

Kudos for top coach, players

BY DAN O'MEARA

STAFF WRITER

In 18 seasons, Westland John Glenn's Chuck Gordon has established himself as one of the most respected football coaches in the state. But he may never have done a better job of teaching, preparing and nurturing than he did this season.

For starters, the Rockets entered the 1994 campaign with new players at 30 positions and only two regular backfield players in the Class AA running up squad.

Then the Rockets started the new season 0-2 — the first time since 1973 a Glenn team had found itself in that situation.

But Glenn produced the most amazing comeback in Overland history under Gordon's leadership.

"The Rockets were eight of their last 10 games, qualified for the playoffs a seventh time and almost reached the state championship game again. (Glenn topped No. 1-ranked Belleville in the first round of the playoffs and averaged an easier loss to Livonia Stateway in the regional final. The Rockets would have played for the Class AA title but for a Bay City Central rally and 15-12 victory in the state semifinals.)

For bringing his team back to an 8-4 finish, Gordon, who has a career record of 136-42, has been named Overland coach of the Year.

"Usually, when things go poorly, everyone wants to run for cover," he said. "But everyone said 'What can I do to be better?' — and you have to credit the senior leadership for that."

"Our players stayed positive and had great attitude. That alone made the rest of us able to turn things around. No one gave up on the coaches, and the coaches didn't give up on the players."

ALL-AREA OFFENSE

Tony Jankowski (OL), Stevenson: Jankowski was a standout on a big drive late that usually dominated opposing defenses and paved the way for Stevenson's power running attack. He started two years at guard and was a team captain.

ALL-AREA

"Tony is quick off the ball, stays on blocks and has good balance," coach Jack Reardon said. "He received our outstanding blocker award this season."

Steve Shaieb (OL), Harrison: Shaieb was a three-year starter at guard and also played defensive tackle the year, making 36 stops. The blitzer ran many of their inside plays out of his position.

"He's one of the hardest working boys we've had at Harrison," coach John Heister said. "He made himself into a good athlete with hard work in the weight room and dedication."

"He's definitely one of coach (Bob) Sutter's all-time favorite linemen. He was great on the short punt and putting around the corner on the pitch sweep."

Ron Schoenheide (OL), Glenn: Schoenheide played a key role in Glenn's turnaround and playoff drive, controlling the line at offensive tackles and opening holes for Brent Washington.

"He played his best football against excellent competition at the end of the year and in the playoffs," coach Chuck Gordon said. "He was the guy we wanted to run behind when it was winning time. He's the biggest lineman we've ever had (6-2, 300), and I think he can play some more."

Curt Katala (OL), Farmington: Coach Katala Niskanen often said the offensive line was the strength of the team, and Katala figured prominently in that assessment. He was a three-year starter at guard who spearheaded a tough line that enabled Jake Siklosky to set school rushing records.

"(Assistant) John Bechtel has coached 17 years, and he said 'Curt is the best I've ever coached,'" Niskanen said.

"The thing about Curt being a one-way player is he always played on the scout team (offense). When we went against our defense, he was over there improving his skills. You want your best offensive players — if they're not playing defense, it was not beyond him to jump in there."

Nick Bellovary (OL), Garden City: Bellovary was a versatile, two-way player for the Cougars. He was a two-time most

valuable player on defense where he was third in tackles with 32. Bellovary is a straight-A student who will play in college at Wayne State, Adrian or Kalamazoo.

"We moved him to center and all over the offensive line — and from defensive line to linebacker and back to defensive line," coach Bob Elmering said. "He would have been better as an offensive guard, but he filled a void at center."

Brad Rainko (TE), Redford CC: Rainko was a two-year, two-way starter for the Shamrocks — a strong blocker on offense and a force at defensive end. He caught 12 passes for 160 yards and one touchdown; he had 50 tackles and three sacks on defense.

"This was his best year," coach Tom Macchi said. "He's a big defensive end and has excellent technique. He helped out on offense with his catching ability. He'll play somewhere; he has the size and strength for Division I."

Kevyn Bryant (WR), Harrison: A three-year starter who has contributed to Michigan, Bryant caught 33 passes for 630 yards and 10 touchdowns. He is the third all-time leading receiver at Harrison behind Brian Harrison and Bryan Weidman with 61 career catches for 1,223 yards and 18 TDs. A fierce hitter at free safety, Bryant was the leading tackler (101) and had 10 interceptions. He also returned punts and kicks.

