

Metamora Injury List Grows

The Metamora Redbirds have been the envy of the Mid-Illini Conference for years with their astonishing number of players on the varsity roster. Many reserve players for the Birds would see significant playing time on most other conference teams. This level of participation has had fans in Central Illinois wondering where Metamora gets these young men. This year, the depth of the Redbirds has been tested.

The Birds cruised to an easy victory last Friday night at Canton but the evening was not all jubilate. The Redbirds suffered at least four significant injuries in the game that has fans asking “what’s going on?” Detailed injury statistics are rarely kept at the high school level but if they were available, this would have to rank as one of the worst seasons for the injury plagued Birds. At least 18 players will miss time due to injuries or illnesses after the first six games of the season. The last game continued to add to the list.

In the 2nd quarter against the Little Giants, Metamora fans held their collective breath as safety David Kuhne (#10) laid on the field motionless for several minutes. Kuhne was later helped to his feet by the team trainers and diagnosed with a concussion. A few minutes later, fans gasped as senior captain Dane Kempf (#2) suffered a knee injury and had to be helped off the field. In the second half, cornerback Kyle Albertson (#1), substituting for another injured player, had to leave the game with an ankle injury. Later in the half, reserve linebacker Elliott Blankenship (#87) suffered a concussion during a kick off. It appeared that Kuhne, Kempf and Blankenship sustained the most serious of these injuries and would miss playing time. No doubt the doctors’ offices will be busy this week evaluating that status of these young men.

Two starters from last week did not suit up for the Canton game. Offensive linemen Tyler Burch (#57) was experiencing discomfort in his ankle after surgery this spring. Burch was waiting on medical test results to determine his status. Defensive end David Tracy (#46), still recovering from hip and back injuries, suffered a sprained knee in a non-football related incident and missed the game. Tracy status will be re-evaluated this week.

Other players that have missed games due to injuries and various ailments are seniors Grant Whittington (#4), Zach Rose (#6), Chase Reatherford (#33), Sean McKee (#42) and Kevin Maher (#75). The juniors list includes Tyler Sluga (#3), Beau Geier (#12), Michael Fay (#15), Brett McKinney (#21), Mark McDaniel (#22), Jake Ferguson (#32), Bryan Love (#41), and Chris Nannie (#61). The list of players who have suffered injuries that have limited their performance but not missed games seems to include nearly the remainder of the roster.

The number of head injuries this season seems to be very unusual. Along with Kuhne and Blankenship Friday night, quarterbacks Fay and Geier have also suffered concussions.

Metamora fans are hoping this is the end of the injury list for the 2009 Redbirds. It appears the Birds have had more than their fair share of injuries and everyone is hoping all the injured players heal quickly.