

# GOAL LINE

THE WEEKLY AREA HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PREVIEW SECTION

## LET THE SEASON COMMENCE



Nick WenningThe Daily Standard

Hunter Wilker will look to help Marion Local extend its winning streak to 38 games as the Flyers open the 2015 football season on the road against McComb, which also made the postseason in 2014.

By GARY R. RASBERRY and COLIN FOSTER  
The Daily Standard

The 2015 high school football season is upon us, and now the talk of what could be can be converted into action.

The first Friday of the season features a plethora of key non-conference matchups. The Western Buckeye League goes into league play in Week Two while the Midwest Athletic Conference will play another week of non-conference games before going into the MAC wars.

Here's a small summary of the area games on Friday night. All will kick off at 7:30 p.m. except for the Marion Local-McComb and St. Marys-Sidney games, which will start a half hour earlier at 7 p.m.

### MARION LOCAL AT McCOMB

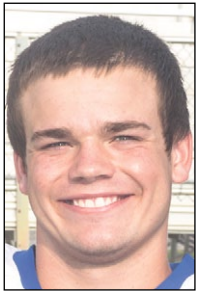
The defending Division VII state champs are now back in Division VI and face a tough competitor in the Panthers. McComb went 8-4 last season and lost to fellow Blanchard Valley Conference member Arlington in the regional semifinals. Marion holds a 2-0 lead in the all-time series.

The Flyers and Panthers, who have won at least eight games each of the last five

seasons, met in the 2012 Division VI state semifinals at Wapakoneta's Harmon Field. Marion needed three overtimes before pulling out a 34-28 win to advance to the state title game.

McComb coach Kris Alge, who like Flyers coach Tim Goodwin played collegiality at Findlay, has a big offensive line that averages 263 pounds. While the Panthers will miss Clay Grubb at quarterback, Malachi Abbott, who started in the postseason after Grubb was hurt, is solid and returns his top three receivers in Tyler Parker (450 yards, 7 TDs), Austin Davis (299 yards, 2 TDs) and Chas Shoop (271 yards, 2 TDs).

The Flyers do have to replace All-Ohioans Dustin Rethman and Jacy Goette-moeller on offense, but first-team All-stater Hunter Wilker returns as one of the best all-purpose players in the state. Add in Aaron Nietfeld at tailback and three returning starters on the offensive line, including 6-6, 290-pound sophomore John Dirksen, the Flyers have the potential to put up points again this season after setting a school record with 656 points



Nietfeld



Nick WenningThe Daily Standard

Chris (Petey) Post returns after being a key rusher and receiver for Coldwater last season. Coldwater opens defense of its Division V state title at Cavalier Stadium on Friday in hosting Kenton in their traditional lidlifter matchup.

scored last season.

The Flyer defense allowed just 88 points in 2014, including just 14 in the postseason.

### KENTON AT COLDWATER

This opener has been a measuring stick game for both teams over the last two years, with the winner usually relying on the other team winning a lot of games the rest of the season to ensure playoff spots. Both teams had great 2014 seasons. The Cavaliers won the Division V state title and the Wildcats made it to the state semifinals in Division IV.

Kenton features a dominating quarterback in Trent Hites, who threw for 4,175 yards and 34 touchdowns last season as a sophomore. Hites will have to look to new receivers after Colyn Blackford (1,651 yards, 15 TDs) and Kollin Stollar (1,468 yards, 16 TDs) graduated.

Jack Hemmelgarn succeeds two-time Division V Offensive Player of the Year Brody Hoying at quarterback. With a good core of skill players returning as well as



Hemmelgarn

several key linemen, the Cavaliers should not miss a beat.

In the last two meetings between the teams, the losing team has scored just two points.

### FORT LORAMIE AT MINSTER

Minster drops down to Division VII after winning the Division VI state title last year and immediately opens with a potential regional opponent in next-door neighbor Fort Loramie.

