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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Conneaut Preview	Page 4
	Conneaut Team Photo	Page 6
	Edgewood Preview	Page 10
	Edgewood Team Photo	Page 11
	Grand Valley Preview	Page 13
	Grand Valley Team Photo	Page 16
	Geneva Preview	Page 18
	Geneva Team Photo	Page 19
	Jefferson Preview	Page 21
	Jefferson Team Photo	Page 22
	Lakeside Preview	Page 24
	Lakeside Team Photo	Page 25
	Madison Preview	Page 28
	Madison Team Photo	Page 29
	Pymatuning Valley Preview	Page 31
	Pymatuning Valley Team Photo	Page 32
	St. John Preview	Page 34
	St. John Photo	Page 35

Changes on the county gridiron in the 2018 season

Change happens each year in high school football.

This year is no exception.

Conference realignment is just one of those changes this season.

Conneaut is entering its third year of Pennsylvania's District 10.

The Spartans football team competed in Region 4 the opening two years and shared the conference title with Titusville in 2016.

But after a two-year cycle, District 10 has realigned and Conneaut has moved to Region 3, so instead of playing schools such as North East, Harborcreek and Girard (Pa.) as conference opponents, the Spartans will take on Iroquois, Northwestern and Seneca for the championship.

While the opponents will be new, the same goal remains for Conneaut coach Rocco Dobran and his team.

"It's the same as two years ago," he said. "That was all new and it turned out well. We'll watch film one week at a time."

A second change is three new county coaches are on board.

Buzz Edwards takes over at Lakeside, Jon



MICHAEL GRECO ||

Butcko will lead Edgewood and Ed Rankin is the head coach at Jefferson.

Edwards has held coaching positions in other states, most recently at Virginia high schools Dinwiddie and Colonial Heights, but he's no stranger to the area as an East-lake North graduate.

He was also a player on Mount Union's back-to-back championship teams from 2001-02.

Butchko's coaching credentials include being the head coach at Morral Ridgedale High School, serving as offensive coordinator at Sandy Valley High School in Magnolia and coaching at Canton Central Catholic.

Sandy Valley appeared in the 2015 Ohio High School Athletic Association state playoffs for the first time in school history.

In 2017, Sandy Valley

established the best offense in school history, in terms of total yards gained and scoring.

During his time at CCC, the team played for three consecutive state championships (2014-2016), claiming the state title in 2016.

Rankin was the offensive coordinator at Lisbon David Anderson the past two years and also coached at South Range, Beaver Local and Austintown Fitch.

The third big change this season is the players themselves.

Of course, this is a constant change as coaches have to figure out each year how to replace key players, whether it's new ones stepping in or switching personnel around.

Just a few of the county names fans won't be accustomed to seeing this season are Lakeside's Spencer Loftus, Edgewood's Matt Lilja, St. John's Ron Nejbauer, Jefferson's J.J. Henson, Geneva's Cory Culton, Grand Valley's Eduardo Hernandez, Conneaut's Nathan Lower, Pymatuning Valley's Gaige Willis and Madison's Seth Schrock.

Next year, more changes are in store.

Lakeside, Edgewood and GV are set to join the Chagrin Valley Conference, which is expanding to 22 schools. The CVC currently has two divisions — Chagrin and Valley — but the plan is to have three for football.

The projected divisions are:

- Chagrin Division: Lakeside, Chagrin Falls, Perry, Geneva, Harvey, West Geauga, Orange and Edgewood.

- Metro Division: Cuyahoga Heights, Independence, Fairport, Richmond Heights, Trinity, Brooklyn and Lutheran West.

- Valley Division: Beachwood, Berkshire, Wickliffe, Grand Valley, Kirtland, Cardinal and Hawken.

In addition, Jefferson will join the Northeast 8 conference for football with Girard, Hubbard, Lakeview, Niles, Poland, Struthers and South Range.

The NE8 is up and running for all sports, except for football.

While those changes are a year away, enjoy this one.

The football season starts on Friday.

Once again, it should be an outstanding one.

Good luck to all the programs and let the games begin.

CONNEAUT SPARTANS

New challenges for Spartans



Aug. 24
at LaBrae
7 p.m.



Aug. 31
vs. John Adams
7 p.m.



Sept. 7
at Lakeview (Pa.)
7 p.m.



Sept. 14
vs. Iroquois
7 p.m.



Sept. 21
vs. Wilmington
7 p.m.



Sept. 28
at Seneca
7 p.m.



Oct. 5
at Sharpville
7 p.m.



Oct. 12
at Northwestern
7 p.m.



Oct. 19
vs. Conneaut Area
7 p.m.



Sept. 26
vs. Grand Valley
7 p.m.

Key Game Week 4: vs. Iroquois



The Spartans will open District 10, Region 3 play against the Braves, who finished 7-3 last season. Iroquois must rebuild its backfield, but has experience up front. A good gauge for coach Rocco Dobran and his team in a new region.



Strength of Schedule

Division IV, Region 13, 5-5 in 2017

2017 OPPONENT RECORD

59-47 (.557)

PLAYOFF OPPONENT

Grand Valley

DIVISION BREAKDOWN

Division II (1), Division V (2), rest against Pennsylvania teams

Conneaut moves into different District 10 region, but goals remain same

BY MICHAEL GRECO

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CONNEAUT — After several years of 7-3, 6-4, 5-5 type seasons, Conneaut is looking to get over the hump and not only win the conference, but reach the postseason in 2018.

“It comes down to motivating guys in the offseason,” Spartans coach Rocco Dobran said. “You look at bigger and faster teams and we need to get bigger, faster and stronger in the offseason.”

Dobran has noticed the development of his players through playing other sports or on their own.

“I know the track program has gotten better and we had more guys playing baseball,” he said. “The guys who

didn't play another sport worked hard in the weight room. We made conditioning a focus and the kids asked for that. The last few years, we started slow, so we're working on conditioning and speed.”

Last season, Conneaut lost its first two games, but won two of the final three for a 5-5 mark in District 10, Region 4.

District 10 went through a realignment and this year, the Spartans join Iroquois, Seneca and Northwestern in Region 3.

“It helps us take it one game at a time,” Dobran said. “We can focus on that one team each week. The downside is the kids love rivals. Grand Valley (Week 10) is the only team we'd consider a rival. We play

Northwestern, so maybe they can become a rival, but we'd love to play the Edgewoods, PVs, etc ...”

With just three conference games, the Spartans have seven non-conference contests on the slate. LaBrae and Grand Valley are familiar foes, then Cleveland John Adams and schools from Pennsylvania — Lakeview, Wilmington, Sharpville and Conneaut Area — round out the schedule.

Two years ago, Conneaut joined District 10 and ended up sharing the conference crown with Titusville.

But to even have a chance to think about a conference championship, the Spartans have to perform on the field.

Dobran likes his skilled personnel on offense. The line has just one returning

starter, but he's a good one.

Conneaut gained 3,313 total yards offensively last season, including 2,145 on the ground, and scored nearly 30 points per game.

QUARTERBACK

Juniors Brandon Smile and Rylan Davison return as the signal-callers to run the spread offense. Smile went 60 of 134 for 1,009 yards with 11 touchdowns and four interceptions through the air last season. Davison passed for 132 yards and ran for another 218.

“Week-to-week we'll have to see what works for the team,” Dobran said. “Brandon is a game manager and Rylan is a game changer.”

RUNNING BACKS

Whoever the quarterback

is, the returning tailback is a good one in Mike Williams. The senior busted out for 1,482 yards rushing, averaging 10.2 per carry, with 13 scores last season.

He rushed for 306 and 304 yards, respectively, in back-to-back last season against Titusville and Corry in earning first-team all-county, first-team Northeast District and all-Ohio honors.

“He was injured his first five games as a sophomore, but we knew he'd be something special as a sophomore, but we didn't know how good he'd be,” Dobran said. “I think he's grown two, three inches and added 15, 20 pounds.

“He's very fast, has great vision and shifts while still

CONNEAUT SPARTANS

SPARTANS: Conneaut looks to start fast in seeking conference title, playoff spot

FROM PAGE 4

'The last few years, we started slow, so we're working on conditioning and speed.'

Rocco Dobran
Conneaut head coach



Dobran

running north and south."

Junior Seth Fedor brings back 346 yards and seven TDs. Junior Chance Ryan is another runner who should get reps, Dobran said.

WIDE RECEIVERS

The Spartans lost 49 catches with the departure of Jon West, Kyle Gaugh, Nathan Lower and Alan Christine.

Williams hauled in nine receptions and Davison added eight. Senior Austin Pinkerton, junior Aidan Thomas and sophomore Jake Slayton are being looked at as other receivers with junior Richie Pickard, a receiver-tight end.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Senior John Applebee anchors the group up front.

The right guard was voted the county lineman of the year and earned first-team Northeast Lakes and all-Ohio recognition last season.

"We knew how smart he was, it was a matter of him getting stronger," Dobran said. "He loves the weight room."

Joining Applebee up front are junior Damon Bowers at left guard, junior Logan Johnston



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Conneaut's Mike Williams (30) is brought down during a recent scrimmage with Jefferson at SPIRE Institute in Harpersfield Township.

at left tackle, sophomore Jake Wiley at right tackle and freshman Nick Osborne at right tackle.

Junior Hunter Dale is also working up front at various positions.

"We have a lot of

good talent, it's just inexperienced," Dobran said. "Coach (Bill) Lipps will do a good job with that group."

DEFENSIVE LINE

The 3-4 scheme is

expected to have Dale at end, Johnston and senior Jonny Money-penny at nose guard and Applebee at defensive tackle.

ROSTER

No.	Name	Position	Ht.	Wt.	Gr.
2.	Keifer Mandagelo	WR/DB	5-6	120	Fr.
3.	Jake Slayton	QB/WR/C	5-5	150	So.
4.	Austin Pinkerton	WR/C	6-0	165	Sr.
6.	Jay Green	WR/DB	5-7	150	Jr.
7.	Jason Herd	QB/DB	5-7	150	Fr.
8.	Rylan Davison	QB/WR/DB	5-9	180	Jr.
9.	Richie Picard	WR/TE/LB	5-10	180	Jr.
10.	Seth Fedor	RB/OLB	5-8	155	Jr.
12.	Levi Corlew	WR/DB	5-8	125	Fr.
13.	Lane Herman	WR/DB	5-7	150	So.
14.	Joey Merlene	K	5-9	140	So.
16.	Tellus Andrews	TE/LB	5-8	160	So.
18.	Stefan Yopp	FB/OLB	5-8	160	Sr.
19.	Brandon Smile	QB/DB	6-1	170	Jr.
23.	Anthony Nunes	WR/DB	5-6	130	So.
24.	Matt Bennett	RB/LB	5-8	170	Fr.
25.	Ryan Osborne	WR/DB	5-1	113	So.
26.	Chance Ryan	RB/DB	5-7	155	Jr.
27.	Aidan Thomas	WR/DB	6-0	180	Jr.
28.	Alex Kohlman	WR/DB	5-8	175	Fr.
32.	Ryan Kidder	RB/LB	5-2	155	Sr.
34.	Mike Williams	RB/S	6-0	185	Sr.
42.	Leon Moffett	RB/DL	5-11	180	Jr.
44.	Josh Snyder	WR/LB	5-9	170	Sr.
50.	Hunter Dale	OL/DL	6-2	196	Jr.
53.	Nic Brown	OL/DL	5-8	160	So.
54.	John Applebee	OL/DL	6-1	270	Sr.
55.	Jonny Money-penny	OL/DL	5-10	170	Sr.
55.	Tyler McCurdy	FB/LB	5-5	160	Jr.
56.	Logan Johnston	OL/DL	5-7	190	Jr.
62.	Damien Estes	OL/DL	5-10	245	Jr.
65.	Eric Woods	OL/DL	5-9	182	Fr.
66.	Jacob Wiley	OL/DL	6-0	230	So.
72.	Damon Bowers	OL/DL	5-8	250	Jr.
75.	Nick Osborne	OL/DL	5-8	205	Fr.
80.	Kyle Woods	WR/DE	6-2	165	Jr.
N/A	Josh Tantari	OL/DE	5-10	190	Sr.
N/A	Joey Bowen	OL/LB	5-6	160	Fr.

CONNEAUT AT A GLANCE

Coach: Rocco Dobran

Years at Conneaut: Eighth season

2017 Record: 5-5

Career Record: 31-39

Conference: District 10, Region 3

Base Offense: Spread

Base Defense: 3-4

Assistant Coaches: Aaron Joslin, Tim Tallbacka, Bill Lipps, RJ Nelson.

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CONNEAUT SPARTANS

||



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

With a new region in District 10, the Conneaut Spartans are looking to win a conference championship for the second time in the past three seasons.



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Conneaut running back Seth Fedor is surrounded by a host of Pymatuning Valley players during a recent scrimmage at Conneaut.

