



HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PREVIEW 2021

The Name Of The Game Is

Change

**REFRESHED ROSTERS,
COACHING CHANGES,
RETURN TO REGULAR SCHEDULES**
Area Teams Tackle New Challenges
At Onset Of 2021 Season



Sparta's Carson Kelsey

Bangor's Mathieu Oesterle

**NEW CAST OF SPARTANS
SET TO TAKE PROGRAM FORWARD**
pg 6

**DIFFERENT COACH, SAME BANGOR
CARDINALS AIM TO MAINTAIN STRANGLEHOLD ON SCENIC BLUFFS**
pg 5



Cashton's Jacob Huntzicker

**EAGLES RETURN AS TRUE
CONTENDER IN SBC RACE**
pg 12



Tomah's Drew Brookman

**TOMAH HAS FAMILIAR LOOK
IN REVAMPED OFFENSE**
pg 2



Brookwood's Franklin Wildes

**WILDES STEPS INTO UNFAMILIAR
ROLE FOR FALCONS**
pg 8

**TOMAH FOOTBALL
2020 SEASON RESULTS**



Tomah's Tanner Mathias

| OPPONENT | WE | THEY |
|---------------------|-------|------|
| Onalaska | 13-39 | L |
| Reedsburg | 28-24 | W |
| West Salem | 14-28 | L |
| @ Prairie du Chien | 21-14 | W |
| @ Westby | 47-26 | W |
| Aquinas | 34-20 | W |
| D1 Level 1 Playoffs | | |
| @ Baraboo | 6-43 | L |

**OVERALL: 11-11
MVC: 5-7 (5th)**



Tomah's Calvin Mitch

2021 SCHEDULE

- AUGUST**
20 @ Mauston
27 Prairie du Chien
- SEPTEMBER**
3 @ River Falls
10 Sparta
17 Holmen
24 @ La Crosse Central
- OCTOBER**
1 La Crosse Logan
8 @ West Salem
15 Onalaska

GAME TO WATCH

EARLY NONCONFERENCE CONTESTS

Tomah will be tested early as they tackle both Mauston and Prairie du Chien prior to making its Mississippi Valley Conference start in which, they'll face newcomer, River Falls.

Why are the first two weeks of the season important? It's all about gaining experience and momentum.

Joe Protz, now in his second season as head coach at Tomah, is tasked with bringing along a new contingent of players after a large senior class exited following the 2020 season.

This year's crop of upperclassmen have two opponents early on in Mauston and PdC that they can not only grow from, but that they can win. Tomah topped PdC 21-14 last year and bested Mauston in 20-14 in 2019.

Tomah's squad needs to be successful in those first two weeks of the year to stave off what could be a very tough stretch of league play.

Tomah's youth and inexperience will make it hard to obtain MVC victories this year, but a successful run in the team's nonconference portion of the season may be enough to propel the Timberwolves back into the playoffs. Experience and growth are keys in weeks one and two.

TOMAH TIMBERWOLVES



Tomah's Logan Ruffedt runs through a gauntlet formed by Tanner Mathias (right) and Keaton Vonderhe (left) during a recent practice.

Youth and inexperience are two of the major hurdles surrounding Tomah football at the onset of 2021. However, a 'normal' preseason routine appears to have the Timberwolves prepared for the regular season, which begins Friday at Mauston. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

It's an ALL-NEW, ALL-DIFFERENT, PACK OF WOLVES

By NATE BEIER
Sports Writer

In spite of many personnel changes following the 2020 season, there's still an air of excitement surrounding the next chapter of Tomah football.

Perhaps its a fresh start with new faces that has head coach Joe Protz and his staff keen on this season.

Perhaps its a regular, normal beginning unlike what every team in Wisconsin had a year ago.

Either way, the Tomah football program is eager to test a number of new players in hopes that they can take the Timberwolves back to the playoffs and beyond.

"It's been good progress," said coach Protz regarding the onset of the season.

"I think the attitude has been great. My emphasis is always attitude and effort. We can improve on that a little bit, but I think it's been a great start to the year."

Protz, now in his second year leading Tomah, said it will take some time to ultimately decide which players are best suited for certain positions, but it's a problem he's willing to deal with. He said that the inclusion of a scrimmage this fall, as well as the extra practice time, has allowed him and his staff more time to evaluate each player's progress.

Turning the page on a successful 2020 season will be key. Tomah ended with a 4-3 mark last year after a surprising run in the middle of the season. The Timberwolves struck up a 3-game win streak that included wins over Prairie du Chien and Aquinas before taking a final loss from Baraboo in the first round of the WIAA playoffs.

This year's team has big shoes to fill if they hope to post another winning season. Last year's graduating class featured over 20 seniors.



Braeden Calhoun tries to burst through the offensive line during drills at a recent practice. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

Statistically speaking, Tomah has few returners who would turn heads on paper outside of receiver Drew Brookman who was one of the team's leading receivers.

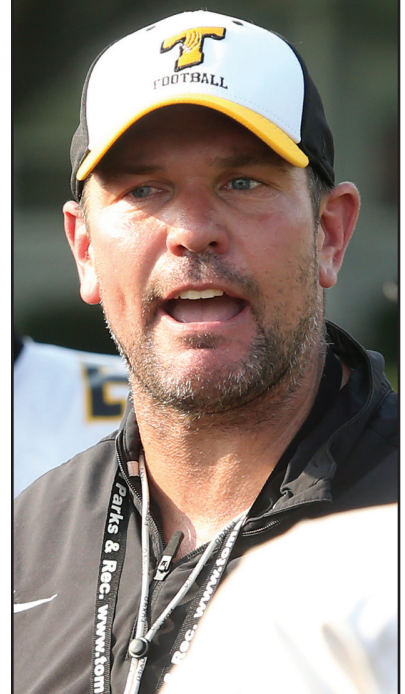
Replacing that amount of experience and leadership is no small feat. However, this year's set of seniors are eager to try to keep things going in the right direction.

Senior linebacker and running back, Tanner Mathias said, "It's going to be a very big difference playing with 22 seniors last year and a small number of seniors this year, but I think we'll

be just as good this year."

"That's the thing, I've had varsity experience before this, when we've had a big number of seniors. I'm just trying to pass on the knowledge of what I've learned from varsity before on to these young guys. I hope we can mesh early and get things clicking."

Tomah will have great opportunities to develop its younger talent prior to starting MVC play as the Timberwolves will play both Mauston and Prairie du Chien in nonconference matchups (TOMAH) cont. pg 7



Joe Protz faces new challenges in his second year as head coach of the Tomah football program as the fall saeson returns to its traditional schedule. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

A return to stability

Protz continues to learn the ropes in sophomore season

By NATE BEIER
Sports Writer

Joe Protz enters his second season at the helm of the Tomah football program.

Despite this being his sophomore year in charge of the Timberwolves' gridiron gang, there are plenty of new challenges and changes for Protz.

It's important to remember that Protz took over Tomah's program in the midst of the high point of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic altered a number of routines, not the least of which was the 2020 football season. There were concerns that the season wouldn't happen at all as the summer of 2020 wore on. However, the WIAA found it necessary to push forward and give schools the choice of playing in the fall or to push off the season to an alternative season which was held in the spring of 2021.

Tomah elected to stay in the fall. That regular season didn't start in early August as normal. Instead, it kicked off just as September began and then ran into mid-November.

This year's August start was just one change that coaches and players had to re-adjust to.

"You're still dealing with some kids on vacations or what not, but the kids have been pretty good in showing up," said Protz. He continued to address the weather issues regarding the summer heat by saying It's a little warmer as well, but that the kids have been handling that pretty well.

One of the key additions this fall has been the annual scrimmage. Last year teams just went into their first games without any contact against anyone outside of their own squads.

"It has been a little more normal preparation for the year. You try to get your foundation the first week. You try to get some of your players back in football shape, then back into fundamentals and then into schemes. You just have more of a process compared to last year where a lot of times you didn't know if you were coming or going."

Perhaps the biggest difference for this Protz this year will be the way they'll be able to prepare for opponents.

Last year the Timberwolves had several schedule changes just days before they were set to play, including the infamous Week 1 cancelation by cross-county rival, Sparta.

Some quick maneuvering by the athletic administration ensured that its football team still had games to play, but a week of preparation for a single opponent still could prove futile.

Protz said that his contingent of seniors last year rolled with the punches quite well. This year things have been different.

We handled that adversity of not knowing (who we'd play last year), where this year it's nice (having stability) being a younger team.

Receiving Corps Ready To Accommodate Change

By NATE BEIER
Sports Writer

There's one big challenge ahead for Tomah - finding a new quarterback that's up to the challenge of carrying an offense that has used the passing game quite effectively in the past few seasons.

However, Protz feels he has the guy that can take over where three-year starter, Justin Gerke left off in junior Tom Hesse.

Hesse is expected to lead Tomah this Friday when they travel to Mauston to face the Golden Eagles. The game will be the junior's first real varsity test.

"Tom's been having a couple nice weeks of practice," said Protz. "We have a lot of great expectations of our quarterback."

The coach said that Hesse's demeanor in the pocket is calm and collected, which should help him get through sticky situations or struggles. He also complimented the junior's arm and said that he can deliver a nice pass to his wideouts. Even with high expectations, Protz knows that Hesse's progress won't occur overnight.

Wide receiver, Bryson Retzlaff also gave Hesse a vote of confidence by sharing his praise for the team's new quarterback.

"I think it's pretty nice that Tom's coming up because the wide receivers he's working with are the same receivers he's been working with forever. It'll be good."

Protz echoed the sentiment, even though his team graduated a trio of top receivers in Zander Williams, Kade Gnewikow and Luke Buckendahl. This year's corps of catchers isn't expected to have a major drop-off in terms of ability, though they may need time to come around to the speed of the varsity game.

The main target for Hesse will most likely be junior Drew Brookman. Brookman came through for Tomah last year - especially in its three-game win streak at the end of the regular season.

The sophomore caught 6 passes for 93 yards in a narrow win at Prairie du Chien and then picked up 2 passes for 98 yards and a TD against Aquinas two weeks later. Stats from the Westby game, which was cancelled between the PdC and Aquinas game, were not available.

Brookman is one of the few proven commodities Tomah returns this year. In order for him to continue having success, others will have to step up and demand attention from opposing defenses. That task is something that Protz sees as well, and is positive his team is up to the challenge.

"I think this young receiving corps has taken that on and we have some younger ones - some juniors and sophomores - that are fighting for position and hopefully we can find someone to offset Drew (Brookman) because we expect him to draw the attention of defenders."



ABOVE Tomah's Tom Hesse (21) will take over for three-year starter Justin Gerke under center in 2021. Hesse will move into a starting role with a cast of receivers he's familiar with.

LEFT Tomah's Drew Brookman will lead a new team of receivers into 2021. Brookman was part of a successful receiving corps last year, but key departures will force Brookman to carry the load to start the season until the next generation of catch-hungry wideouts comes along. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

TOMAH

cont. from pg 6

before heading to River Falls.

RIVALRY RENEWED

One of the biggest disappointments of the 2020 season was the fact that Tomah never had a chance to test the mettle of cross-county rival, Sparta.

The two teams were supposed to meet in the revised season opener in late September. However, just two days before kickoff, Sparta shut down its fall sports in hopes of staying off issues with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Even though there was hope to reschedule the game, it never happened as Sparta opted to move its season to the alternative fall season and played in the spring of 2021.

Senior Bryson Retzlaff said what most players for both Tomah and Sparta are thinking when it comes to the Spartan/Timberwolf matchup.

"(It's) a big rival."
"It was disappointing for us, but especially hard on the seniors when they heard they wouldn't get a chance to play (Sparta)."

Retzlaff concluded, "Everyone really wants to get that gold ball so we're trying to get that back."

Beyond facing off with Sparta, there's a different level of excitement to square off against other Mississippi Valley Conference foes as well. Last year Tomah only played Onalaska and West Salem - the only other two schools which tried football in the fall. Tomah did play Aquinas, which is in the traditional MVC alignment, but the Bugolds were moved into the Coulee Conference starting last year.

Mathias said, "We're excited. It's going to be fun to see how it goes."



