

2025 High School Football Gridiron Featured Section



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PREP FOOTBALL » ALLEN PARK

Jags hoping experience from 2024 season pays off this fall

By Alexander Muller
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After starting 6-0 a year ago, the script flipped considerably for the Allen Park football program. Largely due to injuries, the Jags finished the campaign on a four-game losing skid, including a 21-14 loss vs Livonia Franklin in the first round of the playoffs.

Not a very senior-heavy team in 2024, the folks in green and white bring back a large group of key contributors, something that head coach Tom Danosky says will help them considerably this fall.

"I expect us to be improved from last year," Danosky said. "We were young last year and had to fight through a lot of adversity and injuries. Last year we also played with a lot of Juniors and several sophomores that now have some experience under their belt."

Among the notable returnees expected to take a step forward in 2025 will be senior quarterback Ben Klos. An all-News-Herald honorable mention a year

ago, Klos threw for over 1,400 yards and 12 touchdowns in the team's 10 games.

Klos is one of nine returning starters on offense for Allen Park and will have a host of classmates surrounding him at various skilled positions to disperse the ball to. Perhaps the most important such piece will be running back Marcus Buchanan, who returns after missing the final six games of the 2024 season due to injury.

Buchanan will see another senior in Manny Nieves accompany him in the backfield as an option at fullback, while junior Mikey Edwards appears to be the lead candidate for the No. 2 tailback behind Buchanan.

As far as pass-catchers are considered, Klos will have some experience available there, even after losing former second-team all-News-Herald honoree Weston Gleis to graduation. Players like Xavier Liepe and Brody Matelic will line up as a flanker and wide receiver, respectively, while third-team all-area recipient Joey Sackrison reas-



ALEXANDER MULLER — MEDIANEWS GROUP

Allen Park running back Manny Nieves looks for room to run in the backfield during the Jags' home game vs Gibraltar Carlson on Oct. 18, 2024.

sumes his post at tight end.

Up front, Danosky has tabbed Ben White, a projected starter at guard, as a key impact player for the Jags.

White is also one of three juniors expected to in the trenches, along with tackle Ethan Rozman and center Brady Sauve.

The lone senior projected to start on the offensive line

comes in the form of Steven Brant, who will likely start one of the tackle spots, while a sophomore in Carter Cox will hold down a guard spot to start the year.

Other available bodies in the rotation will include two more seniors in Larry D'Agiano and Jacob Brady, as well as junior Braden Cooper.

Allen Park has to replace

2025 Allen Park Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

W1 — Aug. 29 — H — Trenton, 7 p.m.* (Prep Kickoff Classic at Wayne State University)

W2 — Sept. 5 — H — Taylor, 7 p.m.*

W3 — Sept. 12 — A — Southgate Anderson, 7 p.m.*

W4 — Sept. 19 — H — Brownstown Woodhaven, 7 p.m.*

W5 — Sept. 26 — A — Lincoln Park, 7 p.m.*

W6 — Oct. 3 — A — White Lake Lakeland, 7 p.m.

W7 — Oct. 10 — H — Wyandotte Roosevelt, 7 p.m.*

W8 — Oct. 17 — A — Dearborn Edsel Ford, 7 p.m.*

W9 — Oct. 24 — A — Gibraltar Carlson, 7 p.m.*

a bit more on defense from last year, however the returning starters are among their biggest difference-makers across the board. Players like Buchanan and Matelic are expected to line up as a linebacker and defensive back, respectively.

Aiding in Buchanan's efforts will be like senior Michael Collins, who earned second-team all-area honors after logging close to 100 tackles a season ago. Meanwhile in the secondary, it's an experienced group as Matelic teams up with two 2024 all-News-Herald recipients in junior Cooper Obrycki and senior Ryan Lawyer.

On the defensive line, Danosky will be looking

for a big season from junior Jack Doty, whose presence alone oftentimes demanded the attention of several opposing offensive linemen in 2024. Doty will be surrounded by a trio of seniors up front in Sean Doyle, Reece Phillips, and Matthew Sheldon.

With a lot of faces returning from an up-and-down team that still reached the playoffs, it's understandable why Danosky is optimistic for the new fall season.

"I believe there is an opportunity to be much improved from a year ago," Danosky said. "But our guys know it will take a lot of hard work and effort. Nothing is given and everything is earned."

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PREP FOOTBALL » ALLEN PARK CABRINI

Talented Monarchs look to take next step in 2025

By Alexander Muller
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After a rocky start due to some key injuries, the Allen Park Cabrini football team a season ago used a late-season push to finish 5-5. In doing so, they qualified for the state playoffs for a second straight year, something they last did in the mid to late 2000's when they did so in five consecutive seasons.

Although this year's Cabrini team appears to be smaller in numbers, they more than make up for it with experience, which is what head coach Ryan Chidester is hoping to see come through.

"We are really excited about this group of guys," Chidester said. "The roster size is a little smaller than the last couple of years, but the experience level, football knowledge, and talent is greater."

Should Cabrini want to contend for earning the program's first ever district title and beyond, it was unquestionably start and end with the offense and, more

specifically, quarterback Evan Bergdoll.

Entering his junior year, Bergdoll only played in four games last season before suffering a season-ending injury. Still, the upside remains there for a big breakout season. In 15 career games, nine of which were starts, Bergdoll has already thrown for over 2,000 yards and 31 touchdowns.

The injury to Bergdoll left the signal-calling duties up to do-everything athlete Jace Cetnar. A third-team all-News-Herald honoree in 2024, Cetnar scored seven touchdowns in three different ways for the Monarchs last year.

Cetnar figures to give Bergdoll some flexibility on offense, whether it be as a wide receiver or a running back. Cabrini as a team will have one of the better wide receiver rooms in the Downriver region with the Emerick brothers, the senior Lander and the junior Logan.

Another option out of the backfield for Cabrini will be a familiar name to the program in Noah Roman. In addition to his starting



ROBERT SHERMAN — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Cabrini wide receiver Lander Emerick, #17 in white, tries to shed a Grosse Ile defender on a run during a Week 9 matchup held at Woodhaven High School on Oct. 25, 2024.

role at the linebacker spot on defense, Roman will also see steady reps at running back, says Chidester.

Up front, the Monarchs will be tasked with replacing a pair of 2024 all-area offensive linemen in Brycen Kimes and Tyler Gutt. Fortunately for Chidester, he sees a couple of seniors and returning starters in

Richard Escobar and Nick Kiltyka come back to bolster the line.

Adding some depth in the trenches will be a combination of DJ Maffesoli, Morgan Stollings, and Tyler Hernandez-Walsh. All of the aforementioned linemen will also be regulars in some capacity on the defensive line as well. Stollings,

2025 Cabrini Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

- W1 — Aug. 28 — H — Detroit Northwestern, 7 p.m.
- W2 — Sept. 5 — H — Sterling Heights Parkway Christian, 7 p.m.
- W3 — Sept. 12 — A — Rochester Hills Lutheran Northwest, 7 p.m.
- W4 — Sept. 19 — H — Clarkston Everest Collegiate, 7 p.m.*
- W5 — Sept. 26 — A — Royal Oak Shrine Catholic, 7 p.m.*
- W6 — Oct. 3 — A — Madison Heights Bishop Foley, 7 p.m.*
- W7 — Oct. 11 — A — Marine City Cardinal Mooney, 7 p.m.*
- W8 — Oct. 17 — H — Waterford Our Lady of the Lakes, 7 p.m.*
- W9 — Oct. 24 — H — TBD (CHSL Prep Bowl or crossover)

in particular, is an imposing figure at 6-foot-5 and 250 pounds.

Cabrini does have to replace six starters from last year's team, however they have nearly a dozen players that played varying minutes on that side of the ball last season.

In fact, a lot of those returnees are those who will be the big-impact players on offense. The Emerick brothers are expected to accompany Roman at the second level of the defense. Cetnar meanwhile will help man things in the secondary as will Eddie Hughes, who will be yet another pass-catch-

ing option on offense.

Chidester doubled down on the importance of staying healthy this season, should Cabrini want to have any sort of success. He also added that prioritizing such will be a two-way street between both the players and the coaches.

"We are going to have almost double the number of 2-way players as we have had the past couple of seasons," Chidester said. "If we can coach and play fast, decisive, and confident — it should limit the number of errors we make and vulnerable positions we put ourselves in."



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PREP FOOTBALL » WOODHAVEN

Warriors looking to shake up Downriver League landscape

By Alexander Muller
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The varsity football team at Brownstown Woodhaven a year ago turned in a 4-5 mark for the second consecutive season, resulting in an absence from the state playoffs.

This upcoming fall will be the third year for Dave Mifsud at the helm. A MHS-FCA Hall of Fame inductee in 2024, Mifsud will be tasked with trying to send the Warriors back to the postseason for the first time since 2022.

Should the young men in purple and black want to make some noise in the Downriver League, it will start and end with what is a total of nine returning starters on offense, including quarterback Preston Scheffler.

In his first year of high school football a year ago, Scheffler played in all eight games for Woodhaven, throwing for a little below 1,000 yards and 10 touchdowns.

The soon-to-be sophomore figures to take another step forward, espe-

cially with a familiar cast of characters around him.

A big piece to the Warriors' success will be running back Isaiah Ibrahim. Now a three-year starter on varsity, the senior last season paced the team with just under 500 rushing yards amassed on 88 carries.

Ibrahim does headline a position that offers depth for Woodhaven, something that Mifsud has identified as a strength for the team this fall. Mifsud, however, added that the ground game will be imperative to their success.

"We should be able to both run the ball and also pass," Mifsud said. "The Warriors need to improve and show that they can run the ball consistently and effectively on offense."

Other skilled position players at Scheffler's disposal will be two more seniors in Tyler Lennon and Brody Garrison, who will line up as a starting wide receiver and tight end, respectively.

Scheffler will also have a veteran group of lineman to help keep him upright as Woodhaven sees four



JACK VANASSCHE — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Woodhaven quarterback Preston Scheffler, left, hands the ball off to running back Isaiah Ibrahim during the Warriors' home matchup vs Allen Park on Sept. 13, 2024.

starters from last year's team come back in 2025. Among that bunch is Marquez McAdoo, a two-time all-News-Herald honoree and a first-team recipient last season.

