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Pioneer Press 2018 football preview: Maine East Blue Demons

By HEATHER RULE
PIONEER PRESS | AUG 16, 2018



Baltazar Cabrales is a key returning player in Maine East's backfield this season. (Tim Boyle / Pioneer Press)

Coach: Bob Winkel (first season)

Last season: 1-8 (0-5 Central Suburban North), did not make playoffs.

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First-and-10: Senior Josh Devitt returns at quarterback with senior Michael Bobowik as his primary receiver. Junior Baltazar Cabrales is back as the team’s top running back, and he’ll once again play on both sides of the ball. Senior Matthew Miceli also returns to the backfield. Winkel said all parts of the offense will have to work together to succeed. “One of our big expectations this year is to take things off film,” Winkel said. During Saturday film sessions, the Blue Demons will go over what could be done better from the previous game and will focus on not making the same mistake twice, Winkel said.

Three-and-out: The team will look to its one-way players to step it up a notch, Winkel said. That includes senior defensive end Josh Carson, junior cornerback Angelo Goumas and sophomore linebacker Ray Noffz. “One of our big things this year that we’re trying to focus on is tackling,” Winkel said. The coaching staff is working on teaching players a new technique for tackling that involves focusing on the back hip to eliminate the ballcarrier’s ability to cut back. Winkel said Goumas and Noffz are the team’s most consistent tacklers.

Keep an eye on: Winkel comes to the Blue Demons after a four-year stint as the defensive coordinator at East Aurora, a program he said was in a similar position: not many people came out for the team, and that led to only a few wins. That attracted Winkel to this job. “There’s a lot of coaches who can go into a program that’s already a winning program and help continue that winning tradition, but it’s a lot harder to take a program that’s basically at nothing with one win last year and try and build off of that and create a team that has larger numbers,” Winkel said.

Game to watch: Sept. 28 vs. Maine West. Maine East fans are encouraged to participate in the “blackout” game against a CSL North rival.

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2018 schedule

8/24 FENTON, 7

8/31 at Round Lake, 7:15

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9/7 WHEELING, 7

9/14 at Hoffman Estates, 7:30

9/21 DEERFIELD, 7

9/28 MAINE WEST, 7

10/5 GLENBROOK NORTH, 7

10/12 at Vernon Hills, 7

10/19 at Highland Park, 7

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