WEEK BY WEEK SCHEDULE

Friday, August 24

Week 1

Non-Conference

- Edgewood at Lakeside, 7
- Madison at Geneva, 7
- Grand Valley at Jefferson, 7
- St. John at Mathews, 7
- Conneaut at LaBrae, 7
- PV at Mineral Ridge, 7

Friday, August 31

Week 2

All-American Conference

- Jefferson at Edgewood, 7

Non-Conference

- Lakeside at Madison, 7
- Newbury at St. John (SPIRE), 7
- Cleveland John Adams at Conneaut, 7
- Geneva at Mogadore, 7:30
- Berkshire at GV, 7
- PV at Cardinal, 7

Friday, September 7

Week 3

All-American Conference

- Edgewood at Hubbard, 7

- Lakeside at East, 7
- Jefferson at Poland, 7

Non-Conference

- Perry at Madison, 7
- Kirtland at Geneva, 7
- Conneaut at Lakeview (Pa.), 7
- St. John at Fairport, 7
- Cardinal at GV, 7
- Liberty at PV, 7

Friday, September 14

Week 4

All-American Conference

- Canfield at Lakeside, 7
- Struthers at Jefferson, 7

Chagrin Valley Conference

- Geneva at Harvey, 7

Non-Conference

- Edgewood at Newbury, 7
- Windham at St. John (SPIRE), 7
- GV at Orange, 7
- PV at Garfield, 7

Western Reserve Conference

- Madison at South, 7

District 10

- Iroquois (Pa.) at Conneaut, 7

Friday, September 21

Week 5

All-American Conference

- Southeast at Edgewood, 7

- Jefferson at Girard, 7

Chagrin Valley Conference

- Geneva at West Geauga, 7

Western Reserve Conference

- Riverside at Madison, 7

Northeastern Athletic Conference

- Chalker at GV, 7

Non-Conference

- Lakeside at Rocky River, 7
- St. John at PV, 7
- Wilmington Area (Pa.) at Conneaut, 7

Friday, September 28

Week 6

All-American Conference

- Warren G. Harding at Lakeside, 7

- Brookfield at Edgewood, 7

- Lakeview at Jefferson, 7

Chagrin Valley Conference

- Beachwood at Geneva, 7

Western Reserve Conference

- Madison at Chardon, 7

- Conneaut at Seneca (Pa.), 7

Northeastern Athletic Conference

- GV at PV, 7

Non-Conference

- St. John at Ridgedale, 7

Friday, October 5

Week 7

All-American Conference

- Lakeside at Fitch, 7

- Edgewood at Lakeview, 7

- Jefferson at Hubbard, 7

Chagrin Valley Conference

- Geneva at Orange, 7

Northeastern Athletic Conference

- Mathews at GV, 7

- Chalker at PV, 7

Non-Conference

- Conneaut at Sharpsville (Pa.), 7

Western Reserve Conference

- Madison at Mayfield, 7

Saturday, October 6

Non-Conference

- St. John at Crestline, 2

Thursday, October 11

Week 8

Non-Conference

- St. John at Edgewood, 7

- Jefferson at Liberty, 7

- Geneva at Holy Name, 7

Friday, October 12

- University School at Lakeside, 7

Western Reserve Conference

- Kenston at Madison, 7

District 10

- Conneaut at Northwestern (Pa.), 7

Northeastern Athletic Conference

- Windham at GV, 7

- PV at Newbury, 7

Friday, October 19

Week 9

All-American Conference

- Edgewood at Struthers, 7

- Jefferson at Niles

Chagrin Valley Conference

- Perry at Geneva, 7

Northeastern Athletic Conference

- GV at Newbury, 7

- PV at Mathews, 7

Non-Conference

- Lakeside at Erie, 7

- Conneaut Area (Pa.) at Conneaut, 7

Western Reserve Conference

- Madison at North, 7

Saturday, October 20

Non-Conference

- Crestline at St. John, 2 (SPIRE)

Friday, October 26

Week 10

All-American Conference

- Boardman at Lakeside, 7

- Niles at Edgewood, 7

Chagrin Valley Conference

- Chagrin Falls at Geneva, 7

Non-Conference

- GV at Conneaut, 7

- LaBrae at Jefferson, 7

Northeastern Athletic Conference

- Windham at PV, 7

Western Reserve Conference

- Brush at Madison, 7

Saturday, October 27

Non-Conference

- Chalker at St. John, 2 (SPIRE)

PREP FOOTBALL



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Conneaut's Rylan Davison looks to pounce on the ball after a fumble during a scrimmage at SPIRE Institute in Harpersfield Township.

Playoff games return to Saturdays for certain divisions

COLUMBUS — The Ohio High School Athletic Association has announced details for the 2018 football regional assignments and playoffs schedule, including the location for the state championship games.

The OHSAA will return to using Saturday nights for several divisions during the playoffs and the 2018 title games will return to Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium in Canton.

The OHSAA Board of Directors approved school playoff regional assignments and the playoff schedule during

its June meeting and authorized the OHSAA Executive Director's office finalize the contract with Visit Canton and the Pro Football Hall of Fame to host the 2018 finals.

In November, playoff games in Divisions I, II, III and VI will be played on Fridays, while Division IV, V and VII playoff games will be played on Saturdays.

Last year, the OHSAA experimented with having all playoff games on Friday nights during the first four rounds.

In addition, all playoff games will kick off at 7 p.m. Previously, Friday playoff games kicked

off at 7:30 p.m.

"We still have good attendance throughout the playoffs, but the overall total attendance dropped in 2017 when we moved all the games to Fridays," said Beau Rugg, OHSAA Director of Officiating and Sport Management and the OHSAA's football administrator.

"Some parts of the state liked staying away from Saturdays for playoff games, but we also received quite a bit of feedback, mainly from the smaller schools, that they hoped we would return to having games on

Saturdays, too, so their communities could see two games per weekend instead of one."

The specific dates and times for the state championship games in Canton will be announced after the state semifinals Nov. 23 and 24.

POSTSEASON SCHEDULE

Regional Quarterfinals

- Friday, Nov. 2: Divisions I, II, III and VI.
- Saturday, Nov. 3: Regional Quarterfinals Divisions IV, V and VII.

Regional Semifinals

- Friday, Nov. 9: Divisions I, II, III and VI.
- Saturday, Nov. 10: Divisions IV, V and VII.

Regional Finals

- Friday, Nov. 16: Divisions I, II, III and VI.
- Saturday, Nov. 17: Divisions IV, V and VII.

State Semifinals

- Friday, Nov. 23: Divisions I, II, III and VI.
- Saturday, Nov. 24: Divisions IV, V and VII.

State Championship Games

- Nov. 29-Dec. 2: at Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium, Canton.

WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Edgewood's Anthony Narducci celebrates after a touchdown during a home scrimmage with Pymatuning Valley on Friday evening.



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CONNEAUT SPARTANS

CONNEAUT: County lineman of the year Applebee returns

FROM PAGE 5

Junior Kyle Woods is working at end/line-backer. Dale notched a team-leading six sacks last season.

Linebackers

Fedor, the team's top returner with 79 total

points, is back on the outside. He recorded seven tackles for loss, contributed four pass break-ups and four pressures.

The inside group includes Picard and seniors Stefan Yopp and Ryan Kidder. Yopp recorded 76 tackles, good

for second on the team, in the 2017 season.

Secondary

Pinkerton returns for a third year at starting cornerback and brings back two interceptions.

Slayton is working at the other corner with Thomas and Williams at safety.

Thomas chipped in with 71 tackles and two fumble recoveries last season.

Davison is rotating in at corner and safety.

Special Teams

Sophomore Joey Mer-

lene and freshman Alex Kohlman are working at kicker and Davison has the edge thus far in punting.



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EDGEWOOD WARRIORS

Taking one step at a time



Aug. 24
at Lakeside
7 p.m.



Aug. 31
vs. Jefferson
7 p.m.



Sept. 7
at Hubbard
7 p.m.



Sept. 14
at Newbury
7 p.m.



Sept. 21
vs. Southeast
7 p.m.



Sept. 28
vs. Brookfield
7 p.m.



Oct. 5
at Lakeview
7 p.m.



Oct. 11
vs. St. John
7 p.m.



Oct. 19
at Struthers
7 p.m.



Oct. 26
vs. Niles
7 p.m.

Strength of Schedule

Division IV, Region 13, 2-8 in 2017

2017 OPPONENT RECORD

47-55 (.461)

PLAYOFF OPPONENTS

Poland, Lakeview, Struthers

DIVISION BREAKDOWN

Division II (1 game), Division III (1 game), Division IV (5 games), Division VI (1 game), Division VII (2 games)

Key Game

Week 2: vs. Jefferson

The Warriors get a chance to play county foe Jefferson for the final time for the foreseeable future as All-American Conference opponents. The teams will play in 2019, but Edgewood will be a part of the expanded Chagrin Valley Conference and Jefferson in the Northeast 8 Conference.

Warriors working on continued daily improvement in every facet

BY MIKE SHAFFER

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Jon Butchko borrows a mantra from a book he read recently; "Burn your Goals" by Joshua Medcalf.

The book shares nothing of making a quick fix or reaching the top of the mountain. Instead, it discusses strategies about seeing improvement and reaching one's full potential.

That is what Edgewood's first-year coach is looking to do with the Warriors' gridiron program this season.

Since being hired in January, Butchko

has spent the last eight months beating a path between Canton and Ashtabula County, getting acquainted with his new team.

It is a team that hasn't had a winning season in six years, including going 6-24 over the last three.

"We kind of found each other at a time when the program was down and there wasn't a great self-image," Butchko said. "We're fighting like heck every day to correct that. Our kids are busting their tails, they really are."

The new coach has been a part of winning programs, both as a player and as a coach.

But he's not talking about building a championship team or setting a time table for a dramatic turnaround. Instead, he's planting the focus squarely on simply getting better.

"What we need to focus on is just improving," he said. "Forget about the records, forget about the scoreboard, snap to snap, drill to drill, game to game. We just have to get better."

Offensively, the Warriors want to push the tempo this fall.

"The best way to describe it would be to call it an air raid," Butchko said.

It's not a super sophisticated offense, according to the coach. The Warriors are likely to have as many pass attempts as rush attempts. It's been a summer of learning ways to communicate quickly and effectively to make the offense operate efficiently.

Under center, senior Aaron Pocatko has emerged as the starter. Butchko has been very pleased with what he's been able to show in camp and in the scrimmage season.

Senior tailback Nick Monda is a player that Butchko says is as good as anyone he's ever coached, and Butch-

ko fully expects him to get the ball for a "significant number of carries."

He'll be counted on to be the leader on defense as well.

Up front, it's a mix of upperclassmen and new faces. Senior Garrett Webster has taken command of the offensive line.

Defensively, the Warriors will have four down linemen playing in front of a mixed bag of linebacker and secondary formations.

Freshman Izaiah Harris has been a pleasant surprise in camp and will start, not because of lack of depth, but because he has shown

himself to be good enough.

Numbers wise, Edgewood continues to not be where it would like to be. For Butchko, though, the focus won't be on who isn't out for the team, but who is. Seeing those guys improve will be what determines success or not.

"Burn your goals," he said. "Focus on the next thing you're doing and do it to the best of your ability and then hopefully better than the best of your ability when you started. We're gonna fight that bar up higher and higher. It may not be

EDGEWOOD WARRIORS



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

The Edgewood Warriors have a new coach in Jon Butchko, who looks to turn the fortunes of the program around.

WARRIORS: Pocatko has emerged as Edgewood starting quarterback

FROM PAGE 10

pretty everyday, but we're here to learn and I'm committed to this program."

QUARTERBACKS

Last year was kind of a revolving door at the quarterback position.

This summer, Pocatko was the unlikely player, winning the job over Alec Katon.

Pocatko "has pretty good physical tools to be successful," Butchko said. Aside from that, he's grasped the new offensive philosophy well and seems ready to

lead the offense. Katon will back him up and freshman Troy Peterson is also listed as a quarterback on the roster.

RUNNING BACKS

Monda missed much of last season with an injury. When he did return, the aftermath

of the injury limited his mobility. But he's back to being healthy this season and will be a big part of the offense. He's a tough runner who can get downhill with the football.

Other players that are expected to see time in the backfield includes

Harris and juniors Teddy English and Curtis Warren, who broke off a 60-yard run for a score in a scrimmage this summer.

WIDE RECEIVER

Katon has caught passes coming out of the slot during the

preseason. Senior Hugh Flanigan will also line up as a receiver, along with seniors Asher Searles and Anthony Narducci and Harris.

LINEMEN

Webster has been

SEE **EDGEWOOD**, 12

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EDGEWOOD WARRIORS

EDGEWOOD: Monda to call defensive signals

FROM PAGE 11



Butchko

'What we need to focus on is just improving. Forget about the records, forget about the scoreboard, snap to snap, drill to drill, game to game, we just have to get better.'

