career or entering the private sector economy.

He has joked that at his size, the Air Force may not allow him to pilot anything but heavy cargo planes. Seriously, he will head out West with an open mind, totally undecided on which Air Force specialty he may choose to pursue.

Sean Fitzgerald hopes, in the meantime, that Mount Pleasant can build upon last season's success. The Oilers finished 9-3 for the 2015 season and achieved the third round (regional finals) in the Division 3 playoffs, falling to East Grand Rapids High School.

"We lost a lot of seniors, but in practice we are looking good," he said. "We would like to win the Saginaw Valley League and make a run in the playoffs. We hope to stay in Division 3 and we would like another chance against East Grand Rapids."

He is keeping his classroom grades at an Air Force top level. With a 3.7 GPA, he has achieved All-SVL Academic status.

The son of Tim and Kristine Fitzgerald has pursued wrestling, track and field (the shot put and the discus, of course) and even some basketball, but football always has been his prime and favorite sport. His sister, Shannon, a sophomore, also is a multi-sporter, in basketball and track.

Football isn't simply tops on Sean's list -- it's offensive football. He plays defense as well, and indeed he's a handful, but he lists defensive tackle as his "secondary position."

In part, this is because he blocks on offense with the mindset of a defender. He says he aims for strength in "aggression" and "agility." He prides himself in "finishing plays" until the whistle blows. During the red-hot summer, he has joined four days-a-week workouts to build upon his footwork and lower shoulder-pad levels.

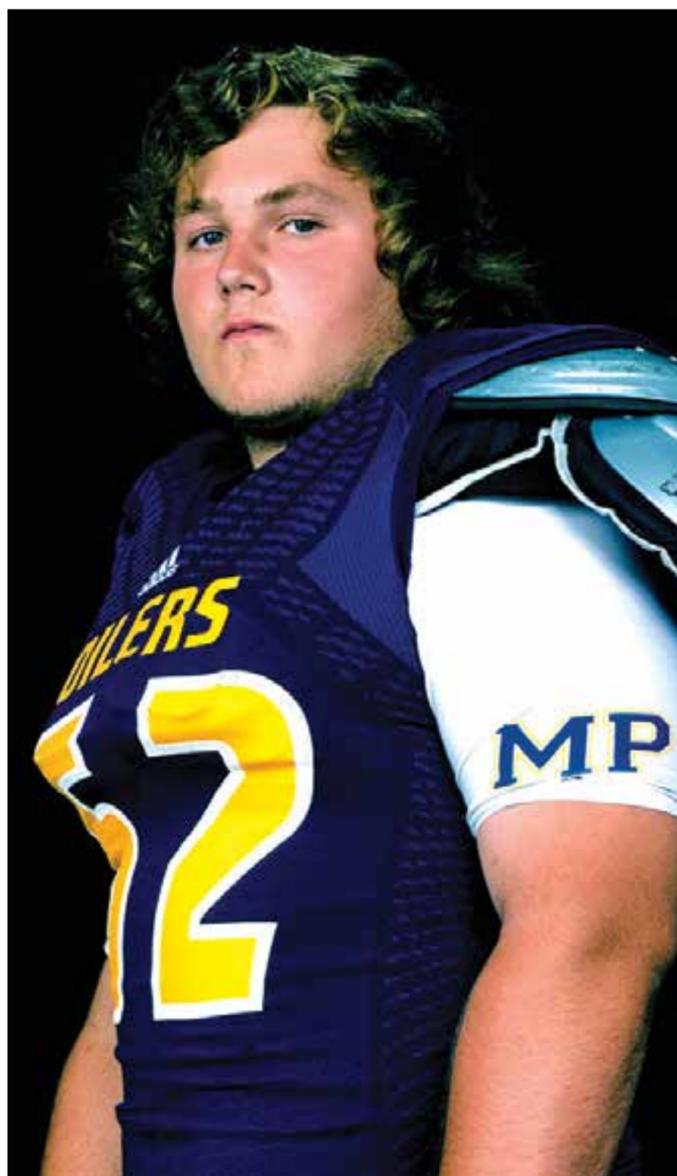
He does his duty and his utmost in pass blocking, but he best enjoys the chance to become a little bit "mean" as a run blocker.

"That's a big reason for going with Air Force, their running game," said Sean, who also entertained offers from Mid-American Conference and Great Lakes Conference schools. "Air Force runs the triple option."

A share of his motivation stems from cheering for a team he sticks with through thick and thin, the Detroit Lions.

"Right about the first year I started following the Lions, they were 0-16," said Sean, who was in fourth grade during the winless 2008 debacle. "So I know what losing feels like."

Mt. Pleasant's Sean Fitzgerald will anchor the Oilers line this season. Fitzgerald will play at the next level at the Air Force Academy. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)



7625 N. Alger Rd.  
Alma  
Between Walmart  
& K-Mart Center

989-463-AUTO (2886)  
seeleycars.com

02 Chevrolet Cavalier LS 2.2L I4, Automatic	13 Ford Escape SEL EcoBoost 2.0L Turbo I4, Automatic	80 Porsche 924 5 Speed Manual	03 Chrysler Concorde Limited 3L NA V6, Automatic
\$2,995	\$13,995	\$5,995	\$3,995

Ask About Our  
**BUY HERE, PAY HERE PROGRAM**  
SPECIALIZING IN CUSTOMERS WITH SSI,  
DISABILITY AND SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME

## THE ULTIMATE CHOICE FOR PORTABLE SOUND

# SM-5 Sound Machine

- Built-in Shure wireless mics. (123-channels - 300' typical range)
- 6-8 hours of battery life (Lithium Iron Phosphate 2000 charging cycles)
- Full Range Biamped system (10" speaker and horn)

- 200 Watts of power (126db clear volume)
- CD/MP3 player with USB port
- Easily adapts most MP3 players to wireless
- Gym, track, swimming pool, cheer, golf, or aerobics; The SM-5 goes anywhere you need to be.

"I love my speaker and could not live without it. It has saved my voice and has changed my life. We don't just use it for PE, but also for assemblies, lunchtime activities, and after-school release."

Suzanne Hansen - Oceanside, CA

**THE BEST FULL RANGE PA SYSTEM - EVER**

Available Through:  
**Roth Sound**  
989-779-8828  
www.rothsound.com

SM-5 only 35 pounds fully loaded

**FARM • COMMERCIAL • INDUSTRIAL • HOME**

1-877-857-4567 • www.trilakesllc.com

**Gasoline • Diesel Fuels**     **Kerosene • Heating Oils**

**Sports Scene Breaks Down Southern Region Detroit Cass Tech Loaded; Talent Level Of Players At All-Time High**

Serving Our Customers For Over 40 Years

Buy Direct And Save!

Contact: Scott Capen Cell/Text: 989-620-7527  
scapen@tri-lakespc.com

# Sports Scene Breaks Down Southern Region Detroit Cass Tech Loaded; Talent Level Of Players At All-Time High

## Top 10 Teams

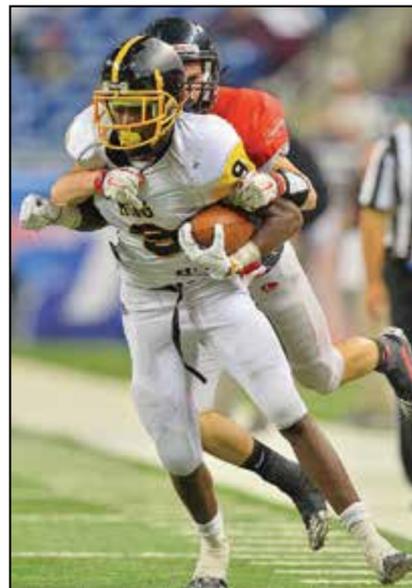
- 1. DETROIT CASS TECH:** The Technicians are loaded with talent and have a secondary that most D1 schools would take. Wide receiver Donovan Peoples-Jones is one of the premier wide receivers in the country.
- 2. ORCHARD LAKE ST. MARY'S:** The Eaglets may have the best defense in the state led by University of Michigan recruit Josh Ross, who is one of the premier linebackers in the nation.
- 3. PLYMOUTH CANTON:** A total of 12 starters return from a team that fell 48-41 to Cass Tech in the state semifinals. Senior quarterback Joel Foster and senior running backs Reid McDonnell and Marcus Sanders pace the offense.
- 4. MACOMB DAKOTA:** Dakota returns a total of 15 starters from last year's team with eight starters back on offense and seven on defense.
- 5. DETROIT KING:** The defending Division 2 state champions have another stocked team led by senior standout Ambry Thomas.
- 6. WALLED LAKE WESTERN:** Western returns plenty of talent led by wide receiver Cody White, who has committed to Michigan State and defensive lineman Rob Hudson (6-8, 310).
- 7. SALINE:** The Hornets have another deep and talented team led by University of Arizona commit tight end Bryce Wolma.
- 8. BIRMINGHAM BROTHER RICE:** The Warriors have a loaded team this year led by tight end Carter Dunaway who has committed to Michigan and offensive tackle Larry Broom (6-6, 335) headed to Missouri.
- 9. WARREN DE LASALLE:** Standout running back/defensive back Allen Stritzinger, a Syracuse commit, leads a solid De LaSalle squad.
- 10. ANN ARBOR SKYLINE:** Skyline features a star-studded offense paced by wide receiver and Michigan State recruit Hunter Rison and fullback Charles Jones, who is headed to Western Michigan.

## Top Players In Southeast Michigan:

1. Donovan Peoples-Jones, WR, Detroit Cass Tech
2. Ambry Thomas, WR, Detroit King
3. Jaylen Kelly-Powell, DB, Detroit Cass Tech
4. Josh Ross, LB, Orchard Lake St. Mary's (Michigan)
5. Jordan Reid, OL, Detroit Cass Tech (Michigan State)
6. Scott Nelson, DB, Detroit U-of-D Jesuit
7. Cody White, WR, Walled Lake Western (Michigan State)
8. JaRaymond Hall, OL, Oak Park (Michigan)
9. Hunter Rison, WR, Ann Arbor Skyline (Michigan State)
10. Allen Stritzinger, DB, Warren De LaSalle (Syracuse)



Cass Tech's Donovan Peoples-Jones is one of the most explosive players in the entire country. He has the talent to carry his team to another Class A title in 2016. (Alan Holben, High School Sports Scene Photo)



Detroit Martin Luther King football, the 2015 Division 2 Champion will play this season with a heavy heart as longtime coach Dale Harvel passed away this summer while at a 7 on 7 camp. King returns a lot of experience from last year's state title team. (Alan Holben, High School Sports Scene Photo)

**Serving The Entire Great Lakes Region**

1-877-857-4567 • www.trilakesllc.com

**Consignment Programs • Equipment**     **Financing • Flexible Branding Programs**

**Contacts**

- Lois Neitzke.....Cell/Text: 248-789-7046  
lneitzke@tri-lakespc.com
- Hassan Bazzi.....Cell/Text: 313-802-7600  
hbazzi@tri-lakespc.com
- Gary Downing.....Cell/Text: 517-231-2234  
gdowning@tri-lakespc.com

Serving Our Customers For Over 40 Years

Buy Direct And Save!

Contact: Scott Capen Cell/Text: 989-620-7527  
scapen@tri-lakespc.com

# Field Of Dreams: Long Overdue Facility Upgrades Hit Several Michigan Schools



The Lansing Catholic football team finally has a stadium to call its own. The Cougars opened its new state-of-art complex Aug. 26 against Waverly. Lansing Catholic's facilities includes a synthetic turf playing surface, eight-lane track, light poles, seating for 2,100, a new press box, sound and public address system, and concession stand. | (Alan Holben and Submitted Photos, High School Sports Scene)

## Dan Stickrad Sports Scene

Jim Ahern will finally have a chance to march his troops out on a Friday night on Lansing Catholic's own turf — literally.

Ahern, the school's football coach, will guide his troops against Lansing Waverly on Aug. 26, as part of the season opener festivities, which will be held in the school's new 2.7-million dollar athletics complex.

Lansing Catholic has never held a night football game, or track meet, or an evening lacrosse game, either. A couple of day football and soccer games on grass fields behind the school has been the extent of it.

"This is something that is truly a long-time coming," said Ahern. "We've always had to pack up and drive to our home games. We've played at various places around the Lansing area. I think everyone is really looking forward to it."

Lansing Catholic has spent the last several years playing home games at Holt Middle School. In the past, the school had rented facilities at Lansing Sexton and other schools.

Now, the school will finally have a stadium to call its own. Lansing Catholic's facilities include a synthetic turf playing surface, eight-lane track, light poles, seating for 2,100, a new press box, sound and public address system, and concession stand as part of phase one of the project.

Major renovations to the baseball, softball and natural grass soccer fields on campus will be a part of the second phase. The school is currently raising money for the project, which thus far has all been made from private donors.

"We've had over 110 years of catholic high school history in the Lansing area, and with the merger of catholic schools into Lansing Catholic in 1970, and had nearly (five decades) of teams at Lansing Catholic. But never a Friday night home football game on our campus like most of the schools in the area," said Lansing Catholic

president Tom Maloney. "We have a lot of alumni going back to the 1960s and 1970s who have been a part of this, and we'll be at the game."

"We truly believe this will put us at the top of the list in terms of stadiums in the Lansing area," continued Maloney. "As much success that we've had as a school in football and track and field, it's amazing we've done so without our own facilities. Our track teams has had to practice hurdles and relay handoffs in the parking lot. All we had was a dirt track around the practice football field."

The turf field is only the second in the entire Lansing area, following Class B Olivet, which had it installed a few years ago. The major stadium upgrades gives Lansing Catholic some of the finest facilities in the whole Lansing area.

Lansing Catholic's new complex is one of many that have been erected in Michigan over the past couple of years.

"We're coming home," noted Maloney. "That's one of the phrases we're using around the new stadium. We're finally coming home. There has been a true sense of community in this project. Everyone is really excited."

### LAPEER DAYS

Entering its third school year since the merger of Lapeer East and Lapeer West high schools, the new Lapeer High is in the final stages of its major stadium renovation project.

Coming all from fundraisers and donors, the multi-million dollar project, which is located at the Lapeer West site, features a new gray turf field, new grandstands, press box, locker rooms, public address system, restrooms, and a new eight-lane track.

The stadiums at Lapeer East and Lapeer West were both natural grass stadiums.

The football, track, cross country and lacrosse teams will use the stadium, plus youth leagues can rent the facility. Lapeer's soccer teams will continue to play games on the natural grass soccer-only stadium next to the Lapeer East building, which is

being used as the Lapeer High.

Lapeer's football teams held intra-squad scrimmages on the new playing surface Aug. 13. The first home varsity football game will take place Sept. 16 against Flint Southwestern Academy.

Lapeer is the fifth school in the Saginaw Valley Conference to have turf installed in their stadiums.

"There has been tremendous community support for all of this — and it has all been handled with private donors. No public funds have been used," noted Lapeer athletics director Shad Spilski. "There are a lot of community groups in Lapeer that have stepped up over the past couple years to make this all a reality. There were five really big donors that really helped out. There's

"There is a lot of buzz round the stadium," continued Spilski. "I think the players were really excited about their scrimmages out there. They can't wait to play a real game on the turf."

### TURF SHOWCASED

According to the MHSAA, there are more than 100 high schools in the state that now have turf fields, with the addition of Lansing Catholic, Grand Rapids West Catholic and Lapeer this year. Most of those turf stadiums are located in Oakland, Wayne, Macomb and Kent counties, with the first being located at Birmingham Detroit Country Day back in 1999.

In the tri-cities area and central Michigan region, Clare, Midland, Midland Dow and Mount Pleasant have all constructed new stadiums with turf fields in recent years. Mount Pleasant shares its facility with Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart.

In Oakland County alone, there are 43 stadiums with turf fields, including two at high schools that have closed (Bloomfield Hills Lahser and Southfield Lathrup).



**Pine River DENTAL CARE** Where excellent care, the latest technology, and friendliness live

Jenna Putman, D.D.S. • Brian Putman, D.D.S.  
610 N. Pine River Street • Ithaca, Michigan 48847  
**(989) 875-2888** www.pineriverdentalcare.com

**PREMIER COMPONENTS, INC.** YOUR #1 SOURCE FOR MILL ACCESSORIES

- Square & Round Spouting & Accessories • Truss Kits
- Screw Conveyors & Parts • Power Transmission Components
- Belting, Buckets & Fasteners • Drag Conveyors & Accessories
- Level Controls • Bin Sweeps and Unloading Equipment

3984 W. Monroe (M-46) Alma, MI 48801  
Ph: (989) 463-4532 Fax: (989) 463-4560 Toll Free: 1-877-681-3064  
www.premier-com.com

**lean** lifestyle, exercise and nutrition

116 N. Mill St., St. Louis, Michigan  
989-620-0365  
info@leangroupfitness.com

**AARON WALDRON TRUCKING, LLC** 7480 West Polk Road, Alma, MI 48801  
Local 989-466-2300 | Or Toll free 866-507-2300

- Haulers of Agricultural Commodities • Van and Flatbed Hauling
- Temporary Dumpster Service • 10, 15, 20 & 30 Yard Containers

**COMPUTER CABLE CONCEPTS, INC.** VOICE & DATA CABLING • NETWORK CABLING • FIBER OPTICS

**MIKE MATLOCK** OWNER  
5804 STERLING DRIVE HOWELL, MI 48843  
PH: 517.548.9800 FAX: 517.680.0504  
CELL: 810.599.5916 MIKE@COMPUTERCABLECONCEPTS.COM

Proud to support our local athletes!

**Mercantile Bank of Michigan**

Alma | Ithaca | Mt. Pleasant  
St. Louis | St. Johns | DeWitt  
www.mercbank.com

**Pat's Auto, Inc.** "Quality Of Our Work Guaranteed"

Complete Collision Repair • Serving Gratiot County Since 1982

Phone (989) 681-5334 FAX # (989) 681-3855  
1501 West Monroe Rd. (M-46) Saint Louis, MI 48880  
www.patscutoinc.com

**RPC** Roslund Prestage & Company CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

**DAVID RAYBURN**

308 Gratiot Avenue Alma, Michigan 48801 www.rpcpas.com  
Ph. (989) 463-6123 Fax (989) 463-4055 e-mail: dave.rayburn@rpcpas.com

**sears of Alma** 1650 Wright Ave. • Alma, MI • 989-466-6688  
**HOMETOWN STORE**  
**sears of Greenville** 301 S. Maplewood St. • Greenville, MI • 616-754-7121

**FINANCING FOR EVERYONE!**  
Lawn & Garden: **CRAFTSMAN** Husqvarna  
Appliances: Kenmore Whirlpool MAYTAG SAMSUNG LG  
Tools: **CRAFTSMAN** **DEWALT** BLACK & DECKER  
Bedding: Serta STEARNS & FOSTER Sealy  
Fitness Equipment • Gas & Charcoal Grills

Owner Jarred Cline

# NORTHERN REPORT



## Clare QB Takes On The Challenge

Scott Salowich Sports Scene

Clare senior Travis Vida is heading into his third season as the starting quarterback for the Pioneers and, in case he had any questions about just what that meant, his coach put them to rest early on.

"If we are going to win, he has to be successful," said Clare coach Kelly Luplow. "Our season is going to depend on him becoming a true dual-threat quarterback."

That's pressure. Vida has accepted the responsibility.

"I see it as a challenge to me personally," he said. "That was the plan last year, too, but I rolled my

ankle and couldn't run the ball as well. I'm going to be more versatile this year."

Vida's passing credibility is not an issue. He already has, or likely soon will have, all of the school records in the book.

Luplow wants it all: a high-powered, run-pass attack that keeps leaves defenses gasping for breath. Vida is all in.

"We're going to be fast-paced," he said. We are going to run a lot and also throw. We've got some speed on the outside and, if we can complete some passes to those guys, it will help our running game."

Luplow said Vida looks ready to roll.

"He's always had a great arm and he's evolved into a very smart quar-

terback," said Luplow. "His pre-snap reads are all great now. He's a thin kid, but he's worked hard in the weight room and all he needs to do is run the ball more. We can be very good offensively if he is willing to take that step."

The Pioneers did not make their typical trip to the playoffs last season and saw a streak of eight consecutive Jack Pine Conference championships come to a screeching halt.

Fairly or unfairly, the quarterback takes heat when those kinds of things happen, and Vida is letting it fuel his fire this fall.

"I am definitely aware of that situation and not reaching our goals last year hurt," he said. "That is not acceptable here. We have a

tradition of winning and we are using last year as motivation every day in practice."

Vida is an elite three-sport athlete, who also stars for the Pioneers in basketball and baseball.

Football is his top priority.

"I guess I always like whatever sport I am currently playing best, but football is really my favorite," he said. "Football season is just different. It's more community-centered and I love that about it."

The crowds will be out as always on Friday nights in Clare and giving the fans a reason to cheer is Vida's mission.

"If we stay healthy and get the blocking up front, we will have a good running game and a good passing game and we will be dangerous," he said. "We just have to come together and work as one."

Clare will rely on senior quarterback Travis Vida this season. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)



## Coleman Hopes To Get Back On Playoff Path

Scott Salowich Sports Scene

The bills came due last season for the Coleman football team.

The Comets went 7-3 and made the playoffs in each of the two previous seasons, but were wracked by graduation and limped to a 1-8 finish last fall.

Coleman is hoping to rebound this season after finishing 1-8 a year ago. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)

This year, they plan on getting back to normal.

"We had back-to-back trips to the playoffs and then we had a down year with a lot of young guys," said Coleman coach Chad Klopf. "They probably needed another year to get ready for varsity, but we lost 13 or 14 guys from the previous seasons and

we had to rush them in there.

"We're still mostly juniors and sophomores, but we have 27 guys who have been on the varsity for two or three years, so now all we have to do is get them on the right track and point them in the right direction."

Klopf said he could see the difference from last year's team after just two weeks of practice.

"There has definitely been a lot of improve-

ment," he said. "Our offense is going to be better than last year because we're going to have a better line and I think our defense is going to be what holds us up. We'll be strong on that side of the ball and get what we can from the other end."

The Comets will compete in the new-look Mid-State Activities Conference, which this year includes Ashley, Montabella, Breckenridge, Carson-City Crystal, Merrill, Mount Pleasant Sacred

Heart and Vestaburg.

"Breckenridge and Merrill are coming in for the first time and there are a lot of new coaches in the conference," Klopf said. "We've got a lot of teams in similar boats. Sacred Heart is always Sacred Heart, but they have a new coach, too.

"It's going to be a good season," he continued. "We're going to be improved from last year and we should be competitive with every team in our conference."

# NORTHERN REPORT

## Harrison Determined To Keep It Coming

Scott Salowich Sports Scene

Making the playoffs has hardly been routine for the Harrison football program over the years.

Things have changed for the better of late as the Hornets have qualified for the post-season party in each of the past two seasons. As the 2016 season looms, the task at hand is to maintain the momentum.

"One of our goals is to make it for the third year in a row,"

said Harrison coach Mike Petrongelli. "We're working hard to improve on what's been happening here and we're trying to impress upon the kids that winning gets harder to do, not easier.

"That's part of the responsibility of success. When people see Harrison now, they are ready to play. No one is taking us lightly anymore."

The Hornets lost nine starters on offense and another six on defense to graduation, but

Petrongelli is confident that the replacements will be up to the challenge.

"We've got 18 seniors and 15 of them played at least some of the time last year," he said. "Plus, our JV went undefeated and 12 of them are coming up.

"We've got a lot of holes to fill, but we've got some good kids to fill them," he continued. "We have a lot of good athletes with a lot of winning experience, so all we need to do as coaches is move them around

until we come up with the right combinations."

The 2015 Hornets went 7-2 in the regular season and drew a tough assignment in the first round of the Division 5 playoffs. They lost 25-0 after a long trek to the Upper Peninsula to face Kingsford to wind up 7-3.

