

END ZONE

Gazette



TALES FROM THE HEARTLAND

South Williamsport among several area teams facing changes in new conference

INSIDE

FERN STATE
GAMEDAY

Can football players survive the transition to a new conference?

Questions, questions

Williamsport Millionaires

Gravish seeks improvement, first win

By WES BRINK
wbrink@sungazette.com

Year No. 1 didn't result in as many wins as Tom Gravish would have wanted as Williamsport's head football coach. But last did year did bring a couple of things that pleased Gravish. Improvement as the season wore on and valuable experience for his younger players who will be this year's big contributors. Gravish will be looking for some of last year's youngsters to be this year's leaders.

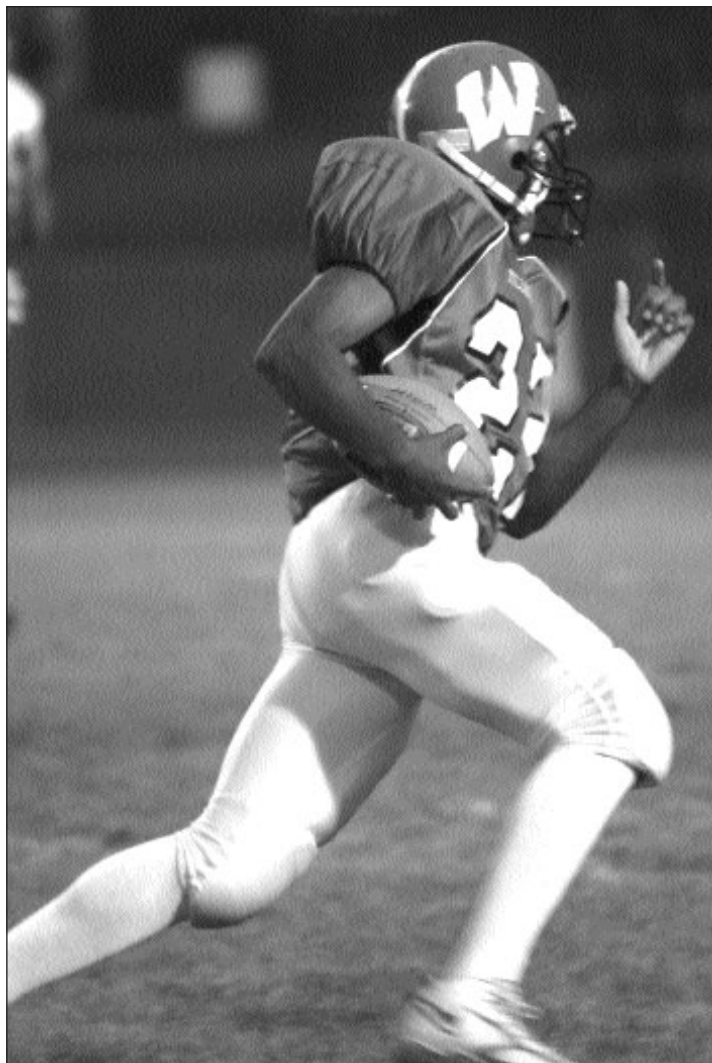
"We played against Pittston and we didn't get a win but you could see improvement, especially in some young kids here and there," said Gravish. "There were a couple games like that where we didn't win but I could see the improvement in these guys. They know the expectations and they gained a lot of experience. We're trying to be as positive as we can and work as hard as we can and I think they have high expectations for themselves as well."

Williamsport, 0-10 last year, lost several skill players, including quarterback Josh Rogers, who threw for 1,298 yards and nine touchdowns. But the 6-foot-2, 205 signal-caller is now playing at Susquehanna, and Gravish said that junior Mike Person looks to be the guy to be under center.

Person saw considerable time as a sophomore and completed over 50 percent of his passes (23-for-40) for 432 yards and five touchdowns.

"He had a pretty good off-season and he's having a good summer camp. Right now, he'd probably be our guy," Gravish said. "He's grown up. He's gotten a lot bigger, he's a little quicker. We were pleased with the State College scrimmage. He seemed to manage things reasonably well. He took some hits and didn't seem to fluster."

When Person doesn't throw, he'll have Nhashon Braggs to



SUN-GAZETTE FILE

Sophomore Nhashon Braggs is Williamsport's leading returning rusher.

run the ball. As a freshman last year Braggs rushed for a team-best 426 yards and three touchdowns and should be the main back this year. Joe Nolan will join Braggs in the backfield. Several players on the Millionaire offensive line are back including seniors Keith McCabe (6-4, 230) Josh Traver (6-0, 250), Brennan Meyer (5-11, 230) and 6-3, 285-pound junior Scott Bailey. Matt Morehart, a 6-1, 240 pound junior who started in the season opener last year against Berwick but suffered a season-ending injury, should be back on the line as well. Thomas

Burk, a 6-1, 240-pound senior will be at tight end. Despite losing three of its top wide receivers, including current Penn State freshman Jake Fagnano, Williamsport does have some weapons for Person.

