

High School Football Preview '21

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The 2021 Star Beacon Football Preview section was written by Michael Greco, Dan Hiner and Mike Shaffer. Editing and design by Greco, Hiner and Ed Puskas. Photographs by Warren Dillaway and David Dermer.

Return to a full season

What a difference a year makes.

At this time last year, high school football teams were preparing for a six-game regular season — uncertain if that would even happen due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Each team had the opportunity to play a postseason game if they chose to.

Eliminated teams could play additional games up to 10 or until Nov. 14.

This season, coaches have been preparing for a normal season, whatever that means nowadays.

Teams have 10 regular-season games scheduled like usual, barring any coronavirus issues.

“The kids aren’t as antsy,” Pymatuning Valley coach Neal Croston said after a recent practice. “They did not know what was going on last year. This year, there’s not as many questions. They’re a little more relaxed.”

Grand Valley coach Clint Nims concurred with Croston.

“This offseason had a different feel to it,” Nims said. “Last off-



MICHAEL GRECO ||

season we had to be in groups of 10, so players didn’t get to see each other. But this year it’s so much better, the camaraderie within our team is so much better.”

There are differences, though.

The season starts today and ends Oct. 23, which is a week earlier than previous seasons.

The playoffs will also start a week earlier as the playoffs have been expanded from eight to 16 teams in each region.

In Ashtabula County, Lakeside, Edgewood and Geneva will all play Kirtland.

The defending Division V state champions have moved into the Chagrin Valley Conference Chagrin Division. Harvey has dropped to the CVC Valley Division.

Concerning the playoffs, I’m all for giving players a chance to

play in the postseason. There’s just something different about the playoff atmosphere that each player should experience.

But I would rather see the top four teams in each region have byes in the first week. Unlike the NFL and college, most high school football teams doesn’t have the luxury of adding players as the season goes or a roster of up to 100 players in case of injuries or other reasons. Oftentimes, a 1-16 matchup is lopsided.

Each team in Ohio has returners, while also facing questions. That’s just the nature of the beast.

But coaches have also had an offseason of trying to figure out who will play what position and when.

They’ve also had more time as teams could acclimate in July and be ready to hit the ground running in early August.

Players who are at one position last year may not be at the same one this year.

And these changes are likely to continue as the season progresses.

Ashtabula County has two new coaches

that graduated from Lakeside. Brandon Hanna takes over for Ed Rankin at Jefferson. Olajuwon Cooper is leading Edgewood.

Here at the Star Beacon, we’ll have Dan Hiner, Mike Shaffer, John Hutchison and David Negin covering games. More correspondents may be added to the mix.

And, of course, Warren Dillaway will be around with his usual array of quality photos.

The football preview is included in this section, and includes stories, schedules, photos and rosters for the nine Star Beacon schools, including Lakeside, Edgewood, Jefferson, Geneva, PV, GV, Conneaut, St. John and Madison.

So as we move to another season, good luck to the players, coaches, fans, schools — and even the officials (as Grand Valley graduate Eric Mauk pointed out to me recently).

The goals, as always, are to have good, competitive games, as few injuries as possible, and no inclement weather.

Let the games begin.

WEEK BY WEEK SCHEDULE

Week 1
All games at 7 p.m.
Aug. 19
Edgewood at Conneaut
Aug. 20
Geneva at Madison
Lakeside at Brush
Grand Valley at Jefferson
Pymatuning Valley at Mineral Ridge

Rittman at St. John
Week 2
All games at 7 p.m. unless noted
Aug. 27
Madison at Lakeside
GV at Edgewood
Collinwood at Geneva
Jefferson at Harvey

Medina Buckeye at Conneaut
Cardinal at PV
Aug. 28
Sebring McKinley at St. John, 6

Week 3
All games at 7 p.m. unless noted
Sept. 3
Edgewood at Jefferson

Villa Angela-St. Joseph at Lakeside
Springfield Local at Geneva
North East at Conneaut
GV at PV
Madison at Perry

Conneaut Spartans Upgrade upfront

Conneaut improves size for 2021 football season

BY DAN HINER

dhiner@starbeacon.com

CONNEAUT — The returning players on the Conneaut football team remember their playoff loss to Cardinal Mooney. After the game, coach Rocco Dobran said his team ran out of gas while dealing with their opponent's size.

"Understanding what we need to go against and

it's something we need to chase," senior lineman Nick Osborne said.

That's why the Spartans hit the weight room as soon as possible.

Dobran wanted the Spartans to run the ball effectively in 2020, but the necessary players weren't big enough to handle the offense.

This year, however, the returning linemen are larger. And the Spartans



'We knew going into this year we need to get better in our run game and our offensive line, and that's been a focus.'

Rocco Dobran
Conneaut football coach

have Zack Rice returning at running back. Dobran finally gets a chance to reinstitute his run offense.

"It's going to be very

important that they click," Dobran said. "They can make adjustments on their own. Fortunately, we do have a very smart offensive

line this year. Our first group's real smart and do good in the classroom. And Zack's that type of runner that's gonna find a hole wherever it is."

The Spartans finished the season 4-6, but closed the campaign winning two of their last three games, beating Cardinal and Girard (Pa).

Dobran stressed that this year's roster is dif-

ferent from last year's group. He said his 35 players have come out with a positive attitude and work ethic.

"I think making those technical changes will make us 10 times better because we have size, we have skill, we have heart," Osborne said. "So I think that if we listen to our coaches and work

SEE **CONNEAUT**, 5

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CONNEAUT: Rice returns at RB for Spartans

FROM PAGE 4

on getting those things right, really, there's not much that can stop our run offense."

The Spartans start the season against Edgewood tonight.

Their remaining schedule consists of teams they haven't faced in years, according to Dobran.

"There's two teams on our schedule that we played last year," Dobran said. "The other teams we haven't faced for at least three years. We're definitely taking this one week at a time."

The regular summer will also play a part in the Spartans' success, Dobran said. He said the lack of summer work played a part in their approach in 2020.

"We knew going into this year we need to get better in our run game and our offensive line, and that's been a focus," Dobran said.

QUARTERBACK

Senior Kiefer Mandagelo takes over at quarterback for Jake Slayton, who graduated. Mandagelo has the ability to throw and run from under center. And he also has some playing experience after seeing time in Conneaut's play-off game last season.

RUNNING BACK

Rice, a junior, returns as the Spartans primary ball carrier. Rice received honorable mention honors on the Division V Northeast Lakes District for his performance last November. Last season, Rice finished with 691 rushing yards and five touchdowns.

WIDE RECEIVER

Senior Chase Carpenter is expected to help fill the void left by standout tight end-receiver Tellus Andrews, who graduated.

Junior Owen Shields

SCHEDULE

All games at 7 p.m.

Aug. 19: vs. Edgewood
Aug. 27: vs. Medina Buckeye
Sept. 3: vs. North East
Sept. 10: at Grove City
Sept. 17: at Hickory
Sept. 24: vs. Girard (Pa.)
Oct. 1: vs. Slippery Rock
Oct. 8: at Sharon
Oct. 15: vs. Titusville
Oct. 22: at Ft. Leboeuf

is also expected to be an important piece in the Spartans' passing game. Rice caught 18 passes last season.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Osborne is the leader of the offensive line at center. He'll lead a group of around 15 lineman, including three other seniors.

Junior Daykon Chabot and senior Robert Hagstrom are expected to assist in the run game at tight end while also making catches.

DEFENSIVE LINE

Chabot will get time

at defensive end, and Osborne will play nose guard after being named a team captain. Chabot recorded five sacks last season.

LINEBACKER

Seniors Jason Herd and Joey Bowen were named captains and will man the linebacker positions. The pair started at linebacker last season.

DEFENSIVE BACK

Shields claimed a spot at corner in camp alongside Carpenter. Senior Levi Corlew has also received some reps on the outside.

SEE SPARTANS, 6

ROSTER

Name	Year	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.
2. Kiefer Mandagelo	12	5-9	150	QB/S
3. Zack Rice	11	5-11	175	RB/DB
4. Chase Carpenter	12	6-0	160	QB/WR/DB
5. Daykon Chabot	11	5-11	240	RB/LB
6. Nathan Myers	9	5-8	120	WR/DB
7. Jason Herd	12	5-11	170	WR/LB
8. Nathan Koston	11	6-1	160	QB/DB
10. Levi Corlew	12	6-0	150	WR/DB
11. Noah Hamm	9	6-0	141	WR/DB
12. Exzavior Martin	9	6-0	190	RB/DB
13. Bryce Spurlin	10	6-0	180	QB/LB
19. Ethan Osborne	10	5-11	140	WR/LB
21. Owen Shields	11	5-8	150	WR/DB
22. Troy Turner	11	6-0	150	WR/DB
23. Max Gleason	10	5-8	150	WR/DB
24. Wyatt Payne	10	5-8	144	RB/DB
28. Ty Covill	10	5-9	155	RB/LB
30. Larry Hamm	11	6-4	155	WR/DB
44. Robert Hagstrom	12	6-3	240	TE/DL
50. Daren Christine	11	5-10	235	OL/DL
51. Moses Schwartz	11	5-10	180	OL/DL/LB
52. Joey Bowen	12	6-0	170	OL/LB
54. Elisha Nadeau	10	5-9	250	OL/DL
55. Chase. Zimmerman	10	6-0	205	OL/DL
58. Scotty Edwards	10	6-0	215	OL/DL
60. James Herd	10	5-10	195	OL/DL
62. Jaydon Anderson	9	6-0	225	OL/DL
64. Owen Taylor	9	5-5	140	DL
66. Gavin Nesbitt	9	6-0	267	OL/DL
67. Michael Newlun	9	6-0	250	OL/DL
70. Clinton Rand	9	5-8	255	OL/DL
73. Nick Osborne	12	5-9	235	OL/DL
74. Patrick Kantola	12	6-4	260	OL/DL
75. Jack Madden	11	6-1	270	OL/DL
78. Eric Woods	12	6-0	220	OL/DL

Assistant coaches: Tim Tallbacka, Tony Pasanen, Tony Todaro, Bill Lipps, Eric Hodges, Matt Pape.

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WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

The 2021 Conneaut football team.