McAdoo, who will also line up on defense for the Warriors, will be joined alongside Michael Owens, Francisco Guardado, and Caleb Perez as returning starters up front on offense.

In fact, McAdoo and Perez are just two of four returning starters on defense.

The linebacking core will not be lacking in experience with senior Andrew Pridemore teaming up with the aforementioned Brody Garrison. Woodhaven's weak point could be in the secondary, especially after seeing 2024 first-team all-area standout Nick Henson graduate this past school year.

2025 Woodhaven Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

- W1 — Aug. 28 — H — Southgate Anderson, 7 p.m.*
- W2 — Sept. 5 — H — Ann Arbor Huron, 7 p.m.
- W3 — Sept. 12 — A — Lincoln Park, 7 p.m.*
- W4 — Sept. 19 — A — Allen Park, 7 p.m.*
- W5 — Sept. 26 — A — Wyandotte Roosevelt, 7 p.m.*
- W6 — Oct. 3 — H — Dearborn Edsel Ford, 7 p.m.*
- W7 — Oct. 10 — H — Gibraltar Carlson, 7 p.m.*
- W8 — Oct. 17 — H — Trenton, 7 p.m.*
- W9 — Oct. 24 — A — Taylor, 7 p.m.*

The senior Lennon will certainly help shore up that pass defense.

The Warriors will otherwise be turning towards a host of potential impact newcomers to fill the third level. Among those are a pair of juniors in Davonte Clayborn and Landon Noe as well as sophomore Kaden Segnegon.

Clayborn and Segnedon each will be pass-catching options for Scheffler, while Noe could help spell Ibrahim as a runner out of the backfield.

Other newcomers coming are Mason Miller, Drew Migliaccio, and Jordan Jackson, all of whom are entering their junior years. Miller figures to play on both sides of the line. Mi-

gliaccio will help fill out the linebacking room alongside Garrison and Pridemore. And Jackson could get some looks at wide receiver on offense.

Numbers are not going to be an issue for Woodhaven, as Mifsud said they have around 60 players for the varsity team this fall. That depth could pay dividends as they gun for their first Downriver League title in four years.

"We have a great senior class and the team has a great work ethic and positive attitude," Mifsud said. "We look to be able to compete with anyone and everyone in the Downriver league, and feel we will be much improved from the past two seasons."



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PREP FOOTBALL » ECORSE

Red Raiders eyeing bounce-back campaign in 2025

By Alexander Muller
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Last year, the Ecorse football program saw their run of consecutive playoff appearances snapped. Early season woes ultimately led to a 4-5 finish, marking the first time they missed the postseason in a full nine-game slate since 2019.

It's a new era of Red Raiders football this fall as well with Larry Johnson taking over the head coaching duties. It'll be the first time holding that title for Johnson, who comes over after serving as the offensive coordinator at nearby River Rouge for the last decade plus.

Johnson, who brings along with him a handful of his old coaching colleagues to fill out the staff, has the goal of bring Ecorse back to the playoffs on an annual basis, something he helped accomplish at Rouge every year since 2010.

"We expect to go out and compete at a high level every week," Johnson said.

"We want to qualify for the playoffs and once you make the playoffs, anything can happen."

Should Ecorse want to compete in what figures to be a tough Gold Division of the Charter School Conference, it will start and end in the trenches, which Johnson has identified as an early strength of their team.

The Raiders do possess one of the fast-rising defensive linemen off the edge in Cortney Powell. The senior, who comes into the year sitting at 6-foot-5 and 240 pounds, will also likely line up on offense at one of the guard positions.

Powell is one of five players that Johnson has tabbed as the biggest key returners from last year's squad.

Another one of those returnees is another big body up front in junior Ashley Childress Jr, who like Powell figures to line up on both sides of the ball.

It remains to be seen who will handle the quarterback duties for Ecorse, following the graduation of do-everything signal-



CORY LINSNER — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Players for Ecorse huddle up before a play during the Red Raiders' Week 9 football matchup at home vs Romulus on Oct. 25, 2024.

caller and 2024 third-team all-News-Herald honoree John Hazard-Williams. Regardless, there will be some familiar faces along with some newcomers to distribute the pigskin to.

On the outside, a pair of senior wide receivers in Michael Russ and Michael Putman should be the primary pass-catching options. In the backfield, the Raiders do have to replace the recently-graduated all-

area honorable mention tailback Diondre Johnson. They, however, appear to have a capable answer in junior Rishon Langford-Smith.

All three of those aforementioned skilled players will turn around and start on defense as well. Both Russ and Putman will handle pass defense duties in the secondary, while Langford-Smith will man one of the linebacker spots.

2025 Ecorse Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

- W1 — Aug. 28 — H — Whitmore Lake, 7 p.m.
- W2 — Sept. 5 — H — Detroit Old Redford Academy, 7 p.m.*
- W3 — Sept. 12 — H — Detroit Voyageur Prep, 7 p.m.*
- W4 — Sept. 20 — A — Warren Michigan Collegiate, 2 p.m.*
- W5 — Sept. 26 — H — Romulus Summit Academy North, 7 p.m.*
- W6 — Oct. 3 — A — Harper Woods Chandler Park Academy, 7 p.m.*
- W7 — Oct. 10 — A — Detroit Lincoln-King Academy, 7 p.m.*
- W8 — Oct. 17 — H — Detroit Edison, 7 p.m.*
- W9 — Oct. 24 — H — Hamtramck, 7 p.m.

As far as newcomers to the program are concerned, Johnson has several options who can help make an immediate impact.

Junior Chamri Joseph will add some depth to the wide receiver room behind Russ and Putman and likely see some steady minutes in the defensive backfield.

Helping fill out that third level of the defense for Ecorse will be another junior in Delorean Ruffin.

Langford-Smith will be tasked with added leadership duties as he welcomes in freshman Jaylen Banks to the linebacking core.

And aiding in the efforts of both Powell and Childress up front will be another imposing figure in 315-pound senior Jahlel Dunson.

Building overall depth is the main focal point for Johnson, both now and long-term for the program. The first-year head coach hopes to draw up plans that garnered success during his time at Rouge.

"We want to be able to stop the run on defense and run the ball effectively on offense," Johnson said. "When the game is over, we want our opponent to know they were in a battle for 48 minutes."

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PREP FOOTBALL » FLAT ROCK

Rams begin post-Graham Junge era in 2025

By Alexander Muller
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Flat Rock a season ago made it all the way to the state semifinals for a second straight year, something no Downriver-based school has done in over 20 years. Those back-to-back semis appearances capped a three-year window that saw the team collect 27 wins and average 36 points per game.

Now that a star-studded Class of 2025 has graduated, what do the folks in green and gold do for an encore?

"We will look a little bit different due to the graduation of our outstanding senior class," Flat Rock head coach Brandon Reaume said. "We will need to replace some key pieces on both sides of the ball, and our kicker. However, we return many of our skill positions who have a lot of experience."

For many, it will be hard to recognize Flat Rock this fall without Graham Junge back under center. A first-team all-News-Herald hon-

oree each of the last two seasons, Junge finished his career with the Rams throwing for over 8,000 yards and 90 touchdowns, 2,695 and 37 — respectively — of which came last season.

Few schools can replace the talent and leadership level that Junge provided for Flat Rock. However, Reaume already has a viable candidate to fill in the starting quarterback role in Joel Scully.

The program's starting junior varsity QB each of the last two seasons, the junior Scully will have plenty of experience and production around him to help alleviate some pressure. Among those skilled position players returning is Joel's older brother and senior Ben Scully, who logged close to 1,200 scrimmage yards in 2024.

The younger Scully will also have one of the local region's top wide receivers at his disposal in Evan Szalay. A second-team all-News-Herald honoree last season, Szalay is coming off a junior campaign in which he had 935 receive-



ALEXANDER MULLER — MEDIANEWS GROUP

ing yards and a single-season school record 16 touchdowns.

Szalay is the focal point for a wide receiver room with upside. Flat Rock will also see sophomore Jordan Godfrey, junior David Riddle, and senior Braylen Crump all line up as pass-catching options.

The ability for Flat Rock to score at a high rate will depend on how well a vir-

tually new offensive line produces. Though not foreign to seeing the field last season, a host of seniors in Blaine Demyan, Davion Moore, Frankie White, Mathias Sanchez, David Knezovich, and Mario Zapata are expected to step in and assume starting roles up front.

Moore, in particular, is someone that Reaume is looking to lean on heav-

2025 Flat Rock Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

W1 — Aug. 28 — A — Gladwin, 7 p.m.

W2 — Sept. 5 — H — Monroe St Mary Catholic Central, 7 p.m.*

W3 — Sept. 12 — A — Grosse Ile, 7 p.m.*

W4 — Sept. 19 — H — Carleton Airport, 7 p.m.*

W5 — Sept. 26 — H — Monroe Jefferson, 7 p.m.*

W6 — Oct. 3 — A — Riverview, 7 p.m.*

W7 — Oct. 10 — A — Milan, 7 p.m.*

W8 — Oct. 17 — H — New Boston Huron, 7 p.m.*

W9 — Oct. 24 — H — Macomb Lutheran North, 7 p.m.

ily for leadership in the trenches. The big 6-foot, 300-pound senior is expected to "make the calls on the line" for Flat Rock.

The Rams do have some juniors who can step in and perhaps make an impact right away. Among those are Colin Booms, who will add some depth in the trenches on both sides of the ball, as well as Alex Beaudrie, who figures to take over at tight end for the since-graduated Adam Szalay.

In addition to the linemen, several of the skilled players on offense for Flat Rock will also be regulars on defense this fall.

At linebacker, Ben Scully

will be joined by another fellow running back option in junior Blake Recore. The aforementioned Knezovich is also tabbed to play at that second level. Meanwhile, players like Szalay and Crump will join a returning senior in Addison Sturgill, who Reaume says will be the quarterback in the secondary.

"The beauty that each new season brings is coaching up the guys who will replace those that we lost and seeing them gel with the ones who return," Reaume said. "We are excited for the challenge that awaits us and we look forward to competing each and every week as a team."

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PREP FOOTBALL » GABRIEL RICHARD

New-look Pioneers hope to continue winning ways this fall

By Alexander Muller
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No local high school football program had more success on the gridiron last season than the one at Riverview Gabriel Richard.