Petrongelli said he and his players are in "reload" mode as opposed to a rebuilding project with so many new starters.

"You can hear it and you can see it," he said. "The attitude is starting to change around here. The kids know they can win if they put the time and effort in."



Harrison will look to make the playoffs for a third straight year in 2016. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)

## Tough Act To Follow "What's Next For Meridian After Best Season Ever?"

Scott Salowich Sports Scene

When Christian Petre ran off with two gold medals and two silvers in leading the Meridian boys' track team to the Division 3 state championship in June, he took something else with him.

His high school diploma.

That left Mustangs football coach Mike Bilina -- who doubles as the school's track coach -- contemplating life without his explosive quarterback for the first time in four seasons.

Bilina denies spending the summer months prior to the start of practice sitting in a dark room clutching the state championship trophy and pining for the good old days, like last season when

Meridian had its best record ever with a 10-1 finish. He said it wasn't quite that bad, but he was definitely concerned.

After a couple of weeks of practice, he feels better.

"I thought we were going to struggle, but we had a good two weeks of practice," Bilina said. "It's not as gloom-and-doom as I thought it was going to be. We won't know what kind of team we've got until we start getting into the season, but we came out of it ahead of where I thought we'd be."

A promising corps of rookies and an influx of talented players who spent last season whooping it up in the stands with everybody else in the Sanford community will make or break

the Mustangs this fall.

Quarterback Brett Barriger, whose dad, Rod, is the team's offensive coordinator, heads up a sophomore class that Bilina said reminds him of the special group of seniors who just left.

"Brett's got a strong arm and he's strong between the ears, too," said Bilina. "There are a lot of good athletes in that class. One thing that stands out is that we're going to have a sophomore center and a sophomore quarterback, so on every play we'll have two inexperienced players touching the ball."

Given clean exchanges, generating some offense should be a snap, thanks to the aforementioned new blood.

"A couple of kids who did not play last year have come out and there are some good athletes among those guys," said Bilina. "I bugged some of them to play last year, but they said they'd rather watch from the stands because they knew there wasn't going to

be a lot of playing time with all the seniors we had.

"I told them, 'Well, we're going to have a team next year too,' and they assured me they would come out. I didn't really count on any of them until they showed up on Day 1, but they're here and they are not afraid to work.

"Overall, we're a young and inexperienced team, but we've got some kids who love football and are true students of the game."

So now it's time for kickoff and everyone wants to win 10 games again.

Bilina won't be tied down to a prediction.

"We could go 2-7 or 6-3," he said. "Last year, we knew we could screw up here and there and it wouldn't be the end of the world. This year, we're going to be fundamentally sound.

"It's going to be interesting. We're going to be playing a different style of football, that's for sure."



Sanford Meridian lost a lot of graduation before entering the 2016 season, but the Mustangs hope a balance offensive attack can lead them back to the playoffs this season. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)

**Good Luck All Area Sports Teams**

**PROPANE GAS**  
RESIDENTIAL • FARM • INDUSTRIAL • COMMERCIAL

**Gas Production Co. Inc.**  
989-268-5079 8152 East M-46 Vestaburg 800-991-7477

**MEADOWLANES BOWLING & BANQUET**

Glow Ball - Fridays & Saturdays  
Book Your Christmas Parties Today!

430 W. Fifth St. - Gladwin  
989-426-7671  
www.bowlmeadowlanes.com

**Bonham**  
HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING INC.  
Serving Gladwin Area Since 1981

**bryant** Heating & Cooling Systems  
• Industrial • Residential • Commercial • Service • Geothermal Systems • Design • Installation

989-426-2151  
2441 W. M-61 Gladwin, MI 48624

**Bary A. Schluckebian**  
General Dentistry  
921 N. Pine River Rd.  
(989) 875-4721  
bshackdentist.com

**GO DEWITT PANTHERS!** **GO ITHACA YELLOWJACKETS!**

**COUNTRY MEADOW FARMS LLC**

HOURS: 9-6  
7 DAYS A WEEK

11384 RIVERSIDE DR. ST. LOUIS, MI  
989-681-2014

**THE STORE**  
BEER GAS LOTTERY

Medium Pizza Special! Up To 3 Items \$10 + Tax  
Available 7 Days A Week!

Elm Hall • 989-833-7311  
Open Sun - Thurs 7am - 10pm  
Fri & Sat 7am - 11pm  
\*Deli closes one hour before store closing

**NEW OWNERSHIP!**  
Stop In And See **BIG MIKE!**

**KRAPOHL**  
Ford LINCOLN

*Serving You Since 1950*

MT. PLEASANT 772-2991 • 1-800-772-5974

**Central Michigan's Service Leader!**

www.krapohlford.com

Staff: Cliff Anderson, Jim Cole, Kim Laurencz, Tony Marshall, Ray Garver, Casey Gott, Tom Shafer, Mike Croll, John Lerg, Greg Noyes

**FIRST CONTRACTING INCORPORATED**

Specializing in MSHDA multi Family Renovations  
701 South Main - Ovid, MI 48866  
989-834-1500

Serving Mid-Michigan • Fully Insured

**Grass Wackers Inc.**  
Lawn Care Service  
(989) 763-1425

**DAN SEELEY**  
Lawn Mowing and Trimming • Trees and Shrub Care  
Spring and Fall Clean-Ups • Fertilizing

**GA General Agency Company**  
Insurance since 1915  
Knowledgeable. Committed. Trusted.

(989) 773-6981 (800) 589-6982  
www.ga-ins.com



# Mid-Michigan Returning Stats Leaders

## PASSING YARDAGE

- Aaron Sarkon, Linden 2,186
- Bruce Mann, Midland Dow 2,169
- Michael Lynn III, Lansing Catholic (@Sexton) 1,815
- Charles Garrett, Bridgeport 1,601
- DJ Lowery, Chippewa Hills 1,556
- Will Nagel, DeWitt 1,487
- Travis Vida, Clare 1,342
- Jered Fattal, Corunna 1,302
- Max Wood, Valley Lutheran 1,295
- Hunter Helmic, East Lansing 1,189
- Gabe Kanause, Hemlock 1,026
- Jim Pierce, St. Louis 1,009
- Jake Kelsey, Freeland 995
- Nick Hartner, Beaverton 961
- Kade Kestner, Michigan Lutheran Seminary 902
- Kolin Leyrer, Holt 758
- Logan Blake, Mt. Pleasant 687
- Hunter Veltkamp, Central Montcalm 655

## TOUCHDOWN PASSES

- Bruce Mann, Midland Dow 30
- Will Nagel, DeWitt 21
- Aaron Sarkon, Linden 20
- DJ Lowery, Chippewa Hills 18
- Michael Lynn III, Lansing Catholic (@Sexton) 18
- Jered Fattal, Corunna 15
- Charles Garrett, Bridgeport 14
- Max Wood, Valley Lutheran 14
- Hunter Helmic, East Lansing 13
- Kade Kestner, Michigan Lutheran Seminary 13
- Travis Vida, Clare 11
- Gabe Kanause, Hemlock 11
- Nick Hartner, Beaverton 10
- Jake Kelsey, Freeland 9
- Jim Pierce, St. Louis 9
- Kolin Leyrer, Holt 7
- Hunter Veltkamp, Central Montcalm 7
- Seth Stratton, Vestaburg 6
- Logan Blake, Mt. Pleasant 5



Michael Lynn III, Lansing Catholic

## TOUCHDOWN RECEPTIONS

- Malik Ellison, Flint Beecher 9
- Ben VanSumeren, Essexville-Garber 8
- Brenden Sersaw, Clare 7
- Casey Williams, MLS 7
- Keegan Cossou, Greenville 5
- Obie Riumsric, Mt. Pleasant 5

## RUSHING YARDS

- Jared Smith, Pewamo-Westphalia 3,243
- Trent Hilger, Lake Fenton 1,343
- Logan Lefke, Portland 1,218
- Blake Opdyce, Shepherd 1,100
- Christian Keeler, Vestaburg 1,058
- Scott Pemberton, Fowler 991
- Tamar Heart, Bridgeport 985
- Dylan Crankshaw, Fenton 958
- DJ Lowery, Chippewa Hills 837
- Gabe Kanause, Hemlock 729
- JD Ross, DeWitt 700
- Max Kubiak, Freeland 675
- Logan Feldpausch, Fowler 649
- David Dumond, Coruna 595
- Liam Tobin, Bay City Western 592
- Jared Davis, Frankenmuth 587



Jared Smith, Pewamo-Westphalia

## RUSHING TOUCHDOWNS

- Jared Smith, Pewamo-Westphalia 53
- Trent Hilger, Lake Fenton 19
- Logan Lefke, Portland 17
- Blake Opdyce, Shepherd 15
- Dylan Crankshaw, Fenton 958
- Jared Davis, Frankenmuth 13
- David Dumond, Coruna 12
- Scott Pemberton, Fowler 12
- Christian Keeler, Vestaburg 9
- DJ Lowery, Chippewa Hills 9
- Max Kubiak, Freeland 8
- JD Ross, DeWitt 8
- Anthony Humm, Alma 7
- Liam Tobin, Bay City Western 7

## RECEIVING YARDS

- Ben VanSumeren, Essexville-Garber 853
- Brenden Sersaw, Clare 814
- Malik Ellison, Flint Beecher 642
- Keegan Cossou, Greenville 582
- Kentre Patterson, East Lansing 559
- Konnor Vedrode, Alma 476
- Kody Burton, Bridgeport 449
- Casey Williams, MLS 397
- Obie Riumsric, Mt. Pleasant 378
- Logan Buczkowski, Mt. Pleasant 363

## FIELD GOALS

- Adam Culp, Ithaca 3

## PUNTING AVERAGE

- Ricky Schroeder, Swan Valley 43.3
- Will Nagel, DeWitt 42.0
- Gabe Denton, Clare 37.1



Will Nagel, DeWitt

## TACKLES FOR LOSS

- Deron Irving-Bey, Flint Southwestern 23
- Mike VanSumeren, Essexville-Garber 14
- Trent Hilger, Lake Fenton 13
- Tanner Motz, St. Johns 13
- Mic Munderloh, St. Louis 13
- Greg Woodcock, Ithaca 12
- Alex Garza, St. Louis 11
- Javaris Jackson, Bridgeport 11
- Dallas Watts, Fowler 11
- Jayce Kuehnlein, St. Louis 10
- Spencer Stephenson, Midland Dow 10

## SACKS

- Brennen Ward, St. Charles 10
- Kelson Conners, Flint Powers 8
- Vince Walker, Midland 7
- Deron Irving-Bey, Flint Southwestern 6

## INTERCEPTIONS

- Konner Maloney, Lansing Catholic 9
- Blake Underwood, East Lansing 7
- DJ Lowery, Chippewa Hills 6
- Nate Mentus, Laingsburg 6
- Nate Taylor, Beaverton 6

## TACKLES

- Mike VanSumeren, Essexville-Garber 126
- Greg Woodcock, Ithaca 115
- Kelson Conners, Flint Powers 112
- Gabe Kanause, Hemlock 111
- Dallas Watts, Fowler 100
- Levon Hunter, Mt. Pleasant 100
- James Smith, Lakeview 94
- Taylor Jackson, Corunna 94
- Tanner Motz, St. Johns 91
- Billy Koepf, Chippewa Hills 88
- Eli Whitney, Lansing Catholic 88
- Hayden Harvey, Hemlock 87

# On The Move: Schools Across State Beginning Conference Shifts

## Dan Stickrad Sports Scene

As enrollment figures continue to dwindle in certain areas of the state, coupled with steady growth spikes in other regions, administration at numerous high schools, school districts and private/parochial schools have begun to seek different alternatives for competition regarding high school athletics in Michigan.

Much like the mid-1990s, when schools were routinely joining forces to create mega conferences, the new trend is that multiple schools across the state are on the move once again — either switching conferences for the 2016-17 school year, preparing for a move before the 2017-18 school year, or compiling some thorough research to see if a move will be viable in the near future.

There is a paradigm shift taking place in many areas around the state.

Breckenridge and Merrill, previously two of the smallest schools in the three-division Tri-Valley Conference, officially left the TVC in June to join the Mid-State Activities Conference. There they will compete alongside other small Class C or Class D schools.

Pinckney and nine other schools are set to depart the Kensington Lakes Activities Association next school year. Otisville-Lakeville will be departing the Tri-Valley Conference in 2017, while two more schools, Pinconning and Standish-Sterling, recently made a move into the TVC.

The Ottawa Kent Conference gained two

more schools, keeping its reign as Michigan's largest conference, while the Oakland Activities Association also saw its numbers decrease — a trend during the past decade.

"It's to the point that administrators have to look at the big picture and look out for what's best for their student athletes," said Pinckney athletics director Brian Wardlow. "When you have schools that are more than 1,000 students larger in your league or division, you have to start looking for a change."

### DIFFERENT PASTURES

Class B schools Pinconning (418 students, grades 9-12) and Standish-Sterling (470) recently moved to the TVC to replace the aforementioned Breckenridge (235) and Merrill (191). Most of the TVC is comparable Class B or large Class C schools.

Previously, Pinconning and Standish-Sterling competed in the Northeast Michigan Conference, which disbanded.

The NEMC closure leaves both Tawas City and West Branch Ogemaw Heights as independents for the foreseeable future.

The TVC will spread its sports into three divisions — East, Central and West — with the current members being Alma (676), Birch Run (585), Bridgeport (566), Caro (497), Carrolton (545), Chesaning (487), Essexville-Garber (550), Frankenmuth (533), Freeland (561), Hemlock (412), Ithaca (426), Midland Bullock Creek (550), Millington (396), North Branch (758), Otisville-Lakeville (445), Ovid-Elsie (477), Pinconning (418), Saginaw Michigan Lutheran Seminary

(200), Saginaw Saw Valley (607), Saginaw Valley Lutheran (342), Shepherd (498), Standish-Sterling (470), St. Charles (379) and St. Louis (350).

Saginaw Nouvel Catholic (248) applied earlier this year for the TVC, but withdrew its application when it was decided that the school would be placed in the division with the highest enrollment schools.

The shakedown leaves Breckenridge and Merrill competing against schools close in size, including Ashley (195), Blanchard-Edmore-Montabella (258), Carson City-Crystal (268), Coleman (208), Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart (146) and Vestaburg (195).

"Size-wise, it's a perfect fit for us," noted Breckenridge athletics director Ryan Sklener. "Merrill first started talking about it, and then we started to research it. We are only seven miles apart from Merrill and they are one of our rivals. Now we'll be going up against schools a lot closer in size — and none of them are that far away travel-wise."

"The Mid-State really wanted to have eight schools, and Merrill only wanted to make the move if we did," continued Sklener.



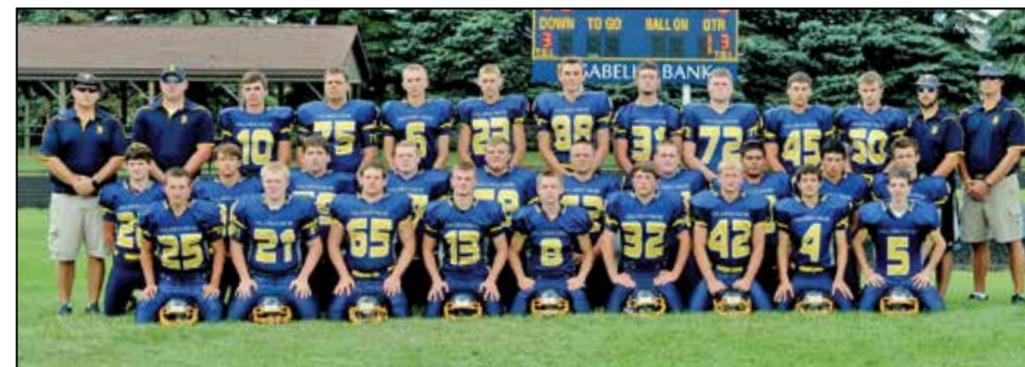
"Really, it's the right fit for both of us. A lot of the schools in our league (sponsor) the same sports and this will give us a chance to build up some other sports. I think everyone is looking forward to a more level playing field. Some of the schools in the TVC were double our size."

### LAKEVILLE JUMPING SHIP AGAIN

Over the past two decades, Class B Otisville-Lakeville has seen a slow enrollment decrease from 796 students in 1996-97 to around 445 for 2016-17. Currently, Lakeville is the second smallest school in the TVC and the Falcons have struggled in many sports, including football where the school is 2-16 over the past two school years.

With the consistent decrease, O-L will leave the TVC next summer and head back to the Genesee Area Conference. The Falcons competed in the GAC from 2002 until 2012, when it left for the TVC.

Before that, Otisville-Lakeville was a member of the Flint Metro League during the 1980s and 1990s before leaving in 2002.



Ovid-Elsie (Above) and Breckenridge (Left) will play in new conferences in 2016. (Chuck Prikasky and Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photos)

**Guaranteed Financing!**  
**9.99% APR!**  
See Lansing Auto Connection For Details!



Denny Emmer, Owner



Mark George, Owner



Mike Pier, Sales Manager



611 E. Saginaw St. • Lansing, MI 48906 • LANSINGAUTOCONNECTION.COM 517-253-0375

**BRECKENRIDGE INSURANCE**  
AGENCY OF MICHIGAN  
126 Eaton St., Breckenridge, MI 48615  
(989) 842-3161  
fax (989) 842-5570  
biaofmi.com

With more than twenty companies to choose from, we can connect you to the right policy for your specific needs. Give our team a call for a proposal today!



# SPORTS SCENE'S TOP SENIORS TO WATCH



**Tanner Motz**  
- St. Johns



**Kentre Patterson**  
- East Lansing



**Bruce Mann**  
- Midland Dow



**Sean Fitzgerald** - Mt. Pleasant  
**Jared Smith** - Pawamo-Westphalia  
**Casey Williams** - MLS  
**Greg Woodcock** - Ithaca

**Jared Smith 6', 200 RB, Pawamo-Westphalia**  
With outstanding strength and speed, Jared is one of the most productive runners in Michigan prep history.

**Bruce Mann 6'3", 210 QB Midland Dow**  
With good size and speed (4.7 40), Mann has all the tools you look for in a quarterback and passed for over 2,100 yards and 30 touchdowns last fall.

**Keegan Cossou 6'5", 230 TE Greenville**  
A big, strong and athletic tight end recruited by a number of D1 schools, Keegan will be playing his college ball for Central Michigan next season.

**Sean Fitzgerald 6'2", 295 OL Mt. Pleasant**  
The premier offensive lineman in Mid-Michigan, Sean will be playing D1 football for the Air Force Academy.

**Evan Plate 6'3", 220 LB Greenville**  
A punishing run stuffer, Evan also has good speed and quickness and is another blue-chip recruit for Central Michigan.

**Kentre Patterson 6'1", 173 WR East Lansing**  
Patterson is a game-breaker with excellent speed and size and has plenty of potential at the next level.

**Tanner Motz 6'3", 205 LB St. Johns**  
An outstanding athlete with plenty of upside, Tanner is another of the top recruits that have been heading to Western Michigan.

**Robi Stuart 6'3", 278 DT Saginaw Nouvel**  
Blessed with outstanding size and strength, Robi is the top defensive lineman in the area and will be playing his college ball at Central Michigan.

**Cameron Feguer 6'5", 272 OL DeWitt**  
A big, punishing blocker, Feguer has the skill set to be a standout somewhere at the next level.

**Nick Isley 6'2", 200 RB Rockford**  
Isley has outstanding size and speed (4.47 40) and averaged eight yards per carry for the Rams last fall.

## OTHER SENIORS TO WATCH

H	W	P	School	Coopers Clapp	6'2"	270	OL	Corunna	Dalis Williams	6'	185	RB/DB	Okemos	
Kahari Foy-Walton	6'3"	235	TE/DE	Lansing Sexton	Will Nagel	6'	185	QB/P	DeWitt	Anthony Humm	6'	185	RB	Alma
Tony Brown	6'1"	200	WR	Carman-Ainsworth	Dane Stambaugh	6'4"	335	OL	Lakewood-L. Odessa	Reid Thompson	6'1"	290		Fenton
Casey Williams	5'11"	175	WR	Saginaw MLS	DeShaun Lowery	5'11"	175	DB	Lansing Everett	Brandon Blair	6'4"	255	OL	Corunna
Michael Doyle	6'4"	245	DL	Lowell	Greg Woodcock	5'11"	220	LB	Ithaca	Blake Whitcomb	6'2"	290	DL	Greenville
Cole Johnson	6'5"	260	OL	Grand Ledge	Zack Hanson	6'1"	218	LB	Haslett	Andre Jackson	6'1"	175	DB	Bridgeport
JD Ross	6'	180	DB	DeWitt	Alfonso Reyna	6'3"	290	OL	Lansing Everett	Troy Bastien	6'4"	270	OL	Alma
Brennan Ward	6'4"	265	OL	St. Charles	DJ Lowery	5'10"	165	QB	Chippewa Hills	Logan Lefke	5'9"	170	RB	Portland
Spencer Stephenson	6'1"	220	FB/MLB	Midland Dow	Collin Alvesteffer	6'2"	200	QB	Cedar Springs	Taylor Jackson	6'2"	190	LB	Corunna
Konnor Maloney	6'	180	DB	Lansing Catholic	Gabriel Hull-Lopez	5'10"	180	DB	Holt	Robert Love	6'5"	290	OL	Clio
					Obie Ricumstrick	6'1"	160	WR	Mt. Pleasant					

# SPORTS SCENE'S TOP JUNIORS TO WATCH



**Mikey Lynn**  
- Lansing Catholic

**Jason Whittaker 6'5", 195 QB Rockford**  
Whittaker has D1 size, arm strength and ability and has a number of Big 10 schools watching him.

**Nolan Bird 6'2", 175 QB Grand Ledge**  
The junior class is stocked with outstanding quarterbacks and Bird is another one with D1 skills.

**Braeden Childress 6'3", 205 QB/TE Big Rapids**  
An outstanding all-around athlete, Childress can play a number of positions at the next level.

**Blake Underwood 6'3", 190 S East Lansing**  
A freakish athlete with big-time ball skills, Underwood intercepted seven passes as a sophomore.

**Jimmy Bell 6'9", 335 OL Saginaw Arthur Hill**  
Linemen don't come much larger than Bell who has attracted the attention of D1 scouts for a few years now.

## OTHER JUNIORS TO WATCH

	H	W	P	School
Cody Carone	6'4"	290	OL	Rockford
Michael Lynn III	5'11"	170	QB	Lansing Catholic Central
Cal Johnston	6'4"	190	S	Grand Ledge
Ben VanSumeren	6'3"	210	WR/DB	Essexville-Garber
Marcus Remtema	6'	180	CB	Rockford
Josh Czarnota	6'1"	195	QB	Fenton
John Rogalke	5'10"	240	OL	Lowell
Patrick Nugent	6'3"	215	TE/LB	Okemos
Scott Pemberton	5'11"	190	RB	Fowler
Billy Koepf	5'9"	220	DL	Chippewa Hills
Charles Garrett	6'2"	160	QB	Bridgeport
Cody Blankenburg	5-8	155	S/KR	Lansing Sexton
Nevin Simington	6'1"	196	LB	Saginaw
Casey Rigney	6'2"	200	OL	Greenville
Cody Finnery	6'	230	DL	Coleman



**Garhet Metiva**  
- Freeland



**Jason Whittaker**  
- Rockford

**U.S. 27 YOUR GATEWAY TO THE NORTH SUPERSTORE!**  
**MOTORSPORTS & TRAILERS**  
 866-554-4217  
 www.us27motorsports.com  
 LINK TO US-27 HERE!  
 SERVICE PROFESSIONAL AND PARTS EXPERTS.....SERVICING ALL MODELS OF ATVs, MOTORCYCLES, SNOWMOBILES, PWC AND TRAILERS

EXCELLENT QUALITY! WINTER FUN! HUNTERS WELCOME! RIDERS WANTED! FALL COLOR TOURS! BEST DEALS!