SPARTANS: Conneaut has depth at DL

FROM PAGE 5

Rice and sophomore Wyatt Payne have taken the safety positions. Dobran plans to get Rice a little rest from time to time due to the

workload he's expected to take on both sides of the ball. When Rice is out, Mandagelo will fill his spot at safety.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Spartans have al-

ways punted with their quarterback.

So Mandagelo will line up slightly deeper on fourth-and-long situations this season.

Carpenter will handle the place kicking

duties, but the kickoff could come down to a strategy.

Dobran said he could use Chabot or Carpenter on kickoff, depending on what he wants at that moment.



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Conneaut's Chase Carpenter grabs a pass against Pymatuning Valley during a recent scrimmage at Conneaut.

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Edgewood Warriors

Warriors moving forward

Interim coach Cooper believes Edgewood is 'headed in the 'right direction'

BY MIKE SHAFFER

sports@starbeacon.com

It may be a year of uncertainty concerning the head coaching position at Edgewood, but according to interim coach Olajuwan Cooper, that will have no effect on the team's focus will be for this season.

Simply put, the Warriors are looking to move forward — regardless of what circumstances they have to deal with.

"Adversity makes you better," said Cooper, a Lakeside graduate. "We understand that a lot of people are hit with a lot of different things, a lot of teams face a lot of different stuff.

"If we can develop that mentality of don't blink, don't flinch, take everything in, process

it, evaluate it and then go back and implement things, that will help us become better. That's kind of where we're at. So we're embracing everything that comes that way."

Cooper, who took over the program in early July, believes that embracing different situations can be the catalyst to improvement.

"Adversity reveals who you are," Cooper said. "It reveals who you really are, if you can handle being down two scores in the fourth quarter and be able to come back. I've found that our kids have a lot of resolve just because they have taken every challenge head-on and I think we're headed in the right direction."

A big reason to believe the program



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Edgewood's Izaiah Harris makes an interception during a recent 7-on-7 scrimmage.

is headed towards the better is an increase in roster size this fall. Edgewood has around 40 players out for pads and a helmet this

summer, which is a considerable improvement from the past few years.

The increase in numbers should provide

a level of depth that could be very beneficial.

The added depth is one thing, bringing back some talented

players is another, and the Warriors have their share of them.

Senior record-setting quarterback Zach Winchell will once again be the Edgewood QB. He'll have one of the most athletic playmakers in the county in senior Izaiah Harris, and senior Troy Peterson, one of the best linemen in the county, protecting his blind-side.

What could help the Warriors most, however, is the emergence of a running game, something that has been lacking the past few seasons.

Expect Edgewood to continue to be a pass-first offense, but with more maturity upfront along with some skilled athletes

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WARRIORS: Winchell, Harris, Peterson among the key returners for Edgewood

FROM PAGE 7

competing for spots in the backfield, Cooper believes his team could have enough rushing to balance the passing attack.

Defensively, the Warriors will run a four-man front, giving the linebackers and secondary all the freedom they need to make plays.

Edgewood will open with county rival Conneaut. A year ago, the Spartans sealed a close game with a big play late in the fourth quarter to get out of Corlew Stadium with a 22-13 win. The Warriors will also see Jefferson and Chagrin Valley Conference county foes Lakeside, Geneva, and Grand Valley.

The goal is to move forward and improve on last year's 3-7 mark, but

SCHEDULE

All games at 7 p.m.

Aug. 19: at Conneaut
Aug. 27: vs. Grand Valley
Sept. 3: at Jefferson
Sept. 10: at Orange
Sept. 17: vs. West Geauga
Sept. 24: vs. Perry
Oct. 1: vs. Geneva
Oct. 8: at Chagrin Falls
Oct. 15: at Kirtland
Oct. 22: vs. Lakeside

according to the coach, the attitude and way his team has embraced what's already been thrown at them is something he's proud of.

QUARTERBACK

Winchell returns for his third year as the starter.

Last year, he broke the Ashtabula County record for passing yards in a season by throwing for 2,365 with a 58% completion rate and 18 touchdowns. Backing up

Winchell are junior, Donovan Ciesicki and sophomore Tony Hall.

RUNNING BACK

The Warriors do not bring back much experience in the backfield, but Cooper likes what he has. Sophomore Zeke Lucas and seniors Santo Sanabria and Cody Estock are all guys that could get some carries.

WIDE RECEIVER

Harris will be back for his fourth year as a varsity starter. Last year, he led the Warriors with 45 receptions for 830 yards and six touchdowns. He has 112 receptions for just over 1,700 yards and 16 scores in his Edgewood career.

Others who should see some passes are senior Christian Curry and junior Christian

Cunningham. Sophomore Jacob Ernst, who is coming back from a major injury, will be lined up on the outside. Another one to keep an eye on is freshman Zane Naylor, who has been impressive in camp as well.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Edgewood will have one of its biggest lines in years. Peterson will be on the right side protecting the Warriors southpaw quarterback's blindside. On the inside, Edgewood seniors Kaleb Summers and Will Cooper are the projected starters at guard.

At center, coach Cooper raved about sophomore Nick Barger, who is transitioning to a varsity lineman, and is expected to be a formidable part of the Edgewood line. At right tackle is sophomore Nick Wyman, a hockey player, who will bring the physicality from

SEE EDGEWOOD, 9

ROSTER

Name	Year	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.
1. Izaiah Harris	12	6-2	210	Ath.
2. Jon Heath	12	5-11	180	WR/DB
3. Christian Cunningham	11	6-1	170	WR/DB
4. Jacob Ernst	10	6-0	160	WR/DB
5. Cody Estock	12	5-10	180	WR/DB
6. Christian Curry	12	5-11	175	Ath.
7. Zach Winchell	12	6-1	190	QB/DB
8. Austin Zall	10	5-10	150	WR/DB
9. Jackson Gillespie	10	5-8	145	WR/DB
10. Mikey Gibbs	10	5-11	160	WR/DB
12. Santo Sanabria	11	5-11	205	RB/OLB
13. Donovan Ciesicki	11	6-0	175	WR/OLB
15. Tony Hall	10	5-9	170	QB/OLB
16. Zane Naylor	9	5-7	140	Ath.
17. Justin Jury	12	5-9	160	WR/DB
18. Ben Swartfigure	9	5-8	140	WR/DB
20. Michael Ochoa	9	5-9	145	WR/DB
21. Hunter Braat	10	5-8	140	WR/DB
22. Zeke Lucas	10	5-8	175	RB/ILB
25. D'Angelo Sanchez	9	5-6	140	WR/DB
27. Noah Annick	10	5-9	150	WR/DB
29. Coby Rockwell	12	5-11	145	K
30. K'Den Hommes	9	5-9	160	RB/OLB
44. Ray Braat	11	6-1	235	TE/ILB
45. Seth Enos	10	5-9	170	RB/ILB
50. Nick Wyman	10	6-2	220	OL/DL
51. Sean Applebee	12	6-3	260	OL/DL
52. Austin Pal	9	5-10	180	OL/DL
53. Patrick Fagan	10	5-9	170	OL/DL
54. Alex Malasky	9	5-8	185	OL/DL
55. Troy Peterson	12	6-3	240	OL/DL
56. Chris Skwera	10	5-9	175	OL/DL
57. Kaleb Summers	12	6-2	235	OL/DL
70. Keith Coy	10	6-0	260	OL/DL
74. Jack Leehan	10	6-1	240	OL/DL
75. Nick Barger	10	6-0	245	OL/DL
77. Payton Newsome	11	6-3	245	OL/DL
79. Will Cooper	12	6-2	308	OL/DL
82. Logan McEndree	12	5-11	160	WR/DB
87. Aiden Kachersky	9	5-8	140	K

Assistant Coaches: Tyler Welton, Rob McEndree, Ted Barger, Nate Winchell, Jesse Browning, Jeff Herron, RJ Baldwin, Jim Dufour, Ricky Baldwin, Danny Addair, Chuck Fultz, Mike Greenleaf.

'I've found that our kids have a lot of resolve just because they have taken every challenge head-on, and I think we're headed in the right direction.'

Olajuwon Cooper
Edgewood interim football coach



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WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

The 2021 Edgewood football team.

EDGEWOOD: Warriors to run four-man up front on defense

FROM PAGE 8

his games on the ice to the gridiron.

DEFENSIVE LINE

The four-man front should help Edgewood slow down opposing run attacks as well as put pressure on the

quarterback. Peterson and Wyman will be on the edge. On the inside, Will Cooper will be over the ball at nose tackle. The other inside spot could be a rotation of players, but junior Ray Braat is someone who has come on strong and could see a lot of

snaps this fall.

LINEBACKER

Lucas and fellow sophomore Seth Enos have earned the nickname the "Bash Brothers" for their ability to run recklessly smashing into everything they see. They'll play on the

inside. Sanabria, Estock, and Ciesecki are working at outside backer.

SECONDARY

Curry and Cunningham will man the corner spots, while Harris has the ability to cover from sideline to sideline at his safety spot.

Cooper has been impressed with the secondary's ability to come up and help against the run as well as handle pass coverage.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Two soccer players have come out to handle the placekicking

duties for Edgewood. Senior Coby Rockwell has been pretty good on field goals this summer, while freshman Aiden Kachersky has nailed down the task of handling kickoffs. Both are also slated to punt.

Harris should be the primary kick returner.

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Geneva Eagles

New faces key for Eagles

Geneva looks to transition some younger players this season

BY DAN HINER

dhiner@starbeacon.com

HARPERSFIELD TOWNSHIP — The Geneva football team was on a roll in the postseason last year. But they ran into a buzzsaw in Chardon, the eventual Division III state champion.

With that said, Geneva head coach Chip Sorber thinks his team has the potential to replicate that success in 2021. But the Eagles will be younger when they face Madison in Week 1.

Sorber admitted that the skill positions were the “strong point” of the team during camp. The Eagles, though, have players coming back at key positions throughout the team.

The Eagles have 38 players on the roster



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Geneva's Brady Peet relaxes during a break during a recent scrimmage with Chardon at SPIRE Institute in Harpersfield Township.

this season, with 26 players returning from last year. That small but

experienced group will be critical to the Eagles' success in 2021.

“Some years [leadership is] very important and it's even more

important than others,” Sorber said. “It's the kind of year where we're probably going to be transitioning some younger guys into some positions.”

