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Dawgs to be tested early, often

By John Erzar
jerzar@timesleader.com

Berwick won't have to wait long to avenge the missteps of last season.

The Dawgs lost three games in 2017 and those opponents — Williamsport, Selinsgrove and Valley View — are in the first six weeks of the schedule.

“The schedule will be a great challenge for us,” Berwick coach Frank Sheptock said. “I think it’s like going on a four or five week playoff run. The difference is after the five games you should be in the state title game. But I think our guys look forward to trying to rise to the occasion. We go four out of five weeks on the road — to Williamsport, to Valley West, to Selinsgrove, to Hazleton — and then we get the pleasure of Valley View coming here.”

Valley View ended Berwick’s season last year at Crispin Field with a 24-17 overtime victory in the District 2 Class 4A championship game.

“You look at your football team to go through a stretch like that,” Sheptock said. “Can we develop the depth to play well for that extended period of time.”



Bill Tarutis file photo | For Times Leader
Owen Shoemaker takes over as Berwick's main running threat. He rushed for 548 yards and six touchdowns during the 2017 WVC regular season.

ON OFFENSE

The Dawgs lost their quarterback, leading rusher and top two receivers to graduation so there could be some growing pains.

“We lose at almost every skill position player on offense,” Sheptock said, “so that’s where we have some concern of like how quickly can that younger group (matures). I think we’re fine physically. It’s

just the game experience part of it. Offensively, we still have a tremendous amount of turnover and a tremendous amount we have to figure out to be productive.”

There is some experience coming back. When starting quarterback Jared Marshman missed the start of the season, Alex Force ran

See BERWICK | 12

BERWICK BULLDOGS

Coach: Frank Sheptock (18-8) 3rd year
Division: WVC 4A
PIAA Class: 4A
Male enrollment: 302
School phone: 570-759-6400
Stadium location: Crispin Field
2017 regular-season leaders
Passing: Jared Marshman 44-of-75, 664 yds., 10 TDs
Rushing: Evan Klinger 118-742, 6.1 avg., 7 TDs
Receiving: Damon Beckhorn 27-338, 12.5 avg., 5 TDs
Scoring: Evan Klinger 56 pts.
Kicking: Ken Marshman 32 XPM, 7 FGs, 53 pts.

Schedule

Fri., Aug. 24	Crestwood (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Aug. 31	at Wyoming Area (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 7	at Nanticoke Area (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 14	at Tunkhannock (4A)	7 p.m.
Sat., Sep. 22	Pittston Area (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 28	at Dallas (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 5	Wyo. Valley West (5A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 12	at North Pocono (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 19	Hazleton Area (6A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 26	Berwick (4A)	7 p.m.

2017 Results (10-3)

at Hazleton Area (7-5)	W 24-10
Dallas (7-4)	W 23-7
at Wyoming Area (4-7)	W 17-14
Crestwood (5-6)	W 56-0
Selinsgrove (11-3)	L 17-6
at Coughlin (5-7)	W 24-6
at Pittston Area (6-5)	W 36-0
Wyo. Val. West (6-6)	W 44-22
Lake-Lehman (7-5)	W 41-14
at Williamsport (7-4)	L 32-27

D2-4A playoffs

Wyoming Area (4-7)	W 42-0
North Pocono (7-5)	W 48-14
Valley View (10-4)	L 24-17 OT

Coughlin in battle to make playoffs

By John Erzar
jerzar@timesleader.com

Back in 1892, a group of boys from Coughlin High School played two football games. One was a 12-0 victory over Kingston. The other a 20-2 win over the Wyoming Seminary junior varsity.

Thus began the journey of one of the Pennsylvania’s longest-running high school football programs. The end will come some time this fall.

Coughlin embarks on its final season before it merges with GAR and Meyers to form one squad in 2019. The Crusaders will play 10 games for sure. Whether there will be an 11th contest, or more beyond that, is hard to judge.

Coughlin enters the season minus its top offensive threats and with only four starters back on both side of the ball. So to make the final crusade a success, the team must mature quickly.

“We have to stay injury-free,” said Coughlin coach Ciro Cinti,

who had 31 players on the pre-season roster. “If we have guys get injured and are out games, we’re in trouble.”

ON OFFENSE

Coughlin has a long history of work-horse running backs — the last being the since-graduated Jake Cole — who would bang and pound themselves at the opposition.

It’s unlikely that will occur this season.

Four guys are expected to share carries — huge Jervone Young, speedster Sa’id Hollis and seniors Xayvion Proctor and Marquis Silva. Hollis rushed three times in 2017; the other had no carries.

“Sa’id has the ability. Proctor is a senior that’s coming back. He’s a nice kid and works hard,” Cinti said. “He is right now our best kid there. But there’s not a Jake Cole or a Vincent Todd or a Baldo Vinciarelli —

not in this group. But they’re all pretty equal so when the next kid comes in it’s not a big dropoff.”

Junior Garrett Wardle started a handful of games as a sophomore. Wideout Rafael McCoy and tight end Ben Yozwiak bring experience to the pass catchers, although Coughlin doesn’t throw much. Hollis and Salem Diop will also be split out wide. Combined, the unit had 12 receptions in 2017.

The offensive line is green with junior Richard Carey the only returning starter. Junior Gregorio DeLeon will be the other guard. Junior Matt Thompson will be the center with a pair of sophomores — Randall Bednar and Mike Timek — at the tackle spots.

ON DEFENSE

Last year’s defense showed its improvement as the season wore on. After surrendering 54 points in the season-opener to Dallas, it shut out Dallas in the first round of the District 2 Class 4A playoffs.

See COUGHLIN | 12

COUGHLIN CRUSADERS

Coach: Ciro Cinti (71-63) 13th year
Division: WVC 4A
PIAA Class: 4A
Male enrollment: 354
School phone: 570-826-7201
Stadium location: Wilkes-Barre Memorial Stadium, Old River Road, Wilkes-Barre
2017 regular-season leaders
Passing: Vincent Todd 15-of-33, 341 yds., 4 TDs, 3 Ints.
Rushing: Jake Cole 179-1,069, 6.0 Avg., 9 TDs
Receiving: Vincent Todd 11-114, 10.4 avg., 0 TD
Scoring: Jake Cole 54 pts.
Kicking: Jeff Mondulick 12 XPM, 2 FGs, 18 pts.

Schedule

Fri., Aug. 24	Crestwood (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Aug. 31	at Wyoming Area (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 7	at Nanticoke Area (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 14	at Tunkhannock (4A)	7 p.m.
Sat., Sep. 22	Pittston Area (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 28	at Dallas (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 5	Wyo. Valley West (5A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 12	at North Pocono (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 19	Hazleton Area (6A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 26	Berwick (4A)	7 p.m.

2017 Results (5-7)

at Dallas (7-4)	L 54-7
at Scranton Prep (13-1)	L 42-0
at Crestwood (5-6)	W 27-14
Wyoming Area (4-7)	W 17-14
Honesdale (2-8)	W 28-13
Berwick (10-3)	L 24-6
at Meyers (6-5)	W 35-7
Williamsport (7-4)	L 55-10
at Pittston Area (6-5)	L 21-14
at Wyo. Val. West (7-7)	L 42-0

D2-4A playoffs

at Dallas (7-4)	W 28-0
at Valley View (10-4)	L 40-7

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Comets hope to change for better

By John Erzar
jerzar@timesleader.com

Crestwood is going to take a step back in hopes of taking a step forward.

The Comets' success in recent years came via a throwback offense — the single wing. The offense, or at least some aspects of it, will return this year.

The single wing features various ball carriers, deceptive backfield action and end runs where the defense is simply overwhelmed by a phalanx of blockers.

The change, Crestwood coach Greg Myers said, was based on the offensive talent fitting it better than the past few years.

Crestwood finished unbeaten in Wyoming Valley Conference play when the single wing was used in force in 2014. Over the next three WVC seasons, the Comets won a total of 11 games, including a 5-5 record last year.

ON OFFENSE

The group will be buoyed by the return of quarterback Chase Pass-

man, whose 2017 campaign ended after four games with a collarbone injury. He was on his way to a 1,000-yard passing season when he was hurt.

"I expect a lot out of Chase running the ball, throwing the ball, from a leadership standpoint," Myers said. "We've put a lot on his shoulders and so far he's done a good job with it."

Garrett Swank took over the quarterbacking duties, but plans this year are for him to play run-

ning back. Having a second dependable thrower in the backfield could add more wrinkles to the offense. Patrick Rother returns after being second on the team in rushing a year ago. Jimmy Hawley toted

the ball some in 2017, so there's a good level of experience.

When Crestwood passes, wide receiver Brandon Nieminski will be the main target. The 6-foot-4 junior hauled in 18 passes for 196 yards and four TDs as a

sophomore. But that's where the experince ends. Wideout Ryan Petrosky and tight ends Jimmy Curry, Logan Arnold, Ryan Harding and Dylan Horn could end up as factors as the season goes on.

The offensive line returns three starters — junior center Tyler Cesario, senior guard Adam Gegar and senior tackles Sean Foley and Kevin Frisbie. Gegar, though, could see time as a tight end. Also in the line mix are Matt Dean, John Schuler, Derek Petrochko, Anthony Poyer and Sean Foley.

"We're really excited about our guys up front," Myers said.

ON DEFENSE

Crestwood is going to switch things up defensively.

While the unit performed well for the most part, it struggled against the better WVC offenses.

"We're going to a little bit of a different scheme," Myers said. "The linebackers are a group we're

See CRESTWOOD | 12

CRESTWOOD COMETS

Coach: Greg Myers (80-72) 13th year at Crestwood; 14th overall

Division: WVC 4A

PIAA Class: 4A

Male enrollment: 351

School phone: 570-474-6782

Stadium location: High School

2017 regular-season leaders

Passing: Garrett Swank 51-of-93, 598 yds., 7 TDs, 7 Ints.

Rushing: Nick Grosek 69-564, 8.2 avg., 7 TDs

Receiving: Brandon Brozena 29-427, 14.7 avg., 5 TDs

Scoring: Garrett Swank 38 pts.

Kicking: Garrett Swank 26 XPM, 0 FG, 26 pts.

Schedule

Fri., Aug. 24	at Coughlin (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Aug. 31	Dallas (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 7	at Wyo. Valley West (5A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 14	Pottsville(4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 21	Williamsport (6A)	7 p.m.
Sat., Sep. 29	Nanticoke Area (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 5	at Tunkhannock (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 12	at Berwick (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 19	Pittston Area (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 26	at Hazleton Area (6A)	7 p.m.

2017 Results (5-6)

at Pittston Area (6-5)	W 34-15
Wyoming Area (4-7)	W 21-18
Coughlin (5-7)	L 27-14
at Berwick (10-3)	L 56-0
at Pottsville (4-7)	L 13-7
Nanticoke Area (6-5)	W 35-7
at Tunkhannock (1-9)	W 42-18
at Hanover Area (0-10)	W 42-7
Wyo. Val. West (7-7)	L 39-7
Hazleton Area (7-5)	L 35-0

D2-4A playoffs

at Valley View (10-4)	L 51-0
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Dallas has a need for speed

By Tom Robinson
For Times Leader

Rich Mannello often takes a traditional approach to coaching football, emphasizing the weight room in the offseason and controlling the ball when the game starts.

Mannello is pleased, however, that his Dallas team is shaping up as one prepared to fit well into modern football as he approaches his fourth season leading the Mountaineers.

"We think this could be our fastest group, especially on defense, which is the way you have to be right now with all these spread offenses," Mannello said.

The Mountaineers are loaded with experienced players on both sides of the ball after jumping up from two to seven wins a year ago. And, some of those veterans still have time to keep building the Dallas program with many in the current junior class earning significant playing time, and even some starts, since they were freshmen.

ON OFFENSE

Michael Anderson, Matt Ferrara, Josh Balera and Taylor Bolesta all return to start in the offensive line.

Xander Shaner is trying to land the other spot.



Bill Tarutis file photo | For Times Leader

Junior Michael Starbuck will be in his third season as the Dallas Mountaineers' starting quarterback.

Jack Farrell is also back at tight end.

Danny Meuser and Lenny Kelley are back at tailback after combining to run for 19 touchdowns and more than 1,200 yards.

Dylan Schuster provided another option there.

Michael Starbuck is back at quarterback while sophomore R.J. Wren

had a strong offseason and is trying to work into the mix at either quarterback or free safety.

Sean Cuba and sophomore Nick Gashi have been working at fullback, one of the few positions where Dallas needs to find a new starter.

Matt Maransky and Luke DelGau-

See DALLAS | 28

DALLAS MOUNTAINEERS

Coach: Rich Mannello (15-18), 4th year

Division: WVC 4A

PIAA Class: 4A

Male enrollment: 328

School phone: 570-675-5201

Stadium location: School Road, off Route 309, Dallas
2017 regular-season leaders

Passing: Mike Starbuck 66-of-132, 862 yds., 10 TDs, 6 Ints.

Rushing: Danny Meuser 133-645, 4.8 avg., 10 TDs

Receiving: Bradley Adams 14-163, 11.6 avg., 3 TDs

Scoring: Lenny Kelley 60 pts.

Kicking: Nate Maransky 32 XPM, 8 FGs, 56 pts.

Schedule

Fri., Aug. 24	Tunkhannock (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Aug. 31	at Crestwood (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 7	Hazleton Area (6A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 14	at Pittston Area (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 21	Wyo. Valley West (5A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 28	Coughlin (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 5	at Nanticoke (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 12	Valley View (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 19	at Berwick (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 26	at Lake-Lehman (3A)	7 p.m.

2017 Results (7-4)

Coughlin (5-7)	W 54-7
at Berwick (10-3)	L 23-7
Pittston Area (6-5)	W 38-7
Scranton Prep (13-1)	L 35-17
at Wyo. Val. West (7-7)	W 31-18
at Meyers (6-5)	W 42-0
Wallenpaupack (5-6)	W 21-20
at Wyoming Area (4-7)	W 21-20 OT
Hazleton Area (7-5)	L 16-13
Lake-Lehman (7-5)	W 37-6

D2-4A playoffs

Coughlin (5-7)	L 28-0
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Grenadiers prepped for final campaign

By John Erzar
jerzar@timesleader.com

The GAR Grenadiers would like to make their final season a memorable one. Last season was quite forgettable.

GAR slogged through a 1-9 record in 2017. The offense scored over 13 points just twice. The defense surrendered 41 or more five times.

Now comes the final season for a program that played its first game in 1925. GAR will merged with Coughlin and Meyers to form a unified Wilkes-Barre Area team for 2019 in anticipation of all three schools eventually becoming one.

“For the kids, they’re going about it like it’s any other ordinary season,” GAR coach Paul Wiedlich Jr. said. “It’s really going to set in as the season winds down.”

ON OFFENSE

There was plenty of competition at positions in the preseason, which was expected on a team that scored 12 offensive TDs in 2017

and has just three starters back. GAR is hoping either junior Tyrone Qualls or sophomore Kam Taylor can bring some stability to the quarterback position, which had three different starters last



Wiedlich



Lomas

season.

Qualls was the team’s second-leading rusher with 347 yards and could be slotted at running back instead. Senior Justice Lomas and sophomore Noah Taylor bring experience to the backfield. Christian Hernandez also figures into the mix.