It was a historic season for the Pioneers, whose 11 wins were the most in a single season in program history.

That 11-2 mark not only earned them a third straight trip to the postseason, it also saw them reach the state championship game for the first time in school history.

So what do the folks in burgundy and white do for an encore in 2025? With virtually an entirely different team from the year prior, it will be an uphill battle of sorts to have repeat success.

The wholesale changes for Richard start with the coaching staff with John Sobush taking over the head coaching duties. Sobush, who has around two decades of coaching experience, becomes the sixth different head coach in as many seasons for the Pio-

neers.

Having been on the program's staff in recent years, Sobush is one of the very few areas of continuity returning this fall for Richard.

As far as player personnel is concerned, the Pioneers have to fill voids left by what was a strong and deep Class of 2025. Among those recent graduates was Nick Sobush and Joey Calhoun, the team's starting quarterback and running back from a year ago, each of whom were named first-team all-News-Herald in 2024.

Fortunately for the elder Sobush, he does have a handful of key returning players at his disposal for the upcoming fall season. Without question, none are more valuable and integral to the team's success than incoming senior Derek Lesko.

A former first-team all-area honoree himself, Lesko last season was the most prolific wide receiver in the entire Downriver area, logging over 1,000 receiving yards and 18 touchdowns on over 40 grabs. He also racked up close to 300



ALEXANDER MULLER — MEDIANEWS GROUP

Riverview Gabriel Richard's Derek Lesko, white jersey, pulls away from an Ann Arbor Gabriel Richard defender after hauling in a pass during a CHSL matchup on Sept. 19, 2024.

yards in the return game on special teams and had almost 80 tackles as a defensive back.

Lesko, who recently committed to play football at Ferris State University next school year, is one of four returning players that Sobush tabbed as vital for Richard this season.

The other three key returnees for the Pioneers all come in the trenches, which Sobush says will be the team's biggest strength. Fellow seniors Jaxon Snyder and Anthony Emelue are expected to line up at center and offensive tackle, respectively, while junior Vito Mazzola will line up as a

2025 Gabriel Richard Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

W1 — Aug. 28 — H — Montrose, 7 p.m.
 W2 — Sept. 5 — H — Muskegon Catholic Central, 7 p.m.
 W3 — Sept. 12 — A — Clarkston Everest Collegiate, 7 p.m.
 W4 — Sept. 19 — H — Ann Arbor Father Gabriel Richard, 7 p.m.*
 W5 — Sept. 26 — A — Detroit Loyola, 7 p.m.*
 W6 — Oct. 3 — H — Grosse Pointe Woods University Liggett, 7 p.m.*
 W7 — Oct. 10 — A — Macomb Lutheran North, 7 p.m.*
 W8 — Oct. 18 — A — Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook-Kingswood, 12 p.m.*
 W9 — Oct. 24 — H — A&T Academy of Pontiac, 7 p.m.

guard. All three players figure to flip around and solidify the defensive line also.

A big question for Richard will be the quarterback position. Sobush has tabbed sophomore Cal Frump as the frontrunner for the starting gig.

Frump is one of a few newcomers for the Pioneers that will be expected to step in right away and take on bigger roles.

In fact, two other sophomores in Aiden Beddow and Max Riney are expected to line up as running backs and fill out the offense for Sobush.

Beddow and Riney each will also be two-way play-

ers, patrolling the line-backer positions on defense.

Sobush said the team's biggest goal for 2025 is to "keep the winning tradition going." In addition to their pioneer run to the state finals last fall, Richard has qualified for the state playoffs all but two times over the past 11 seasons.

Despite the question marks, teams around the Catholic High School League still peg Richard as a contender of sorts. At the league's football media day back on July 31, the Pioneers were picked to finish third out of six teams in the Intersectional 1 Division of the CHSL.

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PREP FOOTBALL » CARLSON

Marauders look to make it five straight DRL titles in 2025

By Alexander Muller
amuller@medianewsgroup.com

One would be hard-pressed to find many local high school football programs, if any, excelling more right now than the one housed at Carlson High School.

Another 10-win campaign last fall helped the Marauders earn their fourth consecutive Downriver League championship — second straight time doing so outright — and eventually their second straight Division 2 district title.

Carlson head coach Jason Gendron is fully embracing his program being the hunted now. But even with a target on their backs, the Marauders appear primed to make another run at another conference title and maybe more in 2025.

“The pieces are in place for another strong season,” Gendron said. “The standard remains high, and this group knows what it takes. Now it’s about putting it all together.”

Fortunately for Gendron, he has arguably the

best player in the entire Downriver area returning for one final year in running back Izaiah Wright.

A former two-time all-News-Herald honoree, Wright is hoping to finish his career at Carlson on a high note. Despite being banged up with a nagging injury in 2024, the Purdue University signee still managed to rack up over 1,000 scrimmage yards and 13 touchdowns.

Wright headlines a Carlson offense that will see eight players who started or saw significant time a season ago return again this fall. In fact, the Marauders may also boast the best 1-2 running back tandem in the area with Avery Ortiz backing up Wright.

Another senior, Ortiz averaged over 10 yards per carry on 38 touches last season.

He is expected to see steady time lined up as a wide receiver also, a position that Carlson three players graduate from.

A big question for Carlson is who will be lining up at quarterback to hand the ball off to Wright and Ortiz, following the gradua-



CONSTANCE YORK — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

The Gibraltar Carlson football team claimed its second D2 district title in as many seasons by rolling to a 35-7 victory at home over Livonia Franklin on Nov. 8, 2024.

tion of 2024 second-team all-area honoree Joe Krolak.

Perhaps the leader in the clubhouse comes in the form of Trent Ison, who did a little bit of everything for Gendron offensively last season with at least 150 yards each rushing, receiving, and even passing.

The new signal-caller will have a relatively experienced group of linemen to work behind.

Three of the five projected starters on the of-

fensive line are seniors in Chris Nightingale, Brady Wilkins, and Jovani Wilczewski. Also, look for a pair of 280-pound forces in junior Sam Przytula and sophomore Josh Beach to make an impact.

Elsewhere on offense, Carlson does have to replace first-team all-News-Herald recipient and Michigan Tech University signee Drew Sikora. Gendron, however, has tabbed Marco DePaoli as a newcomer that can make a big statement early and often.

2025 Carlson Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

- W1 — Aug. 28 — H — Wyandotte Roosevelt, 7 p.m.*
- W2 — Sept. 5 — A — Dearborn Edsel Ford, 7 p.m.*
- W3 — Sept. 12 — A — Pontiac Notre Dame Prep, 7 p.m.
- W4 — Sept. 19 — A — Trenton, 7 p.m.*
- W5 — Sept. 26 — H — Taylor, 7 p.m.*
- W6 — Oct. 3 — H — Southgate Anderson, 7 p.m.*
- W7 — Oct. 10 — A — Brownstown Woodhaven, 7 p.m.*
- W8 — Oct. 17 — A — Lincoln Park, 7 p.m.*
- W9 — Oct. 24 — H — Allen Park, 7 p.m.*

At 6-foot-3 and 215 pounds, Gendron says DePaoli is a “physical tight end who has worked hard this offseason and is ready to make an impact.”

The defense for Carlson should be strong once more with six starters from a year ago coming back. Among those are a trio of 2024 second-team all-area standouts and soon-to-be seniors in Kenny McCurdy, Cam Kalbfleisch, and Jayden Allen. McCurdy and Kalbfleisch each logged over 70 tackles a season ago, the former doing so at safety and the latter as a line-backer.

Allen meanwhile saw a quarter of his 43 tackles go for a loss of yards as an

edge rusher.

Gendron says the team will have to find some answers on the interior of their defensive line, but says they are “confident” in their depth and development both this season and beyond.

And on special teams, look for Dean Manthei to provide Carlson with even more experienced. Now a senior, Manthei converted on all but one of 68 point-after tries a year ago.

“With a veteran core, championship experience, and seniors hungry to finish what they started, this team has the potential to make a deep run — if we stay healthy and grow in a few key areas,” Gendron said.



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PREP FOOTBALL » GROSSE ILE

Red Devils looking to rebound from back-to-back tough seasons

By Alexander Muller
amuller@medianewsgroup.com

One can argue that no local high school football program is aching for a bigger turnaround than the one over at Grosse Ile.

The Red Devils last season finished with a 1-8 mark for the second consecutive year. And it was tough sledding on a week-to-week basis as they were held to single-digits scoring in each of their first eight games while allowing opponents to score on average over 38 points per contest.

During the team's first practice back on Aug. 11, head coach John Bodner emphasize a program-wide effort on "getting better than what we've been in the past." No stranger to success, the head man for the islanders understands the daily and weekly grind that is Huron League football.

"As in the past, if you can get through the Huron League with more wins than losses, then you probably find yourself a playoff team," Bodner said. "So

many great teams that each week, you will be expected to play your best to get a chance to win."

Should Grosse Ile want to make some noise in the always-competitive Huron League, it will likely start with a much-needed spark on offense. Fortunately for Bodner, he sees more than half of last year's starters on that side of the ball return in 2025.

Leading that Devils offense will be senior quarterback Tanner Symons. Now a three-year starter, Symons has thrown for just over 2,300 yards and 11 touchdowns over the past two seasons. A dual-threat quarterback, he also has an ability to escape and create for himself, evident by his 210 rushing yards back in 2023.

Symons does have some familiar continuity around him, headlined by a trio of returning offensive linemen in seniors Will Weise and Evan Raithel as well as junior Jack Epperson.

As far as skill position options to distribute the pigskin to, Symons' favorite target could be senior Dominic Cucinella.



ROBERT SHERMAN — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Grosse Ile's Dominic Cucinella runs down the sidelines with the ball during the Red Devils' Week 9 matchup vs Cabrini at nearby Woodhaven High School on Oct. 25, 2024.

Projected to be the team's starting tight end, Cucinella assumes the No. 1 pass-catching role following the graduation of 2024 third-team all-News-Herald honoree Mason Crowley.

Another returning

starter who figures to take a step up in production in Kolton Bodner on the outside. An option to return kicks on special teams, the junior is looking for a breakout fall after collecting 16 grabs for 123 yards in 2024.

2025 Grosse Ile Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

W1 — Aug. 28 — H — Ida, 7 p.m.

