

Marion looks to rebound after tough year

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 22 August 2015 18:47 -



The Marion Indians got off to a good start last year when they whipped Mount Vernon, 28-6, in the first game of the regular season, but they never won another ballgame and finished with a 1-and-8 record.

It was a tough season to swallow for a program that's accustomed to winning records and trips to the Class 3A playoffs.

"It was horrible," Coach Tony Perkins said Thursday before practice. "The worst thing about it, you do everything the same as you have in every other year, and then you have one of those years where everything that could go wrong ..."

Perkins did not finish the season, but you know the ending.

"That's the way the season went last year," he said. "The biggest thing we're doing, we're not talking about it. It didn't happen. Move on."

Perkins has compiled a flashy 104-51 record in 15 years at his alma mater. He needs one more victory to tie the legendary Les Hipple for the most victories in school history. Hipple fashioned a 105-42-10 mark during his 18 years at the helm from 1945 through 1962.

Perkins liked the way his club responded to last year's disappointing results. He said they hit

Marion looks to rebound after tough year

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 22 August 2015 18:47 -

the weight room with extra vigor and have maintained a positive attitude.

"It was great," he said. "That's the big thing about having high school kids. You have a new group come in and a new mix. It's a great big new soup.

"And these guys have really meshed well together. They do a lot of things together and they're good kids."

The Indians have a building block with senior tailback Kory Walsh, who rushed for 755 yards and seven touchdowns last season. Walsh ran for 448 yards and scored five touchdowns as a sophomore in 2013, giving him 1,203 yards and 12 TDs in two years.

"He's been a good blessing to have the last three years," said Perkins. "He's a strong kid, he runs well. The biggest thing this year, we're going to have more to go with him.



"We'll try to loosen it up a little bit more for him this year so he doesn't take so many shots."

Gage Kray and Issak Hahn have been battling for the starting nod at quarterback and Kray, a 6-foot-4 athlete, can play other spots as well.

Ryan Whalen, Owen Carstensen, Blair Brooks and Clayton Mohwinkle figure to get the ball as well.

Marion looks to rebound after tough year

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 22 August 2015 18:47 -

The Indians stuck mostly to the ground last year and averaged only 12.9 points per game, but Perkins anticipates a more balanced attack - and a more productive attack - this time around.

Perkins said the Indians are not a big football team. "But we have a lot of athletes on the team," he remarked. "There's a lot of kids who can do a lot of things. Depth on the offensive line is my biggest concern."

Chris Cole, a 6-1, 220-pound freshman, has been promoted to the varsity as a fullback and linebacker. Perkins said it's the first time he's had a freshman on the varsity.

Walsh, a strong runner at 6-foot-1 and 220 pounds, worked hard during the off-season to get ready for his final year at Marion. He's optimistic about the chances for success.

"I think we've grown together a little bit more," he said. "Everyone here is working as hard as they can."

Walsh said the Indians stuck together in 2014, despite the rough times.

"It was tough, but we were a team, we were a family, we all worked together, we all stayed together," he said. "You just have to keep pushing."

Walsh suffers from asthma, but still managed to carry the ball more than 18 times per game. "It makes it a little tough, but not something I can't get through," he said.

Marion hosts Mount Vernon in the season opener this Friday night.

Marion looks to rebound after tough year

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 22 August 2015 18:47 -

"I like this team a lot. I really do," Perkins said. "They just are go-getters."

SCHEDULE

Aug. 28 - Mount Vernon
Sept. 4 - at Washington (Iowa)
Sept. 11 - Cascade
Sept. 18 - Solon
Sept. 25 - at DeWitt Central
Oct. 2 - Maquoketa
Oct. 9 - at Western Dubuque
Oct. 16 - at Dubuque Wahlert
Oct. 23 - Xavier