

Moila Classic looms as offensive show

Western, Jewell boast high-powered potential

By JEFF GORDON
Staff Writer

When Missouri Western and William Jewell face-off in the Moila Shrine Classic this afternoon at 1:30, their arsenals will be well stocked with some of the most dangerous offensive weapons in small college football.

So, naturally, most players and coaches expect the Classic to be an offensive circus, a battle between two explosive teams.

The teams are strikingly similar. Both run veer offenses, both like to pass about 20 times a game, both have two standout running backs, and both have all-America caliber receivers.

"The teams are very similar," said Jewell coach Stan McGarvey. "We run inside veers, outside veers, counter plays . . . we are not as much a play-action passing team — not as much as Western."

William Jewell, 9-1 and ranked ninth in NAIA Division II, is led by quarterback Mark Capra, named the top offensive player in NAIA District 16. Capra completed 105 of 195 passes for 1,589 yards and 20 touchdowns.

His favorite target was all-district wide receiver Rob Schermerhorn, who pulled in 40 passes for 877 yards and 14 touchdowns. Fullback Vic Davolt plowed for 614 yards to lead the Cardinals in rushing, and David Cunningham, an all-America last year, has fully recovered from injury.

Missouri Western, 6-4 and once the seventh ranked team in NAIA Division I, is powered by quarterback Mike Solomon, running back Rodney

Stephenson and wide receiver Tim Hoskins.

Solomon, now fully recovered from a dislocated collarbone, completed 84 of 171 passes for 1,275 yards and 15 touchdowns. Stephenson bulled his way for a school record 1,113 yards and 13 touchdowns and Hoskins caught 40 passes for 716 yards and a record 11 touchdowns.

Missouri Western and William Jewell piled up almost identical offensive yardage this season — the Griffons averaged 353 yards a game, the Cardinals 352. Neither team has a sterling defense, but Jewell did yield 50 yards less a game, playing smaller opponents.

Griffon defensive coordinator Jim Grechus believes his defensive unit will recover from the total collapse of the past four weeks. "We're confident about controlling the line of scrimmage," he said. "That's the important thing in any game. I think we will play with lots of emotion and enthusiasm."

"It's a chance to prove we're capable of playing good defense. We have been very spotty," Grechus said.

"I think they (Jewell) have two fine running backs. I think Mark Capra is a good quarterback, but I don't think he's their sole strength. They have a good running game, an option, a good outside veer — the key is to limit their running game," he said.

The Griffon offense, which came to life two weeks ago in a losing effort at Fort Hays State, "is ready to roll" according to Missouri Western offensive coordinator Steve Schottel.

"Everything should be prepared as it has all year," he said. "Our kids

are ready to play — I mean fired and wired."

Missouri Western has a decided size and strength advantage on its line, but Schottel is impressed with the Cardinal defensive speed.

"They play with a lot of determination," Schottel said. "We have a size advantage, but they have the advantage of quickness. They are not a big team, but exceptionally quick and skilled."

