

Clarenceville Trojans gridders try to maintain winning ways

BY BRAD EMONS
STAFF WRITER

Is Livonia Clarenceville more than a two-man football team? "We're on a mission to prove we're not," said coach Greg Hudkins, who lost his one-two punch of Tim Shaw and Steve Meadows, the dynamic duo that helped the Trojans to a 13-1 record and a berth in the Division V state championship game.

"We had two players we designed our offensive scheme around. We would have been crazy not to do that."

Clarenceville is not accustomed to losing streaks under Hudkins, who is 34-3 in three seasons.

The Trojans open the season today against Macomb Lutheran North in an early-season Metro Conference showdown.

North will be glad to see Tim Shaw, now at Penn State, is gone after setting state and school records for career yards (7,223) and touchdowns (131). Meadows, slated to play at Grand Rapids Junior College, was a bruising fullback and linebacker who finished with 1,126 yards on the ground and 18 TDs.

"We'll win and/or lose games this year up front," Hudkins said. "Last year we had to trick people to get room for Tim. This year we'll have to sustain drives, because nobody is going to break 90 yards."

Everybody returns from last year's team with the exception of Shaw. Meadows, offensive tackle Josh Ghena and tight end Bill Nesbitt.

The Trojans have only 21 players, including nine seniors. But that group has a ton of regular-season and playoff experience.

"We have nine seniors who can all be captain," Hudkins said. "And all 21 kids can play. We don't have the numbers and it might sound strange, but we have depth."

Quarterback position is not a concern with the return of starter Pete Shaw, a 6-foot-4, 171-pound senior.

The difference between Pete's junior and senior year is that he's more confident; he's bigger and stronger," Hudkins said. "I'd imagine he'll step it up."

Junior Jeff Fioretti (5-9, 193) will be the lead back.

"He's had a year and a half of varsity experience," Hudkins said. "He's a good athlete, but he doesn't have the all-around speed obviously Tim had. He's around a 4.75 (40-yard dash time); he's a hard-nosed, tough kid."

Sophomore Allen Garratt (5-9, 176), junior Matt Saylor and sophomore newcomer Bruno Shkreli (5-9, 170) will fill in at fullback. Senior Aaron Allison (5-9, 174) inherits the wingback position.

Look for the Trojans to throw more this year, especially with the return of senior wide receivers Glenn Garratt (6-6, 179) and Josh Silvernail (6-1, 174).

"We're still a wing-T team, but we have to keep people honest," Hudkins said. "Glenn has good hands and he'll hit you. Josh is our slash, a guy who can play wide receiver and run our offense."

The tight end will be senior Ryan Bierschbach (6-0, 189), who filled in for an injured Nesbitt during the playoffs.

"He worked really hard in the off-season and has gotten a lot stronger," Hudkins said.

The team's strength, however, lies in the offensive line. Four of five starters return led by first-team all-area senior guard Andrew Shaw (6-0, 266) and senior guard Justin Robbins (6-10, 204).

Also returning on the line is right tackle Justin Lohman (6-3, 225) and junior left tackle Frank Pointer (6-0, 268). The starting center is returnee Sean Duba (5-8, 218).

Clarenceville is not accustomed to losing streaks under Greg Hudkins.

Eight players return on defense led by linebacker Andrew Shaw, who had a team-

high 95 tackles. The other linebackers are Robbins, junior Mike Lass (6-0, 193) and Shkreli.

The tackles will be Pointer, who excelled in last year's playoffs, along with sophomore Russell Spencer (6-1, 272), who is out for the first game because of an academic matter. Lohman moves to defensive end where he'll be a disruptive force. Duba and sophomore J.J.

Lohman will play at nose guard. The other defensive end spot will be manned by junior returnee Mark Simpson (5-11, 196) and Bierschbach.

The cornerback position "will be done by committee," according to Hudkins. The group includes Garratt, Pete Shaw, Silvernail, Allison, sophomore Paul Schneider (5-10, 165) and Alan Garratt.

"The base defense looks a lot

like last year, but the rules are different, especially on the defensive line," Hudkins said. "It's a gap-control defense, but they'll be more aggressive to the ball."

Shkreli will do the placekicking until Joe Park and Ali Ishmail return from overseas. Fioretti will be the kickoff man and Andrew Shaw the punter.

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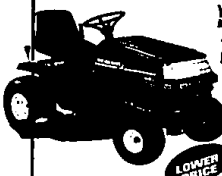
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DAWN M. SCHULTZ, Attorney

840 W. Lake Road, Suite 201,
Troy, MI 48068

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File No. 2002-284, 86-C-32

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Estate of Harold E. Bierschbach,

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Personal Representative: Gloria

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Attorney: Dawn M. Schultz, P.C.,

840 W. Lake Road, Suite 201,

Troy, MI 48068. Telephone 486-2779.

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