

Football preview

Yeomen eye OUAA Championship

"This team has the potential to be the best this school has ever had."

Head Coach Dave Pickett on this year's York Yeomen.

Mike Leonetti

For the above statement to be true a great many things have to fall into place for the football Yeomen. Dave Pickett is not trying to boast or to build up high expectations; it is, rather, a statement of quiet confidence. At the same time Pickett is the first to admit this team has many "ifs" facing it.

The most vital point of concern is the quarterback position. The Yeomen have no veteran passer returning, forcing them to use two quarterbacks who have never played university football. The two leading candidates are Tino Iacono from Senator O'Connor High School and Angelo Inetta a converted slotback.

Explosive Ground

The remaining backfield members will also be new. But Pickett is very excited about the running game. Norc Williams who has played for the Etobicoke Agonaunts and Joe Paraselli from Weston Collegiate, also an MVP in last year's high school all-star game, promises York an explosive ground game.

The offensive line returns virtually intact. Led by all-star Steve Shubat, the line should provide much support to a young and inexperienced backfield. In fact the offensive line could be the team's strongest area. Receiving also should be solid as Brian Eifford and Neil Dalgarno return from last year's team. Mike Bridgeman might be a newcomer to watch for in this area.

Defensively the Yeomen appear to be solidified especially the front seven. Pickett intends to use a 3-4 defense (3 down linemen and 4 linebackers). The line is anchored by veteran Charles Haing who will be joined by 23 year old rookie Trent Mackay who Pickett describes as someone who "could be all world." John MacDonald will likely be the noseguard in the alignment. The linebacking position will be handled by experienced men which include Elviro Marsella, Ron McIntyre and Mark Hopkins.

New Faces

There will be new faces in the defensive backfield this year. Gone are vets Angelo Kloussis and Greg Timmons however returnees included Dan Koenig and Doug Taylor. Rookies expected to start include Trevor Williams, Gordie Ferguson and Gerry Phillip. Pickett thinks the lack of experience among the defensive halfbacks will be made up by having more quickness and speed than in previous years. The kicking game will hopefully be handled by Sergio Capobianco who rates as one of the best in the league. However his academic status was not yet clear and if he is unable to play...well Pickett would rather not think about such a problem.



Training is hard work as our Yeomen are finding out. Here we see them going through their paces on the exercise field. Keep up the good work boys and step over those Radio Shack antennas.

Not to be forgotten as one of the rookies is Coach Pickett himself. The challenge of head coach is one he's looking forward to. "I love being head coach. It's something I've always wanted. I like the responsibility it brings me back to my quarterbacking days."

Pickett, who has been the Yeomen's assistant coach for the past 3 years, assumed full responsibility last spring replacing Frank Cosentino. He is quick to acknowledge Cosentino's work in bringing the Yeomen to respectability but he wants the team to go on to bigger and better things. He believes he can do this by adding more fire and intensity to the football program. "We will have a young team but we're going to be aggressive and have a more diversified attack than we've had before."

Tremendous Interest

Pickett has been especially happy with his first training camp as head coach.

"I am very pleased with the effort that has been given by everyone. There has been tremendous intensity and excitement. The key will be the development of the young players. I am sure the veterans are back to prove themselves and I feel we can compete with anyone."

Competition in the OUAA is expected to be tough this year. The Western Mustangs, last year's College Bowl participants, should be strong contenders again. The Varsity Blues, with QB Dan Fereday leading the way, should challenge for first place. Of course no-one should overlook a team coached by Tuffy Knight. His Laurier Golden Hawks always appear in the playoff picture often upsetting favorites. A team to watch for could be the Guelph Gryphons who made the playoffs last year as a much improved squad. Windsor is hoping to recapture their glory days and at the same time, playoff berth. Waterloo and McMaster are expected to be the weaker teams in the league.

The Yeomen have never made the playoffs and to do so this year would be a great accomplishment for Coach Pickett. It was something Cosentino could not accomplish but Pickett is confident his team will mesh together and gain a playoff berth.

Maybe this could be the season that Yeomen fans will have something to cheer about.

"I feel we can compete with anyone."

The Yeomen have gotten off to a good start. In an exhibition game last Friday, September 11, they defeated the Ottawa Gee-Gees 24-20 in Ottawa.

This Saturday, the Yeomen are off to London, Ontario where they'll do battle with the Western Mustangs.

On October 3, they'll host the Windsor Lancers for their home opener.



Ummmph!

Training for the upcoming football season means more than just push-ups and weightlifting! Here, dance instructor Paula Thompson leads the Yeomen through flexibility exercises.

