

'Marshall Plan' well ahead of schedule

By C.J. Rieak
staff writer



Alex Marshall
Not resting on laurels

To Lloyd Carr, the defensive coordinator for University of Michigan's football team, Alex Marshall's success wasn't so surprising.

"I knew he was a good football player," said Carr at Thursday's media day. "He has outstanding potential."

What was surprising was the timing of Marshall's success. It's rare for a first-year player — Marshall was a redshirt freshman in 1988 — to make a significant contribution. But this foot-4, 235-pound outside linebacker from Redford (Red) Borgess proved to be something special.

Marshall didn't just play, he started 11 of 12 games last season. He made 49 tackles, including seven for 37 yards in losses — three of which were quarterback sacks.

Such rapid success surprised Carr. "He needed to get experience," the U-M coach said. "It's hard to count on a freshman."

Marshall proved more than reliable. The progress he made last year puts him in posi-



tion to challenge for all-Big Ten accolades this year and for the remainder of his Wolverine career.

BUT SUCH projections mean little to Marshall. His opinion is blunt enough: "A lot of people have potential, but they never do anything with it. You've got to live up to it."

That is Marshall's goal — to make the most of his ability.

If he manages to come close to realizing his enormous talent, Marshall may be the finest outside linebacker to come out of U-M. He's already a proven blitzer, according to Carr.

"He's a great pass rusher," the Wolverine coach said. "He's got the size you want. The thing that's helped is he got some experience early in his career, because you know he's going to get bigger and stronger and develop

some more.

"If Alex maintains his work ethic, he can be a great one."

Already, Marshall is determined not to limit himself. "My strength is probably in pass rushing and against the run," he said. But he quickly added doing those two things well in a game doesn't necessarily mean he's performing up to his potential.

"FOR ME to play well, I've got to be consistent," Marshall, who has three more years of eligibility, explained. "I want to improve in all areas. I don't want people to look at me and say, 'He's a good pass rusher,' or 'He's good at coverage.'"

"I want to be good at everything. I want to improve all-around."

Despite a year of experience, Marshall doesn't expect it to get any easier. "In some ways, it will be," he predicted. "The nervousness of being a redshirt freshman starting is behind me."

"But now, (coaches and teammates) are looking for me to be more of a leader, to help the newer guys. And I'm looking for a little more from myself. I want to be the best I can be."

The U-M coaches are expecting a lot from Marshall, and his linebacker teammates, too. "Linebacker will be the strength of our defense," said coach Bo Schembechler. "We have a lot of depth. Our returning starters will have to work like the dickens to hold onto their spots."

That challenge doesn't worry Marshall: "Potential is one thing," he philosophized. "It's wonderful, magnificent. But what I accomplish, well, it's all up to me."

Should Marshall progress and improve on a scale equal to last year, both he and the Wolverines will enjoy spectacular success.

RU, Garden City set to disrupt NSL

By C.J. Rieak
staff writer

This season the Northwest Suburban League could prove whether last year was the beginning of a new era or just an illusion, a temporary blurring of the status quo.

There were a couple of firsts in the NSL in '88, the most impressive of which was the crowning of a new champion. Dearborn Edsel Ford had ruled the current NSL since its formation in 1988. The Thunderbirds had been perfect in league play two consecutive years.

Woodhaven ended that streak in the league opener for both teams last year, beating Edsel Ford 13-9. The game proved pivotal; it was the Thunderbirds only league loss, and it relegated them to second place behind Woodhaven. The Warriors finished 4-0, 6-3 overall; Edsel Ford was 3-1 and 6-3.

THE LOCAL entries, Redford Union and Garden City, could not overtake the front-runners. RU finished third in the NSL at 2-2 (5-4 overall), while Garden City tumbled into the basement at 0-4 (1-8 overall). Dearborn placed in between at 1-3, 4-5 overall.

Don't expect much of a change in the '89 NSL standings, although the race could take on a different complexion. Woodhaven and Edsel Ford are expected to grapple for the No. 1 spot, but unlike last season, the gap between contenders and also-rans may be wider.

