

PA **PRELIVE**

2018 HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

PREVIEW

96 pages of team-by-team breakdowns



INSIDE | PIAA Class actions difficult to judge after first two years

Wednesday, Aug. 22, 2018

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 Neshaminy 94
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PRELIVE TOP 20



1. SAINT JOSEPH'S PREP



2. COATESVILLE



3. ARCHBISHOP WOOD

4. MALVERN PREP

13. PENNSBURY

5. LA SALLE

14. D'TOWN EAST

6. NORTH PENN

15. PENN WOOD

7. GARNET VALLEY

16. POTTS GROVE

8. NESHAMINY

17. EPISCOPAL ACAD.

9. PERK VALLEY

18. UPPER DUBLIN

10. D'TOWN WEST

19. SPRINGFIELD-D

11. C.B. SOUTH

20. QUAKERTOWN

12. PENNRIDGE

OTHERS RECEIVING VOTES

West Chester Rustin, Unionville, Marple Newtown, Academy Park, Interboro, Haverford High



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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL 2018

Size Matters

PIAA's Class actions difficult to judge after first two years



PETE BANNAN — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Receiver Tayshon Harmon, left, and quarterback Desman Johnson Jr. have watched two promising seasons at Penn Wood come to crashing halts at the hands of powerful Perkiomen Valley. This year, they know that won't happen, as the Patriots drop back a step into Class 5A, while Perk Valley remains in Class 6A.

By Matthew De George

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It's with a hushed tone that Ato Troop thinks back to last season's finale at Penn Wood football camp.

Each of the last two seasons, Troop's team has run across dreaded Perkiomen Valley in the District 1 Class 6A playoffs. Two years ago, the Vikings ran up 55 points in a lopsided win over the No. 14 Patriots. Last fall, a game that stung immeasurably more, saw the second-seeded Vikings recover from a 16-point second-half deficit to claim a 38-30 win.

There's one consolation for Troop and his players: The 2018 season won't end at the hands of Perkiomen Valley. Even as they convene for preseason camp, that end-of-season truth is secure.

It's not due to the Patriots' growth as a team. It's because the new PIAA football classifications have the Patriots in Class 5A while the Vikings remain solidly in 6A.

If Troop has the opportunity to gameplan for a playoff contest this season, he'll still focus on Xs and Os, on executing, on being the better team on the day. He won't have to worry about structural disparities, like having 43 Patriots in uniform against 90-something Perk Valley players.

More than that, Troop won't fret over the week-to-week stress of merely qualifying for the playoffs. It took an 8-2 record for Penn Wood to squeeze into the District 1 Class 6A field last year, emerging as the champion of a Del Val League in which it was the only 6A team. By comparison, league mate Glen Mills grabbed the 14th spot in the Class 5A field last year at 3-6.

"We were 8-2, won the conference and we were a 15 seed driving an hour for a playoff game," Troop said. "We still had an opportunity to win that game, but if we are in 5A, we would've been like a three or four seed, playing at home, which makes a huge difference. I think the players like it because they know in the playoffs they might get an opportunity to play another Delco team. We might play Academy Park twice or get an opportunity to play Springfield or Marple Newtown, and these are guys that they know, they train with in the offseason. So from a competitive standpoint, it's nice."



MARK PALCZEWSKI — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Archbishop Wood's Luke Stengel, left, and Ryan Loughlin, right, celebrate with tight end Kyle Pitts after his touchdown catch against Gateway in the PIAA Class 5A football final at Hersheypark Stadium last December. The Vikings are once again the class of 5A, though the school's enrollment has dropped and they now voluntarily play up into Class 5A.

Class

FROM PAGE 3

The conversations that Troop and his coaching staff are having at Penn Wood are experienced all across District I and across Pennsylvania. The PIAA has navigated the first two-year cycle in the new six-classification system for football, a system which contains distinct impermanence for many. Schools like Penn Wood are at the constant risk of seeing their classifications change, sometimes for the better, sometimes not. And where the challenge in a densely populated area like Southeastern Pa. is about

success, the wide geographic spread of Pennsylvania posits a massive logistical challenge elsewhere.

The classes are, by necessity, transient, with surveys conducted on two-year cycles to sort schools by enrollment. Once programs settled into a structure, their post-season opponents can abruptly change. With more classes come more interfaces between them, which opens opportunities for schools to rise or fall. And that's not to even mention the approval by the PIAA this summer of a success-factor formula that augments enrollments by factoring in transfers and wins in inter-district competitions, a system so distant that few coaches have even begun to explore its pos-

sible ramifications.

The system is usually too vast to affect the day-to-day operations. But at the end of the season, it's easy to look back and wonder 'what if'... What if we'd had this talent in a smaller class? What if that team had just one or two more students and not been in our class?

"It's definitely going to be an interesting story and a major part of the season," Pottsgrove football coach Bill Hawthorne said. "But right now it's hard to project it."

With more changes on the horizon, it's as good a time as any to reflect on the first two years of the six classifications, in the sport for which it was first adopted and see what its effects have been.

Chances are you're not looking at the six-classification system in the same way its designer did.

When Bob Tonkin, a longtime administrator in District 9 in western Pennsylvania, devised the system in 2015, he didn't see the six classes as being about state championships. As easy as it is, in a time of increasing animosity between so-called boundary and non-boundary schools in which the latter is gobbling up a disproportionate share of championships, Tonkin didn't design the system as a pacifier, to dole out more trophies and satiate the masses.

CLASS » PAGE 5



PETE BANNAN — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Aaron Young, left, and Coatesville will be one of the favorites in District 1 in Class 6A. But to get to Hershey, they will likely have to get past nationally ranked St. Joe's Prep, which beat them in the state semifinals last season.

Class

FROM PAGE 4

He looked at it the other way, in football especially. More state championships equaled more teams qualifying for district and state competition, the kinds of important games that are most memorable and meaningful for student-athletes. The mechanics of the plan added a wrinkle of compromise by flattening the season. With the optional Week 0, for a 10th regular-season game or second scrimmage, teams play fewer games while also increasing their chances of postseason football. The broadening of the system to more classes shortened the season, avoiding conflicts with the winter season. While initially taken by surprise with its application to most team sports and an expansion of classes almost across the board, Tonkin is happy to see increased inclusiveness beyond football.

So while the plan is occasionally derided as more trophies for all, that wasn't its intent.

"Our purpose in fighting for the six-classification system, it was always going back to the idea of getting more teams in-

involved in the playoffs than we had before with four classifications," said George Shue, associate executive director of the Pennsylvania Scholastic Football Coaches Association (PS-FCA). "That was our intent. I think with PIAA, that's the way they looked at it as well."

Tonkin, who serves on a number of committees in District 9 and travels frequently to PIAA events, has garnered a lot of feedback. He's not self-aggrandizing, but he's found most of the response positive. For football specifically, he cites the safety edge of the shortened schedule, while the increase in classes has necessitated closer relationships between districts, particularly in rural parts of the state that rely on regional contests.

"In my travels, I have not heard a negative comment from any of those sources about the increase in classifications," Tonkin said. "Some of my thoughts and some of the reasons why I got behind it and put this together is that it gives our student athletes a great opportunity to play in district and inter-district competition. It increases the number of those chances for student-athletes."

CLASS » PAGE 6

2017 PIAA FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Class 6A

FIRST ROUND

Friday, Nov. 17

Coatesville 42, Pennsbury 2
Garnet Valley 28, Pennridge 20
Parkland 30, Bethlehem Freedom 6
Cumberland Valley 28, Hempfield 7
Manheim Township 28, Wilson 14
State College 21, Delaware Valley 14

SATURDAY, NOV. 18

St. Joseph's Prep 31, Northeast 0
Pine-Richland 42, Pittsburgh Central Catholic 7

QUARTERFINALS

Friday, Nov. 24

Coatesville 35, Garnet Valley 28

Saturday, Nov. 25

St. Joseph's Prep 49, Parkland 14
Pine Richland 49, State College 21
Manheim Township 24, Cumberland Valley 21

SEMIFINALS

Friday, Dec. 1

St. Joseph's Prep 53, Coatesville 49

Saturday, Dec. 2

Pine Richland 28, Manheim Township 7

FINAL

Saturday, Dec. 9

Pine Richland 41, St. Joseph's Prep 21

Class 5A

FIRST ROUND

Friday, Nov. 17

Wyoming Valley West 32, Whitehall 21
Springfield (Delco) 17, Upper Dublin 6
Unionville 36, Marple Newtown 21
Hollidaysburg 30, Grove City 27
Manheim Central 21, Cocalico 20

Saturday, Nov. 18

Governor Mifflin 26, Harrisburg 14
Archbishop Wood 36, Simon Gratz 6
Gateway 21, Penn Trafford 16

QUARTERFINALS

Friday, Nov. 24

Unionville 35, Springfield (Delco) 25
Manheim Central 30, Governor Mifflin 29

Saturday, Nov. 25

Archbishop Wood 41, Wyoming Valley West 14
Gateway 49, Hollidaysburg 30

SEMIFINALS

Friday, Dec. 1

Archbishop Wood 49, Unionville 28
Gateway 31, Manheim Central 28

FINAL

Friday, Dec. 8

Archbishop Wood 49, Gateway 14

Class 4A

FIRST ROUND

Thursday, Nov. 16

Erie Cathedral Prep 56, University Prep 0

Friday, Nov. 17

Imhotep Charter 40, Cardinal O'Hara 7
Valley View 24, Berwick 21 (OT)
Bethlehem Catholic 49, Pottsgrove 14
Berks Catholic 48, East Pennsboro 7
Bishop McDevitt 47, Lampeter-Strasburg 17

Saturday, Nov. 18

Sellingsgrove 37, Bellefonte 3
Thomas Jefferson 27, Montour 0

QUARTERFINALS

Friday, Nov. 24

Berks Catholic 45, Bishop McDevitt 24
Imhotep Charter 41, Valley View 0
Bethlehem Catholic 33, Sellingsgrove 32
Cathedral Prep 42, Thomas Jefferson 17

SEMIFINALS

Friday, Dec. 1

Imhotep Charter 34, Bethlehem Catholic 14
Erie Cathedral Prep 42, Berks Catholic 24

FINAL

Thursday, Dec. 7

Erie Cathedral Prep 38, Imhotep Charter 28

Class 3A

FIRST ROUND

Thursday, Nov. 16

Middletown 49, Wyomingissing 0

Friday, Nov. 17

Conwell-Egan 44, Lansdale Catholic 20
Scranton Prep 31, Loyalsock 28
Forest Hills 32, Huntingdon 25
Sharon 67, Karns City 17

Saturday, Nov. 18

Quaker Valley 2, Aliquippa 0
Palisades 48, Lehigh 42

QUARTERFINALS

Quaker Valley, Bye

Friday, Nov. 24

Middletown 35, Scranton Prep 0

Saturday, Nov. 25

Conwell-Egan 34, Palisades 17
Sharon 45, Forest Hills 25

SEMIFINALS

Friday, Dec. 1

Quaker Valley 43, Sharon 23
Saturday, Dec. 2
Middletown 49, Conwell-Egan 7

FINAL

Saturday, Dec. 9

Quaker Valley 41, Middletown 21

Class 2A

FIRST ROUND

Friday, Nov. 17

Southern Columbia 49, Mt. Carmel 14
Dunmore 35, Newport 6
Wilmington 31, Greenville 13
Clarion 20, Chestnut Ridge 14
Steel Valley 13, Riverside 10 (OT)
Washington 19, CW North Catholic 14

Saturday, Nov. 18

Neumann-Goretti 44, Schuylkill Haven 7
Ligonier Valley 19, Bishop McCourt 15

QUARTERFINALS

Friday, Nov. 24

Southern Columbia 45, Neumann-Goretti 12

Saturday, Nov. 25

Dunmore 23, Ligonier Valley 20
Wilmington 33, Clarion 6
Washington 37, Steel Valley 10

SEMIFINALS

Friday, Dec. 1

Southern Columbia 56, Dunmore 19
Wilmington 49, Washington 41

FINAL

Friday, Dec. 8

Southern Columbia 48, Wilmington 0

Class A

FIRST ROUND

Friday, Nov. 17

Bishop Guilfoyle 59, Juniata Valley 13
Williams Valley 44, Old Forge 25
Jeanette 18, Clairton 7
Ridgway/Johnsonburg 9, Curwensville 7
Farrell 34, Northern Bedford 19
Imani Christian 30, California 24

Saturday, Nov. 18

Steelton-Highspire 45, Wyalusing 7
Homer Center 18, Ferndale 0

QUARTERFINALS

Friday, Nov. 24

Homer Center 20, Bishop Guilfoyle 14
Steelton-Highspire 41, Williams Valley 6
Farrell 36, Ridgway/Johnsonburg 0

Saturday, Nov. 25

Jeanette 35, Imani Christian 34

SEMIFINALS

Friday, Dec. 1

Homer Center 20, Steelton-Highspire 14
Jeanette 17, Farrell 6

FINAL

Thursday, Dec. 7

Jeanette 42, Homer Center 12

Sound off on the Pa. Prep Live
High School Football Top 20,
unveiled every Monday during the season,
only at PaPrepLive.com

Class

FROM PAGE 5

There are systemic issues that the six-classification system neither set out to solve nor can realistically mitigate. One is the boundary/non-boundary conflict, which the PIAA has sought to address in recent months. Moves such as a database of transfers, mandatory sit-out for in-season transfers and a postseason ban for players transferring after 10th grade in the first season at a new school are hoped to ameliorate some of the tension. Tonkin said that when he designed the system, he shied away from approaching the boundary/non-boundary question, both as a non-starter statewide and because he wanted a system that would work independent of the larger quandary. The system he devised is distinctly non-partisan in that regard; that it has such staunch defenders as Shue, whose organization includes coaches at public and non-public schools, is an indication of that.

Other ideas, like a "Super 700" class for the largest schools, or the PIAA's proposed inclusion of a seventh "super class" in the success-factor system, didn't pass muster. But there was something about the environment in which Tonkin put forth his plan in 2015 that allowed it to get across the finish line where similar efforts in the previous decade — 2003, 2006, 2009 — failed to.

Some of the PIAA's issues weren't created by the six-class system, and they won't be solved by it. There's a prominent demographic imbalance. In the two largest classes, 6A and 5A, 54.7 percent of teams hail from Districts 1 and 3 (104 of 190). Five districts (1, 3, 7, 11 and 12) account for 91.6 percent of the Class 6A and 5A schools. Nearly 90 percent of football teams in 6A hail from those five districts (84 of 94); when they win titles, as is almost inevitable, it inflames the urban vs. rural divide that clouds conversations. It also leaves vast swathes with no big schools for state competition. District 4, for instance, has one 6A team (Williamsport) and no 5A teams. District 8, the city of Pittsburgh, has one 6A team and one 5A team.

Tonkin's intent in reviving the



AUSTIN HERTZOG — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Pottsgrove's Kobey Baldwin, left, tackles Upper Perkiomen's Tyler Whary in the 2017 District 1 Class 4A final. Pottsgrove won big, 49-14. This year, the Tribe have moved up to Class 5A, where a return trip to the final will be much more difficult.

six-class idea was never to iron out all the geographical textures of Pennsylvania. His aim was to widen the net of teams deriving the full benefits of playoff competition. And in that regard, he's happy with the outcome.

"The other thing it has done it has the opportunity for some new schools to enter the playoffs that never had the opportunity to play before," he said. "So we have new people into the playoff system."

The board-room intricacies filter down to the gridiron, but they're usually relegated behind more pressing matters.

Practically, they impact scheduling, as Troop knows. Last season, Penn Wood opened with trips to Souderton, Pennsbury and Council Rock North, three 6A teams that carry big strength-of-schedule bonuses. Penn Wood went 1-2, but losing to 6A teams carried more power-point value than beating 4A opposition.

The choice, though, isn't easy. Logistically speaking, those bus rides took more than an hour for the Patriots. For the last two-year cycle, Pennsbury was calculated as the fifth-largest boys enrollment in the state, at 1,387 students. Penn Wood, among the smaller 6A schools, had 572, a stark discrepancy.

So Troop wasn't surprised to see the Falcons field 90 varsity players, more than he has among

freshman, JV and varsity.

"In 6A, there's probably a little bit more pressure because you can't afford to slip up," Troop said. "We played a lot of close games, too many for my liking, and if we lose any of those games, even at 7-3, we probably don't make the playoffs. Generally 5A has been more forgiving in terms of schedules and what you can do."

Now that they're in 5A, Troop doesn't have to schedule the same way. If there's a 4A team he wants to play, it's won't hobble his team's postseason hopes. He can also stay local and tap into the abundance of 5A teams in Delco, particularly among the Central League set.

The countervailing move to Penn Wood is rival Chester, which rises from Class 5A to 6A. The Clippers didn't make the postseason the last two years; the chance to get there now grows exponentially harder.

Then there's the revolving door installed in Class 4A. The title each of the last two years has been won by Pottsgrove, which prevailed in the four-team tournament by wide margins each year.

The opposition has changed drastically. In the last two-year cycle, six teams comprised Class 4A. Only two remain, Pottsgrove and Pottstown. Interboro and Upper Perkiomen, both playoff qualifiers the last two years, have vaulted up to 5A. Pope John Paul II has fallen to 3A. Octorara remains a Class

4A school, but it's now in District 3 with its move to the Lancaster-Lebanon League.

Yet the Class 4A field is somehow more robust with seven teams. Lower Moreland and Springfield-Montco rise from 3A; Glen Mills, Bishop Shanahan and Upper Moreland slide from 5A. The downgraded trio combined for five playoff berths in two seasons. Shanahan twice hosted home games as top-eight seeds, while Upper Moreland was the second seed last year.

"There's going to be not only more opponents, but you're going to have more quality opponents," Hawthorne said. "... That makes every game in the regular season that much more important because you're competing against more teams to get more points to actually fill those four spots. You have less room for mistakes."

More classes also present more opportunities to voluntarily play up, including some of the most prominent names in PIAA football. Archbishop Wood, for instance, saw its boys enrollment drop from 425 to 351, landing in Class 4A numerically, but it has opted to play up to 5A.

That decision was made under the reign of coach Steve Devlin, who retired after last season and his fifth state title. It's one of many legacies bequeathed to new coach Kyle Adkins. Wood has won the PIAA Class 5A title two straight

years.

"I think it depends on case-by-case basis," Adkins said. "There's a lot of teams that move every two years. We're playing different teams. It's always changing once the two years cycle turns over. It is what it is."

Wood isn't alone. Bethlehem Catholic and Imhotep Charter are both Class 3A schools playing up to 4A. Imhotep has made the last two 4A finals, both times losing to Cathedral Prep; Bethlehem Catholic lost to Imhotep in the state semis each of the last two seasons. Several Class A private schools in the West of the state, including Serra Catholic in District 6 and Bishop Carroll in District 7, play up to 2A. And District 10 has lessened its classification oddity in Class 4A: In the last cycle, nine D10 teams with 4A enrollments played up a class to avoid juggernaut Cathedral Prep; this cycle, only four are still doing so.

All those nuances have a bearing on this season. But for most coaches navigating training camps, just how that will transpire is unclear. There are more practical matters at hand.

"To me, they're still trying to figure out the system, so they're still moving pieces around to get the best possible playoff system across the board," Hawthorne said. "And that's really our job to adapt to what is there and who we have to play in the future."

Troop has one idea, a potentially fortunate consequence of the shuffling. The last two years, the underclassmen-laden squad took its lumps in Class 6A. Many seniors are back, having tasted the disappointment of playoff setbacks. And with the opportunity to take on an objectively shallower field of combatants, they're out to make sure it doesn't happen again.

"It tested them mentally," Troop said. "When you look at the film, you can show them, hey these little things that we don't do have hurt us, so now they know. Hey, when coach says I take two steps, not one or three, coach means two steps. When coach says don't backpeddle, don't backpeddle."

"So it definitely makes the hungry. They definitely want it. These seniors lost to Perk Valley the last two years, so they're hungry for that win. It's definitely made us tougher."

2018 PIAA FOOTBALL CLASSIFICATIONS

Table with 3 columns: School Name, District, and Enrollment. Contains Class 6A schools from Adjusted Enrollment School 1813 Reading High School to 564 Williamsport Area High School.

Table with 3 columns: School Name, District, and Enrollment. Contains Class 5A schools from 546 Pickett Mastery Charter to 286 General McLane.

Table with 3 columns: School Name, District, and Enrollment. Contains Class 4A schools from 383 Benjamin Franklin High School to 274 Springfield Township High School.

Table with 3 columns: School Name, District, and Enrollment. Contains Class 3A schools from 273 Wilson Area High School to 251 Imhotep Charter.

Table with 3 columns: School Name, District, and Enrollment. Contains Class 2A schools from 264 Kutztown Area High School to 200 Warrior Run High School.

Table with 3 columns: School Name, District, and Enrollment. Contains Class A schools from 200 Westmont Hilltop High School to 110 Aliquippa Senior.

Table with 3 columns: School Name, District, and Enrollment. Contains Class B schools from 194 North Penn-Mansfield HS to 132 Carmichaels Area.

Table with 3 columns: School Name, District, and Enrollment. Contains Class C schools from 127 Serra Catholic High School to 37 Belmont Charter High School.

CENTRAL LEAGUE PREVIEW

Final Act

Springfield's season is about finishing 'what we started'

By Matt Smith

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For two-time defending champion Springfield, there is no such thing as taking two steps back.

Despite graduating their entire offensive and defensive lines, and a few key skill position players, the Cougars will lean on a winning culture in 2018.

"We know this is a new year and we have a lot of new guys who are stepping up," senior quarterback Jack Psenicska said, "but that doesn't mean anything about us will change. We are going to be ready."

Last year the Cougars ran the table in the Central League en route to a 13-1 overall record. Their lone blemish came in the District 1 Class 5A final, falling to Unionville, 35-25. Springfield won the conference title outright after sharing it with Ridley and Marple Newtown in 2016.

They have lost the district final in back to back seasons.

They have not lost their hunger.

"It's something we keep in the back of our minds," senior wide receiver Jack Spence said. "I think everyone here wants to go all the way and finish what we started."

Psenicska returns as a 2,000-yard, 25-touchdown quarterback, and he will rely upon familiar faces such as Spence and Frankie Bullock, who will lead the re-



DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Springfield's Jack Spence, shown intercepting a pass against Haverford last season, will help anchor a Cougars defense that will be inexperienced up front.

ceiving corps. Geo Dotscias and Ben Kohnah, both seniors, will get most of the carries in the backfield. While the offensive and defensive lines figure to be a weakness, based only on lack of experience, Springfield features a collection of excellent linebackers, headlined by senior Pat Clemens and fellow senior Jeff Biancianiello. Springfield also must replace its top playmakers from a year ago, wide receiver Kyle Long and running back Ja'Den McKenzie, both of whom were All-Delcos.

Whether the Cougars enter the 2018 season as a slight favorite in the Central is debatable. Needless to say, there are several programs vying for the team-to-beat label.

First, there is Garnet Valley. Longtime coach Mike Ricci has the biggest team in the county, in terms of overall numbers.

Back in the saddle is quarterback Cole Palis, who played well in limited action last fall. When Palis, who replaced starting quarterback Ryan Hamby, suffered a knee injury in the regular season, third-string QB Ryan Gallagher helped lead the Jags to three District 1 Class 6A playoff victories. Gallagher, a junior, will back up the senior Palis this fall.

The Jags have made the District 1 Class 6A championship game the last two seasons.

Colin Robinson is among a slew of options that will look to replace 1,000-yard running backs Danny Guy, who was the 2017 *Daily Times* Player of the Year, and Matt Lassik. Robinson ran for nearly 500 yards as the Jags' No. 3 tailback last year. Senior Dom LaBricciosa and junior Greg Reynolds will also re-

ceive touches.

The offensive line is headed by senior Kyle McCullough, who is the lone returning starter up front. All-Delco defensive end Cade Brennan, a Bucknell commit, is among the top returning players on defense along with cornerback Nick Westburg, a three-year starter.

Garnet Valley, ranked No. 15 in the PA Prep Live preseason Top 20, should once again be a favorite in the Central League.

"We're not changing anything we do," Ricci said. "We are very simple, but very fundamentally sound. That's the biggest thing for us. If we can be fundamentally sound ... and just execute what we set out to do, we'll be fine."

Marple Newtown should be in the mix, too.

CENTRAL » PAGE 10



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DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Marple Newtown's Alden Mathes, shown hauling in a pass in a game against Lower Merion last season, is one returning reason why the Tigers think they can remain competitive in the Central League after losing a lot of top players to graduation.

Central

FROM PAGE 8

The Tigers are coming off their most successful three-year run in program history, compiling 28 wins, including five postseason triumphs. Eight of Marple's seniors from last year's squad are playing college football, including two-time All-Delco quarterback Anthony Paoletti, who is beginning his collegiate career at the University of Delaware. Paoletti is the Delaware County record holder for yards in a single season (2,739) and career (6,944). Also gone is wide receiver Dash Dulgerian, who owns the Delco record for most catches in season (87).

The good news for the Tigers? They welcome back their outstanding senior running back, Marlon Weathers, a three-year starter.

Weathers ran for more than 1,500 yards and totaled 25 touchdowns last fall. Alden Mathes, a Richmond commit for baseball, is the team's most versatile player. He should see action from a variety of positions, including quarterback, wide receiver and defensive back. He had 39 catches for 460 yards last fall. Senior linebacker Tom Tobin, who notched 100 tackles as a junior, leads the defense.

Although the Tigers graduated several key players, it would be foolish to think they will not — or cannot — compete for a Central League title this fall.

Speaking of annual contenders, one could argue that Haverford is the frontrunner. Back for his third season at quarterback is senior Jake Ruane, who passed for 1,925 yards and 23 touchdowns a year ago. Ruane is a dual threat, as evidenced by his 10 rushing scores in 2017.

CENTRAL » PAGE 11

2017 Central League							
Pos	Team	CW	CL	W	L	PF	PA
1	Springfield-Delco	9	0	12	2	455	179
2	Garnet Valley	8	1	12	2	420	235
3	Haverford	7	2	9	3	352	154
4	Marple Newtown	7	3	8	4	344	240
5	Ridley	5	4	7	4	280	173
6	Strath Haven	5	4	6	6	277	279
7	Upper Darby	5	4	6	5	277	166
8	Radnor	4	5	6	6	287	229
9	Penncrest	3	6	3	8	122	334
10	Lower Merion	1	8	2	9	196	344
11	Conestoga	1	8	1	9	111	343
12	Harrilton	0	9	1	9	90	335



Matt Smith
Columnist



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Central

FROM PAGE 10

Ruane has many weapons to utilize, perhaps none better than Trey Blair, whom coach Joe Gallagher considers one of the top all-around players in the area. The junior is an amazing athlete who can play running back, wide receiver, defensive back and punt. Seniors Paul Denman and Sean Leyden are two-way starters on the line, and senior Shane Mosley is a top returner at defensive back. Mosley is the brother of former Haverford High standout Jordan, who is playing football at Maryland. Haverford was eliminated in the first round of the District 1 Class 6A playoffs last fall.

Strath Haven is coming off its most successful campaign since the 2010 season, the last year it won a district title. The 2017 season was highlighted by coach Kevin Clancy's 300th career victory, which happened to come against Bishop Shanahan in the first round of the District 1 Class 5A playoffs.

Senior Jake Fisher returns for his second season as the Panthers' starting quarterback. Zach Hussein, a senior fullback, ran for more than 1,100 yards with 14 touchdowns last year. Senior linebacker Ethan Belville leads the defensive unit.

Upper Darby is never short on talent, either. Despite missing the district playoffs, the Royals finished 6-5 overall. They said goodbye to several starters, including quarterback Josh Gouch and defensive lineman Derrick Korboi, but coach Rich Gentile remains optimistic. Kevin Kerwood takes the reins at quarterback. The junior is a good athlete with quick feet and a strong arm. Other players of note include junior running back Kareem Davis and senior defensive lineman Eric Miller.

This figures to be a rebuilding year for Ridley, which is one of the most inexperienced teams in the Central League. Tommy Bramwell, a 6-5, 280 lineman, heads a small returning group of starters that also includes senior running back Hassan Chandler and senior defensive back Elijah Yakpasuo. John Bakey, a 5-10, 175-pound senior, is the Green Raiders' new quarterback. Bakey saw limited



DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Haverford's Trey Blair will be one of the most versatile players in the Central League, or so says his coach Joe Gallagher.

playing time as the backup last fall.

Penncrest aims to get better as coach Andrew Pidgeon begins his second season at the helm. The Lions, with new quarterback Nick Benecke and athlete Giovanni Antonelli showing the way, believe they are a better team that finished 3-8 in each of the last two seasons.

Radnor could be ready to take a big step as a program. For years the Raiders have finished in the bottom or middle of the Central League standings, but they are loaded with experienced talent this season. Longtime coach Tom Ryan has 26 players in his senior class, including seasoned quarterback Sean Mullarkey. Overall, the Raiders have eight starters

returning on defense and seven starters returning on offense. Last season Radnor finished 6-6 overall and qualified for the District 1 Class 5A playoffs for a second year in a row.

Conestoga's Matt Diamond, an assistant for the Pioneers the last two years, is the new man in charge. Once a perennial Central League contender, 'Stoga is 3-18

since the start of the 2016 campaign.

Harriton and Lower Merion are also looking to make headway. The Rams hope for big things out of senior linebacker Harry Thomas. The Aces will build toward their first winning campaign since 1992 under new boss Evan Breisblatt, the former Phoenixville head coach.



CONESTOGA

PIONEERS

CLASS
6A

By Bruce Adams

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TREDYFFRIN >> Former Conestoga football star Matt Diamond, who took over the Pioneer head coaching job last spring, knew very quickly into his preseason preparation what the team's theme for 2018 would be.

"Our team theme this year is, 'What does it mean to be a Pioneer?'" said Diamond. "It means to forge your own path, and to cut down obstacles in your way, to rely on your work ethic and determination."

The last couple of years, the Pioneers have faced their share of obstacles. In the wake of the tumultuous events that led to the resignation of long-time coach John Vogan in 2016, Conestoga, usually a solid contender in the Central League, struggled to records of 2-8 and 1-9 the past two years.

But for Diamond, who was a first team all-area quarterback and defensive back for Conestoga in the late 1990s (and an all-league defensive back at Gettysburg College), the Pioneers are starting with a whole new clean slate.

"We have about 60 kids out here this first week of practice, and they're really excited about the new start," said Diamond. "We [the coaches] have really been excited about how the kids have bought into our program."

"As the head coach you have a very influential role on these young men, and I am excited to have them working hard to achieve their goals. There is no place I would rather be coaching at than Conestoga — I have seen many great kids come through this program."

Teaching comes naturally to Diamond,



PETE BANNAN — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Tailback Milton Robinson brings some strength and experience to the Conestoga backfield this season under new coach Matt Diamond.

who along with wife Krissy is a teacher in the T/E school system, Matt at Valley Forge Elementary School and Krissy at Devon Elementary. They are the parents of four children.

The last two years, Diamond served as an assistant coach to Marquis Weeks, a former Pioneer football star who was a teammate of Matt's. This fall, Weeks will be coaching the running backs at Great Valley.

"Marquis is a close friend of mine, we still stay in touch, and through him I learned a lot about how to handle different situations that arise throughout a season," said Diamond. "He helped show me

+ **Online:** Longer versions of most team previews are available online, with even more info, at PAPREPLIVE.COM

what the overall big picture of the head coaching job entails."

Diamond sees the Pioneers' biggest strength this fall as their quickness.

"While we would love to have more size on our roster, we see a strength being our team speed," said Diamond. "We can take advantage of some pin- and pull-blocking techniques that can utilize our quickness."

At quarterback, both junior Chris McGovern (6-2, 190) and senior Cameron Marcus (5-11, 170) have looked good in pre-season, according to Diamond.

"Both have had a good camp — Cameron is a strong runner, and Chris can throw the deep ball," said Diamond.

Conestoga has several promising running backs, including senior fullback and co-captain Ryan Duffy (5-10, 192), senior tailback and co-captain Milton Robinson (5-11, 180) and junior tailback Liam Kirk (5-11, 180).

"Ryan's a tough kid and a good blocker," said Diamond. "Milton and Liam have shown good patience waiting for holes to develop, and they have good speed as well."

"I'm going to be help drive the running side of our offense, blocking, and making sure we stay aggressive at all points of our offense — on long drives, short drives, beginning of the game, after halftime, at the end of the game," Duffy said.

On the defensive side of the ball, the Pioneers will be led on the front line by junior defensive end Scott Smith (5-11, 178), and in the linebacking spots by senior LB and co-captain P.J. Hewitt.

"As a senior linebacker, P.J. is our emotional leader on defense," said Diamond.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Owen J. Roberts	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 26-6)		
Aug. 31	Haverford High*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 54-13)		
Sept. 7	@ Upper Darby*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 49-13)		
Sept. 14	@ Strath Haven*	7:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 44-7)		
Sept. 21	Penncrest*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 13-2)		
Sept. 28	Ridley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 47-0)		
Oct. 5	Marple Newtown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 12	@ Harriton*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 19	@ Garnet Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 49-19)		
Oct. 26	Springfield-Delco*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 35-7)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

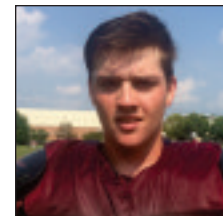
RYAN DUFFY » FULLBACK



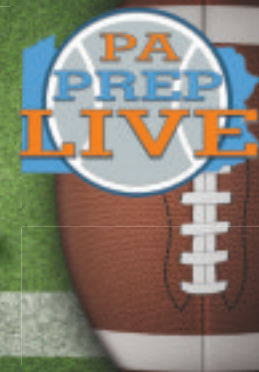
The 5-10, 192-pound senior fullback and co-captain is valued for a variety of roles. "He's a tough kid, and a good blocker," said Diamond.

P.J. HEWITT » LINEBACKER

The 5-11, 185-pound senior linebacker and co-captain is considered the emotional leader of the Pioneers' defense.



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GARNET VALLEY

**CLASS
6A**
JAGUARS
By Matt Smith

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CONCORD >> Cole Palis was the second Garnet Valley quarterback to suffer a significant injury last season.

The Jaguars, though, never skipped a beat. Palis was next in line when senior Ryan Hamby went on the shelf midway through Garnet's outstanding 12-2 campaign. Palis shined in relief in a win against Marple Newtown. A knee injury the following week against Harriton cost him several games.

The physical setback gave Palis a chance to reflect and grow into a well-rounded teammate. He offered support to his replacement, sophomore Ryan Gallagher, who started all three of the Jaguars' victories in the District 1 Class 6A playoffs.

"I think the injury really made me a better teammate and a better person," said Palis, who is committed to play baseball at the University of Pennsylvania. "I needed to be there to help Ryan Gallagher when he was in there, just as he and Ryan Hamby were supporting me when I was out there. Obviously, Gallagher was doing a great job when I was gone. The injury for me was unexpected, but gave me confidence that I can overcome anything."

Palis returned to pilot the Jaguars to a heartbreaking loss to Coatesville in the district final, marking the second straight year the Jags have fallen short in the title game.

"That team was special. They picked me up and kept going like I was there starting the whole time," Palis said. "It gave me experience and I was able to understand the speed of the game and just knowing where everyone has to be. Everyone has to look to me, and being able to play last year gave me the experience I needed for this year."



PETE BANNAN — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Garnet Valley defensive end Cade Brennan earned All-Delco honors last season.

+ **Online:** Longer versions of most team previews are available online, with even more info, at PAPREPLIVE.COM

Garnet Valley coach Mike Ricci heaped a ton of praise on Palis, calling him "one of the best athletes who has ever come through Garnet Valley."

"He understands the game and understands what we're trying to do," Ricci added. "He's a great student, a great player, a great leader. Cole is the whole package."

Despite losing 2018 Daily Times Player of the Year and running back Danny Guy, as well as fellow 1,000-yard rusher Matt Lasik and All-Delco lineman Tom Mahoney to graduation, the Jags are expected to win plenty of games in 2018. The offense will lean upon seniors and returning starters Kyle McCullough (offensive line), Colin Robinson (running back) and Rory Gla-

skin (split end/running back). Robinson displayed his potential in limited action as the No. 3 back in the Jags' option-based system last season.

Top varsity newcomers on offense include senior linemen George Wisendanger, Jake Colelli, Nick Van Horn, Jack Markussen and Joe Morrone; senior running back Dom LaBriocciosa, senior receivers/split ends Matt Daudert, Jo Jo Harrell and Alec MacKinnon; junior tight ends Kevin Craig and Blaz McDaniel; junior kicker Bryce Stansfield and junior running back Reece Malek. Gallagher, a junior, will back up Palis.

Senior end Cade Brennan, a Bucknell commit, will anchor the Jags' defensive line unit. Adam Oldrati, another disruptive defensive end, is back for his senior year. One of the Jags' top strengths is their secondary, which includes returning starters and seniors Nick Westburg (corner), Brandon DiCamillo (corner) and Nick Gabos (safety).

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Unionville	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Aug. 31	Ridley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 24-14)		
Sept. 7	@ Haverford High*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 28-13)		
Sept. 14	@ Marple Newtown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 34-31)		
Sept. 21	Harriton*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-0)		
Sept. 28	Springfield-Delco*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 14-7)		
Oct. 5	Lower Merion*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 12	@ Radnor*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 19	@ Conestoga*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 49-19)		
Oct. 26	Upper Darby*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 22-14)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

KYLE MCCULLOUGH » OFFENSIVE LINE



Garnet Valley traditionally has one of the best offensive lines in the state, and don't expect that to change this year, though McCullough is the lone returner starter. The 5-10, 260-pound senior leader is poised

to have a big year.

CADE BRENNAN » DEFENSIVE END

Brennan emerged as one of the top defensive ends as a junior, registering six sacks en route to earning All-Delco honors. He made a verbal commitment to Bucknell.



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HARRITON

RAMS

CLASS
5A

By Bruce Adams

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LOWER MERION >> Although Harrington's roster doesn't feature a lot of strength in numbers (35 players came out for the first day of practice Aug. 13), the Rams do boast some powerful brotherly bonds.

Twin brothers Brian and Mike Stewart, two seniors who will be playing key roles for the Rams this fall, are the younger brothers of former Harrington quarterback Pat Stewart, who set a Central League single-season passing record by throwing for 2,754 yards four years ago.

Senior middle linebacker Harry Thomas, who will be leading the Rams' defense this fall, takes the reins of leadership from his older brother Jack, who was a standout defensive back last year. Thomases have won each of the last three Harrington defensive MVP awards: Jack in 2015, Harry in 2016 and Jack and Harry splitting the award last fall.

"I have coached four Stewart brothers at Harrington, including David in his senior year [2013]," Rams head coach Justin Mellor said. "Regardless of what sport, all the coaches at Harrington will tell you the same thing — that they love it when Stewarts are on their team. As a coach, you know they are going to be dependable, respectful, and hard-working. They are great teammates and sacrifice for the team.

"Harry is the third Thomas that I have coached at Harrington, including Will (Class of 2016). The Thomases bring a toughness and football intelligence to our team. They have all played a lot of football and lead by example."



PETE BANNAN — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Harrington wide receiver Brian Stewart eyes a pass during practice last summer.

Mellor, who played on the same Upper Dublin baseball team as two of his older brothers, knows the value of this kind of "brotherhood."

"Some days you feel like your brothers, especially the older ones, are a little tougher on you than they are on their other teammates, but you also know that when you need someone, they will be there for you," said Mellor. "My brothers wound up being my best teammates, probably because if they didn't, they would have to answer to the real head coach, my mom."

Harrington's strength this fall is on the defensive side of the ball, led by middle linebacker Harry Thomas (5-10, 175), a first team All-Central League honoree last fall.

"Coming into this season, our team lost a lot of key players (to graduation), so I have to step up and help lead the team," Thomas

said. "We're light on numbers this year, so it's important for the veterans to show the younger players what we need to do."

Another key piece is junior strong side linebacker Max Copley (5-10, 170). Harrington junior Shane Sullivan (5-10, 185), who played linebacker last fall, is being moved to defensive end to shore up that position.

In the secondary, junior Sam Segal (5-8, 162) will play safety. Mellor calls Segal, "probably the best athlete on our team."

Due to a lack of overall size, the biggest challenge the Rams probably face will be on the front lines. Harrington does have a couple of hard-working senior offensive linemen in Ryan Dieudonne (6-0, 230) and fourth-year starter Connor Block (5-9, 205).

Many of Harrington's top defensive players could play a key role on offense as well. The top receiver will probably be versatile Brian Stewart (who doubles at cornerback), while Copley will handle many of the Rams' running chores.

Stewart reflected on the value of playing both ways: "Since I also play cornerback, as a wide receiver I know a lot about what the defensive back is looking for, what he's reading."

At quarterback, Harrington has several options. One is Mike Stewart (5-8, 165), who also plays lacrosse and basketball.

Harry Thomas could play some QB, and junior Will Brannau (6-0, 190), a transfer from St. Joseph's Prep and younger brother of former Harrington football player Matt Brannau, could also earn time as the signal-caller.

GOOD START

The Rams will start the season at home against Valley Forge Military Academy Friday Aug. 24 at 5 p.m. Last fall, Harrington got off to a strong start by defeating VFMA 35-7 in the opener.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Valley Forge M.A	5:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 35-7)		
Aug. 31	Penncrest*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 40-7)		
Sept. 7	@ Radnor*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 41-0)		
Sept. 14	@ Springfield-Delco*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 42-8)		
Sept. 21	@ Garnet Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 43-0)		
Sept. 28	Marple Newtown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 34-12)		
Oct. 5	@ Upper Darby*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 12	Conestoga*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 20	@ Lower Merion*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 19-14)		
Oct. 26	@ Strath Haven*	7:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 27-7)		
Nov. 2	@ Springfield-Montco**	7:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 37-13)		

* denotes a league game

** contingency game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

BRIAN STEWART » WIDE RECEIVER



The 5-10, 160 pound senior is a versatile two-way player. Stewart is a knowledgeable veteran who Mellor praised for his skill at running and reading routes.

HARRY THOMAS » LINEBACKER

The senior, who made 127 tackles last fall, received first team All-Central League honors. Mellor said, "Harry has great natural instincts. He has a great ability to find the ball. When you turn on the tape, it's amazing how many times Number 4 is in on the tackle."



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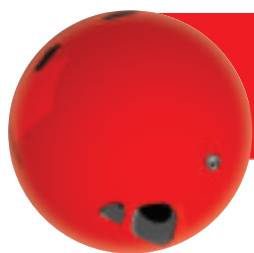
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HVERFORD HIGH

CLASS
6A

FORDS

By Jack McCaffery

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HAVERFORD >> As Joe Gallagher begins his 26th season as the head coach at Haverford High, he is excited about the following: His running back, his kicker, his punter, his punt-returner, his slot receiver, his kick-returner, his safety, his cornerback and his backup quarterback.

Their names? Trey Blair.

"I've never seen anything like him," Gallagher said. "No. Not like that."

Never? Not in the Fords' 2015 Central League championship season? Not even in 1972, when Gallagher was a big-time, Tennessee-bound recruit at St. James?

"Billy Warrington?" he said, trying hard to identify a player with the potential to match Blair's variety of skills and recalling a long-ago Bulldogs teammate. "Maybe he could have done it."

And how about Joe Gal himself?

"Me," said Gallagher, smiling, even as he was wearing a St. James polo shirt at practice. "No, I couldn't have done the skill stuff."

Blair is the 5-11, 183-pound junior, technically listed as a cornerback and a wide receiver. But if he shows up everywhere else too, neither Fords fans nor opposing coaches should be surprised. They have been warned.

"Yeah, I like to do it all," Blair said. "I don't think I have a specific strength. I think my strength is that I have a lot of versatility and I can play almost anywhere on the field on both sides of the ball. There's no specific position that I would choose over another."

"Some games I might be playing safety. Some games I might be playing corner, depending on who we are playing. On offense, I



Haverford coach Joe Gallagher is ready to compete for a Central League championship with, from left, Jake Ruane, Shane Mosley, Trey Blair and Paul Denman.

+ **Online:** Longer versions of most team previews are available online, with even more info, at PAPREPLIVE.COM

think I'll get a few handoffs a game, a couple of receptions and, if we need to, I can go into wildcat and play quarterback. And I can return punts and kicks, too."

With Blair, and with the returning excellence and experience of quarterback Jake Ruane, Gallagher is confident of fielding another playoff team, despite significant losses on both sides of the line of scrimmage. High among those departures is safety Jordan Mosley, who has surfaced as a linebacker at Maryland. But someone will fill that spot in the Fords' secondary.

Yep. That would be Blair.

"Mosley is a big loss, but Trey will play his position at free safety," Gallagher said. "It was comforting having Jordan back there. He had eight interceptions last year. Having an athlete in the middle of the field is such a comforting thing for a coach. Trey will take his spot."

An accomplished baseball outfielder who often leaves observers impressed, Blair grew

in the Haverford youth programs and began to show his special versatility in middle school.

"When I played in Haverford youth, I really didn't like football then," he said. "Then I decided to come back and play for the middle school and that's when I started to love it. Then I came up here and the coaches here are incredible. That kind of helped me. And my passion for football grew."

It didn't take Gallagher long to realize he had something special.

"It's obvious," the Fords' coach said. "It's known. Anybody who has ever been around him knows it. He could probably be a college baseball player. He's a special athlete. And the other great thing about it is he's an incredibly hard worker on top of his natural skills."

Like Blair, Ruane provides versatility, with a proven ability to both run and pass for touchdowns. Though the Fords will return only eight regulars from a 9-3 team that fell to North Penn in the postseason, Gallagher has plans and high expectations for Paul Denman, Sean Lydon, John Higson, Kevin De-Prince and Steve Peta, all of whom sparked during training camp.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Chester**	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 40-6)		
Aug. 31	@ Conestoga*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 54-13)		
Sept. 7	Garnet Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 28-13)		
Sept. 15	@ Lower Merion*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 34-0)		
Sept. 21	Radnor*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 10-0)		
Sept. 28	Unionville	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 5	Penncrest*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 12	@ Strath Haven*	7:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 19	@ Springfield-Delco*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 31-17)		
Oct. 26	Ridley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 13-9)		
Nov. 22	@ Upper Darby	10:45 a m
— 2017 RESULT (W 14-7)		

* denotes a league game

** at Lincoln University

PLAYERS TO WATCH

JAKE RUANE » QUARTERBACK



The returning All-Central quarterback threw for 22 touchdowns last season and ran for 10 more. And he will be a third-year starter. In the Haverford system, that experience is rare for a quarterback.

SHANE MOSLEY » DEFENSIVE BACK

The Fords lost valuable defender Jordan Mosley, but his younger brother, a junior, will help at safety, corner and linebacker.



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LOWER MERION

**CLASS
5A**
ACES
By Bruce Adams
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LOWER MERION >> While Lower Merion High School football features more than a century of memorable moments and great teams, the LM squad has encountered rough times the past quarter-century. Not since 1992 has Lower Merion enjoyed a winning season.

New head coach Evan Breisblatt aims to reverse that downward trend.

"We've got to break some habits, and we've got to start a new culture here — it's a collective bunch of guys getting together with one belief, and that belief is to do it the right way, that's the only way," Breisblatt said during the first week of preseason practice. "Winners don't become champions at the end of the season, they become champions at the beginning of the season when they do things the right way.

