

William Jewell

National ranking staggers McGarvey

William Jewell College was ranked as high as ninth in the nation in one preseason football poll, but head coach Stan McGarvey is not so sure the Cardinals can give a repeat performance after last season's success.

"I'm not so sure we're that good," shrugs McGarvey.

The Cards won their first eight games last year and were ranked second in the country, before a humbling loss to Baker. The Wildcats shared the Heart of America Conference championship with William Jewell.

Although McGarvey's modesty comes through when he talks about the Cards, the conference coaches feel William Jewell will be the team to beat this year. The Big Red were picked first in the preseason poll.

McGarvey is in his third year at Jewell, and he did wonders with a young team last season. The Cardinals have a slew of regulars returning this fall, and graduation only hurt the offensive line where there will be a few holes to fill.

The Cards will have to replace quarterback Mark Capra, a second team all-american last year, and Kelly Groom has the early edge. The rest of the backfield is solid, including two powerful running backs David Cunningham and Vic DaVault.

Cunningham, a senior, was an all-american as a sophomore when he rushed for over 1,300 yards, but was injured half of last season. He is starting out healthy this season and will team with DaVault to provide a bruising ground game.

On the offensive line only Steve Spencer, a first-team all-conference guard, returns.

On defense, all but two starters are back from last year's unit giving the Cards depth and experience.

"We will call on our defense to help us out early," McGarvey said. "They will carry the load."

Three Northland freshmen will be among those trying for a shot at a linebacker for the Cards, Wally Roseburrough from

St. Pius, Steve Carmack an Oak Park grad, and Northtown's Scott McConnell.

Jeff McGuire, a punter for Liberty High School last year, has impressed McGarvey and may have the inside track for the number one spot. Mike Nelson, a Park Hill grad, may also do some punting.

The Cards also got a pleasant surprise when Richard Bridges, former North Kansas City standout, transferred to the school in late August. Bridges had originally intended to play for Northwest Missouri State University.

The Cards should be quicker than last year, and will have average size overall. But they will have good, solid depth.

"There is more competition for positions this year," reports McGarvey. "And that's very healthy."

The Cards will be contenders—both in the conference race and nationally. McGarvey is pleased with the freshmen recruited, and with the lettermen.

It should be a fun year for the third-year coach.