The Grenadiers have a couple solid wide receivers in basketball standout Will Johnson and Malachai Williams, but they need to do a better job getting the ball to them. Taylor could also see action

as a receiver as well as Curtis Smith and Curon Smith. Either Mike Smeraglio or Jalil Timmons will plug to hole at tight end.

“A strength for us is we have a lot of skill kids back, a lot of quick kids,” Wiedlich said. “We kind of

revamped our offense. We kind of simplified it a bit.”

There were plenty of battles for the offensive line spots. Kristin Vasquez and Adriel Chamberlain were the center candidates. The



Williams



Kopko

guard jobs had several hopefuls — Josh Newhall, Junior Pozo, Omar Degante and Kashawn Wade. Likewise at tackle with Juan Vicioso, Kareem Jones and Vincent Beltran the prospects for two positions.

“We’re young, really young,” Wiedlich said. “There are two freshmen linemen I brought up that will definitely play. Up front last year, we were kind of piecemeal, but we were upperclass heavy.”

ON DEFENSE

Many of the same faces on offense will be on the defensive side of the ball. And the key is to play much, much better than last

year. Opponents threw sparingly against the unit in 2017 because they were able to run the ball effectively.

Beltran, Newhall and Jones will

See GRENADIERS | 12

GAR GRENADIERS

Coach: Paul Wiedlich Jr. (52-38) 9th year
Division: WVC 3A-A
PIAA Class: 3A
Male enrollment: 235
School phone: 570-826-7165
Stadium location: Wilkes-Barre Memorial Stadium, Old River Road, Wilkes-Barre
Key players lost: Anthony Blake, RB/LB; Zynear Bradford, OL/DL; Ron Peguero, QB/DB; Gerson Peralta, WR/DB; Yorlin Peralta, OL/DL; Jared Soto, OL/DL; Kadin Taylor, TE/DL

2017 regular-season leaders

Passing: Ron Peguero 32-of-104, 380 yds., 1 TD, 11 Ints.
Rushing: Ron Peguero 75-410, 5.5 avg., 4 TDs
Receiving: Malachai Williams 14-262, 18.7 avg., 1 TD
Scoring: Ron Peguero 26 pts.
Kicking: Jose Amigon 2 XPM, 0 FG, 2 pts.

Schedule

Sat., Aug. 25	at Susquehanna (2A)	7 p.m.
Sat., Sep. 1	Holy Redeemer (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 7	Hanover Area (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 14	at Western Wayne (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 21	Wyoming Area (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 28	at Northwest (A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 5	at N. Penn/Mansfield (2A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 12	Lake-Lehman (3A)	7 p.m.
Sat., Oct. 12	Nanticoke Area (4A)	7 p.m.
Sat., Oct. 27	at Meyers (3A)	3:30 p.m.

2017 Results (1-9)

at Honesdale (2-8)	L 38-8
at Western Wayne (7-4)	L 34-0
Nanticoke Area (6-5)	L 45-6
Lake-Lehman (7-5)	L 50-12
at Pittston Area (6-5)	L 35-13
Athens (8-3)	L 41-6
Wyoming Area (4-7)	L 44-7
at Northwest (8-3)	L 45-8
Hanover Area (0-10)	W 30-13
at Meyers (6-5)	L 26-19 OT

Hanover Area hoping to ride line to a level of success

By Paul Sokoloski
psokoloski@timesleader.com

As a man headed to a military school, Justin Kopko likes structure.

He also likes winning games.

And this year, he’d like to get to one before he gets to the other.

“I do believe this year will be one of the better seasons we’ve had in the past five years,” said Kopko, a 6-foot-4, 350-pound senior two-way lineman who’s committed to West Point.

The Hawkeyes are counting on it after last year’s nightmare. They didn’t win a single game as some early injuries and other issues led to an 0-10 season.

Kopko & Co. plan to change that fate as a formidable returning front on both sides of the ball gives Hanover Area immediate hope.

“Very excited,” Hawkeyes fourth-year coach Mike McCree said. “I think this is the best I’ve looked since I’ve been here. Last

year, we ended up having some issues early. We had seven freshmen and six started last year. But to watch those guys mature has been an outstanding experience for me.



McCree

“This is really my first class coming through.”

Kopko, the grandson of former Hanover Area basketball coach Vic Kopko, went through a rugged college recruiting process. His final

choices included Division 1 programs Rutgers, Temple, Massachusetts and Bucknell before Kopko chose West Point, where he was named the MVP of the school’s annual football camp in 2017.

“I just love the football coach there,” Kopko said. “The academics is second to none. Their football atmosphere, you can’t beat.”

ON OFFENSE

The Hawkeyes plan on piling up yardage behind a big and experienced offensive line led by the 350-pound Kopko.

But there’s plenty of punch around him, with seniors Matt Beecham (6-2, 265), Mike Mieldazis (6-2, 255) and Zach Halenda (5-7, 225) all returning with Kopko and 6-3, 225-pound



Kopko

sophomore Jacob Mercandante joining them in the trenches.

“It’s a big, physical group,” McCree said.

They’ll be blocking for running backs James McCabe and Cameron Holeman, with Justin Stevanowicz helping to open holes as the fullback.

Running the show will be third-year starting quarterback Aaron Hummer.

“He’s seeing everything a lot quicker,” McCree said.

One of his top targets will be his cousin, tight end Connor Hummer, with senior Jared Kishbaugh and sophomore Joe Curcio at wideout. Auggie George returns as the team’s kicker.

“We should have a great season throwing the ball and running the

See HANOVER | 25

HANOVER AREA HAWKEYES

Coach: Mike McCree (6-24), 4th year
Division: WVC 3A-A
PIAA Class: 3A
Male enrollment: 234
School phone: 570-831-2300
Stadium location: St. Mary’s Road, Hanover Twp.
Key players lost: Sean Coleman, WR/DB; Josh Jopling, RB/DB; Sal Gurnari, OL/DL; Tyheim Taylor, WR/LB

2017 regular-season leaders

Passing: Aaron Hummer 74-of-168, 719 yds., 2 TD, 4 Ints.
Rushing: David Fedorczyk 79-475, 6.0 avg., 5 TDs
Receiving: Sean Coleman 31-356, 11.5 avg., 1 TD
Scoring: David Fedorczyk 36 pts.
Kicking: Auggie George 7 XPM, 2 FGs, 13 pts.

Schedule

Fri., Aug. 24	at Athens (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Aug. 31	Lake-Lehman (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 7	at GAR (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 14	Riverside (2A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 21	Meyers (3A)	7 p.m.
Sat., Sep. 29	at Holy Redeemer (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 5	Northwest (A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 12	Lackawanna Trail (A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 19	at Wyoming Area (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 26	at Nanticoke (4A)	7 p.m.

2017 Results (0-10)

at Old Forge (11-2)	L 44-0
at Blue Mountain (2-8)	L 40-0
Meyers (6-5)	L 21-12
Mid Valley (5-6)	L 40-15
at Lake-Lehman (7-5)	L 28-14
at Wyoming Area (4-7)	L 54-14
Northwest (8-3)	L 55-22
Crestwood (5-6)	L 42-7
at GAR (1-9)	L 30-13
Nanticoke (6-5)	L 44-0

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Cougars poised to take next step

By Paul Sokoloski
psokoloski@timesleader.com

After playing in the 2017 district football finals and nearly making the state basketball championship last season, Sparky Wolk feels a sense of accomplishment from helping restore pride in two major Hazleton Area sports.

But he's tired of near-misses and heartbreaking defeats. "District championship," Wolk said, "is definitely the goal."

That's an objective that seemed way out of reach for the Cougars for most of this decade.

Hazleton Area suffered through seven straight losing seasons under three different coaches after Rocco Petrone left the sidelines for the school's principal job following his 7-3 finish in 2009.

The Cougars came close to cracking the .500 mark a couple times, finishing 4-6 in 2011 and again in 2015, during the third season of current fifth-year coach Mike Brennan.

Then came last year, when Hazleton Area won three of its final four games and five of its last seven to accomplish a 6-4 regular season. Then the Cougars stunned Williamsport in a thrilling District 2/4 Class 6A playoff semifinal before falling to Delaware Valley in the District 2 title game.

"We were excited to win a playoff game on the road and get a chance to play for a championship," Brennan said. "We're looking for big improvement, continuing improvement and trying to take it to the next level."

Mainly, Brennan is hoping the success doesn't level off.

A former state championship coach at Mount Carmel, Brennan's teams have gone 1-9, 4-6, 3-7 and 6-4 during his four seasons at Hazleton Area. In other words, each season of improvement was followed by a year of regression.

"One of the things we've had

a problem with is taking a step forward, and then backward," Brennan said.

Wolk, who quarterbacked the Cougars into last year's district championship game and played point guard on a basketball team that lost in overtime of the state semifinals, isn't about to let that happen. "Senior year, we all put the work in," Wolk said. "We're excited to show how much better we got from last year."

ON OFFENSE
The offense will revolve around Wolk, who is back for his third season as a starter after throwing for 1,850 yards and 17 touchdowns against just six interceptions last season.

"People really had an appreciation for what he did on the basketball court. He's the same player on the football field," Brennan said. "He's tough, he's athletic, he's a leader. Kids gravitate toward him."

See HAZLETON AREA | 25

HAZLETON AREA COUGARS

Coach: Mike Brennan (128-90) 17th year overall
Division: WVC 6A-5A
PIAA Class: 6A
Stadium location: Harman-Geist Memorial Field
2017 regular-season leaders
Passing: Sparky Wolk 133-of-233, 1,850 yds., 17 TDs, 6 Ints.
Rushing: Damon Horton 100-623, 6.2 avg., 6 TDs
Receiving: David Smith 40-608, 15.2 avg., 5 TDs
Scoring: Damon Horton 54 pts.
Kicking: Will Barrientos 12 XPM, 2 FGs, 18 pts.

Schedule		
Fri., Aug. 24	Pottsville (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Aug. 31	Wyo. Valley West (5A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 7	at Dallas (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 14	Williamsport (6A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 21	at Wallenpaupack (5A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 28	at Delaware Valley (6A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 5	Berwick (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 12	at Scranton (6A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 19	at Coughlin (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 26	Crestwood (4A)	7 p.m.

2017 Results (7-5)		
Berwick (10-3)	L 24-10	
at Wyo. Val. West (7-7)	W 17-15	
Williamsport (7-4)	L 28-26	
Abington Heights (1-10)	W 47-19	
at Wallenpaupack (5-6)	W 34-13	
at Delaware Valley (12-1)	L 28-14	
Scranton (6-5)	W 34-8	
Donegal (5-5)	L 20-14	
at Dallas (7-4)	W 16-13	
at Crestwood (5-6)	W 35-0	

District 2/4 Class 6A playoffs		
at Williamsport (7-4)	W 28-27	
at Delaware Valley (12-1)	L 31-3	



Brennan



Horton



Wolk



Fuchick



Attorney Samuel A. Falcone, Jr.

Good Luck to the Hazleton Area Cougars and all the teams in the 2018 football season!



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Attorney William J. Watt, III
Hazleton Area Class of 2000

Redeemer looking to develop

By Paul Sokoloski
psokoloski@timesleader.com

The 2017 regular season started with promise for Holy Redeemer with a big opening-day win.

It ended with a gritty one-point victory to secure a spot in the Eastern Conference Class 3A title game, the program's first postseason berth.

In between, though, is where things went awry. The Royals not only lost eight consecutive games between their victories, they lost some potential to better the talent level in their program.

Which sent Redeemer, which was formed through a Catholic school juncture in 2017, to an 11th consecutive losing season.

"It's too bad," said Holy Redeemer coach Dwayne Downing, who will field a roster of just 28 players this season. "We've got the athletes in the school. They just won't play. I think it's just a lack of success over the years in the program."

Not that the current Royals

on the roster haven't tried to get some potential help.

"We've been trying to get kids," said junior Colin Conway, who will take over as the team's quarterback this year. "But they keep coming up with excuses like, 'You

guys never win.' That's a problem. We're not getting all the players in the school."

A few more wins may help steer more participation, and success, in the future.

And the Royals believe they have some pieces in place to do it.

"We have some good football players, a couple guys who can make plays," Downing said, naming Conway, junior running back Roger Williams and senior linemen Gavin Fincke and Josh Kodish, among others. "We have some good guys

returning and some players coming along who I think are going to end up being pretty good football players.

"It's just overcoming that his-

tory."

ON OFFENSE

As a reliable receiver, Conway spent last year catching passes.

Now he'll be throwing them for the Royals.

And although the position switch was initially met with some hesitation by Conway, it pretty much came about out of necessity. He was the guy best equipped to play quarterback at Redeemer this season.

"I'm going to miss catching the ball," Conway admitted. "But it's good. I like having the ball in my hands. I get to control the pace of the game."

He also gets to impart some advice on the guys he'll be throwing to, gleaned from years of experience in their shoes.

"If someone's doing something wrong, I can correct it and know what the right thing is for them to do," Conway said. "It helps."

The Royals offense will get plenty of help from senior linemen

See REDEEMER | 25

HOLY REDEEMER ROYALS

Coach: Dwayne Downing (27-43) 3rd year at Redeemer; 8th year overall
Division: WVC 3A-A
PIAA Class: 3A
Male enrollment: 200
School phone: 570-829-2424
Stadium location: Wilkes-Barre Memorial Stadium, Old River Road, Wilkes-Barre

2017 regular-season leaders
Passing: J.D. Turosky 86-of-195, 949 yds., 5 TDs, 9 Ints.
Rushing: J.D. Turosky 148-730, 4.9 avg., 11 TDs
Receiving: Colin Conway 29-231, 8.0 avg., 0 TDs
Scoring: J.D. Turosky 66 pts.
Kicking: Nate Roppelt 19 XPM, 1 FG, 22 pts.

Schedule		
Sat., Aug. 25	Holy Cross (A)	7 p.m.
Sat., Sep. 1	at GAR (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 7	at Mahanoy Area (2A)	7 p.m.
Sat., Sep. 15	Old Forge (A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 21	at Tunkhannock (4A)	7 p.m.
Sat., Sep. 29	Hanover Area (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 5	at Lake-Lehman (3A)	7 p.m.
Sat., Oct. 13	Wyoming Area (3A)	1 p.m.
Thur., Oct. 19	Meyers (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 26	at Northwest (A)	7 p.m.

2017 Results (2-9)		
Holy Cross (0-10)	W 44-0	
Susquehanna (4-6)	L 54-21	
Mahanoy Area (6-5)	L 42-0	
at Western Wayne (7-4)	L 53-0	
Meyers (6-5)	L 30-9	
at Northwest (8-3)	L 42-14	
at Athens (8-3)	L 52-7	
at Lake-Lehman (7-5)	L 35-7	
at Nanticoke Area (6-5)	L 57-14	
Col-Mo. Vo-Tech (3-7)	W 27-26	
Eastern Conference 3A championship		
at Nanticoke Area (6-5)	L 58-12	

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Coughlin

From page 5

Four starters are back — Young at defensive end, Carey and Silas Armstrong as linebackers and McCoy in the secondary.

Young is a four-year varsity player. At the other end spot will be either Yozwiak or sophomore Xavier Carter. DeLeon and fellow junior Connor Lee will form the interior.

Armstrong was at defensive end last season. He and Carey will be joined by Proctor and Aiden Redding.

McCoy had two interceptions last year and will lead the deep patrol that will also feature Diop, Nino Cinti and Antwan

Gray-Dates. “This is a nice group,” Cinti, the coach, said. “They move to the ball well. They’re not huge up front, but it’s a nice mixture. They kind of play off of each other. It’s a smart group.”

