

FOOTBALL

Panthers, Golden Bears prepare for showdown

Thursday, September 20, 2007

PATRICK DOLAN

ThisWeek Staff Writer

The offenses for the Hilliard Darby and Upper Arlington high school football teams have the ability to score a lot, which will present a major challenge for both defenses when the undefeated teams play Friday at Darby.

For UA coach Mike Golden and his 50 defense, the No.1 concern is containing quarterback Jeremy Ebert. A special-mention all-district selection a year ago and a Northwestern recruit, he is dangerous with both his arm and his legs.

Ebert, who sat out a 62-0 win over Briggs on Sept. 7 because of a sprained right knee, has completed 22 of 39 passes for 244 yards, two touchdowns and an interception and has rushed for 313 yards and four touchdowns on 45 carries.

Darby is averaging 38.3 points per game.

"That's what makes the spread so effective," said Golden, whose team improved to 4-0 with a 42-0 win over Thomas Worthington last Friday. "It's when the quarterback can run. He's not going to Northwestern on a full ride because he can't play. He's an athlete."

"He can really run with the ball," Golden Bears linebacker Colin McClain said. "We haven't faced someone who runs the ball from the quarterback position like him."

Also capable of taking over a game is 6-foot-2, 204-pound tailback Jordan Richeson, who leads the Panthers with 421 yards on 72 carries and has scored three touchdowns. Richeson sat out the game against Briggs because of a strained shoulder. He ran for 182 yards and two touchdowns on 28 carries in a 39-38 overtime win over Cincinnati Anderson last Friday as the Panthers improved to 4-0.

"Their offense is led by (Ebert), but (Richeson) is really, really good," Golden said.



BY JIM METZENDORF/THISWEEK

Quarterback Brandon Bargar (center) pitches the ball to Darby teammate Richard Hammons (left) as Eric Broersman closes on the play for Briggs on Sept. 7. The Panthers won that game 62-0 and are 4-0 entering a game Friday at home against Upper Arlington.

Next game

**DARBY vs. UPPER
ARLINGTON**

When: 7:30 p.m. Friday

Last meeting: 2006, UA 24-21
UA (4-0) to date: Defeated
Westland 70-0; def. Gahanna 24-
21 (OT); def. Findlay 42-7; def.
Thomas Worthington 42-0

Top Golden Bears: Mikel
Berry, Andrew Colosimo, Mark
Crawford, Adam Donahue, Alex
Drake, Tommy Farwick, Anthony
Finissi, Nolan Kleinhenz, Braden
Layer, Colin McClain, Thomas
Sauter and Kacy Yuhas

Of note: The Bears lead the
all-time series 7-1.

Robbie Anzuini leads the Panthers' receivers with 19 receptions for 285 yards and three touchdowns.

Safety Anthony Finissi leads the Bears' defense with 33 tackles, including 18 solo, and two fumble recoveries. Defensive end Mikel Berry has 30 tackles and linebackers Mark Crawford and Nolan Kleinhenz have 26 tackles apiece.

For Darby coach Paul Jenne and his shade defense, the No. 1 priority is to slow the Bears' two-headed running attack in fullback Tommy Farwick and tailback Alex Drake.

Farwick has a team-high 504 yards rushing on 57 carries (8.8 yards per carry) and has scored nine touchdowns and Drake has run for 310 yards on 35 carries (8.7 yards per carry) and has three touchdowns.

UA, which employs the wing-T offense, is averaging 44.5 points.

"They just execute so well as a team," said Jenne, whose team was sixth in the Division I state poll last week. "They execute (the wing-T) perfectly.

"You can't say just take away Drake and let Farwick murder you and you can't say take away Farwick and let Drake kill you. You have to try to take away both. We hope that's what we're able to do."

The ground game has been so effective that the Bears haven't had to go to the air often. Quarterback Braden Layer has completed 15 of 29 passes for 282 yards, one touchdown and one interception.

Darby's defense, which has yet to allow any points in the first or third quarters, is led by 6-1, 210-pound linebacker and Georgia Tech recruit B.J. Machen, who has a team-high 47 tackles, including 23 solo. Defensive end Ty Cobb leads the Panthers with four sacks and cornerback Stephen Wells has two interceptions.

UA leads the all-time series 7-1 and posted a 24-21 win last season. The Panthers' only victory was 25-9 in 2004.

"It should be a really good game," McClain said.

"(Darby has) one of their best teams ever. We expect to get their best, and the game will probably have major playoff implications. It will take a team effort."