Jon Butchko
Edgewood head coach



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Edgewood's Garrett Webster (right) looks to block Pymatuning Valley's Tyler Bean Friday during a scrimmage at Edgewood.

making ability in camp. The freshman has won one corner position. Katon and Searles will split time at the other spot. Warren and Narducci will hold down

the safety spots.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Soccer player Anthony Zuccaro, a junior, will handle the place kicking duties.

Pocatko will be the punter. A variety of players could be used in the return game, including Warren, Harris and Searles with others in the mix.

ROSTER

No.	Name	Position	Ht.	Wt.	Gr.
1.	Curtis Warren	WR/DB	5-11	165	Jr.
2.	Alec Katon	QB/DB	6-0	155	Jr.
4.	Asher Searles	WR/DB	5-8	145	Sr.
7.	Zach Winchell	QB/DB	5-9	165	Fr.
9.	Aaron Pocatko	QB/DE	6-3	180	Sr.
11.	Izaiah Harris	WR/DB	5-10	155	Fr.
13.	Caleb Hommes	WR/DB	5-9	140	So.
15.	Rasheem Morgan	WR/DB	5-11	155	Sr.
16.	Logan McEndree	WR/DB	5-9	125	Fr.
18.	Nick Monda	RB/LB	5-10	205	Sr.
21.	Maysen Wilson	WR/DB	5-8	175	Fr.
25.	Hugh Flanigan	WR/LB	6-0	165	Sr.
27.	Anthony Narducci	WR/DB	5-11	170	Sr.
33.	Teddy English	RB/LB	5-8	160	Jr.
50.	Troy Peterson	OL/DL	5-9	185	Fr.
51.	Phil Castrilla	OL/DL	5-10	165	So.
52.	Sean Sheldon	OL/DL	5-10	225	Fr.
54.	Jacob Bell	RB/LB	5-9	180	So.
56.	Kaleb Summers	OL/DL	6-0	220	Fr.
64.	Michael Steele	OL/DL	5-10	205	Sr.
66.	Dominic Belmonte	OL/DL	5-3	225	So.
68.	Joseph Johnson	OL/DL	5-10	190	So.
70.	Aidan Webster	OL/DL	6-0	265	Fr.
72.	Connor Tack	OL/DL	6-0	250	So.
74.	Garrett Webster	OL/DL	6-3	300	Sr.
75.	Ethan Searles	OL/DL	6-1	180	Fr.
76.	Jacob Tackett	OL/DL	6-0	215	Sr.
79.	Will Mogel	OL/DL	5-11	275	Fr.
82.	Anthony Zuccaro	K	6-1	200	Jr.

EDGEWOOD AT A GLANCE

Coach: Jon Butchko

Years at Edgewood: First season

2017 Record: 1-9

Career Record: 0-0

Conference: All-American Conference

Base Offense: Spread

Base Defense: 4-2-5

Assistant Coaches: Olajuwon Cooper, Rob McEndree, Tyler Welton, Jeff Herron, Jeremiah Keeler, Ted Barger, Steve Diemer, Steve Ernst.

LINEBACKERS

Monda, at inside backer, will make all the defensive calls He'll be joined by Flanigan.

SECONDARY

Edgewood will get Lakeside transfer Rasheem Morgan after the halfway point of the season.

Harris has been impressive with his athleticism and play

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GRAND VALLEY MUSTANGS

Mustangs lean on culture



Aug. 24
at Jefferson
7 p.m.



Aug. 31
vs. Berkshire
7 p.m.



Sept. 7
vs. Cardinal
7 p.m.



Sept. 14
at Orange
7 p.m.



Sept. 21
vs. Chalker
7 p.m.



Sept. 28
at Pymatuning Valley
7 p.m.



Oct. 5
vs. Mathews
7 p.m.



Oct. 12
vs. Windham
7 p.m.



Oct. 19
at Newbury
7 p.m.



Oct. 26
at Conneaut
7 p.m.

Key Game Week 4: at Orange

After three straight first-round exits from the playoffs, the Mustangs have their eyes set on taking the next step. In Week 4, they will be tested by an Orange team that won eight games a year ago, including a 42-6 beatdown of Wickliffe — the same team that eliminated GV from the playoffs in 2017.



Strength of Schedule

Division V, Region 17, 10-1 in 2017

2017 OPPONENT RECORD

43-61 (.413)

PLAYOFF OPPONENTS

Orange, Mathews, Windham

DIVISION BREAKDOWN

Division IV (3 games), Division V (1 game), Division VI (2 games), Division VII (4 games)

GV striving for fourth straight NAC crown, playoff appearance

BY BRENDAN FEENEY
bfeeny@starbeacon.com

ORWELL — Grand Valley football is more than a program.

It's a culture that the Mustangs have rode to three consecutive playoff berths from 2015-2017. It's a way of life that has resulted in five Northeastern Athletic Conference championships in the past six years.

It's a motto that can be summed up in three letters: CST.

"We have a slogan, I guess you could call it, it's called choice, sacrifice and trust," senior Dylan Susman

said. "It's for the team. The choices you make, the sacrifices you make and the trust in your teammates build up this program. We haven't gone to the playoffs the past three years just messing around and goofing off. It's a lot of hard work and dedication, a lot of good choices and a lot of sacrifices for your teammates."

Seventh-year head coach John Glavickas said the Mustangs inherited CST from Urban Meyer and have tweaked it a little bit to make it their own.

"We try to make (our

players) live by it and you see them, they'll say to each other, CST, and you'll hear when they make bad decisions, or they make bad choices or they make not the best decision in the classroom, you'll hear the players say it to each other," Glavickas said. "It's kind of become our culture."

This year's Mustangs will look to keep the tradition alive after last year's team won all 10 of its regular-season games. They'll have to do so without many of their key players from a year ago, including two-year starting

quarterback Michael McGovern, and all-Ohio honorees Eddie Hernandez, Jerone Evans, Robert Copeland and Brandyn Spoon.

While there's plenty of production needed to be made up for — McGovern and Hernandez accounted for 2,222 of the Mustangs' 3,104 rushing yards, all of their passing yards and 47 touchdowns — Glavickas is used to replacing the irreplaceable.

"We've been fortunate the past few years that we've lost some really good players, we lost some great players and you sit there and

you're like 'How are we ever going to replace this kid?' and then all of a sudden somebody else steps up and then we say 'Well how are we ever going to replace this kid?' then somebody steps up," Glavickas said. "Even this year, we lose Eddie Hernandez and people are like counting us out right away: 'You just lost one of the best backs in the history of Grand Valley,' but then we got out there watch David Nye run the ball, watch Logan Newell run the ball and we look at each other and we say 'We're going to be OK.'"

While the Mustangs have reached the playoffs in each of their last three seasons, they haven't been able to do much when they've gotten there, losing their three postseason games by a combined 115-55. Last year's team came closer than the previous ones, taking Wickliffe down to the wire — despite losing Hernandez early in the game to a leg injury — before ultimately coming up three points short.

This year, they're hoping to take their

PREP FOOTBALL



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Geneva running back Jason Corlew looks for running room during a recent scrimmage against Lakeside at SPIRE Institute in Harpersfield Township.



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Jefferson's Colton Sinkko is brought down by a host Conneaut tacklers during a recent scrimmage at SPIRE Institute in Harpersfield Township.

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GRAND VALLEY MUSTANGS

GV: Mustangs looking for players to step up

FROM PAGE 13

next step.

“We want to make the playoffs and then we want to win a playoff game, I would say that’s the biggest thing on everybody’s mind right now,” Susman said. “We’ve gone three years and haven’t made it. We’ve come close two years, but didn’t get it. Especially the senior class right now, we’ve been to three playoff games and lost all three years. We have an urgency that we want to come back and we want to win one for our school.”

QUARTERBACKS

With McGovern gone, senior Jon Soltis and junior Gordon Seger have been battling for the right to command the offense in 2018. Glavickas said he’s given both equal time during practices and scrimmages and that the two have different skill sets, with Seger being more of a passing quarterback and Soltis more of a running threat.

In the past, the Mustangs have used both quarterbacking styles, with commanders like Jake Vormelker being a threat to run for 300 yards in any given game and McGovern, who passed for nearly 900 yards in 2017 and



Glavickas

‘We’ve been fortunate the past few years that we’ve lost some really good players, we lost some great players and you sit there and you’re like ‘How are we ever going to replace this kid?’ and then all of a sudden somebody else steps up.’

John Glavickas

Grand Valley head coach

had partners in the backfield like Hernandez to take the pressure off him.

“The quarterback has played a really important role for us in our running and passing game,” Glavickas said. “It’s very important to us, it’s really the focal point of our offense. We’re just very fortunate that whoever steps in as a first-year starter, he’s going to have some running backs who we’re hoping can take some pressure off him.”

RUNNING BACKS

Hernandez rushed for 1,558 yards and 28 touchdowns on 109 carries a year ago, earning Ashtabula County Player of the Year and all-Ohio second-team honors.

Maybe more impressive than his counting numbers, though, was the talent behind him and how he was so lethal that players like Newell, Nick Reichek and Nye only got a combined 67 carries be-

tween the three of them.

But all three took advantage of their opportunities.

Newell, a senior, took his 22 attempts for 254 yards, an average of 11.5 yards per carry. Fellow senior Reichek and Nye, a junior, both averaged more than 7 yards per touch. The trio accounted for 10 touchdowns.

Glavickas gushed over Newell’s “incredible vision,” Nye’s combination of strength and speed and Reichek’s lead blocking abilities, which often results with defenders on their backs.

Clayton Takacs will also be in the mix.

“We’re really excited about our running backs this year,” Glavickas said. “They are incredible athletes.”

RECEIVER

Following the theme of replacing players, GV’s leading pass catchers from a year ago — Evans and Hernandez — are no longer on the team.

With Jacob Glavickas, Evan Heller, Susman, his crop of running backs and either Seger or Soltis — whoever doesn’t win the quarterback battle — coach Glavickas likes his team’s depth at the receiver position.

“We have a bunch of kids who just get the job done,” he said. “I don’t know if we have a (No. 1) target like we did with Jerone ... I think we’re going to be able to spread the ball around the field pretty evenly this year.”

OFFENSIVE LINE

The line will be the group that most resembles the Mustangs of a year ago on offense.

Robert Miller and Copeland are gone, but Glavickas has plenty of experience at his disposal. Chase Cottrell played as a freshman, Ryan Buser — the team’s only senior lineman — started all 10 games at center and Mason Shreve, GV’s left

ROSTER

No.	Name	Position	Ht.	Wt.	Gr.
1.	Ethan Spencer	WR/DB	5-3	125	Fr.
2.	Gordon Seger	QB/DB	6-2	180	Jr.
3.	Sal Martin	WR/DB	5-7	140	So.
4.	Tyler Herendeen	WR/DB	5-10	150	So.
5.	Hunter Perry	RB/LB	5-8	180	Fr.
6.	Ethan Russell	K	5-8	150	So.
7.	Cole Seger	RB/DE	6-0	170	So.
8.	Zach Hall	QB/DE	5-10	150	Fr.
9.	Jon Self	WR/DB	6-2	160	So.
10.	Evan Heller	WR/DB	6-2	180	Jr.
11.	Jacob Taylor	WR/DB	6-0	150	Jr.
13.	Jacob Glavickas	WR/DB	5-10	180	Sr.
14.	Chris Ray	WR/DB	5-10	140	Sr.
15.	Ashton Zupancic	WR/DB	5-11	140	So.
16.	Dylan Susman	WR/DB	5-9	170	Sr.
17.	Zach Hazlett	TE/DE	6-2	180	Sr.
18.	Jon Soltis	QB/DB	5-10	175	Sr.
19.	Toby Lucas	WR/DB	5-6	150	So.
21.	Josh Mullet	WR/DB	5-7	125	Fr.
22.	Justin Dlugos	WR/DB	5-10	130	Fr.
23.	Logan Newell	RB/WR/LB	5-10	190	Sr.
24.	Joe Sieracki	QB/LB	6-0	190	So.
27.	Trevor Meeker	WR/LB	5-4	130	So.
28.	David Nye	RB/LB/DL	5-9	185	Jr.
31.	Evan Hiland	WR/DB	5-10	120	So.
36.	Alex Baumann	RB/DL	5-10	180	Fr.
38.	CJ Samsa	WR/LB	5-8	150	Fr.
40.	Nick Reichek	RB/LB	5-11	190	Sr.
44.	Keegan Hart	WR/LB	5-6	150	Fr.
48.	Clayton Takacs	RB/WR/LB	5-11	185	Sr.
50.	Bradley Busser	OL/DE	6-2	190	Jr.
51.	Ryan Busser	OL/DE	6-1	215	Sr.
52.	Corey Fry	OL/DL	6-2	200	Jr.
53.	Mason Shreve	OL/DL	6-2	225	Jr.
54.	Cameron Stevens	OL/DL	5-8	200	Sr.
55.	Noah Fletcher	OL/DL	5-7	175	Fr.
57.	Jaret Takacs	OL/DL	5-10	200	So.
58.	Cooper Pilarczyk	OL/DL	6-0	245	So.
59.	RJ Watkins	OL/DL	5-9	210	Fr.
61.	Chris Cronin	OL/DL	5-9	200	So.
64.	Colin Cromley	OL/DL	6-1	200	Jr.
65.	Shannon Binns	OL/DL	5-4	240	Sr.
66.	Chase Cottrell	OL/DL	6-0	225	So.
71.	Eric Benton	OL/DL	6-2	205	Fr.
75.	Danny Gearhart	OL/DL	5-8	215	Jr.
76.	Riley Cunningham	OL/DL	6-0	205	So.
77.	Drew D’Amico	OL/DL	5-9	200	So.
79.	Isaac Purchase	OL/DB	5-11	210	Jr.
86.	William Seger	WR/DB	5-7	140	Fr.
88.	Brendon Hamilton	WR/LB	5-6	160	Fr.