"There's always a tendency for guys to not jump in (100 percent) at practice, to lose focus and to rely on the other guys, but losing focus at a practice is not what a winner does."

The 45-year-old Breisblatt has extensive coaching experience, and his last two coaching assignments involved teams that had fallen on hard times. In 2011, he took over a Pequea Valley program that had gone 4-36 over the past four years, and guided it to 10 wins in the next three campaigns. From 2014-2017, he was the head coach at Phoenixville, creating a feeder program and linking the middle school program to the high school squad.

"Changing the culture isn't going to happen overnight," said Breisblatt, who is a special ed-



Former Phoenixville head coach Evan Breisblatt is now in charge at Lower Merion, and hopes to turn the Aces' fortunes around.

+ **Online:** Longer versions of most team previews are available online, with even more info, at PAPREPLIVE.COM

ucation teacher in the Phoenixville District. "But we happen to be loaded with seniors (20) this year, so I told the seniors that they don't have much time, and we've got to start right now with changing the losing culture.

"I want to emulate some mentors of mine, the way they do things — Mike Matta from Downingtown East, Rick Pennypacker from Pottsgrove, Mike Ricci from Garnet Valley, just to name a few. I really look at their programs as first-class programs, winning cul-

tures, winning on and off the field, creating a culture in which you can count on the kids doing things the right way, and the community and school district being proud of us."

On the first day of preseason fall practice Aug. 13, a total of 52 players came out, including 22 freshmen.

"We're blessed with good skills position players," said Breisblatt, who noted that Lower Merion has four good senior receivers in Ian Goodman (5-9, 165), Jalen Goodman (5-11, 185), Marcus Green (6-1, 175) and Jaden Helton (5-9, 165).

Lower Merion's top runners look to be sophomore Deshawn "The Tank" Jemison (5-11, 195), junior Brandon Desper (5-8, 185) and senior Ardontrelle Williams (5-10, 170).

"We will feature a lot of offensive formations, a no huddle-spread offense along with some pro-sets with multiple tight ends and multiple running backs," said Breisblatt. "I want to keep the defense off-guard."

At the helm of the Lower Merion offense is 6-foot-2, 185-pound senior quarterback Matt O'Connor.

"Matt is very smart and can read defenses very well," said Breisblatt. "He gets everyone lined up. He's an accurate passer who has worked hard on his mobility. He's an outstanding leader, student and person — someone who you would want to have representing your team."

O'Connor said, "This is a great opportunity for us to improve."

The biggest challenges Lower Merion faces on both sides of the ball are size and roster depth.

"We have 22 freshmen that we're not counting on this year," Breisblatt said. "We don't have many guys on the defensive line over 220 pounds, and none on the offensive line. They'll have to rely more on technique than size."


2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Chichester	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 30-19)		
Aug. 31	Strath Haven*	7:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 36-14)		
Sept. 7	Marple Newtown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 44-13)		
Sept. 15	Haverford High*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 34-0)		
Sept. 21	@ Ridley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 45-12)		
Sept. 29	Penncrest*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 21-20)		
Oct. 5	@ Garnet Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 13	Springfield-Delco*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 20	Harrilton*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 19-14)		
Oct. 27	Radnor*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 38-25)		

* denotes a league game


PLAYERS TO WATCH
MATT O'CONNOR » QUARTERBACK


The 6-foot-2, 185-pound senior is noted for his intelligence, accuracy and ability to read defenses. Breisblatt said, "Matt is an outstanding leader, student and person — someone who you would want to have representing your team."

JALEN GOODMAN » SAFETY

The 5-11, 185-pound senior strong safety, a Villanova commit, has length, size, speed and a nose for the football. "He can play in the box as well as cover," said Breisblatt. "We will line him up everywhere to take advantage of his skill set."



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MARPLE NEWTOWN

**CLASS
5A**
TIGERS
By Terry Toohey

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NEW TOWN TWP. >> Marlon Weathers, Alden Mathes, Tom Tobin and Sal Tartaglia were asked to do a lot for Marple Newtown as juniors last season, and they delivered.

Weathers led all Delaware County backs in rushing (1,544 yards) and scoring (25 touchdowns), and was third on the team in receptions (22), receiving yards (262) and receiving touchdowns (four). He also averaged 20.8 yards per kickoff return en route to first-team All-Delco honors.

Mathes finished second on the squad in receptions (39), receiving yards (437) and touchdown receptions (five) and threw three TD passes when he had to fill in at quarterback for one game.

Tobin was second on the team in unassisted and total tackles (55 and 100, respectively) and led the team in assisted stops (45).

Tartaglia was the only underclassman on a line that paved the way for an offense that averaged 28.1 points and 331.6 yards per game.

As four of the five returning starters, Weathers, Mathes, Tobin and Tartaglia will have greater responsibilities in 2018. They're being asked to take over the leadership role from a class that set the school record for wins (28) by a class in the 91-year history of the program.

They're ready for the challenge.

"We have to be the leaders and show the young guys what it takes to play Marple football," Weathers said. "We're trying to be better than last year."

That won't be easy. The Tigers have a lot of holes to fill from a team that went 8-5 and lost to eventual champ Unionville in the semifinals of the District 1 Class 5A playoffs.



DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Marlon Weathers led Delaware County in rushing in 2017 to earn first-team All-Delco honors. He'll be counted on heavily by Marple Newtown once again.

+ **Online:** Longer versions of most team previews are available online, with even more info, at PAPREPLIVE.COM

"We're very young and inexperienced," coach Chris Gicking said. "Even some of the older kids who are going to play don't have much experience. We'll be relying on those guys a lot."

Having Weathers back is a good place to start. He already holds the school record for career rushing yards (2,994, according to MN statistics) and his 25 TDs a year ago tied the single season record set by Steve Coyne in 1983, the year he earned Player of the Year honors from the *Daily Times*.

Weathers' 252 carries showed he is more than capable of handling the physical load.

"Marlon is a special player, and he's going to play an even bigger role than he has in the last three seasons," Gicking said. "This year

will be his biggest role because of the lack of returning starters that we have, but I know he can handle it. He's a special kid, a special athlete and a special football player. We're going to rely on him."

The gauntlet has been laid down.

"Sure, there's pressure," Weathers said. "I have to breathe, take it all in and keep rolling."

The biggest area of change is at the quarterback position, where All-Delco Anthony Paoletti, the leading passer in Delco history, reigned for the last three years. He's at Delaware now. Sophomores Joe Paoletti, Anthony's brother, and Brian Joslin are dueling for the starting job.

"They've been battling it out all offseason," Gicking said. "It's a good battle. Competition brings out the best in a player. All we ask of them is to do the best they can and let the other guys lead and take care of business for them so that don't have too much to worry about, whoever it is."

TOUGH LOSS

The Tigers suffered one of their biggest losses in the spring and it had nothing to do with graduation. Starting linebacker Luke Jelus, the leading tackler on the team last season with 103 stops, suffered a torn ACL and is likely out for the season.

"The doctors say he's out for the year, and he says he'll be back," Gicking said. "We'll see."

NO POSITION CHANGE

In the offseason, a lot of people wanted to know if Mathes was going to be the heir apparent to Anthony Paoletti. The baseball All-Delco played well in one game replacing Paoletti and was a big part of Marple Newtown's run to the PIAA Class 5A baseball title last spring.

But he'll stay at receiver, for now.

"If I had a dime for every time someone asked me that question I'd be rich," Gicking said. "Alden is playing football, just not at QB."

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Kipp-DuBois Acad.	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Aug. 31	Radnor*	7:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 45-14)		
Sept. 7	@ Lower Merion*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 44-13)		
Sept. 14	Garnet Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 34-31)		
Sept. 21	@ Springfield-Delco*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 42-19)		
Sept. 28	@ Harriton*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 34-12)		
Oct. 5	@ Conestoga*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 12	Upper Darby*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 19	Strath Haven*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 38-28)		
Oct. 26	@ Penncrest*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 35-0)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

MARLON WEATHERS » RUNNING BACK



He'll be the go-to back for the third year in a row. Weathers needs six yards to become the first player in Marple Newtown history to rush for 3,000 yards in a career.

"I think my best attribute is being a complete back, being able to run, catch and block," Weathers said. "Blocking is critical in our offense."

TOM TOBIN » LINEBACKER

Gicking called the defense the foundation of the team a year ago. As one of the few returning starters on that side of the ball, Tobin will anchor a linebacker corps that includes fellow senior AJ Katrakazis.



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PENNCREST

LIONS

CLASS
5A

By Matt Smith

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MIDDLETOWN » Following a practice in early August, Penncrest coach Andrew Pidgeon showered new starting quarterback Nick Benecke with praise.

"We love him," said Pidgeon, an All-Delco quarterback at Ridley 10 years ago. "I like to call him a 'walk-by quarterback,' where he can learn the offense by walking by the white board. He's probably the smartest player I've coached."

Benecke dedicated himself in the weight room to prepare for the rigors of a long season.

"Last year I might have weighed 155 pounds, and now I'm at 175-180," he said. "That was my goal this past offseason, to gain weight and to get stronger and hopefully it pays off."

Primarily a JV player last fall, Benecke is expected to lead Penncrest to a winning season while proving he's got the skills to stick on varsity. Although the Lions have qualified for the District 1 Class 5A playoffs in each of the last two campaigns, they finished 3-8 overall, losing to Central League foe Springfield in the first round in back-to-back years.

"We've got nothing to lose, basically," Benecke said. "We're known for losing and we're known for not being the greatest team in the league. Maybe we can shock some teams who aren't expecting a lot from us. That will be the best thing for us. I think we have the talent to do it this year."

The Lions will run a spread offense. Aidan Conmy and Jayden Brown have play-making ability at wide receiver. Gee An-



PETE BANNAN — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Penncrest receiver Aidan Conmy carries the ball during a recent practice.

tonelli can line up anywhere on the field as the Lions' top multi-purpose player. The senior caught three touchdowns last fall. Senior Vinny Brown should get the bulk of the carries at running back.

"Jay has the speed of a track runner, Big G (Antonelli) is an athlete who can play anywhere on the field, and Vinny in the backfield with me, he was a beast last year," Benecke said. "We've got some young guys on the outside who are very good players, too."

It's safe to say the Lions need more production from the quarterback position in 2018. Last fall, their QBs combined to throw for 16 interceptions and only seven touchdowns.

"We're excited about him, he's a nice leader and he has a good arm," Pidgeon

said of Benecke. "A lot of our success will rely on him, which is a good thing."

Penncrest will run a 4-3 defense. Antonelli, Sterling Crawford, Dave Cage and Josh Reyes will comprise a very talented front four on the line.

"There's more energy here, more than ever before," senior linebacker Luke Bauwens said. "It's a new year and it should be fun. I'm excited for the defense, excited to get going. We've got some wrestlers on the team now, so that will only help us."

Overall, the Lions believe they are going in the right direction.

"There's definitely a positive atmosphere around here and people are stepping up," Pidgeon said. "We have a lot of work to do. Every day is going to be tough, especially in this league. Every game is huge, every team is very well-coached, every day is a headache. When you play in this league for so long, playing in it and now coaching in it, you know that everyone you face is so tough. We feel we can win any game when we play our best."

MAKING STRIDES

Penncrest folded its freshman team last year due to lack of numbers and in an effort to strengthen the JV program. Pidgeon was very pleased to see more first-year players in camp this summer.

"We have 17 freshmen, which is great," he said. "We have a lot of very good football players in that group, too."

STAYING HEALTHY

Jayden Brown has the talent to be a star wide receiver, but the senior hasn't been able to show what he can do. He was sidelined all of last year due to a back injury, but Pidgeon is hopeful that Brown can get on the field and be an integral part of the team in 2018.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Sun Valley	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Aug. 31	@ Harriton*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 40-7)		
Sept. 7	Strath Haven*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 44-7)		
Sept. 14	Upper Darby*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 34-7)		
Sept. 21	@ Conestoga*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 13-2)		
Sept. 29	Lower Merion*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 21-20)		
Oct. 5	@ Haverford High*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 12	Ridley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 19	@ Radnor*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 35-13)		
Oct. 26	Marple Newtown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 35-0)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

GEE ANTONELLI » ALL-PURPOSE



It's not often you see a player as big and tall as Antonelli be considered a multi-purpose player. He would fit in at left tackle, but Pidgeon views him as someone who can make

things happen with the ball. Antonelli was a key role player on the Penncrest basketball team that captured a District 1 Class 5A title last winter.

VINNY BROWN » DEFENSIVE BACK

He is the No. 1 running back and will start in the defensive secondary. Brown has a quick burst and shows good instincts on both sides of the ball. "Last year ... I got some snaps, but now taking over as the starting running back I have to expect to get 30 snaps game," he said. "I'm excited."



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GO
PENNCREST
FOOTBALL



RADNOR

RAIDERS

CLASS
5A

By Jack McCaffery

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@JackMcCaffery on Twitter

RADNOR >> Dylan VanDusen was enjoying his 14th year of playing youth soccer, a center back charged with kicking the ball long, far and into scoring range. That's when he felt pain in one knee, then in the other and then, in his gut.

His soccer career, he feared, was over.

"It was a genetic thing," VanDusen said. "It was osteochondritis dissecans. There just wasn't any cartilage in my knees. So if I didn't catch it then, my knees probably would have given out by my sophomore year of playing soccer."

When he was in eighth grade, it was caught, treated with preventive surgery and, long and painful story abridged, became as much a reason as any why football hopes are so high, years later, at Radnor. Though VanDusen regained such robust health that he has become a highly recruited college prospect, the recovery time put him too far behind other soccer players of his age to remain a scholarship-level player.

So for kicks ... he did just that.

"Everyone used to joke around with me and stuff about kicking for football," VanDusen said. "So I went out one day and did it. It was just a leap of faith for me, because I had no idea how my parents would react to me playing football, even though I was a kicker. But I fell in love with it."

There are plenty of reasons why the Raiders' stated goal is to reach the post-season for a third consecutive season and, this time, enjoy a home game. A 26-man senior class has been built for such a crescendo, and the resulting enthusiasm made the weight room a serious and productive summertime laboratory.



Radnor kicker and punter Dylan VanDusen, right, goes over kicking drills with a teammate.

Veteran quarterback Sean Mullarkey is seasoned in coach Tom Ryan's run-pass option attack. Eight defensive starters return from a 6-6 team that went 4-5 in the rugged Central League. So do seven offensive starters.

But in VanDusen, the Raiders have a particularly effective if understated weapon. As a junior, he had a 35.5-yard average net punt and provided 42 points as a placekicker, mixing in two touchbacks.

"It will increase this year," the three-year starter said. "Definitely."

So, apparently, believe the scouts, as VanDusen has reported interest from Lehigh, Gettysburg, Ithaca and RPI amid a growing list.

"I'm lucky," Ryan said. "That's one area I don't have to worry about. It's the little things people take for granted."

With long-snapper Logan O'Sullivan and

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holder Phil Gatti, VanDusen should make Radnor a scoring threat from the red zone and beyond. And his kickoffs, long and consistent, are likely to give the Raiders' defense its own head start

"You have no idea how much that means," Ryan said. "We are pretty confident Dylan is going to be able to get the ball consistently in the end zone on kickoffs, which changes the dynamics of the game, starting at the 20. If Dylan can consistently get it in the end zone, it helps us out defensively, for sure."

And in an ever-competitive and balanced league, any edge can make the difference.

"This is a really special senior class that we have," VanDusen said. "They can all play."

At 6-4, 185, VanDusen would not have been out of place physically at another position. Ryan did once view him as a receiver.

"But he is so valuable as a kicker and a punter," Ryan said, "that we're just going to let him do that."

For a player who once didn't know if genetics would allow him to kick at all, that's fine.

"I fell in love with kicking," VanDusen said. "And I love being a part of this team."

OFFICER'S CLUB

Among the college suitors for the Raiders' Jahmair Rider was one that required military precision. The 5-11, 160-pound wide receiver and cornerback was invited to a camp at West Point.

"They think I could be a good fit there," said Rider, who also enjoyed a recruiting trip to Davidson. "But they would like me to play corner, and I am really not that big on corner. I would rather play wide receiver in college."

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Upper Merion	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 52-22)		
Aug. 31	@ Marple Newtown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 45-14)		
Sept. 7	Harrilton*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 41-0)		
Sept. 14	Ridley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 14-6)		
Sept. 21	@ Haverford High*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 10-0)		
Sept. 28	@ Strath Haven*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 21-14)		
Oct. 5	@ Springfield-Delco*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 12	Garnet Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 19	Penncrest *	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 35-13)		
Oct. 27	@ Lower Merion*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 38-25)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

SEAN MULLARKEY » QUARTERBACK



The 6-0, 180-pound senior quarterback became a starter due to injury in his sophomore season, and has had plenty of time to gain a full grasp of Radnor's run-pass option.

"We've been building up for this," Mullarkey said. "At the end of last season, we said, 'Next year is the year.' And we have just been working in the winter. There is a special vibe around this team."

TEDDY GIRTON » SAFETY

A linebacker last season, the 5-10, 170-pound senior will return to safety, where he played some as a sophomore. Also a valued wide receiver, Girton's mobility in the secondary could make a difference. "I feel comfortable there," he said. "I am definitely looking forward to it."



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RADNOR HIGH SCHOOL





RIDLEY

GREEN RAIDERS

CLASS
6A

By Matt Chandik
For Digital First Media

RIDLEY TWP. >> Dave Wood has been coaching football for the better part of three decades, so it's safe to say that the Ridley coach has seen just about every situation that you can think of.

There's a first for everything, though, and this fall, Wood will trot out the youngest team he's ever had.

"I was very blessed my first year here (when the Raiders were Central League tri-champions in 2016) of having a lot of older kids and even last year, we had some older kids, but we're very young this year," Wood said. "I think we have two or three starters back on each side of the ball."

It's never ideal to have so much inexperience, but it's particularly daunting with a schedule that opens with Father Judge and the Central League's last two champions, Garnet Valley and Springfield, in the first three weeks.

"I'm expecting for us to grow together as a team," said senior cornerback Elijah Yakpasuo, one of the returning defensive starters who will also add an offensive role as a running back and wide receiver. "The younger players will have to step up, but that's football for you."

Senior quarterback Jack Bakey takes over full-time under center. He played in five games last year, but enters the year with all of five passing attempts and 20 rushes to his name. Unlike past Ridley offenses, Wood's preference is with the ground game and the triple-option offense, so Bakey will likely only have to throw a few times per game to keep defenses honest.

"It definitely helps to get the experience in there and it better prepares for you for



MATT CHANDIK — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Senior Jack Bakey will take over as the full-time quarterback this season for a young Ridley team that will have to grow together quickly.

future games," Bakey said. "... Now that I've matured as a senior, the reads are like second nature to me and once you get that down, it's easy.

"I'm excited. I've been waiting for this for a few years and I'm just happy that I got my opportunity, and I'm going to make the most of it."

Fortunately for Bakey, two of the three returning offensive starters are offensive linemen in Tom Bramwell and Vaughn Ker-tis. The former is a 6-5, 280-pound masher at right guard, while the latter will be a mainstay at left tackle and checks in at 5-11, 250. There's a talented group of unproven backs, with senior Hassan Chandler and junior Dylan Staley leading the way.

The Green Raiders' defense might have to carry the team until the inexperienced offense catches up to speed, and that's just

fine. Linebackers Jalen Hudson (5-11, 210) and Bryce Regan (5-10, 200) should make a big impact, with Yakpasuo and Evan Bosak (5-8, 150) manning the secondary.

Ridley also returns two senior specialists in punter Myles Turner and kicker Nate Warwick, and Wood feels that he's got one of the best kicking games in Delco.

"I think we have a strong defense," Regan said. "We're definitely strong. We can fill our gaps when we need to and we'll be blitzing hard. Our defensive line is a brick wall. They won't let anything through."

It won't be easy to do with such a young team, but Wood has shown that he can get the most out of his players and put them in a position to be successful. Will that be enough to get Ridley into the play-off hunt?

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Father Judge	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 38-20)		
Aug. 31	@ Garnet Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 24-14)		
Sept. 7	Springfield-Delco*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-7)		
Sept. 14	@ Radnor*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 14-6)		
Sept. 21	Lower Merion*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 45-12)		
Sept. 28	@ Conestoga*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 41-0)		
Oct. 5	Strath Haven*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 12	@ Penncrest*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 19	Upper Darby *	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 36-22)		
Oct. 26	@ Haverford High*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 13-9)		
Nov. 22	@ Interboro*	10:00 am
— 2017 RESULT (W 38-20)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

TOM BRAMWELL » RIGHT GUARD



The senior right guard is an imposing figure at 6-5, 280 pounds, and Wood thinks that the big fella can play at the FBS or FCS level. The Green Raiders will likely run a lot behind big No. 77, and that's a recipe for success. Bramwell has the tenacity and aggressive mindset to get defenders acquainted with the turf, and he seems to relish contact.

JALEN HUDSON » LINEBACKER

It doesn't take long to notice that the senior linebacker asserts himself on the Ridley defense. As one of four returning starters, he's at ease all over the field and communicates well with his teammates.



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SPRINGFIELD

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By Matt Smith

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SPRINGFIELD >> Ben Konah was Springfield's backup quarterback last year.

He didn't see the field very often because of the emergence of Jack Psenicska, who was one of the most productive quarterbacks in Delaware County.

This year, Konah has a new role on the team. The hulking 6-2, 205-pound senior will line up either behind or next to Psenicska at running back.

"It's kind of new, but it's not a big difference for me," Konah said. "It's making me able to understand how the (offensive) line works, before I run and get the ball, I know how the line is moving and I can calculate my route, personally, I guess. It's really not hard or a big change for me. I've worked hard on my strength and agility and I want to get ready as best as I can."

Springfield is aiming for its third consecutive Central League championship and fourth in five years. Last season, the Cougars' only loss was to Unionville, a 35-25 defeat in the District 1 Class 5A final. For the third time in four years, the Cougars advanced to the final but had failed to capture the program's first district championship.

Many key players, including All-Delcos Ja'Den McKenzie (running back/linebacker) and Kyle Long (multi-purpose), have moved on to college, and several starting spots were open in training camp. But not much else has changed at Springfield camp. It would be unwise to suggest that 2018 is going to be a rebuilding season.

"Last year there were a lot of two- and three-year starters, especially on the O-line



DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Springfield quarterback Jack Psenicska, center in this shot from last year's District 1 Class 5A final against Unionville, should be primed for a big year in his second season at the Cougars' controls.

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and the D-line. It's not a work in progress, but you're replacing a lot of players from a team that won the Central League twice in a row," head coach Chris Britton said. "I don't think the expectation for this team is any different. This is what they were brought up to do. The first four weeks are going to be about getting these guys experience. All of these first-year (starters) will be getting first-time cracks."

Konah will split backfield duties with classmate Geo Dotscias, who served as back up for McKenzie last fall.

"We don't need two senior quarterbacks," Britton said of Konah, "and he's a big kid. We can use him at running back and see what he can do."

Pat Clemens, an All-Delco last fall, is

the leader of the defense at linebacker. That unit also includes Jeff Biancanello, who was outstanding last year. Over the last several seasons, Springfield has possessed one of the county's top defensive units. The Cougars will replenish their defensive line unit following the graduation of several standout players, including Derek Strain and two-time All-Delco Justin Shields.

"We had a great senior class last year and we're trying to match what they did, trying to make our practices fun and at the same time we're getting better every day, making everything positive," Clemens said. "I think the new guys are going to be able to step into the role. I think we will have to be consistent on every play and take no plays off. When you take plays off, teams are going to be able to beat us. We just need that consistent play all the way through, never stop giving it your all and never stop playing the way we know how."

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Glen Mills	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 28-8)		
Aug. 31	Upper Darby*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 20-8)		
Sept. 7	@ Ridley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-7)		
Sept. 14	@ Harriton*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-8)		
Sept. 21	Marple Newtown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-19)		
Sept. 28	Garnet Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 14-7)		
Oct. 5	Radnor*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 13	@ Lower Merion*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 19	Haverford High*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 31-17)		
Oct. 26	@ Conestoga*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 35-7)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

JACK SPENCE » WIDE RECEIVER



One in a long history of great lacrosse players at Springfield who aren't too shabby on the football field, either. The Lehigh lacrosse commit and senior wideout has all the tools to be the next Kyle Long-type

receiver for the Cougars.

PAT CLEMENS » LINEBACKER

The All-Delco linebacker and three-year varsity starter registered 138 tackles last year. "Leadership kind of comes with the position. I'm used to having pressure on me at all times," he said. "I like being a leader



for my guys, knowing that they can look to me for help because I know that I can give them the same thing back."

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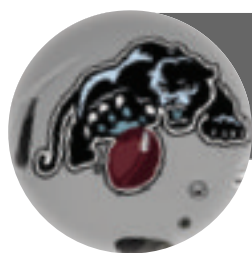
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STRATH HAVEN

CLASS
5A

PANTHERS

By Jack McCaffery

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@JackMcCaffery on Twitter

NETHER PROVIDENCE >> As the Strath Haven football team worked through its preseason, Kevin Clancy outlined two plans for Jake Fisher.

One: Make things happen when the Panthers have the ball.

Two: Arrive back safely when they don't. "Exactly," Clancy said, with an exhale.

Not that the legendary coach hadn't done it his first 28 seasons at Strath Haven, particularly with NFL-player-to-be Isaac Jones two decades ago, but he has found himself in a spot where he will have to ask his quarterback to be a key defensive player, too. Reality, and some good fortune, left him with few alternatives.

The reality is that Strath Haven, unlike some other programs in the Central League, is finding it increasingly difficult each season to attract willing football players. For that, Clancy will play up to 16 players both ways.

The good fortune, as it relates to Fisher, is that his quarterback is also the strongest player on the team, winning every weight-room contest and offseason accolade.

The quarterback?

"First time I can remember that," Clancy said. "But, yes, he's the strongest guy. So we will use him on defense some. The defensive coach wants to use him all the time. I say, 'No, he's our quarterback. He can't be out there the whole time.' Right now we're talking free safety."

So it will be for Fisher, the 6-1, 185-pound senior. He'll be a quarterback first and a safety second. Or could that possibly be the other way around?

"I like offense," he said. "But I love playing



PETE BANNAN — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Strath Haven quarterback Jake Fisher is 'the strongest kid on our team and he makes everybody better around him,' according to head coach Kevin Clancy.

+ **Online:** Longer versions of most team previews are available online, with even more info, at PAPREPLIVE.COM

defense. Defense is a whole different level of brotherhood on that side of the ball."

More to the point, it does give the strongest Panther the occasional chance to create, not just absorb, contact.

"Oh, yeah, definitely," he said. "We don't really have that many free-safety blitz packages. But you never know."

As is typical in the balanced Central League, Strath Haven is facing another you-never-know kind of season. So it was last year, too, before the 6-6 Panthers nudged into the postseason and won a game at Bishop Shanahan before being ousted by Unionville.

With Fisher back at quarterback, hopes literally are stronger.

"He's a big guy," linebacker John Prochniak said. "He is a leader on this team. He pushes everyone. He pushes me. He is the strongest kid on our team and he makes everybody better around him because he's that type of

player. He is just a leader."

Through his youth football career, which wound through the Rose Tree program, Fisher played just about every place. But he was a lineman before he was anything else, and, in the weight room at least, he never lost that urge to grow.

"I get on the linemen to keep up a little bit," he said, smiling. "But it's all fun. I love it. I love being in there with the team. And Coach (Erik) Hollingsworth in there with everybody. It's just awesome."

The Panthers have had their awesome moments under Clancy, twice winning state championships. This season they will count on running back Ibo Pio, All-Central fullback Zack Hussein and tight end Ethan Belville, among others, to surround Fisher with options. Prochniak, lineman Ryan Krouse, back Arion Ford and center Sam Burk will also be of high value.

"We have a real tight core group of guys," Fisher said. "If we are able to stay together, then we'll be all right. I just want to help out the team as much as I can."

Twice as much, if necessary.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Interboro	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 26-13)		
Aug. 31	Lower Merion*	7:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 36-14)		
Sept. 7	@ Penncrest*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 44-7)		
Sept. 14	Conestoga*	7:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 44-7)		
Sept. 21	@ Upper Darby*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 21-7)		
Sept. 28	Radnor*	7:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 21-14)		
Oct. 5	@ Ridley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 12	Haverford High*	7:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 19	@ Marple Newtown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 38-28)		
Oct. 26	Harrilton*	7:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 27-7)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

JAKE FISHER » QUARTERBACK



As the quarterback's production goes, so should Strath Haven. "He's just an all-around athlete," Clancy said. "He understands the game. He's physical. He's fast enough, probably a 4.7

(40-yard dash), something like that. He's tough. I think he is Division I (material)."

JOHN PROCHNIAK » LINEBACKER

The junior had a strong 2017 to rise into the conversation of the Central League's top underclass talents. "We're hoping we keep growing and get better as a team and hopefully we come out with a home playoff game this year and hopefully win some games and hopefully get to the District championship and win the Central League," he said. "We're going for it all."



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12 UPPER DARBY

ROYALS

CLASS 6A

By Jack McCaffery

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@JackMcCaffery on Twitter

UPPER DARBY >> As 5-foot-7 sophomore quarterback Kevin Kerwood trotted onto the Upper Darby High School field last year for his only opportunity of the season, Kareem McAdams was among the first to greet him in the huddle.

Even then, everyone around the Royals' program knew that one, three-word burst of advice would be sufficient.

"He was nervous," McAdams was remembering, months later. "But I just told him: Play your game."

That's all Kerwood ever intended. And that's all Rich Gentile, the Royals' coach, will expect when Kerwood becomes the full-time starter in a junior season of high opportunity. Despite his size, the accomplished wrestler is everything Gentile was hoping to find upon the graduation of valuable quarterback Josh Gouch.

"The best way I can describe him is that he's a quarterback," Gentile said. "He makes all the correct reads. Nothing seems to faze him. If it is a bad play or something bad happens, he comes right back and doesn't let it affect him. And he's a hard worker."

With substantial losses on the fringes, but with returning value along the lines, Upper Darby's season will be determined by how well younger skill players perform. For that, the unflappable Kerwood appears the perfect replacement for Gouch.

Though Kerwood didn't rally the Royals to victory in his mini-audition against Ridley, he helped them win the second half, 8-6, and to bring the final difference to within two touchdowns. If he looked more seasoned than most sophomores, it was for two reasons: 1) His development as a quarterback in the Clifton Heights Rams program; 2) All those nights going one-on-one, eye-to-eye, flip-for-flip with high school wrestlers, plenty of the upperclass variety.

"At one point when I was younger, I played running back," Kerwood said. "But in my last two years with Clifton Heights, I played quarterback. I still like to run. We will play some under center and some in the shotgun. So I can do both."

He can run, if that's the play. But if the situation calls for him to hang in and battle, he's been trained for that, too.

"I have been wrestling since I was six years old," Kerwood said. "I wrestled at 150



Upper Darby's football players enter their facility by tapping a sign that demands they put the team ahead of individual efforts.

pounds this year. I did good. I was sixth in districts. I didn't make it to regionals, because you have to finish in the top five. But wrestling teaches you a lot of stuff, like not to be rattled by anything at all. It teaches you to be tough with anything that you come up against and things like that."

Kerwood will be up against multiple Central League defenses, all designed for and capable of limiting even the most experienced of quarterbacks. And he will have to do that without departed Royals runner supreme Quaran Davis.

Gentile has a plan to trust Kerwood, with offensive-line carry-overs Eric Miller and Delva Jean-Baptiste helping to clear space for McAdams to run. With receiver Brylan Brown ready to create points and with Kerwood's savvy, enthusiasm is high after a 6-5 season.

"I think Kevin will do well," Gentile said. "When Josh got hurt in the Ridley game in the second half, Kevin came in and did a really nice job. He understands the offense. And the best thing about him? He's a junior. So we will have him for two years."

Kerwood, who barely flinches whenever critics question his size, is ready for the challenge.

"Getting in there last year was valuable, to be sure," he said. "That was my first time in a real varsity game getting a lot of playing time. So I was excited. I wasn't nervous, though."

"This year, we are going to be a great

team. We are all coming together as a family and I think we are going to come out good. We don't have a lot of seniors, but that doesn't bother us at all."

To the quarterback Upper Darby needs, to the quarterback Rich Gentile knows is ready, nothing ever does.

HELLO, NEIGHBOR

Nick Faraglia played some as a sophomore at Bonner & Prendergast, then transferred down the street to Upper Darby last year. But he sustained a shoulder injury in training camp and missed the entire season.

Having regained health, the offensive guard and inside linebacker should be valuable.

"We are looking forward to having him," Gentile said. "We are young. But he does give us a player who has had varsity experience."

READ THE SIGN

As has been the case for several years, a sign reading, "If you're not prepared to put the team first, turn around," is the last thing the Royals see before descending onto the playing and practice fields.

This year, the sign is newer and bigger. As always, the Royals tap it, one by one, before practice.

"It's important, absolutely," Gentile said. "If you don't want to do that, get out of here."

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Bonner-Prendie	7:00 pm
- 2017 RESULT (W 35-0)		
Aug. 31	Springfield-Delco*	7:00 pm
- 2017 RESULT (L 20-8)		
Sept. 7	Conestoga*	7:00 pm
- 2017 RESULT (W 49-13)		
Sept. 14	@ Penncrest*	7:00 pm
- 2017 RESULT (W 34-7)		
Sept. 21	Strath Haven*	7:00 pm
- 2017 RESULT (W 21-7)		
Sept. 28	@ M.L. King	6:30 pm
- 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 5	Harriton*	7:00 pm
- 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 12	@ Marple-Newtown*	7:00 pm
- 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 19	@ Ridley*	7:00 pm
- 2017 RESULT (L 36-22)		
Oct. 26	@ Garnet Valley*	7:30 pm
- 2017 RESULT (L 22-14)		
Nov. 22	Haverford High*	10:45 am
- 2017 RESULT (L 14-7)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

KAREEM MCADAMS » RUNNING BACK



The 5-11, 205-pound junior tailback has no secrets: He is running into ... and through ... contact.

"That's what I love," he said. "That's what I did when I was little. That's what I am known for, just

running downhill. I am not that type of guy who will just juke."

Realizing the potential of such a force, Gentile has envisioned an old-school offense. Very old. Very, very old.

"I'm for 1905 football," the Royals' coach said. "My viewpoint is 3.5 yards is a great offensive play. If you get three of them, it's a first down and you hold onto the ball."

ERIC MILLER » DEFENSIVE LINE

The 6-2, 205-pound senior has the reach and the willingness to cause backfield havoc. Though he will take some offensive line shifts, defense is his passion.



"Defense is not planned," he said. "You have to react to the offense. So it's kind of like a rush. You don't know what's going to happen. But if you follow your cue, it's going to lead you to where the ball is. And then good things happen from there."

CHES-MONT LEAGUE PREVIEW

Two Tough

Chesco teams line up behind district champs Coatesville, Unionville with reputation to uphold

By Nate Heckenberger
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For the first time since 1995, after Downingtown and Unionville won District 1 crowns, Chester County will be home to a pair of returning district champions.

Coatesville (Class 6A) and Unionville (Class 5A) begin their quests to defend district titles. The bar has seemingly been raised around the Ches-Mont League, with the Red Raiders emerging as a perennial powerhouse since the PIAA shifted to six classes two years ago.

Coatesville has played in three district finals since 2012 and won two of them. After nearly reaching another state final last fall, the Red Raiders seem poised to make another run at Hershey. With the District 12 champ now sent to the western half of the bracket, they are dreaming big in Coatesville. And rightly so.

Senior running back Aaron Young (1,687 yards, 31 touchdowns rushing last year) and juniors Ricky Ortega (3,225 yards and 42 TDs passing) and Dapree Bryant (1,253 yards and 19 TDs receiving) are as potent a trio as there is in the state.

There will be new faces in the wide receiving corps and defensive secondary, but Coatesville is not only blurringly fast, but imposingly big up front, starting with left tackle Ricky Santiago. Tione Holmes is also back to anchor the defensive line.

If Coatesville's talent makes it the favorite in the National Divi-



NATE HECKENBERGER — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Unionville has a lot of talent to replace, but the Indians know there will be a target on their backs.

sion, the layers added to its run-pass option offense could come off as downright unfair.

The Red Raiders have won 13 games in a season three times since 2012 and have lost just four regular-season games to District 1 teams in that span. Downingtown East has given Coatesville two of those Ls and came about 20 seconds away from doing it again last season.

The Cougars lost a lot on their offensive line, and Luke Davis takes over at quarterback, but East is one of those programs you can almost pencil in to be a contender in the National and land in the playoffs.

The thought is that one of the Downingtown teams will challenge Coatesville for the top spot in the National.

Downingtown West has struggled the past two seasons after going 9-2 in 2015, but hopes are high with Will Howard returning at quarterback as a junior.

CHES-MONT » PAGE 25



NATE HECKENBERGER — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Coatesville's Ricky Ortega is one of the top dual-threat quarterbacks in District 1.



NATE HECKENBERGER — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Lance Frazier takes over as head coach at Kennett, bringing some high-level experience with him.

Ches-Mont

FROM PAGE 24

Howard took his lumps in the division last season but finished with 1,795 passing yards and an 11-4 touchdown/interception ratio. The combination of a talented quarterback and head coach Mike Milano's play calling has always meant fireworks, so betting the Whippets to light up some scoreboards once again is logical.

West brings back a lot of talent to the starting lineups, but the biggest question is if they will have enough team speed to catch up to Coatesville or outrun East and the other contenders.

Avon Grove defeated West last season for the first time since earning a share of the National Division title in 2009. In the four seasons following that co-title, Avon Grove won just seven total games before Harry O'Neill took over as head coach. O'Neill suffered a winless season in his inaugural campaign, but in the last three falls, Avon Grove is 14-18.

The Red Devils have shown consistent improvement; a winning record and playoff appearance is next on their list of objectives. With good size up front, starting with Connor Long, they will hope to find enough skill to finally get them over the hump.

Bishop Shanahan has been to the playoffs the last two seasons.

The Eagles will welcome a junior transfer from Kutztown, Charlie Maddocks, to take over at quarterback on a team with a lot of positions to fill.

With the Eagles' nonleague schedule and the points they'll tally playing the big boys, they should have a shot at the postseason, dropping into Class 4A this year.

West Chester East returns quarterback Ryan Cassidy and one of the top receivers in the area, Michael Gray, but the Vikings need to take major strides to get back to the playoffs.

West Chester Henderson starts a new era with Stefan Adams taking over as head coach, and it will be an uphill battle with a lot of new faces on a team that won one game last year.

The American Division has been owned by Unionville the past three seasons as the Indians have won 19 straight games in the division.

Unionville averaged 36.2 points in five postseason games last year, but 51 of 64 offensive touchdowns last season came from players who have since graduated. The defense may have to shoulder the load early while the offense develops. Connor Schilling (347 total yards, four TDs) and Joe Fariello (299 yards, six TDs rushing) give the Indians some punch at the running back position.

As usual, West Chester Rustin and Great Valley appear to be the top contenders in the American Division.

CHES-MONT » PAGE 26



NATE HECKENBERGER — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Coatesville junior Dapree Bryant led the area with 1,253 yards and 19 touchdowns receiving last season.

2017 Ches-Mont American Division

Pos	Team	CW	CL	W	L	PF	PA
1	Unionville	6	0	13	1	491	242
2	Great Valley	5	1	6	5	287	327
3	West Chester Rustin	4	2	7	5	415	291
4	Oxford	3	3	6	5	390	374
5	Sun Valley	2	4	5	7	311	398
6	Kennett	1	5	3	7	263	345
7	Octorara	0	6	2	8	146	417

2017 Ches-Mont National Division

Pos	Team	CW	CL	W	L	PF	PA
1	Coatesville	6	0	13	2	665	262
2	Downingtown East	5	1	10	2	488	270
3	Avon Grove	4	2	5	5	280	217
4	Bishop Shanahan	3	3	7	4	340	231
5	Downingtown West	2	4	5	5	232	268
6	West Chester East	1	5	2	8	151	347
7	West Chester Henderson	0	6	1	9	134	354



NATE HECKENBERGER — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Downingtown East's Garvey Jonassaint is one of two returning 1,000-yard rushers in the Ches-Mont.



NATE HECKENBERGER — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Senior lineman Tim Dwyer gives Great Valley a veteran presence on both sides of the ball.

Ches-Mont

FROM PAGE 25

The Golden Knights have lost 11 games in the past two seasons, a total that took five seasons prior to accumulate. They lost some big names from a squad that won a playoff game in the 5A bracket last year, but unlike Unionville, the Golden Knights return their quarterback, Will Pileggi (753 yards, 11 TDs passing).

Along with its signal-caller,

Rustin will lean on running backs Michael Covert (498 yards, four TDs rushing) and Collin Hurley, who will step into expanded roles.

Great Valley returns arguably the best quarterback in the division with senior Jake Prevost. Starting for the first time as a junior last fall, Prevost threw for 1,294 yards, 14 touchdowns and only three interceptions. He has the body type that looks the part of an elite passer.

The Patriots also have their best playmaker back in Josh Burgess (462 yards, six TDs receiv-

ing), who will line up all over to get more touches as a senior. Amari Christopher (256 yards, one TD rushing) transfers in from Conestoga and will pair with Mark Montague (101 yards, 2 TDs rushing) in the backfield.

Unlike the National Division, and as is often the case in smaller-classification playoffs, playmakers have been the difference more than the quarterbacks. In the last 10 years, three smaller schools have won district titles — Rustin (the former 3A in 2008), Great Valley (3A in 2014)

and Unionville (5A in 2017). They were led by Rondell White, Nasir Adderley and Joe Zubillaga, respectively.

Whoever can find that superstar will likely take the American and compete in the 5A playoffs.

Oxford is coming off a winning season and a playoff appearance but lost the bulk of its offense to graduation. How the Hornets can rebuild will tell a lot about the direction of this program. Junior running back Tim Faber (522 total yards, seven TDs) could be a breakout candidate.

Kennett starts with a new coach for the second consecutive year. Lance Frazier is the new head man and will likely rely on running back Garrett Cox (751 yards, 10 TDs) and receiver Mitch Kosara (611 yards, six TDs receiving).

Sun Valley won a pair of games in the American last season, one against Kennett and the other against Octorara, who left to join District 3. The Vanguard's boast one of the best all-purpose players in the league in Julz Kelly. Quarterback Anthony Ellis is also back.



AVON GROVE

RED DEVILS

CLASS
6A

By **Bill Rudick**
For Digital First Media

WEST GROVE >> Avon Grove is coming off just its second non-losing season in program history.

That taste of success is sweet, and something head coach Harry O'Neill and his Red Devils hope to build on.

"Our overall size and strength is the best it's been in the past five years," said O'Neill. "Our overall team speed has improved, and, along with our experienced offensive line, and speed on the outside receiving group, we have a different look offensively than in the past. We look forward to continued improvement of the overall culture."

The Devils have a solid group of returning starters on offense, including the bulk of the offensive line in Connor Long (6'3, 260, OT/DE, Sr.), Nick Pino (6'2, 320, OG, Jr.), Rhys Whitehouse (6'1, 265, OC, Jr.), and Jack Casey (6'0, 245, OG, Sr.), along with wideout Jay Paone (6'1, 175, WR, Sr.) and tight end Max Paschall (6'2, 235, Jr.)

Last season's Ches-Mont National MVP Kevin Francis graduated last spring, but an experienced O-line should help ease the transition for an increased work load for Dino Arhontakis (5'8, 195, Sr.) and Wyatt Kirby (6'0, 185, Jr.).

"Replacing Kevin Francis will be difficult, but we feel that we have good depth at the RB position in Dino Arhontakis and Wyatt Kirby," said O'Neill. "They have both shown flashes throughout the offseason. Hopefully, by committee we can replace the yards Kevin Francis was able to amass, and run the football effectively behind an experienced offensive line."

When the Devils take to the air, quarterback JT McDonald (6'3, 185, Jr.) will look



BILL RUDICK — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Avon Grove quarterback JT McDonald throws during a practice session.

to a pair of speedsters in Paone and Tyre Stead, who transferred to Avon Grove from Conestoga Valley in the Lancaster-Lebanon League.

"McDonald shows good ability and arm strength," said O'Neill. "He has made great progress since the spring. Stead has impressed in camp and had very good numbers in 2017 catching over 60 passes for 1000 plus yards."

On the defensive side of the ball, the Devils will look to a trio of returning start-

ers to lead the way in Eric Yurkovich (6'1, 215, DE, Sr.), Scott O'Neill (5'9, 185, SS Sr.) and Kirby.

"The defensive line is solid," said O'Neill. "Eric Yurkovich and Isiah Castenada are returning starters, who, along with Connor Long and Briggs Godfrey, give us good size and strength on the line of scrimmage. Three-year starter and two-year captain Scott O'Neill returns at SS/OLB, who, along with Wyatt Kirby, gives us strength in the secondary at the safety positions."



2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Kennett	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 25-23)		
Aug. 31	@ Harry S. Truman	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 35-12)		
Sept. 7	Unionville*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 14-6)		
Sept. 14	@ Downingtown East*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 35-25)		
Sept. 22	W.C. East*	2:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-14)		
Sept. 28	@ Downingtown West*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 38-17)		
Oct. 5	Malvern Prep	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 12	@ Bishop Shanahan*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 31-21)		
Oct. 19	Coatesville*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 42-6)		
Oct. 26	W.C. Henderson*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 41-21)		

* denotes a league game



PLAYERS TO WATCH

DINO ARHONTAKIS » RUNNING BACK



Trying to fill the shoes of the area's top ground-gainer last season (Kevin Francis) is no easy task, but Arhontakis has a great offensive line in front of him as he takes on a bigger role for the Red Devils.

ERIC YURKOVICH » DEFENSIVE LINEMAN

The senior Yurkovich is one of the Devils' captains, and brings a wealth of experience to a solid defensive line that will need to be strong against the big boys from the National Division.



Peter DiGiovanni
Columnist

Follow **Peter DiGiovanni's** coverage of the Ches-Mont League and beyond at **PaPrepLive.com**.



(On Twitter @PeteDLN)





BISHOP SHANAHAN

CLASS
4A

EAGLES

By Neil Geoghegan

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@NeilMGeoghegan on Twitter

DOWNTOWN » Paul Meyers understands the realities associated with trying to compete on the football field with the big boys in the Ches-Mont National. But the long-time head coach at Bishop Shanahan is not going to back down from the challenge.

"There is clearly an upper half (this fall)," he said. "Coatesville and the Downingtons are going to be really good. You are never going to slow those teams down, so you need a few wrinkles to keep them on their toes."

Meyers and his staff will need plenty of innovative thinking in 2018 to get into the top half of the division standings, which the Eagles (3-3, 7-4 overall) flirted with a year ago. That's because Shanahan must find a way to replace a 24-member senior class that has graduated, which includes nine who have gone on to play college football.

"We are going back to square one and sticking to the basics," Meyers explained. "We don't want to try to run before we walk."

"We were more advanced heading into the season last year because the guys had two or three years under their belts and knew what we were trying to do."

With just one starter returning on each side of the ball, there are a lot of unknowns right now for the Eagles. But there are also some intriguing pieces to build upon, especially at the skilled positions.

"Our strong point this season is our skilled players," Meyers said. "We have guys who can get in space and can run."

Slot receiver/running back Connor Whalen is the lone returning starter on offense, but others like Tyler Kingsbury and Vinny Riccardo are poised to make a mark. All three were players on Shanahan's lacrosse squad that won the state title last spring.

