

Rebuilding task awaits Rockets

By KEN VOYLES

Coming back from a week-long conditioning camp, the Westland John Glenn football team has begun intensive training at its facilities on Marquette to match or better its outstanding 1975 season.

A feeling of optimism, spurred by new head coach Gerald Lutz and tri-captains Mike Hotten, Bob Byrd and Dai Evans surrounds the Glenn gridiron program.

The road will be rocky, though, as the Westlanders lost 12 seniors from a squad that went 8-1 last year, the only loss being to Class A state champion Livonia Franklin by seven points.

However, the week of conditioning gave the members of the squad a chance to know one another. As Lutz put it, "The boys are close together." That could be important with so many new faces in the starting lineup.

The tri-captains form the bulwark of the Rockets' strength. Hotten is Glenn's premier linebacker. Byrd plays guard on offense and linebacker on defense and Evans goes both ways at tackle.

A couple of other prominent Rocket returnees are Mark Grabowski, an all-Northwest Suburban League choice at middle guard and Jeff Preston, who will man the tailback position.

But like a junior, will run Glenn's offense at quarterback Mark Scobinski and Cliff Williamson return as receivers. Both have excellent hands. Lutz and Williamson, a track sprinter, is extremely quick.

There will be no real offense changes, strategy wise, in the rebuilding year for the Rockets. The staff formation will be utilized.

Glenn's primary defense will be a 3-2.

with Rick Burns charged with the challenging monster or rover back duties. Joe Mignier, at end, and Jim Ervin, at safety, are expected to come through on defense for the Rockets.

Ervin is a junior, as are five other members of the defensive crew.

Balance is Glenn's strong suit this fall. There seem to be no standouts on either offense or defense, but as Lutz put it, "a well-rounded squad" with great toughness.

Experience is probably the weakest link in the Rockets' machine. But even this is no real danger due to the overall balance that the team possesses, according to Lutz.

Glenn definitely will face challenge after challenge in the strong Northwest Suburban League in coming weeks. Lutz regains the task at hand by stating, "This is the toughest league there is."

Lutz, a Glenn assistant coach for several years, took over this year from Lloyd Carr, who moved to Eastern Michigan University as an assistant coach.

The job ahead, as Lutz said, is a tough one filled with pitfalls and high hopes.

The team will hold a picture day Sept. 11 at the school for family, friends and the press. It will likely last most of the morning.



Mike Hotten (51), one of Westland John Glenn's tri-captains, grimaces as he takes a shot from a teammate during a summer practice session. (Staff photo by Chris Chagnon)

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