GRAND VALLEY AT A GLANCE

Coach: John Glavickas

Years at Grand Valley: Seventh season

2017 Record: 10-1

Career Record: 42-20

Conference: Northeastern Athletic Conference

Base Offense: Pistol/spread/option

Base Defense: 4-3

Assistant Coaches: Clint Nims, Lowell Moodt, Aaron Brown, Josh Kocacab, Ralph Turk, Dave Oscar.

GRAND VALLEY MUSTANGS



PHOTO COURTESY OF GRAND VALLEY

The Grand Valley Mustangs will embark on a fourth straight Northeastern Athletic Conference football championship and fourth consecutive playoff appearance this

GV: County defensive player of the year Takacs leads defense

FROM PAGE 15

tackle, also started 10 games a year ago.

Daniel Gearhart is another name to keep an eye on.

“We have a bunch of guys who are coming back,” Glavickas said. “A bunch of them who got playing time, they may not have been starters for us, but they played a lot and coach (Lowell) Moodt and coach (Aaron) Brown are our line guys and they do a great job of getting our guys experience during a football game.”

DEFENSIVE LINE

First-team all-Ohio player Zach Haslett highlights another strong position group for the Mustangs. Hazlett, a senior defensive end, totaled 69 tackles, 17.5 for a



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Grand Valley's Logan Newell (with ball) gets hit during a recent home scrimmage with Champion.

loss of yards, and 3.5 sacks. Fellow defensive ends include Shreve and Busser.

“We feel pretty strong at the defensive end position,” Glavickas said.

Gearhart and Nye will play on the interior of the line.

“This is where we’re

a little bit unique, we put David Nye, who’s our tailback, he plays nose for us,” Glavickas said. “He’s only 5-foot-8 but he’s probably our strongest kid on the team ... tremendous strength and he adds speed to our defensive line and gives teams fits up front.”

LINEBACKER

A first-team all-Ohio linebacker, Takacs tackled 100 ball carriers, sacked the quarterback four times and picked off two passes en route to earning Ashtabula County Defensive Player of the Year honors last year as a junior. He will be

joined by Reichek, a second-team all-Ohio honoree who led the team with 113 tackles in 2017.

Newell will join the dangerous duo in the middle of the defense.

“We feel really confident about our line-backer crew,” Glavickas said.

DEFENSIVE BACKS

The safety positions are set with Glavickas and Heller.

The former started all 10 games, scored two defensive touchdowns and broke up a team-high six passes.

Both had 40 tackles a year ago. Susman and Seger, both of whom intercepted a pass last year, will man the outside for GV.

SPECIAL TEAMS

A former GV futbol

player turned football player, Ethan Russell has traded in a soccer ball to join the football team.

“At the last minute he decided to come out and he’s doing a great job with our place kicking and our extra points and we’re trying to turn him into a punter too, right now,” Glavickas said.

Newell could see some time as the team’s punter until Russell grows comfortable with punt coverage.

Returning kickoffs will be sophomore Sal Martin.

“He’s a really quick kid and we’re hoping he stays healthy and he can do those duties so we don’t have to put any of those older kids in,” Glavickas said.

The safeties will handle punt return duties.

PREP FOOTBALL



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Lakeside running back Gavin Bish receives a handoff from quarterback Johnny Anservitz during a scrimmage earlier this month at SPIRE Institute.



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Madison quarterback Alex Dragas interacts with coaches during a recent practice.

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GENEVA EAGLES

Looking to turn the corner



Aug. 24
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Aug. 31
at Mogadore
7:30 p.m.



Sept. 7
vs. Kirtland
7 p.m.



Sept. 14
at Harvey
7 p.m.



Sept. 21
at West Geauga
7 p.m.



Sept. 28
vs. Beachwood
7 p.m.



Oct. 5
at Orange
7 p.m.



Oct. 11
at Holy Name
7 p.m.



Oct. 19
vs. Perry
7 p.m.



Oct. 26
vs. Chagrin Falls
7 p.m.

Key Game Week 4: at Harvey

With games against Madison, Mogadore and Kirtland to kick off the season, the Eagles will be tested early and often in 2018. Their Chagrin Valley Conference opener against Harvey will be a great opportunity to either keep their early-season momentum rolling or turn their season around for the better. Geneva trounced Harvey 49-21 last season.



Strength of Schedule

Division III, Region 9; 2-8 in 2017

2017 OPPONENT RECORD

62-48 (.564)

PLAYOFF OPPONENTS

Kirtland, Mogadore, Orange, Perry

DIVISION BREAKDOWN

Division II (1 game), Division III (2 games), Division IV (4 games), Division V (1 games), Division VI (2 games)

Eagles seeking a move forward after two consecutive 2-8 seasons

BY BRENDAN FEENEY
bfeeney@starbeacon.com
GENEVA — The

Eagles have put in the work, they've learned from their mistakes

and after back-to-back 2-8 seasons, they are ready to take a step

forward. A year ago, an extremely young Geneva team constant-

ly found itself on the wrong end of coin-flip games. The Eagles lost by one touchdown in the opener to Madison, were a tipped pass from being tied with Mogadore at halftime before ultimately losing by 13 in Week 2, gave then-undefeated Perry its toughest game of

the season — in terms of final scoring margin — in Week 7 and lost their last two games — to Orange and Wickliffe, both playoff teams in 2017 — by a combined six points.

Coming into 2018 with more experience,

SEE **EAGLES**, 20

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GENEVA EAGLES



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GENEVA EAGLES

EAGLES: Geneva seeks to turn close losses around

FROM PAGE 18

fourth-year head coach Chip Sorber believes this is the year to change the narrative of Geneva football. He's not shying away from last year's close losses either. Instead, he's hoping to build off them.

"We're picking up largely where we left off last year, playing some pretty good football down the stretch," Sorber said. "Being as young as we were, it's been a really smooth transition so I really do believe that we were able to start much further ahead because of the youth that we had last year. We're ahead of the game at this

point, as far as some of our schemes and things like that go."

Not only are Sorber's Eagles a year older, they're a year wiser, too. They understand how one play — like an unsportsmanlike penalty that set up Madison's game-winning touchdown drive or a tipped ball that was the difference between a tie game at halftime against Mogadore and what turned into a seven-point deficit — can change an entire game.

"These guys know that every play matters," Sorber said. "As these guys will tell you, seven plays flips their schedule, seven plays would have totally

flipped their schedule (in 2017) and we know what seven plays they were and they know every play matters. So we're expecting them to make those plays this year, not watch them happen."

This year being the season to turn around the program is not by coincidence. It's been part of a multi-year plan designed by Sorber and his coaching staff to get Geneva back to where they want it to be.

The theme of the plan can be defined by one word: culture.

"You have to make a culture first and that does not happen in one or two years, so we

believe our culture is where it needs to be," Sorber said.

Sorber said Geneva's culture is one of hard work, selflessness, accountability and getting the job done. The team lifts before and after school all-year long and has championship Fridays at 5 a.m. in the weight room.

"This group has worked and my coaching staff has worked and we hope we get some payback from all of this work," Sorber said. "So our culture is solid: be tough, be good students, be winners all the way around."

SEE GENEVA, 27

ROSTER

No. Name	Position	Ht.	Wt.	Gr.
2. Edmund Juodenas	RB/LB	5-11	225	Jr.
3. Dakota Hutchinson	QB/LB	5-10	150	So.
4. Tyler Boling	SE/DB	5-7	140	So.
5. Blake Peet	RB/DB	5-11	180	Jr.
6. Nick Erb	SE/DB	5-11	155	Jr.
8. Aiden Cowles	RB/DB	5-9	150	Jr.
10. Zack Turk	SE/DB	5-11	150	Sr.
11. Terry Miller	QB/DB	5-11	150	Jr.
12. Gage Baker	SE/DB	6-0	155	So.
13. Kyle Stark	QB/DB	6-0	180	Sr.
14. Caleb Selman	RB/LB	5-6	160	So.
15. Ben Scibona	QB/LB	6-3	185	So.
20. Seth Goodrick	RB/DB	5-5	145	Sr.
21. Victor Echeverria	RB/LB	5-10	180	Jr.
22. Devan Young	SE/DB	5-11	155	Jr.
23. Justin Way	RB/DB	5-8	170	Jr.
24. Steven Wagner	RB/DB	5-9	145	So.
26. Braden Bilicic	TE/LB	5-11	160	Sr.
29. John Amato	TE/LB	6-0	185	Jr.
33. Vinny Varcette	RB/LB	5-11	185	Jr.
35. Charles Taylor	TE/DL	6-2	240	So.
40. Zane Francis	RB/LB	5-11	175	So.
44. Jason Corlew	RB/LB	5-11	195	Sr.
52. Brian Spencer	OL/DL	5-11	215	So.
54. Austin Massena	OL/DL	5-8	215	So.
55. Tyler Anderson	OL/LB	6-1	195	Sr.
56. Alex Krieg	OL/DL	5-11	195	So.
59. Justin Hanna	OL/LB	5-10	200	So.
62. Christian Bradbury	OL/DL	5-10	235	So.
65. Micah O'Handley	OL/DL	5-7	200	So.
67. Matt Gruzinski	OL/DL	6-5	245	So.
68. Zander Swanson	OL/DL	6-3	250	Jr.
70. Austin Melvin	OL/DL	5-10	300	Sr.
71. Dylan Vincent	OL/DL	6-0	190	Sr.
72. Brandon Thomas	OL/DL	6-2	220	Jr.
73. Sam Davis	OL/DL	6-4	250	Jr.
74. Michael Cooper	OL/DL	5-9	230	Jr.
75. Shane Miller	OL/DL	5-8	225	Sr.
76. Daniel Lanning	OL/DL	5-8	260	Jr.
77. Zach Buskirk	OL/DL	6-0	255	Jr.
79. Antonio Saldana	OL/DL	5-10	260	So.

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JEFFERSON FALCONS

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Aug. 24
vs. Grand Valley
7 p.m.



Aug. 31
at Edgewood
7 p.m.



Sept. 7
at Poland
7 p.m.



Sept. 14
vs. Struthers
7 p.m.



Sept. 21
at Girard
7 p.m.



Sept. 28
vs. Lakeview
7 p.m.



Oct. 5
vs. Hubbard
7 p.m.



Oct. 11
at Liberty
7 p.m.



Oct. 19
at Niles
7 p.m.



Oct. 26
vs. LaBrae
7 p.m.

Key Game

Week 1: vs. Grand Valley

Right out of the gate, Jefferson first-year coach Ed Rankin and his team will face county foe Grand Valley, which has captured three straight North-eastern Athletic Conference titles and reached the postseason three consecutive times. It's a lead in for a season in which the Falcons will compete in the All-American Conference for a final time.



Strength of Schedule

Division IV, Region 13, 1-9 in 2017

2017 OPPONENT RECORD

66-41 (.629)

PLAYOFF OPPONENTS

Grand Valley, Poland, Struthers, Girard, Lakeview, Liberty

DIVISION BREAKDOWN

Division III (1 game), Division IV (6 games), Division V (2 games), Division VI (1 games)

First-year Jefferson coach looks to bring back winning ways

BY MIKE SHAFFER
sports@starbeacon.com

'You show up, play hard and be a good teammate.'

Ed Rankin
Jefferson head coach



Rankin

JEFFERSON — Ed Rankin is well aware he's taking over a 1-9 football program from a year ago.

The first-year coach is more aware that he's coming into a program that has a strong winning tradition on Friday nights, though.

Rankin, who served as offensive coordinator at Austintown Fitch last year, has been assigned the task of returning the Falcons to their former glory.

He's not promising it will happen overnight,

but he likes what he's seen so far.

"We're gonna be back," he said. "It's gonna be fun."

It could also be time consuming, though. The Falcons are young just about everywhere and are working out the kinks of learning a new system.

But the coach is up for the challenge and says the players seem

to be as well.

"If it was easy, anybody could do it," Rankin said. "If it was easy, what fun would that be. It's the challenge that makes it fun."

What the coach wants the kids to understand is simple.

"You show up, play hard and be a good teammate," Rankin said. "Win, lose or

draw, we'll control what we can control. If a team is better than us, we'll shake their hand and wish them well."