"We are going to be using our athletes," Meyers said.

Add another senior, Mike Prieto, to the mix, and the Eagles have receivers who can catch and run. The job of getting them the football will fall on junior quarterback Charlie Maddocks.

"Charlie's got a good, strong arm, but he's still learning the system," Meyers said.

"We have a lot of fast kids but not as many big, strong kids, so we need to be more ag-



MICHAEL REEVES — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Bishop Shanahan's first team offense goes through drills during practice at training camp.

ile and be more explosive," added the speedy Kingsbury.

The biggest challenge is going to be up front, where inexperience is an issue, and where depth is a constant worry on both sides of the ball.

"The six or seven we are going with are going to be OK, but in order to make sure they don't get worn down, we'll try to rotate another guy in there each series, or try to keep them on one side of the ball," Meyers said. "But three or four are going to have to go both ways."

That's going to put a lot of pressure on projected two-way starters like Nick Schell (offensive tackle/middle linebacker), Nick Macon (center, defensive line) and Tony Cipriano (guard, defensive line).

"We've had a lot of guys step up already," said Schell, a senior. "Because we had so many seniors last season, a lot of guys are getting their first looks. As the season goes on, they are going to get better and better."

Schell and Prieto form a formidable duo at linebacker, and the secondary is headlined by Kingsbury and Riccardo.

"The seniors last year left a great legacy, so we want to make our own legacy," Kingsbury said.

Maddocks is more of a drop-back quarterback, so look for Shanahan to throw the ball more often, especially early in the season.

"Our guys can catch the ball and put a move on you. It's fun to watch," Schell said.

"In years past, we've had a running quarterback," Meyers added. "The previous two

seasons, our guys have run for about 1,900 yards. We still want to run, but if we can't, we will throw it a little more."

LAX LEADERSHIP

There are four football starters (and six players overall) who also play lacrosse at Shanahan. As an assistant lacrosse coach under head man Jon Heisman, Meyers knows that he has some gamers.

"I talked to the lacrosse guys the other day and said, 'I want that mentality to step over onto the football field,'" he said. "They know what it takes to win. They know what it's like to be down 4-0 in the state championship game and avoid any panic. That's the leadership we need to bring to a young team."

Kingsbury added: "When things are going rough, just keeping your head up and having confidence that the next play is your play."

EAGLES INTANGIBLES

The Eagles may be reloading in 2018, but Meyers has been impressed with this current group in ways that go beyond football experience and ability.

"There are no 'I' guys on this team," he said. "We've stressed that from day one, but there are times you do that and there are still individuals who want to do their own thing. These guys get along, work hard and encourage each other."

"They don't point fingers and they don't feel sorry for themselves."

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Benjamin Franklin	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Aug. 31	Prep Charter	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 7	@ Daniel Boone	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 14	Coatesville*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 55-13)		
Sept. 21	@ Downingtown East*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 34-7)		
Sept. 28	W.C. Henderson*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-7)		
Oct. 5	@ W.C. East*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 32-10)		
Oct. 12	Avon Grove*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 31-21)		
Oct. 19	@ Downingtown West*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 41-14)		
Oct. 26	@ Oxford*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 56-27)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

TYLER KINGSBURY » WIDE RECEIVER



An impressive athlete and a blur on the field, Kingsbury is in the mold of former Shanahan players like Dan DiBeneditto, Steve Sweeney, Dan Bathon and Andrew Smyth. He is listed as a slot receiver, but is also proficient at two other receiver

positions.

"We will move Tyler around to get him the ball and set up a favorable matchup," Meyers said. "If he is matched up with a linebacker, he will give them fits."

NICK SCHELL » LINEBACKER

The senior played behind college-bound seniors like Kevin Jones (Maine) and Mac Berry (St. Anselm) last season, but Schell is poised for a much bigger role this fall. The 6-foot-2, 210-pounder is a tackle on offense, and the anchor at middle linebacker on defense.

"Schell is a big kid and a great leader who works hard," Meyers said.





COATESVILLE

RED RAIDERS

CLASS
6A

By Neil Geoghegan

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CALN >> No plays off. No days off. It's become the unofficial motto for the Coatesville football program, which has very realistic state championship aspirations this fall. The Red Raiders dominated the Ches-Mont League, captured the District 1 Class 6A crown and came tantalizingly close to a spot in the state final in 2017. And the bulk of the key players from that squad are back.

"Our players aren't dumb," said 10-year head coach Matt Ortega. "They know how far we got last year and what we have coming back."

Despite great gridiron tradition, Coatesville has never won a state football title. Under Ortega, the Raiders reached the title game in 2012. And last season, the squad blew an 18-point second half lead over St. Joseph's Prep in the semifinals, which has since haunted and motivated Ortega's players.

"I think about it a lot," acknowledged star wideout Dapree Bryant. "The way it ended last season hurt my heart. It motivates me a lot. I think about that game every day."

Ortega added: "That kind of game keeps us on our toes every day. We have to be able to get over the hump in a game like that, so we have to raise the bar in practice and in the weight room."

It's difficult to imagine a team in the state with more offensive firepower than the Raiders. Along with Bryant, junior quarterback Ricky Ortega and senior runner Aaron Young are returning all-state selections.

A junior, Bryant amassed 1,253 receiving yards and 19 touchdowns, while Young rolled up 1,384 on the ground and 24 scores. And Ortega added more than 4,000 yards of to-



NATE HECKENBERGER — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Coatesville's trio of Dapree Bryant (2), Aaron Young (4) and Ricky Ortega (1) is arguably the most lethal threesome in the state.

+ **Online:** Longer versions of most team previews are available online, with even more info, at PAPREPLIVE.COM

tal offense and 42 TDs. Though the squad has to replace two Division I recruits (Avery Young and Kahtero Summers), the Red Raiders have depth in the receiving corps that has the potential to give defenses fits.

"We have a lot of weapons on the offensive side," said tight end/defensive end Tione Holmes, who is also a Division I recruit.

"There's been a few times in my 21-year career as a coach where we've had skill like this," Matt Ortega said. "The nice thing about this year is I feel we've married those kids with a line that has experience. We finally have both elements."

"We should be able to run the ball in big games, which is something we haven't done since 2012."

Tackle Ricky Santiago (6-5, 320) leads the way up front. Ayden Geter and Chris McBride are also returning starters, along with Dylan Nichols (6-3, 290), who is the son of former head coach Tom Nichols.

"There are a lot of options," Bryant said.

"If a defense tries to shut down the run, we can throw it over the top. If they try to stop the pass, we'll give the ball to Aaron."

Holmes and Jimmy Limper will anchor the defensive line, and three-year starter Nick Thompson (6-0, 200) will lead the linebackers. Matt Ortega calls safety Shamaur Hall "the glue of the defense." The Raiders are poised to rotate players at cornerback: Young, Bryant, Dymeer Miller and Frank Sherman.

"We have a lot of young guys on defense, but we hit hard. I think we are ready for the next step," Holmes said.

But with proven star power all over the field and a lot of untapped potential to fill in the gaps, Matt Ortega understands that this group is a snapshot in time that may never be duplicated. He also knows that playing loose and confident is going to bring out the best in his squad.

"We are going to bust our tails every day, but we are going to have fun doing it," he said. "I told our team when we play somebody, they are going to say two things about us: we are tough and we love playing the game."

"If we have that mindset, we will have a good chance to reach our goals."

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 25	@ Harrisburg	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Aug. 30	@ Middletown South (NJ)	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 7	Cumberland Valley	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 21-14)		
Sept. 14	@ Bishop Shanahan*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 55-13)		
Sept. 21	W.C. Henderson*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-0)		
Sept. 28	@ W.C. Rustin	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 49-0)		
Oct. 5	Downingtown West*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-6)		
Oct. 12	@ W.C. East*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 63-14)		
Oct. 19	@ Avon Grove*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-6)		
Oct. 26	Downingtown East*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 38-27)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

DAPREE BRYANT » WIDE RECEIVER



Not physically imposing, the junior is elusive and dangerous. He is already one of the top slotbacks in the state, hauling in 57 passes as a sophomore, a third of those going for TDs. He'll be an even bigger target this year.

TIONE HOLMES » DEFENSIVE LINE

The list of standout players at Coatesville is long and impressive. Holmes may not rank at the very top of the list. But the two-way lineman is going to be very important for the Raiders this fall. And that's why he is will likely be on the field as much as any player on the roster.



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DOWNINGTOWN EAST

CLASS
6A

COUGARS

By Peter DiGiovanni
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UWCHLAN >> Like it or not, quarterback is the glamour position on any football team. And in the last decade, the Downingtown East Cougars have had their share of great quarterbacks, including NFL players, Pat Devlin and Kyle Lauletta.

This season, Cougars head coach Mike Matta has handed the reins of a team that advanced to the District 1 Class 6A quarterfinals to an unproven senior in Luke Davis, and Matta could not be any happier.

"Two other quarterbacks in the league, Ricky Ortega (of Coatesville) and (Will) Howard at Downingtown West, have gotten all the accolades, and with good reason, but we are very happy with Luke," Matta said. "He has great leadership skills, can run the football and has a great understanding of the offense. In any other year, he would be getting all the ink, but we are very excited to see Luke lead our offense."

"I guess you could call me the comeback kid," Davis said. "No one knows me and no one expects much of me outside this locker room, but we have a lot of weapons and I certainly embrace the challenge of leading this football team. I know the quarterback legacy here."

Davis has a world of confidence despite losing four offensive linemen to graduation, as the Cougars return all-league receivers Connor Noble and Jack Riley to go with 1,000 yard rusher Garvey Jonassaint.

Riley was All-Ches-Mont last season as a junior, and he thinks losing four offensive linemen will not be a problem.



NATE HECKENBERGER — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Luke Davis inherits the quarterback spot for the Cougars.

"We have a lot of confidence in those young guys," Riley said. "And Luke will be great out on the field and we have Garvey and Connor, so we will be as good as we usually are around here."

The one offensive lineman the Cougars have returning is Weston Menzie, who Matta says is one of the top linemen in southeastern Pennsylvania.

Defensively, the Cougars only bring back three starters, linebackers Stuart Regitz and Kyle Egan and cornerback James Basilli. But Regitz is not expecting any drop-off.

"We feel the young guys will top us," Regitz said. "And defense has always been a strong suit at Downingtown East and defenses have been good here for a very long time and I feel that will continue this season."

As usual, Downingtown East has a tough nonleague schedule, and Regitz likes the fact the Cougars do not duck anyone.

"I really like playing talented teams because it is fun and it gets us ready for the league games, which are always tough."

Downingtown East's nonleague slate includes Plymouth Whitmarsh, Perkiomen Valley and Roman Catholic.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Plymouth Whitmarsh	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 47-6)		
Sept. 1	Perkiomen Valley	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 7	Roman Catholic	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 37-27)		
Sept. 14	Avon Grove*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 35-25)		
Sept. 21	Bishop Shanahan*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 34-7)		
Sept. 28	@ W.C. East*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 49-7)		
Oct. 5	@ W.C. Henderson*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 41-7)		
Oct. 12	@ Downingtown West*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 28-14)		
Oct. 19	@ Unionville	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 45-21)		
Oct. 26	@ Coatesville*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 38-27)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

LUKE DAVIS » QUARTERBACK



The Cougars senior signal caller seems to embrace the program's long line of quality quarterbacks and is a dual threat for the Downingtown East offense.

STUART REGITZ » LINEBACKER

The senior linebacker is the leader of the Cougars defense and roams sideline to sideline to knock down opposing ball carriers.



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DOWNINGTOWN WEST

CLASS
6A

WHIPPETS

By Peter DiGiovanni
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DOWNINGTOWN >> The motto of the 2018 edition of Downingtown West football, with a nod toward the Super Bowl champion Eagles, is “Hungry Dogs Run Faster.”

An unfamiliar 5-5 record and no playoff berth in 2017 was more than enough to make the Whippets hungry.

Downingtown West head coach Mike Milano started 14 sophomores last season, one of them superb quarterback Will Howard, who holds three Division I offers.

“Will is the total package,” Milano said. “He is, if not the smartest kid in the school, he is in the top three. And he is very humble. You would never know he is the heir of the team. He can throw deep, throw on the run and run the football.”

“He can do it all and we have had some really good quarterbacks here in the past like Nolan Kearney, Bret Gillespie and Nick Pagel. Will is a one of a kind player and leader of the football team.”

Watching Howard air out his arm to receivers at Whippet practice is a sight to behold. The junior signal-caller says that qualifying for the district playoffs is a big goal of this team, and he feels playing all the young kids will really benefit this year’s team.

“We just have more experience in game situations with the bright lights on,” Howard said. “Everybody is together this season, which was not always the case last season because we played a lot of sophomores instead of some seniors. We really have a family atmosphere here right now and we want to win the league and make



NATE HECKENBERGER — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Big things are expected from junior quarterback Will Howard, who threw for 1,795 yards and 11 touchdowns last fall for the Whippets.

the playoffs.

“And I love that we are playing teams like Perk Valley, Neshaminy and Central Bucks South. Those game can only make you better for the league games.”

Milano knows those games will get the Whippets ready for the tortuous Ches-Mont slate and heavyweights like Coatesville, Avon Grove and Downingtown East.

“I just think playing these kinds of teams is the way to go,” Milano said. “Last year we played well for a half at Perk Valley and lost our focus in the second half, and then we go to Neshaminy and beat them.

What hurt us was losing to Bishop Shanahan and Avon Grove and that cost us a playoff spot. But the kids are a year older, and we finally have some guys with some size up front.”

One of the mainstays of the Downingtown West defense is middle linebacker Ryan Wetzel, who led the Whippets in tackles last season.

“We will definitely be better on defense this season because of the maturity and by playing together in big situations,” Wetzel said. “We are really looking forward to this season.”

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Perkiomen Valley	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 38-0)		
Aug. 31	C.B. South	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 8	Neshaminy	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 36-34)		
Sept. 14	@ W.C. Henderson*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 40-14)		
Sept. 21	@ Great Valley	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 52-7)		
Sept. 28	Avon Grove*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 38-17)		
Oct. 5	@ Coatesville*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-6)		
Oct. 12	Downingtown East*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 28-14)		
Oct. 19	Bishop Shanahan*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 41-14)		
Oct. 26	W.C. East*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 28-14)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

WILL HOWARD » QUARTERBACK



The big, strong-armed junior may be the best pure passer in the Ches-Mont and has offers from Rutgers, Yale and Morgan State. He threw for 1,795 yards and 11 touchdowns

last fall for the Whippets.

RYAN WETZEL » LINEBACKER

Wetzel is a ball hawk who seems to always find his way near the ball-carrier. The leader of an improved Whippets defense, Wetzel led the team in tackles last season.



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WEST CHESTER EAST

CLASS
5A

VIKINGS

By Peter DiGiovanni
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WEST GOSHEN >> The 2017 season was a frustrating one for the West Chester East Vikings and first-year head coach Scott Stephen.

The Vikings lost star running back Jared Cooper early in the season to an injury, then lost several close games on their way to a 2-8 record.

But the woes of last season may give the 2018 edition of West Chester East football big boost. John Wileczek and Kyle Cichanowsky both got significant reps running the football, and Stephen calls Cichanowsky a big asset on the offensive and defensive side of the football.

Wileczek, a slot receiver, hauled in more than 600 yards in the receiving department from quarterback Ryan Cassidy last year. He said getting a lot of time last season will greatly improve his game this year.

"I benefited a lot from last season's playing time," Wileczek said. "This year we feel we have the makings of a good run game which will open things up in the passing game. We definitely feel we can improve on our 2-8 record of last season. We have a lot of people back and we had a good off-season."

Another big two-way cog for the Vikings is senior receiver/free safety Michael Gray, who hauled in 68 passes last season. Gray is very excited about this year's team and he already sees improvement in the Vikings.

"We have no quit in this team," Gray said. "We had good numbers in the weight room in the offseason, and everybody can hardly wait to get going against Council



NATE HECKENBERGER — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Ryan Cassidy is back to quarterback the Vikings after passing for 980 yards and 11 touchdowns as a junior.

Rock North. We know we will be better than last year because of the experience we gained last year. We lost a lot of tough games last season, and this year with the added experience we hopefully can turn those close losses into wins."

Stephen is also cautiously optimistic about his team. He said so while watching his charges go at it on a very hot day of practice.

"I think playing together for a year can only benefit us," Stephen said. "We had a strong offseason and the numbers were great. We have Kyle, who will get the bulk

of the running duties, and John Wileczek as a good slot receiver and a returning quarterback in Ryan Cassidy, so yes we feel good about this season.

"We gave away some games last season and we hope to turn them around starting with our opener at C.R. North. We lost a fourth-period lead to them last year but we were right in the game. Right now we are looking to practice and play for each other and come together as a unit. Getting the win in Week 1 would be big because it would set the tone for the weeks ahead and give the kids a lot of confidence."

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Council Rock North	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 14-13)		
Aug. 30	Pottstown	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 7	W.C. Rustin	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 49-7)		
Sept. 14	@ Sun Valley	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 35-20)		
Sept. 22	@ Avon Grove*	2:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 42-12)		
Sept. 28	Downingtown East*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 49-7)		
Oct. 5	Bishop Shanahan*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 32-10)		
Oct. 12	Coatesville*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 63-14)		
Oct. 19	@ W.C. Henderson*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 37-14)		
Oct. 26	@ Downingtown West*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 28-14)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

JOHN WILECZEK » WIDE RECEIVER



Wileczek is one of the fastest players in the Ches-Mont National Division. Getting him the ball often will be critical for quarterback Ryan Cassidy to keep the Vikings moving.

MICHAEL GRAY » FREE SAFETY

Besides being the Vikings' number one receiver, Gray is the leader of an experienced Vikings secondary as he switches to free safety this season.



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W.C. HENDERSON

**CLASS
5A**
WARRIORS

By Peter DiGiovanni
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WEST CHESTER >> For a very long time, the West Chester Henderson football team was a major player in the Ches-Mont League and District I. But two losing seasons in a row convinced head coach Steve Mitten to resign after last season's 1-9 mark.

All Henderson did was turn to a member of its successful past in Stefan Adams, who guided the Warriors through some glory years before starring as a running back for Bloomsburg University.

Adams knows bringing the Warriors back to prominence will take time, but he seems more than ready for the big challenge ahead.

"So far, so good," Adams said at one of the Warriors' practice sessions in the first week of camp. "We just want to get better one play, one practice, one game at a time. We want to build football players and young men with character. We are trying to change the attitude and bring enthusiasm to the program.

"Improvement for me would be seeing guys play hard with great effort and take care of themselves during the week by practicing hard. We have the numbers up a little bit and we have some guys who did not come out for football last year coming out this season because they want to be a part of something, and that is a very good sign. We are doing a lot of teaching with guys because for many it is their first time playing high school football."

One player Adams does not have to teach much to is 6-foot-5, 230-pound sophomore Jordan Laudato, who burst onto the Ches-



NATE HECKENBERGER — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Stefan Adams is back at his alma mater, taking over the reins as head coach at West Chester Henderson.

Mont League scene as a freshman last season, impressing on the defensive line and running the football. Laudato is very excited about what the new head coach has brought to the Warriors.

"He really changed the practices for the better," Laudato said. "It is really organized and it seems like we are getting a lot done in a short amount of time. These practices can only help us as a team."

Another returning starter for the Warriors is senior cornerback Steve Armstrong, who echoed the praise.

"He is trying to change the attitude and

culture, and I think it is working," Armstrong said. "The numbers are up, and kids are excited about playing football again. A lot of guys did not go out last year but are going out this season."

The Warriors start the season with a road test at an improved Oxford team before meeting West Chester Rustin and Glen Mills ahead of the meat grinder of the Ches-Mont National slate.

"We basically have a new group of kids," Adams said. "Our job as coaches is to have them ready and excited to go out and execute at Oxford."



2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Oxford	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 34-27)		
Aug. 30	W.C. Rustin	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 37-6)		
Sept. 7	Glen Mills	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 14	Downingtown West*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 40-14)		
Sept. 21	@ Coatesville*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 42-0)		
Sept. 28	@ Bishop Shanahan*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 42-7)		
Oct. 5	Downingtown East	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 41-7)		
Oct. 12	@ Kennett	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 24-14)		
Oct. 19	W.C. East*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 37-14)		
Oct. 26	@ Avon Grove*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 41-21)		

* denotes a league game



PLAYERS TO WATCH

JORDAN LAUDATO » RUNNING BACK



The impressive sophomore, who emerged last year as one of the few bright spots in a 1-9 season, should get the bulk of the Warriors' carries from the fullback position. He's also a

punishing blocker.

STEVE ARMSTRONG » CORNERBACK

Armstrong is a sure tackler and the best cover man in the Warriors secondary, which will be tested by the powerful passing games in the Ches-Mont National.



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GREAT VALLEY

CLASS
5A

PATRIOTS

By Bruce Adams

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EAST WHITELAND >> Last fall, Great Valley averaged 26 points per game en route to a 6-5 season. In 2018, the Patriots will rely on some of that returning offensive talent as they make their way through the Ches-Mont League.

"I think our skill-position players will be the key for us this year, in both the running game and passing game," Great Valley head coach Dan Ellis said. "They will have to make some plays early on for us, as our inexperienced offensive line starts to get the hang of things."

At the helm of the Patriots' offense is senior quarterback Jake Prevost (6-5, 185), who threw for more than 1,400 yards and 15 touchdowns last season, and received honorable mention honors on both the *Daily Local News* All-Area team and the All-Ches-Mont American Conference squad.

"Jake's greatest attributes this year have been his willingness to learn and his leadership," Ellis said. "He is really working hard and wants to be great."

"We had a lot of seniors graduate last spring, so I've got to take a bigger part in leadership," Prevost said. "I feel responsible for keeping the team morale up, and just running the offense, in general. I'm really excited for the season to begin."

Once again, the Patriots will run a spread offense.

"I like (the spread offense)," Prevost said. "I think we're strong up front, and we've got a lot of skill position players returning as well, so I'm pretty confident throwing the ball, and I think our running game is going to be good as well."



NATE HECKENBERGER — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Receiver Brendan O'Donnell is a versatile returner on special teams and will contribute in the defensive secondary for the Patriots.

+ **Online:** Longer versions of most team previews are available online, with even more info, at PAPREPLIVE.COM

Senior wide receiver Brendan O'Donnell (6-2, 200) leads a solid Great Valley receiving corps, and the Patriots' top two running backs look to be senior Amani Christopher and senior Mark Montague (5-10, 175).

"(Christopher and Montague) are both good hard runners and compliment each other very well," said Ellis.

On the offensive and defensive lines, the Patriots lost Xander Utecht, who was a first team All-Ches-Mont American selection on both side of the ball. He is playing for Williams College.

This fall, the Patriots' two most experi-

enced linemen, senior Tim Dyer (6-0, 300) and junior Ian Rodriguez (5-10, 230), will start at tackle.

"We have a mix of other (linemen) who have played some, but need to grow and become more experienced individually and as a group — Andrew DiSanto, Graham Muscella, Warrick Parvess, Joe O'Neil," Ellis said. "Also in the mix is Dawson Rhodes, who transferred in, but has had a lot of experience and will look to be a huge addition."

On the defensive side, the Patriots' leading returning tackler is senior safety Josh Burgess (6-0, 190), who received first team All-Ches-Mont American Conference honors as a defensive back. He can also fill in at linebacker in certain sets.

"Josh is a relentless defender and pursues the ball very well," Ellis said. "He's going to have a great year."



2018 SCHEDULE

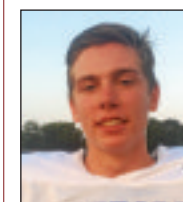
Aug. 24	@ Phoenixville	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 50-31)		
Sept. 1	@ Chester	10:30 am
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 7	Academy Park	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 43-20)		
Sept. 14	Unionville*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 41-14)		
Sept. 21	Downingtown West	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 52-7)		
Sept. 28	@ Kennett*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 37-8)		
Oct. 5	Sun Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 26-22)		
Oct. 12	@ Oxford*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 36-28)		
Oct. 19	Reading	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 26	@ W.C. Rustin*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 31-28)		

* denotes a league game



PLAYERS TO WATCH

JAKE PREVOST » QUARTERBACK



The 6-foot-5, 185-pound senior quarterback threw for more than 1,400 yards and 15 touchdowns last season, and received honorable mention honors on both the *Daily Local News* All-Area team, and the All-Ches-Mont American Conference squad.

JOSH BURGESS » SAFETY

The senior safety, who received first team All-Ches-Mont American honors, is the Patriots' top returning tackler. He also will be contributing at linebacker this fall.



Peter DiGiovanni
Columnist

Follow Peter DiGiovanni's coverage of the Ches-Mont League and beyond at PaPrepLive.com.



(On Twitter @PeteDLN)





KENNETT

BLUE
DEMONS

CLASS
5A

By Neil Geoghegan

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KENNETT SQUARE » Lance Frazier's football pedigree is stellar, but some questioned his judgment when he accepted the head coaching job at Kennett last winter.

Frazier played professionally for nine years as a defensive back, including stints with the NFL's Baltimore Ravens, Dallas Cowboys and Seattle Seahawks. He's heading into his first head coaching job with his eyes wide open. A former assistant at Newark (Del.) High, Frazier knows that the Blue Demons play in the tough Ches-Mont American, and that the program has had precious few winning seasons since reinstating football in 2005 following an 89-year hiatus.

"Right now we are a team everybody wants to play for Homecoming and Senior Night," Frazier said. "We are going to have to change that."

"We will do that a little at a time. We are not trying to recreate anything overnight. We understand it will be a slow process and we will start at base one: being fundamentally sound, understanding what your job is, and playing fast."

Kennett is coming off 3-7 campaign that started strong but petered out under Josh Kaufman, who resigned in December. Frazier is the Demons' third head coach in three seasons.

"We are kind of used to it," said senior Josh Ploener, a two-way starter. "Hopefully (Frazier) is the last one for a while, and I feel he will be. We really love coach."

"He's brought in a new culture."

That aspect is going to be imperative. A year ago, Kennett lost six of its last seven,



NATE HECKENBERGER — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Lance Frazier, right, takes over as head coach at Kennett, bringing a decade of professional football experience with him.

+ **Online:** Longer versions of most team previews are available online, with even more info, at PAPREPLIVE.COM

and the only division victory came against Octorara, which has since left the conference.

"I've watched the last two seasons repeatedly," Frazier said. "I am a film junkie because there is so much you can learn about yourself and others. I saw confusion and a lack of confidence. Some of it has to do with preparation, how organized you are, and not giving the kids' too much. And then build off of that."

Multi-dimensional quarterback Jake Dilcher has graduated, along with all-league linemen Lonnie Hall and Nate Pizzini.

"(Dilcher) jumped off the film. I started watching the wrong film and briefly got excited about him coming back," Frazier said.

Kennett will be breaking in a new quarterback, but the strength of the offense is the rest of the skill positions, featuring Ploener

— a 6-foot-3 receiver — as well as battering-ram junior runner Garrett Cox and versatile senior Mitch Kosara.

"We are going to rely a lot on speed," said Ploener, who will play at wideout and tight end. "Josh is a vocal senior leader," Frazier added. "He just does everything the right way."

He also said that Kosara is a "multiple-position athlete."

The heart and soul of the attack, however, is Cox, who is solid (6-0, 200 pounds), tough and reliable.

"I'd say he is going to be the best running back in the conference," Ploener said.

According to Frazier, four players are vying to be the QB, but the conventional wisdom is that junior Sam Forte has the edge.

"I think Sam (Forte) has what it takes to fill in and make his own legacy," Ploener said.

The big question mark is up front. Two-way lineman Aiden Bowe (6-3, 235) is probably the best of the bunch, but there will be a lot of filling in required.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Avon Grove	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 25-23)		
Aug. 31	@ Chichester	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 20-12)		
Sept. 7	Phoenixville	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 14	W.C. Rustin*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 50-35)		
Sept. 21	@ Sun Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 42-21)		
Sept. 28	Great Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 37-8)		
Oct. 5	@ Unionville	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 50-36)		
Oct. 12	W.C. Henderson	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 24-14)		
Oct. 19	Oxford*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 55-36)		
Oct. 26	Kingswood (N.H.)	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

GARRETT COX » RUNNING BACK



Just a junior, Cox established himself as one of the top 10 runners in the Ches-Mont last fall. He gained 751 yards and scored 10 TDs for a squad that won just three games.

JOSH PLOENER » LINEBACKER

A valuable two-way player, Ploener is the vocal leader for Kennett and will almost certainly be the team's top tackler at middle linebacker. At 6-foot-3, 198 pounds, he has the size to make a difference on both sides of the ball. And he also has a tenacious mindset.



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OXFORD

HORNETS

CLASS
5A

By **Bill Rudick**
For Digital First Media

EAST NOTTINGHAM >> Coming off its best season of the millennium, Oxford returns eight defensive starters and looks to some promising newcomers to add offensive spark.

"That taste of success and playoffs was invaluable for these guys and made them that much hungrier this offseason," head coach Mike Means said. "They know we ramped up the non-league schedule and in order for us to compete we needed to really work in the winter all the way through two-a-days."

With so much talent returning on defense, that unit is going to be looked to carry the team while the offense takes time to gel. Strong safety Nate Ferro, a first team All-Ches-Mont player last season leads a group of returning defenders that also includes Brett Kochmansky (6-1, 170, FS Sr.), Justin Neskic (5-8, 160, CB, Jr.), John Renninger (5-7 180, LB, Sr.), Alijah Thomas (6-0, 220 LB, Sr.) Mason Hager (5-7, 190, DL Sr.), Dylan Jobe (6-3, 320, DL, Jr.), and Jay Morton (6-0, 230, DL, Jr.).

"We are really experienced on defense," said Means. "We have eight starters back from our playoff game last year and lot of other guys who got Varsity time. Our defense should be vastly improved and will need to start the year fast with our schedule and while our offense fits in some new personnel."

Last season, behind the Chandler England-Brandon DeShields connection through the air and Brandon Holz on the ground, the Hornets set a school scoring record, posting 38 points a game. But those players have all graduated.

The senior Kochmansky will be tasked with picking up where England left off as



BILL RUDICK — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Oxford head coach Mike Means talks to his team during training camp.

he takes his turn under center.

"Brett has a tall task," said Means. "Chan did some special things last year, was the offensive MVP of the league and ran our offense like a maestro. Because Brett got limited offensive reps last year because of his role as our starting FS, he had a lot of work to do to prepare for the job and every day he continues to improve. He is a very different QB then the other two I have had and we have adapted some of our packages around his skill set. He had a phenomenal offseason and is one of our best leaders."

Kochmansky will have a pair of talented and experienced receivers in Thomas and Brandon McWilliams, while Tim Faber will step up to fill the void left by Holz. All will be helped by an experienced and big offensive line.

"The interior three of our O-line is rock

solid and really experienced and overall this is by far the deepest we have been up front with our hogs since I have been here," said Means. "Sam Blevins, our center, is the unquestioned leader of that unit and one of the best leaders I have ever had in the trenches."

If the offense matures quickly, the Hornets figure to be right back in the play-off hunt.

"We are really excited about the culture we keep working to build at Oxford," said Means. "Over the last year we have really made a huge push to building these young men's bond off the field and it has resonated. We are going to figure out where we are early in the season with some tough tests and it doesn't get easier when we get into the league schedule. We are going to continue to try to improve and compete."



2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	W.C. Henderson	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 34-27)		
Aug. 31	@ Interboro	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 7	Owen J. Roberts	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 14	@ Penn Wood	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 21	Unionville*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 40-0)		
Sept. 28	@ Sun Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 55-13)		
Oct. 5	@ W.C. Rustin	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 42-34)		
Oct. 12	Great Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 36-28)		
Oct. 19	@ Kennett*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 55-36)		
Oct. 26	Bishop Shanahan	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 56-27)		

* denotes a league game



PLAYERS TO WATCH

BRETT KOCHMANSKY » QUARTERBACK



Kochmansky takes the helm of a young offense and will try to give the Hornets a third straight prolific QB, as Oxford tries to duplicate the most successful season the program has seen in decades.

NATE FERRO » STRONG SAFETY

Ferro has seen significant playing time on defense going back to early in his sophomore year and leads a tough defensive Hornet backfield.



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SUN VALLEY

VANGUARDS

CLASS
5A

By **Harry Chaykun**
For Digital First Media

ASTON >> Dan Nearey is not a selfish football player. He entertained thoughts about postseason honors as he prepared for his senior season as Sun Valley's middle linebacker.

"More than anything I just want to play the whole season," said Nearey, who went from being a spectator for more than a month because of an injury to the hero of the Thanksgiving Day win over Chichester last fall.

Nearey began the 2017 season playing outside linebacker for the Vanguard. He suffered a fractured tibia in the Sept. 22 game at Kennett and was not cleared to resume playing until the week before the Thanksgiving game.

Two days before the annual showdown with Chichester — the 50th in the storied rivalry — Nearey found out that the team's starting middle linebacker would be ineligible.

"I had to try to learn all the things a middle linebacker has to do that day," he said. Sun Valley had a big lead early in the third quarter of the Turkey Bowl before Chichester staged a dramatic comeback. With 1:08 left in the game and the Eagles 11 yards from the Vanguard's end zone, Nearey came up with an interception to put the finishing touches on a 32-30 victory.

"I guess I've looked at the play (on film) 50 or 60 times since it happened," Nearey said. "But really, that was last year. I'm just trying to be a better player and trying to stay on the field all year."

Coach Greg "Bubba" Bernhardt expects improved performances all-around as his players experience their second year in his system.

"That's been very beneficial, and we feel we're ready to compete," Bernhardt said. "We have strength and quickness at all positions. We're not overly big, but we are strong and athletic up front and our skill position players are all back and very talented."

"Plus all around, the leadership has been great."

The player who can dazzle whenever he is on the field — "and we don't think he'll ever come off the field in any game," Bernhardt said — is senior Julz Kelly, who made the All-Delco team last season because of his all-purpose skills. Kelly picked up 958



PETE BANNAN — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

yards rushing, scoring 14 touchdowns, and he made 37 catches and had three scores through the air.

In the Thanksgiving game, he accounted for 128 yards on 19 carriers, had a pair of TD runs from scrimmage in the opening half, and ran 32 yards with a fumble to score on the first play of the second half.

"He does it all on both sides of the ball," Bernhardt said. "He's one of the best players I have coached in 20 years."

Anthony Ellis (115-for-212 for 1,477 yards and eight touchdowns) is back at quarterback. He again will be taking snaps from his uncle, center Dom Ellis (6-2, 215 pounds).

"He has a tremendous arm in addition to being able to get out and run with the ball," Bernhardt said. "He's extremely smart and well-rounded in the offense as well."

Dathon Poole and Rocky Albano are among the returning offensive linemen, Dayon Belgrave and Kevin Tucker have experience at receiver, and Lance Stone will get the chance to carry the ball.

Sophomore Jake Crowder (6-5, 310) and junior Jayvon Wilson (5-10, 215) are among the newcomers who could help on the line. Damirre Sutton, Randy Marker, and Johnny Eskridge could see time at linebacker, and Evan Fooks and Tyler

McLaughlin will be new in the secondary.

"We've added new strength and conditioning people and they've really helped," Bernhardt said. "We'll be relying on quickness and fundamentals up front."

PLAYING THE FIELD

Sun Valley moved its scheduled home scrimmage to West Chester Henderson while renovations continued on its home field. The Vanguard are hoping that the artificial turf playing surface being installed will be ready for their first home game, Aug. 31 against Upper Moreland.

"People are talking about it, and I think we're all looking forward to playing on it," Nearey said.

MIDNIGHT MADNESS

Bernhardt was head coach and former Chester High head man Chuck Crews was one of his assistants when Monsignor Bonner had a "Midnight Madness" session to open preseason practice several years ago.

This summer, Crews, who is beginning his third season as Williamsport High's head coach, adopted the "Midnight Madness" approach as his Millionaires kicked off training camp.

"He's doing a great job out there," Bernhardt said of Crews.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Penncrest	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Aug. 31	Upper Moreland	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 7	Cardinal O'Hara	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 14	W.C. East	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 35-20)		
Sept. 21	Kennett*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-21)		
Sept. 28	Oxford*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 55-13)		
Oct. 5	@ Great Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 26-22)		
Oct. 12	@ Washington (Ohio)	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 19	W.C. Rustin*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 70-29)		
Oct. 26	@ Unionville*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 42-14)		
Nov. 22	@ Chichester	10:30 am
— 2017 RESULT (W 32-30)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

JULZ KELLY » RUNNING BACK



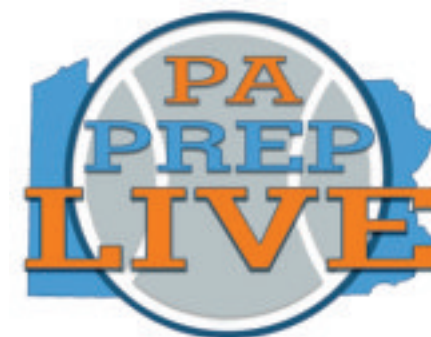
The 5-10, 190-pounder is a threat to go all the way, whether he is taking a handoff, catching a pass, returning kicks or playing defense. "I've always wanted to play football," Kelly said. "I've been

playing since I was four years old. It could be interesting this year playing our home games on turf for the first time."

DAN NEAREY » LINEBACKER



The 6-3, 190-pound middle linebacker wants to make up for all the missed opportunities he had when he was injured last season. "The biggest thing with our defense is making sure we are flying to the ball and getting as many helmets on the ball as we can on every play," he said.





UNIONVILLE

INDIANS

CLASS
5A

By Neil Geoghegan

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@NeilMGeoghegan on Twitter

EAST MARLBOROUGH >> Hit hard by graduation losses, some just assume that powerhouse Unionville is in for a down football season this fall.

"I hope people keep thinking that," said wideout Nick Schnaars.

"The reality is that people hope you fail," added head coach Pat Clark. "People are waiting to see good programs fall on their face. That's a challenge our group has to embrace.

"Our history prevents us from saying we are underdogs — we will play like we are defending league and district champions."

The Indians are coming off the most decorated season in program history, which included 13 wins, Ches-Mont American and District 1 Class 5A titles and spot in the PIAA semifinals. But a long, impressive list of stars is off to play college ball, like all-stater Joe Zubillaga (Delaware) and speedy J.T. Hower (Colgate).

"A lot of our guys were behind and learned from great players. I think we have a lot of young talent," linebacker Alex Pellegrin said.

"Our saying every year is 'next man up,'" Schnaars added. "We graduated a lot of very good players, but Unionville is always about who is going come in and fit into those roles."

The Indians will be breaking in a new quarterback and trying to develop some reliable playmakers, but the squad looks to be stout up front on both sides of the ball. It means that the 2018 edition will be a more traditional Unionville outfit compared to last season's explosive bunch.

"For 15 years, this program has been about playing good defense, finding points and yardage in special teams, and control-



NATE HECKENBERGER — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Linebacker Gabe McLaughlin is a senior captain on a young but hungry Unionville squad.

+ **Online:** Longer versions of most team previews are available online, with even more info, at PAPREPLIVE.COM

ling the clock," Clark said. "Our philosophy is pretty solid and we have the right kids to do it.

"The list of candidates to step up and be really good football players is pretty deep. I am excited."

With three returning starters on the offensive line (Cole Sheehan, Declan Boyle and Matt Julier), it should make things easier for first-year quarterback starter Blake Charlton. And with Schnaars on the outside, and Connor Schilling and Joe Fariello splitting carries in the backfield, there are some threats.

"Nick had a lot of big catches for us," Clark said. "His only issue, so to speak, was that

he was behind two FCS scholarship guys last year. He is going to be one of the most explosive kids in our league. He is going to have a breakout year.

"Connor had a couple great individual games. And Fariello had multiple touchdowns in playoff games and took all of the reps after (Jack Adams) got hurt."

Defensively, Unionville's front seven is aggressive and athletic, with Pellegrin leading the way. Nose guard Eli Lyons and Julier at defensive end are also returning regulars. Safety Jeff Lang, along with Schnaars and Schilling at the corners, will lead a revamped secondary.

"We are fast, athletic and we will get to the ball," Clark predicted.

"We look very strong in the front seven," Pellegrin said. "We are going to have a very solid run defense. Against the pass, we have some new kids who show a lot of ability."



2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Garnet Valley	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Aug. 31	Academy Park	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 23-20)		
Sept. 7	@ Avon Grove	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 14-6)		
Sept. 14	@ Great Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 41-14)		
Sept. 21	@ Oxford*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 40-0)		
Sept. 28	Haverford High	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 5	Kennett*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 50-36)		
Oct. 12	@ W.C. Rustin*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 28-21)		
Oct. 19	Downingtown East	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 45-21)		
Oct. 26	Sun Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-14)		

* denotes a league game



PLAYERS TO WATCH

NICK SCHNAARS » WIDE RECEIVER



Despite fighting for playing time with NCAA Division I prospects Joe Zubillaga and J.T. Hower, Schnaars made some big plays for the Indians in 2017. The 6-foot, 175-pound senior

wideout now becomes Unionville's most proven pass-catching threat.

ALEX PELLEGRIN » LINEBACKER

Pellegrin had a big sophomore year and is poised for a breakout year as a junior. Pellegrin isn't huge but is reminiscent of previous Unionville LBs Trevor Gardiner and Jesse Gill.



Sound off on the Pa. Prep Live High School Football Top 20, unveiled every Monday during the season, only at PaPrepLive.com





W.C. RUSTIN

CLASS
5A
GOLDEN KNIGHTS

By Peter DiGiovanni
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WESTTOWN >> Not too long ago, the West Chester Rustin football team ruled the Ches-Mont League's American Division, and the Golden Knights were a major player on the District 1 Class 5A scene.

For the last three seasons, Unionville has ruled the American. But with a veteran squad coming into the 2018 season, things may have switched in favor of the Golden Knights.

Rustin has long been a smashmouth, run-first team with strong lines on both sides of the ball, and Golden Knights head coach Mike St. Clair is very excited about his veteran group coming into the 2018 season.

"The strength of our team is that we have a very strong senior class both athletically and academically," St. Clair said. "We have a good returning quarterback in Will Pileggi who is a very intelligent and athletic dual-threat quarterback who can run and throw the football.

"We also return a lot of skill players on both sides of the football. Running backs Michael Covert, Sean Durant, Colin Hurley and Michael Burke bring a lot of experience to the offense. On the defensive side of the ball, Owen Walsh, Jake Wilsey, Pat Quinn, RJ Cleveland and Tyler Kallinger all return for us on defense, and Sean Hopkins is a terrific dual threat at tight end and defensive end."

Pileggi gained over 600 yards on the ground last season from the quarterback position, and has a very accurate arm.

Rustin also sports a very capable corps



NATE HECKENBERGER — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

West Chester Rustin's Will Pileggi, right, and Collin Hurley are hungry to bring back the Ches-Mont American Division title.

of running backs, and Hopkins is one of the best blocking tight ends in the Ches-Mont League. Hopkins is also one of the best pass rushers from the defensive end position.

"We do not have the typical size we normally do, but this group of players is very fast and physically one of the strongest teams we have had in school history," St. Clair said. "They are all multi-sport athletes who like to compete, but like all teams our size, we are going to have to stay healthy in order to be competitive at the end of the season."

Defensively, Rustin has five returning starters. St. Clair's teams have a reputa-

tion for hitting whatever moves and asking questions later.

St. Clair has opted not to play the full 10-game schedule this season, going instead to what many District 3 teams have done, a nine-game schedule with two scrimmages. The head coach feels his team needs those two scrimmages to compete during the season.

Besides playing Unionville, Great Valley, Kennett, Oxford and Sun Valley in the American Division, the Golden Knights will have dates with West Chester East, West Chester Henderson and a very tough crossover game with Coatesville. The only game outside the Ches-Mont will be a date with Penn Wood.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 30	@ W.C. Henderson	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 37-6)		
Sept. 7	@ W.C. East	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 49-7)		
Sept. 14	@ Kennett*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 50-35)		
Sept. 21	Penn Wood	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 28	Coatesville	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 49-0)		
Oct. 5	Oxford*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-34)		
Oct. 12	Unionville*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 28-21)		
Oct. 19	@ Sun Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 70-29)		
Oct. 26	Great Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 31-28)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH
WILL PILEGGI » QUARTERBACK


The senior signal-caller will throw the ball more than in past years as the Golden Knights will open up the offense a little bit more this season.

SEAN HOPKINS » DEFENSIVE END

Hopkins is one of the most fun defensive players to watch in the league, both a dangerous pass rusher and a solid run stopper. He is the unquestioned leader of the Rustin front wall.



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PIONEER ATHLETIC CONFERENCE PREVIEW

Triple Threat

Defending division champions Perkiomen Valley, Pottsgrove pushing toward PAC title three-peat

By Thomas Nash

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@Thomas_Nash10 on Twitter

After three years and three runs to the District 1 playoffs, the Perkiomen Valley football team's preseason focus has not faltered.

"For us, it's always about the league first," said head coach Rob Heist, entering his third year at the helm of the Vikings. "Our team goal every year without fail is to win the PAC Championship. That's something you can hang your hat on.

"Everything after that is icing on top of the cake. We've been very fortunate the last few years to have some outstanding football players and we've made a couple nice runs. But the thing those kids will remember is that they were league champions. That's always our first goal."

The Vikings have accomplished that goal each of the past two seasons, sealing the Pioneer Athletic Conference title with a 28-14 win over Pottsgrove in 2016 before de-

fending the crown in 2017 with a 43-26 win over the Falcons.

Entering the 2018 season with a large roster overhaul that now includes just 13 seniors, Heist and the two-time defending champs know the target on their back is as big and bold as ever. And once again, their biggest threat could be donning the maroon and white at Pottsgrove.

"Success will always breed increased competition," said Heist. "We know that every team we play, we'll get their best shot. I'm happy about that. I would expect nothing less. I think it's fun for the kids on a weekly basis to get up for our next opponent."

"You've got to take every game like it's the first game," second-year quarterback Cole Peterlin said. "This game's a new week, last week doesn't matter. It's about what you do in practice to prepare for it."

The Vikings will open up the season with matchups against Downingtown West and Downingtown East then face District

PAC » PAGE 41



Above, Perkiomen Valley quarterback Cole Peterlin, right, is congratulated after rushing for a touchdown last season against Downingtown West. The dual-threat QB returns to the two-time reigning PAC champion Vikings.

At left, Perkiomen Valley's Alec Jackson (5) and Brendan Schimpf (24) raise the PAC championship plaque after defeating Pottsgrove in the league title game last season.

AUSTIN HERTZOG (ABOVE), SAM STEWART (LEFT) - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE



Pottsgrove experienced significant departures in the offseason, namely PAC-record rusher Rahsul Faison, above, and longtime head coach Rick Pennypacker, right, pictured after the Falcons won the District 1 Class 4A championship in 2017. Yet Pottsgrove appears poised to stay atop the PAC Frontier.

PAC

FROM PAGE 40

1 Class 6A playoff semifinalist Pennridge followed by District 1 Class 4A qualifier Interboro before entering PAC play. Perk Valley will close out the regular season with a game against Liberty Division rival Spring-Ford in a matchup the Vikings have owned the past two seasons.

If all goes to plan, Perk Valley may find that the road to another PAC Championship will once again go through Pottsgrove, the typical power of the PAC's Frontier Division.

