

# 2023 High School Football Gridiron Featured Section



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PREP FOOTBALL

# Perennial power Jags looking to reclaim DRL title in 2023

By Doug Donnelly  
For MediaNews Group

There are no off nights in the Downriver League.

Allen Park head coach Tom Danosky isn't asking for one, but he knows no matter how many returning starters his squad has, the league's eight-game schedule will be tough as nails.

"I believe our team will be competitive in the league as will many other teams," the eighth-year head coach said. "It is a challenging league top to bottom. Teams are well coached throughout the league and there are no easy games."

Allen Park does have six returning starters on both sides of the ball. It also has some key positions still up for grabs in training camp as the Jaguars prepare for the season.

"I think our team will have some versatility on both sides of the ball and if we play as a team, we have an opportunity to have a really good year," he said. "We return many people who saw significant time last season."

The varsity roster is nearly 40 players in size.

Braylon Orsette is a senior quarterback with senior Josh Rempert having seized one of the running back slots and Reed Picotte back at fullback. That leaves Glen Webster, Quintin Liepe and Alex Varga battling for additional carries.

Orsette completed 50 percent of his 82 passes last year for 574 yards. Rempert was the second-leading rusher on the team with 348 yards on the ground.

Junior Camden Johnson, named to the All-Downriver League team a year ago after catching 21 passes for 253 yards, is the flanker with Bird Nascief and Weston Gleis the split ends and Steven Doyle and Justin Payne battling it out to be the starting tight end.

On the offensive line, seniors Gavin Bolley and Vinny Scott are projected starters. Seniors Cooper Brown, Gryphon Alwell and Bryce Sauve, along with juniors David McKinney and Aidan Powell have sights on the other starting spots.

Danosky has a solid rotation going on the defensive front with three seniors — Glen Webster, Brown and Bolley looking solid with Alwell, Powell and Justin Payne in the mix.

At linebacker, Picotte (51 tackles, 4 sacks), Doyle, and Alex Varga (47 tackles) are an experienced senior group. Liepe and Carlson Sanchez are looking for playing time at that position as well.

Johnson, Nascief, Rempert, and Ben Kaczmarek are being pushed by Gleis and Kaidon Boyd in the secondary.

Carson Shene is a junior punter and kicker.

Danosky is an Allen Park grad-



FRANK WLADYSLAWSKI — MEDIANEWS GROUP

Allen Park's Braylon Orsette (8) takes off on a run while being chased by Wyandotte Roosevelt's Zachary Tomczyk (64) during the 2022 Xenith Prep Kickoff Classic at Wayne State University in Detroit. Orsette and the Jaguars went on to earn a 55-22 win over the Bears.

uate, having played on coach Tom Hoover's first year coaching the Jaguars. He spent more than a decade on the coaching staff before Hoover stepped down, landing the head coaching job himself in 2016.

In seven seasons as the head coach at Allen Park, there has been no drop off. The Jaguars have gone 54-23 with six playoff

appearances in seven years. His best season was 11-1 in 2016 and there were three additional nine-win campaigns along the way.

Last year Allen Park went 6-5, winning a Division 2 playoff game. They remain in Division 2 for this season.

Danosky was pleased with the Jaguar weight room over the summer.

## 2023 ALLEN PARK FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- (\*denotes league game)
- Week 1 | vs Taylor (Prep Kickoff Classic at Wayne State University) / Aug. 25 (4 p.m.)\*
- Week 2 | at Southgate Anderson / Aug. 31 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 3 | vs Brownstown Woodhaven / Sept. 8 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 4 | at Lincoln Park / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 5 | at Dearborn Edsel Ford / Sept. 22 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 6 | Wyandotte Roosevelt / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 7 | Trenton / Oct. 6 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 8 | at Gibraltar Carlson / Oct. 13 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 9 | at Redford Union / Oct. 20 (7 p.m.)

"We have good senior leadership and have several players capable of handling the ball offensively," he said.

Allen Park opens the season Friday, Aug. 25 at the Xenith Prep Classic Kickoff at Wayne State University against Taylor (3-6 last year). The Jaguars play in the Downriver League every week except Week 9.

The Jaguars have only four home games this season — the last coming Oct. 6.

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PREP FOOTBALL

# Cabrini enters new era with former Monarch at the helm

By Alex Muller  
MediaNews Group

A new era for Allen Park Cabrini football is officially underway.

The Monarchs will be led by new head coach Ryan Chidester, who after a decade of coaching at various college programs returns home to lead his alma mater.

A 2004 graduate from Cabrini, Chidester takes over a Monarchs program that finished 2-7 overall in 2022 including 0-5 and a last-place finish in the Catholic League's Intersectional 2 Division. Last year marked the fourth straight losing season for the program and their lowest win total in a nine-game season since 2016.

As is the case with most teams, Chidester will have to deal with roster turnover from the year prior. Fortunately for the former Monarch himself, he has a number of key returning players to help pave the way.

Among those include senior quarterback Nick Baccella, who takes over signal-calling duties for the since then graduated Carson Bradley.

Baccella may not be alone under center. Chidester says freshman Evan Bergdoll is one of three potential impact newcomers that could provide Cabrini a different look at times throughout the season.

Baccella will have some experienced weapons around him to

disperse the ball to as well. Wide receiver and fellow senior Alex Thompson figures to be the primary target for Baccella. Two other pass-catching options, brothers Lander and Logan Emerick, should also see steady time at the wide receiver position.

The sophomore Lander is tabbed as a starting wideout for Cabrini. The freshman Logan, meanwhile, is one of those aforementioned impact newcomers that could emerge as a steady option for the Monarchs.

Elsewhere on offense, another projected starter be Logan VanNorden. The senior figures to be the primary running back option for Baccella to hand the ball off to.

It is a Cabrini offense that will surely be looking for a spark. After putting up 42 points in their Week 1 over Dearborn Advanced Tech Academy a season ago, the Monarchs were held to 21 or fewer points over their final eight games, including under 10 points four times.

Cabrini will have no shortage of experience up front in the trenches. A trio of seniors in Christopher Alanis, Charlie Kieselbach, and Wyatt Korndorfer are slated to anchor the offensive line. Alanis is among those key returning players for the Monarchs.

On the defensive line, two more returning starters in senior Josh Hancock and junior Zachary Hamid will lead the charge. Chidester also highlights fresh-



FRANK WLADYSLAWSKI — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Cabrini's Alex Thompson looks for room to run during their 2022 Week 1 matchup at home against Dearborn Advanced Tech Academy.

man Tyler Hernandez-Walsh as an impact newcomer at the defensive end position.

The Monarchs should have a relatively deep and steady rotation up front on both sides of the ball.

Other offensive line options include senior Cam Stayton; juniors Tyler Gutt, Brycen Kimes, Andrew Tomaine, and David Andrews; and sophomores Richard Escobar, Nick Kielytyka, and Mor-

gan Stollings.

Defensive line depth will include the likes of sophomore Pdraig John and freshman Alex Uselman.

At the linebacking position, look for junior and returning starter Lucas Roman to carry the workload. Others who figure to see time at linebacker include fellow juniors Nathan Hernandez-Walsh and Jay Turner as well as freshman Daniel Kibzey.

## 2023 CABRINI FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- (\*denotes league game)
- Week 1 | vs Dearborn Advanced Tech (at Lawrence Tech University) / Aug. 25 (7 p.m.)
- Week 2 | vs Sterling Heights Parkway Christian / Aug. 31 (7 p.m.)
- Week 3 | vs Lakeview (at Ferris State University) / Sept. 8 (7 p.m.)
- Week 4 | vs Clarkston Everest Collegiate / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 5 | at Royal Oak Shrine Catholic / Sept. 22 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 6 | at Grosse Pointe Woods University Liggett / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 7 | at Marine City Cardinal Mooney / Oct. 7 (1 p.m.)\*
- Week 8 | vs Waterford Our Lady of the Lakes / Oct. 13 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 9 | at Detroit University Prep S&M / Oct. 20 (7 p.m.)

Chidester has tabbed sophomore Eddie Hughes as a projected starter at defensive back. Joining the all-area honorable mention baseball player in the secondary include junior Vance Edwards as well as any of the aforementioned wide receivers.

As for the kicking game, look for sophomore Evan Thompson to shoulder a lot of those duties on special teams.



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PREP FOOTBALL

# New era for Woodhaven football begins in 2023

By Alex Muller  
MediaNews Group

A new era for Brownstown Woodhaven football is officially underway.

The Warriors head into the 2023 season with a new head coach Dave Mifsud, who assumes the title after Keith Christnagel held that role for more than 20 years.

Christnagel has since then moved to the role of athletic director for Woodhaven High School.

Mifsud comes by way of Monroe High School, where he spent the 2021 season. That brief stint was just one of nearly 30 years of high school coaching experience under his belt.

Mifsud inherits a Woodhaven program that enjoyed a lot of success over Christnagel. The Warriors since 2007 have a collective record of 110-50 and qualified for the state playoffs 13 times, including seven straight seasons.

Woodhaven in 2022 finished 6-4 overall and 6-2 in the Downriver League, second behind eventual co-champions Gibraltar Carlson and Trenton. The Warriors saw their season end with a 48-0 loss to eventual Division 1 state champion and powerhouse program Belleville in the opening round of the postseason.

It is a healthy program right now in terms of numbers.

Woodhaven will go into the 2023 campaign with 55 guys slated for the varsity roster.

While Mifsud is encouraged with the depth at his disposal, it is by and large a young team. Couple that with implementing new systems, Mifsud is prepared for the potential of some growing pains, at least early in the season.