Tomah's Hayden Eades is one of just two returning starters on the line for the Timberwolves this year. Eades and Calvin Mitch both logged plenty of time during last year's season, but will have to help groom a new crop of linemen in order for Tomah to rekindle its path to winning ways. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

We team last year and we didn't get to. We're excited to go full bore against them."

Mathias knows that Tomah will have its hands full with the likes of

Onalaska and Holmen this year, and La Crosse Central could prove to be a top contender as well. Picking up wins, much less accumulating enough victories to qualify for the playoffs, may be an uphill climb.

Still, though, the senior's enthusiasm isn't quelled.

"I feel like we're underdogs coming into this season, but I think we're going to surprise a lot of people."


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MISSISSIPPI VALLEY CONFERENCE

ON THEIR OWN

SCHOOLS TRY DIFFERENT PATHS IN 2020

There was plenty of excitement surrounding the 2020 season for most MVC teams.

Onalaska was eager to defend its MVC title, River Falls was a newcomer, West Salem needed just a single win to end a sour losing streak, Tomah's senior experience was expected to turn the tide, a new era at Central was to start after the graduation of quarterback Johnny Davis and a bevy of talented receivers, and Sparta was keen on proving it had more in the tank after a couple of successful runs.

The COVID-19 pandemic sidelined several of these storylines.

Most of the MVC schools attempted football in the fall. However, it didn't last long for most.

The week of the first game, a number of schools backed out and looked to the alternative spring option in March of 2021.

Onalaska, West Salem and Tomah forged ahead in the fall. Onalaska and Tomah played near-full schedules, while West Salem settled for just four games before pulling the plug on the year.

Onalaska played as full of a schedule as possible last fall. The Hilltoppers had one of the more intriguing matchups in Week 2 when they hosted D6/7 power, Edgar in a nonconference match.

Ona claimed a Level 2 playoff win, which was the final win a team could achieve in 2020 as the WIAA only hosted two rounds of the playoffs. Tomah ended with its first winning season in nearly five years and qualified for the playoffs.

River Falls was set to take part in the MVC last year after being moved from the Big Rivers to the Mississippi Valley via the WIAA's realignment plan, but stuck to playing opponents around home last year and only recorded three games total.

In the alternative fall season, La Crosse Central turned heads with a number of key wins - starting with shootouts against Eau Claire Memorial and Holmen, but then lost its finale to Logan in surprising fashion.

Holmen was 2-1 against MVC opponents last spring and only played five total games.

Sparta ended with a surprising 2-4 mark, but lost a pair of games in overtime.



Onalaska's Michael Skemp



Melrose-Mindoro's Tory Lockington will have his Mustangs poised to challenge for the top spot in the Dairyland Conference once again this fall after posting a 4-2 mark last year. Pepin/Alma and Whitehall are also top contenders in the DC this fall. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

COULEE CONFERENCE

The Coulee Conference did not name a league champion last year as its members were split between both the fall and alternative fall seasons.

In the fall, Altoona, Aquinas, Viroqua and Westby played, while Arcadia, Black River Falls and G-E-T participated in the spring.

Aquinas posted the best record in the fall with a mark of 5-3. The Blugolds defeated Lancaster in the second round of the playoffs.

The other three fall teams combined for a paltry 1-16 record with Viroqua emerging with the only victory. The Blackhawks held off Altoona 25-8.

Altoona and Westby will each seek its first win in the all-new Coulee Conference this fall.

Arcadia led the spring teams with a 3-1 mark. G-E-T was 2-1 and Black River Falls 0-3.

Arcadia will enter this season as the league favorite alongside Aquinas. G-E-T, under first year head coach Jeff Wiseman, will try to defend its Coulee title from 2019, however.

2021 AREA ROUNDUP

DAIRYLAND CONFERENCE

The Wildcats at Blair-Taylor went 8-0 last year and were 5-0 in Dairyland play. However, The DC didn't recognize a league champion as none of the eight participating schools played a complete DC schedule.

Melrose-Mindoro and Pepin/Alma both ended at 4-2 last year. The Mustangs topped the Eagles 10-0 in the meeting between the two second place squads.

This year, B-T try to return to the top, but with a new cast of characters.

Melrose-Mindoro, Pepin/Alma and Whitehall (which went 2-1 last year) will lead the charge in the DC this season.

Eleva-Strum will feature a new coach after the departure of Jacob Lerum, but program numbers have been light for the Cardinals, making it difficult to compete in the DC. C-FC and Independence/Gilmanton also have suffered from numbers issues, but will each try to build on a season that featured a single win. Augusta will try to avoid a second-straight winless campaign

RIDGE & VALLEY CONFERENCE

The Ridge and Valley football conference grows further and further from its traditional alignment each year. Only three teams in this year's RVC - De Soto, Ithaca, Seneca/Wauzeka-Steuben - are in the traditional version of the conference.

Last year newcomer, Highland, posted an 8-0 mark, finishing with a rousing last-second fumble recovery in the endzone at Potosi/Cassville in the final playoff game of the year. The Cardinals will be the favorite in the RVC this fall most likely with Ithaca and De Soto also in title contention.

Changes will continue for the RVC, however, as De Soto has opted to go to 8-player football starting in 2022. Expect the Pirates to make a final strong run at the RVC title before making the switch to 8-player.

Seneca/Wauzeka-Steuben and Hillsboro will try to fight for a playoff berth as well. However, the fight for fourth place could get interesting as S/WS, Hillsboro, Boscobel and Riverdale combined for a 3-18 record last school year.

2021 PREDICTIONS

| COULEE CONFERENCE | |
|-------------------|-----|
| AQUINAS* | 6-0 |
| ARCADIA* | 5-1 |
| WESTBY* | 4-2 |
| BLACK RIVER FALLS | 3-3 |
| G-E-T | 2-4 |
| ALTOONA | 1-5 |
| VIROQUA | 0-6 |

| DAIRYLAND CONFERENCE | |
|------------------------|-----|
| MELROSE-MINDORO* | 6-1 |
| PEPIN/ALMA* | 6-1 |
| WHITEHALL* | 6-1 |
| BLAIR-TAYLOR* | 4-3 |
| C-FC | 2-5 |
| INDEPENDENCE/GILMANTON | 2-5 |
| ELEVA-STRUM | 1-6 |
| AUGUSTA | 1-6 |

| RIDGE AND VALLEY CONFERENCE | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| HIGHLAND* | 6-0 |
| DE SOTO* | 5-1 |
| ITHACA* | 4-2 |
| RIVERDALE | 2-4 |
| SENECA/WAUZEKA-STEUBEN | 2-4 |
| BOSCOBEL | 1-5 |
| HILLSBORO | 1-5 |

*PLAYOFF QUALIFIERS

*PLAYOFF QUALIFIERS

*PLAYOFF QUALIFIERS



Bangor will have a shot at an eighth-straight SBC title this year. However, a rising program in Cashton could end the Cardinals' streak. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY CONFERENCE

La Crosse Central turned heads last spring with a number of surprising wins. However, despite being two years removed from a winless season, West Salem looks to contend for the MVC crown in its last season in the league.

Sparta, Tomah and Logan may occupy the bottom half of the conference, but will play some of the most interesting games of the league schedule as each team tries to avoid the MVC cellar.

| MISSISSIPPI VALLEY CONFERENCE | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| LA CROSSE CENTRAL* | 6-1 |
| WEST SALEM* | 6-1 |
| ONALASKA* | 5-2 |
| RIVER FALLS* | 4-3 |
| HOLMEN* | 4-3 |
| SPARTA | 2-5 |
| TOMAH | 1-6 |
| LA CROSSE LOGAN | 0-7 |

*PLAYOFF QUALIFIERS

SCENIC BLUFFS CONFERENCE

The SBC is Bangor's league until proven otherwise.

Cashton appears to be the top challenger, but a senior-heavy Necedah squad and a revitalized Brookwood team will come searching for a playoff spot, and maybe an upset of the 7x champions.

The Brookwood/Necedah game is one of the more pivotal contests in the league.

Luther is a dark horse in the SBC after moving from the Coulee and SWAL conferences.

| SCENIC BLUFFS CONFERENCE | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| BANGOR* | 6-0 |
| CASHTON* | 4-2 |
| BROOKWOOD* | 4-2 |
| NECEDAH* | 4-2 |
| ONALASKA LUTHER | 2-4 |
| ROYALL | 1-5 |
| NEW LISBON | 0-6 |

*PLAYOFF QUALIFIERS

SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE

Mauston will position itself for another SCC title this fall. The Golden Eagles will have to fight off advances from an improved Wisconsin Dells team and a pesky Wautoma group.

A-F and WD were both 2-2 on the year, while the other teams were all very much under the .500 mark.

Expect the fight for a fourth playoff spot in the SCC to be a tightly contested battle between 3-4 teams.

| SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| MAUSTON* | 6-0 |
| WISCONSIN DELLS* | 5-1 |
| WAUTOMA* | 4-2 |
| ADAMS-FRIENDSHIP* | 3-3 |
| MONTELO/PRINCETON/GREEN LAKE | 2-4 |
| POYNETTE | 1-5 |
| WESTFIELD | 0-6 |

*PLAYOFF QUALIFIERS

THROUGH MY LENS

How Do I Pick My Games?

By NATE BEIER
Sports Reporter

'How do you pick what games you're covering?'

I get that question often.

For most sports, the answer isn't fancy, it's just that I can hit 2-3 locations in a night, spreading out my coverage for what I do as GX3 Media as well as my other sports obligations such as coverage for the Monroe County Herald or other publications.

Football, however, requires more of a strategy and plan in order to do the most damage possible.

NON-FRIDAY GAMES

When I pick football stops, I start with non-Friday games. Honestly, I wish more teams would play Thursday and Saturdays throughout the season. The local media show up, extra fans show up, opposing schools show up to scout - it's a win-win-win.

Ithaca and Highland do great Saturday homecomings, so hitting those places for a 2:00 p.m. game is a little piece of heaven on a fall afternoon. Eau Claire Regis gets stuck with playing several Thursday games, which means I get to see them extra times in a year - again, because their team is good, I won't complain about that notion.

Also, as a photographer, I know I'll have no issue with lights. There are some places I work hard to avoid because the lights are bad - yes, Sparta and Tomah, I'm talking about you, and it hurts to say that.

FRIDAY

The number one parameter I work with is: being able to hit at least two games in one night.

If I want to see a game at De Soto, then I need a game in Prairie du Chien, I flip to an isn't an option, I cut that run entirely.

I also try to balance my coverage - meaning that I don't need to see Brookwood three weeks in a row, nor do I need to watch Onalaska play seven times a season.

Certain matchups aren't good, so they get cut, unless it's the only way I can see a squad I really care to see.

I usually make a Plan A, then formulate a Plan B and a couple weeks in, I flip to a Plan C just because the spirit moves me a certain way.

This season I've made a plan that may allow me to see upwards of 35 regular season games. I left Week 9 open as a flex week so I can go watch some team claim a conference title (I hope).

The highlights of my upcoming year include these games:

Sparta @ Tomah

I've never seen these two teams play each other in football. I was really looking forward to the matchup last year and was frustrated when it was cancelled. Though both teams look very different this fall, I still think this game will be one of the grittier, grungier rivalry matchups I'll get to see.

G-E-T @ Westby

These two teams have both had plenty of success in the Coulee Conference. However, both teams are not what they once were. That doesn't mean either will fail this season. Instead, I see both battling for a playoff spot and this matchup may eliminate a team from postseason contention. Yup, it'll be fun.

Royall @ Brookwood

I have rarely missed a Royall/Brookwood game since the Falcons returned to the Scenic Bluffs in football for the fall of 2001.

I love and hate watching this game, but the mixed emotions aren't enough to keep me from going.

Why do I love it? I enjoy watching my high school team - Royall. Yes, 20 years after graduating, I still back my high school proudly.

The reason that I hate going is that it's against Brookwood. Yes, I live in that district, but it's a rivalry thing - you don't want to lose to your rival, right? This is a fun game because I know so many people on both sides, but its one of the few games I stress over the outcome of greatly.