The Falcons find themselves in the midst of a program overhaul heading into the 2018 season, a year after they defended the District 1-4A title.

Gone is longtime head coach Rick Pennypacker, who retired at the end of last season. Also gone are several skill position players, including stand-out running back Rahsul Faison, who rushed for 2,919 yards last season, a PAC record and good for 10th overall on Pennsylvania's all-time list for yards in a season.

Yet amid all of the roster

turnover, Pottsgrove still finds itself wrapped up in the pre-season conversation with the return of its dual-threat quarterback, a solid tight end and the brunt of its offensive line.

"I think the goal for us is to take care of the division championship, PAC championship and the district championship," said first-year head coach Bill Hawthorne. "But the mentality is that we've got to win Week 1, Week 2 and so on. We take that approach every week throughout the season and things kind of fall into place from there. So we like to take care of business on a weekly basis."

Per usual, Pottsgrove's strength will be on its offensive line, which features experienced players in Justin Adams, Darrian Seaman, Nate Tornetta and tight end Ryan Bodolus. The big men up front will clear the way for returning quarterback Jay Sisko as well as running backs Isaiah Glover and Isaiah Taylor, who have got some shifty shoes to fill in the backfield.

"The good thing being in this system so long and following a coach like Rick Pennypacker is that we've already got a good system in place," said Hawthorne, who spent several years

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2017 STANDINGS

Pioneer Athletic Conference Division I

Pos	Team	CW	CL	W	L	T	PF	PA
1	Perkiomen Valley	5	0	10	2	0	367	159
2	Owen J. Roberts	4	2	9	3	0	329	141
3	Spring-Ford	3	2	6	5	0	298	224
4	Boyertown	3	2	5	6	0	274	336
5	Norristown	1	4	4	7	0	117	263
6	Methacton	0	5	0	10	0	41	415

Pioneer Athletic Conference Division II

Pos	Team	CW	CL	W	L	T	PF	PA
1	Pottsgrove	5	0	11	2	0	537	212
2	Upper Perkiomen	4	1	7	5	0	334	316
3	Pope John Paul II	3	2	7	4	0	322	264
4	Phoenixville	2	3	2	8	0	233	367
5	Upper Merion	1	4	1	10	0	93	346
6	Pottstown	0	6	2	10	0	118	380

PAC

FROM PAGE 41

as an assistant on Pennypacker's coaching staff. "He left the program in about as good of shape as it could possibly be. We've got plenty of stability."

That stability should go a long way for a Pottsgrove program that has been founded on defensive play with every yard earned in the trenches the past several seasons.

Still Plenty to See

Elsewhere around the PAC, there are a few teams that were hit hard by graduation, but should still manage to be in the hunt.

Pope John Paul II is coming off its most successful campaign in program history where the Golden Panthers began the year 7-0 and eventually matched their win total from the past five years combined. Gone are several key offensive playmakers as well as standout quarterback Matt De-Laurentis. Returning, though, are wide receiver CJ McCafferty and running back AJ Natale along with the arrival of quarterback Kamal Gray, a transfer from Archbishop Carroll.

Owen J. Roberts will be another team worth keeping an eye on. The Wildcats will move on following the graduation of 21 seniors, including the quarterback-wide receiver duo of Dawson Stuart and Hunter Hinrichs. OJR was founded on its defense last season, which posted four shut-outs and booked the Wildcats a trip to districts for the first time since 2010.

A down season by their standards last fall, Spring-Ford is coming off a 6-5 campaign where the Rams snuck in as the No. 16 and final seed in the District 1 Class 6A playoffs. Gone are decorated quarterback TJ Pergine and leading rusher Justin DeFrancesco along with several skill position players from last season. Ryan Engro will take over at quarterback for Spring-Ford, which has had no shortage of talent behind center over the past several seasons.

Dark Horse

Phoenixville took its lumps last season, featuring an 0-6 start



BARRY TAGLIEBER - FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Phoenixville's Travis Pannella, left, is the top returning rusher in the PAC and has the ability to take the league rushing title as a senior.

capped by a 34-31 overtime loss against Pope John Paul II in Week 6. The Phantoms return senior quarterback Connor Patania and senior running back Travis Pannella under new head coach Don Grinstead. A fresh start mixed with some senior leaders could go a long way for the Phantoms this fall.

Class Act

Three area schools will make a switch in the PIAA Classifications this coming season.

Upper Perkiomen, which finished runner-up in the District 1 Class 4A playoffs last season, will jump up to Class 5A this season.

Meanwhile, Pottstown will drop from Class 5A to 4A, in search of their first district playoff berth since 2015.

Pope John Paul II will drop from Class 4A to 3A, which meshes District 1 with District 12 in the postseason.

New Faces in the Mix

Including Hawthorne and

Grinstead, the PAC will feature four new head coaches this fall season.

Dave Lotier will take over at Methacton while Joe Milligan will serve as head coach of Norristown and former Pottstown head coach Don Grinstead will take the reins at Phoenixville.

Lotier takes over a Methacton program that's compiled just four wins over the last three seasons, along with an 0-10 record in 2017. Methacton hasn't made a district playoff run since 2014, though this year's squad gives promise at the very least in terms of numbers. A defensive coordinator and assistant head coach at Valley Forge Military Academy and College last fall, Lotier spent two seasons as the defensive backs coach at Souderton following a two-year stint in the same position with Ursinus College.

Milligan, a 1996 graduate of Norristown, takes over an Eagles' program that has gone 7-16 since making the jump from the Suburban One League to the PAC two



GENE WALSH - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Pope John Paul II can expect a boost this season from the addition of QB Kamal Gray, a transfer from Archbishop Carroll.

seasons ago. Norristown ended last season with consecutive wins against Upper Merion to close out with a 4-7 record.

Grinstead had spent three years at Pottstown, leading the Trojans to a district playoff run in 2015 before he moved to Florida. Now back in Pennsylvania, he takes over a Phantom program that hasn't made districts since 2013 and is 13-42 overall in the past five seasons. Before his time at Pottstown, Grinstead served as the defensive line coach at Great Valley in 2009 and became the Patriots' defensive coordinator and assistant head coach until 2012. While in Florida, he spent this past season as a defensive coach with Atlantic High School.

2018 Season Leader Predictions

PASSING » Cole Peterlin showed flashes behind center at Perki-

omen Valley last fall. The left-hander scored multiple touchdowns in seven games last season, highlighted by a win over Methacton where he combined for 265 total yards and four touchdowns. He's got big-stage games under his belt already, including wins over Pottsgrove and Spring-Ford, to go along with two district playoff games. That experience will go a long way as the Vikings return just two players who logged receptions last season. Also in the mix: Ayden Mathias, Boyertown; Ryan Engro, Spring-Ford; Kamal Gray, Pope John Paul II.

RUSHING » Travis Pannella closed out the 2017 season on a high note for Phoenixville, rushing for a combined 268 yards and three touchdowns in the Phantoms' final two games. He finished the year fifth overall in the PAC with 912 rushing yards and seven touchdowns while averaging just under five yards per carry. Mixing good size with solid speed, Pannella should be a workhorse as Grinstead gets himself established with the Phantoms. Also in the mix: Malik Smith, Perkiomen Valley; Isaiah Glover, Pottsgrove; Jamison Moccia, Boyertown; Marcus Martin, Owen J. Roberts.

RECEIVING » Donte Bonanni emerged as a sophomore with Spring-Ford last season. Showcasing great hands and solid size, Bonanni racked up 649 receiving yards and four touchdowns last season as the Rams' primary receiver, including a monster game against Methacton where he had eight catches for 162 yards and two scores. He'll be a sure thing on a Spring-Ford team that will be searching for an identity early on. The Rams will look to replace quarterback T.J. Pergine and running back Justin DeFrancesco. Also in the mix: Ryan Bodolus, Pottsgrove; CJ McCafferty, Pope John Paul II.



Tom Nash

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BOYERTOWN

BEARS

CLASS
6A

By Rob Senior

For Digital First Media
@RSenior31 on Twitter

By most measures, the Bears' first season under coach TJ Miller was a step forward — a 5-6 overall record, 3-2 mark in the Pioneer Athletic Conference Liberty Division with an Eastern Football Conference championship and tie for 2nd place in the PAC's Liberty Division.

But perhaps the most encouraging sign for Miller was the team falling one win shy of a District 1 Class 6A playoff berth — close enough to make it hurt and make a playoff berth an attainable goal in 2018.

"We won't be complacent," Miller confirmed. "We want to become stronger, faster — we want to win in every phase of our lives. If you're not playing to win the league, then why are we even here?"

Leading the Bears' prowl towards that next step will be senior QB Ayden Mathias, who emerged in 2017. Mathias, a dual-threat at the position, says the key to his own development and continued progression has been coaching and consistency. "I feel like now I step in, I know what's going on, and I can help bring the younger guys along," he said.

To that end, Miller has already noticed the advantages of being a coach in his second year with the program as opposed to his initial foray last year. "First year, you're trying to instill everything," he explained. "Guys are getting used to you and vice versa. This year? We're able to just get going."

The Bears' offense will get going this season behind the backfield tandem of senior Dylan Robertson and junior Jamie Moccia. "Versatile, strong, tough," Coach



SAM STEWART - DFM FILE

Boyertown's Ayden Mathias (11) returns at QB for the Bears in 2018.

Miller said in describing Robertson. "He'll run through a wall for you."

In last year's triple-option Bears' offense, there were plenty of carries to go around, and this year sophomore Joey Dulin will figure into the mix at tailback as well.

On the outside, the Bears hope to replace graduated seniors with senior Blaise Caroselli, and junior Aaron Tidd. Senior guard Carter Watts anchors an experienced offensive line.

On the other side of the ball, Caroselli returns after an all-league performance at linebacker and is as good a bet as any for a potential PAC Defensive Player of the Year. Watts and Jake Eddinger will lead the way up front.

"They've got good reaches, they're strong—and they're hungry for the ball," summarized Miller.

Robertson will anchor the defensive secondary.

Season Outlook

Every high school team takes a toll each year due to graduations, and the Bears are no different, losing state interceptions leader Jerry Kapp and workhorse RB Marcus Thomas, among others. But Mathias is one of only two returning starting QBs in the division, and an improved defense anchored by Caroselli could be the determining factor as Boyertown vies for a return to the District playoffs.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Upper Perkiomen	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 42-21)		
Aug. 31	@ Exeter Twp.	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 26-14)		
Sept. 7	Pottsgrove	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 49-14)		
Sept. 14	Berks Catholic	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 21	@ Methacton*	2:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 54-14)		
Sept. 28	Owen J. Roberts*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 24-21)		
Oct. 5	@ Spring-Ford*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 16-0)		
Oct. 12	@ Perkiomen Valley*7:00 pm	
— 2017 RESULT (L 46-20)		
Oct. 19	Norristown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 20-15)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

AYDEN MATHIAS » QUARTERBACK



6-3 senior is 1 of 2 returning QBs in the PAC Liberty. Last year, Mathias accumulated over 1,500 total yards while continuing to improve his throwing and command of the offense.

BLAISE CAROSELLI » LINEBACKER

Caroselli was singled out by Coach Miller as the anchor of a defense that will be looked upon for improvement in 2018 after allowing 40 or more points four times in 2017.





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METHACTON

WARRIORS

CLASS
6A

By Rob Senior
For Digital First Media
@RSenior31 on Twitter

Brand-new coach Dave Lotier's first job as Methacton head football coach was probably the toughest he'll face in his entire tenure.

Lotier needed to inject excitement into a program that finished without a victory in 2017 and finished the season with only 19 players on the roster.



Methacton head coach Dave Lotier

"Football's supposed to be fun, it's supposed to be exciting," said Lotier. "When [the new staff] came in, we tried to say 'It's time to work hard, compete, but also, it's time to enjoy ourselves.'"

The message got out quickly, thanks to Lotier's contagious enthusiasm and a particularly resilient group

of seniors. When camp started earlier this month, the Warriors had over 60 athletes out for the team.

"It's the coaches," explained senior OT/OLB Joe Pacholski, "Football is fun — even at practice, it doesn't even feel like working out."

Seeing a number of athletes — about 10 seniors in total — give up football during the season in 2017 instilled a resolve through the Class of 2019 at Methacton to see things through and get the new regime off to a fast start.

"We're not going to take the easy way out," said senior center Colby Stahl, "and we don't want [the younger classes] to go through how we felt last year."

"I think the credit [for the growth in



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Methacton is in the midst of a revival in 2018 thanks in part to senior leaders, from left, Joe Pacholski, Stephen Brown, Tonee Ellis, Colby Stahl.

numbers] goes to these guys," said coach Lotier, referring to his senior class.

"With more people, there's more accountability," said senior CB/WR Steve Brown.

"We had a number of seniors who hadn't played football since ninth grade come back out this year," added nose tackle Tonee Ellis. "They want to be there, so it's easy to immerse them in this new culture."

One example is Mike Ciriello, who's played in the past and overcome adversity both on the field and in life and is back among the Warriors this year. Coach Lotier singled out Ciriello as a player who exemplifies the new Methacton culture.

"He'll be a running back, a linebacker — he's a guy who sets the tone," said Lotier. "When he put his name down as someone who was committing to this thing, I think at least a few other guys followed suit. He's that guy who nobody's going to mess with

— we've got a few of those this year."

With so many new players in the mix, position battles are quite fluid. While no starting jobs had been determined, junior Dylan Schultz returns in the mix at QB, with sophomores Mike Merola and Ryan Cassidy also in the mix. Leading ball carriers Gary Knox and Mike Torcini return in the backfield.

Season Outlook

In taking over a program that went without a win in 2017, it's easy to argue that Coach Lotier's already done the hardest part—he's reignited the excitement in the Methacton football program. The next step is translating that excitement into results on the field. The Warriors plan three crossover games (Pottsgrove, Upper Merion, Pottstown) as well as Truman High before embarking on their Liberty Division slate. By that time, the early returns on the new era will be clear.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Harry S. Truman	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 48-0)		
Aug. 31	Pottsgrove	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 56-0)		
Sept. 7	@ Upper Merion	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 14	@ Pottstown	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 12-6)		
Sept. 21	Boyertown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 54-14)		
Sept. 29	@ Spring-Ford*	2:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 43-7)		
Oct. 5	Perkiomen Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 51-0)		
Oct. 13	@ Norristown*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 35-0)		
Oct. 19	Owen J. Roberts*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 55-14)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

WILL ROESE » WIDE RECEIVER

Roese moonlighted at several offensive positions in 2017 for the undermanned Warriors. In 2018, Roese figures to slot in at WR on a more permanent basis, with Coach Lotier secure in the knowledge that the senior can be utilized in a variety of ways. "You could see him in the backfield, the slot, or split out wide," said Lotier. "He's going to do quite a few things for us."



Methacton's Gary Knox

GARY KNOX » LINEBACKER

Knox certainly got his share of experience in his sophomore and junior years on defense, and now he's ready to put it all together in a final go-round. "Gary plays like his hair's on fire," said Lotier. It's just fun to watch him play the way he does, flying around the field."

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NORRISTOWN

CLASS
6A
EAGLES
By Rob Senior
For Digital First Media

Some coaches thrive as teachers, others as motivators.

Norristown's new man in charge, Joe Milligan, endeavors to accomplish both — on and off the football field.

Milligan, a 1996 graduate of Norristown, took over the job this spring and immediately instilled a culture of accountability.

"We have raised the level of expectations," he stated, "and thus far, the players are matching us. Throughout the season, we'll continually raise those expectations, and I expect the players to keep pace."



Norristown head coach Joe Milligan.

To accomplish this, Milligan has built a staff consisting mainly of Norristown graduates or experienced coaches with ties to the area.

His goal? To restore the pride the entire community wants to take in Norristown Eagles football.

"Norristown 2.0" is how Milligan describes his desire to maintain the culture and foundation in which he was raised, while updating the program's expectations and changing with the times.

"For example, we used to play at Roosevelt Field," explained Milligan. "That's no longer the case, but we want these players to understand that history, while clearing the way to make their own mark at the high school — I like to call it 'The Nest.'"

"We haven't since attained the level of prestige we had at Roosevelt within Norristown football. Some of the players are probably tired of hearing about what this program used to be, but they can't understand where they need to go until they know where we started."

"When Coach Milligan and his staff came in, they immediately clarified their expectations," linebacker Santino Carlomagno said. "Since that time, it's been up to us to meet those expectations. It's completely different now — and that's for the better."



GENE WALSH — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Norristown's Kirk Wilson returns for his senior season after being the team's leading rusher a year ago.

Milligan's team-first approach goes all the way through his depth chart. He declined to name any starters — or even front-runners for starting positions — instead focusing on the need for each player to continue meeting an increasing level of expectations.

But with Milligan, such statements don't come across as coach speak. There's no appearance of trying to hold his cards close to the vest — it's easy to believe that the players who meet the staff's criteria will be the ones rewarded with playing time. It wouldn't be surprising to see Norristown trot out vastly different lineups from week to week based on those results.

"Every position is a battle," he summarized. "We will use what we have — technique, hard work. We know we have to be able to run the ball, so that's first. But it might be by committee. If one guy doesn't have it, the man next to him steps up."

"We want to change the perception, overall, about Norristown football. Football is a metaphor for life — sometimes things go your way, sometimes they don't. Either way, you've got to make it happen, keep moving, day after day."

Season Outlook

A year ago, the Eagles captured four victories and were in a number of other games until the bitter end. This year, the program embarks on a restart with Milligan helming an all-new coaching staff with "every spot up for grabs."

When the PAC slate rolls around, Norristown welcomes Spring-Ford before traveling to Perkiomen Valley and Owen J. Roberts. It won't take long to assess the early progress of Coach Milligan's regime.



2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Upper Dublin	5:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Aug. 31	Upper Merion	5:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 20-7, W 10-0)		
Sept. 8	Ply-Whitemarsh	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 10-9)		
Sept. 14	@ Cheltenham	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L NA)		
Sept. 22	Spring-Ford*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 49-6)		
Sept. 28	@ Perkiomen Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 44-0)		
Oct. 5	@ Owen J. Roberts*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 15-0)		
Oct. 13	Methacton*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 35-0)		
Oct. 19	@ Boyertown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 20-15)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

KIRK WILSON » RUNNING BACK



The senior is the Eagles' leading returning rusher but will be targeting far more than the 225 yards and one touchdown he amassed as a junior.

LARRY HILL » DEFENSIVE BACK

The senior wide receiver/defensive back will bring an experienced presence to the Eagles' defensive side as a three-year starter.



Norristown will be tasked with replacing most of its key skill-position players from last year, including quarterback Izaiah Webb (14).

BOB RAINES — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE



OWEN J. ROBERTS

CLASS
6A

WILDCATS

By Rob Senior

For Digital First Media
@RSenior31 on Twitter

After graduating 21 seniors from last year's playoff squad, you'd figure Owen J. Roberts coach Rich Kolka and his staff would want time to ease players into their new roles — putting them in familiar confines as they learn the ropes.

And you'd be right. That's exactly what they want. But instead, they get to kick off the season with three consecutive road contests.

"It's certainly not by design," Kolka said. "We had a period of transition with athletic directors, so we only have four home games in 2018."

Rather than feel bad about their luck, however, the Wildcats, coming off qualification to the District 1 Class 6A playoffs in 2017, are embracing the role of "road warriors" in hoping to get off to a strong start as they did a year ago.

"It's better to be at home," said senior running back Marcus Martin, the team's leading returning rusher, "but it motivates us to go on the road and show what we're made of."

Once the Wildcats traverse their non-conference slate of Conestoga, Daniel Boone and Oxford, they'll be rewarded by playing four of the next five contests in the friendly confines of Henry J. Bernat Field at Wildcat Stadium. This part of the sched-



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Owen J. Roberts' Marcus Martin scores a touchdown against Pottstown last season on Thanksgiving.

ule includes the marquee matchups with Spring-Ford and defending Pioneer Athletic Conference champion Perkiomen Valley.

"We have a couple of really big games at home, so we're excited about that," said Kolka. "We play well at home."

By that time, junior Cooper Chamberlain should have his feet under him in taking over the offense from last year's QB, the school record-setting passer Dawson Stu-

art. To do this, he'll rely heavily upon Martin, senior receiver Savaughn Davidheiser, and junior receiver Connor Leister.

Up front, Arnaldo Montagano anchors a big Wildcats offensive line.

"We are young in some spots," Kolka said. "But we need some guys to step up and replace the graduates relatively quickly."

On the defensive side of the ball, the 2017 defense set quite a standard, allowing fewer than 100 total points in 11 regular-season games, shutouts of Upper Merion, Norristown, Pottstown and Spring-Ford.

Senior defensive end Aidan Hayward leads this year's unit—one he believes has the potential to match the new standard.

Season Outlook

Despite youth in key positions, Kolka says the team's goals haven't diminished one bit.

"A successful season for us is a return to the playoffs, back-to-back appearances," Kolka said. "That's only been done once in school history. But goal number one is always the league title."

To accomplish either goal, the Wildcats will need some youngsters to grow up quickly in the early going. If they do, OJR can be secure in the knowledge that their stiffest PAC competition has to face them on their home field.



Owen J. Roberts was led by its defense in 2017, a trend they'll hope to continue with a largely new cast.

AUSTIN HERTZOG - DFM FILE

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Conestoga	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 26-6)		
Aug. 31	@ Daniel Boone	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 7	@ Oxford	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 14	Upper Merion	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 47-0)		
Sept. 21	Perkiomen Valley*	2:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 27-0)		
Sept. 28	@ Boyertown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 24-21)		
Oct. 5	Norristown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 15-0)		
Oct. 12	Spring-Ford*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 33-0)		
Oct. 19	@ Methacton*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 55-14)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

MARCUS MARTIN » RUNNING BACK



The all-purpose threat was one of the favorite targets for graduated quarterback Dawson Stuart in 2017 and will be asked to carry an even bigger workload in his

senior campaign. I think I'll be getting the ball more this year," Martin said, "but it's about everyone working together, getting everybody back in sync."

AIDAN HAYWARD » DEFENSIVE END

The 6-1, 215-pound defensive end is within striking distance of Nick Duliakas' school record for sacks. But Hayward's primary focus is continuing the standard set by last year's Wildcats defense, which led District 1 in fewest points allowed for a significant portion of the season. "I think we can be as good as last year on defense," he confirmed. "Even in practice, I see it — we're intense, we're flying to the ball."





PHOENIXVILLE

PHANTOMS

CLASS
5A

By Jeff Stover

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Don Grinstead sees a number of changes on the local high-school football landscape from his view of three years ago.

His Phoenixville grid program would like to make a change of its own, to mark Grinstead's return to the Pioneer Athletic Conference since his departure from Pottstown in 2015.



GRINSTEAD

"We want to show Phoenixville is not the same," T.J. Hine said. "We knew it was great in the past, and we want to get that back."

That will be Grinstead's mission in his return to the Pioneer Athletic Conference coaching fraternity.

He was head coach at Pottstown for three seasons before a career change had him stepping away after a 7-5 2015 campaign that featured qualification for the District 1 Class 3A playoffs.

Grinstead preached the mantra of "building culture" during his time at Pottstown. That mindset is being embraced by Phantom gridders who are back from last year's 2-8 team (2-3 in the PAC's Frontier Division).

"We're very excited for the season," said Hine, a senior listed at center and defensive end.

A similar energy level is being experienced by Grinstead, who dealt with putting a smaller roster at Pottstown against the PAC's bigger schools. He lauded the by-size divisional arrangement the league in-



Phoenixville's Travis Pannella, left, is the top returning rusher in the Pioneer Athletic Conference after rushing for 912 yards as a junior.

BARRY TAGLIEBER -
DFM FILE

stituted with the addition of Norristown and Upper Merion to the fold.

"The league is different, with the two divisions," he noted. "That makes it more exciting for a team that has 40 kids."

Grinstead's performance philosophy leans heavily on fleet feet ... running the ball on offense, running to the ball on defense. To that end, individual conditioning is part of the team's preseason training regimen.

"We want to be effective running the ball, creating more offensive possessions," he said. "A fast team runs the ball, hits people, creates turnovers. Offense dictates defense."

"We want to create adaptability ... kids running to the ball, creating more possessions."

Key to the offensive game plan are Connor Patania, a senior back for his second season starting at quarterback; Travis Pan-

nella, a running back, and Hine, playing center. They will also figure in on the defensive side; Patania in the secondary, Pannella at linebacker and Hine at end.

"With Connor here, I have a quarterback who's an effective passer," Grinstead said. "We'll look to run the ball to set up the pass, looking at four yards a carry."

"The guys have shown a tremendous response to what we're asking them. They're taking on the challenge of laying large bricks."

The players' optimism and spirit is shining brightly as Phoenixville moves toward its Aug. 24 debut at Washington Field against neighboring rival Great Valley.

"We're learning new plays right now," Pannella said. "As we progress, we'll get running smoothly. We're working to get better every day."

"We're getting more confident, not as nervous," Patania added.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Great Valley	7:00 pm
- 2017 RESULT (L 50-31)		
Aug. 30	Martin Luther King	7:00 pm
- 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 7	@ Kennett	7:00 pm
- 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 14	@ Chichester	7:00 pm
- 2017 RESULT (L 34-7)		
Sept. 21	@ Upper Merion*	7:00 pm
- 2017 RESULT (W 35-17)		
Sept. 28	Pottstown	7:00 pm
- 2017 RESULT (W 41-6)		
Oct. 6	@ Pope John Paul II*	1:00 pm
- 2017 RESULT (L 34-31, OT)		
Oct. 12	Upper Perkiomen*	7:00 pm
- 2017 RESULT (LL 44-20)		
Oct. 19	@ Pottsgrove*	7:00 pm
- 2017 RESULT (L 53-7)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

CONNOR PATANIA » QUARTERBACK



The senior is back under center for the Phantoms after a promising junior year where he ranked sixth in the PAC in passing yards (74-for-171, 1,246 yards, 8 TD, 10 INT).

TRAVIS PANNELLA » RB/LB

The senior looks to be one of the PAC's top two-way players, a tenacious middle linebacker on defense while he is the top returning running back in the PAC after a 912-yard, 7-TD season in 2017.



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PHANTOMS**

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POTTSGROVE

FALCONS

CLASS
4A

By Jeff Stover

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He'll be new only in job description. After years of serving on the staff of a longtime coaching icon, Bill Hawthorne is moving up in Pottsgrove's supervisory hierarchy. Hawthorne was selected in the 2017-18 off-season to succeed Rick Pennypacker as the Falcons' head coach — the program's first change of that magnitude in three decades.



HAWTHORNE

The change of leadership notwithstanding, the new field boss, his assistants and players are focused on staying the successful course that's marked the Maroon and White grid program for much

of the recent past.

"It's very much a different role," Hawthorne admitted. "The good thing is being in a system so long, following a coach like Rick Pennypacker who has emplaced a very successful system, that's a plus in my mind.

"He's left the program in about as good shape as it couple possibly be," Hawthorne added. "The main thing is learning management of the game, the staff, the ins and outs of everyday operations ... essentially, just learning to delegate specific jobs to doing people as well as doing your job."

One significant change for the Pottsgrove offense is the graduation of star running back Rahsul Faison. The explosive, shifty, speedy Faison has gone on to play college ball for Stony Creek after being the workhorse of a running game that helped the Falcons go 11-2 overall last fall — 5-0 in the Pioneer Athletic Conference's Frontier Division — and repeat as District I's Class 4A champion.

But that won't signal any whole change in offensive philosophy, though Hawthorne admitted a desire to have a more-involved passing game.

"We have a good stable of running backs," he said. "There's not a lot of experience because Rahsul occupied the spot for two years. But Isaiah Glover and Isaiah Taylor, a junior and senior, are very



AUSTIN HERTZOG — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Pottsgrove's Ryan Bodolus sacks Glen Mills quarterback Tarik Bey last season. Below, quarterback Jay Sisko throws a touchdown on the run against Glen Mills. Both Bodolus and Sisko return to the reigning District I Class 4A champions in 2018.

talented. We have a very strong offensive line, too.

"We want to throw the ball more. The reality is, if you have a lot of success with something, we'll do that. We'd like to throw more to get the (opponents') ninth and 10th man out of box, but we'll do what we're good at. We'll put a system in place with the ability to go with something else."

Jay Sisko, a senior returning behind center, is touted by Hawthorne as a "talented running quarterback." He will have a group of capable targets in senior Ryan Bodolus at tight end — a "big, tough, strong, fluid athlete," Hawthorne noted — and wide receivers Jimai Springfield (senior) and Jack Sibley (junior).

"We have a good mix of speed and possession," Hawthorne said of the Falcons' passing game. "We have the ability to go into the air."

"We're definitely excited about the whole offense," Bodolus added. "We're working so they (opponents) have less people in the box."

Defensively, Bodolus returns to end with solid credentials from the 2017 season. The



Defensive Player of the Year is coming from an 18-sack campaign.

Justin Adams, a senior cornerback, is known for his athleticism. Springfield, another senior, had five interceptions from his cornerback spot, and Glover, a senior at outside linebacker, is a proven run- and pass-stopper.

"Our senior class is selfless," Hawthorne said. "It's a pleasure to have."

"We have a winning mentality," Glover added. "The younger kids see our work ethic."

The players, for the most part, don't see a significant change in the way the coaching

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	West Catholic	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 14-0)		
Aug. 31	@ Methacton	7:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 56-0)		
Sept. 7	@ Boyertown	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 49-14)		
Sept. 14	@ Glen Mills	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 38-20)		
Sept. 21	@ Pottstown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 49-6)		
Sept. 28	Pope John Paul II*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 63-27)		
Oct. 5	Upper Perkiomen*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 55-24)		
Oct. 12	@ Upper Merion*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 49-0)		
Oct. 19	Phoenixville*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 53-7)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

ISAIAH GLOVER » RUNNING BACK



Senior was a PAC Frontier First Team selection at LB in 2017 but will now see a much bigger role on offense, likely taking many of the carries left by PAC-record rusher Rahsul Faison.

RYAN BODOLUS » TE/DE

Senior has all the makings of a repeat performance after 18 sacks and PAC Defensive Player of the Year honors as a junior.



staff is doing business with Hawthorne at the helm.

"Honestly, it doesn't feel too different," Bodolus said. "We have the same coaching staff back."

"There's just as much hard work," Sisko added. "We're playing a little more free this year. Just really going at it."

In that vein, Pottsgrove is not allowing itself to be caught up in headlines and hype during the season. Its focus remains whatever opponent is on tap for any given week.

"We want to take care of a divisional championship," Hawthorne said. "We like to take care of business on a weekly basis."



POTTSTOWN

TROJANS

CLASS
4A

By Thomas Nash

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Last fall, the newly installed lights were about the only thing that shined bright at Pottstown's Grigg Memorial Field.

The Trojans, coming off a year where they beat Methacton twice, enter the fall season with consecutive two-win seasons to their credit.

However, with a bevy of starters returning to the mix — including 10 out of 11 on defense — head coach Mark Fischer believes Pottstown is well on its way to flipping the switch in 2018.

"We've got a lot more experience on this year's team," said Fischer, heading into his second season with the Trojans. "At last year's Thanksgiving Day game, we had 10 sophomores on the field starting for us defensively. And we have all 10 of those guys back this year.

"We were very young all around last year. These guys are now in their second year of knowing the offense and the defense. They're familiar with the way this staff likes to do it and they're doing a great job already."

Pottstown will make the transition from Class 5A to 4A in 2018, a move that should pit the Trojans in more balanced matchups in non-conference games.

Safety Nehemiah Figueroa returns a season after he picked off five passes and was named the Trojans' Player of the Year.

"Having those 10 guys back, we'll be able to make more plays and work together more," said Figueroa of the Trojans' outlook. "Everybody will be on the same page — whether on the field, off the field, in the classroom, during practice. I feel like everything will be good."

Junior Josiah Wiggins will make the transition from running back to quarterback this season for a Pottstown team that promises to blend a balanced run-pass attack. Among his primary targets will be Figueroa in the slot while Daniel Darden should handle most of the work in the ground game.

The Trojans also return four of their five offensive linemen in Destyn Snyder, Cole Miller, Dawaik Phillips and David Hicks.

"We've all had chemistry since last year," said Snyder. "So losing (Tom) Doyle and (Aubrey) King from last year will be okay for us. We'll keep developing chem-



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Pottstown's Nehemiah Figueroa (10), the Trojans' team MVP in 2017, and Dominique Durant (33) team up to tackle Pope John Paul II's Jake Bildstein last season. Both return to the Pottstown defense this fall.

istry during the year because we won't be switching around as much this year. I try to make sure our O-line knows what we're doing and they know what calls to make to make sure we block the plays effectively."

Season Outlook

With the return of 10 starters on the defensive side of the ball, the Trojans will surely improve from last year where they let up over 31 points per game. Pottstown

has adjusted the early portion of its schedule with the move to 4A, nixing matchups with Sun Valley (4-7 overall last season), Solanco (4-6) and Bishop Shanahan (7-4) for more favorable matchups against Octorara (2-8), West Chester East (2-8) and Kutztown (0-10). If the Trojans can get Wiggins and the offense going early on in the season, they could be in full stride by the time they open up PAC play against Methacton Week 4.



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Pottstown head coach Mark Fischer, left, along with senior leaders Destyn Snyder (50), Nehemiah Figueroa (10) and Giovany Arroyo (83) at PAC Media Day on Aug. 8.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Octorara	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Aug. 30	@ W.C. East	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 7	@ Kutztown	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 14	Methacton	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 12-6)		
Sept. 21	Pottsgrove*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 49-6)		
Sept. 28	@ Phoenixville*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 41-6)		
Oct. 5	@ Upper Merion*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 27-6)		
Oct. 12	Pope John Paul II*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 38-13)		
Oct. 19	@ Upper Perkiomen*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 33-0)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

JOSIAH WIGGINS » QUARTERBACK

After finishing last season as the team's leading rusher, Wiggins will have the

ball in his hands a whole lot more as the primary signal caller in 2018. He spent a little time behind center last season mixing time at quarterback with Owen Morton. Blending a good mix of size and speed with a solid arm, Wiggins should be a perfect fit for the Trojans, who plan to run the ball and set up the pass. "My philosophy has always been that the run sets up the pass," said Fischer, "so I believe the teams that can run the football are the ones that will be successful. We're gonna have to throw the football, but we've got to get the run game going first."



NEHEMIAH FIGUEROA » SAFETY

At the anchor of an experienced Trojan defense, Figueroa returns after being named Pottstown's player of the year with five interceptions to his credit last fall. "Early in the year, you couldn't throw a deep ball on him," said Fischer. "He was all over the field. And then by Week 10, I thought that as a safety he was one of the best guys at coming downhill and making plays at the line of scrimmage."



PERKIOMEN VALLEY

**CLASS
6A**
VIKINGS

By Rob Senior
For Digital First Media
@RSenior31 on Twitter

With five straight years of District 1 playoff appearances to their credit, the Perkiomen Valley Vikings certainly have the credentials of a top team in District 1.

Early on this season, they'll be setting out to cement their status one game at a time. The Vikings face a murderer's row of nonleague opponents—Downingtown West, Downingtown East, Pennridge, and Interboro—before embarking on their quest for a third consecutive PAC title.

"We've gotten to a level in our program where we believe iron sharpens iron," said coach Rob Heist. "In my mind, we want to compete to win not only the PAC, but District 1 and beyond. If we're going to accomplish that, and if we're going to be ready to play PAC football, we need to test ourselves against teams like that.

Coach Heist has maintained the philosophy of "take care of the league first, everything else is icing on the cake."

The Vikings took care of the league in 2016 and 2017 (5-0 PAC Liberty, 10-2 overall), and followed it up with a district semifinal appearance two years ago and a spot in the quarterfinals last season.

"Success breeds increased competition. We will get everyone's best shot. I'm happy about that, I expect that."

In their quest for a three-peat, the Vikings have perhaps the preseason favorite for PAC Player of the Year in quarterback Cole Peterlin, who returns to lead the offense after a breakout season (133-for-224, 1,705 yards, 13 TDs, 8 INTs passing; 906 yards, 8 TDs rushing) one year ago. The Vikings' spread-based attack gives many



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Perkiomen Valley's Cole Peterlin avoids a sack against Pennridge last season.

players a chance to shine in skill positions, with a few leading candidates emerging in running backs Jon Moccia and Malik Smith, as well as wide receiver Isaiah Domine. Gavin Euker returns to anchor the offensive line. In all, seven returning starters will give the Vikings a great chance to duplicate their offensive output.

The defensive side of the ball could be more of a challenge, as PV looks to replace eight graduates, including five first-team Liberty Division performers. One first-teamer, safety Austin Rowley, returns to anchor the unit, aided by second-team LB Smith.

"As a unit, I think it's all about communication," said Smith. "If we can get on the field and all be on the same page, that's the key. That's what we were able to do

last year."

"We'll be as physical as we can between the whistles," said Gavin Euker. "If we can take the young guys under our wings it sets the tone for future success."

Season Outlook

As Heist alluded, the Vikings will spend the 2018 campaign with a giant bullseye on their backs—particularly in PAC play. So perhaps the Week 3 meeting with Pennridge will be a rare opportunity to play the hunter rather than the hunted. It was Pennridge who handed PV both of their losses in 2017. If Perkiomen Valley can come through that game—and the rest of its daunting non-league schedule—unscathed, the sky is the limit in the quest for a third straight PAC title.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Downingtown West	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 38-0)		
Sept. 1	@ Downingtown East	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 7	Pennridge	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 29-0)		
Sept. 14	Interboro	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 21-13)		
Sept. 21	@ Owen J. Roberts*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 27-0)		
Sept. 28	Norristown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 44-0)		
Oct. 5	@ Methacton*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 51-0)		
Oct. 12	Boyertown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 46-20)		
Oct. 19	@ Spring-Ford*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 28-7)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

COLE PETERLIN » QUARTERBACK



Peterlin exceeded all expectations last year, taking over for the graduated Stephen Sturm, Pa. all-time leader in Class 6A passing yards and touchdowns. Amassing 1,706 passing yards and another 907 on the ground, Peterlin looks to cement his status as the area's top dual-threat QB.

AUSTIN ROWLEY » SAFETY

On a senior-laden defense last year, Rowley managed to stand out with 89 total tackles, 10 passes defended and four fumble recoveries. "Austin's not the biggest guy on the field," Heist said, "but when he hits you, it feels like he is."



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POPE JOHN PAUL II

**CLASS
3A**
GOLDEN PANTHERS
By Jeff Stover
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Its run through the 2017 high-school football season proved to be a pleasant trip for Pope John Paul II.

But players who made the trek — those back as leaders this fall — are looking at that special season not so much as a destination but as a milepost toward even bigger achievements.

“We want to build on last year,” C.J. McCafferty, a senior who’s working at wide receiver and strong safety, said. “We’re looking to win them one at a time. We can’t be complacent. We have to get better at practice.

“We always want to get better.”

The Golden Panthers have been in improvement mode off a 2015 campaign that saw them winless in their 11 games. They logged a 4-7 record the next year; in 2017, they were 7-4 overall (3-2 Pioneer Athletic Conference Frontier Division), bolstered by a seven-game win streak at the start.

That success has translated into a 50-man roster this preseason — an increase of 4-5 more than last year. It’s a sign of progress, but not a finished product.

“They’re not satisfied,” PJP head coach Rory Graver said. “We’re building a program, and we told the seniors they have to make their own mark.”

McCafferty, A.J. Natale and Bryan Bendig — all are members of the Class of 2017 — are leading the way as the Golden Panthers seek to maintain their upward mobility. The program, with a 7-45 record over the past five seasons, is also looking to improve on a recent post-season history that saw it unable to get past the first round of the District 1 Class 4A playoffs.

“We have a solid senior class as leaders,”



SAM STEWART - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

PJP receiver CJ McCafferty (2) returns this fall and will hope to become a favorite target of new quarterback Kamal Gray, a transfer from Archbishop Carroll.

Graver said. “The core of the team is juniors and sophomores. We could be pretty successful this year.”

“We have a lot of intensity,” Bendig added. “We hype each other up. It’s a nice thing to have, and to harness.”

The Panthers will build their team around a core of four returning starters on offense, and five on defense. The trio of McCafferty, Natale and Bendig figure to be fixtures on both sides of the ball.

McCafferty, the program’s receptions leader as a wide receiver, will also work at strong safety. Natale, a running back since 10th grade, will also play middle linebacker while Bendig is a solid commodity at tackle, tight end and defensive end.

“We have good personnel to look up to,” Natale said. “We also have Kamal Gray (junior, quarterback) from Archbishop Carroll.”

Graver sees the defensive line as “our

strength.” Defensive coordinator Tony Yerger has overseen improvement in tackling proficiency.

“I struggled to tackle as a freshman,” Natale recalled. “He (Yerger) made our tackling the best it’s been.

PJP also figures to be solid in the line-backing corps. McCafferty, senior Andrew Duff and junior Justin Mitala look to be manning that sector in front of a secondary with a mix of young players.

“We’re looking to be more consistent ... not for a game or a series,” Natale said. “We can’t take it easy.”

“The biggest thing is we never look ahead,” Graver added. “It’s one day at a time, one game at a time, one play at a time.”

Home Sweet Home (sort of)

Pope John Paul II will play two of its first three games at its “home away from home;”

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Kutztown	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Aug. 30	@ New Hope Solebury	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 7	Chichester	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 21-20)		
Sept. 15	Schuylkill Valley	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-10)		
Sept. 22	Upper Perkiomen*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 41-14)		
Sept. 28	@ Pottsgrove*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 63-27)		
Oct. 6	Phoenixville*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 34-31, OT)		
Oct. 12	Pottstown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 38-13)		
Oct. 20	Upper Merion*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 35-0)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

AJ NATALE » RB/LB



Senior is an outgoing leader and the team’s returning rusher after going for 571 yards and 9 TDs in 2017.

BRYAN BENDIG » OL/DL

The senior will be a big presence on the edge for the Golden Panthers’ defensive line, considered a team strength by coach Rory Graver.



namely, the “A” Field in Conshohocken. The Golden Panthers will host Kutztown (Aug. 24) and Chichester (Sept. 7) in 7 p.m. contests sandwiching a Friday night game at New Hope-Solebury.


**Tom
Nash**

Follow Tom Nash’s coverage of the Pioneer Athletic Conference and beyond at PaPrepLive.com



(On Twitter @Thomas_Nash10)





SPRING-FORD

RAMS

CLASS
6A

By Rob Senior

For Digital First Media
@RSenior31 on Twitter

Chad Brubaker's first eight years at Spring-Ford have seen the school develop quite a lineage at the quarterback position.

Hank Coyne, Brandon Leacraft, Ricky Venuto, and TJ Pergine continue to raise the standard for the position within the program. Now, junior Ryan Engro looks to extend the trend to a solid decade of all-league — or better — performances.

After spending some time at wideout last year's on Spring-Ford's skill position-rich offense, Engro moves behind center this year as the Rams reload after the graduations of Pergine, all-conference RB Justin DeFrancesco, and receivers Tyler Edwards and Colby Goldsmith.

"Ryan's probably the best all-around athlete we've had at quarterback in my time here," said Brubaker. "We just need him to be more consistent."

The coach's confidence in his new quarterback was apparent, as he discussed his approach to working with his new junior starter. "I'm hard on Ryan, as I am on all quarterbacks," he said. "If they can't handle the pressure in practice, how can they handle it in a game against Central Bucks South on opening night or Perkiomen Valley?"

You could argue that handling the pressure of two games in particular was Spring-Ford's undoing in 2017. Going on the road to rivals Owen J. Roberts and PV, the Rams' high-scoring offense unraveled, shut out by the Wildcats and managing only a late touchdown against OJR. An otherwise stellar conference season was tarnished by those two results, and played a large part in the Rams being sent out on the road to top-seeded Neshaminy in the first round of the playoffs, hanging tough before falling, 35-21.

"What's upset me in the past two years is we have not matched their energy in those games," Brubaker said specifically to the Perkiomen Valley rivalry. "We had early opportunities, failed to seize the momentum. That's disappointing. I'm not saying it's true, but my perception was that the game felt more important to [PV's] kids. Losing is part of football, but when you add it the magnitude of that rivalry—that needs to change this year."



SAM STEWART - DFM FILE

Spring-Ford's leading receiver Dante Bonanni, right, and new quarterback Ryan Engro (7) will hope to be celebrating together many times this fall.

Players like RB Stephen Brill and OT James Begg are prime examples from a 2019 class looking to make the most of their final season in a Rams uniform. It's a young senior class, if that makes sense, due to the time several players missed due to injury. Brill, for example, sat out the last eight games of 2017 with a meniscus tear, while Begg missed his own sophomore season due to medical issues.

Brill figures to see a number of the carries left available by DeFrancesco's graduation, while Blaize Scarcelle will join established junior Dante Bonanni as prime pass-catching threats for Engro.

Season Outlook

The Rams' nonleague schedule will be the definition of 'baptism by fire' for Engro and the new offensive players, as they take on top District One contend Central Bucks South, Wilson West Lawn and Exeter. These early tests provide Spring-Ford with ample opportunities to build the knack for the big moment that they'll need in pivotal PAC contests. If they're suc-

cessful, the season's final two contests—at Owen J. Roberts and home with Perk Valley—will likely determine whether Spring-Ford claims its first division title in three years.



From left, Spring-Ford senior leaders James Begg, Stephen Brill and Nick DelRomano at PAC Media Day on Aug. 8.

AUSTIN
HERTZOG -
DIGITAL FIRST
MEDIA

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ C.B. South	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Aug. 31	Wayne Valley (N.J.)	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 7	@ Wilson West Lawn	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 28-21)		
Sept. 14	Exeter Township	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 45-21)		
Sept. 22	@ Norristown*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 49-6)		
Sept. 29	Methacton*	2:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 43-7)		
Oct. 5	Boyertown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 16-0)		
Oct. 12	@ Owen J. Roberts*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 33-0)		
Oct. 19	Perkiomen Valley*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 28-7)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

DANTE BONANNI » WIDE RECEIVER

Bonanni, who set Spring-Ford underclassmen records last year for receptions (41) and receiving yards (649), will be a focal point for new quarterback Ryan Engro and the rest of an offense hit hard by graduations.

NICK DELROMANO » LINEBACKER

An outstanding performer last year with 71 tackles and four sacks, DelRomano and the Rams' defensive unit will be relied upon heavily to hold down the fort in early matchups against the likes of Central Bucks South and Wilson West Lawn while the offense gets up to speed.



UPPER MERION

VIKINGS

CLASS
5A

By Thomas Nash

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@Thomas_Nash10 on Twitter

When Victor Brown held his season-ending meeting with his players following last year's one-win campaign, one thing became instantly evident to the first-year coach: The Vikings desperately needed leadership.

Flash forward nine months, and those leaders have emerged for Brown and Upper Merion heading into the 2018 fall season.

"At the end of last season when I met with each player, each coach, we talked about their thoughts on the season and got their input," recalled Brown. "We needed to get some leadership to get our culture going in the right direction. I raised the bar for these guys — we had a lot of expectations for them before and we upped the ante."

Brown is hoping that a revived culture and higher expectations will bring out the best in the Vikings, who finished at the bottom of the Pioneer Athletic Conference in passing yards per game (35 yards) and ninth overall with just over 120 rushing yards per game while finishing the year at 1-10 overall (1-4 PAC Frontier).

Among the standouts for Upper Merion this fall will be versatile senior Zaire Savage, who split time at quarterback and wide receiver last season. He'll man the defensive secondary alongside safety/wide receiver Ahmad Stone.

