



Big Red

Pictured here is the backfield that coach David Coulter is hoping will move the ball for his team this year. Pictured from left to right

are: Tim Keene, Gary Blankenship, Steve Tackett, James Jamerson and Scott Harris. (Reflector Photo by Larry Burgess)

Changes galore for Big Red

By STEVE BYRNE
Reflector Staff Writer

PLYMOUTH — The word out on Plymouth High School football is that everything has changed. The Big Red will be unveiling a new coach, a new conference, and a new cast of players with a tough act to follow when they start their 1979 campaign Friday against Buckeye Central.

David Coulter, former defensive coordinator at Lima Central Catholic High School, steps into his first head coaching position this year, and is well aware of the job in front of him.

Plymouth went 7-3 in both 1977 and 1978, playing in the Johnny Appleseed Conference, the smallest and only Class A school in the conference. This year, however, the Big Red have joined up with two schools more their size, Crestview and Lucas, to form the Black Fork Valley Conference.

The team that went 14-6 over the past two seasons, a record made more impressive by the fact that the Red was playing many teams a class higher, is gone. Not one starter is back from last season.

In fact, only 29 Plymouth students had donned football gear as of Aug. 13.

"We have 11 athletes here, and not much else," said an easy-going Coulter. "The talent is there, they now have to get experience."

"We have to get the right people in the right positions early," Coulter added. "If we have to jumble our lineup during the season we'll be hurting. Any injuries would kill us. We just don't have the depth."

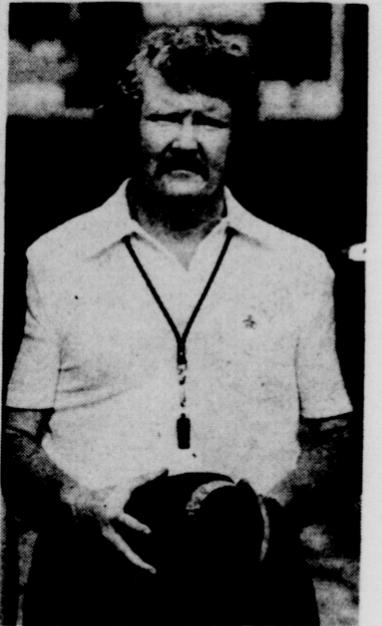
Seven lettermen are returning for this grid season, mostly on the offensive line, which will be anchored by co-captain Jeff Burrer, a 6-foot, 175-pound senior, at the center spot.

Other letter winners on the line, all of whom are seniors, include massive tackles Gary King (5-foot-11, 225 pounds) and Gary Ryman (5-foot-7 245 pounds) and left guard Doug Miller (5-foot-8, 140 pounds). Filling out the offensive line will be junior Bill

Hudson (5-foot-10, 145 pounds) at tight end, senior Jerry Miller (5-foot-10, 155 pounds) at right guard, and either sophomore Reg Ganshorn (5-foot-11, 150 pounds) or senior Mike Branham (5-foot-9, 150 pounds) at split end.

Junior Rick Echleberger (5-foot-7, 220 pounds) is currently challenging Burrer at the center spot.

In the offensive backfield,



DAVID COULTER

Coulter will go with Steve Tackett, a 5-foot-11, 160-pound senior who saw limited action last year. Tackett and company plan to run a wing-T offense during the campaign, hoping to either run or pass when they want to.

For the running game, Plymouth has a fleet sophomore named Scott Harris who Coulter says will "make people stand up and take notice." Harris (5-foot-7, 155 pounds) will work at the running back spot with senior Jim Keene (5-foot-9, 150 pounds) at set back and either senior Gary Blankenship (5-foot-10, 160 pounds) or sophomore James Jamerson (5-foot-11, 190 pounds) handling the fullback duties.

Most of Coulter's troops will be playing on the defensive team also, where the rookie coach plans to employ a Notre Dame 4-4 lineup. Burrer and Ganshorn will most likely fill in at the end positions, with King and Ryman playing at the tackles.

The linebackers will be Doug Miller and Blankenship at left outside and left inside respectively, Jamerson at right inside and Jerry Miller at right outside. The backfield is set with Harris and Branham at the corners and Tackett playing safety.

"The first part of our schedule is the toughest," Coulter explained. "We've got Buckeye Central right off the bat and rumor has it their loaded this year. Then we have South Central and Hopewell-Loudon, both very much improved teams."

Regardless of how Coulter's debut as head mentor at Plymouth High turns out, the Big Red gridders will give their supporters a taste of the new and the different.

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Coulter gets first try at running his own team

The new head mentor at Plymouth High is David Coulter, 31, who comes to the Big Red from Lima Central Catholic, where he spent the last six years as defensive coordinator.

Coulter takes his young gridders into their first season as members of the Black Fork Valley Conference, a new conference which also includes Crestview and Lucas.

A native of Grove City, Pa., where he attended high school and college, Coulter inherits for his first head coaching position a team of players who will all be getting their first cracks at starting positions.

"We have a very green team," said Coulter. "If we can get the right people in the right positions early, we have potential."

Coulter lives in Shelby with his wife, Eileen, and son, Glenn.

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