CAN-AM POLARIS HONDA YAMAHA SKI-DOO SUZUKI SEV200 ARCTIC CAT SURE-TRAC Haulmark AMERICAN MADE HALL-IT

FEATURES AT MOREY COURTS

- 8 Basketball/Volleyball Courts
- 3 Racquetball Courts
- 2 Tennis Courts
- Complete Fitness Center
- Walking/Jogging Track
- Championship Sports Individual Training
- Basketball & Volleyball

**MOREY COURTS RECREATION CENTER**  
 Creating Enjoyment Through Recreation

5175 East Remus Road  
 Mount Pleasant, MI 48858  
 989-953-7529  
 www.moreycourts.com

CHAMPIONSHIP SPORTS AT MOREY COURTS  
 - Camps & Leagues -

Championship Sports Volleyball Camps with Ali Smith  
 Championship Sports Basketball Camps

Visit Our Club Page At  
 www.championshipsports.net  
 For More Details

# YOUNG OWOSSO Presents The

# The Shiawassee County Football Preview

## Courunna Cavaliers

**League:** Genesee Area Conference Red  
**Coach:** Kyle Robinson  
**2015 Record:** 8-2, 5-1 Tied 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Players lost:** Spencer Mort (WR/S), Corey Mort (WR/CB), Michael Parker (FB/LB).  
**Players returning:** Jerod Fattal (QB), Cooper Clapp (OG/DT), Max Nations (C/MLB), Brandon Blair (OT/DT), Taylor Jackson (LB).  
**Outlook:** The Corunna Cavaliers finished last season an impressive 8-2 sharing the conference title with the Goodrich. Despite losing a number of starters, Coach Robinson is confident in the leadership that his seniors will bring to the team. "Senior leadership will be one of the team's strengths this season," said Robinson. Senior linebacker Taylor Jackson is a natural leader on defense. The offense looks solid with a number of impact players including slot back David Dumond and quarterback Jerod Fattal. Corunna has a solid unit of linebackers that also includes Chris Wooley, Sam Thompson, and Dylan Briggs. The offensive line is a big strength with the return of linemen like Cooper Clapp (6-2, 272), Max Nations (6-1, 227), Brandon Blair (6-4, 275), and Luke Cortez (5-9, 250).

## Owosso Trojans

**League:** Capital Area Activities Conference Red  
**Coach:** Bryan Carpenter  
**2015 Record:** 0-9, 0-5 6<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Ethan McNamara (WR), Brandon Hrcka (OL), Nick Delaney (WR), Dylan Stanfield (OL).  
**Players returning:** Nathan Nicevski (QB), Drake Nover (WR), Dakota Shears (RB/LB), Tom Stickle (RB/LB), Matt Hickmott (RB/LB), Josh Hanifan (OL/DE), Andrew



Schneider (LB).  
**Outlook:** Veteran quarterback Nathan Nicevski returns to lead the Trojan offense. Senior Josh Hanifan will lead the line on both sides of the ball. Owosso has a strong contingent of senior linebackers that is led by Andrew Schneider.

## New Lothrop Hornets

**League:** GAC Blue  
**Coach:** Clint Galvas  
**2015 Record:** 12-1, 6-0 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Players lost:** Steven Garza (RB), Quentin Taylor (RB), Caleb Symons (TE), Luke Harris (LB).  
**Players returning:** Erik Birchmeier (QB/LB), Luke Krupp (RB/LB), Brayden Bitterman (WR/DB), Ryley Hafner (OL/DL), Carter Hemgesberg (OL/DL), Mason Ruddy (RB/DB).  
**Outlook:** The Hornets turned in a perfect regular season and won district and regionals titles before falling to eventual state champion Ishpeming in the state semifinals. "We have some key players back from the semifinal team from a year ago that was led by a very talented group of seniors," Galvas said. "We are looking for some young guys to step up this season and fill the big shoes left behind from the senior class."

## Laingsburg Wolfpack

**League:** Central Michigan Athletic Conference  
**Coach:** Brian Borgman  
**2015 Record:** 8-4, 4-3 4<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Kevin Koenig (QB/DE), Dan Harkness (RB), Jacob Hannah (OL/DL), Wyatt Rowley (C/DE).  
**Players returning:** Nick Putnam (QB), Aaron Rutila (RB/LB), Jakob Cecil (OL/DL), John Fortino (OL/LB), Nate Mentus (WR/DB), Avery Alana (WR/DB), Austin Elliott (OL/DE).  
**Outlook:** A total of 13 starters are back this season, including junior Nick Putnam at quarterback and Aron Rutila at running back. Wide receivers Nate Mentus and Avery Alana are returning starters. Senior Jordan Jones and junior Jake Raleigh also return at receiver along with slot back Lucas Fraidenburg. The offensive line returns three starters in senior Austin Elliott and juniors Jakob Cecil and John Fortino. Six starters return on defense including defensive linemen Jakob Cecil and Austin Elliott. John Fortino and Aaron Rutila lead at linebacker

Owosso looks to rebound from a 0-9 season a year ago. (Mike Schutt, High School Sports Scene Photo)

with junior Tommy Austin. Hunter Blaski, Mentus, Alana and Fraidenburg pace the secondary.

## Durand Railroaders

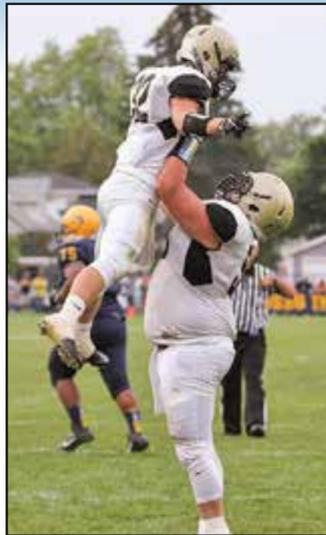
**League:** Genesee Area Conference Blue  
**Coach:** Jason Gray  
**2015 Record:** 0-9, 0-6 Tied 7<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** N/A  
**Players returning:** David Baker (FB), Ryan Binaei (DB), Remington Wurtz (RB), Jake Will (G), Randy Will (G), Austin Yager (QB), Matt Rexin (WR).  
**Outlook:** Durand will look to improve this year under the leadership of their seniors. Senior Austin Yager returns at quarterback with classmate Remington Wurtz providing playmaker ability for the Railroaders at running back. Fullback David Baker will support Wurtz. Senior Matt Rexin is a target for Yager through the air. Seniors Jake and Randy Will lead the offensive line while senior Ryan Binaei paces the defense.

## Perry Ramblers

**League:** Greater Lansing Athletic Conference  
**Coach:** Jeff Bott  
**2015 Record:** 3-6, 1-4 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Riley Winn (TE), Mike Gamza (RB), Dalorean Graves (RB), Hunter King (RB/DB).  
**Players returning:** Josh Shaw (RB), Bradley Cronk (QB), Colton Leykauf (CB).  
**Outlook:** Perry will look to improve upon last year's performance with Bradley Cronk back to lead the offense at quarterback. Josh Shaw is a powerful running back that leads the running game. Cornerback Colton Leykauf is a key player to watch on defense.

## Morrice Orioles

**League:** Central Michigan 8 Man  
**Coach:** Kyle Robinson  
**2015 Record:** 9-2  
**Players lost:** Nick Hart (QB), Jake Rivers (RB), Tanner Atkinson (WR), Kole Riley (DL), Sam Jackson (DL), Joe Wesley (LB).  
**Players returning:** Colton Dietz (OL/LB), Luke Bindschatel (RB/DB), Zach Rivers (RB).  
**Outlook:** The Morrice Orioles had a good run last year as they reached the district finals. It will be harder to replicate last year's performance, as they only return three



Corunna finished the year 8-2 in 2015. (Mike Schutt, High School Sports Scene Photo)

starters, all on the offensive line. Senior Colton Dietz is the top returnee and will make a big impact at linebacker and along the offensive line. Seniors Luke Bindschatel (RB/DB) and Zach Rivers (RB) also look to step up.



Laingsburg is coming off an 8-4 season in 2015. The Wolfpack lost to Ithaca in the regional finals a year ago. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)

# CLINTON COUNTY FOOTBALL PREVIEW

## Dewitt Panthers

**League:** Capital Area Activities Conference Red  
**Coach:** Rob Zimmerman  
**2015 Record:** 9-2, 5-0 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Players lost:** ShonQuise Trainor (WR), Chase McPhee (DB), Matt Hummell (DL), Brandon Martinez (DL), Shane Cullen (DB).  
**Players returning:** Cameron Feguer (OL), Will Nagel (QB), JD Ross (RB/DB), Alan Smith (WR), Cade Skaar (DL), Alec Guillaume (DE), Michael Stygles (LB), Beau Yabs (WR/DB).  
**Outlook:** Standout quarterback Will Nagel returns at quarterback after throwing for 1,487 yards and 21 touchdowns. JD Ross returns to lead the running game after posting 700 yards rushing and eight touchdowns. Ross also recorded three interceptions on defense. Nagel will look to wide receivers Alan Smith and Beau Yabs through the air. Cameron Feguer (6-5, 272) anchors the offensive line. The defensive line will include Cade Skaar and Alec Guillaume (6-4, 245). Michael Stygles is a standout at linebacker.

## Saint Johns Redwings

**League:** Central Area Activities Conference Red  
**Coach:** Dave Mariage  
**2015 Record:** 8-4, 4-1 2<sup>nd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Blake Thelen (QB), Blake Stewart (RB), Steven Linton (RB), Jake



Gnegy (OL/DL), Jake Eaton (WR/FS).  
**Players returning:** Tyler Wilson (OL), Jack Bouck (RB/DB), Tanner Motz (LB), Levi Hayworth (DL).  
**Outlook:** Graduation day hit the Redwings hard. "We have a limited roster and these players will have to learn multiple positions and work hard to get in game shape," said Coach Dave Mariage. Two returning starters leading the offense are Jack Bouck (RB) and Tyler Wilson (OL). Ryan Feldpausch steps in at quarterback. Jacob Ernst helps at running back with Jacob Dorn at tight end. Three starters return to lead the defense led by standout linebacker Tanner Motz along with Levi Hayworth (DL) and Bouck (DB). Supporting them are linebackers Kade Heibeck and Konner Near plus Cole Weber (DB). Tyler Secord, Clay Purtil, Hayden Dyer and Jacob Dorn will see action along the lines.

## Pewamo-Westphalia Pirates

**League:** Central Michigan Athletic Conference  
**Coach:** Jeremy Miller  
**2015 Record:** 13-1, 7-0 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Players lost:** Dan VanElls (OL/DL), Colin Smith (RB/DB), Nate Jandernoa (LB), Matt Fox (OT/DT).  
**Players returning:** Jared Smith (RB/LB), Devon Pung (C/LB), Dominic Spitzley (OT/DT), Bryce Thelen (FB/LB), Jimmy Lehman (QB), Ryan Smith (QB/DB), Mason Schneider (WR/DB), Austin Thelen (OL/DL), Nathan Smith (LB), Nolan Hagen (DE), Logan Hengesbach (WR/S), Nick Jandernoa (DB).  
**Outlook:** "Expectations are high," said P-W coach Jeremy Miller. "We intend to compete for a league title as well as make another run in the state playoffs." Plenty of players return to take on that task led by senior all-state running back Jared Smith, who set multiple state records for rushing yards and touchdowns last year. The offensive line is not to be overlooked. "The numbers put up by Jared Smith last year got a lot of coverage, but we bring back the majority of the offensive line that allowed him to set those records," Miller said. "They are selfless and work hard to make it happen." Among the returning linemen are seniors Dominic Spitzley, Austin Thelen and Devon Pung. Junior Jimmy Lehman and senior Ryan Smith will share the quarterback duties this year for the Pirates. Third-year starter Bryce

Pewamo-Westphalia, St. Johns and Ovid-Elsie all enter the 2016 season with high expectations. (High School Sports Scene Photo)

Thelen will play at fullback and linebacker on defense. Seniors Mason Schneider and Logan Hengesbach both return at wide receiver along with playing defensive back and safety respectively. The defense also returns seniors Nathan Smith (LB), Nolan Hagen (DE), and Nick Jandernoa (DB).

## Fowler Eagles

**League:** CMAC  
**Coach:** Kris Ernst  
**2015 Record:** 7-4, 5-2 3<sup>rd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Clayton Simons (TE), Cole Theis (OC), Glenn Becker (LB).  
**Players returning:** Dallas Watts (TE/MLB), Jared Speers (OL/DT), Scott Pemberton (RB).  
**Outlook:** The Eagles have few starters back, but those who returned are standouts. Dallas Watts is a four-year starter and standout at middle linebacker; Jared Speers anchors the line on both sides of the ball; the Eagles also return dynamic junior running back Scott Pemberton. "We have a lot of work to do," said Fowler coach Kris Ernst. "We return only four starters on offense, and four on defense. We should be competitive. We should be fast and aggressive on defense."



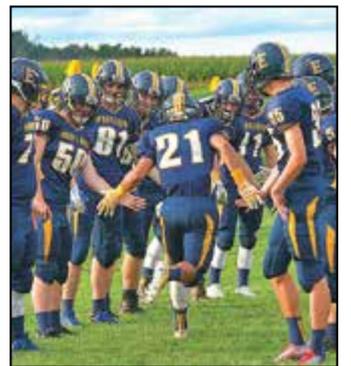
Moffitt (QB), Taurean Resseguie (RB).  
**Players returning:** Sam Weiler (RB/LB), Max Tiraboschi (QB), Matt Anibal (TE/DL), Max Bailey (WR/DB), Sam Alger (OL), Jaylen Richardson-Green (RB/LB), Sam Halfman (WR/DB), Zach Parry (LB), Adin Shank (OL).  
**Outlook:** Senior Max Tiraboschi will return to start at quarterback this year. The backfield will see Sam Weiler and Jaylen Richardson-Green at running back. Seniors Matt Anibal, Max Bailey, and Sam Halfman will step up at receiver. Sam Alger and Adin Shank lead the offensive line. Junior Zach Parry will be a presence at linebacker for Bath.

## Ovid-Elsie Marauders

**League:** TVC West  
**Coach:** Travis Long  
**2015 Record:** 7-3, 6-1 2<sup>nd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Devon Kelley (RB), Keaghan Sutliff (QB), Ben Stillwell (TE), Tyler Root (FB), Michael Ryals (DL).  
**Players returning:** Wes Houska (TE/DE), Bobby Olger (TE/DE), Curtis Chapko (RB/DB), Trent Mason (G), Zach Morris (DL), Justin Houska (OT).  
**Outlook:** "We are a very young team with only seven seniors and 10 juniors," said O-E coach Travis Long. "That being said, I still believe we will be very competitive. Our offensive ends will be top notch. Wes Houska and Bobby Olger are two of the best ends I have had. Defensively we will be strongest up front."

## Bath Bees

**League:** Central Michigan Athletic Conference  
**Coach:** Matthew Stephens  
**2015 Record:** 1-8, 1-6 Tied 6<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Elliott Carter (RB/DB), Jarred



# YOUNG OWOSSO

989-725-2184 • 800-725-2188  
www.YoungAutoSales.com

1500 East Main Street  
Owosso, MI 48867

**Your Best Deals  
are at Young  
in Owosso!!**

Supporting High School  
Athletics For 25 Years

**Right Here Right Now  
in St. Johns**

*PHYSICAL THERAPY close to home*

**Sparrow**  
Clinton Hospital

Sparrow Clinton Hospital • St. Johns • 989.224.1575 • www.sparrowclinton.org

**At Sparrow Clinton Hospital**

Leading-edge Techniques +  
Compassionate Caregivers =  
Exceptional Recovery Support

- Physical Therapy
- Speech & Language Therapy
- Sports Medicine
- Adult, adolescent & pediatric patient support
- Occupational Therapy

We support outstanding athletes by providing Sports Medicine services on the field, court and track for the Redwings of St. Johns High School

# INGHAM COUNTY FOOTBALL PREVIEW

## Lansing Catholic Central

**League:** Capitol Area Conference White  
**Coach:** Jim Ahern  
**2015 Record:** 11-2, 4-1 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Players lost:** Tony Poljan (QB), Tony Palmer (WR/RB), Joel Collinson (DL), Peter Galer (FB/LB), Liam Lamke (OL).  
**Players returning:** Spencer Fox (C), David Hart (G), Wiloughby Urquhart (T), Eli Whitney (RB), Justice Lewis (DL), Konnor Maloney (QB/CB), Nick Baker (DB).  
**Outlook:** Lansing Catholic had an impressive 2015 season as it went 11-2 overall to win the CAC White and reach the Division 5 state semifinals. Graduation, however, hit the Cougars hard. "We have a lot of people to replace," Ahern said. "A lot of real good skill people have graduated." The battle to replace graduated quarterback Tony Poljan includes three players. Frontrunner for the job is Lansing Sexton transfer Michael Lynn III. Lynn had a big year at Sexton passing for 1,815 yards and 18 touchdowns.

## East Lansing Trojans

**League:** Capital Area Activities Conference Blue  
**Coach:** Bill Feraco  
**2015 Record:** 5-4, 5-2 Tied 2<sup>nd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Noah Holbrook (RB/SS), Heath Williams (OT/DT).  
**Players returning:** Kentre Patterson (WR), Darian Holbrook (CB), Quenten Jackson (OLB), Blake Underwood (S), Hunter Helmic (QB), Anthony Nguyen (G).  
**Outlook:** All-conference quarterback Hunter Helmic is back for the Trojans this season. Helmic's top target in the air this season is all-conference wide receiver Kentre Patterson. Anthony Nguyen leads the offensive line for the Trojans. The defense is led by all-conference outside linebacker Quenten Jackson and safety Blake Underwood, who posted seven interceptions last year.



## Holt Rams

**League:** Capital Area Activities Conference Blue  
**Coach:** Chad Fulk  
**2015 Record:** 5-4, 5-2 Tied 2<sup>nd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Trent Stone (RB/DB), Jacob Pingston (OL), Mitchell Kauffman (OL), Ivan Barkley (DL), Connor Kelenske (LB).  
**Players returning:** Gabriel Hull-Lopez (SS), Kolin Leyrer (QB), Adam Dudek (WR), Khan Gray (WR), Josh Adado (MLB), Dylan Reich (T), Bryan Ho (G), Dean Puranovic (T), Justin Bicy (RB), Alex Stockwell (C/MLB).  
**Outlook:** Quarterback Kolin Leyrer returns to lead the offense along with senior wide receivers Adam Dudek and Khan Gray. Justin Bicy will lead the Rams in the backfield. Holt returns numerous big players on the line, including Dylan Reich (6-2, 271) and Bryan Ho (5-11, 260). Strong safety Gabriel Hull-Lopez and middle linebacker Josh Adado lead the Rams' defense.

## Haslett Vikings

**League:** Capital Area Activities Conference Red  
**Coach:** Charlie Otlewski  
**2015 Record:** 6-4, 2-3 4<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Dan Kashy (LB), Blake Roe (DL), Jake Tahaney (QB), Rob Boughton (OL/DL).  
**Players returning:** Justin Kuchnicki (OL), Zak Hanson (OL/DT), Mykal Stinson (RB), Nevin Brittain (DL), Hayden Cross (SB/DB).  
**Outlook:** Haslett returns 14 starters from a team that finished 6-4 last year and 2-3 in conference play. Justin Kuchnicki (6-6, 315) and Zak Hanson (6-2, 235) lead the line on both sides of the ball along with senior nose guard Nevin Brittain (5-9, 190). Senior Mykal Stinson (6-2, 220) leads the running game. Versatile playmaker Hayden Cross is a threat on both sides of the ball.

## Mason Bulldogs

**League:** Capital Area Activities Conference Red  
**Coach:** Jerry Van Havel  
**2015 Record:** 7-3, 3-2 3<sup>rd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Jarrett Van Havel (QB), Hunter Holbrook (DB), Nick Vondra (WR), Dan Kennihan (DL), Sam Benson (OL), Justin Scarvada (OL).  
**Players returning:** Storm Miller (FB/LB), Andy Ferguson (RB/FS), Riley Smith (T), Brandon Showers (WR), Brennan Campbell (WR), Forrest Akers (DE), Brad Wilton (QB/DE), Leon Popp (FB), Ben Surato (OL).  
**Outlook:** Mason goes into 2016 with a number of key players returning. Senior Brad Wilton is stepping in at quarterback where he will have a stable of running backs to work with in running back Andy Ferguson and fullbacks Storm Miller and Leon Popp. Wilton's top targets through the air are wide receivers Brandon Showers and

Brennan Campbell. The defense will be led by Miller at linebacker and Ferguson in the secondary. Juniors Forrest Akers (DE) and Ben Surato (OL) will also make an impact.

## Williamston Hornets

**League:** Capital Area Activities Conference White  
**Coach:** Steve Kerston  
**2015 Record:** 4-5, 2-3 Tied 3<sup>rd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Montana Reagan (RB), Robbie Grooms (OL), Maddux Maki (OL), Brett Sturgis (LB).  
**Players returning:** Stone Schafer (OL), Bryce Rollin (RB), Michael Walter (DB), Kyle Clendenan (DE), Cole Berg (TE), Tommy Dutcher (SS), Chase McManaman (LB), Blake Monroe (OL).  
**Outlook:** Williamston returns a number of key seniors. Senior Bryce Rollin will lead the Hornet offense at running back running behind of a line led by seniors Stone Schafer and Blake Monroe. Senior Cole Berg will be a top target at tight end. On defense, seniors Michael Walter (DB), Kyle Clendenan (DE), Tommy Dutcher (SS), and Chase McManaman (LB) lead the way.

## Okemos Chieftains

**League:** Capital Area Activities Conference Blue  
**Coach:** Jack Wallace  
**2015 Record:** 1-8, 1-6 7<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Chaz Richardson (WR/DB), Ben Buttery (RB/DL), Arsh Mir (OL/DL), Ian Scott (WR/DB).  
**Players returning:** Danny Rhodes (C), Dalis Williams (RB), Patrick Nugent (TE).  
**Outlook:** Okemos is paced by the return of all-conference running back Dalis Williams who possesses game-breaking skills. Junior all-conference tight end Patrick Nugent (6-3, 215) is a standout on both sides of the ball.

## Lansing Sexton Big Reds

**League:** Capital Area Activities Conference Blue  
**Coach:** Daniel Boggan  
**2015 Record:** 2-7, 2-5 6<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Devin Taylor (CB), Marshon Blake (OL/DL), Kiston Branson (DB), TJ Harvey (DE).  
**Players returning:** Kahari Foy-Walton, Cody Blankenburg (SB), Karey Faulkner (RB), Donaven Holmes (S), Tyron Hart (LB).  
**Outlook:** Lansing Sexton is led by all-conference slot back Cody Blankenburg who will be a big impact player on both sides of the ball. Senior Karey Faulkner will lead the running game and Donaven Holmes will be the leader on defense. Senior Kahari Foy-Walker (6-3, 230) is one of the top tight ends in the state.



## Lansing Everett Vikings

**League:** Capital Area Activities Conference Blue  
**Coach:** Marcelle Carruthers  
**2015 Record:** 4-5, 3-4 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Tyree Pruitt (DL), Ja'leel Jones (OL), LeAndre Wright (WR/DB).  
**Players returning:** Alfonso Reyna (OL), Diego Martin (MLB), DeShawn Lowery (DB), LuZander Granderson (OL), Kenny Schmidt (DB), Leslie Buck (WR), Mike Jeffries (DE).  
**Outlook:** Kenny Schmidt returns at quarterback after putting up impressive numbers last season. The Vikings return a strong core of big players on the line including two all-conference players in Alfonso Reyna and LuZander Granderson. Senior defensive back Deshaun Lowery will also make a major impact for the Vikings.