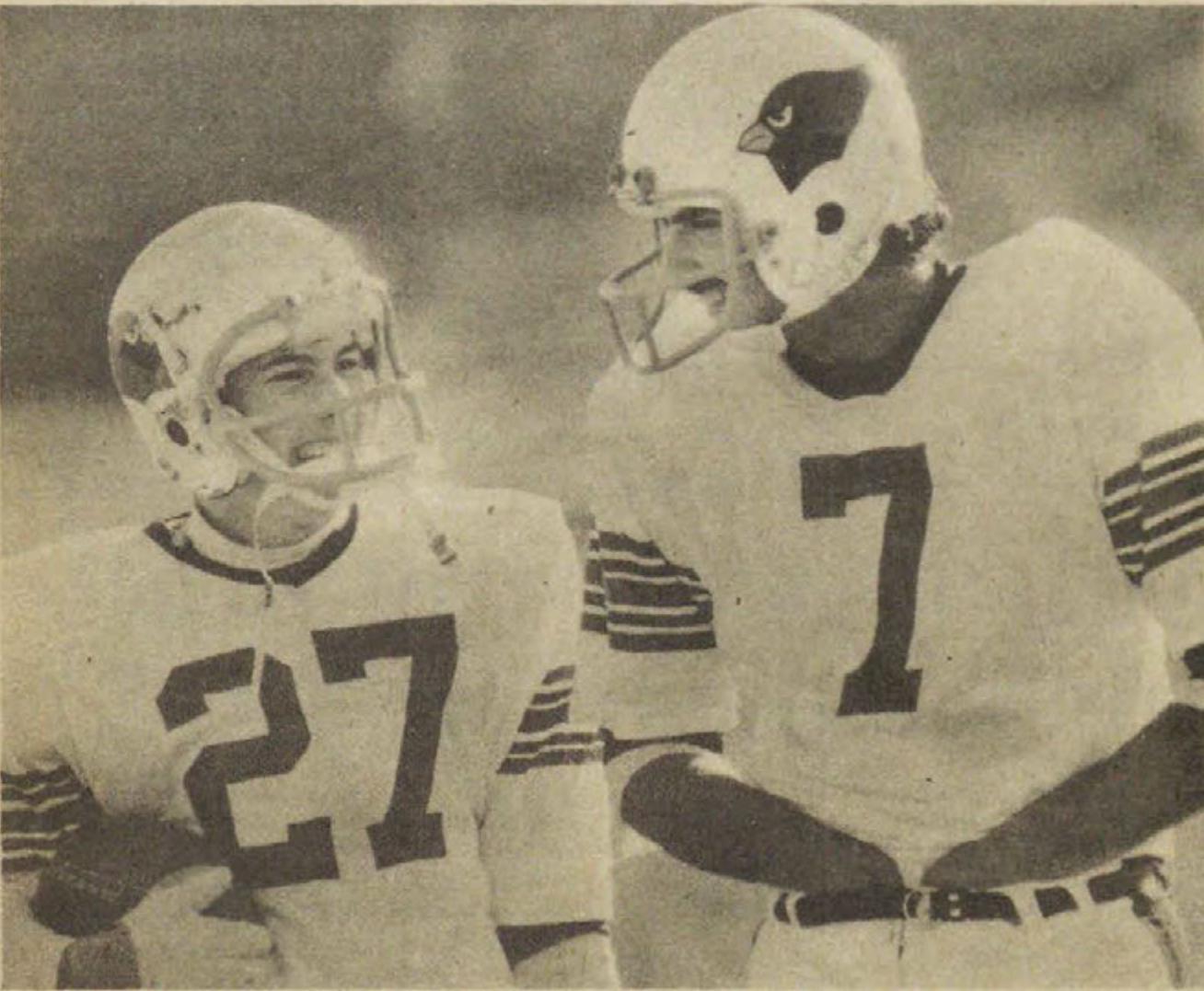
McGarvey said his team's size disadvantage will not alter his basic offenses and defenses. And he is impressed with the Griffons linebackers and defensive backs, although they have faltered in recent weeks.

"Defensively, they have a fine set of linebackers," said McGarvey. They cover their zones real well. They recognize backfield patterns well. Their safeties come up and support very well, which is always a concern to a veer offense. They are very big on the line — we are concerned about them on our running game as well as pass protection."

The Cardinals, like the Griffons, seldom throw to their running backs because, McGarvey said, "Our receiving corps has done such a fine job on the wide outs."

William Jewell, unlike Western, uses a basic pro passing look, with split backs and drop-back passing. The Griffons prefer a half roll-out and a fake hand-off to a running back to set up the pass.

Either way, the two clubs are effective throwing units that are always looking for the big play. To slow either team, a defensive unit needs good pass rush and control the opponents' running game — or else the pass becomes lethal.



— Staff photo by DAVID WILLIAMS

Robin Schermerhorn (left) and Mark Capra are two dominant forces for William Jewell