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On the cover

Record-Eagle/Jim Bovin

Benzie's John Plumstead poses with sled-dog racing huskies owned by the Bacchus family in Sherman.

Plumstead runs down history

Benzie back eyes career rushing list

BY MARK URBAN

Record-Eagle staff writer

BENZONIA — It started out innocently enough.

During his freshman football season in 2000, Benzie Central's John Plumstead was thrown into the offensive backfield.

The staff, head coach Hal Holman recalls, planned on limiting the freshman's carries to "four or five" because "we didn't want to get him killed."

Plumstead, in his first real duties rushing the ball, racked up 161 yards and three touchdowns against Boyne City.

"We knew he was going to be good," Holman said. "We didn't know he would be THIS good."

MHSAA CAREER RUSHING LEADERS

7,813	Tim Shaw, Livonia Clarenceville	1998-01
7,212	Benny Clark Jr., Ravenna	1993-96
6,605	Tom Tyson, Whittemore-Presscott	1992-95
6,336	Keath Bartynski, Saginaw Nouvel	1995-97
5,655	Rick Granata, Imlay City	1991-93
5,337	Jim Gilmer, Ontonagon	1989-91
5,337	Ryan Cunningham, Fulton-Middleton	1992-95
5,132	Richie Jordan, Fennville	1962-64
5,087	Fred Russell, Romulus	1996-98
5,078	Dwain Koscielniak, Gaylord St. Mary	1987-90
5,011	John Plumstead, Benzie Central	2000-02

Now, as he enters his senior season, Plumstead is leader of the pack. With 5,011 yards he can climb up the top 10 all-time rushers in the state of Michigan.

"As a freshman, I just wanted to get out on the field and prove myself," Plumstead said. "I wasn't looking at all four years. But I'm proud of it, that's for sure."

"He's at top speed in three steps," TC St. Francis coach Josh Sellers said. "He's patient... and patient... then he

finds an opening and he's gone, and nobody's going to catch him."

As a freshman, Plumstead ended up rushing for 1,103 yards. He followed that up with 1,728 as a sophomore and took it another step further with 2,180 as Benzie reached the state semifinals in 2002.

If Plumstead runs for the same total as last season, he'll be just 21 yards behind Ravenna's Benny Clark Jr. for second-place all-time.

"For sure I'd love to see my

name up there if I can rush for another 2,000 yards,"

Plumstead said. "Hopefully I can do that and a little more. Hopefully we can add one more game so we can play all 14 of them."

"He's knocking on the door (of the all-time list)," Holman said. "I don't want to jinx myself — or him."

Even more remarkable is how Plumstead got to carry the ball in the first place. On the varsity to play defensive back, Plumstead got to carry the ball when a senior back quit the team after the second game.

"This is the next kid we've got is Plumstead," Holman said. "So we put him in there and that's how it all happened. It's the best coaching move I've ever made."

Plumstead, the son of Marty Plumstead and Nancy

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