

GOAL LINE

THE WEEKLY AREA HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PREVIEW SECTION

Division VII State Championship Game

Marion, ready for battle of Flyers

By COLIN FOSTER
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Marion Local has wanted the chance to play at Ohio Stadium for a while now.

The time will come for the Blue and Gold on Saturday morning. The team entered the season with high expectations with a strong core of key players returning. Now only Norwalk St. Paul's Flyers stand in the way of denying Marion Local's Flyers a fourth consecutive state championship. The battle between Flyers kicks off at 10 a.m. Saturday in Columbus.

"We had high expectations but you never know how it's going to work out," Marion Local coach Tim Goodwin said. "The season went really well. Our kids have done what we thought they could do. We continued that into the playoffs and played some pretty good football for the most part."

Marion Local's 179-14 margin of victory through the playoffs may be a little better than "pretty good."

St. Paul head coach John Livengood addressed the giant elephant in the room during the OHSAA Football Finalists Coaches/Media teleconference on Monday.

"Stating it as the elephant in the room is a good statement," said Livengood when asked about Marion's dominance this season. "Coming out of the MAC, I think they've got three teams for state championships. That's a great conference, great tradition. Tim Goodwin does an awesome job down there. They've won three state titles in a row."

"They're a great football team. They've got decent size, but I think their makeup is speed. They've got great team speed."

Livengood's bunch is pretty good, too.

Like Marion, St. Paul is a traditional state football power year in and year out. The program has 16 playoff appearances (Marion has 17), seven state showings, three state runner-ups and one state title (2009).



Mark Pummell/The Daily Standard

Marion Local's Jacy Goettemoeller will look to help his Flyers win their fourth straight state title on Saturday against Norwalk St. Paul in Columbus.

St. Paul (13-1) ran through the first two rounds of the playoffs with ease, beating Vienna Mathews 63-2 and then Ashland Mapleton 41-6. In the regional final, St. Paul edged Western Reserve 18-14 before beating Trimble 41-13 in the state semifinal.

"It's been a great playoff run for us," Livengood said. "Our kids have done a great job and we're thrilled to be playing down at Ohio State and excited for Saturday morning."

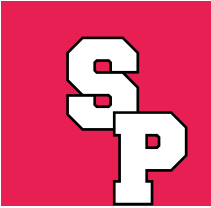
Goodwin said he anticipates St. Paul's run-heavy offense to challenge his defense, with a sound unit in the trenches and a duo of 1,000-yard backs in Brad Smith (256 carries, 1,983 yards, 29 touchdowns) and Devin Smith (205 carries, 1,771 yards, 23 touchdowns). Quarterback Sam Carper (51-of-106 passing, 13 touchdowns, seven interceptions) has also had key moments for an offense that averages 43.5 points per game.

"The thing that really stands out is their style," Goodwin said. "We just really don't see that over here in our league ... what I would consider their commitment to running the ball. Most of the teams we see will run the ball but they aren't totally sold on running the ball like St. Paul is."

"Their offensive linemen put a lot of weight on their hands and they get off the ball. They do a lot of good things up front. That first series is going to be a series of adjusting for our defensive front, that's for sure."

St. Paul's defense is led by Derek Gross (142 tackles), Jacob Ruffing (124 tackles) and Jaret Nickoli (122 tackles). St. Paul has given up 10.3 points per game and has three shutouts.

**Division VII
State Championship
Norwalk St. Paul (13-1)**



Vs.

Marion Local (14-0)



**Ohio Stadium,
Columbus
Saturday, 10 a.m.**

All that said, Livengood knows it will take a great effort to beat the Flyers. In the 2013 state title game, Marion Local defeated previously unbeaten Trimble 33-0. A lot of those players are on this year's team, including Jacy Goettemoeller, who had three touchdowns in Massillon last season.

"We know that we've got to come out and play our best game of the season," Livengood concluded.

Division V State Championship Game

Cavs face challenge in Boccuti

By GARY R. RASBERRY
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Not often does a quarterback weigh more than most of the opposing defenders.

Coldwater will get to experience that Saturday as they face Canton Central Catholic in the Division V state championship game at Ohio Stadium at 8 p.m.

The Crusaders boast the talent of quarterback Jake Boccuti, a 6-foot-2, 205-pound athlete who can do damage with his arm as well as his legs.

Boccuti is having a dream season after missing the last part of 2013 with a blood clot in his throwing arm. Boccuti is 107-of-171 passing for 1,791 yards with 18 touchdowns to only four interceptions. On the ground, Boccuti leads the team with 874 yards rushing and 15 touchdowns.

"The hard part is they spread the wealth pretty well with two slot (receivers) who are very fast," Coldwater coach Chip Otten. "They do all the fakes on what we call the Fly or the Jet Sweeps. If your quarterback can run, you get an extra blocker at times. Our strength on defense is we can run to the ball, so when you're not sure who has the ball, you have to hesitate a bit. That opens up holes and space."

"When the quarterback is 205 pounds, which is as big as anybody we have on defense with the exception of a couple of tackles, you have to focus on him but also watch the speed guys. It's hard to defend when you can spread the wealth."

Complementing Boccuti in the slot spots are Jimmy Russell (45 receptions for 791 yards, 644 yards rushing) and Jon Calangelo (36 receptions for 589 yards, 324 rushing yards). Justin Ditty adds solid running back numbers with 729 yards and 13 touchdowns.

Defensively, the Crusaders did not allow a team more than 14 points until last week's state semifinal win over Bishop Hartley. Linebacker Carter Blakeney leads the team with 150 tackles. Defensive end Simon Smith has 23 tackles for loss and 11 sacks on the season.

"They're the most solid defense other than maybe a combination of Marion Local and



Nick Wenning/The Daily Standard

The Coldwater defense faces a tough challenge Saturday against Canton Central Catholic at Ohio Stadium

Kenton," Otten said. "Really physical front with two strong tackles (Chris Harbison, with 75 tackles and 11 TFL, and Griffin Baumel with 90 tackles). (Smith) is a good pass rusher."

CCC head coach Jeff Lindesmith, who took over this season after the retirement of longtime coach Lowell Klinefelter, knows how good Coldwater is.

"They're like any Coldwater team I have watched over the years in the playoffs," Lindesmith said. "Their quarterback (Brody Hoying) is so accurate when he throws the ball. Always been impressed with their route running. ... They're so fundamentally sound. I just enjoy watching a football team that plays that way."

"Defensively, we played some teams where we thought their secondary tackled very well," continued Lindesmith. "The first thing that sticks out to me is how (Coldwater) tackles. They don't miss a lot of things. Very disciplined. They may not be the biggest team we've played throughout the year, but they're the most sound, well-coached team we've faced. I was impressed with Mitch Fullenkamp. I liked his energy."

**Division V
State Championship**

**Canton Central
Catholic (14-0)**



Vs.

Coldwater (13-1)



**Ohio Stadium,
Columbus
Saturday, 8 p.m.**

**Look for The Daily Standard's special
State Championship Weekend
Commemorative section in Tuesday's edition**

Caring for the Champions in *Our* Community.



Success Breeds Success.



**Good Luck to the Coldwater Cavaliers,
Marion Local Flyers and Minster Wildcats
at the OHSAA State Football Championships.**