For example: Last year, two of Garden City's league losses were by the margins of a single point. The Cougars were edged by one point by Woodhaven and lost to Dearborn in overtime in coach Bob Elmsinger's first season.

The '89 Cougars don't look as tough. Gone are Joe Zurianski, an all-NSL lineman, and quarterback Brad Armstrong. The lines will have to be rebuilt, with senior center-noseguard Doug Day (5-foot-9, 185-pounds) the only experienced returnee.

SENIOR JIM MARZALEK (5-10, 165) takes over at quarterback. Marzalek started in the defensive backfield in '88 and since the team has just 33 varsity players — he must play both ways again.

Operating behind an inexperienced and small (only one starter over 200 pounds) offensive line, Marzalek will have to rely on "hit-and-passing." His main target will be returning tight end John Samborski (6-4, 198).

Their overall lack of size, depth and experience could make Elmsinger's second year more difficult than his first.

At RU, the picture isn't as bleak. The Panthers have lost heavily to

Northwest Suburban

graduation — quarterback John Burdick and wide receiver-punter Joe Dellgaw set school records — and they must break in both a new coach in Shawn McGowan and a new offense (McGowan's dumped the run-and-shoot employed by former coach Jim Gibbons, now RU's athletic director).

Also gone are noseguard Chris Woodcock and defensive back Doug Robinson, both all-league performers. But RU has depth and size, and four offensive linemen return.

SENIOR DAVE STERLITZ (6-3 1/2, 200) will anchor the offensive line at center and be a defensive key at linebacker. Seniors Carl Watkins (5-3 1/2, 225) and Andy Kazar (5-3, 235) will open holes at their tackle positions for senior running back Jeff Platt (5-10, 175).

McGowan, who served as RU's defensive coordinator last year, is counting on line play to be the glue early in the season. "Woodhaven's got a lot of talent, but it will take for new players to develop and replace Burdick and Dellgaw."

Should the development exceed expectations, the Panthers may make a run at the front-runners.

But that might be expecting a lot. As Dearborn coach Chuck Baughman predicted, "Woodhaven's got a lot of starting linemen coming back, and Edsel Ford is always tough. At Redford Union, well, they've got a new coach and I think they lost a lot. My guess is they'll take a little while to get going."

Baughman's prognosis for his own team is wait "til next year. We have a lot of depth, and the thing I like is we have a lot of kids who will go only one year. But we're young. We'll replace just three seniors. Every kid that started last year was a senior except for two spots."

"I don't think Redford Union, Dearborn or Garden City can go unbeaten in the league."

Alan Snyder (5-11, 165), a safety and back-up light end and fullback, and Matt Lewicki (5-11, 215), an offensive guard-defensive end, are the co-captains. Another player to watch, a major college prospect according to Baughman, is junior lineman Andy Balesirieri (6-1, 285).

"We're nothing special," insisted Baughman.

IT MAY NOT take anything special to win the title, however.

Woodhaven does have some strong returnees in senior offensive linemen John Formentin (6-5, 200), Kevin Miller (6-2, 250) and John Salyers (6-4, 200). Formentin and Salyers were both all-NSL offensive linemen in '88. Formentin also plays inside linebacker and Miller is a defensive tackle.

However, the Warriors' losses have coach Jim Butson concerned. "I certainly think we have a chance at (the title)," he said. "But Edsel has to be the favorite."

Among the 18 seniors Butson lost from his '88 championship team are quarterback Chris Collins, tailback Carl Robak (the team's leading rusher), all-NSL linebacker-guard Rick Neuharth and center Jim Clawson.

Still, the talent is there. Junior Ernie Nemeth (5-10, 170), a starter at strong safety last season, will play both ways this year. Senior Carl Robak at tailback. Senior Dustin Snell, in his first year of varsity football, also looks dangerous as wide receiver and placekicker (he may punt, too).