While the players are younger, they are also athletic. Geneva has a number of players who could slot into different positions on either side of the ball.

Gavin Juodenas, a senior guard and line-backer, said the added versatility is a benefit that some teams can't use to their advantage. “It's great to have athletes that can adapt, and they're smart, too,” Juodenas said.

The biggest questions for Sorber and the Eagles revolve around the offensive and defensive lines. But Sorber is confident in his athletes on the edge.

“We're really excited about the speed and range that we have on both sides of the ball,” Sorber said.

The depth chart was a question throughout camp. Sorber wanted to see how the players reacted to the grind of camp and the competition from scrimmages before determining where the young players would land.

“You're looking at younger players, potentially sophomores, being able to handle things — mentally and physically. Both are critical,” Sorber said.

QUARTERBACK

The Eagles lost their quarterback, Ben Scibona, to graduation in the spring. Senior Wyatt Fuduric is stepping

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EAGLES: Fuduric to lead offense from QB position

FROM PAGE 10

under center after sitting as a backup for the last three years.

Fuduric was named the starting quarterback before the Eagles opened camp. Sorber's focus in camp was developing a couple players to step in a QB if needed.

RUNNING BACK

Brady Peet returns for his senior season. Peet played the last three years for the Eagles in their run-heavy offense.

Jacob Wilson will slot in at fullback for the Eagles as a blocker or Peet.

WIDE RECEIVER

The Eagles feature a deep receiver group. Seniors Dominic Quinn and Clayton Queen are the leaders of the position group, while Sorber has high expectations for sophomores Kenny Young, Luke Smith and Giovanni Rice.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Johnny Haeseler returns on the offensive line for his junior season. Juodenas, a senior, is the leader along the line at guard.

Michael Amato and others are in the mix for playing time along a young offensive line unit.

DEFENSIVE LINE

Haeseler will be called to not only contribute



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Geneva's Clayton Queen grabs a reception during a recent 7-on-7 scrimmage at SPIRE Institute in Harpersfield Township.

SCHEDULE

All games at 7 p.m.

Aug. 20: at Madison
Aug. 27: vs. Collinwood
Sept. 3: vs. Springfield Local
Sept. 10: at Lakeside
Sept. 17: vs. Kirtland
Sept. 24: vs. Orange
Oct. 1: at Edgewood
Oct. 8: vs. West Geauga
Oct. 15: at at Perry
Oct. 22: at Chagrin Falls

on the offensive, but along the defensive line as well. Sorber said he could play either defensive tackle or defensive end this season.

The defensive line is another position where Sorber needs to fill some holes with younger players battling for time.

LINEBACKER

Sorber is expecting a big season out of Wilson at inside linebacker. It will be his first time as a full-time linebacker for the Eagles.

Juodenas also has some experience at linebacker and Peet is an outside linebacker.

DEFENSIVE BACK

Fuduric returns in the defensive backfield for

the Eagles.

Fuduric was a second team Division III All-Northeast Lakes defender last season. Queen has played a number of different positions on the field in previous years, including safety, corner and linebacker.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Ethan Yost returns as a senior to handle the place kicking responsibilities.

The Eagles were still looking for a punter to handle Week 1 responsibilities.

ROSTER

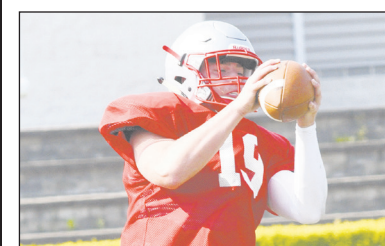
Name	Year	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.
2. Dylan Hamilton	12	5-11	185	RB/LB
3. Xavier Liddy	12	5-10	150	SE/DB
4. Luke Smith	10	6-0	155	QB/SE/DB
5. Will Mook	11	5-8	145	RB/LB
6. Ethan Yost	12	6-0	165	K
7. Brady Peet	12	6-0	180	RB/LB
8. Evan Suttie	11	6-0	160	RB/DL
9. Matt Van Sickle	10	5-7	150	RB/DL
11. Christian Santiago	11	5-9	155	RB/LB
12. Kenny Young	10	6-1	160	QB/SE/DB
13. Dominic Quinn	12	6-0	160	SE/DB
14. Daniel Hall	11	5-8	145	SE/DB
15. Logan Queen	10	5-11	150	RB/LB
16. Josh Cupp	12	6-0	165	QB/SE/DB
18. Rece Degroot	11	5-9	150	RB/DB
19. Wyatt Fuduric	12	6-2	210	QB/DB
20. Anthony Albee	11	5-11	145	SE/DB
21. Matt Wright	10	5-9	160	RB/LB
22. Jacob Wilson	11	6-0	205	RB/DL
23. Clayton Queen	12	6-0	170	TE/LB
25. Giavonni Rice	10	5-8	150	RB/DB
26. Nick Germack	10	5-10	165	TE/DL
29. Andrew Carroll	10	6-0	175	TE/DL
31. Knaulidge Cahill	10	5-10	145	RB/DB
32. Jordan Boss	11	5-10	150	SE/DB
44. Isaac Riddell	10	5-11	170	TE/LB
48. Justyn Mook	12	6-2	200	TE/DL
52. Mike Amato	12	6-0	175	OL/DL
55. Trent Calhoun	12	6-2	210	OL/DL
56. Wyatt Habina	10	5-10	240	OL/DL
57. Jackson Furlan	10	5-9	270	OL/DL
59. Gavin Juodenas	12	5-11	205	OL/LB
60. Johnny Haeseler	11	5-11	225	OL/DL
61. Matt Hoover	11	5-10	190	OL/DL
67. Jon Butterfield	10	5-10	160	OL/DL
70. Kenny Pavlisin	10	6-0	220	OL/DL
73. Jason Thrower	10	5-10	220	OL/DL
74. Jon Alley	10	6-3	250	OL/DL
77. Jacob Kendall	11	5-11	200	OL/DL
79. Jacob Tanner	11	6-4	270	OL/DL

Assistant coaches: Don Shymske, Matt Peet, John Mirabell, Jay Corlew.

'Some years [leadership is] very important and it's even more important than others. It's the kind of year where we're probably going to be transitioning some younger guys into some positions.'



Chip Sorber
Geneva football coach



WARREN DILLAWAY |
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Geneva's Wyatt Fuduric grabs an interception during a recent scrimmage at SPIRE.



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

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Grand Valley Mustangs

GV counting on veterans

Mustangs bring back 17 seniors for 2021 season

BY DAN HINER

dhiner@starbeacon.com

ORWELL — Last season didn't go as expected for the Grand Valley football program. Admittedly, no team in the state went through 2020 without facing the unexpected.

Mustangs head coach Clint Nims said he has 49 players on this year's roster — that's down from 56 last year. However, the 2021 team does have 17 seniors.

The Mustangs went 0-10 last season in Nims' third season leading the program. They'll also get an early series of tests to start the season.

They will look to snap their skid when they host Jefferson in Week 1. The Falcons are the first of three games against Ashtabula County opponents,



DAVID DERMER | SPECIAL TO THE STAR BEACON

Grand Valley's Kamden Cottrell throws a pass during a recent practice at Grand Valley High School.

with the others being Edgewood in Week 2 and Pymatuning Valley the following week.

"It was probably the hardest schedule we ever played," Nims said. "Our record might not show it, but I think we did some good things that allowed us to get better."

The Mustangs had a young roster last season that consisted of 25 freshmen and sophomores. Now, that young roster has a season under its belt. And

"We need to focus," Byers said. "We need to pay attention more. We need to make [the younger linemen] hit the books a little more, make them understand what's going on. But other than that, they all have the potential. I know they do. I've seen it in all of them."

Nims is excited for the talent at the skill positions. He said he expects to rotate some players at various positions. Senior Zach Hall, who is a quarterback and linebacker, could be one of a couple players that could see time at another position since Nims wants to take advantage of his roster's athleticism.

"We got some guys that can throw it and we got some guys that can catch it as well," Nims said. "I think that the guys up front will be able to open up some holes for us."

QUARTERBACK

Nate Boiarski returns at quarterback for the Mustangs. The junior started last season and was a key component in the team's passing and

SCHEDULE

All games at 7 p.m.

Aug. 20: vs. Jefferson
Aug. 27: at Edgewood
Sept. 3: at Pymatuning Valley
Sept. 10: at Berkshire
Sept. 17: vs. Hawken
Sept. 24: at Harvey
Oct. 1: at Cardinal
Oct. 8: at Rootstown
Oct. 15: vs. Crestwood
Oct. 22: vs. Beachwood

running games. Boiarski rushed for 564 yards with four touchdowns last season.

RUNNING BACK

The Mustangs have to replace production from Joe Sieracki, who saw time at running back and tight end. Seniors Hunter Perry, Hunter Kundrat and junior James Phillips are returning letter winners who are listed as running backs on the roster.

WIDE RECEIVER

Seniors Will Seger and Perry will lead the receivers. Sophomore Robert Rogers will also be an important pass catcher for GV.

SEE **MUSTANGS**, 14

'We got some guys that can throw it and we got some guys that can catch it well. I think the guys up front will be able to open some holes for us.'