## Lansing Eastern Quakers

**League:** Capital Area Activities Conference Blue  
**Coach:** Troy Matlock  
**2015 Record:** 0-9, 0-7 8<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** LaTone Smith (RB), Chase Davis (LB).  
**Players returning:** Adam Rodriguez (OL), Deandre Wilson (OL), Kyle Lewis (DL), Tyrone Trainer (WR/DB), Kyangelo Robinson (RB).  
**Outlook:** Eastern has the makings for an outstanding offensive line led by returning starters Adam Rodriguez (6-0, 250) and Deandre Wilson. Junior Kyle Lewis leads the defensive line. Senior wide receiver and defensive back Tyrone Trainer will be a top target in the passing game as well as a key leader on defense. Sophomore Kyangelo Robinson will get plenty of game time at running back.

# EATON COUNTY FOOTBALL PREVIEW

## Lansing Waverly Warriors

**League:** Capital Area Activities Conference Red  
**Coach:** Anthony Walker  
**2015 Record:** 4-5, 1-4 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Joe Schwartz (QB), Sage Schneider (LB), Tyler Mojet (DB).  
**Players returning:** Shazon Crutcher (DB), Tyler Rowden (MLB), Kenny Brewer (WR), Jaden Sutton (RB), Lucas Leek (TE), Kyle Tackett (WR), Malik Norris (DT), Everett Thomas (C).  
**Outlook:** Senior Jaden Sutton is a talented running back that is poised for a big year. Junior Kenny Brewer and senior Kyle Tackett will be threats in the passing game at wide receiver. Senior Malik Norris leads the defensive line. Seniors Tyler Rowden (MLB) and Shazon Crutcher (DB) will also be key defenders.

## Grand Ledge Comets

**League:** Capital Area Activities Conference Blue  
**Coach:** Matt Bird  
**2015 Record:** 12-1, 7-0 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Players lost:** Malek Adams (WR), Sean Pelfrey (OL), Matt Lloyd (DL), Zac Hanes (LB), Cooper Alspaugh (OL), Robert Willoughby (LB).  
**Players returning:** Nic Lloyd (G), Zach Willoughby (WR), Alec Rogers (G), Nolan Bird (QB), Cal Johnston (S), Cole Johnson (OT).  
**Outlook:** Defending league champion Grand Ledge graduated a number of key players but have plenty of talent returning. Junior quarterback Nolan Bird is one of the top junior quarterbacks in the state. Senior wide receiver Zach Willoughby is one of Bird's top returning targets. Providing plenty of

protection up front is a big and experienced offensive line that includes seniors Nic Lloyd (6-2, 270), Alec Rogers (6-0, 243) and Cole Johnston (6-5, 260).

## Charlotte Orioles

**League:** Independent  
**Coach:** Jeff Finney  
**2015 Record:** 2-7  
**Players lost:** Tyler Bundy (WR), Mikey Demello (DL), Mason Penix (OL), Andrew Burdick (DL).  
**Players returning:** Justin Anderson (RB), Caleb Johnson (TE/LB), John O'Brian (OL/DL), Jacob Ryal (OL/DL), Gary Lake (RB), Matt Earnst (TE/LB), Dallas Mollett (OL/DL), Kaleb Pierce (OL/DL).  
**Outlook:** The Orioles are going the independent route this year after leaving the Interstate-8 Conference. Charlotte will count on strong line play with junior John O'Brian (6-4, 270) anchoring a strong group of linemen on both sides of the ball. Senior Justin Anderson (5-10, 155) will make an impact on offense and defense as will senior linebacker/tight end Caleb Johnson.

## Eaton Rapids Greyhounds

**League:** CAAC White  
**Coach:** Mike Smith  
**2015 Record:** 4-5, 1-4 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Clayton Higelmiere (OL), Lane McVicker (TB/DB), Tyler Oberlin-Scott (RB/DL).  
**Players returning:** Jared Bush (OL), Drew Shafer (WR/DB), Alex Dick (TE/DE), Collin Lewis (OL), Hunter George (DB/RB), Tristen Schultz (FB/LB), Tyrain Connor (WB/DB).  
**Outlook:** Senior all-conference lineman Jared Bush anchors what should be a solid



Grand Ledge is coming off a strong 2015 campaign that saw the Comets defeat Rockford for a Division 1 regional title a year ago. The Comets return a lot of talent this season and should be right in the mix competing for a playoff spot this season. (Alan Holben, High School Sports Scene Photo)

offensive line that includes senior tackle Collin Lewis (6-3, 265). Drew Shafer (6-1, 165) is a versatile player who started in both backfields last season. Junior wing back Tyrain Connor is another player to watch.

## Potterville Vikings

**League:** CMAC  
**Coach:** Phillip Heim  
**2015 Record:** 2-7, 1-6 6<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Dominic Ackley (DL), Brandon

Romanek (RB), Jake Ryan (FB/LB), Dylan Pitcher (RB).  
**Players returning:** Hunter Geisenhaver (WR), Tyler Moulder (LB), Zach Baker (WR), Tony Schaub (FB), Dylan McPhee (TE).  
**Outlook:** The Vikings feature a solid group of receivers in juniors Hunter Geisenhaver and tight end Dylan McPhee (6-0, 225) and sophomore Zach Barker. Senior linebacker Tyler Moulder (5-9, 205) will head up the defense.

**THE Camera SHOP**  
 M-F 9am-6pm, Sat. 10am-4pm  
 We Can Transfer To DVD  
 Home Movies Including:  
 • VHS  
 • 8mm, Super 8mm & 16mm  
 • 8mm & High 8mm video  
 • Digital 8mm video tape  
 • Mini DV Type  
 FREE Second Copy With This Ad!  
 6006 S. Pennsylvania at Miller, Lansing  
 517-272-0027  
 www.LansingCamera.com

**Kingsley Insurance Group**  
 Rich and Louanne Kingsley  
 800-783-0817  
**Alma** 116 W. Superior Street Suite 1 989-463-5347  
**St. Johns** 1000 E. Stugis St Suite 12 989-224-3505  
**Lansing** 526 S. Creyts Rd. Suite C. 517-489-2257  
 Auto / Home Boat / Umbrella  
 www.KingsleyInsuranceGroup.com

No Limit to the Fun You'll Have  
**City Limits**  
 Pizzas Burgers Steaks Ribs  
 801 N. Cedar St. • Mason  
 517-244-1090  
 www.citylimitsmason.com

**WATERSHED TAVERN AND GRILL**  
 Family Owned And Operated  
 5965 Marsh Rd • Haslett, MI 48840  
 517-999-SHED  
 Call Us For Take-Out!

**FIRST CONTRACTING INCORPORATED**  
 Specializing in MSHDA multi Family Renovations  
 701 South Main - Ovid, MI 48866 - 989-834-1500



# Presents The Montcalm County Football Preview

## Greenville Yellow Jackets

**League:** OK White  
**Coach:** Eddie Ostipow  
**2015 Record:** 2-7, 0-5 6<sup>th</sup> (OK Bronze)  
**Players lost:** Nick Baker (RB), Logan Macmillen (QB), Alec O'Conner (FB).  
**Players returning:** Keegan Cossou (TE), Evan Plate (OLB), Kyle Lorenz (RB), Blake Whitcomb (OL), Cal Syrjala (RB), Luke Newhouse (LB), Casey Rigney (DL).  
**Outlook:** The 2016 season will be a year of new experiences for Greenville. The Yellow Jackets will play this season in the OK White. On top of moving into a new conference, Greenville has a new name at the head coach position. Eddie Ostipow arrives after leading Forrest Hills Eastern to an 11-2 season and going as far as the state semifinals last year. Greenville returns a talented bunch of players that include CMU recruits Keegan Cossou (6-5, 235) at tight end and outside linebacker Evan Plate (6-3, 220).

## Vestaburg Wolverines

**League:** Mid State  
**Coach:** Danny Ryckman  
**2015 Record:** 5-5, 3-2, 3<sup>rd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Marcus Benavidez (QB/DE), Alex Steed (RB/CB), Tyler Ruckle (WR/CB), Andrew Smith (OG/DE), Troy Freeman (T/LB), Trevor Ketter (T/DL).  
**Players returning:** Christian Keeler (RB), Dalton Daymon (OL), Seth Stratton (QB), Reece Randall (OL/DL), Trenton Ketter (G/DT).



**Outlook:** The Wolverines will look to make a strong playoff push this year thanks to a solid offensive corps led by senior running back Christian Keeler, who ran for 1,080 yards and 13 touchdowns last year. Junior Seth Stratton will be the Wolverines' quarterback this year, and will get plenty of help up front with a strong offensive line that includes senior Dalton Daymon (6-0, 210) and juniors Reece Randall (6-2, 248) and Trenton Ketter.

## Carson City-Crystal Eagles

**League:** Mid State  
**Coach:** Ben Brock  
**2015 Record:** 6-4, 4-1 2<sup>nd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Dallas O'Green (RB), Tabor Erskin (RB), Zach Pringle (QB), Jon Ferris (DE), Tommy Christensen (DT), Garrett Tabor (LB).  
**Players returning:** Jacob Smith (OL/DL), Jeremiah Eller (C), Will Fay (T), Taylor Barkley (RB).  
**Outlook:** The loss of quarterback Zach Pringle and running back Dallas O'Green, who helped lead the Eagles to the playoffs last year, will sting. Carson City-Crystal does return a solid part of their offensive line though led by Jeremiah Eller (6-2, 255) and Will Fay (6-1, 244). Taylor Barkley looks to be the main man at running back. All-conference senior Jacob Smith (6-2, 238) returns after totaling 50 tackles and five sacks on defense.

## Lakeview Wildcats

**League:** Central States Activities Association Silver  
**Coach:** Sean Rinehart  
**2015 Record:** 5-4, 3-2 3<sup>rd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Tony Seaborn, David Larson, Kobe Perez.  
**Players returning:** Mike Zerka (QB/DB), Addison Mitchell (RB/DB), James Smith (OL/LB), Jason Kroeze (RB/DL), Caleb Cavendish (OL/LB).  
**Outlook:** The Wildcats will rely heavily on the rushing game to score the points in order to compete in the division this year. "We are a running team," said Coach Sean Rinehart. "I have challenged our kids to be the best option football team in the state. That challenge comes with an incredible amount of work, commitment, and accountability, but they have accepted that challenge fully." Running backs Addison Mitchell and Jason Kroeze key the ground game. Junior quarterback Mike Zerka returns as the starter. Offensive lineman/linebacker James Smith and Caleb Cavendish are impact players on defense.

## Blanchard Montabella Mustangs

**League:** Mid State  
**Coach:** Shaun Balhorn  
**2015 Record:** 1-8, 1-4 Tied 4<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Josh Balhorn (TE), Daven Lefever (WR), Alex Gendreau (WR), Hunter Myers (OL).  
**Players returning:** Alex Faber (DT), Luke

Burns (FB), Wyatt Sackett (OL), Cody Christensen (TE), Jordan Clark (RB), Jordan Balhorn (RB), Wyatt VanWagner (G/LB), Travis VanWagner (DE).  
**Outlook:** Blanchard Montabella returns a number of talented players including all-conference players Alex Faber at defensive tackle and Wyatt Sackett on the offensive line. Offensive player-of-the-year Luke Burns returns at fullback with juniors Jordan Clark and Jordan Balhorn joining him at running back. Defensive player-of-the-year Wyatt VanWagner (5-11, 170) returns at linebacker with junior Travis VanWagner back along the defensive line this year.

## Stanton Central Montcalm Hornets

**League:** Central States Activities Association Gold  
**Coach:** David Clay  
**2015 Record:** 2-7, 2-4 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Trenton Braman (RB)  
**Players returning:** William Nava (WR), CJ Denman (WR/OLB), Hunter VeltKamp (QB/FS), Zach Bigelow (SB/CB), Nolan Ziegler (G), Thomas Hall (T/DE), Bo Studley (RB/MLB), Kyle Tissue (C).  
**Outlook:** Quarterback Hunter VeltKamp returns at quarterback after throwing for 655 yards and seven touchdowns. The task of replacing star running back Trenton Braman will go to Bo Studley (6-0, 225) who is also a standout linebacker. Seniors CJ Denman and Zach Bigelow will also play key roles on offense while the line returns good size.

## Tri-County Vikings

**League:** Central States Activities Association Gold  
**Coach:** Phil Butler  
**2015 Record:** 2-6, 1-5 Tied 6<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Hunter Wiltjer (RB), Jonathan Becktell (RB), Colton Harris (QB).  
**Players returning:** Quentin Stevens (TE), Ray Smith (OLB), Eli Longcore (RB/SS), Kyle Gains (G), JD Bradley (G), Jeremiah Carter (DE).  
**Outlook:** Howard City Tri-County will be looking to improve this year without standout quarterback Colton Harris who graduated. Eli Longcore will lead the running game this year with tight end Quentin Stevens (6-2, 195) and junior slot back Kyle Proctor the top targets in the passing game. Senior outside linebacker Ray Smith will lead the Viking defense.

Vestaburg squeaked into the playoffs last season, finishing the year 5-5. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)

## Choose Wisely. Choose Sparrow.

Making the right decision is important. Especially when it comes to your health. Sparrow is a leader in every major area of care. Choosing Sparrow means getting clinical expertise, exceptional nurses and breakthrough treatments, unavailable anywhere else in the region. Call 1.800.Sparrow to find your Sparrow Physician today.

Sparrow.org/SparrowCarson • 989.584.3131



# GRATIOT COUNTY FOOTBALL PREVIEW

## Ithaca Yellowjackets

**League:** Tri-Valley Conference West  
**Coach:** Terry Hessbrook  
**2015 Record:** 14-0, 7-0 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Players lost:** Jake Smith (QB), Derek Teed (OL), Curtis Ackels (OL/DL), Jace Demenov (LB), Jonah Loomis (RB/DL), Tyler Spitzley (WR/DB), Spence DeMull (WR).  
**Players returning:** Greg Woodcock (LB), Dawson Sherman (DB), Joey Bentley (QB), Trey Chapin (WR), Seth Davis (WR), Nic Jones (OL).  
**Outlook:** After winning their fifth title in six years, Ithaca saw graduation day hit the roster hard. Ithaca may have lost many senior starters, but they are hopeful that last year's underclassmen will use their experience gained from last year's title run to replace the graduated veterans. At quarterback, last year's backup Joey Bentley takes the reins of the offense. Bentley has a strong arm and quick feet, making him a threat both passing and running. At receiver, Trey Chapin and Seth Davis are both juniors who will get plenty of snaps. Nic Jones returns along the line. Jones started all 14 games as a sophomore. On defense, Greg Woodcock enters his third year starting at linebacker. Dawson Sherman will return this year as a senior after suffering a broken leg last year in week eight.

## Saint Louis Sharks

**League:** Tri-Valley Conference West  
**Coach:** Aaron Munderloh  
**2015 Record:** 4-5, 2-5 Tied 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Kaden Keon (WR/DB), Jase Anderson (RB), Hunter Cannefax (OL/DL), Cameron Rios (WR/DB), Robert Borie (WR/LB).  
**Players returning:** Braden Hanley (OL/DL), Alex Garza (OL/DL), Mic Munderloh (WR/DE), Jayce Kuehnlein (WR/LB), Jim Pierce (QB/DB), Konnor Holton (RB/DB), Mark Janasik (TE/LB), Travis Courter (WR/LB), Jake Davis (WR/DB), Ernie Diaz (OL/DL), Maverick Giles (TE/LB), Dylan McCloskey (WR/DB), Dylan Weller (RB/LB).  
**Outlook:** "Defensively, we return seven starters, and five of those are in our defensive line and linebacker groups,"



Munderloh said. "We return several starters on the offense as well." Jim Pierce is a two-year starter at quarterback. All-conference lineman Braden Hanley will lead the line that includes Ernie Diaz and Leo Franco-Lopez. All-conference players Alex Garza and Mike Munderloh will lead the defensive line with Jayce Kuehnlein a returning all-conference linebacker.

## Alma Panthers

**League:** Tri-Valley Central  
**Coach:** Dan Falor  
**2015 Record:** 6-4, 4-3 2<sup>nd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Justin Doyle (QB), Preston Shirley (DE), Daniel Waber (OL), Brevan Bender (K/P).  
**Players returning:** Ryan Cornejo (LB), Anthony Humm (RB), Troy Bastian (OL/DL), Konnor Vedrode (WR), David Castillo (OL), Tristan Villalobos (OL).  
**Outlook:** The Panthers return a number of key players from a team that qualified for the playoffs last season. Ryan Cornejo (6-3, 200) totaled 98 tackles last year and returns to lead the defense. Senior running back Anthony Humm (6-0, 185) is a good blend of power and speed. Senior Konnor Vedrode is a productive receiver while senior Troy Bastian (6-4, 270) is a powerful lineman on both sides of the line. Look for sophomore Drew Humm to make an impact at quarterback.

## Fulton-Middleton Pirates

**League:** Central Michigan Athletic Conference  
**Coach:** Paul Hungerford  
**2015 Record:** 3-6, 3-4 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Jayvin Wolfe (OL), Colton Antes (DB), Mason Fitzpatrick (LB), Jake Litwiller (QB).  
**Players returning:** Paul Smith (OL), Reed Warnke (OL), Zach Cooper (OL), Adam Wiles (DE), Colton Stipcak (RB), Evan Barton (QB).  
**Outlook:** Fulton-Middleton will look to improve under the leadership of their seniors. Senior running back Colton Stipcak will lead the Pirates' running game. Stipcak will get plenty of support up front on the line that returns three seniors. Paul Smith, Reed Warnke, and Zach Cooper all return on the offensive line. Senior defensive end Adam Wiles is the leader on defense.

## Breckenridge Huskies

**League:** Mid State  
**Coach:** Kris Robinson  
**2015 Record:** 0-9, 0-7 7<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Jake Wendling (RB).  
**Players returning:** Brad Siler (QB), Corbin Reed (OL), Desmond Ward (OT), Spencer Brown (WR/CB).  
**Outlook:** Breckenridge returns a core of key players on offense this year. The offensive line will see the return of sophomore Corbin Reed (5-11, 175) and senior Desmond Ward (5-8, 200). Brad Siler (5-11, 165) will look to lead the team at quarterback this year. He will get support from wide receiver Spencer Brown (6-4, 160).



St. Louis enters the year with high hopes. The Sharks return a strong senior class led by quarterback Jimmy Pierce. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)

## Ashley Bears

**League:** Mid State  
**Coach:** Rick Weisbarth  
**2015 Record:** 3-6, 1-4 Tied 4<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Bailey Felton (OT/DE), Zack Kremer (DE), Austin Edell (TE/DB), Corey Turner (OG/DL).  
**Players returning:** Gabe Saylor (RB/OLB), Chaz Polish (RB/OLB), Ezra Bearden (OT/DT).  
**Outlook:** Ashley looks to improve its record with the return of two strong players at running back. Junior Chaz Polish (5-11, 160) and senior Gabe Saylor (5-9, 165) key the ground game this year. Senior Ezra Bearden (5-8, 245) leads the offensive line in their task to open up running lanes.

**ANDERSON CUSTOM CARPETING**

**Mary Anderson**  
Store Manager  
**989-681-3536**

603 E. Washington St. Louis, MI 48880      Hours: M-F 8-5:30; Sat. 9-2

vintage gifts      antiques

**Rickedy Redos**

rickedyredos@icloud.com      118 E. Superior St.  
Sweet Rickedy Redo's      Alma, MI 48801  
sweetrickedyredos1      (989) 463-2020

Committed to our Future ...

Village of Breckenridge

Inspired by our Past.

**BOLAND'S**

**BEST ONE TIRE** BRECKENRIDGE

120 S. Pine Street Breckenridge, MI 48615 989-842-5855

General • Cooper Firestone • Bridgestone Goodyear

24 Hour On The Road Service  
Large Selection of Farm Tires - Semi Light Truck - Passenger - ATV - Lawn & Garden

# — ISABELLA COUNTY FOOTBALL PREVIEW —

## Mt. Pleasant Oilers

**League:** Saginaw Valley League Blue  
**Coach:** Jason McIntyre  
**2015 Record:** 9-3, 4-2 3<sup>rd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Kaleb Perry (QB/WR), Hunter Buczkowski (RB/LB), Billy Tithof (OL), Jake Mogg (OL).  
**Players returning:** Logan Buczkowski (WR/LB), Levon Hunter (RB/LB), Sean Fitzgerald (OL), Obie Ricumstrict (WR/DB).  
**Outlook:** The Oilers are coming off a big nine-win season but suffered some key graduation losses led by DI recruits Kaleb Perry and Hunter Buczkowski. The Oilers do have some solid veterans back led by seniors Logan Buczkowski (6-3, 215) who caught 26 passes for 363 yards last year and totaled 78 tackles and Levon Hunter (5-10, 185) who rushed for 418 yards and seven touchdowns and totaled 100 tackles. Talented wide receiver Obie Ricumstrict also returns along with offensive line standout Sean Fitzgerald (6-3, 290).

return 16 seniors on both sides of the ball and take aim at their first playoff appearance since 2004. "We expect to be a relevant contender in the TVC Central and try to make the playoffs," said coach Nathan Ferency. "This group of seniors has expectations of playoffs and is poised to do so with their leadership and experience." Joe Yuncker returns at quarterback where he has the ability to put up big numbers through the air. He'll have plenty of options to pass to including junior Michael Lator, senior Cole Fitzpatrick, and junior Johnny Lynch. Blake Opdycke returns at running back. Opdycke rushed for 1,100 yards and 15 touchdowns last season. Fullback Wesley Cole rounds out the backfield. A number of defensive standouts return led by senior linebackers AJ Pardy and Wesley Cole along with Opdycke, defensive back Johnny Lynch and strong safety Michael Lator.

## Beal City Aggies

**League:** Highland Conference  
**Coach:** Brad Gross  
**2015 Record:** 9-2, 4-1 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Players lost:** Tucker Gross (QB/LB), Chase Rollin (RB/LB), Ian Hoogerhyde (OL/LB), Tristan Smith (OL/DL), Jake Mathews (RB/LB).  
**Players returning:** Kyle Yuncker (RB/CB), Brett Upton (MLB), Chase Maxon (FB), Thomas McCann (RB), Lucas Schumacher (QB), Trey Ferguson (DE), Caleb Bauer (DT), Nicholas Schafer (RB).  
**Outlook:** The Aggies must replace a number of key players from last year's Highland Conference title team. Beal City will have a new quarterback this year in junior

Lucas Schumacher who is up from the junior varsity along with fullback Chase Maxon. Senior running backs Thomas McCann and Nicholas Schafer and junior Kyle Yuncker lead the ground game. Junior Brett Upton paces the defense along with seniors Trey Ferguson and Caleb Bauer (6-0, 290) along the defensive line.

## Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart Irish

**League:** Mid State  
**Coach:** Jamie Slate  
**2015 Record:** 6-4, 5-0 1st  
**Players lost:** Kyle Szymanski (TE/LB), Jacob Starr (LB), Tony Perez (QB), Kristian Gostomski (RB/TE/LB).  
**Players returning:** Ryan Ervin (G/DE), Ian Ruggles (QB), Christian Maloney (T/DT), Carter Lowe (RB), Abe Hollenbeck (RB).  
**Outlook:** The defending league champions graduated a number of key players including quarterback Tony Perez and versatile playmaker Kristian Gostomski. Despite these losses, the Irish return a handful of talented players who are motivated to defend the title. Ian Ruggles (6-3, 190) looks to take over at quarterback this year. Providing protection up front is a strong offensive line led by all-conference guard Ryan Ervin (5-10, 215) and senior Christian Maloney (6-3, 195) who racked up 45 tackles on defense. Running backs Carter Lowe (5-10, 155) and Abe Hollenbeck lead the running game.



The Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart football team finished last season 6-4 and enter this season with a new coach. Longtime MPSH coach Rick Roberts retired after last season. (Skip Traynor, High School Sports Scene Photo)

## Shepherd Bluejays

**League:** Tri-Valley Conference Central  
**Coach:** Nathan Ferency  
**2015 Record:** 2-7, 1-6 Tied 6<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** True Conroy (WR/C), Shane Boge (WR/C), Noah Crispin (WR/CB), Kyle Galgoc (RB/LB), Clayton Long (G/NG).  
**Players returning:** Blake Opdycke (RB), Joe Yuncker (QB), AJ Pardy (LB), Johnny Lynch (WR/CB), Wesley Cole (FB/LB), Cole Fitzpatrick (WR/C).  
**Outlook:** The Bluejays have high expectations this year as they

**Blackford Concrete**  
 Licensed And Insured FREE ESTIMATES  
 Residential, Commercial & Agricultural Poured Walls & Laser Flat Floors  
 Decorative Stamped Concrete  
 168 E Deerfield Rd, Mount Pleasant, MI 48858  
 Office (989) 773-7898

(989) 463-8321  
 A great place to join see how we can help you

Check Out More Photos At  
**highschoolsportsscene.com**

**Soaring Eagle Waterpark and Hotel**  
 Celebrate Your Birthday at the Waterpark!  
**Base Party Package** STARTING AT \$125 Mon-Fri  
 • 1 Hour in Party Room  
 • 4 Hours in Waterpark  
 • 10 Passes + Birthday Child is FREE  
 • Gizi Birthday T-Shirt for the Birthday Child  
 • Discount at Gift Shops  
 STARTING AT \$150 Sat/Sun  
 CALL FOR FULL DETAILS!  
 989.817.4825  
 5665 E. Pickard Rd. • Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858  
 WWW.SOARINGEAGLEWATERPARK.COM

# — MECOSTA COUNTY FOOTBALL PREVIEW —

## Big Rapids Cardinals

**League:** Central States Activities Conference Gold  
**Coach:** Mike Selzer  
**2015 Record:** 7-4, 4-2 3<sup>rd</sup>  
**Players returning:** Braeden Childress (QB/TE), Avery Montgomery (RB), Erik Rehkopf (C), Jonathan Pereira (OL/DL), Kyle Bewalda (OT), Josh Alley (QB).  
**Outlook:** The Cardinals are coming off of a winning season and looking for even bigger things this year. Plenty of firepower returns on offense led by standout junior Braeden Childress (6-4, 210), who can play quarterback or tight end. Senior Josh Alley is also in the quarterback mix, with senior Avery Montgomery providing punch at running back. The offensive line will be strong this year led by seniors Erik Rehkopf (6-1, 230), Jonathan Pereira (6-2, 240) and Kyle Bewalda (6-1, 193).



Kurt Ray (TE), Andrew Vinton (OT), David Spedowski (RB), Nathan Berry (OG).  
**Outlook:** Last year Chippewa Hills posted an impressive 9-3 record, and won a district championship. This year they plan on improving even more. Big time playmaker DJ Lowery will look to use his explosive speed (4.53 40) to keep the offense as deadly as ever. Junior running back David Spedowski will lead the ground game. Senior linemen Jonathan Hawley (6-0, 255) and Nathan Berry (6-2, 220) lead the pack up front along with junior Andrew Vinton. Fellow junior Billy Koepf is an impact player at defensive tackle and the offensive line.

## Chippewa Hills Warriors

**League:** Central States Activities Conference Gold  
**Coach:** Larry Jose  
**2015 Record:** 9-3, 5-1 2<sup>nd</sup>  
**Players lost:** John Wixson (WR/S), Slade Todd (WR/DB)  
**Players returning:** DJ Lowery (QB/CB), Billy Koepf (DL), Jonathan Hawley (OT/DT),  
 Chippewa Hill's DJ Lowery led the Warriors to a 9-3 record a year ago and a district championship. (John Raffel, High School Sports Scene Photo)

## Morley-Stanwood Mohawks

**League:** Central States Activities Association Silver  
**Coach:** Clark Huntey  
**2015 Record:** 6-4, 4-1 2<sup>nd</sup>  
**Players lost:** N/A  
**Players returning:** Nic Huntey (QB/OLB), Aaron Sharp (RB/CB), Josh Grosplin (RB/OLB), Adam Carey (DT), Cole Elliott (MLB).  
**Outlook:** Morley-Stanwood is looking to improve upon an impressive season last year. Quarterback Nic Huntey will start at quarterback again this year. He has great speed (4.6 4) and is also an impact player at outside linebacker. Senior Aaron Sharp (5-9, 170) and junior Josh Grosplin lead the way at running back. Defensive tackle Adam Carey and middle linebacker Cole Elliott will lead the defense for the Mohawks in 2016.

Nutrients to Refuel • Protein to Rebuild • Backed by Science • Produced by Local Farm Families

**Chocolate Milk: Nature's Sports Drink**

RECOVER PROTEIN, REBUILD, REHYDRATE, REFRRESH, DELICIOUS, HEALTHY, STAMINA, ENERGY, NUTRITIOUS, ENDURANCE, VITAMIN A, CALCIUM, POTASSIUM, ELECTROLYTES, REPAIR, STRENGTH, REBUILD, REHYDRATE, REFRRESH, DELICIOUS, HEALTHY, STAMINA, ENERGY, NUTRITIOUS, ENDURANCE, VITAMIN A, CALCIUM, POTASSIUM, ELECTROLYTES, REPAIR, STRENGTH

For more information, please visit [www.MilkMeansMore.org](http://www.MilkMeansMore.org) or call 1-800-241-MILK (6455) to learn how your school can get involved.

**milk Means More**  
 United Dairy Industry of Michigan

# IONIA COUNTY FOOTBALL PREVIEW

## Portland Red Raiders

**League:** Capital Area Conference White  
**Coach:** John Novarra  
**2015 Record:** 10-1, 5-0 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Players lost:** Noah Hengesbach (TE/LB), Mark Brooks (OL/DL), Tyler Simon (LB), Cory Gensterblum (DB).  
**Players returning:** Cole McGregor (QB/SS), Logan Lefke (RB), Gabe Schrauben (RB), Hayden Maus (DL), Treyvin Groesser (DL), Devin Aung (LB), Justin Hohman (OL), Zach Hickling (DL), Austin Allison (QB), Griffin Hager (SB).  
**Outlook:** The Portland Raiders are coming off of a sensational season last season and return most of their key players that made last year happen. All-conference running back Logan Lefke returns after posting 1,218 yards and 17 touchdowns last year. Lefke will get support from fellow running back Gabe Schrauben. Many players return on the defensive line including all-area Hayden Maus.

## Ionia Bulldogs

**League:** Capital Area Conference White  
**Coach:** Mike Holes  
**2015 Record:** 3-6, 1-4 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Mitchell Lahr (QB), Dillin Biella (OL), Steven Barber (OL/LB), John McCord (WR).  
**Players returning:** Andrew Fox (RB), John Meyer (QB), Cam Sanicki (WR), Isaac Mann (LB), Brian Hamilton (LB), Max Sharp (CB).  
**Outlook:** "We graduated a whole lot of seniors," Ionia coach Mike Holes said. "We have a lot of guys who will be making their first varsity starts this year." Senior running back Andrew Fox is the lone starter returning on offense. Junior quarterback John Meyer did get some snaps last year on the varsity and will look to get the ball to Ionia's playmakers in space.

## Belding Redskins

**League:** OK Silver  
**Coach:** Joe Schwander  
**2014 Record:** 1-8, 1-4 5<sup>th</sup> (OK Blue)  
**Players lost:** Jordan Esposito (OL), Conner Barker (RB), Aaden Quinn (QB), Blake Rodarmer (LB).  
**Players returning:** James Daniel (RB), Dalton Riches (OL), Zack Kavaluskis (WR), Damion Ball (OL), Nolan Beck (RB), David Ross (LB), Brendan Powers (G), Mitchell Hopkins (DL), Tanner Eisenga (TE/DE), Tristan Barclay (LB), Trenton Collins (QB).  
**Outlook:** Junior running back James Daniel (5-9, 165) is a talented back with good speed and is joined in the backfield by Nolan Beck. The offensive line returns seniors Dalton Riches (5-11, 244) and Damion Ball (6-1, 200). Junior Trenton Collins takes over at quarterback with wide receiver Zack Kavaluskis and tight end

Tanner Eisenga back. On defense, linebacker David Ross (6-1, 220), defensive lineman Mitchell Hopkins and linebacker Tristan Barclay return.

## Lake Odessa Lakewood Vikings

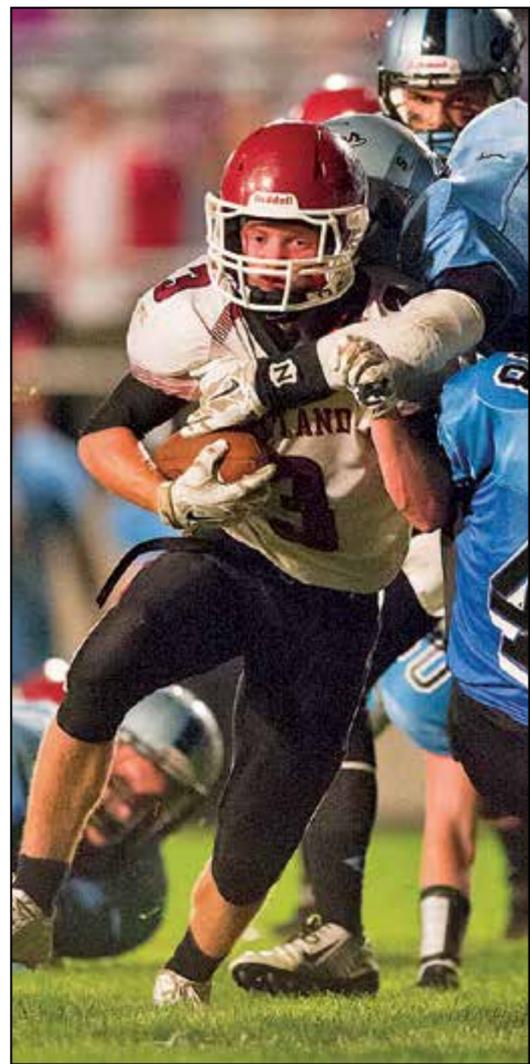
**League:** Greater Lansing Athletic Conference  
**Coach:** Nick Boucher  
**2015 Record:** 7-3, 5-0 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Players returning:** Dane Stambaugh (DT), Jacob Kelly (DE), Luke Tromp (T), Ben Madejczyk (DT), Devon Everson (T).  
**Outlook:** Lakewood will look to win another conference title this year with the help of their line play. The Vikings return multiple players on the line and provides great size. Expect Lakewood to be the front runners for the conference title again this year.

## Saranac Redskins

**League:** Central Michigan Athletic Conference  
**Coach:** Andrew Lytle  
**2015 Record:** 2-7, 1-6 Tied 6<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Drake Edwards (QB), Sam Ward (OL), Isaac Kidder (OL/DL).  
**Players returning:** Nick Krammen (WR), Alex Graft (WR/DB), Michael Wojcik (FB/LB), Justin Davis (WR/DB), Zach Pieroni (OL/DL).  
**Outlook:** Saranac returns eight starters for this season. Senior Michael Wojcik will set up in the backfield at fullback and will lead the defense at linebacker. Seniors Alex Graft and Justin Davis are two wide receivers that will be a threat to defenses. Senior Zach Pieroni will lead the line on both sides of the ball for the Redskins.

## Portland St. Patrick Catholic Shamrocks

**League:** Central Michigan 8 Man  
**Coach:** Pat Russman  
**2015 Record:** 6-4  
**Players lost:** Brady Lehman (RB), Tate Schrauben (OL), Fischer Klein (OL), Travis Moyer (DB), Garrett Pline (P).  
**Players returning:** Tyler Schrauben (WR/DB), Sam Hodge (RB/LB), Matt Jandernoa (WR/DB/K), Jerrid Pline (QB), Collin Pline (OL/DL).  
**Outlook:** Portland St. Patrick returns multiple players from last year's 6-4 team. Senior Jerrid Pline returns to start at quarterback. Sam Hodge will lead the running game at running back for the Shamrocks. Pline will have Tyler Schrauben and Matt Jandernoa to look for through the air. Collin Pline will lead the Shamrocks' line on both sides of the ball.



Portland put together another stellar season in 2015 finishing the year 10-1 before losing to Lansing Catholic in the district finals. (Alan Holben, High School Sports Scene Photo)

**COMMERCIAL BANK**  
 COMMUNITY...it's what we are.  
 Alma • Ithaca • St. Louis • Greenville  
 Mt. Pleasant • Middleton • Hastings • Lake Odessa  
 www.commercialbank.com  
 800-547-8531

**Blake Hollenbeck Auto Sales Inc.**  
 W. M57 Greenville, MI  
 www.Blakehollenbeckinc.com  
 CHECK OUT OUR INVENTORY  
 Hours: Monday and Wednesday 9 to 8  
 Tuesday, Thursday Friday 9-6, Saturday 9-3  
 Ph. (616) 754-5588  
 Toll Free (866) 358-7473

**Crop Production Services** **Dyna-Gro**  
**Doug Belles**  
 Manager  
 Office: (989) 842-1185  
 8263 N. Ransom Rd.  
 PO Box 157  
 Breckenridge, MI 48615  
 www.cpsagu.com

**Gratiot Aerials**  
 Office 517-719-4670 • Mobile 989-285-8685  
 JoeBosley9133@gmail.com

# GENESEE COUNTY FOOTBALL PREVIEW

## Fenton Tigers

**League:** Flint Metro Conference  
**Coach:** Jeff Setzke  
**2015 Record:** 9-2, 7-0 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Players lost:** Kevin Lack (OL), Kobe Lookbill (OL), Mitch Adams (OL), Chase Lynch (DE), Mason McCormick (DL).  
**Players returning:** Josh Czarnota (QB), Dylan Crankshaw (QB), Greg Lucas (DB), Reid Thompson (OL), Chris York (DE), Jarrett Smith (DL), Zack West (WR).  
**Outlook:** Fenton returns plenty of talent led by all-conference quarterback Josh Czarnota (6-2, 195), all-conference receiver Zack West and all-conference running back Dylan Crankshaw who rushed for 958 yards and 13 touchdowns. Second team all-conference pick Reid Thompson (6-1, 190) returns to the offensive line. Second team all-conference players Chris York (6-0, 195) and Jarrett Smith (6-1, 255) will lead the defensive line with all-conference defensive back Greg Lucas leading the secondary.

## Linden Eagles

**League:** Flint Metro Conference  
**Coach:** Dennis Hopkins  
**2015 Record:** 8-3, 6-1 2<sup>nd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Bailey Davis (OL), Ryan Young (WR).  
**Players returning:** Aaron Sarkon (QB), Sawyer Berge (OL), Gabe Piesko (DL), Skyler Stites (DL), Aaron Steedman (RB), Hunter Michael (DE), Cade Dickson (LB), Ryker Rivera (DB), Trent Strang (LB).  
**Outlook:** Look for Linden to challenge Fenton for the Flint Metro title. Quarterback Aaron Sarkon leads a high-powered offense that includes all-conference running back Aaron Steedman. All-conference linemen Sawyer Berge and Gabe Piesko anchor the line with Skyler Stites, and Hunter Michael also back on the defensive line. All-conference linebackers Cade Dickson and Trent Strang provide a solid core to the defense.

## Montrose

**League:** GAC Red  
**Coach:** Dennis Reinhart  
**2015 Record:** 6-5, 3-3 4<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Bubba Reinhart (RB/LB), Caden Robinson (OL/DL), Tyler Burch (PK).  
**Players returning:** John DeMura (LB), Collin Vandergronden (DB), Ryan Bishop (OL), Devante Bedford (WR), Evan Kinder (OL), Baily Diem (DE).  
**Outlook:** The Rams have some standout defensive players back in senior linebacker John DeMura (5-8, 210) and defensive back Collin Vandergronden. Devante Bedford is a playmaker on offense while seniors Evan Kinder (6-2, 230) and Ryan Bishop (6-0, 250) anchor the offensive line.

## Grand Blanc Bobcats

**League:** KLA West  
**Coach:** Joe Delaney  
**2015 Record:** 4-5, 2-3  
**Players returning:** Brett Anderson (SS), Kullan Jamieson (WR), Blake Bogan (WR), Chris Riley (RB), Kevin Coriasso (QB), Kendrick Green (DE).  
**Outlook:** The Bobcats have a number of defensive stalwarts led by senior safety Brett Anderson (6-0, 185) and big-play defensive end Kendrick Green (6-0, 235). Quarterback Kevin Coriasso (6-3, 200) leads a potent passing game that brings back receivers Blake Bogan and Kullan Jaieson.

## Flint Powers

**League:** SVL Red  
**Coach:** Jerry Todd  
**2015 Record:** 11-3, 5-1 2<sup>nd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Noah Sargent (QB), Reese Morgan (RB), Daurel Tolbert (DT).  
**Players returning:** Kelson Connors (S/RB), Spencer Gomez (MLB), Michael Pellizzari (OT), Matt Wiskur (WR), Peyton Beauchamp (TE).  
**Outlook:** After reaching last year's D4 state title game change has come to Powers Catholic. Jerry Todd is the new head coach and gone is standout quarterback Noah Sargent. The Chargers do return some standouts led by junior tackle Michael Pellizzari (6-4, 275), senior middle linebacker Spencer Gomez (5-11, 220) and junior safety/running back Kelson Connors (6-2, 205) who is a standout all-around player.

## Davison Cardinals

**League:** SVL Blue  
**Coach:** Kyle Zimmerman  
**2015 Record:** N/A  
**Players returning:** Brenden McRill (QB); Hunter Childs (S), Kyle Dymowski (RB/LB), Zach Slezak (OL), Gabe Ellis (LB), Josh Lapeer (OLB).  
**Outlook:** Davison will feature a potent offense led by senior quarterback Brenden McRill who accounted for 2,579 total yards last season. Senior tackle Zach Slezak (6-4, 275) anchors the offensive line. The Cardinals have a strong group of defenders back led by senior linebackers Kyle Dymowski and Josh Lapeer (6-1, 215) and junior linebacker standout Gabe Ellis (6-2, 190). Senior safety Hunter Childs is the ringleader of the secondary.

## Clio Mustangs

**League:** Flint Metro  
**Coach:** Jeff Klopff  
**2015 Record:** 3-6, 1-6  
**Players returning:** Kane Williams (RB), Jared Sherman (QB), Robert Love (OL), Garrett McGraw (OL), Kolton Langdon (WR).  
**Outlook:** Hard-charging running back Kane

Williams gives the Mustangs an outstanding threat on the ground. Linemen Robert Love (6-5, 290) and Garrett McGraw (6-3, 265) have to size to open up some good running lanes. Clio also returns quarterback Jared Sherman and wideout Kolton Langdon.

## Swartz Creek Dragons

**League:** Flint Metro  
**Coach:** Brad Brown  
**2015 Record:** 4-5, 3-4 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Brett Pero (WR), Derrick Ross (WR), Dan Croft (DL).  
**Players returning:** Clayton Lynn (LB), Joe Hill (QB), Brian Bridges (OT), Narondi Davis (OG).  
**Outlook:** The Dragons return a veteran quarterback in Joe Hill. The offensive line is solid with Brian Bridges (6-3, 285) and Narondi Davis (5-10, 210) returning. All-conference linebacker Clayton Lynn heads up the defense.

## Flushing Raiders

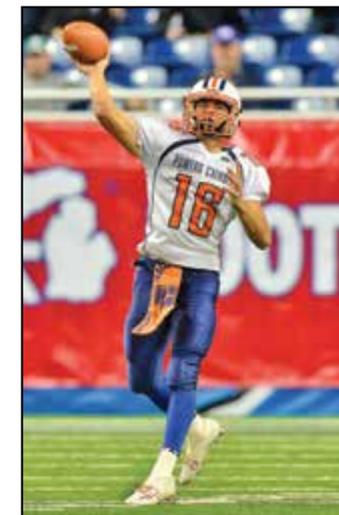
**League:** Flint Metro  
**Coach:** Robert Oginski  
**2015 Record:** 4-5, 3-4 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Colin Emmendorfer (OL/DL), Garrett Oginski (QB), Devin Morgan (DE), Justin Rau (LB).  
**Players returning:** Cal Endicott (QB/S), Easton Brotherton (LB), Nick Mabry (DB), Bradley Novess (DT).  
**Outlook:** Look for Cal Endicott (6-5, 180) to make a big impact in his first year as starting quarterback. The Raider defense is led by defensive tackle Bradley Novess (6-3, 290) and linebacker Easton Brotherton (5-11, 200).

## Lake Fenton Blue Devils

**League:** GAC Red  
**Coach:** Eric Doyle  
**2015 Record:** 6-5, 3-3 4<sup>th</sup>  
**Players returning:** Trent Hilger (FB), Christopher Tomczak (DE), David Foerster (OL), Andrew Foerster (LB), Bryce Andres (WB), Daniel Osminski (NG).  
**Outlook:** The Lake Fenton offense is poised to take off under junior quarterback Jackson Nevadomski. Punishing senior running back Trent Hilger (6-1, 245) returns after running for 1,343 yards and 19 touchdowns last season. The defense also looks solid with nose guard Daniel Osminski (6-1, 275) and outside linebacker Andrew Foerster (6-3, 230) leading the way.

## Flint Beecher Bucs

**League:** GAC Red  
**Coach:** Courtney Hawkins  
**2015 Record:** 7-3, 4-2 3<sup>rd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Jelani Taylor (DB), Marcus Wright (QB), Tajo'n Dillard (DL).  
**Players returning:** Malik Ellison (WR), Andre Holloway (RB), Calvin Moten (RB).



Flint Powers advanced all the way to the Division 4 finals a year ago, but enter the season under new coach Jerry Todd. (Alan Holben, High School Sports Scene Photo)

JaQuaylyn Kelly (QB).  
**Outlook:** N/A

## Flint Southwestern Knights

**League:** SVL Blue  
**Coach:** Chane Clingman  
**2015 Record:** 1-8, 0-6 7<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Jaylen Chaney (NG), Marcus Washington (QB), Tone Dillard (DL).  
**Players returning:** Deron Irving-Bey (DL), Marcus Matiere-Bey (RB), Ronald Wallace (LB), Lamonta Bobo (WR), Chris Lewis (QB), Alijah Moore (G).  
**Outlook:** The Knights return a dominating defensive lineman in senior Deron Irving-Bey (6-5, 250) who racked up 23 tackles for loss and six sacks last year. Marcus Matiere-Bey is back to give the Knights a strong running threat.

## Flint Northwestern Wildcats

**League:** SVL Red  
**Coach:** Fred Jackson  
**2015 Record:** 2-7, 1-5 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Shamond Halbert (QB), Lance Rison (RB), Chris Pool (OL).  
**Players returning:** Troy Brown (WR), Jordan Shock (LB), McClendon Devin (TE).  
**Outlook:** The Wildcats will miss standout quarterback Shamond Halbert. Senior wide receiver Troy Brown (6-1, 200) is a big-play performer that returns while on defense Jordan Shock (6-3, 235) is a rugged linebacker.

