

Cougars going for third straight Red title

Anchor Bay lost 12 to graduation

By Fred Costello
Special to The Macomb Daily

If history repeats itself, the Macomb Area Conference Red Division will be a battle between familiar faces. In five years of competition, St. Clair Shores Unified has won the title three times; Dakota has taken the last two in a row. Here's a look at the Red:

Anchor Bay

Losing 12 seniors to graduation seems to have taken its toll on the Tars. That said, head coach Daryel McCarrel is enthused about his underclassmen's ability to play well where it counts the most: in the defensive zone.

"We're not a team that scores a lot, so we have to be a defensively sound team," McCarrel explained. "We're a young team, but we have very strong goal-tending."

Anchor Bay boasts senior net-minder Alan Gaglio, who was a Michigan Developmental Hockey League selection in the fall. Rarely is a goalie named one of a hockey team's captains, but that is the case with Gaglio. McCarrel and his staff have faith that both Gaglio and sophomore Jeff Wilssens, a former AAA travel player, can keep the Tars in each and every game.

Anchor Bay is led defensively by junior co-captains Alex Fostad and Tom Novak. They will be counted on in shorthanded, power play and the bulk of five-on-five situations.

Up front, the Tars will count

Hockey Preview MAC Red Division

on production from senior centers Anthony Depetro and Mike Wyszczelski.

McCarrel hopes for a successful year, but has been careful not to burden his seven seniors with all the pressure of winning.

"Our goal is always to win the Red, but we're up against some pretty tough competition," he said. "For our young guys, it's all about learning how to win."

Chippewa Valley

After working tirelessly to revive the program, Chippewa Valley head coach Mark Micolò will probably be relieved to get the season underway. He'll do so with a very youthful lineup, featuring almost as many sophomores (six) as seniors (seven). Regardless of age, Micolò is instructing the team to play an up-tempo style.

"I want them to play a very aggressive, very physical style of hockey," Micolò said. "The kind of hard-nosed old-time hockey where we get the puck in deep and establish our forecheck."

The coach expects the Big Reds to be potent offensively.

Senior team captain Jimmy Gaydos will be joined up front by Chad Sills. Talented sophomore Zach Greiner also will be counted on to score, as will Alex Wodnicki. Juniors Nick Bayagich and Connor Grossman will chip in with even more offense.

Sophomore Jared Odren anchors the defense, along with senior Jon Rosenthal. Senior goalie Troy Ronald figures to be

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— Frank DiCristofaro
St. Clair Shores Unified coach

the teams' starter between the pipes. Ronald was brilliant as a freshman, earning third team all-MAC selection for the 2007-08 season.

Dakota

As the two-time defending MAC Red champions, Dakota enters the new season trying to match St. Clair Shores for the most division titles. Coach Dave Koons may have lost two all-MAC forwards to graduation, but luckily for the Cougars, he has a pair coming back. Seniors Alex Johansons and Jeff Monfils will be leaned on heavily for their offensive abilities.

Defensively, senior stalwart Austin Mazur returns to anchor the blue line. He'll be joined by senior Will Stawinski, a former travel player who Koons believes will add a dynamic nature to his defense.

Though he sat out all of last season with an injured shoulder, senior goalie Trevor Miller has made a full recovery and will likely see the bulk of the minutes between the pipes.

With seven sophomores and a pair of freshman on the roster, Koons doesn't have any illusions of walking through the division — as his team did last year with a 6-1-1 record.

"I think St. Clair Shores would be the front runner, and I'd put

us in the mix somewhere," Koons said. "If everything falls into place how we envision, we have the potential to reach the regional final. But, that's asking a lot and a lot of things have to happen for us to do that."

St. Clair Shores Unified

After narrowly losing the MAC Red title last season, St. Clair Shores is back with a vengeance. Considered by observers to be the division front-runner, the Lakers will likely have one of the county's most potent offenses.

"I think we're in a little better shape than we were last year," Lakers coach Frank DiCristofaro said. "We're very balanced and I'm really excited about this season because all the players have really put the effort in."

Leading the way will be senior forward Chris Pontello, the only MAC player to earn first team all-state honors last season. He'll be joined by classmates Joe Kommer, Zach Morgan, Shawn Quinn and Cory Shafer. Juniors Nick Shultz and Nick Izaguirre also will contribute.

