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Prep Insider: Powers bounce back in Week 2



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- Tom Markowski



Canton's Malcolm Hollingsworth finds running room in a Week 1 OT loss to Midland. Canton came back in Week 2 with a 31-10 win over Brighton. (Jose Juarez/Detroit News)

Don't tell Mike Giannone or Tim Baechler the season opener is more important than games played in Week 2. For many coaches throughout the state the second week was a chance at redemption, an opportunity to show their teams can bounce back from a loss.

Giannone's Macomb Dakota team made too many mistakes in its 27-17 Week 1 loss to Dearborn Fordson. On Thursday, Dakota intercepted four passes, including two that were returned for touchdowns, and won at Sterling Heights Stevenson, 45-21.

Baechler's Canton team lost 29-28 in overtime in Week 1 to Midland, then wore down Brighton on Thursday in a 31-10 victory.

The same can be said of other state powers like Birmingham Brother Rice, Rockford, East Grand Rapids and Orchard Lake St. Mary's. All lost the first week and bounced back with victories this past weekend.

"It kind of defined the character of the team," Giannone said. "I hadn't won a game in such a long time. We lost to Utica Eisenhower in the first round of the playoffs. I coached (the East team) in the All-Star Game and we lost that and then last week. We got the monkey off our back."

Baechler said his team made too many mistakes in the loss to Midland and his defense responded well in the victory over Brighton.

"Our defense is bending a lot," he said. "They were on the field too much. We only ran 11 plays in the second half and the defense only gave up three points. We're getting hardened. And that's good. I'd like to say we're 2-0 but we're not. It's going to be a much better weekend."

Fun is back

Highland Park didn't win a game last season and just a few days before the start of practice in August it was uncertain whether **Cedric Dortch** would have a team to coach in 2012.

On Aug. 2, the Leona Group LLC took over the Highland Park school system, transforming it into charter schools, which saved the football program. Dortch began the season with 28 players but now has just 21 due to what Dortch said was academic issues.

Highland Park defeated Ypsilanti Willow Run 20-13 on Thursday, giving the team a reason to celebrate and look to the future.

"They needed this," Dortch said. "Last year we didn't get a win. Once we got that win they understood what it takes. The players came up to me after and said they understand that what you do in practice you do in the game. They see the results."

New KLAA powers

We're used to seeing teams like Canton, Plymouth, Grand Blanc, Walled Lake Central and Walled Lake Western field strong teams in the Kensington Lakes Activities Association but two teams that combined for five victories last season are off to impressive 2-0 starts.

Salem won a wild one over Walled Lake Northern, 49-42, on Thursday and Livonia Stevenson thumped Walled Lake Central, 41-7.

"The good thing is, we're 5-1 as a program," Salem coach **Kurt Britnell** said in reference to the varsity, junior varsity and freshman teams. "We've made the commitment. Hopefully, we've turned the corner."

Salem hasn't started 2-0 since 2004 and hasn't had a winning season since 1997.

Stevenson was 2-7 last season, its worst record since 1971. **Matt Fielder** is in his second season as head coach.

"I was inexperienced and we were young," he said of the 2011 season.

"(Quarterback) **Joe Mims** had a down year and that had a lot to do with me. I threw him out to the wolves. He had a lot on his plate. I went back to more traditional stuff (this year)."

Mims was 12-of-20 for 233 yards against Central and rushed for 67 yards.

Home sweet home

Eric Redmond returned to Monroe in 2010 to coach his alma mater, Monroe High, and on Friday, at home, Monroe (2-0) won one of the most exciting games of the season.

Thomas West's 1-yard touchdown run with 30 seconds left pulled Monroe to within 41-40 of Lansing Sexton. Redmond decided to go for the 2-point conversion and the win. The gamble paid off as **Nathan Daniels** scored on the conversion run.

"I wanted to win it there," Redmond said. "I wasn't afraid to go to overtime. We lined up for the kick and drew them offside. If you can't get in from a yard and half out, you don't deserve to win."

Sexton quarterback **Malick Mack** threw for 363 yards and three touchdowns and **Jesse Lathan** had 236 yards rushing on 25 carries for Monroe. West and **Jacob Nadeau** each scored two touchdowns for Monroe.

Redmond spent eight seasons as an assistant at Monroe before he became the head coach at Carleton Airport (1996-09).

By the numbers

698: Total yards on offense for Zeeland East in its victory over Zeeland West

964: Total yards rushing for Woodhaven in its first two games

10.7: Yards per carry for Taylor Truman (840 yards in two games)

Five teams to look for to go 9-0

1. **Utica Eisenhower:** Toughest game, Sept. 21 at Macomb Dakota
2. **Flint Carman-Ainsworth:** Toughest game, Oct. 19 vs. Davison
3. **Warren Mott:** Toughest game, Oct. 12 vs. Port Huron
4. **Midland:** Toughest game, Oct. 12 at Bay City Western
5. **Carleton Airport:** Toughest game, Oct. 19 vs. Tecumseh

Top 5 surprises

1. Flint Carman-Ainsworth (2-0)
2. G.R. Forest Hills Central (2-0)
3. Hartland (2-0)
4. Livonia Churchill (2-0)
5. Lansing Everett (2-0)

Top 5 disappointments

1. Grand Blanc (0-2)
2. Zeeland West (0-2)
3. Mount Pleasant (0-2)
4. Adrian (0-2)
5. Chelsea (0-2)

Top performance

Junior receiver Zach Arnold rushed for 140 yards on five carries and scored on runs of 40 and 36 yards to lead Lake Orion to a 68-20 victory over Troy Athens. Arnold also had a 43-yard reception to set up another touchdown. Arnold, a sprinter on the track team, helped Lake Orion win the Division 1 track title last June.

Quotable

"We can't afford to overlook anyone. (Our players) knew we'd lost eight straight coming in. We're looking to make strides."

-- Melvindale coach Jason Carriveaux on his team's 42-0 victory that extended Lincoln Park's losing streak to 54 games.

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