**AMERICA'S CHOICE REALTY L.L.C.**  
 When Buying or Selling Your Choice... Your Home...  
 108 E. Center St. Suite A, Ithaca  
 989-875-5148 • www.homesandland.com

Marci Browne Broker - Owner 989-620-1027  
 Michelyn Crowley Realtor 989-388-1750  
 Sherri Hessbrook Realtor 989-875-4649  
 Amber Weburg Realtor 989-620-7918

# SAGINAW COUNTY FOOTBALL PREVIEW

## Swan Valley Vikings

**League:** Tri-Valley Central  
**Coach:** Kevin Gaverda  
**2015 Record:** 6-4, 4-3 2<sup>nd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Nate Neuenfeldt (RB/LB), Tyler Zolinski (OL), Mason Hernandez (OL).  
**Players returning:** Emmett Boehler (RB), Nick Sulen (TE/DE), Cam Toth (TE/DE), Jack Martin (OL/LB), Matt Werle (OL), Trey Cheney (WR), Garrett Rozich (S); Matt Pike (LB), Brady Kessler (LB).  
**Outlook:** "We will be young this year but extremely competitive and we run well," Gaverda said. "We also want to be more balanced on offense." Alex Fries and Nick Krzyzaniak are in the hunt to start at quarterback with a healthy Emmett Boehler (5-8, 190) expected to lead the ground game. Nick Sulen (6-3, 225) and Cam Toth (6-1, 230) are a pair of standout ends on both sides of the ball.

## St. Charles Bulldogs

**League:** Tri-Valley West  
**Coach:** Jason Dinninger  
**2015 Record:** 4-5, 4-3 4<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Tre Williams (RB), Branan Neiman (RB/DB), Anthony Miller (RB/DB).  
**Players returning:** Brennen Ward (OL/DE), Johnny Westlock (RB/LB), Trey Lindsay (WR/RB/DB), Blake Berent (QB), Lee Fisher (WR), Keith Whiren (OL/DT), Nathan Haske (LB).  
**Outlook:** St. Charles has a dominating two-way lineman in Brennen Ward (6-4, 280), a three-year starter and two-time all-stater. Johnny Westlock (5-10, 180) is a standout at running back and linebacker. "Our strong points are our offensive and defensive lines," St. Charles coach Jason Dinninger said. "We are pretty big and strong up front and hopefully that will equal some wins."



## Saginaw Nouvel Panthers

**League:** Independent  
**Coach:** Mike Boyd  
**2015 Record:** 9-2  
**Players lost:** Mitch Morley (QB), Jason Russell (RB).  
**Players returning:** Robi Stuart (DL), Christian Mendyk (RB), Kyle Allen (OT), Alex Wrobel (LB), Alex Dwan (FS), Matt Sullivan (OL/DL), Tate Hausbeck (QB/DB).  
**Outlook:** The Panthers have another solid all-around team. Central Michigan-recruit Robi Stuart (6-4, 276) can dominate along the defensive front along with Matt Sullivan (6-0, 205). Junior offensive tackle Kyle Allen (6-2, 230) is an anchor along the offensive line. Junior linebacker Alex Wrobel (5-11, 200) is a tackling-machine at linebacker.

## Hemlock Huskies

**League:** Tri-Valley West  
**Coach:** Adam Clark  
**2015 Record:** 3-6, 2-5 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Brett Dezelah (RB/DB), Noah Rowe (WR/LB), Conner Herrington (WR/LB).  
**Players returning:** Gabe Kanouse (QB), Hayden Harvey (RB/ILB), Zach Boruszewski (OL/DE), Mitch Engel (WR/CB), Jared Menard (OL), Brandon Owen-Bakos (WR), Brandon Wardlow (DT).  
**Outlook:** The Huskies look for a big year behind the all-around talents of Gabe Kanouse at quarterback, free safety and punter. Hayden Harvey is a returning all-conference linebacker while Zach Boruszewski earned all-conference at defensive end. "We have a battle-tested group," Clark said. "We also have a nice junior class and a couple of sophomores up."

## Saginaw Arthur Hill Lumberjacks

**League:** Saginaw Valley League Red  
**Coach:** Jim Comer  
**2015 Record:** 0-9, 0-6 7<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Will Rodgers (DL), Lawrence Gordon (OL/DL), Billy Burton (QB).  
**Players returning:** Jimmy Bell (OL), Kentavious Davis (RB), Christopher Ramirez (OL).  
**Outlook:** The Lumberjacks have some promising young players in a number of different areas. Up front, Jimmy Bell (6-10, 335) has incredible size and has improved his quickness. Kentavious Davis is poised for a big year running the ball behind the blocking of center Christopher Ramirez (6-0, 270). Freshman Zamarion Foster is a promising young quarterback.

## Michigan Lutheran Seminary Cardinals

**League:** Tri-Valley West  
**Coach:** Karl Schmutz  
**2015 Record:** 10-2, 6-1 2<sup>nd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Andrew Schroeder (QB), Tristan Pankow (RB), Dan Gensmer (OL/DL).  
**Players returning:** Casey Williams (WR), Caleb Heyn (RB), Micah Neumann (WR), Cade Kestner (QB), Tyler Broekhuizen (DE), Andrew Owczarzek (OL), Michael Leeson (OL).  
**Outlook:** The Cardinals return one of the most productive offensive players in the area in Casey Williams. With a good blend of size up front and good talent at the skill positions, MLS is poised for another strong season.

## Chesaning Indians

**League:** Tri-Valley Central  
**Coach:** John Mimranek  
**2015 Record:** 4-5, 3-4 4<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Drew Eastwood (RB), Bryan Moore (RB), Jacob Redmond (FB/LB).  
**Players returning:** Sam Forsyth (WR), Danny Nicol (RB), Brandon Keys (QB).  
**Outlook:** Chesaning is looking forward to a new era as John Mimranek comes from the successful Ithaca program to take over as head coach. Chesaning has some talent to build around led by speedy running back Sam Forsyth and athletic quarterback Brandon Keys.

## Saginaw High Trojans

**League:** Saginaw Valley League Blue  
**Coach:** Nate Simington  
**2015 Record:** 3-6, 2-4 6<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Marquis Goodman (RB/WR/CB), Javante Carter (QB/WR), Kendrick Gaines (QB/WR), Steven Gaddy (RB), Willie Shavers (RB/WR/DB).  
**Players returning:** E'donis Scott (QB/DB), Tamar Heart (RB/DE), Lane Henderson (TE/DT), Bennie Babers (OL/DT), Neven Simington (TE/LB), Atwan Gaines (OL/LB).  
**Outlook:** E'donis Scott will lead the Trojans on offense this year as an experienced senior. Running back Tamar Heart will be Saginaw's prime threat on the ground. Tight ends Lane Henderson and Neven Simington will provide options to the passing game. The Trojans return multiple players on both offensive and defensive line. Tamar Heart (defensive end), Lane Henderson (defensive tackle), Bennie Babers, and Atwan Gaines will all provide needed experience and leadership this year on the line.



## Saginaw Heritage Hawks

**League:** Saginaw Valley League Red  
**Coach:** Joseph Willey  
**2015 Record:** 2-7, 1-5 Tied 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** N/A  
**Players returning:** Dylan Teneyuque (RB), Marshawn Evans (MLB), Brendan Jackson (QB), Dalton Norris (T), Wynn Wasmer (C).  
**Outlook:** Saginaw Heritage loses many key players in skill positions this year. The Hawks will rely on improved line play as they have a good-sized line on both sides of the ball. Linebacker Marshawn Evans (6-0, 230) brings the experience and veteran presence necessary to lead the defense this year.

## Saginaw Valley Lutheran Chargers

**League:** Tri-Valley Conference West  
**Coach:** Randy Finney  
**2015 Record:** 4-5, 2-5 Tied 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Jake Wilson (OL/DL), Evan Eisler (OL/DL), Corbin Vanderclip (C), Travis Dantzler (RB/DL), Lucas Weiss (RB/LB).  
**Players returning:** Max Wood (QB), Markos Azucar (RB/DB), Hunter Fehn (TE/DE), Joe Thornton (OL/LB), Bryce Howard (OL/DL), Caleb Smith (C), Justin Kirby (G/DL).  
**Outlook:** Quarterback Max Wood returns to lead the Charger's offense. Wood threw for over 1,000 yards last year as a junior. Markos Azucar will lead the running game. The line game looks strong despite a handful of key players lost to graduation.

# SAGINAW COUNTY FOOTBALL PREVIEW

## Bridgeport Bearcats

**League:** Tri-Valley Conference East  
**Coach:** Kevin Marshall  
**2015 Record:** 2-7, 2-5 6<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** N/A  
**Players returning:** Charles Garrett (QB), J'Ronquae Duncan (RB), Javaris Jackson (DT), Kody Burton (WR).  
**Outlook:** Talented junior Charles Garrett returns at quarterback this year for the Bearcats. J'Ronquae Duncan will lead the rushing game. Wide receiver Kody Burton will be the top target for Garrett this year through the air. Senior Javaris Jackson will lead a well-sized offensive line this year for Bridgeport.

## Carrollton Cavaliers

**League:** Tri-Valley Conference Central  
**Coach:** Nathan Wotta  
**2015 Record:** 4-5, 2-5 Tied 5<sup>th</sup> (Tri-Valley West)  
**Players lost:** Logan Fischer (QB), Jailen Patrick (WR/SS), Santino Rodriguez (RB/DE).  
**Players returning:** Chaquille Tolbert (FB/MLB), Logan Keller (G/LB), Vionte Webb (RB), Jalen Myles (RB/FS), Paris Smith-Curry (TE/SS), Santrelle Watts (FB/LB), O'Vauntay Vickers (WR/DB), Ja'Leil Warren

(QB/DB), Brandon Achtabowski (OL/DL), Jerry Delgado (OL/LB), Eric Dalton (QB/DB).  
**Outlook:** Carrollton coach Nathan Wotta is looking forward to the challenge of a new conference saying, "It will be a great challenge, as there are a lot of very good programs and coaches in the Central." The Cavaliers return plenty of young talent, along with some experienced seniors, this year. "We return a number of sophomores, so while we are still young, I think that we are quite athletic at our skill positions and they have all gained a lot of experience."

## Frankenmuth Eagles

**League:** Tri-Valley Conference East  
**Coach:** Phil Martin  
**2015 Record:** 9-2, 7-0 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Players lost:** Jack Veitengruber (RB/DB), Jack Tagget (QB), Brady Wood (WR/DB).  
**Players returning:** Ryan Khan (RB), Austin Johnson (WR), Grant Bronner (WR), Tyler McDonald (DT), Garrett Rezmer (LB), Corey Chandler (DT), Zach Jacobs (QB), Nathaniel Lambeth (C), Jared Davis (RB/DB).  
**Outlook:** The Frankenmuth Eagles will be strong favorites to win the Tri-Valley Conference East again this season. Zach

Jacobs will take over at quarterback this year for the departing Jared Davis returns to lead the ground game after rushing for 587 yards and 13 touchdowns last year along with Ryan Khan. Austin Johnson and Grant Bronner will be the top targets for Jacobs this year in the passing game. Tyler McDonald and Corey Chandler return on the defensive line with junior Garrett Rezmer at linebacker.

## Freeland Falcons

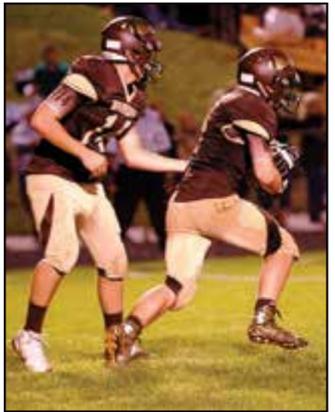
**League:** Tri-Valley Conference Central  
**Coach:** Kevin Townsend  
**2015 Record:** 11-1, 7-0 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Players lost:** Nate Whitting (RB/S), Ben Whitting (WR/LB), Ben Rybicki (RB/LB), Joe Rybicki (RB/LB).  
**Players returning:** Zach Townsend (DB), Max Kubiak (RB/LB), Jake Kelsey (QB), Garhet Metiva (FB/LB), Chase Crook (OL), Drew Bakos (TE).  
**Outlook:** The Falcons lose 17 starters, but despite the heavy losses Freeland does return a handful of impact players. Quarterback Jake Kelsey returns this year as a senior. He will have plenty of options to throw to this year including tight end Drew Bakos (6-4), Shifty running back Max Kubiak and 230-pound fullback Garhet Metiva lead the

ground game. Senior Chase Crook returns to lead the line. On defense Freeland has a talented linebacker unit lead by Kubiak (second team all-conference) and Metiva. Second team all-conference defensive back Zach Townsend also returns.

## Merrill Vandals

**League:** Mid State  
**Coach:** Christian Wiley  
**2015 Record:** 6-4, 5-2 (TV West) 3<sup>rd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Trent Lutzke (QB), James Castillo (OL/DL), Joe Castillo (OL/DL), Nate Fisher (WR), Nolan Sysak (RB), Tyler Kirby (WR/LB).  
**Players returning:** Jaden Reiber (WR), Austin Letts (RB), Cody DeBeau (WR/S), Levi Gross (WR), Alejandro Hernandez (G).  
**Outlook:** The Merrill Vandals will kick off the 2016 season in a new conference, the Mid-State Athletic Conference. With the team in a new environment and without star quarterback Trent Lutzke, this year will be a new adventure for the Vandals. Merrill returns three wide receivers this season with Jaden Reiber (5-10, 170), Cody DeBeau (6-0, 160) and Levi Gross (6-1, 175). Austin Letts (5-8, 175) returns at running back and Alejandro Hernandez (5-9, 195) is back on the offensive line.

# BAY COUNTY FOOTBALL PREVIEW



## Bay City Western Warriors

**League:** Saginaw Valley League Blue  
**Coach:** Jeff Rahl  
**2015 Record:** 3-6, 3-3 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Ryan Adcock (WR), Kane Wendling (RB), Cody Witzgall (OL), Alan Clark (LB), Cole Rechseiner (DL).  
**Players returning:** Liam Tobin (LB), Jared Berry (G), Eliseo Vasques-Landin (WR/DB).  
**Outlook:** Graduation hit Western hard with a number of key standouts gone. On offense, the line will be built around Jared Berry (6-0, 230). On the defensive side of the ball linebacker Liam Tobin earned all-conference honors.

Bay City Western looks to rebound after finishing 3-6 a year ago. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)

## Essexville-Garber Dukes

**League:** Tri-Valley Conference East  
**Coach:** Jake Coquillard  
**2015 Record:** 5-5, 4-3 4<sup>th</sup>  
**Players returning:** Ben VanSumeren (WR), Jarrod Brown (RB), Desmond Glaza (WR), Carson Kayner (NG), Jacob Sansburn (SB), Taylor Lamont (G), Mike VanSumeren (FB).  
**Outlook:** Junior wide receiver/defensive back Ben VanSumeren is one of the best all-around players in Bay County. Jarrod Brown is a talented running back while Desmond Glaza is another talented receiver. Taylor Lamont will lead the offensive line while nose guard Carson Kayner anchors the defensive line.

## Bay City Central Wolves

**League:** Saginaw Valley League Red  
**Coach:** Morley Fraser  
**2015 Record:** 3-6, 2-4 4<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Ryan Hauger (OL), Jordan Wilson (LB), Andrew Kern (PK).  
**Players returning:** Robert Walkowiak (DB/WR), Skylar Manczak (LB), Tanner Koth (WR), Dylan Rezmer (OL).  
**Outlook:** Senior offensive tackle Dylan Rezmer (6-4, 280) provides a solid cornerstone for the offensive line. Defensively, senior Robert Walkowiak (6-1, 155) is a returning all-conference player at cornerback. Skylar Manczak (5-11, 180) leads the linebacking crew.

**MARTIN CHEVROLET**

A Place You Can Count On - Since 1914

**2008 Jeep Wrangler Sahara**

4 Door, Loaded **\$17,990\***

**2009 Chevy Impala**

Cloth, Loaded **\$8,590\***

**2016 Chevy Silverado LT**

Double Cab **\$179/mo**

24 mos. 10,000 miles per year, \$1999 Down. Includes GMSPricing and lease loyalty. Tax, title, plate and dealer fees extra.

**GM CERTIFIED VEHICLES!** **8800 Gratiot Rd. (W. M-46) • Saginaw**

**0% For 36 Months** **989-781-4590 • www.martincars.com**

On Select Vehicles Plus tax title and plate fees, see Martin Chevrolet for details

MICHIGAN ASSOC. OF INSURANCE AGENTS

**MAYAN INSURANCE SINCE 1915**

www.mayanagency.com

TRUSTED CHOICE

**THE MAYAN AGENCY** BUS. (989) 643-7207  
 140 W. Saginaw St. FAX (989) 643-7482  
 P.O. Box 578 TOLL FREE (800) 64-MAYAN  
 Merril, MI 48637 24/7 EMERGENCY PAGER (989) 253-4639

**EXPERIENCE CAMPUS LIFE**

real fun. real friends. real life.

@cmfyc High School Mondays, 7pm

@cmfyc 7th & 8th Grade Tuesdays, 7pm

/cmfyc 6th Grade Tuesdays, 3pm

989.463.4274 | 2550 W Cheesman Rd, Alma | www.cmfyc.net

**SANLOT SPORTS**

Custom Screen Printing & Embroidery

Custom Screen Printing • Custom In Store Embroidery  
 Team Uniforms • Trophies • Business Apparel • Workwear • Varsity Jackets

**NOW FEATURING ONLINE TEAM ORDERING**  
[sandlotssports301.com/custom-online-store](http://sandlotssports301.com/custom-online-store)

1221 Salzburg Bay City, MI 48706  
989-391-9684

5605 State St. Saginaw, MI 48603  
989-791-5900

2900 Universal Dr. Saginaw, MI 48603  
989-781-2991

www.sandlotssports301.com

ECO WATER

SINCE 1925.

**Lindsay Soft Water Co.**

1209 Michigan Ave. St. Louis, MI 48880  
 (989) 681-5436  
 1-800-244-3464  
 www.ecowater.com  
 E-mail: waterboy@emsinter.net

P.O. Box 401 Gladwin, MI 48624  
 (989) 426-4220  
 Cell (989) 429-6576

**KEVIN EAREGOOD**  
 Certified Water Specialist

Insured Free Estimates

**Nathan Schooley**  
 (989) 388-6924

(989) 388-6924

**SCHOOLEY'S LAWN CARE**

Residential • Commercial

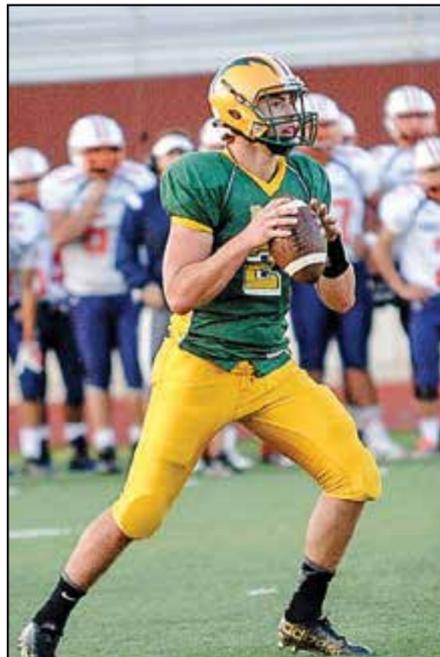
**FIRST CONTRACTING INCORPORATED**

Specializing in MSHDA multi Family Renovations  
 701 South Main - Ovid, MI 48866  
 989-834-1500

# MIDLAND COUNTY FOOTBALL PREVIEW

## Midland Dow Chargers

**League:** Saginaw Valley League Red  
**Coach:** Jason Watkins  
**2015 Record:** 10-2, 6-0 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Players lost:** Mike Robb (WR), Devontae Stine (WR/LB), Josh Riepma (QB/WR/DB).  
**Players returning:** Spencer Stephenson (MLB), Bruce Mann (QB), Austin Stredney (WR), Ryan Merry (G), Kevin Murray (T), Lane Johnson (G).  
**Outlook:** Bruce Mann, one of the premier senior quarterbacks in the area, returns after throwing for more than 2,100 yards and 30 touchdowns last year. On defense, standout senior linebacker Spencer Stephenson (6-1, 220) has good speed and totaled 65 tackles and 10 tackles for loss last season. Dow also returns some good size and experience along the lines.



Senior Bruce Mann threw for more than 2,100 yards and 30 touchdowns to lead Midland Dow to a 10-2 record a year ago. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)

## Midland Chemics

**League:** Saginaw Valley League Blue  
**Coach:** Eric Methner  
**2015 Record:** 7-3, 5-1 2<sup>nd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Luke DeLong (WR/RB/DB), Payton DeWildt (QB), Max Klemish (LB), Shay Methner (OT).  
**Players returning:** Vondre Warren (RB), Payne Cassaday (OLB), Vincent Walker (OLB).  
**Outlook:** Midland lost a lot of key players to graduation, but the cupboard is not totally bare. Senior Vondre Warren (5-8, 165) is a talented back that leads the ground game. On defense, senior outside linebacker Vincent Walker totaled seven sacks last season.



Vondre Warren returns this season to lead the Midland High ground attack. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)

## Sanford-Meridian Mustangs

**League:** Jack Pine Conference  
**Coach:** Michael Bilina  
**2015 Record:** 10-1, 7-0 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Players lost:** Mikes LeViere (WR/DB), Mason Schultz (OL), Christian Petre (QB/DB), Monte Petre (SB/CB), Matt Hoffman (RB), Nick Arthur (LB).  
**Players returning:** Jacob Wentworth (OT/DL), Aaron Kielpinski (C), Brett Barriger (QB), Jake Cole (DL), Ethan Lewandowski (OL).  
**Outlook:** The Sanford-Meridian Mustangs look to defend their conference title this year against an even tougher and more improved Jack Pine Conference and without some outstanding skills players who graduated. Talented sophomore Brett Barriger is one to watch at quarterback this season. Barriger will get plenty of protection from a solid offensive line that returns a number of key players including all-conference linemen Jacob Wentworth (6-1, 205) and junior Ethan Lewandowski (6-3, 230).

## Coleman Comets

**League:** Mid State  
**Coach:** Chad Klopff  
**2015 Record:** 1-8, 1-4 Tied 4<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Ryan Yeager (RB/WR), Elliott Murray (WR/S), Dylan Carbeno (QB/LB), Robert Schmidt (RB/DB).  
**Players returning:** Cody Finnelly (LT), Jason Beckner (WR), Karlos Moiser (QB), Kenneth Ranck (OL), Hunter Ullom (OL).  
**Outlook:** The Coleman Comets look to improve around return of two all-conference players in Cody Finnelly (OL/DL) and Jason Beckner (WR). Finnelly (6-0, 230) totaled 51 tackles on defense while Beckner (5-8, 150) is a productive receiver. At quarterback, junior Karlos Moiser (6-0, 165) looks to take over. Seniors Kenneth Ranck (5-8, 170) and Hunter Ullom (6-1, 215) are two more veteran returnees.

## Bullock Creek Lancers

**League:** Tri-Valley Central  
**Coach:** Will Luzar  
**2015 Record:** 2-7, 1-6 Tied 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Adam McCann (RB/DB), Kegan Marshall (WR/DE), Cam Richards (QB/DB).  
**Players returning:** Travis Radosa (WR/DB), Brandon Bruman (WR/DB), Peyton Kobel (LB), Hunter Buckley (OL), Nate Thomas (OL).  
**Outlook:** The Lancers will miss the multi-talented McCann and are also breaking in a new quarterback. Bullock Creek looks to be improved but in the rugged TV Central improvement is not always easy to see.