Rankin and his staff have rounded up 40 players for the varsity roster this season. The numbers at the junior high and even the midget league are also encouraging.

On offense, the triple flex wishbone is what the coach terms an "execution offense." Jefferson undoubtedly wants to run the football, while at the same time build in passing options as well.

Jefferson will open up

with county foes Grand Valley and Edgewood, before getting into the meat of a tough All-American Conference schedule.

What Rankin is looking for as far as season expectations go, however, is simply steady improvement out of his team from start to finish."

QUARTERBACK

Senior Tyler Messenger got about six quarters of playing time a year ago. He may be tall and lean, but according to Rankin, he runs "deceptively powerful."

In spite of his inexperience

playing quarterback at the varsity level, Messenger has had an excellent camp and seems to have gotten a firm grasp on the new offense.

RUNNING BACKS

As the Jefferson running game goes, so to will the Falcon offense.

Jefferson is strong up the middle. Seniors Colton Sinkko and Nathan Jacobs return from a year ago and are the biggest of the backs. Sinkko goes 5-foot-8 and 185 pounds and

SEE JEFFERSON, 22

JEFFERSON FALCONS



PHOTO COURTESY OF RAPID PHOTO

First-year Jefferson football coach Ed Rankin will lead his team on to the field for the regular-season opener at home against Grand Valley on Friday.

JEFFERSON: New-look offense is triple option-wishbone attack for Falcons

FROM PAGE 21

Jacobs checks in at 5-10 and 185. Rankin is also very high on senior Garrett Boczar and sophomore Daniel Bruckman. It could be running by committee in the early going to see if one of these three can secure the bulk of the carries.

WIDE RECEIVERS

While the run game is

what the Falcons want to establish, there will also be passing options built in. Jefferson isn't going to run past anyone this season. Tough and scrappy is a good way to describe the unit as a whole. Senior Zach Bean is considered the team's best playmaking threat, but he's battled health issues this summer. Rankin is also high on junior Braxton Babic.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Jefferson doesn't have much in experience to deploy up front. Senior Jacob Butler, listed at 205, will handle center duties. He may seem undersized for the position, but his quickness and athletic ability lends itself well to what he'll be asked to do. The other player Rankin considers the best of the bunch is junior left guard

Johnnie Eckart, who goes 240. Like Butler, Eckart will bring some energy to the unit. On the right side, David Specht, a 300-pound senior, will give the Falcons some push.

DEFENSIVE LINE

Finding guys to lock into the trenches up front is something Rankin called "a challenge." Butler will be the player he's counting

on the most. But the coach will be working to develop guys such as Eckart, Specht and juniors Keegan Wallace, Dakota Morrison and Cole Farina into two-way players on the line.

LINEBACKERS

The strength of the Falcons defense could be in their backers. On the inside, both DJ Hall and Jacob Sabo have been

excellent this summer.

On the outside, Rankin also feels good about Sinkko and Jacobs. The biggest concern will be keeping them healthy. If so, this group could be fun to watch.

SECONDARY

The linebackers could be the strength of the

SEE **FALCONS**, 23

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JEFFERSON FALCONS

FALCONS: LBs, DBs defensive strengths

FROM PAGE 22

defense, but right now the secondary is with Messenger and Boczar both experienced at cornerback.

Bean will have the same expectations as those on offense. Rankin also expects

Bruckman to be a playmaker in the secondary, though he's not exactly sure where yet.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Last year, Angelica Sack, from the girls soccer team, handled the kicking duties in admiral fashion. This

year Jefferson doesn't have a true kicker on the football roster.

Messenger will try his hand at place kicking, although the coaching staff may continue to look for a "true kicker" elsewhere. Sinkko has done a nice job with punting so far.

ROSTER

No.	Name	Position	Ht.	Wt.	Gr.
3.	Jake Toth	WR/OLB	5-8	130	Jr.
4.	Zach Bean	WR/DB	6-0	165	Sr.
6.	Evan Smock	RB/DB	5-7	135	So.
7.	Austin Schmidt	WR/LB	5-10	190	Jr.
8.	Tyler Messenger	QB/DB	6-0	165	Sr.
9.	Colton Edgar	QB/DB	6-0	150	So.
11.	Alex Salyer	WR/DB	5-9	170	Sr.
12.	Nathan Jacobs	RB/LB	5-9	185	Sr.
13.	Dwayne Hanson	RB/LB	5-9	150	Jr.
14.	Braxton Babic	WR/DB	5-8	160	Jr.
16.	Hunter Dietrich	WR/DB	6-0	170	So.
17.	Cameron Hall	WR/DB	6-0	160	So.
21.	Garrett Boczar	RB/DB	5-8	150	Sr.
23.	Daniel Bruckman	RB/DB	5-8	160	So.
26.	Tyler Brown	WR/DB	5-8	150	Jr.
32.	L. Woodworth	RB/LB	5-7	160	So.
35.	DJ Hall	QB/OLB	5-7	170	Jr.
36.	Colton Sinkko	RB/LB	5-10	185	Sr.
39.	JJ Kelsey	RB/LB	5-8	150	Sr.
50.	C. Pawlowski	OL/LB	5-9	160	Fr.
51.	Jacob Sabo	OL/LB	5-8	190	So.
52.	Justin Miller	OL/DL	5-11	230	Jr.

55.	Brent Dietrich	OL/DL	5-8	170	Fr.
57.	Johnnie Eckart	OL/DL	5-9	240	Jr.
59.	Jacob Butler	OL/DL	5-11	205	Sr.
64.	Matt Dreis	OL/DL	6-1	180	Fr.
65.	Kory Newhart	OL/DL	5-9	180	Fr.
66.	Asa Collins	OL/DL	6-0	180	So.
67.	Cole Farina	OL/DL	5-10	165	Jr.
68.	Thomas Kirk	OL/DL	5-8	180	Fr.
70.	Dakota Morrison	OL/DL	5-10	180	Jr.
71.	Jacob Wheeler	OL/LB	5-8	180	Fr.
72.	Tristan Jodon	OL/DL	5-10	320	Jr.
73.	David Specht	OL/DL	5-10	300	Sr.
75.	Keegan Wallace	OL/DL	5-11	220	Jr.
80.	Reid Boczar	RB/DB	5-7	130	Fr.

JEFFERSON AT A GLANCE

Coach: Ed Rankin

Years at Jefferson: First season

2017 Record: 1-9

Career Record: 0-0

Conference: All-American Conference

Base Offense: Triple option/wish-bone

Base Defense: 3-4

Assistant Coaches: Scott Collins, John Namey, Tim Glodowski, Jim Tsilimos, Robbie Eckart.



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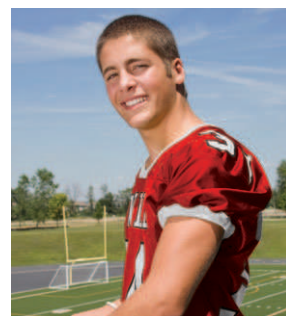



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LAKESIDE DRAGONS

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7 p.m.



Aug. 31
at Madison
7 p.m.



Sept. 7
at Youngstown East
7 p.m.



Sept. 14
vs. Canfield
7 p.m.



Sept. 21
at Rocky River
7 p.m.



Sept. 28
vs. Warren G. Harding
7 p.m.



Oct. 5
at Fitch
7 p.m.



Oct. 12
vs. University School
7 p.m.



Oct. 19
at McDowell
7 p.m.



Oct. 26
vs. Boardman
7 p.m.

Key Game

Week 1: vs. Edgewood

Billed as The Battle For The Bridge, this opener matches first-year Dragons head coach Buzz Edwards against first-year Warriors head coach Jon Butchko. It's an opportunity for Edwards to get off to a good start as Lakeside coach.



Strength of Schedule

Division II, Region 5, 4-6 in 2017

2017 OPPONENT RECORD

57-50 (.533)

PLAYOFF OPPONENTS

Canfield, University School, Erie (Pa.), Boardman

DIVISION BREAKDOWN

Division I (1 game), Division II (4 games), Division III (3 games), Division IV (1 game)

Lakeside looking to move forward with different system

BY MIKE SHAFFER

sports@starbeacon.com

SAYBROOK TOWNSHIP — Lakeside's 4-6 season of a year ago may not sound like a huge step, but considering the football program was 8-62 over the past seven seasons prior to the 2017 campaign, it was a move forward.

Enter Buzz Edwards, who graduated from Eastlake North and coached in Virginia before taking over the top coaching job closer to home. Edwards is looking to take the program another step this year — and he wants to do it fast.

Edwards put down four goals for his football players. The top two deal with who they are as men in terms of character and integrity. After that, he wants to be the most physical and fastest team in the state.

With the players he has, the coach believes he can accomplish both.

"We want to go, go and go," Edwards said. "We have some dudes, some kids that we want to get the football to. I'm a spread guy and we're going to play fast on both sides of the ball."

Offensively, Lakeside is going to be in a

hurry. The plan is to go no-huddle, hand signals to call plays and lot of non-verbal communication.

"Drop the ball and let's go baby," Edwards said enthusiastically. "We're gonna showcase our speed. We're gonna get out and we're gonna attack people. We have a bunch of people that are going to be able to get the ball, and they're not going to be able to stop all of them."

Defensively, it will be a little more traditional.

"We're gonna put our best 11 football players on the field," Edwards said. "The guys that are the most physical, that can run and make

things happen. That's the way we're gonna do it and we're gonna make it work."

Lakeside lost key pieces from a year ago, namely quarterback Spencer Loftus, receiver Antonio Harris and lineman Parker Meaney, among others.

Edwards, however, is excited about players coming back, some of whom didn't see a lot of playing time a year ago, but could pay immediate dividends this season.

Skilled players such as Cristian Rosario, Courtez Vaughn, Gavin Bish, Ethan Colbert, Jose Reynoso, Isaiah Fleming, Jashon Hunt

and a few others have turned some heads this summer.

In the trenches is where Edwards has the most concern as the Dragons linemen are raw. Expect to see a freshman or two going each way.

Overall, though, the first year coach likes what he has seen this summer and is more ready to lead the Dragons to their next step in becoming a winning program, not just on the field, but off the field as well.

"When you're a new coach, you want to win a state championship, go undefeated and all that," he said. "Once

you get into it, it's more about being there for the kids and raising young men. If you do that, winning takes care of itself."

QUARTERBACKS

Senior Johnny Anserivtz and junior Rosario have battled it out in camp for the starting nod.

Edwards is high on both players as they have shown the ability to make some plays with their feet as well as be able to stand strong in the pocket. Anserivtz got just a taste of varsity action last season.

LAKESIDE DRAGONS



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

There's a new buzz in the air at Lakeside High School as "Buzz" Edwards has taken over head football coach.

DRAGONS: Lakeside wants to play fast, physical on both sides of the ball

FROM PAGE 24

RUNNING BACKS.

Hunt, a senior, has impressed the new coaching staff from day one with impressive speed and power. Bish, also a senior, received a significant amount of carries last year. Edwards expects him to get 15-20 touches a game. Junior Davin Watkins should also get his share of carries.

WIDE RECEIVER

Seniors Vaughn and Bish, and Colbert, a junior, all bring returning experience to the

receiving corps.

Vaughn has worked a lot on technique this year, compared to just surviving on physical ability. Big things will be expected of him this season.

He'll be on the outside with sophomore Savion Colbert.

Ethan Colbert, who caught 20 passes last season, brings explosiveness off the line, while Bish showed last year he could catch the ball out of the backfield as well as line up wide. Junior Mark Dalrymple will also get some targets, while freshman Ashton Wheelock has



Edwards

'I'm a spread guy and we're going to play fast on both sides of the ball.'

Buzz Edwards
Lakeside head coach

really caught the coaching staff's eye for being a young player.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Edwards' specialty is the offensive line, but coaching inexperience can be a challenge and the Dragons have their fair share up front. Right now, the coaching staff isn't real sure where all the pieces are

going to fit.

Juniors Robert Delewski and Jordan Mellin have had solid camps. Senior Keontrey Hinson is the biggest of the group at 6-foot-3, 260 pounds. Freshman Chris Bartone has also been impressive considering his youth.

DEFENSIVE LINE

Just like the offen-

sive line, the Dragons are equally young on the other side of the trenches. Delewski, Melin, Hinson and senior Caleb Pierce are the listed upperclassmen, but Edwards said there will be many younger players rotating in as

well. Freshman Anthony Donahue has gotten a lot of reps at nose tackle this summer.

LINEBACKERS

While the D-line is raw, the linebacking

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LAKESIDE DRAGONS

LAKESIDE: All-Ohio LB Fleming returns

FROM PAGE 25

crew behind them are anything but. Seniors Fleming, a second-team All-Ohio choice, and Reynoso both played well last year.

Fleming recorded 101 tackles, including 22 for loss, with six sacks, three caused fumbles and one fumble recovery last season.

The duo should bring experience as well as toughness to the unit. Rosario and Anservitz could both see time at linebacker, while the coach is again high on Hunt and how his speed and power can be of use on defense.

