

Northwest conference

2004 Standings

Team	League		Overall	
	W	L	W	L
Frankfort	5	0	11	1
Suttons Bay	4	1	12	2
Kingsley	3	2	6	4
Glen Lake	2	3	4	5
Manton	1	4	2	7
Mesick	0	5	0	9

Coaches' Poll

No. 1 votes in parenthesis

Team	Points
1. Kingsley (2)	31
2. Suttons Bay (3)	30
3. Frankfort (1)	27
4. Glen Lake	16
5. Manton	13
6. Mesick	9

Players to watch

Drew Wyse, FB/LB,
Kingsley

Elliott Gallagher, HB/LB,
Suttons Bay

Weston Buchan, HB,
Glen Lake

Caleb Nickerson, QB,
Kingsley

Chris Send, DT/G,
Suttons Bay



Senior LB/HB Elliott Gallagher is one of eight players on the varsity football team at Suttons Bay that is a student at Lake Leelanau St. Mary's.

The two schools have had a cooperative agreement in football since the early 1990s. In 2004, Suttons Bay/St. Mary's was the first cooperative football team to play for a state title.

Glen Lake and Leland have a cooperative agreement for football starting this season. The Lakers have two players on its varsity from Leland.

For prep football schedules, see pages 22-23.

1. KINGSLEY

Coach: Tim Wooer

2004: 3-2 in Northwest, 6-4 overall

Key Players Returning: Senior FB-OLB Drew Wyse, senior QB Caleb Nickerson, senior G-ILB Travis Paton, senior HB/DE Joe Zenner, senior ILB Jack Richards, senior OLB Nick Putala, junior DE Brian Bott

Top Newcomers: Junior FS Dan Taylor, junior DT Rob Kautman

Outlook: Wyse, a bruising fullback, is back after rushing for 1,200 yards as a junior. Also back in the mix is Nickerson at quarterback.

The problem area for the Stags will be up front, particularly on the offensive side of the ball.

"We have one returning offensive lineman," Wooer said. "We're really searching right now."

Kingsley is also looking to develop more consistent options on the ground this season. The Stags would also like to throw more with Nickerson.

"I hope that we can have more balance," Wooer said. "We got in trouble late in the season. When you have one stud, if teams can take away that one player, you're in trouble. So we have to be a little better balanced."

The same issues the Stags have on offense carry over to the defensive side of the ball.

"Defensively, it's very similar to our offense," Wooer said. "It should be good in the skill positions. But the defensive line, especially at defensive tackle, is a big question mark."

2. SUTTONS BAY

Coach: Joe Trudeau

2004: 4-1 in Northwest, 12-2 overall

Key Players Returning: Senior LB-RB Elliott Gallagher, senior DT-G Chris Send, senior LB-RB Andrew Dalzell, senior RB-DB Edgar Guillen, junior DE Kegan Rummel, junior DB Collin Korson, senior WR Steve Brockman, junior DT Ray Freund, senior QB Eric Browning, senior RB LaKota Raphael, senior LB-DL Todd Mikowski, senior G Chris Braden

Top Newcomers: Junior T Geromy White, junior T Justin Cox, junior C Kris Marin

Outlook: Suttons Bay is coming off its most successful season ever, which ended in a 34-13 loss to Constantine in the Division 6 state final.

But the offense was hit hard by graduation, as the top three rushers are gone, taking more than 2,500 yards with them. Also departed are the starting quarterback, both tackles, a guard and a center. Of the players that are back on offense, none were full-time starters.

"Luckily, we have some returners back on defense," Trudeau said. "Hopefully our defense can carry us for a little while until we get our offense clicking."

Anchoring the defensive unit is Gallagher from his linebacker spot.

Gallagher was a first-team all-region selection as a junior.

Suttons Bay's run to the Pontiac Silverdome last season may also help the Norsemen this campaign.

"The kids know that it's possible to do that again," Trudeau said. "They also have to realize that what we did last year doesn't matter this year. They have to work just as hard as the group did last year to be successful."

3. FRANKFORT

Coach: Matt Stapleton

2004: 5-0 in Northwest, 11-1 overall

Key Players Returning: Senior HB-DB Kevin Nerg, senior WR-DB Josh Bodell, senior QB-S Garrett Luxford, senior C-LB Aaron Murray, senior RB-DL Brandon Gatrell, senior WR-DB Brandon Pritchard

Top Newcomers: Junior RB-LB Cory Lietert, junior G-LB Conner Rouse, junior OL-DL Justin Majewski, junior TE Connor MacHugh

Outlook: Graduation hit the defending Northwest Conference champions hard. The Panthers must find eight new starters on offense and seven on defense. The biggest loss is halfback Greg Walton, the two-time Associated Press Class D Player of the Year.