OUTLOOK

Coughlin has been an annual playoff team under Cinti, whether it’s the district playoffs or the Eastern Conference tournament.

Eight of the 13 Class 4A teams in District 2 make the playoffs, so if the Crusaders come together quick enough they should be able to secure a lower seed.

Reach John Erzar at 570-991-6394 or on Twitter @TLJohnErzar

Crestwood

From page 6

really excited about.”

Cesario, Foley and Gegaris will be defensive ends. There is nice depth at tackle with Frisbie, Petrochko, Schuler and Trevor Kinney rotating in.

Likewise, the line-backing group has a lot of players available — Gegaris, Curry, Hawley, Arnold, Horn and Dean.

There is plenty of talent in the secondary as well. Nieminski, Rother, Figmic and Ryan Miller will see time as safeties. At the corners will be Swank, Petrosky, Miller, Brendan DeMar-

zo and T.J. Kulak.

OUTLOOK

Crestwood was the seventh seed in the eight-team District 2 Class 4A playoffs in 2017. The schedule, though, is a bit tougher with Wyoming Area and Hanover Area gone and replaced by Dallas and Williamsport, two squads expected to be solid contenders for district tournament crowns.

The Comets enter their campaign with more seasoning that last year, so that could help squeeze into the D2-4A field.

Reach John Erzar at 570-991-6394 or on Twitter @TLJohnErzar

GAR

From page 8

be defensive tackles. Taylor is back at defensive end with Wade and Vicioso also seeing action.

Degante, Vasquez and Chamberlain will work as inside linebackers with Lomas, Smith and Javier Gonzalez on the flanks. Lomas was a starter last year.

The secondary is experienced. Johnson, Williams and Qualls return as starters. Taylor and Hernandez figure to get playing time as well.

OUTLOOK

District 2 has nine Class 3A teams and eight of them make the postseason. So the odds are in GAR’s favor to return to playing Week 11.

But to make any noise beyond that the Grenadiers need to become a cohesive unit as the season goes on.

Perhaps the opportunity to write the final chapter in the program’s history will be a driving force.

Reach John Erzar at 570-991-6394 or on Twitter @TLJohnErzar

Berwick

From page 4

the show for the first six games. The senior was in a preseason competition with junior Ryan Laubach for the job.

Senior running back Owen Shoemaker had a pair of 100-yard games as a backup last season and will be the main ball carrier. Joey Lynn and Mason Labauch will also gets some carries. Former tight end Eric Montes is the top candidate to start at fullback.

The receiving cupboard isn’t completely bare as Teagan Wilk and Justin Robbins saw ample time. Berwick uses several guys at receiver, so Preston Robbins, Alex Sharkuski and Jarret Groshek should see the ball thrown their way. Montes, Blaine

Cleaver and Will Decker will be the tight ends. Ben Peck, Noah Craig and Mike Zalutko return as starters on the line.

ON DEFENSE

Seven starters return to a defense that pitched three shutouts last year. “Defensively, we think the interior box of linebackers, D-line with Wilk in the middle we’re pretty strong there,” Sheptock said. “That’s something we can build on. I got a lot of anticipation of watching that group play because I think they can be pretty special.”

Montes, Decker and Mason Laubach are experienced defensive ends. J.J. Snyder started at a tackle spot, but could see time as an end as well. Run stopper Peck and Craig will also work inside.

Outside linebacker is question mark. Ryan Laubach, who started at cornerback last season, will lead the group. Jake Seely got a start last season due to an injury. Lynn anchors the inside linebackers. Cleaver and Dallas Schechterly will see time inside.

Wilk returns as the free safety. He was a ballhawk as a sophomore with six interceptions. Sharkuski, NaQuan Smith, Peyton Williams and Preston Robbins are among those in the mix for the other secondary spots.

OUTLOOK

Although it may take time for the offense to click, Berwick should once again be a top contender for the District 2 Class 4A title.

Reach John Erzar at 570-991-6394 or on Twitter @TLJohnErzar

Knights want experience to pay off

By Tom Robinson
For Times Leader

Lake-Lehman was already getting contributions from its underclassmen a year ago when the Black Knights were hit with injuries on their way to the District 2 Class 3A championship game.

The result is what would already have been an experienced team in 2018 comes back with even more playing time.

“I’m super excited with what we have returning from last year,” Black Knights coach Jerry Gilsky said. “We made the playoffs last year, but we lost about five starters for the year.

“A lot of these kids had to start as sophomores, so now they’ll become three-year starters.”

As he discussed his team at Wyoming Valley Conference Media Day, Gilsky said the Black Knights were already ahead of their progress from last year when they went 7-5 and pulled off an overtime road win at Western Wayne in the district semifinals.

“I think we’re a couple of weeks ahead of where we were last year because of the maturity and also

the knowledge they have already in our football system,” he said. “The kids are much hungrier this year because of where they left off last year, making it to a district final.”

ON OFFENSE

The Black Knights will need to find a new quarterback, but two of the top three rushers and most

of the key blockers return to an attack built around the ground game.

Matt Kurtz is back at fullback and Zach Kojadinovich returns at one of the running back spots.

Both are three-year

starters. Frank Kutz, T.J. Meehan and Elmer Souder return in the line with Josh Durling at tight end.

Wyatt Lopasky will move into the offensive line with Logan Hoyt likely to join him.

Casey Kaminski and Tyler Billotti were both part of the receiver rotation last season.

Junior Jake Ferguson and sophomore Ethan Adams are working at quarterback.

“They’re both good athletes,”

Gilsky said.

ON DEFENSE

The Black Knights feature a quick and experienced defense.

“We don’t have the biggest team up front,” Gilsky said. “I think we only average about 230 pounds up front, but we’re faster than we were last year.”

Meehan, Souder and Durling are all back in the front four. Kurtz joined them late in the season and could be there or at linebacker.

Kutz is back for a third season on the inside and Jarrett Cummings also returns to the linebacker corps.

Floyd McRoy, Ferguson, Kaminski and Billotti all have starting experience in the secondary.

OUTLOOK

Lake-Lehman has finished tied for the second-best record among the WVC’s small schools (Classes 3A and A) the last two seasons after finishing on top of that group in 2015.

The Black Knights are likely to

See LAKE-LEHMAN | 28

LAKE-LEHMAN BLACK KNIGHTS

Coach: Jerry Gilsky (57-34) 9th year

Division: WVC 3A-A

PIAA Class: 3A

Stadium location: High School

2017 regular-season leaders

Passing: Nate O’Donnell 26-of-65, 369 yds., 5 TDs, 3 Ints.

Rushing: Trey Borger 129-810, 6.3 avg., 10 TDs

Receiving: Zack Kojadinovich 8-123, 15.4 avg., 2 TDs

Scoring: Trey Borger 60 pts.

Schedule

Fri., Aug. 24	Western Wayne (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Aug. 31	at Hanover Area (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 7	Meyers (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 14	at Carbondale Area (2A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 21	at Northwest (A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 28	Wyoming Area (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 5	Holy Redeemer (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 12	at GAR (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 19	at Lackawanna Trail (A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 26	Dallas (4A)	7 p.m.

2017 Results (7-5)

Meyers (6-5)	W 30-23
Northwest (8-3)	L 25-7
Scranton Prep (13-1)	L 42-0
at GAR (1-9)	W 50-12
Hanover Area (0-10)	W 28-14
Tunkhannock (1-9)	W 49-31
at Nanticoke Area (6-5)	W 42-21
Holy Redeemer (2-9)	W 35-7
at Berwick (10-3)	L 41-14
at Dallas (7-4)	L 37-6

D2-3A playoffs

at Western Wayne (7-4)	W 27-26 OT
at Scranton Prep (13-1)	L 54-7



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Meyers seeks a storybook ending

By John Erzar
jerzar@timesleader.com

If Meyers’ final season is to be successful, two things need to happen.

First, the defense needs to maintain is solid play from 2017. Secondly, the offense needs to find different ways to score.

“I think we finished off, if you go number-wise, second overall in defense,” Meyers coach Jeff Labatch said. “So it should be a strength. We have two track guys returning in the secondary and you add (Darrian) Tyson in there, that makes a pretty good secondary that we should match up with.”

Meyers will end a program that started in 1930 as it merges with Coughlin and GAR to form a single Wilkes-Barre Area team in 2019. So there is plenty of incentive to write the final chapter in a storied history.

ON OFFENSE

The strength of the unit will be the offensive line. Guards Ryan Maffei and Kevin Kaskey return

as does tackle Michael Horvath. Justin Eberhardt will be the center and the other tackle spot will be manned by either Josh Jones or



Labatch

Josh Woodworth. As a whole, the line has some decent size.

“Those two line-men who didn’t start, they started a game or two,” Labatch said. “They have experience. It’s not like they’re getting

thrown into the fire the first time.”

The question is how will the Mohawks replace the production of do-everything quarterback Janssen Wilborn, who combined to rush and throw for nearly 2,000 yards. However, there is talent to ease the loss.



Patronick

The prospects for the quarterback position are Reese Patronick, Talee Sweeney and Joevanney Martinez.

Patronick was Meyers’ leading receiver last season with 41 receptions. If he wins the quarterback job, the Mohawks should still be

in good shape with pass catchers. Tight end Najese Hood showed big-play promise with 19 catches for 417 yards and four TDs. Plus, the receiving corps got a huge boost when it added Darrian Tyson, who transferred in after leading Wyoming Valley West is receptions in 2017.



Dessoie

Corey Brown and Tyler Yelland will get some snaps as wideouts. Maleek Robinson will see time as a tight

end.

Running back Kevin Dessoie returns after rushing for 596 yards and six TDs — both second best on the team last year. Nazir Dunell rushed a handful of times and should get more carries this season.



Horvath

ON DEFENSE

With eight starters back, Meyers has the ability to improve on defense. The Mohawks, though, need to do a better job against run-oriented teams and create more turnovers.

Maffei, Horvath and Kaskey are back on the line. Eberhardt and

See MEYERS | 26

MEYERS MOHAWKS

Coach: Jeff Labatch (19-15), 4th year
Division: WVC 3A-A
PIAA Class: 3A
Male enrollment: 263
School phone: 570-826-7145
Stadium location: Wilkes-Barre Memorial Stadium, Old River Road, Wilkes-Barre
2017 regular-season leaders
Passing: Janssen Wilborn 74-of-148, 1,174 yds., 6 TDs, 9 Ints.
Rushing: Janssen Wilborn 118-856, 7.3 avg., 10 TDs
Receiving: Reese Patronick 41-604, 14.7 avg., 1 TD
Scoring: Janssen Wilborn 66 pts.
Kicking: Kenny Mack 16 XPM, 2 FGs, 22 pts.

Schedule		
Fri., Aug. 24	at Riverside (2A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Aug. 31	Northwest (A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 7	at Lake-Lehman (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 14	Montrose (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 21	at Hanover Area (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 28	Susquehanna (2A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 5	at Wyoming Area (3A)	7 p.m.
Sat., Oct. 13	Mid Valley (2A)	7 p.m.
Thu., Oct. 18	at Holy Redeemer (3A)	7 p.m.
Sat., Oct. 27	GAR (3A)	3:30 p.m.

2017 Results (6-5)		
at Lake-Lehman (7-5)	L 30-23	
at Montrose (1-9)	W 28-6	
at Hanover Area (0-10)	W 21-12	
Nanticoke Area (6-5)	W 26-7	
at Holy Redeemer (2-9)	W 30-9	
Dallas (7-4)	L 42-0	
Coughlin (5-7)	L 35-7	
Tunkhannock (1-9)	W 27-16	
at Northwest (8-3)	L 23-21	
GAR (1-9)	W 26-19 OT	

D2-3A playoffs		
at Scranton Prep (13-1)	L 42-0	

WEEK 1
Friday, Aug. 24
(7 p.m.)
Abington Heights at Berwick
Carbondale at Old Forge
Delaware Valley at Pennridge
Lakeland at Honesdale
Meyers at Riverside
North Pocono at West Scranton
Northwest at Lackawanna Trail
Scranton at Wyoming Valley West
Scranton Prep at Dunmore
Wallenpaupack at Valley View
Western Wayne at Lake-Lehman
Wyalusing at Montrose

Saturday, Aug. 25
GAR at Susquehanna, 1 p.m.
Holy Cross at Holy Redeemer, 7 p.m.

WEEK 2
Friday, Aug. 31
(7 p.m.)
Honesdale at Wallenpaupack
Mid Valley at Dunmore
North Pocono at Western Wayne
Old Forge at Lakeland

Riverside at Carbondale
Scranton Prep at Scranton
West Scranton at Delaware Valley
Saturday, Sept. 1
Lackawanna Trail at Susquehanna, 1 p.m.
Montrose at Holy Cross, 1 p.m.
Valley View at Abington Heights, 1 p.m.

WEEK 3
Friday, Sept. 7
(7 p.m.)
Carbondale at Dunmore
Delaware Valley at Wallenpaupack
Holy Cross at Mid Valley
Lackawanna Trail at Montrose
Lakeland at Riverside
Scranton at North Pocono
Susquehanna at Old Forge
Valley View at West Scranton
Western Wayne at Honesdale

Saturday, Sept. 8
Abington Heights at Scranton Prep, 1:30 p.m.

WEEK 4
Friday, Sept. 14
(7 p.m.)

Dunmore at Lackawanna Trail
GAR at Western Wayne
Holy Cross at Northwest
Honesdale at Delaware Valley
Lake-Lehman at Carbondale
Montrose at Meyers
Riverside at Hanover Area
Scranton Prep at Valley View
Wallenpaupack at Scranton
West Scranton at Lakeland
Saturday, Sept. 15
Mid Valley at Susquehanna, 1 p.m.
North Pocono at Abington Heights, 1 p.m.
Old Forge at Holy Redeemer, 7 p.m.

WEEK 5
Friday, Sept. 21
(7 p.m.)
Abington Heights at Scranton
Carbondale at Lackawanna Trail
Delaware Valley at North Pocono
Dunmore at Riverside
Hazleton Area at Wallenpaupack
Holy Cross at Old Forge
Honesdale at Valley View
Mid Valley at Lakeland
Susquehanna at Montrose
Western Wayne at Nanticoke Area

Saturday, Sept. 22
West Scranton at Scranton Prep, 1:30 p.m.

WEEK 6
Friday, Sept. 28
(7 p.m.)
Abington Heights at Honesdale
Hazleton Area at Delaware Valley
Lackawanna Trail at Mid Valley
Lakeland at Western Wayne
Montrose at Carbondale
Old Forge at Dunmore
Pittston Area at West Scranton
Scranton at Williamsport
Susquehanna at Meyers
Valley View at Berwick
Wallenpaupack at Wyoming Valley West

Saturday, Sept. 29
Riverside at Holy Cross, 1 p.m.
North Pocono at Scranton Prep, 1:30 p.m.

WEEK 7
Friday, Oct. 5
(7 p.m.)
Dunmore at Montrose
Lakeland at Carbondale
Mid Valley at Riverside
North Pocono at Wallenpaupack
Old Forge at Lackawanna Trail
Scranton at West Scranton

Scranton Prep at Honesdale
Western Wayne at Valley View
Saturday, Oct. 6
Holy Cross at Susquehanna, 1 p.m.

WEEK 8
Friday, Oct. 12
(7 p.m.)

