

Lot of changes, same expectations for Tiger football
by Steve Batko ~ Twinsburg Bulletin

Twinsburg -- The Tigers have a new head coach, new philosophies, a new quarterback and a new division.

That's what Twinsburg football looks like at this stage and this season will be interesting.

Mark Solis is out and Joe Schiavone is in as the Tiger's head coach. For Schiavone, that title is also new.

A successful defensive coordinator for the Tigers as a three-year assistant, Schiavone enters his 13th season overall and his first as head coach.

"We are excited and the kids are excited after working extremely hard in the off season," he said. "This is the strongest Twinsburg team I have seen since I have been here."

Twinsburg went 10-2 last year and reached the division I regional semifinals. The Tigers open this season Aug. 26 at backyard rival Aurora. Twinsburg has four of its first games on the road.

With as much change as a program can endure in an off season, it seems almost silly to say that this year's Twinsburg football squad could mirror the team in the past several years.

However, Twinsburg returns most of its coaching staff and both coordinators. Furthermore, the Tigers will keep both sides of the ball similar in style.

Scott Amstutz will again head the spread offense for the Tigers with Schiavone heading a defense that allowed just 7.7 points and 213 yards in 2010.

"We didn't overhaul a lot of things," said Schiavone. "I just asked the offensive staff to be more efficient, both in practice and in games."

Oddly enough, the biggest change may not be with Schiavone at the helm or Jalen Washington at quarterback -- it could be competing in the Northeast Ohio Conference Valley Division.

Twinsburg is moving to the strongest NOC Division for football ñ and one of the tougher leagues in Ohio for that matter. The Valley includes Mentor, Medina, Brunswick, Strongsville, and Solon.

"It's a big challenge to be in the Valley, there are some outstanding programs," said Schiavone. "We're facing stronger competition and these young men know that the only way to get better is to face the best."

Twinsburg faces four state playoff clubs and has six road games this fall, but Schiavone will want to win.

Washington enters his first season as a starter of the team's exciting spread offense that produced for 32 points and 316 yards a game.

A junior, Washington gained valuable experience, rotating with Aaron Macer during the stretch drive in 2010. He completed 32 of 53 passes for 521 yards and four touchdowns. He was only intercepted three times and had 29 rushes for 106 yards.

"Jalen got some game reps last year and he is a great competitor," said the coach. "He has some tools, including a strong arm and is a natural athlete."

Twinsburg actually returns two lettermen at QB as senior two-year letterwinner Zack Buckeye returns as a team captain. Sophomore Michael Peelman (6-0, 175) also will serve as backup.

In Amstutz's playbook, the backfield often has an empty set in the spread offense. Much like Macer, Washington will get some carries, but may not run as much.

Twinsburg's primary tailback will be junior John Barton, who amassed 1,282 total yards in offense and on special teams.

A versatile speedster with 4.5-speed in the 40-yard dash, Barton can catch and run with the best of them.

"John looked great in the pre season and should pick up where he left off last season," said the mentor. "He works extremely hard and we expect him to build off of last year. We trust him with the ball."

Junior Tyrone McGuinea is the top sub as a back, although the Tigers can use a bevy of backs, wing backs, fullbacks, and receivers all over the field.

Seniors Michael Baker and Myles Campbell will be used when a fullback is needed.

Senior London Carter returns to a wide out spot while seniors B.K. Grewal and Mitch Harrison are also back.

Carter scored six times in four different ways last year and could reach 1,000 total yards in receiving, returns, and running the ball. He had 855 last year, including 21 catches for 376 yards and a 17.9 average.

While Carter is a major threat, Barton led the Tigers in every receiving category last year.

Harrison had two catches 21 yards and can play both wide out and tight end. Grewal had some starts last year and is athletic and a solid blocker.

Buckeye will also play wide receiver this fall as will another senior captain, Tre Jones. Schiavone can use Buckeye's running as well as the athleticism of Jones, a defensive star.

Senior Jordan Bray will also get more reps on offense as a receiver. Junior Rob Williams will also help.

At tight end, senior captain Dylan Minick could be one of the best in the league if the 235-pounder wasn't needed so much on defense.

The Tigers have a solid starting offensive line and decent experience, but this is an area where graduation took away some depth.

Senior Quentin Chambers (225 pounds) is a captain and a standout left tackle, while two more seniors with starting experience also return in right tackle Willie Williams (300) and left guard Dimitri McDaniel (255).

The line also includes right guard Mitch Durkee (265) and center Robert Hoyt (250). Depth is provided by versatile senior Tom Delegram (210) and junior Bob Liu (225).

