

Stevenson battles for 3d ILL crown

By C.J. RISAK

For most of us, fall is still two weeks away. But to many others, the harvest season has already arrived.

Since the middle of August, prep football players have been preparing for the upcoming season. Getting in shape is never easy, but some players and coaches are finding it tougher than others this year.

Livonia Stevenson's Jack Reardon is one coach who has had few problems during his years as head man. After all, Stevenson has been the power of the Inter-Lakes League over the past 10 years, winning the championship six times, including the last two.

But this season things could be different. Reardon has found himself with an inexperienced squad and a shortage of coaches.

"The failure of the millage to pass has hurt us," Reardon said. "Last year we had three varsity coaches: Jack Gabel, Tom Bills, and myself. But because of cutbacks, it will be just Jack and me this year."

Reardon wasn't complaining or making excuses; he was simply stating a fact. He is going to have his hands full coaching an inexperienced team shorthanded.

But Reardon will have a nucleus to build on. The biggest change for the team will be at quarterback, where Dave Hall will take over. Hall, a junior, was the back-up to Tom Smith last season, but Smith, a senior this year, has been moved to fullback, making room for Hall.

Other players that will be counted on heavily will be Jim Gemuend, who started at slotback a year ago but will be at tail-

back this season; Matt Shipley, a senior guard who started the last half of the season last year; and Mike Farnick, a senior linebacker and guard who started the third game for Stevenson last year but was forced out with a broken leg.

"We're young and not big or physical," Reardon stated. "Our players will have to improve game by game, gain experience as we go along."

Farmington High School will lack neither size nor experience, according to head coach Hal Beardsley. Returning will be the entire offensive line from last year and five of the defensive starters.

Beardsley and assistant coaches Dave Catherman (backfield) and Clarence Haus (ends and linebackers) biggest problem will be rebuilding the offensive backfield. Lack of depth could also be troublesome for the Falcons.

But the experienced line should help stabilize the situation. Returnees include Jerry Krist at end and defensive back, Scott Hazen at both offensive and defensive tackle, Joe Brown at the guard and linebacking positions, Tom Crane at center and noseguard, Mike Marok at guard and linebacker, Mark Tyler at offensive and defensive tackle, and Chuck Cisto at linebacker and end. All seven are seniors.

In league play, both Beardsley and Reardon picked Waterford to be tough, and each named the other as possible league champs. But, as it is with most coaches, both were mainly concerned with their openers—and with good reason. Farmington starts the season with Farmington Harrison, while Stevenson opens against Redford Union, who are picked to win their league championship.

Seaholm in title chase

By C.J. RISAK

At the start of every prep football season, all coaches are optimistic about their team's chances in the upcoming year.

They'll all tell you the same thing—every team starts out with the same record.

Of course, most coaches agree on who the conference favorites are and what their team has to do if they are to be successful. But, as often as not, once the season begins this information is useless. Some teams fall flat on their face, while others come through with big years.

The Southeastern Michigan Association conference is no different. Everyone expected Hazel Park and Royal Oak Kimball to be tough last year. But Birmingham Seaholm? It had been years since they had had a winning season, let alone vie for the conference championship. All Seaholm had going for them last year was a new coach, Chuck Skinner.

But that new coach was more than enough for the Maples. In his first year at the helm, Skinner took a team that had been 1-8 the previous year to a 6-3 record and kept them in the title race until the final weeks of the season.

Ironically, the team that knocked Seaholm out of the race was Skinner's former school, Hazel Park. Before switching to Seaholm, Skinner had coached for 21 years at Hazel Park, compiling a 110-85-5 record. Whatever formula he used to be successful at Hazel Park, he has instilled in the Seaholm squad as well.

Seaholm again appears to be among the

conference favorites this year. Todd Murphy and Jeff Harris, who shared the quarterback spot last year, will both be back, as well as starting backs Bill Kendro and Tom Robinson. Dennis McCardie, Tom McFarlane, and Craig White will be returning linemen, and ends Tom Hague and Bob Moses will also be back.

Southfield coach John Finlayson will be relying heavily on his three returning backfield members to help his team improve on last season's 2-7 mark. Both of Southfield's victories were against conference foes—Seaholm and Berkley. The team's inability to score points was one of Finlayson's big problems last season, however with the experienced backfield and two starting offensive linemen back, the Blue Jays should be better.

Cal Fletcher is the backfield coach for Southfield, and he will be working with returnees Eric Hefner, Tony Chapman, and Tim Moore. Line coach Pete Mazzara's job will be made easier with guard Shawn Bannan and center Mike McCann back.

Finlayson is entering his sixth season at Southfield, boasting a career record of 27-18.

Both Skinner and Finlayson pick Hazel Park and Royal Oak Kimball to be the ones to beat in the SMA again this year. Seaholm should also be in the title race.

But, for the moment, both coaches are more concerned with their opening games, which will be a big test for both schools. Seaholm opens at home against Southfield Lathrup, while Southfield opposes Birmingham Groves at home. Both games will be on Friday, Sept. 8.

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