

Ski Valley conference

2004 Standings

Team	League		Overall	
	W	L	W	L
Bellaire	7	1	8	2
Gaylord SM	7	1	8	2
Inland Lakes	6	2	6	4
Johannesburg	5	3	6	4
Central Lake	4	4	4	5
Onaway	4	4	5	4
Pellston	2	6	3	6
Mancelona	1	7	1	8
Forest Area	0	8	0	9

Coaches' Poll

No. 1 votes in parenthesis

Team	Points
1. Inland Lakes (6)	76
2. Johannesburg (2)	64
3. Gaylord St. Mary (1)	62
4. Bellaire	56
5. Central Lake	46
6. Onaway	44
7. Mancelona	25
8. Pellston	23
9. Forest Area	9

Players to watch



Mark Hutchinson, QB, Inland Lakes . . . . .  
A three-year starter, Hutchinson passed for nearly 2,000 yards in 10 games last fall. He threw for 14 touchdowns and had just two interceptions. The Bulldogs like to air it out. The lefthander will throw 60 to 70 percent of the plays.

Rowan said a good senior campaign could help Hutchinson land a college scholarship.  
"I've coached some Division I quarterbacks and he has the velocity and size they're looking for," Rowan said.

Lonnie Splan, RB/DB, Onaway  
Mike Smith, RB/LB, Gaylord St. Mary  
Lorenzo Espinoza, OL/LB, Inland Lakes  
Phil Knapp, QB, Johannesburg  
Cody Mongar, FB/LB, Central Lake  
Matt Kopke, RB/LB, Inland Lakes

**1. INLAND LAKES**  
**Coach:** Jack Rowan  
**2004:** 6-2 in the Ski Valley, 6-4 overall.  
**Key Players Returning:** QB Mark Hutchinson (6-3, 210), RB-LB Matt Kopke (6-3, 230), LB-OT Lorenzo Espinoza (6-3, 215), T Ezra Coe (6-1, 225), DB-RB Dave Hare (6-0, 180), WR Ben Smith (6-3, 180), WR-LB Danny August (6-4, 218), DB Pat McMullen (5-11, 165).  
**Outlook:** Inland Lakes has been knocking at the door in the Ski Valley the last couple years. This might be the Bulldogs year.  
Coach Jack Rowan's team is the overwhelming favorite, according to league coaches.

One reason is the presence of quarterback Mark Hutchinson, a three-year starter. The 6-3 senior threw for 14 touchdowns and about 2,000 yards a year ago.  
"He's a good kid, a smart kid," Rowan said.  
Matt Kopke is another talent in the backfield. The 6-3, 230-pound senior rushed for over 800 yards in 2004.  
"He's a load," Rowan said. "And he runs a 4.7 40."  
Lorenzo Espinoza and Ezra Coe are the leaders of a line that will be responsible for opening the holes for Kopke and junior Dave Hare, who's coming back from a broken ankle last season. Coe is a three-year starter.  
"He's (Coe) strong and he has good agility," Rowan said.  
Danny August and Ben Smith will be two of Hutchinson's primary receivers. The Bulldogs will throw the ball 60 to 70 percent of the time, Rowan said.  
"We spread it out," he said.  
"We make no bones about it."  
Defensively, the 6-3, 215-pound Espinoza is a force at linebacker. Espinoza moved into the district from California last year.  
"He's fit in well," Rowan said. "And he's a straight A student."  
Kopke was one of the team's top

sack specialists last season. He can play end or linebacker. August will line up at linebacker.  
Coe anchors the defensive line with Hare and Pat McMullen spearheading the secondary.  
Inland Lakes qualified for the playoffs last year, but lost to Newberry in the first round.  
"The kids want to get beyond the first round," Rowan said. "We stubbed our toes last year."  
The future looks bright, too.  
"Our freshman class is outstanding," he said. "The next four years we'll be as good as it's been around here in a long time."

