

Cardinal 'D-backs' stress teamwork

Experience is defined as direct participation in events. In football, experience can be defined as playing sense, and in terms of William Jewell's defensive backfield, experience means success.

The Cardinal defensive backfield consists of safeties Paul Taylor, senior business major, and Mike Newman, senior physical education major, and cornerbacks Brian Fairchild, senior data processing major, and Dan Christian, senior communication and public relations major. All four have been involved in Jewell football for four years.

The "D-backs" are responsible for stopping the pass, the long run and pitch man on the option. Five games into the season, the pass completion for opposing teams averages less than 38 percent. Only one touchdown pass has been completed and Graceland's Jeff Smith, the second-rated passer in the nation for the Yellow Jackets, was held to less than 100 yards passing. A number of teams have tried to run the option play against the Cards, but few have

succeeded. In addition there has only been one run over 30 yards.

These impressive statistics can not be credited solely to the defensive backs, although they are a major factor. "I couldn't play without Jerry Twigg or Tim Johnson," said Christian. "When they do their job, it makes our job easier. It's a team defense."

Teamwork is essential to these four players and it is probably their strongest suit. "They have confidence in each other, and that allows them to play more freely," said Dan Griggs, defensive coordinator.

By watching them play and playing football with them, I have the confidence to know they're going to do their job, which makes my job easier," said Fairchild.

"Paul Taylor and Mike Newman are mostly responsible for creating havoc," said Christian. "They are probably the best tandem in small college ball. They are our field generals." The hard hitting, aggressive style of the "D-backs" is an intimidating factor for opposing receivers.

Those same hard hits have been one reason for the injuries each of these players has suffered. Christian is playing with a broken finger, Fairchild has a lower back injury that has bothered him all season, Newman was sidelined earlier this year for a twisted vertebra in his neck and Taylor underwent surgery last year to repair his left shoulder and tore some tendons in the same arm this year.

As far as coaching is concerned, there is a deep mutual respect. The "D-backs" feel that Coach Dan Griggs is the best defensive coach at any level and that he's probably a better coach than some larger schools have. Griggs is described as calm, perceptive and all in control. Christian stated, "I've learned more from him in one day than a season of my high school coaches."

As for head coach Vic Wallace, the "D-backs" have nothing but respect. "It was hard to switch from McGarvey philosophy to a Wallace philosophy, but after we made the transition, we highly respect Coach Wallace, and he puts fun in the game," said Christian.

"These guys are a class act," said Griggs. "They have respect for others, are team players, play for the school which they are proud of and they know how to win."

Concerning the outlook for this season, "Everybody has the will to win," said Newman. All positions seem to have depth, and the four "D-backs" believe that they can expect to go at least as far this year as in years past.

"We have the potential to become the best team Jewell has ever had," said Taylor.

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Scorecard

Football

Area

CENTRAL STATES

Fort Hays State 36, Wayne State 14
Kearney State 28, Missouri Western 14
Missouri Southern 41, Emporia State 6
Pittsburg State 29, Washburn 21

HEART OF AMERICA

Baker 20, Benedictine 15
Central Methodist 21, Culver-Stockton 0