

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Nash surprised as Bishop David is voted the solid favorite

By BOB WHITE
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 You'd think that after 18 years on the job, nothing would rattle Denny Nash, the Bishop David mentor who is dean of Jefferson County high school football coaches.

Not so, though. Nash appeared surprised that his colleagues voted Bishop David a solid favorite to repeat as First District champion. "They've got to be out of their minds," Nash said. "This is the worst we've been in 12 years. I appreciate their respect, though. We have maintained a strong program the last 12 years, and that must count for something. But we're not as talented as in the past. It's going to be competitive in our district again. I just hope we're up to it."

Five of the six district coaches voted Bishop David first. Nash, who could not vote for his own team, rated Butler — the 1979 state Class 4-A titlist — No. 1.

Overall, Butler — which lost to Bishop David 16-0 in regular-season play last year, then upset BD 24-14 in the playoffs — was second in the balloting. Pleasure Ridge Park was third, followed by Western, Valley and Shawnee.

"Bishop David has a lot of people to choose from and a good coaching staff," said Butler coach Bob Morehead. "They won't be as good at the start of the season as they were last year, but toward the end of the season they'll be at the top of the district."

Bishop David
 Bishop David's varsity numbers 80-85 players, "and that's even down from past years," Nash said. "We've got three full-time starters back and two part-timers. Out of 38 seniors, we don't have much playing experience."

Running back Jeff Roe, a major college prospect, wide receiver Ray Daub and guard Brian Neuner are the offensive regulars back. Returning on defense are end Chris Bearden and tackle Rocky Cambron.

Nash, whose 10-3 record last year boosted his overall record at Bishop David to 126-64, is looking at three quarterbacks: Larry Ward, a transfer from Does, is the best passer, Chris Hawkins the best runner (he might play some at fullback) and Todd McGrath the most stable of the three.

McGrath is a son of ex-Flaget star Joe McGrath and a brother to ex-Bishop David star Kevin McGrath. Two other brothers, Bobby and John, played for Flaget. "Whoever comes forth in our scrimmages will start," Nash said.

Jeff Saultzman, a senior tight end playing for the first time since he was a freshman, tackle Greg Ray

First District poll
 Coaches were not allowed to vote for their own teams, and points were awarded on a 5-4-3-2-1 scale.

Team	1	2	3	4	5	Pts.
Bishop David	5	0	0	0	0	25
Butler	1	3	1	0	0	20
Pleasure Ridge	2	3	0	0	0	17
Western	0	2	2	0	0	14
Valley	0	0	4	1	0	9
Shawnee	0	0	0	0	5	5

and center Doug Morgan are standouts in the offensive line. "Defensively, we're in fair shape, although our secondary is totally new," Nash said. Bishop David is strong at tackle with Cambron and Jim Bryan, and at end with Bearden and Chris Thiessen. Greg Egert, Bob Kilkelly and Chris Harr will handle the linebacking chores. Tim Hardin, a senior playing for the first year, may start at nose guard.

Butler
 Most of the big names that helped Butler win the 4-A state title in 1979 and post a 10-3 record last year are gone, including two-time All-State linemen Wayne Mink and Greg Thornton. Graduation also took the heart of Butler's running attack, tailback Jeff Sloops and fullback Tony Warren.

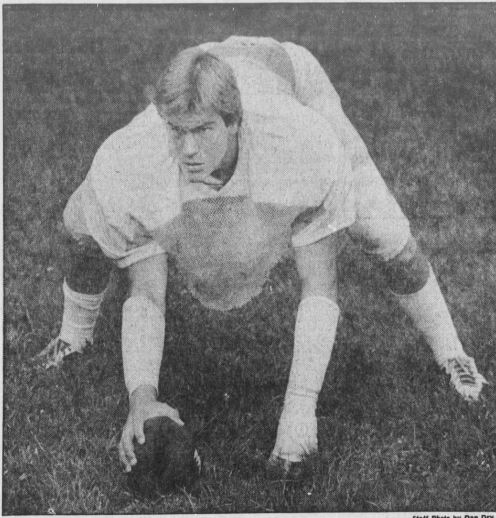
Yet, coach Bob Morehead isn't asking for a crying towel. Doug Lucas returns at quarterback, and two of the county's best linemen — tackles David French, a second-team All-State last year, and John Belcher — will be playing for Butler.

Belcher carries 215 pounds on a 6-foot-2 frame, and is bused in from Does, where he started as a sophomore last fall. "He's real good," Morehead said. The 6-1, 235-pound French, a straight-A student, is considered a major-college prospect.