Clint Nims

Grand Valley football coach



ROSTER

Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Year
1. Hunter Kundrat	12	6-0	200	RB/LB
2. Justin Hagan	10	5-9	160	RB/LB
3. William Seger	12	6-2	170	WR/DB
4. Austin Lilly	9	5-10	150	WR/DB
5. Hunter Perry	12	5-10	205	RB/DL
6. Trent Doyle	11	5-8	145	WR/DB
7. Sammy Goforth	9	5-10	150	QB/DB
8. Zach Hall	12	6-0	180	QB/LB
9. Hunter Hayes	10	5-9	125	WR/DB
10. Matt Wengard	12	5-5	140	WR/DB
11. Robert Rogers	10	6-2	170	WR/DB
12. Kamden Cottrell	10	5-8	140	QB/LB
13. John Foss	8	5-8	150	WR/DB
14. Nathan Boiarski	11	6-3	185	QB/DB
15. Caden Vetty	12	5-11	185	WR/DB
16. Aidan Whitright	11	6-0	160	WR/DB
17. DJ Webb	12	6-0	215	QB/DL
18. Dylan Hivick	11	6-0	160	WR/DB
19. Nick Krieg	9	6-0	160	WR/DB
21. Braden Hart	9	5-11	175	RB/LB
22. Conner Sullivan	10	5-4	176	RB/LB
23. Logan Jones	11	5-8	130	WR/DB
24. Trenton Crum	11	5-11	160	WR/DB
26. Andrew Soltis	9	5-7	150	QB/LB
28. Tanner Lee	10	5-8	150	WR/DB
30. James Phillips	11	5-7	160	RB/LB
36. A. Baumann	12	6-0	215	TE/DL
38. CJ Samsa	12	5-9	172	TE/LB
39. Chase McDonald	9	5-8	152	WR/DB
40. Casey Turner	11	6-0	200	RB/LB
43. Brenton Mihalov	12	6-0	170	RB/DL
44. Keegan Hart	12	5-10	165	RB/LB
50. Trevor Mullen	10	5-9	210	OL/DL
51. Jason Byers	11	6-0	250	OL/DL
52. Quinn Newell	9	5-8	160	OL/DL
54. Reese Kuhn	12	6-1	230	OL/DL
55. Noah Fletcher	12	5-7	160	OL/DL
56. Brandon Warne	12	5-8	260	OL/DL
58. Brendon Hamilton	12	5-10	170	WR/LB
64. Charlie Clason	11	5-9	155	OL/DL
65. Logan Martin	11	6-6	315	OL/DL
70. David Utt	9	5-4	160	OL/DL
73. Tyler Murphy	9	6-0	180	OL/DL
74. Paul Marcum	9	6-3	285	OL/DL
75. Andrew Hall	12	5-10	290	OL/DL
77. Tyson Taylor	9	5-9	250	OL/DL
79. Brady Bogdan	10	6-2	200	OL/DL

Assistant coaches: John Glavickas, Josh Kocab, Michael McGovern, Jay Yuhasz.

MUSTANGS: Boiarski back to lead GV offense

FROM PAGE 13

OFFENSIVE LINE

The Mustangs were in the process of determining their offensive line during camp. All five linemen from last season's team graduated. Juniors Logan Martin and Byers will lead the offensive line. Sophomore Brady Bogdan will also start.

DEFENSIVE LINE

Bogdan will be the big man in the middle of the Mustangs' defensive line.

Perry will also start on the edge.

The remaining spots on the defensive line will come down to who shows the most promise among the young linemen.

LINEBACKER

Junior Casey Turner and Hall will be the focal points at the linebacker position.

The position group features a mix of experience and youth, with Alex Baumann and Brendon Hamilton returning as letter winners from last year.

DEFENSIVE BACKS

Aidan Whitright is the senior in the secondary.

Juniors Trent Doyle and Trent Crum, Boiarski and Rogers will round out the rest of the defensive backfield. Senior Matt Wengard is also in the mix for some playing time.

SEE GV, 15



DAVID DERMER | SPECIAL TO THE STAR BEACON

Grand Valley's Andrew Soltis hauls in a pass during a recent practice at GV High School.

SCHEDULE: Weekly schedule for Ashtabula County, Madison teams

FROM PAGE 3

St. John at Windham South at Madison	All games at 7 p.m. unless noted Sept. 24 Lakeside at West Geauga Orange at Geneva Perry at Edgewood Girard (Pa.) at Conneaut Jefferson at Hubbard GV at Harvey PV at Fairport Madison at North	Oct. 1 Geneva at Edgewood Chagrin Falls at Lakeside Slippery Rock at Conneaut Struthers at Jefferson GV at Cardinal PV at Windham Chalker at St. John Kenston at Madison	West Geauga at Geneva Jefferson at South Range Conneaut at Sharon GV at Rootstown PV at Chalker St. John at Mathews Madison at Chardon	Toronto at PV Crestwood at GV Mayfield at Madison
Sept. 4 Akron Springfield at St. John, 2	Week 5 All games at 7 p.m. Sept. 17 St. John at PV Lakeside at Perry Kirtland at Geneva Niles at Jefferson West Geauga at Edgewood Conneaut at Hickory Hawken at GV Riverside at Madison	Sept. 25 St. John at Lutheran East, 1	Week 9 All games at 7 p.m. Oct. 15 Orange at Lakeside Edgewood at Kirtland Geneva at Perry Poland at Jefferson Titusville at Conneaut	Week 10 All games at 7 p.m. Oct. 22 Lakeside at Edgewood Lakeview at Jefferson Geneva at Chagrin Falls Conneaut at Ft. LeBoeuf Beachwood at GV Mathews at PV Fairport at St. John Garfield Heights at Madison
Week 4 All games at 7 p.m. Sept. 10 Geneva at Lakeside Edgewood at Orange Conneaut at Hickory Jefferson at Girard PV at Rootstown GV at Berkshire	Week 6 Week 6	Week 7 All games at 7 p.m.		



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

The 2021 Grand Valley football team.



DAVID DERMER | SPECIAL TO THE STAR BEACON

Grand Valley's Matthew Wengard intercepts a pass and is tackled by Chase McDonald during a recent practice at Grand Valley High School.

GV: Hall, Turner key LBs

FROM PAGE 14

SPECIAL TEAMS

Boiarski will be the punter, while junior

Dylan Hivick will be the place kicker.

Wengard and sophomore Justin Hagan will handle the returns.

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Jefferson Falcons

New approach for Falcons

First-year head coach Hanna focusing on mental aspect

BY DAN HINER

dhiner@starbeacon.com

JEFFERSON — High school football camps tend to run along the same track.

Practices typically consist of some combination of conditioning, position drills and team reps.

Coaches focus on the physical and fundamental side of the game. But Jefferson's first-year coach Brandon Hanna is focusing more on the mental aspect.

After getting some stretching in early in the day, the team breaks off into line-men and skill position players.

The linemen practice blocking and shedding while the skill guys walk through plays and reads.

That portion of

practice usually takes around 45 minutes before the players get a water break.

Afterward, the two groups unite to run through team reps. The coaches also make sure the players get a session in the film room in between the team's practices.

"The beginning of this looks like a Thursday walk-through for us," Hanna said. "Just refreshing the brain. We've sent a lot of stuff our via social media, our sites, and putting things out for them to study."

"So in the beginning, it's almost like we're getting ready for the test. We got a test in an hour, make sure we refresh their memories. Walking through, teaching, going through techniques every day."



Jefferson's Grant Hitchcock picks off a pass during a recent home scrimmage against Cardinal Mooney.

WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Jefferson is in the middle of a rebuild that saw progress the last two seasons under then head coach Ed Rankin.

The Falcons beat Grand Valley in the 2019 season opener, snapping an 18-game losing streak.

They finished last season 3-7 and lost to Martins Ferry in the first round of the Division V playoffs.

Hanna's goal is to get into the top half of the Northeast 8 Conference. The Falcons went 1-5 in the NE8 last season.

Jefferson bested Lakeview 49-7 in the final conference game in the sixth game of the season.

The Falcons almost

beat Hubbard in Week 2, but lost 21-16 after they were unable to cash in on a blocked punt in the final minute.

"We're excited to play some local teams to start the season off, but ultimately, we're looking to compete with the South Ranges, Girards, Polands, Struthers and Hubbard," Hanna said.

The mental approach was the way to go, according to Hanna. But he said that could change as the season progresses.

It all depends on how the players react to the lessons and if they continue to improve.

"All the greats touch the basics, even in the pros," Hanna said. "That where we want to be — just keep teaching, teaching, teaching. Then we take the test for the last hour, eat some lunch and get in the weight room after that."

QUARTERBACK

Grant Hitchcock returns at the quarterback position after starting last season as a

SEE **FALCONS**, 18



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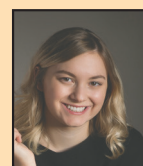
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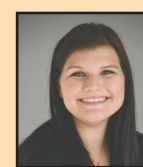
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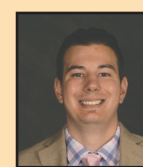
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FALCONS: Hitchcock back at quarterback for Jefferson

FROM PAGE 16

sophomore.

Hitchcock was a threat with the ball as a passer and runner last season.

RUNNING BACK

The Falcons need to replace Daniel Bruckman, who was the Falcons' primary ball carrier last year. Juniors Wade Woodworth and Blaze Blankenship

SCHEDULE

All games at 7 p.m.

Aug. 20: vs. Grand Valley
Aug. 27: at Harvey
Sept. 3: vs. Edgewood
Sept. 10: at Girard
Sept. 17: vs. Niles
Sept. 24: at Hubbard
Oct. 1: vs. Struthers
Oct. 8: at South Range
Oct. 15: vs. Poland
Oct. 22: vs. Lakeview

back position.

Hanna said he could play all three depending on the weekly game plan and the production of each player.

WIDE RECEIVER

Trent Hodge returns at receiver and is expected to take on a larger role in the offense under Hanna. Hodge started last season, but

SEE JEFFERSON, 19

'Walking through, teaching, going through techniques every day.'



Brandon Hanna
Jefferson football coach



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Jefferson's Wade Woodworth looks for running room during a recent home scrimmage vs. Cardinal Mooney.

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WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

The 2021 Jefferson football team.

JEFFERSON: Hodge expected to be used in a vareity different positions and formations

FROM PAGE 18

Hanna expects to use the junior in a variety of different positions and formations in 2021.

Hanna expects to see some plays from senior Jonathan Waszil. Hanna was also impressed with freshman Kaige Boczar.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Juniors Mason Pawlowski, Sam Discher and Reed Edgar return on the offensive line.

Pawlowski will retain his spot at center, while Discher stays at left guard and Edgar protects Hitchcock's



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Jefferson's Blaze Blankenship tries to break a tackle during a home scrimmage with Cardinal Mooney.

blindside at left tackle. Senior Cole Pawlowski

saw some time last season at right guard and right tackle.

Junior Cole Brake didn't play last season due to injury, but he is an offensive tackle.

DEFENSIVE LINE

Senior Brent Dietrich and Brake will sit in the center of the defensive line at tackle.

Senior Ben Feick could also see some time along the offensive and defensive lines.