W2 — Sept. 5 — H — New Boston Huron, 7 p.m.*

W3 — Sept. 12 — H — Flat Rock, 4 p.m.*

W4 — Sept. 19 — A — Monroe St Mary Catholic Central, 7 p.m.*

W5 — Sept. 26 — H — Ecorse, 7 p.m.*

W6 — Oct. 3 — A — Carleton Airport, 4 p.m.*

W7 — Oct. 10 — H — Monroe Jefferson, 7 p.m.*

W8 — Oct. 17 — A — Riverview, 7 p.m.*

W9 — Oct. 24 — A — Dundee, 7 p.m.

Grosse Ile has to replace a bit more defensively, however a lot of the same names return. The aforementioned Will Weise will occupy one of the spots on the defensive line. Cucinella meanwhile handle an outside linebacker role, a level of the defense that could be the most important for the Devils.

Cucinella will be accompanied by Chris Budziak. A former second-team all-News-Herald recipient. Budziak in 2024 paced the islanders with well over 80 tackles to go along with three forced fumbles, in what was his first year playing on defense.

Another important piece to the puzzle on defense for Bodner will be Michael

Nappa, who figures to be the team's primary pass rusher off the edge. Nappa is pseudo-newcomer of sorts as Bodner could plug the senior into the backfield on offense.

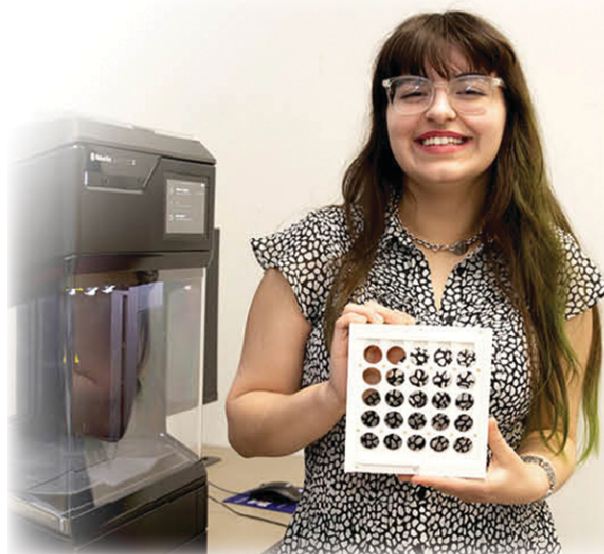
Other potential impact players taking on bigger responsibilities for the Devils include two more seniors in Hunter Taylor and Nate Barletta. The former will help bolster the trenches, while the latter will line up as a receiver on offense as well as a defensive back in the secondary.

"The team is working hard to get better in the areas of execution, discipline, and playing as a team with the intent of putting ourselves in a position to win games," Bodner said.

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PREP FOOTBALL » LINCOLN PARK

Railsplitters looking to end decade-long playoff drought

By Alexander Muller
amuller@medianewsgroup.com

The 2024 football season for Lincoln Park was by far the most successful one in the program's recent history.

Although they came just shy of qualifying for the state playoffs, a 5-4 mark overall gave the Railsplitters their first winning season since 2015. Since the end of last year, however, there has been some notable personnel turnover, both on the player and coaching front.

A pair of 2024 all-News-Herald honorees in Jamir King and Sean Bailey have since graduated, and Chad Bonmon left his post as head coach after four seasons. Assuming those responsibilities now for Lincoln Park is Lamar Williams.

Previously the head man at Detroit Lincoln-King Academy, Williams in 2024 helped lead the Eagles to an undefeated regular season in what was just their third year fielding an 11-player football program.

Even with the aforemen-

tioned King and Bailey having moved on, Williams still has some of the Downriver League's best individual players at his disposal to build around for the upcoming fall season.

Arguably no such pieces are more important to Lincoln Park's success than Brandon Gray.

An all-DRL honoree and near all-area recipient in 2024, Gray last season logged closed to 500 yards rushing and another 92 yards receiving. The senior will likely assume the No. 1 running back role following the graduation of King.

Lincoln Park should have a decent 1-2 punch in the backfield with Gray's classmate Devin Macon accompanying him.

The passing game could be equally effective for the Rails as well with another senior in Omari Harvey as well as junior Corey Williams as the primary pass-catching options. The former Harvey has big-play potential as evident by his 184 receiving yards on just eight grabs a season ago.

The offensive line will have some different faces up front, however they do



CONSTANCE YORK — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Lincoln Park's Brandon Gray finds some room to run with the ball during the Railsplitters' non-conference Homecoming Game against visiting Coldwater on September 22, 2023.

see a returning starter in Santino Galvan come back for one more season. Galvan is also likely to help anchor the defensive line at one of the tackle positions.

The defense as a whole

is one area that Williams has tabbed as a potential strength for Lincoln Park this fall. And a lot of the key playmakers on offense will also factor into how well the Rails do defen-

2025 Lincoln Park Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

- W1 — Aug. 28 — A — Taylor, 7 p.m.*
- W2 — Sept. 5 — A — Southgate Anderson, 7 p.m.*
- W3 — Sept. 12 — H — Brownstown Woodhaven, 7 p.m.*
- W4 — Sept. 19 — A — Detroit University Prep Science & Math, 5 p.m.
- W5 — Sept. 26 — H — Allen Park, 7 p.m.*
- W6 — Oct. 3 — H — Wyandotte Roosevelt, 7 p.m.*
- W7 — Oct. 10 — A — Dearborn Edsel Ford, 7 p.m.*
- W8 — Oct. 17 — H — Gibraltar Carlson, 7 p.m.*
- W9 — Oct. 24 — A — Trenton, 7 p.m.*

sively.

The trio of Williams, Harvey, and Macon will hold down spots in the secondary, a unit that Williams foresees being a work in progress to start the season.

Gray meanwhile will slide in at the second level alongside a veteran in Logan Ferrell. Now a three-year starting linebacker for the Rails, the senior Ferrell earned all-News-Herald honors back in 2023.

As far as impact newcomers to the varsity squad, Williams has labeled a couple of high school rookies in Zaron Oliver and Tra'vell Calvin that can step in and produce right away.

Oliver adds even more

depth to both the wide receiver and defensive back rooms.

Calvin meanwhile is expected to line up as a tight end on offense while also serve as a pass rusher off the edge on defense.

Although there appear to be some notable question marks, some of which Williams himself has already honed in on, the strengths of Lincoln Park could very well help keep them in playoff contention, or even shake up the always-competitive Downriver League.

"We have to take it one game at a time and make a playoff push," Williams said. "It should be a great year. I predict a few upsets."



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PREP FOOTBALL » MELVINDALE ABT

Gators eyeing first playoff showing since 2022

By Alexander Muller

amuller@medianewsgroup.com

It's been a difficult stretch as of late for the football program at Melvindale Academy for Business & Tech.

The Gators in 2024 finished with just a 3-6 record overall, including 3-4 in the Charter School Conference's Silver Division. They have won just five total games over the past two seasons, failing to miss the state playoffs each time.

However, with perhaps one of their more experienced groups in recent memory, ABT is hoping to snap that mini postseason drought.

Just on offense alone, head coach Andrew Hall is seeing 10 starters from a year ago return this upcoming fall. That includes soon-to-be senior quarterback Ty'Juan Johnson.

Primarily a threat with his legs, Johnson accrued 600 scrimmages yards in 2024 — three-quarters of which came on the ground — to go along with nine touchdowns.

Should Johnson want to expand and become more of a dual-threat signal-caller for ABT, he will have some experience on the outside at the wide receiver position in the form of fellow seniors David Boston and Avantez



Melvindale Academy for Business & Tech Gators — Logo

Barnes.

Hall also tabbed Joseph Nelson and Marsean Martin as viable pass-catching options on offense. And Johnson will have another Class of 2026 product in Keimon Perry to hand the ball off to in the backfield.

Perhaps the biggest asset that ABT possesses is in the trenches, specifically on the offensive line. Even Hall acknowledged the value that area of the team can bring.

"The team's strength would have to be our offensive line," Hall said. "We understand the importance of our offensive linemen. Without them, we can't play football."

Hall noted four key players — Kahiron Perry, Maurice Boyd, Megale Redd, Ja-Eirre Ware — as big difference-makers for ABT on the offensive line this upcoming season. The incoming senior Boyd, who also logged a dozen tackles as a defensive lineman in

2025 ABT Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

W1 — Aug. 28 — H — Genesee, 4 p.m.**W2 — Sept. 5 — H — A&T Academy of Pontiac, 5 p.m.*****W3 — Sept. 12 — A — Detroit Leadership Academy, 5 p.m.*****W4 — Sept. 19 — A — Mount Clemens, 7 p.m.*****W5 — Sept. 26 — H — Detroit Community, 4 p.m.*****W6 — Oct. 3 — A — Southfield Bradford Academy, 4 p.m.*****W7 — Oct. 10 — H — Hamtramck, 4 p.m.*****W8 — Oct. 17 — H — Redford Westfield Prep, 7 p.m.*****W9 — Oct. 24 — A — Detroit Osborn, 6 p.m.**

2024, did not surrender a sack in his junior campaign.

Boyd is one of several Gators that is expected to see significant, if not regular, time on both sides of the ball this fall. He and Kahiron Perry are two of the six returning starters for ABT on defense as the will help anchor the defensive line.

Elsewhere on defense, Martin and Keimon Perry are expected to occupy the linebacker positions, while the trio of Johnson, Boston, and Barnes will hold things down in the secondary.

In addition to their slew of seniors, ABT is expected to see a wave of incoming new players, many of whom are underclassmen, that will make an immediate impact, says Hall. In fact, four of the six fresh faces he highlighted are in the sophomore class alone.

Khyrin Lewis will add some depth at both the running back and linebacker position. King Charleston could step up and become another pass-catching option for Johnson on offense, while also patrolling the defensive backfield. Nate Martinez will only bolster what appears to already be a strength for the Gators in the trenches. And there is also Anthony Williams, who can be a secret weapon in the kicking game.

ABT is also welcoming in two more linemen — junior Djimon Burton and senior Cason Shannon — to the fold.

Like almost all coaches, Hall is always looking to improve in all areas with his team, especially given their "high hopes" of competing for a CSC Silver Division crown and, in turn, a spot in the state playoffs.



