

FALL SPORTS PREVIEW

Huskies

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Shane Whalen at quarterback and Tim Beck who was one of our slot backs, but we have people that can come in and do the job. The problem is the people who backed them up last year — we're looking for people to back them up this year."

Finding depth on the line is the biggest concern of the coaching staff. Someone who isn't a concern is Jesse Rodgers. The junior has been named to the Pennsylvania Football News preseason all-state second team on the defensive line. Rodgers will be counted on to be a leader in 2013.

"Up front we are going to rely heavily on Jesse Rodgers and Colton Craig. Those two guys will be key on both sides of the ball. Phil Rearick will play offense. Kyle Bargo played a lot on JV last year and he will be part of our offensive and defensive line play. I think we're pretty solid up front. The big question will be finding the backups," Miskinis said. "Developing depth on the line is a concern. We have guys backed up by underclassmen, so we have to make sure those guys are ready if called upon. There is a big difference playing a junior high or JV game compared to a varsity game, especially speed wise with the teams we face. We just want to do a whole bunch of things faster."

Miskinis will unveil some new wrinkles to his read-option spread attack by adding the pistol formation to the offensive arsenal. The pistol can be used in a variety of ways because the quarterback is closer to the line of scrimmage than a traditional shotgun formation. This allows him to see more easily over the line and make downfield reads. He will also

get the ball snapped to him faster, which can alter timing patterns greatly for a preparing defense. It's an offense built on creating mismatches.

The only question remaining is, who will be running it?

"Right now we have a battle between Brice Christine and Hunter Walker going on at the quarterback spot," Miskinis said. "Isaac Strohecker, who is back out for football this year, didn't play last year. He can also play quarterback and will also see time at wide receiver."

Inexperience could be a problem. Of the three, only Christine has thrown a varsity pass.

No matter who runs the offense he will have plenty of weapons to choose from. The strength of the Huskies lies in their depth at the skill positions.

Seniors Kyle Kahley (545 yards, eight touchdowns) and Heath Hidlay (430 yards) will carry the brunt of the load in the running game, while seniors John Michael Maclay and Curtis Jerzerick are key wideouts for Mifflin County.

"If you look at the receiving corps, John Michael Maclay is back. He was our leading receiver last year and Curtis Jerzerick was a wide receiver, running back, and tight end last year. He's back at tight end, but we will move him around again this year and try to make teams find out where he is," Miskinis said. "At running back we have Heath Hidlay, Kyle Kahley and Chase Pitts. We have some solid underclassman as well. Without question the backfield is one of our strengths this season."

Defensively, the Huskies must try to overcome the losses of two down linemen and two linebackers from their 4-3 base.

"On the defensive side of the ball we have to replace two of our three linebackers.

We will miss Dylan Kauffman and Jordan Treaster, who anchored the middle, along with David Monsell and Derrick Specht at defensive end. We lost some key defensive players but we have a lot returning also," Miskinis said. "We have pretty nice depth all-around. The idea is to make sure we can play because in our league we have to be able to play a multitude of people and keep everybody as healthy as possible.

"We have kids who are working hard; they're getting the calls down and trying to understand what we are doing offensively and defensively. They are working at getting better, everything we do is on an upswing, and we just have to keep going. The biggest thing is to develop the depth. We have to get our best working hard in practice to get the ones behind them playing better, so there's no drop-off when they have to get into the game for a play or series or two."

Once again, the Mid-Penn Commonwealth schedule is not friendly to Mifflin County. The Huskies have a three-game run in late September/early October with Harrisburg, Central Dauphin and Cumberland Valley. The bright spot is two of the three are at home.

"When you look at Mid-Penn Commonwealth, just on sheer talent alone, Harrisburg is a sleeping giant. They have excellent speed and last year they got to play a lot of people because of the lopsidedness of some of their

games. So they developed some nice depth and coach (Calvin) Everett does a nice job down there," Miskinis said. "State College has gotten better. They have a lot of returning people and the team that I look to be really, really dangerous, and people may overlook is Chambersburg. Chambersburg has nine and eight starters back on each side of the ball. They will be tough.

"We can't beat ourselves. We can't make that turnover and then say, 'OK we can stop them.' When you make a turnover in the Mid-Penn and you give them a short field, it's like sharks or piranha in the water when they smell blood. The scent is there and they are going for the kill. We just have to get better and better at the little things. The emphasis is on not beating ourselves and we have worked hard in the offseason to get to that point.

"We know what to expect. Not one of our players believes that we cannot play with them (Mid-Penn) and I think we saw that last year. The lopsided scores against Harrisburg and Central Dauphin are not indicative of how we played," Miskinis said. "It's very devastating when you turn the ball over and give up the big, explosive play. I think our kids have learned that you have to be in it every play and stay focused. We just have to keep working and the success we'll have comes down to a lot of hard work by a bunch of individuals."

Trojans

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them," he said. "We have depth. There's a lot of sophomores who are really, really good. We have some outstanding sophomore running backs and some decent receivers that will contribute. It's a good problem to have."

Shugarts believes the strength of the team comes at the skill positions and the back seven on defense.

"Our skill people are the strength of this team. Line, offensively and defensively, is always the hardest thing to come together," Shugarts replied. "We are going to put a lot of emphasis on both sides of the line. Our secondary and linebacking crew is going to be strong.

When asked what he wants to accomplish this season back with the Trojans, Shugarts displays his passion for Mount Union and the people who live in the area. He also isn't shy about having lofty goals.

"I am a Mount Union person. I was born and raised here, went to school here and graduated in 1957. I played ball here and came back in 1962 and spent al-

most 40 years teaching here, so I have a vested interest in this school system. That's why I'm here right now, but I want to try and give back to them what I can and this is one way to do it," he said. "I hope we can go undefeated. That is your ultimate goal. My primary goal is to win the first game and then the second game. Hopefully that happens week to week. I just want the boys to be respectable on the field and play the game the way it's meant to be played. We want to play smash-mouth football and play to our potential. I believe if we don't get any key injuries we should do well."

Once again, the scourge of the ICC Gold should be Bellwood-Antis, ranked fifth in the state in the preseason by Pennsylvania Football News.

"Bellwood is always good. They are going to be tough. Northern Bedford has been on a roll lately. They have some really good athletes there," Shugarts said. "I think Everett is going to be someone to look at. We are not going to point to anyone of those. We are starting with Huntingdon and then Juniata Valley and then it goes right down the line."

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