Wykons feeling good as practice gets going

Written by Peter Nocerini Tuesday, August 14, 2012 2:09 PM -



Assistant Coach Jim Kralovec quickly checks foot positioning as linemen work on their blocking technique during a practice last week.

IRON RIVER—It's our first Wykon football story of the year, and it's a time to feel upbeat. The Wykons went 8-1 last season, were unbeaten in the West Pac Conference and reached the district title game. Overall record: 9-2.

Practice for the 2012 season officially started Aug. 6, and the players put pads on for the first time Aug. 9.

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Who's gone: The 2011 Wykons ran behind a strong corps of linemen—Atanasoff, Spicer, Varney, Pellizzer—now graduated and gone.

"We lost those four guys," Coach Mike Berutti said. "Those are big shoes to fill—they were big and strong." The Wykons have a strong corps of backs returning, and getting effective play from the renovated O line is a big goal.

But the cupboard is hardly bare. Coaches are counting on Bryson Heimerl and Andy Ridolphi to show their stuff. Both have lots of potential.

Strengths: "We're pick-ing up things quickly," Berutti noted. "We've got a lot of experience back off last year's team. We're a lot further ahead defensively than we normally are."

Returnees include G-SS Cody Desjardins, QB-OLB Andrew Peterson, RB-DB Adam Newby, RB-DL Tyler Stafford, RB-LB Chasz Jonet and RB Alec Schnmelebeck, who played varsity late last year.

Berutti: "We've still got a lot of work to go. Hopefully it starts coming together in the next few days."

Turnout: Varsity has 22 players, and the JV team has 26 or 27. "JV numbers are down a little bit."

Overall? "It's gone really pretty well," said the coach. A few players missed the first week—either out of town or dinged up. One was recovering from wisdom tooth surgery.

The base offense and defense are in, along with some stunts. This week's plans include working more on the passing attack, including the shotgun package, in time for Friday morning's scrimmage.

Tuesday night: Nelson Field hosts "Meet the Wykons" night on Aug. 14 at 6 p.m. It includes a ceremony for the new scoreboard. The new schedule posters are in, too. And season passes are available at the high school office starting Friday.

Coming up: The scrimmage is Friday. Aug. 17, at 9 a.m. at Nelson Field, vs. Forest Park and Florence. It's open to the public, and there's no charge.

West Iron's season opener is against Pittsford on Aug. 25, at St. Ignace. Just a week and a half away. Then they go to L'Anse on Aug. 30 (Thursday) and open the home schedule vs. Iron Mountain Sept. 7.