In Schiavone's 4-2-5 defense, his athletes on the line of scrimmage play a huge role.

Minick is a threat from a tackle post and is a college prospect after averaging four tackles a game a year ago.

Senior tackle Dwan Larkins saw some action a year ago with 11 tackles, but will play a bigger role this year.

McDaniel will rotate in on the line, both at end and at tackle. Rob Williams will use his quickness at end. Willie Williams, Chambers and senior Devereaux McCall offer depth.

At middle linebacker, Campbell is a budding star. He was second on the team with 7.6 tackles a game, led team in assists and two forced fumbles last season

Junior Scott Tegowski also tested and will be a key this year inside. He added 3.1 stops a game.

At the outside spots in this attacking defense, the Tiger's strong safeties have experience and big-play ability. Baker returns while junior letterman Ben Bisesi is tested.

This cast is deep with the likes of Tre Jones, Carter, Baker, Bisesi, and senior Andrew Tozzi.

Defensive back coach Jeff Tomko is thrilled to have Jones and Carter.

With strong coverage skills, Jones is also an excellent tackler (50 stops). He had four pass break ups and four interceptions a year ago.

Tozzi (5-11, 150) is the free safety and he has vast experience. He can also sub in at the corner spot. He had 13 stops last year.

Sophomore Kon Grewal (5-8, 145) is another player who will see action at corner. When Tozzi moves over to a corner spot, junior Cooper Rea (5-10, 160) will be used at free safety.

Junior Frank Candau is the new place kicker and for now, the punter.

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NOC Valley will challenge Twinsburg football team
by BRAD BOURNIVAL - SportsInk.com



Dylan Minick (left) and Myles Campbell are two of 27 seniors back for Twinsburg as the Tigers hope to make it to the playoffs for the fourth-straight year.

EDITOR'S NOTE: No. 23 of 31. The following is the 23th of the one-a-day series of local football team previews that SportsInk.com will feature throughout August. This report focuses on the Twinsburg Tigers.

SportsInk.com 2011 Football Camp Report

TWINSBURG TIGERS

Affiliation: Division I, Region 2

Coach: Joe Schiavone, (1st year at Twinsburg)

2010 Record: 11-2, 4-1 NOC River co-champions

Returning Starters: 5 on offense, 5 on defense

Playoff appearances: (7) 2010, 2009, 2008, 2003, 1994, 1992, 1991

Players to watch: Michael Baker (S, Sr., 5-9, 190), John Barton (RB, Jr., 5-9, 175, 681 yards rushing, 14 TDs), London Carter (WR/CB, Sr., 5-8, 145, 376 yards receiving, 3 TDs), Jalen Washington (QB, Jr., 5-11, 160, 521 yards passing, 3 TDs), Myles Campbell (LB, Sr., 5-10, 190), Quentin Chambers (OT/DE, Sr., 6-2, 220), Tre Jones (CB, Sr., 5-10, 160), Dimitri McDaniel (G, Sr., 5-8, 255), Scott Tegowski (RB/LB, Jr., 6-0, 195); Dylan Minick (TE/DE, Sr., 6-2, 235).

Strengths: This squad has 30 seniors back and speed to burn. Barton came into his own last season, and Carter is a wide receiver that gives defensive coordinators nightmares. If the offense can stay on the same page, it can be just as strong as last year's squad. This year's line is strong as a cohesive unit, so look out.

Weaknesses: Outgoing coach Mark Solis didn't want to do it. Twinsburg wasn't keen on it either, but the Tigers are up in the NOC Valley Division. Going against enrollment giants like Mentor, Medina, Brunswick and Solon will take its toll. Depth is certainly an issue as the Tigers prepare for their first year in what has been labeled one of the top three hardest conferences in the state.

Coach's comment: "There are a lot of positives. We had a great offseason conditioning program. We're the strongest we've ever been. From the seniors all the way down to the younger guys, they're excited about the season."

Notes: Success won't be hard to find under Schiavone as the first-year coach was part of two national title teams with Mount Union. An assistant at Cleveland Benedictine, Schiavone was on the sideline for three straight state championship games, winning it all in 2003 and 2004. ... As defensive coordinator with the Tigers, Schiavone mentored the top defense the last two seasons in Division I, Region 2 according to Patch.com. That defense gave up 7.7 points per game in 2010 and 8.4 in 2009. ... In the last three seasons, the Tigers have accumulated a 30-7 record and won a playoff game each year.