“This year’s Warriors are very young and inexperienced, and are learning a new system on both offense and defense,” Mifsud said. “They should be competitive in the Downriver league, but a lot will depend on how quickly they adjust to a new coach, a new offense and defense and how quickly they mature and develop as a team.”

Fortunately for Mifsud, he has several key players returning from last year’s team to help lead the new-look Warriors.

Two players who figure to see a heavy workload in 2023 are seniors Tyler Dodd and Andrew Phillips, both of whom are two-way players. Dodd figures to be anchoring the offensive line and leading the line-backing core on defense along with Phillips, who will also be a prime target at the slot receiver position on offense.

Another potential two-way impact player for the Warriors will be Adrian Sadiku. The senior “gained valuable experience” playing H-back on of-



ROBERT SHERMAN — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Woodhaven’s Devin Henry (9) runs the ball on Friday night while getting a block from Tyler Dodd (51) during the team’s matchup with host Southgate Anderson during the 2022 season. Dodd enters his senior season and will anchor the offensive line for the Warriors in 2023.

fense and linebacker on defense in 2022, and could very well do the same again in 2023.

Other key returning players that Mifsud highlighted are linemen Xavier Barnes and Christian Granthom. The senior Barnes will join Dodd on the offensive line while the junior Granthom will be part of

a deep rotation up front on defense.

With the influx of youth into the Woodhaven program, there is the likelihood for several impact newcomers. Mifsud point to juniors Jace Davis, Nick Harget, and Maurice Tyler as well as sophomores Izzy Ibrahim and Marquez McAdoo.

## 2023 WOODHAVEN FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- (\*denotes league game)
- Week 1 | at Wyandotte Roosevelt / Aug. 24 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 2 | vs Trenton / Aug. 31 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 3 | at Allen Park / Sept. 8 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 4 | at Waterford Mott / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)
- Week 5 | at Taylor / Sept. 22 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 6 | vs Southgate Anderson / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 7 | vs Gibraltar Carlson / Oct. 6 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 8 | at Lincoln Park / Oct. 13 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 9 | vs Dearborn Edsel Ford / Oct. 20 (7 p.m.)\*

Davis, Mifsud says, is one of two prime candidates to become Woodhaven’s primary quarterback along with senior Ben Kolodziejczyk. Harget and Tyler are two more of those aforementioned two-way options who will see time at wide receiver and defensive back.

Ibrahim will join a running back room that includes senior Gunner Kniga and Darion Parker, and will be part of that heavy rotation in the secondary. And McAdoo is likely to see significant time on both the offense and defensive lines.

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PREP FOOTBALL

# Red Raiders looking to build on strong 2022 season

By Alex Muller  
MediaNews Group

It was a strong campaign for the Ecorse football program a season ago.

The Red Raiders finished the 2022 campaign with a 9-2 mark overall. The record included eight straight victories to start the season, something they had not done since going a perfect 9-0 way back in 1965.

The nine victories in a season was the most for Ecorse since going 10-3 back in 2011. All of the success in 2022 was good enough to earn the Raiders their sixth playoff appearance in seven seasons.

The red and white appear ready to continue what is currently a strong era for Ecorse football. And according to head coach Jovan Olafioye, they are doing it with a “little engine that could” mindset.

“Our team should be able to compete at a very high-level,” Olafioye said.

Should Ecorse make some noise again in 2023, it will start and finish on the offensive side of the ball, specifically with the play of quarterback Marquis Campbell.

Campbell spear-headed a Raiders offense that averaged north of 40 points per game. And the junior won’t be alone as he has both key weapons and experienced offensive line to insulate him under center.

Campbell was merely an option, albeit a dangerous one, for a strong running game put forth by Ecorse. Fortunately for he and Olafioye, they return the likes of juniors Diondre Johnson and Phillip Tillie to shoulder the bulk of that workload out of the backfield.

A potential impact newcomer on offense for Ecorse in 2023 comes in the form Samir Mitchell. The senior is listed among the plethora of running back options at Olafioye’s disposal.

As far as pass-catching options, Dennell Kemp returns for one more year. A three-sport standout and all-state baseball player last spring, the senior will be a threat and then some at the slot receiver position for Ecorse.

Other wide receiver options for the Raiders are a pair of potential impact newcomers. Senior Orlando Hall should also see time as a defensive back on the other side of the ball, while junior John Hazard, according to Olafioye, is listed as an athlete could see all sorts of looks, including at quarterback.

Both the run and passing game should see plenty of time and space to operate with a trio of returning offensive linemen holding down the fort in the trenches. Olafioye tabs as Bruce Fomby, Khamari Washington, and Milton



ALEX MULLER — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Ecorse quarterback Marquis Campbell (3) takes off on a run and gets a block from lineman Bruce Fomby (51) during a matchup with host Dearborn Advanced Tech at Lawrence Tech in Southfield. The visiting Red Raiders rolled to a 48-8 victory over the Lakers in their Week 6 matchup of the 2022 season.

Streator as key returning players up front for Ecorse in 2023.

Those senior linemen are expected to create havoc on the defensive line as well. They are also part of a rotation of players up front that include Courtney Powell, Derrick Cunningham, Marcus Winter, Tristian Thomas, and Jordan Barnett.

Tillie and Johnson should see significant time on defense as well

at the linebacker position. They will be joined by Deontae Antfield and Roderick Campbell at that second level of the defense.

And in the secondary, look for the quarterback Campbell and the aforementioned newcomer Mitchell to hold down spots at defensive back. Other viable options for Olafioye are Hall, Brandon Love, Ralph Reed, and Jaylen Reed.

## 2023 ECORSE FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- (\*denotes league game)
- Week 1 | BYE
- Week 2 | vs Detroit Cody / Sept. 1 (7 p.m.)
- Week 3 | at Detroit University Prep (The Corner Ballpark) / Sept. 8 (4 p.m.)\*
- Week 4 | vs Muskegon Heights / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)
- Week 5 | vs Detroit University Prep S&M / Sept. 22 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 6 | vs Dearborn Advanced Tech / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 7 | at Hamtramck / Oct. 6 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 8 | vs Detroit Loyola / Oct. 13 (7 p.m.)
- Week 9 | vs Detroit Southeastern / Oct. 20 (7 p.m.)

It’s a defensive side of the ball that definitely made a statement for Ecorse in 2022, giving up 185 points over 11 games. Of those 185 points, however, 135 came over the Raiders’ final three games when the level of competition ratcheted up quickly.

Ecorse will go into 2023 playing above their paygrade, if you will, for the second season in a row. The Raiders have opted up to participate in the Division 6 state playoffs despite being slotted in D7 in terms of enrollment.

**Let's GO Red Raiders!!!**

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PREP FOOTBALL

# Flat Rock looks to build on historic 2022 season

By Alex Muller  
MediaNews Group

The Flat Rock football program comes into the 2023 season with a lot of optimism and expectations after a historic campaign a season ago.

The Rams in 2022 finished with an 8-4 mark overall and the school's first-ever football district championship. The eight eights are the most in a single season for the program since going 11-0 back in 1976 and the 12 games played are the most in team history.

And with more than half of their starters from last year making a return in 2023, Flat Rock figures to factor into how the always-competitive Huron League plays out on the gridiron.

Helping lead the charge will be the tandem of quarterback Graham Junge and running back Brian Booms.

Junge as a sophomore in 2022 threw for 28 touchdowns and over 2,600 yards, picking up first-team all-state honors as well as News-Herald Dream Team recognition in the process. The junior was the focal point of a Rams offense that enjoyed its highest-scoring season in program history.

Booms meanwhile rushed for nearly 800 yards and 13 touchdowns via rushing, receiving, and even passing a season ago. The senior was arguably Flat Rock's most valuable player. Another Dream Team honoree in 2022,

Booms also led the team in tackles and interceptions on defense.

Head coach Brandon Reaume described Booms as Flat Rock's "quarterback on defense."

Junge and Booms are just two of 13 returning starters for Flat Rock including seven on offense. Among the others returning on that side of the ball include tight end Rocco Breslin, who hauled in four touchdown passes a season ago.

Breslin like many Rams players will also be a fixture on defense as the senior will be the leader at the linebacker position.

A big wild card for Flat Rock offensively comes in the form of Alex Gillum. A 6-foot-6 senior, Gillum returns after missing all of 2022 due to an injury and figures to be Junge's primary deep threat option in the passing game.

Up front in the trenches, Reaume will see of his five offensive linemen make a return, headlined by Michael Beaudrie. The senior is expected to once more set up shop at left tackle and protect Junge's blind side. Beaudrie will also have fellow returnees Drew Booth and RJ Percha on the line, while seniors Teigan Donovan and Jacob Stallings, both of whom have varsity experience.

All of those names will also be integral to the defensive line as well for Flat Rock. Reaume also mentioned a host of lesser experienced that could make an early



ALEXANDER MULLER — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Flat Rock quarterback Graham Junge winds back to fire a pass downfield during a MHSAA D5 regional round game at home against Detroit Country Day on November 11, 2022.

impact including Zach Claiborne, Isaac Arradondo, Owen McKay, Kaden Luff, and Carter Aicher.

The aforementioned Gillum is likely to see steady time as a defensive end as well. Reaume says the Rams "should have some depth up front" and will be able to freely rotate players in out to keep them fresh and healthy.