LINEBACKER

Juniors Wade Woodworth and Preston Reams will man the

linebacker positions. The Falcons also have several underclassmen that could step in and provide depth over the course of the year.

DEFENSIVE BACK

Hitchcock and Hodge will return to the secondary after playing last season. Sophomore Caden Heinly will also see some time in the defensive backfield.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Feick returns at kicker for his senior season. He will also handle the punting responsibilities.

ROSTER

Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Year
1. Jonathan Waszil	WR/DB	5-9	145	12
2. Kaige Boczar	WR/DB	5-8	145	9
3. Wade Woodworth	RB/LB	6-0	185	11
4. Grant Hitchcock	QB/DB	5-11	170	11
6. Caden Heinly	QB/CB	5-9	145	10
7. Trent Hodge	WR/DB	5-8	155	11
8. Ben Rankin	WR/DB	5-9	140	10
10. Patrick Beebe	WR/DB	6-2	160	11
11. Blaze Blankenship	RB/DB	5-9	160	11
14. David Ellis	WR/DB	5-7	145	11
16. Luke Funtash	RB/LB	5-10	170	10
21. Grayson Campbell	WR/DB	5-10	145	10
22. Anthony Shank	RB/LB	5-8	165	9
23. Nick Roach	WR/DL	6-2	150	12
26. Wade Jones	WR/DB	5-8	135	9
32. Caleb Kemp	OL/DL	5-7	140	10
35. Eric Deary	RB/LB	5-11	170	11
40. Bradley Williams	OL/DL	5-10	150	9
42. Preston Reams	TE/LB	6-0	190	11
44. DJ Partridge	OL/DL	5-7	165	10
50. Cole Pawlowski	OL/DL	6-0	175	12
52. John Kinkopf	TE/LB	5-8	200	11
43. Preston Reams	C/MLB	6-0	190	10
55. Brent Dietrich	OL/DL	6-0	175	12
56. Brandon Oeffner	OL/DL	5-10	200	10
60. Andrew Atkins	OL/DL	5-10	150	10
65. Devin Cowell	OL/DL	5-9	195	11
66. Ben Feick	K/DL	6-3	180	12
68. Sam Discher	OL/DL	6-3	265	11
70. William Cade	OL/DL	6-1	195	10
72. Cole Brake	OL/DL	6-0	220	11
75. Mason Pawlowski	OL/DL	6-0	230	11
76. Blade De La Rosa	OL/DL	6-0	365	10
79. Reed Edgar	OL/DL	6-5	190	11
88. Joey Bruckman	WR/DB	5-3	115	10

Assistant coaches: Melvin Leath, Mel Hanna, Robbie Eckert, Rey Tirado.

Lakeside Dragons

Looking to flip the script

Dragons seek to scale the mountain in tough CVC

BY MIKE SHAFFER

sports@starbeacon.com

Over the years, the Lakeside football program has found that breaking a run of seasons below .500 with a winning campaign hasn't been as much a hurdle to clear as it has been a mountain to climb.

As his team prepares for this fall's run at it, coach Buzz Edwards will be leaning on experience, improvement with depth and conditioning in pursuit of what he hopes can be Lakeside's first winning season in more than a decade.

With 11 seniors on the roster, the most ever in Edwards' four years and nearly triple what he had a year ago, the coach not only has

his most mature team but also players who have been in his system for four years.

This year's seniors have attained a 6-23 record over the past three seasons, including last year's 3-7 mark. Edwards said that it is time for the Dragons to scale that mountain.

"I told our seniors 'It's our turn now,'" the coach said. "We've been through the fire, we've been through the beatings. Now, it's time to flip the script, and be the ones that are giving the beatings and not taking them."

Flipping the script will rely on what should be a much improved Lakeside defense and the ability on offense to get the ball to playmakers, namely running



Lakeside's Mike Olson attempts a diving reception during a recent practice at Lakeside High School.

back J'Shon Sanders, who rushed for 999 yards in only seven games last season.

The biggest factor, though, could simply be having players that

have been in Edwards' system for four years now. The coach said the difference has already shown up on the practice field.

"In the past, it was

like starting every summer for installs," Edwards said. "This year the tweaks and the detail stuff, it's not like 'What guy I got?' It's more like 'How detailed

can I get in my stance or how detailed can I get in my route that I'm running?' That's been a lot of fun to coach and there have not been as many distractions"

Not only are the Dragons in the same system, they are also better conditioned from Edwards' offseason regiment.

"You can definitely see it in our older guys and even in our younger guys," the coach said. "You can see the difference in the confidence guys have when we line up. I think this is the first year since I've been here where we are not outmatched physically almost every week. We should be even faster and stronger than most of the teams that we play."

A little more depth

SEE **DRAGONS**, 21

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The 2021 Lakeside football team.

DRAGONS: Lakeside leaning on experience, conditioning

FROM PAGE 20

on the team this year will also allow Edwards to switch some guys in and out and should help late in games.

The Dragons have a couple of good early tests with a trip to Brush in Week 1, then

have their home-opener against Madison the following week. Lakeside will also play Division V state champs Kirtland. The Hornets have moved up to the CVC Chagrin Division with Harvey going to the Valley Division.

Despite the 3-7 record

from a year ago, there were at least a few games that everyone within the program felt they let slip away, including a 21-19 loss to West Geauga in the opener and 40-34 defeat to Perry.

SEE LAKESIDE, 22

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LAKESIDE: Donahue, Raffa solid on defense

FROM PAGE 21

With added experience, strength, and depth, Edwards believes his team is ready to flip the script.

“We talked about it all offseason,” he said. “We were probably about five plays away from being a 6-4 football team. So, it’s about learning from those mistakes and getting better from those mistakes.”

“In the past, we’ve not done a great job of handling adversity. We need our players to step up and handle adversity better. We’re getting there, I don’t know if we’re there yet, but we’re getting there and that’s going to be the biggest step for us this year.”

QUARTERBACK

Garrette Siebeneck returns to the starting job under center. A year ago, the senior appeared in six games, completing 45 of 87 passes for 563 yards to go with four touchdowns and six interceptions.

Edwards calls Siebeneck “a team player that will do whatever it takes to help his team win.”

He’s had a strong camp and is playing much better than where he was a year ago. What the coaching staff wants is for their quarterback to consistently hit the short quick

SCHEDULE
All games at 7 p.m.
Aug. 20: at Brush
Aug. 27: vs. Madison
Sept. 3: vs. Villa Angela-St. Joseph
Sept. 10: vs. Geneva
Sept. 17: at Perry
Sept. 24: at West Geauga
Oct. 1: vs. Chagrin Falls
Oct. 8: at Kirtland
Oct. 15: vs. Orange
Oct. 22: at Edgewood

passes, understanding that the big plays will open up in time.

Sophomore Alex DiSalvatore is slated to back up Siebeneck.

RUNNING BACK

Sanders, a junior, averaged more than 100 yards a game last year and scored 11 touchdowns.

One of the keys for the coaching staff will be keeping him out of the trainer’s room. The surplus of guys with the ability to run the ball should help that effort.

Senior AJ Raffa, the strongest player on the team, went for nearly 500 yards last year on 86 carries.

Senior Lorenzo Lagoa also saw some time in the backfield. Throw in senior Elijah Jefferson and freshman Nate Bartone, and it’s easy to see why Edwards is excited about the position group.

RECEIVER

The Dragons lost their top four receivers from a year ago, opening the door for a host

of new players to have a chance at catching the football.

Junior Malachi Matlock had an outstanding offseason and has looked good in camp. Juniors Mike Olson and Cameron Mitchell were strong on the JV squad a year ago.

Look for junior Jamil Haynes to show up in the passing game as well. The Dragons will typically not deploy a tight end, but sophomore Jimmy Timonere provides a big inside receiver for the offense.

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN

Senior Sam Petros may be one of the best linemen in Northeast Ohio according to Edwards. Whether it’s run or pass blocking, Petros has the size, strength and quickness to do whatever is asked of him.

He’ll be the only senior upfront to start the season.

After that, the Dragons are young but have some experience. Sophomores, Randy Valeriano started every game last year and Gavin Grant started eight. The center will be another sophomore, Hassani Sy, who played very well on the JV team a year ago. Grayson Petros, an extremely strong freshman could also crack the line this year.

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN

The teeth of the Drag-

ons 3-5-3 defense will be the linebacking core, but the guys up front certainly have a lot of ability as well.

Senior Anthony Donahue was a disruptive force last season, and he’ll be back at the nose tackle position.

Senior Morgan Bish played two years before moving to Florida last year.

He’s back this season and has looked good in camp, as has senior Yunion Valeriano.

LINEBACKERS

Senior Thomas Allen has had a tremendous camp. Raffa brings not only strength but great speed to the position.

Lagoa should also provide plenty of punch. Bartone will also probably get some snaps as well as a few other guys.

SECONDARY

Junior Angelo Collazo anchors the defensive back from the safety position. Matlock, Olson and Haynes are the corners.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Chris Chamberlain was solid on extra points and field goals a year ago. He’ll be challenged by sophomore Aiden Hathy, who kicked for the JV team a year ago. The return game should feature Matlock, Elijah Jefferson and Haynes, and Collazo.