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PREP FOOTBALL » MELVINDALE

Young Cardinals looking to make noise in WWAC

By Alexander Muller
amuller@medianewsgroup.com

A year ago, James Hill took over a Melvindale football program that finished with just one victory in 2023.

In Hill's first season, albeit marginal, the Cardinals saw some improvement in finding a second win on the schedule while also seeing an uptick in scoring.

There is a continued concerted effort to "change the narrative around" with football at Melvindale, says Hill. And with a raw but talented group this fall, perhaps they can climb up in the Western Wayne Athletic Conference rankings.

"We're extremely young but are bigger, stronger, and faster than last year's Cardinals," Hill said. "We want the kids to leave this place better than they found it while utilizing those who have come before them to sustain what we are building here."

What Hill and Melvindale appear to be building is a core group of players from the younger classes

that have already played together for at least one season, if not multiple. Among those familiar faces is the quarterback Terrell Crawford II.

Now a junior, Crawford became the starting quarterback midway through the 2024 season and provided a spark offensively. In just six games played, he racked up close to 900 total yards and nine touchdowns, earning second-team all-WWAC honors at season's end.

Crawford will have some fellow classmates to distribute the ball to throughout the season.

The likely No. 1 option out of the backfield is Kaleb McNea, who assumes the role left by the since-graduated King Allen.

McNea is arguably Melvindale's best and most important player to their success moving forward. A first-team all-News-Herald honoree in 2024, the junior racked up well over 100 tackles at the linebacker position.

Elsewhere on offense, Crawford's primary pass-catching option downfield



CORY LINSNER — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Melvindale quarterback Terrell Crawford II unloads a pass during the Cardinals' road game vs WWAC foe Dearborn Heights Annapolis on Oct. 11, 2024.

comes in the form of another junior in Bradford Cottrell Jr, who in just four games a season ago accumulated close to 400 all-purpose yards. Cottrell is also expected to hold down one of the spots in the secondary on defense as well for Hill.

The aerial attack could be a focal point for what the Cards do offensively.

In addition to Cottrell, the signal-caller Crawford will have a host of wideouts at his disposal. Those include a pair of returnees in senior Emad Ali and sophomore Joziah Strong, the latter of which was a starter in 2024. Ali meanwhile will also help spell McNea as a rushing option in the backfield.

Up front, Melvindale will

2025 Melvindale Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

- W1 — Aug. 28 — A — Livonia Clarenceville, 7 p.m.
- W2 — Sept. 5 — H — Dearborn Heights Robichaud, 6 p.m.*
- W3 — Sept. 12 — H — Redford Thurston, 6 p.m.*
- W4 — Sept. 19 — A — Romulus, 6 p.m.*
- W5 — Sept. 26 — H — Garden City, 6 p.m.*
- W6 — Oct. 3 — A — Dearborn Heights Crestwood, 7 p.m.*
- W7 — Oct. 10 — H — Dearborn Heights Annapolis, 6 p.m.*
- W8 — Oct. 17 — A — Redford Union, 6 p.m.*
- W9 — Oct. 24 — A — Southgate Anderson, 7 p.m.

be leaning on the services of a few veterans to lead the way, namely seniors Evan Longworth and Maurice Presley. The latter is likely to play on both sides of the line and help fill the void left by 2024 all-area recipient Davair McCrimon. Another two-way lineman, Jahliel McDowell, returns after logging valuable minutes as a freshman last year.

As far as potential impact newcomers, Hill has identified a handful that can step in right away, many of which are underclassmen.

Among the fresh faces to the Melvindale programs are pair of sophomores, Jhase Wiley and Jackson Makarewicz, each

of whom will add depth to the wide receiver room. Makarewicz is a transfer from the Cardinals' conference foe Dearborn Heights Annapolis that can also serve as a pass rusher on defense.

Hill believes there were some chances to be hand for Melvindale a season ago. It is why there has been a point of emphasis on the attention to detail this off-season.

"Our 2024 team left too much on the table, and our kids have taken the 'hunter' mentality to heart," Hill said. "Going into year two, we have spent a good majority of the offseason teaching the nuances to this game that will help us win differently moving forward."

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PREP FOOTBALL » NEW BOSTON HURON

Chiefs seek to climb Huron League ranks in 2025

By Alexander Muller
amuller@medianewsgroup.com

It's been a little bit of a roller coaster for New Boston Huron on the gridiron as of late.

The Chiefs are just two games over the .500 mark (20-18) overall, since the start of the 2021 season. That includes a 4-5 mark last season, which resulted in them missing the state playoffs for the second consecutive year.

The 2024 edition of Huron football was one that saw a number of young players earn regular playing time. Head coach Tom Hoover is hoping that experience pays off this upcoming fall.

"We lost some quality seniors to graduation in June, but we have several promising players eager to step-up and fill their shoes," Hoover said. "Overall, we played 13 underclassmen last season and we are expecting some dividends from their experience."

Several of those returning underclassmen are players that Hoover has tabbed

as the biggest difference-makers for Huron this season. That includes quarterback Cash Moczydlowsky, who comes back after handling the starting duties as a sophomore in 2024.

Moczydlowsky is one of seven returning players on offense for Huron. He'll be joined in the backfield by classmate Jamil Brown, who figures to get the bulk of carries at the running back spot.

Moczydlowsky will have some continuity up front on the offensive line as well with juniors Garrett Wezer and Noah Herron, as well as senior Brandon Potter, helping fortify the trenches. And Cayden Delaney is the likely candidate to handle the snaps at center.

All four of those linemen are likely to see significant reps on defense as well.

Herron will be slotted at the linebacker position while the other three will line up as defensive tackles.

Herron will be accompanied at the second level of the defense by the aforementioned Jamil Brown as well as senior Landon Hall, who could also get some



ROBERT SHERMAN — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

The New Boston Huron football team collected its third victory of the fall season with a 30-7 win at home over local conference rival Grosse Ile on Oct. 11, 2024.

touches out of the backfield on offense.

Perhaps Huron's most important piece come back comes in the form of senior Nathan Matsos. A second-team all-News-Herald honoree in 2024, Matsos logged a team-high 61 tackles to go along with a pair of interceptions and a forced fumble out of the safety position.

Matsos, who is also another option to run the ball on offense, spearheads the secondary for a defense that sees starters back from last year's team.

Among those returnees are Caleb Ball and Sebastian Ibarra.

Additionally, Hoover has his eyes on a host of players — some returning and some new altogether — that

2025 Huron Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

W1 — Aug. 28 — A — Lake Fenton, 7 p.m.

W2 — Sept. 5 — A — Grosse Ile, 7 p.m.*

W3 — Sept. 12 — H — Monroe St Mary Catholic Central, 7 p.m.

W4 — Sept. 19 — A — Milan, 7 p.m.*

W5 — Sept. 26 — H — Riverview, 7 p.m.*

W6 — Oct. 3 — A — Monroe Jefferson, 7 p.m.*

W7 — Oct. 10 — H — Carleton Airport, 7 p.m.*

W8 — Oct. 17 — A — Flat Rock, 7 p.m.*

W9 — Oct. 24 — H — Adrian, 7 p.m.

can and will help the team right away.

Matsos should see players like senior Jayden Lundy and junior Daniel Gemmel help fill out the defensive backfield, as will Moczydlowsky. Both Lundy and Gemmel also figure to be pass-catching options as wide receivers for Moczydlowsky when Huron is on offense.

The linebacking core also gets a little deeper with junior Kyler Caswell and senior Carson Yanick in the fold. Offensively, the former is also tabbed as a running back option, while the latter can line up at tight end.

Where Huron appears to be building the most depth

is up front. Players who can help spell some of the returning regulars on both sides of the ball are junior Joel Diserens and senior Parker Wodarski.

Navigating through the Huron League is never an easy task. Hoover is fully embracing that challenge once more as they look to make some noise with what is a more experienced group.

"We expect a tough matchup every week in the Huron League," Hoover said. "We have had a strong core of kids who have shown up and worked hard this summer and they are optimistic heading into the season."

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PREP FOOTBALL » RIVERVIEW

Pirates look to reclaim Huron League crown in 2025

By Alexander Muller
amuller@medianewsgroup.com

Although they saw their streak of four straight Huron League football championships snapped, Riverview a year ago turned in a 9-2 mark overall. It marked the fourth straight time they've won nine games or more in a season, good enough to make it eight straight trips to the state playoffs.

This year's group of Pirates will look a bit different from years past, however the run-heavy program figures to lean on experience and depth in the trenches to make another conference and postseason run.

"We have a lot of experience on the offensive and defensive lines," Riverview head coach Derek McLaughlin said. "They are great players and people that are competitive and fun to coach. We also have a lot of depth in positions overall and are hoping to play multiple people during games."

The line depth for Riverview is headlined by Braedyn Evans. A third-team all-News-Herald honoree in

2024, Evans is expected to assume his old post at left tackle this fall and become the leader of a line that saw both Garrett Timmerman and Joe Avouris both graduate.

Evans, who like most Riverview players will line up on both sides of the football, will also be a starting edge rusher on defense.

Elsewhere on the offensive line, Evans will be accompanied by fellow seniors Yamil Acevedo, Nico Papadopoulos, and Tristen DuBose. Both Papadopoulos and DuBose are also tabbed to be starting interior linemen on defense, as will Karon Williams-Harrell.

Another returning senior, Magnus Geiger, will also be a pass-rushing option off the edge.

Acevedo meanwhile will slot in as a linebacker, another potential position of depth for McLaughlin. That group for the Bucs will house one of the area's best returning players in Braylon Orcher. A former first-team all-area nominee, Orcher logged well over a 100 tackles a year ago.

Orcher is again expected



CONSTANCE YORK — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

The Riverview football team improved to 2-0 on the young season with a convincing 36-7 victory at home over Huron League rival Carleton Airport on Sept. 6, 2024.

to also line up as a tight end, although it'll likely be in more of a blocking capacity for the run-prominent Riverview offense.

That ground game is arguably the one that sees the biggest player personnel change. It comes following the graduation of three-year starting quarterback Lucas Thompson as well as

a pair of multiple-time all-area running backs in Nathan Pinkava and Ian Adams.