Other potential impact players for Flat Rock in 2023 include juniors Jacob Hagan and Adam

Szalay as well as sophomores Evan Szalay and Ben Scully. Both Szalay's will see time at the wide receive and defensive backfield while Scully and Hagan will be used in a variety of ways, among those at running back behind Booms.

While there is plenty to like and look forward to with Flat Rock in 2023, Reaume was quick to point out that there are still big shoes to fill following a mag-

## 2023 FLAT ROCK FOOTBALL SCHEDULE —

- (\*denotes league game)
- Week 1 | at Dundee / Aug. 24 (7 p.m.)
- Week 2 | at Grosse Ile / Aug. 31 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 3 | vs Carleton Airport / Sept. 8 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 4 | vs Monroe Jefferson / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 5 | at Riverview / Sept. 22 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 6 | at Milan / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 7 | vs Monroe St Mary / Oct. 6 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 8 | vs New Boston Huron / Oct. 13 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 9 | vs Livonia Clarenceville / Oct. 20 (7 p.m.)

ical run in 2022.

"We lost a great senior class last year," Reaume said. "We'll need some guys to step up this year and fill those roles."

In addition to their own team expectations, Flat Rock will be jockeying for position in a Huron League that saw six of its eight member schools qualify for the state playoffs in 2022. Among those was Riverview, who won the conference for a third straight season and advanced all the way to the state semifinals for the first time in five years.



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PREP FOOTBALL

# Gabriel Richard looks to contend for CHSL title in 2023

By Alex Muller  
MediaNews Group

The Riverview Gabriel Richard football team heads into the 2023 season with high expectations following a bounce-back campaign a year ago.

After going just 3-5 and missing the playoffs for the first time in five years back in 2021, the Pioneers responded with a 7-4 record and a return trip to the post-season in 2022. That turnaround included a 3-1 mark in Catholic League Intersectional 1 Division play with their only defeat being a slim one-point loss to league champion Madison Heights Bishop Foley.

Richard made it to the district final round of the Division 8 state playoffs before falling to eventual state champion and perennial powerhouse Ottawa Lake Whiteford.

Since that season-ending loss last November, there has been no shortage of excitement and optimism around the program going into 2023.

"Our energy has been up there," Richard head coach Dionte Allen said at the media day festivities. "Our motto this year is 'all in.' We've been able to have a great offseason with weightlifting and training, just building that program and culture. It's been phenomenal."

The Catholic League held its

annual preseason football media day on July 27 at Detroit U-D Jesuit High School. Allen was one of nearly two dozen coaches on hand representing the new-look CHSL that expanded for the first time in five years.

"I think it is a great opportunity (to be here)," Allen said. "It is great to be around all of these great men and just get that feeling of football."

CHSL coaches compiled a pre-season poll for each of its four divisions heading into the much-anticipated 2023 seasons. Gabriel Richard was picked to finished first out of five teams in the Intersection 1 Division. The Pioneers were picked ahead of Ann Arbor Gabriel Richard (2nd) and Macomb Lutheran North (3rd), with defending champion Bishop Foley and and Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook-Kingswood rounding out the poll.

A big reason for the high expectations with Richard revolves around the talent and production running it back from last year's squad. Of their 22 starters from the 2022 campaign, 17 are returning including nine on the offensive side of the ball.

Allen, who enters year two as the Richard head coach, talked about the importance of having a plethora of experience returning once more in 2023.

"That's always great to have," Allen said. "We got some (new)



ALEXANDER MULLER — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Riverview Gabriel Richard's Tylor Morehouse runs after catching a pass during a Week 1 matchup at Grosse Ile in 2022.

guys coming in as well. There is some consistency with the guys. They know the verbiage, we are playing faster, and understanding things faster. It is great to have so many guys back."

The Pioneers' offense last season averaged 33.5 points per game, virtually matching their per-game total from the 2017 squad for the highest mark in program history. Several key playmakers return from that high-powered offense including the likes of juniors Nick Sobush and Joey Calhoun.

Sobush, who was used in a variety of roles last season, is ex-

pected to be the team's primary signal-caller at quarterback in 2023. Calhoun meanwhile figures to be the go-to ball-handler in the backfield.

It will be tough for Richard to replace lineman Nic DiSanto, who is off playing football at Eastern Illinois University. The Pioneers do have a key returning lineman to fortify their trenches in the form of Andrew Fust, who enters his senior year.

In addition to being a tackle on the offensive line, Fust should make an impact as an edge rusher on defense for Richard. Other key players returning on defense for

## 2023 GABRIEL RICHARD FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- (\*denotes league game)
- Week 1 | vs Montrose / August 25. (7 p.m.)
- Week 2 | at Royal Oak Shrine / Aug. 31 (7 p.m.)
- Week 3 | at Huron (OH) / Sept. 8 (7 p.m.)
- Week 4 | vs Ann Arbor Gabriel Richard / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 5 | vs Muskegon Heights / Sept. 23 (1 p.m.)
- Week 6 | vs Madison Heights Bishop Foley / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 7 | at Macomb Lutheran North / Oct. 6 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 8 | at Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook-Kingswood / Oct. 13 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 9 | TBD (CHSL Prep Bowl or crossover)

Allen include a pair of cornerbacks in junior Antonio Sobush and sophomore Derek Lesko.

Even before the CHSL pre-season polls, there has been a growing sense of championship expectations within the walls of the Richard program. It has Allen especially excited to get the season going.

"I believe it is time," Allen said. "If we do what we're supposed to do, take things one game at a time, I think we have a chance."

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**PREP FOOTBALL**

# Carlson enters 2023 season eyeing third straight DRL title

**By Alex Muller**  
MediaNews Group

The 2022 football season was another strong one for Gibraltar Carlson.

A 9-2 record on the gridiron earned the Marauders their second consecutive Downriver League title, sharing the honors with Trenton. It marked the school's third DRL crown in the sport since the conference's inception back in 2009.

Last season ultimately ended in the Division 3 district final round with a 17-7 loss at home to Trenton, whom they defeated during the regular season.

Nonetheless, the Carlson program as a whole has enjoyed a nice run of success as of late, winning 75 percent of their games since the start of the 2017 season (45-15 record). The upcoming 2023 campaign could be another bright one for the two-time defending DRL champions.

"Our staff is looking forward to the challenge of preparing this group to compete for a DRL championship while staying focused on the process of getting better each week," said head coach Jason Gendron.

Gendron in his first year coached a Marauders team that had a +249 point differential, their highest such single-season mark since 2006. A big reason for that was the defense allowing on average under 12 points per game.

Despite plenty of big names gone by way of graduation, Carlson will see plenty of big-time play-makers return on both sides of the ball in an effort to repeat as DRL champs.

Among those will be Jackson Zackary, who figures to be a prime candidate to be the team's primary quarterback option. Zackary will also see steady time at both wide receiver and as a defensive back as Gendron labeled the senior as an "athlete."

"Jackson is going to command a lot of attention from our opponents based on his size and athleticism," Gendron said. "We will rely on his playing experience from last season."

Another player who Gendron says is vying for the starting quarterback job is Joe Krolak. Gendron says the junior has "nice pocket presence and runs the ball very well." Krolak also played safety and served as the team's punter last year.

A big hole to fill will be in the backfield following the graduation of standout running back Omari Carter, who accounted for 15 touchdowns a season ago. Fortunately for Carlson, they possess one of the more dynamic and electric play-makers in the Downriver area in the form of Izaiah Wright.

Entering only his sophomore season, Wright will take on a bigger workload at the running back spot after averaging roughly 50 yards rushing and scoring eight touchdowns in 2022.



ALEXANDER MULLER — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Carlson running back Izaiah Wright stiff-arms a Woodhaven defender during a Week 9 matchup of the 2022 regular season.

Helping block for whatever quarterback is under center as well as open up holes for Wright to run through will be offensive lineman Adam Zurawski. The 6-foot-2, 230-pound senior, Gendron says, will "need to take his game to the next level" and be a leader for what is likely to be a young and inexperienced offensive line for the Marauders.

Two other seniors who figure to be key facets in other areas of the game include Antonio Burrell and Kyler Ostrowski.

Burrell has become more or less the leader of the Carlson defense at the linebacker position, having made big plays in key moments late last season. Ostrowski, who also plays for the school's boys soccer team, is a secret weapon on special teams after earning all-region honors in 2022.

As is the case with many teams, Carlson will be looking for big impact from some new faces. One of those for the Marauders could come in the form of Drew Sikora.

A junior who starred on the

**2023 CARLSON FOOTBALL SCHEDULE**

- (\*denotes league game)
- Week 1 | vs Carleton Airport / Aug. 24 (7 p.m.)
- Week 2 | at Dearborn Edsel Ford / Aug. 31 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 3 | at Taylor / Sept. 8 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 4 | vs Wyandotte Roosevelt / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 5 | vs Southgate Anderson / Sept. 22 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 6 | at Trenton / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 7 | at Brownstown Woodhaven / Oct. 6 (7:00p)\*
- Week 8 | vs Allen Park / Oct. 13 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 9 | vs Lincoln Park / Oct. 20 (7 p.m.)\*

school's junior-varsity team in 2022, Sikora is expected to be the team's primary tight end option this year. Gendron says Sikora had a "great offseason" and benefitted a lot from taking reps behind the recently graduated all-around athlete Ben Przytula.

"Heavy graduation from last year has opened up numerous opportunities for our young men," Gendron said. "We will rely on players who have played in big games to lead us and will need our underclassmen to step up and compete at a high level."

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**PREP FOOTBALL**

# Red Devils eyeing return trip to playoffs in 2023

**By Alex Muller**  
MediaNews Group

The 2022 football season was an up-and-down one for Grosse Ile.