Senior Michael Zelli is expected to emerge at running back following the graduation of the Vikings' leading rusher in 2017, Dave Brown.

"He's a guy who really came on for us at the end of the season as an outside



Upper Merion's Zaire Savage evades a Pottstown defender and runs for a touchdown last season.

THOMAS NASH
- DIGITAL FIRST
MEDIA

linebacker," said Brown of Zelli. "Going through our evaluations last season, we felt like Mike was a guy we needed to get more involved offensively."

He'll line up behind Dale Clayton, a junior quarterback who sat out last season and will take his first varsity snaps this fall. Clayton, a pocket passer with athletic ability, has been making his progress throughout camp.

"We're very pleased with his growth as of right now," said Brown. "There are a lot of questions that we still need to get answers. We want to see how he responds when things get live. So far, what we've seen from him in practice, he's ready, he'll respond well."

CHASING THE PAC » Since making the jump from the Suburban One League to the Pi-



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Upper Merion head coach Victor Brown, left, with senior leaders Sam Ghanayen, Mark Picariello and Kevin Jainlett at PAC Media Day on Aug. 8.

oneer Athletic Conference two years ago, Upper Merion is 3-13 against PAC opponents with six shutouts against them.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Radnor	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 52-22)		
Aug. 31	@ Norristown	5:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 20-7)		
Sept. 7	Methacton	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 14	@ Owen J. Roberts	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 47-0)		
Sept. 21	Phoenixville*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 35-17)		
Sept. 28	@ Upper Perkiomen*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 35-14)		
Oct. 5	Pottstown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 27-6)		
Oct. 12	Pottsgrove	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 49-0)		
Oct. 20	@ Pope John Paul II*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 35-0)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

ZAIRE SAVAGE » WIDE RECEIVER

The Viking senior looked plenty comfortable with the ball in his hand as the team's quarterback where he stacked up 144 yards and three touchdowns in split time. Now lining up on the edge as a wide receiver, he'll get the chance to showcase his speed in the open field.

MARK PICARIELLO » LINEBACKER

The Viking senior sat out all of last year with a torn PCL, LCL and meniscus injury suffered prior to the regular season. Now back for his final go, the two-year team captain plans to make up for lost time. "With Mark, most guys would have hung it up and checked it in at that time," said Brown. "He didn't miss a practice. He was early for everything, still in the weight room with his teammates before school. ... His voice carries a lot of weight in our locker room."



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UPPER PERKIOMEN

CLASS
5A

INDIANS

By Thomas Nash

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For three years, Tyler Weber paced the sidelines with a clipboard in hand on gameday, filling in late in games at quarterback to run out the clock for Upper Perkiomen.

Now, he'll trade in his clipboard and pick up the role as the primary signal-caller heading into his senior season with the Tribe.

"Tyler is a very intelligent quarterback," said head coach Tom Hontz. "He's been our backup for the past three years, basically. This is his time. He knows what he's doing, he's really improved strength-wise.

"I have no doubt that he's got a firm grasp on the offense. He can step right in and take over in that regard. We're excited to see him with the keys to the car."

Weber will take over the drivers seat for an Upper Perk offense that has been known for spreading the field and throwing the ball. The Tribe will make the jump from Class 4A to 5A this coming season, a year after falling to Pioneer Athletic Conference power Pottsgrove in the District 1-4A title game.

In 2016, quarterback Zeke Hallman set a school mark for most passing yards in a season (1,938) before passing it on to Tyler Keyser, who had been a wide receiver, last season. Keyser finished out the year in 2017 with 1,173 passing yards and 12 touchdowns last season in leading the Tribe to the District 1-4A title game.

Having sat behind both Hallman and Keyser as the team's primary backup all three seasons, Weber has no doubt that he's ready for what the season brings.

"The past three years, I've been getting ready and I've gotten a hold of it now," he said. "Being a part of the offense the past three years — I understand everything and know how to run the offense."

Weber's transition will be aided by his playmakers, most notably running back Tyrese Reid.

At wide receiver, the Tribe will predominantly rotate Andrew Carducci, Collin Funk and Duka while also featuring tight end play from senior Max Kratochwill and promising freshman Grady Thompson.

FALCON PUNCH » Upper Perkiomen's run has ended in the District 1-4A playoffs each of the last two seasons against Pottsgrove,



SAM STEWART - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Upper Perkiomen's Tyrese Reid shoves away a Boyertown would-be tackler during the first half of the Indians' 42-21 victory over Boyertown. The win snapped a seven-game losing streak to their bordering rival.

the perennial power in the PAC's Frontier Division.

Since taking over the helm at Upper Perk prior to the 2014 season, Hontz is 0-6 against Pottsgrove, a team that will enter this fall season with a new head coach and having graduated its star running back among several other playmakers.

"I know Coach (Billy) Hawthorne and he's going to do an outstanding job there," said Hontz of Pottsgrove's incoming head coach.

"They have a system in place where they keep reloading.

"So whether it's us, or some of the teams in our division — Upper Merion's up and



AUSTIN HERTZOG - DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

From left, Upper Perkiomen seniors Tyler Weber, Tyrese Reid, Luke Whary and Logan Hollingsworth at PAC Media Day on Aug. 8.

coming, Pottstown has shown some improvements, Rory (Graver) does a real nice job at PJP — we just hope to make them competitive and knock off those top dogs."

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Boyertown	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-21)		
Aug. 31	Kutztown	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 47-12)		
Sept. 7	@ Upper Moreland	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 34-20)		
Sept. 14	Fleetwood	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 22	@ Pope John Paul II	*1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 41-14)		
Sept. 28	Upper Merion*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 35-14)		
Oct. 5	@ Pottsgrove*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 55-24)		
Oct. 12	@ Phoenixville*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 44-20)		
Oct. 19	Pottstown	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 33-0)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

TYRESE REID » RUNNING BACK

Reid, a speedster change-of-pace back, was part of a three-headed monster that had featured Tyler Whary and Austin Tutolo in the Upper Perk backfield last season.

With both of them now graduated, Reid will now be at the forefront of a backfield that will also include fullback/linebacker Luke Whary along with Malachai Duka.

This past summer, Reid finished second overall in the long jump (20-1) and fifth overall in the 100-meter dash (11.49) at the AAU Region 2 National Track & Field Championships at Richard Stockton College in New Jersey.

"I've been getting myself right, getting better, faster stronger," said Reid. "I'll always be a finesse and speed back."

LUKE WHARY » LINEBACKER

Luke Whary, Linebacker » Whary will look to build on a standout junior season as one of few returners to a Tribe defense that was one of four teams to hold the opposition to under 100 passing yards per game.

"He had a phenomenal year last year, so he'll be the anchor on defense for us," said Hontz of Whary.

DEL VAL LEAGUE PREVIEW

Arms Race

Four veteran QBs should elevate offense in competitive Del Val



DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Interboro senior quarterback Jared Dellapriscoli, seen in a game last season against Norristown, could be the key in making a usually run-heavy Bucs attack take to the air more.

By Matthew De George

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LANSDOWNE » You might not necessarily equate high-powered passing attacks with the Del Val League.

Its most dominant team of the last half-decade, Academy Park, has done the job with gritty defense and explosive running backs. The presiding power before that, Interboro, leaned heavily toward a punishingly efficient running attack. Consider successful squads at Glen Mills or Penn Wood through the years, and a dominant running back is likely to spring to mind.

But four experienced quarterbacks are out to change that notion this year.

Thanks to Penn Wood's Desman Johnson, Interboro's Jared Dellapriscoli, Academy Park's Skylor Fillis and Chester's Tahree Fuller-Bryan, more than half of the Del Val is loaded with veteran signal-callers.

Johnson stands out among the crowd. Just a sophomore last year, he utilized his impressive array of deep threats to amass 2,225 yards, 20 touchdowns against nine interceptions and a 55.0 completion percentage. He had All-Delcos Kennedy Poles and Raheim Bowens to target, and while the latter has graduated to a spot on the football team at Maine, Poles is ready for a return to form.

"Me and Des, we've been playing with each other since pups," Poles said at a recent practice. "So our chemistry has been there. In middle school, I was throwing the ball to him, and now it's vice-versa. Now he's throwing the ball to me. We've always had that chemistry."

DEL VAL » PAGE 56

Del Val

FROM PAGE 55

“I think any good team will build around your strength,” coach Ato Troop said. “Having the athletes that we have, it allows us to do some things that other teams can’t do, some different looks. They’re also a very football-smart group, so they pick things up very quick. So it allows us to do some different things.”

The Patriots are coming off an 8-3 season and a Del Val title, a remarkable turnaround under first Nick Lincoln, then Troop. It was just three years ago that the Patriots went winless, a stretch of just two wins in four seasons from 2011-14. Troop has continued the program’s revitalization, creating thrilling prospects in the process.

This year, Poles is the top threat in a varied arsenal. Elijah Gleplay, who grew into the feature back ahead of schedule last year as a sophomore, is back, hoping to grow from his 537 rushing yards and two 100-yard games.

He’ll get help in the backfield from Tayshon Harmon, while Edmund Dennis, Anauri Hankey, Brian Parker Jr. and Micken Daley each got experience in the receiving game last year.

“They’re competitive,” Troop said. “They’re all teammates, but at the same time, they want to do well, they feed off each other, they make fun of each other when they drop stuff. The competitiveness is there, and it carries over.”

Fillis is back at Academy Park, where he’s the Knights’ most proven offensive weapon to start the season. He’s got ample protection up front, with veteran lineman Taj Brooker and Xavier Newman.

It just so happens that the Knights’ strength in a perennially formidable defense is the secondary. Rasheed Coles, also a dangerous return man, is the leader of the unit, with Malik Johnson and Alphonso Hayes adding coverage depth. Linebacker Devin Covert is another impact defender.

Interboro’s offense remains run-heavy, but there, too, a veteran hand like Dellipriscoli can provide balance. The Bucs went 5-7 last year and have to replace their top two backfield producers. But senior Mike Moore is back after significant time toting the rock, while shifty back Andrew Grieb also returns.

The key to the big plays from the Bucs could be how often Dellipriscoli can take advantage of the packed box. He has a great pass-catcher in Grieb, as well as wideout Tim Convery, and getting them the ball in space outside of

the congested backfield can serve as an extension of the running game.

Dellipriscoli threw for 605 yards last year. He’s proven his arm strength on the baseball diamond and could get a chance to brandish it more often on the gridiron.

Chester’s Fuller-Bryan is back for a third season under center, though this year he lacks the benefit of any returning varsity running backs. He’s got a few veteran wideouts from which to choose, including Malik and Malachi Langley and Shaheem Parr. The Langleys earned spots in the rotation last year as just sophomores, part of a strong Class of 2020 core.

The emphasis on veteran quarterbacks places a premium on the defensive secondary, which is luckily a strength for Chichester. The Eagles went 4-7 last year to make the District 1 Class 5A playoffs. While they replace multi-year starting quarterback Andrew Rodriguez and his two top receivers, the Eagles surround junior QB Nate Decenzi with senior running back Nate Resine and a bunch of veteran receivers.

Those skill guys double as a defensive backfield that will be particularly vital.

“That challenge is going to be pretty good, because we already saw those guys last year,” defensive back Calvin Church said of the returning QBs. “Most of us played against them.”

As is customary, Glen Mills doesn’t have a long list of returnees to fall back on. But those that are back — linebacker Raysonno Williams, defensive backs Camer Warrington-Curry and Robert Hill — project as potential impact players on the defensive side.



DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Penn Wood quarterback Desman Johnson Jr., seen against Interboro last season, looks to build on an impressive sophomore campaign for the reigning Del Val champs.

2017 Delaware Valley League

Pos	Team	CW	CL	W	L	PF	PA
1	Penn Wood	5	0	8	3	278	210
2	Academy Park	4	1	7	4	360	177
3	Interboro	3	2	5	7	248	332
4	Glen Mills	2	3	3	7	164	228
5	Chichester	1	4	4	7	209	259
6	Chester	0	5	2	8	154	229



ACADEMY PARK

KNIGHTS

CLASS
5A

By Christopher A. Vito
For Digital First Media

SHARON HILL >> They gathered at the 40-yard line for a brief conversation. They talked about brotherhood and accountability. They challenged one another to show up each day at training camp and pledged to work harder than they had the day prior.

Then, in less time than it takes to brush your teeth, they dispersed. About 10 members of Academy Park's defensive secondary broke the huddle near midfield and went their separate ways. Around Knight Park, similar positional pow-wows simultaneously met similar fates.

Perennially a favorite to win its league title and to chase postseason glory, Academy Park is once again home to a roster that is rich in talent and deep in numbers. Not many programs can afford to place its best athletes on the field strictly to play one side of the ball. That is where Academy Park is an outlier.

One of those players is Rasheed Coles, the leader of the Knights' aforementioned secondary corps. The senior exclusively plays defensive back for coach Jason Vosheski. Coles will get some burn with the kick-return and punt-return units, too, but his focus remains on defense.

"It's Vo's choice," said Coles, alluding to Vosheski, "but it's a good one. It doesn't matter to me that I only play defense, because it works."

Coles isn't alone. Taj Brooker will enter his third season as a starting offensive tackle. For the first time in the senior's playing career at Academy Park, Brooker's knowledge of the playbook will allow him to see the field as a first-year defensive tackle.



Academy Park quarterback Skylor Fillis, here throwing a touchdown pass last season, is a two-way offensive threat for the Knights.

DFM FILE

"The coaches, they don't want me playing it a lot because that's not who we are," Brooker said. "We're not a two-way team. They'll expect it out of me because I know a lot and because I'm strong. I'm one of the few (asked to play both sides of the ball)."

Brooker has a theory. He believes there is a correlation between Academy Park's one-way players and their recent string of successful seasons, one that he attributes to Vosheski's well-conditioned and well-rested players.

In the last four seasons, the Knights have racked up an impressive 41-10 record, accompanied by two Del Val League championships, two District I titles, and two appearances in the PIAA playoffs. Over that span, Academy Park has saved the best for last. The Knights have played particularly well in the second halves of their seasons, surrendering 14 points or more in only six games after the midway point.

"This strategy by Vo and the rest of the coaches gives us the benefit of the doubt in the fourth quarter and in the second half (of the year)," Brooker said. "You look at when we score most of our points. You look at whose guys have more energy, (and) are better conditioned. It's because we're deeper than every team."

If Brooker's theory holds true, Academy Park is poised for yet another sterling season.

The Knights return left tackle Xavier Newman for a second year as an anchor on the offensive line. Malik Johnson, at free safety, and Alphonso Hayes, at cornerback, could shine as brightly as Coles in the secondary. Devin Covert, primarily a linebacker, expects to get stronger consideration as an offensive weapon this season. And big things are expected of up-and-comer Eddie Soloku, a sophomore wide receiver.

Of course, none of this factors in Academy Park's greatest catalyst, Skylor Fillis. The senior quarterback will line up (exclusively) under center for his third season as the Knights' starter. Aside from Fillis' ability, insiders are noticing a difference in his demeanor.

"The biggest thing for him is command of the huddle and of the offense," Vosheski said. "He's not a big talker. Doesn't matter. People still follow. His sheer ability, too, is going to help. For him, it's less thinking and more doing. I've seen big steps for him, and we expect even more from him now."

Said Fillis: "Nobody here is selfish. We all have our roles. We've all bought in, and now it's time to win."

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Pennsbury	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 27-20)		
Aug. 31	@ Unionville	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 23-20)		
Sept. 7	@ Great Valley	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 43-20)		
Sept. 14	Simon Gratz	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 21	Martinsburg (W.Va.)	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 28	@ Interboro*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 50-27)		
Oct. 5	Chichester*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 39-12)		
Oct. 12	Chester*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 43-12)		
Oct. 19	@ Glen Mills*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 34-0)		
Oct. 26	Penn Wood*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 14-12)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

SKYLOR FILLIS » QUARTERBACK



At training camp, Vosheski followed Fillis from one part of Knight Park to another carrying a blue-tooth speaker. It seemed almost poetic, the coach blasting music and his quarterback hitting his

receivers in perfect rhythm. The 6-1, 175-pound senior captain is a dual-threat under center.

RASHEED COLES » DEFENSIVE BACK



Academy Park's secondary is rife with talent and experience. The senior defensive back had 43 tackles last season, while also handling kick- and punt-return duties. Coles has had recruiting interest from Monmouth and Alvernia.



Matt Smith

Columnist



Follow Matt Smith's
coverage of Delco football
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CHESTER

CLIPPERS

CLASS
6A

By Matt Smith

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CHESTER >> On most days, LaDon-tay Bell can count on the punctuality of one player in particular.

Starting quarterback Tahree Fuller-Bryan is developing a reputation for being the first player at practice and one of the last to leave. In Bell's mind, Fuller-Bryan is setting a perfect example for others.

"He's disciplined and on time. Every day, I know to look for him," Bell said. "In fact, he's the first one here. He usually beats me here and is waiting for me to get started."

Fuller-Bryan is beginning his second year as Chester's full-time starter under center. He also saw action two years ago as a sophomore.

"I want to be able to do everything with the ball, but most of all, I want to be a leader," the 5-foot-11, 165-pound senior said. "I want to be there for my teammates."

Fuller-Bryan has the arm to be among the top passers in the Del Val League. He showcased his throwing prowess at various times last season, during which the Clippers went 2-8 for the second straight year.

Many of those passes went 10-15 yards beyond the reach of his intended receiver, leading to plenty of frustration. Fuller-Bryan worked on improving his timing, among other things, to become a better all-around QB.

"I've worked a lot on my footwork and putting better touch on my passes. I over-threw a lot (last season)," he said. "I want to be strong in the pocket. I don't want to do a lot of running, that got me in trouble. I have to do better on my feet, stay in the



PETE BANNAN — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Chester quarterback Tahree Fuller-Bryan has rededicated himself to improvement of the little things ahead of his second season as the starter for the Clippers.

pocket and make better reads."

Bell sees a player who has dedicated himself to improve, and that's a huge first step to helping the Clippers to a winning campaign.

"I would say, more so this year, that he is more coachable and dedicated," Bell said. "We're trying to coach him to get the ball out, be smart with the ball. Last year was a big year for him. He has to keep working hard."

Last year, the offensive line was partially responsible for Fuller-Bryan's struggles as he was sacked more than 30 times. Chester's offense scored six points or fewer in six of eight losses, while committing too many turnovers and mental mistakes.

"You're going to see a lot of differences with our offense," Bell said. "We're really

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going to cater to our strong suit, get guys in the open field and let them make plays. That's (one way) you've got to compete with the teams in the Del Val."

Senior Ian Jones (6-0, 290) and junior Darnell Jones (6-0, 225) are the two returning starters on the line, looking to make life better for the offense.

"We're not there quite yet," said Ian Jones, "but we're going to get there soon."

Bell has high hopes for 5-5, 180-pound sophomore tailback Anton Sterling, who got a taste of varsity action last year. Sterling will share rushing duties with seniors Christin Briscoe (6-0, 200), Chris Jackson (5-10, 190) and Aasim Muhammad (5-8, 170).

Fuller-Bryan will have plenty of options in the passing game. Senior Shaheem Pharr is garnering interest from Howard University and Rutgers. Malik and Malachi Langley are junior speedsters who can stretch the field. Tylee Williams-Clark (6-2, 200) is a big target at tight end.

"I believe 110 percent in my guys," said Williams-Clark, who registered a team-high seven sacks as a defensive end last fall. "You can tell, we have that work ethic this year. I'm sure a lot of teams work hard, but we've been working as hard as anybody and bringing it every day. I truly believe that."

Rafiqe Hilliard, who has the top grade-point average on the team, is a hard-hitting junior defensive back. He earned All-Del Val honors last fall, and should be one of the top DBs in the county. Muhammad and Williams-Clark also have noses for the ball and were among the leading tacklers on the team last fall.

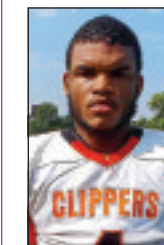
2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 25	Haverford High**	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 40-6)		
Sept. 1	Great Valley	10:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 8	@ Bishop McDevitt	3:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 15	@ Archbishop Ryan^	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 22	@ Haverford School	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 29	Penn Wood*	10:30 am
— 2017 RESULT (L 14-6)		
Oct. 6	Glen Mills*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 22-0)		
Oct. 12	@ Academy Park*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 43-12)		
Oct. 19	@ Interboro*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 27-0)		
Oct. 27	Chichester*	11:00 am
— 2017 RESULT (L 12-6)		

* denotes a league game
** game at Lincoln University
^ game at George Washington HS

PLAYERS TO WATCH

SHAHEEM PHARR » WIDE RECEIVER



The senior wide receiver is a top playmaker for the Chester offense, which will look to throw the ball early and often. Chester certainly has the talent to put a lot of points on the board, and Pharr and Fuller-Bryan need to establish a good rapport on game days.

RAFIQE HILLIARD » DEFENSIVE BACK

As a sophomore, the defensive back led the Clippers in tackles (89), interceptions (three) and passes defended (seven). Expect more of the same this year.



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CHICHESTER

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By Matthew De George

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UPPER CHICHESTER >> Chichester coach Ryan Smith knew pretty quickly after the end of the 2017 season that Nate Decenzi was the next in line for the Eagles' quarterback job.

Just a sophomore then, Smith had high hopes for Decenzi as the replacement for departing senior Andrew Rodriguez. So he began working with Decenzi all through the spring, hoping that when his junior season rolled around, Decenzi would be ready to take the reins from the outset.

"Nate's been good because with Andrew, he was able to wrap his head around everything we were doing and we were able to turn a lot of the keys over to him, and I think through that process, Nate learned," Smith said. "Nate's a very technical quarterback, he's a good quarterback. But I think that he's now combining that aspect with the mental aspect after watching Andrew. His development has been fun to watch."

Part of the plan is the Eagles surrounding Decenzi with veteran options. First and foremost, that means the all-Nate backfield with tailback Nate Resine.

The all-Nate backfield includes a solid weapon for the young quarterback to have as insurance.

"We've been working really hard since February with him," Resine said. "We've known since last year with him. It's been staying humble and keeping his head up. We're here for him all the time and always protect our quarterbacks. We have lots of faith in him. He's a great arm."

There's no avoiding the fact that the Eagles have big shoes to fill. Rodriguez threw



PETE BANNAN — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Chichester quarterback Nate Decenzi will take over under center as a junior.

for 1,246 yards last season with a 53.6 completion percentage. He accounted for 14 touchdowns and 11 interceptions through the air. Decenzi, who attempted just one pass for varsity last year, won't have the benefit of either of Rodriguez's top two targets, Rashaad Shaw and Andre Dean, the former of whom was both the team's leading runner and receiver. Both were also constant threats in the return game.

Nonetheless, the skill positions are the area of strength on the Eagles' roster.

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In addition to Resine, Decenzi can pick from four senior receivers/athletes — Calvin Church, Jamese Lundy-Byrd, Damian Thompson and Tyler Bardwell — who make up for experience with potential.

Resine occupies the lead rusher's role. Though he only rushed for 218 yards last year due to injuries that cost him several games, Resine started the season strong with 24 carries for 81 yards and a touchdown against Lower Merion. He added eight carries for 49 yards in a win over Phoenixville, displaying in flashes as a junior the durability to be a feature back.

Beyond its playmaking ability, Smith also appreciates the dynamic that his veteran skill corps creates for the young quarterback, one of mentorship but also accountability if any lackadaisical play slips in.

"He's a young quarterback," Church said. "He's getting better every day. We already know him. ... We always try to keep him calm, keep him fresh all the time, don't throw all the pressure on him."

"It helps humble a kid," Smith said. "If you feel like he's kind of just meeting the quota, they do a good job of keeping him humble."

Smith hopes to have the line in front of Decenzi sort itself out in the preseason. Seniors Adham Fathy and Dace Bell figure to be the anchors, but several position battles will boil down to younger talents with higher ceilings against more seasoned veterans.

"I love watching our big guys go head-to-head and watching them stay humble," Resine said. "They've always got their heads up."

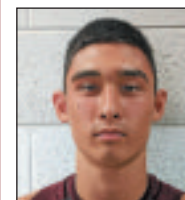
2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Lower Merion	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 30-19)		
Aug. 31	Kennett	7:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 20-12)		
Sept. 7	@ Pope John Paul II	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 21-20)		
Sept. 14	Phoenixville	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 34-7)		
Sept. 28	Glen Mills*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 24-16)		
Oct. 5	@ Academy Park*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 28-7)		
Oct. 12	Interboro*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 31-28)		
Oct. 19	Penn Wood*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 40-0)		
Oct. 27	@ Chester*	11:00 am
— 2017 RESULT (W 12-6)		
Nov. 22	Sun Valley	10:30 am
— 2017 RESULT (L 32-30)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

NATE RESINE » RUNNING BACK



Injuries did the senior no favors last year. If Resine can consistently be the back that he showed to be early last season against Lower Merion and again in the playoffs against Academy Park, the Eagles have something to build around.

CALVIN CHURCH » DEFENSIVE BACK

In a pass-happy Del Val featuring four returning starting quarterbacks, playmaking in the secondary is all the more valuable. Church has varsity experience from the basketball court to pass down to younger players and leads the "ballhawk" mentality of the Eagles secondary.



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GLEN MILLS

BATTLIN' BULLS

CLASS
4A

By Terry Toohey

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@TerryToohey on Twitter

THORNBURY>> Middle linebacker Rae-kwon General barked out the formation each time the Glen Mills offense stepped to the line of scrimmage during a 7-on-7 drill in training camp.

Outside linebacker Raysonno Williams repeated the instructions, just to make sure the rest of the unit heard the initial call.

"Strong right," Williams yelled after General gave the first command.

"Trips left," Williams shouted after General informed the rest of the unit that three wide receivers were lined up in a triangle formation on the hash mark.

Williams continued to display his leadership skill when it was time for the senior to switch to running back.

"OK, let's do this," Williams said as he took off the blue pinnie that defensive players wear in 7-on-7 and 11-on-11 drills.

By its nature as a school for court-adjudicated boys, Glen Mills rarely has the benefit of returning players. So every season head coach Kevin Owens and his staff count on the few returnees such as Williams, wide receiver/safety Camer Warrington-Curry and cornerback/running back Robert Hill to show the younger players, many of whom are playing football for the first time, how it's done.

Stepping into a leadership role is not an easy task, but one that both Williams and Warrington-Curry relish.

"I just try to tell them not to give up on themselves because a lot of people who come here have given up on themselves," Warrington-Curry said. "You just have



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Quarterback Clentrell George works out under the watchful eye of assistant coach Calvin Garvin.

to keep encouraging them because some people learn differently and that's why you have to keep encouraging them until they get it."

The challenge, as always, is to mold a group of unproven yet talented players into a cohesive unit, and that takes time. The coaching staff, though, has a pretty good record of success in that department. A year ago, the Bulls lost their first three games before going 3-3 down the stretch to qualify for the District 1 Class 5A playoffs. Glen Mills fell to eventual champ Unionville in the first round of the tournament, but the turnaround was typical. It was Glen Mills' third straight trip to the district playoffs.

"We've only been together for a few months and we're playing against teams that have been together for a few years, but it always comes together at the end," Williams said. "We may lose a couple of games and then win a few in a row."

The big question, as usual, is who will be

the quarterback and how quickly will the offensive and defensive lines develop?

Russell Hill and Clentrell George are fighting it out for the starting quarterback's job. George was a member of the boys volleyball team in the spring and received the team's Most Coachable Award, according to the student newspaper, *The Battling Bulletin*.

"It's a nice battle between those two," Owens said. "They're good athletes. We're still developing our offensive and defensive lines, which are the heart and soul of our team."

General, who will play at linebacker, running back and serve up punts, and Hill will be counted on heavily, too.

"I think it's going to be a very interesting year," Owens said. "I think the Del Val League is going to be very challenging this year. We want to be the best football team we can be by the middle of the year, when the league season starts. We tell the kids that the first thing we want to do is have fun. Then we want to win the league and make the playoffs."

And that takes time.

"I've seen growth," Owens said. "We've progressed every day we've been out here."

CLASSIFICATION CHANGE

This year, Glen Mills is one of seven teams in District 1, and the only one from Delaware County, in Class 4A. Interboro has moved up to 5A. The top four teams in the class qualify for the District 1 Tournament.

SEASONED STAFF

Most of the players may be new, but the coaching staff isn't. Owens is in his 13th season as the head coach and 25th on the staff overall.

"I have a good staff," Owens said. "We've had some guys come and go, but (defensive coordinator) Paul Dixon has been with me the whole time."

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Springfield-Delco	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 28-8)		
Aug. 31	West Philadelphia	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 38-7)		
Sept. 7	@ W.C. Henderson	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 14	Pottsgrove	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 38-20)		
Sept. 21	@ Pottsville	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 28	@ Chichester*	7:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 24-16)		
Oct. 6	@ Chester*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 22-0)		
Oct. 12	@ Penn Wood*	7:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 20-14)		
Oct. 19	Academy Park*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 34-0)		
Oct. 26	Interboro*	7:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 15-14)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

RAYSONNO WILLIAMS » RUNNING BACK



Much of Williams' experience is on the defensive side of the ball, but he also is being asked to contribute to an offense that lost nearly all of its production from a year ago. He's a powerful back with speed. "I know there are a lot of expectations on me, especially with the running backs we've had before. I'm definitely held to a high standard," Williams said.

CAMER WARRINGTON-CURRY » CORNERBACK

Expect the tall, lanky Warrington-Curry to be a contributor on both sides of the ball, like Williams, Hill and General. Warrington-Curry should contribute as a receiver on the offensive side, but his presence should especially be felt as a cover corner.



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INTERBORO

BUCS

CLASS
5A

By **Matt Chandik**
For Digital First Media

GLENOLDEN >> Last season didn't exactly end the way Interboro would have liked.

A decidedly un-Buc-like 5-7 mark left people wanting more, and three straight blowout losses to Academy Park, Pottsgrove and Ridley to cap the campaign wasn't quite the way the Bucs wanted to go into the offseason.

There's a sense of renewed optimism and commitment, however, and the belief that the personnel to challenge for the Del Val title is there.

"We have a lot more intensity and a lot more pride on the team," right guard and defensive lineman Ricky Neill said. "I'm really glad that we got the kids that we got because of how much they want to practice. It's really made a difference. I'm not going to lie, it freaking stunk the whole year, but we're planning on making it up this year."

Quarterback Jared Dellipriscoli returns after his first year under center, giving coach Steve Lennox a rare two-year starter at the position. That may mean a couple more passes, but it's going to be the same offense that's helped Lennox win a lot of games in his career. Expect a ton of runs, with seniors Andrew Grieb and Mike Moore receiving the bulk of the carries. Grieb rushed for 308 yards and two touchdowns a season ago, while Moore added 209 yards and four scores. You can bank on those numbers at least doubling, if not more.

"It's going to be interesting to see how we do it," said Grieb, who doubles as a strong safety. "We're not going to catch a lot of teams off-guard because we've been running the same offense for 25 years. We're



MATT CHANDIK — FOR DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Interboro receiver Tim Convery will try to give head coach Steve Lennox reason to attack through the air more than usual.

throwing some new wrinkles in, though."

"It's more of the same," Moore added. "We don't really have many surprises. I like quick traps, though."

When Dellipriscoli drops back, he'll have a plethora of returners to throw to, but he'll probably be looking for Tim Convery. The senior, who also starts at cornerback, snagged 16 passes for 189 yards and two touchdowns last year.

"Hopefully, (we'll throw) a lot more," Convery said with a smile. "We have versatility. Anybody can run the ball and anybody can catch the ball."

"Most of our skill guys are returning,

which makes me want to open it up more because they have a year under their belt," Dellipriscoli said. "Last year was pretty hard, just making sure that everyone has the timing down and that they know which route they're running every play. Now, I just have to refresh them every once in a while. We have a lot of talent."

The Bucs haven't posted back-to-back losing seasons this decade, so the smart money would indicate that they're in a good position for a bounceback season. With some fortuitous bounces, they could even be the ones celebrating a league title in November.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Strath Haven	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 26-13)		
Aug. 31	Oxford	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 7	Archbishop Ryan	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 14	@ Perkiomen Valley	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 21-13)		
Sept. 28	Academy Park*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 50-27)		
Oct. 5	@ Penn Wood*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 16-14)		
Oct. 12	@ Chichester*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 31-28)		
Oct. 19	Chester*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 27-20)		
Oct. 26	@ Glen Mills*	7:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 15-14)		
Nov. 22	Ridley	10:00 am
— 2017 RESULT (L 38-20)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

JARED DELLIPRISCOLI » QUARTERBACK



The senior quarterback is a rarity as a multi-year starting QB for the Bucs. He threw for 605 yards and five scores a year ago, and he's also mobile enough to escape the

pocket and make a play on the run in Interboro's option attack. The most important aspect, though, might be that he's earned more of Lennox's trust.

TIM CONVERY » CORNERBACK

Convery did a lot on the offensive end last year, and he added a pair of return TDs on special teams. But he's also the tone-setter in the secondary, where he's going to match up with some wide-open passing attacks in the Del Val.



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PENN WOOD

PATRIOTS

CLASS
5A

By Matt Smith

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LANSDOWNE >> Penn Wood senior Edmund Dennis admits he hasn't reviewed the film of last year's District 1 Class 6A playoff game.

"I've never touched the game (highlights) on Hudl," Dennis said. "It's too hard to look back on."

Facing a No. 2 seed in a first-round battle, the 15th-seeded Patriots stood toe-to-toe with big, bad Perkiomen Valley. Penn Wood had a 16-point, second-half lead and was on the verge of a major upset.

But Perk Valley never went away. The home team scored 24 unanswered points and held on for a wild, 38-30 victory. It was a game that saw then-sophomore quarterback Desman Johnson Jr. throw for nearly 250 yards. All-Delco wide receiver Kennedy Poles, a junior at the time, had five catches for 191 yards and two scores.

"To this day, I still think about it," Poles said. "It's two years in a row (losing to Perkiomen Valley in the playoffs). But I'll just say, there will be some different results this year."

The Patriots are, perhaps, more talented than ever before, poised to defend their Del Val League title, which they captured for the first time since 2010. However, if you ask any player on the Patriots, they'll tell you they have bigger goals to conquer. Qualifying for the district postseason two years in a row was an accomplishment for a team that was on the rise. The Patriots, with a loaded roster, are now expected to win in the postseason.

That's the difference with this year's squad: They're good, and they know it.

"We are tired of not getting past the first round," Dennis said. "We want that first playoff game at Kerr Field, too. We just have to win every game this year and show up in practice and work hard, which is something we have been doing."

The Patriots won't have to worry about playing in the biggest classification in the PIAA anymore. In 2018, they are a Class 5A program, joining a playoff division that includes three Del Val rivals, including Interboro, which moved up from Class 4A.

"I think it's good news for us," second-year head coach Ato Troop said. "We're right there and we'll see teams from Delaware County, teams that we know pretty well."



PETE BANNAN — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Penn Wood quarterback Desman Johnson Jr., looking for a receiver in a game against Interboro last season, broke school records for single-game and single-season passing yards last year as a sophomore.

Only a junior, Johnson will begin his second season as the Patriots' No. 1 quarterback. He is a mountain of a young man at 6-2, 240 pounds, and could be on pace to break the county's career passing record by his senior year. Last fall Johnson set the single-season and single-game passing records in program history, finishing with 2,225 yards and 20 touchdowns. With more than 250 yards and seven scores on the ground, Johnson is one large dual threat who is nearly impossible to tackle one-on-one.

And it's scary to think that he's only getting better.

"I mostly worked on my footwork, staying high on my toes and standing tall in the pocket," Johnson said. "Going through my progressions, reading the defenses better and understanding what coverages they're in."

Every team has to worry about stopping Poles, who averaged 29 yards per catch last

year. But he is not alone on offense.

Dennis, Tayshon Harmon and Anauri Hankey, all seniors, are weapons on the outside. Junior Elijah Gleplay is expected to have a breakout year after gaining valuable playing experience last fall.

If there is a concern on offense, it's that Keivon Stokes (6-5, 280) is the only returning starter on the line.

The Patriots' defensive secondary is anchored by Dennis, who was targeted only eight times last year. Two-way lineman Christian Suber made a big impact as a freshman. Senior linebacker Aliyoh Turay is expected to have a big year, as well.

NIGHT LIGHTS

Penn Wood will play all but one of its home games under portable lights at Kerr Field, including its season opener against Souderton.

"It's special," Dennis said. "There's nothing better than playing under the lights."

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Souderton	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 37-14)		
Aug. 31	Pennsbury	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 41-28)		
Sept. 7	Council Rock North	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 28-7)		
Sept. 14	Oxford	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 21	@ W.C. Rustin	2:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 29	@ Chester*	10:30 am
— 2017 RESULT (W 14-6)		
Oct. 5	Interboro*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 16-14)		
Oct. 12	Glen Mills*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 20-14)		
Oct. 19	@ Chichester*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 40-0)		
Oct. 26	@ Academy Park*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 14-12)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

KENNEDY POLES » WIDE RECEIVER



With offers from Morgan State and Stony Brook, Poles is the best returning wide receiver in the county. Last year he led all Delco receivers with 1,181 yards, the fifth-best single-season total in county history.

"Breaking records, to be honest, that's not on my mind," he said. "This is my senior year and I want to win. I want my teammates to break records because, from other people's point of view, it's just all about Kennedy and that's where the ball's going to. Well, I want everyone to get the ball. We have too much depth for the ball just to be going to me."

EDMUND DENNIS » DEFENSIVE BACK

The 6-1, 190-pounder is good enough to play any position in the secondary. He is a leader, on and off the field, and has offers from Morgan State and Stony Brook.



"I want teams to target me and I want to have some fun," he said. "My stats don't show it, because I don't get the ball thrown to me. My mindset is if you're not catching interceptions, you must be doing good because you're not getting targeted. It can be boring, but I just know I have to do other things to

PHILADELPHIA CATHOLIC LEAGUE PREVIEW

Hawks Will Never Die

Nationally ranked St. Joe's Prep favorite in a loaded conference

By Andrew Robinson*arobinson@21st-centurymedia.com*
@ADRobinson3 on Twitter

After being asked about what it's like competing in the Philadelphia Catholic League, new Archbishop Wood coach Kyle Adkins couldn't help but grin.

Adkins may only be 24, but he's got as good a perspective on the question as anybody else in the league. A former standout at Wood, Adkins went on to play at Ursinus then returned to his alma mater as defensive coordinator before taking over as head coach after Steve Devlin's departure this offseason.

So he's got a pretty good idea of what that challenge entails. "It's so difficult," Adkins said. "There are a lot of talented football players in our league. There's a boatload of talented coaches in our league. You see a multitude of schemes, and it's changing week to week so it forces you to adjust on a week to week basis. That's the fun part, the chess match and getting your kids ready to play is exciting and for the kids, it keeps things fresh."

Despite winning the Class 5A PCL, District 12 and PIAA titles last year, Wood didn't win the PCL Red division. That honor belonged to St. Joseph's Prep, the PIAA 6A runner-up to Pine-Richland. That's not to discount third-place finisher in La Salle, which was kept out of the postseason thanks to Prep in the 6A PCL title game.

The rest of the division consists of Archbishop Ryan, Roman Catholic and Father Judge. While they may not have the year-to-year firepower the top triumvirate does, they all get a little extra juiced for those games and believe they can spring an upset.

Life on the other side of the break, in the smaller-school PCL Blue, is no cakewalk either. Cardinal O'Hara, the biggest school in the division, has had two resurgent seasons. Conwell-Egan might have the best player in the division in Boston College-bound running back Patrick Garwo, and Bishop McDevitt put itself back in the conversation last year. Archbishop Carroll drops into the Red Division, joining O'Hara and Bonner & Prendergast as Class 4A representatives.

Neumann-Goretti came back in a big way last fall as well while Lansdale Catholic faced Egan for the District 1/12 3A title last fall.

Wood is going for its third straight state title, and though some things have changed at the Warminster school, the expectations are the same. There's no big-name player on Wood's roster this season of the ilk that the Vikings have produced in the past half-decade, but there's no shortage of solid football players ready to rise to the occasion.



PETE BANNAN — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

St. Joseph's Prep running back Marques Mason is back for another season with the nationally-ranked Hawks.



GENE WALSH — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Archbishop Wood quarterback Jack Colyar is back for the Vikings.

2017 Catholic League Blue Division

Pos	Team	CW	CL	W	L	T	PF	PA
1	Neumann-Goretti	7	0	10	0	0	320	98
2	West Catholic	5	2	8	4	0	306	127
3	Cardinal O'Hara	3	3	7	3	0	267	78
4	Lansdale Catholic	3	3	5	7	0	255	348
5	Conwell-Egan	2	4	7	7	0	437	348
6	Bishop McDevitt	1	5	5	5	0	224	281
7	Bonner-Prendergast	1	5	1	10	0	79	410

2017 Catholic League Red Division

Pos	Team	CW	CL	W	L	T	PF	PA
1	St. Joseph's Prep	6	0	13	1	0	488	182
2	Archbishop Wood	5	1	9	2	0	355	156
3	La Salle College	4	2	7	4	0	337	166
4	Archbishop Ryan	3	3	6	7	0	251	351
5	Roman Catholic	2	4	3	9	0	133	298
6	Father Judge	1	5	4	8	0	203	320
7	Archbishop Carroll	0	6	3	8	0	221	289

Catholic

FROM PAGE 63

Senior Jack Colyar is entering his third season as the starting quarterback, but the Vikings will still lean on their strong running game and defense to navigate a loaded schedule of games.

"We've had situations like that every year where guys are getting pulled and others promoted in the season, even past midseason," Adkins said. "We're a staff that's not afraid to make a change if it's going to help the team. We think practice the most important thing we do here."

The Prep, which has been to Hershey the past two seasons, winning the 2016 6A state title but losing to Pine-Richland last winter, enters the season again highly regarded. Ranked No. 18 in the country by *USA Today*, the Hawks retain plenty of experience on both sides of the ball while also facing their yearly challenge of replacing a crop of impact

seniors.

Coach Gabe Infante likes to play fast on offense, and the return of running backs Kobe Burrell and Marques Mason means the Prep has a strong foundation to build on. Three-year starting quarterback Marquez McCray graduated and is now at St. Francis, but the Hawks don't expect to miss a beat with highly-regarded sophomore Kyle McCord ready to step in.

There's a pair of very familiar names on the Prep roster as well. Linebacker Jeremiah Trotter Jr., son of the former Eagles great, will see an expanded role as a sophomore while Marvin Harrison Jr., the son of the standout Syracuse and Indianapolis Colts receiver, is in his first season with the Hawks after playing for La Salle as a freshman.

"The preparation, the energy around PCL games, it's a whole different monster," La Salle linebacker Brendan Frusco said. "There's really no other league like ours. There's a lot of powerhouse teams, every team brings the juice week in and

week out and you can't take a game off because if you do, everyone knows what happens in the PCL."

La Salle and St. Joe's Prep meet on Sept. 28, Wood and the Hawks battle on Oct. 12 and La Salle faces the Vikings on Oct. 19.

"It makes you think what's on the line," La Salle linebacker Dillon Trainer said. "In the Catholic League, anybody can beat anybody else. No matter what, it's always a game. When you're in the middle of one of those games, you think about how everything's on the line and it could go a long way to determining how long your season goes, so that really adds another factor."

La Salle has a lot of re-tooling to do after graduating 30 players off last season's PCL 6A runner-up team. The league only sends one team to the District 12 playoff, so at least for the last few years, the Prep-La Salle games have had an extra bit of importance.

Frusco and Trainer feel there's a lot of unknown talent on this Explorers roster and they've seen a lot of healthy compe-

titition so far in practice.

PCL teams like to load up their schedules with the highest level of competition. La Salle will face New Jersey's Pope John XXIII, Imhotep Charter, North Penn, Malvern Prep and Haverford School. Wood faces Maryland's McDonogh and Archbishop Spaulding plus New Jersey powers Bergen Catholic and Pope John XXIII. The Prep will battle St. Frances and Our Lady of Good Counsel from Maryland, plus Jersey's St. Peter's Prep before opening PCL play.

Still, ask anyone who coaches or plays in the PCL and they'll say there's something different about the games when it comes time for league play.

"You know all the coaches, you know a lot of the guys on the other teams, most of our guys have grown up playing against each other so that adds a little bit of motivational factor to it," Adkins said. "You know what that team's going to run, you know their kids, it's hard not to get excited about it with all that familiarity between the programs."

ARCHBISHOP CARROLL

CLASS 4A

PATRIOTS

By **Harry Chaykun**
For Digital First Media

RADNOR >> Kyle Detweiler played football at Souderton High and Muhlenberg College, then he spent seven years as an assistant coach at Central Bucks South, the last six as defensive coordinator.

As the new head coach at Archbishop Carroll, he had to get to know a lot of new faces in his first offseason program for the Patriots. One of the problems his players faced, in addition to learning a new coaching staff, was the lack of returnees from 2017.

"Our offensive line experienced immense turnover due to graduation and transfers leaving," Detweiler said. "We have only one returning starter among those front five.

"Who steps up at the other four spots and how quickly the five jell will be critically important. The offensive line will determine how successful we'll be at scoring points this year."

That line will be anchored by senior center Pat Griswold (6-0, 310 pounds), one of the team's captains. Detweiler will deploy a spread offense after the Patriots used a Wing-T attack the last two years under Dan Connor, who left to become an assistant at Widener.

Carroll, which was 3-8 overall and 0-6 in the Catholic League Red Division in 2017, moves over to the Blue Division and will compete against Cardinal O'Hara, Bonner & Prendergast, Conwell-Egan, Lansdale Catholic, Bishop McDevitt, West Catholic and Neumann-Goretti. The team will compete in the PIAA's Class 4A.

The season opens with a home matchup against Olney Charter of the Philadelphia Public League, then the Pats will travel to



Free safety Zach Butler, left, and linebacker Jaelen Parker are two of Archbishop Carroll's captains and defensive leaders.

+ **Online:** Longer versions of most team previews are available online, with even more info, at PAPREPLIVE.COM

O'Hara to take on Seton Hall Prep as part of a Catholic League vs. North Jersey parochial schools tripleheader Saturday, Sept. 1.

Guiding the Carroll offense will be junior quarterback Russel Minor-Shaw (6-1, 220), who finished last season as the starting fullback. Seniors Josh Bowman and Raphael Manning have experience running the ball.

"We started working with these guys in March," Detweiler said. "We wanted them to get familiar with our schemes and the new things they would have to run. We got a good response from them, and they've made the adjustments.

"We were so excited when August got here and we could get going out on the field. We felt good about the guys we have coming back on defense, and wanted to find out what some of the ones who were new to playing varsity would be able to do on offense."

Among the offensive moves Detweiler and his staff made was to shift senior Koran Butler (6-1, 180) from running back to wide receiver. Junior Mike Dempsey (6-2, 185), a good baseball player, has shown promise as a receiver, and sophomore basketball player Darryl Simpson (6-3, 190) is moving in at tight end.