# KENT COUNTY FOOTBALL PREVIEW

## Cedar Springs Red Hawks

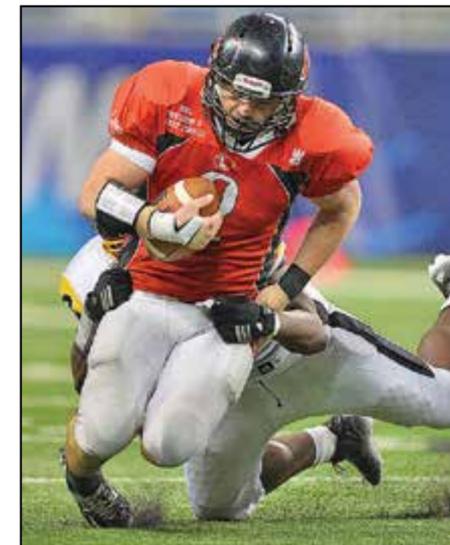
**League:** OK White  
**Coach:** Gus Kapolka  
**2015 Record:** 6-4, 4-1 1<sup>st</sup> (OK Bronze)  
**Players lost:** Taylor VanDyke (TE/DE), Anthony Topolski (FB/LB), Cameron Umphrey (RB), Demarcus Barnett (TE).  
**Players returning:** Collin Alvesteffer (QB), Jacob Hooker (RB), Spencer Graham (OT), Noah VanKampen (OT), Jaron Spencer (OC), Christian Twichell (OL), Austin Ellis (G), Ryan Ringler (LB).  
**Outlook:** The Red Hawks overcame numerous key injuries last season to earn a share of the OK Bronze title. This season, Cedar Springs moves to the rugged OK White, where it will battle powerhouse Lowell for a league title. Veteran quarterback Collin Alvesteffer (5-11, 205) returns to pilot the offense where he is a threat both running and passing the football. Jacob Hooker (6-1, 165), who stepped in at quarterback when Alvesteffer was injured last season, will see plenty of action at running back. The Red Hawks



have a big, strong and veteran offensive line. Senior tackles Noah VanKampen (6-0, 250) and Spencer Graham (6-7, 330) anchor the line that includes center Jaron Spencer (6-2, 255), Christian Twichell (6-0, 260) and Austin Ellis (5-9, 215). On defense, sophomore linebacker Ryan Ringler (5-9, 180) led the team in tackles last season and will be a defensive leader this season.

## Rockford Rams

**League:** OK Red  
**Coach:** Ralph Munger  
**2015 Record:** 8-4, 4-1 1<sup>st</sup> (OK Red)  
**Players lost:** Tyler Bradford (RB/DB), Brendan McKellar (RB), Jackson Ammon (TE), Gabe Baumann (DE), Quinn Nordin (PK/P).  
**Players returning:** Jason Whittaker (QB), Nick Isley (RB), Cody Carone (OC), Mike Baker (OL), Tate Radaz (NG), Parker Anderson (DT), Cole VanSetters (OLB), Paul Reinke (OLB), Marcus Remtema (CB).  
**Outlook:** The Rams are coming off another big season that saw them win a share of the OK Red title and reach the Division 1 regional finals. Plenty of talent returns again for the Rams, who have a large and talented team. Junior quarterback Jason Whittaker (6-5, 200) is one of the premier junior quarterbacks in the state. Senior running back Nick Isley (6-2, 200) has good size and speed (4.47 40). The Rams have a big, solid offensive line led by junior center Cody Carone (6-5, 305) and senior Mark Baker (6-2, 240). Look for the Rams to have a stellar defense. Nose guard Tate Radaz (5-9, 200) is a tough, aggressive lineman while senior Parker Anderson (6-2, 240) is another big, rugged lineman. The Rams have a pair of standout outside linebacker in senior Cole VanSetters (5-11, 205) and junior Paul Reinke (6-3, 200). Rockford also returns junior cornerback Marcus Remtema (6-0, 185) who has good size and speed.



game where they fell to Detroit King on a last-second touchdown pass. The Red Arrows are well versed in re-loading but this year's rebuilding project is bigger than most as the losses were heavy on both sides of the football. Lowell will rely on the basics of strong line play and team defense this season. The offensive line has a pair of seasoned vets to build around in junior John Rogalke (5-10, 240) and senior center Joey Schaefer (6-4, 200). Senior Nathan Stephens (5-10, 185) returns to give the Red Arrows a veteran running back. Stephens will also see action at linebacker on defense. The Lowell defense will be strong up front with the returns of senior defensive tackles Michael Doyle (6-4, 225) and Logan VanderMeulen (6-0, 240).

## Lowell Red Arrows

**League:** OK White  
**Coach:** Noel Dean  
**2015 Record:** 12-2, 5-0 1<sup>st</sup> (OK White)  
**Players lost:** Ryan Stevens (QB), Max Dean (RB/LB), Trevor Shurlow (RB/LB), Gabe Steed (WR), Danny Kruse (DL), Zeth Dean (DB), Derek Massey (DB), Karson Murley (OL).  
**Outlook:** The Red Arrows suffered massive graduation losses from a team that reached the Division 2 state championship

Rockford and Lowell are no strangers to making playoff runs during the football season. Both teams are capable of making strong runs in 2016. (Alan Holben, High School Sports Scene Photos)

 DLP FINANCIAL GROUP & ASSOCIATES, INC. 989-463-5052 Toll-Free: 888-846-7895 Fax: 989-463-1989 dlpfinancialgroup.com	Daniel R. De Jong, AAMS Vice President, Investments
	Randy Lewis Associate Vice President, Investments
John W. Pobanz Financial Advisor	

**NCG offers 10 regional locations including:**  
 Alma, Auburn, Courtland, Coldwater, Grand Blanc, Greenville, Owosso, Lansing, Lapeer & Midland

WWW.NCGMOVIES.COM

Private showings and group rates are available by contacting your local NCG Cinema location or by e-mailing [Groupshows@NCGmovies.com](mailto:Groupshows@NCGmovies.com)

The Center For Women's Healthcare

**Your Health. Our Passion!**

**989.584.3107**

**The Center For Women's HealthCare**  
<http://cfwhc.com>

**1844 N. Saginaw Midland**  
**1114 S Saginaw Midland**

[www.littlecaesars.com](http://www.littlecaesars.com)

**1612 W Washington Greenville**  
**324 S Mission Mt. Pleasant**

**SAVE \$25.00**

**Off Any Service Purchase Over \$100.00 With This Ad**

**1800sundance.com**

**1205 N. US-27, St. Johns, MI 48879**  
**(989) 224-3900**  
 Sale Hours  
 Mon-Thurs: 8am-9pm; Fri: 8am-6pm  
 Sat: 8:30am - 5pm, Sun: 12pm-5pm  
 Service Hours  
 Mon: 7am-7pm; Tues-Fri: 7am-6pm  
 Sat: 8:30am - 2pm

# CLARE/GLADWIN COUNTY FOOTBALL PREVIEW



## Clare Pioneers

**League:** Jack Pine Conference  
**Coach:** Kelly Luplow  
**2015 Record:** 5-4, 5-2 3<sup>rd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Max Swan (OL/DL), John Franco (T), Ben Bates (RB).  
**Players returning:** Brenden Sersaw (WR/DB), Travis Vida (QB/FS), Hunter Schaaf (WR), Ryan Rummell (MLB), Jack Moore (C), Jacob Stickler (OT/DT), Max Craford (G/DL), Brandon Zinser (DB).  
**Outlook:** Clare returns stand out

## Farwell Eagles

**League:** Jack Pine Conference  
**Coach:** Benjamin Bryant  
**2015 Record:** 1-8, 0-7 8<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Austin Maxey (WR/S), Shane Wiley (T/DE), Brenden Smith (RB/CB), Lucas Brenden (RB/OLB).  
**Players returning:** Anthony Yonts (SE), Collin Maxey (RB), Jacob Barrasso (RB), Alex Dailey (QB), Logan Osborn (OL), Nick Wixson (DE).  
**Outlook:** Farwell is looking to improve behind senior quarterback

Alex Dailey who returns from last year. Running backs Collin Maxey and Jacob Barrasso will share duties in the running game. Logan Osborn will lead the offensive line while defensive end Nick Wixson will lead the line on the defensive side.

## Harrison Hornets

**League:** Jack Pine Conference  
**Coach:** Mike Petrongelli  
**2015 Record:** 7-3, 6-1 2<sup>nd</sup>  
**Players lost:** Jarod Given (G/MLB), Steven Scherrer (OL), Blayne Fowler (RB/DB), Noah Reyes (OL).  
**Players returning:** Justin Wilson (DB), Bryce Lipovsky (OT), Corey Lang (TE), Will Dennis (DL), Brandon Cassidy (DL), Jeremy Fillhard (FB).  
**Outlook:** Jeremy Fillhard (5-10, 160) will lead Harrison's running game this year. Expect tight end Corey Lang to get plenty of looks through the air. Junior tackle Bryce Lipovsky (6-1, 250) will lead the offensive line while Will Dennis and Brandon Cassidy will lead

the line on the defensive side. All-conference defensive back Justin Wilson will be the key player for the Hornets on defense this year.

## Gladwin Flying G's

**League:** Jack Pine Conference  
**Coach:** Tyler Foor  
**2015 Record:** 4-5, 3-4 Tied 4<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Owen Ritchie (DL), Drew Cantrell (LB), John Mantei (RB), Leroy Bouck (OL), Andrew Redman (LB).  
**Players returning:** Mason Fitzpatrick (WR), Javan Medema (QB), Gatlin Mansfield (LB), Mason Sisco (FB), James Kirtley (DT), Dylan McDonald (SB/SS).  
**Outlook:** Senior Javan Medema (6-3, 195) returns to lead the Flying G's at quarterback this year. Medema's top passing target looks to be second team all-conference wide receiver Mason Fitzpatrick (6-3, 150). Fullback Mason Sisco (5-9, 155) leads the rushing game for Gladwin. On defense, James Kirtley (6-1, 275) anchors the defensive line while Gatlin Mansfield (5-10, 195) is a

playmaker at linebacker.

## Beaverton Beavers

**League:** Jack Pine Conference  
**Coach:** Aaron Seiser  
**2015 Record:** 3-6, 2-5 Tied 6<sup>th</sup>  
**Players lost:** Jamie Shaffer (OL), Hogan Hayes (WR), Wade Sturgeon (OL), Joseph Couture (RB/LB).  
**Players returning:** Nate Taylor (DB), Eric Cassidy (MLB), Nick Hunter (QB), David Jenkins (SB), Austin Rhodes (LB).  
**Outlook:** The Beaverton Beavers are looking to improve their record and challenge the top half of the conference this year with a number of returning starters. All-conference quarterback Nick Hunter (5-11, 175) leads the Beaverton offense. Slot back David Jenkins will be a key player on offense. All-conference defensive back Nate Taylor and second-team, all-conference middle linebacker Eric Cassidy (5-10, 190) will lead the defense along with linebacker Austin Rhodes.

# The Lup-Lowdown

## Five Questions With Clare Coach Kelly Luplow

### Scott Salowich Sports Scene

Clare football coach Kelly Luplow won his 200th game last season, which was sweet.

The Pioneers went on to miss the playoffs. That was bitter.



Luplow reacted predictably. He didn't sit around ruminating on his career accomplishments. Instead, he hunkered down with his staff in an effort to right a ship that has made 19 trips to the postseason during his tenure.

With the new season approaching, Luplow took on five questions about the past and, way more significantly to him, the future:

**Q:** You went over 200 wins last season. What was the first one?

**A:** I don't remember it. I know it was 1987 and I know we went 6-3 in each of my first three years, but I can't remember the game. I can tell you it wasn't against Shepherd. Gene Hackney was coaching there at the time and he kicked my (butt) every year.

**Q:** When a milestone is reached, the

achiever often says something like, "It's going to take some time for this to sink in." Did 200 wins sink in during the off-season?

**A:** Not really. Numbers are never important to me, and 200 is just a number. It's cool, but the only number that is important to me is the number of wins during the current season. Somebody asked me how many total wins I have now and I had to ask one of the assistants. I really didn't know. It's the same thing with our players. People ask about team records for passing, receiving and rushing and all that. I've got them filed somewhere, but I'd have to look them up. Numbers just aren't as important as everything else that is going on with the team now.

**Q:** Did you hear from any famous people or get any outside awards for reaching 200 wins?

**A:** Well Mick McCabe from the Free Press called and did a nice article about

it and I guess he's a celebrity (editor's note: he is, just ask him). I'm good friends with (Ferris State coach) Tony Anness and I went to their game the day after the 200th win. He had them make an announcement over the PA and that was very nice. And, I heard from a lot of my colleagues. You get old, you get to know a lot of people and there is quite a fraternity of high school football coaches in the state. I got a lot of notes and people contacted me on social media, so that was nice.

**Q:** Is your playbook thicker now than when you started?

**A:** I don't do playbooks, because I've found over the years that kids leave them lying around locker rooms, or they take them home and never look at them. If we did have one, though, it would be like Moby Dick or longer compared to what we used to run. Things have changed drastically. We were strictly power football back then and, oh my gosh, things have changed

a lot.

**Q:** You didn't make the playoffs last year. Is there any special impetus to get back this year, or did you see that as more of a cyclical thing and just stick to the usual plan?

**A:** We decided we had to do some things differently. We made changes in our off-season training, we made changes to our offense and defense and we re-evaluated our personnel to see what we could do differently with the kids we had coming back. There was no panic. We were just frustrated as coaches, so we met a lot and tried to figure out what to do differently to get these kids going. There are certain years when you are just not going to have it and certain years where other teams on your schedule step up. Sanford Meridian and Harrison got better last year and we got worse and we've spent a lot of time addressing that since the end of last season.

# Is Ex-Lansing Catholic Star Cooper Rush The Best Quarterback In College Football?

## John Raffel Sports Scene

Central Michigan University football coach John Bonamego is quite clear about his opinion on his quarterback, senior Cooper Rush.

"He's the best quarterback in college football," Bonamego said. "I stand by that."

Rush, who played quarterback for Lansing Catholic, modestly doesn't know if he should agree with Bonamego's assessment. But he wants to have a banner season for the Chippewas.

"It's great having a coach who has your back like that," Rush said. "He's unbelievable. We love him. He's one heck of a guy and a great coach."

Coming into this season, Rush ranks on CMU's career top 10 list in four categories: second in touchdown passes (67) and third in passing yards (9,354), passes completed (744)



and passing attempts (1,183).

"I think he's one of those guys that has that factor," Bonamego said. "How do you describe that? Measure that? How do you figure out if someone has it? If I had a formula for that ... He's got it."

Rush started all 13 games as a junior and earned second team All-MAC honors while taking academic All-MAC honors and was named a MAC Distinguished Scholar Athlete and was selected a team captain while taking the Herb Deromedi Most Valuable Player Award.

As a junior, Rush completed 324 of 489 pass attempts for 3,848 yards and connected for 25 touchdown passes. His yardage total ranks first for a single season in CMU history and was rated 14th nationally and second in the MAC in passing yards. He placed seventh nationally with 24.9 completions per game and 15th nationally in completion percentage (66.3 percent). Rush tied for 26th nationally, and fifth in school history, with 25 TD passes.

"He's continued to improve all the time," Bonamego said. "He's a great leader. He's developed that way. He has a tremendous grasp and knowledge of our offense. It's like having another coach on the field."

His 324 completions and 489 attempts both rank second in a single season in school history while his 3,896 total yards put him third in school history. He had eight 300-yard passing games, one 400-yard passing game and threw four touchdown passes against Western Michigan and against Buffalo.

"He has all the tangibles you look for in the quarterback," Bonamego said. "I really feel the sky's the limit for him. What I love about him the most is he's very self-aware. He knows probably better than anyone where the holes are in his game, so he's worked hard to improve in those areas. But there aren't many holes."

Rush threw multiple touchdown passes in

Lansing Catholic grad and current Central Michigan University quarterback Cooper Rush leads the way for the Chippewas heading into the 2016 season. Rush is considered one of the top senior quarterbacks in the country. (Submitted Photo)

nine games. A huge effort came when he completed season-high 37 passes on 51 attempts for 430 yards vs. Syracuse.

Rush started all 13 games as a sophomore during the 2014 season. He earned Division I CoSIDA Academic All-American second team, earned Academic All-District First Team honors, gained Academic All-MAC honors and was named a MAC Distinguished Scholar-Athlete.

The season ended with a 21-14 loss to Minnesota in the Quick Lane Bowl at Ford Field.

This will be Rush's second season with Bonamego as coach.

"Going into the second year with a coach you're a little more prepared, you kind of know what to expect. It's definitely an advantage," Rush said.

But as a senior, it's scary for opponents to consider what Rush might be able to accomplish.

"It's just another level of comfort, being here another year, and getting another year under my belt, it always helps," he said. "Experience is something that's very valuable."

As a sophomore Rush ranked second in the MAC in passing touchdowns (27), third in passing efficiency (149.6), fourth in yards per game (242.8) and fifth in total offense per game (238.9). He had a record setting performance in the memorable Bahamas Bowl game against Western Kentucky, passing for a CMU-record 493 yards and seven touchdowns on 28-for-45.

The seven passing touchdowns is a NCAA bowl game record and Rush also tied the NCAA bowl record for most TDs responsible for (7) and most points responsible for (42).

After being redshirted as a freshman, Rush had an impressive freshman season for CMU and was the team's offensive player of the year. He played in 11 games and started the final 10 of the season, completing 117-of-312 passes (56.7 percent) for 2,349 yards with 15 touchdowns and 15 interceptions, ranked fifth in the MAC in passing (213.5 ypg) and seventh in pass efficiency (126.2). He made his first career appearance in the second quarter vs. New

Hampshire (9/7), finishing with 326 yards on 19-of-32 passing with three touchdowns and no interceptions.

Rush threw the second longest touchdown pass in program history, a 97-yarder to Titus Davis in the fourth quarter in the win over UNH and made first career start at UNLV, throwing for 265 yards on a season high 46 attempts with one touchdown.

He was redshirted in 2012 and named Offensive Scout Team Player of the Year.

"He's a student of the game, he's a gym rat," Bonamego said. "He can't come in the building without sitting down and watching some film. He's constantly trying to improve, elevate his game. He's a perfectionist."

A three-year starter at Lansing Catholic, Rush ranked No. 21 on Detroit Free Press Fab 50 and No. 25 on Detroit News Blue Chip list and was selected to play in 2012 MHSFCA East-West All-Star game. He led Lansing Catholic to a 13-1 record and state runner-up finish in 2011. Rush completed 242-of-362 passes (67 percent) for 4,002 yards and 48 touchdowns and ran for 756 yards and 16 TDs as a senior ... 25-5 career record as a starter. His career passing totals are 455-for-734 (62 percent), 7,248 yards and 80 touchdowns.

"I'm able to keep my poise playing a lot of games throughout my career," Rush said after his junior season. "Being accurate as a passer is always a key. I've had a pretty good year with that."

He had Michigan high school records for touchdown passes in a quarter (5), half (7), game (8) and season (48) and has 16 single-season and 20 career school records. He was Gatorade Michigan Football Player of the Year and Associated Press Division 5/6 Player of the Year as a senior.

Rush said he's been a quarterback since the elementary school level.

"In high school I realized I had a chance to play college football," he said. "(The 2015) season it's been a team that has so much resiliency. We were down in the second half and came back a lot. Every game was close. It's a group of guys that never quit and handled adversity very well."

**MIDSTATE SALES AND SERVICE**  
Outdoor Power Equipment

**Simplicity**, **YAMAHA**, **STIHL**  
**Ingersoll**, **HONDA**, **SCAG**, **SNAPPER**

3251 W. M-21  
St. Johns, MI 48879  
(989) 224-2711  
(800) 582-8152  
(989) 224-1781 Fax  
midstatesales.net

Clearance sale on all Lawn Mowers  
Rebates up to \$300

**CRIPPEN MANUFACTURING COMPANY**

Providing Quality Grain Equipment Since 1924!

4000 WOODSIDE DRIVE ST LOUIS, MICHIGAN 48880  
PHONE 989.681.4323

www.crippenmfg.com

**Carman's Tree Service & Stump Removal**

Gary Carman  
Owner/Operator

8426 N. Wheeler  
Wheeler, MI 48662  
(989) 330-9782 cell  
25yrs. Experienced  
Free Estimates  
License/Insured  
Taking Pride in our Exceptional "Clean up!"

**ALLEY T**  
SCREEN PRINTING & EMBROIDERY

PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS  
SCREEN PRINTING  
EMBROIDERY  
LOGO DIGITIZING  
ON SIGHT DESIGNER  
SCHOOL SPIRIT WEAR

P: (989) 875-4793 F: (989) 875-7148 www.alleyt.com M-TH 8-5  
designs@alleyt.com 103 S Jeffrey Ave. Ithaca, MI 48847 F 8-5:30 SAT 9-1

Bring this ad into any JFCU location to receive a **FREE GIFT** when you open a new account!

**JOURNEY**  
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION  
Discover the possibilities

ST. JOHNS - FOWLER - OVID  
989.224.9511  
www.JourneyFCU.org

Serving Clinton, Gratiot & Shiawassee Counties

**TRUSTWORTHY**  
FOR 100 YEARS

trust-wor-thy is able to be relied on as honest or truthful.

To Auto-Owners Insurance and your local independent agent, being trustworthy means that we will be there when you need us most - just like we have been for 100 years.

**SCHUMACHER INSURANCE AGENCY**  
215 Ross Street  
Beaverton, MI 48612  
989.435.7715

404 N. McEwan  
Clare, MI 48617  
989.386.3387

schumacherinsurance.com

LIFE • HOME • CAR • BUSINESS  
**Auto-Owners**  
INSURANCE

**SCRIMMAGES TO STATE CHAMPS**  
WITH YOU, EVERY STEP.

**CHEMICAL BANK**  
We're proud to support our local communities and high school athletics. To find the Chemical Bank nearest you visit [ChemicalBank.com](http://ChemicalBank.com). Member FDIC

Tomorrow's *Anywhere* Adventure

Anywhere Checking with Mobile Banking\*

- Mobile Deposit
- Bill Pay with Person-to-Person Payments
- Transfer
- Manage Cards

Member FDIC isabellabank.com 800.651.9111 isabellabankmi

\*Third party data charges may apply. Please contact your mobile service provider for details. Account holders under 18 must have a parent/guardian as co-owner.

**ISABELLA BANK**

# 2016 College Football Preview



## Michigan State Spartans

**2015 Record:** 12-2, 7-1 Big 10  
**Offense:** The prominent change in East Lansing this year is the loss of quarterback Connor Cook to the Oakland Raiders. Replacing Cook (MSU's all-time leading passer)

will not be easy for the Spartans, but fifth-year senior Tyler O'Connor showed the fans last year that he can be the one to replace Cook by leading State to a big, and unexpected, 17-14 win over Ohio State. State has a full stable of talented running backs, who are led by sophomore LJ Scott, who had an impressive performance the Big 10 title game against Iowa. Michigan State's wide receiving corps includes only one receiver who caught more than seven catches last year, RJ Shelton. Despite the inexperience they have plenty of speed in receivers Felton Davis III, Donnie Corley, and Shelton. The offensive line has some holes to fill, but the Spartans return three starters on the line to build around.



**Defense:** Michigan State's biggest asset in recent years has been their defense and this year will be no different. Despite the loss of players like Shilique Calhoun, the Spartans' defensive line will be strong again with juniors Malik McDowell and Demetrius Cooper leading the way. McDowell is a strong player all around. He has the size, the strength, the speed and overall athleticism to be a top 10 NFL draft pick (even number one overall). Cooper has the ability to replace the production from Calhoun. State's group of linebackers is full of experienced players who got significant game time last year. Senior Riley Bullough is one of the nation's best linebackers. He had a career-high 106 tackles last year. The secondary will be as strong as ever as the Spartan's return Darian Hicks and Vayante Copeland from their injury plagued season last year. Last year's injuries gave underclassmen valuable playtime that will strengthen the depth at secondary. Safeties Montae Nicholson and Demetrius Cox provide a deadly duo in the secondary.

**Local Angle:** Lansing Catholic Central grad Matt Macksood is a fifth-year senior with the Spartans. Macksood has won three letters and is also the holder on special teams along with being a backup wide receiver who has appeared in 33 games during his career.

**Outlook:** With a talented offense and one of the best defenses in the nation expect Michigan State to contend for the Big 10 title and a place in the College Football Playoffs again. Ohio State and Michigan will not make State's repeat easy though. The Spartans will be hosting both rivals this year and they manage to avoid Big 10 West favorite Iowa.



