

LMC

*More parity could
be possible behind
TC St. Francis*

FROM PAGE 6

“We have a lot coming back on offense,” he said. “We moved the ball well last year; we just couldn’t put it in the end zone. I think we can do that this year.

“Defensively, we’re gearing up to stop the run.”

Ernst’s **EAST JORDAN** Red Devils had the misfortune of playing St. Francis twice last year, once during the regular season and again in the playoffs.

The Red Devils dropped those games by a combined score of 110-20. They believe they can close that gap this fall.

East Jordan was 6-2 in its other eight games.

Among those back are senior quarterback Tommy Krause (5-11, 175), who passed for 812 yards and 10 touchdowns and rushed for 516 yards and two scores; junior running back Kyle Peters (5-10, 170), who was the team’s No. 2 rusher last year; and junior back Josh Cooper (5-8, 170), who started four games a year ago.

“We’re tremendously athletic this year,” Ernst said. “The big question will be if we can block up front.”

That question will be answered by linemen Jeremy Roberts (6-0, 250), Nate Page (6-1, 230), Ian Sibinic (5-10, 170) and Nate Richter (5-11, 190).

Among the top returnees for **KALKASKA**, which finished 4-5 last season, are senior halfback Wayne Golden (5-8, 155), senior quarterback Ryan Wurtz (6-0, 185) and senior fullback Scott Fry (6-1, 200).

Senior center Josh Nichols (5-10, 175) and senior tight end Scott Fry (6-1, 200) will anchor the offensive line.

No team in the Lake Michigan Conference has more returning starters

Playoff qualifiers

Farmington Hills Harrison	22
Beal City	21
Fowler	21
Detroit St. Martin dePorres	20
Crystal Falls Forest Park	19
Mendon	19
FRANKFORT	18
TC ST. FRANCIS	18

than **ELK RAPIDS**, which struggled through a 1-8 season in 2003.

Second-year head coach Josh Merchant has 10 starters back on both sides of the ball, and nine of those 10 are beginning their third season in the lineup.

Senior quarterback Kyle Arnold completed 55 percent of his passes a year ago; senior running back-strong safety led the team in tackles (92) and interceptions (5); senior tackle Zach Amos (6-2, 290) anchors the offensive line; senior Tim Watt switched from split end to guard to help up front; and senior tight end Nic Clark led the Elks in receptions (21).

Other third-year senior starters are center-defensive tackle Raul Gomez, halfback-free safety Brant Boisvert, split end-defensive end Dustin Price and fullback-cornerback Brent Gilley.

Split end-defensive end Andrew Lee is the 10th returnee, with the final spot being claimed by tackle-nose guard John Lockett, a 5-10, 215-pound junior who bench presses 325 pounds.

The Elks average 230 pounds on the line.

HARBOR SPRINGS has a new coach in Don Twiss, who inherits a team that went 2-7 last fall.

“This will be a year of adjustment — getting to know a new offense, a new defense and a new coach,” Twiss said.

Key returnees include senior running back-defensive back Geoff Cottrill (5-9, 165), junior running back-linebacker Nick Hyde (6-0, 170), senior running back-defensive back Adam Moody (6-1, 170) and junior quarterback-defensive back Jesse Oldman (5-10, 175).

Twiss said Danny Eggers is also a player to watch.



Record-Eagle file photo/John L. Russell

TC St. Francis QB Joe Hastings hands off to Sam Schilling during the 2003 state title game.

GLADS

*St. Francis hopes to
ride title momentum*

FROM PAGE 2

experience he gained last year.

“I feel a little more relaxed,” he said. “It’s going to be a fun season. I’ve already been to the puppet show and seen the strings.”

Another key returnee is Schilling (6-0, 220), who was hampered by injuries last fall, but rushed for a team-high 142 yards in the title game. His 82-yard fourth-quarter TD run clinched the championship. He also made six tackles on defense.

“First and foremost, Sam has to stay healthy,” Sellers said. “And he’s got to play tough, physical football because he’s a big body.”

Schilling will share time in the backfield with junior Chad Biggar (6-1, 220), who played on the offensive line last year and opened some eyes with his athletic play at linebacker.

“Chad came up with some

big plays in some key games and really matured as a sophomore,” Sellers said.

“He’s excited to run the ball. He made an unselfish sacrifice last year by playing guard.”

Senior Josh Beckwith (6-1, 205) can play any offensive line position but will start at right tackle, allowing him to help the guard beside him if, Sellers said, “there are some assignment problems.”

“He’s as good an offensive lineman as we’ve ever had — period,” Sellers said. “He’s a technician, he’s big and he’s strong.”

The final returning starter, junior Patrick Rigan (6-5, 220), may be switching positions during the season. He’ll start at offensive tackle, but Sellers hopes to move him to tight end at some point “so we can run behind him.”

“Plus,” Sellers said, “he’s a 6-5 target with big hands who can run.”

Rigan is also expected to start at defensive tackle before sliding over to linebacker.

Other players to watch are junior tight end/safety Hunter Nostrant, senior running back/defensive back Tylor Bott, senior tight end/defensive end Erik Wojtkowiak and

senior halfback/defensive back Sean Moore.

Among the key losses for St. Francis is former offensive coordinator Pat Cleland, who had to quit after accepting the principal’s position at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Middle School.

Sellers said he will now call the plays — “with plenty of help, I’m sure.”

Another change for the Gladiators will be their season-opening opponent. Turning away from tradition, St. Francis won’t play Benzie Central this fall. Instead, the Glads will open at Kingsley.

St. Francis will host Muskegon Catholic Central in Week 2, then host Boyne City, their opponent in last year’s regular season finale, to open the Lake Michigan Conference in Week 3.

Schilling said the Gladiators know that the opposition — both in and out of the league — will gear up for them this fall. But, he said, that isn’t any different than in other years.

“We realize with the success of our program we have a target on our backs,” Schilling said. “We just have to focus on the task at hand.”

And avoid the word “repeat.”