

Metamora Varsity Football Starts Season with a “W”

“It’s the most wonderful time of the year”. That seems to be the chorus of lyrics coming from the majority of the Metamora community. Yes, football season is here and time to grab your blankets to save a seat on the new bleachers at Malone field. Now it’s time to find out if the Redbirds can continue to build on their undefeated 2007 state championship season. A road trip to take on the Riverside-Brookfield Bulldogs was first up on the docket.

Questions always arise with any new season but 2008 seems to be a bit unique. Can the Redbirds continue their defensive dominance? Can Coach Pat Ryan replace the offensive back field almost completely lost from last year? Does 2008 become a rebuilding year or a reloading one for Metamora?

Based on Friday night against the class 6A Riverside-Brookfield Bulldogs, the Redbirds are reloaded and ready to take on the rest of the Mid-Illini. Metamora easily defeated the Bulldogs 42-14 in a game that saw some surprises. Of them, Coach Pat Ryan in his 19th year as head coach surprised everyone by starting sophomore Michael Fay (#15) at quarterback. Fay appeared nervous on the first offensive series but played a calculated and conservative game to lead the Redbirds to a 21-0 halftime lead. Offensive fire power came from junior Aaron Peters (#47) and Fay as the senior dominated offense line of Corwin (#72), Randolph (#79), Taseff (#74), Thannum (#63) and Harman (#68) took control of the game early.

Metamora’s first possession of the game ended quickly as the Birds could not generate a first down. Doing double duty, Michael Fay punted to the Riverside-Brookfield 32 yard line. The Redbird’s defense quickly figured out the Bulldogs new A-11 offense to gain possession back at the Metamora 38 yard line. The Riverside-Brookfield A-11 offense allows nearly every offensive player to be an eligible receiver until the moments before the snap. It was obvious from the start that Metamora’s defensive coaches had prepared the team well for this “trick” offense.

The Redbird’s first score came on a 4 yard run with 4:38 left in the first quarter by Fay. The next possession, Metamora drove the ball down to the Bulldogs 5 yard line and committed a fumble for its only turnover of the game. But Metamora recovered on its next possession, driving to the Riverside-Brookfield 4 yard. Peters then took a handoff from Fay to score the Bird’s second TD. Peter’s followed it up with another TD on a 34 yard run with 8:49 left in the 2nd quarter. The Birds took the halftime lead (21-0) by controlling the line of scrimmage and racking up 226 yards of rushing.

In the 3rd quarter, Kody Kanaga (#39) intercepted a Bulldog pass and ran it back to the Riverside-Brookfield 9 yard line. Metamora continued its’ offensive dominance as senior quarterback Christian Roth (#8) took control, scoring quickly and increasing the lead to 35-0.

Metamora added 6 more to the scoreboard as junior fullback Dane Kempf (#24) fought his way in from the 22 yard line. Sophomore kicker Brennen VanMieghem (#26) continued his perfect 6 for 6 night on extra points and the Birds took a 42-7 lead. Metamora reserves gave up a touchdown late in the game but gained valuable experience as the Redbird's started the season on the winning path. Metamora 42 Riverside-Brookfield 14.

The Metamora Redbirds start conference play this Friday night at Malone Field against arch rival Washington. The Panthers come into Metamora with a 1-0 record ranked #7 in the state after defeating Springfield Lanphier last Friday night. Metamora is currently ranked #2 in the state behind Woodstock Marian Central Catholic.