The Redskins go through several changes this season after founding coach Matt Burgbacher moved on to Troy. Former Minster coach Whit Parks takes over a team that has made six straight playoff appearances.

Fort Loramie lost a lot of offense from last season, but running back Justin Siegel returns after rushing for 511 yards and a team high eight touchdowns in 2014.

Even with Eli Wolf joining older brother Ethan at Tennessee, Minster quarterback Josh Nixon has enough ammunition in stock to allow him the ability to throw to multiple receivers with returning Bryce Schmiesing and Jacob Dues.

See SEASON, page 7B

See MONNIN, page 7B

### Computer Points



By  
Bruce  
Monnin

### Breakdown

## LATE VOTE MAKES FOR SOME CHANGES

Every two years, the OHSA reclassifies its football teams based on enrollment, placing them in their appropriate divisions and regions. This year included a new change. The passage of Ohio House Bill 487 in July 2014 gave community and STEM school students the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities at their local public school.

Since data from the Ohio Department of Education included the public school district where students reside, the OHSA decided to include community school and STEM school students in the enrollment of local public schools. This greatly increased the enrollment numbers of many city schools. For instance, many of the Columbus public schools moved up two divisions in football.

So, after putting in 60 hours preparing for analyzing the computer points during the 2015 season, I left for a well-earned week long vacation ("Vacation from what?" responded those who know me best).

When I returned in early August, I found that the divisions and regions had been changed for many teams. OHSA Commissioner Dan Ross explained that "the feedback we've received from many member schools across the state about the negative impact this had on tournament divisional movement for schools, combined with the belief that so few of these students currently take advantage of these participation opportunities, made us realize it is best for us to study this issue further." It is possible a rumored-threatened lawsuit from the Columbus public schools

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After helping Fort Recovery to its first-ever playoff appearance, Caleb Martin is back at quarterback as the Indians look to continue their run. Fort Recovery hosts another Division VII Region 26 team in Lehman on Friday at Barrenbrugge Park.

SEASON

(Continued from page 8B)

CELINA AT VERSAILLES

The Bulldogs look to rebound from a 5-5 2014 season, but face a big challenge in an experienced Tigers team that made the playoffs last season.

Versailles, under the guidance of former Delphos St. John's full-back Adam Miller, has picked up the running game that was its calling card during the era of hall of fame coach Al Hetrick after several years of working with a passing game.

Colin Peters returns after rushing for nearly 1,200 yards during the 2014 regular season. Quarterback Jared Niekamp (37-91, 793 yards, 11 TDs/6 INTs) returns but will need to find a new go-to receiver after Jace Barga graduated. Barga caught nearly a third of Niekamp's completions (12 catches for 414 yards, 5 TDs).

Celina has Caleb Hoyng back at quarterback and Garrett Winget returns at running back, but Hoyng will have several new receivers to pass to this season.

LEHMAN AT FORT RECOVERY

This could be a good battle between a pair of teams who made the Division VII, Region 26 playoffs.

Both squads had their seasons end at the hands of eventual champion Marion Local. The

Indians' loss came in the regional semifinal. The Cavs were taken down by the Flyers the following week in the regional final.

The Indians have returning starters across the board and are hoping for an even greater run this time around. They have five starters returning on the offensive side of the ball, including QB Caleb Martin, and seven on defense.

The Cavaliers were hit heavily by graduation but still have lofty goals for this season. QB Nick Rourke, a three-year starter, is now gone and senior Stephen Monnin will try to keep the Lehman offense on point. More than 2,000 rushing yards were graduated off Lehman's 2014 team, accounted for by Rourke, Greg Spearman, Skylar Brown and Lane Monnin.

COVINGTON AT ST. HENRY

For another season opener, it will be MAC power St. Henry against Covington, a perennial Cross County Conference contender and playoff threat.

St. Henry won last year's game 34-7 and finished the year 6-4. The Buccs finished 6-5, losing to Lehman in the opening round of the Division VII, Region 26 playoffs.