"We lost some excellent players last year due to graduation," McLaughlin said. "There are approximately 5 positions on each side that players are in active competition for. Additionally, there are many ca-

2025 Riverview Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

W1 — Aug. 28 — H — Utica Eisenhower, 7 p.m.

W2 — Sept. 5 — H — Milan, 7 p.m.*

W3 — Sept. 12 — A — Carleton Airport, 7 p.m.*

W4 — Sept. 19 — A — Monroe Jefferson, 7 p.m.*

W5 — Sept. 26 — A — New Boston Huron, 7 p.m.*

W6 — Oct. 3 — H — Flat Rock, 7 p.m.*

W7 — Oct. 10 — A — Monroe St Mary Catholic Central, 7 p.m.*

W8 — Oct. 17 — H — Grosse Ile, 7 p.m.*

W9 — Oct. 24 — H — Toledo St Francis de Sales (OH), 7 p.m.

pable options to fill these roles."

Fortunately, McLaughlin has several capable replacements to plug right in, backs that saw regular minutes last season especially after the unfortunate season-ending injury to Adams in Week 5 vs Flat Rock.

The primary runners are expected to be seniors Ashton Robinson and Domanic Stuck. Each taking hand-offs from the likely new starting signal-caller, Nathan Johnson, while also lining up in the secondary on defense.

As is tradition, Riverview will have a stable of options to carry the ball in their T-offense. McLaughlin highlighted a pair of juniors

in Carson Rice and Aidan Treece as well as sophomore DeAngelo Johnson to add different looks.

Other potential impact newcomers are a pair of two-way linemen in the Class of 2027 in Noah Jasinski and DeAngelo Broadnax.

Additionally, sophomore Tyler Grunwald could spell Johnson at quarterback while also seeing time in the defensive backfield.

"The best thing about this team is their attitude and outlook," McLaughlin said. "They love to compete and do not shy away from hard work. We have a very tough schedule this year and we will grow as a team throughout the season."



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PREP FOOTBALL » RIVER ROUGE

New era underway for Crowell-led Panthers in 2025

By Alexander Muller
 amuller@medianewsgroup.com

Few local high school football programs have been as consistent as the one at River Rouge in recent years.

Albeit an up-and-down 6-5 campaign a year ago, Rouge found themselves on the right side of the playoff picture for the 15th consecutive year.

The season, however, ultimately ended with a loss vs Detroit Martin Luther King in the playoffs. A 33-0 loss in the Division 3 regional round last November marked the fourth time in as many years that the Panthers saw their season end at the hands of the Crusaders.

Not long after the 2024 season concluded, Rouge opted to part ways with head coach Eric Pettway after three seasons. Pettway, who was previously a assistant under former head coach Corey Parker for over a dozen years, finished with a final coaching mark of 18-15.

Pettway has since then assumed the same posi-

tion at Wayne Memorial High School. To fill his void, Rouge made a bold, big-splash move in hiring Jermain Crowell.

Formerly the head coach at Belleville, Crowell had been suspended from coaching at any school in Michigan each of the last two academic years after it was determined he violated the MHSAA undue influence rules. That barring began back in 2022 when the Tigers were beginning what eventually became their second D1 state championship in as many seasons.

Still, the on-field success that Crowell garnered in his time at Belleville simply cannot be overlooked. In eight seasons with the Tigers, he compiled a strong 84-10 record in addition to their state titles in both '21 and '22. It's a big reason why he has the support of the River Rouge brass.

A return to football glory is ultimately the end goal for Rouge, which in the aforementioned Corey Parker tenure turned in a 113-34 mark with three state finals appearances,



ALEXANDER MULLER — MEDIANEWS GROUP

River Rouge wide receiver Will Hobbs Jr looks for room to run during the Panthers' D3 regional round game vs No. 8-ranked Detroit Martin Luther King on Nov. 15, 2024.

winning it all in 2019.

Crowell also has an impressive track record of identifying and grooming players for the next level, the most notable and recent of which is University of Michigan incom-

ing freshman quarterback Bryce Underwood. The Panthers are no stranger to producing college-bound talent themselves, having seen 17 more players sign on to play college football back in February.

2025 River Rouge Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

- W1 — Aug. 28 — H — Westland John Glenn, 7 p.m.
- W2 — Sept. 5 — A — Muskegon Mona Shores, 7 p.m.
- W3 — Sept. 12 — H — Toledo St John's Jesuit (OH), 7 p.m.
- W4 — Sept. 19 — H — Bloomfield Hills Brother Rice, 7 p.m.
- W5 — Sept. 26 — H — Toledo Central Catholic (OH), 7 p.m.
- W6 — Oct. 3 — A — Warren De La Salle, 4 p.m.
- W7 — Oct. 10 — A — Ferndale, 7 p.m.
- W8 — Oct. 17 — H — Newmarket Huron Heights (CAN), 7 p.m.
- W9 — Oct. 24 — A — Orchard Lake St Mary's, 7 p.m.

Despite the pretty sizeable roster turnover, Crowell comes in with a fair amount of in-house talent to still work with. Perhaps the most important piece is on the back end of the defense in the form of senior Nate Stallworth.

A second-team all-News-Herald honoree in 2024, Stallworth had a knack for making big plays in the secondary, logging 40 tackles to go along with 14 pass break-ups and a pair of interceptions and forced fumbles each.

Stallworth is a focal point of what could be a stingy Rouge defense this fall. The Panthers also bring back a couple of former all-area linebackers

in Darryl Folks and Roland Berry, each of whom are juniors that combined for over 80 tackles a season ago.

Folks also had eight tackles for a loss, two interceptions, and a punt return for a touchdown. Berry meanwhile found himself in the backfield often, picking up six sacks of opposing quarterbacks.

Offensively for Rouge, they may give the keys (back) to Will Hobbs. Formerly a backup quarterback earlier in his career, Hobbs last season found himself flanked out as a wide receiver. And in the backfield, look for Jakoby Cross to be the primary rushing option.



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PREP FOOTBALL » ROMULUS SUMMIT ACADEMY

Dragons looking to get over playoff hump in 2025

By Alexander Muller
amuller@medianewsgroup.com

Few high school football programs locally have been as consistent in recent history than the one over at Romulus Summit Academy North.

A 6-4 record overall a year ago earned the Dragons their eighth consecutive season with a winning mark and their sixth straight appearance in the state playoffs. It was, however, a one-and-done effort in 2024 when they fell to Charter School Conference rival Detroit Voyageur Prep for the second time in three weeks.

Although they have to replace a fair amount of starting production from last year, Summit appears prime to make another push towards the postseason in Division 5.

Back on the sidelines for the Dragons this fall will be Matt Swain, now entering his ninth season. Swain has been the architect of the school's football program, having compiled a 49-21 coaching record through

his first eight seasons.

Prior to Swain taking over the head coaching role, Summit struggled on a near annual basis, putting together just three winning seasons and one playoff showing in a 13-year window, including back-to-back winless campaigns in 2015 and '16.

Now a perennial playoff-caliber group, the next step for Swain and Summit is capturing the school's first district title in the sport after falling in each of their four district finals appearances.

Should the folks in black and teal want to get over the hump, Swain will be turning towards the trenches, which he has identified as his strongest unit heading into this new season.

Among the bigger impact players for Summit up front will be a pair of seniors in Brian Crawford and Aaden Gallmore, who will be lined up at left tackle and guard, respectively. Each should also flip around and help anchor the defensive line.

It will be a veteran group of linemen for the Dragons as Crawford and Gallmore



ALEXANDER MULLER — MEDIANEWS GROUP

Players for the Romulus Summit Academy North rush the field ahead of the Dragons' first-round playoff game vs crosstown rival Romulus on Oct 28, 2023.

will be joined by fellow classmates Lucas Bellomy and Eric Ball-Warren. Adding to the depth of front will be two juniors in Omari Smith and Kevin Pettigrew.

Another two-way impact player for Summit this season comes in the form of Donovan Ewing. In addition to being a starting linebacker on defense, the senior could be an option in the backfield on offense.

Staying on the offensive side of the ball, the Dragons are likely to give full rein to Oween Sudduth as the starting quarterback come Week 1. Sudduth a year ago appeared under center in four different games, throwing for seven touchdowns while averaging 130 passing yards per outing.

A touted signal-caller in his class, Sudduth has already begun generating

2025 Summit Academy Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

W1 — Aug. 28 — A — Detroit University Prep Science & Math, 5 p.m.

W2 — Sept. 5 — H — Harper Woods Chandler Park Academy, 7 p.m.*

W3 — Sept. 12 — A — Detroit Edison, 4 p.m.*

W4 — Sept. 19 — H — Detroit Lincoln-King Academy, 7 p.m.*

W5 — Sept. 26 — A — Ecorse, 7 p.m.*

W6 — Oct. 3 — A — Detroit Old Redford Academy, 4 p.m.*

W7 — Oct. 10 — H — Warren Michigan Collegiate, 7 p.m.*

W8 — Oct. 17 — H — Detroit Voyageur Prep, 7 p.m.*

W9 — Oct. 24 — A — Ann Arbor Skyline, 7 p.m.

some interest at the next level.

The sophomore received a scholarship offer from Division 1 program Southern Mississippi back in March earlier this year. Oween is also the younger of Summit Class of 2024 graduate Dylan Sudduth.

The emergence of the younger Sudduth likely means more opportunities on the field elsewhere for Jacob Boykins. The starting quarterback for Summit for much of last season, Boykins racked up close to 1,000 yards from scrimmage, roughly half of which came on the ground or as a

receiver.