ROSTER

Name	Year	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.
2. Jamil Haynes	11	5-11	151	DB/RB
3. Mike Olson	11	5-9	147	DB/WR
4. Angelo Collazo	11	5-9	140	DB/WR
5. Elijah Jefferson	12	5-5	156	LB-DB/RB-WR
6. J'shon Sanders	11	5-5	195	DB/RB
7. Alex DiSalvatore	10	6-1	162	DB/QB
9. Shaun Forbes	9	6-1	152	DL/TE
10. Jimmy Timonere	10	6-1	173	DB/WR
11. AJ Raffa	12	5-10	196	LB-RB/WR
12. Jackson Huffman	9	5-3	111	DB/WR
13. Malachi Matlock	11	5-8	165	DB/WR
14. Jon Higgins	11	5-4	139	DB/WR
16. Jayden Cooper	9	5-10	201	LB/QB
18. Garrette Siebeneck	12	6-3	181	DL/QB
20. Thomas Allen	12	5-11	186	LB/TE/H
21. Nate Bartone	9	5-5	206	LB/RB
22. AJ Sassler	9	5-6	172	LB/RB
23. Marcus Thompson	9	5-8	155	LB/WR
25. Morgan Bish	12	5-9	210	LB/OL-H
27. Malachi Donahue	11	5-10	148	DB/RB
28. Lorenzo Lagoa	12	5-8	182	LB/RB
30. Fransico Rodriguez-Chavez	9	5-10	146	DB/WR
32. Anthony Donahue	12	6-2	196	DL/TE-RB
33. Martin Rea	10	5-3	158	LB/OL
34. Devaughn Jefferson	9	5-6	168	LB/RB
45. Owen Canter	9	6-0	162	DL/OL
51. Yunion Valeriano	12	5-10	190	DE/OL
52. Sam Petros	12	6-2	273	DL/OL
53. Kaleb Burnheimer	9	5-10	188	LB/OL
54. Ethan Hastings	9	6-0	196	LB/OL
55. Randy Valeriano	10	5-8	225	DL/OL
57. Abi Ortiz	10	5-9	207	DL/OL
59. Gavin Grant	10	6-1	250	DL/OL
62. Hassani Sy	10	5-8	224	DL/OL
63. Michael Canter	9	5-10	174	LB/OL-TE
66. Anthony Ashley	9	5-7	196	DL/OL
67. Grayson Petros	9	6-1	247	DL/OL
72. Liam Beatty	9	5-10	220	DL/OL
74. Delonta Miller	12	5-9	279	DL/OL
77. Dylan Northrup	10	5-9	225	DL/OL
83. Cameron Mitchell	11	5-11	160	LB/WR-TE
84. Aiden Hathy	10	6-2	155	K
86. Chris Chamberlain	12	5-10	180	K

Assistant coaches: Lou Edwards, Bob Frey, Josh Hartz, Scott Collins, Ryan McEndree.

‘You can see the difference in the confidence guys have when we line up. I think this is the first year since I’ve been here where we are not outmatched physically almost every week. We should be even faster and stronger than most of the teams we that play’

Buzz Edwards
Lakeside football coach

Madison Blue Streaks

Fresh start for Blue Streaks

Young players gained experience in unusual 2020 season

BY DAVID NEGIN

sports@starbeacon.com

MADISON — Sitting in the weight room at Madison High School following a preseason practice recently, Madison offensive coordinator Mike Martin turned to head coach Mike Gilligan and briefly reminded his longtime friend and colleague of some of the struggles the 2020 season brought them.

"Of the 22 starters who suited up Week 1 for us last season, just nine of them were in uniform when we took the field the last week of the season," Martin said.

The injury bug indeed took a heavy toll on the Blue Streaks, as Gilligan saw key starter after key starter sidelined throughout a winless first season as head coach.

"It may have been some really bad luck, but I think COVID had



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Madison's Kenyon Boncela looks for running room on Thursday evening during a scrimmage at Harvey.

a little to do with it with the fact the kids were inactive for so long heading into the season," Gilligan said of the injuries.

Nevertheless, the pandemic filled year is one that Gilligan has put in the rearview mirror.

"I'd rather not think about that anymore," he said.

So while optimism is always high at the be-

ginning of any new season for football teams across the area, the sense of normalcy that 2021 has brought so far to the Madison camp is especially understood.

"It has been good because I have been able to kind of do the things that I wanted to do my first year," Gilligan said of the offseason and preseason so far. "For us, football is pretty much a year-round sport. But a lot of the stuff as far as being around our guys more and trying to create the culture that we want to do, it has been a lot easier to do it when we've actually been able

to spend it face to face with our guys."

And while Gilligan has a roster of just 44 players heading into the year, the adversity of last season did have a positive effect on the group of good young athletes on the field.

"There were a lot of young guys who had to step up and get in some varsity time against some really, really good competition," he said. "I definitely think these kids have gotten a taste of it, so maybe some of those jitters maybe aren't as strong so they are more mentally aware of what to expect."

Fans who watch the

Blue Streaks this season should also expect to see a more traditional offense than the many spread formations used the last few seasons.

"Offensively, schematically we are trying to return to Madison football," Gilligan said, referring to the style that Madison made a name for itself over the years. "We're trying to run some more Power-I, smash-mouth football."

One of the reasons for the switch is the excitement the staff has for sophomore Bryant Perkins. The 5-foot-9 185 pound Perkins started all of his freshman season at linebacker for the Blue Streaks, but this year will also be moved to tailback where he will be one of the primary backs featured in the running game.

The staff also believes the switch will allow returning quarterback Michael O'Brien to improve on his junior year where he threw for 889 yards and 7 touchdowns in the eight games in his first season as a starter.

By allowing the 6-foot-3 senior to run less and be able to use his powerful arm

SCHEDULE

All games at 7 p.m.

Aug. 20: vs. Geneva
Aug. 27: at Lakeside
Sept. 3: at Perry
Sept. 10: vs. South
Sept. 17: vs. Riverside
Sept. 24: at North
Oct. 1: vs. Kenston
Oct. 8: at Chardon
Oct. 15: vs. Mayfield
Oct. 22: at Garfield Heights

throwing downfield more to a talented group of wide receivers, Gilligan is confident the Blue Streaks will greatly improve on the nine points a game it scored a year ago.

The simplified approach is important as the Blue Streaks still will be a young football team, with Gilligan estimating at least five sophomores will be starting when Madison opens the season at home Friday against Geneva.

Gilligan knows that being in the rugged Western Reserve Conference with defending Division III state champion Chardon among the many juggernauts will challenge his young team this year. But, if 2020 taught him and his team anything, it is

SEE **BLUE STREAKS**, 24

'Our mantra with our seniors this year is to compete, compete, compete.'

Mike Gilligan

Madison head football coach



ROSTER

Name	Year	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.
2. Carson Alley	10	5-8	165	QB/CB
3. Mitch Polovic	12	5-10	175	RB/S
4. DeAnthony Curry	11	5-10	160	WR/S
5. Chase Martin	11	6-0	175	WR/S
6. Michael O'Brien	12	6-2	185	QB/CB
10. Mitch Sopko	10	6-1	175	WR/CB
11. Charlie Wade	12	5-8	155	WR/CB
12. Sam Cost	12	6-0	165	WR/CB
13. Kenyon Boncela	12	6-1	165	WR/CB
14. Julian Zappitelli	11	6-1	155	WR/CB
20. R.J. Johnson	10	5-8	145	WR
21. Noah Barnes	10	6-1	165	WR/CB
22. Tyler Wolfe	11	5-10	160	WR/S
23. Gavin Svagerko	11	5-10	160	K
24. Connor Kozlina	11	5-10	175	RB/LB
25. Jesse May	10	5-9	165	RB/LB
26. Noah Howarth	12	5-8	180	RB/LB
27. Jason Stenger	10	5-8	180	WR/LB
28. Bryant Perkins	10	5-9	185	RB/LB
31. Ethan Bovee	12	6-2	170	WR/S
32. Landon Albert	12	6-2	190	TE/LB
33. Danny Alley	12	6-2	190	FB/LB
35. Ryan Crim	12	6-3	180	TE/LB
42. Payton Schroeder	12	5-8	205	FB/LB
44. Sonny Salajcik	10	5-9	165	RB/LB
45. Aiden Sample	12	5-10	185	FB/LB
50. Drew Laurie	11	6-2	230	OL/LB
51. Cole Sundquist	11	6-4	255	OL/DL
52. Evan Rodriguez	10	6-3	225	OL/DL
54. Yogi Cornelius	10	5-10	265	OL/DL
55. Nick Moretti	10	6-1	215	OL/LB
59. Andrew Molnar	11	6-1	205	OL/LB
62. Kodey Quiggle	10	6-1	220	OL/DL
63. Tyler Brown	10	6-1	215	OL/DL
64. Ben Gelofsack	10	6-0	250	OL/DL
65. Jordan Watt	12	6-4	265	OL/DL
70. Diego Ruiz	10	6-0	265	OL/DL
75. Alex Reznak	11	6-2	245	OL/DL
76. Ben Combs	12	6-5	280	OL/DL
77. Andrew Spitzer	11	6-3	275	OL/DL
80. Joey Sanchez	10	6-3	205	TE/DL
83. Demetrius Williams	10	6-0	205	TE/LB

Assistant coaches: Mike Martin, Tim Mainello, John O'Brien, Nick Riley, Vince Austin

BLUE STREAKS: Young players gained experience during last season's unusual campaign

FROM PAGE 23

to stay focussed on the task at hand one play at a time.

"Our mantra with our seniors this year is to compete, compete, compete," Gilligan said. "Along with that is understanding that there are so many things out of our control that we can't worry about. What we can control is our attitude and our effort."

QUARTERBACK

While O'Brien returns and big things are expected from him with his excellent arm talent and intelligence behind center, the coaching staff is also excited about a pair of underclassmen.

Sophomore Carson Alley is one of them and will be used at various points at the position this year. Alley brings a speed element

to his game, which will give opponents a different look when he is behind center.

The other is Chase Martin. The junior will play most of his snaps starting at wide receiver, but the junior has played quarterback in the past. He has looked good when used at quarterback in camp and could help there at some point if needed.

RUNNING BACK

Perkins is slated to get a big share of carries, but senior Kenyon Boncela proved at the end of last season that he can play tailback as well.

Moved to tailback late in the season as Madison was looking for a playmaker, Boncela showed promise with 123 yards and a touchdown in two games.

With Madison returning to a more powerful running attack, the play of seniors Danny Alley and Noah Howarth at fullback will be a key to that scheme.

WIDE RECEIVER/TIGHT END

Senior Sam Cost and Martin are slated to be the starting duo for the Blue Streaks with sophomore Noah Barnes along with seniors Mitch Polovic and Charlie Wade as rotational players or multiple receiver formations.

All of these players

also play on defense, with the exception of Barnes. Because of that, the growth of Barnes this preseason has been noticeable by the Madison coaching staff.

At tight end, senior Landon Albert returns and has stood out in the scrimmages so far.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Junior Cole Sunquist is a returning starter at right tackle, but has been out during the preseason with an injury.

At 6-foot-4 and 255 pounds, Sunquist has the combination of size and toughness to be a major factor in the running game.

In his absence, senior Jordan Watt (265 pounds) and junior Drew Laurie (230) are doing well on the end of the line. When Sunquist comes back, one will either move inside or provide depth.

