

# Manistee looks up

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"We're trying to get better and have some decent attitudes," Smith said. "We're trying to put kids in the right situations to have an opportunity to win. It's hard when you play teams that have 50-60 kids on the team."

"The kids we have play hard and are working hard. We'll try to do the best with whatever we have. That's all you can do."

Smith said he will be leaning on his four captains to lead Manistee. Three of the four captains are seniors — Andy Tiefenthal, Mike Machen and Lance Luomala — along with junior Mike Colonowski.

After a winless campaign in 2001, **GRAYLING** is looking for much improvement this fall.

"I think we're going to have a chance to get us a few wins," third-year Grayling coach Scott Cousineau said. "We've had the best offseason workouts since I've been here. The kids are starting to get an idea of what needs to happen. The first two weeks of practice were great."

"We're starting to see some movement forward, but we still have a long way to go."

The Vikings returns three starters on offense, all up front.

Senior center Dan Mahaney (6-foot, 180 pounds) anchors the middle for Grayling. Junior tackles Aaron Rosecrans (5-10, 220) and Greg Morrill

(6-1, 215) are also back after starting as sophomores.

The Grayling backfield has a lot of new faces that will have to step into starting spots.

Senior Chris Wakely will be the quarterback for the Vikings. At fullback is senior David Burton, a transfer from Tennessee.

One halfback for the Vikings will be junior Shawn Gabriel. Seniors Brett Mead and Matt Strohpaal are battling for the other starting halfback spot.

"We are going to be improved," Cousineau said. "We have a long ways to go and play in a tough conference, but we've worked hard on improving attitudes the last two years and I think we're starting to show progress."

The Grayling defense will be led by junior linebacker Roy Czapek, an all-North East Conference honorable mention selection. Senior nose guard Lance Harmer also returns in the middle of the defense.

Grayling doesn't have any other starters back on defense, but the Vikings have several players with a lot of playing experience.

Matt Strohpaal and Burton should play linebackers for Grayling while junior Andy Strohpaal will start at free safety.

The defensive line will be anchored by senior Roger Alvarez at one of the end positions. Juniors Dan Snider and Greg Warren are battling for the other spot.

# Prep football a rallying point

By **DENNIS CHASE**

Record-Eagle sports editor

Jack Roberts, executive director of the Michigan High School Athletic Association, took some time to answer a few questions about the upcoming football season.



**MHSAA  
Q & A**

Roberts has overseen tremendous growth in the playoff season and he talks about the current state of the system and its future.

**Dennis Chase: The football playoff system has been tweaked dramatically over the years. When the playoffs were first introduced in 1975, 16 teams qualified in four classes. Now 256 teams take part in eight divisions. Teams that win six games are all but guaranteed a spot in the post-season. Are you satisfied with how the current system works and what type of feedback have you received from coaches, players and fans?**

Jack Roberts: Ours is a line of work where a 51% approval rating is good, so we very readily point to

the latest football playoff expansion as one of our most satisfying efforts on behalf of Michigan schools, more than 90% of which voted in favor of this plan. Feedback is still very positive.

**DC: There was a fear that some schools would change the way they schedule, taking tough non-conference opponents off the schedule to improve their chances of getting six wins. Has this fear been realized?**

Roberts: Some schools have probably built their schedules to help them get the 5 or 6 wins they need to qualify for the playoffs. But far more schools look at the expanded playoffs in just the opposite way. They can afford a couple of losses now that the old system may not have allowed. They can schedule very tough teams and not worry that one loss puts them out of the playoffs.

**DC: What, if any, changes do you envision in the playoff system in the future?**

Roberts: I envision, but I do not want, further attempts to expand the playoffs. I fear that just as people were dissatisfied with a field of 16, then 32, then 64 and then 128, some people will become dissatisfied that only 256 (40%) of schools

qualify for the football playoffs while 100% of schools qualify for MHSAA tournaments in all other sports.

I'm not going to predict it will ever happen, but we have begun informal discussions about 6- or 8-player football. It's an exciting brand of football, popular in some other states, that might suit the interests and abilities of students in our smallest schools.

**DC: Will the state finals be moved from the Silverdome to Ford Field (or elsewhere)? If, so when?**

Roberts: We have a contract with the Silverdome through 2004. If the Silverdome keeps its part of the bargain, we'll keep ours. If the building is razed or service slips, we'll look to Ford Field.

**DC: From an attendance standpoint — given all the other options people have — is prep football on the upswing or downswing? What do you hear from the athletic directors?**

Roberts: Football is still highly popular with the public and provides a rallying point for schools and communities. There are struggling programs to be sure, but just as many are hitting new highs as new lows.



Chad Marshall, Joel Joslin, Brad Nostrandt, Nick Schlueter, Michael Kibby, J.J. McMahon, Greg Walton, Steve Nerg, Scott Rodal, Matt Lloyd, Brady Olsen, Kurt Gilbert, Kyle Gilbert, Shane Chatterton, Jared Kjorth, Dane Colby, Jeremy Campbell, Adam Bennett, Garry Honeycutt, Stephan Nelson

## 2002 Frankfort Panthers Football Schedule

August 31	Lake Linden-Hubbell	Away
September 6	White Cloud	Away
September 13	Manton	Home
September 20	Mesick	Away
September 27	Maple City Glen Lake	Home
October 4	Suttons Bay	Away
October 11	Kingsley	Away
October 18	Rudyard	Home
October 26	Onkama	Away

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