

Malvern Goes Without the Gorillas

By TED SILARY

The name is Gaspare (Gamp) Pellegrini and, no, he is not the head chef for the city's top Italian restaurant.

But in the past two football seasons at Malvern Prep, it is entirely true that The Gampster rarely was forced to break out his biggest pots and pans ... the better to show all those goodies in his offensive and defensive smorgasbords.

Now, Paul (Franchise) Phelan is hitting the books and evading tacklers at Fork Union Prep in Virginia and most of those other studs who helped the Friars take two straight Inter-Ac titles — pushing that string to six, pushing the unbeaten streak in the league to 27 — are off somewhere in college.

Gamp is not exactly down in the dumps, but he is no dummy, either.

"TO BE PERFECTLY honest," noted Pellegrini, "there were a few games there when all we had to do was show up and win. We would prepare for them real tough, but when they came, shoot, sometimes we wound up using only 10 to 15 percent of the stuff we had worked on. We were just too strong.

"But not now, baby. We're not close to what we've been. The gorillas are gone. We will have to use all the stuff we prepare and even then, that doesn't mean we're going to be successful."



Gaspare Pellegrini, chef's surprise?

If that phrase reads like a death knell, better buy some Murine. Malvern can't ever be bad these days. It just might not be super.

"Ah, just say we have a hard-working group of kids that has the possibility of being a good football team," Pellegrini hemmed. "There is some talent, but it's equal talent. There is no one around to carry us."

Mike Burke returns at quarterback, so that much is set. Meanwhile, the hope to replace Phelan is baseball star David Orr, an outfielder with pro potential. On defense, deep

back Ed Devine is expected to star as he did in '79.

"Last season," noted Pellegrini, "I knew that Paul would be dynamite going in. With David, it's a 'could be dynamite' situation. He's liable to be great since he does have the tools. Then again, God forbid, he could be average."

ON A SAD note, Kevin Fitzpatrick, a 230-pound, two-way tackle, was killed last month in a boating accident. Not only was Kevin talented, but Pellegrini called him his "best player from a coach's standpoint, as far as listening to what was said and using the pointers to improve himself."

The last time Malvern dropped a league game, Germantown Academy did the honors and went on to win the championship. And seven seasons later, the Patriots pose another threat.

Walt Norley (6-3, 265) will unwind the latest in a long line of golden arms in the league, while Angelo Lochetta and Jim Turner, the coach's growing sophomore son, will prove more than adequate as his favorite targets.

Also, Gary Hufnagel, Tom Finaccio and Blair Talmadge possess enough talent as runners to prevent any imbalance.

"The Inter-Ac is so darn competitive," said Jack Turner. "You have to be ready to play all four games. If not, you get bumped off somewhere along the line and one loss kills you."

"When you have a talented team, you just can't come out and say, 'Yeah, we are going to be up there.' It's too crazy a league. All the games are World War III caliber. Yeah, it

This Weekend

FRIDAY
Night
Non-League
Dougherty at Coatesville, 8
N. Catholic at Wilson, 7:30
Roman at Kennel, 7:30
SATURDAY
Afternoon
Non-League
5-J Neumann at Coatesville, 1:30
McDevitt at Springdale, 1:30
Wood at Council Rock, 1:30
Night
Non-League
W. Catholic at Delmas (Wilson), 7:30
Carroll at Kutztown (District), 8
SUNDAY
Non-League
Ryan at O'Hara (Springfield), 2

could be us and Malvern fighting it out. But that's nothing I can count on."

IN THE NOT-TOO-DISTANT past, Penn Charter School could assume a certain amount of victories most seasons and point to the showdown with Malvern, which usually decided the championship.

By the Malvern game last year, the Little Quakers were barely alive (let alone kickin') thanks to injuries, inexperience and a plain ol' shortage of talent.

"We got our butts whipped by just about everyone in the whole league," said Ed Zubrow, who is even more of a workaholic than Dick Vermeil. "We were whipped by teams that were flat out better than us. It was not that we were thinking ahead to Malvern."

"To do that — even this season, which should be better — would be presumptuous on our part."

"We just want to be the best team we can possibly be. And I've noticed that my kids are working extra hard to be the best players they can possibly be."

Six players, headlined by co-captains Jay Curcio (RB-DB) and Vinca Della Valle (OG-LB), started both ways in many games last season.

Thanks to Dan Dougherty, now running second string at fullback at Wake Forest, Episcopal Academy roared to a 6-0 start in '79 and shocked Penn Charter. Thanks to an injury which slowed that same Dan Dougherty, the Churchmen sagged like so many flies in November and lost their last three.

THERE'S NO "Doc" in the locker room this season, but two-way linemen Bob Marra and Ernie Rosato and two-way back Gene Tinari will do their best.

"We lack the one athlete who could carry us like Dan did," noted Jim Auch, who is coaching for the 13th season in the last 17, at four different schools. "And we're talking about eight or nine two-way players. An injury in the right place could destroy us."

John Gillin, who does everything, but work the scoreboard, is the franchise for Haverford School, which owns two straight 2-2 finishes and will be hard pressed to reel in third.

Mike Cunningham, the ex-Episcopal quarterback, returns almost as few lettermen (nine) as the singing group of the same name.

"We are looking for a good performance from John and we think we can block for him, too," Cunningham said. "It doesn't look like we have the quality we had in 1979, but the spirit is really good. Our biggest drawback is that a lot of guys are untested."

Next week: Public (hopefully).

Inter-Ac Thumbnail

1980 Preseason IA article

Clipped By:



Rcarey5171
Thu, Dec 31, 2020