After starting with victories in their first three games, the Red Devils finished just 2-5 down the stretch. But even with an under-.500 record, they were able to sneak into the Division 5 state playoffs, becoming one of six Huron League teams to do so in 2022.

Last season was a microcosm of what Grosse Ile football has done in recent history. The Devils have reached the postseason seven times in the last 12 years, however they have only done it in consecutive years once.

Head coach John Bodner is certainly hoping to buck that trend a bit and get back into the second season while navigating what should be another tough schedule for the islanders.

"Our schedule is competitive from Week 1 to Week 9 with 6 teams having made the playoffs last year," Bodner said.

In addition to the tough schedule, Grosse Ile has the difficult task of trying to replace the likes of quarterback Travis Symons, running back Tyler Fraczek, and wide receivers Hunter Proctor and Tyler Swick, all of whom have since graduated.

The Devils in 2023 will be leaning heavily on a pair of three-year

starters in Matthew Pizzo and Aiden Rush to lead the team both on and off the field.

Pizzo figures to take on a bigger role and assume the title of lead running back. The senior also returns to man the secondary after leading the team in tackles and interceptions a season ago.

Rush meanwhile will lead the linebackers, further solidifying a defense that features a host of returning players including seniors Dylan Alexander, Jonathan Allison, Zac Berwald, Carson Pace, and Austin Wisler.

Alexander, Wisler, and Pace are slated to start on both the offensive and defensive lines for Grosse Ile. Berwald will join Rush at linebacker while Allison will be opposite of Pizzo in the defensive backfield.

A group of seniors who figure to see time throughout the season on defense include Dominic Cappellino, Sebastian Grace, Ethan Miller, and Pete Moore.

A big question Grosse Ile will need to answer sooner or later will be the starting quarterback. Bodner says it is a battle between junior Mason Crowley and sophomore Tanner Symons.

Crowley is already tabbed as a projected starter on both offense and defense. Should he not beat out the newcomer Symons for the quarterback, the junior will be the team's starting slot wide receiver.

Symons, who Bodner also lists



ALEXANDER MULLER — MEDIANEWS GROUP

Grosse Ile running back Matthew Pizzo stiff-arms a Riverview Gabriel Richard defender during the Red Devils' Week 1 matchup at home vs the Pioneers on August 26, 2022.

as a defensive back option, is one of several potential impact newcomers for Grosse Ile in 2023. The Devils also have juniors Joseph Christnagel and Evan Brown as well as sophomore Dominic Cucinella as guys who could make an impact early and often.

Regardless of whomever takes over the job under center, Grosse Ile should have a plethora of weapons for that quarterback to distribute the ball to. In addition to experienced targets like Allison, Crowley, and Pizzo, other options could include Brown, Cap-

**2023 GROSSE ILE FOOTBALL SCHEDULE**

- (\*denotes league game)
- Week 1 | vs Ida / Aug. 24 (7 p.m.)
- Week 2 | vs Flat Rock / Aug. 31 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 3 | at Monroe St Mary Catholic Central / Sept. 8 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 4 | vs Milan / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 5 | at Carleton Airport / Sept. 22 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 6 | vs Monroe Jefferson / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 7 | vs New Boston Huron / Oct. 6 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 8 | at Riverview / Oct. 13 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 9 | at Romulus / Oct. 30 (7 p.m.)\*

pellino, Cucinella, and Miller. Bodner knows that he will have no shortage of skilled players and talent at his disposal in 2023. What he doesn't know yet is how or where the pieces will fall.

"We have lost a lot of our skill players from last year," Bodner said. "We will need to find some depth as we have several guys playing both ways."

With another tough schedule waiting in the wings, Grosse Ile figures to learn a lot about themselves early on.



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PREP FOOTBALL

# Railsplitters looking to make more strides in 2023

By Alex Muller  
MediaNews Group

One Downriver League football team looking to get over the hump and make some noise in Lincoln Park.

The 2022 season unfortunately was the latest in what has been a difficult stretch for the Railsplitters in recent history. A 2-7 record overall last season marked the sixth straight year in which they collected two or fewer victories.

It is seemingly always an uphill battle for Lincoln Park on the gridiron. However, head coach Chad Bonmon is encouraged by what he has seen from the program all off-season.

“Our guys have done a great job in the offseason,” Bonmon said. “They have really bought into what we are doing as a staff. We look to compete day in and day out.”

Bonmon himself enters his third season as the head football coach for Lincoln Park. And albeit marginal — one more victory in 2022 than in '21 — there is some semblance of growth and development around the Rails program.

What Lincoln Park does have going for them are a host of key players returning in 2023, particularly on the offensive side of the ball.

Senior Esterlin Reyes, junior Javion Cornett Tillman, and sophomore Brandon Gray all return at the wide receiver position while

senior Shane Townsend will be the primary ball-carrier out of the backfield.

That said, Lincoln Park will have a new face under center to distribute the ball to those weapons on offense. Bonmon has already tabbed sophomore Jacob Boykins to be the team's starting quarterback come Week 1.

Boykins replaces the recently graduated Matthew Ferrell.

Also returning on offense are a trio of linemen in seniors CJ Buckens and Nick Martinez as well as junior Isaiah Badder. All three figure to be the Rails' starting defensive linemen as well.

Townsend will be a focal point at the linebacker position for Lincoln Park, a group that also includes juniors Jamir King and Tyle Gibbs along with sophomore Logan Ferrell.

Gibbs is projected to be the team's starting tight end. King meanwhile will help Townsend shoulder some of the workload on offense as a fullback.

King is one of five potential impact newcomers for Bonmon and company in 2023.

Among those include more options on offense include junior tight end Sean Bailey, who will also see time at defensive end. Meanwhile, junior Archie McCornell and sophomore Omari Harvey could earn themselves playing time at wide receiver.

The wide receiving group, like



FRANK WALDYSLAWSKI — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Lincoln Park's Shane Townsend catches a pass during the Railsplitters' Week 1 matchup at home against Gibraltar Carlson on August 25, 2022.

many players on this team, will also do double duty and man things in the secondary on defense for Lincoln Park. Bonmon projects Reyes, Tillman, and Gray to be the starting defensive backs for the Rails with McCornell and Harvey being in the mix.

To Bonmon's point about being more competitive, one thing

Lincoln Park unfortunately found themselves in too often last season was digging a deep hole early in games. The Rails' seven losses were decided by an average of more than 24 points per game.

For whatever it is worth, Lincoln Park does have an opportunity to establish some momentum early in 2023.

## 2023 LINCOLN PARK FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- (\*denotes league game)
- Week 1 | at Dearborn Edsel Ford / Aug. 24 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 2 | vs Wyandotte Roosevelt / Aug. 31 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 3 | at Trenton / Sept. 8 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 4 | vs Allen Park / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 5 | vs Coldwater / Sept. 22 (7 p.m.)
- Week 6 | vs Taylor / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 7 | at Southgate Anderson / Oct. 6 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 8 | vs Brownstown Woodhaven / Oct. 13 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 9 | at Gibraltar Carlson / Oct. 20 (7 p.m.)\*

They open the season against a Dearborn Edsel Ford team that finished winless a season ago. Then in Week 2, they play a Wyandotte Roosevelt team that matched Lincoln Park's record of 2-7 last season but also defeated the Rails in their head-to-head matchup.

“We are excited everyday and look to be the best versions of ourselves,” Bonmon said. “We have a hungry group, that loves one another, and are ready to battle night in/night out.”

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PREP FOOTBALL

# Cardinals looking to recapture winning ways in 2023

By Alex Muller  
MediaNews Group

Among the Downriver-area programs looking to rebound in 2023 is Melvindale.

The Cardinals finished the 2022 season with a 3-6 mark overall including 3-4 in the Western Wayne Athletic Conference. That was under the direction of Michael Suchy, who enters year two as the program's head coach.

There are seemingly non-stop adjustments being made at Melvindale. But for Suchy, he says the program has still made significant strides heading into the new season when compared to a year ago.

“We're better off at this point than we were last year,” Suchy said. “We're a lot further ahead and got more things in. It is just a matter of figuring out the puzzle pieces that we're going to miss for a while.”

Suchy described their preseason as “up and down” so far, with much of the ebbs and flows revolving around player availability. Melvindale is not expected to field a junior-varsity team for the second consecutive season; Suchy said they very well could be the only WWAC team to be in that position in 2023.

Even with the preseason day-to-day uncertainties, Suchy says there is some level of comfort and continuity between the staff and players when it comes to familiarity.

“They're figuring out the system,” Suchy said. “But we're pretty

young and that is always going to be the problem (for us). We're still trying to get that continuity of being here everyday and putting in the work during the offseason.”

With all of that said, there are still some key returning players who will factor into the Melvindale's success on the gridiron in 2023.

One could argue that no Downriver area player is more valuable to his team than what Jordan Jablonski is for Melvindale. A first-team all-area honoree and all-WWAC performer in 2022, the senior picked up close to 900 yards and eight touchdowns on the ground while tallying a team-high 52 tackles as a linebacker.

Jablonski should take a sizeable amount of pressure off King Allen, who Suchy says is probably the favorite to be Cardinals' starting quarterback. The junior, like Jablonski, dabbled at both running back and linebacker in 2022.

Any room for Jablonski to run or for Allen to operate will depend on the work in the trenches. Suchy says among their linemen, Davair McCrimon is their most important returning starter up front. The junior will anchor the line on both sides of the ball.