Stout Defense Will Once Again Carry Tiger Football **Twinsburg's road to playoffs is loaded with top quality opponents**

By Barry Goodrich - [Twinsburg Patch](#)

The Tigers will have their hands full as they move into the top division of the NOC. Courtesy Twinsburg High School Athletic Department Photos (1) Photos Credit Courtesy Twinsburg High School Athletic Department
Add your photos & videos Joe Schiavone knows a thing or two about championship football.

The first-year Twinsburg head coach was a part of two national title teams while playing for Division III national power Mount Union. As an assistant coach at Benedictine, Schiavone was on the sidelines for three straight state championship games, including state titles in 2003 and 2004.

As the Tigers' defensive coordinator, Schiavone produced the No. 1 defense in Division I, Region II the past two seasons as Twinsburg allowed just 7.7 points per game in 2010 and 8.4 points per game in 2009.

That trademark Tiger defense will come in handy this season as the Tigers have moved up to the Northeast Ohio Conference's Valley Division. The team will now take on such perennial powers as crosstown rival Solon, Strongsville, Medina, Brunswick and Mentor.

And next week's season opener? A battle with former state champion Aurora.

"We know that week in and week out we're going to be facing some great competition," said Schiavone. "Our players are looking forward to it. With our schedule we can't overlook anybody, but playing against great teams is a good thing."

The Tigers have advanced to the state playoffs in each of the past three seasons. Last year, they knocked off Sylvania Southview in a 24-21 overtime thriller before being sidelined by Toledo Whitmer in the regional semifinals.

Twinsburg returns five starters on each side of the ball. "We're going to keep doing what we do on defense," said Schiavone. "Like every team, we are concerned about injuries and depth."

Junior back John Barton (5-10, 185) will be the focus of the running game after picking up 681 yards and scoring 14 touchdowns last year. Barton also had 26 receptions for 477 yards and three TDs as a key component of the spread offense.

It will be tough to replace quarterback Aaron Macer, who will be playing at Ohio University this fall, but junior Jalen Washington (6-1, 175) looks like the real deal. "No question, Jalen is going to turn some heads," said Schiavone. "He is very poised and composed for a young quarterback."

Twinsburg is deep and fast at the wide receiver spots with seniors B.K. Grewal (6-0, 175), London Carter (5-8, 165), Mitch Harrison (6-3, 190), Zack Buckeye (5-5, 155), Jordan Bray (5-10, 175) and Trey Jones (5-10, 160). "Jalen passes the ball well so we will throw a little more than we have in the past," said Schiavone. "He's been very effective when he makes the right decisions."

Seniors Quentin Chambers (6-3, 230) and Dimitri McDaniel (5-10, 240) return on the offensive line, where the development of younger players will be essential to the team's success.

Carter, Jones and senior Michael Baker (5-10, 185) anchor an outstanding defensive secondary. Senior Myles Campbell (5-11, 210), second on the team in tackles last season, will be one of the area's top inside linebackers and senior defensive end Dylan Minick (6-3, 235) had four sacks last season.

Senior free safety Andrew Tozzi (5-10, 165), junior strong safety Ben Bisesi (5-11, 185) and junior inside linebacker Scott Tegowski (6-0, 195) will all be counted on to contribute to Schiavone's tenacious 4-2-5 defense.

Frank Candau, the goalkeeper for the Tiger soccer team, will handle the kicking duties.

Schiavone will be assisted this year by offensive coordinator Scott Amstutz, offensive line coach Jim Lipinski, wide receiver coach Chris Shaffer, running backs coach Dan Thompson, defensive secondary coach Jeff Tomko and defensive line coach Mark Mole.

The 2011 season will be a test, but the Tigers are looking toward just one game - next Friday's season opener.

"We're focused on Aurora," said Schiavone. "They've become a great rival for us. We'll move on after that."

Congratulations to the 2011 Tiger Captains

Congratulations to the 2011 Twinsburg Tiger Captains:

Michael Baker, Zack Buckeye, Myles Campbell, London Carter, Quentin Chambers, Tre Jones, and Dylan Minick.

Storylines abound as Northeast Ohio's high school football teams prepare to take the field

Bob Fortuna, Plain Dealer Reporter, July 31, 2011 5:32 p.m.

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- The dog days of summer are certainly here but there's a touch of autumn in the air.

Monday marks the opening day of high school football training camps across Ohio, a fresh start for everyone. Rest assured, however, some unexpected developments will occur before the whistle sounds to signal the end of two-a-days. They always do.

Many questions seek answers, and themes are abundant heading into the 2011 season kickoff on Aug. 25. Here are some of the many storylines we'll all be following this summer and fall.

