

## **Saints hit jackpot with Dowling, Regina**

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 07 March 2014 12:17 -

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If anyone thought the Xavier Saints would be ducking stiff competition by dropping to Class 3A football this season, guess again.

Xavier's non-district schedule includes three of the toughest Catholic schools in the state with Class 4A powerhouse Dowling Catholic, Class 1A powerhouse Iowa City Regina and Class 3A power Davenport Assumption.

The only premier Catholic school that's missing from the schedule is the University of Notre Dame.

"It's like playing Notre Dame with those three," said Xavier Coach Duane Schulte, who welcomes the new challenge.

The Iowa High School Athletic Association announced the football schedules Friday morning. All of the Mississippi Valley Conference schools - including Xavier - are switching to district football with the 2014 season and there was keen interest to see who everyone would be playing in their non-district games.

The Saints hit the jackpot.

Xavier opens the 2014 campaign Aug. 29 at Dowling Catholic, which whipped the Saints 44-13 for the Class 4A title in November and finished 14-0.

The Saints play their second game Sept. 5 at Davenport Assumption, which went 9-2 last year and reached the second round of the Class 4A playoffs. The Knights, like the Saints, are dropping from 4A to 3A for their proper enrollment bracket.

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Perhaps the most intriguing game happens Oct. 17, when Iowa City Regina comes to Saints Field for a marquee affair. Regina has won 56 straight games - a state record - and has captured four state titles in a row.

"That's going to be the East game of the year, isn't it?" Schulte remarked. "Obviously they're a huge challenge, too."

Regina is coached by Marv Cook, the former Iowa All-American and NFL all-pro tight end. Cook's son, Drew, is a 6-foot-6 quarterback who has committed to the Hawkeyes. Drew Cook will be a senior at Regina this fall.

Xavier wanted to play local Class 4A schools from the Mississippi Valley Conference, but none of them wanted to play the Saints. The Saints got on the phone and struck deals with Dowling, Assumption and Regina instead.

"Obviously it's unbelievably competitive when you have to play those three teams," said Schulte. "We wanted to play good football teams and actually play people that want to play us."

"Nobody can say that we're still not trying to play good football teams. In fact, we wanted to play 4A teams around here, but nobody would play us."

The Saints will face Dowling, Assumption and Regina again in 2015 as part of a two-year cycle with the new district schedules.

Xavier's six district games are against Solon, DeWitt Central, Maquoketa, Western Dubuque, Dubuque Wahlert and Marion. Only those games count toward making the playoffs.

"To me, it's like playing in the MVC," said Schulte, surveying his entire schedule. "All nine

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games are tough."

Kennedy, Washington, Jefferson, Linn-Mar and Prairie filled their non-district schedules with games against Class 4A teams from the Mississippi Valley Conference and Mississippi Athletic Conference.

Kennedy will play Iowa City West, Washington, North Scott and Pleasant Valley. Washington drew Jefferson, Kennedy, Iowa City West and Linn-Mar. Jefferson will meet Washington, Prairie, Davenport North and Davenport West.

Linn-Mar's non-district games are with Prairie, Pleasant Valley, Clinton and Washington. Prairie will meet Linn-Mar, Jefferson, Dubuque Senior and North Scott.

The Marion Indians will play Mount Vernon, Washington (Iowa) and Cascade in non-district games in Class 3A.

Cedar Valley Christian will face Harmony and Clarksville in non-district games in 8-Player football.

Each school was allowed to list preferred non-district games on their schedule and the IHSA took it from there.

## **2014 METRO FOOTBALL SCHEDULES (Non-District Games in Capital Letters)**

### **KENNEDY**

Aug. 29 - AT IOWA CITY WEST

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Sept. 4 - WASHINGTON  
Sept. 12 - AT NORTH SCOTT  
Sept. 19 - PLEASANT VALLEY  
Sept. 25 - at Jefferson  
Oct. 2 - Linn-Mar  
Oct. 10 - at Waterloo East  
Oct. 17 - at Cedar Falls  
Oct. 24 - Waterloo West

### WASHINGTON

Aug. 29 - JEFFERSON  
Sept. 4 - AT KENNEDY  
Sept. 12 - IOWA CITY WEST  
Sept. 19 - AT LINN-MAR  
Sept. 26 - Muscatine  
Oct. 3 - Ottumwa  
Oct. 10 - at Prairie  
Oct. 16 - Iowa City High  
Oct. 24 - at Burlington

### JEFFERSON

Aug. 29 - AT WASHINGTON  
Sept. 5 - PRAIRIE  
Sept. 12 - AT DAVENPORT NORTH  
Sept. 18 - AT DAVENPORT WEST  
Sept. 25 - Kennedy  
Oct. 3 - at Cedar Falls  
Oct. 10 - Waterloo West  
Oct. 17 - Waterloo East  
Oct. 24 - at Linn-Mar

### LINN-MAR

Aug. 29 - AT PRAIRIE  
Sept. 5 - PLEASANT VALLEY  
Sept. 12 - AT CLINTON  
Sept. 19 - WASHINGTON  
Sept. 26 - Waterloo East

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Oct. 2 - at Kennedy  
Oct. 10 - Cedar Falls  
Oct. 17 - at Waterloo West  
Oct. 24 - Jefferson

### **PRAIRIE**

Aug. 29 - LINN-MAR  
Sept. 5 - AT JEFFERSON  
Sept. 12 - AT DUBUQUE SENIOR  
Sept. 19 - NORTH SCOTT  
Sept. 26 - at Burlington  
Oct. 3 - at Iowa City High  
Oct. 10 - Washington  
Oct. 17 - at Muscatine  
Oct. 24 - Ottumwa

### **XAVIER**

Aug. 29 - AT DOWLING CATHOLIC  
Sept. 5 - AT DAVENPORT ASSUMPTION  
Sept. 12 - Solon  
Sept. 19 - at DeWitt Central  
Sept. 26 - Maquoketa  
Oct. 3 - Western Dubuque  
Oct. 10 - at Dubuque Wahlert  
Oct. 17 - IOWA CITY REGINA  
Oct. 24 - Marion

### **MARION**

Aug. 29 - AT MOUNT VERNON  
Sept. 5 - WASHINGTON (IOWA)  
Sept. 12 - AT CASCADE  
Sept. 19 - at Solon  
Sept. 26 - DeWitt Central  
Oct. 3 - at Maquoketa  
Oct. 10 - Western Dubuque  
Oct. 17 - Dubuque Wahlert  
Oct. 24 - at Xavier

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### **CEDAR VALLEY CHRISTIAN**

Aug. 29 - AT HARMONY

Sept. 5 - CLARKSVILLE

Sept. 12 - at Central City

Sept. 19 - Central Elkader

Sept. 26 - at Lansing Kee

Oct. 3 - Midland

Oct. 10 - at West Central

Oct. 17 - Turkey Valley

Oct. 24 - Springville