A Trojan back heads upfield after turning the corner on a Wykon defender at last week's scrimmage. The Trojans host Bark River-Harris at home this Friday, Aug. 24.

CRYSTAL FALLS—Team members were probably disappointed last Monday when Forest Park announced that it wouldn't—couldn't—field a JV football squad this year due to lack of young players.

By Friday's scrimmage in Iron River, they had put it behind them and were focused on the guys in the blue and green shirts across from them—the West Iron and Florence players.

__PUBLIC__

By no means did the Trojans dominate the Wykons and Bobcats. But they weren't dominated, either. "We held our own," Coach Bill Santilli said. And that was better than coaches had expected.

How it went: Forest Park led off, facing Florence's defense from the Bobcat 40. Several short runs led to a 13-yard pass to the 10, and FP "scored" on a five-yard run two plays later. Runs of nine and 12 yards later in the possession.

Then, the Bobcat offense went at FP. Staying on the ground, Florence got eight- and six-yard gains and a 10-yard burst up the middle to the 12. But the Trojans didn't let Florence inside the 10.

Later, FP faced the Wykons. That's summarized in the West Iron story.

Trojan D: Santilli said he was especially pleased with FP's defense. "We played with some intensity, swarmed to the ball and had some aggressiveness."

Santilli had eight (former) JV players dressed for the scrimmage, and two freshmen, Kyle Soderberg and Ryan Silva, started on the defensive line. A third freshman, Adam Hilberg, would have been at linebacker but banged his shoulder the day before and was held out.

On offense: Santilli said Forest Park's offense looked "a little stagnant." But, he added, none of the three teams really was impressive with the ball.

When he watched film later, "It reinforced the fact that we've got so much work to do individually … the little fundamental things. If we're going to progress, it's got to be quickly."

Forest Park used a backfield of QB Jeff Johnson, E Derek Aberly, flanker Austin Snell, FB Raymond Tomasik and TB Zach Painter.

Overall: "I think we accomplished the things we wanted to do and what we wanted to see—and had a pretty good feeling that we didn't get blown out by anybody and that we competed.

"We worked on things we were hoping to see and got a look at all our guys—that was another good thing."

Changes: Having just one football team is new for Forest Park, and everyone is adjusting.

The coaches want the younger players to learn one position—even special teams—so they can get playing time. Santilli said FP's best players will still go both ways. But those without the skills and/or dedication will see playing time cut back in favor of the young guys.

The JV kids who have the desire, determination and skills coaches like will get their chances, even if it's just to give starters a breather.

As always, Santilli said, there will be changes to playing roles after the scrimmage, as coaches try to decide the best player for each position and the most effective combinations. Some things never change.

Coming up: The season opener Aug. 24 at Dick Mettlach Field against Bark River-Harris, with a special ceremony at halftime for the renovated scoreboard.