Jahlil Warren (5-7, 160), who competes in track in the spring, got stronger during the summer as he made a move to earn playing time at running back.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Olney Charter	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 48-12)		
Aug. 31	Seton Hall Prep (NJ)#	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 7	Boys Latin Charter	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 15	@ West Catholic*^	12:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 21	Cardinal O'Hara*	2:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 28	Conwell-Egan*	10:30 am
— 2017 RESULT (W 39-38)		
Oct. 5	Neumann-Goretti*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 12	@ Bonner & Prendie*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-7)		
Oct. 20	@ Lansdale Cath.*%	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 26	Bishop McDevitt*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		

* denotes a league game
game at Cardinal O'Hara
^ game at Drexel University
% game at Wissahickon

PLAYERS TO WATCH

PAT GRISWOLD » CENTER



The 6-0, 310-pound center is the only returning starter on the Patriots' offensive line. "We got after it right after (Detweiler) became our head coach," Griswold said.

Griswold has been drawing interest from schools in the Centennial and Middle Atlantic Conferences.

RICHIE KIMMEL » LINEBACKER

The 6-1, 220-pound junior linebacker will be a captain. "His work ethic, energy, and enthusiasm are contagious," Detweiler said of the Ridley Township resident, who is a product of the St. Gabriel's CYO program.





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CARDINAL O'HARA

**CLASS
4A**
LIONS
By Matt Smith
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MARPLE >> There is plenty to like about Cardinal O'Hara quarterback Luke Sprague.

He has the size, maturity and poise to be a big-time player and lead the Lions back to the top of the Catholic League.

And now it's his time to shine.

"I love it," the 6-foot-5, 190-pound Sprague said. "I think last year made me a better player, trying to battle for my spot. It's good to know that I'm going to be the starter. I just have to keep working and getting better."

Sprague earned playing time over his senior competition, Bobby Siderio, eventually becoming the No. 1 quarterback for the Lions, who finished third in the Blue Division at 7-4 overall. As a junior, Sprague passed for 946 yards and 11 touchdowns.

"He's got all the skills and qualities to be a very good starting quarterback," coach BJ Hogan said. "He came through in some big spots (last season) and saved us a lot. We are expecting him to be the leader out there this year and we all believe he can do the job."

In the offseason Sprague spent time improving his skills at various camps, including Football University camp, plus ones hosted by Columbia, Temple and Villanova. He has also benefitted from the addition of new quarterbacks coach, Bryan Savage, a former Haverford School standout.

"I've been at the field working every day. Mostly foot work, arm strength and going to the gym a lot," Sprague said. "I fully believe we can win the Catholic League, I have



PETE BANNAN — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Cardinal O'Hara quarterback Luke Sprague won the starting job as a junior last year.

a lot of faith in that. We have a lot of people returning on offense, especially our receivers. Our defense is working hard, too."

O'Hara was ravaged by graduation and has a slew of positions to fill. In total, 17 starters from the 2017 squad are gone. Among those returning are senior wide receivers/defensive backs Chris Kirby and Derrick Patrick, who will be Sprague's top targets.

The offensive line, outside of seniors Louie Perri and John Sheffer, will feature

some new faces. And on defense, the Lions lost 10 of 11 starters to graduation.

"We have a shot to be very athletic and powerful up front," Hogan said. "Running back will be another position that will be competitive ... we have two or three (players) we trust to take care of the football and gain some yards. Our QB and wide receivers will be the strength of our team. We will have to limit our turnovers throwing the ball this season."

Among the players vying for starting jobs are seniors Max Much (wide receiver/defensive back), Ryan Culp (offensive/defensive line), Quasir Cottman (running back) and Keed Kpoto (running back). Juniors Hunt Whitlock (running back), Brandon Schumm (linebacker), Cole Sprague (wide receiver/defensive back), Cole Gehret (offensive line), Joe Kelly (offensive/defensive line) and Mike Levy (wide receiver/defensive), as well as sophomore Chris Sheffer (linebacker) will also be counted upon.

"We have good receivers, good linemen, and we have a lot of options with Luke as our quarterback," said Kirby, who had 22 receptions for 242 yards and five TDs last year. "We're returning three of our four receivers, so I would say that's a top strength of ours. It should be fun."

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT?

The Lions took advantage of an option to schedule two scrimmages. Whereas all other PIAA Delco teams kick off the regular season the weekend of Aug. 24-25, the Lions will have their season opener the following week at home against Hudson (N.J.) Catholic. They will scrimmage Episcopal Academy Aug. 23.

"With us, we have a lot of new guys and positions to fill," Hogan said, "so we need all the time we can get to prepare for the season."

2018 SCHEDULE

Sept. 1	Hudson Cath. (NJ)	3:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 7	@ Sun Valley	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 14	Bishop McDevitt*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 10-7)		
Sept. 21	@ Arch. Carroll*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 28	West Catholic*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 20-14)		
Oct. 5	Lansdale Catholic*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 31-0)		
Oct. 13	@ Neumann-Goretti*^	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 22-21)		
Oct. 19	Bonner & Prendie*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 21-0)		
Oct. 27	@ Conwell-Egan*#	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 20-13)		

* denotes a league game
^ game at South Philly Supersite
game at Harry S. Truman

PLAYERS TO WATCH

DERRICK PATRICK » WIDE RECEIVER



Patrick is a dynamic player at wide receiver and cornerback. He had a pair of TD catches in limited chances last fall, but should be a prime target this year for a team that will love to throw

the ball out of a spread. "I know we can put up points," he said. "I'm the only starter on defense and I think all the new guys that are starting this year can step it up."

LOUIE PERRI » DEFENSIVE LINEMAN

The 6-3, 260-pounder is a two-way lineman and has the potential to be a disruptive force. "I know I have to take on that leadership role," he said. "I have to take control, letting these younger guys know how we do things at O'Hara."


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BONNER & PRENDIE

**CLASS
4A**
FRIARS
By Terry Toohey
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UPPER DARBY >> All Rushawn Lawrence could do on this day was watch practice. A bothersome knee turned the defensive end/linebacker from Monsignor Bonner & Archbishop Prendergast into a spectator during a recent training camp session.

At times, Lawrence stood and chatted with teammates while he observed the proceedings. Occasionally he went halfway up the hill that overlooks the baseball and softball fields at MBAP, which is where the football team was practicing, for a better view.

Once the season begins, though, a lot of eyes will be focused on the solidly built 6-3, 248-pound senior, especially those of college recruiters. Lawrence has scholarship offers from the University of New Hampshire, the University at Albany and Howard University.

"This is all new to me," Lawrence said. "I'm not used to getting so much attention."

Well, Lawrence better get accustomed to being in the spotlight, because more offers are sure to come in.

"He's just blown up in the last year," Friars coach Jack Muldoon said. "Every time we sent out a highlight tape, the coach loved him. ... He went down to Baylor for a (one-day) camp. I talked to (Baylor coach and former Temple head man) Matt Rhule before Rushawn went down there and I asked Matt if we really wanted to send him down there. He said, 'Coach, we wouldn't have him if we didn't think he was worth seeing.'"



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Senior defensive end/linebacker Rushawn Lawrence is receiving recruiting interest from a number of schools. He already has scholarship offers from New Hampshire, Albany and Howard.

Lawrence had a blast in Texas.

"It was a great experience," Lawrence said. "There was a lot of competition and a lot of them were bigger than me. I definitely did well. They took me out of my age group and put me in with the junior college linemen. They had some great coaches there and I learned a lot. I learned some new moves to add to my arsenal so it was very helpful to me."

Lawrence transferred to Bonner & Prendergast from South Philadelphia High School prior to his junior season. He called

it "one of the greatest decisions of my life," on his Twitter page. Another good choice was going to work out at Dream Makers Elite Fitness in Drexel Hill, run by former Chester football coach Tony Beaty.

"He changed my body a lot," Lawrence said. "I didn't play that much in my sophomore season (at Southern). I was slow, but I got bigger, faster and stronger working out with him. He's played a big part in my success."

Lawrence is one of 11 seniors Muldoon is counting on to help the Friars bounce back from a 1-10 record last season. Among the other seniors are running back/defensive back Nasim Cooper, quarterback Shon Nelson, offensive linemen Matt Hennessey and Brennan Harris, defensive lineman Gerald Smith III and outside linebacker David MacMullen.

Nelson threw for more than 600 yards and five touchdowns last year, but he is being pushed by junior Mike Standen and sophomore Kyle Lazer. Standen has experience. He threw for 301 yards and one touchdown last season.

"The atmosphere is completely different this year," Smith III said. "There's more competition. We only had (35) guys last year. This year, we have (54, plus a freshman team). That's made a big difference."

"We're trying to build our depth," Muldoon said. "We have 25 sophomores, and a lot of them are going to play. We have 15 juniors and 27 freshmen. We have 80 kids in the program so our numbers are almost where I want it to be."

One player Muldoon expects to produce is No. 9. That's Lawrence.

"His hand and off-the-ball skills are just natural," Muldoon said. "He's a nice kid who wants in bad. That's a nice combination. He's going to be very hard to block, especially in one-on-one situations."

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Upper Darby	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 35-0)		
Aug. 31	KIPP DuBois	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 7	St. Paul's (Md.)	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 15	@ Neumann-Goretti*^	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 42-6)		
Sept. 21	Bishop McDevitt*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 20-16)		
Sept. 29	@ Lansdale Cath.*#	2:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 25-12)		
Oct. 6	@ Conwell-Egan*%	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 63-21)		
Oct. 12	Arch. Carroll*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 42-7)		
Oct. 19	@ Cardinal O'Hara*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 21-0)		
Oct. 26	West Catholic*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 50-0)		

* denotes a league game
^ at South Philly Supersite
at Wissahickon
% at Harry S. Truman

PLAYERS TO WATCH

NASIM COOPER » RUNNING BACK



The 5-10, 175-pound senior will share time with junior Charles "Chuck" Ingram. Cooper, who also is an outstanding defensive back, is looking forward to the challenge. "Sure there's pressure, but that just makes you better," Cooper said. "Everything happens for a reason. If we didn't go through what we went through last year, we wouldn't be as hungry as we are this season. We want this."

DAVE MACMULLEN » LINEBACKER

Most of the eyes will be focused on Lawrence, but don't sleep on the 6-1, 187-pound MacMullen. The senior captain is a fierce competitor and is receiving recruiting interest from the PSAC.


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L LA SALLE

EXPLORERS

CLASS
6A
By Andrew Robinson

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WYNDMOOR >> From a purely numerical standpoint, La Salle's losses to graduation were staggering.

The Explorers lost more than 30 players from last season's team, which means there's a lot of new players stepping into new spots this summer. It's been a few years since the Explorers have put new trophies in their display case, so the expectations are also high at the Philadelphia Catholic League power.

From a numbers perspective, the losses were big. But that doesn't mean the well of talent has run dry.

"I love the atmosphere at practice, there's a lot of young guys stepping up and with the senior leadership we do have, I feel it's basically like nobody left," linebacker Dillon Trainer said. "We have good leaders, good energy at practice so I can't really ask for anything more."

With so many players having graduated, it means there's a position battle going on in pretty much every group on offense, defense and special teams. Coach John Steinmetz and his staff have been busier than usual this preseason in terms of teaching and integrating new players, but they've also gotten to see a lot of different players try to claim their stake to playing time.

La Salle's success this season will hinge on its play in the PCL, but the Explorers aren't easing into the season even with a new-look roster. They open with a Week 1 matchup with Imhotep Charter, the Philadelphia Public League power, then have their tradition meeting with North Penn in Week 2.

The Explorers non-league slate ends with Malvern Prep and Haverford School before they open PCL play with archrival St. Joe's Prep on Sept. 29.

"We just finished saying that our trophy case these past couple years is empty and that's something we're not satisfied with," linebacker Brendan Frusco said. "We don't have PCL, District or even states, so that's really lighting a fire under us and we're finding that edge. La Salle, we're built on tradition and this isn't who we are so we have to change it around."

Steinmetz has been pleased with his team's energy this preseason but added that it still has work to do.

Although it lost enough players to almost



DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Most of last year's big names at La Salle, like receiver Troy Holland — pictured here in the annual rivalry game with North Penn — are gone, making this year's team of young talent hard to predict.

field a different lineup for an offense, defense and special teams without any crossovers, La Salle didn't lose everyone. The Explorers defense is ahead of the offense at this point, per Steinmetz, and there's been no shortage of defensive players stepping up already.

"Brendan Frusco and Dillon Trainer have really stood out, Zaire McLaurin and TJ Meachum, our two safeties, have been doing a nice job too," Steinmetz said. "Our o-line is getting better, Ronnie Ross is doing a good job anchoring that, there's a couple guys banged up but hopefully once they're back, we'll be all right. Jack (Machita) is doing a nice job running the offense."

Steinmetz said the two biggest challenges facing the team this preseason are remembering that many of the players don't know everything yet and bringing the younger guys up to speed while taking first and second team reps with full pads on. The focus so far has been internal, the Explorers can't worry about what's going on outside the program while they have so much work to do before their opener.

"A lot of young kids are already accepting their roles," senior defensive back Sean Daly said. "There aren't many starters back, but it doesn't matter. We're all going to step up and give everything we've got. It's good, it makes us competitive in practice and there's guys fighting for every spot, which will make us

better this year."

Daly also got reps in the secondary last year, so he's been able to give some advice to players either coming up from the JV ranks or moving up the depth chart.

Senior Luke Hardy, who plays wide receiver and in the secondary, echoed his coach in saying the defense is a little ahead of the offense and everyone vying for spots on defense seems to be making plays in practice. He did counter by adding the offense is working hard to catch up and credited Ross, a 6-foot-2, 300 pound guard/tackle, for pushing the offensive linemen to get game-ready.

"A lot of players on our team, even though they're young, they're playing with chips on their shoulders," Hardy said. "That's what we need. That's the most important thing for our team right now, to come out and play physical and with a chip on our shoulders. No one's really counting on us right now."

La Salle's fate will come down to a few weeks at the end of the season, and the post-season is a driving motivator for this Explorers team.

"All I'm thinking about is those days in October and November where we're fighting against these PCL teams, trying to take our spot and win a championship and bring the PCL title back home," Frusco said. "It's what we all think about, we have one goal and it's to get that plaque and bring home one more."

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Imhotep Charter	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Aug. 31	@ North Penn	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 41-28)		
Sept. 8	@ Malvern Prep	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 45-21)		
Sept. 15	Haverford School^	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 28	@ St. Joe's Prep*#	7:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 28-14)		
Oct. 5	@ Father Judge*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 34-0)		
Oct. 13	@ Arch. Ryan*%	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 45-7)		
Oct. 19	Archbishop Wood*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 31-17)		
Oct. 26	Roman Catholic*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 45-0)		

* denotes a league game

^ game at Springfield Township HS

game at Widener University

% game at George Washington HS

PLAYERS TO WATCH

JACK MACHITA » QUARTERBACK



After seeing some time as a sophomore, the offense is firmly in Machita's hands this fall. Already gaining his teammates' trust, the junior still has a tough task in front of him as he guides an offense that will have many

new pieces in place all around him. The Explorers don't mind throwing the ball, so Machita will have plenty of chances to show what he can do.

DILLON TRAINER » LINEBACKER

If the last name and position look familiar, they should. Following older brother Liam, now at Delaware, Dillon Trainer looks poised to be a defensive leader at the linebacker spot. The 6-foot,



218 pound junior brings plenty of toughness to the spot but also plenty of range and quickness to find and get to the ball in a hurry.



LANSDALE CATHOLIC

**CLASS
3A**
CRUSADERS
By Mike Cabrey
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LANSDALE >> Last year saw Lansdale Catholic finish with more losses than victories, but Crusaders coach Tom Kirk takes a glass-half-full approach on the 2017 season.

"I think if you look back and say we were 5-7, we look back and say we were District 12 champions," he said.

The Class 3A district title was Lansdale Catholic's first championship since 2007. A repeat will be a tougher challenge since Neumann-Goretti, which reached the PIAA Class 2A quarterfinals, joins the Crusaders and Conwell-Egan — which beat LC in the District 1/12 final to make the state semis — to make it a trio of teams in the Philadelphia Catholic League Class 3A.

"Felt great because we haven't won one in several years but after that, just got to move on, don't think about it," Lansdale Catholic junior Danny Dutkiewicz said. "Got to think about this year, about what we're going to do this year."

Dutkiewicz was one of two Crusaders to run for more than 1,000 yards last season. But the team's other four-digit rusher Matt Casee, who finished fourth in the PCL per tedsilary.com with 1,160 yards to go with 16 touchdowns, graduated. LC will have to fill the void he leaves to make waves in the PCL Blue Division.

"I don't look at replacing Matt Casee; I look at replacing Matt Casee's yardage," Kirk said. "And we've been able to do that in the past, in past years we've had kids that had 1,000 yards or 1,100 yards and you just figure out a way to replace it. So whether it's with the kids



DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE PHOTO

Lansdale Catholic running back Danny Dutkiewicz looks to anchor the Crusader ground attack.

who replace them — we don't have someone who's a good as Matt Casee but we have to figure out a way to replace Matt Casee's yards and we'll be able to that."

Dutkiewicz was just behind Casee at fifth in rushing yards in the league with 1,108 along with nine touchdowns on the ground. But he has not put any additional pressure on himself after a standout junior campaign.

"I just don't really think about that stuff, I think about the team," he said. "Building as a team, the o-line's going to be real good this year."

Seniors Mike Schragger, Jason Carr and Evan Zawadski, along with junior Kenneth Grandy, a North Penn transfer, will look to be factors in the running game behind a veteran offensive line led by senior Matt Brulenski and junior Brady Walsh and Nick Scheetz.

"We feel really good. We take pride in it,

like that old-school approach of just pounding the ball into the opponent, controlling the clock," Brulenski said. "We know we're undersized but we know what we're doing, everybody executes, fires out, we're confident that we can control the game and then beat teams."

At quarterback, juniors Peter McHugh and Evan Hannings both have a chance to take over the position from the graduated Mike Dutkiewicz. Kirk is also looking to find a role for junior Tyler Owen, who the coach says is the Crusaders' fastest player.

"We've been in games where all of a sudden you're just getting manhandled and we're three-and-out," Kirk said. "If we're three-and-out, we're not going to win. We have to be able to control that. I mean, like everybody, I accept the fact that there's going to be fumbles, there's going to be mistakes, like anything you just have to minimize that stuff. You control the ball but you have to score touchdowns rather than field goals. We were in a couple games last year and we're kicking field goals and not scoring seven so you have to be able to score touchdowns."

The back seven with the strength of the LC defense, which is looking to improve on the 28.9 points per game in allowed in 2017.

On defense, most of the experience is in the defensive backs and linebacking corps with returners Dutkiewicz — an All-PCL Blue second team pick at DB — Hannings, Schragger and junior Pat Daly aiming to improve the unit's 28.9 points per game it allowed last season.

"I feel really great about this team," said Walsh, who also plays on the defensive line. "One thing that separates the team from others is that I feel like we're all one big unit. Everybody generally likes each other and when you have that kind of connection on both sides of the ball you can really rely on someone to make a play when you need them to."

2018 SCHEDULE

Sept. 1	Penn Charter [^]	10:00 am
— 2017 RESULT (L 20-6)		
Sept. 7	@ Wissahickon	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 15	Conwell-Egan* [#]	noon
— 2017 RESULT (W 31-21)		
Sept. 23	@ West Catholic [%]	3:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 40-28)		
Sept. 29	Bonner & Prendie* [#]	5:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 13-12)		
Oct. 5	@ Cardinal O'Hara* [#]	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 31-0)		
Oct. 13	@ Bishop McDevitt* [#]	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 49-27)		
Oct. 20	Arch. Carroll* [#]	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 27	Neumann-Goretti* [#]	5:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		

* denotes a league game
^ game at Ocean City, N.J.
games at Springfield Township HS
% game at Drexel University

PLAYERS TO WATCH
MATT BRULENSKI » OFFENSIVE LINEMAN


The Crusaders were one of the PCL's stronger rushing attacks in 2017, and the senior is part of an experienced line that looks to keep LC piling up the yards on the ground.

DANNY DUTKIEWICZ » DEFENSIVE BACK

Dutkiewicz ran for over 1,000 yards, but he was also selected to the All-PCL Blue Division first team at defensive back as a sophomore.



Kev Hunter
Columnist



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ARCHBISHOP WOOD

CLASS
5A

VIKINGS

By Andrew Robinson

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WARMINSTER >> For the past half-decade, Archbishop Wood's roster has had its share of marquee names.

This fall, the Vikings don't have a four- or five-star recruit that has either made or is on the verge of making a commitment. What the PCL powerhouse does have is a new coach, a lot of new names ready to step into major roles and eyes locked on a third straight state title.

The benefit for Wood's new 24-year-old coach Kyle Adkins is that he knows better than anyone what it takes to win at Wood.

"We have a large senior class this year — it's one of the largest we've had — with 27 guys and many of them have sat behind some pretty good football players," said Adkins, who starred at Wood before playing collegiately at Ursinus. "We graduated 10 kids that went on to play college football, seven of them going to Division I football. It's the nature of the beast; they've waited their turn and they're excited to show what they can do."

After his college career, Adkins returned to Wood as an assistant coach and spent last year as the Vikings' defensive coordinator under Steve Devlin. When Devlin left to become the defensive coordinator at Ursinus, Adkins took over but made sure not to shake things up very much by retaining most of the coaching staff.

Don't expect to see Wood come out in an empty backfield spread formation on offense. This team will still be built on suffocating defense and a power running game.

"I've been lucky to keep our staff in place and that continuity has been huge for myself, the kids and the program," Adkins said. "The guys know what we're trying to accomplish here and we have good leaders in our senior class across the board, so they've done a good job so far."

Going into the season at least, the two-time defending PIAA Class 5A champions don't have a player with the profile that Ryan Bates, Jake Cooper, Anthony Russo, Raheem Blackshear, Mark Webb, Nasir Peoples or Kyle Pitts did during their respective seasons, but there's still plenty of talent on the roster.

Senior quarterback Jack Colyar has given a verbal commitment to Duke baseball and is entering his third season sling-



DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE PHOTO

Quarterback Jack Colyar, a Duke baseball commit, is back for a third season under center.

ing the rock for the Vikings, while senior lineman Connor Bishop recently committed to West Point.

It's not like the entire roster is devoid of playing experience. Running back Chris Blackstone got a lot of carries last year and will be in the mix to help replace the offensive production of Peoples, now at Virginia Tech. Receiver Ryan Loughlin graduated, but Jake Ross, Brad Otto and Kevin Otto have been in the program for a few seasons and contributed on special teams.

The secondary has to replace Peoples and Nasir Bowen, but has some experience back with Joe Wade returning. Dylan Urbanowski and Colin Murt got reps at linebacker, and Bill Cook saw a good amount of time at defensive end and tight end spelling the graduated Pitts (Florida) and Billy Schaeffer (Lafayette).

"It's a lot of new faces right now, but everyone is working really hard and some guys are still out to prove some things," Colyar said. "We're all working to get a position and prove we're right where we should be."

Colyar and Bishop said the transition from Devlin to Adkins was pretty seamless. Some of the terminology has changed and practices run a little differently, but overall it's the same thing the Vikings players have seen as long as they've been in the program.

"We're just trying to carry that tradition

along," Bishop said. "A lot of us here have that same mentality that carried down from last year's team. We expect to win a state championship, so we're carrying that on and trying to instill it in the younger guys to make that the whole mentality for the team in general. At the core, everything that's helped us win the past however many years, we still have it."

As usual, the Vikings' schedule is loaded. Wood opens with Maryland power McDonogh, battles New Jersey hammers Bergen Catholic and Pope John XXIII then another Maryland crusher in Archbishop Spalding before PCL play. The Vikings face St. Joe's Prep on Oct. 12 then La Salle a week later on Oct. 19.

Practice has been very competitive, and Adkins said there are a lot of spots up for grabs. Even Colyar, who seems entrenched at quarterback, said he hasn't been handed a starting spot yet and is working hard to build a rapport with a receiving unit he hasn't throw to much the past two seasons.

One thing the senior has seen, though, is a lot of guys playing to prove themselves.

"Guys are looking up to me now as a leader and we've had those big name the past couple years but now they're looking at me to be that guy, along with other seniors," Colyar said. "These guys take it like and underdog mentality and I love it, actually. It's definitely different, but I'm looking forward to it."

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	McDonogh (Md.)	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 7	@ Bergen Catholic (NJ)^	noon
— 2017 RESULT (W 27-21)		
Sept. 15	Pope John XXIII (NJ)	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 22	Arch. Spalding (Md.)	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 29	Roman Catholic*#	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 38-6)		
Oct. 6	@ Arch. Ryan*	3:30 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-6)		
Oct. 13	St. Joe's Prep*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 27-7)		
Oct. 19	@ La Salle*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 31-17)		
Oct. 26	@ Father Judge*	6:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 49-19)		

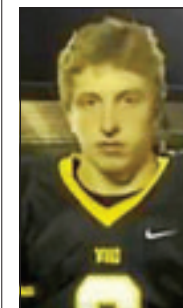
* denotes a league game

^ game at Rutgers University

game at Upper Moreland

PLAYERS TO WATCH

JACK COLYAR » QUARTERBACK



Wood is a running team at heart, but Colyar still threw for more than 1,100 yards last season. Since taking over as a sophomore, the 6-3 signal-caller has improved each season and enters this fall as a leader and respected voice on

a young team. Wood's receiving corps is eager but inexperienced, and Colyar sees a lot of potential in the growth of the passing game.

CONNOR BISHOP » DEFENSIVE LINE

The senior will likely play offensive line at Army, but he's been pretty good for the Vikings on the defensive side of the ball as well.

A solid interior defensive lineman, Bishop fills holes and does the work that allows Wood's ends to create pressure off the edges. His numbers may not jump off the page, but he's the type of player any coach would like to have anchoring their defensive front.



PHILADELPHIA CATHOLIC LEAGUE



Aug. 24	@Bartram	6:30 pm
— South Philly Supersite		
Aug. 30	@Frankford	7:30 pm
— Northeast High School		
Sept. 7	@Interboro	7:00 pm
Sept. 15	Chester	1:00 pm
— George Washington HS		
Sept. 22	Springside-CHA	7:00 pm
— Northeast HS		
Sept. 29	Father Judge*	7:00 pm
— Northeast HS		
Oct. 6	Archbishop Wood*	3:30 pm
— George Washington HS		
Oct. 13	La Salle *	1:00 pm
— George Washington HS		
Oct. 20	@Roman Catholic*	1:00 pm
— Germantown Supersite		
Oct. 26	@St. Joe's Prep*	8:00 pm
— Widener University		

* denotes a league game



Aug. 25	Central	1:00 pm
— Springfield-Montco HS		
Aug. 31	@Cheltenham	4:00 pm
Sept. 8	Valley Forge M.A.	3:00 pm
Sept. 14	@Cardinal O'Hara*	7:00 pm
Sept. 21	@Bonner & Prendie*	7:00 pm
Sept. 29	Neumann-Goretti*	1:00 pm
— Springfield-Montco HS		
Oct. 5	@West Catholic*	8:00 pm
— Widener University		
Oct. 13	Lansdale Catholic*	1:00 pm
— Springfield-Montco HS		
Oct. 20	Conwell-Egan*	1:00 pm
— Springfield-Montco HS		
Oct. 26	@Arch. Carroll*	7:00 pm

* denotes a league game



Aug. 25	Roman Catholic	7:00 pm
— Harry S. Truman HS		
Aug. 31	@Salem, NJ	4:00 pm
Sept. 8	@Penn Charter	2:00 pm
Sept. 15	@Lansdale Catholic*	12:00 pm
— Springfield-Montco HS		
Sept. 22	@Neumann-Goretti*	6:00 pm
— South Philly Supersite		
Sept. 28	@Archbishop Carroll*	7:00 pm
Oct. 6	Bonner & Prendie*	7:00 pm
— Harry S. Truman HS		
Oct. 12	West Catholic*	7:00 pm
— Harry S. Truman HS		
Oct. 20	@Bishop McDevitt*	1:00 pm
— Springfield-Montco HS		
Oct. 27	Cardinal O'Hara*	7:00 pm
— Harry S. Truman HS		

* denotes a league game



Aug. 24	Ridley	7:00 pm
— Northeast HS		
Aug. 31	Springside-CHA	6:00 pm
Sept. 7	@Northeast	6:30 pm
Sept. 14	Germantown Ac.	6:00 pm
Sept. 21	@Salesianum, DE	7:00 pm
Sept. 29	@Archbishop Ryan*	7:00 pm
— Northeast HS		
Oct. 5	La Salle*	6:00 pm
Oct. 13	@Roman Catholic*	1:00 pm
— Germantown Supersite		
Oct. 20	@St. Joe's Prep*	7:00 pm
— Widener University		
Oct. 26	Archbishop Wood*	6:00 pm

* denotes a league game



Aug. 25	@St. Augustine, NJ	6:30 pm
Sept. 1	@Avalon, MD	4:00 pm
Sept. 8	Ballou, DC	7:00 pm
— South Philly Supersite		
Sept. 15	Bonner & Prendie*	6:00 pm
— South Philly Supersite		
Sept. 22	Conwell-Egan*	6:00 pm
— South Philly Supersite		
Sept. 29	@Bishop McDevitt*	1:00 pm
— Springfield-Montco HS		
Oct. 5	@Arch. Carroll*	7:00 pm
Oct. 13	Cardinal O'Hara*	1:00 pm
— South Philly Supersite		
Oct. 19	@West Catholic*	7:30 pm
— Widener University		
Oct. 27	@Lansdale Catholic*	5:00 pm
— Wissahickon HS		

* denotes a league game



Aug. 25	@ Conwell-Egan	7:00 pm
— Harry S. Truman HS		
Aug. 31	Malvern Prep	7:00 pm
— Northeast High School		
Sept. 7	@Downingtown West	7:00 pm
Sept. 14	Springside-CHA	7:00 pm
— Germantown Supersite		
Sept. 29	@Archbishop Wood*	7:00 pm
— Upper Moreland HS		
Oct. 5	St. Joe's Prep*	7:00 pm
— Northeast HS		
Oct. 13	Father Judge*	1:00 pm
— Germantown Supersite		
Oct. 20	Archbishop Ryan*	1:00 pm
— Germantown Supersite		
Oct. 26	@La Salle*	7:00 pm
— Germantown Supersite		

* denotes a league game



Aug. 31	@St. Frances, Md.	7:00 pm
Sept. 8	@St. Peter's Prep, NJ	7:00 pm
— Rutgers University		
Sept. 14	Good Counsel, Md.	7:30 pm
— Widener University		
Sept. 28	La Salle*	8:00 pm
— Widener University		
Oct. 6	@Roman Catholic*	7:00 pm
— Northeast HS		
Oct. 13	@Archbishop Wood*	1:00 pm
— William Tennent HS		
Oct. 20	Father Judge*	7:00 pm
— Widener University		
Oct. 26	Archbishop Ryan*	8:00 pm
— Widener University		

* denotes a league game



Aug. 24	@Pottsgrove	7:00 pm
Aug. 31	Paramus, NJ	4:00 pm
— Cardinal O'Hara HS		
Sept. 8	Hudson, NJ	10:00 am
— Rutgers University		
Sept. 15	Archbishop Carroll*	12:00 pm
— Drexel University		
Sept. 23	Lansdale Catholic*	3:00 pm
— Drexel University		
Sept. 28	@Cardinal O'Hara*	7:00 pm
Oct. 5	Bishop McDevitt*	8:00 pm
— Widener University		
Oct. 12	@Conwell-Egan*	7:00 pm
— Harry S. Truman HS		
Oct. 19	Neumann-Goretti*	7:30 pm
— Widener University		
Oct. 26	@Bonner & Prendie*	7:00 pm

* denotes a league game

INTER-AC LEAGUE PREVIEW

Friar Drill

Blue-chip laden Malvern Prep primed for a repeat in Inter-Ac

By Matthew De George

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MALVERN » When Malvern Prep blew into the Inter-Ac portion of its schedule last season, the Friars weren't exactly playing like world-beaters.

After four straight losses — albeit against a national schedule — the Friars toted a 1-4 record, an immense amount of talent and an enigmatic reputation.

“Last year was a big learning experience for everyone, coaching staff and players,” quarterback Drew Gunther said. “Coach (Dave) Gueriera came in and we had a tough out-of-league schedule. We had our woes and we just learned. We grew from that, and coming back this year, there's unfinished business.”

Any chance of the Friars sneaking up on opponents is out the window, since the chorus of colleges vying for the services of the current squad signals their arrival long before they enter town.

As the reigning champ, Malvern returns as the favorite in 2018 ... with the talent to back the hype.

“We had a great season last year, very successful, especially in-league,” linebacker Keith Maguire said. “Out of league, we

had a little bit of trouble, but it helped us become who we are for the in-league schedule, which made us a lot tougher and smarter. So building off of that, we're obviously excited.”

Where to start on the blue-chip front? There's Maguire, the imposing linebacker who's committed to Clemson. There's offensive tackle Jake Hornibrook, all 6-4 and 275 pounds of him, who selected Stanford from a host of suitors. Gunther, entering his second full year as the starter, has offers from Fordham and Brown. Quincy Watson will head to Delaware, and Tygee Leach is bound for Lehigh, a pair of playmakers on both sides of the ball.

“It's like playing Madden,” Gunther said. “Sending Keith on fades, or Tygee or Quincy can take any ball to the house, or Ryan Iacone. It's a great feeling, trusting all the guys around me and being able to do so many different things with all the guys we have.”

Talent isn't the only thing. This year's quest is to meld the undeniable ability with a team identity that will be the difference when the going gets tough in games.

“We've got a lot of talent, but we also realize we've got to work as a team, and if we don't, we won't have the output that we want to have,” Maguire said. “So right now we're



DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Malvern Prep quarterback Drew Gunther (11) threw for 1,667 yards and 18 touchdowns last season.

really working on getting used to playing with the new kids we have, some new transfers coming in, and just becoming a better team right now, working as one unit. If we get that down, I don't really see anyone stopping us.”

The senior class is at the forefront. They've weathered adversity with the parting of Aaron Brady late in their sophomore seasons and have emerged stronger under Gueriera, embarking on his second campaign. The core comprises players like Maguire, Hornibrook and Gunther, the latter of whom emerged from a crowded pack of talented QBs to earn the starting job as a sophomore and has scarcely looked back. Gunther threw for 1,667 yards last year, despite missing a game, and 18 touchdowns. While last year's leading rusher, O'Shaan Allison is gone, leading scorer/receiver Watson is back.

With this team's potential, players like Maguire are looking toward the joy the season could bring.

“It's a ton of fun,” he said. “I've been with these guys for four years. We all have our own times, our own moments, our own memories that we have. I think this is one of our stronger senior classes we've had in a while, and we've been through thick and thin and we've always been together.”

Beyond Malvern, the Inter-Ac is loaded with talent. The most eye-

popping talent in the league is probably Edward Saydee, the running back that led Penn Charter to an 11-1 record last year, the only loss coming at the hands of Malvern.

The Temple commit rushed for 1,161 yards, caught 19 balls for 418 yards and scored 15 touchdowns last year. He'll get help in the backfield from Jalen Jones and Gavin Tygh, the top three returning rushers from a season ago, while Brendan Thomas and Terence Thompson are options out wide.

In the same breath as Watson and Saydee is Episcopal Academy running back DeeWil Barlee, the All-Delco who ran for 1,267 yards and scored 23 total touchdowns last season.

Quarterback Maurcus McDaniel played well early in the season as a sophomore before a late injury. He'll be given more free rein with the offense, with Barlee (a great pass-catcher), Jack Bush and hulking tight end Jack Purcell among the targets.

Springside Chestnut Hill returns starting quarterback Aaron Angelos, who won the job as a junior and tossed for 1,355 yards and 10 touchdowns. He's got his top target back in Pat Elliott (40 catches for 527 yards) as well as the top two rushers, Aaron Rascoe and Rob Gentile.

The linebacking corps will be a strength for the Blue Devils, led by

Elliott, sophomore Carnell Kemp and junior Nick Schragar.

Germantown Academy slipped to 1-4 in the league last year after its share of the 2016 title, but they did so with young talent that has the opportunity to grow. Trae Vance played prominently as a sophomore last year, as did freshman Lacey Snowden. Both are back with another year of seasoning.

The defense will be a point of strength for the Patriots to play low-scoring, grinding games. Linebacker Jack Sheridan sports an offer from Lehigh, while 6-3, 284-pound lineman Elijah Wroten has committed to Duke.

The stumbles of Haverford School through a one-win campaign relied on a bevy of underclassmen at the skill positions. Those growing pains could pay dividends this season. The team's top four rushers last season — Logan Keller, Jordan Berry, Nate Whitaker and Daiyaan Hawkins — were all underclassmen.

Fifth on that list is quarterback Ben Gerber, who'll get another year under center with plenty of competition from Patrick Toal. The top four receivers — Dan Whaley, Whitaker, Jake Spencer and Bryce Broadus — are also back in the fold. Then there's Asim Richards, the four-star defensive end who's garnered more than a dozen major college offers.



EPISCOPAL ACADEMY

CHURCHMEN

By Matt Chandik
For Digital First Media

NEWTOWN TWP. » He has a school record for points in a single season, an All-Delco nod and is coming off of a ludicrous 20-touchdown campaign as a junior, but DeeWil Barlee still doesn't have the thing he needs the most in order to quiet his older brother.

It's been six years since Episcopal Academy last captured the Inter-Ac title, when the 2012 Churchmen went undefeated. Barlee's older brother, Dee, was a sophomore on that team who would later end up as the Churchmen's single-season rushing record holder. He doesn't need much prodding to remind his younger brother of that fact, either.

"He's always talking about how he has an Inter-Ac championship. 'I have a ring to prove it,' and he's got a banner in the competition gym," said DeeWil Barlee, who recently committed to Villanova. "It would mean the world to me to win it this year because we've never been able to achieve that goal. I think, for the whole team and the whole EA community, it would mean a lot to us. We've put in the work to be able to achieve it."

Much of EA's success will hinge on whether Barlee can improve upon his standout 1,268-yard season from a year ago. The multi-dimensional star also hauled in 23 passes for 291 yards and three touchdowns, and he's also an all-Inter-Ac defensive back. Defending league champion Malvern Prep is the favorite to repeat and the league is always strong from top to bottom, but there's enough talent for the Churchmen to be able to make a run at the title.

"The Inter-Ac's a pretty small league,

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 31	.....@ St. Mary's (MD)	7:00 pm
Sept. 8	.....Lawrenceville School (NJ)	3:00 pm
Sept. 14	.....Avalon (MD)	7:00 pm
Sept. 22	.....@ Hill School	3:00 pm
Oct. 5	.....Salesianum School (DE)	7:00 pm
Oct. 12	.....@ Springside Chestnut Hill*	7:00 pm
Oct. 20	.....@ Malvern Prep*	1:30 pm
Oct. 26	.....Germantown Academy*	7:00 pm
Nov. 2	.....William Penn Charter*	7:00 pm
Nov. 10	.....@ Haverford School*	2:00 pm

*denotes league game

but there are some really good teams," senior right tackle Ryan Rockenbach said. "It's a hard league to play in, but I think to win it, we just have to work harder and we've got a lot to play for this year."

It's not just Barlee, though. Quarterback Maurcus McDaniel, a talented dual-threat junior, is back for his second year as a starter. He'll have multiple weapons with which to work, not the least of which includes senior wide receiver Jack Bush, who snagged 20 balls for 233 yards and three touchdowns last year and recently picked up an offer from Lehigh. Blossoming sophomore Malcolm Folk is an intriguing target.

Recent Penn commit Jack Purcell moves from tight end to left tackle, and he'll also help anchor the Churchmen's defense. He put on 25 pounds this off-season, which figures to help him in the trenches, but the desire to put in the work in the offseason was a common refrain from the Churchmen. It's time to find out if that's going to pay off with a championship.

"Every year, we just seem to come up one or two games short," Purcell said. "That has been pushing us constantly this off-season, to find those few things to put together the winning streak that we need to win the league. I'm really happy with the way this team has come together this off-season, and I'm feeling very confident with where we're at right now."

EPISCOPAL » PAGE 75



HVERFORD SCHOOL

FORDS

By Dillon Friday
For Digital First Media

HVERFORD » Sabol Field at the Haverford School is getting new turf this season, a remodeling that provides an apt metaphor for the home team: The Fords, after going 1-9 (0-5 Inter-Ac) in 2017, could use a fresh start.

"I'm the first guy to look in the mirror and say I didn't do a good enough job coaching," said coach Mike Murphy, in his 14th season in charge of the program. And so he changed things. He set up a leadership council to make sure the communication is clear between players and coaches. He's also passing off offensive play-calling duties for the first time in his head coaching career.

"I probably needed to be more of a head coach last season," Murphy said.

But one thing hasn't changed for Haverford School: The young man under center. Ben Gerber, a 6-1, 200-pound senior, had an up-and-down season in 2017, his first as a starter. He accounted for 10 touchdowns, eight through the air, against 10 interceptions and took plenty of lumps along the way. And yet Murphy saw a resilient player.

"What I appreciate the most about him — we talk about how quarterbacks get all the credit and all the blame at their feet — at no time last year, and there were times when it wasn't his fault, not one time did he try and deflect the blame," Murphy said. "He hung in there as a leader. I was really impressed by that."

Gerber entered the offseason ready to heed the lessons of a difficult campaign.

"They say you learn more from losing than you do from winning," Gerber said. "So it kind of forced me and a lot of other guys to look at (ourselves) in the mirror and figure out what we need to do better.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 31	.....@ Northeast	6:30 pm
Sept. 7	.....@ Simon Gratz	6:30 pm
Sept. 15	.....@ La Salle	7:00 pm
Sept. 22	.....Chester	1:00 pm
Sept. 29	.....Hun School (NJ)	1:00 pm
Oct. 13	.....@ Germantown Academy*	2:00 pm
Oct. 20	.....@ William Penn Charter*	2:00 pm
Oct. 27	.....Malvern Prep*	1:00 pm
Nov. 3	.....Springside Chestnut Hill*	2:00 pm
Nov. 10	.....Episcopal Academy*	2:00 pm

*denotes league game

I think a big thing is understanding where the team is and the morale of the team."

That emphasis on attitude — a word Gerber uses frequently in positive and negative contexts — could make the difference for an offense that is strong on paper. The Fords pack plenty of weaponry in Nate Whitaker, Bryce Broadus and Dan Whaley. Those three should make life easier for Gerber, especially with an offense geared to get the ball out quickly.

"I need to do a good job of getting our playmakers the ball," said Gerber, "and giving them space to do what they do."

His teammates believe Gerber will do just that.

"We're confident in Ben," two-way lineman Asim Richards said. "We know what happened last year. He knows, too. We're going to just move forward, and it's a new, clean slate for us."

A clean slate, and a new position, three years on from an Inter-Ac three-peat (2012-15), Haverford School suddenly finds itself as an underdog.

"We embrace that," Richards said. "We didn't expect to go 1-9. This year, they probably expect us to do about the same, but we're not going to do that. We're going to surprise some people."

As always, the Fords will navigate a tricky non-league schedule before traveling to Germantown Academy on Oct. 13 to open league play. At that point, Richards hopes to have 2017 all the way behind him.

HVERFORD » PAGE 75

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MALVERN PREP

FRIARS

By Bruce Adams

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MALVERN » Coming off a 2017 season in which Malvern Prep swept to the Inter-Ac title, the Friars still have unfinished business this fall.

The Friars opened the 2017 campaign by losing four of five non-league contests before finishing the season with a 5-0 Inter-Ac sprint to the title.

“We want to start fast this year, and continue it throughout the season,” said Malvern Prep head coach Dave Gueriera. “We want to eliminate mental, self-inflicted mistakes — and last year, we weren’t efficient on third down early in the season.”

Fortunately for Malvern, there are 23 seniors on the roster this fall.

“Our overall senior leadership is awesome,” said Gueriera.

One of the most visible seniors is middle linebacker Keith Maguire, last year’s Inter-Ac Most Valuable Player.

“I’m very excited to start this season, this is one of the biggest senior classes we’ve had,” said Maguire, a 6-2, 215-pound Clemson commit. “Our overall senior leadership is so great that each of the seniors on this team could be a captain.

“As the middle linebacker, I try to lead by example, to help pick up (the underclassmen) on defense if they get down, but we have a lot of leaders on this team — the guy I play next to, Nick Gueriera, is a good leader.”

Offensively, Malvern’s key is another senior, 6-3, 185-pound quarterback Drew Gunther, who passed last year for 1,641 yards and 17 touchdowns while receiving first team *Daily Local News* All-Area hon-

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 31	..... Roman Catholic (Wildwood, NJ)	7:00 pm
Sept. 8	..... La Salle	1:00 pm
Sept. 14	..... @ McDonogh School (MD)	7:00 pm
Sept. 21	..... Berks Catholic	7:00 pm
Sept. 28	..... Peddie School (NJ)	7:00 pm
Oct. 5	..... @ Avon Grove	7:00 pm
Oct. 12	..... @ William Penn Charter*	3:45 pm
Oct. 20	..... Episcopal Academy*	1:30 pm
Oct. 27	..... @ Haverford School*	1:00 pm
Nov. 3	..... Germantown Academy*	1:00 pm
Nov. 10	..... @ Springside Chestnut Hill*	1:00 pm

*denotes league game

ors. He has received offers from Brown, Georgetown and Fordham, but has not committed yet.

“Drew is like an assistant coach on the field for us,” said Gueriera. “He’s our distributor on offense, and has been taking over leadership. He has full audible power and can change the signal at the line of scrimmage.”

Gunther has a talented bunch of wide receivers at his disposal, including senior Ryan Iacone (5-11, 175), sophomore Lonnie White (6-2, 185) and Maguire.

“Ryan is a good route runner with good hands and a quick first step,” said Gueriera. “Lonnie is a prototypical wide receiver — long, rangy, superathletic. And Keith is the best two-way player in the state.”

Another talented senior, University of Delaware commit Quincy Watson (5-9, 180), has been moved from wide receiver to running back.

“Quincy’s best attribute is his vision,” said Gueriera. “He’s a good inside runner who’s hard to tackle, and he has the speed to break a long one. He’s his own ‘Thunder and Lightning.’”

“I’ve played running back my whole life, so it was an easy transition,” Watson said. “I feel confident running behind our offensive line — it’s looking really good this year.”

Up front, the Friars’ offensive line is anchored by senior Jake Hornibrook (6-4 ½, 275).

MALVERN » PAGE 75



GERMANTOWN ACADEMY

PATRIOTS

By Ed Morlock

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WHITEMARSH » Everything starts up front.

That’s good news for the Germantown Academy football team.

Elijah Wroten, Mike McDonough and Justin Wajda are all seniors along the offensive line that started since they were freshmen. Avery Samuels is a senior who has been starting since he was a sophomore. Samuels is listed at 315 pounds, McDonough 300 pounds and Wroten 295.

The group helped the Patriots win 15 games between their freshman and sophomore years and an Inter-Ac title in 2016.

“It better be a strength,” head coach Matt Dence said. “If it isn’t, we’re in trouble. We took our lumps a little bit last year but I don’t think it was because of our line play. This year, I said to them, ‘You better be one of the top units in the city, one of the top units in the area. You’re that good.’ We have a left tackle with a commitment to Duke, a left guard who’s getting recruited by all the Ivys, a right guard, right tackle that are getting high-end Division 2 interest. They’re good football players. We’re excited about that.”

Wroten, a Duke commit, is the anchor of the offensive line. Holding down the left tackle position, the 6-foot-4 two-way player has made a lot of improvements over his four years as a starter.