SECONDARY

Vaughn and Savion Colbert will lock down the



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

A host of Lakeside tacklers make a play during a recent scrimmage against Jefferson at SPIRE Institute in Harpersfield Township.

corner positions, while Bish will be patrolling at free safety.

Vaughn brings back 39 tackles, including two for loss, two interceptions and seven pass breakups.

Ethan Colbert and Wheelock will both rotate in as well.

It's a group that has not only experience but lots of athleticism and speed.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Vaughn had the night of his career last year when he ran a pair of kickoffs back for touch-

downs against Warren Harding during Week 6 of the 2017 season.

He had four kickoff returns for TDs last year and is back returning kicks again this season. Just as they want to play fast on offense and defense, the Dragons will want to use special teams to put pressure on the opposition.

Anservitz will handle both punting and place kicking duties.

He averaged nearly 38 yards per punt last season.

ROSTER

No.	Name	Position	Ht.	Wt.	Gr.
1.	Savion Colbert	RB/DB	5-9	155	So.
2.	Courtez Vaughn	WR/DB	6-1	165	Sr.
4.	Jashon Hunt	RB/DB	5-10	177	Sr.
5.	Johnny Anservitz	QB/LB	6-2	185	Sr.
8.	Cristian Rosario	QB/LB	5-11	191	Jr.
11.	A.J. Raffa	RB/LB	5-9	170	Fr.
12.	Seth Thomas	QB/DB	5-7	120	So.
13.	Ethan Colbert	WR/DB	5-10	170	Jr.
15.	Patrick Perry	WR/LB	5-10	155	Fr.
18.	Garrett Siebeneck	QB/LB	6-2	189	Fr.
22.	Mark Dalrymple	WR/DB	5-8	154	Jr.
23.	Austin Wheelock	QB/DB	5-10	160	Fr.
25.	Gavin Bish	WR/DB	5-9	171	Fr.
28.	Lorenzo Lagoa	RB/DB	5-7	166	Fr.
30.	Isaiah Fleming	RB/LB	6-0	204	Sr.
32.	Anthony Donahue	OL/DL	6-1	194	Fr.
34.	Davin Watkins	RB/DB	5-8	164	Jr.
38.	Chris Steele	WR/LB	5-11	168	So.
40.	Jacob McRae	WR/DB	5-10	141	Fr.
44.	Thomas Allen	WR/DB	5-10	125	Fr.
49.	Jose Reynoso	TE/LB	5-11	196	Sr.
50.	Destiny Kruczewski	OL/DL	5-9	131	So.
51.	Robert Delewski	OL/DL	5-9	227	Jr.
52.	Sam Petros	OL/DL	6-2	221	Fr.
56.	Alex Rounds	OL/DL	5-8	181	Fr.
57.	Kevin Pettit	OL/DL	5-10	172	So.
60.	Caden Potter	OL/DL	6-0	218	Fr.
71.	Jordan Mellin	OL/DL	6-1	215	Jr.
62.	Alan Sousa	OL/DL	5-8	260	Fr.
64.	Kaleb Scaine	OL/DB	5-10	211	Fr.
66.	Darion Bell	OL/DL	6-4	279	Fr.
69.	Josh Marple	OL/DL	6-0	246	So.
70.	Jose Cruz	OL/DL	5-7	220	So.
72.	Keontrey Hinson	OL/DL	6-3	260	Sr.
73.	Adrianna Hutson	OL/DL	5-5	131	So.
75.	Morgan Bish	OL/DL	5-8	189	Fr.
76.	Chris Bartone	OL/DL	6-1	250	Fr.
78.	Caleb Pierce	OL/DL	6-0	220	Sr.
81.	Kyler Sabatine	WR/DB	5-6	131	Fr.

Coach: Buzz Edwards
Years at Lakeside: First season
2017 Record: 4-6
Career Record: 0-0
Conference: All-American Conference
Base Offense: Spread
Base Defense: 3-5-3
Assistant Coaches: Andrew Horvath, Louis Edwards, Gregory Juhola, Terrance Henton, Paul Lauth, Nicholas Dalrymple, Jacob Penk, Tyler Wilbur.

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GENEVA EAGLES

GENEVA: Stark back at quarterback for Eagles, Corlew anchors LB unit

FROM PAGE 20

Culture isn't a yearly task that's limited to the varsity team. It's something Sorber has tried to instill from the varsity level down to the youth programs in Geneva.

And, for the first time since taking over the head coaching position, Sorber is starting to see the results.

"For years here, I'm not saying we had good or bad classes, but from a talent standpoint and a numbers standpoint, we have not, to this point, been able to put two back-to-back good quality classes together and in high school football, if you're not doing that, you're in big trouble," Sorber said. "Now what we have is we have a very wonderful senior class ... We have a good junior class with good numbers, we have a solid sophomore class, we have a very good freshman class, our eighth grade is developing, our seventh grade is loaded."

QUARTERBACK

Kyle Stark is back under center for the Eagles. A second-year-starter-to-be, Stark rushed for 879 yards and 14 touchdowns on 167 attempts, to go along with 505 passing yards. All were team-highs and Stark was rewarded with second-team all-county honors.

"Kyle is the senior,

'Our culture is solid: be tough, be good students, be winners all the way around.'

Chip Sorber
Geneva head coach



Sorber

he's got the keys to the car and he's a difference maker with his feet," Sorber said. "We're really excited about having Kyle back, it's huge."

RUNNING BACK

Ten different Eagles received a carry a year ago and seven of them are back for another year.

Led by junior second-team all-county running back Justin Way and Blake Peet, as well as Stark from the quarterback position, Geneva's run game is its breadwinner.

Peet, Way and Jason Corlew all averaged more than 6 yards per rush a year ago. Corlew is the only senior of the trio. Fullback Edmund Juodenas and Vinny Varcette will be two more juniors to watch in the Eagles backfield.

WIDE RECEIVER/ENDS

In such a run-heavy offense that saw 442 of last year's 527 offensive plays occur on the ground, the receiver position is a little different in Geneva.

They still need to run routes and be able to

catch the ball, but an emphasis is put on blocking, especially at the tight and split end positions.

Normally, according to Sorber, the Eagles will have one tight end and one split end lined up at a time. Junior John Amato and sophomore Charlie Taylor will share tight end duties, while junior backup quarterback Terry Miller and junior Devan Young will see time at split end.

All are returning from last year's team, Sorber said.

OFFENSIVE LINE

While the offense's skill positions are almost identical to what they were a year ago, in terms of names on a depth chart, the offensive line is down three starters, including Corry Culton and Chucky Jackson. The former was a first-team all-county lineman while the latter claimed second-team all-county honors.

The de facto captain of this year's line will be junior 6-foot-4, 250-pound right tackle Sam Davis.

"He's got the speed

and athleticism of a skill guy," Sorber said. "He is our defunct leader of our offensive line, simply because he's just such a hard worker. ... We're expecting him to dominate on both sides of the ball."

The man to his left, junior Michael Cooper, is no slouch either. He started a year ago.

DEFENSIVE LINE

No position group has coach Sorber more excited than the defensive line. He's expecting so much out of the line, that it should, in turn, help improve the linebacking corps as well as the defensive backs.

Davis and Taylor will be on the ends of Geneva's three-man defensive line, while senior Shane Miller has stepped up to seemingly separate himself from the pack of defensive tackles who have been rotating all summer long.

"This should be the best defensive line since I've been here," Sorber said. "What that means, that should make our linebackers

Coach: Chip Sorber

Years at Geneva: Fourth season

2017 Record: 2-8

Career Record: 8-21

Conference: Chagrin Valley Conference

Base Offense: Spread/pistol/wing-t

Base Defense: Multiple fronts (3-3/3-4/3-5/4-4)

Assistant Coaches: Don Shymske, Matt Peet, John Mirabell, Jay Corlew, Jay Iapaolo, Sean Seibert, Josh Williams, Russ Brown.

better, then that makes our defensive backs better. So starting up front with a quality defensive line, I think is going to make everybody better."

LINEBACKERS

Anchoring the five-man linebacking group will be Corlew, a 2017 first-team all-county linebacker.

The senior, recorded 54 solo tackles a year ago. He also added a sack and five tackles for loss.

"I always call Jason a throwback player," Sorber said. "He doesn't ask for anything, he doesn't say anything, he's a quiet kid, he just goes out and gets it done."

Amato and Juodenas will be on each side of Corlew.

DEFENSIVE BACKS

A starter since his freshman year, Peet is the lone safety in the Eagles secondary. He recorded 45 solo tackles, forced three fumbles, recovered two and picked off two passes last year in earning first-team all-county defensive honors as a sophomore.

Way and senior Seth Goodrick will man the cornerback positions for Geneva.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Peet is active on offense and on defense, so why not special teams, too? This year, he will be responsible for kickoffs, extra points, field goals and punting.

Peet, alongside Way, Varcette and Goodrick, will also return kicks and punts for the Eagles.

MADISON BLUE STREAKS

Madison ready to compete



Aug. 24
at Geneva
7 p.m.



Aug. 31
vs. Lakeside
7 p.m.



Sept. 7
vs. Perry
7 p.m.



Sept. 14
at South
7 p.m.



Sept. 21
vs. Riverside
7 p.m.



Sept. 28
at Chardon
7 p.m.



Oct. 5
at Mayfield
7 p.m.



Oct. 12
vs. Kenston
7 p.m.



Oct. 19
at North
7 p.m.



Oct. 26
vs. Brush
7 p.m.

Key Game Week 2: vs. Lakeside



Lakeside defeated Madison for the first time since 2005 last season, so the Blue Streaks will look to pick up a win heading into the always crucial contest against Perry the following week.



Strength of Schedule

Division II, Region 5, 2-8 in 2017

2017 OPPONENT RECORD

57-50 (.533)

PLAYOFF OPPONENTS

Perry, Mayfield, North, Brush

DIVISION BREAKDOWN

Division II (6 games), Division III (3 games), Division IV (1 game)

Veteran Blue Streaks counting on experience in 'wide open' WRC race

BY DAVID NEGIN
sports@starbeacon

MADISON — Each season brings some sort of hope and optimism for just about any team.

Entering last season, Madison coach Tim Willis and his staff went in with that kind of hope, but the Blue Streaks finished with just two wins.

"We probably could've won a couple more games last year," Willis said, "but realistically that would have probably been about it."

Looking back at a season where his Blue Streaks lined up as many as nine sophomores, Willis remembered something an old

friend once told him.

"He told me, 'As many sophomores you are putting out there, you're going to have that many losses on your team,'" Willis said. "The good news, as of today, we don't have any sophomores who are going to be playing. Things are moving in the right direction.

"When you have a junior and senior laden team and not a lot of young guys out there, things are probably going to be better."

That is the hope for Willis as he enters his 19th season as head coach of the Madison program with a 113-68 overall record. In short, 2-8 seasons have not

been anything close to the norm for Willis and his staff.

"There are two things that are going to matter for us," Willis said. "Number 1 is our leadership, and that doesn't necessarily mean seniors. The second thing is, how good are our juniors going to be? We have a lot of juniors who played as sophomores, and what kind of step they took in the offseason is going to be the big difference. I personally think it is going to be a good jump. We have a lot of guys with a lot of experience who are only juniors, but they are very good ones."

Without looking, Willis mentioned

seniors Jonas Pinta, Dominic Conforte, and Max Starke along with juniors Alex Dragas, Aidan Thompson, Jacob Glass, and Cole Tanner as some of the leaders emerging from his 17 returning players.

"Hopefully they are ready to play at a different level than we did last year," Willis said.

So far, Willis has been pleased with what he has seen.

"The way I look at things is: 'Do I like going out to practice every day?'" he said. "That means the kids are hard workers, they listen, they are taking the coaching as opposed to me having to wonder if they are going to

show up or do the right things. This is a group I love to coach."

Willis knows his schedule is filled with top level competition, but he sees a very wide open and balanced Western Reserve Conference race heading into the year.

"You are always going to have teams that are going to be good, but if you ask me who it is, I couldn't tell you," Willis said. "I think it is anybody's game. But, the most important thing is we've got to beat Geneva (opening week) and that isn't going to be an easy task."

QUARTERBACKS

When you look at

good indicators for a turnaround season, having your quarterback returning is a good place to start.

Dragas, a 6-foot, 175-pound junior, started all 10 games last year, completing 85 of 187 passes for 885 yards and six touchdowns. He also added three more touchdowns on the ground.

"He is a kid who is an athlete with a tremendous amount of intelligence," offensive coordinator Mike Martin said. "He understands the game and has put in countless hours of film study in the offseason. At this point in time last

SEE **BLUE STREAKS**, 29

MADISON BLUE STREAKS



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

The Madison Blue Streaks are looking to turn around an 2-8 2017 season.

BLUE STREAKS: Madison coaches counting on senior leadership

FROM PAGE 28

year he was running plays. This year he is running the offense.” Shane Magda, a senior wrestling standout, is a player who the coaches said they want to utilize more in some schemes this year and will serve as Dragas’ backup for the second straight year.