Glenville's unfamiliar role: Don't expect Glenville to be ranked at its normal high perch in The Plain Dealer's Preseason Top 25 later this month. Coach Ted Ginn Sr. graduated 16 starters and doesn't have his usual slew of big-name players.

The Tarblooders should win their 14th straight Senate Athletic League crown, but there's plenty of untested talent at quarterback, tailback, receiver, linebacker and special teams.

Open QB at St. Ignatius: The job as the Wildcats' starting quarterback is one to keep an eye on as 6-3, 185-pound senior Matt Hoyer, 6-2, 190-pound senior Eric Williams and 6-2, 175-pound junior lefty Mike LaManna contend.

Hoyer threw for 1,450 yards and 13 touchdowns during an injury-plagued junior campaign. Williams transferred from Oregon in January after passing for 1,405 yards and 13 touchdowns for Portland Jesuit. LaManna played on St. Ignatius' junior varsity team last season.

"When Eric came to our school I told all involved the job is wide open and it still is," said coach Chuck Kyle.

Arcs of triumph: Brush will contend for the NOC Lake Division title and it could qualify for the Division I postseason for the first since its 2005 playoff debut.

The Arcs have bonafide Division I college players in 6-6, 235-pound Michigan recruit Pharoah Brown, Louisville recruit Kevin Houchins Jr., 6-4, 300-pound Ball State-bound Carlutorbantu Zaramo and that's just for starters. They could have a few more big-college recruits by mid-season.

Big conference changes: Count the North Coast League Blue Division and Northeast Ohio Conference Valley Division among the toughest circuits in the state, next to Cincinnati Greater Catholic League's South Division.

The NCL Blue has added former independents Walsh Jesuit and Benedictine to a strong field of Archbishop Hoban, Lake Catholic, Padua and Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin.

In the NOC Valley, Mentor and Twinsburg have joined Solon, Strongsville, Brunswick and Medina. Moeller, St. Xavier, Colerain and LaSalle make up the Cincinnati Greater Catholic League South.

The NCL Blue and CGCL have 10 state titles each, while NOC Valley Division teams have been state runners-up four times.

Cold front in Akron City Series: The regular-season finale pitting Buchtel against Firestone will be intense. Not all is warm and fuzzy concerning the relationship between Firestone coach Tim Flossie and his former running back Ricky Powers, the coach at Buchtel.

Powers earned All-Ohio status and a scholarship to Michigan while playing for Flossie at Buchtel in the early 1990s. Their relationship soured this summer when four seniors tried to transfer from Firestone to Buchtel after transferring from the Buchtel district to Firestone as freshmen. The Ohio High School Athletic Association ruled the players ineligible. They have since transferred to Ellet and are eligible under an OHSAA bylaw that permits a superintendent to grant a second transfer if one school offers an academic program not available at the other.

Powerful teams, new coaches: Joe Schiavone is feeling the heat, but he says it's not because his first head coaching gig is at Twinsburg, which is riding a three-year playoffs streak.

"I've always put pressure on myself," said Schiavone, a Tigers assistant last year. "Our tradition began a few years ago, so the players know what's expected of them."

Adding fuel is Twinsburg's promotion from the Northeast Ohio Conference's River Division to the more physical and challenging Valley Division.

"We're looking forward to it," said junior tailback John Barton, who believes Schiavone's disciplinary style of coaching was needed. "People always said we weren't playing the best competition but they won't be able to say that anymore."

It's not quite the same at Medina, where Ray Hradek takes over as coach after head and assistant jobs at Midpark, Brunswick and Baldwin-Wallace.

Hradek succeeds Larry Laird, who resigned after one memorable season in which he led the Battling Bees (9-3) to their second postseason appearance, which included a 31-28 first round upset of top-seeded Canton McKinley.

"No pressure, just expectations of being successful," said Hradek, who went 73-47 as Midpark's head coach from 1988-99. "We still want to win the [NOC] Valley Division and get to the postseason."

Lorain must win quickly: Mark Solis has found a new home as Lorain's coach, his third school in the past six seasons. The fiery mentor, who once held the reigns at Elyria, didn't have his contract renewed at Twinsburg despite racking up a 32-14 mark in four seasons.

Solis is at a school that wants to win immediately, in evidence of Todd Auvil's dismissal after a 2-8 effort last year, Lorain's first season following the merge of Admiral King and Southview.

Welcome aboard: For the first time in the school's 35-year history, Open Door Christian is fielding a football team. The coach for the coed private school in Elyria is Ray Lowe.

Welcome to the football fray, Patriots, and good luck.

Plain Dealer reporter Tim Rogers contributed to this story.