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Big Greyhounds next in line for Vikings

By Mike Considine

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Some high school teams are said to be college-sized, when they're simply big. Then there's Hubbard.

The Greyhounds, a name that is apt for their skill-position players, have major-college size and more -- as in a 320-pound center and 385-pound right tackle. It's important to note, though, they're not college players yet.

"When you get to this point in the season, everyone has some (college prospects)," Geneva coach Rob Wicinski said. "They just have more. Hubbard carries the torch for the (Chicago) Public School League. They're used to being in the playoffs, they're very big and they're very, very fast. "

Geneva (9-1), the No. 3 seed in the upper bracket of Class 6A, is likely to be tested in a way not always common to second-round games against No. 6 Hubbard (8-2) at 2 p.m. Saturday at Burgess Field. The Vikings tuned up for the Greyhounds with a 42-14 blasting of Grant.

"After (the previous) Friday's game against Batavia," Wicinski said, "it was really nice to see a nice game from us. We did what we needed to do (against Grant). Now we just have to do it against a team that's a little bigger than them."

One of the most heavily recruited backs in the Midwest, Robert Hughes, runs behind the behemoths. His suitors include Ohio State University and Notre Dame.

"They put a ton of mass into one hole," Wicinski said. "We may have to work hard to keep moving and get our kids into every area. Otherwise we're pretty much toast. We're going to have to keep our eyes on their backs.. They're so explosive, they can break any play."

Geneva fine-tuned the offense against Grant, and the Vikings' major college prospect, 6-7 Shaun Ratay, threw for more than 200 yards for the first time in 2006.

"We spent a lot of time with Shaun individually, stressing mechanics," Wicinski said. "He threw better last Friday than he has all season. I was really pleased with his throwing and placement.

"Our wideouts had to come along, too. We lost one (Joseph Augustine) and he's out for a while."

The offensive line has been Geneva's best asset, but it's going to be under

attack from four players colleges are pursuing, including a pair of 280-pound defensive tackles.

"Big lines give us trouble," Wicinski said, "(in the loss to) Batavia, we saw that. We have to use the lessons we've learned there and do some things to counter (them). We're in a good place right now. Little things are starting to come together, after a big speed bump."

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