Coughlin at North Pocono
Hazleton Area ar Scranton
Honesdale at Montrose
Lackawanna Trail at Hanover Area
Nanticoke Area at Lakeland
Riverside at Old Forge
Scranton Prep at Pittston Area
Susquehanna at Dunmore
Tunkhannock at Wallenpaupack
Valley View at Dallas
West Scranton at Western Wayne
Williamsport at Delaware Valley
Saturday, Oct. 13
Wyoming Valley West at Abington Heights, 1 p.m.
Mid Valley at Meyers, 7 p.m.

WEEK 9
Friday, Oct. 19
(7 p.m.)

Abington Heights at West Scranton
Dunmore at Western Wayne
Honesdale at North Pocono
Lake-Lehman at Lackawanna Trail
Montrose at Riverside
Old Forge at Northwest
Scranton at Valley View
Susquehanna at Carbondale
Tunkhannock at Mid Valley
Wallenpaupack at Williamsport
Wyoming Valley West at Delaware Valley
Saturday, Oct. 20

Holy Cross at Columbia-Montour Vo-Tech, 1 p.m.
Lakeland at Scranton Prep, 1:30 p.m.

WEEK 10
Friday, Oct. 26
(7 p.m.)

Carbondale at Mid Valley
Delaware Valley at Scranton
Dunmore at Lakeland
Montrose at Old Forge
Scranton Prep at Western Wayne
Valley View at North Pocono
West Scranton at Honesdale
Saturday, Oct. 27

Lackawanna Trail at Holy Cross, 1 p.m.
Riverside at Susquehanna, 1 p.m.
Wallenpaupack at Abington Heights, 1 p.m.

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2018 HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SCHEDULE



HIGH SCHOOL	AUG. 24 - 25	AUG. 31 - SEPT. 1	SEPT. 7 - 8	SEPT. 14 - 15	SEPT. 21 - 22	SEPT. 28 - 29	OCT. 5 - 6	OCT. 12 - 13	OCT. 17-19	OCT. 26 - 27
BERWICK	Fri Abington Heights 7pm	Fri Pittston Area 7pm	Fri at Williamsport 7pm	Fri at Wyo Valley West 7pm	Fri at Selinsgrove 7pm	Fri Valley View 7pm	Fri at Hazleton Area 7pm	Fri Crestwood 7pm	Fri Dallas 7pm	Fri at Coughlin 7pm
COUGHLIN	Fri Crestwood 7pm	Fri at Wyoming Area 7pm	Fri at Nanticoke Area 7pm	Fri at Tunkhannock 7pm	Sat Pittston Area 7pm	Fri at Dallas 7pm	Fri Wyom Valley West 7pm	Fri at North Pocono 7pm	Fri Hazleton Area 7pm	Fri Berwick 7pm
CRESTWOOD	Fri at Coughlin 7pm	Fri Dallas 7pm	Fri at Wyo Valley West 7pm	Fri Pottsville 7pm	Fri Williamsport 7pm	Sat Nanticoke Area 7pm	Fri at Tunkhannock 7pm	Fri at Berwck 7pm	Fri Pittston Area 7pm	Fri at Hazleton Area 7pm
DALLAS	Fri Tunkhannock 7pm	Fri at Crestwood 7pm	Fri Hazleton Area 7pm	Fri at Pittston Area 7pm	Fri Wyo Valley West 7pm	Fri Coughlin 7pm	Fri at Nanticoke Area 7pm	Fri Valley View 7pm	Fri at Berwick 7pm	Fri at Lake-Lehman 7pm
GAR	Sat at Susquehanna 1pm	Sat Holy Redeemer 7pm	Fri Hanover Area 7pm	Fri at Western Wayne 7pm	Fri Wyoming Area 7pm	Fri at Northwest 7pm	Fri at North Penn-Mansfield 7pm	Fri Lake-Lehman 7pm	Fri Nanticoke Area 7pm	Sat at Meyers 3:30pm
HANOVER AREA	Fri at Athens 7pm	Fri at Lake-Lehman 7pm	Fri at GAR 7pm	Fri Riverside 7pm	Fri Meyers 7pm	Sat at Holy Redeemer 7pm	Fri Northwest 7pm	Fri Lackawanna Trail 7pm	Fri Wyoming Area 7pm	Fri at Nanticoke Area 7pm
HAZLETON AREA	Fri Pottsville 7pm	Fri Wyo Valley West 7pm	Fri at Dallas 7pm	Fri at Williamsport 7pm	Fri at Wallenpaupack 7pm	Fri at Delaware Valley 7pm	Fri Berwick 7pm	Fri at Scranton 7pm	Fri at Coughlin 7pm	Fri Crestwood 7pm
HOLY REDEEMER	Sat Holy Cross 7pm	Sat at GAR 7pm	Fri at Mahanoy Area 7pm	Sat Old Forge 7pm	Fri at Tunkhannock 7pm	Sat Hanover Area 7pm	Fri at Lake-Lehman 7pm	Sat Wyoming Area 1pm	Thurs Meyers 7pm	Fri at Northwest 7pm
LAKE-LEHMAN	Fri Western Wayne 7pm	Fri Hanover Area 7pm	Fri Meyers 7pm	Fri at Carbondale 7pm	Fri at Northwest 7pm	Fri Wyoming Area 7pm	Fri Holy Redeemer 7pm	Fri at GAR 7pm	Fri at Lackawanna Trail 7pm	Fri Dallas 7pm
MEYERS	Fri at Riverside 7pm	Fri Northwest 7pm	Fri at Lake-Lehman 7pm	Fri Montrose 7pm	Fri at Hanover Area 7pm	Fri Susquehanna 7pm	Fri at Wyoming Area 7pm	Sat Mid Valley 7pm	Thurs at Holy Redeemer 7pm	Sat GAR 3:30
NANTICOKE AREA	Fri Pittston Area 7pm	Fri at Tunkhannock 7pm	Fri Coughlin 7pm	Fri at Wyoming Area 7pm	Fri Western Wayne 7pm	Sat at Crestwood 7pm	Fri Dallas 7pm	Fri at Lakeland 7pm	Sat at GAR 7pm	Fri Hanover Area 7pm
NORTHWEST	Fri at Lackawanna Trail 7pm	Fri at Meyers 7pm	Fri at Wyoming Area 7pm	Fri Holy Cross 7pm	Fri Lake-Lehman 7pm	Fri GAR 7pm	Fri at Hanover Area 7pm	Fri at Wyalusing 7pm	Fri Old Forge 7pm	Fri Holy Redeemer 7pm
PITTSTON AREA	Fri at Nanticoke Area 7pm	Fri at Berwick 7pm	Fri Tunkhannock 7pm	Fri Dallas 7pm	Sat at Coughlin 7pm	Fri at West Scranton 7pm	Fri Williamsport 7pm	Fri Scranton Prep 7pm	Fri at Crestwood 7pm	Fri Wyoming Area 7pm
TUNKHANNOCK	Fri at Dallas 7pm	Fri Nanticoke Area 7pm	Fri at Pittston Area 7pm	Fri Coughlin 7pm	Fri Holy Redeemer 7pm	Fri at Towanda 7pm	Fri Crestwood 7pm	Fri at Wallenpaupack 7pm	Fri at Mid Valley 7pm	Fri Mid-West 7pm
WILLIAMSPORT	Fri Central Mountain 7pm	Fri at Altoona 7pm	Fri Berwick 7pm	Fri Hazleton Area 7pm	Fri at Crestwood 7pm	Fri Scranton 7pm	Fri at Pittston Area 7pm	Fri at Delaware Valley 7pm	Fri Wallenpaupack 7pm	Fri at Wyo Valley West 7pm
WYOMING AREA	Fri at Mid Valley	Fri Coughlin 7pm	Fri Northwest 7pm	Fri Nanticoke Area 7pm	Fri at GAR 7pm	Fri at Lake-Lehman 7pm	Fri Meyers 7pm	Sat at Holy Redeemer 1pm	Fri at Hanover Area 7pm	Fri at Pittston Area 7pm
WYOMING VALLEY WEST	Fri Scranton 7pm	Fri at Hazleton Area 7pm	Fri Crestwood 7pm	Fri Berwick 7pm	Fri at Dallas 7pm	Fri Wallenpaupack 7pm	Fri at Coughlin 7pm	Sat at Abington Heights 1pm	Fri at Delaware Valley 7pm	Fri Williamsport 7pm

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Trojans stepping up to challenge

By Paul Sokoloski
psokoloski@timesleader.com

The numbers in the school have grown to the point where Nanticoke Area will have to move up.

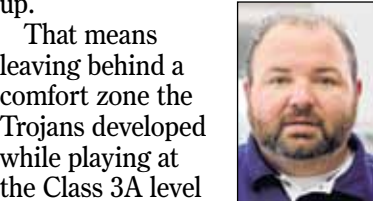
That means leaving behind a comfort zone the Trojans developed while playing at the Class 3A level to meet some unfamiliar foes in Class 4A this season.

A scary proposition? Nah. “We’re feeling pretty natural with it,” Nanticoke Area coach Ron Bruza said. “It’s going to be a change for us. We get to see some schools we haven’t seen for a couple of years. But the kids are just continuing playing football. “They like the challenge.” State classifications are made in two-year cycles. And while Bruza believes

Nanticoke Area will drop back down to Class 3A after the 2019 season, his Trojans are excited about navigating a new landscape.

So they’ll leave behind divisions,” Trojans line-backer John Shoemaker said. “We’ve just got to work harder.”

Senior Joe Ammons, Keanu’s older brother, will be the running back, where he spent half of last season as a starter after graduated standout Eric Jeffries was injured. “Joe Ammons is good, two other running backs are in the rotation, it should be exciting to watch,” Butczynski said. “We’re going to stay consistent with the run.”



Bruza



Butczynski



Boseman

ON OFFENSE

If they can stay healthy this season, the Trojans have some pieces in place to become a force in their new

division.

Junior Colby Butczynski, forced into a starting role by injury in the third game of the 2017 season, is back at quarterback. He’ll be looking for capable receivers Dylan Szychowski, Keanu Ammons and big-play speedster Darren Boseman — who averaged more than 20 yards on his 13 catches last season.

“It’s going to be fun to throw to those guys again,” Butczynski said.

The question marks are along the offensive line where 6-foot-1, 240-pound junior Kyle Boback returns but with inexperience all around him.

“We have a young offensive line,” Bruza said. “If they keep developing, we’ll be all right.”

ON DEFENSE

With eight starters returning to a 4-4

See NANTICOKE | 26

NANTICOKE AREA TROJANS

Coach: Ron Bruza (33-49), 9th year
Division: WVC 3A-A
PIAA Class: 3A
Male enrollment: 316
School phone: 570-735-7781
Stadium location: Kosciuszko Street, Nanticoke
2017 regular-season leaders
Passing: Colby Butczynski 33-of-76, 560 yds., 8 TDs, 5 Ints.
Rushing: Eric Jeffries 102-788, 7.7 avg., 9 TDs
Receiving: Darren Boseman 13-355, 27.3 avg., 6 TDs
Scoring: Eric Jeffries 58 pts.
Kicking: Ricky Klepadlo 32 XPM, 0 FG, 32 pts.

Schedule

Fri., Aug. 24	Pittston Area (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Aug. 31	at Tunkhannock (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 7	Coughlin (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 14	at Wyoming Area (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 21	Western Wayne (3A)	7 p.m.
Sat., Sep. 29	at Crestwood (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 5	Dallas (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 12	at Lakeland (3A)	7 p.m.
Sat., Oct. 20	at GAR (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 26	Hanover Area (3A)	7 p.m.

2017 Results (6-5)

Tunkhannock (1-9)	W 33-21
Col-Mo Vo-Tech (3-7)	W 50-13
at GAR (1-9)	W 45-6
at Meyers (6-5)	L 26-7
Northwest (8-3)	L 20-15
at Crestwood (5-6)	L 35-7
Lake-Lehman (7-5)	L 42-21
at Pittston Area (6-5)	L 46-21
Holy Redeemer (2-9)	W 57-14
at Hanover Area (0-10)	W 44-0

Eastern Conference 3A championship

Holy Redeemer (2-9)	W 58-12
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Rangers trying to keep it rolling

By Paul Sokoloski
psokoloski@timesleader.com

For the first time in a long time, the Northwest Rangers won’t have Jake Anderson to carry the load this year.

What they do have is a quarterback who has never lost a league game as a starter, one of the area’s most prolific place kickers and a 17-game Wyoming Valley Conference winning streak that’s stretched over the last three years.

They plan to keep it going, even without their graduated horse in the backfield.

“First and foremost, we’d like to have a winning season,” Northwest coach Lon Hazlet said. “We’d like to play well at home. And we’d always like to contend for a playoff spot.”

So the goals haven’t changed, even if the gameplan might.

Running back Anderson was the go-to guy, scoring 35 touchdowns over the past two years as the Rangers went 7-0 in league play and won the WVC Division 3A-A both seasons.

“He was our workhorse, our go-to guy,” junior quarterback David Piestrak said. “We’re just going to have to find guys who can



Fred Adams file photo | for Times Leader;

David Piestrak will return as Northwest’s starting quarterback.

make plays for us.”

One of those is Piestrak, a junior who hasn’t lost any of his WVC starts over the past two seasons. Another is receiver Connor Hazlet, who caught over 500 yards worth of passes and 11 touchdowns last year.

Does that mean the Rangers are ready to air it out more?

“It’s going to be interesting to see,” Piestrak said.

And on defense, opponents may be seeing stars after running into

an attacking unit led by returning all-state linebacker Tyler Stevens.

“As always, it’s a challenge at Northwest,” said Lon Hazlet, citing the school’s low enrollment. “We are the only (Class) A team in the WVC. We’ve got to play up and play 3A teams week in and week out. It’s a challenge.

“But our guys have welcomed that challenge.”

See NORTHWEST | 27

NORTHWEST RANGERS

Coach: Lon Hazlet (106-98), 4th year at Northwest; 20th year overall
Division: WVC 3A-A
PIAA Class: A
Male enrollment: 118
School phone: 570-542-4126
Stadium location: High School
2017 regular-season leaders
Passing: David Piestrak 64-of-145, 933 yds., 11 TDs, 6 Ints.
Rushing: Jake Anderson 171-1,023, 6.0 avg., 6 TDs
Receiving: Connor Hazlet 26-455, 17.5 avg., 9 TDs
Scoring: Connor Hazlet 54 pts.
Kicking: Jack Wessler 26 XPM, 7 FGs, 47 pts.

Schedule

Fri., Aug. 24	at Lackawanna Trail (A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Aug. 31	at Meyers (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 7	at Wyoming Area (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 14	Holy Cross (A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 21	Lake-Lehman (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 28	GAR (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 5	at Hanover Area (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 12	at Wyalusing Area (2A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 19	Old Forge (A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 26	Holy Redeemer (3A)	7 p.m.

2017 Results (8-3)

at North Penn (6-5)	L 14-10
at Lake-Lehman (7-5)	W 25-7
Western Wayne (7-4)	L 35-7
Lackawanna Trail (8-3)	L 27-6
at Nanticoke Area (6-5)	W 20-15
Holy Redeemer (2-9)	W 42-14
at Hanover Area (0-10)	W 55-22
GAR (1-9)	W 45-8
Meyers (6-5)	W 23-21
at Tunkhannock (1-9)	W 27-17

Eastern Conference Class 2A-A championship

Bloomsburg (5-6)	W 31-30 OT
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Patriots eager to take the next step

By Tom Robinson
For Times Leader

Nick Barbieri's successful debut season at Pittston Area was built around a large group of experienced skill players.

