

Williamsville South football

Billies building towards winning ways

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

Two victories in one high school football season is not great, but for a program that had posted six consecutive one-win seasons, a 2-7 record last year is a step in the right direction for Williamsville South.

"We want to build on that," said South coach Kraig Kurzanski. "We think we have a lot of good players coming back. Plus we had a whole offseason to work on what we need to do. Going into last season, we didn't have that. The first day of practice was a lot easier because if we called a play, the kids now know what that play is."

"I think it's a beautiful thing," added senior running back and linebacker Yabs Williams, one of four South captains. "We don't have to go through so much time in practice trying to learn plays. Everybody knows what they're doing. Practice has been going smooth so I think it's going to help when it's game time."

Williams, the team's leading rusher (302 yards, touchdown), top returning tackler (55 tackles, two sacks, and four fumble recoveries — one for a TD) and only Class A first-team all-star selection (defense), is one of eight returning starters on offense and defense.

On offense, there's also senior quarterback Dae'Shaune Clark, senior wide receivers Chris Hauser and Armaan Wood, and on the offensive line, senior guards Anthony Glieco (5-10, 230 pounds) and John "Reed" Kelley (6-3, 245-pounds) and junior tackles Kevin Gerlach (6-2½, 250-pounds, Class A North honorable mention) and Dillon Gallagher (6-3, 230 pounds). Clark, Kelley, and Gerlach are the other three team captains.

Returning defensive starters include Gerlach, Gallagher, Kelley, and Glieco on the defensive line,



Williamsville South's Yabs Williams looks for yardage during a scrimmage Saturday at South. Williams is the Billies' top returning leading rusher and tackler. Williams will start at running back and linebacker and is one of four South captains.

Photo by Patrick McPartland
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Hauser, Wood, and Williams at linebacker, and Clark at safety.

Many South players took advantage of offseason conditioning, but maybe not as much as Clark has. Last year, Clark tipped the scales at 220 pounds. This year, he weighs 188.

Clark worked out with former Syracuse University QB Kevin Mason and attended a camp through Thurman Thomas Sports Training camp where he trained with Demeris Johnson, a former NFL player with the Miami Dolphins and Buffalo Bills.

Clark is going to need the extra quickness as Kurzanski wants to utilize him at different positions on offense throughout a game.

Clark is ready for the challenge. "I'll do whatever I have to do to help the team win," said Clark. "I'm going to give 110 percent and step up to the challenge."

Clark will split time at QB along with sophomore Joe Licata, who

played four games on JV before an injury derailed his season. Licata is among six members on the South roster that played varsity basketball last winter.

The other five are seniors Zach Murray, Tom LiSacchi, and Wood, junior Mark Coppola, and sophomore Phil Stasiak. Bob White and Kevin O'Connell, who also played in the South basketball program, are also on the team. All can play receiver and defensive back, except Murray, who is listed as a linebacker. Murray will also handle the kicking and punting du-

ties. LiSacchi will be rotated in at cornerback with junior Tyler Krempa and senior Dan Polis. Stasiak will see time at safety.

"We have a lot of good athletes on the perimeter," said Kurzanski. "I hope to take advantage of a lot more of our team speed this year."

The new starting center and middle linebacker is junior Dan Erbacher, who replaces older brother, Anthony, who graduated in June.

Charles Munschauer, a 6-3, 295-pound junior, will see time on the defensive line, as will 6-4, 245-pound junior Mike Russo.

Overall, Kurzanski said the team is better at almost every position.

"We believe, other than one position, we improved at every position on the team," said Kurzanski. "That's based on kids getting a year older or replacing kids with better players."

South begins its 2008 journey when they travel to Cheektowa-

ga, the Section VI Class A runner-up, at 7 p.m. on Friday.

"I think we can compete," said Kurzanski. "We'll be in every game this year into the fourth quarter. I hope we get better every week. We're trying to make the playoffs."

Kurzanski's players also want to prove to the skeptics that this South team, unlike ones in recent years, is a team to look out for.

"I think we finally have got the talent to turn it around and be what we were in the 80's and 90's (winning program)," said Kelley.

"Winning games would mean a lot," said Gerlach. "We need to play real hard and with intensity on each side of the ball. We need to play with a mean streak."

"There are people out there doubting us so we want to come in there and surprise them," said Clark. "Let them know that South isn't dead. We're here to play. This team is for real."

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HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCOREBOARD

Sweet Home

Boys Soccer — NFL/ECIC Challenge — lost to Lewiston-Porter 1-0; tied Kenmore West 2-2

Girls Soccer — tied Niagara-Wheatfield 1-1

Williamsville East

Girls Soccer — Cohocton Tournament — lost to Brockport (Section V) 3-0; defeated Marion (Section IV) 3-0

Williamsville North

Boys Soccer — Brighton Tournament — def. Aquinas (Section V) 2-1 (OT)

Girls Volleyball — lost to Lockport 25-16, 22-25, 22-25, 13-25

Lou Gehrig scores stunning upset to win tournament

The Lou Gehrig Lasers 12U team overcame a two-run deficit in the bottom of the seventh inning to beat EMW 12U, 9-8, in the championship game of the Mel Ott Extravaganza.

The Lasers went 5-0 in the tournament.

Tournament MVP Katelyn Battaglia scored 10 runs over the tournament, and delivered stellar play at third base to keep the Lasers in some close games. Lauren Elliott was the game MVP in the championship game with a spectacular catch, stopping a late EMW rally.

Jamie Kenyon went 2-0 on the mound and hit the game-winning RBI in the championship. Pitcher Sara Armstrong also went 2-0, including wins in the championship and a two-hit performance against archrival Clarence.

Maddison Welch led the team with a .500 average and scored the winning run in a close game over Clarence. Meaghan McFarland delivered six hits to boost her tournament hitting streak to 10. Jessica Gates started the rally in the championship game with a clutch hit and was spectacular in the outfield.

Jordan Roetzer led the defensive effort at catcher and delivered a triple and two doubles. Lauren Schreiner pitched a two-hit winner against Lew-Port 12U and bounced back from a major collision in left field.

Sharon Trigilio was outstanding at center field and stole five bases.

The team is coached by Scott Roetzer with assistants Bob Armstrong and Scott Welch.

Spartans

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"I don't want the last time I put on a Spartan uniform to always remember going 1-7," said Longarzo. "When I was a sophomore, we went 7-1 on JV. I guess some of us last year got used to winning from having success on JV and got cocky. It gave us a reality check."

"What motivates me is I'm ready to win," said Fields, who is getting looks from several Division III colleges such as Cortland State, Edinboro and Allegheny. "This is my last year of high

school football. Pete Bittner ('06 North graduate) always comes back and tells me, 'this is your senior year. Leave it all on the field because when it's gone, you'll miss it.' I don't want my senior year to pass me by."

"The seniors have been with our program for three or four years," said Mammoliti. "They've put a lot of time in. There should be something at the end of the rainbow for them."

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Sports brief

A tryout for the 2009 West Seneca Magic 18U travel softball team will be held from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 6 at Sunshine Park, 1750 East and West Roads. Residency is not required and all players will be considered.

Participants can pre-register at www.wsgsa.com. Players attending college who are interested should register online and information will be forwarded to them.

For more information, call Jack Hess at 867-5312 or send e-mail to Jaxweb@aol.com.

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