"He's one of the most outstanding athletes we've ever had at Harrison," coach John Harrison said. "You can put him in the same class with John Miller and Mike Coleman and all the great athletes. He can do it all on either side of the ball."

"When he came to Harrison (as a sophomore), we thought he was going to be a tackler, but we moved him to wide receiver and he became an all-star."

Richard Beal (WR), Farmington: Beal was another 48-minute player. He had 25 receptions for 443 yards and one TD — a 72-yarder for the only score in a game at Livonia Stateway. As a defensive back, he had three interceptions, nine pass deflections and 24 tackles. Beal averaged 10 yards per kick return and 12 on punts.

"I don't think I've had a receiver who has such soft hands," coach Jim O'Leary said. "He can catch the ball in traffic and take a hit. He concentrates so hard on the ball he rarely misses a catch."

"He does his job every day and is a

FOOTBALL

FIRST-TEAM OFFENSE

LINEMEN
 w. Tony Jankowski (6-0, 239), Stevenson
 w. Steve Shaieb (5-10, 197), Harrison
 w. Ron Schoenheide (6-2, 300), Glenn
 w. Curt Katala (5-9, 160), Farmington
 w. Nick Bellovary (6-2, 300), Garden City
QUARTERBACKS
 w. Brad Rainko (5-4, 225), Redford CC
 w. Kevin Bryant (5-0, 175), Harrison
 w. Richard Beal (5-0, 160), Farmington
BACKS
 w. Brent Washington (5-0, 170), Glenn
 w. Nick Williams (5-2, 245), Harrison
 w. Jason Granger (5-8, 145), Harrison
 w. Stan Stevenson (5-11, 160), Wayne
 w. Bill Matti (5-0, 170), St. Agatha

SPECIALIST

w. Ron Bialobrzaski (5-2, 180), Redford CC

FIRST-TEAM DEFENSE

LINEMEN
 w. Andy Short (5-0, 220), Redford CC
 w. Dave Ross (5-0, 212), Stevenson
 w. Ryan Lewis (5-11, 240), Farmington
 w. Craig Martin (5-2, 197), Farmington
 w. Brian Sirlani (5-0, 180), Thurston
 w. John Spolsky (5-0, 180), Redford CC
 w. Corey McClelland (5-1, 230), Wayne
 w. Mike Redington (5-9, 185), Stevenson
 w. Dan Kanaan (5-11, 240), Canton
BACKS
 w. Dave Hensel (5-9, 185), Harrison
 w. James Hagelthorn (5-11, 170), Glenn
 w. Jake Siklosky (5-11, 185), Farmington
 w. Scott Goldman (5-9, 165), Stevenson

COACH OF THE YEAR

Chuck Gordon — Westland John Glenn

SECOND-TEAM OFFENSE

LINEMEN
 w. Phil Grace (5-11, 200), John Glenn
 w. Mike Lawler (5-10, 215), Redford CC
 w. Jim Smith (5-10, 190), John Glenn
 w. Jim Smith (5-11, 195), Harrison
 w. Ben Townsend (5-10, 230), Stevenson
QUARTERBACKS
 w. Dave Enos (5-0, 215), Franklin
 w. Chris West (5-0, 185), St. Agatha
BACKS
 w. Damon Frenco (5-9, 155), Garden City
 w. Mike Brennan (5-11, 195), Salem
 w. Leroy Gardner (5-10, 165), Canton
SPECIALIST
 w. Kyle Vessell (5-10, 165), Harrison

SECOND-TEAM DEFENSE

LINEMEN
 w. Eric Hine (5-11, 261), Stevenson
 w. Bryan Strickland (5-4, 205), Redford CC
 w. Jeremy Smith (5-0, 185), Harrison
 w. Jim Churcho (5-0, 182), Thurston
QUARTERBACKS
 w. Matt Matti (5-0, 185), Church
 w. Evan Johnson (5-11, 202), Harrison
 w. Matt O'Neil (5-11, 190), John Glenn
 w. Jeff Ford (5-9, 180), North Farmington
BACKS
 w. Sam Marzoc (5-0, 185), Redford CC
 w. Martin Serran (5-11, 195), Canton
 w. Chris Miller (5-9, 170), Stevenson
 w. James Bialobrzaski (5-9, 150), Wayne

HONORABLE MENTION

Forrest Washington (QB), Harrison
 Nick Williams (TE), Harrison
 Jason Granger (WR), Harrison
 Stan Stevenson (WR), Wayne
 Bill Matti (TE), St. Agatha
 Ron Bialobrzaski (TE), Redford CC



