

cardinal sports

By Bill Richardson
A Member of the Sports Staff

In the last two seasons, William Jewell has compiled a 21-2-1 record and twice reached the semifinals of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Division II playoffs.

With 15 returning starters, headed by quarterback Kelly Groom and defensive-line star Guy Weber, the Cardinals figure to be national title contenders again.

William Jewell hasn't lost a league game in two seasons, another good reason why the Cardinals from Liberty have been picked to repeat as Heart of America Conference champions. In a poll of conference coaches, William Jewell received six of the seven first-place votes.

The Heart lost a member when Ottawa joined the Kansas Conference, but the league gained two new head coaches. Ted Kozinski, an assistant, replaced Don Shinnick at Central Methodist. Jeff Moore, who was on the Missouri staff last year, replaced Scott Swofford at Tarkio.

Vic Wallace, who is starting his second year as Jewell coach, lost two starting receivers but still has firepower with Groom, who runs the veer offense, and returning backfield starters Scoop Gillespie and Steve Hodges. The Cardinals averaged nearly 30 points a game last year.

"We return our entire defensive secondary, and we have two excellent safeties in Paul Taylor and Mike Newman," Wallace said. "Weber heads our defensive line, which we are calling the 'Cobras.' Tim Johnson is an outstanding linebacker for us."

Baker lost 22 seniors. As Coach Charlie Richard said, "It's almost like we're starting over."

It may be a pleasant start. Baker, 8-2 in 1981, appears strong in the backfield. Jerry Rauschelbach took over as the starting quarterback in the final game of the 1981 season and showed he may have the passing arm Richard is seeking to complement a running attack powered by sophomore Larry Freeman, a 6-foot, 220-pounder, and Drake transfer Kevin

Nichols.

The offensive line has only one returning starter, guard Dean Vette. Richard is concerned about defensive depth but is counting on a bountiful recruiting haul of talented athletes. All-league linebacker Chris Brown heads the defense.

Missouri Valley Coach Ken Gibler feels like crowing about the Vikes' prospects. He has 17 returning starters, five of whom made all-conference rolls last year.

"We're very optimistic," Gibler said. "This is my 14th year at Missouri Valley, and we've got more size than we've ever had. That means a lot. The worst team I had here was also the smallest."

Some behemoths are offensive linemen Tony Perkins, 6-1, 252; Mark Nichelson, 6-2, 235; and Dan Musick, 5-10, 210. They'll protect Don Winkler, who was all-conference second-team quarterback last year. Senior slotback Bob Fitzpatrick figures heavily as a runner and receiver in the Vikes' offense, while junior Mike Smith is the top running threat.

"Our front seven is very good and John Weisansal is an exceptional defensive end," Gibler said. "We're not sure about our secondary."

Graceland Coach Bill Dudek, who has a 45-31-1 record in eight seasons, has a major revamping job on his hands. The Iowans return only four starters, one offensively, and are changing to a split-T offense. Junior defensive tackle Bruce Crozier, 6-4, 270, should be Graceland's top performer.

Mid-America Nazarene, in its fifth season of football, may have its best team ever. Coach Gordon DeGraffenreid welcomes back standout linebacker Don Diehl, who sat out last season to work. The Pioneers go into the season with a No. 1 quarterback in sophomore Derik Dirks, who has top receivers in Jeff Kent (47 catches in 1981) and Tim Osborne (44 catches).

"Dirks took over in our third game last year and got better and better," DeGraffenreid said. "We switched Lloyd Murray from fullback to tail-

back, and he got 100 yards rushing in each of our last two games. He worked on his speed in the off-season and should come in and give us a good year."

Central Methodist returns 13 starters and Kozinski said he expects improvement. "We're not bad offensively, but we're young," said Kozinski, whose strong-armed quarterback, Craig Brown, dropped out of school. Tailback Larry Clark could be the top player for the Eagles.

Culver-Stockton was winless in 10 games last year, but Coach Vince Okruch expects improvement with the return of 32 lettermen. His top returnee will be senior tight end Ric Fencik, 6-2, 225, whose pass catching highlighted Culver's offense last year.

With junior Charlie Nager providing a passing threat, Okruch is moving from a veer to a pro-style offense.

Moore, who became the fourth head coach at Tarkio in four years, found a heavy turnover in personnel from last year.

"There were 118 players here at Tarkio at the start of last season and when I met the squad for the first time this spring there were 18," Moore said. "We have 12 returning juniors and seniors and about 65 new players. We're real young, but we have an experienced quarterback in Mike Butt."

Tarkio broke a 27-game losing streak last year with a 20-12 victory over Culver-Stockton and then lost its last eight games.