Defensively, senior Kyle Evanko will bolster the blue line. The Lakers return sophomore goalie Zach Kosal, who exceeded expectations as a freshman last year.

Volleyball

FINALS

(At Kellogg Arena, Battle Creek)

Saturday, Nov. 21

Class D — Battle Creek St. Philip d. Pellston, 25-13, 25-21, 25-10
Class C — Bronson d. Ravenna, 26-24, 24-26, 15-25, 25-23, 17-15
Class A — Marian d. Portage Central 26-24, 20-25, 25-22, 25-20
Class B — North Branch d. Delton Kellogg 25-19, 30-28, 25-23

STATE SEMIFINALS

Thursday, Nov. 19

Class D

Battle Creek St. Philip d. Beal City, 21-25, 25-18, 25-15, 25-13
Pellston d. Oakland Christian, 25-21, 25-23, 25-17

Class A

Marian d. Mercy, 25-13, 25-22, 25-23
Portage Central d. Livonia Churchill, 25-18, 20-25, 25-19, 25-23

Friday, Nov. 20

Class C

Ravenna d. Marlette, 25-13, 25-11, 25-7

Class B

North Branch d. Cadillac 25-14, 24-26, 25-16, 25-19
Delton Kellogg d. Ladywood 25-10, 25-17, 25-18

QUARTERFINALS

CLASS A

(1-Host Muskegon-Reeths-Puffer)
Portage Central d. Rockford, 12-25, 25-11, 25-22, 25-14

(2-Host Fenton)

Mercy d. Lapeer East, 25-14, 25-23, 23-25, 25-13
(3-Host Brownstown-Woodhaven)
Livonia Churchill d. Carleton Airport, 25-22, 26-24, 25-18

(4-Host L'Anse Creuse)

Marian d. Eisenhower, 25-7, 25-13, 25-22

CLASS B

(5-Host Vicksburg)
Delton Kellogg d. Holland Christian, 25-14, 25-13, 25-19

(6-Host Williamston)

Ladywood d. DeWitt, 25-23, 25-16, 25-18

(7-Host Notre Dame Prep)

North Branch d. Marysville, 25-21, 25-17, 25-22

(8-Host Cadillac)

Cadillac d. Fruitport, 25-18, 25-19, 25-20

CLASS C

(9-Host Bronson)
Bronson d. Schoolcraft, 25-21, 25-22, 25-20

(10-Host Notre Dame Prep)

Marlette d. Allen Park Cabrini, 25-17, 27-25, 25-15

(11-Host Saranac)

Ravenna d. Byron, 25-15, 22-25, 25-16, 25-18

(12-Host Newberry)

McBain d. Calumet 25-21, 26-24, 21-25, 25-16

CLASS D

(13-Host Kalamazoo-Loy Norrix)
Battle Creek St. Philip d. Hillsdale Academy 25-11, 24-26, 25-12, 25-14

(14-Host Fenton)

Oakland Christian d. Deckerville, 25-14, 25-22, 26-24

(15-Host Big Rapids)

Beal City d. Leland, 25-15, 25-15, 25-9

(16-Host St Ignace-La Salle)

Pellston d. Hancock, 25-14, 18-25, 25-23, 25-9

O'Shell, seniors left legacy of resiliency

— FERNDALE

When the 2009 De La Salle Pilots gathered one final time on the football field, senior Steve O'Shell left the underclassmen with words to remember.

"I told them, 'Lead,'" O'Shell said after De La Salle's 12-3 loss to Inkster in a Division 2 state semifinal on Saturday at Ferndale High School. "Be a leader."

While those words will resonate, the actions of O'Shell and the rest of the Pilots senior class also will have a lasting impact on the program.

"They're a bunch of kids who played hard all year long," De La Salle coach Paul Verska said. "They kept battling and battling." O'Shell, a running back, linebacker and punter, did a little bit of everything for De La Salle, and his contributions — and those of his classmates — won't be forgotten. The seniors helped continue a tradition of excellence at DLS. The Pilots have advanced to the state semifinals in three of the last four years, and they have an 11-4 record in the postseason over that span.

In addition, thanks to players such as O'Shell, the Pilots have made toughness and resiliency part of their trademark.

This year wasn't easy, a sea-

son of great expectations that featured several rough spots.