LA CROSSE CENTRAL FOOTBALL ALT-2020 SEASON RESULTS

| OPPONENT | WE | THEY |
|---------------------|-------|------|
| Eau Claire Memorial | 43-33 | W |
| @ Holmen | 35-24 | W |
| Superior | 42-14 | W |
| @ Eau Claire North | 42-21 | W |
| @ La Crosse Logan | 10-20 | L |

OVERALL: 4-1
MVC: 1-1

HOLMEN FOOTBALL ALT-2020 SEASON RESULTS

| OPPONENT | WE | THEY |
|-------------------|-------|------|
| @ La Crosse Logan | 21-6 | W |
| La Crosse Central | 24-35 | L |
| @ Menasha | 14-35 | L |
| Sparta | 41-21 | W |
| Eau Claire North | 42-0 | W |

OVERALL: 3-2
MVC: 2-1

LA CROSSE LOGAN FOOTBALL ALT-2020 SEASON RESULTS

| OPPONENT | WE | THEY |
|-------------------|-------|------|
| Holmen | 6-21 | L |
| Sparta | 0-35 | L |
| Eau Claire North | 26-0 | W |
| @ Superior | 12-13 | L |
| La Crosse Central | 20-10 | W |

OVERALL: 2-3
MVC: 1-2

ONALASKA FOOTBALL 2020 SEASON RESULTS

| OPPONENT | WE | THEY |
|-------------------------------|-------|------|
| @ Tomah | 39-13 | W |
| Edgar | 7-12 | L |
| West Salem | 15-13 | W |
| @ St. Croix Central | 27-31 | L |
| @ Adams-Friendship | 50-16 | W |
| @ Aquinas | 46-6 | W |
| D2 Level 1 Playoffs Portage | 63-22 | W |
| D2 Level 2 Playoffs @ Baraboo | 50-26 | W |

OVERALL: 6-2
MVC: 2-0

RIVER FALLS FOOTBALL 2020 SEASON RESULTS

| OPPONENT | WE | THEY |
|----------------|-------|------|
| Chippewa Falls | 23-8 | W |
| @ Rice Lake | 19-14 | W |
| Hudson | 20-31 | L |

OVERALL: 2-1
MVC: 0-0

SPARTA FOOTBALL ALT-2020 SEASON RESULTS

| OPPONENT | WE | THEY |
|---------------------|---------|------|
| @ G-E-T | 38-46OT | L |
| @ La Crosse Logan | 35-0 | W |
| Eau Claire Memorial | 14-38 | L |
| @ Holmen | 21-41 | L |
| Superior | 21-22OT | L |
| @ Eau Claire North | 52-28 | W |

OVERALL: 2-4
MVC: 1-2

TOMAH FOOTBALL 2020 SEASON RESULTS

| OPPONENT | WE | THEY |
|-------------------------------|-------|------|
| Onalaska | 13-39 | L |
| Reedsburg | 28-24 | W |
| West Salem | 14-28 | L |
| @ Prairie du Chien | 21-14 | W |
| @ Westby | 47-26 | W |
| Aquinas | 34-20 | W |
| D1 Level 1 Playoffs @ Baraboo | 6-43 | L |

OVERALL: 4-3
MVC: 0-2

WEST SALEM FOOTBALL 2020 SEASON RESULTS

| OPPONENT | WE | THEY |
|------------|-------|------|
| @ Onalaska | 13-15 | L |
| Tomah | 28-14 | W |
| Aquinas | 22-6 | W |
| Nekoosa | 35-6 | W |

OVERALL: 3-1
MVC: 1-1

BANGOR FOOTBALL
ALT-2020 SEASON RESULTS



Bangor's Nick Brownell

OPPONENT WE THEY

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------|---|
| @Seneca/Wausika-Stauben* | 47-0 | W |
| Necedah | 2-0** | W |
| @ New Lisbon | 33-0 | W |
| @ Riverdale* | 55-6 | W |
| @ Brookwood | 42-6 | W |
| Cashton | 34-28 | W |
| Royall | 38-0 | W |

* @ Woodside Sports Complex
** forfeit

OVERALL: 7-0
SBC: 5-0 (1st)



Bangor's Mathieu Oesterle

2021 SCHEDULE

- AUGUST**
19 Melrose-Mindoro
27 @ Pepin/Alma (Alma)
- SEPTEMBER**
3 @ Hillsboro
10 @ Necedah
17 New Lisbon
24 @ Royall
- OCTOBER**
1 Luther
8 Brookwood
15 @ Cashton

GAME TO WATCH

AT CASHTON

If there is one game to have circled on your calendar heading into the 2021 Scenic Bluffs football season, it is Bangor at Cashton on Friday, October 15.

The Eagles came perilously close to knocking the Cardinals off their SBC perch last spring before the latter scored a last-minute touchdown to break a tie and secure the win.

Even though Bangor pulled out the victory in the end, the game still felt like a pivotal moment in the ongoing trajectory of the conference.

The Cardinals have built up the longest conference winning streak in the entire state, and there had not been so much as a close call at any point along the way until that meeting between the rivals.

The Eagles didn't pull off the upset, but they showed that the gap isn't nearly as wide as it has been in recent years.

Cashton brings back much of its team from last year and will surely be out for revenge. Bangor defended its top spot in the last meeting, but now must hit the road for a mid-October showdown.

There is a lot of season to be played before these two meet in the final week of the regular season. But if both hold true to expected form, the race for the Scenic Bluffs title could easily come down to this Week 9 rivalry clash.

BANGOR CARDINALS



INTERVIEW LEADER SAMI BANGOR

Todd Grant aims to continue Cardinals' gridiron success

For the first time in 25 years, the Bangor football sideline won't feature former head coaches Kevin Kravik or Rick Muellenberg, both of whom had two different stints as head coach in that span of time. In their place is Todd Grant, who will set his sights on continuing the Cardinals' winning tradition after fostering a winning tradition on the baseball diamond for more than a decade in Bangor. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

By ZACH RASTALL
Sports Writer

Look all throughout the state of Wisconsin and you will find very few high school football programs that can claim the level of consistent success that Bangor has enjoyed in recent years.

The Cardinals have made the playoffs in 12 consecutive seasons, own a 41-game winning streak in conference play (the longest in the state), have been Scenic Bluffs champions seven years running and captured state titles in 2015 and 2017.

But an era of unprecedented success for Bangor football has come to a close.

Following the conclusion of this past spring alternate season, long-time head coach Rick Muellenberg decided to step down from the program. The decision had been made before then, as Muellenberg realized he couldn't give the job the same level of devotion as years past due to his new position as middle/high school principal that he started with the 2019-20 school year.

However, Muellenberg decided to stick around for one more season once the COVID-19 pandemic hit, as he did not want to add a coaching change to the existing chaos of playing during the pandemic.

Once the spring season was over, he decided to move on after a Hall of Fame type of career with Bangor. In 20 years under Muellenberg, the Cardinals went 162-55 with two state titles, 10 conference championships, five state semifinal appearances and 16 playoff berths.

Additionally, long-time defensive coordinator Kevin Kravik opted to step down from both that position and his job as Bangor athletic director. Kravik had taken over as interim head coach in 2018 when Muellenberg briefly stepped away, guiding the

Cardinals to an 11-2 record with a conference championship and a state semifinal appearance.

Muellenberg and Kravik were two mainstays and hugely influential figures during this golden age of Bangor football. Both are now gone, but that doesn't mean the golden age is abruptly over. As they, and any coach worth their salt, would tell you, it's all about the players in the end. And the Cardinals still have one of the most talented rosters in the area.

GRANTED A GIFT

It's just that now the responsibility for getting the most out of that talent falls on the shoulders of new head coach Todd Grant. An assistant under Muellenberg, Grant expected to stay in that role under a new head coach. It wasn't until Muellenberg approached him about possibly being his successor that he seriously considered the idea.

"I was basically asked, (Muellenberg) was retiring and he asked me if I'd be interested," Grant said. "I thought about it. It wasn't an immediate yes because it's a big responsibility, a lot to do, a lot of time, but what it came down to was these kids. They're a great group to work with — they work hard, coachable, supportive of each other. They're just a really good bunch to be around and that honestly was kind of the deciding factor."

It is a daunting task to follow up a legendary coach, no matter what school you are at. An additional difficulty is the fact that the Cardinals aren't the overwhelming Scenic Bluffs favorites heads and shoulders above everyone else heading into this season.

To be clear, they are still favorites and their reign of supremacy isn't over until someone forcefully takes the mantle from them. It's just that, for the first time in years, there is a

credible challenger to their throne.

The Cashton Eagles nearly usurped the Cardinals this past spring when the two unbeaten rivals squared off, as they came into Bangor and erased a 21-6 first-herald deficit to level the score at 28-28 early in the fourth quarter.

It was a moment no Bangor player had ever faced in conference play. The Cardinals had a multiyear winning streak against SBC competition, with all those wins coming by double digits.

But when push came to shove, Bangor dug deep and found an answer, ensuring that its status as the top dogs of the Scenic Bluffs would not end. The Cardinals orchestrated a late touchdown drive that was completed in the final minute of the game, allowing them to escape with a 34-28 victory.

The win clinched them a share of their seventh straight SBC title — breaking the conference record of six set by De Soto in the 1980s — an honor they made sure was outright when they

(GRANT) cont. pg 9

Daines, The Dark Horse Senior fullback set to surprise in new role

By ZACH RASTALL
Sports Writer

Mathieu Oesterle and Tanner Jones figure to be the two bellhows of the Bangor backfield in 2021.

Oesterle is coming off a junior campaign that saw him pile up 550 rushing yards and eight touchdowns on 6.0 yards per carry. Jones provided 216 yards and four touchdowns on 7.4 yards per carry (albeit, with far more limited touches than Oesterle).

Zach Servais, Hayden Lyga and Owen Johnson have all departed from the program due to graduation, so Jones figures to see a much-increased workload behind Oesterle. That duo will be the stars of the Bangor backfield and the engine of the offense.

However, joining them in a less heralded role will be senior Dawson Daines, who is carving out his own path at fullback.

"There's going to be a lot of attention paid to Mathieu and Tanner and I think that could open some things up unexpectedly for (Daines) inside," Grant said. "He's going to have to come through as a blocker for us. I know the effort that he gives and the dedication he has — I'm excited to see him play there."

Daines is one of the team's senior captains, someone Grant describes

(DAINES) cont. pg 9



Bangor's Dawson Daines (33) looks to try his hand within the Cardinal offense as a fullback after being a leader on defense in total tackles last year with 49. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

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SPARTA FOOTBALL
ALT-2020 SEASON RESULTS



Sparta's Tyler Schendel

| OPPONENT | WE | THEY |
|---------------------|-------|------|
| @ G-E-T | 38-46 | OT L |
| @ La Crosse Logan | 35-0 | W |
| Eau Claire Memorial | 14-38 | L |
| @ Holmen | 21-41 | L |
| Superior | 21-22 | OT L |
| @ Eau Claire North | 52-28 | W |

OVERALL: 2-4
MVC: 1-1



Sparta's Carson Kelsey

2021 SCHEDULE

- AUGUST**
20 @ Baldwin-Woodville
27 Mauston
- SEPTEMBER**
3 La Crosse Logan
10 @ Tomah
17 West Salem
24 @ Holmen
- OCTOBER**
1 @ Onalaska
8 La Crosse Central
15 River Falls

GAME TO WATCH

AT TOMAH

Yes, it's easy to pick Sparta's number one rivalry game as the team's game to watch.

However, it's a very true test and comes at a pivotal time in the season.

Sparta could kick off the MVC season with a win over Logan. If the team then follows that victory with a win over Tomah, the Spartans are in the driver's seat for a run to the playoffs.

However, more importantly, the MVC schedule doesn't really get any easier after the Tomah game.

Sparta will host West Salem the next week for homecoming, and the emotions of the week may be enough to upset the Panthers. The next week Sparta heads to Holmen - a team they've had success against in recent history.

However, it all hinges on the performance in the Tomah game. There could be a real downward spiral if the Timberwolves find a way to knock off Sparta.