The key to Barbieri's second team may start in the line and build from there. "Up front, we feel like that's our strength as far as what we have returning," Barbieri said.

After winning just two games total in the two seasons before Barbieri took over in the long-time assistant's first head coaching position, Pittston Area went 6-5, including a loss in the District 2 Class 4A quarter-finals.

"We're very pleased with the progress we made, but we're certainly not satisfied with where we're at," Barbieri said. "I don't think any coach in this room would say '6-4, now we're satisfied', but based on the situation and where we were at, that was a great first step."

Barbieri wants to keep his alma

mater moving up.

"We want to keep making steps," he said. "Our goal is to improve on where we were last year, get that first playoff win and keep heading in the right direction."



Barbieri

ON OFFENSE

Center Ed Galonis, right guard Joey Jones and left tackle Reilly Brody are all seniors who return to start in the offensive line.

Seth Johnson, another senior, made some starts at left guard before getting hurt midway through the season.



Corey

Junior Hugh Ben-tham and senior Josh Christ are working at the right tackle position.

Both tight ends return.

Tony Gorey took over when John DeLucca was injured and with both back, they may be used together in some two-tight end sets.

The Patriots must replace Wal-

ter Coles, who threw for more than 3,500 yards the past two seasons and led Wyoming Valley Conference Division 4A teams in passing yards and touchdowns. "Those are big shoes to fill," Barbieri said.



DeLucca

They also graduated Coles' top three targets, including Kevin Krawczyk, the division's second-leading receiver, and the team's top rusher.

Juniors Mike Nocito and Alex Anastasi and sophomore P.J. Pisano are pursuing the quarterback position. Anastasi, the Old Forge starting quarterback as a freshman in 2016, is in his first season in the program.



Coe

Junior tailback Dylan Lukachko, who got some action off the bench last season, is the top returning rusher. Senior fullback Mike Coe and junior tailback Franny George have very limited experience in the offensive backfield.

Even with the graduation losses, Barbieri said, "We feel our receiv-

See PITTSTON AREA | 27

PITTSTON AREA PATRIOTS

Coach: Nick Barbieri (6-5), 2nd year
Division: WVC 4A
PIAA Class: 4A
Male enrollment: 365
School phone: 570-654-2415
Stadium location: Charley Trippi Stadium, high school, Stout Street, Yatesville
2017 regular-season leaders
Passing: Walter Coles 122-of-240, 1,927 yds., 18 TDs, 8 Ints.
Rushing: Keemar Woodruff 153-723, 4.7 avg., 8 TDs
Receiving: Kevin Krawczyk 39-753, 19.3 avg., 10 TDs
Scoring: Kevin Krawczyk 60 pts.
Kicking: Shane Syms 21 XPM, 2 FGs, 27 pts.

Schedule		
Fri., Aug. 24	at Nanticoke Area (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Aug. 31	at Berwick (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 7	Tunkhannock (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 14	Dallas (4A)	7 p.m.
Sat., Sep. 22	at Coughlin (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 28	at West Scranton (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 5	Williamsport (6A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 12	Scranton Prep (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 19	at Crestwood (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 26	Wyoming Area (3A)	7 p.m.

2017 Results (6-5)		
Crestwood (5-6)	L 34-15	
at Tunkhannock (1-9)	W 36-20	
at Dallas (7-4)	L 38-7	
at Valley View (10-4)	L 58-20	
GAR (1-9)	W 35-13	
at Abington Heights (1-10)	W 51-34	
Berwick (10-3)	L 36-0	
Nanticoke Area (6-5)	W 46-21	
Coughlin (5-7)	W 21-14	
at Wyoming Area (4-7)	W 24-21	

D2-4A playoffs		
at North Pocono (7-5)	L 48-15	

Tigers looking for toughness, balance

By Tom Robinson
For Times Leader

Mike Marabell will try to build toughness defensively and better balance offensively at Tunkhannock as the new head football coach of his alma mater.

An explosive offense was not enough last season for Tunkhannock to avoid a disappointing 1-9 finish.

Jan Cechak retired and Marabell, a former junior high and youth coach, took over.

Assistant coach Bill Prebola led the Tigers through part of the preseason practices, including the first three days of double sessions last week, so that Marabell could be with his daughter Paige as she competed with the Tunkhannock team that finished second at the Little League Softball World Series in Portland, Ore.

"My school board, athletic director and principal were very accommodating and understand where I was at," Marabell said. Marabell rejoined the team as soon as he returned Aug. 16 and was pleased with the progress he saw from his players.

"We're a small community," he said. "They knew what was going on and what it was leading into. I had 100 percent support from them, too and I left them in very good hands."



Peterson

"The effort was beyond my wildest dreams. I'm very, very impressed. The kids are stepping up and trying to change this thing around."

ON OFFENSE

Logan Cywinski was one of the Wyoming Valley Conference's most productive offensive weapons the past three years, but, following his graduation, Marabell will seek a new identity. "We will be more balanced than we've been in the past," Marabell said. "We don't have a big running back like we've had and relied on. We're going to spread the ball around to five or six instead of having one person who we put everything in their hands."

Jack Chilson is back at quarterback after making some late-season starts as a freshman. "He's done a lot of camps this year and he's proven that he's ready to step up," Marabell said.

"He's a good student of the game." Chilson will have many targets with which to work.

Garrett Hopkins is back after leading the team with 35 catches and Jake Stephens returns after leading in receiving yards by averaging 19.7 on his 21 catches.

Hopkins could be running the ball more, sharing time at running back with Gavin D'Amato while also still playing some at receiver. Stephens is back at one receiver.



Rogers

Troy Simmons has some limited experience. Marabell expects Jake Frisco to be an effective possession receiver and said Riley Jones, Nathan Lord and Shane Wood could also see time there.

Matt Ramey and Alec Seboe will share football duties.

Zach Rogers and Jhamal Zacharias are the tight ends.

Guard Tyler Peterson and tackle Brett Sickler give the Tigers a pair of 280-pound returning starters up front. Center Andrew Slusark, guard Zach Fisher and tackle Alex Daily are expected to join them.

ON DEFENSE

See TIGERS | 27

TUNKHANNOCK TIGERS

Coach: Mike Marabell (0-0), 1st year
Division: WVC 4A
PIAA Class: 4A
Male enrollment: 287
School phone: 570-836-8264
Stadium location: High School, off Route 6, Tunkhannock
Key players lost: Logan Cywinski, RB/LB; Tyler Grasso, LB; Connor Munley, LB; Bily Prebola, K; Sam Rice, TE/DL; Evan Turner, TE/DL
2017 regular-season leaders
Passing: Zach Rogers 67-of-113, 849 yds., 4 TDs, 6 Ints.
Rushing: Logan Cywinski 228-1,265, 5.5 avg., 18 TDs
Receiving: Garrett Hopkins 35-398, 11.4 avg., 4 TDs
Scoring: Logan Cywinski 108 pts.
Kicking: Billy Prebola 27 XPM, 7 FGs, 48 pts.

Schedule		
Fri., Aug. 24	at Dallas (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Aug. 31	Nanticoke Area (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 7	at Pittston Area (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 14	Coughlin (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 21	Holy Redeemer (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 28	at Towanda (2A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 5	Crestwood (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 12	at Wallenpaupack (5A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 19	at Mid Valley (2A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 26	Mid-West (4A)	7 p.m.

2017 Results (1-9)		
at Nanticoke Area (6-5)	L 33-21	
Pittston Area (6-5)	L 36-20	
Honesdale (2-8)	L 43-31	
at Wyalusing Area (5-8)	W 34-7	
Western Wayne (7-4)	L 32-24	
at Lake-Lehman (7-5)	L 49-31	
Crestwood (5-6)	L 42-18	
at Meyers (6-5)	L 27-16	
Towanda (8-3)	L 42-35	
Northwest (7-3)	L 27-17	

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Williamsport looks strong again

By John Erzar
jerzar@timesleader.com

On the ride to the Wyoming Valley Conference media day, a couple players asked Chuck Crews Jr. why he was such a taskmaster when he took over the Williamsport program four years ago.

“I had to explain to them it’s a lot easier being (tougher) and transitioning to a nice guy than being a nice guy and transitioning into being (tougher),” Crews said. “Once I put it to them like that, it made sense to them.”

Now that Crews, who came from Chester High School, and his players are on the same page, the Millionaires could be ready to take the next step. And that would be becoming a perennial power in the conference.

Williamsport enters the season off consecutive WVC Division 6A-5A championships. But with Hazleton Area improved and Wyoming Valley West always a threat, the Millionaires can’t let

up now.

ON OFFENSE

The return of running back Treyson Potts, who missed his junior year with a knee injury, will make a formidable offense even stronger. Potts, who verbally committed to the University of Minnesota, rushed for 1,607

yards and 27 TDs as a sophomore. His speed and ability to make tacklers miss make him one of the premier players in the state.

“He looks like what a Big Ten back should look like,”

Crews said.

Potts’ absence last season forced quarterback Joe Fagnano to be the focus point and he responded with 2,300 yards and 29 TDs passing.

“His job is easier (with Potts back),” Crews said. “You have to pick your poison. You’re going to have to show when you’re going to want to stop the run because we’re going to see eight or nine in the box. You’re going to show

when you’re going to take the pass away because we’ll see two high and deep corners. His reads will become easier with (Potts) in the backfield.”

Receiver Marcus Simmons also developed into a deep threat and led the entire WVC with 62 receptions. Colin Esposito also had a solid season and will be

joined by Brock Moyer at the wideout position. Isaac Ritter will fill the hole at tight end.

The main concern is the offensive line where senior Tucker Kreisher is the only returning starter. New faces in the interior line will be senior Jason

Kelly, juniors Beau Smith and Ian Welshans and sophomore Beau Smith. Aside from Kreisher and Williamson, the unit doesn’t have much size.

ON DEFENSE

Although some numbers improved, Williamsport still gave up way too many points last season. Defense has been a

See WILLIAMSPORT | 22

WILLIAMSPORT MILLIONAIRES

Coach: Chuck Crews (36-40), 4th year at Williamsport; 8th year overall

Division: WVC 6A-5A

PIAA Class: 6A

Stadium location: High School

2017 regular-season leaders

Passing: Joe Fagnano 195-of-290, 2,300 yds., 29 TDs, 3 Ints.

Rushing: Blaze McClements 108-554, 5.1 avg., 4 TDs

Receiving: Marcus Simmons 62-836, 13.4 avg., 11 TDs

Scoring: Marcus Simmons 96 pts.

Schedule

Fri., Aug. 24	Central Mountain (5A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Aug. 31	at Altoona (6A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 7	Berwick (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 14	at Hazleton Area (6A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 21	at Crestwood (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 28	Scranton (6A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 5	at Pittston Area (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 12	Delaware Valley (6A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 19	Wallenpaupack (5A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 26	at Wyo. Valley West (5A)	7 p.m.

2017 Results (7-4)

at Central Mountain (1-9)	W 34-7
Mifflin County (2-8)	W 49-26
at Hazleton Area (7-5)	W 28-26
Wyo. Val. West (7-7)	L 48-34
Shikellamy (9-3)	W 45-28 2OT
at Scranton (6-5)	W 38-34
Delaware Valley (12-1)	L 55-17
at Coughlin (5-7)	W 55-10
at Wyoming Area (4-7)	L 58-42
Berwick (10-3)	W 32-27

District 2/4 Class 6A playoffs

Hazleton Area (7-5)	L 28-27
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Warriors defense gets big boost

By Tom Robinson
For Times Leader

Wyoming Area enters the season as a small school with a big addition.

The Warriors need not seem to need much help in filling out a lineup with experienced players, but they got it anyway with the transfer of Sammy Solomon from Wyoming Valley West.

Solomon, a 6-foot-3, 295-pound junior fullback/defensive tackle, is already weighing scholarship offers from NCAA Division I schools. Solomon, who has early offers from Rutgers, Boston College, Virginia and Temple, is considered a prospect to play defensive end in college.

ON OFFENSE

Dominic DeLuca was pressed into emergency duty in time for the second offensive series of the season a year ago and wound up emerging as one of the WVC’s most efficient passers while holding the spot the rest of the way.

DeLuca finished behind only Berwick’s Jared Marshman and Williamsport’s Joe Fagnano in regular-season passing efficiency among conference quarterbacks. He hit 57.7 percent of his passes while posting an 18-4 touchdown-to-interception ratio and



Bill Tarutis file photo | For Times Leader

Former Wyoming Valley West defensive lineman Sammy Solomon has transferred to Wyoming Area and will play for the Warriors this season.

throwing for 1,290 yards.

Corey Mruk, who played both fullback and tailback last season, will be at tailback with Darren Rodney. Solomon and F.J. Braccini are the options at fullback.

Brian Williams is back after finishing second on the team in receiving last season. Dmitri Depietro, Rodney, Zajquay Williamson, Jake Busch and Riley Rusyn add depth to the pool of

receivers.

Derek Ambrosino is a returning starter at tight end.

While others provide depth, Spencer has the option to go with an all-veteran offensive line of center Stephen Sokach-Minnick, guards Jaryn Polit-Moran and Michael Amato and tackles Cameron Carr and Matt

See WYOMING AREA | 28

WYOMING AREA WARRIORS

Coach: Randy Spencer (49-49) 10th year

Division: WVC 3A-A

PIAA Class: 3A

Male enrollment: 270

School phone: 570-655-2836

Stadium location: Anthony “Jake” Sobeski Stadium, Boston Ave., off Route 11, West Pittston

2017 regular-season leaders

Passing: Dominic DeLuca 97-of-168, 1,290 yds., 18 TDs, 4 Ints.

Rushing: Donovan O’Boyle 63-356, 5.7 avg., 6 TDs

Receiving: Marc Minichello 43-489, 11.4 avg., 6 TDs

Scoring: Marc Minichello 42 pts.

Kicking: F.J. Braccini 26 XPM, 1 FG, 29 pts.

Schedule

Fri., Aug. 24	at Mid Valley (2A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Aug. 31	Coughlin (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 7	Northwest (A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 14	Nanticoke Area (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 21	at GAR (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 28	at Lake-Lehman (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 5	Meyers (3A)	7 p.m.
Sat., Oct. 13	at Holy Redeemer (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 19	Hanover Area (3A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 26	at Pittston Area (4A)	7 p.m.

2017 Results (4-7)

at Wallenpaupack (5-6)	W 7-3
at Crestwood (5-6)	L 21-18
Berwick (10-3)	L 17-14
at Coughlin (5-7)	L 17-14
at Scranton Prep (13-1)	L 24-0
Hanover Area (0-10)	W 54-14
at GAR (1-9)	W 44-7
Dallas (7-4)	L 21-20 OT
Williamsport (7-4)	W 58-42
Pittston Area (6-5)	L 24-21

D2-4A playoffs

at Berwick (10-3)	L 42-0
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80899585

Spartans must overcome inexperience

By John Erzar
jerzar@timesleader.com

Wyoming Valley West had 10 players combine to score 40 offensive touchdowns during the Wyoming Valley Conference season in 2017.

Only one of them, Jake Shusta, returns. And he scored just one TD.

This season presents a bit of a transition for the Spartans, who will be very young on offense and even younger on defense. The graduation of a very good class, plus the loss of two key players to transfers, leaves Valley West as a team that can go in either direction.