**2. JOHANNESBURG**  
**Coach:** Fred Davis  
**2004:** 5-3 in the Ski Valley, 6-4 overall.  
**Key Players Returning:** QB Phil Knapp (6-0, 170), L Cody Proctor (5-10, 225), L Thad Thomas (5-10, 205), C-LB Ryan Ives (6-2, 190), FB-LB Zack Vogt (5-10, 190), T Todd Bolser (6-0, 215), TE-DB Sam Hart (5-10, 165), DE Josh Graham (6-0, 190), DE Mike Marsh (5-9, 165), TE Jeff Tebbe (6-2, 185).  
**Key Newcomers:** TE-LB Andrew Hart (6-0, 175), RB-DB Kevin Mascioli (6-0, 165), T Mark Owens (6-0, 190), T Eric Hess (6-2, 280), HB Cal Sundberg (5-10, 160), HB Stan Kwapis (5-9, 160).  
**Outlook:** The Cardinals made the playoffs last year and coach Fred Davis returns the nucleus of that team, including seven starters on defense.  
"We're pretty solid," Davis said.  
Davis had 25 players turn out for varsity. Two years ago, he had 15 players.  
"We have 109 boys in the high school and 54 are playing football (varsity and JV) this year," he said.  
Veteran quarterback Phil Knapp returns for his senior season. He started as a freshman in the playoffs and has held down that position ever since, although he missed a few

games last year with a shoulder injury.  
"I think he's going to have a big year," Davis said. "He's showing no effects from that injury."  
Zach Vogt, who rushed for 700 yards, is also back. In one game last season he went for over 200 yards.  
Juniors Kevin Mascioli and Cal Sundberg and sophomore Stan Kwapis will see time in the backfield. Sundberg's older brother, Kip, was a standout for Davis and is now at Olivet.  
That group will run behind a line that lost just one starter. Ryan Ives, Cody Proctor, Thad Thomas and Todd Bolser spearhead the line.  
Proctor and Thomas will also line up inside on defense. Ives and Vogt will man linebacking spots.

**3. GAYLORD ST. MARY**  
**Coach:** Rod Bragg  
**2004:** 7-1 in the Ski Valley, 8-2 overall.  
**Key Players Returning:** RB/LB Mike Smith (5-10, 155), SS Kevin Spyhalski (6-4, 195), RB-FS Joey Cuca (5-10, 180), OG-LB Greg Borowiak (5-7, 160).  
**Top Newcomers:** QB Robert Delong (5-10,150), L Eric Hagedorn (5-7, 160), T Bill Harsell (6-4, 260), FB Matt Foster (6-1, 210).  
**Outlook:** St. Mary tied Bellaire for the conference title a year ago, the sixth consecutive season the Snowbirds have claimed a league championship trophy. St. Mary had a 42-game conference winning streak snapped by Bellaire in mid-October (20-13).  
The Snowbirds suffered some key graduation losses, most notably QB Ryan Smith, FB-DL Cody Lawnichak and T Dan Borowiak. St. Mary was more of an option team last season with Ryan Smith at the controls.  
Mike Smith will be one of the top players in the league. He was the Snowbirds leading rusher and tackler in 2004.

Joey Cuca's return will bolster the

team on both sides of the ball. Cuca, probably the fastest player on the team, suffered a knee injury on the opening kickoff last season. He eventually underwent arthroscopic surgery, but returned to play baseball in the spring. "He's worked his tail off," Bragg said. Cuca also missed a good share of his sophomore season on the JV team with an injury. "He probably has a chip on his shoulders," Bragg said. "He feels he has something to prove."  
Bragg is converting Cuca from linebacker to free safety. He also switching Kevin Spyhalski from defensive end to strong safety.  
Bragg said Greg Borowiak was one of the most improved Snowbirds last season. He worked hard in the weight room in the off-season, Bragg said, and will be one of the stalwarts on the line. Justin Hacker (6-3, 240) has also come along and will bolster the line on both sides of the ball.  
Junior Robert Delong, a two-year starter on the JV team, will take over at quarterback. Bragg said Delong is a "mix" between his last two quarterbacks, Ryan Smith and Ray Burzynski. Bragg said Delong has improved his decision-making skills.  
Bragg believes the Snowbirds are set at the skill positions, but will need to develop on the line to make a run at a seventh title. "It's all about line play," he said.

**4. BELLAIRE**  
**Coach:** Jeff Hebden  
**2004 Record:** 7-1 in the Ski Valley, 8-2 overall.  
**Key Players Returning:** RB-LB John Pawson (5-8, 170), RB-DB David Ryan (5-8, 160), FB-DT Pat Guy (5-8, 175), L James McQueen (6-1, 200), L Charlie Brownell (6-1, 260), L Roger McQueen (6-0, 160), L Eric Shumaker (5-11, 255), E Michael McClary (6-4, 225).  
**Top Newcomers:** QB Skyler Hindes (5-9, 150), E-LB Kouri

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