## Michigan Wolverines

**2015 Record:** 10-3, 6-2 Big 10  
**Offense:** As was the question last year, so it is this year for the Michigan Wolverines:

Who is the quarterback? Houston transfer John O'Korn is the frontrunner in a three-way quarterback battle that also includes Wilton Speight and Shane Morris. Jim Harbaugh knows how to manage the

Michigan State junior Malik McDowell is considered one of the top 10 players in the country for the 2016 campaign. (Submitted Photo)

quarterback position, and the quarterback question didn't stop Michigan from getting back to a 10-win season last year, so don't expect it to hamper the Wolverines this year either. Whoever the quarterback is, they will thrive with one of the best wide receiving units in the nation. Wide receivers Amara Darboh and Jehu Chesson join tight end Jake Butt to establish a deadly group of passing options. All three of them have the potential to be high-round draft picks if they repeat their performances from last year. Michigan returns a large majority of starters on an offensive line that was one of the best in the country last year.

**Defense:** Michigan has a new face at defensive coordinator this year in Don Brown, who gave Boston College the best overall defense in the country last year. The defensive line returns seniors Chris Wormley and Ryan Glasgow along with Taco Charlton. The line should be one of the best. Michigan is strong at linebacker with the quintessential college football player in Jabrill Peppers. Peppers has the athleticism to play virtually any position on the football field with great success. Michigan's secondary will be one of the nation's best with the return of cornerbacks Jourdan Lewis and Jeremy Clark, and free safety Delano Hill also returns. Michigan's secondary has the ability to shutdown passing games.

**Local angle:** Former Rockford standout Ben Braden is a three-year letter winner along the offensive line. An honorable-mention, all-Big 10 player, Braden has started 25 games during his career. Former Fenton standout Kenny Allen also earned honorable-mention, all-Big 10 honors. Allen connected on 18-of-22 field goal attempts last year.

**Outlook:** Despite the question of quarterback, Michigan's nationally touted offensive line and wide receiver corps will assure that whoever takes the snaps will thrive thanks to the protection and passing options provided. A Jabrill Peppers-led defense will undoubtedly be one of the best there is. Expect Michigan to challenge for the Big 10 title and a playoff appearance this year. The three-way battle with Michigan State and Ohio State will be toughest for the Wolverines, who have to play on the road against both, as well as a strong Iowa team.



## Central Michigan Chippewas

**2015 Record:** 7-6, 6-2 MAC  
**Offense:** Cooper Rush, who is arguably the top quarterback in the conference, headlines the

Chippewas' offense. Rush threw for 3,848 yards and 25 touchdowns last year. Rush looks to put up similar numbers this year as he returns the majority of his talented receivers. Jesse Kroll, Anthony Rice, Mark Chapman, and Corey Willis all posted at least 500 receiving yards last year. The Chippewas will need to shore up the running game and the offensive line.

**Defense:** The Chippewas' defense was one of the best in the conference last year and they return the core of that defense this year. Joe Ostman returns from injury last year to lead the defensive line. The linebacking corps returns most of their players and will be strong this year. The secondary returns Amari Coleman, Josh Cox, and Tony Annese to solidify the Chippewas' strength at pass defense.

**Local Angle:** Former Holt standout Kenny Rogers is a returning veteran up front. The senior offensive lineman has started 24 games the last two years and was an academic, all-MAC selection last year. Central's placekicker, Brian Eavey, is a Grand Ledge grad. Eavey earned second-team, all-MAC honors last year as he connected on 16-of-24 field goals and all 38 of his PAT's for a team-leading 86 points.

**Outlook:** The defense is one of the MAC's best, but the Chippewas need to address issues at running back and offensive line if they want the offense required to win the division. Consecutive road games at Northern Illinois and Toledo will make a run at the division title difficult, but the 'Chips should have a solid season.



## Western Michigan Broncos

**2015 Record:** 8-5, 6-2 MAC  
**Offense:** Zach Terrell returns to lead the Broncos' offense this year. Terrell is a standout quarterback in a

conference full of talent at the position. Senior wide receiver Corey Davis is arguably the best receiver in the MAC. Davis caught 90 passes for 1,436 yards last year. Conference freshman of the year Jamauri Bogan will get the start this year at running back after a freshman year that saw him run for 1,051 yards and 16 touchdowns.

**Defense:** Last year's young defense is what prevented the Broncos from a MAC title. This year's defense will have the added experience needed to be a consistent threat to offenses. Robert Spillane will lead at linebacker. Safety Asantay Brown and cornerback Darius Phillips gives Western a formidable secondary.

**Local Angle:** Okemos grad Taylor Moton is back to anchor the Bronco offensive line. A third-team, all-MAC selection last year, Moton has 38 career starts along the offensive line to his credit. Former Alma standout Curtis Doyle is a redshirt sophomore along the offensive line.

**Outlook:** With one of the conference's best offenses and a more experienced defense will make Western Michigan a MAC title contender. The Broncos host division challengers Northern Illinois and Toledo both this season and avoid conference favorite Bowling Green. P.J. Fleck has certainly made an impact in Kalamazoo.



## Eastern Michigan Eagles

**2015 Record:** 1-11, 0-8 MAC  
**Offense:** Despite last season's record, the Eagle's offense performed pretty well.

Quarterback Brogan Roback threw for 2,304 yards and 16 touchdowns last year and will be back to lead the offense this year. Roback will need to rely heavily on an inexperienced wide receiving corps that is comprised of freshmen and a sophomore. The offensive line returns all five of its starters this year, which will be a big help for Roback.

**Defense:** Eastern Michigan's defense had much to do with the poor record last year. The defense was one of the worst in the country last year, mainly due to a vast number of injuries. This year should see an improved defense with a new defensive coordinator in Neal Neathery. If the defense can stay healthy this year, expect to see a significant improvement over last year.

**Local Angle:** Eastern has a local flavor along the offensive line. Matt Thornton (Owosso) and Andrew Wylie (Midland) are fifth-year seniors with plenty of starting experience. Thornton started 12 games last year while Wylie also started 12 games a year ago and has 31 career starts. Grand Blanc grad Luke MacLean has a big year along the defensive line. A transfer from Pittsburgh, MacLean totaled 46 tackles, 10 tackles for loss and five sacks.

**Outlook:** There is hope in Ypsilanti that the team can win at least three games this year, which is all Eagles fans can ask for after these last few years. The offense showed us last year that they can compete in the conference and as long as the defense stays healthy they will be able to compete too.



## Grand Valley State Lakers

**2015 Record:** 12-3, 8-2 GLIAC

**Offense:** The Lakers return standout sophomore quarterback Bart Williams, who tossed 45 touchdown



The University of Michigan will rely on Jabrill Peppers to anchor the defense while taking some snaps on offense this season for the Wolverines this season. Peppers is considered a Heisman Trophy candidate entering the season. (Submitted Photo)

passes last season as he helped lead Grand Valley to the NCAA D2 national finals. Senior all-American wide receiver Matt Williams is back after catching 72 passes for 1,357 yards and 17 touchdowns while fellow wideout Brandon Bean was leading the team in receiving until an injury in week seven. The Lakers also return three starters to the offensive line.

**Defense:** A total of 10 starters return to the defense but the one starter gone is all-American defensive end Matt Judon who was drafted in the fifth round of the NFL draft by the Baltimore Ravens.

**Local Angle:** A product of Grand Blanc High School, quarterback Bart Williams is the next in line in the tradition of outstanding Grand Valley quarterbacks. Williams passed for a new school record 4,206 yards last fall.

**Outlook:** with a total of 17 starters back including their record-setting quarterback, the Lakers are loaded for a big season and have to be a main contender for the GLIAC title.

College Football Preview Continued On Page 42

Your local agent insures your **Life**

**Scott Allen**  
sallen@fbinsmi.com  
FarmBureauInsurance.com

**FARM BUREAU INSURANCE**  
Michigan's Insurance Company

989-875-2200  
225 East Center Street, Ithaca

**Shumet Insurance Agency**  
Established For You & Yours

**Auto - Home - Farm Business - Life**

Agents:  
Bradley M. Simmet  
Candice L. Watson  
Autumn Robbe  
Brandon M. Simmet

117 West Center  
Ithaca, MI 48847  
PH: (989) 875-8580

**WWW.HIGHSCHOOLSPORTSCENE.COM**

**2016 Trailer Clearance Event**

Almost 700 NON-Current Models With Discounts and Rebates Totaling Up To \$1,965 OFF!

Take **\$500.00 OFF** Any Trailer -AND- Financing From Only **\$69/mo**

**BECKS TrailerStore.com**  
1-888-499-9061

**C & S Steel**

203 Industrial Pkwy. Ave B - Ithaca  
Ph: 989-875-5145  
Fx: 989-875-4754

**PRECISION MACHINE & MFG., INC.**

1102 Industrial Pkwy. Ave. A - Ithaca  
Ph: 989-875-2359  
Fx: 989-875-4615

**VALET AUTO CARE, INC.**

- **TRUCK** Pickup Toppers
- Truck Accessories
- Tonneau Covers
- Detailed Auto Cleaning

Over 100 new and used toppers on site!  
Factory seconds also available!

610 N. Mission in Mount Pleasant (2 blocks S. of Meijer)  
**989-773-3477**

The name you've grown to trust just got better  
**Put Our Team To Work For You**

**Weichert Realtors**

Broadway Realty Mount Pleasant  
989-775-3800  
WeichertBroadway.com

**Gratiot Towing** (989) 875-8484

**Good Luck to All Area Teams !!**

<b>Alma</b> 1321 Pine Avenue Alma, MI 48801 989-463-1139	<b>Wolverine Optical</b> 7314 North Alger Rd. Alma, MI 48801 989-463-1838	<b>Carson City</b> Suite 400 102 South Third Carson City, MI 48811 989-584-6868	<b>Mt. Pleasant</b> Pleasant Optics 500 South Mission St. Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858 989-773-7747
---	--	---	---

SEALS • TACIA BARTZ • ZAINEA • WHITEMORE •  
Comprehensive Optometry

College Football Preview Continued From Page 41



**Ferris State Bulldogs**

**2015 Record:** 11-1, 10-0 GLIAC  
**Offense:** The Bulldogs face a monumental task in replacing two-time Harlon Hill Trophy winning quarterback Jason Vander Laan. Look for the Bulldogs to rely a bit more on the running game led by junior Jahaan Brown who rushed for

572 yards last season. The Bulldogs also return four veteran linemen and a trio of receivers who totaled a combined 16 touchdowns last season.

**Defense:** Ferris returns its linebacking crew led by senior Anthony Darkangelo, a three-year starter, and Nick Huckabay. Although all-American defensive end Justin Zimmer graduated, the rest of the defensive line returns led by end Dylan Roney who was second on the team in tackles for loss.

**Local Angle:** Junior center Jack Daugherty is a Big Rapids High School product who earned all-conference honors last season and anchors the offensive line. Nick Huckabay, a Montrose grad, was third on the team in tackles last season with 67 and added 5.5 tackles for loss.

**Outlook:** Replacing Vander Laan will be impossible but look for a solid starter to emerge. While the Bulldogs suffered some major graduation hits they have recruited well and have talented players waiting in the wings.



**Saginaw Valley State Cardinals**

**2015 record:** 1-10, 1-9 GLIAC  
**Offense:** With four starters back up front, the Cardinals have a strong foundation to build on.

Saginaw Valley also returns its top two running backs in Jeremiah Johnson and David Nay, and wideouts Marq Johnson and Max Corcoran. How quickly a new starter at quarterback can be developed will be key to the offense.

**Defense:** Nine starters return on defense for the Cardinals led by top tackler Bryan Jones. Saginaw Valley has one of the better defenses in the GLIAC last year as it yielded 24.5 points per game.

**Local Angle:** Junior tight end Will Farr, a Grand Ledge grad, earned honorable-mention, all-conference honors last season as he caught 17 passes for 281 yards and two touchdowns. Sophomore linebacker Michael Alexander from Midland played in 11 games last year and recorded nine solo tackles and 15 assists last season.

**Outlook:** The Cardinals made the NCAA D2 playoffs as recently as 2013 but have spiraled down since. Look for Saginaw Valley to show improvement this season but breaking in a new quarterback may slow the offense early.



**Northwood Timberwolves**

**2015 record:** 5-6, 5-5 GLIAC  
**Offense:** Like many teams in the GLIAC, Northwood must find a new starter at quarterback.

In the second season of moving to an option-based attack, the Timberwolves do return a pair of

experienced wingbacks in Shane Barron and Andre Carter along with the top receiver, Theron Wilson.

**Defense:** Linebacker Michael Fisher anchors the Northwood defense. Michael Fisher led the GLIAC in tackles last year with 106. Charles Williams is a returning defensive end with big-play capabilities.

**Local Angle:** Defensive lineman Colt Harrington, a

Greenville grad, totaled 25 tackles and 1.5 sacks last year. Dustin Hardy, a junior offensive lineman from Saranac, earned academic, all-conference honors last year.

**Outlook:** Developing a new quarterback will be a key to the success of the offense this fall. The Timberwolves have enough key players back to make things interesting this fall.



**Alma Scots**

**2015 record:** 5-5, 2-4 MIAA  
**Offense:** The Scots return a number of key performers on offense. Junior quarterback Dylan Zaborowski completed 54 percent of his passes last year for 2,370

yards and 18 touchdowns. At receiver, Alma returns junior Daniel Hagan who caught 71 passes for 821 yards and four scores. Senior running back Nick Sullivan led the team in rushing last year with 881 yards and 10 touchdowns.

**Defense:** Alma returns five of its top seven tacklers on defense. Junior linebacker Zac Peterson led the team with 104 tackles while senior defensive lineman Troy Gahm totaled 62 tackles and 15.5 tackles for loss.

**Local Angle:** A graduate of Holt, linebacker Zac Peterson was second-team, all-MIAA last season. Along with leading the team in tackles, Peterson added 14 tackles for loss and 8.5 sacks. Senior defensive back Justin Thelen, a Pewamo-Westphalia grad, totaled 46 tackles last year along with four interceptions.

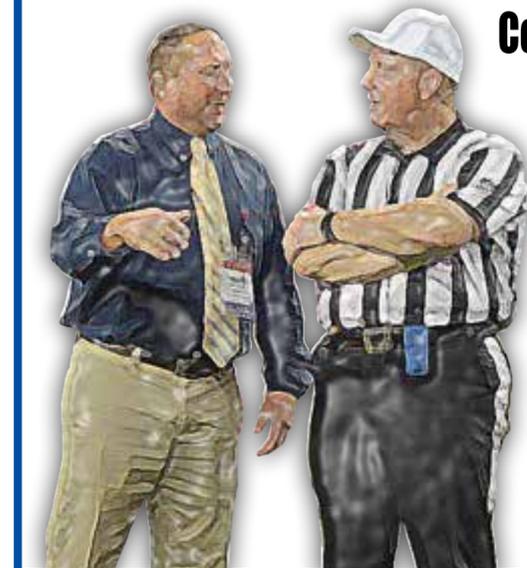
**Outlook:** The Scots made significant progress last season and are looking to build on that success this season. With key offensive players back along with their defensive leaders, Alma is primed for a big season.

# Become a School Coach or Game Official

Contact your local high school athletic administrator or the Michigan High School Athletic Association



1661 Ramblewood Dr.  
 East Lansing, MI 48823  
 517-332-5046  
 www.mhsaa.com



# 2016 DETROIT LIONS PREVIEW

## Life after Johnson Can Lions Make A Run At Playoffs, Despite Untimely Retirement Of NFL's Best Wide Receiver?

**Veteran Additions:**

WR Marvin Jones, WR Jeremy Kerley, WR Andre Caldwell, G Geoff Schwartz, DE Wallace Gilberry, DT Stefan Charles, S Rafael Bush, S Tavon Wilson, S Johnson Bademosi.

**Early Draft Picks:**

OT Taylor Decker, DT A'Shawn Robinson, C/G Graham Glasgow, S Miles Killebrew. Lions Rookie Forecast

**Offseason Losses:**

WR Calvin Johnson, G/C Manuel Ramirez, DE Jason Jones, OLB Travis Lewis, ILB Stephen Tulloch, S Isa Abdul-Quddus.

**2016 Detroit Lions Offense:**

The Lions received some awful and untimely news this offseason when they learned that Calvin Johnson decided to retire. Johnson wasn't the dominant receiver he once was in recent years, but he was still one of the better players at his position. His departure leaves a huge void in the offense that will be almost impossible to fill.

The front office tried its best this offseason, signing Marvin Jones and Jeremy Kerley - the former being the top wideout available in a weak free-agency class at the position. While Jones has been a solid No. 2 for the Bengals when healthy, his production level won't even be close to what the Lions have been used to with Megatron. Jones has yet to even crack the 1,000-yard barrier in his career, while Johnson used to eclipse that plateau in his sleep. The one caveat is that



Jones will have a much better quarterback throwing to him in Matthew Stafford than he did in Cincinnati, but that won't make up for the immense difference in talent.

Jones and Kerley will form a quartet of receivers along with Golden Tate and T.J. Jones. Tate, who has caught a combined 189 receptions over the past couple of years, should continue to be productive. T.J. Jones, meanwhile, could be the sleeper to finish atop the stat sheet in receiving yardage. The team is high on the 2014 sixth-rounder, as he has shined in OTAs. And while on that subject, tight end Eric Ebron, who has barely done anything since being chosen in the first round of the 2014 NFL Draft, has reportedly been working extra hard this offseason.

Unfortunately for the Lions, they have problems well beyond Johnson's absence. Their offensive line was so horrendous last season that a brand new coordinator had to revamp the entire offense during the bye week to compensate for the ineptitude of the blockers. The tackles were especially problematic, as calling them woeful would be an insult to that word. Dreadful left tackle Riley Reiff will be back to act as a human turnstile on Stafford's right side. The new blind-side blocker will be Ohio State's Taylor Decker. While Decker was the fourth tackle in the 2016 NFL Draft, he could serve as an upgrade over Reiff, if only by default. Still, it's curious that the Lions see him as a left tackle, given that most teams believed he would be ideal on the right side.

The interior is better, but based on last year's production, only by default. Larry Warford had performed well in the past, but struggled in 2015 because of an ankle injury. He's expected to rebound, but even if he does, the Lions could use better play out of the other guard, Laken Tomlinson. A disappointment as a surprising 2015 first-round selection, Tomlinson has the ability to perform on a

Can Matthew Stafford and the rest of the Detroit Lions survive the 2016 season after the retirement of Calvin Johnson? The Johnson loss is huge, but the Lions are more than capable of putting together a solid season under third-year coach Jim Caldwell. (Submitted Photo)

higher level, but hasn't shown it yet. Warford and Tomlinson will sandwich center Travis Swanson unless third-round rookie Graham Glasgow can show enough to emerge as the starter. It shouldn't be overly difficult for Glasgow to overtake Swanson, given how brutal Swanson was last year.

With the blocking issues, it was difficult for the Lions to establish much of a ground attack last year. Ameer Abdullah was the team's leading rusher at 597 yards and just a 4.2 YPC average. No other Lion gained more than four yards per pop, with Joique Bell and Theo Riddick managing 3.5 and 3.1, respectively. Bell isn't even on the team anymore, so Abdullah figures to handle more of a workload. Abdullah has a very good skill set, so perhaps Decker will help improve his numbers.

**2016 Detroit Lions Defense:**

For the second consecutive offseason, the Lions watched multiple key defenders depart without replacing them for certain. Last spring, Ndamukong Suh and Nick Fairley said goodbye to Detroit, yet the front office didn't replace them. This year, it was Jason Jones and Isa Abdul-Quddus.

Beginning with Jones, he had served as a solid do-it-all player across from Ezekiel Ansah. The latter was obviously the star, generating a team-leading 14.5 sacks, but Jones applied solid pressure on opposing passers while clamping down on the run pretty well. With Jones gone, Devin Taylor will have to play more snaps. Taylor is good at putting heat on opposing signal-callers (7 sacks), but is a liability in rush support. The best replacement Detroit could find was sixth-rounder Anthony Zettel.

As for Abdul-Quddus, he was the better of the two players who departed. Abdul-Quddus had developed into a quality safety; in fact, he was the team's best player at the position. He was solid in coverage and even better in run support. With him gone, Detroit's starting safeties will likely be the average Glover Quin and one of Tavon Wilson, Rafael Bush or Miles Killebrew. Bush appears to be the favorite right now despite playing just 11 games over the past two seasons. Wilson was a bust for the Patriots, while Killebrew, a fourth-round choice, hits hard, but could be a liability in coverage.



Elsewhere in the secondary, the Lions have an elite cornerback in Darius Slay. Well, that might be premature to say after his poor 2014 showing, but Slay was elite last year at least, routinely shutting down the receivers he was asked to cover.

Quandre Diggs also played well in the slot. However, there's a huge hole across from Slay that wasn't addressed. Rashean Mathis has retired, and to say that Nevin Lawson struggled last year would be a severe understatement. Detroit's only hope for improvement at the position is if 2015 third-rounder Alex Carter steps up. It's unclear what Carter will be able to provide, however, given that he missed his entire rookie campaign with an ankle injury.

Speaking of neglected positions, the Lions still haven't fully addressed the defensive tackle spot. It was obviously going to be a weak area heading into last year in the wake of the Suh and Fairley departures, and that certainly turned out to be the case. The newly acquired Haloti Ngata proved only to be a marginal player at this stage of his career, while everyone who lined up next to him was far worse. A second-round selection was spent on Alabama's A'Shawn Robinson, but he slid for multiple reasons. Among those were meager pass-rushing skills and a lack of passion for football.

With weaker players in front of them, it's astonishing that Detroit's linebackers performed so prolifically last season. Well, two of the three did. Josh Byrnes and Tahir Whitehead both enjoyed solid 2015 campaigns and should continue to be a major part of the defense. Of course, the Lions' best player at the position, DeAndre Levy, missed 15 games this past season because of a hip injury. Assuming he's 100 percent or close in 2016, Levy's return will certainly compensate for the other losses this offseason.

## Return from Sports and Fitness Injuries With WellSport

**WellSport** WellSport is a sports medicine program that combines the resources of MidMichigan Health with specialized medical approaches for treating athletic injuries. WellSport puts experience and knowledge from the field of sports medicine to work for local athletes of all ages, in all sports or fitness pursuits, at all levels of participation. In addition to being motivated by athletic competition or pursuing a personal best, studies show that more people are following a doctor's prescription of exercise for health benefits to help treat high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes, depression, obesity, or to recover from many types of surgery.

WellSport offers convenient locations in Midland at MidMichigan Medical Offices - Campus Ridge 1 and Mt. Pleasant at MidMichigan Health Park - Mt. Pleasant.

To make an appointment, call (989) 837-9350. For more information, visit [www.midmichigan.org/wellsport](http://www.midmichigan.org/wellsport).





**North of I-96  
Next To  
Celebration Cinema  
Lansing**

# Over 1,000 Cars & Trucks to Choose From!

**2016 Malibu Limited  
\$161/Mo.**



**2016 Cruze LT  
\$118/Mo.**



**2016 Silverado  
\$198/Mo.**



**2016 Equinox  
\$120/Mo.**



**Finest In Customer Service  
In Mid-Michigan**

**We Stand By The Simple Philosophy:**

**"Shaheen Chevrolet Is  
Dedicated To Providing The  
Ultimate Automotive Experience"**



## Mid-Michigan's Largest Chevy Dealer!

**New • Used • Finance • Service • Parts • Body Shop**



**1-800-678-9561 • 517-803-2568**  
632 American Rd. • Lansing, MI  
[www.shaheenchevrolet.com](http://www.shaheenchevrolet.com)

**CERTIFIED  
PRE-OWNED  
CHEVROLET BUICK GMC**

Based on GM employee discount, subject to lender approval. Lease for 24 to 36 month, plus tax, title, state fee's, 1st payment and acquisition fee not included. See dealer for details.

**FIND NEW ROADS**