“We’re completely a different chemical makeup as far as that is concerned,” Valley West coach Pat Keating said. “I like the toughness and grittiness of some of these guys and the way they they’ll play. Some of the younger guys ... they have big-play ability, but they’re sophomores.”

ON OFFENSE
When starter Rob Dwyer was

injured, Shusta gained valuable time at quarterback in nine regular-season games last season. He was battling fellow senior Nate Baranski for the spot in the pre-season.



Keating

With the top-three rushers having departed, the ground game will be in the hands of a trio of running backs — seniors Carson Canavan and Jayden Watkins and sophomore Darius

Redguard. Brendan Woods, Zack McDaniels and Jonathan Stochla will be the fullbacks. Combined



Shusta

statistics for all these backs in 2017 — 21 carries for 165 yards. The numbers dip even more with the pass catchers, none of whom had a varsity catch last year. Baranski, Dylan

Nastansky, Nah-Syr Garner, Jerimiah Williams and Dontae Rhodes are the wideout candidates. Harunah Jallow and Jorge Pina will see time as tight ends.

“I don’t necessarily think we’re bad there,” Keating said of the

skill players. “It’s just we’re inexperienced. Some of our skill kids are very good and very talented. They’re just inexperienced.

The line returns two starters — seniors Dave Widey and Connor Mikovitch. Juniors Donald Messersmith and Brandon Tirado started some as well, so the unit appears in the best shape. Senior Dylan Brown and junior Nate Mooney will also see time in the trenches.



Canavan

ON DEFENSE

The linebackers will be the strength with Canavan, McDaniels and Woods returning. They’ll be joined by Watkins and Quaid Braddy.

But in order to remain among the top rush defenses, the Spartans will need a rebuilt line to perform. Two-way players like



Baranski

Mikovitch, Messersmith, Stochla, Jallow and Pina will be joined by Seth Decker along the line of scrimmage.

An inexperienced secondary of

See VALLEY WEST | 27

WYO. VALLEY WEST SPARTANS

Coach: Pat Keating (76-30) 10th year
Division: WVC 6A-5A
PIAA Class: 5A
Male enrollment: 421

2017 regular-season leaders

Passing: Jack Shusta 59-of-101, 789 yds., 4 TDs, 7 Ints.
Rushing: Sean Mikovitch 133-1,077, 8.1 avg., 11 TDs
Receiving: Darrian Tyson 27-319, 11.8 avg., 3 TDs
Scoring: Zach Davies 80 pts.
Kicking: Jake Gurtis 26 XPM, 4 FGs, 38 pts.

Schedule

Fri., Aug. 24	Scranton (6A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Aug. 31	at Hazleton Area (6A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 7	Crestwood (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 14	Berwick (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 21	at Dallas (4A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Sep. 28	Wallenpaupack (5A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 5	at Coughlin (4A)	7 p.m.
Sat., Oct. 13	at Abington Heights (4A)	1 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 19	at Delaware Valley (6A)	7 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 26	Williamsport (6A)	7 p.m.

2017 Results (7-7)

at Scranton (6-5)	L 58-48
Hazleton Area (7-5)	L 17-15
Delaware Valley (12-1)	L 35-25
at Williamsport (7-4)	W 48-34
Dallas (7-4)	L 31-18
at Wallenpaupack (5-6)	L 28-21
Abington Heights (1-10)	W 38-7
at Berwick (10-3)	L 44-22
at Crestwood (5-6)	W 39-7
Coughlin (5-7)	W 42-0

D2-5A playoffs

Abington Heights (1-10)	W 63-14
at Wallenpaupack (5-6)	W 35-7

PIAA 5A playoffs

at Whitehall (9-4)	W 32-21
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Hanover Area

From page 9

ball,” Kopko said.

ON DEFENSE

The Hawkeyes have a lot of pieces back, but some of them will be moving.

Hanover Area is switching from a 3-3 Stack to a 4-4, putting an extra man up front.

That man will be Holeman, who moves from linebacker to defense end. He’ll join Kopko, Beecham and Mercandante on the defensive line.

Manning the linebacker spots will be returners Justin Stefanowicz and Aaron and Connor Hummer, along with Jade Andrews.

The secondary is stacked with depth, starting with returners Curcio, McCabe and Bobby Sabecky, along with Tanner Bednarski.

“We actually have a lot of guys coming back on defense,” Kopko said. “We should be a force up front. We’ll be an attacking and aggressive team on defense.”

OUTLOOK

While most teams talk about playoff possibilities in preseason, the Hawkeyes aren’t at liberty to look that far ahead.

“We have one goal,” McCree said. “That’s getting a win in Week 1.”

After all, getting a first victory in two seasons may lead to another, and another, and then, who knows? The Hawkeyes may

just find themselves in position to make it to the postseason during the stretch run of the regular season.

“We want to be the best conditioned team,” McCree said, “and the best tackling team, which is very important.”



Hummer

Reach Paul Sokoloski at 570-991-6392 or on Twitter @TLPaulSokoloski

Hazleton Area

From page 10

Wolk will have his top target back in lightning-quick David Smith, a deep threat who caught 40 passes for 608 yards and five touchdowns last season, and tight ends Jared Cunningham and Dallas Solomon should present some nice secondary options.

Back to lead the running game is elusive Damon Horton, who averaged 6.2 yards and gained 623 with six scoring runs in a shared backfield role last season. They should find plenty of room to roam behind senior center Michael Fuchick and linemen Jefferson Luna, Jacob Hunsinger and 6-foot-5, 270-pound Josh Hedrington.

ON DEFENSE

Gone is fast-closing, hard-hitting linebacker Adrian Otero, the spark-plug who is now playing at Maine and who Brennan called irreplaceable.

But Bryce Reed and Austin Andreuzzi are both back at linebacker,

joined by Kevin Meluskey.

The defensive line looks deep, with experienced players Fuchick, Hunsinger, Vinny Damiano, Isaac Garcia and Bryann Zayas ready to make a push. The secondary will be led by speedy cover guys Wolk, Smith and Nolan Schneider.

“I like being on the field for defense,” Wolk said.

OUTLOOK

The Cougars got a taste of the championship atmosphere last season, and immediately want more.

They have the pieces in place to make another playoff run, but have some question marks to clear up through a 10-game regular season first.

“How much can we build?” Brennan wondered. “Can we get a home playoff game Week 11 and win? Can we get to Week 12? We want to be one of the upper-echelon teams in the Wyoming Valley, in our conference, in District 2.”

Reach Paul Sokoloski at 570-991-6392 or on Twitter @TLPaulSokoloski

Redeemer

From page 11

Gavin Fincke and Josh Kodish — a three-year starter.

Conway’s athletic ability and strong arm made him an obvious choice to step in at quarterback, Downing said, while junior Ryan Williams will be at running back.

“I think we’re going to have a good balance,” Conway said.

ON DEFENSE

The strength of the Royals is up front where an experienced group of linemen led by Fincke should put some pressure on opposing offenses, while Kodish leads and active line-backing corps.

The Royals also boast strength in the secondary, with returning cornerbacks Peter Shay and Conway.

“I think our corners are definitely

fast,” Conway said. “Our middle linebacker, Josh Kodish, is going to be real good.”

OUTLOOK

The Royals, who have never won more than three games in a season, aren’t likely to compete for a league or district title right now. But they believe they have enough potential to start turning a corner, beginning this year.

“Sometimes, losing becomes a habit,” Downing said. “For us, it’s just learning how to win, being confident and knowing we can win. I mean, I’d like to win all of them. If we mature and accept the challenge, I think we can win quite a few games. Obviously, you want to win football games. And be competitive.

“Hopefully, we can take a step forward.”



Williams

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Meyers

From page 14

Ian Levy bring additional size, giving Meyers one of the bigger fronts in WVC Division 3A-A.

Patronick, Brown and Jose Rivera all started at linebacker last year. Maleek Robinson, a part-time starter, will round out the group.

Hood and Dunell are the veterans in the secondary.

Tyson had experience as well, albeit it was at Valley West, so he should adapt quickly. Ryan Judge will also start.

OUTLOOK

Eight of the nine District 2 Class 3A teams make the playoffs, so all Meyers has to do it not be the worst among the bunch.

The Mohawks, though, have their sights set higher than just not being the worst D2-3A team. The playoffs look like a certainty, but a postseason home game will require plenty of hard work and, perhaps, a little luck along the way.

Reach John Erzar at 570-991-6394 or on Twitter @TLJohnErzar

Nanticoke

From page 18

defense that was respectable for most of last season, this might be the strength of Nanticoke Area's team.

It starts up front with Boback back in the interior and Shane Ropasky and Joe Ammons at defensive end.

With Shoemaker, Seth Pelton, Shuquan Douglas and Austin Cheslaw, the Trojans have plenty of experience at linebacker.

Butcznski and Boseman will also be back to lead a speedy secondary.

"We're looking good," Shoemaker said. "We have a lot of returning starters on defense. And it's spread out, with a lot of returning players at each position."



Szychowski



Shoemaker



Bobeck



Gregory



Ammons

OUTLOOK

The move to a new class should be an interesting one for the Trojans, but it certainly won't make them back down.

The key, as usual, will be keeping their playmakers on the field. That was the trouble last season as Nanticoke Area lost two key weapons in the first part of the season and finished 5-5, just missing the District 2 Class 3A playoffs by a game.

So the objective for the Trojans is to get back to the district playoffs with a whole group of guys who are hungry for it.

for it.

"Our goal is to get at least six wins," Butczynski said, "and get into the district playoffs."

Even if the road that leads there just got a little tougher for the Trojans.

"I think we have a playoff-bound team here," Bruza said. "It's all going to come down to how fast our young guys catch up."

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Northwest

From page 19

ON OFFENSE

A prolific passing game appears set with the return of season quarterback Piestrak throwing to a talent receiving bunch led by Hazlet and Bryce Koser.



Hazlet

"Our wide receiving group is going to be pretty good this year," Piestrak predicted.

The big hole is at running back after the graduation of Anderson, but the Rangers believe they have that covered.

Sophomore George May and Stevens will both see action in the backfield, while running behind a formidable offensive front led by Lucas Acornley.

"We're a tough program," Piestrak said. "Our mentality is the next man up. It's pretty exciting."

And if Northwest gets stopped in the red zone, points are far from impossible.

Kicker Jack Wessler converted nine of his 11 field goal attempts last season as one of the most reliable scorers in the conference.

"And the two he missed were blocked, which isn't his fault," Lon Hazlet said. "We've got a real weapon in the kicking game."

ON DEFENSE

Stevens earned his all-state status last season at linebacker as he was all over the field while leading the Rangers with 124 tackles.

But he has plenty of help around him to free him up.

May, Cam Capece, Shane Noss and Brendan Dixon mix a nice blend of experience and youth on the defensive line. And three of four guys with experience return to a solid secondary, with Connor Hazlet, Piestrak and Koser manning the defensive backfield.

"Haven't played a lot, but this year I'm probably going to play safety full-time," Piestrak said. "I'm definitely looking forward to it."

OUTLOOK

With a third straight 7-3 overall finish, the Rangers missed the District 1/2 Class A subregional playoffs last season after making the postseason in 2016. They're looking to get back.

"I just want to win games," Piestrak said. "I'll do anything to win games."

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Pittston Area

From page 20

ing corps is pretty good."

Andrew Krawczyk and Bryan Giambra averaged 22.6 yards on their combined 21 regular-season catches last season. Alex Haas and Brennan Higgins could join them in different combinations.

ON DEFENSE

The Patriots have experience at linebacker, but will have a new look there.

Coe, who is also the team's punter, and DeLucca both move from outside linebacker, where they started, to inside linebacker.

George, who has significant experience, and Gorey, who gained some last year, are expected to be on the outside.

Brody returns in the defensive front. Bentham, Johnson and James Murtha are working at the other two spots.

The entire secondary will be new. Lokachko and Billy Kyttle are expected to be at the corners. Tannon Kraklio is a strong safety. Giambra and Higgins are working at free safety.

OUTLOOK

Pittston Area is no longer trying to shake out of a losing routine.

Barbieri is hopeful that and the program's influx of players – there are now 50 on the varsity roster and the junior high program is growing – will help with the difficult task offsetting heavy graduation losses and keep the progress going.

"It's different in that things we were trying to establish have already been established last year," Barbieri said.

"We don't have to go and input a whole new system. The kids that are back know the system and even the kids who were freshmen ran the same system, so that's a lot easier.

"Replacing 17 seniors is difficult, but when you work some kids in, the advantage of getting kids reps as sophomores is that when they come back, they do it with some experience, whether it's starting or not."

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Valley West

From page 24

Baranski, Williams, Garner and Nastansky must also be up to the task. The Spartans are in WVC Division 6A-5A, which features two very productive passing quarterbacks.

"We have some holes to fill," Keating said. "Defensive line is going to be a big key, seeing how some of these guys play in their first game up front. We'll have some youth in the secondary and I'm sure they will be tested early. We'll have to see how they



Watkins

Perhaps the hardest team to figure out in the pre-season.

Tigers

From page 21

Marabell will go with a five-man front defensively and try to begin much-needed progress by doing a better job of stopping the run.

"We couldn't stop anybody, so I'm going to load the box," Marabell said. "If we can put enough pressure on, maybe somebody will make mistakes."

Peterson returns at left tackle, Ramey is back at one end and Zacharias is back as a starter, but moving from tackle to end.

Daily will be at nose guard with Alex Smith at tackle.

Seboe, who saw a lot of playing time, will be at strong-side linebacker while Tyler Chesla, who coming back from a knee injury, will be on the weak side.

Hopkins, who has played

perform."

OUTLOOK

Valley West will be a team to keep an eye on all season because of its youth.

A veteran Spartan team got off to a slow start in 2017, but regrouped and advanced to the PIAA Class 5A state playoffs.

Can an inexperienced bunch do the same if things don't go right early on?

Perhaps the hardest team to figure out in the pre-season.

Reach John Erzar at 570-991-6394 or on Twitter @TLJohnErzar

all over the field, will handle the team's "tiger back" position.

Stephens, Lord, Jones and Simmons will form the "cornerback by committee."

Frisco and Rogers are working at safety.

OUTLOOK

Marabell understands that changes are needed in a program that has produced only nine wins in the last seven seasons, even with some scheduling concessions at times from the conference.

"It's a culture," Marabell said. "It's a mental thing. For years, our kids didn't know how to win. They knew how to lose."

There are different areas that need to be addressed.

"It's a mental toughness and a physical toughness that has to change, which is hard to do, but we're getting there," Marabell said.

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Williamsport

From page 22

bit of an Achilles heel even before Crews took over. “Defense wins championships,” Crews said. “In my tenure here, we’ve proved we can score points. We’ve yet to prove we can consistently shut people down. Hopefully, this is the year we can prove we can shut people down.” Blaze McClements, who filled in for Potts as running back last year, returns on the defensive line. Smith, Welshans and Nassir Jones will round out the group.

“Defense wins championships. In my tenure here, we’ve proved we can score points. We’ve yet to prove we can consistently shut people down. Hopefully, this is the year we can prove we can shut people down.”

— Chuck Crews, Williamsport head coach

Dallas

From page 7

dio are returning starters at receiver where Christian Motley could also be in the rotation.

