

# Old Shoe Game still big after 60 years

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With one team playing its best football of the season and the other struggling through a season of bad breaks, it might appear on paper as though the 60th edition of the Old Shoe Game could be a one-sided contest.

But football games — especially back yard rivalry games — aren't played on paper.

Rivals Dallas and Lake-Lehman will square off in the 60th annual Old Shoe Game at 7 p.m. Friday at Edward H. Edwards Stadium in Lehman Township. Dallas is under the direction of longtime head coach Ted Jackson, while Lake-Lehman is led by second-year coach Carl Kern.

At press time, the Mountaineers were 6-2 entering their game against Meyers. Dallas is also third among District 2 Class 3A teams in state points, with the top four teams making the playoffs.

Meanwhile, Lake-Lehman was taking a 1-7 record into its game against winless Nanticoke Area. The Black Knights lost four games this year by a touchdown or less and, in another, was leading in the fourth quarter.

Dallas has won six consecutive games against Lake-Lehman, including last year's 35-0 win against an injury-depleted Black Knight squad.

Here's a look at how the teams match up:

#### OFFENSE

While Dallas and Lake-Lehman have quality skill players, both teams are led offensively by their quarterbacks.

The Mountaineers are led by 6-foot-4, 220-pound Fred Mihal. Despite playing in a relatively conservative offense, the senior has completed 51 percent of his passes for 853 yards and a Wyoming Valley Conference-leading 12 touchdowns. Mihal has also thrown just three interceptions and has compiled a quarterback rating of 141.24. He's also rushed for almost 200 yards.

The Black Knights are led by junior Nate Volkel, who has thrown for a WVC-high 1,220 yards — and that total could have increased significantly against winless Nanticoke Area. Volkel has thrown 10 touchdowns and has a quarterback rating of 120.65. His 111 completions are by far the most of any WVC Class 2A quarterback. Hanover Area's Eric Popovich is second with 65.

But the quarterbacks aren't the only performers on offense.

At Dallas, senior running back



Students from Lake-Lehman and Dallas High Schools, coaches and past participants gathered last year for a pre-game "Old Shoe Game" breakfast at the clubhouse at the Huntsville Golf Course. Shown here during the breakfast are, from left, Ted Jackson, Dallas High School football coach, Bob Dolbear and Tony Marchakitus. Dolbear and Marchakitus played in some of the earliest Old Shoe Games, a traditional annual competition between Dallas and Lake-Lehman High Schools.

Joe Hayes leads a balanced rushing attack with 445 yards and three touchdowns. The receiving corps is deep and has big-play capability. Pat Murray leads a group of six players who average more than 12 yards per catch. The senior has 12 receptions for 267 yards (15.3 yards per catch) and seven touchdowns.

Hayes has caught 12 passes for 193 yards (12.4), followed by Vito Recchia 4-88 (22.0), Kyle Arnaud 4-67 (16.8), Joe Collini 5-76 (15.2) and Scott Gallup (13.8).

The Black Knights have big-play guys of their own. Six players have at least 100 receiving yards, led by Cody Lamoreaux's 36 catches for 373 yards. Tight end Kenny Pollock is second in the WVC 2A with 255 yards on 25 receptions. Other players with at least 100 receiving yards are Cody Komrowski (191), T.J. Stepanki (141), Keith Roberts (129) and Aaron Setzer (126).

Lamoreaux is also a threat to run, compiling a team-high 528 yards on 93 carries. Setzer (220), Komrowski (191) and Volkel (168) have also run for at least 150 yards each.

#### DEFENSE

Both teams have looked im-

pressive on defense at times — but have looked shaky, as well.

Dallas surrendered a combined 128 points in game against Berwick (55), Tunkhannock (38) and Valley West (35), but allowed just a combined 43 points in its other five games. Lake-Lehman has posted similar numbers, allowing only 19 more points than Dallas. With the exception of giving up some big plays — very costly big plays — the Black Knights played solid defense in losses against Meyers, GAR and Crestwood.

Dallas has also been able to force turnovers by its opponents. The Mountaineers have recovered 12 fumbles and intercepted five passes for 17 takeaways — second in the league. The Black Knights, meanwhile, have recovered six fumbles and recorded one interception.

With both teams full of potentially-explosive offensive players, the team that allows the fewest big plays might walk away with the trophy.

#### SPECIAL TEAMS

Lake-Lehman struggled early in the season with its placekicking, but seems to have found a reliable kicker in soccer player Gary Knauer. Although he's missed several extra-points, Knauer has shown a strong leg at times.

Dallas has a solid kicker all season in Recchia. The senior has made 25 extra points, the second most in Class 3A and No. 3 in the entire conference. Murray has also done a nice job as the punter, pinning the opponents inside their own 10-yard line at least five times this season.

#### COACHING



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Senior members of the Dallas High School football team who will play in their last Old Shoe Game against the Black Knights of Lake-Lehman on Friday are, from left, first row, Kyle Arnaud, Anthony Rubbico, Joe Collini, Steve Pearson and Matt Luksick. Second row, Steve Pearson, Vito Recchia, Patrick Murray, Fred Mihal, Jeremy Fike and Mike Adams.



Senior members of the Lake-Lehman football team who will play in their last Old Shoe game against the Mountaineers of Dallas this Friday are, from left, kneeling, Wally Simko, Eli Foss and Remington Boyd. Standing, Matt Sikora, Ken Pollock and Dan McHugh.

Jackson has won more than a dozen championships — including a state title — during his 23 years at Dallas. But this year might be his best job of coaching. The Mountaineers entered the season with just 32 players on the roster. The team featured just

four players who started a varsity game last season and an offensive line with four sophomores.

The result: a chance for an 4-2 record in the regular season and a berth in the District 2 Class 3A playoffs.

See SHOE, Page 13

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