Expect Sparta to go into this year's cross-county matchup with plenty of fire and pent up rage - especially after not getting a chance to square off against THS a year ago. Both Tomah and Sparta should go into that Week 4 matchup ready to deliver some proverbial punches after coming so close to playing last year, only to have the opportunity denied by outside factors.



SPARTA SPARTANS

The LEGS to LEAD

Senior running back, Kent, poised to power offense

By NICK LEONARDELLI
Sports Writer

Sparta running back, Nick Kent, is gearing up to have a monster senior season for the Spartan football team.

If the past two years are any indication of the trajectory ahead, the description 'monster season' may not be enough to describe what lies ahead.

Kent has been running the ball for the Spartans since his sophomore year. In that year, Kent rushed for 580 yards on 83 attempts in the ten games the Spartans played that season.

In the 2020 alternate spring season, in the six games that the team played, Kent rushed for 565 yards on just 80 attempts. He also had multiple runs of 40-plus yards in those six games. Kent led the team in rushing yards and touchdowns. He is "that guy" when it comes to this Spartan rushing attack. But Kent is more than just a fantastic running back for the Spartan high school football team. He is a leader on the team.

THE LEADER TO LEAD

Head Coach Adam Dow said that Kent matured so much from his early days in the program.

Dow first took over the Sparta program when Kent and the Class of 2022 were just freshmen, which has allowed him to watch the full development of this specific senior. Dow said that early in his Spartan career, Kent was more of a follower. He said that Kent didn't say much, but listened to the older guys and always wanted to be coached.

"He has matured so much. I have seen him come from the middle school program, to a follower on the high school team, to him wanting to be the best," said fourth year head coach Dow.

"He wants to have opportunities after this season too, and when you see a kid want it like he does, it is so fun to coach. He will pick up anyone if they are down and it will be exciting to see what the future has in store for him. Anything that comes to him, he will have earned it."

Kent's improvement mentally was just one aspect of his ever-improving game. His physical dominance was another as the position of running back puts any ball carrier in jeopardy of injury at a higher rate than most other positions.

"Nick has always been an athletic kid. When he entered our program, the biggest question was "does he have the physical durability?"

"Well, from being a freshman, to sophomore year, to junior now senior year, that is no longer a question. Now watching him in the spring and coming into the season, that development physically and mentally is truly great," added Dow.

"He is constantly leading in drills and at practice and continues to ask questions and wanting to get better and he continually



Sparta's Nick Kent tries to fight off a tackle during Week 4 of the Alt-Fall season at Holmen this past spring. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

shows that he wants to improve as an athlete, player and leader."

Nick Kents leadership is needed more than ever coming into this 2021 season. The Spartans lost 16 seniors after the spring season. They come into the new season looking younger with alot of position battles going on during practice and at the scrimmage. But Coach Dow knows what Kent brings to the team.

"Nick can turn a counter play that looks like it will gain no yards into a 50 yard touchdown. How he leads in the huddle is amazing. Come Friday, his leadership will be essential for this team to get the win."

Coach Dow only has praise for his star running back. Dow only has great things to say about Kent and has loved what he has seen from his senior so far in the early aspects of the season. Dow expects Kent to have a fantastic season as a running back and a leader on the team.

Nick Kent will be the guy that opposing defenses watch film on and want to stop him. He is a walking explosive play and coach Dow loves the explosive plays. The leading rusher for the Spartans is geared up and ready for his senior season. Last season as a Sparta Spartan and Nick Kent has what it takes to help take his team to the next level.

Sparta's Nick Kent rumbles into the endzone during a carry in last spring's game at La Crosse Logan. Kent is aiming to improve on successful sophomore and junior seasons as a running back for the Spartans this season. Kent led Sparta's ground attack last year and expects to continue to lead the way in 2021. Herald photo by Nate Beier.



Sparta's Tye Klass (11) and Ty Lietzau burst forward at the onset of a play during last spring's game at Holmen. Klass and Lietzau are two players that will see an increased role on defense as Sparta tries to limit opponents moreso than last spring. In the all-fall season, Sparta opponents averaged just over 20 yards. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

New faces dot the landscape for Sparta team eager to prove itself

By NICK LEONARDELLI
Sports Writer

With summer fun coming to an end and kids of all ages beginning to go back to school, there is a light at the end of the dark tunnel - FOOTBALL IS BACK!

More importantly, Sparta high school football is back!

For this season, it is a return to normalcy as the Spartans played an alternate spring season earlier this year.

In that spring season, the Spartans faced some unfamiliar foes and some familiar ones. The spring season was a short one with the Spartans only playing 6 games. At the end of the season, the Spartans finished 2-4.

"There were no pushover games in the spring. Were the teams we faced different than a normal season, yes they were, but every team we face in conference is a tough team," said head coach Adam Dow.

"We were only a couple overtime games away from going 4-2, but those couple games in a normal season could be the difference on making the playoffs or not."

Sparta opened the season with an OT loss at G-E-T and then suffered an extra period defeat in its last home game of the year to Superior. Those two games, had they gone the way of the Spartans, could have led to a different feeling after the all-fall experience.

Despite the 2-4 mark, Coach Dow believes that the spring season helped to develop some of the younger players on the team.

The Spartans had 16 seniors on the team during the spring. Those seniors have moved on and now the team comes into the 2021 season looking a little younger.

"Some of the younger guys weren't ready to play physically fall of last year, but when the spring season came around and their bodies changed a whole lot and some were ready to see the field," said Dow.

SPARTAN FIREPOWER

Offensively, the Spartans have been a run-heavy offense in the first three seasons of Adam Dow's reign as head coach.

The philosophy is to run first and allow the ground game to help create openings for the pass game.

Senior running back Nick Kent was the leader of the running game in the spring. He managed to tally up 565 yards on 80 attempts. He also had 7 touchdowns which lead all offensive weapons on the team. However, Dow says that this cannot be one dimensional and that they have athletes on the outside that can also make plays.

Players like Ty Klass moving to halfback/tight end, while younger ones like Carson Kelsey, Layton Ott and Dain Pitsenberg are all guys who will have expanded roles and extra opportunities to make plays on this Spartan team.

With former quarterback, Brett Stuessel, off to college, there will be a new face taking snaps for SHS.

Though the exact plan for who should lead the offense may change, for now, Dow seems content with the progress he's witnessed from sophomore Thomas Laufenberg.

"Laufenberg took most of the snaps at our scrimmage," said Dow. "I really like what I saw from him. He is an athletic kid and ready to learn.

We have a few great guys in the QB room but Laufenberg has impressed me the most."

If Laufenberg's progress continues at a high rate, it may be a perfect compliment to a proven commodity with Kent at running back. Dow understands the value of balancing the offense and knows its the key to a number of victories - especially in the MVC.

"In high school football, if you can run for 200 yards and pass for 100, you are winning most games."

GET A STOP

One major focus for Sparta this fall will be its defense. After allowing over 200 yards a game and just over 29 points a contest last spring, there's plenty more to be desired from the red and gold on the other side of the ball.

Again, Dow is positive in what he's seen from his defensive unit so far and is expecting a big turn around from his defense going into the season.

Even though there will be mostly new faces in on the defense, there are enough returning players to keep opponents honest.

"This isn't a year where we are returning a lot of our starters," Dow said.

"Honestly, it has been really fun coaching these kids and trying to figure out who wants to start at

each position. You really see the best come out of the kids when that is the case."

At the linebacker level, Sparta returns Ty Klass. On the defensive line, Ty Lietzau and Hayden Brueggeman will be holding things down up front.

"Those are two solid guys who are going to be playing both ways for us. They did in it in the spring and are ready to do it again this fall," added Dow.

Senior Chris Jacobs is returning to the cornerback position while also playing wide receiver on the offensive end.

WHO WILL STEP UP

With the loss of 16 seniors coming into this fall season, one of the biggest questions is, who are going to be the leaders on the team?

Head coach Adam Dow said, "We have a great core group of seniors in Hayden Brueggeman, Chris Jacobs, Nick Kent, Ty Klass and Ty Lietzau who are emerging as the leaders on our team."

"These first couple weeks of practice leading up to the game are a time for them to figure out if they are a vocal leader or a leader who leads with his actions. We will learn that when they face the adversity come Friday."

"I'm excited to see what this year has in store for them."



Sparta's Hayden Brueggeman finds La Crosse Logan's Trent Wieland making a cut to the edge during last spring's nonconference contest. Brueggeman is one of two returning starters on the defensive line this year. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

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BROOKWOOD FOOTBALL
ALT-2020 SEASON RESULTS



Brookwood's Derek Erdman

| OPPONENT | WE | THEY |
|--------------------------|-------|------|
| @ Cashton | 6-7 | L |
| @ Seneca/Wauzeka-Steuben | 14-0 | W |
| @ Necedah | 39-44 | L |
| @ Royall | 7-44 | L |
| Bangor | 6-42 | L |
| @ Riverdale | 33-4 | W |
| New Lisbon | 21-20 | W |

OVERALL: 3-4
SBC: 1-4 (5th)



Brookwood's Jayden Kolemarn

2021 SCHEDULE

- AUGUST**
- 20 @ C-FC
- 27 @ Viroqua
- SEPTEMBER**
- 3 Cashton
- 10 Seneca/Wauzeka-Steuben
- 17 @ Necedah
- 24 @ New Lisbon
- OCTOBER**
- 1 Royall
- 8 @ Bangor
- 15 Luther

GAME TO WATCH

AT NECEDAH

Brookwood and Necedah locked up in one of the best games of the Scenic Bluffs slate last spring.

The Falcons went on the road in early April and found themselves in a full-scale shootout with the Cardinals. The two teams traded touchdowns back and forth with Necedah ultimately pulling off the 44-39 victory.

Both teams are in a somewhat similar boat this fall: returning a boatload of experience to use in their respective bids for a playoff berth.

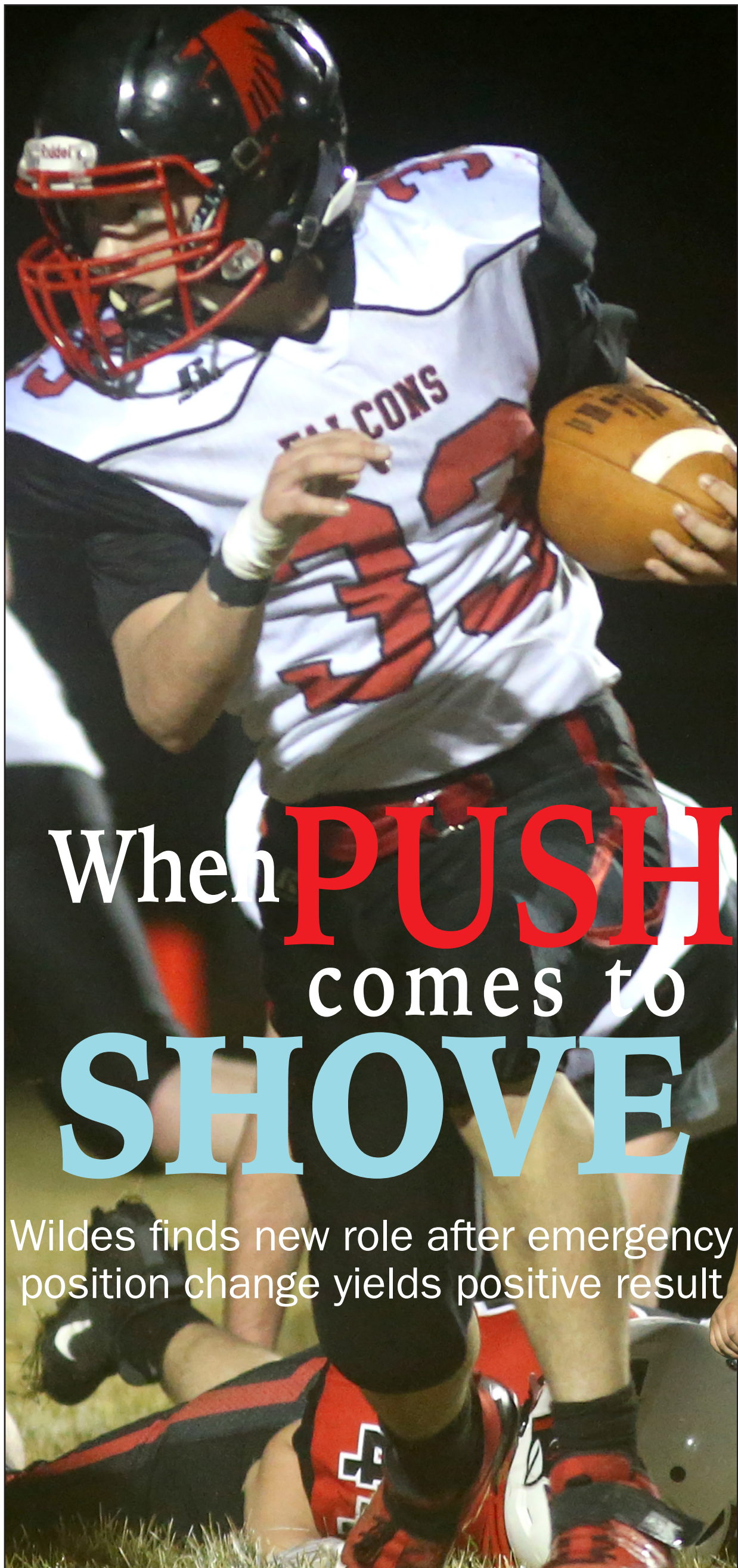
This will be a nice test for both at the midway point in the regular season to get a feel for where they're at. They will each have had plenty of time to iron out the wrinkles before they square off once again in Necedah.

