



# Respect? Western Sun deserves plenty

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Posted Tuesday, August 21, 2007

Ask for opinions regarding the top football conferences in the state and you'll likely hear about the DuPage Valley or the Chicago Catholic Blue.

The Western Sun Conference made its own strong case last season.

Four of the eight teams made the playoffs, including three qualifiers — Batavia, Geneva and Kaneland — that combined for a 34-5 record as tri-champions. All three reached the state semifinals, with Batavia playing in the Class 6A title game.

Not bad for the debut season of the conference.

"The Western Sun opened some eyes as a real good football conference," said Glenbard South coach Dan Starkey.

Unfortunately for the Raiders they suffered at the other end of the Western Sun's success. After falling to Batavia and Geneva to start the conference slate, they struggled to recover.

With what it hopes will be an electric offense led by third-year starter Will Hill, Glenbard South plans to bounce back this season. Expect Hill to get the ball often and from several positions.

Ten total starters return, including a linebacker corps anchored by returning starters Mike Oratowski and Greg Calabrese. The Raiders know they'll need every bit of talent to compete in the wild Western Sun.

Despite key graduation losses across the board, expect another competitive season.

Last year Batavia junior quarterback Jordan Coffey, replacing injured starter Alex Schroeder, threw for 215 yards and a pair of touchdowns in the Bulldogs' title-game loss to Normal.

Geneva, which fell to Batavia in the 6A semifinals, returns standout running back Michael Ratay after he missed the bulk of last season due to injury. Kaneland, the third of last year's tri-champions whose biggest loss from last season may be retired coach Joe Thorgesen, looks to reload under first-year coach Tom Fedderly.

"Since I've been here the conference title has always gone through Batavia and Geneva," Starkey said. "And then with Rochelle and Kaneland, you really have to respect the teams in this conference."

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