

Andover gridders boast savvy

By JOHN BOZZO

A veteran Andover football squad is aiming to regain the league title it lost last season after three consecutive championships.

Eight returning offensive starters, plus seven former first team defensemen head up the Baron team, which for the fifth year is coached by Frank Buford.

"We have excellent team speed," Buford said. "We're not big, but we're not small. We have an excellent attitude. Our kids are highly motivated."

"There are no cliques on the team," Buford said. "We have none of the problems that frequently show up between juniors and seniors. They're a close knit group, giving each other a lot of encouragement."

One year ago, Buford's Barons were 5-4 on the season and 3-2 in Greater Oakland Activities League play, finishing second behind Clarkson. League champion Clarkson qualified for the state playoffs, reaching the semifinals before losing to eventual Class A winner Brother Rice.

Both Rice and Clarkson are on Andover's schedule. The Rice game, Sept. 8, is the season opener for both schools. Andover also plays Metro Suburban Activities Associ-

ation champ Birmingham Groves (Oct. 27).

"OUR BIGGEST obstacle this season is a tough schedule," Buford said. "Rice and Groves will probably be rated among the top 10 teams in the state. Our league is always tough."

"The consensus of coaches is that Rochester is the preseason favorite," Buford said, "but I believe Andover is at least as good as Rochester."

Buford noted that West Bloomfield and Clarkson both have good football programs that were hit hard by graduation. Clarkson's new coach, Bill Velasco, was an Andover assistant last year.

Buford will also be a factor in the league race, Buford said. One of the big factors for Andover will be the experience Kon Baer gained as a sophomore quarterback last year. Baer returns for his second full season.

Baer will also handle all the Andover kicking chores, kickoffs, point after touchdowns, field goals and punts.

Senior Kirk Harris, 5-8, 175 pounds, is slated for tailback duties. He served as a back-up to starter Mark Walker last year. As a jayvee two years ago, he gained 1,300 yards.

Fullback Tom Kalahar, 6-1, 195 pounds, will be Harris' run-

ningmate in the backfield. Kalahar played junior varsity last season.

Two players will alternate at the flanker position. They will be carrying in plays from the sidelines. Both Dave Tietmeyer, 5-2, 180-pound senior, and John Hess, 6-0, 155-pound senior, fulfilled the same roles last year.

BILL HERTLE, a 6-3, 197-pound senior, returns to his split end position. Hertle won all-league honors last season. He will also start at interior line backer for the second consecutive year.

Rich Dunlap, a 5-11, 195-pound senior, was also a two-way starter one year ago. Dunlap will cover the offensive center and defensive ends again this fall.

Experience at both guard positions helps anchor the middle of Andover's line. Left guard Jeff Sherman and right guard Bill Schmidt were both starters last season. Sherman is 5-8, 180 pounds, while Schmidt is 5-11, 190 pounds.

Schmidt also started at defensive tackle last season. He is the team captain.

Paul Silvani, a 5-10, 185-pound senior, returns at left tackle. Also playing that position will be 6-4, 190-pound junior Ed Schneider, who played junior varsity ball last year.

Tight end Steve Koch, 6-3, 185 pounds, was also a starter last year. This season, he will see double duty as an interior line-

backer. He was a second-team line-backer last year.

BOTH OUTSIDE linebackers are veteran starters. Joe Perraut, 5-11, 180-pound senior, will be at left linebacker, while Barry Sloane, 5-11, 175-pound senior, will handle the right side.

Slated for a starting position at right end is a newcomer to the football team, Jordan Kleber. A 6-3, 200-pound senior, Kleber has represented Andover the past two years as one of the best swimmers in the area.

"He just decided to come out for football this year," Buford said. "He hasn't played football since ninth grade, but he's such a great athlete that he's won a starting position."

There is still competition for the defensive secondary positions. Left cornerback Scott Allen, 5-10, 155-pound senior, right cornerback Tom Buford, 5-11, 145-pound senior, son of the head coach, free safety George Henry, 5-7, 145-pound junior, and strong safety Mark Drumm, 5-8, 165-pound senior are the likely starters in these positions.

Drumm was a regular starter at strong safety last year. Buford started the final two games of last season at right cornerback.

Mark O'Riley also played cornerback last year. He was injured late in the season. The 6-4, 165-pound senior was also injured just prior to the start of football this fall. He is starting to catch up with his teammates.

Newcomer Randy Clark, 5-11, 155-pound junior, is also pushing for a cornerback or strong safety spot.

OTHER HOPEFULS are Mark Doss and Scott Lasser. Doss, a 5-7, 170-pound senior, is giving Schmidt a battle for the tackle spot.

Lasser, a 5-10, 170-pound junior, is showing a lot of competition for the inside linebacker position.

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