Both squads also figure to be in that middle pack of teams jostling for positioning in the Scenic Bluffs standings.

Coming into the season, Bangor and Cashton are expected to be the cream of the crop in the conference. If the Falcons and the Cardinals are unable to upset either one, an even greater focus goes on how you do against the teams in the same tier as you.

This mid-September matchup could go a long way in determining both teams' postseason fates. A win or loss could be the difference between Level 1 play and watching from home.

BROOKWOOD FALCONS



When PUSH comes to SHOVE

Wildes finds new role after emergency position change yields positive result

By ZACH RASTALL
Sports Writer

When one thinks of the Brookwood backfield, one name in particular jumps to mind: Dan Peterson.

After racking up 504 rushing yards and four touchdowns while averaging 5.5 yards per carry this past spring, Peterson earned himself a spot on the all-conference first team as a running back (he also was a first-team defensive back for a second straight year).

This all came on the heels of a sophomore season in 2019 where he had given a little taste of what was to come, putting up 461 yards and four touchdowns on the ground while averaging an eye-popping 10 yards per carry.

Peterson has cemented himself as the Falcons' star player and one of the very best in the Scenic Bluffs Conference, though he's not without help in the Brookwood backfield.

Senior fullback Austin Frye also played an important role for the Falcons during the spring alternate season. Frye earned himself a second-team all-SBC selection following a campaign where he ran for 387 yards and four touchdowns.

However, the story still doesn't end there for the Brookwood running game in the team's double wing offense. There is a third piece to the puzzle who was unexpectedly thrust into an unfamiliar position last season and wound up thriving in his new role: Franklin Wildes.

When senior Kaden Brandau separated his shoulder early in the season, Brookwood head coach Jeremy Mack and his coaching staff called on Wildes, previously a tight end, to step in and fill the void.

Wildes didn't simply provide a warm body to play at wingback, he wound up flourishing in this new spot.

“I built a full head of steam. After that first Necedah game, through practice, I thought I was getting pretty confident in that spot.”

FRANKLIN WILDES
BROOKWOOD SENIOR
RUNNING BACK

“He didn't come off the bench, he moved from tight end to wingback,” Mack said of Wildes. “He had not taken a single snap there all season, and in a half he had 84 yards and two touchdowns. He never really looked back from that point.”

From Week 3 through the end of the season, Wildes compiled 454 yards and five touchdowns while

averaging a team-high 7.4 yards per carry en route to an all-conference honorable mention. While he admits that being thrown into that situation was daunting at first, Wildes quickly gained confidence while learning on the fly.

“I built a full head of steam. After that first Necedah game, through practice, I thought I was getting pretty confident in that spot,” Wildes said. “Learning the spot, what to do, who to block when I'm not getting the ball — and then after that second game I played at running back, I thought I was doing pretty good.”

Wildes praised Peterson for his speed and Frye for his power out of their backfield and has grown increasingly comfortable with his role in their rushing attack. He may not be grabbing as much attention as someone like Peterson going into the 2021 season, but Wildes may soon further assert himself to anyone in the Scenic Bluffs who might need a refresher.

“We're going to have really good balance with both Peterson and Wildes. We're going to be able to spread the field in that regard and then we've got a very solid fullback in Austin Frye that does a lot of work right up the middle for us,” Mack said. “The expectation is for Peterson to have a big year, but I think we can have really a three-headed rushing attack that can get quality numbers for all three, quality yards for all three and good looks for all three.”

Falcons content in underdog role

By ZACH RASTALL
Sports Writer

No high school team played football under ideal circumstances last season. For many in Wisconsin, it meant delaying play until the spring alternate season.

The Brookwood Falcons were among those that didn't see the gridiron until the spring and dealt with all the inherent hurdles that came with it: soggy/cold conditions, competition with other spring sports, the unfamiliar environment and, of course, continuing COVID concerns.

Despite all this, Brookwood head coach Jeremy Mack is drawing on the positives from the whole experience. Namely, the benefit of bringing back just about everybody this fall with everything they learned still fresh on their minds thanks to the quick turnaround.

“I think having the spring season was a huge boost for us,” Mack said. “We only graduated three starters in theory — one of them went out midseason anyway — so we really have nine core players basically returning to the exact same spots. There's a lot of consistency and fluidity, I feel like. We're considerably further along than we have been in the past as far as getting our offensive playbook down.”

The Falcons are coming off a 3-4 campaign in the spring — which included a 1-4 mark in official Scenic

Bluffs play — though could have posted a winning record if one of a couple incredibly narrow losses went the other way.

Brookwood opened its spring season the last weekend in March with a defensive slugfest against Cashton. The Eagles held a 7-0 lead throughout most of the game until the Falcons finally found the end zone in the fourth quarter.

However, Brookwood's two-point conversion attempt failed and neither team would score again, so Cashton held on for a 7-6 victory.

A couple weeks later, the Falcons found themselves locked in another tight contest, though this one was an offensive shootout.

Brookwood and Necedah traded touchdowns throughout the night in a wild, back-and-forth affair. It was ultimately the Cardinals who had the last laugh and escaped with a narrow 44-39 win.

The Falcons would finally reverse their close-game fortunes in their season finale at home against New Lisbon, where they staved off the Rockets and capped off their spring with a 21-20 victory.

That win gave them back-to-back victories to close the season and a good reason to hold their heads high. The hope for them now is to continue building off that positivity and take advantage of all the



experience they bring back.

“The guys are really excited because they got a taste for how things are going to go,” Mack said. “We finished the spring strong with a couple of really nice wins to round out the spring season. We had a couple close losses. Our record could've been considerably better if literally two plays had gone differently.”

“Getting that taste, especially after an 18-month layover of no football ... that really ramped up the excitement for this fall.”

Brookwood loses just the three seniors from last spring — Hayden Thompson, Kaden Brandau and Garrett Anderson.

(FALCONS) cont. pg 9

Brookwood's Evan Klinker returns to help bolster the line play for the Falcons. Klinker was a second team offensive and defensive line selection last spring. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

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SCENIC BLUFFS CONFERENCE

ALT-FALL ACTION

NEW CHALLENGERS EMERGE IN SBC

Bangor's reign atop the SBC continued in the spring of 2021. Once again, the Cardinals went unblemished in league play for the seventh-straight season.

The Cardinals' rise to the top wasn't as clear-cut as in year's past. Bangor quietly maneuvered through the first part of the season before facing Cashton in one of the best SBC title matches of the past decade.

Bangor's Ethan Hemmersbach was named the SBC's Lineman of the Year.

Cashton continued to garner respect around the SBC last spring after showing for the second-straight season that it could win in a tight spot.

The Eagles' second half against Bangor in Week 6 was a coming out party for running back Colin O'Neil. O'Neil had been steady up to that point, but probably wasn't considered as one of the major running threats in the league. The sophomore's efforts in the third quarter and beyond may have changed that perspective going forward.

Royall also had a bounce-back season after winning just a single game in 2019. SBC Player of the Year, Jameson Bender, helped propel the Panthers to just its second winning season since 2002.

Necedah continued to make progress as well after going 4-3 overall last year. The Cardinals started slowly with a lopsided loss to Royall and a forfeit loss to Bangor, but then managed to hold off Brookwood in Week 3 which launched the team into a four-game win streak.

Brookwood suffered through a season with less than 20 participants and a few key injuries were enough to keep the Falcons from fighting their finest. Still, though, the team held their own against Necedah and Cashton, losing by less than a touchdown in each contest.

New Lisbon struggled through a season with an ever-changing roster due to COVID protocols and other factors, but still managed to play every scheduled game as planned. The Rockets finished the season with one of the league's best games that no one remembers - a 21-20 loss at Brookwood. There were multiple lead changes throughout the game and more than one in the fourth quarter to make for a wild finish to the spring season.



SBC Player of the Year Jameson Bender, Royall



ABOVE Bangor's Tanner Jones breaks away from the De Soto defense during last week's scrimmage in Viroqua. Jones missed several games last year, but is expected to play a large role in Bangor's success this fall.

BELOW Bangor's Sam Horstman sets a block during last week's scrimmage in Viroqua. Herald photos by Nate Beier.

GRANT cont. from pg 5

steamrolled Royall in the regular-season finale.

The Cardinals did lose a handful of all-conference performers to graduation this past spring: first-team offensive lineman Ethan Hemmersbach, first-team offensive lineman Devon Mathison, first-team kicker and punter Nathan Crenshaw, first-team inside linebacker Hayden Lyga, first-team outside linebacker Hank Reader and first-team defensive back Zach Servais.

On the flip side, they are returning first-team running back Mathieu Oesterle, first-team utility player Tanner Jones and second-team tight end Gunner Ellenburg. Oesterle led the team out of the backfield last season with 550 rushing yards and eight touchdowns on 6.0 yards per carry.

With its talent and turnout, Bangor

is a program that reloads rather than rebuilds, so one would expect the Cardinals to do so again with their outgoing seniors.

Grant won't be looking to reinvent the wheel as head coach. He has familiarity with the program thanks to his time as an assistant and additional familiarity with some of the players thanks to his position as head coach of the varsity baseball team.

There won't be any radical changes coming, just a new voice at the helm. If all goes well, it will look like more of the same and a continuation of this golden age of Bangor football.

"I'm not changing anything from what we've done in the past," Grant said. "The familiarity with it has made the transition easier. Not that it hasn't been hard or a steep learning curve — which it is — but it definitely makes it easier, having established relationships with these guys."



DAINES cont. from pg 5

as both a vocal leader and a leader by example. He's a player who his coach indicates as someone who operates in one high gear at all times.

"He's always on and with Dawson, you know you're always going to get 100 percent from him," Grant said. "That's one thing you don't ever have to question. You're going to get his full go."

As a senior captain, Daines understands the responsibility that comes with it and doesn't

take it lightly, but he also seeks to keep a friendly relationship with his teammates who he might be mentoring at times.

"I'm a guy that keeps everybody going, motivates people, keeps people in line," Daines said. "I know people don't up to me as a role model, but I don't consider myself a role model. I want to be a friend to my teammates and make them go as hard as they possibly can."

Daines made a strong impact for the Cardinals last year on the defensive side of the ball as a linebacker, ranking second on the

team with 49 total tackles. But he saw very little playing time on offense.

That all changes this fall as he is inserted into the lineup as the starting fullback.

As far as his personal stats go, Daines couldn't be less concerned. He's more worried about doing the dirty work that helps springs guys like Oesterle and Jones.

"This is going to be my first year as a big part of our offense," Daines said. "My main goal is to just get these other backs going and give them some good blocks so they can

have some big plays."

His head coach seems confident they'll be able to find some key moments to allow Daines to strike as a ballcarrier, which could include some battering ram dives at the goal line. Whether it be him or someone else, however, in Daines is just happy to be a cog in the machine doing his part.

