

FROM THE SIDELINES: BY LARRY SPEGAR

Districts 2 and 4

Following the first 2 weeks of football action, several District 2 teams have posted impressive victories. Lakeland scored an impressive win over North Pocono 41-7 and the Chiefs have made yet another statement that they are one of the teams to watch in AA. Dunmore added another big victory over a highly regarded Carbondale team 32-8. Watch out for more of freshman runner sensation, Michael Perry, who ran for 170 yards registering 3 TDs and leading the Bucks' charge. Congrats to Dunmore Head Coach, Jack Henzes, who in his 40th year of coaching has his team poised for a possible run at the AA crown. Wyoming Area is deserving of lofty pre-season expectations courtesy of another strong performance in a 35-6 win over Pocono Mountain East. Valley View, although a disappointing Week 1 overtime loss to Lakeland, blasted Scranton Prep 55-7 serving notice to all that the Cougars are on the prowl and very much in the thick of things in AA for District 2 competition. Senior speedster, Kyle Passeri, enjoyed yet another fine performance averaging 10 yards a carry and scoring 3 rushing TDs. Passeri is also an explosive punt returner as well, adding 2 returns for an exciting 110 yards and highlighted by a nifty 85 yard TD return. Doubling as a defensive back, Kyle Passeri is truly one of District 2's premiere big time players and is worth the price of admission to see him perform. If the Valley View offensive line can open some room for him, Passeri is an absolute nightmare for defensive coordinators. The Cougar defense has allowed just two TDs to 2 very good opponents in Lakeland and Scranton Prep. Brandon Havirlak and Luke Betley are exceptional defenders against the run. Look for that Week 1 rematch with Lakeland and Valley View at the season's end.

In District 2 "A" competition, Lackawanna Trail appears to have emerged as the favorite with an impressive win over a much larger school in Honesdale (AAA) 30-13. Trail, no stranger to post season play, is led by Head Coach Jeff Wasilchak. The Lions look to be the team to beat in A games. Moving on to the big boys in AAAA, 2 of the best in District 2 hooked for a good one on Saturday afternoon at "The Pit" in Clarks Summit, home of the Abington Heights Comets. Coming off a stellar undefeated regular season in 2005, the Comets, led by Head Coach Joe Repshis and Coach Greg Justave are looking for even brighter times in the Abingtons. A "AAA" team just a year ago, the Comets are back with a purpose for success in the 2006 campaign. Across the field in charge of the Spartans of Wyoming Valley West was none other than veteran, George Curry. Curry, the all-time leader for coaching victories in the State of Pennsylvania and the former leader of the Berwick Bulldog "Empire" set numerous records and wrote the book on success of a high school football program and community. It will surely be interesting to see what the great coach has in store for Wyoming Valley West and the Spartan fans throughout the Wyoming Valley. As it turns out, Coach Curry is a native of Larksville (within the Wyoming Valley School District). So this turns out to be a Homecoming and Week 1 was a sweet one and deservedly so with the Coach's fine record of accomplishments at Berwick. Week 1 saw the Spartans win handily over a perennial tough contender, Scranton. On Saturday, Curry would bring his Spartans to "The Pit" in his first ever road game with the Spartans (It took a while to adjust to seeing Coach Curry

clad in Spartan maroon and gold, as opposed to the Berwick blue and white). Nonetheless, in the early going, the Curry led Spartans looked very much like the football machines of days of old with early dominance on both sides of the ball. Wyoming Valley West QB, Pat Resetar was a standout scoring 2 TDs on runs of 65 and 50 yards putting the Spartans ahead 21-7 in the third quarter. Following a lightning delay of more than an hour, play was resumed with a little more than 2 minutes remaining in the third quarter. True to the form of a year ago, Abington did not give up. They fought on and brought about one of the more exciting finishes of this new year of football action. Credit Abington senior QB and DB, Dave Keisling. Remember the name, Dave Keisling. He's a dynamo and he literally lifted the Comets on both ends of the ball. After Wyoming Valley West had taken a commanding 28-14 lead in the fourth quarter, Keisling led the Comets down the field and connected with Kurt Medeiros for a 10 yard scoring strike to cut the lead to 28-21. Then with only 1:15 remaining in the game, Keisling stepped up on defense and came down with a key interception returning it to the Comet 47 yard line. Undaunted, Keisling threw yet another strike to a sprinting Shaun Pasternak down the left sideline for a 44 yard scoring strike with just 48 seconds remaining. The heroics, however, were over for the Comets on this day when the potential tying PAT was missed. Game, set and match for the Spartans of Wyoming Valley West. Look for both of these 2 fine teams to hook up again for a possible rematch in AAAA District 2 playoffs. Note that it was great to see the composure of the Abington players and coaches immediately following the game. To quote Coach Repshis and Dave Keisling in similar words, "We may not have won this game today, but we're proud that we came back and challenged the way we did and we're looking forward to practice on Monday." Great courage all the way around and we definitely look forward to seeing these 2 fine teams in future games this season.

In District 2, West Scranton also got off to a 2-0 start courtesy of a 10 point win on Friday over Riverside. Head Coach Mike DeAntona has the Invaders off to another fine start. West Scranton has enlisted Coaches, Dave Rebar(Riverside) and Bill Phillips(Abington Heights) to join the talented staff at West Side. Look for the Invaders to challenge as well.

In District 4 this past weekend, Mount Carmel was stopped on Friday night by a quality Lancaster Catholic team. Look for both of these schools to be at the top of the AA Eastern State Competition. Also, "A" powerhouse, Southern Columbia rolled on with a win over Bloomsburg. Southern hosts Mount Carmel this Friday night it what is always an exciting contest. The neighboring rivals will pack in the crowd at Catawissa and add yet another chapter to this highly emotional and prime time game.

See you on the sidelines,

LARRY SPEGAR