Sha'Had Harris, Blake Adams, Shariff Monroe, and Mark Walker are expected to carry the receiving corps. Harris had six catches last year for 59 yards and a touchdown while Burk caught 5 for 117 and three scores.

With Rogers' big arms, Williamsport often scored on big plays, but Gravish said the game plan might change a lit-

tle bit this year, going to a more ball-control, possession offense.

"We're trying to have an offense that we don't need to try score on 70 yard plays," Gravish said. "We just want to chip away and move the sticks, keep first downs going, and we think we have the guys to do that. If we play team football and they all work together, we feel we can move the chains. If we can have four eight minute drives a game and score four times and kick the extra points, there's 32 minutes of football we take away out of 48. That puts the pressure on the defense. And we do think that we will play a little bit better defense than we did last year, and if we can do that, we stand a chance to be in every game."

That defense does have several returnees as well. Meyer and Burk are back on the defensive line as well as Bailey, who saw some time last year on the defensive side of the ball. Matt Lewis, a 6-2, 205-pound junior, should also be on the defensive line. Peter Lovecchio, a 6-2, 220-pound junior, should see time on the line as well.

The secondary should be solid as well with senior Cyrek Johnson at one corner and Paul Shannon at the other. Braggs will be at safety.

After going through the growing pains that a lot of times accompany a new coaching staff, Gravish is hoping for vast improvement from this year's squad who doesn't play Berwick this year but opens at Dallas.

"I've been teaching here a whole year," Gravish said. "I've had them come into the winter weight program and spring program, summer program. I feel I know them a little bit better, they trust us a little bit better as a coaching staff. We're expecting big things from those guys who played last year. We have high expectations for them."

The rundown

Head Coach: Tom Gravish, 2nd year
Last Year: 0-10
Assistant Coaches: Bill Olsen, Kevin Choate, Justin Ross, Bob Lundy, Adam Allison, Pat Vollman, Corey Burkholder, Tony Cipriani.
League: Wyoming Valley Conference

2008 SCHEDULE

Aug. 30— at Dallas
Sept. 5— Central Mountain
Sept. 12— at Stroudsburg
Sept. 19— Coughlin
Sept. 26— at Hazleton
Oct. 3— Crestwood
Oct. 10— Central Dauphin
Oct. 17— at Wyoming Valley West
Oct. 24— at Hollidaysburg
Oct. 31— Tunkhannock

2007 RESULTS

Williamsport 13, Berwick 33
Williamsport 35, Pleasant Valley 42
Williamsport 8, Coughlin 40
Williamsport 7, Valley West 41
Williamsport 10, Central Mountain 39
Williamsport 17, Hazleton 55
Williamsport 7, State College 35
Williamsport 20, Pittston 23
Williamsport 7, Central Dauphin 48
Williamsport 21, Tunkhannock 34

2007 STATISTICS

Passer	At	Cm	Int	Yds	TD
Josh Rogers	218	94	10	1298	9
Michael Person	40	23	5	432	3
Jake Fagnano	1	1	0	71	1
Drae Lewis	1	1	0	5	0
Jerrill Buxton	1	0	0	0	0
Rusher	At	Yds	TD		
Nhashon Braggs	95	426	3		
Joseph Nolan	33	146	0		
Josh King	19	118	0		
Jerrill Buxton	30	78	0		
James Dunn	13	36	0		
Michael Person	10	11	1		
Donte Adams	1	5	0		
Drae Lewis	1	3	0		
Andre Martin	1	2	0		
Davon Seldon	4	1	0		
Jake Fagnano	2	-4	0		
Blake Adams	1	-4	0		
Josh Rogers	35	-139	1		
Receiver	Rec	Yds	TD		
Andre Martin	33	468	3		
Davon Seldon	30	575	5		
Jake Fagnano	20	446	4		
Sha'had Harris	6	59	1		
Thomas Burk	5	117	1		
Nhashon Braggs	4	-7	0		
Seth Hembree	4	36	0		
Jerrill Buxton	4	19	0		
Josh King	3	3	0		
Blake Adams	2	34	0		
Colin Hammerstein	2	21	0		
Drae Lewis	2	19	0		
Paul Shannon	1	5	0		
Robert Diehl	1	0	0		
Joseph Nolan	1	10	0		
Demarc Shorter	1	3	0		
Team Statistics					
First downs	103				
Rushes	246				
Rushing yds	681				
Passing yds	1815				
Completions	119				
Attempts	261				
Interceptions	15				
Penalties	76				
Penalty yds	520				
First downs all.	169				
Rushing yds all.	2646				
Passing yds all.	936				
Turnovers	25				
Takeaways	15				



Williamsport Millionaires 2008 Varsity Football Schedule

Sat.	August 30	Away	Dallas High School
Fri.	September 5	Home	Central Mountain High School
Fri.	September 12	Away	Stroudsburg High School
Fri.	September 19	Home	Coughlin High School
Fri.	September 26	Away	Hazleton Area High School
Fri.	October 3	Home	Crestwood High School
Fri.	October 10	Home	Central Dauphin High School
Fri.	October 17	Away	Wyoming Valley West High School
Fri.	October 24	Away	Hollidaysburg High School
Fri.	October 31	Home	Tunkhannock High School



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