

LMC

Boyerne, SF favored

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tions in front of and behind him — senior center-defensive lineman Matt Ku (5-11, 190) and junior fullback-outside linebacker David Austin (6-0, 215). Austin made 50 tackles on defense a year ago.

Another junior, Reed Ameel (6-0, 185), will join the back-

field. Ameel rushed for 420 yards and had 200 yards in pass receptions last season. The strong safety also had 74 solo and assisted tackles.

Returning offensive starters include senior tackle Zach Carlston (6-1, 215), senior tight end Jordan Voice (6-2, 210) and senior running back Bryce Endline (6-0, 195).

Senior defensive back Carl Mariner (5-10, 160) will join the starting lineup after seeing considerable playing time last season.

Hills, who is in his fourth season as Ramblers coach, said there have been so many coaching changes around the league that it's hard to predict how well each team will perform.

Sellers is in his first season, as is Charlevoix's Don Jess, East Jordan's Kris Ernst and Elk Rapids' Josh Merchant. Plus, Grayling is in its first season in the league.

"I'm amazed by the turnover," Hills said. "It's hard to get a feel for what teams are going to do without seeing anybody play.

"Sometimes a coach is suc-

cessful right away, sometimes it takes awhile.

"There are a lot of unknowns."

Ernst, 23, became the youngest coach in the league when he accepted the **EAST JORDAN** job less than a month ago.

The former Central Lake standout took over for Greg Bowden, a former Alma College teammate who coached the Red Devils just one season before accepting a teaching-coaching position in Texas.

"It was definitely a quick hire," said Ernst, who was the wide receiver-defensive backs coach at Ithaca High School last season. "But they were getting down to the wire and I know the system well, having played with (Bowden), so the kids weren't going to have to learn anything different. It was a pretty good fit."

East Jordan, which fell one victory short of making the playoffs last year at 5-4 (3-3 in the LMC), returns a number of key players. Top returnees are senior middle linebacker-fullback Willie Skrocki (6-2, 220),

junior quarterback Tommy Krouse (5-10, 170), senior running back-corner back Alan Arnott (5-10, 180) and senior center-nose tackle Kevin Whiteford (5-10, 180).

The Red Devils' schedule includes home dates the final two weeks of the regular season against Grayling (Oct. 17) and Charlevoix (Oct. 24).

CHARLEVOIX, which placed fourth in the preseason coaches' poll, went 2-4 and 2-7 last season.

New coach Jess has high hopes for the Rayders, and if they're going to make noise it will be due in large part to the play of four returning seniors — athletic fullback-nose tackle Josh Carter (6-3, 245), tackle Luke Whitley (6-4, 240), fullback-linebacker Troy Coen (6-0, 200) and third-year varsity running back Jeff Urban (5-10, 180).

Urban's ability is no secret to the rest of the league. He joined Drew Gillespie of Kalkaska, Travis Sivek of St. Francis and Charlevoix's Ameel and Simeri as the most-

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