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Big Picture . Local Focus

Geneva's numbers keep going up

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Despite graduating all but one starter on defense and two on offense, Geneva has numerous reasons to be excited about the 2007 season.

Two hundred, to be exact.

That's the number of kids out for football, the program's highest total to date. About 75 are varsity players, 55 sophomores and 70 freshmen.

"Huge equipment issues, but it is a nice problem," said Geneva coach Rob Wicinski.

The Vikings can accomplish something remarkable with a 7-2 — or better — regular season record. It would push Wicinski's coaching record in 9 years at Geneva over .500 at 46-45.

How many people saw that coming in 2003, after the Vikings had gone 0-9, 1-8, 2-7 and 2-7 — that's 5-31 — in Wicinski's first four years on the job?

Cadets locked in: Marmion got its practice underway Wednesday with a 3-8 p.m. session.

On Friday, the Cadets will have a team lock-in. They spend 30 hours together, sleeping in the school, having supper with moms Friday night and doughnuts with dads Saturday morning.

"We play games, have motivational speakers and try to develop team chemistry," Marmion coach Dan Thorpe said.

New-look North Stars: St. Charles North is opening up its offense and worked on some of the new concepts at 7-on-7 camps at NIU, Bolingbrook, Oswego East and Glenbard South, and in scrimmages against West Aurora and Kaneland.

While that might be a new look for Mark Gould's team, the trademark hard-nosed defense should be back again.

"The kids are excited about the offense because of some new things we are putting in," Gould said. "We have a good number of juniors and they look to be pretty skilled. We are excited about this upcoming season. With quite a bit of experience back the defense looks pretty good."

Next level: Last year at this time, Batavia lineman Mike Garrity had committed to Illinois.

It turned out to be a good year for Division I talent in the area, with Geneva's Pat Schiller and Kaneland's Boone Thorgesen getting rides to Northern Illinois, where Shaun Ratay also is headed as a preferred walk-on.

It remains to be seen which players can earn a similar scholarship this fall. St. Charles East defensive tackle Dave Mashal and Marmion cornerback Manny Jaurez are both getting looks by many MAC and Big Ten schools.

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