

# Pennsbury Is Subject Of Great Expectations

Second of three parts

By **MIKE KERN**

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It's getting to the point that Jim Dundala cringes every time he picks up a sports section. Because invariably, someone else is predicting that his Pennsbury Falcons are going to win the Suburban One National football title.

Of course, there's good reason for the expectations — Pennsbury won the crown a year ago and returns a substantial portion of the group that did it. But Dundala, whose team lost the '83 championship in a special playoff game against William Tennent, knows it will take a lot more than some familiar faces to repeat.

"Judging by how high everybody has us ranked, I guess we don't even have to show up," Dundala said. "Why go to all the trouble? Just give us the trophy.

"Seriously, we have a good nucleus coming back and we'd like to think that our program can continue to be successful, but it's sure not going to be easy. I know I'm obviously biased, but I think this is the toughest league around. It doesn't have too many soft spots on the schedule."

In a non-league obstacle course, Pennsbury meets Father Judge, which has won two consecutive Catholic League titles, Wilson-West Lawn from the Reading area, and Bux-Mont power North Penn. That should provide Dundala with an early indication of what he has.

Some of the Falcons' key people include running backs Scott LaBrecque and Roy Strandberg, new quarterback Dave Fisher, receiver Andy Anderson, and two-way tackle Bob Burns, a Division I prospect.

"A lot of folks are going to want to take our championship away from us, and I guess that's what sports are all about," Dundala said. "You have to want to work for what you've got, if you want to hold onto it bad enough. That's why the kids were out here on Aug. 12 instead of hanging out on the corner or going to the Jersey shore."

Last year, only a season-ending loss to Pennsbury prevented Neshaminy from winning the title. Still, it was a far cry from the previous year, when the Redskins won just one game. But with only four starters back, two each on offense and defense, veteran coach Dick Bedesem, in his second



Neshaminy's Dick Bedesem

year at Neshaminy, has numerous holes to fill. Of course, Bedesem's been known to patch things up with the best of them.

"The kids have had a taste of what it's like to win, and you can't beat that for generating enthusiasm," said Bedesem. "It's shown up in the offseason workouts, in the turnout for practice, you name it. Still, the thing you can't beg, borrow or steal is experience, and that's what we're lacking. It's hard to be a great football team at the high school level without a solid senior nucleus. So, how fast our newcomers mature is going to determine just how good we probably can be."

Tim Ford returns at quarterback for Neshaminy and Terry Murphy is a Division I-caliber lineman.

There are three other teams that figure to be contenders.

Norristown returns quarterback Frank Cassano, who threw for 15 touchdowns as a junior, promising running back Danny Boyd, and twin pillars on the defensive line in Greg Rinehart (6-4, 265) and Theron Ellis (6-3, 215).

Abington returns its entire backfield, including junior Chris Roberts, who rushed for nearly 1,300 yards last year. If coach Doug Moister can find able replacements for several top linemen lost to graduation, beware. And even if he doesn't the Ghosts promise to be an explosive squad that will have a lot to say about who does win the title.

At Council Rock, coach Walt Snyder went through a rebuilding year

in 1984 and has an abundance of experienced talent at his disposal. Senior running back Jamy Franco probably will carry much of the offensive load.

Over in the American Conference, things always seem to be a bit more orderly. If Upper Merion doesn't win the title, then Methacton usually does. Since Upper Merion won the crown a year ago, should it come as any surprise that Methacton looms as the team to beat this time?

"It all goes back about eight or nine years, with only one exception," said Methacton coach George Marinkov. "There's an awful lot of tradition and pride involved. The problem is, while we have some real good veterans around, we're going to have to use some young kids, too. Once they blend in, I feel we'll be all right. But how long that takes is hard to say.

"I think there's a lot of enthusiasm with the kids coming back from last year, because we felt we blew it. But it's never as easy as it sounds or looks on paper."

Quarterback Bob Stamm, who missed virtually the entire 1984 season after breaking an arm in the first game, returns. His presence should allow Marinkov to open up what generally has been a close-to-the-vest offense. Among the 11 other starters back are tailback Mike Gambone and linebacker Kyle Koehler, two potential all-leaguers.

At Upper Merion, coach Steve Schein has only five starters back. But one of them is Bryan Russo, a rock at both center and linebacker.

Plymouth-Whitemarsh had its finest season in six years in '84, and with all-league quarterback Mickey Pergine back there's no reason to believe that the momentum won't carry over. About the only thing the Colonials lack is experience along the offensive line.

Upper Dublin should have a solid defense, led by Ryan Lafferty and Dave Derr, and might be heard from if some promising newcomers on offense perform as expected.

Upper Moreland has Scott Layer, a three-way talent who accounted for 1,130 yards rushing and 16 TDs as a junior. Problem is, with only two other starters back, the supporting cast appears threadbare, and even Layer can only do so much.

**Tomorrow: Bux-Mont, Central and Del Val.**