

# A scramble in the Big North

*Departures leave just six teams vying for conference title*

**BY JAMES COOK**  
Record-Eagle staff writer

TRAVERSE CITY — First, the good news. For the remaining six teams, the chances of winning the Big North Conference crown went up about 4.2 percent after Cheboygan and Sault Ste. Marie dropped out.

The bad news is the defections left the remaining half dozen BNC squads scrambling to fill out their schedules.

Cadillac snapped up a game against nearby independent Benzie Central — which had a 10-2 squad last season — and travels to Forest Hills Eastern, a new school in Grand Rapids created from portions of Forest Hills Northern and Forest Hill Central.

“They’re kind of an unknown entity,” Viking coach James Webb said.

Traverse City Central ended up with a homecoming date with reigning Division 1 state champions Detroit Catholic Central and a road contest against U of D Jesuit, which was 4-5 last year while playing in the same league as Catholic

## COACHES POLL

School (1st place votes)	Pts.
TC West (2)	26
TC Central (2)	25
Gaylord (1)	23
Cadillac	10
Petoskey	10
Alpena	10

5 of 6 coaches participated

## PLAYERS TO WATCH

- Tony Gourlay, LB/TB, TC West
- Robbie Harman, WR/DB, TC Central
- Eric Miller, WR/DB, Gaylord
- Greg Pinto, RB/DB, TC Central
- Tony Thompson, QB, TC West

## 2003 STANDINGS

	Conference		Overall	
	W	L	GB	W L
TC West	7	0	-	7 3
TC Central	6	1	1	6 4
Gaylord	5	2	2	8 3
Petoskey	4	3	3	4 5
Alpena	3	4	4	4 5
Cadillac	1	6	6	1 8
Cheboygan	1	6	6	2 7
S.S. Marie	1	6	6	2 7

Central.

“Teams like us and West have picked up tougher non-conference opponents,” TC Central coach Kelly Clark said, “which will pay off in the playoffs.”

Petoskey retained both its games with the Chiefs and the Soo.

Sault Ste. Marie and Cheboygan both went to the Straits Area Conference, join-



Record-Eagle file photo

Gaylord’s Eric Miller (5) won’t have to worry about running into TC Central’s Jeff Fancy this season. Miller and the Blue Devils are hoping to improve on a third-place finish in the BNC.

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