

# Can Southfield match last season's showing?

By TOM BAER

Southfield High football coach John Finlayson doubts that his 1977 Blue Jays can match last year's performance — an 8-1 overall record and a piece of the Southeastern Michigan Association title.

But just don't ask any of Southfield's opponents this season to accept that opinion.

"Southfield down this year? You gotta be kidding," said one opposing coach, whose team will play Southfield this fall. "Last year, Southfield's kids had a certain mental toughness. It was so thick you could almost see it. I'm sure they'll be strong again this season."

This season is almost here. Southfield opens at non-league Birmingham Groves on Friday at 8 p.m.

Southfield's toughness, both mental and physical, was apparent to anyone who watched the Blue Jays play last year. Southfield raced to six-straight victories and seemed headed for its first SMA football title ever before losing a heartbreaker to Ferndale, 7-6. The loss meant that Southfield had to share the SMA crown with Royal Oak Kimball — even though Southfield had trounced Kimball earlier in the season.

But graduation has taken many stars from last season's squad. Players like quarterback Jon Vigil, end Scott Fasbinder and running back Ron Briemeister will be tough to replace. Finlayson has 12 lettermen back from last year, and only a few were starters.

"OUR KIDS do have a good sense of football toughness, but they've gone through the learning process," Finlayson said. "I don't think we have an offensive or defensive strength right now."

"Last year, our strength was our defense. But this year, it's going to take a total team effort. We'll just have to find the 22 best football players, or the 11 best players, to put in the

game."

One key player for Southfield will be Bill Steinbrener, a 6-foot-2, 190-pound senior. An all-league tackle last year, Steinbrener will be carrying the ball from the fullback spot this season.

Some other returnees from last year include guard Phil Vaughn (6-0, 185), tackle John Thompson (6-0, 180), halfback and safety Jim Kurylo (5-10, 150) and defensive end Ted Prappas (5-10, 150).

Other key players are guard Mike McCann (5-10, 160) and center Mark Tawril (6-0, 180), both juniors, and guard and linebacker Dane Smith (5-11, 170), a senior. Southfield also has a good looking transfer in Chuck Burch (5-9, 180), a senior halfback.

"Burch has real good quickness, so he should help us a lot," Finlayson said.

Finlayson had counted on senior Blaine Gatti (5-11, 160) to handle the quarterbacking duties, but Gatti was injured in practice and may not be ready for Friday's opener at Groves. Tom Heiss, a junior, quarterbacked the team in a recent scrimmage at Livonia Churchill.

"I WAS satisfied with the way Heiss performed," Finlayson said. "He went in there cold with no experience against top-notch football teams, but I

## Teams needed for tourney

St. Francis Knights of Columbus in Farmington Hills is seeking teams to play in its men's open softball tournament, scheduled for Sept. 21 to Oct. 2 at the Knights of Columbus field, 21900 Middlebelt Road.

The entry fee is \$45 per team. Interested team managers may enter by calling Mike DeLeo at 363-6254. The deadline for entries is Sept. 18.

think he did real well."

But Gatti will be Southfield's QB as soon as he gets healthy. "He can throw and he has good speed," Finlayson said. "He's a better option quarterback than Vigil was."

Southfield's kicking game should be good with senior Bob Fromm doing the kicking and place kicking, and Steinbrener or Mike McCann taking care of the punting. "Fromm is a decent field goal and extra-point man," Finlayson said. "If we can block for him, he'll do well."

Some Southfield players are being

moved into new positions as the coaches experiment to find the right combination. For example, Steinbrener will be new at fullback, and Prappas will be new to defensive end. "We're really experimenting with a lot of different kids," Finlayson said. "It's hard for them and it's hard for us. But hopefully, it'll pan out."

SOUTHFIELD'S SECOND game is next Friday (Sept. 16) at non-league Utica Henry Ford. Southfield opens its SMA season on Sept. 23 at home against co-champion Kimball.

## Stevenson looks strong

Even though Livonia Stevenson football coach Jack Reardon lost a host of outstanding athletes from his undefeated 1976 team, he expects the Spartans will again be contenders for the Inter-Lakes League championship this season.

Reardon's biggest task during pre-season practice has been to find replacements for nine all-league selections who closed their prep careers last fall with a 9-0 record and a conference title.

"Seven kids went both ways for us last year, until the middle of the season when other kids came on well," said Reardon. "A lot of kids are going both ways at the start of this year and hopefully by the second or third game, the younger kids can fit it."

Jim Spaul, an all-Oak server defensive back

and a tailback last year, and Mike Centers, an offensive center and defensive lineman, will co-captain the Spartans during the upcoming campaign.

Stevenson, not particularly known for its physical size in the past, Reardon said, will likely have several imposing specimens on the field this fall.

Larry Burdiss, 6-3, 200 pounds, is an offensive tackle and down defensive lineman. Brian Bowley, 6-3, 195 pounds, is a tight end and a line-

backer candidates this fall. Tom Smith, a junior who played on the JV squad last season, and Dave Hall, a sophomore, are the major candidates to take over the quarterbacking duties from Jim Dolmetsch, who graduated with all-state recognition.

Smith, whom Reardon said "runs well and throws fairly well," has the inside track at this time. Both lack experience, Reardon added, but are quickly making progress.

Todd Sorinson, defensive back, Mark Burton, split end and extra-point kicker, and Mike Farnick, offensive guard and linebacker, have also been impressive, Reardon said.

Bill Finn and Bryan Nichols are competing for the starting nod at fullback and Jim Gemeund and John

Noren are contending for the slotback post. Finn and Gemeund are also defensive possibilities.

"The Spartans will operate from a variety of offensive sets, Reardon said, and will use a basic 3-2 defense "with not a whole lot of stunting."

"I don't think we're going to blow anyone off the field," the coach said, adding that he frequently built big leads early in games last year and sat on the ball much of the second half.

"We're working a great, great deal on our passing attack," Reardon said. "Tom and Dave are throwing the ball very well."

Reardon indicated that Pontiac Northern, Farmington and Walled Lake Central will provide tough competition in the weeks ahead.

## Skate team comes home

The skating dance team of Richard Dalley and Carol Fox, who toiled all summer at Centaur Ice Arena, returned home from a successful European tour Saturday.

"It went great," said Dalley of Lathrup Village. "We had some really good competition, and now we have a chance at being on the World Cup Team."

Dalley and Fox placed first in international competition at St. Gervais, France, a few weeks ago, and wound up taking second at Oberstorf, West Germany.

The U.S. team won every event at St. Gervais except for the ladies singles and she placed second. In Oberstorf, the team also won the point trophy with everyone finishing first except for the dance team of Fox and Dalley. The U.S. team won the Neville Horn Trophy for winning the two competitions.

The dance team is taking a two-week vacation before they hit the ice again. Then they'll start practicing for the regionals that will be held in Plymouth in November. Then they'll travel to Chicago for some more competition in December.

The U.S. Nationals will be held in February, and if the dance team makes it to the top two, they'll travel to Canada for World competition.

"If the other two teams ahead of us do well in international competition in November, they'll go on the World Cup team instead of us," said Dalley.

Dalley and Fox are ranked number three in the U.S. in dance skating. After their vacation they'll begin practice at the Southfield's Beechwood Arena, along with their coach Sandra Hess.

Dalley, who had his clothes lost by the airlines, had them recovered by the time he got to Oberstorf.

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