

Palma reloads, remains team to beat

You lose a record-setting quarterback.

You lose your leading rusher.

You lose your leading receiver.

You lose your best lineman.

If you're Palma High School, it essentially means you lose almost nothing.

There's hardly anything about Palma football that relates to losing, be it games or players.

They may have lost quarterback Brian Reader and his school-record 1,866 passing yards. They may have lost swift Andrew Reyes and his 7-yard-per-carry average. They may have lost Brett Taylor and his league-leading 30 receptions and 550 yards. And they may have lost Jeff Davis, the 2006 T-CAL Lineman of the Year.

Those players may be lost, but they probably won't be missed.

As is usually the case with Palma, there's more where they came from.

Such is football at Palma, which has been attracting, molding and coaching some of the best players in the Central Coast Section for nearly a quarter century.

Palma, which has won 22 titles in 23 years and reached the playoffs in all of those 23 years, has the second-longest streak in the section, at 24, for most consecutive years with a winning record.

One more and it ties St. Francis' record of 25 (1975-1999).

And as if Monterey County teams need a reminder of Palma's domination, the Chieftains have a 120-1-1 record against area teams since 1988.

Since losing to Salinas High in 2002 the Chieftains have won 17 straight against county teams and have scored 40 or more points in their last six encounters against neighboring schools.

There's no end in sight.

"We have motivated kids who

buy into what we're doing," said Palma coach Jeff Carnazzo. "We put it out there for them and they know in time there will be a reward at the end."

It doesn't seem to matter if those in uniform play a lot, or hardly at all. Palma football has a meaning maybe only its players truly understand.

"Some players may not get into a game, some may get in only at the end," Carnazzo said. "But being part of it is special to those kids."

Carnazzo not only has continued the legacy of Palma football, but he has taken it to another level.

During his seven years as coach, Palma has won the highest division of the CCS playoffs three times, reached the championship game four times, won a league title six times and never lost more than two regular season games in any year.

Last year Palma came close to reaching the state title game, something it hasn't forgotten.

"That's our ultimate goal," Carnazzo said. "We throw the date out (Dec. 15), but we quickly explain a lot of things have to come together."

This year's team will be quarterbacked by Connor Farotte, who at 6-feet, 160 pounds, is more of the traditional style of Palma quarterback, compared to the 6-4, 215-pound Reader.

But that doesn't mean he can't throw.

"He's a cross between Jordan Casas and Reader," Carnazzo said.

Casas was MVP of the T-CAL in 2005. Reader was MVP last year.

Farotte scampered for 180 yards last year in a back-up role, averaging more than eight yards per carry in the process.



SALINAS CALIFORNIAN FILE PHOTO/SCOTT MACDONALD

Chad Davis squeezes into the end zone in last year's game against Hollister.

But the marquee player for Palma is probably Chad Davis, whose combination of athleticism and academics may make him the most heavily recruited player in the county.

The 6-foot, 200-pound Davis is

Chieftains schedule

- Sept. 8: Skyline, 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 14: At Sequoia (Redwood City), 7 p.m.
- Sept. 22: At De La Salle (Concord), 7 p.m.
- Sept. 28: North Salinas, 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 5: At Salinas, 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 12: Alisal, 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 19: At Hollister, 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 26: At Gilroy, 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 2: Turlock, 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 9: Alvarez, 7:30 p.m.

an Ivy League-like student with a 3.8 grade-point average who promises to pack a punch as a linebacker and running back.

"He could be a 1,000-yard rusher, but his future is probably at linebacker," Carnazzo said.

Nate Ramirez, another of Palma's multi-talented players, is expected to be the featured back. He averaged about nine yards per carry last year.

Palma has plenty of receivers, led by 5-9, 180-pound Chris Lauritzen (17 catches, 217 yards) and A.J. Layson.

"A.J. could be one of our most

dynamic receivers," Carnazzo said. "He's one of those kids who runs precision routes with good hands."

Yet the best of the receiving bunch may turn out to be 6-2, 200-pound John Bonano, who missed all of last football season with an injury.

Palma's offensive line consists of 6-2, 240-pound Sean Minami; 5-10, 235-pound Brandon Karleen; 5-10, 285-pound Sam Dozier; 6-5, 275-pound Taylor Reeder and 5-10, 240-pound Joey Piedimonte.

Six times last year Palma allowed a touchdown or less, and its defense could be as strong as ever this year.

The linebackers include 5-9, 215-pound second team all-leaguer Hunter Baird; 5-10, 175-pound Bobby Dennehy and 5-10, 185-pound Brett Chernetsky.

An imposing defensive line has 6-2, 215-pound Colton Holloway; 6-3, 200-pound Paul Marcroft; 6-4, 215-pound Ryan Barber and 6-0, 295-pound noseguard Evan Swenson.

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Saturday, January 26, 2008

Open House

Sunday, Nov. 4, 2007

11 am - 2 pm

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