Other potential impact players for Melvindale in 2023 include junior Anthony White, who figures to help spell Jablonski a bit in the run game, and sophomore Evan Longworth, who Suchy says has impressed coaches with his work



ALEXANDER MULLER — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Melvindale Jordan Jablonski takes the handoff from quarterback Johnny Ford during the Cardinals' matchup at home vs Robichaud in the 2022 season.

on the offensive and defensive line.

Suchy said he was most encouraged with the team's performance at a recent four-way scrimmage down in Ida that also included two other Monroe County region powers Erie Mason and Monroe St Mary Catholic Central.

“The kids did really well at the scrimmage,” Suchy said. “I was happy with the results. Those are some real good quality teams down there so it was a good test for us. Our kids didn't back down, they played hard.”

Despite finishing 3-6 overall, Melvindale came up just shy of qualifying for the postseason. A

win over Lincoln Park in Week 9 would have vaulted the Cardinals into the state playoffs by virtue of playoff points.

In league play alone, two of their losses came were decided by a single score to a pair of eventual playoff teams in Dearborn Heights Crestwood and Garden City. Suchy points to those results as valuable learning experiences for his team.

“Last year I think we gave some games that we probably shouldn't have,” Suchy said. “But I think these kids now know that they can compete in this league a little better than they did in the past.”

## 2023 MELVINDALE FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- (\*denotes league game)
- Week 1 | at Center Line / Aug. 24 (7 p.m.)
- Week 2 | vs Redford Thurston / Aug. 31 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 3 | vs Garden City / Sept. 8 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 4 | at Dearborn Heights Robichaud / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 5 | at Dearborn Heights Crestwood / Sept. 22 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 6 | vs Dearborn Heights Annapolis / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 7 | at Redford Union / Oct. 6 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 8 | at Romulus / Oct. 13 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 9 | vs Monroe Jefferson / Oct. 20 (7 p.m.)

Suchy is not only thinking about the short-term success and growth of the Melvindale program, but long-term future as well. And that starts with their Week 1 tilt at Center Line.

“The this for us in Week 1 is executing the game plan,” Suchy said. “If we end up falling short, that is fine as long as the kids are executing as we're trying to be flawless in all parts of the game. Then it is a success.”

“Win or lose, that part doesn't matter, you're moving forward now.”

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PREP FOOTBALL

# Chiefs looking to make noise in competitive Huron League

By Doug Donnelly  
For MediaNews Group

A mid-season four-game win streak propelled New Boston Huron into the state playoffs last season, extending the Chief's playoff streak to three years. Four starters from that team are now playing college athletics.

Second-year head coach Tom Hoover says the Chiefs are still going to be a solid team.

"The cupboard's not bare," Hoover said. "We have half of our starters back and some talented JV kids that came up. They will improve as the season goes."

It's hard to say what the toughest loss for Huron is. Quarterback Gavin Moczydlowsky led the team in passing (1,347 yards) and receiving (720 yards) while Rory Callahan caught more than 20 passes for 505 yards. And Josh Buettner was an all-league center.

If there is a coach out there who can mold a group of new starters with the returning ones, it's the veteran Hoover.

Before this stop at Huron, Hoover spent 20 years at Allen Park, where he led that school to 17 playoff appearances. He's 177-54 as a head coach between his time with the Jags and the Chiefs. He's also a member of the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

"Every year is a new challenge,"

Hoover said. "Every team is different. This is my second year. Last year we had a new staff, new offense, new defense and new special teams. Everything was new. It took us a few weeks to get acclimated."

"This year, the kids know what's going on. Things are a little easier and we can get more reps in."

The battle to replace Moczydlowsky in the Gun-T offense is between seniors Micah Smith and Christian Copely.

Hoover said no matter which quarterback starts, both will play a lot on both sides of the ball.

"Micah knows what every kid is doing," Hoover said. "He could play anywhere and he's tough as nails. Christian is an excellent passer."

Five running backs figure to split time, including Austin O'Dell, A.J. Floyd, Brad Hughes, Brennan Caldwell and Drew Lachach.

"I've got some guys who can run inside and outside and some guys that can scoot," Hoover said.

Ryan Anderson will be in the slot with Blake McCarthy and Todd Sinclair at wide receiver. Jake Handiside is the tight end.

Hoover is still looking to fill all of the offensive line spots but has good battles going on in camp.

Earl Shephard, Josh Luciw, Austin Holloway and Colton Marentette are probable start-



FRANK WLADYSLAWSKI — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Huron's Micah Smith carries the ball, looking for a hole to run through during a home game vs Grosse Ile on Sept 30, 2022.

ers. Shephard is about 6-foot-4 and 250 pounds, while Luciw is in his third season as a starter on the line.

Hoover is also excited about kicker Andrew Traster.

"He's been impressive in practice," the coach said.

Many of the same guys will be looked at to lead the defense. Smith is a returning starter at linebacker/strong safety and Caldwell is returning at middle linebacker. Copely was a starting corner back last year.

Shephard, Luciw and Marentette will be key guys up front. Shawn Folkewin is a defensive back that Hoover is high on.

Anderson started at safety last season and could be a big-play guy on defense.

"He's a track sprinter," Hoover said. "He's much improved. He's grown, too. He's probably 6-2 now."

Huron opens with Livonia Churchill, a 2-7 team a year ago, and closes with Detroit Henry Ford, who went 5-4 last year.

## 2023 HURON FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- (\*denotes league game)
- Week 1 | vs Livonia Churchill / Aug. 24 (7 p.m.)
- Week 2 | vs Monroe St Mary Catholic Central / Aug. 31 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 3 | at Milan / Sept. 9 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 4 | vs Riverview / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 5 | at Monroe Jefferson / Sept. 22 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 6 | vs Airport / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 7 | at Grosse Ile / Oct. 6 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 8 | at Flat Rock / Oct. 13 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 9 | at Detroit Henry Ford / Oct. 20 (7 p.m.)

In between those bookends is the usual rugged Huron League schedule, including powerhouse Monroe St. Mary Catholic Central, which is the league opener. "(We) should be competitive within the Huron League," Hoover said.

The schedule has some quirks. Unless they host a playoff game, the Chiefs won't play at home after September 29. The final three regular season games are all on the road.




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PREP FOOTBALL

# Riverview ready to run rampant once more in 2023

By Alex Muller  
MediaNews Group

One of the more consistently successful Downriver area football teams in recent history is Riverview.

Over the past six seasons, the Pirates have won more than 80 percent of their games played (54-11). Last season alone, they finished with a 12-1 record, matching the 1997 season for the most wins in a single season in school history.

The season ultimately ended with a loss to Goodrich in the D4 state semifinal round, which was their fourth such appearance in program history and the first since 2017.

One can safely say that Riverview will be one of the stronger area programs once more in 2023. However, like every team, they will have to tackle the turnover of player personnel.

The 2023 team is young and highly competitive," Riverview head football coach Derek McLaughlin said. "We will have many new faces competing for positions, some of which have never played a snap of varsity football."

Fortunately for McLaughlin, a number of familiar faces return in 2023 from a team that scored nearly 500 points in their 30 games played this season. Perhaps none will be more important than Max Lockhart, who figures to be the primary ball-carrier in the Pirates' run-heavy offense.

Lockhart last season averaged more than eight yards a carry and nearly 80 yards per game while also finding the end zone 10 times. Following the graduation of both Jacob Shank and Anthony Bowman, the senior will need to step up in a big way.

"Max is one of the best leaders we have had in our program," McLaughlin said. "He is an exceptional young man, and has paid the price in the off season."

Lockhart will be one of several Bucs to carry the rock out of the backfield in 2023. Look for junior Ian Adams to take on a bigger role as well after tallying 217 yards and six touchdowns on 27 carries last year. McLaughlin said Adams is a "true athlete that has great burst and running ability."

Other key returning players that will contribute to the Riverview rushing attack include senior Charlie Singleton, junior Nathan Pinkava, and sophomore Domanic Stuck. McLaughlin also tabs junior Jordan Smiechowski as a potential breakout impact player.

Of course, a big component of the Pirates having endless success in the ground game was the work put up front on the line. That unit figures to be another solid one again in 2023, however it like many sees quite the facelift in player turnover. McLaughlin will be leaning heavily on Gavin Labadie to be the leader on both the offensive and defensive lines for Riverview, as the senior is



ALEX MULLER — MEDIANEWS GROUP

Riverview quarterback Lucas Thompson (5) takes off on a run in a D4 state semifinal against Goodrich at Rochester High School.

the only returning start from last season.

Labadie will be accompanied by other linemen who have had significant playing time, albeit not in a starting role. Those include senior Jake Anderson and sophomore in Braeyden Evans.

Other linemen who will be looking to make an impact early and often include juniors Joe Avoris and Garrett Timmerman. Helping bolster the line even more will be a pair of tight ends in junior Chris Sarnacki and sophomore Braylon Orcher.

Junior quarterback Lucas Thompson also returns for his second season as a varsity starter.

While he was not asked to do much in the passing game in 2022 Thompson showed plenty of poise

managing the Power-T, while also chipping in with a little more than 20 rushing yards per game.

A potential wrinkle to the Bucs' offense could be in the form of senior Caleb DiBrano, who McLaughlin tabs as a potential impact option at the quarterback position.

All of these names figure to be staples on defense for Riverview as well.

Labadie and his fellow offensive linemen will flip around and be the primary disruptors on the defensive side of the ball. Meanwhile, the running back room will be dispersed throughout the linebacker and secondary positions.