Sophomore Nick Moretti (215) will be the center and Payton Schroeder (205) will be one of the guards with senior Ben Combs (280) and junior Andrew Molnar (205) battling for the other starting spot.

DEFENSIVE LINE

Madison will rotate many players along the line in their base 3-4 defensive scheme.

Sunquist, Laurie, Watt, Combs and Moretti all

will see some playing time on the line along with sophomores Joey Sanchez and Cody Quiggle.

LINEBACKER

Danny Alley and Aidan Sample are slated to be the starting inside linebackers, with Molnar rotating with them.

Perkins, who started every game at outside linebacker, returns and will be paired with senior Ryan Crim.

Albert also will see some reps on either the inside or outside.

DEFENSIVE BACK

The defensive backfield may be one of the most experienced groups with seniors Cost and Wade both returning as starting cornerbacks.

Junior Julian Zappitelli, along with Boncela and Carson Alley, will provide depth on the perimeter. Martin, Howarth and Polovic are vying for the two safety spots.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Junior Gavin Svagerko was recruited off the soccer team and has been tasked with all the kicking duties for the Blue Streaks. Sanchez and Barnes are battling for the punting job, with Moretti doing the long snapping. Cost, Martin and Wade will handle all of the kick returning duties.

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The 2021 Madison football team.



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Pymatuning Valley Lakers

Continuing to build

Lakers seeking to keep up their winning ways

BY MICHAEL GRECO

mgreco@starbeacon.com

The Pymatuning Valley Lakers enjoyed one of their most successful seasons in 2020.

The Lakers finished 8-1 overall, won a second straight Northeastern Athletic Conference title and reached the third round of the Division VI playoffs.

The strong showing gave coach Neal Croston, his coaching staff and players some confidence heading into this year.

"We expect to win," said Croston, who is in his 12th season of leading PV. "It's a little different attitude. Last year we had good vibes with the seniors."

The Lakers finished their regular season with six games.

They defeated Hillsdale 18-8 after a first-round bye before falling to perennial power Mogadore 32-14 in the third round.

"We talk more situations," Croston said. "We know who's not here. We talk about finishing a game, a play, a quarter."

But Croston also real-

SCHEDULE

All games at 7 p.m.

Aug. 20: at Mineral Ridge
Aug. 27: vs. Cardinal
Sept. 3: vs. Grand Valley
Sept. 10: at Rootstown
Sept. 17: vs. St. John
Sept. 24: at Fairport Harding
Oct. 1: at Windham
Oct. 8: at Chalker
Oct. 15: vs. Toronto
Oct. 22: vs. Mathews

izes that this is a new season.

"We played solid for four quarters [vs. Mogadore], but kind of moved on," he said. "We've got to prove it this year."

The Lakers lost significant talent from last season's team, including Ashtabula County Offensive Player of the Year Tyler Bean. The top three rushers — Dillon Knowles with 541 yards, Jonah Wilkerson 508 and Bean 434 — have all departed.

Bean also went 51 of 77 for 902 yards with 16 touchdowns and three interceptions from the quarterback spot.

Wilkerson grabbed a team-leading 19 receptions.

On the offensive and

defensive lines Victor Verba, the county line-man of the year, also graduated.

On defense, back Mason Inman, with six interceptions, also departed.

But Croston is excited what he has returning.

"We worked hard in the weight room, but we can work harder," he said. "Before practice, we already had guys lifting 45 minutes earlier."

PV has a full 10 games scheduled.

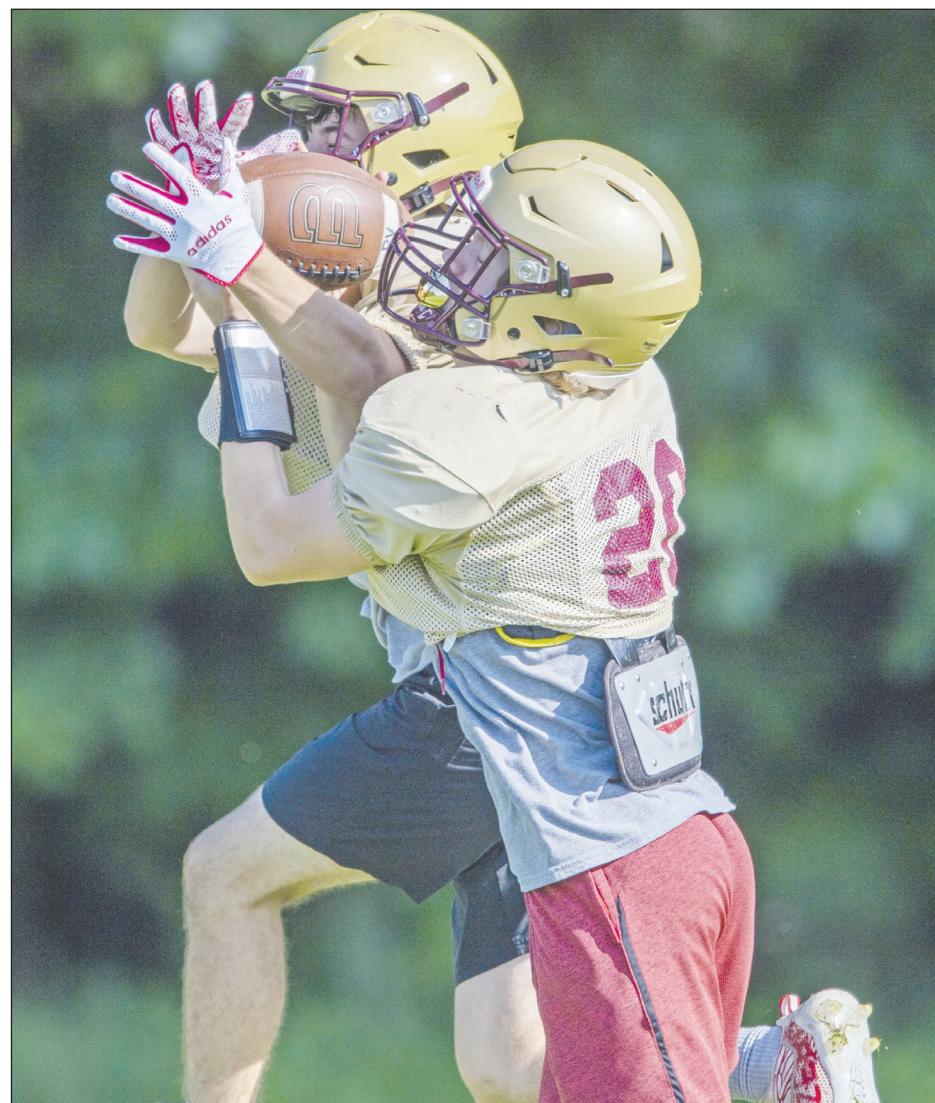
In addition to going against conference foes Mathews, Windham, Fairport Harbor, St. John and Chalker, the Lakers also have games against Mineral Ridge, Cardinal, Grand Valley, Rootstown and Toronto.

The Lakers will play the Mustangs for the first time since 2018.

"That's your rival," Croston said. "It's probably a good thing we're playing them early [Week 3]. It gives them a chance to see how they stack up in the county."

Croston knows the NAC will be a challenge.

"It's a new year," he



DAVID DERMER | SPECIAL TO THE STAR BEACON

Pymatuning Valley's Andrew Root, front, defends a pass in a recent practice at PV High School.

said. "The tables can be switched on us if we don't take care of things."

Croston said being physical and competitive with a young squad are important.

"We have to have new leaders and be posi-

SEE **LAKERS**, 27

LAKERS: Offensive line a strength for PV

FROM PAGE 26

tive,” he said. “We have a lot of young guys. If you can’t play physical, you’ll have a hard time beating anyone.”

QUARTERBACK

Seniors Garrett Smith and Robert Verba have been working to run the power spread offense.

Smith was PV’s starting QB as a freshman before sustaining an injury.

He returned as a wide receiver when Bean took over at QB.

RUNNING BACK

Senior Devin Ray is PV’s top returning rusher. He picked up 218 yards on 31 carries with three TDs last season.

Verba, senior Jimmy Thomas and freshman Ty Vickery are also getting reps in the backfield.

WIDE RECEIVER

Senior Andrew Root caught just three passes last season, but averaged 55.3 yards per catch.

He also scored three TDs, and four 2-point conversions.

Junior Devin Sharpe and freshman Ryan Croston are other receiver options.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Senior Tim Strang is the center, while classmates Thurmond Adkins and Hunter Smith are working at guard.



DAVID DERMER | SPECIAL TO THE STAR BEACON

Pymatuning Valley’s Hunter Stevens goes through a blocking drill during a recent practice at PV High School.



DAVID DERMER | SPECIAL TO THE STAR BEACON

Pymatuning Valley’s Damon Brainard carries the ball.

Strang and Adkins are both returners.

Senior Dale Dehn and junior Kameron Cargill are the tackles.

Sophomore Ali Fazal provides a solid backup.

SEE PV, 28

ROSTER

Name	Year	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.
2. Garrett Smith	12	6-1	205	WR/QB/LB
3. Jimmy Thomas	12	5-11	205	WR/LB
6. Devin Sharpe	11	5-7	160	QB/CB
9. Josh Brovier	11	5-7	170	WR/CB
10. Jaron Nowakowski	9	5-7	160	RB/CB
15. Ryan Croston	9	5-8	165	WR/QB/CB
18. Damon Brainard	9	5-6	160	RB/LB
20. Andrew Root	12	5-10	175	WR/QB/CB
21. Robert Verba	12	6-2	235	RB/QB/DE
22. Ty Vickery	9	5-7	180	RB/LB
23. James McCullough	12	6-5	275	TE/DE
24. Chase Vickery	11	5-11	210	TE/LB
25. Matthew Adkins	9	5-9	150	WR/LB
26. Drake Haines	9	5-9	165	WR/QB/DE
28. Jaden Potter	9	5-7	135	WR/CB
44. Devin Ray	12	5-11	235	RB/LB
48. Kaden Welsh	9	5-6	130	WR/CB
51. Tim Strang	12	5-10	205	OL/DL
54. Landen Paul	9	5-7	160	OL/CB
57. Thurmond Adkins	12	5-9	260	OL/DL
56. Ali Fazal	10	6-0	260	OL/DL
58. Dale Dehn	12	5-11	255	OL/DE
60. Ben Crouser	10	5-9	180	OL/LB
61. Mason Todd	10	5-7	175	OL/DE
62. Brennan Moore	9	5-6	150	OL/LB
63. Hunter Smith	12	6-0	345	OL/DL
64. Nick Robles	9	5-8	255	OL/DL
67. Kamron Cargill	11	6-0	245	OL/DL
70. Hunter Stevens	12	6-0	255	OL/LB
72. James Shaver	11	6-0	235	OL/DL
73. Jon Finello	9	5-7	180	OL/DE
79. Carson Bradley	12	5-9	170	OL/DE
84. Phoenix Scott	9	6-1	165	WR/CB

Assistant coaches: Kevin Brown, Jason, Root, Tim Cross

‘We worked hard in the weight room, but we can work harder. Before practice, we already had guys lifting 45 minutes earlier.’