ON DEFENSE

The speedy defense includes Motley, who led the WVC in interceptions last season from his cornerback position. Kelley and Maransky return as the safeties. Schuster, the other cornerback last season, is making the move to line-backer. Cuba returns at another linebacker spot. Bolesta, Ferrara and Anderson all return to start in the defensive line. Mannello said several players are competing to grab open spots in the line and at linebacker.

The linebacking corps will be young with sophomores Malik Jones and Chase Nye and freshman Keith Freeman as the projected starters. Simmons returns as a starter in the secondary. Potts started as a sophomore. Fagnano and Moyer will hold the other two spots.

OUTLOOK

The offense should be fun to watch as Williamsport has a good a chance as any team to win the District 2/4 Class 6A championship. The key will be the defense, which had some issues down the stretch in 2017 as the season ended sooner than expected.

OUTLOOK

Dallas landed the second seed in the District 2 Class 4A playoffs last season before being upset by Coughlin at home in the quarterfinals. Enough returns from a team that went 7-3 in the regular season for the Mountaineers to again be jockeying for position near the top of the list of 13 teams fighting for eight district Class 4A playoff berths. With so much experience back on offense and defense, improvement could hinge on whether Dallas can maintain its exceptional kicking game. “What we’ve got to get figured out is that we’ve lost a lot of production in the kicking game with Nate Maransky, who’s down at Widener right now,” Mannello said. “We’ve got to get that void filled. “When you could cross the 50 and know that you could play for three, when necessary, that’s a weapon. We’ve got to get that replaced. We’ve got a couple good kids competing there.”

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Warriors

From page 23

Wycoski. Carr also has experience as tight end.

ON DEFENSE

The Warriors return one of the conference’s top secondaries with DeLuca at free safety, Rodney at corner and Depietro at strong safety. Brian Williams and Zajquay Williamson also saw time as spot starters or in nickel situations. Spencer describes Mruk as the “quarterback of the defense” from his inside linebacker position. Banishefski and Braccini also are experienced linebackers with Nicholas Elko and Dillon Williams trying to join them in the rotation. Solomon was an all-star as a defensive end at Wyo-

ming Valley West, but he is expected to move inside and play tackle. Carr, who returns to the spot, and Ambrosini are the ends. Jesse Cegelka and Anthony Scalzo provide quickness options in the interior line when the Warriors choose to go that route. Cegelka saw extensive line at nose guard last season. There are plenty of linemen available for when Spencer chooses what he calls a “bigger, more traditional look.” James Gashi, Amato, Polit-Moran and Stephen Sokach-Minnick are among those players.

OUTLOOK

There is no denying that Wyoming Area immediately becomes a threat to be the top small school team in the WVC. “We enter the season with size, athleticism and

some good experience,” Spencer said. The Warriors also have more depth than most small schools. Spencer listed many more players who he said could be in fighting to be in the rotation at their positions. Even with the Big School schedule from a year ago, Wyoming Area was not far removed from its championship effort of 2016. The Warriors went 4-7, but five of those losses were by three points or less. With a less-demanding schedule, the Warriors are less likely to have so many games decided late. “Hopefully, we’re going to play as a hungry team and use those experiences to be a little bit more ready out of the gate,” Spencer said.

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Lake-Lehman

From page 13

take their usual place among the top small schools, but Gilsky points out what he sees as a lack of talk about his team this preseason. “I don’t understand that because of what we have back and making it to a district final last year,” he said. “I’m kind of eating that up right now.” Lake-Lehman is part of a



Kurtz

District 2 Class 3A field where qualifying for the postseason is simple with eight spots available for nine teams. However, finishing on top is difficult with returning state quarter-finalist Scranton Prep in the field along with Wyoming Area. The Warriors moved down from previously playing among the big schools.

— Jerry Gilsky, Lake-Lehman head coach

QUARTERBACK EFFICIENCY (minimum 50 attempts)							
Division 6A-5A	At	Cmp	Pct	Yds	TD	Int	QBR
Joe Fagnano, Williamsport	290	195	67.2	2300	29	3	164.79
Sparky Wolk, Haz Area	233	133	57.1	1850	17	6	142.70
Jake Shusta, Wyo. Val. West	101	59	58.4	789	4	7	123.24
Division 4A	At	Cmp	Pct	Yds	TD	Int	QBR
Jared Marshman, Berwick	75	44	58.7	664	10	0	177.03
Dominic DeLuca, Wyo. Area	168	97	57.7	1290	18	4	152.83
Walter Coles, Pittston Area	240	122	50.8	1927	18	8	136.36
Alex Force, Berwick	98	55	56.1	652	5	1	126.80
Zach Rogers, Tunkhannock	113	67	59.3	849	4	6	123.47
Mike Starbuck, Dallas	132	66	50.0	862	10	6	120.76
Garrett Swank, Crestwood	93	51	54.8	598	7	7	118.64
Chase Passman, Crestwood	80	43	53.8	414	4	5	101.22
Jack Chilson, Tunkhannock	73	25	34.2	385	4	3	88.41
Garrett Wardle, Coughlin	53	19	35.8	168	1	7	42.29
Division 3A-A	At	Cmp	Pct	Yds	TD	Int	QBR
Colby Butczynski, Nanticoke	76	33	43.4	560	8	5	126.89
Janssen Wilborn, Meyers	148	74	50.0	1174	6	9	117.85
David Piestrak, Northwest	145	64	44.1	933	11	6	114.95
Nate O'Donnell, Lake-Lehman	65	26	40.0	369	5	3	103.84
JD Turosky, Redeemer	195	86	44.1	949	5	9	84.21
Aaron Hummer, Hanover Area	168	74	44.0	719	2	4	79.16
Ronald Peguero, GAR	104	32	30.7	380	1	11	43.48

RUSHING				Garrett Hopkins, Tun	84	482	5.7	4
Division 6A-5A	At	Yds	Avg	TD	Patrick Rother, Cre	93	464	5.0
Sean Mikovitch, VVW	133	1077	8.1	11	Vincent Todd, Cou	111	433	3.9
Damon Horton, HazArea	100	623	6.2	6	Donovan O'Boyle, WA	63	356	5.7
Blaze McClements, Will	108	554	5.1	4	Kevin Klusewitz, Cre	30	283	9.4
Rob Dwyer, VVW	111	537	4.8	6	Mike Starbuck, Dal	95	277	2.9
Latrell Jackson, Will	88	486	5.5	4	Dominic DeLuca, WA	74	262	3.5
Zach Davies, VVW	73	423	5.8	11	Darren Rodney, WA	63	249	4.0
Adrian Otero, HazArea	80	389	4.9	3	Justin Joseph, WA	41	228	5.6
Joe Fagnano, Will	95	316	3.3	6	Damon Beckhorn, Ber	19	147	7.7
Alec Dickey, Will	48	315	6.6	2	Matt Ramey, Tun	33	144	4.4
Darrian Tyson, VVW	38	264	6.9	3	Garrett Swank, Cre	45	144	3.2
Sparky Wolk, HazArea	79	240	3.0	7	Dylan Lukachko, PA	22	141	6.4
Marcus Simmons, Will	33	171	5.2	4	Marc Minichello, WA	33	117	3.5
Carson Canavan, VVW	12	96	8.0	0	Walter Coles, PA	40	117	2.9
Jake Blaski, VVW	6	52	8.7	0	Rafael McCoy, Cou	14	111	7.9
Jayden Watkins, VVW	5	39	7.8	1	David Schuster, Dal	30	101	3.4
Sulaiman Ismail, VVW	1	35	35.0	1	Dorian Ryans, PA	14	98	7.0
Josh Zukoski, HazArea	14	35	2.5	0	Corey Mruk, WA	18	93	5.2
Brenden Woods, VVW	4	30	7.5	0	Matt Maransky, Dal	9	89	9.9
Quaid Braddy, VVW	4	25	6.3	0	Joe Lynn, Ber	13	88	6.8
Division 4A	At	Yds	Avg	TD	Trevor Tigue, PA	27	85	3.1
Logan Cywinski, Tun	228	1265	5.5	18	Blaise Ciampi, WA	7	68	9.7
Jake Cole, Cou	179	1069	6.0	9	Jacob Fenske, Dal	11	65	5.9
Evan Klinger, Ber	118	724	6.1	7	Matt Tirpak, Cre	9	64	7.1
Keemar Woodruff, PA	153	723	4.7	8	Alex Force, Ber	19	59	3.1
Danny Meuser, Dal	133	645	4.8	10	Mike Macri, Cre	12	57	4.8
Lenny Kelley, Dal	91	592	6.5	9	Zajquay Williamson, WA	10	50	5.0
Nick Grosek, Cre	69	564	8.2	7	Fran George, PA	1	49	49.0
Owen Shoemaker, Ber	86	548	6.4	6	Chase Passman, Cre	37	44	1.2



Fred Adams file photo | for Times Leader
Meyers' Reese Patronick could be shifting from receiver to quarterback this season.

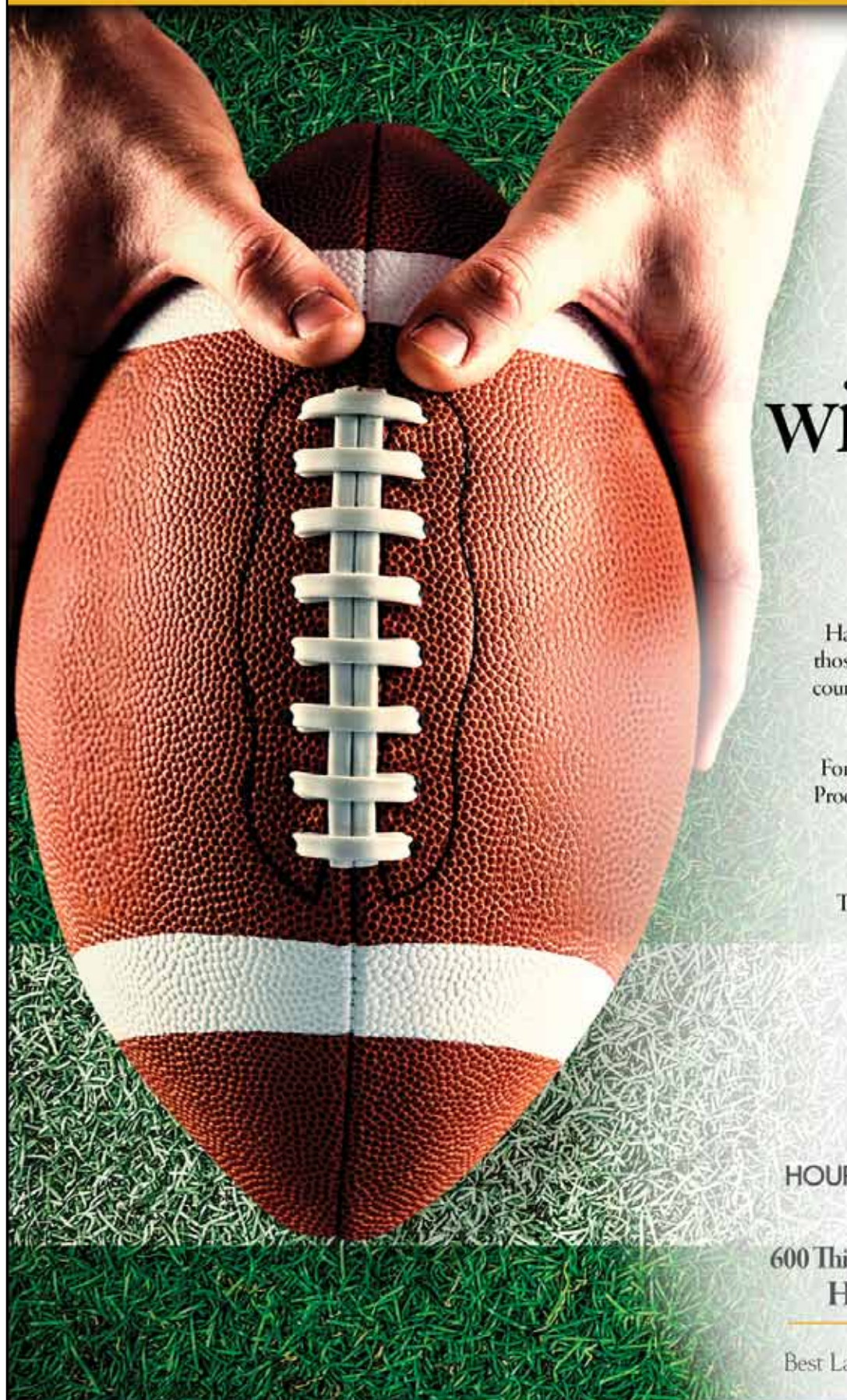
Anthony Scalzo, WA	7	40	5.7	0
Jimmy Hawley, Cre	15	40	2.7	0
Teagan Wilk, Ber	2	31	15.5	1
Mike Macri, Cre	7	31	4.4	0
Charlie Banashefski, WA	7	29	4.1	1
Tyler Ferlick, PA	10	29	2.9	0
Eric Sovan, Cou	7	27	3.9	1
Nino Cinti, Cou	17	27	1.6	0
Jacob Williams, WA	2	23	11.5	0
Dominic Ruhmel, Ber	4	23	5.8	0
Javron Kinlaw, WA	4	22	5.5	0
Division 3A-A	At	Yds	Avg	TD
Jake Anderson, Nwt	171	1023	6.0	6
Janssen Wilborn, Mey	118	856	7.3	10
Trey Borger, LL	129	810	6.3	10
Eric Jeffries, Nan	102	788	7.7	9
JD Turosky, HR	148	730	4.9	11
Dawson Hughes, Nan	122	727	6.0	5
Matt Kurtz, LL	107	685	6.4	8
Kevin Dessoye, Mey	92	596	6.5	8
David Piestrak, Nwt	87	507	5.8	8
Zach Kojadinovich, LL	80	497	6.2	6
Dave Fedorczyk, Han	79	475	6.0	5
Ronald Peguero, GAR	75	410	5.5	4
Sean Coleman, Han	58	362	6.2	3
Tyrone Qualls, GAR	69	347	5.0	2
Josh Jopling, Han	83	310	3.7	2
Joe Ammons, Nan	54	297	5.5	3
Beau Getz, Nwt	50	266	5.3	4
Manny Saldana, Nan	36	238	6.6	2