Both Thompson and DiBrano will help hold things down as defensive backs.

When you add it all up plus the

## 2023 RIVERVIEW FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- (\*denotes league game)
- Week 1 | at Detroit Renaissance / Aug. 25 (7 p.m.)
- Week 2 | at Carleton Airport / Aug. 31 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 3 | at Monroe Jefferson / Sept. 8 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 4 | at New Boston Huron / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 5 | vs Flat Rock / Sept. 22 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 6 | at Monroe St. Mary Catholic Central / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 7 | vs Milan / Oct. 6 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 8 | vs Grosse Ile / Oct. 13 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 9 | at Monroe / Oct. 20 (7 p.m.)

recent track record, Riverview figures to be a favorite to win the Huron League in 2023. But even McLaughlin knows the Huron League is no cakewalk. Last year alone, the conference sent six of its eight member schools to the state playoffs.

"I think the league will be very competitive this year," McLaughlin said. "So many teams are returning loads of experience and play-makers. Every week, we will have our hands full."



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PREP FOOTBALL

# Reloaded Panthers look to make another deep run in 2023

By Alex Muller  
MediaNews Group

On surface, the 2022 season for River Rouge may have felt like a down year for their standards. But a deeper dive into the season tells a further story.

The Panthers last season finished the season at 5-4 overall, their fewest win total during what is now 13 straight playoff seasons for the program. Three of those four losses were by one possession to Division 1 staple Southfield A&T, the eventual D2 state champion Warren De La Salle, and Ohio-based power Cleveland St Ignatius.

The season for Rouge ultimately ended in the first round of the state playoffs, a 41-28 defeat at the hands of the two-time defending D3 state champion Detroit King.

Among the bigger storylines surrounding Rouge last season was Eric Pettway taking over as the head coach after being a long-time assistant under then head coach Corey Parker. The Panthers also made a mid-season quarterback change, handing the keys over to McKale McDowell.

Now with Pettway entering year two at the helm, a full season of McDowell under center, and a plethora of talent elsewhere on the field, Rouge could be primed to make another deep run.

According to Rouge assistant coach Russell Hughes, McDowell

had “a great offseason and won multiple summer camp MVP awards at various camps.” The junior will be joined by sophomore William Hobbs, who could offer the Panthers different looks on offense other than the quarterback position.

Further aiding the growth and development of McDowell will be top-tier weapons at the skilled positions, highlighted by wide receiver Nick Marsh. The senior All-American and 4-star recruit recently re-upped his commitment to Michigan State back in early July.

Marsh is merely one cog of a stacked wide receiving unit for the Panthers. He will be joined by very talented and capable seniors Daniel Rucker and Keyshawn Fisher. The former Rucker has garnered NCAA Division 1 looks while the latter Fisher is a dual-sport athlete who has NCAA D2 offers to play basketball.

As explosive as the passing game could be for Rouge, look for the running game to perhaps carry this team. The Panthers have a three-headed monster in the backfield with senior Cameron Broadnax expected to shoulder a lot of the workload.

One will be hard-pressed to find many more talented and experienced offensive lines than the unit that Rouge has returning in 2023. Senior guard Brayon Taylor and Lamar Moore are expected to see time in the trenches



ALEXANDER MULLER — MEDIANEWS GROUP

River Rouge running back Cameron Broadnax runs it to the end zone during the Panthers' Week 1 game vs Cedar Springs at the 2022 Prep Kickoff Classic.

on both sides of the ball. Fellow senior Karon Butler also returns to serve as the “anchor and senior leader of the offensive line” according to Hughes.

The defensive line figures to be the strength on that side of the ball for Rouge. Joining Taylor and Moore up front will be junior standout Jordin Farrow, who has started every game for the Panthers since his freshman campaign.

The linebacking core features

no shortage of experience and play-making ability as well. Seniors Daivon Hill, Leo Garcia, and Christian Mathews will be leading that group.

A team captain this season, Hughes says Hill is the “heart and soul of the defense” and also plays with “passion for the game that can't be taught.”

If there is one facet of the team for Rouge that could see some early growing pains, it is the secondary. The only return-

## 2023 RIVER ROUGE FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- Week 1 | vs Belleville (Prep Kickoff Classic at Wayne State University) / Aug. 25 (7 p.m.)
- Week 2 | at Grand Rapids Catholic Central / Sept. 1 (7 p.m.)
- Week 3 | vs Toledo St John's Jesuit (OH) / Sept. 8 (7 p.m.)
- Week 4 | vs Bloomfield Hills Brother Rice / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)
- Week 5 | at Lakewood St Edward (OH) / Sept. 22 (7 p.m.)
- Week 6 | vs Orchard Lake St Mary's / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)
- Week 7 | TBD; Bye Week / Oct. 6
- Week 8 | vs Detroit University Prep S&M (7 p.m.)
- Week 9 | vs Center Line (7 p.m.)

ing starter in that group comes in the form of senior DiJon Wilson who has been receiving DI looks since his freshman year.

Wilson will be joined by juniors Irving Knott and Jaheim Richmond at the safety position along with sophomore Nate Stallworth at the opposite cornerback spot.

The 2023 season will be the fourth straight year that Rouge has operated as an independent program void of any conference affiliation for football. It has allowed them to play one of the tougher schedules on a year-to-year basis and that will not change this fall.

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PREP FOOTBALL

# Summit Academy looking to get over the hump in 2023

By Alex Muller  
MediaNews Group

The football team for Romulus Summit Academy North is currently enjoy its been run of success in program history.

Last season, the Dragons finished 8-3 overall, matching the 2018 season for the most victories in school history. The campaign earned them their fourth consecutive trip to the state playoffs, which have been their only such appearances since they began fielding a football team back in 2004.

However, Summit has yet to take that next level and hoist a district championship trophy. Head coach Matt Swain knows that and so do the players.

But as he enters year six with the program, Swain says the goals for Summit on the field largely remain the same: win the Charter Conference Gold Division and make the postseason. Now, he says there is some added fuel to the fire for the Dragons.

“We have never won the conference despite our sustained success,” Swain said. “We have never won a district despite playing in three of the last four. The kids know this and are hungry and eager to right the wrongs of the past.”

Might this be the year that Summit gets over the hump? If they do so, it will depend largely on four key returning players

that make up what is just a class of six seniors. That quartet includes Mike Bethune, Kalab Harris, Jaden Barrow, and Dylon Sudduth.

Harris and Barrow are expected the bolster both the offensive and defensive lines for Summit. Bethune will start at linebacker on defense while also taking hand-offs at running back from the quarterback Sudduth.

“They all played key roles in our success over the past few seasons,” Swain said. “They will captain our team and lead the younger guys in their respective position groups and or sides of the ball. How they perform and how they lead the team will determine the outcome of our season.”

Other returning players who are expected the make an impact include junior Desmond Murphy, who Swain says will be a “problem for opponents on both sides of the ball” at wide receiver and defensive back. Swain also says sophomore Keyan Phillips could have a “coming out party” at the safety position while dabbling in plays on offense as well.

Summit figures to have a host of impact newcomers. That is nothing new for Swain and company, who have rarely if ever had the luxury of fielding a junior-varsity team.

But Swain said the program is continuing to grow and this year's incoming freshman class is making a difference right away.



ROBERT SHERMAN — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Summit Academy quarterback Dylon Sudduth hands the ball off to running back Jeremiah Dallas-Martin during the Dragons' D5 district final game at Flat Rock on November 4, 2022.

“(The freshmen) have been integral in creating a more competitive and efficient practice plan,” Swain said. “You are only as good as your scout team, and my scout team has been better than seasons past thanks to them.”

Two freshmen Swain was eager to point out were Jordan Williford and Alex Weinberg. Swain said Williford is expected to start opposite of Murphy at wide receiver

and cornerback and has proven to be a varsity-caliber athlete since the summer. Weinberg, meanwhile, could be a serious weapon at kicker.

Swain says Weinberg has been “the best kicker in his class at every camp he attended this summer.”

Elsewhere on defense for Summit, two projected starters who will take on bigger roles include

## 2023 SUMMIT ACADEMY FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- (\*denotes league game)
- Week 1 | vs Saginaw Arthur Hill / Aug. 24 (7 p.m.)
- Week 2 | at Detroit Renaissance / Aug. 31 (7 p.m.)
- Week 3 | vs Southfield Bradford Academy / Sept. 8 (7 p.m.)
- Week 4 | vs Warren Michigan Collegiate / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 5 | at Detroit Leadership Academy / Sept. 22 (4 p.m.)\*
- Week 6 | vs Harper Woods Chandler Park / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 7 | at Detroit Edison / Oct. 6 (4 p.m.)\*
- Week 8 | vs Detroit Voyageur Prep / Oct. 13 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 9 | vs Dearborn Heights Annapolis / Oct. 20 (7 p.m.)

junior Donovan Cruse and sophomore Donovan Ewing. The safety Cruse has “track speed” according to Swain while Ewing figures to see time at both linebacker on defense and H-back on offense.

“We are young, but that is no excuse,” Swain said. “As a program, we are used to playing underclassmen because we haven't had a JV team. By their senior season, most of my players are three-year starters. So we are young, but experienced.”

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**PREP FOOTBALL**

# Young Eagles looking to take flight in 2023



ALEX MULLER — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Romulus quarterback Torrence Searcy gets ready to throw a pass during their Week 5 matchup with Annapolis of the 2022 season. The host Eagles struck first but went on to suffer a 24-6 defeat.

**By Alex Muller**  
MediaNews Group

One football team that could be primed for a bounce-back season in 2023 is Romulus.