RUNNING BACKS

Because Madison has always tried to keep their players fresh by minimizing the number

of two-way repetitions their players get, the Blue Streaks will again use a handful of ball carriers this season. “(Junior) Michael Woody will be the first guy out, but Starke looks fantastic, and we are playing Will Weema at tailback also,” Martin said. “It will be a revolving door between those three kids.” Woody returns with the most yards from the tailback spot, finishing with 173 yards (26 carries) and a pair of touchdowns.

“He is a guy who can do everything,” Martin said. “He can be a physical, punch-you-in-the-face guy and he also has the speed to get around the edge. Max is a power runner where

Weema brings more of the speed,” **RECEIVERS/TIGHT ENDS** Conforte is another player who has experience the last two seasons running the ball

(125 yards, 1 touchdown last year) but the coaching staff is using him more in a H-Back/Tight End type of role

this year. “We wanted to move him somewhere where **SEE MADISON, 30**

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MADISON BLUE STREAKS

MADISON: Junior QB Dragas returns

FROM PAGE 29



Willis

'The kids are hard workers, they listen, they are taking the coaching. This is a group I love to coach.'

Tim Willis
Madison head coach

he could be more of an every down impact for us," Martin said. "So far he has looked fantastic."

Martin described his receiving corps as his most competitive group with as many as eight guys with the ability to play.

Tanner was the leading receiver for Madison last year with 22 catches for 302 yards and a pair of touchdowns.

"He is going to be a significant producer for us," Martin said.

Senior Manny Dominguez is the fastest of the group, while Pinta and juniors Marcel Welch and Alex Parmertor all have play-making ability.

Martin also got excited when talking about senior Quandrel Liggans, who is out for football for the first time.

"He is 6-foot-3, unbelievably athletic, go get the ball receiver," Martin said. "If we can get the light to turn on from a football understanding, he can be special."

Junior Jacob Fisher will also rotate with Conforte at tight end.

OFFENSIVE LINE

While the exact spots on the offensive line at the beginning of practice had not been settled, Martin has a good mix of players to look at filling those roles.

"The leader is (senior) Cody Obradovic who is starting at center for us," Martin said. "He is a great leader at running the show for us."

Thompson returns at right tackle and Glass will be at right guard.

The left side of the line is yet to be settled, with juniors Eddie Rodriguez, Nick Wardrop, Jacob Land and Braydon Johnston all competing for spots at guard and tackle.

DEFENSIVE LINE

What was one of the strengths for Madison last year, the bodies on the defensive line for coordinator Mike Gilligan are a little less settled this time around.

Glass, Thompson and Obradovic all played on the defensive line a year ago, but with all three playing on the offensive line, Gilligan will rotate the three at nose guard to keep fresh legs on the field.

Johnston, Fisher, Rodriguez, as well as juniors Derek and Dominic Zirkle, are all first-year varsity players competing at defensive end.

"There is some good

competition going on there," Gilligan said.

LINEBACKERS

Starke started all 10 games last year as a middle linebacker and Gilligan said he is one of the leaders of his 3-4 defense.

"He was our most improved player last year as the season went on," Gilligan said. "Going in he was one of the few positions we had locked up."

Gilligan said that junior Alex Blackie added muscle from last season and has moved from safety and is the frontrunner for the other inside linebacker spot with wrestling standout Brody Arrundale competing for playing time.

Senior Patrick Baldree returns as a strong side outside linebacker and Magda will rush the passer a lot from his weak side linebacker spot. Conforte, who has experience playing linebacker the last two years, will also see playing time.

SECONDARY

Gilligan likes what he sees from his secondary so far.

Pinta and Weema both have experience at cornerback with junior Hunter Nadzan and possibly Dragas serving as backups.

"Jonas is our best cover guy," Gilligan said. "He is probably going to put him on the other team's best receiver. He and Weema both can allow us to play some man coverage this year."

Woody will be the free safety while Parmertor is locked in at weak safety. Welch will also see time at both spots.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Another area Madison could excel in is on special teams, where all of the key positions have returners.

Fisher and Dragas both punted last year will share those duties this season receiving snaps from Magda, who has two years of experience as the long snapper.

Wardrop will snap on field goals and Dominguez, who converted 12 of 15 extra points and three of his four field goal attempts last year, will handle all kicking duties.

ROSTER

No.	Name	Position	Ht.	Wt.	Gr.
2.	Alex Dragas	QB	6-0	175	Jr.
5.	Alex Blackie	WR/LB	5-10	160	Jr.
6.	Jonas Pinta	WR/DB	6-0	185	Sr.
7.	Truman Myers	WR/DB	5-10	150	So.
8.	Cole Tanner	WR/DB	6-1	155	Jr.
9.	Jacob Fisher	TE/LB	6-1	185	Jr.
10.	Brad McKeon	QB/DB	5-9	155	So.
11.	Marcel Welch	WR/DB	5-10	155	Jr.
12.	Shane Magda	QB/DB	5-11	165	Sr.
14.	Will Weema	RB/DB	5-8	150	Jr.
15.	Alex Parmertor	WR/LB	5-10	160	Jr.
17.	Manny Dominguez	WR/DB	6-1	165	Sr.
21.	Barat Gasi	RB/DB	5-10	155	So.
22.	Michael Woody	RB/DB	5-11	180	Jr.
23.	Vince Fisher	RB/DB	5-10	150	So.
24.	Hunter Nadzan	WR/DB	5-8	155	Jr.
25.	Jaren Havens	RB/DB	5-6	140	So.
26.	Noah Corbett	RB/DB	5-10	185	Sr.
27.	Jacob Land	TE/LB	5-10	190	Jr.
28.	Treven Florian-Lewis	RB/LB	5-8	175	Jr.
29.	Brody Arrundale	WR/LB	5-10	170	Sr.
31.	Michael Colaneri	TE/LB	5-10	180	Jr.
32.	Max Starke	RB/LB	5-7	180	Sr.
35.	Patrick Baldree	RB/DB	5-10	160	Sr.
42.	Alex Rowe	WR/DB	6-0	175	Sr.
43.	Ben Harrison	WR/DB	5-6	145	Jr.
46.	Dominic Conforte	RB/LB	5-8	185	Sr.
48.	Nate Novak	RB/LB	5-8	170	Jr.
49.	Ethan Wiles	WR/DB	5-6	155	So.
50.	Braydon Johnston	RB/LB	5-10	180	Jr.
51.	Nick Wardrop	OL/DL	5-10	180	Jr.
52.	Eddie Rodriguez	OL/DL	6-2	190	Jr.
53.	Ryan Kadas	OL/LB	5-10	175	So.
54.	Zack Dowd	OL/DL	5-10	190	Jr.
55.	Cody Obradovic	OL/DL	6-0	240	Sr.
57.	Zack Reynolds	OL/LB	5-10	175	Jr.
58.	Randy Taulbee	OL/DL	5-11	195	So.
59.	Aidan Thompson	OL/DL	5-11	255	Jr.
60.	Steven Ludwick	OL/DL	5-9	175	Jr.
61.	Josh Barragan	OL/DL	6-0	170	So.
62.	Derek Zirkle	OL/DL	5-9	212	Jr.
64.	Dominic Zirkle	OL/DL	5-9	212	Jr.
72.	Kyle Golding	OL/DL	5-9	200	So.
74.	Ryan Kadas	OL/DL	5-10	185	So.
75.	Jacob Laurie	OL/DL	5-7	190	So.
76.	Tommy Welch	OL/DL	6-3	200	Sr.
78.	Jacob Glass	OL/DL	6-3	295	Jr.
88.	Quandrel Liggans	WR/DB	6-1	165	Sr.

MADISON AT A GLANCE

Coach: Tim Willis

Years at Madison: 19th season

2017 Record: 2-8

Career Record: 113-68

Conference: Western Reserve Conference

Base Offense: Multiple formations

Base Defense: 3-4

Assistant Coaches: Brian Craemer, Mike Gilligan, Tim Mainello, Mike Martin, Steve Reed, Erie Head, John O' Brien, Nick Reilly.

PYMATUNING VALLEY LAKERS

Abundance of youth



Aug. 24
at Mineral Ridge
7 p.m.



Aug. 31
at Cardinal
7 p.m.



Sept. 7
vs. Liberty
7 p.m.



Sept. 14
at Garfield
7 p.m.



Sept. 21
vs. St. John
7 p.m.



Sept. 28
vs. Grand Valley
7 p.m.



Oct. 5
vs. Chalker
7 p.m.



Oct. 12
at Newbury
7 p.m.



Oct. 19
at Mathews
7 p.m.



Oct. 26
vs. Windham
7 p.m.

Key Game

Week 1: at Mineral Ridge



Two years ago, the Lakers opened their season with a 22-18 win at Mineral Ridge. The Rams returned the favor with a 42-6 win at PV to kick off the 2017 season. "It's getting (to be) a little bit like a rivalry," head coach Neal Croston said.



Strength of Schedule

Division VI, Region 21, 3-7 in 2017

2017 OPPONENT RECORD

55-48 (.534)

PLAYOFF OPPONENTS

Grand Valley, Liberty, Mathews, Windham

DIVISION BREAKDOWN

Division V (2 games), Division VI (3 games), Division VII (5 games)

Lakers not letting young players define their season

BY BRENDAN FEENEY

bfeeney@starbeacon.com

ANDOVER — Pymatuning Valley football has an abundance of youth on this year's team and, despite being outnumbered, head coach Neal Croston will be looking for the few upperclassmen to lead the way.

Nineteen of the 26 players listed on the Lakers roster are either freshmen or sophomores. In fact, PV will have more freshmen (10) than juniors and seniors combined (seven). Less than half of the team has varsity experience, as only 12 were awarded varsity letters a year ago.

"I've never had a team where we're so young," head coach Neal Croston said. "If you look at it, it almost looks like a JV team."

Don't mistake youth for a rebuild, though. Despite the loss of Gaige Willis — a 2018

PV graduate who rushed for 1,429 yards and 15 touchdowns a year ago — having returning seniors like Logan Drnek at quarterback, Jacob Chiles at running back and Noah Campbell and Bryce Farmer lined up out-

side, the Lakers aren't planning on using their youth as an excuse.

Drnek and Chiles, both of whom were captains a year ago, have done their best

to step up and fill the leadership void left my Willis, especially with the younger players.

"I think they've been

SEE **LAKERS**, 32

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PYMATUNING VALLEY LAKERS



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

The Pymatuning Valley Lakers will try to balance an influx of young players to go with key veteran returners.

LAKERS: Drnek, Chiles to lead way in PV backfield

FROM PAGE 31

more vocal, but I think, not that they didn't play hard last year, but they're giving more in practice," Croston said of his two seniors. "They're helping guys out when we're messing up, they're being positive reinforcements where last year sometimes they took a step back and let Gaige be the guy. This year they know they're the top dogs for us so they've been a positive influence on our guys."

After an 0-4 start

to last year's season, the Lakers played .500 football to finish 3-7. They scored more than 30 points in back-to-back wins over St. John and Chalker, and nabbed their final win of the year in Week 9 against Newbury.

This year, the Lakers aren't planning on using their age as an excuse. Chiles, in his final year at PV, said he's aiming for a playoff berth.

The Lakers open their season against Mineral Ridge for the third year in a row. PV bested

the Rams 22-18 on the road in 2016 and Mineral Ridge repaid the favor with a 42-6 triumph in Andover a year ago.

"I think we're more athletic as a team than we've been in years past, so even though we're young, we're not counting ourselves out," Croston said. "We've been focused on getting ready for Week 1, especially with a young team, you can't look ahead ... (Mineral Ridge) knows us, we know them, and it's important for us to get off

to a good start, because we have a lot of young guys and we want to get that sense of winning early and if we can get that first one, that's a lot of momentum."

QUARTERBACK

After throwing for 293 yards and two touchdowns in two outings as a sophomore, Drnek established himself as the team's quarterback in 2017, accounting for 1,138 passing yards to go along with 11 touchdowns.

Croston eased Drnek

into the position by starting the year with a more run-focused offense. But as the first-year starter grew comfortable, Croston rewarded him with a more balanced offense.

By the time midseason rolled around, Drnek found his groove. He threw two touchdowns and converted a clutch fourth down play in the Lakers 36-34 win over St. John and followed that up with a three-touchdown performance in a 38-7 win at Chalker.

"I have a lot of

confidence in Logan being that second-year starter," Croston said. "It almost reminds me of a couple years ago, five-six years ago, we had Josh Adkins throw for 800, 900 yards his junior year and then he came on his senior year and threw for about 1,700, 1,800 yards. So I think Logan can step up if we need him to."

RUNNING BACK

Willis has been the Lakers safety net whenever they've needed

SEE PV, 33

PYMATUNING VALLEY LAKERS

PV: Many of the same athletes will play on both sides of the ball

FROM PAGE 32



Croston

'I think we're more athletic as a team than we've been in years past, so even though we're young, we're not counting ourselves out.'