“I have a lot more confidence,” he said. “From freshman year to senior year, that’s a huge transition. I’ve grown a lot over the years with the weight room. That helped me a lot in transitioning to becoming a better player. By confidence I mean coming out strong and making sure I have all

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 31	..... @ Simon Gratz	12:00 pm
Sept. 8	..... Frankford	1:30 pm
Sept. 14	..... @ Father Judge	7:00 pm
Sept. 22	..... Kipp-DuBois Collegiate Academy	1:30 pm
Sept. 29	..... @ Lawrenceville School (NJ)	2:00 pm
Oct. 13	..... Haverford School*	2:00 pm
Oct. 20	..... Springside Chestnut Hill*	1:30 pm
Oct. 26	..... @ Episcopal Academy*	7:00 pm
Nov. 3	..... @ Malvern Prep*	1:00 pm
Nov. 10	..... William Penn Charter*	1:30 pm

*denotes league game

my guys’ backs and stuff. I think the thing I’ve had to work on the most is probably just staying consistent on my form with the running game and passing game.”

The line also expects contributions from juniors Seamus Dean, who is listed at 305 pounds, and Matthew Voutsinos.

Not many offensive lines get the attention that Germantown Academy’s does. Wroten takes pride in that.

“It shows that our (offensive line) coach Greg Isdamer, he’s a really good coach,” Wroten said. “He has a lot of faith in us. He spends a lot of time with us just working and stuff. No one ever sees the hours we’re putting in — working, learning the plays, in the weight room or conditioning. It means a lot to us that people see our offensive line is a big part of our team.”

In the passing game, the big guys up front will be protecting Jordan Longino. The 6-foot-4 sophomore didn’t play last year due to injury, but the basketball star is a gifted athlete both with his arm and his legs.

“Jordan has done a really good job distinguishing himself as the guy,” Dence said. “He’s a special talent.”

In the running game, the Patriots have a stable of seasoned backs. Senior Donny Ganges brings the speed, junior Trae Vance the power and sophomore Lacey Snowden gets the ball in creative ways. The team also has a few freshmen primed to make an impact.

GA » PAGE 75



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Episcopal

FROM PAGE 73

PLAYERS TO WATCH

JACK BUSH » WIDE RECEIVER



Bush and junior QB Maurcus McDaniel developed a strong rapport last season, and getting the ball to the senior wideout is an important part of the offensive plan

this season. Bush caught 20 passes for 233 yards last year, including two touchdowns against Penn Charter. He'll punish defenses that pay too much attention to the danger posed by Barlee.

DEEWIL BARLEE » STRONG SAFETY

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SPRINGSIDE-CHA

BLUE DEVILS

Aug. 31 ... @ Father Judge	6:00 pm
Sept. 7 ... Philadelphia Central	3:45 pm
Sept. 14 ... @ Roman Catholic	7:00 pm
Sept. 22 ... @ Archbishop Ryan	7:00 pm
Sept. 29 ... Hill School	2:30 pm
Oct. 5 ... @ Springfield-Montco	7:00 pm
Oct. 12 ... Episcopal Academy*	7:00 pm
Oct. 20 ... @ Germantown Academy*	1:30 pm
Oct. 27 ... William Penn Charter*	2:30 pm
Nov. 3 ... @ Haverford School*	2:00 pm
Nov. 10 ... Malvern Prep*	1:00 pm

*denotes league game

PENN CHARTER

QUAKERS

Sept. 1 ... Lansdale Catholic (Ocean City, NJ)	10:00 am
Sept. 8 ... Conwell-Egan Catholic	2:00 pm
Sept. 14 ... @ Philadelphia Central	3:00 pm
Sept. 21 ... Upper Dublin	4:00 pm
Sept. 29 ... Blair Academy (NJ)	2:00 pm
Oct. 12 ... Malvern Prep*	3:45 pm
Oct. 20 ... Haverford School*	2:00 pm
Oct. 27 ... @ Springside Chestnut Hill*	2:30 pm
Nov. 2 ... @ Episcopal Academy*	7:00 pm
Nov. 10 ... @ Germantown Academy*	1:30 pm

*denotes league game

Haverford

FROM PAGE 73

"I just want us to have the confidence to be like, 'Oh, we're going to take this league. We're going to become Inter-Ac champs,'" Richards said. "I just want us to have that in our minds. That attitude, that mindset, that confidence to win."

Nate Whitaker could be the "X" factor for the Fords. The speedster scored six touchdowns in 2017, four on receptions, one on the ground and one on a punt return.

"He's good on both sides," Richards said. "He's a playmaker. I think he's really going to grow as a defensive player and on offense, too."

Haverford School should be solid at all three levels of defense. Richards fronts a talented line, while the entire linebacking core and three players in the secondary return as starters.

"I think we're most excited about (that experience)," Murphy said.

If things start slow for the Fords, don't expect Ben Gerber to dwell on the past.

"I wouldn't say we're looking for things 'not to happen' again," he said. "We're more looking at things we want to happen. We want to come out every day with the best attitude we can, get the most out of every day."

Other players to watch include Logan Keller (WR/S), Daiyaa'n Hawkins (RB/CB), Sean Clark (LB), Nick Chermol (LB), Michael Barr (OL/DL) and Kwaku Adubofour (OL/DL).

PLAYERS TO WATCH

BEN GERBER » QUARTERBACK



Despite a difficult 2017 season (10 touchdowns, 10 interceptions), Gerber has attracted attention from Ivy League schools. At 6-1, 200 pounds, he has the size to compete at the next level, and he'll

have a great chance to impress potential suitors in 2018. "We're really fast," Gerber said. "(I need to) get (receivers) the ball as fast as possible, giving them time to use the space they create."

ASIM RICHARDS » DEFENSIVE LINEMAN

The 6-5, 280-pound two-way lineman will be a force again, especially lining up at defensive end. His strength is in shedding blocks and stopping the run, although he's focused his offseason on improving as a passer. When teams double-team Richards, it'll open space for fellow linemen Michael Barr and Kwaku Adubofour.



Malvern

FROM PAGE 74

"Jake is one of the most complete linemen I've ever coached, one of the best linemen in the state," said Gueriera. "He has good feet and a strong punch."

The Friars have their share of toughness on the defensive side of the ball, too, with senior two-way lineman Harry Stinger (6-1, 215) and senior LB Nick Gueriera.

"They're a couple of lunch-pail guys," Dave Gueriera said. "Harry's an achiever in the weight room, the classroom and on the football field. Nick is a warrior, a throwback, just like Harry."

In the defensive backfield, senior Tygee Leach (6-0, 175), a Lehigh University commit, leads the way. Last fall, he was a first team *Daily Local News* All-Area defensive back.

"Tygee is probably one of the most football-smart players we have," said Gueriera. "He's really good at reading routes and understanding defenses."

Malvern Prep's kicking is in the capable hands of Sebastian Constantini, who had 18 touchbacks last fall.

"[Constantini] has a powerful Division I leg," Gueriera said.

Speaking of kicking, the Friars will kick off their season Aug. 31 against Roman Catholic in Wildwood, N.J.

"We have 70 players on our roster, and 42 incoming freshman, which is one of the biggest turnouts that I know of in the area," Gueriera said. "If we stay healthy and have good team chemistry, it should be a fun year."

PLAYERS TO WATCH

QUINCY WATSON » RUNNING BACK



A senior 5-9, 180-pounder, he was a productive wide receiver for the Inter-Ac champions last fall and has been moved to running back this season. "Quincy's

best attribute is his vision," Gueriera said. "He's a good inside runner who's hard to tackle, and he has the speed to break a long one. He's his own 'Thunder and Lightning.'"

KEITH MAGUIRE » LINEBACKER

Gueriera calls the 6-2, 215-pound senior middle linebacker, "the best two-way player in the state." Last year's Inter-Ac MVP is also a productive pass receiver, grabbing 19 passes for 278 yards and five touchdowns last season.



GA

FROM PAGE 74

"We have good running backs," Dence said. "We're young there but we're talented."

The Patriots finished 1-4 and near the bottom of the Inter-Ac standings last year. The mood around camp is that this year will be different.

"We had a good team last year," Wroten said. "We had a lot of potential. I just feel like we didn't figure out how to play with each other until the end. This year we came out with a lot more energy knowing that we're trying to accomplish a lot more than we did last year. That means pushing each other, having each others' backs, flying around and having that same positive energy."

"Last year we had the same energy, but this year we're trying to have that energy and figure out how to play with each other a lot quicker than we did last year."

"We were 4-1 the year before and we go to 1-4," Dence said. "That was disappointing. You lose your starting quarterback and starting tailback in the same game — our offense just went downhill. I still think we played really good defense. I think we played more-than-solid special teams and we lost a lot of close games, but we lost them. When you on paper should have one of the best offensive lines in the area, I expect our record to be better."

PLAYERS TO WATCH

JUSTIN WAJDA » OFFENSIVE LINE



Wajda is entering his fourth season starting on the offensive line. Standing at 6-2 and 265 pounds, Wajda has offers to play at the college level. He will be one of the main components of what

should be one of the best offensive lines in the area.

JACK SHERIDAN » LINEBACKER

When you think "football player," think Sheridan. The senior linebacker has Division I FCS offers to continue his career at the collegiate level. He's expected to terrorize opposing offenses all season.



BICENTENNIAL ATHLETIC LEAGUE PREVIEW

The Knight Moves

Mitchell out to make Hill's debut a smooth one as Delco Christian competes in crowded BAL

By Christopher A. Vito
For Digital First Media

Lloyd Hill's route to Delaware County began in South Beach.

It's where Hill was born, and where he lived until an offer to play football at Widener University uprooted Hill from Miami and brought him to Southeastern Pennsylvania more than 25 years ago.

Hill has been here ever since, along the way holding down assistant-coaching roles with Delaware County Christian School's football program, and even serving as the throwers coach for Roman Catholic's track team.

This summer, Hill got the call he was waiting on for years.

"I'm ready to be a head coach. I'm ready for this moment," said Hill, the recently appointed coach at Delco Christian.

Behind Hill, the Knights will keep their eyes toward another lengthy postseason run. They fell one win shy of a PIAA playoff berth, losing in last season's District 1-2 Class A sub-regional championship.

Hill, the new coach, will have a new quarterback, Jordan Mitchell, calling the shots. Is that enough to signal a new offense, too? Not so fast, said Hill, who assured that the Knights will not stray from the Power-T offense that has become synonymous with their program.

"We've always been successful at it," Hill said. "If it isn't broke, don't fix it. But what we can fix is making our players' fakes tighter, their blocks better, their techniques stronger. That's where we'll need to be perfect."

Teaching is Hill's calling. After earning a degree from Widener, Hill launched a career in troubleshooting and tech support in the information systems field. After a while, Hill said he "felt like a robot," and needed a change. For the next year, he held a full-time teaching gig by day and worked in computer systems at night. That arrangement didn't last long, and Hill followed his heart into the classroom.

Today, in addition to his role on the football field, he's a middle school math teacher at Delco Christian.

"I told our guys my heart is with building their life skills," said Hill, 43, a Brookhaven resident. "I want to make sure I'm teaching them valuable skills like integrity and how to overcome adversity, and responsible risk-taking."

"I have trophies and medals. They're collecting dust. I want our guys equipped with things that will mean something and will last forever."

The Knights, in a crowded Bicentennial Athletic League, will need significant play from a few key players. Among them is Mitchell, a sophomore



Delco Christian quarterback Jordan Mitchell runs through drills during a recent practice session.

who will have a steep learning curve at quarterback. Jason Motley, a two-way player, will make his most-critical contributions at linebacker. Abby East, a junior defensive end and tight end, is one of the Knights' best tacklers and "has the potential," Hill said, to lead the Knights this season and beyond. Peter Grieb, a running back and linebacker, is expected to have a break-

out year.

A.J. Gerow (RB/LB) and Jared Sutphin (OL/DL) did not play last season, but Hill has seen enough in camp to expect big things from the senior duo.

"This group is hard-working. They want to get after it," Motley said. "We're ready. We have Coach Hill, and we have the talent to simply outwork teams and win."

BICENTENNIAL » PAGE 77



2018 SCHEDULE

Sept. 1	@ Dobbins Vo-Tech	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 29-12)		
Sept. 8	Jenkintown*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 29-20)		
Sept. 15	Morrisville*	12:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 20-13)		
Sept. 22	@ Lower Moreland*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 38-24)		
Sept. 29	@ Valley Forge M.A.*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 21-17)		
Oct. 5	@ New Hope-Solebury*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 38-7)		
Oct. 13	Mastery Charter	2:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 19	@ Bristol*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 35-14)		
Oct. 27	Bohemia Manor (Md)	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 36-26)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

JORDAN MITCHELL » QUARTERBACK



No matter the lens through which it's viewed, Delco Christian's offense will take a hit this season. That's the predictable outcome of losing a two-year starting quarterback to graduation.








Out is Luke Gutowski, the reliable and do-everything signal caller. In is sophomore Mitchell, Gutowski's backup in 2017 who earned most of his varsity reps at defensive back. Mitchell, according to Hill, is "athletic, speedy, and a good role model," traits that could help smooth over his inexperience at the position.

JASON MOTLEY » LINEBACKER

The senior linebacker is invaluable to the Knights. He's capable of playing any position on the defensive side of the ball, Hill said. And according to junior Abby East, Motley "knows the formations and shifts for every player on our defense. He even calls out the plays."



2017 Bicentennial League

Pos	Team	CW	CL	W	L	PF	PA
1	 New Hope-Solebury	6	0	9	2	407	171
2	 Bristol	5	1	9	2	313	172
3	 Delco Christian	3	3	6	6	256	311
4	 Jenkintown	3	3	5	5	217	239
5	 Morrisville	2	4	4	6	161	268
6	 Valley Forge Military	1	5	1	9	136	357
7	 Lower Moreland	1	5	1	7	99	233

Bicentennial

FROM PAGE 76

Elsewhere in the BAL:

■ For two-time defending champion New Hope-Solebury, there's no replacing Jesse Capriotti. The all-state running back scored 33 touchdowns and churned out 2,478 yards on 182 carries. Coach Jim DiTulio's offense-by-committee could be the answer. He will turn to Phil Weinsemer as a dual-threat quarterback, and a trio of ballcarriers in Mike Borys, Timmy Leonard, and Tom Raupp. John Flavin, the BAL's top receiver a year ago, also is back. The Lions return four starters on the offensive line. Defensively, they are just as deep in veteran experience.

■ At Jenkintown, sixth-year coach Tony Owens has seven two-way starters around whom to build. Cade Lafferty, Shady Neidich, and Kyle Lam fortify the line. Lafferty, at 6-6 and 225, doubles as

an imposing all-league defensive end. Neidich's savvy at center will be beneficial for new quarterback Clint Jackmon. The Drakes may struggle to find a player as balanced as the recently graduated Pat Morrin. The dual-threat quarterback was an all-BAL defensive end and all-state punter. Johnson John could help. The athletic Nigeria-born running back is "just starting to understand the game," said Owens, which could unlock another facet to his game.

■ First-year coach Steve Schweiker is aiming for a balanced approach with Morrisville. A Bishop Egan grad who played exclusively at cornerback, Schweiker has coached predominantly on the offensive side of the ball. He and the Bulldogs will benefit from 10 returning seniors with a wealth of varsity experience. Felix Feliciano, a captain and third-year starter at quarterback, is a dual threat. He will share time at linebacker with fellow senior James Williams, a four-year starter who also plays running back. JaQuese Little, a senior, will be Feliciano's primary target at wide receiver. Little doubles as a lock-down cornerback, too.

**BRISTOL**

LANCERS

CLASS A

Sept. 1 @ Academy New Church 1:00 pm
 Sept. 8 Pennington School (NJ) 2:00pm
 Sept. 14 New Hope Solebury* 7:00 pm
 Sept. 21 George School 7:00 pm
 Sept. 28 Springfield-Montco 7:00pm
 Oct. 6 @ Valley Forge Military* 1:00 pm
 Oct. 12 @ Jenkintown* 7:00 pm
 Oct. 19 Delco Christian* 7:00 pm
 Oct. 27 Lower Moreland* 7:00 pm
 Nov. 22 @ Morrisville* 10:30 am

**JENKINTOWN**

DRAKES

CLASS A

Aug. 24 @ Springfield-Montco 7:00 pm
 Aug. 31 @ Shenandoah Valley 7:00 pm
 Sept. 8 @ Delco Christian* 1:00 pm
 Sept. 15 Lower Moreland* 12:00 pm
 Sept. 22 AcademyNew Church 10:30 am
 Sept. 29 New Hope Solebury* 1:00 pm
 Oct. 6 @ Morrisville* 1:00 pm
 Oct. 12 Bristol* 7:00 pm
 Oct. 20 @ Valley Forge Military* 12:00 pm
 Oct. 26 George School 7:00 pm

**LOWER MORELAND**

LIONS

CLASS 4A

Aug. 31 @ Springfield-Montco 10:00 am
 Sept. 15 @ Jenkintown* 12:00 pm
 Sept. 22 Delco Christian* 12:00 pm
 Sept. 29 Morrisville* 12:00 pm
 Oct. 5 Academy New Church* 7:00 pm
 Oct. 13 Valley Forge Military* 12:00 pm
 Oct. 20 @ New Hope Solebury* 1:00 pm
 Oct. 27 @ Bristol* 7:00 pm

**MORRISVILLE**

BULLDOGS

CLASS A

Aug. 24 Shenandoah Valley 7:00 pm
 Aug. 31 @ Valley Forge Military* 3:45 pm
 Sept. 8 @ George School 2:00 pm
 Sept. 21 @ Kutztown 7:00 pm
 Sept. 29 @ Lower Moreland* 12:00 pm
 Oct. 6 Jenkintown* 1:00 pm
 Oct. 12 Kensington 7:00 pm
 Oct. 26 New Hope Solebury* 7:00 pm
 Nov. 22 Bristol* 10:30 am

**NEW HOPE-SOLEBURY**

LIONS

CLASS 3A

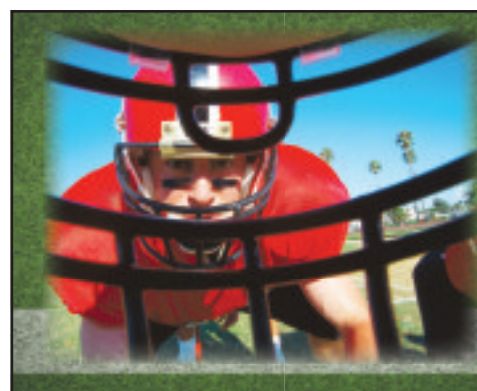
Aug. 24 Kensington 7:00 pm
 Aug. 31 Pope John Paul II 7:00 pm
 Sept. 7 Academy New Church 7:00 pm
 Sept. 14 @ Bristol* 7:00 pm
 Sept. 21 Valley Forge Military* 7:00 pm
 Sept. 29 @ Jenkintown* 1:00 pm
 Oct. 5 Delco Christian* 7:00 pm
 Oct. 12 @ Springfield-Montco 7:00 pm
 Oct. 20 Lower Moreland* 1:00 pm
 Oct. 26 @ Morrisville* 7:00 pm

**VALLEY FORGE M.A.**

TROIJANS

CLASS A

Aug. 24 @ Harriton 5:00 pm
 Aug. 31 Morrisville* 3:45 pm
 Sept. 7 @ Springfield-Montco 7:00 pm
 Sept. 14 John Bartram 3:45 pm
 Sept. 21 @ New Hope Solebury* 7:00 pm
 Sept. 29 @ Delco Christian* 1:00 pm
 Oct. 6 Bristol* 1:00 pm
 Oct. 13 @ Lower Moreland* 12:00 pm
 Oct. 20 Jenkintown* 12:00 pm
 Oct. 27 @ St. Johns Prep (MD) 1:00 pm



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SUBURBAN ONE LEAGUE PREVIEW

Stacked Deck

North Penn out to defend Continental crown; Upper Dublin heating up

By Kev Hunter

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@khunter10 on Twitter

The Suburban One League Continental Conference has done the impossible: It's gotten even better.

"Our conference, as a whole, is gonna be up. I think every team is gonna be up this year. And that's scary," said Central Bucks South coach Tom Hetrick, who guided the Titans to the playoffs a year ago. "It's fun that way. In my opinion, if you can come through the Continental conference and earn enough points to make the playoffs, that's saying something.

"Because our conference is full of very well-coached teams and some quality football."

The conference sent four teams to the District 1 Class 6A Playoffs a year ago and should once again be a playoff factory this autumn.

Said Central Bucks East coach John Donnelly: "It's always tough. It's always a dogfight."

North Penn, once again, is the team to chase.

The defending champion Knights, 6-0 in the conference in 2017, have some turnover on both sides of the ball but should once again present a big challenge.

North Penn reached the district quarterfinals a year ago and eyes another trip to the postseason. The Knights have made it to the tournament five straight years and in 15 of the past 16 seasons.

Central Bucks West, Central Bucks South and Pennridge all qualified for the playoffs a year ago and CB East should be making a push this fall as well.



North Penn's Jon Haynes is one of the top returning weapons for the Knights.

DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE PHOTO



GENE WALSH — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Plymouth Whitmarsh's Tim McNally practices with the Colonials during training camp.

SOL

FROM PAGE 78

"Some great competition," Pats quarterback Evan O'Donnell said, "and I look forward to playing everyone."

TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT
» The American Conference will also be crowded at the top, with Upper Moreland entering the season as the defending champion.

The Bears and Upper Dublin both showed up in the District 1 Class 5A

Playoff bracket in 2017 and Quakertown reached the 6A tournament.

Things could be bunched even tighter together this year.

"Upper Dublin has a lot coming back. They have a new quarterback but he's really good. I look at them probably being the top contender in our conference," Panthers coach George Banas said. "PW is always tough, no matter what. Hatboro's tough. Wissahickon has a new coach but they have athletes everywhere."

SOL » PAGE 81

2017 Suburban One Continental

Pos	Team	CW	CL	W	L	T	PF	PA
1	North Penn	6	0	9	3	0	496	320
2	Penridge	5	1	11	3	0	401	191
3	Central Bucks South	4	2	7	4	0	239	184
4	Central Bucks West	2	4	6	5	0	209	196
5	Central Bucks East	2	4	4	6	0	258	214
6	Souderton	2	4	3	7	0	132	232
7	William Tennent	0	6	0	10	0	122	337

2017 Suburban One National

Pos	Team	CW	CL	W	L	PF	PA
1	Neshaminy	6	0	10	2	368	211
2	Pennsbury	5	1	10	3	370	264
3	Harry S. Truman	3	3	7	4	365	236
4	Council Rock South	3	3	4	6	192	212
5	Bensalem	2	4	5	5	246	294
6	Abington	2	4	4	6	216	262
7	Council Rock North	0	6	1	9	132	361



Kev Hunter
Columnist



Follow Kev Hunter's coverage of the Suburban One League and beyond at PaPrepLive.com

(On Twitter @khunter10)



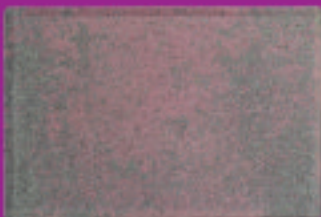
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Look For Us On



Coach Bret Stover and Upper Dublin will try to improve on a great 2017, albeit with mostly new faces on both sides of the ball.

DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE



DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Upper Moreland's Caleb Mead skirts the crowd and turns up field during Friday night's game against Marple Newtown last season.









SOL


FROM PAGE 79

“Cheltenham’s the same way — he’s a second-year coach so you should really start to see some changes. It’s gonna be interesting. Upper Moreland has a new coach as well — they graduated a ton but they probably have one of the top running backs in the league now. So every team has its own little niche. It’s definitely gonna be competitive every Friday night.”


NATIONAL POWERS COLLIDE » Neshaminy and Pennsylvania should duke it out again, but Abington is the wild card in the mix.

The Ghosts were a power in 2016 before injuries held them back a year ago. With Council Rock South and Truman coming on strong in recent years, the National possesses a pretty tight race of its own.

2017 Suburban One American							
Pos	Team	CW	CL	W	L	PF	PA
1	 Upper Moreland	6	2	10	2	410	245
2	 Quakertown	5	1	7	4	225	228
3	 Upper Dublin	4	2	8	3	289	165
4	 Hatboro-Horsham	4	3	6	4	278	182
5	 Cheltenham	2	4	2	8	121	292
6	 Plymouth-Whitemarsh	1	5	1	8	128	270
7	 Springfield-Montco	0	0	3	6	153	272
8	 Wissahickon	0	6	2	7	116	245



Sound off on the Pa. Prep Live High School Football Top 20, unveiled every Monday during the season, only at PaPrepLive.com



22 WISSAHICKON

**CLASS
5A**
TROJANS
By Ed Morlock

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LOWER GWYNEDD » Bruce Fleming is entering his 14th year coaching and first as the head man at Wissahickon High School.

The Philadelphia native started coaching youth football in 2004. He transitioned to high school in 2006 at La Salle. After time at Norristown, he jumped to the college ranks at Ursinus. He spent the last two years at Wissahickon as the assistant head coach and defensive coordinator.

Fleming spent half of his coaching career on offense and half on defense. His background is in offense, and that's what he will be focusing on in 2018.

"Being able to spend a good amount of time on both sides of the ball, as an offensive coordinator, I'm able to anticipate what defensive coaches are going to look at to try to stop what I'm trying to do," the Roxborough High grad said. "Vice versa, I know how I want to attack a particular defense so I'll be able to help out my defensive coordinator if he's having trouble stopping something. I'll say, 'They're going to try to attack you here or here, this is how we should adjust.' The experience of being on both sides of the ball can really help out moving forward."

Fleming, a Special Education teacher at Wissahickon, plans to run an up-tempo offense that throws the ball a lot but remains balanced. Sophomore EJ Schreiner and junior Caleb Kemp are battling for the starting quarterback position.

"They are going to compete," Fleming said. "Hopefully one of them takes hold of the position before we get to our first game against (Martin Luther) King. We'll see



GENE WALSH — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

First-year Wissahickon head coach Bruce Fleming looks over a recent practice.

where it goes."

Trojans fans can expect to see an aggressive approach under Fleming, who was officially named head coach May 29.

"My personal philosophy with coaching is always be aggressive," he said. "Offensively I want to apply as much pressure as I can on an opposing defense and when I was on the defensive side I wanted to apply that same type of pressure on the opposing offense. I stress to my guys on playing less thinking — you already know your assignment — just react and play with aggression to make the play on the field."

"He's really calm the way he explains things to you," senior wide receiver Maurice Willis said of Fleming. "He'll discipline us but it's always good discipline, stuff we really need to work on. He'll incorporate it and make it so we're also getting conditioning in. His coaching style — he lets the position

coaches take over what they know and just teach the team what they know and not try to get in too much even though he does know a lot. Overall he's a pretty chill coach, but if things do go downwards he always knows how to step up and help the team out."

Fleming played wide receiver, cornerback and outside linebacker in high school. He had the opportunity to play Division III college ball but chose not to after suffering ankle injuries.

He is setting realistic expectations for the team to move forward in his first year.

"My main goal after being here for two years and trying to change the culture of the program and move the program forward is to double up on the number of wins we've had so far," he said. "My first year here we had one. Last year we had two. So my goal is this year as a positive growth moving forward get four. Then moving on from there."

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Martin Luther King	7:00 pm
	— 2017 RESULT (W 20-10)	
Aug. 31	@ Council Rock North	7:00 pm
	— 2017 RESULT (NA)	
Sept. 7	Lansdale Catholic	7:00 pm
	— 2017 RESULT (NA)	
Sept. 14	@ Ply.-Whitemarsh*	7:00 pm
	— 2017 RESULT (L 20-0)	
Sept. 21	@ Hatboro-Horsham*	7:00 pm
	— 2017 RESULT (L 21-12)	
Sept. 28	Quakertown*	7:00 pm
	— 2017 RESULT (L 32-13)	
Oct. 5	Upper Moreland*	7:00 pm
	— 2017 RESULT (L 46-26)	
Oct. 12	@ Upper Dublin*	7:00 pm
	— 2017 RESULT (L 42-7)	
Oct. 19	@ Eastern York	7:00 pm
	— 2017 RESULT (NA)	
Oct. 26	Cheltenham*	7:00 pm
	— 2017 RESULT (L 20-13)	

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

MAURICE WILLIS » WIDE RECEIVER



Willis is a big-bodied wide receiver. The senior stands 6-5 and 185 pounds. He's in line to see plenty of targets in the Trojans up-tempo passing attack.

TYLER CASO » DEFENSIVE END

Caso is a three-sport athlete who plays football, basketball and baseball. The 6-3, 200-pound senior will play both sides of the ball, but it's on defense where he is expected to make the biggest impact. Caso will be playing the weakside defensive end position, where he should be in position to make a lot of plays in DC Will Crawford's system.



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UPPER DUBLIN

CARDINALS

CLASS
5A

By Ed Morlock

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@emor09 on Twitter

UPPER DUBLIN >> It can be difficult to sustain success in high school football when a team graduates a big senior class.

Not only did Upper Dublin lose 17 players from the team that reached the District 1 Class 5A semifinals last year, it lost a lot of key contributors.

On offense, the starting quarterback, leading rusher and top two receivers are gone. The defense will be without its top two tacklers.

“Those are our challenges right now,” head coach Bret Stover said. “The good news is last year we had three returning starters on both sides of the ball and now we have a handful on both sides of the ball. We’re experienced from what we did last year. We grew up on the field last year and I think we’re going to be better for it. I’m excited about where we’re going.”

Despite losing a large and decorated senior class, the new group has seen a lot. The Cardinals won the District 1 championship when they were freshman and reached the district quarterfinals as sophomores before falling in the semifinals as juniors.

“We will be able to step up really well,” two-way senior lineman Bryan Derr said. “We have a new quarterback coming in who is a phenomenal player. Our offensive line has four of five starters coming back. We have a good running back in Lucas Roselli and our defense is just as strong as before. We lost some linebackers, but the two filling in Ryan Jamison and Logan Heim are great players and I think they’ll fill their shoes well.”



BOB RAINES — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Upper Dublin running back Lucas Roselli is one of the top returning Cardinals this season.

Upper Dublin’s defense did most of the heavy lifting during the playoff run in 2017 and appears set to lead the way this fall.

“We have a lot of defensive linemen coming back,” Derr added. “We have a strong defensive line who will help out the younger guys playing linebacker. We have a lock down at the d-back position with Selvin Haynes (cornerback) and Mike Slivka at safety. I think we’ll be able to carry (the offense) just as strong (as last year) and go just as far if not further.”

“It’s going to be different because our linebackers were really good and we were inexperienced up front and in the secondary (last year),” Stover said. “Now our strength is going to be around our linebackers. I think our defense is going to be solid and hopefully our offense catches up quick. We do have some exciting, electric players on offense who waited their turn. Now it’s their turn to get on the field.”

To free up those electric players, the Cardinals return four starters along the offensive line. According to some, that may not be the strongest unit when they have the ball.

“I don’t think (the offensive line) will necessarily be the strength but it will be a huge part,” senior two-way lineman CJ Stehli said. “Another huge part is going to be we played with each other since youth football. We all know each others’ strengths and weaknesses. It’s really good to have those player, the chemistry between the whole team — the quarterback and wide receivers and everything. The o-line is going to be a big part of the offense, but not the biggest. We’ll have good running and good passing as well.”

Upper Dublin projects to finish near the top of the Suburban One League American Conference. The team has its sights set on the league title and even more prizes down the line.



2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Norristown	5:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Aug. 30	Central H.S.	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 27-8)		
Sept. 14	Hatboro-Horsham*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 14-7)		
Sept. 21	@ Penn Charter	4:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Sept. 28	@ Cheltenham*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 49-7)		
Oct. 5	Quakertown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 34-28, OT)		
Oct. 12	Wissahickon*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 42-7)		
Oct. 19	@ Ply-Whitemarsh *7:00 pm	
— 2017 RESULT (W 28-14)		
Oct. 26	Upper Moreland*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 21-20)		

* denotes a league game



PLAYERS TO WATCH

LUCAS ROSELLI » RUNNING BACK



Roselli has varsity experience as the number two rusher on the team last year. As a senior, he takes over lead running-back duties. He’s a smart player who is shifty and always falls forward. He can make adjustments in the middle of games, and the coaching staff is expecting big things from him in 2018.

SELVIN HAYNES » CORNERBACK

Every coach would love to have Haynes on their team. The senior is a shut-down cornerback with the potential to play in college. He started all 14 games last year. His season took off after Week 3, and he continued to improve.



Sound off on the Pa. Prep Live High School Football Top 20, unveiled every Monday during the season, only at PaPrepLive.com





PENNRIDGE

RAMS

CLASS
6A

By Mike Cabrey

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@mpcabrey on Twitter

EAST ROCKHILL >> Maybe Pennridge's Cody Muller is young, but the 27-year-old first-time head coach has spent most of his life around the gridiron.

"You look on paper, you can say that I don't have any experience being a head coach. But I grew up around the game of football," said Muller, a Souderton grad who played collegiately at New Hampshire. "My dad's been a coach for 33 years. When I was born, I was going on the sidelines with Bethlehem Catholic back in the Bob Stem era — Liberty, other schools like that. Honestly, it's what I've always wanted to do."

What Muller and the Rams want is to continue to build upon the success the program enjoyed under former coach Jeff Hollenbach, who led Pennridge to the District 1 Class 6A playoffs the last two seasons.

"No letdown. No step back. They want to raise the bar," said Muller, who was an assistant at Saucon Valley the last two seasons. "Those guys, great group of seniors that graduated that played a lot of football, produced a lot and just not taking a step back from that. Keeping that bar raised and taking it even higher than what it was."

The Rams ran off seven straight victories to reach the district semifinals for the first time since 2012, and a Thanksgiving win over Quakertown finished the 2017 campaign at 11-3. While Pennridge lost a strong group to graduation — including all-state linebacker Nick Tarburton — the team returns a talented group that has its sights on attaining bigger goals.



GENE WALSH — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Pennridge head coach Cody Muller is in his first season with the Rams.

"I think a lot of the kids from the team last year were left with the feeling of unfinished business, like there's more we could do and more we want to do," senior quarterback Zak Kantor said. "So we're all trying to work harder to get further than we did and do the best that we can."

Kantor threw for 1,614 yards and 18 touchdowns as a junior and helms the Rams' fast-paced offense.

"Definitely a little more confidence coming off what I did," Kantor said. "Just coming off of that, little more expectations too."

Senior Ryan Garner is back after leading the Rams in rushing (790 yards, seven touchdowns) behind an offensive line that includes seniors Zack Tarburton (a Bucknell

+ **Online:** Longer versions of most team previews are available online, with even more info, at PAPREPLIVE.COM

committ), Brain Lafty and Joel Hartzell.

"We want to be up-tempo, we want to be on the ball, we want to run, we want to get after it," Muller said. "We're big up front we want to use that to our advantage."

Junior Connor Pleibel, sophomore Shane Hartzell and senior Jon Post — returning to football after focusing on basketball as a junior — figure to also be playmakers on the offensive side.

On defense, the Rams have to replace Nick Tarburton (now at Penn State) along with six other players that earned All-Suburban One League Continental Conference honors from a unit that allowed 13.6 points per game. The Rams posted three shutouts, including back-to-back shutouts against Quakertown and Perkiomen Valley in districts.

"Obviously we lost a lot of production — Nick Tarburton being gone, Evan Exner, Kyle Schetter, Oliver Jervis, Ryan Rapp, I mean I could go on. Replacing those guys but creating a new brand," Muller said. "And we're not running the same defense as last year. We're switching it up. But it's just about keeping it simple and just playing fast and physical football."

Senior Chris Feralio earned all-conference honorable mention at linebacker last year and is back at the position with Shane Hartzell joining him. Senior Austin Bishop and Lafty bring size to the defensive line, with senior Jadin Bass and junior Cooper Chaikin man part of the secondary.

"I think all of our guys, we have a lot of heart and we'll just keep playing," Feralio said. "We'll just keep running over play after play and I mean that's what we're hoping to do every single game this year."

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Delaware Valley	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Aug. 31	Neshaminy	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 23-14)		
Sept. 7	@ Perkiomen Valley	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 29-0)		
Sept. 14	North Penn*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 45-35)		
Sept. 21	Souderton*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 34-3)		
Sept. 28	@ C.B. West*	2:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 26-6)		
Oct. 5	C.B. South*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 21-7)		
Oct. 12	William Tennent*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 35-26)		
Oct. 19	@ Harry S. Truman*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 27	@ C.B. East*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 28-12)		
Nov. 22	@ Quakertown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 24-0, W 34-6)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

RYAN GARNER » RUNNING BACK



An All-SOL Continental first team selection in 2017, Gardner paced the Rams on the ground as a junior with 790 yards and seven touchdowns and also hauled in 18 receptions for 318 yards and a pair of TDs.

CHRIS FERALIO » LINEBACKER

The senior, who was an all-conference honorable mention selection last season, mans the middle linebacker spot for a defense looking to maintain its strong form from 2017.



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NORTH PENN

**CLASS
6A**
KNIGHTS
By Mike Cabrey

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TOWAMENCIN >> Dick Beck strives to make it clear to his players that there are no guarantees for success — even for a program like North Penn.

“I tried to express to the kids, you can’t assume that it’s going to happen. It takes a lot of work,” the Knights coach said. “When you have success on the field, it’s not just because you’re wearing a North Penn uniform, it’s from a lot of hard work and understanding what we’re trying to do. It doesn’t come easy. It just doesn’t happen.”

The point was hammered home in North Penn’s last game of 2017, as a seemingly safe 35-7 second-half lead against Garnet Valley in the District 1 Class 6A quarterfinals evaporated, the Jaguars scoring the final 29 points to shock the Knights, 36-35, and end NP’s bid at defending its district title.

“After the Garnet Valley game, I just felt like everyone knew you can’t just put a jersey on,” North Penn senior Jon Haynes said. “And you know that game really put a bad taste in a lot of the players coming back, just put a bad taste in our mouths. Ever since that game, we haven’t taken anything for granted and we think out about the game every day at practice, every day in the weight room, whenever we condition and even if we want to do something on our own.”

“I think this year we’re really getting back to just working, working, working. We have a sour taste in our mouth and we want to get back to where we were two years ago and maybe even take that next step and potentially making it to the state cham-



GENE WALSH — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

North Penn quarterback Solomon Robinson will take over the starting job this season.

ampionship game and make a state championship run.”

Another charge to the top will have to be done with a lot of new faces. But the Knights still have a good veteran group, including three-year players like Haynes and Julian White. North Penn, which went 9-3 last season, is looking for a sixth straight Suburban One League conference title, the last two in the Continental.

“It’s a real good feeling,” White said. “We’ve got a fairly new team. New line, new pieces we’re adding in but it’s overall good feeling. We like what we got and now we’re just going on, learning from coach, coaches are telling us new things and we’re just taking it in stride. We’re just working and ready to get it going.”

Senior Solomon Robinson takes over

at quarterback behind an offensive line with five new starters. The Knights lost all of their production from last year’s attack, but Beck thinks this group matches up with any in the Continental. Haynes caught 16 passes for 209 yards and two touchdowns in 2017, while senior Shamar Edwards had 11 receptions for 261 yards and four TDs. The two look to factor in both the running and passing game along with White, senior Kaleem Corbin and juniors Evan Spann and Nate Brown.

“We try to develop around our talent, so I think what’s the hardest part when you get some new guys, new quarterback, is to get our niche — what do we do well?” Beck said. “Are we going to be a power-running team? Do we spread? Do we mix it up? Are we going to throw it up a lot, you know, whatever, I think we’re going to have to develop that as the year goes on. I don’t think you can say this is what we’re going to do on offense all the time because you’re not going to have the same talent all the time.”

North Penn looks to improve on a defense that gave up 26.7 points per game last season. The strength of this year’s unit is the linebacking corps, where the Knights return three starters in Edwards, Brown and senior Nick Intrieri. The secondary will have Haynes and first-year starters Corbin and senior Andrew Cole, while the line has White and junior RJ Macnamara at ends and senior Noah Fox at tackle.

“What we’re trying to do it mostly hold our ground,” White said. “We can’t let teams run up the scoreboard on us and do what they want to. We have to have a sturdy front. Our new pieces come in, we’ve got a lot of new guys that are basically learning the formats, the sets. And we’re just doing what we got to do, listening to Coach Beck, he tell us what the do, gives us the keys and we just work with it.”

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Neshaminy	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Aug. 31	La Salle	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 41-28)		
Sept. 7	Pennsbury	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 29-20)		
Sept. 14	@ Pennridge*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 45-35)		
Sept. 21	C.B. East*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 57-43)		
Sept. 28	@ C.R. South*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 5	@ Souderton*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 47-20)		
Oct. 12	C.B. West*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 28-14)		
Oct. 19	C.B. South	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 40-9)		
Oct. 26	@ William Tennent*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 56-7)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH
SHAMAR EDWARDS » RUNNING BACK


The 5-11, 190-pound senior is one of the few returnees on the offensive side of the ball and should make a mark both in the rushing and passing games. He caught 11 passes for 261 yards and four TDs last season.

JON HAYNES » DEFENSIVE BACK

A three-year varsity starter, the 6-0, 195-pound senior will be a leader in the secondary after earning All-SOL Continental second team honors at defensive back in 2017.


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PLYMOUTH WHITEMARSH

COLONIALS

CLASS 6A

By Ed Morlock

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WHITEMARSH >> Larry McLaughlin was thrust into the starting quarterback role last season as a sophomore when starter Stephen Maslij suffered a concussion in the preseason.

The Colonials struggled through the season, finishing 1-8 and near the bottom of the Suburban One League American Conference.

Now McLaughlin has had a full offseason to prepare to be the starter and is ready to get after it.

“(The mindset is) so much different (this year),” he said. “You’re prepared. Having the season under your belt is very good. The experience is there. I know what it takes to start and play.”

The junior quarterback spent the off-season working on his physical and mental game.

“I improved the most in my confidence, which I wasn’t there last year,” he said. “I was very shaky. Also, my mechanics. Vernard Abrams — he’s a QB coach in Collegeville. He knows what he’s doing. He helped me with my mechanics to get sound and ready for the season.”

“He taught me the exact mechanics and to pay attention to the little details. Mentally, he taught me how to really want to work hard and be great.”

Plymouth Whitemarsh head coach Dan Chang noticed the improvements, too.

“Larry’s going to be our Q,” he said. “The amount this kid has worked has been incredible. He’s put on a lot of muscle — he’s put on some weight and gotten much faster. His knowledge and handle of the



GENE WALSH — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

Junior quarterback Larry McLaughlin will again be the Colonials’ starter.

game has gotten way better, not to mention his throwing is significantly better from last year. He’s going to be a leader for our team and I’m excited to see what he can do.”

The leadership role is something that McLaughlin is ready to take on as the quarterback.

“As quarterback you have to be a leader on the team,” he said. “Everybody looks at you when times are tough and when times are good so you have to set a good example for the rest of your teammates.”

“I know what it takes to play. The mentality and the preparation that goes into it — watching film, practicing with your teammates — every minute counts. I know

to take advantage of that now.”

Under Chang, the Colonials have typically ran an option-based attack on offense. Adding weight in the offseason and improving his mechanics will help McLaughlin throw the ball and keep it to run when he gets the right look from the opposing defense.

McLaughlin set his goals for himself and his team this year as getting better than they were a year ago.

“Personally I would like to improve from last year — get one percent better, hopefully more,” he said. “I hope we have a good year. I hope we win a lot of games. I hope we get closer as a team throughout the season.”



2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Downingtown East	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 47-6)		
Aug. 31	Abington	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 44-0)		
Sept. 8	@ Norristown	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 10-9)		
Sept. 14	Wissahickon*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 20-0)		
Sept. 21	@ Upper Moreland	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 41-7)		
Oct. 5	Cheltenham*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 23-20)		
Oct. 12	@ Quakertown*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 42-23)		
Oct. 19	Upper Dublin*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 28-14)		
Oct. 26	@ Hatboro-Horsham*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 49-28)		

* denotes a league game



PLAYERS TO WATCH

BRIAN DRESNIN » RUNNING BACK



Plymouth Whitemarsh lost its top two running backs from a season ago in Dontae Wilson and Kirk Bell. The team likes a lot of the players they have competing

for touches, and Dresnin is near the top because he brings a lot of intensity.

MIKE PACIELLO » LINEBACKER

The Colonials only have a few starters back on the defensive side of the ball. Paciello is one of them. The junior is a two-way player who will man one of the outside linebacker positions.



Plymouth Whitemarsh-Germantown Academy
Student Coalition

Proactive Patrol Alert To Reduce Underage Drinking

The Whitemarsh Police Department in collaboration with the PW/GA Student Coalition would like our residents and students to be aware of the fact that local police departments will be conducting proactive patrols for underage drinking and related violations. Statistically during the spring season, police departments across this country see an increase in alcohol related deaths and injuries involving teenagers. As a result, Whitemarsh Police officers will be conducting extra patrols that focus on after school related functions at both PWHS and GA for alcohol related violations committed by anyone under the age of 21. The enforcement efforts are funded by a grant from the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board. For questions regarding these details please contact Lt. Jeff Nowak at the Whitemarsh Police Department at 484-594-2739.



CENTRAL BUCKS WEST

**CLASS
6A**
BUCKS
By Kev Hunter
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As Rob Rowan enters his first season as head coach at Central Bucks West, guys like Owen Shields continue to make it a quick startup.

"He's a coach's dream," said Rowan. "He's such a quick learner. He's a one-timer. You tell him things one time and he executes and usually does things pretty well."

Shields, a wide receiver and free safety for the Bucks, is embracing the moment.

"I'm really excited, been waiting for this for a long time," the senior said. "(What I look to bring is) leadership and the mentality to keep working hard. Even if things are rough or things go well, to just keep going to work each day and never give up on anything."

"I like how we're all one," Shields said following a hot August practice. "We're all really friends, and it's not fake at all. And it's kind of fun to come to practice. Execute on little things, make sure we come out and don't go flat at the beginning of practice. Bring the intensity and bring the juice, as coach says. Make sure the energy is there."

BRINGING IT TOGETHER

When it comes to unsung heroes at West, there's enough to fill a chorus.

Sean Cotton, who plugs up holes along the defensive line and pries them open on the offensive side of things, typifies that.

"He's another guy that just doesn't complain, makes zero excuses," said Rowan. "He shows up every day willing to work. He's going to wind up having a big role on this team at some point, because of his ability to play so many positions."

Said Cotton: "We're been at it for months



GENE WALSH — DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

CB West football coach Rob Rowan is entering his first season as head coach.

now, really since February. We've all been putting in the work. We're all invested. The coaches are really showing us the ropes.

"It's a totally new system but the coaches are introducing it really well. A lot of our starters last year were people that graduated, so people just wanna step up. We're all really hyped. Most of us, we played JV as sophomores and juniors so we're going to see a lot of familiar faces, people that we played on JV before. So that's something's to look forward to. I really want to lead by example and show the younger guys the fundamentals, what the coaches are preaching to us."

Rowan, an Archbishop Ryan grad who cut his teeth as an assistant at Archbishop Wood and coached on the staffs of Wesley College and Kutztown, takes over a squad that has been on the rise, having reached the District

1 Class 6A playoffs a year ago.

"You get to iron out the kinks and come together as a team, work through the grind," Rowan said of camp. "It's a dedicated group of kids. They've really bought into the foundation that we're trying to establish."

