

SVC

Snowbirds are favored again

FROM PAGE 9

Grybauskas lost 12 seniors from last year and the school did not have a JV team. But the coach remains optimistic. "We are inexperienced. We have question marks. But hopefully some of these new kids are ready to take on leadership roles for us," he said.

"How well they do will be the key to our year."

Grybauskas does return three stalwarts — tailback-linebacker Brad Rogers, tight end-linebacker Wren Chellis and center-nose guard Andy Ross. Rogers rushed for more than 1,100 yards and 17 touchdowns last season.

Scotty Bruce, the backup quarterback last season, inherits the starting job in 2003.

"He's a good leader, a good decision-maker," Grybauskas said.

Fullback Ernice Shove and receiver-running back Zach Stoppert give the Trojans two

more weapons. Stoppert, one of the top basketball players in the league, is out for the first time.

"He's a fantastic athlete," Grybauskas said.

PELLSTON returns four key players off a team that 4-5. Back in the fold are quarterback Peter Bonter, running back Tim Babcock, tight end Tyler Burkhart and lineman Jamie Gillett. Bonter, operating out of the veer, passed for about 500 yards and rushed for about 200 last season. Babcock gained nearly 400 yards on the ground. Gillett, the starting center in 2002, will move to right guard this season.

The Hornets have 16 players on the roster. Several, Pellston coach Bob Babcock said, did not play football last year.

"We have a lot of rebuilding to do," he said.

Babcock is counting on a couple Mackinaw City students to be major contributors — 6-3, 255-pound center Alex McVeigh and 5-9, 180-pound tackle Eric Darrow. Mackinaw City co-ops with Pellston in football.

"(McVeigh) will be the heart of the (offensive) line," Babcock said.

Gillett will spearhead the defense that "looked strong" in a scrimmage at Cedarville,

Babcock said.

MANCELONA is coming off a difficult 2002 campaign. The Ironmen went 0-9, forfeiting five of those games when injuries depleted an already thin roster.

Coach Doug Derrer will build around linemen Aidin Finn and Brandon Nichols, fullback Jeff Leusby and quarterback Josh Bielicki. Leusby, a senior, was brought up to the varsity as a sophomore and rushed for nearly 400 yards. But he didn't play last year because of an injury. Captains Finn and Nichols are starting their third year on varsity. Finn is 6-2, 235.



2003 Varsity Football Schedule

August 29	Escanaba	Home
September 6	Grand Rapids Union	Away
September 12	Petoskey	Away
September 19	Sault St. Marie	Home
September 26	Cadillac	Home
October 43	Cheboygan	Away
October 10	Gaylord	Home
October 17	Alpena	Home
October 24	Traverse City West	Away

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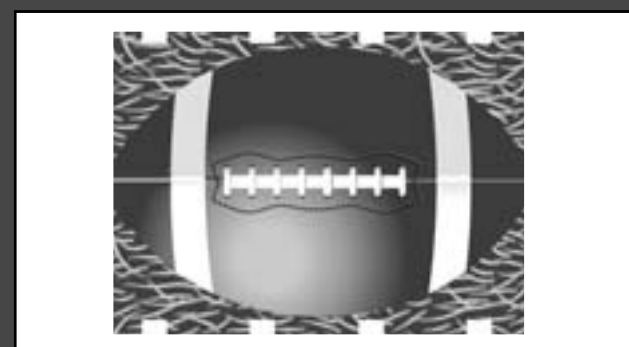
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