It has been a struggle in recent years for the Eagles' program. A 3-6 record a season ago marked the fifth straight season in which the team finished under .500.

But there is plenty of reasons for optimism at Romulus and head coach Charles Searcy and it starts on the offensive side of the football.

The Eagles in 2022 put up 155 points through their nine games played, good for a per-game average of close to 18 points. The bulk of that scoring came in the beginning and end of the season as they only mustered 12 total points in Weeks 4-6, which resulted in three defeats.

How Romulus will do on offense starts and ends with the play of Torrence Searcy, who returns as the team's starting quarterback.

Fortunately for Searcy, he will have plenty of experienced weapons to distribute the ball to on offense.

The pass-catching options feature senior Emil Burton and junior Mylek Lee at the wide receiver position along with senior Lamar Mallard at tight end.

Look for Lee to be the primary target for Searcy, at least early on in the season. Lee in 2022 hauled

in 11 catches for over 300 yards and four touchdowns. He also was the team's primary return man on special teams after collecting close to 200 yards on kickoff and punt returns.

Lee led Romulus with just over 500 all-purpose yards in 2022.

Searcy figures to be the central piece for Romulus in the running game as well. The sophomore averaged nearly nine yards per carry on a team-leading 42 totals.

But Searcy won't be alone in the ground game as fellow classmate Donte Toliver is expected to take on a bigger workload at the H-back position. Burton is also an option to do some damage in the ground game after racking up 75 yards on just seven carries a season ago.

All of these players will be key cogs for the Eagles on defense as well.

Burton and Lee are expected to anchor the team's secondary while Mallard and Toliver are tabbed to start as linebacker.

One player to keep an eye on for Romulus in 2023 is Ervin Toliver. The sophomore, according to head coach Searcy, is another quarterback option for the Eagles and could also see time at linebacker on defense.

These players will be looking to improve a defense that allowed north of 24 points per game last season. That included a stretch of three games in four weeks where

**2023 ROMULUS FOOTBALL SCHEDULE**

(\*denotes league game)

- Week 1 | vs Detroit Loyola (at UD-Mercy) / Aug. 25 (7 p.m.)
- Week 2 | at Garden City / Aug. 31 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 3 | at Dearborn Heights Robichaud / Sept. 8 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 4 | vs Redford Union / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 5 | at Dearborn Heights Annapolis / Sept. 22 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 6 | at Dearborn Heights Crestwood / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 7 | vs Redford Thurston / Oct. 6 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 8 | vs Melvindale / Oct. 13 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 9 | vs Grosse Ile / Oct. 20 (7 p.m.)

they allowed 30 or more points.

That unit, however, did end on a high note in 2022 when they allowed just six combined points to Melvindale and Detroit Denby in their final two weeks of the season, both resulting in victories.

"We're looking forward to a competitive season in the (Western Wayne Athletic Conference)," Searcy said. "We're returning a few key players and looking forward to building off the progress that we've made the past few years."



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**PREP FOOTBALL**

# Anderson looks to contend for Downriver League title in 2023

**By Doug Donnelly**  
For MediaNews Group

Southgate Anderson qualified for the playoffs for the first time in a decade last year — not including the COVID-19 season that everyone made it — and second-year head coach Bobby Marten has high hopes that this team could make another playoff run.

"We return a lot of very good football players but more importantly they are great kids," Marten said. "We look to continue to build and improve our program."

An Allen Park product, Marten is a former college quarterback and record-setting college baseball player at Wayne State University. He was a baseball captain and all-league performer. After college, he coached at his alma mater, attaining the title defensive coordinator a few years ago.

He's witnessed success firsthand. His father was a coach.

At Anderson, he's trying to change the culture and build a program that has had nine sub-.500 seasons in the past 11 years. The glory days of Southgate Anderson football was 2008-11 when the team won 37 games and qualified for the playoffs three straight years.

"We need to continue to improve our culture and play physical football," Marten said.

Anderson had the third best offense in the Downriver League last year, averaging 22.3 points a game. The two biggest pieces of

that return.

Chase Barbosa rushed for 1,029 yards as a sophomore and scored 18 touchdowns. He sliced through defenses for an average of 5.2 yards a rush and caught 15 passes out of the backfield. He was All-Downriver League.

Jackson Sage, another all-league performer, has a lock on the quarterback position. The right-handed junior threw for 1,638 yards a year ago, completing 62 percent of his passes, 11 for touchdowns. He also rushed for 270 yards, averaging 6 yards a pop.

Sage will miss his top receiver from last year, Colin Thomas, however. He'll look to Thomas Laskowski, Isiah Daviston, Andrew Porter and tight end Martin Lofton as key targets.

Laskowski has the most action among those receivers. He caught 14 passes for 191 yards as a sophomore.

The starting offensive line looks to be seniors Logan Riddle at center, Tyler Baker at guard and Ethan Brooks at tackle. Guard Drayden Long and tackle Logan Lynn, both juniors, also figure on starting up front.

On defense, the Titans play a 3-4 defense. The strength of the defense will be an experienced and talented group of linebackers. Barbosa led the team in tackles with 82. He also made 16 tackles for loss and was in on nine sacks. His running mates at linebacker Connor Ensign (41 tack-



FRANK WLADYSLAWSKI — MEDIANEWS GROUP

Southgate Anderson quarterback Jackson Sage gets ready to release the ball in their 2022 first-round playoff game at Trenton. Sage threw for two touchdowns and ran for one but the Titans ultimately fell to the host Trojans 34-27 and saw their impressive season come to a close.

les) and Isaac Norscia (44 tackles) are back. Sean King is the fourth backer.

In front of them are Long as well as seniors Keegan Jackson and Noah Siebert.

Strong safety Andrew Porter leads the secondary. The senior made 66 tackles last year and three interceptions. Sage is the opposite safety with Dean-

gelo Stewart and Laskowski the corners.

Anderson opens with a tilt against 10-2 Trenton, who shared the league title with a 7-1 Downriver League mark a year ago and won two playoff games.

The Titans have an enrollment just under 1,000 and will compete in Division 3 this season.

The only non-league opponent

**2023 SOUTHGATE ANDERSON SCHEDULE**

- Week 1 | at Trenton / Aug. 24 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 2 | vs Allen Park / Aug. 31 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 3 | at Livonia Clarenceville / Sept. 8 (7 p.m.)
- Week 4 | vs Taylor / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 5 | at Gibraltar Carlson / Sept. 22 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 6 | at Brownstown Woodhaven / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 7 | vs Lincoln Park / Oct. 6 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 8 | at Dearborn Edsel Ford / Oct. 13 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 9 | vs Wyandotte Roos-evelt / Oct. 20 (7 p.m.)\*

on the schedule is Livonia Clarenceville, a team that won a playoff game last year and went 6-5.

Having so many starters back — especially at key positions like quarterback, running back, offensive line and linebacker — has Marten excited for what's to come for Anderson. So does having close to 40 kids on the roster — a big leap from 26 a year ago.

"We look to improve upon last season," he said. "This is a very tough league that we just hope to compete in. We have two very good skill players back in Sage and Barbosa who we will look to lead us."



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PREP FOOTBALL

# Griffins hoping to take next step forward in 2023

By Michael J Wallwork  
For MediaNews Group

When current Taylor head coach Michael Pitts arrived, the team was coming off of a winless 0-9 season in 2019. The Griffins then had to deal with uncertainty of the COVID season, going 1-6 that year.

But each year Pitts has been at the helm, the team has made incremental progress winning one more game than the previous year. Heading into 2023, Pitts sees promise in the upcoming season as Taylor looks to improve on their record once again after officially finishing 3-6 last year.

“We’re building slow, but the important thing is that we are building,” Pitts said. “It takes a lot to try to turnaround a program. But that’s my main focus.”

“I just want to make sure people know that we are ready to compete,” Pitts continued. “Hopefully those games that we competed in last year turn into wins. We are progressing every year, a little bit slower than I thought, but my coaches are getting better, the kids are getting better, and we have great support here from the parents. So I look forward to an exciting year.”

The Griffins return 13 seniors from last year’s team and also have a talented crop of juniors.

“A lot of these kids that are se-

niors now played varsity football as sophomores,” Pitts said. “So the experience here is very high for the senior class. With that IQ already being there, expectations are high.”

Offensively, the Griffins will feature three of those seniors in the backfield in quarterback Anthony Celsi and twin running backs Denzal and Dewayne Cyr.

Celsi, who his coach describes as a “gamer,” will have four seniors to throw to in starting tight end Kywone Wells and receivers Jayden Cunningham, Marsean Massenburg, and Amari Watson.

But the team will likely be anchored by the returning linemen including senior tackle Augustine Ajayi and senior center Christopher Malone in the middle. Sophomore Dorian Hollis could play a key role at one guard while several players battle for the other guard spot.

“Last year, the majority of our team was skill players,” Pitts said. “But now it’s like we’re all linemen now. I’m excited for that. We’re not as big as last year, but we’re athletic.”

Many of those players will have to play both sides with the Cyr brothers playing at linebacker, Massenburg slotting in at safety and Wells, Ajanyi, and Moore forming the starting defensive line. That group will get help from, among others, senior line-



CONSTANCE YORK — FOR MEDIATEWS GROUP

Taylor’s Nick Lawson (8) scrambles to run during a Week 3 DRL matchup at Trenton in the 2022 season.

backer Brent Brooks and a pair of newcomers in the secondary: senior Tristian McKinley and sophomore Nick Lawson.

