

## Excitement building for Metro football season

Written by Mark Dukes

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The high school football season is a little more than three months away but already there is anticipation in some Metro districts.

Prairie will unveil its refurbished John Wall Field on opening night, Aug. 26, in a matchup against Washington. Work was scheduled to begin this month on a variety of improvements, including field turf, addition of about 1,500 seats on the home side and additional bleachers on the visitor's side.

At [Linn-Mar](#), its new stadium has been open for spring sports. It will be showcased for the first time during football season Sept. 2 when the Lions host Kennedy. The Lions will have four home games next fall but won't have to leave the Metro area for a game with the exception of a trip to Dubuque Wahlert.

Of course, Kingston Stadium underwent significant changes in 2009 with a \$2.8 million project that included the addition of field turf, improvement in lighting and the addition and upgrade of restrooms. Jefferson, Kennedy and Washington will play their third home seasons at the improved stadium, which is going on 60 years old.

Visiting teams and fans will have to make some adjustments when they go to Prairie and Linn-Mar but, coupled with the work at Kingston, it's great to see the Metro football stadiums evolving. By the way, Marion High School has its own plans, as you can see on its website an artist's rendering of a new stadium.

Football schedules have been released. [Jefferson](#) and [Kennedy](#) each will play six games at Kingston and will leave town only twice.

[Washington](#)

has five games at Kingston and will leave the Metro area three times.

[Prairie,](#)

[Xavier](#)

and

[Marion](#)

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ALUMNI UPDATE – As previously reported here, a national organization called Alumni Football USA has been in Iowa rounding up former high school players for alumni games.

Jefferson and Kennedy were the quickest to jump on board. Marion and Linn-Mar alums have done the same.

A summertime double-header has been scheduled for July 9 at Kingston Stadium, with Linn-Mar taking on Marion at 5:30 p.m., followed by a collision between Jefferson and Kennedy at 8. Already, those four teams have been conducting practices Saturdays and Sundays.

Several other Class 4A alumni contests have been scheduled: Des Moines East vs. Des Moines North (June 26), Dubuque Senior vs. Dubuque Hempstead (July 9), Burlington vs. Muscatine (July 15) and Waterloo West vs. Cedar Falls (July 16).

Just outside the Metro, Center Point-Urbana will host Vinton-Shellsburg on July 8. North Cedar and Tipton will renew old times June 18 and Dyersville Beckman will meet Monticello July 17.

Former players pay \$95 to play, which covers a variety of things including uniforms and insurance.

*(Mark Dukes is former sports editor of the Cedar Rapid Gazette. He is co-host of The Gym Class radio show weekdays from 2-3 p.m. on KGYM-AM 1600.)*