

Twelve Returning Starters Form Minuteman Nucleus

By STEVE EIGHINGER
LEXINGTON — Coach Bill Stoner and crew continue to prepare what promises to be an improved Lexington football squad for their initial 1972 contest with Mansfield Malabar this coming Saturday.

"We're coming along pretty much on schedule," commented Stoner, who will be working with approximately 12 returning starters. "We should be able to start about six veterans on offense from last year and about the same number on defense. Some of the boys, however, will probably have to go both ways."

The Minutemen will be attempting to regain that "championship touch" that led them to consecutive Johnny Appleseed Conference titles in 1969-70 before slipping to a 3-6-1 slate in 1971. Lexington posted a 3-3-1 mark in the JAC last season.

Last season's edition of

the Minutemen got off to a slow start, going winless in its first five games before rattling off three straight victories. Lexington snared wins from league foes Crestview (34-0), Plymouth (14-12), and Loudonville (14-6).

Defense was the byword of the '71 Minutemen outfit, allowing only 88 points (8.8 per game), but the offensive attack could muster only 86.

Some familiar faces who will be returning to the Lexington camp this fall are Rod Fritz, Eben Cockley, and Tony Delianides. Fritz will fill the bill once again at fullback with Cockley expected to step in at a halfback position. Delianides, after seeing considerable action last season as a sophomore quarterback, seems to get the nod at signal-calling duties.

Stoner reported his players are in excellent physical condition, which he credits to the fitness program the players went through in July.

The Minutemen have also been busy along the pre-season scrimmaging trial. They have tangled with Dalton, Northwestern, and Galion.

As do most of the other JAC coaches, Stoner foresees a close race, but with one team emerging above the rest.

"On the basis of past performance and returning personnel, Ontario will be hard to beat. Clear Fork, which has a veteran team, along with Plymouth, should come on strong, too," concluded the veteran Lexington coach. Ontario and the Minutemen battled to a 0-0 tie in 1971.

MINUTEMEN SQUAD — The 1972 Lexington Minutemen football team is made up of (front row, from left) John Williams, Jeff Rhea, Frank Chillemi, Tom Shaffer, Chuck Volz, and Rod Fritz; (second row) Steve Billman, Scott Coulter, Mark Cooper, Yogi Durbin, Craig Breen and Bruce Stevens; (third row) Lee Robinson, Jeff Wentz, Fred McLaughlin, Lou Namath, Dave Taylor, Gary Simmering and Kris Brickman; (fourth row) Bruce Bowers, Dennis Boyce, Mike Buren, Jim Smith, Craig Case and Bruce Stevens; (fifth row) Al Clever, Gary Line, Jeff Mong, Doug Boyce and Gregg Ammons; (sixth row) Rick Compton, Mike Sutter, Eben Cockley, Noel Sherman and Tony Delianides. (News Journal Photo by Ed Zirkle)



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Big Red Seeking To Avoid Injuries

PLYMOUTH — "Overcoming a lack of depth and avoiding injuries are the two obstacles Plymouth must hurdle if we are to improve in 1972," states Coach Larry Root.

"We have twelve lettermen returning, eight of which were regulars on last year's squad," commented the hopeful Root. "By the start of school, we are expecting a few more boys to come out."

"Our goal this season is to improve on last year's 3-7 mark. Four of those losses, however, were by a combined total of 13 points. With a little luck we can get on the winning side of the ledger," continues Root.

"I do not see any weak teams in our conference this year. Ontario will once again be the team to beat. Crestline also looks quite strong and Clear Fork should be the most improved team."

Heading the Plymouth comeback hopes will be a quartet of seniors. Kim Carter, Ray Hughes, Joe Woodmansee and Sid Ream are the lone two-year lettermen on the team.

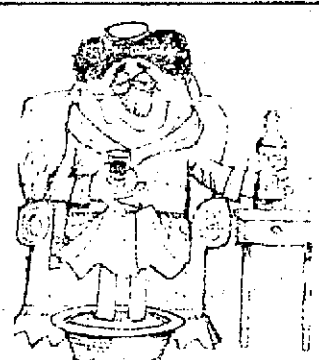
Carter, a 5-9, 170-pound halfback is slated to fill one of the running back slots. Hughes, who stands 5-10 and weighs in at 161 gets the nod at quarterback. Woodmansee (6-0, 218) and Ream (5-10, 190) figure to bolster the Plymouth line.

Other returnees include Backs Larry Reynolds, Rich Dyer, Mike Hamman and Ron Foreman. Jeff Clabaugh and Gary Biesel are back at guards, Rick Strohm at end, and Keith Stone at the center spot.

Missing from this year's squad will be 1971 bulwarks Fullback-Tackle Bill Van Wagner, Running Back John Conley, Quarterback Larry Taylor and End Jim Cutright.

Root has posted a 30-38-2 record at Plymouth. He also doubles as golf coach for the Big Red. Root is a 1958 graduate of Ashland College.

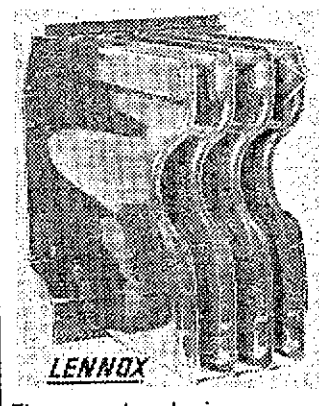
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