Woodhaven's fate could be determined early. The Warriors face Edsel Ford in the first NSL game once again, this time at Woodhaven Sept. 23. "Our first league game is obviously so important," said Butson. "If we win that, we could win the whole thing."

JACK BRIDGES, Edsel Ford's veteran coach, wouldn't disagree. Indeed, he wondered why anyone would rate his team as a challenger.

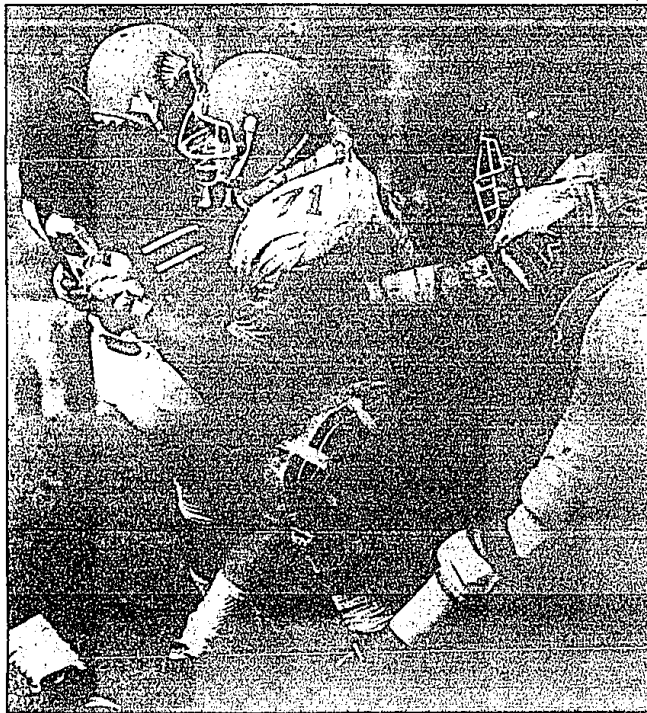
"Woodhaven's the defending champion," he noted. "We're not the defending champions. We've lost a tremendous amount of size through graduation. Some of the kids we have coming back I like real well. But I'm concerned about our physical size and squad size."

The key player Bridges must replace is quarterback-defensive back-kicker Joe Crill, voted the NSL's most valuable defensive player in '88. "He played a lot of positions for us," the Thunderbirds' coach said. "He'll be very difficult to replace."

Also gone are both offensive backs and most of the receivers. But

Six defensive starters return. Among them are senior defensive back Greg Cunningham (5-10, 175), who was also an all-NSL running back, and senior Derek Sied (5-9, 170), a linebacker and running back. Senior Brian Miller (5-7, 175), the all-NSL center, is back as well.

Bridges maintains the league race "is up in the air." But tradition favors Edsel Ford, and so does the talent.



JOHN STORAZZANO/staff photographer
Ryan Boll, dropping a Brother Rico runner in last year's Boys Bowl, anchors the Catholic Central line as a senior. Boll rates as a potential major college prospect and is one of the top players in Observerland.

Top 15 loaded with talent



Steve Hill
Harrison's outstanding kicker

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12. Harold Rankey, tackle, Westland Glenn: Enormous potential even though he didn't see much action in '88, but at 6-4, 255 he's the type who should develop as the season goes along. In only his second year of football, Rankey may be one of the keys to Glenn's success in '89. Remember Harrison's lineman Dale Katz last year? Rankey could be the same type of performer.
 13. Trent Naumcheff, receiver/linebacker, Liv. Churchill: Will team up with Sapienza (see above) to give Churchill one of the area's best one-two punches at linebacker. At 6-1, 190, Naumcheff has the size and speed to be a Division I safety. Biggest problem is that he has been plagued by injuries. His brother Brett is the long snapper for Central Michigan.
 14. Pat Bowls, fullback/tackle, Ply. Salem: The Don Nottingham (5-9, 210) of Observerland. The human bowling ball rushed for 613 yards last year for the Rocks and should do even better on an improved Rock's team in '89. Also a stout tackle on defense because of his quickness.
 15. Carl Watkins, tackle, Redford Union: Two-year varsity starter, big things are expected of the 6-3, 225-pound senior. First-year coach Shawn McGowan has a pair of stout tackles in Watkins and Andy Kazar (6-3, 235). The Panthers should be able to run the football in '89.