Neal Croston
PV head coach

him over the past two years. As a junior in 2016, he ran for 1,102 yards and 12 touchdowns. Willis added more than 300 yards to his total in his final year at PV.

With his departure, Croston will look at Chiles to take the bulk of the carries.

"I definitely do have to take on a bigger role because (Gauge) rushed for over 1,400 yards and those are big shoes to fill," Chiles said. "But I've been hitting the weights hard this offseason and I've been working hard and hopefully our team can pull it together this year and win some games."

In addition to Chiles, Dillen Knowles has been receiving his fair share of carries during preseason practices. Knowles, a sophomore, rushed for 13 yards on six attempts a year ago.

"The other thing we've been doing is taking two or three different guys and just making sure they know the plays back there, that way we can put different guys back there," Croston said. "So it could be four or five guys throughout a game getting carries back there to try and stay fresh."

WIDE RECEIVER

With Chiles' sliding into the backfield, Drnek will need a new No. 1 option on the outside.

Insert Noah Campbell. The 5-foot-10 senior, caught nine balls for 153 yards in 2017. One-third of his receptions resulted in a touchdown.

In addition to Campbell, sophomore Tyler Bean and freshman Garrett Smith give the Lakers some speed on the outside, while Farmer and Knowles bring experience to the position.

"We've got a core group of guys that I think we can be successful with," Croston said.

OFFENSIVE LINE

With seniors Jaret Swiger, Chase Braden, Caleb Bean, Jason Bailey, Williams Strang and Leonard Udell, last year's offensive line may have been the strength of the Lakers. They paved the way for 1,700 rushing yards and 1,143 passing yards.

This year, Kenny Crouch, a junior, is the only upperclassman.

Crouch, a center, is already a two-year letter winner.

Joining him will be a group of sophomores that include Victor Verba, Ronnie Taylor, John Chalfant and Louie Phillips.

DEFENSIVE LINE

With only 26 players on their roster, many Lakers will be playing both sides of the ball this year.

Expect many of the offensive line's starters to stay in the trenches on defense.

Farmer and Drnek are also listed as defensive ends on PV's preseason roster.

"It's a lot of the same names," Croston said. "We're going to have to rotate guys in to stay fresh and get after it and, as freshmen step up, we'll get them in there hopefully. But until those freshmen show that they can get in there and compete, we're going to have to go with our juniors and seniors and couple of sophomores."

LINEBACKER

Croston said last

year's defense was designed for Willis, who racked up 152 total tackles from the linebacker position.

While he isn't expecting one person to step right in and replace Willis' production, he's hoping a new defensive strategy will allow for multiple players to share tackling responsibilities.

"This year we'll be playing more of a team defense," Croston said. "So we're just looking for more balance of defense. We don't need one guy to step up like that, we need more balance and guys getting after the ball."

Logan Giddings, Campbell and Taylor are just three of the names to keep an eye on in the middle of PV's defense.

DEFENSIVE BACKS

Manning the defense from the safety position will be Chiles. The senior intercepted a team-high three passes a year ago and this year he'll be calling the signals for the defense.

Knowles, who is fresh off a 32-tackle, two-

ROSTER

No.	Name	Position	Ht.	Wt.	Gr.				
2.	Bryce Farmer	WR/DE	6-0	200	Sr.	51.	Ronnie Taylor	OL/LB	5-10 195 So.
3.	Logan Drnek	QB/DE	6-0	225	Sr.	54.	Victor Verba	OL/DL	6-2 265 So.
6.	Noah Campbell	WR/LB	5-10	165	Sr.	57.	Thurmond Adkins	OL/DL	5-10 220 Fr.
9.	Tyler Bean	QB/CB	6-1	170	So.	60.	Kenny Crouch	OL/DE	5-11 220 Jr.
13.	Caleb Beach	WR/S	5-8	125	So.	61.	Tim Strang	OL/DE	5-10 175 Fr.
15.	JD Thomas	RB/CB	5-10	165	Fr.	62.	Louie Phillips	OL/DL	5-11 215 So.
17.	Robert Verba	QB/LB	6-0	190	Fr.	63.	Hunter Smith	OL/DL	6-0 290 Fr.
20.	Andrew Root	WR/S	5-10	160	Fr.	65.	John Chalfant	OL/DL	5-10 255 So.
21.	Jacob Chiles	WR/S	5-10	185	Sr.	70.	Daniel Ebert	OL/DL	5-11 185 So.
23.	Garrett Smith	WR/CB	6-0	160	Fr.	72.	Koleby Bell	OL/DL	6-2 215 So.
24.	Dillen Knowles	RB/S	5-10	160	So.	79.	Dale Dehn	OL/DL	5-10 180 Fr.
42.	Logan Giddings	RB/LB	6-0	205	Jr.	80.	James Bohinc	WR/DE	6-1 175 Fr.
							Tyler Campbell	WR/DE	6-0 210 Jr.

PV AT A GLANCE

Coach: Neal Croston

Years at Pymatuning Valley: Ninth season

2017 Record: 3-7

Career Record: 34-36

Conference: Northeastern Athletic Conference

Base Offense: Spread

Base Defense: 4-3

Assistant Coaches: Kevin Brown, Dave Miller, Sean Freeman, Bill Chiles.

sack season, will be in the safety spot next to Chiles.

Bean, Smith, Robert Verba, Andrew Root and JD Thomas should receive plenty of opportunities in the defensive backfield as well.

SPECIAL TEAMS

PV's kicking duties will be assigned on a weekly basis, Croston said, and Campbell and Farmer are the two most likely candidates.

"We just rotate them, we go by practice, who

does better that week and if one wins the job, they stay with that," Croston said. "Just because they play both sides of the ball, you need two, three kickers because you never know when they'll need a rest."

Chiles, Bean and a number of freshmen should rotate return duties.

"We're hoping to have special teams as an advantage this year and we really practiced it more this summer," Croston said.

ST. JOHN HERALDS

Banking on leadership



Aug. 24
at Mathews
7 p.m.



Aug. 31
vs. Newbury
7 p.m.



Sept. 7
at Fairport
7 p.m.



Sept. 14
vs. Windham
7 p.m.



Sept. 21
at Pymatuning Valley
7 p.m.



Sept. 28
at Ridgedale
7 p.m.



Oct. 6
at Crestline
2 p.m.



Oct. 11
at Edgewood
7 p.m.



Oct. 20
vs. Crestline
2 p.m.



Oct. 27
vs. Chalker
7 p.m.

Key Game

Week 1: at Mathews



The Heralds fell short in coach Scott Knisely's debut last season at SPIRE. St. John is hoping to reverse its fortunes and jump out of the gate with a win.



Strength of Schedule

Division VII, Region 25, 2-7 in 2017

2017 OPPONENT RECORD

39-53 (.424)

PLAYOFF OPPONENTS

Mathews, Windham

DIVISION BREAKDOWN

Division IV (1 game), Division VI (1 game), Division VII (8 games)

Heralds seek to reverse fortunes, turn close losses into victories

BY MIKE SHAFFER

sports@starbeacon.com

SAYBROOK TOWN-SHP — If there is anyone that is more tired of losing than St. John coach Scott Knisely, it would be the 13 seniors that have been a part of the program for going on four years now.

The Heralds were 2-7 a year ago, the best mark since the program's resurrection in 2014.

Among the seven losses, were a couple games they'd definitely like to have back — namely a 36-34 decision late to Pymatuning Valley in the fifth game and a 17-14 setback against Edgewood in Week 8.

St. John made strides a year ago, including defeating Newbury 46-40 for its first win in nearly two years. But being in games is one thing, winning is another, as Knisely has repeatedly preached to his players.

"We lost two games by a combined five points," the coach said of the PV and Edgewood losses. "We want to overcome that this year. We want to win games. Expectations are high within the team. These kids have all bought into everything I've asked them, there's been no questioning about anything. They have a winning mentality, now it's time to go out

'They have a winning mentality, now it's time to go out and win some games.'

Scott Knisely
St. John



Knisely

and win some games."

With any Division VII program, many, if not all, players will line up on both sides of the ball. The attitude and work ethic of the players is what Knisely enjoys most.

"There aren't many of us, but the 23 that I have, they work extremely hard," Knisely said. "We have strong senior leadership also. Jon Timonere is a guy

back three all-Ohio players in junior quarterback David Cumberland, senior center Ryan Bento and Blank, a senior running back.

Cumberland and Blank will run the spread formation.

QUARTERBACK

Cumberland is back for another year under center after stepping in a year ago. Last season, he averaged nearly 200 passing yards a game.

A state runner up on the wrestling mat, he has the ability to put velocity on the football with his passing and can move the chains with his mobility as well. The year of expe-

rience he gained a year ago should pay dividends this season.

RUNNING BACK

Blank has been catching people's eyes since the day he showed up. Last year, he amassed 502 yards on 105 carries, including seven scores. He'll be joined by another senior Chris Kile as the team's two primary backs.

RECEIVER

Timonere, a senior, is the one of many guys on the Heralds roster that does a little bit of everything. Senior Eddie Nelson will be

ST. JOHN HERALDS



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

The St. John Heralds are looking to build off last season's 2-7 record.

HERALDS: Senior Bento leads St. John up front in the trenches

FROM PAGE 34

another receiver that returns. They'll be joined on the outside by junior Ethan Ducca who comes over from Chardon. Senior Nick Burgard, who saw time primarily on defense a year ago, may also be called upon to catch some passes.

LINEMEN

Bento is the leader of the group in the trenches. Knisely

calls him "one of the smartest players he's ever coached." Senior Sam Hammers is a guy that Knisely was quick to acknowledge for working very hard over the offseason. Seniors Noah Olson and Dave Nejbauer are solid up front and Ryan Elrod, a freshman, will take the spot vacated by his brother Derek. The Heralds up front have experience as well as cohesiveness and Knisely is expecting

the group to be much improved this season.

LINEBACKER

The athleticism of Blank should anchor

the linebacker core for the Heralds. There will also be a few new faces back there as well.

Junior Elijah Vazquez is back after not playing

his sophomore year. Senior Cayleb Haynes, who played through his

junior high years, has

SEE ST. JOHN, 36

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ST. JOHN HERALDS

ROSTER

No.	Name	Position	Ht.	Wt.	Gr.
1.	Christian Blank	RB/LB	5-10	190	Sr.
3.	Eddie Nelson	WR/DB	5-11	150	Sr.
4.	Steven Heath	WR/DB	6-3	180	Jr.
5.	Connor Kovach	WR/DB	5-10	190	Sr.
7.	Nick Burgard	WR/DB	5-6	160	Sr.
9.	Chris Kile	RB/DB	5-7	160	Sr.
10.	David Cumberledge	QB/DB	5-8	175	Jr.
12.	Devyn Merciliott	WR/DB	5-5	145	Fr.
13.	Cayleb Haynes	TE/LB	6-1	230	Sr.
14.	Jon Timonere	TE/DB	6-1	210	Sr.
23.	Zach Haeight	WR/DB	5-6	125	Fr.
29.	Gabe Harinold	WR/DB	5-5	130	Sr.
34.	Elijah Vazquez	WR/LB	5-7	200	Jr.
42.	Ethan Ducca	WR/DB	5-11	180	Jr.
50.	Sam Hammers	OL/DL	6-4	210	Sr.
53.	Jack Hammers	OL/DL	5-8	200	So.
57.	Joey Timonere	OL/DL	5-10	200	Jr.
69.	Ryan Elrod	OL/DL	6-1	290	Fr.
74.	Ryan Bento	OL/DL	6-0	220	Sr.
76.	Joseph Watson	OL/DL	5-11	210	Sr.
77.	Noah Olson	OL/DL	6-0	275	Sr.
99.	David Nejbauer	OL/DL	6-0	280	Sr.

ST. JOHN AT A GLANCE

Coach: Scott Knisely

Years at St. John: Second season

2017 Record: 2-7

Career Record: 2-7

Conference: Independent

Base Offense: Spread

Base Defense: 3-3-5

Assistant Coaches: Scott Blank, Bob Dlwgoosh.

ST. JOHN: State wrestling champ Burgard back

FROM PAGE 35

decided to come out this fall. Both players have done well in camp according to Knisely.

Cumberledge and Ducca. It's a group that Knisely is very high on and should make it tough for teams to run outside on.

SPECIAL TEAMS

After always going for two-point conversions after touchdowns a year ago, the Heralds now have a kicker in Haynes. Cumberledge will handle punting duties. Expect to see Blank on returns.

DEFENSIVE BACKS

Nelson was the team's best coverage player a year ago. He'll be back in his starting role this season. The safeties will be Burgard, a Division III 138-pound state champion wrestler,



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

St. John's Christian Blank (left) and David Nejbauer get ready for a defensive drill during a Monday practice.



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

St. John's David Cumberledge (left) talks with assistant coach Scott Blank during a defensive drill on Monday afternoon in Saybrook Township.