Neal Croston

Pymatuning Valley football coach



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WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

The 2021 Pymatuning Valley football team.



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Pymatuning Valley quarterback Garrett Smith looks for an open receiver during a recent scrimmage.

PV: Ray, Root to lead Lakers defense

FROM PAGE 27

Senior James McCullough, a mainstay on the offensive line last season, has been moved to tight end.

DEFENSIVE LINE

There are familiar names in the 4-4 base defense.

Verba and McCullough return at end with Adkins and Dehn at tackle.

LINEBACKER

Ray brings back 47 total tackles, which ranked second on the team last season, and three tackles for loss at inside backer.

Junior Chase Vickery and freshman Ty Vickery are options on the inside.

Thomas and Smith are the outside backers. Thomas recorded six tackles for loss last season.

SECONDARY

Root, from his safety position, picked off three passes last season.

Croston, Sharpe and freshman Jaron Nowakowski are working at cornerback.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Verba is slated to punt with Ray at kicking off.

Both players are also working as field goal kickers.



DAVID DERMER |

SPECIAL TO THE STAR BEACON

Pymatuning Valley's Robert Verba gets ready for the action during a recent practice at PV High School.

St. John Heralds

The next step

Heralds look to continue the building process

BY MIKE SHAFFER

sports@starbeacon.com

St. John football fans probably feel as if they watched their program go from the penthouse to the poorhouse in what may have seemed like a blink of an eye.

After making the Division VII state playoffs in 2018, a lack of numbers sent the Heralds program to play eight-man football and a 0-8 season in 2019.

Coach Bob Dlwgosh took on the task last year of not only guiding the team back to the 11-man game, but also restoring respectability to the program.

Notching a pair of wins was certainly a

step in the right direction. This season, the Heralds are looking to take that next step.

“For us to grab two wins and be competitive in a lot of other games was definitely a step in the right direction,” the coach said of the 2020 campaign. “I think with our seven seniors coming back, we should be moving forward.”

Including the seniors, Dlwgosh said he’s returning around 13 players from last year’s squad that finished 2-6.

Getting the numbers back up a year ago meant bringing in a number of new players, some of which had never even played football



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

St. John’s Tyler Cathcart reaches for a pass during a recent 7-on-7 scrimmage at Edgewood.

before. It put Dlwgosh in a position of building pretty much from the ground up.

“Absolutely,” the coach said. “A lot of

our junior class this year were guys playing for the first time. We expect them to be in a lot better shape this season. In fact, a lot of

our seniors were playing for the first time. Unfortunately, we do not get to see what they learned because they’re not here now.”

The seniors are not, but several guys that are, especially on the offensive line.

The Heralds return four of five linemen from a season ago, including senior Darron Jones and junior center Tom Miller.

A year ago, the plan was to be able to control the ball on the ground, but rushing yards were hard to come by. This season, with more experience to go with size and strength, the Heralds feel they are positioned to be more successful.

“We struggled with that more than we thought we would last

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HERALDS: Merciliott, Cathcart among key returners

FROM PAGE 29

year,” Dlwgosh said of the rushing game. “We just want to be more balanced. Last year, we threw the ball around a lot. Seth [Thomas] may have led the county in touchdowns, but that doesn’t always translate to wins. We have to be able to control the clock and the ball.”

Not only are linemen back, but they are much bigger and stronger than a year ago, thanks to their commitment to the Heralds offseason conditioning and strength training program.

“They’ve been in the weight room since last November,” Dlwgosh said. “They’ve gotten way bigger with coach [Alvin] Rodriguez’s program. They’re bigger, stronger, and faster.”

With any Division VII football program, many players if not all of them will be going both ways of the ball.

Defensively, the Heralds will be in a 4-4-3 formation, geared to slow down some of the

smashmouth running attacks that Northeastern Athletic Conference teams are famous for.

Williams will look to provide some speed off the edge from his defensive linemen spot.

A couple of freshmen, Vincent Narducci and Sully Twining, have made a strong impression in camp and have earned a spot with the linebacker unit.

In the secondary, senior Tyler Cathcart will roll at free safety and be joined by guys like juniors Jimmy Severino and Jacob Timonere.

The Heralds will once again play an NAC schedule. Among them are against county foe Pymatuning Valley, and Fairport Harbor in Week 10.

Building on the two-win season from a year ago is obviously important, but also is just re-establishing the pride that St. John is known for. The Heralds will look to take another step in that direction.

“After an eight-man year with no wins, I think we’ve restored a

SCHEDULE

All games at 7 p.m. unless noted

Home games at Spire

Aug. 20: at Rittman
Aug. 28: vs. Sebring McKinley, 6
Sept. 4: vs. Akron
Springfield, 2
Sept. 10: at Windham
Sept. 17: at Pym. Valley
Sept. 25: at Lutheran East, 1
Oct. 1: vs. Chalker
Oct. 8: at Mathews
Oct. 22: vs. Fairport Harding

little of the confidence and a little bit of the pride in our program,” Dlwgosh said. “It’s not always about wins and losses, it’s about the kids going out competing, the fans coming out to support us and getting back to that St. John football feel that a lot of these old-timers like to talk about so much.”

QUARTERBACK

Sophomore Jeff Watson will get the call under center. Watson, according to Dlwgosh “throws a very nice ball,” and has picked up the offense quickly. He spent a great deal of time working on his game and position skills over the summer, including attending some passing camps.

RUNNING BACK

The Heralds really hope to establish a power running game and senior four-year Devyn Merciliott will be a big reason why. Merciliott is a hard runner and will be

slotted in the fullback spot. senior Andrew Williams’ speed will complement Merciliott’s bruising style. Senior Tyler Cathcart should get some carries as well.

WIDE RECEIVER

Cathcart is the most sure-handed of the group. Senior Kaden Johnston’s 6-foot-4 frame makes him a big target and the speed of junior Matt Miller will also be valuable. All three players should be valuable weapons and help their young quarterback in the passing attack.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Tom Miller will handle the center position. Tommy Kirk, a senior transfer from Conneaut, will likely handle one of the tackle spots and Jones will also probably line up at tackle. Sophomore Jacob Bennett will be on the inside. Others who will likely rotate on the line include junior John Burton, sophomore Charlie Fedell and freshman Narducci.

DEFENSIVE LINE

Players that line up as running backs on offense typically play linebacker on defense, but Williams will be lined up on the edge. “He is just so fast” according to Dlwgosh. His speed will be uti-



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

St. John’s Matt Miller catches a pass against Edgewood during a 7-7 scrimmage at Edgewood in July.

lized to create havoc in the backfield for the opposition. Jones, Fedell, Burton, and a few others will be rotating on the line as well. The increased size and strength of several Herald players could allow at least a few of them to settle into one side of the ball.

LINEBACKER

If the Herald coaching staff has too many linebackers, they’ll likely be looking for more. Dlwgosh said they’d like to get as many on the field as possible. Merciliott returns to his inside backer spot where he had 81 tackles, two sacks, and a fumble recovery a season ago. Narducci, Tom Miller and Johnston will also be on the field a good bit. Twining, who

Dlwgosh described as a ‘tough-nosed freshman,’ will round out the group.

SECONDARY

Cathcart returns at safety. A year ago, he had 28 tackles and two interceptions, including a pick-six. Others who will see time in the secondary include a senior that did not play a year ago but is back this season in senior Rodrigo Llamas. Timonere, Matt Miller, and Severino will see time in the secondary, along with sophomore Marcus Cardera.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Matt Miller has a leg up on the placekicking job this summer. Watson is expected to handle the punting duties. Williams will handle returns.

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The 2021 St. John football team.

ROSTER

Name	Year	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.
1. Jimmy Severino	11	5-9	140	WR/DB
2. Kaden Johnston	12	6-4	194	TE/DL
3. Jeff Watson	10	5-11	145	QB/DB
4. Marcus Cardera	10	5-11	144	WR/DB
5. Matt Miller	11	5-10	151	WR/DB
7. Andrew Williams	12	6-2	175	RB/DL
9. Tyler Cathcart	12	6-1	162	WR/FS
10. Sully Twining	9	5-9	150	RB/LB
11. Will Anderson	9	5-8	150	WR/DB
12. Rodrigo Llamas	12	5-6	135	WR/DB
20. Jacob Timonere	11	5-8	137	WR/DB
23. Devyn Merciliott	12	5-10	185	FB/LB
53. Thomas Miller	11	5-10	173	OL/DL
54. Henry Wagner	10	5-8	160	OL/DL
55. Vincent Narducci	9	5-8	181	OL/LB
56. Jacob Bennett	10	6-0	187	OL/DL
60. John Burton	11	5-11	155	OL/DL
69. Tommy Kirk	12	6-0	200	OL/DL
73. Darron Jones	12	6-4	206	OL/DL
74. Charlie Fedell	10	6-3	265	OL/DL
76. Wyatt Rought	10	5-10	196	OL/DL

Assistant coaches: Ryan Bento, Alvin Rodriguez, Curtis Turner, Marcus Parker, Jon Timonere



'For us to grab two wins and be competitive in a lot other games was definitely a step in the right direction. I think with our seven seniors coming back, we should be moving foward.'

Bob Diwgosh
St. John football coach

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