



Hungry for more

Gladiators hope to ride the wave of 2003 state title

BY JEFF PEEK
Record-Eagle staff writer

TRAVERSE CITY — If there's any momentum left from last year, the Traverse City St. Francis Gladiators hope to ride it.

They just don't want to talk about it.

Nine months after the Gladiators beat Hudson 28-14 to win the 2003 Division 7 state football championship at the Pontiac Silverdome, St. Francis coaches and players believe they have the personnel to win another title.

As for last season, they'd like to put that up on the shelf, right along side their title trophy.

"We told these guys at the start of practice, 'Last year was a great year, and we'll have memories that last a lifetime. But that chapter is closed,'" said St. Francis coach Josh Sellers, whose team set a school record by going 14-0 in his first season at the helm. "Last year's team won't play another game. It's done.

"We want this team to make its own mark and leave the past in the past."

Senior quarterback Joe Hastings said forgetting last season is difficult, but necessary.

"Mentally, it's hard to put last year behind us because we expect so much so soon," he said. "You want to pick it up right where you left off.

"People are going to ask, 'Was it a fluke?' But you can't get caught up in that or it'll eat you alive.

"It becomes a mental game," he said. "We're a different team. This is 2004, not 2003. You have to look forward."

Senior offensive back/linebacker Sam Schilling, who scored two touchdowns in the championship game last



Record-Eagle/Lara Neel

After capturing the 2003 Division 7 state title, the 2004 TC St. Francis Gladiators are looking to claim another seat at the championship table.

November, said the Gladiators have to use last year's title run as a way to elevate their performance this fall.

"We have the talent, and we definitely have the experience," he said. "Everyone knows what it takes to reach that next level.

"(Winning last year) puts more pressure on the team, but I don't think much about it. I just focus on the present."

That's good news for Sellers, who refuses to compare last year's team to this one. His words on the subject are measured.

Asked if St. Francis can win another title, which would be the fourth in school history, Sellers nodded.

"The answer is, 'Yes, we can,'" he said, then added, "We have just as good a chance as every other team in

the state." The Gladiators return only five starters from last fall, but those five players filled nearly half of the 22 positions.

Hastings (6-foot-3, 190 pounds) is the only one of the five who plays exclusively on offense, but Sellers believes the importance of his position adds weight.

"Because he's the quarterback, you can argue that he's the biggest key," Sellers said. "He's the general, the most vocal of the returnees.

"And he's worked hard this summer. He went to several camps to make himself better."

Hastings believes those camps will pay dividends, but he said nothing that he's done is more valuable than the

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On the cover

Record-Eagle file photo/John L. Russell

Traverse City St. Francis' players proudly hoist the Division 7 state football championship trophy after a 28-14 victory over Hudson at the Pontiac Silverdome.

STATE FINAL BOX

TC ST. FRANCIS 28, HUDSON 14

2003 Division 7 State Final

Hudson	0	0	0	14-14
TC St. Francis	14	7	0	7-28

First Quarter

TCSF—Schilling 1 run (Hastings kick), 3:33.
TCSF—Sivek 6 run (Petterson kick), 3:07.

Second Quarter

TCSF—Sivek 11 run (Petterson kick), 2:43.

Fourth Quarter

H—Reilly 5 pass from Murphy (Carr kick), 3:08.
H—Carr 15 run (Carr kick), 3:08.
TCSF—Schilling 82 run (Petterson kick), 1:29.

	Hud	TCSF
First downs	11	16
Total Net Yards	167	351
Rushes-yards	43-139	41-265
Passing	28	86
Punt Returns	1-22	4-(-6)
Kickoff Returns	4-75	3-10
Interceptions Ret.	0-0	1-0
Camp-Att-Int	4-17-1	4-7-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	0-0	2-17
Punts	5-33.4	3-27.7
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	3-3
Penalties-Yards	3-24	3-30
Time of Possession	25:29	22:31

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—Hudson, Carr 19-100, Rupnow 13-37, Gagnon 3-10, Parris 3-8, Murphy 2-3, Osborne 1-(minus 2), Freeman 2-(minus 17). TC St. Francis, Schilling 13-142, Curtis 14-83, Sivek 12-53, Schell 1-1, Hastings 1-(minus 14).
PASSING—Hudson, Murphy 3-12-1-25, Freeman 1-5-0-3. TC St. Francis, Hastings 4-7-0-86.
RECEIVING—Hudson, Aquirre 2-20, Reilly 1-5, Bailey 1-3. TC St. Francis, Schilling 2-32, Petterson 1-54, Sivek 1-0.

2003 RESULTS

- St. Francis 25, Benzie 6
- St. Francis 18, Musk. CC 7
- St. Francis 67, Kalkaska 0
- St. Francis 47, Harbor 0
- St. Francis 34, Grayling 6
- St. Francis 57, Elk Rapids 7
- St. Francis 60, East Jordan 6
- St. Francis 42, Charlevoix 0
- St. Francis 42, Boyne City 21
- St. Francis 50, E. Jordan 14*
- St. Francis 38, Mio 22*
- St. Francis 13, Stephenson 12*
- St. Francis 20, Ubly 14*
- St. Francis 28, Hudson 14*

* - playoffs

2004 SCHEDULE

- Fri. Aug. 27 at Kingsley, 7:30
- Sat. Sept. 4 vs. Musk. CC, 5
- Fri. Sept. 10 vs. Boyne City, 7
- Fri. Sept. 17 at Kalkaska, 7
- Sat. Sept. 25 vs. Harbor (HC), 1
- Fri. Oct. 1 at Grayling, 7
- Fri. Oct. 8 vs. Elk Rapids, 7
- Fri. Oct. 15 at East Jordan, 7
- Sat. Oct. 23 vs. Charlevoix, 7