TOP JUNIORS

Chris White, receiver/defensive back, North Farmington; Todd Pawlowski, linebacker/right end, North Farmington; Bobby Johnson, linebacker/tackle, Livonia Franklin; Brian Kutch, quarterback/linebacker, Redford St. Agatha; Mike Turner, linebacker/fullback, Redford Thorton; Ashton Stewart, wide receiver/defensive back, Redford Catholic Central; Karl Wukle, quarterback, Plymouth Canton; Kenneth Harrington, banker/defensive back, Livonia Curetonville; Elias Sarcevic, tackle/linebacker, Farmington Harrison.

Harrison has been a thrill for Mill

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Coleman immediately stepped into the starting role at Harrison after he transferred from Albion late in his freshman year. He had started for the Albion varsity the previous fall and threw for more than 1,500 yards.

"Before I left high school, I wanted to win a state championship, whatever school I was at," he said. "I had no idea we would be in the finals the last two years."

COLEMAN BECAME an immediate star for the Hawks, who had the supporting talent to complement his abilities and make Harrison a bona-fide state contender. In a way, Coleman, who has led the Hawks to a 5-2 record the last two years, made the Harrison star shine brighter, and the Hawks helped make Coleman a bigger star.

"The past two years have been great," he said. "Whenever you're winning in football, it's great. But I've made a lot of friends here



and the school took me in with open arms. I couldn't have asked for anything better."

For talented athletes like Coleman, with senior year come the college recruiters, and they haven't had any trouble finding the Coleman family's address and/or phone number.

Coleman has been contacted by every school imaginable, but he's being cool toward the recruiting side of stardom with an entire season of high school ball still ahead.

"My parents pretty much take care of that," he said. "I don't even talk to the coaches when they call the house. My dad takes all the calls and talks with them."

"He said he wants me to enjoy my last year and as soon as football is over we can deal with the recruiters. So right now I'm concentrating on my last year of football and having a nice season."

COLEMAN HAS left the entire question wide open for now. He hasn't developed a short list of schools he's interested in and reveals no inclination toward a personal favorite.

Though he has demonstrated he can run, Coleman has built his reputation as a passer. Ironically, some schools may want him for the former reason.

Harrison doesn't run the option, which would seem to lessen the interest of schools with run-oriented offenses. Coleman does most of his running off the rollout and plays-action schemes.

"I won't say I wouldn't go to a school that mainly runs the ball," he said. "But I'd like to go to a school that mixes it up, so I can use my running abilities as well as passing. I have an open mind about it right now."

Coleman said his style is suited for a run-and-shoot offense, scrambling from the pocket and throwing on the run. He's seen Rodney Pectis play for the Detroit Lions and likes to compare himself with the former Southern Cal quarterback.

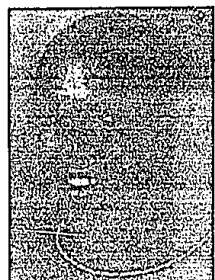
Some colleges may shy away from Coleman, however, because of his lack of size. But he believes he can play at the major college level, because his style allows him to neutralize any drawbacks caused by his 5-9 stature.

"I THINK I can make up for lack of height with other things I can do, like spreading the field, eluding the rush and finding the epic receiver," he said.

Coleman hinted a school that uses a play-action offense and allows its quarterback to bootleg and run out of the pocket might be an inside track when the recruiting battle heats up later this year.

"That would mean a lot to me," he said, "because that would move me out of the pocket. It's kinda hard to see behind a 6-foot-9 line man. It doesn't mean I can't throw from the pocket, but I prefer to run bootleg from this staying in the pocket."

The opponents who must try and defend Coleman are last year's title holders, but he knows that is merely neutral thinking.



Mill Coleman
will lead Hawks again