Only Terry Caffey, a transfer from Manual, has been impressive carrying the ball, so look for Butler to pass more this year. Lucas has a strong arm and two fine receivers in Gary Johnston and Eddie Ziegler.

Defensively, Butler will be strong inside, with French and Belcher at tackles, and David Zirnheld and Rusty Bozarth at linebacker. Belcher also is working out at linebacker.

Pleasure Ridge Park
 Ted Lessor, who coached Moore to an 11-1 record last year, the best in that school's history, hopes to build a similar success story at PRP. "This will be another Moore team in philosophy except the players will be dressed in red and black rather than blue and gray," Lessor said.



Center Doug Morgan is among the offensive standouts returning from last year's 10-3 Bishop David squad. Bishop David has been voted to repeat as First District champions.

In tailback Kevin Williams, who scored 12 touchdowns last season, PRP has one of the fastest and most exciting backs in the county. "He's got raw speed and he can accelerate so quickly if he gets an opening," Lessor said. "We've got to throw the ball and develop our fullbacks (Doug Mercer and Joey Brewer) to keep the heat off Kevin." Chuck Hardman will be the quarterback.

Despite the presence of Williams, Lessor expects the defense to be ahead of the offense early in the season. "When you're putting in a new program, you're always strongest on defense early," he said. Merritt, who doubles as a nose guard, should be a standout on defense, along with linebackers Curtis Stratton and Scott Westley, and Mike Bush and safety Marty Saling.

Lessor also is high on tackles Matthew Bell and Mike Sheard, who will play both offense and defense. "We'll have five or six players going both ways, but our philosophy is to play the best athletes at all times."

Western
 With Western returning eight starters on offense and six on defense, coach Steve Reed is hoping to improve on last year's 3-7 record. "This is the most experience we've had since I've been here," Reed said. "If our kids come through at quarterback and in the secondary, we could be fairly strong."

Quarterback Frank Leaford is more of a passing threat, but Western is well-equipped with Cedric Prestley, Kenny Galther and Tony Conway at the running-back posi-

tion. Prestley is only 5-5, but weighs 184 and has good speed. Conway gained over 600 yards rushing last year.

The 217-pound Conway and Galther (208) also play defense. Conway at linebacker and Galther at tackle. Other defensive starters returning are guards Steve Clark and Gregg Sullivan, linebacker Brian Shumate, tackle Gary Glenn and back Tony Chambers.

Western opens with DeSales, then plays PRP and Bishop David. Later Western has a first-ever meeting against defending state 4-A champion Trinity.

Valley
 Counting five players picked up from Stuart when that school was closed, Valley will have 15 regular

back from last season, making coach Hugh Dening more optimistic than he's been in quite awhile. "Material-wise, this is Valley's best team in four years," Dening said. "Last year, we were young, small, slow and weak. Now we have speed in the positions we need, and we have muscle up front. We added speed and quickness with the kids we got from Stuart."

Travis Hatchell, Lamont Roberts and Billy Harris — all from Stuart — will start in the secondary on defense. Terry Thornton, another player restricted from Stuart, gives Valley a breakout threat at running back.

The best all-around player we have is our quarterback, Scott Walker," Dening said. "He's a converted running back. He runs the year of offense and sprints out well, and he's not a bad passer."

Hatchell, a star in track, Roberts, Bret Davis and James Denny give Valley four good receivers. "If Hatchell catches the ball, he's gone," Dening said.

Another strong point for Valley should be the defensive front with tackles Kevin Reece and Jody Sexton, guard Dwayne Meredith, and Kenny Mullins and linebacker Greg Collier. Mullins also will play running back.

"With our speed in the secondary, people aren't going to get into the end zone so easy this year," Dening said. "They'll have to drive the ball down the field."

Shawnee
 In its first season under coach William "Jelly" Green in 1980, Shawnee went 0-10 for the third straight year and extended its losing streak to 31 games. Shawnee's last victory came on Oct. 28, 1977, when it defeated Butler 24-20.

This is a new year, though, and Green is optimistic. At one time, Shawnee had 80 players out for the team, but then the number dropped to 38. "A lot of the kids weren't disciplined enough to stick it out. They didn't realize football was hard work. They just wanted to play, not practice. If they had stayed out, we could have played. Now, we'll have to play eight or nine kids both ways."

Shawnee should be strongest on defense where tackle Martin Johnson, end Reggie Martin and linebackers Norris White and Reggie McDaniels return. "I don't expect us to give up 200 points (it was actually 294) again this season," Green said. Engineering the offense will be quarterback David Conley, Martin, Johnson and split end William Freeman may be Conley's favorite passing targets. Sophomore Tony Hill and junior Scott Dalton will carry the brunt of the running game.

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