"I'm not too worried about scoring," Daines said. "I just want them to get in the end zone, make some good blocks for them."

SCENIC BLUFFS FOOTBALL ALT-2020 SEASON RESULTS

SCHOOL OVERALL SBC

| | | |
|------------|-----|-----|
| BANGOR | 7-0 | 5-0 |
| CASHTON | 6-1 | 4-1 |
| ROYALL | 4-2 | 3-2 |
| NECEDAH | 4-3 | 2-3 |
| BROOKWOOD | 3-4 | 1-4 |
| NEW LISBON | 0-7 | 0-5 |

SBC CHAMPION: BANGOR

BANGOR FOOTBALL ALT-2020 SEASON RESULTS

OPPONENT WE THEY

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------|---|
| @ Seneca/Wauzeka-Staubert* | 47-0 | W |
| Necedah | 2-0** | W |
| @ New Lisbon | 33-0 | W |
| @ Riverdale* | 55-6 | W |
| @ Brookwood | 42-6 | W |
| Cashton | 34-28 | W |
| Royall | 38-0 | W |

* @ Woodside Sports Complex
** forfeit

OVERALL: 7-0 SBC: 5-0 (1st)

BROOKWOOD FOOTBALL ALT-2020 SEASON RESULTS

OPPONENT WE THEY

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------|---|
| @ Cashton* | 6-7 | L |
| @ Seneca/Wauzeka-Staubert | 14-0 | W |
| @ Necedah | 39-44 | L |
| @ Royall | 7-44 | L |
| Bangor | 6-42 | L |
| @ Riverdale | 33-4 | W |
| New Lisbon | 21-20 | W |

* @ La Crosse Logan

OVERALL: 3-4 SBC: 1-4 (5th)

CASHTON FOOTBALL ALT-2020 SEASON RESULTS

OPPONENT WE THEY

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------|---|
| Brookwood* | 7-6 | W |
| Riverdale | 44-6 | W |
| @ Seneca/Wauzeka-Staubert | 14-6 | W |
| @ New Lisbon | 26-12 | W |
| @ Royall | 7-6 | W |
| @ Bangor | 28-34 | L |
| Necedah | 20-7 | W |

* @ La Crosse Logan

OVERALL: 6-1 MVC: 4-1 (2nd)

LUTHER FOOTBALL 2020 SEASON RESULTS

OPPONENT WE THEY

| | | |
|------------------|-------|---|
| @ Boscobel | 43-0 | W |
| @ River Ridge | 0-44 | L |
| @ De Soto | 8-26 | L |
| Hillsboro | 6-0 | W |
| Potosi/Cassville | 14-34 | L |
| D5 L1 Playoffs | | |
| Osseo-Fairchild | 2-0* | W |
| D5 L2 Playoffs | | |
| Mondovi | 0-34 | L |

* @ La Crosse Logan

OVERALL: 3-4 SBC: N/A

NECEDAH FOOTBALL ALT-2020 SEASON RESULTS

OPPONENT WE THEY

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------|---|
| Royall* | 6-46 | L |
| @ Bangor | 0-2 | L |
| Brookwood | 44-39 | W |
| Seneca/Wauzeka-Staubert | 27-14 | W |
| Riverdale | 42-8 | W |
| New Lisbon | 38-0 | W |
| @ Cashton | 7-20 | L |

* @ La Crosse Logan

OVERALL: 3-4 SBC: 2-3 (4th)

NEW LISBON FOOTBALL ALT-2020 SEASON RESULTS

OPPONENT WE THEY

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------|---|
| @ Riverdale* | 8-22 | L |
| Royall* | 0-48 | L |
| Bangor | 0-33 | L |
| Cashton | 12-26 | L |
| Seneca/Wauzeka-Staubert | 6-12 | L |
| @ Necedah | 0-38 | L |
| @ Brookwood | 20-21 | L |

* @ Wisconsin Dells

OVERALL: 0-7 SBC: 0-5 (6th)

ROYALL FOOTBALL ALT-2020 SEASON RESULTS

OPPONENT WE THEY

| | | |
|----------------|------|---|
| @ Necedah* | 46-6 | W |
| @ New Lisbon** | 48-0 | W |
| Riverdale** | 60-8 | W |
| Brookwood | 44-7 | W |
| Cashton | 6-7 | L |
| @ Bangor | 0-38 | L |

* @ La Crosse Logan
** @ Wisconsin Dells

OVERALL: 4-2 SBC: 3-2 (3rd)



Brookwood's Dan Peterson darts around the Cashton defensive line while Rian Mulvaney looks to add a block during the Alt-Fall Week 1 meeting at La Crosse Logan. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

FALCONS cont. from pg 8

The loss of Thompson in particular is no small matter given that he was a first-team all-conference selection on both the offensive and defensive lines this past season.

But even with that in mind, it is only natural for the Falcons to be optimistic when they bring back as many key pieces as they do.

Senior Dan Peterson is the biggest headliner among returning players after he was named to the all-conference first team as both a running back and a defensive back in the spring. Peterson accumulated 504 yards and four touchdowns on

the ground while averaging 5.5 yards per carry throughout the season.

"He's just got uncoachable, unteachable, natural speed that I've personally never seen in D7 football," Mack said of Peterson. "And we've got other guys who've got nice team speed."

Peterson is joined in the backfield by all-conference second-team pick at running back and fellow senior Austin Frye, who racked up 387 yards and four touchdowns on the ground.

With senior and all-conference honorable mention Franklin Wildes (454 yards and five touchdowns rushing on 7.4 yards per carry) filling out the backfield and senior

Jaydon Koltermann (324 yards and one touchdown rushing) and quarter back once again, Brookwood brings back its top four leading rushers from last season.

Additionally, the Falcons are welcoming back Evan Klinkner (a second-team all-conference selection on both the offensive and defensive lines) and all-Scenic Bluffs honorable mentions Payton Havlik and Rian Mulvaney.

There was no postseason of any kind for teams that played during the spring alternate season, though Brookwood would have been left on the outside looking in even if there had been. Nevertheless, this is a program that is coming off five

consecutive playoff appearances and six in the last seven years.

The losing for positioning in the Scenic Bluffs standings and the potential postseason implications that come along with it figures to be highly competitive this fall. With the Falcons bringing back as much as they do, they certainly have the potential to be right in the thick of it all.

"We've got a good core group back that can kinda guide some of these younger guys into the spots that we're filling," Mack said. "But other than two lineman spots, we've got every other back in the same position that they were in the spring. That's a good thing for us."

THROUGH MY LENS

Should We Accept What Today's Football Is?

By NATE BEIER
Sports Reporter

I don't think we ever expected what's happened to high school football over the past decade to have happened at all. Even just 10 years ago, the thought of any of our local schools playing 8-man football or two certain rival teams needing to combine to have enough players to field a varsity team was absurd. If you used some sort of crystal ball and showed people from 20, 30 or 40 years ago what football would look like today, what do you think they'd think?

Now, I'm not saying that football today is a terrible thing, but let's face the facts, it's a very different game than what we saw even just 10 years ago. The status of being a football player is different. The pomp and circumstance before and around a game is different. The crowds have shrunk. The numbers of kids participating has declined. Yet, I think the general notion is that high school football is still alive and well - healthy and robust, even. I would argue that it's in trouble and we, the fans, are mostly in denial or claim ignorance to the issues that threaten the survival of high school football - especially in our smaller schools. Again, I want to reiterate - I don't think our version of football is a terrible thing, but I do maintain that we're going to let it decline too far before actually doing something to fix the major issues surrounding it.

THE NUMBERS GAME

I'm not shy to offer my opinion regarding the future of football in most of our area schools. My outlook is bleak, but plenty of that is due to communities being unwilling to accept that things have changed regarding their team.

The number of kids playing football is less than that of a decade ago and very different than 20-30 years ago. The type of kid playing football is different than in decades past.

I watched the Scenic Bluffs Conference roll out teams of 18-24 last spring (with the exception of Bangor and Cashton who had numbers in the high 30s and mid 40s, respectively) and wondered how low we would let our numbers get before any team would entertain the idea of moving to an 8-player system.

There are plenty of other local teams in the Ridge and Valley and Dairyland Conferences that have faced a numbers dilemma in recent years. Schools like Lincoln (Alma Center), North Crawford, Kickapoo/La Farge and Wonewoc-Center/Weston have dealt with the situation by switching to 8-player football. Even perennial Ridge and Valley power, De Soto, is making the move to 8-player in the fall of 2022.

There are even several Coulee Conference schools that struggle to claim 30 players on their roster in four grades of high school. Nearly half of the conference won't field junior varsity teams this year, opting for C-Team games alongside Varsity contests.

So, why are the declining numbers so concerning for me? I think that the overall product we put on the field has degraded significantly due to a lack of proper progressions as players develop as well as the absence of competition for a starting spot.

What I mean by the lack of proper progressions is that if a school can put its athletes in a bad spot if they can't field a junior varsity and/or c-team/freshman team. Some kids - most kids - need as many of those reps as possible to be ready for a varsity spot as a junior or senior.

In many cases - especially in the smaller schools - a number of freshmen are asked to step up just because they're slightly more athletic than others, or there's just a need to be filled.

Filling a spot just because a body has to go there leads to my other point - without enough players on a roster, the competition for playing time lessens. If you don't have to fight to keep your spot as a starting guard, why would you do extra video study, hit the weight room one more day a week, or not take a play off in a game?

Football is hard. Life is hard. However, it's the competition for a spot on a team, for a job or position within a company that can drive certain individuals to achieve more of themselves than they expected.

If you can just show up, do the bare minimum and receive praise, are you really growing or learning anything?

LOOKING AHEAD

Sure, it's fine to see where the sport of football (most high school sports, actually) is going, but what can be done to stop the degradation of the sport?

The fact of the matter is that we probably can't stop it from happening. These next few generations of kids are being raised on screens, which are much easier to deal with than a coach who may seem like a screaming tyrant, but in reality is just trying to hold his players accountable to their actions in a game.

We may have to find ways for sport to meet society on new terms. That may mean we work with that neighboring town to create a co-op. That may mean we play two quarters of a junior varsity game ahead of the varsity one to develop younger kids even though numbers are light. We may have to consider playing this 'new-fangled' 8-man game as to maintain a town's own identity.

I've said for a number of years now that 8-player football needs to be a regular way of life for the nearly all of our area D6 and D7 schools. If you can't get 40 kids out for the sport, 8-player is a viable option. Even with 40 players, 8-player allows you to maintain both a varsity and JV team. Heck, you may even be able to squeeze in a freshman level, if all goes well. Within the varsity level, you can platoon and keep kids fresh as they focus on a single position instead of playing both ways.

There's a lot of kickback to the 8-player, though. Most of it stems from just doing the sport 'in a different way than what dad did.' In reality, it's still football. The kids catch and tackle. Concussions are still an issue. You still have jerseys and cleats and helmets that can sport cool stickers for in-game accomplishments - there's just more jerseys and cool stickers and helmets with stickers on the sideline, allowing the coaches more flexibility in personnel.

Even though I push the 8-player agenda, even that may not be enough to stave off the steady decline of football and high school sports in general. Perhaps co-ops are the better way to go for the long run. I don't have an issue with two schools getting behind an cooperative idea such as that.

Honestly, none of these ideas are wrong - unless we ignore what's been going on, expecting more and more kids to come out just because you're winning games or you make things more fun. The days where 75% of boys participated in high school football are over. They aren't coming back.

Again, that's fine. We need to adapt and evolve with those changes, but there are issues to deal with today so tomorrow's alterations don't turn into alterations.

I don't want to see high school football go away. I think it's a very fun part of the school/community environment. There's still something to be said for marching out on the field with the brassy sound of the pep band, for those cool, crisp nights, or (my favorite) a sunny fall afternoon homecoming contest with oodles of alumni and current students lining the field to watch their team battle some hapless and current students lining the field to watch for the larger-than-normal crowd to see.

Where do you sit on the issue - is football fine as is, or do we have some issues to contend with to keep it going for the next three generations?

