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Dondero challenges

Groves favored

By DENNIS O'CONNOR

Most football coaches in the Metro Suburban Association (MSA) think it's a two-team race between defending champion Birmingham Groves and Royal Oak Dondero for league honors this fall.

And Troy Athens shouldn't be too far behind.

It was the year of the Falcon in 1978, as Bill Rankin's Groves' squad finished with a perfect 9-0 regular-season record, the MSA title and a trip to the state playoffs.

Dondero plans to make it hard for Groves, however. The Royal Oak squad won't forget the narrow 7-6 defeat by the Falcons last fall.

GROVES is at a peak in its football program and is the odds-on favorite to repeat as league champions. The Falcons will be led by seniors Mike Evangelides (tackle), Chris Vogt (defensive back), Mark Mourray (end), Matt Kennedy (end) and Don Olsen (back).

ATHENS could be the dark horse in the league race this fall. Coach John Walker enters his fourth season, coming off a respectable 6-3 record.

Athens' tri-captains Stacy Cruce, Mark Robertson and Mike Prentris are the backbone of the attack. Doug Cummings, a 6-foot-3, 180-pound quarterback, will enjoy throwing to ends Marty Uirlch and Jeff Morrich.

SOUTHFIELD-LATHRUP head coach Bob Marten enters his second season after 'posting a 4-5 record in his rookie year. The Chargers fell to Groves by only a field goal, 13-10, last fall.

Senior Ron Curcio, also an excellent baseball player, will lead both the offense and defense from his guard and line-backer positions. He is 6-2, 195 pounds. Junior George Schultz will join Curcio at linebacker and also play fullback. Rich Denno, a junior, will play in both the offensive and defensive backfields. The Chargers are also blessed with two senior transfers — Russ Shoup (tackie) and Mel Tucker (linebacker-halfback-safety).

ROCHESTER ADAMS is coming off a disappointing 1-8 season, and second-year coach Joe Zelmanski hopes things go smoother this year.

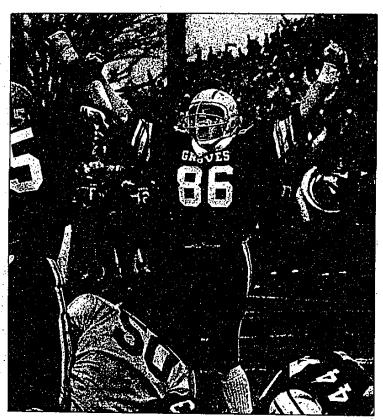
Adams will be led by seniors Steve Burgess, Kevin Connolly, Dan Fifield, Dave Grech, Lance Devoe, George Newton, John Monica and Dave Addy.

BLOOMFIELD HILLS LAHSER was only 3-6 last fall, but coach Ted Guthard thinks things will be different this year.

"We will be more experienced," Guthard said. "We should have a better season."

Lehser also hopes to avenge a 21-14 loss to city-rival Bloomfield Hills Andover when the Knights host the Barons on the final week of the season.

Lahser top players this season include Keith Kefgen, Brad Remer, John Palmer, Kevin Munson, Mark Mastrorocco, Rob Mayo, Kevin Kriebel, Paul Owens, Doug Zack and Curt Howell.



Groves' Tom Poole was one of many happy Falcons after the Birmingham squad finished last year's regular season with a perfect 9-0 record. Groves is expected to pace the MSA race again this fall. (Staff photo by Dick Kelley)