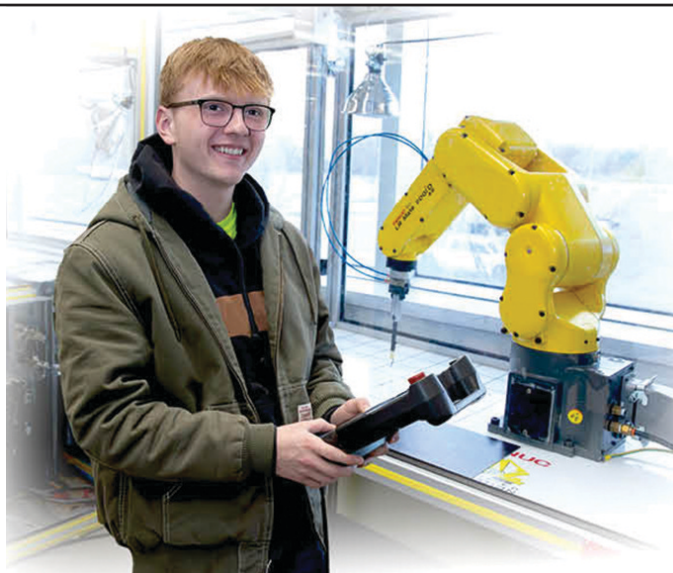
Like many teams, Swain is looking for improvement and growth in all facets of their game as they gear up for the new season. He's been encouraged with the participation levels during the summer and is hoping that work ethic translates into the fall.

"We will go as far as our attitude and discipline allow us," Swain said. "We can play with anyone in our division when it comes to talent and athleticism. If we can stay focused and disciplined on and off the field the sky's the limit for this team."

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PREP FOOTBALL » ROMULUS

Eagles looking to provide shake-up to WWAC picture in 2025

By Alexander Muller

amuller@medianewsgroup.com

After being on the wrong end of some close games early in the season, the Romulus football team in 2024 put together a late-season push to qualify for the post-season.

Despite finishing below the .500 mark at 5-6 overall by season's end, the Eagles collected a season-best three straight wins down the stretch before falling in the district final round of the Division 5 state playoffs.

Even with their sub-.500 mark, Romulus was a better and more competitive team than the record shows. That was evident by their +48 final point differential and having lost all five regular season games by two possessions, three of which were decided by three points or fewer.

The Eagles will be looking to make it three straight trips to the postseason, something they have not accomplished since doing so four consecutive times from 2014-17.

Any and all success the folks in maroon and white garner in 2025 will largely depend on the play of Tor-



CONSTANCE YORK — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

Romulus quarterback Torrence Searcy scampers down the sidelines during the Eagles' Week 4 WWAC football matchup at Melvindale on Sept. 20, 2024.

rence Searcy at the quarterback position.

An all-News-Herald honoree in both 2023 and 2024, Searcy will be starting under center for the fourth time in as many years at Romulus. The talented dual-threat senior has compiled over 40 total touchdowns and roughly 4,000 scrimmage yards, both passing and rushing, over the past two seasons.

It could be a very run-

heavy Romulus team in 2025.

In addition to Searcy's own rushing ability, Eagles head coach Charles Searcy will have another senior in Sterling Frye at his disposal in the backfield. A three-year starter within the program, Frye is also expected to play on both sides of the ball, lining up in the secondary.

The aerial attack has equally been a focal point

in recent years for Romulus. Searcy has had former all-News-Herald wideouts in 2025 grad Mylek Lee and 2024 grad Emil Burton to pass the ball to.

Should Searcy want to drop back and look downfield, he will have some capable options, one being a senior and the other a sophomore.

The veteran comes in the form of Taha Kandji, who

2025 Romulus Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

W1 — Aug. 28 — H — Wayne Memorial, 7 p.m.

W2 — Sept. 5 — H — Redford Union, 6 p.m.*

W3 — Sept. 12 — H — Dearborn Heights Robichaud, 6 p.m.*

W4 — Sept. 19 — H — Melvindale, 6 p.m.*

W5 — Sept. 26 — A — Dearborn Heights Crestwood, 7 p.m.*

W6 — Oct. 3 — A — Garden City, 6 p.m.*

W7 — Oct. 10 — H — Redford Thurston, 6 p.m.*

W8 — Oct. 17 — A — Dearborn Heights Annapolis, 6 p.m.*

W9 — Oct. 24 — H — Warren Fitzgerald, 7 p.m.

in eight games last season hauled in four catches for 63 yards and a touchdown. The potential impact underclassman outside the numbers will be Zane Hunter, who in fact spelled Searcy under center at times last year with 137 yards on 7-of-18 passing.

The aforementioned Sterling Frye can also help with catching passes out of the backfield as well.

A challenging task for Romulus this fall will be replacing the all-around production of the since-graduated Adrian Barnes. A third-team all-area standout a season ago in just six games played collected 15 touchdowns, doing so in four different ways, including a pair of them on special teams and one on defense.

One candidate to at least help fill that void left by Barnes, at least on defense, will be Nasir Robinson. In addition to adding depth in the backfield on offense, Robinson a year ago as a junior had a pair of interceptions to go along with nearly 40 tackles.

The 2025 slate figures to be another tough one for Romulus as the schedule features five teams that qualified for the playoffs in 2024, with four of those residing in the Western Wayne Athletic Conference.

Another league foe for the Eagles, Dearborn Heights Crestwood, just came up short of reaching the postseason but finished 5-4 and have won five straight head-to-head matchups since 2019.

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PREP FOOTBALL » SOUTHGATE ANDERSON

Titans look to make it four straight playoff appearances

By Alexander Muller
amuller@medianewsgroup.com

The football program at Southgate Anderson appears to be back to its annual winning ways.

An identical 7-3 mark for a second consecutive season in 2024 earned the Titans a trip the state playoffs for a third straight year, something they had not previously done since doing so in four straight years from 2008-11.

After losing several key players to graduation, however, plenty of new faces will need to step up in hopes of keeping that playoff appearance streak alive.

It won't be an Anderson team necessarily void of playing experience this fall, but more so starting experience. In fact, the Titans have to replace over half of their starters on both sides of the ball from a year ago.

The biggest player personnel turnover that they will see is on the offensive side of the ball. It starts with the quarterback position, following the graduation

of three-time all-News-Herald honoree Jackson Sage.

Head coach Bobby Marten says there is and has been an ongoing competition between senior Cooper Randall and junior Landon Kuntzman for the role of starting signal-caller. Regardless of who lines up under center, there will be some key returning players taking on new starting roles as well.

Anderson could deploy a tandem of senior Adonnis Goliday and junior Tyler Braddock to carry the ball out of the backfield. As far as pass-catching options, seniors Isiah Daviston and Zyne Whitson take on bigger responsibilities after the Titans saw former all-area recipients Thomas Laskowski and DeAngelo Stewart graduate.

Up front will see a lot of newcomers as well, however a literal big piece in Johnny Pardo returns for one more season. Pardo, along with fellow classmates Jeremy Russell and Nathan Grigsby, will anchor an offensive line that is inexperienced but has upside.



ALEXANDER MULLER — MEDIANEWS GROUP

Southgate Anderson wide receiver Zayne Whitson catches and runs with the ball during the Titans' home playoff game vs River Rouge on Nov. 1, 2024.

"We need to continue to improve up front offensively and develop some playmakers," Marten said. "We have some talent there but need to continue to develop our younger players."

If there is a notable strength for Anderson, it is the defense, specifically

in the trenches according to Marten.

In addition to the aforementioned returning offensive linemen, the defensive line will also see another returning senior in Vince Iwagu occupy one of the edge rusher spots. Iwagu is also expected to

2025 Anderson Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

- W1 — Aug. 28 — A — Brownstown Woodhaven, 7 p.m.*
- W2 — Sept. 5 — H — Lincoln Park, 7 p.m.*
- W3 — Sept. 12 — H — Allen Park, 7 p.m.*
- W4 — Sept. 19 — H — Wyandotte Roosevelt, 7 p.m.*
- W5 — Sept. 26 — A — Dearborn Edsel Ford, 7 p.m.*
- W6 — Oct. 3 — A — Gibraltar Carlson, 7 p.m.*
- W7 — Oct. 10 — A — Trenton, 7 p.m.*
- W8 — Oct. 17 — H — Taylor, 7 p.m.*
- W9 — Oct. 24 — H — Melvindale, 7 p.m.

be a the starting tight end on offense.

The line will also feature some potential impact newcomers in senior Ray Selim as well as juniors Jaeden Larowe and Justin Korte, all of whom will provide depth on the offensive line as well.

Elsewhere for the Titans defensively, the skilled position trio of Daviston, Whitson, and Goliday will occupy spots in the secondary. They will be joined by both quarterback candidates Randall and Kuntzman along with senior King Purvey, who can also spell or complement Iwagu as a second option at tight end on offense.

Braddock and Grigsby

should factor into the equation at the second level of defense.

Aiding in their efforts will be another senior and newcomer to the program in Habib Majedi, whose wrestling-first background should adapt nicely to the linebacking core.

Marten knows there is upside and potential this edition of Anderson football, but also knows their level of success will depend on the progress of certain players and certain position groups.

"We are looking to compete," Marten said. "We have a very young team with not much experience. The kids are working very hard and we are just trying to get better everyday."



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PREP FOOTBALL » TAYLOR

Griffins looking to rebound from winless 2024 season

By Alexander Muller
 amuller@medianewsgroup.com

No local high school football team is seeking a bigger program-wide turnaround than the one over at Taylor.

After going winless in nine tries in 2024, the Griffins come into this fall season riding an 18-game losing streak dating back to the start of the 2023 campaign. And the struggles have been eerily similar during that time, averaging only about 10 points per game while giving up on average over 36 points to the opposition.

What have been by and large young and inexperienced Taylor teams each of the last two seasons are now more seasoned, something that head coach Michael Pitts will translate to more on-field success in 2025.

"We have a lot of returners who played a lot of varsity football," Pitts said. "Experience shouldn't be an issue on offense. They've also had success on the lower levels so they should bring that winning energy

to varsity."

Should Taylor want to have a resurgence on the gridiron, it will likely start with an offense that sees a lot of the same players return from last year. That side of the ball will also see quarterback Landyn Norman assume the starting job from Week 1.

Still only a junior, Norman a year ago took over the No. 1 signal-calling duties midway through the campaign for Taylor. The dual-threat junior figures to provide some versatility for the Griffins offensively.

What will help Norman with his progression is a lot of continuity in the trenches. In fact, Taylor will see all five starting offensive linemen from last season come back in 2025. That includes a trio of seniors in Dorian Hollis, Aiden Havener, and Courtney Moore, along with juniors Charles Ajayi and Mohammad Allouzi.