WEEK 1 AREA ROUNDUP



West Salem's Chris Calico finds room to run as G-E-T's Thomas Haney pursues during the first quarter of last week's season opener in Galesville. West Salem defeated their former conference foe 48-0. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

By NATE BEIER
Sports Reporter

The opening week of the football season was a little like Christmas for those starved for some pigskin action.

Of the five area conferences, only the Scenic Bluffs could boast a winning mark as a league in Week 1. The SBC went 7-0 against non-league opponents. The key win was most likely New Lisbon's over Hillsboro. The win ended a 12-game losing streak that dates back to the 2019 season.

The La Crosse schools defeated the Eau Claire schools by a combined score of 59-0. Onalaska's defeat by Baraboo avenged a playoff loss by the Thunderbirds last November. Coulee power, G-E-T with a 21-point first quarter that led to a 48-0 rout. The game was the head coaching debut for G-E-T's Jeff Wiseman.

Arcadia sullied the coaching debut of Lancaster's Jordan Rolland who took over for longtime Hall of Fame coach, John Hoch after breaking open a narrow 8-6 halftime lead to a 22-6 win.

Aquinas led 36-0 after the first quarter at PdC and won 49-15.

Augusta picked up its first real win (the Beavers took a forfeit from Glenwood City in the first round of the playoffs last year) since Week 8 of the 2019 season.

Ridge and Valley
De Soto 34 Wisconsin Rapids Assumption 31
Highland 34 River Ridge 12
Southwestern 22 Riverdale 14
Potosi/Cassville 48 Seneca/Wauzeka-Stauben 0
Royall 30 Boscobel 6
New Lisbon 28 Hillsboro 6
Cashton 19 Ithaca 14

Scenic Bluffs
Bangor 30 Melrose-Mindoro 7
Brookwood 34 C-FC 14
Cashton 19 Ithaca 14
Necedah 56 Wild Rose 15
New Lisbon 28 Hillsboro 6
Royall 30 Boscobel 6

Luther 40 Blair-Taylor 7

Mississippi Valley
La Crosse Central 46 Eau Claire North 0
La Crosse Logan 13 Eau Claire Memorial 0
West Salem 48 G-E-T 0
Chippewa Falls 40 Holmen 0
Baldwin-Woodville 17 Sparta 6
Mauston 46 Tomah 30
Baraboo 28 Onalaska 21
Menomonie 28 River Falls 6

Coulee
Arcadia 22 Lancaster 6
Altoona 41 Fall Creek 18
Aquinas 49 Prairie du Chien 15
Nekoosa 46 Black River Falls 21
West Salem 48 G-E-T 0
Dodgeville 40 Viroqua 20
Black Hawk/Warren 20 Westby 13

Dairyland
Pepin/Alma 42 Elmwood/Plum City 12
Whitehall 47 Colfax 8
Augusta 28 Pittsville 0
Luther 40 Blair-Taylor 7
Brookwood 34 C-FC 14
Mondovi 72 Eleva-Strum 6
Bayceville 47 Melrose-Mindoro 6
Bangor 30 Melrose-Mindoro 7

* italics = conference member

WEEK 2 PREVIEW

Home openers for Sparta, Tomah headline second week of football action

By ZACH RASTALL
Sports Reporter

The opening weekend of the 2021 Wisconsin high school football season is in the books, and we already have a significant shakeup. Bangor will not play its scheduled game against Pepin/Alma this week due to COVID-19 issues within the Cardinals program.

All other area teams are back in action in non-conference play this weekend. Cashton's home opener against Hillsboro will be Saturday, August 28 at 1 p.m. The three other contests will all be played at the customary time of Friday at 7 p.m.

Mauston at Sparta

The Spartans (0-1) are looking to bounce back following a 17-6 season-opening loss to Baldwin-Woodville. They'll host their home opener against a team that's coming off a win over another Mississippi Valley team in Week 1.

Mauston (1-0) heads to Sparta this Friday after outdueling Tomah in a 46-30 shootout to open the season. Junior quarterback Spenser Lehman went 15 of 23 for 158 yards and two touchdowns while junior running back Antonio Najera ran for 127 yards and a touchdown on 25 carries.

Junior running back Nick Kent led the Spartans with 99 yards on 15 rushes in Week 1.

Prairie du Chien at Tomah

Coming off that loss to rival Mauston, the Timberwolves (0-1) will seek to regroup when they host Prairie du Chien (0-1) this Friday in their 2021 home opener.

The Blackhawks suffered a 49-15 loss to Aquinas to kick off their schedule. Sophomore running back Rhett Koenig was a bright spot for Prairie du Chien, piling up 148 yards and two touchdowns on just 19



Tyler Schendel and the Spartans will open at home against Mauston in a nonconference tilt Friday night. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

carries.

Tomah had some stellar individual Week 1 performances as well. Drew Brookman hauled in seven catches for 164 yard and three touchdowns and Jacob Bullard went for 117 yards and a touchdown on 17 rushes.

Brookwood at Viroqua

After breezing past Cochrane-Fountain City 34-14 to open the year, the Falcons (1-0) will look to pick up back-to-back non-conference road wins and move to 2-0 on the season.

Brookwood takes on Viroqua (0-1) in Week 2. The Blackhawkes were defeated 40-20 by Dodgeville in their season opener. Viroqua led 20-8 in the first half, but watched the Dodgers reel off 32 unanswered points the rest of the way.

In that win over the Pirates, senior running back Franklin Wildes rushed

for 111 yards on 13 carries and senior fullback Austin Frye added 108 yards and two touchdowns on 19 touches for the Falcons.

Hillsboro at Cashton

The Eagles (1-0) are looking to build off a statement 19-14 road win over Ithaca when they welcome in an old Scenic Bluffs friend for their Saturday home opener.

Hillsboro (0-1) will travel to Cashton following a 28-6 loss to New Lisbon last Friday. The Tigers struggled offensively, though Isaiah Stokes rushed for 56 yards on eight attempts and Josiah Thyne had 54 yards and a touchdown on 13 carries.

Sophomore running back Colin O'Neil went for 116 yards and a touchdown on 22 rushes against the Bulldogs.

What lies ahead

By NATE BEIER
Sports Reporter

Next week marks the start of the school year for most kids. It also marks the start of the conference portion of the football schedule for most teams. Here's a guide highlighting some of our area's best matchups for Week 3 and beyond.

WEEK 3

La Crosse Central is at West Salem in a huge matchup in the MVC. This contest will go a long way in determining who will win the conference title this year.

Holmen is at Onalaska - another pivotal MVC matchup.

Cashton goes to Brookwood. The Eagles have edged the Falcons by a single point in each of the last two seasons, so expect another tight game this year.

Viroqua at Westby and Black River Falls at G-E-T are two Good Coulee Conference rivalry games.

WEEK 4

Tomah hosts Sparta in one of the key rivalry games of the week. The two teams did not meet last year.

Onalaska is at La Crosse Central.

Pepin/Alma is at Whitehall in a tussle that will impact the shape of the Dairyland Conference.

Bangor heads to Necedah. Ithaca's trip to Highland may decide who wins the Ridge and Valley title.

Wonewoc-Center/Weston goes to Belmont. Belmont claimed the unofficial 8-man state title last year after defeating Holman.

WEEK 5

Cashton's nonconference matchup with Highland will go a long way in determining the Eagles progress as a program.

Brookwood will try to avenge a loss at Necedah last year.

La Crosse Central at River Falls has the chance to be an important contest in the MVC race.

West Salem's trip to Sparta may be marred as the Spartans try to notch a win for homecoming.

Melrose-Mindoro will host Blair-Taylor as the two teams jostle for position in the Dairyland.

WEEK 6

Onalaska's trip to West Salem will be different than it was two years ago. The Panthers have rebuilt and will be keen on earning a win and possibly gaining ground in the MVC title chase.

Arcadia is at Aquinas to most likely decide who wins the Coulee title.

Cashton and Necedah should have a competitive affair in the SBC.

WEEK 7

Westby will host G-E-T as the two teams face-off for control of the middle of the Coulee Conference. Both programs should be on the cusp of making the playoffs and this game comes at an important time in the season.

Logan is at Tomah in a game both teams may need to sustain a positive outlook for the remainder of the year.

Seneca/Wauzeka-Stauben goes to Hillsboro as the two teams meet for the first time. There's a chance both teams are still looking for a win at this point, making it an interesting watch.

WEEK 8

De Soto makes its final trip to Ithaca (for the foreseeable future) in a game that always plays a role in determining the Ridge and Valley Conference champion.

La Crosse Central will travel to test the Sparta defense.

Aquinas is at Prescott in a unique pairing.

Pepin/Alma is at Blair-Taylor, which should be a meeting between two playoff-bound teams, while Augusta and C-FC will duke it out for a chance to make the playoffs.

WEEK 9

Bangor and Cashton should be on course for a major meeting in the final week of the regular season. Cashton threatened BHS last spring with a big second-half comeback, but looks to avoid a comeback situation altogether this year.

Pepin/Alma at Melrose-Mindoro could determine the Dairyland winner. Last year M-M won their match with the Eagles 10-0.

West Salem at Holmen seems to be the most interesting MVC matchup. Both teams should be qualified for the playoffs, but there's a chance one

GRIDIRON STUDS IN NEW DUDS

Traditional ALTERATIONS

By NATE BEIER
Sports Reporter

New team gear is a welcome change for most players, coaches and fans. Some fresh styles quickly become the standard look for a team, while some new duds are very much 'of their time' and get dated quickly.

For the Brookwood football team, change is the name of the game again this year. Coach Jeremy Mack, now in his seventh season leading the Falcons, has moved on to the second uniform style in his tenure. The previous look came his first year as head coach and was worn through the alternative fall season in spring 2021.

THE JERSEY

For more than 15 years, the Falcons wore a black top with black pants. The numbers were white and the name 'Brookwood' crossed the chest. The away uniforms were simple with a red version of 'Brookwood' over a black block number.

The design was conservative, but it conveyed the sensibilities of the Norwalk-Ontario-Wilton school district. It was simple, it was traditional and it didn't call attention to itself.

By that token, the 2015 jerseys seemed outlandish. There were extra flourishes that contradicted what had been the norm for so many years.

A red number, a different design on the pants, and a few little design cues on the jersey that were more modern.

1. This year's changes include a return to a sans serif block letter, but this time with both a black and white outline to help define it. Outlines also adorn the 'Brookwood' across the chest and the word 'Falcons' sit across the shoulders.

2. There are a few extra splashes of color this year. Those are splashed on the shoulders in two bars that encircle the arm. 3. On the pants, a Falcon logo has been printed on the left thigh and a single, solid swatch of color runs along the side.

THE HELMET

By far, the most striking change to Brookwood's look this year is the red helmet. The Cardinals will be the first team to don a scarlet dome in the Scenic Bluffs in perhaps the entire league's history. Bangor and Necedah, the other two schools that use red as its primary color have typically had white helmets for the majority of their program's histories.

Since Brookwood's first football team in the fall of 1960, a black helmet has been the tradition. The logos on the side have gone through a number of evolutions and changes, but the shell of the head protector has been black.

This year the red gives the Falcons a new identity. Coach Mack has decided to go with black numbers on both sides of the helmet and has put a Falcon logo on the back of it. The black facemask is also a fresh take after Brookwood has sported both white and red facemasks in years past.