"It's a group that cares about each other. We talk about loving each other, protecting each other, serving each other. And it's a group that, without question, has a unique bond building at the moment."

A balance between run and pass is a primary goal for the Bucks' offense.

"We have an identity that we're aiming for, who we want to be," Rowan said. "And every day, I feel like we're getting a step closer. We wanna be balanced. I think it's important to go into every game being balanced in the running game, balanced in the passing game."

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	Hatboro-Horsham	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 21-13)		
Aug. 31	Council Rock South	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 19-14)		
Sept. 7	@ Quakertown	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 20-0)		
Sept. 14	C.B. South*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 21-20)		
Sept. 21	@ William Tennent*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 28-7)		
Sept. 28	Pennridge*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 26-6)		
Oct. 6	@ C.B. East*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 14-13)		
Oct. 12	@ North Penn*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 28-14)		
Oct. 19	@ Souderton*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 21-14)		
Oct. 26	@ Abington	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

LUKE BENSON » TIGHT END



The 6-4, 220-pound senior is a big-time target and is receiving plenty of Division 1 offers. Verbally committed to Syracuse, Benson checks every box in terms of intangibles and is without question one of the Bucks' valued leaders on the field and in the locker room. West is expecting big things this year from its big tight end.

HARRY JONES » CORNERBACK

Probably the Bucks' most experienced corner, Jones comes in with his share of varsity playing time from last year and will be leaned on in terms of trying to mentor and teach some of the younger guys. Jones picked up the Bucks' system very quickly.



**Kev
Hunter**
Columnist



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S SOUDERTON

INDIANS

**CLASS
6A**
By Mike Cabrey

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 @mpcabrey on Twitter

FRANCONIA >> Souderton coach Ed Gallagher sees how things are trending in the neighborhood. And right now, the Indians have fallen a step behind rivals North Penn and Pennridge.

"Those are the two that we have to look at as where we want to be. How close can we get to making that a game going into the fourth quarter, which is the way it used to be," he said. "We used to have good games with North Penn and good games with Pennridge that sometimes we won — we still didn't beat North Penn. But we haven't been that competitive team that we were six, seven years ago."

Souderton lost to both the Rams and Knights by a combined 58 points in 2017 as the Indians finished the season 3-7, the program's lowest win total since its two-win campaign in 2013.

But Big Red still comes into 2018 with big hopes.

"I feel like this year we're going to come out with a bang," Indians senior Troy Mokluk said. "And I'm really excited. I had my gear on yesterday. I was kind of like really amped for two weeks because two weeks our first game against Penn Wood. But I'm really excited to see what we do."

There are reasons for that kind of excitement. The Indians created a touch of momentum at the end of the last season with two of their wins coming in the final four weeks, including a victory over District 1 Class 6A play-off qualifier Central Bucks West in the season finale. With a young, skilled set of offensive playmakers, the Indians are looking to return to postseason play after a one-year hiatus.



DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE

Tre Samuels, here breaking away against C.B. East last season, is a key returnee for Souderton.

+ **Online:** Longer versions of most team previews are available online, with even more info, at PAPREPLIVE.COM

"With this team right now, we care way more than what we did last year," senior Kyle Walker said. "I mean, the senior class last year cared but they didn't want it as much as the junior class and my senior class do right now. We're coming out to practice everyday just working hard, just not giving up. And last year, in my eyes I saw lackadaisical, not running plays correctly, goofing off in the huddle, stuff like that."

"This year, we're taking that stuff way serious but we actually want to go to playoffs and make a better record for ourselves than last year."

The Indians' Wing-T attack is working with a new offensive line. Only Austin Moyer, a three-time All-Suburban One League Continental Conference pick returns. The backfield features an experienced group, with

sophomore Willie Goods and juniors Deandre Wakefield and Nick Guthrie at halfback and Mokluk at fullback that should help the offense improve from its 13.2 points per game in 2017.

"Our skills, I'm really confident in them, we've got a lot of talent there," Moyer said. "I'm more like we got our line together and block for the guys I know have potential to score touchdowns and spring big plays. We're just trying to block as best as we can and get our line in order so we can score the big plays and touchdowns."

Gallagher says "the sky's the limit" for junior Andrew Vince at quarterback. But with Vince also a standout at safety, the Indians won't shy away from giving some time to sophomore Jacob Horton under center.

Whoever Big Red plays at quarterback, they will have plenty of options to throw to with senior receivers Walker and Tre Samuels and tight ends Ethan Smerecki (all-conference third team) and Bruno Stolfi.

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	@ Penn Wood	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 37-14)		
Aug. 31	Quakertown	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 16-13)		
Sept. 7	@ Hatboro-Horsham	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 28-3)		
Sept. 14	William Tennent*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 21-16)		
Sept. 21	@ Pennridge*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 34-3)		
Sept. 29	@ C.B. East*	1:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 10-7)		
Oct. 5	North Penn*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 47-20)		
Oct. 12	Council Rock North*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (NA)		
Oct. 19	C.B. West*	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (W 21-14)		
Oct. 26	@ C.B. South *	7:00 pm
— 2017 RESULT (L 20-0)		

* denotes a league game

PLAYERS TO WATCH

TRE SAMUELS » WIDE RECEIVER



The 6-3, 191-pound senior will be a go-to target in the Souderton passing attack. Samuels was an All-SOL Continental honorable mention selection at receiver as a junior.

ANDREW VINCE » DEFENSIVE BACK

The 6-5, 191 pound junior, who also plays QB, looks to be the anchor of Big Red's secondary after being named to the conference's second team at defensive back last year.



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ABINGTON

**CLASS
6A**
GHOSTS
By Andrew Robinson
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ABINGTON >> It could be a throw-back season in Abington this fall. The Galloping Ghosts roster has a lot of solid, all-around players but doesn't have the one or two eye-catchers of the past few seasons. Even without a clear workhorse or foundational player going into the season, Abington senses that it can be right in the thick of things once the lights go on.

To achieve that goal, the Ghosts will have to do it together.

"We've been waiting all offseason, especially after not having the best season last year, and with it being my senior year, we just want to get back and try to make play-offs," senior co-captain Keith Hudoka said. "We all have to show up every week and work as hard as we can."

After making the District I playoffs in coach Kevin Conlin's first season, injuries hampered the Ghosts last year as they went 4-6 and missed the postseason. While the roster may lack an obvious standout, there is plenty of experience coming back in guys like Hudoka and senior co-captain Tom Lukens.

Conlin cited Lukens and Hudoka as two guys who emerged as team leaders during the offseason and added that their differing personalities make them a good mix as captains. Lukens is very matter-of-fact while Hudoka is a more boisterous, but the two are both focused on making sure the Ghosts are ready for this fall.

"It's a more team, which is what we're going for right now," Conlin said. "The kids have really bought in and they've been great. We never really found a true rhythm last year and that's on me more than anybody so one of the things we're trying to do is be more prepared."

Abington will have to rebuild its running game after losing Darryl Davis-McNeil (Kutztown) and fullback Jackson Taylor to graduation, and top backup Keenan Lambricht to transfer. Junior Tamir Berthau, who played in the secondary last year, will take over as quarterback on a full-time basis.

The Ghosts will likely feature a good mix of underclassmen to go with seniors on both sides of the ball. Lukens is a four-year starter and one of the most experienced players on

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	.... Northeast	..... 7:00 pm
Aug. 31	.... @ Plymouth-Whitemarsh	..... 7:00 pm
Sept. 7	.... Cheltenham	..... 7:00 pm
Sept. 14	.... @ Bensalem*	..... 7:00 pm
Sept. 21	.... Council Rock South*	..... 7:00 pm
Sept. 28	.... @ Neshaminy*	..... 7:00 pm
Oct. 6	.... @ Council Rock North*	..... 2:00 pm
Oct. 12	.... Harry S. Truman*	..... 7:00 pm
Oct. 19	.... @ Pennsbury*	..... 7:00 pm
Oct. 26	.... Central Bucks West	..... 7:00 pm

the team, but he'll likely set up on the line with at least one sophomore in Billy Everitt. Conlin noted that at least eight underclassmen got reps on the offensive line last year, so he's looking at the unit as a potentially strong one.

The offensive line highlights what the general makeup of the team should be this fall. There's a lot of depth, a lot of competition but also some work left to be done before it's a finished product.

"We're bringing a lot of intensity and I feel like we're going to come out hitting this year," Lukens said. "We're going to need everyone to push themselves a little more and come together as a team. We have a lot of role players, maybe not that one super talent, but I think we'll come together."

Abington opens with Northeast High, where a lot of players from both schools grew up playing with and against each other, so it'll be a good test right out of the gate.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

TAMIR BERTHAU » QUARTERBACK

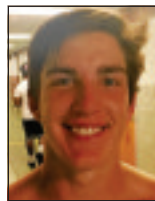


Berthau adds an extra dynamic to the position with his athleticism, which could be a benefit early on as the Ghosts re-vamp their running game.

The 6-2 junior saw some reps behind the offensive line last year, coupled with his spot in the defensive secondary. Abington has some solid receivers back, so the passing attack should only get better as the season goes on.

KEITH HUDOKA » SAFETY/LINEBACKER

One of the hardest working players in the weight room this offseason, the co-captain should play a key spot on defense. Among the most vocal athletes on the team, Hudoka spent last year at safety but could move



around the field thanks to the work he did through the winter and spring. As a junior, he had a knack for finding the ball in the air and provided key interceptions.



CHELTHENHAM

**CLASS
5A**
PANTHERS

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24	.... Council Rock South	..... 7:00 pm
Aug. 31	.... Bishop McDevitt	..... 4:00 pm
Sept. 7	.... @ Abingto	..... 7:00 pm
Sept. 14	.... Norristown	..... 7:00 pm
Sept. 21	.... @ Quakertown*	..... 7:00 pm
Sept. 28	.... Upper Dublin*	..... 7:00 pm
Oct. 5	.... @ Plymouth-Whitemarsh*	..... 7:00 pm
Oct. 12	.... Hatboro-Horsham*	..... 7:00 pm
Oct. 19 @ Upper Moreland* 7:00 pm
Oct. 26 @ Wissahickon* 7:00 pm

By Andrew Robinson
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CHELTHENHAM >> A year has made a big difference for Cheltenham football.

This time last summer, the Panthers were still getting used to their first new head coach in 28 years as Ryan Nase readied for his first season running the Suburban One League program. There were some bumps, as Cheltenham went 2-8.

With the benefit of a full year together, Nase and the Panthers are looking to take the next step.

"The best part of camp, where we are energy-wise and tempo-wise, we're so much better than we were last year," Nase said. "That's been the biggest difference from year one to year two as a staff."

Cheltenham enters the season with a promising junior class loaded with players just starting to realize the depths of their athletic skills. Of course, athleticism only goes so far on a football field, and taking that next step toward competing in the SOL American means honing that ability with discipline and structure.

For all intents and purposes, that was something the Panthers saw last season. Nase also learned his share of lessons, chiefly that he didn't have to be involved or present at every single thing his guys were doing. When Nase stepped back, it allowed players to fill in the void.

"The relationship part has taken care of itself, and now we're just focused on football," Nase said. "The most frustrating part last year starting 0-7 was that it wasn't a lack of effort or not wanting it, we just weren't good enough yet."

Senior lineman Marcus Winfield and senior linebacker Daniel Gaffin have emerged as the team's leaders, organizing workouts and setting an example for the younger guys in the program to follow as second-year captains.

Last year, the young guys pushed for playing time, but Nase noted that they weren't quite ready until the last few weeks of the season.

Running back Jamir Barnes had a very impressive offseason, netting an offer from Morgan State, the first Division I offer for any player on the roster. Nate Edwards, also in the junior class with

Barnes, turned heads with his athletic ability, while TJ Harris is also looking to make his mark on the field.

Nase cautioned that this year's squad doesn't yet have the depth last season's team did, but the year of development and offseason work has the Panthers looking more explosive. There's also a lot more time at practice being spent on preparing for the long grind of the season.

"The biggest thing for us is how in shape we are and how well our offensive and defensive lines play," Nase said. "We're big on the offensive line, so conditioning is a focus for us, then we're a little undersized at some defensive line positions so those guys finding ways to not get worn down will be huge for us."

Success and improvement don't come overnight and while Nase knows this, he's also admittedly impatient about seeing his players' work yield a payoff.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

JAMIR BARNES » RUNNING BACK



After posting a 1,000-yard season as a sophomore, Barnes put in a lot of time and energy over the offseason. The 5-10, 180 pound junior has blistering speed,

but he's also tough and will fight for difficult yardage. Barnes is eager to prove he can do even more than he showed last season.

MARCUS WINFIELD » DEFENSIVE END

Winfield had a solid junior season but looks poised for bigger things this fall after an excellent offseason in the weight room and workouts. A 6-3 end, the co-captain comes from a football family and carries that passion with him onto the field. Improvements on the defensive side of the ball will tell a lot about where Cheltenham goes this season, and Winfield is ready to lead the unit.





HATBORO-HORSHAM

CLASS
6A

HATTERS

By Mike Cabrey

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HORSHAM » After consecutive six-win seasons, Hatboro-Horsham knows what the next step is in 2018.

“We want to break through and finally make the playoffs this year,” Hatters senior lineman Jake Schalki said.

Hatboro-Horsham followed 2016’s 6-5 season with a 6-4 finish last year, giving the Hatters their first back-to-back winning campaigns since 2006 and 2007. And building off that success, the Suburban One League American Conference side is out to reach the District 1 postseason for the first time in 11 years.

“We do whole-heartedly believe we’re a strong football program and that we should be in that next class,” HH coach Mike Kapusta said. “We understand nobody’s going to give it to us. I think we’ve earned a degree of respect so far but we know we have a long way to go and we hope to be in the eight-win, nine-win, 10-win echelon of course.

“And we think that we do have the pieces to do it here we just got to keep working, keep focused on what’s in front of us.”

While the Hatters have to replace several key skill players, the offensive line returns three starters, including Schalki and fellow senior Jake Custer, who were both all-conference honorable mention picks last year.

“If the O-line isn’t taking care of business, it’s really hard to execute anything. So we think we have a pretty experienced unit, a unit that’s really tight,” Kapusta said. “They’ve been getting after it, working hard together for several months now.

“Where the guys who are stepping in who are inexperienced, the guys who are coming back and played a lot of varsity football for us are really helping out. Not just the assignments side of things but also just sort of the mentality and what it takes to be a really good offensive line.”

Kapusta says the Hatters will take the committee approach to the ground game with speedy senior Amir Bookard serving as a change of pace from the more physi-

2018 SCHEDULE	
Aug. 24 @ Central Bucks West	7:00 pm
Sept. 1 @ Central Bucks East	11:00 am
Sept. 7 Souderton Area	7:00 pm
Sept. 14 ... @ Upper Dublin*	7:00 pm
Sept. 21 ... Wissahickon*	7:00 pm
Sept. 28 ... @ Upper Moreland*	7:00 pm
Oct. 12 @ Cheltenham*	7:00 pm
Oct. 19 @ Quakertown*	7:00 pm
Oct. 26 Plymouth-Whitmarsh*	7:00 pm

cal rushing of senior Ismael Collazo and junior Jordan Collazo.

Senior Charles Crothamel looks to take over at quarterback and has an experience wideout to throw to in senior Cameron Broaddus.

Custer and Schalki will also be on the Hatters’ defensive line — Schalki earning honorable mention at defensive end as a junior. Hatboro-Horsham gave up 18.2 points per game in 2017.

“I think we have a very heavy run-stop team,” Custer said. “We’re very strong, especially up front where our biggest guys are right in the middle. It’s going to be hard for people to run on us.”

The Hatters, meanwhile, are aiming for the their run of winning years to continue, this time with a District 1 Class 6A playoff berth added on. They have put in the work in the offseason to make it possible.

“As soon as the season ended, the returning players expressed the fact that they were ready to get to work and were really excited about now stepping into the shoes of the graduates,” Kapusta said. “And they’ve done a nice job so far. Of course, until you’ve been tested, you don’t really know what you got but I’d say so far so good. Our kids are working really hard.”

PLAYERS TO WATCH

AMIR BOOKARD » RUNNING BACK



Kapusta says the senior Bookard provides the Hatters’ ground game with a finesse rusher, giving the backfield a different dynamic to test opposing defenses.

JAKE SCHALKI » DEFENSIVE LINEMAN

Schalki’s return helps to shore up the Hatboro-Horsham front four as he comes off a junior year in which he earned All-SOL American honorable mention at defensive end.



SPRINGFIELD TWP.

CLASS
4A

SPARTANS

By Mike Cabrey

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SPRINGFIELD TWP. » Chris Shelly glances at all the construction occurring on the campus of Springfield-Montco and finds it an apt descriptor of his football team.

“As you can see around here, it’s projection renovation,” the Spartans coach said. “I told these guys like we had to rebuild our program last year, and it’s time for us to complete the mission. Finish the project.”

Two years ago, a decline in its roster numbers forced Springfield to cancel its varsity season after only playing its season opener. The Spartans returned to action in 2017, and now this season, Springfield is returning its focus on growing into a winner.

Which is still a work in progress.

“It’s our second year back, right, so everybody doesn’t have any experience with it or nobody knows what’s out there for them to work for,” senior Paul Asman said. “People understand coming to practice, they just here to be here. Some people don’t understand what’s it’s like to actually win, how much work you actually got to put into it. But our team’s building up.”

After an 0-2 start in 2017, Springfield picked up wins over Lower Moreland and Valley Forge Military Academy, but its only win the rest of the way came via forfeit as it finished with a final record of 3-7. The Spartans are again playing an independent schedule this year, with Shelly hoping that his side can cut back on the miscues as they try to be one of the four teams to make the District 1 Class 4A postseason.

“We go back to a lot of those games, it was us, it wasn’t the other team, it was us — turning the ball over, making mistakes, playing like a JV football team,” Shelly said. “Now we got to play like a varsity team and not get ahead of ourselves.”

Quarterback Max Perry is described by Shelly as “the whole package,” and a strong season by the senior signal-caller will go a long way in helping the Spartans improving on their 18.2 points per game average last year.

“I played on a 7-on-7 team with Philly’s Finest, did a lot of tournaments with them, getting reps. I’ve been working out

2018 SCHEDULE	
Aug. 24 Jenkintown	7:00 pm
Aug. 31 Lower Moreland	10:00 am
Sept. 7 Valley Forge Military Academy	7:00 pm
Sept. 14 ... Academy of the New Church	7:00 pm
Sept. 28 ... @ Bristol	7:00 pm
Oct. 5 Springside Chestnut Hill	7:00 pm
Oct. 12 New Hope Solebury	7:00 pm
Oct. 20 @ George School	3:00 pm
Nov. 2 Harriton	7:00 pm

with Coach Abe (Vernard Abrams), he’s my quarterback guy,” said Perry of his off-season workouts. “Just on my mechanics and everything like that. So I’m excited for this year.”

Protecting Perry is an experienced offensive line with seniors Kyler Brunner and Sullivan Shackleford and juniors Mike Ecker and Sam Shapley. Senior Carter Stepney will be a big part of the rushing attack while the Spartans find a way to get Asman the ball in the offense.

“Between (Stepney) and Max, man, we really got some stuff brewing,” Shelly said. “And Paul’s going to be our ace this year, so that’s like our hybrid tight end kind of player. He brings the nasty. So I can’t ask for three better captains right there.”

On defense, Asman will also play along the defensive line at end with senior Pryce Jamison at nose tackle, while junior Ray Ebner is at middle linebacker.

“Last year was just the beginning. I feel like we can definitely build and improve a lot this year than we did last year,” Stepney said. “You know, last year, we had just come back not having a season and that was my first year here back from another school (Roman Catholic), so I was definitely excited to play with my friends and definitely the Homecoming game was a big sign of support from the whole community that we are back and we are here to win games. That’s our goal.”

PLAYERS TO WATCH

MAX PERRY » QUARTERBACK



The senior quarterback will be the driving force for the Spartans offense as a threat both as a passer and a runner.

PAUL ASMAN » DEFENSIVE END

The 6-6, 190-pound senior will look to use his frame and long reach to cause havoc from his spot on the defensive line.





UPPER MORELAND

**CLASS
4A**
GOLDEN BEARS

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24 William Tennent.....	7:00 pm
Aug. 31 @ Sun Valley.....	7:00 pm
Sept. 7 Upper Perkiomen	7:00 pm
Sept. 14 ... @ Quakertown*	7:00 pm
Sept. 21 ... Plymouth-Whitemarsh*	7:00 pm
Sept. 28 ... Hatboro-Horsham*	7:00 pm
Oct. 5 @ Wissahickon*	7:00 pm
Oct. 19 Cheltenham*	7:00 pm
Oct. 26 @ Upper Dublin*	7:00 pm

By Alex Wahl
For Digital First Media

UPPER MORELAND >> Whenever a team undergoes a change at head coach, it can be tough to adjust to the new skipper in the first year.

That may not be the case for Upper Moreland, which will be under the direction of first-year head coach C.J. Szydlak.

Szydlak, who was the defensive coordinator last year at Council Rock North, is excited for his first season in charge of Upper Moreland.

"This team was really good last year," Szydlak said. "They did have a lot of seniors last year, but we have a lot of players with experience this year."

"So I'm expecting big things from the team this year," Szydlak added. "Even though it's a new coaching system for them, we are doing nicely having meetings every day and they are grasping it very quickly."

Szydlak understands the needs of the 18 Upper Moreland seniors, knowing they have to get used to a new coach after spending their first three years with Adam Beach.

"It is definitely a big transition for them," said Szydlak. "Even though as great of a coach that coach Beach was, we do things a little differently and we got the seniors to get used to that. We did start meeting with each other back in April. They got more custom to what we are doing since then."

Highlighting this season's schedule includes a home rivalry game with Hatboro-Horsham, who the Bears beat on the road, 41-40 last year.

Other home games for the Bears include Upper Perkiomen (Sept. 7), Plym-

outh Whitemarsh (Sept. 21), and Cheltenham for senior night (Oct. 19).

Upper Moreland will host William Tennent on August 24 for the season opener with kickoff set for 7:00 p.m.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

CALEB MEAD » RUNNING BACK



Mead was an All-Suburban One first-team running back in 2017 when he ran for nearly 1,300 yards and 15 touchdowns and will look to deliver more in his senior season.

"Honestly, my biggest goal this year is to have fun," Mead said. "We have a good young team this year and I really like this team. ... I like the new coach. I feel like this coaching staff is more modern than the old coaching staff but this staff has a better style and we hope to make the playoffs."

DAI-JAHN DUKES » LINEBACKER

The Golden Bears are expecting a lot out of the sophomore Dukes, who was an All-Suburban One honorable mention in 2017. Despite going 10-2 last year, Dukes expects some things to be different on a younger team. "I expect this year to be a learning year like my freshman year," said Dukes. "I like our new coaching system and they seem really smart and I like what they are doing."



WILLIAM TENNENT

**CLASS
6A**
PANTHERS

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24 ... @ Upper Moreland	7:00 pm
Aug. 31 ... @ Bensalem	7:00 pm
Sept. 7 Harry S. Truman	7:00 pm
Sept. 14 ... @ Souderton Area*	7:00 pm
Sept. 21 ... Central Bucks West*	7:00 pm
Sept. 28 ... Central Bucks South*	7:00 pm
Oct. 5 Neshaminy	7:00 pm
Oct. 12 ... @ Pennridge*	7:00 pm
Oct. 19 ... Central Bucks East*	7:00 pm
Oct. 26 ... North Penn*	7:00 pm

By Alex Wahl
For Digital First Media

The last time William Tennent won a football game was back in 2015, when it beat Norristown 17-13 at home.

Since then, the William Tennent squad has lost 27 straight games. The Panthers will look to get that elusive first win with the help of first-year head coach Rich Clemens this fall.

The Panthers have a favorable schedule, with six of 10 games at home, including five of the last six. They face a tough league schedule in the Suburban One League Continental Division, pitted against the Central Bucks schools and customary powers like North Penn and Pennridge.

Tennent will be on the road for the first two games of the season against Upper Moreland and Bensalem.

The job at Tennent is Clemens' first head-coaching gig.

He knows what it's like to snap a long losing streak: As an assistant coach, he helped Bensalem snap a 29-game losing streak. The Owls have since grown from that to become a steadily winning program.

"I expect these guys to play hard and not to beg down to anybody," said Clemens. "These guys are going to set the foundation for years to come and I couldn't be happier for the way they're working or how they accepted the challenge."

"The seniors have been great. They've been working and filling in the leadership roles and they are excited to get the season started."

Clemens spent the last eight years as a teacher and the defensive coordinator at Bensalem and has coached football since 2002.

Clemens was a coach at Kennedy-Kerrick, Methacton and Bensalem before becoming the head coach at Tennent.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

DANNY GOODZ » RUNNING BACK



Goodz, who has also seen time as a cornerback and a linebacker, will look to be Tennent's primary playmaker this season. The senior is a versatile athlete, also

starring as the shortstop on Tennent's baseball team. "The new coaching staff is different in practices and things like that," Goodz said. "I like that we are getting pushed a lot harder and I'm excited to see how we do against other teams this year."

EDDIE NORTH » LINEBACKER

North is excited about the new coaching system and will look to win more games than the last two seasons. "It's a different environment and atmosphere with the new coach," said North. "We are working harder and giving everything we got and they push us really hard. ... They definitely changed the culture of William Tennent football. I'm really excited for the new season with our new coach."



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COUNCIL ROCK NORTH CLASS 6A

INDIANS

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24 ... West Chester East.....	7:00 pm
Aug. 31 ... Wissahickon	7:00 pm
Sept. 7 ... @ Penn Wood	7:00 pm
Sept. 14 ... @ Neshaminy*	7:00 pm
Sept. 21 ... @ Abington*	7:00 pm
Sept. 28 ... @ Harry S. Truman*	7:00 pm
Oct. 6 ... @ Bensalem*	2:00 pm
Oct. 12 ... @ Souderton Area	7:00 pm
Oct. 20 ... @ Bensalem*	5:00 pm
Oct. 26 ... @ Council Rock South*	7:00 pm

By Rick Fortenbaugh

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NEWTON » Although the Council Rock North football team has found wins hard to come by with a 2-17 record over the last two seasons, it was usually competitive in many of those games.

Competitive, that is, in the early going before fatigue set in and the Indians faded in the second half. According to third-year coach Matt McHugh, Rock North is on its way to correcting this problem.

"It takes time, but we are getting things in place," said McHugh. "Our depth is getting better. Our goal is to have fewer guys going both ways and have a two-platoon system."

Heading into this year, a plus should be an offensive line that will hold its own. Returning up front are seniors Max Hipple, John Vanderslice and Jonathan Xiong. Vanderslice is a big one at 6-5, 230 pounds.

"We've had some good offensive lineman the last two years, but it's a matter of getting the fundamentals down," McHugh said. "This is a good group."

Senior tight end Dylan Ceslak will join those three up front and help open running lanes for senior Robbie Ranelli. Senior Johnny Kane has returned at quarterback.

"Johnny is a very good athlete," said McHugh. "And Robbie is very strong, an awesome kid."

Looking at the defense, the secondary will be led by senior Chan Kim and juniors Tim Gibson and Dillon Sheehy. The team also has a very capable linebacker in senior Craig Oros.

Senior ends Coleman Closser and Josh Colton along with junior tackle Elijah Widman are all starters on what should be an improved defensive line.

"We are optimistic," said McHugh. "The kids are working hard to turn this around."



DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA PHOTO

Quarterback Johnny Kane is a key returnee for Council Rock North.



COUNCIL ROCK SOUTH CLASS 6A

GOLDEN HAWKS

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24 ... @ Cheltenham	7:00 pm
Aug. 31 ... @ Central Bucks West.....	7:00 pm
Sept. 7 ... Central Bucks South	7:00 pm
Sept. 14 ... Harry S. Truman*	7:00 pm
Sept. 21 ... @ Abington*	7:00 pm
Sept. 28 ... North Penn	7:00 pm
Oct. 5 ... Bensalem*	7:00 pm
Oct. 12 ... @ Bensalem*	7:00 pm
Oct. 19 ... @ Neshaminy*	7:00 pm
Oct. 26 ... @ Council Rock North*	7:00 pm

By Rick Fortenbaugh

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NORTHAMPTON » All signs point toward a possible break-out season for Council Rock South.

Although the Hawks were under .500 last season at 4-6, they were very close to winning at least two other games and capturing a District 1 Class 6A playoff berth that probably would have come with a six-win season.

Now Rock South is back in force with a host of returning starters and the knowledge it is capable of putting together a big season.

"We have a lot of guys back who realize what it takes," said assistant coach Tony Checchia. "The team is very hungry. They want to be successful."

Rock South is led by one of the top players in the area in Nick Gallo. A Virginia Tech recruit, Gallo is a physical force on both sides of the ball as a defensive end and tight end.

There was a healthy competition during the pre-season at quarterback to replace the graduated Christian Jabbar. One of the QB candidates is senior Andrew Vera, who also is a fine defensive back and wide receiver.

Senior Chase Patterson was banged up a bit last season, but looks ready to go at running back. Ditto for junior Dawson Fresses, who is also in the picture at quarterback along with junior Noah Caldari.

The offensive line is headed by senior Shane Anderson (6-0, 265), a three-year starter and a team leader. Other reliable returnees include senior defensive back Matt Checchia, senior linebackers Brad Kraut and Sam Vaniver and junior defensive end/tight end Shemar Mills.

Vaniver will also run the ball as a fullback in a Rock South offense that has morphed from a wishbone to more of a spread under long-time head coach Vince Bedesem.

"We are still a run-first and smash-mouth type of team, but we are more committed to the spread," said Checchia. "We have a lot of speed in the backfield and at receiver. We want to take advantage of that."

In short, it would be a disappointment if this team did not get in the league title hunt and earn a playoff berth.

"We return a lot of experience," said Checchia. "We're excited."



DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA PHOTO

Council Rock South's Nick Gallo, a top tight end and defensive end, is a key player for a team looking to make the playoffs this season.



HARRY S. TRUMAN CLASS 6A

TIGERS

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24 ... West Chester East.....	7:00 pm
Aug. 31 ... Wissahickon	7:00 pm
Sept. 7 ... @ Penn Wood	7:00 pm
Sept. 14 ... @ Neshaminy*	7:00 pm
Sept. 21 ... @ Abington*	7:00 pm
Sept. 28 ... @ Harry S. Truman*	7:00 pm
Oct. 6 ... @ Abington*	2:00 pm
Oct. 12 ... @ Souderton Area	7:00 pm
Oct. 20 ... @ Bensalem*	5:00 pm
Oct. 26 ... @ Council Rock South*	7:00 pm

By Rick Fortenbaugh

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BRISTOL TWP. » With a coaching staff largely imported from Pennsbury, Harry S. Truman made history last season by winning seven games and qualifying for the playoffs for the first time.

A year later, there is even more optimism out of the Truman camp as the Tigers hope to challenge for a Suburban One League National Division title and also advance in the playoffs after last year's first-round exit.

"We'll see how it goes, but we have a lot of athletic skill guys and better size this year," head coach Mike LaPolombara said. "We have high hopes."

Truman also has a sizable amount of experienced starters. Speedster Sayed Saunders has graduated, but the Tigers do return senior quarterback Dylan Snelling, senior fullback Enzo Poulson and senior receiver Javeer Peterson. All three will also play on the defensive side of the ball.

Seniors Tremere Smith and center Alex Fisher return up front along with senior fullback Gabe Gipli and senior running back James Koliyah, who on defense has moved from nose guard to linebacker.

The defense has also welcomed back seniors Shakell Hall, Diondre Winton and Joey Goldey, and junior Terrance Rodgers in the secondary. Rodgers and Winton are in the picture at running back as well.

In addition to getting bigger, Truman has also gotten deeper. Additional players expected to make an impact are sophomore tight end/defensive back Zayyar Saunders (6-5), junior linemen Kashun Holden (6-6), Elijah Narrah (6-0, 340) and Lawrence Baldwin (6-6, 258), and sophomore tackle David Blay (6-2, 250).

In two of its three league losses last year, Truman got pushed around by Neshaminy and Pennsbury. Look for the Tigers to be better equipped to hold their own up front.

Since there are very few squads that can match Truman's speed, this is a team with the potential to make even more history and alter the traditional Suburban One National pecking order.



Senior QB Dylan Snelling returns under center for a Truman team that won seven games and made the playoffs for the first time last season.

DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA PHOTO



C.B. EAST PATRIOTS

**CLASS
6A**

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 25 ... Quakertown.....	11:00 am
Sept. 1 ... Hatboro-Horsham	11:00 am
Sept. 7 ... @ Bensalem	7:00 pm
Sept. 14 ... @ Pennsbury	7:00 pm
Sept. 21 ... @ North Penn*	7:00 pm
Sept. 29 ... Souderton Area*	1:00 pm
Oct. 6 ... Central Bucks West*	1:00 pm
Oct. 12 ... @ Central Bucks South*	7:00 pm
Oct. 19 ... @ William Tennent*	7:00 pm
Oct. 27 ... Pennridge*	1:00 pm

By Kev Hunter
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BUCKINGHAM » sked if his team felt momentum coming off of last year, Evan O'Donnell spoke more about motivation.

"I feel, after a 4-6 season, that we need to pick it up. That just isn't who we are," said O'Donnell, the senior quarterback for Central Bucks East. "It doesn't reflect on who we are as a team. So we all have that fire under us and we want to get out there and show the people what we can really do."

The Pats are packed with experience, including O'Donnell, a versatile quarterback who is tightening his grip on the leadership reins.


RB Jake Ventresca

"(I'm focused on the) leadership aspect of everything, trying to get everyone fired up before a game and setting a good example on and off the field," he said.

O'Donnell will see plenty of familiar faces when he scans the offense.

"In the past, we've had some pretty good skill players, but I think we have more depth at our skill positions than we've had the whole time I've been here," coach John Donnelly said. "We've had to replace some guys on the offensive line but I think we have good depth up front."

O'Donnell will direct a spread offense that aims to be about 70-30 between the run and pass. He likes the play of the defense, having practiced against them every day, and talks about the Patriots as one driving force.

"We're just looking forward to a good season. We're kind of family here," he said. "We mesh really well and have been together for a while now. We're just looking forward to making it a good season and getting out there."

NO-FLY ZONE

One of the things that kept East out of the playoffs a year ago was a leaky secondary, but the Pats have tightened things up.

"The last couple years, we've been very good against the run," said Donnelly, who is looking to direct East to the postseason for the third time in four years. "Last year we had our struggles in terms of pass defense, and about halfway through the year we made some changes schematically that we're kind of rolled into this year with. And I think that'll help us tremendously."

"High school offenses are getting more sophisticated and are throwing the ball effectively, so we've got to be able to defend it. And I think the defense is really stout, especially the secondary. I feel like, schematically, we've put our guys in better position this year to defend the pass."

The offseason mojo has been good for East.

"We had a great summer," Donnelly said. "We did a team camp up in Millersville, which we had never done before, so that was great."



C.B. SOUTH TITANS

**CLASS
6A**

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24 ... @ Cheltenham	7:00 pm
Aug. 31 ... @ Central Bucks West	7:00 pm
Sept. 7 ... Central Bucks South	7:00 pm
Sept. 14 ... Harry S. Truman*	7:00 pm
Sept. 21 ... @ Abington*	7:00 pm
Sept. 28 ... North Penn	7:00 pm
Oct. 5 ... Bensalem*	7:00 pm
Oct. 12 ... Pennsbury*	7:00 pm
Oct. 19 ... @ Neshaminy*	7:00 pm
Oct. 26 ... @ Council Rock North*	7:00 pm

By Kev Hunter
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WARMINSTER » Central Bucks South's defense

isn't interested in merely containing the opposition.

"Tackles for losses and a lot of sacks," senior tackle Dante Scipione said of the many goals for this season. "We'll be good. We're pumped. We're itching for that first game."

The Titans defense, which powered a run to the District 1 Class 6A playoffs last year, is back with many familiar faces. South's flexible 4-2-5 wreaked havoc last fall and again looks to be one of the best around.

"The last couple years, we've put together a pretty good defense," said coach Tom Hetrick. "We have seven guys back from that unit so we have pretty high expectations. We can hopefully roll out there and keep the defensive side of the ball going."

South limited four opponents to single digits last fall, including one shutout.

"The relationship we have, we all have a really good connection," Scipione said of what stands out about the group. "Everyone talks with each other and everyone knows each other's style of play. We jell well together."

"The guys that (graduated) played a big role but we have guys who can fill in."

The Titans are loaded with experience, including linebacker Matt Norris, an All-State selection last year who racked up 130 tackles in 2017.

"The one thing about this group is the senior leadership that sets this up," Hetrick said. "In high school football, it all trickles from the top down. It's a great group of seniors and a great group of captains. And the sophomores picked up on it right away, as far as the tempo and the speed of the game. So we've had great practices so far."

"We're fired up. They seem to be a special group of guys in that they give us great effort. Football's about effort and execution, and so far, we're off to a good start. We're ahead of where we were last year."

TOUGH TESTS

South will go against some stiff competition in the nonleague schedule, hosting Spring-Ford before hitting the road for Downingtown West and Council Rock South.

"I think it's a good thing to play real good teams early, because when you play good competition, it makes you either say 'OK, I think we have something,' or 'what do we need to work on?'" Hetrick said. "Because good teams can expose weaknesses. So it's good to have competition right out of the gate."

South's rugged defense is complemented by a spread, no-huddle attack on the other side of the ball. The Titans also return a kicker for the first time in a while, with Brian Madden providing extra confidence for special teams.

"It's one thing to kick on the practice field, but to have the battle-tested reps under your belt coming into your senior year, it makes a world of difference," Hetrick said.



QUAKERTOWN PANTHERS

**CLASS
6A**

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 25 ... @ Central Bucks East	11:00 am
Aug. 31 ... @ Souderton Area	7:00 pm
Sept. 7 ... Central Bucks West	7:00 pm
Sept. 14 ... Upper Moreland*	7:00 pm
Sept. 21 ... Cheltenham*	7:00 pm
Sept. 28 ... @ Wissahickon*	7:00 pm
Oct. 5 ... @ Upper Dublin*	7:00 pm
Oct. 12 ... Plymouth Whitemarsh*	7:00 pm
Oct. 19 ... Hatboro-Horsham*	7:00 pm
Nov. 22 ... Pennridge	10:15 am

By Kev Hunter
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QUAKERTOWN » S if it was the first day of class, Quakertown's players arrived at preseason practice having done their summer reading.

"This is probably the furthest we've been along during camp, because we have so many returners on both sides of the ball," coach George Banas said. "So we have a lot of older kids that have a lot of playing experience. And even the younger kids — we had a really good spring session, so we were able to install a lot of stuff there. And then coming out here, it was, 'okay, let's hit the ground running.'"

Coming off a District 1 Class 6A playoff berth, the Panthers are poised for an impressive run in 2018. Their offense appears ready to go.

"You can't help but like it," Banas said. "We have four starters back on our offensive line. And we have our starting quarterback, our two running backs, our tight end, and we have two receivers back who saw time. So offensively, they're clicking well."

Being so ready and so driven does come with its share of pressure, but the Panthers welcome it.

"Coach said pressure is a privilege," senior tight end/linebacker Nick Levinski said with a smile. "But we've got to live up to the pressure, really come out and grab the conference. We have tons of returning starters."

CRAZY GOOD

Just as promising as Quakertown's offense is a defense that should turn heads.

"We have some crazy people on our defense," Levinski said. "We have a lot of guys returning who want to make plays and are going to make plays. They fly around and make big hits. We can't wait. We're ready to go out and hit someone."

"The energy is insane. We have so many high-energy people on this team, people who can make plays, and when it all comes together, it's awesome. Everybody wants to be here. To come together and do something great."

There are a few openings to fill, but not many.

"The rest of the spots are returning. One D-end, one D-tackle, one inside linebacker, both outside, one corner," Banas said. "Our kicker, Gavin (Croissette), is back, so we're looking for a little bit more productivity there and a little bit more range, with having a year of experience under his belt. So that should definitely help out field-goal-wise and hopefully field-position-wise as well."

With the playoffs becoming a habit, Quakertown has stocked its early non-conference schedule with playoff-caliber opponents: Central Bucks East, Souderton and Central Bucks West.

The Panthers look ready.

Asked what he wants to provide this fall, Levinski said: "Hopefully big plays, on offense and defense. Leadership of course, and keep everyone on the right path during games, keep us in line, keep us going forward."



BENSALEM

OWLS

CLASS
6A

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24 ...Frankford	7:00 pm
Aug. 31 ...William Tennent.....	7:00 pm
Sept. 7 ...Central Bucks East.....	7:00 pm
Sept. 14 ...Abington*	7:00 pm
Sept. 21 ...@ Central Bucks South ...	7:00 pm
Sept. 28 ...@ Pennsbury *	7:00 pm
Oct. 5 ...@ Council Rock South* ..	7:00 pm
Oct. 12 ...Neshaminy*	7:00 pm
Oct. 20 ...Council Rock North* ..	5:00 pm
Oct. 26 ...@ Harry S. Truman* ..	7:00 pm

By Rick Fortenbaugh

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BENSALEM » While it might not always be reflected in its record, the Bensalem football team does do a good job with what it has against the deeper Suburban One National League squads.

With that in mind, look for coach Ed Cabbage and his scrappy Owls to be right there, battling and remaining competitive in its familiar underdog role against much larger squads.

"Things are going well; we're feeling optimistic," Cabbage said. "We are having a good camp. I like where we are at right now."

Bensalem lost its long-distance threat Keith Parrish to graduation, but the Owls have enough talent to strike at any time on offense. And it all starts up front, where Bensalem returns senior all-league selection Dan Garcia (5-10, 240) along with juniors Matt Brown (6-2, 290) and Ian Bustard.

"Our offensive line is the hardest working group on the team," Cabbage said. "We are real happy with them. Everyone on the team is following the example they set both on and off the field."

A featured offensive weapon will be senior Jarred O'Connell, who will line up at both running back and wide receiver.

"Replacing Parrish will be difficult, but O'Connell is a real productive player," said Cabbage. "We will get him the ball as much as possible."

Speedy sophomore Tyler Barry will start at quarterback and will only get better with more game experience.

O'Connell will also see significant playing time on defense as a safety. Other key defensive players include senior corner Justin Webb, senior linebacker Derrick Thomas (6-1, 210) and junior end Alex Davis (6-2, 200).

"Our numbers are in the low 40s," Cabbage said. "That's pretty good for us, but you know teams like Pennsbury and Neshaminy will have like 100. We may not be deep, but we have talent and can be dangerous."



NESHAMINY

REDSKINS

CLASS
6A

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24 ...North Penn.....	7:00 pm
Aug. 31 ...@ Pennridge	7:00 pm
Sept. 8 ...@ Downingtown West ..	7:00 pm
Sept. 14 ...Council Rock North* ..	7:00 pm
Sept. 21 ...@ Harry S. Truman* ..	7:00 pm
Sept. 28 ...Abington*	7:00 pm
Oct. 5 ...@ William Tennent.....	7:00 pm
Oct. 12 ...@ Bensalem*	7:00 pm
Oct. 19 ...Council Rock South* ..	7:00 pm
Oct. 26 ...Pennsbury *	7:00 pm

By Rick Fortenbaugh

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MIDDLETOWN » It's shaping up as another successful year for the long-time powerhouse Neshaminy football team.

Although the Redskins have to largely rebuild their lines, they have also returned most of their skill-position players and defensive backs from a team that went 10-2 and won the Suburban One League National championship.

"We're in good shape in a lot of areas, but we will also be really tested early in the season," coach Steve Wilmot said.

Neshaminy does have a very tough nonleague schedule that starts at home against North Penn. From there, the Redskins will play Pennridge and Downingtown West before league play.

A huge plus is the return of junior quarterback Brody McAndrew along with his favorite receivers, Cory Joyce, Zach Canimore and Oleh Manzyk.

McAndrew passed for more than 1,800 yards, 17 touchdowns and only four interceptions last year.

A senior, Joyce has over 60 receptions over the last two seasons. Manzyk, who also is a powerful inside runner, has scored 23 touchdowns heading into his junior year. Senior Ryan O'Connor gives Neshaminy even more depth at the receiver position.

Also returning on offense is senior tight end Bobby Buchys. Sophomore Chris James is the new speed back and shows lots of promise. Among the starting offensive linemen are seniors James Koluboi and James Stetson along with new junior center Zach Magdelinkas.

"That's the big question," agreed Wilmot when asked about the offensive line. "If that group comes around we should be in pretty good shape."

As productive as he is on offense, Manzyk is an even bigger terror at linebacker. Last year he recorded nearly 80 tackles, including 15 that resulted in losses.

The secondary will again be headed up by Joyce along with seniors Marcus Griffin and Logan Williamson. Senior Luke Hitchen returns to anchor the defensive line. Other linebackers include seniors Chris Majors and Emmanuel Ampofo.



PENNSBURY

FALCONS

CLASS
6A

2018 SCHEDULE

Aug. 24 ...Academy Park	7:00 pm
Aug. 31 ...@ Penn Wood	7:00 pm
Sept. 7 ...@ North Penn	7:00 pm
Sept. 14 ...Central Bucks East.....	7:00 pm
Sept. 21 ...@ Council Rock North* ..	7:00 pm
Sept. 28 ...Bensalem*	7:00 pm
Oct. 5 ...@ Council Rock South* ..	7:00 pm
Oct. 12 ...@ Council Rock South* ..	7:00 pm
Oct. 19 ...Abington*	7:00 pm
Oct. 26 ...@ Neshaminy*	7:00 pm

By Rick Fortenbaugh

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FALLS TWP. » One of the premier programs in the Delaware Valley for over half a century, Pennsbury has traditionally been able to survive heavy graduation losses much better than most.

This season, however, the program's depth will be put to the test, since the Falcons have virtually a whole new team following yet another in a long line of monster seasons.

Last year Pennsbury was named the No. 1 team in *The Trentonian's* Area Ratings after winning 10 games and advancing to the district semifinals.

The Falcons did not win the Suburban One League National Division title after losing to Neshaminy in the last game of the regular season, but they were able to avenge that loss by beating Neshaminy in the second round of the District 1 Class 6A playoffs.

With only a few returning starters, the team will enter the season with a lot of unknowns, and it will probably take a while for things to come together.

"Our numbers (high 90s) are good, but we lost an awful lot," third-year coach Dan McShane said. "We don't have a single starter back on defense."

What Pennsbury will miss the most on defense is an outstanding group of linebackers that really got after the ball. The team also lost excellent linemen who were adept at stopping the run and putting heat on quarterbacks.

Among those who will lead the rebuilt defense is senior linebacker/safety James Hose.

On offense, Pennsbury must replace most of a massive offensive line that protected quarterback Zach DeMarchis, who also graduated.

On the plus side, the offensive line has Division I prospect Brian Malinowski (6-4, 250) and center Jay Shellenberger (6-2, 290). The tight end position is also in good shape with Andrew Hamacher (6-2, 215) set to step in for his junior season.

The quarterback position is still being determined early in the preseason, but Pennsbury does have some capable running backs. Heading up that group are juniors JayVon McNeil and Brad Mickels.

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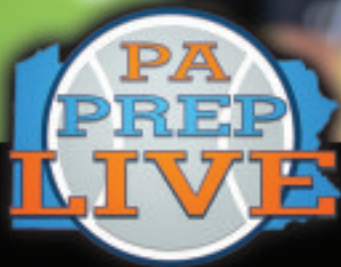
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