De La Salle looked strong at the onset, winning its first three games, all against non-league foes, by a combined score of 119-0.

But the Pilots stumbled in their Catholic League Central Division opener to Orchard Lake St. Mary's 25-16, and they lost the next week in the final seconds to Brother Rice 24-21. Suddenly, their league championship dreams were gone.

After a victory over U-D Jesuit, De La Salle suffered two more tough losses — a 14-10 setback to Detroit Catholic Central and a 14-6 decision to Columbus Bishop Watterson.

Four losses — all by single-digit deficits — over a five-week stretch had turned a 3-0 start into a 4-4 mark, and now the Pilots' playoff hopes were in jeopardy.

The Pilots persevered, though, defeating Detroit Western 48-0 and qualifying for the playoffs with a 5-4 record on the basis of playoff points.

O'Shell said the team heard people saying De La Salle did not belong in the playoffs, but the Pilots were determined to leave a mark similar to the 2006 and '08 squads that made the Division 2 state championship game.

Now, the setbacks in the regular season seemed to fuel the Pilots. Determined to redeem themselves in the playoffs, the players rallied together.

Even with their two top quarterbacks, senior Steve Laudicina and junior Sterling Johnson, sidelined by injuries, the Pilots



Macomb Daily photo by David Dalton

De La Salle's Steve O'Shell rumbles after intercepting a pass against Inkster in a Division 2 state semifinal. The senior running back, linebacker and punter also rushed for 84 yards in the game for the Pilots.

rallied behind freshman Shane Morris, who started throughout the playoffs.

With seniors O'Shell and De'Angelo Parris running behind a powerful offensive line that started four seniors, De La Salle steamrolled the first three postseason opponents by a 68-13 margin and was one step away from making its third trip to the state finals in four years.

But the Pilots fell short against Inkster.

"It took a lot," Parris said. "We lost four games. We bounced back and worked hard. It was a blessing to come back. We just fell short."

They battled all day. Parris and O'Shell each rushed for 84 yards, and O'Shell made an instant impact on Vikings star quarterback Devin Gardner by drilling him for a sack on an early two-point conversion attempt. De La Salle never gave up, and the Pilots had a chance to win until the final three minutes.

While the ending fell short of their hopes, and though the pain of the loss shone in their reddened eyes, O'Shell and Parris both said the team could take pride in the season.

"The best way to describe this team was resilient," O'Shell said.

"We wanted to leave a legacy. All the breaks didn't go our way. A few breaks here or there ...

"We wished we could've gone to the state finals," O'Shell said. "But we're really proud of what we accomplished."

Just as importantly, O'Shell hopes the underclassmen gained something from the senior class.

"I just hoped they learned it's not about winning or losing," O'Shell said. "You're not always going to have the breaks go your way. It's about being tough. It's about bouncing back."

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PILOTS: 'We moved the ball, we just couldn't finish,' Parris says

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1 p.m. at Ford Field in Detroit.

"It feels so good," said Lindsey, whose first-quarter interception return gave the Vikings all the points they would need. "I'm so happy. My birthday's Monday so I'm going to celebrate this weekend."

Inkster needed big plays from Lindsey and the defense because an offense that had been averaging 45.3 points per game in the playoffs struggled against De La Salle.

The Pilots limited Gardner, who has made a verbal commitment to Michigan, to 7-for-15 passing for 76 yards. They also intercepted Gardner twice, once by Steve O'Shell and another by

Doug Vaneslander, though Gardner did manage to score a rushing touchdown late in the game.

De La Salle also kept Gardner from establishing a rhythm, holding on to the ball for 31 of the game's 48 minutes and limiting the Vikings to 11 plays in the first half.

Offensively, the Pilots managed to move the ball, particularly in the first half, and O'Shell and senior running back De'Angelo Parris each rushed for 84 yards.

De La Salle moved the ball inside the Inkster 30-yard line three times in the first half, yet the Pilots failed to take advantage.

Lindsey ruined the Pilots' first

drive — a 10-play, six-minute march on the opening possession of the game — when he stepped in front of a pass in the flat on the 4-yard line and raced up the right sideline for a 6-0 Vikings' lead with 5:47 left in the first quarter.

"I had to check the wing man," Lindsey said. "He kind of telegraphed the ball to the receiver. I just played the ball well and intercepted it."

