

No SMALL task

Seaholm chases 4th straight title; speedy Dorn leads Southfield's bid

By Neal Haldane
staff writer

Birmingham Seaholm, a state playoff qualifier last season, should have a battle on its hands this fall as the Maples attempt to capture a fourth straight Southeastern Michigan Association football title.

Coaches agree that the SMA will be more balanced and competitive this year with three to five teams having legitimate shots at the title.

Besides Seaholm, which remains a favorite, Southfield gains the most respect from opposing coaches.

But strong challenges will come from Troy, Royal Oak Kimball and Ferndale.

The remaining schools — Andover, Berkley and Hazel Park — could spring an upset or two along the way.

"I don't know who is not going to be tough," said Southfield coach Cal Fletcher. "I don't think there will be a breather on the schedule. It's going to be a real slugfest."

SEAHOLM: Winners of 28 straight SMA contests, Seaholm returns to defend its title with all-star linebacker Marc Spencer (6-foot-6, 235 pounds). He is listed in the top 50 players in Sireet and Smith's high school report and is in the top 25 in a USA Today poll, according to coach Chuck Skinner.

But it's the offense which has the most experience.

Southeastern Michigan

Fullback Walter Hall (8-0, 195), who rushed for 725 yards and scored 10 touchdowns last season, is ready for his third year running the ball. His offensive line with Spencer at tackle, Scott Keough (8-1, 200) at center, Mike Kauth (5-11, 210) at guard and Scott Jaden (6-2, 215) at light end, should open some holes. But rookie quarterback George Ziegler (5-10, 170) is a question mark.

"I don't know if we'll have the passing attack we had before, but we're going to try," Skinner said. "Defense is the most important thing, and that's where we're least experienced. But we'd like to make league history by winning our fourth title in a row."

SOUTHFIELD: Torin Dorn.

That's all Fletcher had to say when asked about his team's strengths.

"With him, we can score from anywhere on the field," he said.

Tailback Dorn (6-1, 190) scored 11 touchdowns and ran for 1,181 yards during the Blue Jays 4-5 season last year.

Of course, Dorn will have plenty of help on the offense with the return of seven other starters. Tackle Don Walker (6-4, 245), center Eric Wits (8-0, 202), guard Clarence Rose (6-0, 195), split end Rod Hurst (6-2, 185), quarterback J. Jewett (5-7, 165), fullback Mark Vaughn (5-10, 185) and flanker Ray Hopson (5-11, 200) will anchor the offense.

Lack of defensive depth may cause some problems for the Blue Jays. Returning defensive starters include Rose at end, Hopson and Jeff Colten (6-0, 185) at inside

linebacker and Dorn at safety.

"We're going to have to get ready fast," Fletcher said. "Seaholm is our first league game and second game overall."

TROY: The second-place Colts, 7-2 overall last year, look to move up one more notch this season.

And the key to that may rest on the toes of senior punter Kurt Schram (6, 178) and junior place-kicker Scott Kanle.

"We've always had excellent specialists and this year could develop into the best," coach Jeff Keller said.

The offensive backfield also is solid as running backs John Spinosi (5-8, 180) and John Gyzmanaki (5-8, 155) and fullback Jim Milewski (5-9, 181) return for their senior seasons along with guards Tim Fairman (6-0, 195) and Shane Plannee (5-11, 180).

But inexperience in both the offensive and defensive lines could pose problems.

"It really depends on how our young kids come along," Keller said. "We're starting an all junior offensive line with the exception of one or two players."

ANDOVER: While Seaholm, Southfield and Troy place the emphasis on offense, the Barons look to their defense to move them up from a seventh-place (4-5) finish last season.

"We have excellent athletes in the defensive secondary and line positions," said coach Frank Buford.

Key returnees include defensive end Nathan Dix (6-4, 230), outside linebacker Jamie Little (6-0, 180), cornerbacks Mark Miller (6-0, 175) and Mark Allen (5-11, 165) along with free safety Jason Waldman (5-11, 165).

Offensively, quarterback Bob Hawkins (5-10, 155), an "Oakland County Doug Flutie kind of player," Buford said, provides the catalyst. Brother Rice transfer fullback Chip Winicki (6-2, 185) should help Hawkins in the backfield.

But the linebacker corps is inexperienced along with the offensive line. And the team lacks depth with only 30 kids on the roster.

"I feel we will be competitive," Buford said. "And I don't think there's a great team on my schedule."



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Andover quarterback Bob Hawkins, who coach Frank Buford calls an "Oakland County Doug Flutie," will direct the Barons' offensive attack.

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