

UA intends to be right back in the thick of things

By [BRIAN McLEAN](#)

The Upper Arlington football squad was one team away from likely making it back to the Division I final four in last year's playoffs.

That Golden Bears unit finished the year with a 10-2 record -- both losses coming to eventual state champion Hilliard Davidson. It was also a team dominated by 33 seniors.



While third-year coach Mike Golden said it's been a challenge to replace so many starters, don't start feeling sorry for the 2007 Bears.

Golden has 34 seniors leading the way and, judging by the work they've done in the offseason, don't be surprised to see UA among the eight Region 3 teams in this year's playoffs.

"Replacing so many senior starters has been a big challenge, but I like the way these kids have responded," the coach said. "They've done their work in the weight room and they came back in great shape."

As has been the case with previous Golden-coached squads, look for UA's offense to be a hybrid of the Wing-T and the defense to work out of a 50 slant and angle.

"We'll run the ball about 70 percent of the time," Golden said. "I've always believed you have to be able to run the ball to be effective on offense."

"On defense, in order to be effective you have to be able to stop the run."

The offense

Running or passing, the offense will move as far as the big Bears up front lead it.

A key blocker and receiver is senior tight end Andrew Colosimo (6-feet, 5-inches, 245 pounds), who verbally committed to play at the University of Akron next year.

Colosimo and seniors Colin McClain and Thomas Sauter are this year's co-captains.

Seniors Travis Calkins (6-4, 230) and Brennan Kurfees (6-3, 240) look to start at tackle. Junior Kacy Yuhas (6-2, 245) gets the nod at center; senior Josh Root (5-8, 225) and junior Nat Kell (6-0, 215) are the leading candidates at guard. Junior Charlie Johnson (6-2, 235) is also in the starting rotation.

Under center is senior quarterback Braden Layer (6-1, 180).

"He's waited his turn and worked very hard at improving his skills," Golden said. "He's a fine football player and he continues to improve as the leader of the offense."

Three running backs figure to get the Bears' share of the carries.

Junior Tommy Farwick (6-0, 195), senior Mikel Berry (6-3, 245) and junior Alex Drake (5-10-180) combine speed and power in the backfield.

In addition to Colosimo, look for senior Kyle Angelos (6-0, 165) to lead a group of five or six receivers targeted when Layer throws the football.

Seniors Troy Shroyer and Michael Bock-Bacalao are the kickers.

The defense

Colosimo and Berry will also see significant playing time on the defensive line.

Berry is considering a couple college scholarship offers and Golden expects him to make a verbal commitment soon.

Also seeing playing time on the defensive line are Sauter (5-10, 217) and senior Eric Clements (5-9, 211).

A number of linebackers are in the playing rotation.

Senior Tommy Tench (6-1, 230), McClain (6-0, 190), junior Mark Crawford (5-11, 215) and junior Phil Gross (6-1, 206) are the leading candidates.

In the defensive backfield, seniors Adam Donahue (6-2, 180), Danny Nygren (5-11, 175), Cal Case (6-0, 170) and Gabe Krimm (5-9, 180), and juniors Noah Krimm (5-11, 170) and Anthony Finissi (6-1, 197) are all in the mix.

"We've got 110 kids in the program, so it's pretty difficult to have all the starters set at this point," Golden said. "We'll probably play quite a few of them the first couple weeks to sort everything out."

The OCC Buckeye

Before the Bears can start thinking about the playoffs, they'll have to contend with the rest of the Ohio Capital Conference Buckeye Division.

One of the strongest conferences in Ohio, the OCC Buckeye boasts the only two Central Ohio schools to ever win a Division I state championship -- UA and Davidson.

Dublin Coffman, Grove City, Reynoldsburg and Westerville North are the other teams in the Buckeye.

Although the Bears and Wildcats were at the top of the league standings last year, many analysts believe Dublin Coffman is the top team in the area now.

Golden believes his squad won't have one easy game when the league schedule begins in Week 6.

"All the teams in the league are very well coached," he said. "We're not as experienced as we were last year, but I think experience is overrated when it comes to high school football."

"If our we play to our abilities and our players show steady improvement throughout the season, we'll be successful."

First up: Westland

In addition to Davidson, UA also played Westland twice in '06.

Although both games were exciting -- the teams combined to score 125 points -- the results were more to Bears' fans liking.

With versatile quarterback Kasey Wendal leading them, the Cougars made the playoffs for the first time in school history.

Their playoff run didn't last long, however, as they were beaten 28-21 by Arlington 28-21 in the first round.

UA also won last year's season opener, 41-35.