Inkster never would relinquish the lead, though De La Salle kept battling.

The Pilots marched all the way to the Inkster 3-yard line midway through the second quarter, yet had to settle for Dominic Brugno's 20-yard field goal to cap a 14-play, eight-minute march.

A controversial call halted another De La Salle drive late in the first half. Quarterback Shane Morris connected with Tim Zabawa on a fourth-down pass play that would have given the team a first-and-goal with less than two minutes remaining, but the Pilots were penalized for offensive pass interference to negate the gain.

"I thought the key to the game was the call by the official," Verska said.

Neither team could score in the third quarter before De La Salle had one final chance.

Vaneslander came up with his second takeaway of the game when he stripped DaShawn Bell of the ball and returned the fumble to the Inkster 31-yard line

with 5:03 left in the game.

But after gains of 2 and 6 yards on runs by Parris, Inkster forced two incomplete passes — including the final one on fourth-and-2 from the 23 — and took possession at its own 23.

The Vikings proceeded to march 76 yards on six plays to seal the game on Gardner's 14-yard touchdown run with 1:02 remaining.

"We moved the ball," Parris said. "We just couldn't finish."

	Inkster 12, De La Salle 3		
De La Salle	0	3	0
Inkster	6	0	0
			3
			12
	First Quarter		
	I - Nathan Lindsey 96 interception return (run failed)		
	Second Quarter		
	DLS - Dominic Brugno 20 FG		
	Fourth Quarter		
	I - Gardner 14 run (pass failed)		

Football

STATE SEMIFINALS

DIVISION 1

(At Lansing Everett)
Detroit Catholic Central 31, Holt 0

(At Troy Athens)

Stevenson 37, Clarkston 35

REGIONAL FINALS

R1: Holt 27, Rockford 13

R2: Detroit Catholic Central 31, Canton 24 (10T)

R3: Clarkston 38, Dakota 14

R4: Stevenson 38, Detroit Southeastern 32

DISTRICT FINALS

R1-D1: Rockford 14, Grand Haven 7

R1-D2: Holt 34, Howell 0

R2-D1: Canton 60, Ann Arbor Pioneer 24

R2-D2: Detroit Catholic Central 38, Livonia Stevenson 0

R3-D1: Clarkston 21, Romeo 3

R3-D2: Dakota 28, Eisenhower 10

R4-D1: Detroit Southeastern 41, Detroit Cass Tech 0

R4-D2: Stevenson 35, Warren-Mott 21

PRE-DISTRICTS

R1-D2: Holt 13, Brighton 10

R2-D2: Detroit Catholic Central 42, Livonia Franklin 7

R3-D1: Clarkston 17, Lake Orion 7

R4-D2: Stevenson 35, Roseville 0

DIVISION 2

(At Howell)

Lowell 35, Brother Rice 14

(At Ferndale)

Inkster 12, De La Salle 3

REGIONAL FINALS

R1: Lowell 35, Portage Central 14

R2: Brother Rice 49, Midland 27

R3: De La Salle 27, Southfield 6

R4: Inkster 35, Southgate Anderson 7

DISTRICT FINALS

R1-D1: Lowell 26, Muskegon 19

R2-D2: Portage Central 27, Caledonia 14

R2-D1: Midland 26, Lapeer West 20

R2-D2: Brother Rice 24, Rochester Adams 7

R3-D1: Southfield 20, Farmington Hills Harrison 14

R3-D2: De La Salle 21, Grosse Pointe North 7

R4-D1: Inkster 50, Redford Thurston 28

R4-D2: Southgate Anderson 21, Brownstown Woodhaven 6

PRE-DISTRICTS

R1-D1: Lowell 42, St. Johns 3

R2-D2: Brother Rice 35, Walled Lake Central 7

R3-D2: De La Salle 20, Grosse Pointe South 0

R4-D1: Inkster 51, Dearborn Edsel Ford 19

DIVISION 3

(At Central Michigan University)

East Grand Rapids 43, Ogemaw Heights 8

(At Fenton)

Orchard Lake St. Mary's 44, DeWitt 27

DIVISION 4

(At East Kentwood)

Three Rivers 14, Saginaw Swan Valley 10

(At Williamston)

Marshall 47, Marine City 16

DIVISION 5