

Dave Counts on New Blood

By PETER TESTA

Marian's football outlook for the new season can best be summed up in one short phrase, "New Faces For 1977."

Second-year coach Dave Mattio started 20 seniors on a last year's first-team offense and defense, and the group rewarded him with the first conference championship by a Marian team in any sport, finishing in a three-way tie for the Illini-8 crown.

This year's squad of 19 seniors, 17 juniors and two sophomores will have to mature into a pair of smooth-functioning units in a hurry to match the standard set by the 1976 Spartans, with the additional handicap of a tougher schedule and a better balanced I-8 conference.

THE offense is further along the path to an accomplished platoon, according to Mattio. Todd Bruni, a 6-3, 240-pound offensive tackle, is the one returning Spartan lineman, and the senior has already drawn rave reviews from Mattio. "Todd is definitely an all-area candidate. He's bench-pressed over 300 pounds." Bruni, who will also play defensive tackle this year, is certain to draw the attention of college scouts.

One of the sophomores, 190-pound, Tom Van Dyck, will replace Dave Goss at center with 165-pound senior Dan Rivera also handling pivot duties. Van Dyck, ("He's looked super in practice": Mattio) will also see some action at defensive end along with Rivera.

Seniors Peter Aleck (205) and Mike Sass (185) are currently heading the list of replacements for the 1976 guard duo of Mike Wilczynski and Jack Welshaar. Juniors Byron Anderson (195), Bob Lagone (160), Jeff Scheid (195), and senior Sam Sesto (165) will buoy the Spartan guard line. Of the six hopefuls at guard, Aleck has had the best pre-season scrimmages.

THERE are a pair of candidates for the tackle position opposite Bruni, 220-pound senior Jim Denman and 215-pound junior Bill Mullee, completing the Marian interior offensive line. Both Denman and Mullee will join Bruni in going both ways in the defensive tackle positions.

Seeking the berth at tight end to take over for all-area Shawn Janus are 205-pound junior Mark Panozzo, 185-pound senior Chris Roche, and two juniors, 195-pound Mike Bartolomei and 180-pound Scott Janus.

After completing his only two pass attempts for 23 yards in 1976, senior Karl Volkman, a 6-2, 185-pounder, will direct Marian's offense, moving to the quarterback post from his defensive safety position of last year. "Karl's an intelligent quarterback who'll provide us with good leadership," said Mattio. "He's a magician with the football."

Halfback is the one spot with returnees from last season, senior Jeff Martin (5-9, 170) was third in Spartan rushing tables with just over 300 yards, and junior Mike Petrarca (5-7, 155) ran for another 200 yards. The two Marian basketball players will be joined in the backfield by senior Mark Blankenberger, a 5-11, 160-pounder who contributed 124 yards in 17 carries for a 7.2 average in 1976. Junior Mark Jurczyk, (5-9, 155) will be playing both at halfback and in the defensive backfield.

A PAIR of Spartans are eventually matched in vying for Joe Zarlengo's fullback a lot. Senior Jerrak Stringer (5-10, 185) and the other Marian sophomore 6-2, 195-pound Dave Brockhagen, have been unable to forge ahead to clinch a starting position.

With no experienced players back defensively, Mattio is forced to go back to the basics in schooling his young stop troops. "We have to teach the kids to read keys and execute as a unit," declared Mattio. "Bruni will give us some stability."

Seniors John Wojcik (180) , Tom Shander (155) and Tom Weiser (195) are slated for the defensive front, along with 180-pound junior Dennis McCarron. Backing up the front four will be Mike Broderick, a 160-pound junior, and Steve Moser, a 165-pound senior, with Bartolomei and Stringer as possibilities.

Ten Spartans are competing for the four secondary positions that are totally bereft of experienced players. Seniors Charlie Funk (165), Tony Jiganti (185), Don Prior (143), Jim Thompson (155) and juniors John Donahue (140), Mike Logan (160) , Brian Blue (165) and John Velo (165) are also backfield candidates.

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