The skill positions will have some familiar faces for Norman to distribute the pigskin too, specifically outside the numbers with seniors Nick Lawson, Darrell Scott, and Isaiah Law-



ALEXANDER MULLER — MEDIANEWS GROUP

Taylor quarterback Landyn Norman scrambles to run on a play during the Griffins' DRL football match at Dearborn Edsel Ford on Oct. 11, 2024.

son all assuming starting wide receiver roles. Both Scott and the former Lawson were starters a year ago.

On the other side of the line of scrimmage, the defense sees a bit more roster turnover from the year

prior. It's why Pitts is hammering home an effort to build confidence and consistency as much as possible.

There are some key holdovers on defense from the 2024 squad, namely Nick

2025 Taylor Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

- W1 — Aug. 28 — H — Lincoln Park, 7 p.m.*
- W2 — Sept. 5 — A — Allen Park, 7 p.m.*
- W3 — Sept. 12 — A — Wyandotte Roosevelt, 7 p.m.*
- W4 — Sept. 19 — H — Dearborn Edsel Ford, 7 p.m.*
- W5 — Sept. 26 — A — Gibraltar Carlson, 7 p.m.*
- W6 — Oct. 3 — H — Trenton, 7 p.m.*
- W7 — Oct. 10 — H — Tecumseh, 7 p.m.
- W8 — Oct. 17 — A — Southgate Anderson, 7 p.m.*
- W9 — Oct. 24 — H — Brownstown Woodhaven, 7 p.m.*

Lawson in the secondary and Ajayi on the defensive line.

Taylor will also bring back senior Warric Shepherd, who can play on the line on both sides of the ball and give an extra look at the linebacker position.

Although he will understandably be leaning on some upperclassmen to lead the way, Pitts also has the future in mind. He expects to infuse a handful of underclassmen into the fold, some of whom can make an impact right away.

Freshman Demai Childress, Pitts says, "will get varsity reps" as a wide receiver during the season. The wideout room will get even deeper too with sophomore Ethan New joining

the fray.

New is one of four players who was a regular for Taylor's JV team last season. Other Class of 2028 players who will be making the jump to varsity this fall include a pair of defensive linemen in Payton Buckner and Isaiah Knuckles, as well as linebacker Wesley Kubelis.

"We're excited because we've had a good summer and practices so far have been really competitive," Pitts said. "We have a lot of returners but we also have a lot of young guys that have been developing and clawing to get on the field."

"If we focus on us and get better with the little things, we will have a successful season."

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PREP FOOTBALL » TRENTON

Trojans hoping to make noise in Downriver League

By Alexander Muller
amuller@medianewsgroup.com

It was a “what if” season of sorts for the Trenton football program a year ago.

Although they did see their streak of playoff appearances extend to 11 straight years, the Trojans perhaps left some chances to put together a stronger resume, losing four games by a combined six points including three by a single point.

It's no surprise that attention to detail has been a focal point for Trenton this offseason, given their close calls last fall. First-year head coach Steve Voss acknowledged such during a 7-on-7 scrimmage back in July.

Voss, who was the Trojans' defensive coordinator over the last four seasons, assumes the role of varsity head coach following the resignation of Reginald Glon back in February. The head coaching position is merely a microcosm of what is roster-wide turnover from the year prior.

Fortunately for Voss, given his defensive background, Trenton sees roughly half of its starting defense from the 2024 club come back this fall. Headlining what is a group of six seniors are middle linebacker Brock Culpepper and safety Niko Beaudrie, each of whom logged over 60 tackles a year ago.

The secondary could arguably be the strongest unit for the Trojans will two more seniors in Max Sanfilippo and James Harrison, each of whom had close to 30 tackles, will occupy a safety and cornerback spot, respectively.

Culpepper meanwhile will be accompanied by classmate Luke Heffinger, who returns after missing almost all of the 2024 season. Heffinger is also expected to line up on offense at the tight end position. And up front, senior Brennan Russeau will hold down one spot on the defensive line.

Without question, the biggest wild card for Voss and Trenton will be the offensive side of the ball, which does not see a sin-



ALEXANDER MULLER — MEDIANEWS GROUP

Trenton linebacker Brock Culpepper, #9 in white, is in pursuit of Adnerson quarterback Jackson Sage during the Prep Kickoff Classic showcase game at Wayne State University in Detroit on August 29, 2024.

gle starter from last season return this year.

The biggest challenge will be replacing multiple-time all-News-Herald honoree Ashton Rooney, who set a single-season school record with 1,480 rushing yards to go along with 17 touchdowns.

The run game will be

still be the go-to source of offense. However, it will come in the form of youth and inexperience. It will also come with an element that the Trojans historically have not had in recent history.

“A strength is are influx of speed with our newcomers,” Voss said. “Our

2025 Trenton Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

W1 — Aug. 29 — A — Allen Park, 4 p.m.* (Prep Kickoff Classic at Wayne State University)

W2 — Sept. 5 — A — Wyandotte Roosevelt, 7 p.m.*

W3 — Sept. 12 — H — Dearborn Edsel Ford, 7 p.m.*

W4 — Sept. 19 — H — Gibraltar Carlson, 7 p.m.*

W5 — Sept. 26 — A — Milford, 7 p.m.

W6 — Oct. 3 — A — Taylor, 7 p.m.*

W7 — Oct. 10 — H — Southgate Anderson, 7 p.m.*

W8 — Oct. 17 — A — Brownstown Woodhaven, 7 p.m.*

W9 — Oct. 24 — H — Lincoln Park, 7 p.m.*

strength in the weight room has improved dramatically.”

Given the plethora of newcomers on offense, it may be a committee to carry the ball out of the backfield for Trenton. Voss has tabbed a trio of sophomores in Parker Saches, Tyler Crook, and Ben Strok as the likely candidates to open the season.

Strok transferred over from the Riverview Gabriel Richard program that reached the state championship game last season. The sophomore can also add even more depth to the defensive backfield.

Another Richard transfer, junior Vito Mazzola,

may make an impact right away on the offensive line, along with fellow classmate Kevin Romulo and senior Aiden Smithers.

Handling this fresh-looking Trenton offense under center will be AJ Hawkins.

The junior appeared in nine games last season for the Trojans, attempting 10 passes while also carrying it 16 times for over 150 yards.

“Our outlook is very positive for the season,” Voss said. “We have not had the speed and power we have on offense this season. Our inexperience will be the issue that we will focus on in the next few weeks.”

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PREP FOOTBALL » WYANDOTTE ROOSEVELT

Bears on the hunt to 'shock' the DRL in 2025

By Alexander Muller
amuller@medianewsgroup.com

A year ago, the Wyandotte Roosevelt football program endured its worst season in nearly two decades.

A one-win campaign in 2024 — their fewest victories in a single season since 2005 — resulted in the Bears missing the state playoffs for a fourth straight season. It's an active stretch that follows what had been 15 consecutive postseason appearances from 2006-20.

Head coach Jakob Zanski said the summer has been one of getting players acclimated with a new staff of coaches, many of whom were on the sidelines during Roosevelt's best days as a program.

With those players now a year older, coupled with some old-school looks and approaches from a coaching standpoint, the Roosevelt grad Zanski is ready to perhaps provide a shake-up to the Downriver League this fall.

"We look to make a significant step forward this

year with a year of experience and with the return of former coaches," Zanski said. "We believe we are in a spot to shock some people and return to being competitive in the DRL."

What is still a pretty young and junior-heavy team, Roosevelt sees a large portion of its starters from the 2024 come back this season. The majority of those returnees are on defense, including a front four that includes arguably the team's most important and versatile piece in Jack Halberstadt.

Still only a junior, Halberstadt a year ago earned all-DRL and third-team all-News-Herald honors after picking up 39 tackles as a pass rusher off the edge. Halberstadt was oftentimes lined up under center as Roosevelt's starting quarterback, racking up over 800 total yards and a handful of touchdowns.

On the D-Line, Halberstadt will be accompanied by fellow classmate Landen Williams as well as the senior duo of Collin Reedy and Donaven Stone. Headlining the lineback-



ALEXANDER MULLER — MEDIANEWS GROUP

Roosevelt sophomore quarterback Jack Halberstadt, #13 in white, accounted for all four of the Bears' touchdowns as their comeback efforts came up short in a 28-27 loss vs Edsel Ford on Sept. 13, 2024.

ing group are two more returning starters in junior Ben Demmer and senior Thomas Villarreal.

Zanski has labeled another senior in Christopher Luna as a potential breakout candidate at that second level of the defense.

The secondary will also

feature some familiar faces that have played together before as juniors Malik Daniels and Brayden Jevahirian, along with senior Connor Bedo, all return to their respective posts.

Meanwhile on offense, there is as much upside as there are question marks.

2025 Roosevelt Football Schedule

(*denotes conference game | H — home / A — away)

- W1 — Aug. 28 — A — Gibraltar Carlson, 7 p.m.*
- W2 — Sept. 5 — H — Trenton, 7 p.m.*
- W3 — Sept. 12 — H — Taylor, 7 p.m.*
- W4 — Sept. 19 — A — Southgate Anderson, 7 p.m.*
- W5 — Sept. 26 — H — Brownstown Woodhaven, 7 p.m.*
- W6 — Oct. 3 — A — Lincoln Park, 7 p.m.*
- W7 — Oct. 10 — A — Allen Park, 6 p.m.*
- W8 — Oct. 17 — A — South Lyon, 6 p.m.
- W9 — Oct. 24 — A — Dearborn Edsel Ford, 7 p.m.*

However, a more experienced group in the trenches that sees three starters return from last year will help solve any and all problems Roosevelt has.

In addition to the aforementioned Landen Williams, the offensive line will see the junior tandem of Zach Hoffman and Damon Wisniewski return to their respective tackle positions. Demmer will also provide some added bulk on the line, as will Reedy as the likely No. 1 tight end option.

Halberstadt is in fact one of two quarterback options for Zanski, the other being his classmate Cole Cline. The former, however, could flank out as a pass-catch-

ing option at tight end or an extra blocker, should Cline line up under center to take snaps.

In the backfield, look for Villarreal to get the lion's share of the carries while a sophomore in Zeke McClain will spell him of such opportunities. And if there is an area of improvement, it is the wide receiver room, which Zanski says has "a lot of people looking to step up."

Some likely go-to candidates on the outside are the team's starting defensive backs in Daniels and Bedo, while seniors Luke Hurliman and Brenden Cushman could add some depth, if not burst through as top options.

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