

Falcons

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They were close last year, losing twice in overtime and 7-0 to Lakes Division champ Livonia Stevenson.

If not for a loss to Plymouth Canton on the eighth Friday, Farmington would have qualified but finished fifth in its region.

"We were right there," Niskanen said. "We want to get in the playoffs. But it's going to be tough to get in because of the teams in our region."

A factor in Farmington's favor is senior tailback Jake Siskosky (6-1, 190). He rushed for a school-record 1,183 yards and 12 touchdowns while averaging 5.9 yards per carry.

The All-Observer player will play two ways again, moving from free safety when he caught a break from the defense to fullback on offense, to outside linebacker.

"We expect Jake to have a great year," Niskanen said, "not only offensively but also defensively."

"He's a hands-on player; he has to be up there in close contact. Offensively, we're going to give him the ball."

While opponents will key on stopping Siskosky, senior quarterback Tim Streit (6-10, 172) and senior fullback Nick Latre (6-0, 185) will try to offset that fact.

Strit has a full season of starting experience behind him, passing for 485 yards and three TDs while completing 28 of 65 passes.

"He's confident in what he does; he's a leader," Niskanen said.

said, adding Streit is a 4.0 student. "Because he's an outstanding student in the class, he's also an outstanding student of the game."

Latre was a backup to Ryan Lewis but rushed for as many yards (224) and a touchdown on 32 carries. Like Siskosky, he's an all-round athlete who plays basketball and baseball.

"When the game is on the line, he wants the ball in his hands," Niskanen said. "Not that he doesn't practice well, but he's a gamer."

Latre can run the trap and dive plays and Streit throws a nice quick pass, according to Niskanen, but there's no doubt Siskosky will see the ball more.

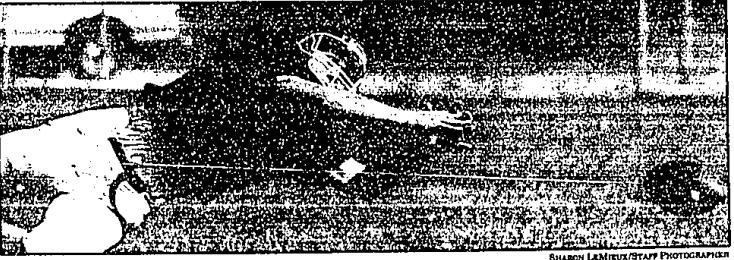
"We'll have play-action and bootlegs to take the pressure off Jake," Niskanen said, "but in the I-formation people have to stop the I-back."

Niskanen is positive about the running game because of a good offensive line, too.

Senior guard Adam Tanielian moves from guard to center and is a Division I prospect at 6-foot-3 and 272 pounds.

"Size-wise, he's there, but a lot depends on what he does this year," Niskanen said, adding Tanielian also snags on extra points and field goals. "Sometimes that's the difference between a partial scholarship and no scholarship."

Senior Patrick Seremet (6-8,



SHARON LEMIRE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

100) trades places with Tanielian and will play left guard.

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"Jake is only as good as those guys up front," Niskanen said.

Tight end is a new position for junior Adam Weber (6-4, 191), who will rotate with seniors Dave Dilworth (6-3, 185) and Matt Niskanen (6-2, 182) since all three will be needed on defense.

Tim Wheills caught 16 passes last year but has graduated. Next among pass catchers was Dilworth with four receptions.

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Junior Nick Bieri (5-9, 222) is the new noseguard, senior Kyle Dubus (5-9, 175) and Fisher the tackles, Siskosky and Weber the outside linebackers.

Tanielian and Foreman will probably play up front in goal-line situations.

The Falcons have a handful of candidates at inside linebacker — Niskanen, Dilworth, senior Tom Mondoux (5-9, 167), Nick Brown (5-9, 168), Ben Lewis (6-10, 193) and Matt Hickey (6-11, 174) as well as junior Mike Johnston (6-0, 163).

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