Andy Short
Redford CC

Dave Ross
Stevenson

Ryan Lewis
Farmington



Craig Martin
Stevenson



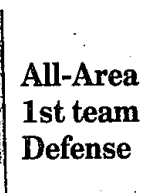
Jeremy Eaton
Salem



Brian Sirlani
Thurston



John Spolsky
Redford CC



Corey McClelland
Wayne



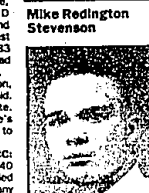
Mike Redington
Stevenson



Dan Kanaan
Canton



Dave Hensel
Harrison



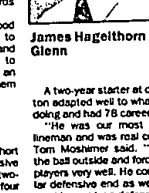
James Hagelthorn
Glenn



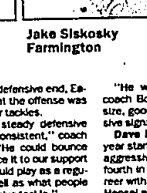
Jake Siklosky
Farmington



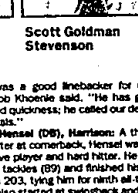
Scott Goldman
Stevenson



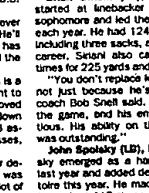
Kevin Bryant
Harrison



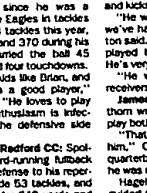
Curt Katala
Farmington



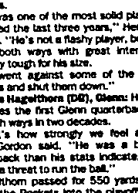
Nick Bellovary
Garden City



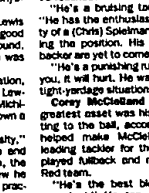
Brad Rainko
Redford CC



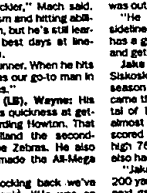
Richard Beal
N. Farmington



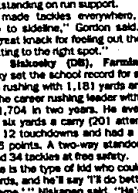
Kevin Bryant
Harrison



Stan Stevenson
Wayne



Bill Matti
St. Agatha



Ron Bialobrzaski
Redford CC

All-Area 1st team Defense

"He was a good linebacker for us," coach Bob Khorien said. "He has good size, good quickness; he called our defensive signals."

Dave Hensel (DB), Harrison: A three-year starter at cornerback, Hensel was an aggressive player and hard hitter. He was fourth in tackles (89) and finished his career with 203 yards with great intensity. Hensel also started at swingback and had one touchdown catch. He returned punts and kicks.

"He was one of the most solid players we've had the last three years," Harrison said. "He's not a flashy player, but he plays both ways with great intensity. He's very tough for his size."

"We went against some of the best receivers and shut them out," James Hagelthorn (DB), Glenn: Hagelthorn was the first Glenn quarterback to play both ways in two decades.

"That's how strongly we feel about him," Gordon said. "He was a better quarterback than his stats indicate, and he was a threat to run the ball."

Hagelthorn passed for 550 yards and guided the Rockets into the playoffs. He had two interceptions at free safety and was outstanding on run support.

"He made tackles everywhere, from sideline to sideline," Gordon said. "He has a great knack for fooling out the play and getting to the right spot."

Jake Siklosky (DB), Farmington: Siklosky set the school record for single-season rushing with 1,181 yards and became the career rushing leader with a total of 1,704 in two years. He averaged almost six yards a carry (201 attempts, scored 12 touchdowns and had a league-high 75 punts. A free safety, he also had 34 tackles and five interceptions.

"Jake is the type of kid who could gain 200 yards, and he'll say 'I'd better get out of there,'" Kanaan said. "He's a motivated, you don't have to tell him to get in the weight room. He's doing it now."

James Hagelthorn (DB), Glenn: Hagelthorn was a great work ethic. He did things in the offseason that will help him do even better next year.

Scott Goldman (DB), Stevenson: Goldman had the second-highest number of defensive points for the Spartans. He was a two-way stud who helped make the Stevenson offense go as a running back. Sharing the workload with Chris Matti, he rushed for 742 yards and the TDs and interceptions.

"Scott was the best conditioned offensive on our team," Reardon said. "He played with the same intensity in his fourth quarter as he did the first. He's a great competitor."

All-Area 1st team Offense

Kevin Bryant
Harrison



Kevin Bryant
Harrison



Stan Stevenson
Wayne



Richard Beal
N. Farmington



Jason Granger
Harrison