

HISTORY

Eagle defense _____ Barlow _____

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standpoint. That's the biggest thing. The kids have to know that if something goes wrong, you can make an adjustment that is based on intelligence and that you're not just guessing."

Centennial hasn't had any problems with confidence, which has become one of the reasons the Eagles always play with gusto.

"We teach our kids that there are always a couple of big plays in a game," Webb says. "They might happen for the offense or they might happen for the defense. You never know when they will happen or who they will happen for. So we teach the kids to play hard on every down and hopefully when the big play comes, it will go in your favor."

JIM HAYS

Barlow

says. "The seniors we're playing aren't the big guns from last year but they're moving into their positions. This team will be starting out in the middle of the pack and could go up or down.

"From a coaching standpoint, this is our staff's biggest challenge in a while. We all realize where we are and we feel

we can teach good football. We need a little luck, a little desire and a few points. If we can score 33 points a game, we'll be tough."

Of course, he adds, who wouldn't be?

JIM HAYS

Off on the right foot

At the end of the 1969 football season, Gresham fans had little reason to expect big things of the Gophers' 1970 team.

The team had been split with Barlow prior to the 1969 season and as a result finished only 5-4 in its last year in the Metro League.

What was encouraging, though, was the fact that Gresham was moving into the Wilco League with schools more its own size.

"When we were in the Metro League, we were going up against a lot of bigger schools like David Douglas, Central Catholic and Hillsboro," says Dean Nice, who was Gresham football coach at the time and is currently the district's athletic director. "Moving into the Wilco League, we didn't know what to expect. We knew we were in a tough league, but we felt we could compete well."

Gresham's ability to compete was demonstrated three years earlier, in 1967, when the Gophers went 7-2 and finished second in the Metro loop to eventual state champion Hillsboro.

Despite the new league, the Gophers gave no indication at the beginning of the 1970 campaign that they would be one of the top football clubs in the school's history — which they turned out to be; nine straight victories, a Wilco League championship and only 39 points scored against them during the regular season.

"It was a group of kids that believed in each other, that loved to play together," Nice says. "They were very easy to coach and they were always ready to play. Sometimes during practice we had to tune them down a little bit. They'd get a little carried away."

In 1970, Gresham had an offense built around quarterback Chuck Wills, running backs Dave Monnes, Ron Lunan and Joe Clingman and a line that included center Victor Burri and guard Mike Popovich. Burri, Popovich and Clingman would all be Wilco League all-stars when the season ended.

But it was defense that the Gophers lived or died on. "One of the reasons we were able to compete well against the larger Metro schools was that we concentrated a lot on defense and our kicking game," Nice says. "Our defense was always as strong as everyone else's."

Gresham opened Wilco League play on Sept. 11, 1970, in Tigard. Monnes ran 27 yards for one touchdown and Larry Simmons scored another, both coming in the first quarter.

Monnes gained 120 yards rushing on 20 carries during the game, accounting for all but eight yards of the Gresham offense. Tigard outgained the Gophers 259-128, but the Tigers' only score in a 14-7 Gresham win came on a fumble recovery.

From there, Gresham rolled up three straight wins, topping Oregon City 22-8, West Linn 14-0 and Putnam 24-6. Milwaukie, however, was also 4-0 going into the fifth week of the season and since the two schools were not scheduled to play each other, Gresham needed a Mustang loss to take over first place.

The Gophers got it in the fifth week. While Gresham was beating Reynolds 27-0 on the Lancers' field, Putnam was scoring an upset 14-7 win over Milwaukie. Gresham was all alone atop the Wilco League and was rated sixth in the state.

Gresham squeaked by Hood River 8-0 in its Homecoming game for its eighth straight win and faced Centennial with the Wilco League championship at stake. According to a tiebreaker point system then in force, if Gresham lost to Centennial, the Wilco's state playoff berth would go to Milwaukie.

The Gophers ended discussions, however, by knocking off the Eagles 20-12. Popovich scored the Gophers' first touchdown of the evening on a play designed especially for him.

"We moved him out to end, just to see if he could catch the ball," says Nice. "He ran straight down the field and the quarterback threw the ball as far as he could. Popovich was all alone. I don't think the defense thought he could catch the ball. I was about the most surprised person in the place when he did."

The Gophers were brought to a screeching halt in the

Wilco roundup _____

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After an 8-9 year, Putnam has nowhere to go but up. Coach Jerry Dressel has the entire offense back except four linemen and quarterback Rich Becker, out for the year with a knee injury suffered during baseball season.

The quarterback spot is a tossup between Monte Skiles and Dan Keough.

The run-and-shoot offense might run the ball more often, too, Dressel says. Putnam has a solid corps of running backs in Don Schmidt, David Kilhefner, Boyd Curtis and Kirk Cordova. Also back is Brad Hermo, last year's all-league split end.

Putnam should also be stronger on defense, with the entire backfield returning. The weakspot will be the line, where three of the front five have graduated.

BOB LEUNG

Sandy _____

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has also been "looking good." Marleau, a 5-11 and 170-pound junior, has a chance to start at guard.

Chris Crabtree, a 5-10 and 155-pound receiver-cornerback that started last year, has been doing a good job in practice, O'Meara says.

Good things are also expected of Dan Martin, a 5-10 and 170-pound returning linebacker.

Oregon City, last year's Timber Valley League champions, and West Linn, are reportedly going to be the teams to beat. O'Meara figures Canby and Sweet Home will also be sporting good teams.

O'Meara, who was an assistant for seven seasons before taking over the head position, feels the Pioneers can compete with the best teams this year.

"We've got good senior leadership," he says. "We've got a good group of kids out."

SCOTT NEWTON

Corbett _____

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Corbett, Humphrey says. "The biggest problem will be changing offenses and getting used to the new coach," he says. "That will take a couple of games, probably."

Hopefully, coach and team will be somewhat familiar with one another in time for the opener Sept. 4 against Elgin, a team that beat the Cards both during the regular season and the playoffs last year.

"We'll find out then whether we've grown or not," Humphrey says.

And how much.

DICK BALTUS



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