Redskin RB Jesse Niekamp will look to have another strong game against the Buccs. Last season, he rushed for 190 yards and four TDs on his way to becoming one of the top backs in the MAC.

CRESTVIEW AT PARKWAY

The Panthers open the season with one of many tests on their loaded schedule.

Crestview won last year's game 35-0, and that began a stretch of six games in which the Panthers failed to reach double digits.

The Knights went 8-3 last year, losing to Spencerville in the opening round of the Division VI, Region 20 playoffs.

Parkway went 1-9 with its lone win coming at New Bremen. Including Crestview, the Panthers have seven playoff teams from 2014 on their schedule.

BRADFORD AT NEW BREMEN

After a year's hiatus, football is back at Bradford.

The Railroaders and Cardinals are both beginning new eras. For Bradford, coach Nathan Hyatt takes over looking to return the program to the glory that it experienced during the 2012 season — the first playoff berth for the team since 1982. At New Bremen, the Chris Schmidt era begins as the Cardinals try to put an end to a 24-game losing skid.

ST. MARYS AT SIDNEY

Coach Doug Frye returned to the sidelines for St. Marys last season and helped snap the team's 21-game losing streak in its opener with a 71-21 thumping over the Yellow Jackets. In



Nick WenningThe Daily Standard

Celina's Caleb Hoyng hands off to Garrett Winget. Both players return this season as the Bulldogs try to improve from last year's 5-5 season. Celina travels to Hole Field to face Versailles in the opener.



Nick WenningThe Daily Standard

St. Henry's Mitchel Stammen looks to help the Redskins open the season with a win as they host Covington at the Wally Post Athletic Complex.

that win, St. Marys racked up a school-record 729 yards on the ground.

The Roughriders finished last

season at 5-5, highlighted by a 21-13 win over rival Celina.

Sidney is coming off a 2-8 campaign.

MONNIN

(Continued from page 8B)

also influenced this decision.

So, what is the result of all this? Almost no changes were placed upon teams in the WBL. Celina, St. Marys and Wapakoneta will all remain in Division III, Region 10. St. Marys was briefly demoted down to Division IV but returned to Division III after the August adjustment.

Elida, Defiance and Lima Shawnee are also in Division III, but in the northern Region 8. Van Wert and Ottawa-Glandorf move up from Division V to Division IV, where they will join Bath and Kenton in Region 12.

The MAC sees many more significant changes from last year.

Defending state champion Coldwater remains in Division V, but the August adjustment moved the Cavaliers from the northern Region 16 to the southern Region 18. Coldwater will be joined there by Anna and Versailles, both of which are moving up from Division VI last year.

Division VII teams across the state breathed a sigh of relief when they saw that Marion Local, who has won the state championship in Ohio's smallest division each of the last four years, is moving up to Division VI. The Flyers will be joined in Region 22 by St. Henry and Parkway.

Before they could relax too much, Division VII schools noticed that the defending Division VI state champions from Minster have dropped down into the smallest division. New Bremen also falls into Region 26 from Division VI last year, and these two will be joined by Fort Recovery. Delphos St. John's was also initially in this same region, but the August adjustment sent them north into Region 24 instead.

Once again this year, the computer points for the four regions involving most area teams can be found throughout the season at: <http://www.nktelco.net/bdmonnin/football.htm>

THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE

- Celina at Versailles
- Kenton at Coldwater
- Lehman at Fort Recovery
- Marion Local at McComb
- Bradford at New Bremen
- Crestview at Parkway
- Covington at St. Henry
- St. Marys at Sidney
- Bellefontaine at Wapakoneta
- Delphos St. John's at Bath
- Napoleon at Defiance
- Lima Central Catholic at Elida
- Oak Harbor at Ottawa-Glandorf
- Delphos Jefferson at Shawnee
- Van Wert at Bryan
- Arlington at Anna



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