

Monday, September 7, 1981

Prep football preview

Southfield: SMA team to beat

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

It's a consensus. The football team to beat in the Southeastern Michigan Association is Southfield High.

Head coaches Frank Buford of Bloomfield Hills Andover, Chuck Skinner of Birmingham Seaholm and Jeff Keller of Troy already have visions of fleet-footed, all-area running back DeVoe Cornell outfoxing their defense and generally making life difficult.

Even Blue Jay coach John Finlayson acknowledges the potential of his talent-laden backfield.

"Good team speed should be our big strength," Finlayson said. "Hopefully, we won't have any weaknesses besides inexperience for some of our linemen."

"Winning our first four ballgames is the key," added the veteran coach. "If we can do that, we've got a good chance at winning the league and going undefeated."

Andover, Buford said, "is going to be respectable. This is the most inexperienced team we've had at Andover, but we have some real raw talent. I'll keep the pressure off by not naming names, but there are some players here who are going to be outstanding before their careers are over."

"But for us to be successful," added Buford, "this team is going to have to mature in a hurry. We have players who haven't played together, and they're fundamentally struggling."

The Barons' schedule provides an early opportunity for gaining experience. The squad opens against Dearborn Edsel Ford (7-2 last year, including two losses to playoff teams) followed by a bout with the Blue Jays.

For Keller's Colts (5-4 last year), all that has to happen is execution. Troy's offensive backfield is back in full force, and Keller is counting on his

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older-and-wiser seniors to make the difference.

The question marks lie in the offensive line and a youthful defense.

Before the Colts lock horns with the Blue Jays in the third game of the season, there's time to toughen up. Troy confronts Clawson in the opener before taking on the floundering Maples.

Poor Seaholm. Coach Chuck Skinner said, "These have been the toughest two weeks I've ever put in. We've been plagued (by injuries, the flu and strep throat). We've had an average of 12 guys out sick for up to 10 days at a time."

"It's disastrous trying to teach anything when you're down to 21 guys out of a possible 36. Plus we lost 21 seniors. The whole team is basically new."

Suffice to say it's a reconstruction year for the Maples.

TEAM: Southfield
COACH: John Finlayson, who begins his ninth year with the Blue Jays.
CAREER RECORD: 46-27
1980 RECORD: 4-5

KEY RETURNING PLAYERS: Loren Vandenberg, quarterback, senior; DeVoe Cornell, halfback, senior; Reggie Hayes, halfback, senior; Cary Moore, fullback, senior; Marty Heits, offensive guard, senior; Scott Lawra-



MINDY SAUNDERS/staff photographer

Southfield quarterback Loren Vandenberg is hauled down during a recent practice.

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Southfield's DeVoe Cornell, a highly touted halfback, should be hard to catch during the 1981 season.

North, Harrison stay strong

By C.J. Risak
staff writer

quickness and speed.

WEAKNESSES: Running backs. Graduation took last year's starters, leaving a gap to fill. While capable runners are available, depth may be a problem.

KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL SEASON: Getting the passing game in gear and finding dependable running backs, both starters and backups.

TEAMS TO BEAT IN LEAGUE:

North was the Northwest Suburban League champion last year and appears to be a good bet to repeat. Westland John Glenn and Redford Union are stiffest opposition. Livonia Franklin is also improved.

TEAM: Farmington Harrison
COACH: John Herrington
LAST YEAR'S RECORD: 10-1
KEY RETURNING PLAYERS: Bill Miller, fullback/linebacker,

senior; Steve Sweeney, tailback, senior; Bob Kassab, offensive tackle/defensive tackle, senior; Eric Womys, offensive-defensive tackle, senior; Dave Blackmer, kicker, junior.

TEAM STRENGTHS: The kicking game. Traditionally a strong point for Harrison, Blackmer is expected to be every bit as good as Paul Rogind, who set Big Ten kicking records for Minnesota. Bob Wood (5-foot-11, 175), a senior who will inherit the quarterback position, is a strong passer and that part of the offense should be effective. Defense is also sound.

TEAM WEAKNESSES: Inexperience in the secondary and injuries. Paul Prestel, a split end, and Jim Love, a defensive end and offensive tackle, both broke collarbones and are expected to be lost for half the season.

KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL SEASON: Quarterback Wood's development. Much of the Harrison season will depend on how well he plays.

TEAMS TO BEAT IN LEAGUE: Livonia Churchill and Harrison have battled for the top spot for the last few years. Things should not change much this season. Walled Lake Western is also building a strong team and return a strong running back, Paul Remms.

TEAM: Farmington
COACH: Hal Beardley
LAST YEAR'S RECORD: 2-7
KEY RETURNING PLAYERS: Dan Antishin, quarterback, senior; Tim Cislo, end/safety, senior; Paul Kobel, offensive tackle/defensive end, senior; Don Devine, punter, junior.

TEAM STRENGTHS: Passing game, led by Antishin and several good receivers. The offensive and defensive backfields return intact.

TEAM WEAKNESSES: Depth and kicking game. Poor punting cost Farmington dearly last year in a season in which they lost their Inter-Lakes League contests by a total of only 17 points.

KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL SEASON: Improved kicking by Devine and steering clear of injuries. Beyond the senior starters, there isn't much depth. If seniors don't come through, it could be another long season for Farmington.

TEAMS TO BEAT IN LEAGUE: In the ILL, you start with Livonia Stevenson and work from there. Only four teams remain in a conference long-dominated by Stevenson. Last year, Farmington lost, 8-0, at Stevenson.



Farmington High hopes to develop its passing game with quarterback Dan Antishin, who started seven games last season.

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