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 Preps

North Shore Conference preview

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Dave Keel spells out the challenges that await his team:

The Homestead coach talks about all the losses to graduation his team suffered on defense. He reminds you that a 28-game starter at quarterback, who is on scholarship at Northern Michigan, must be replaced, too.

All legitimate concerns that the rest of the North Shore Conference coaches believe the Highlanders will address with enough time to continue their winning ways in the league. They've defended their title seven straight times and have won 47 straight conference games.

Cedarburg is the consensus choice as the team most capable of unseating Homestead. Port Washington will have a nice squad, too. Whitfish Bay and Germantown should also be solid.

But they all take a backseat to Homestead. Even in their supposed weakened state, the Highlanders remain more players who received all-conference mention than any other team in the league.

"I think until someone beats them, they're still the team to beat," Coalton coach Ben Chosssek said. "They've proven they don't have down years. They just reload."

CEDARBURG

Coach: Brian Lear, 14th year.

Returning all-conference players: Logan Lauters, jr., RB, 5-8, 180; Eric Poggenburg, sr., RB-WR-DB, 5-8, 165; Jake Durham, sr., tackle, 6-4, 250; Chip Rank, sr., QB, 6-6, 225; Matt Bromley, sr., WR, 5-9, 180.

Other key players: Tariji Starks, sr., RB, 5-8, 200; Luke Morgan, sr., DB, 5-11, 160; Ted Rand, sr., G, 5-10, 175; Jake Borgardt, jr., T, 6-4, 280.

Outlook: Many view the Bulldogs as the league's best shot at unseating Homestead, but before that can happen they must grow up quickly in the trenches where there has been a lot of turnover from last season. Few teams can match their talent at the skill positions, though. Lauters was first-team all-conference. Rank completed 62% of his passes and had a six-to-1 touchdown-to-interception ratio. And <http://www.printthisclickability.com/print/arcion-04/&title=North+Shore+Conference+p...> 8/28/2009

Pyrgonberg has received all-conference mention on both sides of the ball.

GERMANTOWN

Coach: Phil Dalko, 41st year

Returning all-conference players: Bryan Keyes, sr., 6-2, 230, OL-DL; Mitch Kannenberg, sr., 6-2, 220, TE-LB.

Other key players: Eric Kindler, sr., 6-1, 180, QB-DB; Mike Fischer, jr., 5-10, 195, RB-LB; Chris Slomig, sr., 6-0, 195, RB-LB; Alex Neufuss, sr., 6-3, 270, OL; Ben Ash, sr., 6-3, 290, DL; Josh Mengon, soph., 3-9, 170, QB-RB-DB; Zak Showalter, soph., 6-1, 175, QB-WR-DB; Dylan Krivoshein, jr., 6-1, 170, QB-WR-DB.

Outlook: Last season, injuries played a large role in the Warnawks' lowest victory total (two) since 1982, but they're healthy again this year. A handful of players, including Kindler (collarbone), return to the team after suffering significant injuries in 2008. That has contributed to an overall enthusiastic pre-season. The Warnawks are only a few injuries away from being in trouble again, though, something that will be put to the test because of the team's lack of size and general inexperience.

GRAFTON

Coach: Ben Chossek, second season.

Returning all-conference players: Brandon Schweitzer, sr., RB, 5-10, 200.

Other key players: Joe Grams, sr., C, 5-10, 205; Anton King, jr., DL, 5-9, 230; Chris Sebaut, sr., DL, 5-10, 190; Anton Wagner, sr., QB, 6-2, 180; Matt Malinowski, sr., WR, 5-11, 180; Skyler Bohm, sr., K, 3-0, 175; Nick Scherzer, jr., LB, 6-2, 205; Joey Schneider, sr., CB, 5-9, 165; Zach Keeffe, sr., CB, 5-6, 150; Rick Hootling, sr., LB, 5-9, 170.

Outlook: If the Black Hawks develop their lines on both sides of the ball, there is no reason to think they can't improve on their 2-7 mark of last season. Another key will be the growth the program's talented but inexperienced junior class. The team's strength lies in the skill positions. Schweitzer, a first-team all-North Shore pick, gained 1,000 yards last season and Wagner started every game last year.

HOMESTEAD

Coach: Duce Keel, 21st year.