Ryan Williams, HR	61	236	3.9	0	Jake Stephens, Tun	21	413	19.7	3	Tai'Wan Bradley, GAR	7	85	12.1	0
James Cunningham, HR	52	226	4.3	2	Brian Williams, WA	21	373	17.8	2	Adam Bukavich, Nwt	7	47	6.7	0
Nate O'Donnell, LL	53	197	3.7	2	Kevin Klusewitz, Cre	20	311	15.6	2	Nate Labar, LL	6	157	26.2	4
Justice Lomas, GAR	40	165	4.1	1	Evan Turner, Tun	18	250	13.9	1	Jake Anderson, Nwt	6	128	21.3	0
Rajhan Woodson, Mey	36	156	4.3	2	Brandon Niemenski, Cre	18	196	10.9	4	James Cunningham, HR	6	53	8.8	0
Anthony Blake, GAR	35	113	3.2	2	Rich Wallace, PA	17	199	11.7	1	Trent Ambrose, Han	6	38	6.3	0
Casey Kaminski, LL	15	104	6.9	2	Keemar Woodruff, PA	16	243	15.2	1	Kadin Taylor, GAR	5	93	18.6	1
George May, Nwt	6	102	17.0	0	Andrew Krawczyk, Cre	14	287	20.5	0	Bobby Sabecky, Han	5	27	5.4	0
Tyler Stevens, Nwt	24	98	4.1	0	Teagan Wilk, Ber	14	184	13.1	2	David Fedorchick, Han	5	25	5.0	0
Matt Bobeck, Nan	14	73	5.2	1	Bradley Adams, Dal	14	163	11.6	3	Keanu Ammons, Nan	4	102	25.5	2
Scott Robbins, LL	17	66	3.9	1	Robbie Trottni, WA	13	129	9.9	1	Will Johnson,GAR	4	59	14.8	0
Nazir Dunell, Mey	17	59	3.5	1	Chris Murray, Dal	12	194	16.2	2	Tyrone Qualls, GAR	4	32	8.0	0
Peter Shay, HR	11	39	3.5	0	Nick Grosek, Cre	12	67	5.6	0	Lucas Acornley, Nwt	4	31	7.8	0
Aaron Hummer, Han	51	37	0.7	1	Shane Eslick, WA	11	158	14.4	5	Justice Lomas, GAR	3	48	16.0	0
Darren Boseman, Nan	9	35	3.9	0	Vincent Todd, Cou	11	114	10.4	0	Jared Kishbaugh, Han	3	45	15.0	0
Jonathan Winter, HR	4	29	7.3	0	Patrick Rother, Cre	11	82	7.5	0	Tyler Stevens, Nwt	3	16	5.3	1
Hunter Karpovich, Han	5	28	5.6	0	Steve Yordy, WA	10	148	14.8	2	Eric Jeffries, HR	3	10	3.3	0
Malachai Williams, GAR	10	28	2.8	0	Dorian Ryans, PA	10	102	10.2	3	Anthony Blake, GAR	3	5	1.7	0
Keanu Ammons, Nan	4	27	6.8	0	Jack Farrell, Dal	9	111	12.3	1	Ty Billotti, LL	2	31	15.5	0
Devin Karpovich, Han	4	25	6.3	0	Tony Gorey, PA	9	62	6.9	0	Mark Walters, Nan	2	18	9.0	0
Noah Taylor, GAR	10	25	2.5	0	Luke DelGaudio, Dal	8	126	15.6	2	Sean Sabaluski, LL	2	16	8.0	0
Gerson Peralta, GAR	26	25	1.0	0	Justin Robbins, Ber	8	84	10.5	1	Tanner Bednarski, Han	2	9	4.5	0
Chris Seiwel, Nan	4	24	6.0	1	Chris Diop, Cou	7	207	29.6	3	Jonathan Winter, HR	2	2	1.0	0
Will Johnson, GAR	17	24	1.4	0	Bryan Giambra, PA	7	187	26.7	1	Corey Brown, Mey	2	0	0.0	0
Darren Boseman, Nan	1	23	23.0	0	Jake Betz, Ber	7	161	23.0	2	SCORING				
Watkeem Gumbs, Mey	4	22	5.5	0	John Delucca, PA	7	113	16.1	2	Division 6A-5A	TD	2pt	K	Tot
Tyheim Taylor, Han	3	21	7.0	0	Matt Maransky, Dal	7	76	10.9	0	Marcus Simmons, Will	16	0	0	96
Malachai Williams, GAR	8	21	2.6	0	Evan Klinger, Ber	7	58	8.3	1	Zach Davies, WVW	13	1	0	80
Jake Ferguson, LL	9	21	2.3	0	Jake Rice, Tun	7	51	7.3	0	Angelo Girardi, Will	0	0	66	66
Reese Patronick, Mey	12	20	1.7	0	David Schuster, Dal	6	76	12.7	1	Sean Mikovitch, WVW 11	0	0	66	
RECIEVING					Jake Cole, Cou	6	3	0.5	0	Damon Horton, HazArea	9	0	0	54
Division 6A-5A	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	Joe Norce, Ber	4	115	28.8	1	Adrian Otero, HazArea	10	1	0	52
Marcus Simmons, Will6	2	836	13.5	11	Rafael McCoy, Cou	4	100	25.0	1	Ethen Stryker, Will	8	0	0	48
Ethan Stryker, Will	46	492	10.7	8	Logan Cywinski, Tun	4	59	14.8	0	Darrian Tyson, WVW	7	1	0	44
David Smith, HazArea	40	608	15.2	5	Christian Motley, Dal	4	58	14.5	1	Sparky Wolk, HazArea	7	1	0	44
Adrian Otero, HazArea	35	459	13.1	6	Dennie Robinson, Tun	3	58	19.3	0	Colin Esposito, Will	7	0	0	42
Colin Esposito, Will	35	448	12.8	7	Lenny Kelley, Dal	3	28	9.3	0	Rob Dwyer, WVW	6	2	0	40
Jacob Hunsinger, HazArea	29	335	11.6	3	Division 3A-A	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	Jake Gurtis, WVW	0	0	38	38
Darrian Tyson, WVW	27	319	11.8	3	Reese Patronick, Mey	41	604	14.7	1	Joe Fagnano, Will	6	0	0	36
Tanner Esposito, Will	24	325	13.5	0	Sean Coleman, Han	31	356	11.5	1	Latrell Jackson, Will	6	0	0	36
Jake Blaski, WVW	23	418	18.2	1	Colin Conway, HR	29	231	8.0	0	David Smith, HazArea	5	0	0	30
Damon Horton, HazArea	22	415	18.9	2	Connor Hazlet, Nwt	26	455	17.5	9	Blaze McClements, Will	4	1	0	26
Latrell Jackson, Will	16	171	10.7	1	Najese Hood, Mey	19	417	21.9	4	Will Barrientos, HazArea	0	0	18	18
Sean Mikovitch, WVW	9	137	15.2	0	Brandon Hardiman, Nwt	19	337	17.7	3	Jacob Hunsinger, HazArea	3	0	0	18
Derek Doreskewicz, WVW	8	60	7.5	0	Matt Piontkowski, HR	18	204	11.3	1	Alec Dickey, Will	2	0	0	12
Josh Zukoski, HazArea	6	39	6.5	0	Malachai Williams, GAR	14	262	18.7	1	Cam Dickey, Will	2	0	0	12
Dylan Joekel, WVW	5	68	13.6	1	Darren Boseman, Nan	13	355	27.3	6	Gabe Fabian, HazArea	0	0	11	11
Alec Dickey, Will	5	25	5.0	0	Jared Piontkowski, HR	13	254	19.5	3	Jake Blaski, WVW	1	1	0	8
Cam Dickey, Will	4	26	6.5	2	Connor Quaglia, Han	13	100	7.7	0	Division 4A	TD	2pt	K	Tot
Division 4A	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	Joe Ammons, Nan	12	151	12.6	1	Logan Cywinski, Tun	18	0	0	108
Marc Minichello, WA	43	489	11.4	6	Kevin Dessoye, Mey	11	151	13.7	1	Lenny Kelley, Dal	10	0	0	60
Kevin Krawczyk, PA	39	753	19.3	10	Ryan Williams, HR	9	78	8.7	0	Kevin Krawczyk, PA	10	0	0	60
Garret Hopkins, Tun	35	398	11.4	4	Zack Kojadinovich, LL	8	123	15.4	2	Danny Meuser, Dal	10	0	0	60
Brandon Brozena, Cre	29	427	14.7	5	John Sartin, HR	8	114	14.3	1	Evan Klinger, Ber	9	1	0	56
Damon Beckhorn, Ber	27	338	12.5	5	Tyheim Taylor, Han	8	99	12.4	0	Nate Maransky, Dal	0	0	56	56
Jared Watts, Ber	24	322	13.4	2	Trey Borger, LL	8	64	8.0	0	Jake Cole, Cou	9	0	0	54

Garrett Hopkins, Tun	9	0	0	54	David Schuster, Dal	2	0	3	15	Brandon Hardiman, Nwt	5	1	0	32
Keemar Woodruff, PA	9	0	0	54	Jake Betz, Ber	2	0	0	12	Ricky Klepadlo, Nan	0	0	32	32
Ken Marshman, Ber	0	0	53	53	Blaise Ciampi, WA	2	0	0	12	Henry Selingo, LL	0	0	31	31
Damon Beckhorn, Ber	8	0	0	48	Luke DelGaudio, Dal	2	0	0	12	Dawson Hughes, Nan	5	0	0	30
Bill Prebola, Tun	0	0	48	48	Dominic DeLuca, WA	2	0	0	12	Joe Ammons, Nan	4	1	0	26
Marc Minichello, WA	7	0	0	42	John Delucca, PA	2	0	0	12	Keanu Ammons, Nan	4	1	0	26
Garrett Swank, Cre	2	0	26	38	Dylan Lukachko, PA	2	0	0	12	Ronald Peguero, GAR	4	1	0	26
Nick Grosek, Cre	6	0	0	36	Jared Marshman, Ber	2	0	0	12	Sean Coleman, Han	4	0	0	24
Kevin Klusewitz, Cre	6	0	0	36	Christian Motley, Dal	2	0	0	12	Beau Getz, Nwt	4	0	0	24
Donovan O'Boyle, WA	6	0	0	36	Corey Mruk, WA	2	0	0	12	Najee Hood, Mey	4	0	0	24
Owen Shoemaker, Ber	6	0	0	36	Chris Murray, Dal	2	0	0	12	Nate Labar, LL	4	0	0	24
Vincent Todd, Cou	5	2	0	34	Jared Watts, Ber	2	0	0	12	Kenny Macko, Mey	0	0	22	22
Shane Eslick, WA	5	1	0	32	Brian Williams, WA	2	0	0	12	Nate Roppelt, HR	0	0	22	22
Patrick Rother, Cre	5	1	0	32	Steve Yordy, WA	2	0	0	12	Colby Butczynski, Nan	3	0	0	18
Brandon Brozena, Cre	5	0	0	30	Division 3A-A	TD	2pt	K	Tot	Casey Kaminski, LL	3	0	0	18
Walter Coles, PA	5	0	0	30	JD Turosky, HR	11	0	0	66	Jared Piontkowski, HR	3	0	0	18
Mike Starbuck, Dal	5	0	0	30	Janssen Wilborn, Mey	11	0	0	66	Kadin Taylor, GAR	2	1	0	14
Teagan Wilk, Ber	5	0	0	30	Trey Borger, LL	10	0	0	60	Auggie George, Han	0	0	13	13
FJ Braccini, WA	0	0	29	29	Matt Kurtz, LL	9	3	0	60	Anthony Blake, GAR	2	0	0	12
Shane Sym's, PA	0	0	27	27	Eric Jeffries, Nan	9	2	0	58	James Cunningham, HR	2	0	0	12
Brandon Niemenski, Cre	4	0	0	24	Kevin Dessoye, Mey	9	0	0	54	Justice Lomas, GAR	2	0	0	12
Bradley Adams, Dal	3	0	0	18	Connor Hazlet, Nwt	9	0	0	54	Nate O'Donnell, LL	2	0	0	12
Salem Diop, Cou	3	0	0	18	Zack Kojadinovich, LL	8	0	0	48	Matt Piontkowski, HR	2	0	0	12
Justin Joseph, WA	3	0	0	18	David Piestrak, Nwt	8	0	0	48	Tyrone Qualls, GAR	2	0	0	12
Jeff Mondulick, Cou	0	0	18	18	Jack Wessler, Nwt	0	0	47	47	Manny Saldana, Nan	2	0	0	12
Darren Rodney, WA	3	0	0	18	Darren Boseman, Nan	7	0	0	42	John Sartin, HR	2	0	0	12
Dorian Ryans, PA	3	0	0	18	Jake Anderson, Nwt	6	0	0	36	Rajhan Woodson, Mey	2	0	0	12
Jake Stephens, Tun	3	0	0	18	David Fedorchick, Han	6	0	0	36	Matt Wrubel, Nan	2	0	0	12

REGULAR SEASON TV SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 Friday, August 24	Saturday, Sept. 1	WEEK 5	Friday, Oct. 5	Service Electric Ch. 2 – Meyers at Holy Redeemer
7 p.m. Service Electric Ch. 2 – Crestwood at Coughlin	7 p.m. Service Electric Ch. 2 — Holy Redeemer at GAR	7 p.m. PCN – Washington at California	7 p.m. PCN, WYLN – Berwick at Hazleton Area	Friday, Oct. 19
WQMY — Scranton Prep at Dunmore	WEEK 3 Friday, Sept. 7	Service Electric Ch. 2 – Meyers at Hanover Area	Service Electric Ch. 2 – Wyoming Valley West at Coughlin	7 p.m. PCN — Grove City at Meadville
WYLN – Pottsville at Hazleton Area	7 p.m. PCN – Warwick at Manheim Central	WQMY, WYLN – Williamsport at Crestwood	WQMY — Old Forge at Lackawanna Trail	Service Electric Ch. 2 – Pittston Area at Crestwood
Saturday, August 25	Service Electric Ch. 2 – Crestwood at Wyoming Valley West	Saturday, Sept. 22	WEEK 8 Friday, Oct. 12	WQMY – Lewisburg at Central Columbia
1 p.m. PCN – Coatesville at Harrisburg	WQMY — Hazleton Area at Dallas	7 p.m. Service Electric Ch. 2 – Pittston Area at Coughlin	7 p.m. PCN – Bethlehem Freedom at Emmaus	WYLN – Hazleton Area at Coughlin
7 p.m. Service Electric Ch. 2 – Holy Cross at Holy Redeemer	WYLN – Holy Redeemer at Mahanoy Area	WYLN – Holy Redeemer at Mahanoy Area	Service Electric Ch. 2 – Lake-Lehman at GAR	Saturday, Oct. 20
WEEK 2 Friday, August 31	WEEK 4 Friday, Sept. 14	WEEK 6 Friday, Sept. 28	WQMY – Nanticoke Area at Lakeland	7 p.m. Service Electric Ch. 2 – Nanticoke Area at GAR
7 p.m. PCN – Southern Columbia at Mount Carmel	7 p.m. PCN – Bethlehem Catholic at Parkland	7 p.m. PCN – Northwestern Lehigh at Palmerton	WYLN – Crestwood at Berwick	WEEK 10 Friday, Oct. 26
Service Electric Ch. 2 – Lake-Lehman at Hanover Area	Service Electric Ch. 2 – Berwick at Wyoming Valley West	Service Electric Ch. 2 – Susquehanna at Meyers	Saturday, Oct. 13	7 p.m. PCN — Game TBA
WQMY — Shikellamy at Selinsgrove	WQMY — Williamsport at Hazleton Area	WQMY, WYLN – Valley View at Berwick	7 p.m. Service Electric Ch. 2 – Wyoming Area at Holy Redeemer	Service Electric Ch. 2 – Berwick at Coughlin
WYLN – Williamsport at Hazleton Area	Saturday, Sept. 15	Saturday, Sept. 29	Service Electric Ch. 2 – Mid Valley at Meyers	WQMY — Wyoming Area at Pittston Area
WYLN – Wyoming Valley West at Hazleton Area	7 p.m. Service Electric Ch. 2 – Old Forge at Holy Redeemer	7 p.m. Service Electric Ch. 2 – Nanticoke Area at Crestwood	WEEK 9 Thursday, Oct. 18	WYLN – Crestwood at Hazleton Area
		WEEK 7	7 p.m.	Saturday, Oct. 26
				3:30 p.m.
				Service Electric Ch. 2 — GAR at Meyers



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Best of luck for your 2018 season!

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