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Photo by Scott Dreslinski
 Beverly Hills Detroit Country Day senior defensive lineman Chris Eddins (75) tackles Highland Park High junior receiver Jermal Hosley Sept. 19 at DCD.

Star search

Detroit Country Day football replaces graduated stars with team effort

By Brad D. Bates
 C & G Sports Writer

BEVERLY HILLS — Beverly Hills Detroit Country Day football coach Dan MacLean is drawing up a new blueprint for success.

After guiding the Yellowjackets to back-to-back Division 4 state championship games in the past two seasons, MacLean is hoping to get a team that is very different from the last two squads back for a third trip to Ford Field.

And following his team's 36-3 loss to Highland Park High Sept. 19 at home, he has a clearer picture of what that might take.

"We were trying to do some different things," MacLean said of his offense after DCD fell to Highland Park. "We were trying to, formationally, do some motion and do some different things there."

The last two Country Day teams were identified by their star players.

Jonas Gray at running back and Kenny Demens at linebacker guided them to the 2007 final, and running back O'Neil Swanson and receiver Bennie Fowler led them to last year's championship.

This year's team doesn't offer the same opportunity to rely on star players.

"I don't think we're that kind of team," said MacLean, whose squad opened the season with victories over Birmingham Seaholm, U of D Jesuit and Muskegon Catholic Central.

"We're the kind of team where we have to utilize everyone's talents and play good team football."

Including kicker Brett Bukari, who booted a 37-yard field goal against the Polar

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Bears, the Yellowjackets have eight seniors on their 31-man roster.

That lack of veteran bodies gives DCD little room for error against squads like Highland Park, which boasts 14 seniors on a 39-man roster.

Helping bolster their lineup, though, has been the experience of those seniors back on the roster, particularly captains Joe MacLean, Jason Ray, Brett Smith, DeAngelo Taylor, Chris Eddins and Chris Hogan.

“(Joe MacLean)’s been real good, and Jason Ray has been real good,” Dan MacLean said. “Jason Ray got a little banged up today, but he’s been real good.”

And while they may be small in numbers, the seniors’ leadership is a big part of MacLean’s current championship plan.

“We have to regroup and find out where we had breakdowns and look to improve ourselves,” MacLean said. “We have a good group of kids, and they’ll do it.”

Next up for Country Day is an away game against Flint Carman-Ainsworth at 7 p.m. Sept. 25.

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