Returning all-conference players: Mike Collins, sr., WR-DB, 6-1, 170; Lucas Speaker, sr., LB, 6-0, 210; Justin Barber, sr., OL-DL, 6-3, 245; Bryan Brough, sr., RB, 5-9, 165; Brodie Brown, sr., OL-DL, 6-2, 290; Matt Stern, jr., QB-DB-K, 5-9, 155.

Outlook: The defending state champion is still wildly talented. Speaker was first-team all-state, Barber received all-area mention, Collins was first-team all-North Shore on offense, and Brough averaged 8.5 yards per carry and gained 598 yards last season. Concerns? The team will start a new quarterback and will play a lot of new faces on the defensive line.

MILWAUKEE LUTHERAN

Coach: Joe Kalkopf, fourth season.

Returning all-conference players: Cody Johnson, sr., QB-WR-CB, 6-4, 165; Taylor Whyte, sr., 6-3, 150; OL, DE.

Other key players: Garrett Wenzelburger, jr., 6-6, 190, WR; Andrew Gilson, sr., 5-10, 220, OL-LB; James Peters, sr., 5-8, 170, WR; Robert Basting, sr., 6-0, 190, RB; De Angelo Frimoc, jr., RB, 6-0, 195; Kenneth Belsky, sr., 5-9, 170, S; Tom Burke, sr., DE, 6-2, 170; Brynn Staedler, sr., 5-11, 220, OL; Joe Kammelstar, sr., 6-2, 220, OL.

Outlook: The Red Knights have been one of the area's most potent passing teams and that shouldn't change even though they'll have a new starter in quarterback this year. Whoever is under center will have a big target in Wenzelburger, who caught 26 passes and seven touchdowns last season. The team's play in receiver and its overall experience will be strengths. Defense, especially against the run, could be a weak spot.

NICOLET

Coach: Everett Jenkins, first year.

Returning all-conference players: Lamar Johnson-Harris, sr., DB, 5-8, 170; Ethan Peck, sr., 4, 6-5, 270.

Other key players: Shane Wilson, sr., S, 6-3, 200; Kenzie Dillingham, sr., RB, 5-11, 230.

Outlook: Victories were hard to come by for the Knights last season, but they were competitive by the end of the campaign when they won their only league game and suffered their final three games by an average of 5.3 points. Johnson-Harris and Peck will lead an experienced team that hopes to build on that finish. Key to that will be developing a winning mentality at a program that has three consecutive losing seasons.

PORT WASHINGTON

Coach: Tim Griesch, eighth season.

Returning all-conference players: Cory Stemmerz, sr., H-DE, 6-5, 240; Tim Lux, sr., DE, 6-1, 240; Josh Girser, sr., QB, 6-4, 190.

Other key players: Adam Prom, sr., DE, 6-3, 195; Shane Kennedy, jr., LB, 6-3, 215; Andrew Brisley, jr., LB, 5-0, 190; Joe McHree, jr., RB, 5-10, 175; Taylor Davenport, soph., QB-DB, 5-10, 165; Nate Hilton, sr., DE, 6-0, 205; Luke Schmoller, jr., WR, 6-3, 175; Zach Hauser, soph., LB, 6-3, 205; Mark Strong, jr., center, 6-2, 195.

Outlook: The Pirates' defensive front is as good as any Griesch has coached during his tenure. Stemmerz is also generating some Division I interest and Lux is a three-year starter. Offensively, Girser is drawing Division I interest. Keep an eye on McHree, a tough, fast junior who has moved from defensive back to running back, as well as Kennedy and Brisley, who could potentially make a lot of plays playing behind such a strong front.

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WINTERSTOCK

Coach: Jim Telfer, ninth season

Returning all-conference players: Will Hagerup, sr., P, 6-4, 215; Eric Irving, sr., DE, 5-9, 180; Joey Lacey, sr., CB, 6-0, 170

Other key players: Brian Kroll, DB-RB, 6-6, 175; Victor Gaudin, w., LB, 6-0, 215; Garrett Demoth, jr., 6-3, 220; DE - Taylor Hoff, jr., 6-3, 240; OL: Ryan Grych, sr., C, 6-9, 290; Cal Ehrke, jr., QB, 6-3, 180; Jack Beck, jr., DE, 6-3, 240.

Outlook: Defense and special teams will be the name of the game for the Blue Dukes. Hagerup, a five-star recruit, is handling the kicking chores. The defense returns seven players from a unit that ranked third in the conference. Scoring could be a problem, but Kroll is a good athlete. Ehrke, a first-year starter, has a good arm.

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