

Rochester gridders aim for title repeat

By MARTY BUNNER
Despite losing three talented, all-county football players, Rochester coach Dick Ulrich believes his team has a good chance at defending its Greater Oakland Activities League (GOAL) co-championship.

Last year Rochester gained a share of its first league title in six years. The Falcons and Bloomfield Hills Andover finished with impressive 4-1 records.

Although both teams are relatively young, each is confident of defending the championship. Not to be outdone, West Bloomfield also considers itself a title contender.

"At this point, I think we have a real good shot at the league title," said Ulrich, whose team finished with an overall 6-3 mark last year. "Last year the league was inexperienced, but this year it's young. The key will be how fast the young people from all the teams develop."

"We're very young. We lost a lot of key people, and you just don't lose three primary players without creating giant holes in your team."

Ulrich was, of course, referring to graduated sparkplugs Jim Jagels (quarterback), Tom Dieters (wide receiver) and Terry Weathers (tight end). All were versatile, all-star performers, who are continuing their athletic careers in college.

That trio was largely responsible for Rochester being one of 1978's most well-balanced, highly explosive school-boy teams in Oakland County. According to Ulrich, Rochester was second-offensively in total yardage gained, and first in total points scored.

Rochester gained 1,517 yards rush-

ing, and 1,198 more in the air for an overall 2,715 yards. The Falcons scored a whopping 207 points, averaging exactly 20.7 points per game.

ROCHESTER'S strength this season will be an experienced offensive line, a fleet of dependable wide receivers and linebackers, and some good secondary players. The offensive backfield will be completely rebuilt, and needs valuable playing experience together.

"Offensively, our timing is coming. That's the hardest part to learn," said Ulrich. "We're not satisfied with our overall performance yet, but it's coming."

Junior Ron Jenkins appears to have a stranglehold on the starting quarterback position. He was Jagels' back up

last year, completing eight of 12 passes for 133 yards.

"Jenkins played a lot for us in key situations before the game was over," said Ulrich. "Although he didn't play as much, his completion rate was higher than Jagels. Jenkins has the leadership ability, the kids believe in him, and he can move the football. That's what's important."

The running backs will be returning letterman Dave Orlando, a junior, and senior Mike Nealon. Orlando, who carried five times for 17 yards last year, was primarily a defensive linebacker. Nealon was hurt and didn't play too much.

Some of the back-up backfield candidates are Tom Wetzen at quarterback, Gregg Zunker and Joe Pica at fullback,

and Dan Reagan and Todd Morrison at tailbacks. Senior captain Steve Garcia, who carried 28 times for 113 yards last year, is recuperating from an early-season injury.

Phil Bolduc will play at tight end, where he caught two passes for 39 yards last fall. The starting wide receivers appear to be seniors Toby Pope and George Anast.

The nucleus of the offensive line consists of three senior returning starters: Craig Hemingway (6-1, 192 pounds) at center, Steve Brown (6-8, 216 pounds) at left guard, and Todd Bandman (6-2, 192 pounds) at right tackle. The remaining line starters are senior Don Rigney at left tackle and senior John Engstrom at right guard.

The defensive leader will be nose

man Steve Brown, who made the league's honorable mention list last fall. Ulrich says Brown could be the team's most outstanding "technical" football player.

Seniors Steve Garvock and Kevin Hough, and juniors Mike Dowd and Jeff Ambrose are vigorously competing for the down tackle positions. The outside linebackers will most likely be Bandemer and Brett Machovec, and the inside linebackers will be Zunker, a sophomore, and Mike Conner.

The defensive cornermen will be Pope, another honorable mention league player from last year, and Morrison. Tim Simmons and Wetzen will play the safety spots.

"I felt we came away from our scrimmage with a good feeling about our defensive linemen... which was the big question mark going into the scrimmage," said Ulrich, whose team scrimmaged in Warren against Warren Lincoln, Anchor Bay and Detroit Pershing.

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