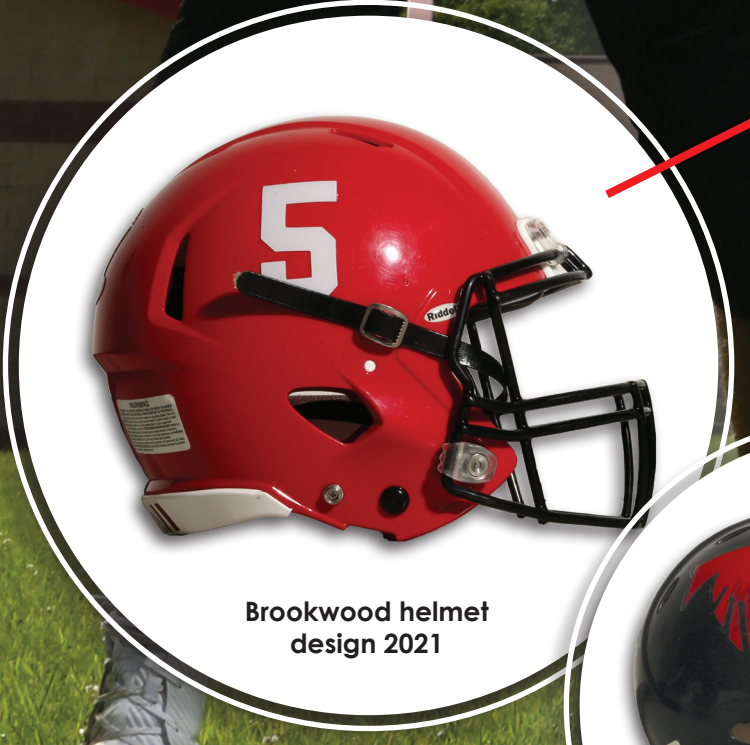
The new-look helmet is similar to that of a few other southwest Wisconsin teams such as Westby, Iowa-Grant and Black Hawk.

The change to red is sure to cause controversy amongst Brookwood football purists, though. After running with a certain style for decades, it will take some time to get all parties on board with the new look. However, maybe the change is past due.

After all, Brookwood has seen an extended run of success on the field since winning a share of its first (and only) Scenic Bluffs Conference championship in 2013.

Two years later, the Falcons began what would be a five-year run in qualifying for the postseason. Last year Brookwood didn't have a chance to vie for a playoff spot as the teams which participated in the alternative fall season were only allowed to play the regular season. In fact, last year's 3-4 finish was the first time the Falcons ended with a losing record since the 2014 campaign - a season that preceded Mack's time as head coach.

Perhaps the change of fatigues can be blamed for Brookwood's on-field success. Perhaps it's just a coincidence that the team has seemingly improved as they changed their look from a more conservative outfit to something that embraces some of the modern trends among uniforms. Either way, the new look suits Brookwood as it tries to find its path in the modern landscape of successful football teams.



Brookwood helmet design 2021



Brookwood helmet design 2001-2020

Brookwood's Jayden Kolfermann

RIGHT The Falcons' previous uniform style which was used from 2015-2020. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

CASHTON
cont. from pg 12

off the spring season and can now, with the short turnaround, focus on building upon that successful campaign this fall.

"It definitely helped with the spring that we had to ride into this. There is, for the first time in a long time, some higher-than-normal expectations for the program," said Cashton head coach Jered Hemmersbach. "But that's good. That's what we've been looking for and working towards as a program in the last five or six years is to get to that point where there is a little expectation."

The Eagles did lose a group of 10 seniors from last season's roster to graduation, which included four all-conference selections: first-team defensive lineman James Harter, first-team outside linebacker Tyson Menzynski, first-team defensive back Aiden Cook and second-team inside linebacker Ethan Anderson.

The thrilling news for Cashton is the team brings back even more all-conference talent than it lost to graduation: first-team quarterback Jacob Huntzicker, first-team tight end and defensive end Lincoln Klinge, first-team offensive lineman Zach Mlsna, second-team running back Colin O'Neil, second-team split end Dylan Bayer and second-team offensive lineman Gabe Peterson. Those returning players make up

the core of an experienced group of upperclassmen for the Eagles, consisting of eight seniors and nine juniors. The success of last spring is still very much fresh on everyone's minds with the team, so the short turnaround from the 2020 alternate season to this upcoming 2021 campaign could actually be a benefit to Cashton.

"Winning some games, I think it was a positive experience and it's rolled right into this late summer/early fall," Hemmersbach said. "Hopefully we carry that momentum and keep things rolling. We do have a lot of guys rolling and it's just easier with your plays. Everything's familiar."

For these seniors in particular, this is special moment.

Some of these guys were living the varsity experience back in 2018, when turnout numbers were lower and the Eagles were sloggng through a difficult 0-9 season. But the lack of success didn't deter them. Instead, they stuck with it and have seen the program steadily rise.

They can also still claim a little bit of a chip on their shoulders. For all the success they had in the spring, they were unable to finish it off with a postseason experience since there were no playoffs for the alternate season.

Cashton enters this fall with the expectation to compete with Bangor

for Scenic Bluffs supremacy. It has been a while since another team has been able to say that realistically, but the Eagles can.

Granted, even if they look slightly more mortal, it's still the Cardinals' conference until someone knocks them off their perch.

But if Cashton can successfully build on its breakout spring, the Eagles might just be the team to do it.

"Everybody is 0-0 right now. The spring's done with, it's over with," Hemmersbach said. "We had a lot of games that were close and a lot of games that could've gone either way, and we found a way to hang on, found a way to win. I think that just builds that mindset of "we can do it at any point in a game.""

Cashton's Zach Mlsna tries to bat down a pass from Necedah's Landen Murphy during the final game of the spring season. Herald photo by Nate Beier.



WALL
cont. from pg 12

quick succession. He has instead decided to join the team from the sidelines, helping them in whatever way he is asked.

"It's just the guys, being around everyone," Wall said. "I love the guys. It's a fun group to be around."

Sticking around the team also allows him to continue to be part of this incredible journey for the Cashton football program.

Wall is among the class of 2022 players who saw the Eagles at their lowest a few years ago.

As freshmen in 2018, many were part of a Cashton varsity squad that endured a winless season. With only two seniors on the team, a lot of younger guys were thrust into large roles right away.

That included Wall, who took the reins at quarterback as a freshman.

"This senior group is the team that was 0-9 their freshman year. It was a team that only had two seniors, so we asked a lot of them as freshmen to go out and play a varsity schedule when we were, realistically, a JV team," said Cashton head coach Jered Hemmersbach. "Not one time did any of those guys complain about anything and Alec was the quarterback. We asked him to step in as a freshman and that, to me, will always be something I remember for this senior group and especially Alec."

Despite the struggles of that season, the young Eagles took their lumps and plowed forward to brighter days.

They improved to 5-5 and a playoff appearance in 2019, followed by a 6-1 record this past spring. Now, this senior class is hoping to cap it off with a long-awaited conference title this fall.

Wall hasn't been able to be on the field much for the back end of this journey, but he's stuck around and kept a presence with the team.

“

...life is full of those obstacles and you have to find a silver lining in it. Maybe (Wall) can lead in a different way..

JERED HEMMERSBACH
CASHTON HEAD COACH
FOOTBALL

"He's a true leader," Hemmersbach said of Wall. "It sucks. You never want to see that with a player, but life is full of those obstacles and you have to find a silver lining in it. Maybe he can lead in a different way."

"We'd like to have him be part of it in any way that he can."

Wall's exact role while he's sidelined isn't specific, but he's helping however he is able — whether it be providing guidance for younger players, simply being an encouraging presence or doing whatever else is asked of him.

It's ensuring that he's part of the end of the journey for this prolific senior class and providing him some closure for his high school football career, whether he's able to eventually take the field or not.

"It's awesome to be able to say that you're part of the senior group that's kind of helped change the Cashton football program around," Wall said. "It's nice because, for a while, Cashton football was a laughingstock. There's not a lot of laughing going on anymore, just a lot of winning."

CASHTON FOOTBALL
ALT-2020 SEASON RESULTS



Cashton's Austin Culpitt

| OPPONENT | WE | THEY |
|--------------------------|-------|------|
| Brookwood | 7-6 | W |
| Riverdale | 44-6 | W |
| @ Seneca/Wauzeka-Stauben | 14-6 | W |
| @ New Lisbon | 26-12 | W |
| @ Royall | 7-6 | W |
| @ Bangor | 28-34 | L |
| Necedah | 20-7 | W |

OVERALL: 6-1
SBC: 4-1 (2nd)



Cashton's Lincoln Klinge

2021 SCHEDULE

- AUGUST**
19 @ Ithaca
28 Hillsboro
- SEPTEMBER**
3 @ Brookwood
10 @ Luther
17 Highland
24 @ Necedah
- OCTOBER**
1 New Lisbon
8 Royall
15 Bangor

GAME TO WATCH

BANGOR

As a rivalry game, Bangor-Cashton always jumps off the page a bit more than others on the Scenic Bluffs docket. But this year, the clash between the Eagles and the Cardinals holds extra special potential.

Cashton very nearly slayed the kings of the conference last spring, but Bangor pulled it out late and ensured its reign of SBC supremacy would continue into the fall.

Despite the loss, Cashton showed that Bangor isn't totally invincible in SBC play anymore. It still will take an incredible performance to knock them off, but it can be done.

The Cardinals are still the favorites until proven otherwise, but the Eagles enter the 2021 season nipping at their heels. It sets the stage for a potentially mammoth mid-October meeting between the two teams.

If both Bangor and Cashton take care of their business, their matchup in the final week of the regular season could be for all the marbles in the race for a Scenic Bluffs title.

The Eagles will get a slight boost this time around in that they get to host the Cardinals rather than travel to Bangor like last spring. Friday, October 15 at 7 p.m. in Cashton is the time and place for the most anticipated SBC contest of the fall.

CASHTON EAGLES



Cashton's Colin O'Neil leads the celebration after stopping Royall on a two-point conversion try in Week 5 of the Alt-Fall season. Cashton went on claim its second win of the year by a score of 7-6. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

PROVING GROUNDS

Hemmersbach's Eagles aiming to continue ascent in SBC and beyond

By ZACH RASTALL
Sports Writer

The spring alternate season may not have been ideal, but you would find few teams in Wisconsin happier to experience it than the Cashton Eagles.

Cashton put together one its best seasons in years this past spring, going 6-1 overall, 4-1 in Scenic Bluffs play and coming oh so close to knocking off powerhouse rival Bangor and capturing a conference championship.

The Eagles rattled off five straight wins to start their schedule, which included a pair of 7-6 wins over Brookwood and Royall in which their opponents scored in the fourth quarter and the Cashton defense stood firm on two-point conversion attempts to preserve the lead.

That set up a mammoth showdown between Cashton and Bangor in Week 6. It was a rivalry clash between two teams who were both 5-0, yet those records to meant something entirely different to both.

For the Cardinals, of course, it was business as usual. They had

steamrolled the Scenic Bluffs over the past several years, compiling a lengthy conference winning streak that was never seriously threatened at any point.

The Eagles, on the other hand, were a program still on the rise. They had gone a combined 4-23 from 2016 to 2018, which included a winless 0-9 mark during the 2018 season. While they had rebounded to a 5-5 record and a playoff berth in 2019, they were still a long way off from Bangor's level.

That very nearly changed this past April.

Cashton overcame a 21-6 deficit in the first half to knot the score up at 28-28 early in the fourth quarter. The upset bid ended, however, when the Cardinals scored with under 30 seconds to play to escape with their multiyear Scenic Bluffs winning streak still intact.

Despite the loss, the Eagles had validated their improvement as a program and given Bangor the sort of scare that nobody in the conference had for years. Cashton rebounded with a win over Necedah to cap (CASHTON) cont. pg 11



Cashton head coach Jered Hemmersbach greets Colin O'Neil after the Eagles tied Bangor in the fourth quarter of last April's SBC contest. Herald photo by Nate Beier.



Cashton's Alec Wall exited the alt-fall football season just a couple of plays into the first game of the season, then reinjured it over the summer playing basketball, possibly jeopardizing his chances to play his senior season on the gridiron. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

The Call On Wall

By ZACH RASTALL
Sports Writer

This is not how Alec Wall expected to be spending summer practices heading into his final season of high school football.

The Cashton senior is watching from the sidelines, the result of a basketball injury he suffered earlier this summer. Wall had originally suffered a separated shoulder during the Eagles' 44-6 victory in Week 2 of this past spring season.

After recovering from that injury, he separated his shoulder once again while playing in a recent basketball tournament. As a result, Wall is out indefinitely and runs the risk of potentially being left as a spectator for the entire 2021 season.

Given the circumstances, one could completely understand if Wall wished to keep as he heals physically and deals with the disappointment and frustration that comes from suffering shoulder injuries in (WALL) cont. pg 11

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Cashton's Brady Hemmersbach returns to the sideline after a successful point-after-touchdown kick at Royall. Herald photo by Nate Beier.

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