The season schedule starts tough for the Griffins who will open with only one home game in

their first four match ups — and that one is against Gibraltar Carlson who tied for first in the Downriver League last season.

“That’s the way to start our season,” Pitts said. “I’d rather start with the tough teams and figure

## 2023 TAYLOR HIGH FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- (\*denotes league game)
- Week 1 | vs Allen Park (Prep Kickoff Classic @ Wayne State University) / Aug. 25 (4 p.m.)\*
- Week 2 | at Royal Oak / Aug. 31 (7 p.m.)
- Week 3 | vs Gibraltar Carlson / Sept. 8 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 4 | at Southgate Anderson / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 5 | vs Brownstown Woodhaven / Sept. 22 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 6 | at Lincoln Park / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 7 | vs Dearborn Edsel Ford / Oct. 6 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 8 | at Wyandotte Roos-evelt / Oct. 13 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 9 | vs Trenton / Oct. 20 (7 p.m.)\*

out who we are early than start out winning and get pummeled later in the season. So I think that’s the best way to do it.”

“This is a great league overall,” Pitts added. “Every week is going to be a test, so I’m excited. It’s all about us. I always tell our kids it’s not about who we play. It’s about how we perform. Once we perform well, and we’re disciplined, and we play together, we’ll be fine.”

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PREP FOOTBALL

# Trojans aim to repeat as Downriver League champs in 2023

By Alex Muller  
MediaNews Group

The Trenton football team enjoyed one of their more successful seasons in program history last season.

The Trojans finished with a 10-2 record overall in 2022, their most victories in a single season since 1998. It also earned them just their second-ever Downriver League championship, first since 2015, as they shared the honor with Gibraltar Carlson. And they collected their first-ever district championship in the sport under the current MHSAA format, which began back in 1999.

Don’t expect Trenton to take a step back, at least in the eyes of head coach Reggie Glon.

“We were able to get a lot of guys experience during last year’s 10-2 season,” Glon said. “This group of seniors is hungry to continue the success of winning a district title and co-conference championship.”

Trenton unfortunately will have the unenviable task of replacing do-everything quarterback Ty Norgren, who has since then graduated from the school. Fortunately for Glon and the Trojans, there are a host of key returning players to help carry an offense that Glon says will be the “strength” of the 2023 team.

Of the 11 total returning starters than Trenton has coming back, seven reside on the offen-

sive side of the ball. Among those is senior Keegan Lewis, who is expected to replace Norgren and assume the starting quarterback duties.

Lewis will have several experienced play-makers to distribute the ball to including a pair of backfield mates in senior Nate Ariganello and junior Drew Carson. Pass-catching options include senior Liam Totten and junior Ashton Rooney at wide receive along with junior Davis Gray at tight end, all of whom started for Trenton in 2022.

Glon says both Carson and Gray are potential impact newcomers to the team in 2023. The third-year head coach for the Trojans also tabs junior Brayden Mack as a complementary option with Rooney at the X wideout spot.

Four of the five projected starting offensive linemen for Trenton will be seniors, highlighted by a pair of returning starters in center Mason Carroll and right guard Drew Dishneau. The rest of the offensive line will consist of seniors Jacob Rogowski and Andrew Hawkins at the tackle positions as well as junior Ben Laws at left guard.

The offense, Glon says, will have to “carry the team while our young defense develops.” Trenton’s projected starting defense will include six seniors, only three of whom, however, started a season ago. Among those returning from last year include se-



FRANK WLADYSLAWSKI — FOR MEDIATEWS GROUP

Trenton’s Nate Ariganello (22) punches it into the end zone for a touchdown during the 2023 D3 pre-district round game vs. Southgate Anderson.

niors Ethan Sargent, Nate Estes, and Caleb Kidd as well as junior Mike Bacha.

Sargent and Bacha will anchor a defensive line that will also include junior Cody Harwig at defensive tackle and a rotation of junior Ayden Little and senior JJ Stephens at nose guard.

Bacha will be leading a starting linebacker core that includes another returning starter in junior Ansel Fater along with an-

other potential impact newcomer in sophomore Brock Culpepper.

Kidd meanwhile figures to have a host of seniors joining him in the defensive backfield. Kidd himself holding down things at one of the safety spots while the other will go to Gavin Gingras. The cornerback position will consist of seniors Zach Hitchcock and Caiden Hedges, and junior Zach Pauli.

“Our guys have bought into the

## 2023 TRENTON FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- (\*denotes league game)
- Week 1 | vs Southgate Anderson / Aug. 24 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 2 | at Brownstown Woodhaven / Aug. 31 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 3 | vs Lincoln Park / Sept. 8 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 4 | vs Dearborn Edsel Ford / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 5 | at Wyandotte Roos-evelt / Sept. 22 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 6 | vs Gibraltar Carlson / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 7 | at Allen Park / Oct. 6 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 8 | at Chelsea / Oct. 13 (7 p.m.)
- Week 9 | at Taylor / Oct. 20 (7 p.m.)\*

off-season conditioning,” Glon said. “They have worked hard to get their bodies ready for the grind of the game.”

Glon figures to learn about his team early on as they face two more DRL contenders in Southgate Anderson and Brownstown Woodhaven in the first two weeks.

“We have to be at our best to start the season-opening with Southgate and Woodhaven right out of the gate,” Glon said. “Both teams return a ton of talent and were very well coached last year.”

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**PREP FOOTBALL**

# Wyandotte Roosevelt starting with 'clean slate' for 2023 season

By Alex Muller  
MediaNews Group

Among the area teams looking to bounce back on the gridiron this fall will be Wyandotte Roosevelt.

It was largely a season to forget in 2022 for the Bears, who finished with a mark of 2-7 and missed the playoffs for a second straight season following a string of 15 straight playoff years. The two wins was their fewest in a season in nearly 20 years (1-8 in 2005).

The struggling campaign ultimately led to coaching change for Roosevelt. This time, they did not have to look far at all as they promoted assistant Jakob Zanski to the role of head coaching duties for 2023.

Zanski has been on the coaching staff each of the last four seasons. He was the only holdover who stayed on last year for then head coach Chris Merrell after longtime Hall of Fame coach Ron Adams retired at the end of the 2021 season.

That is the case once more for Zanski heading into 2023 as he is the only coach to return from the 2022 squad.

Zanski has taken himself with the goal of wanting to "revive the program." A former Bear himself, the 2014 Roosevelt grad is hoping what was a largely young team in 2022 takes a big step in the fall.

"I want these players to have the success that I and those for decades experienced during our time as a Bear," Zanski said. "We were very young last year and being a year older with a core of returning starters, we look to make the step in the right direction."

When asked about projected starters or a depth chart altogether, Zanski was hesitant to go into further details. That is largely because the Roosevelt program is more or less starting from scratch as Zanski describes it as a "clean slate" for every player.

"Everyone has an equal opportunity for us in this upcoming season," Zanski said.

With that in mind, Zanski did mention a handful of key returning players who are going to help lead the way for Roosevelt in 2023. Among those include seniors Max Biundo, Chase Cline, Darryl Harper, and Tommy Cappuccilli as well as juniors Alex Emory, Zach Tomecyk, and Steven Andreone.

All of those players figure to see significant time on both sides of the ball.

Biundo a season ago rushed for over 1,000 yards and 14 touchdowns, earning all-region recognition. A second-team all-area honoree in 2022, the senior is likely to be the steady ball-carrier in the backfield at the running back spot.

Cline, Cappuccilli, and Emory figure to be the primary targets



FRANK WALDYSLAWSKI — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP  
Wyandotte Roosevelt wide receiver Tommy Cappuccilli (7) runs with the ball after the catch during the Week 1 matchup vs Allen Park at the Prep Kickoff Classic on Aug. 26, 2022.

on the outside at the wide receiver position. Harper, Tomecyk, and Andreone will hold things down in the trenches on the offensive line.

It is a Roosevelt offense that will surely be looking for some sort of spark as they were held to 14 points or fewer in six of their nine games last season.

Defensively, those players will be dispersed through and lead that side of the ball as well.

Cline will join his fellow linemen Tomecyk and Andreone, serving as a pass-rushing threat off

the edge. Harper and Biundo will hold things down at the linebacker spots while Cappuccilli and Emory will patrol the secondary as defensive backs.

Defense was a weak point for Roosevelt last year as they allowed on average a little more than 40 points per game.

But those 2022 woes are behind them and a new era is underway once more for the Bears.

It figures to be an uphill battle in a Downriver League that saw five of its nine member schools

## 2023 ROOSEVELT FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- (\*denotes league game)
- Week 1 | vs Brownstown Woodhaven / Aug. 24 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 2 | at Lincoln Park / Aug. 31 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 3 | vs Dearborn Edsel Ford / Sept. 8 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 4 | at Gibraltar Carlson / Sept. 15 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 5 | vs Trenton / Sept. 22 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 6 | at Allen Park / Sept. 29 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 7 | at South Lyon East / Oct. 6 (7 p.m.)
- Week 8 | vs Taylor / Oct. 13 (7 p.m.)\*
- Week 9 | at Southgate Anderson / Oct. 20 (7 p.m.)\*

qualify for the state playoffs a year ago. Excluding the 2020 Covid-shortened season, the '22 campaign marked just the fourth time in the league's 14 years of existence that five teams reached the postseason. Three of those instances, however, have come since 2018.

"We have a lot of guys that are tired of losing and want to make some noise in the Downriver League," Zanski said. "We are excited to go to work and move into the new wave of Wyandotte Bears football!"



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