But Frankfort is ready to take on its 105th year of football. As the T-shirts Stapleton had made say, 'Tradition Never Graduates.'

"We had a talented group of seniors that graduated," Stapleton said. "They made the decision making and the coaching easy: Hand the ball off to Walton."

"But we're real excited about this group and how they develop on both offense and defense."

In addition to its losses in the offensive backfield, Frankfort must also replace most of its interior line. And the Panthers don't have a lot of big guys to chose from.

"We've got some kids that we think will step up to the challenge," Stapleton said. "This is one of the smallest teams we've had in regards to size."

"But what they lack in size, they make up for in attitude. They're a great group of kids; very coachable."

4. GLEN LAKE

Coach: Bill Hollenbeck

2004: 2-3 in the Northwest, 4-5 overall

Key Players Returning: Senior WR Logan Haughn, senior QB James Czapek, junior QB Jason Kemp, junior RB Weston Buchan, senior C Josh Ritola, senior OL-DL Matt Tanner, junior OL-DL Dane Hillard

Top Newcomers: Juniors Wade Nedow and Mike Nachazel, sophomores Jack Drow, Nick Therrien, Paul Hall, Nick Niergarth

Outlook: Hollenbeck's return to coaching after three seasons away from Glen Lake is marked by a small



Record-Eagle file photo/Douglas Tesner

Frankfort vs. Kingsley in 2004. The teams face each other again Sept. 16.

roster of 19 players, four of which are sophomores and two of which are first-year players from the new co-op with Leland.

"This whole program is a new beginning," Hollenbeck said. "It's a new beginning for me, for the whole coaching staff. It's a team that's undertaking a new offense, a new defense. Basically every kid is undertaking a new position."

Glen Lake does have some experienced skill positions returning in RB Weston Buchan and QBs Jason Kemp, who moves from tight end, and James Czapek.

"I'm impressed with the progress I've seen," Hollenbeck said.

The only player returning up front is Ritola, who will move from guard to center.

As a whole, Hollenbeck said the players have been receptive to working hard and learning.

"I think this group of kids is hungry and I think that they're excited about a new start and a new opportunity," he said.

5. MANTON

Coach: Jim Smart

2004: 1-4 in Northwest, 2-7 overall

Key Players Returning: Senior QB-LB Blake Allen, senior WR-S Scottie Bender, senior C-LB Rusty Eadie, senior FB-DE Joel Stahl, junior OL-DL Tom Skiver, senior RB-DB Steven Morse, senior OL-DL John O'Connor, junior FB-LB Justin Swinehart

Top Newcomers: Senior RB-LB Adrian Potwin, junior SE-S Jordan Woodcock, junior OL-DT Brandon Norman

Outlook: Numbers are down at Manton. With just 15 players on the varsity right now, the Rangers will have to avoid the injury bug and fatigue.

"We're going to have to be in shape," Smart said.

As far as the shape of the players the Rangers have, Smart feels confident. With one of its tight ends on the field, Manton could have four players 200-plus pounds on the offensive line.

"I think we're going to be halfway decent," Smart said. "The kids we put

on the field all have experience. We're going to be solid up front, plus I think we have good skill players."

Allen returns as the quarterback for Manton. The Rangers also have a speedy wideout in Bender and options in the ground game with Stahl, Morse and Swinehart.

"We throw quite a bit anyway," Smart said. "Actually, we're looking at throwing a little less this season and running a little more. We're like to have a 50-50 mix."

"You put the ball in Blake's hands every play and he's going to make some things happen."

6. MESICK

Coach: Tom Lipke

2004: 0-5 in Northwest, 0-9 overall

Key Players Returning: Senior HB-S Jason Burns, senior FB-LB Brady Lantis

Top Newcomers: Junior HB-LB Tommy Nakhovanh, junior G-LB Josh Wright, junior FB-LB Ricky Wentworth, junior TE-DE Jason Akers, junior G-DE Derek Reed, junior QB-CB Travis Waddle

Outlook: Experience is one thing Mesick is lacking. The Bulldogs have just three seniors, only two of which played last season.

But the numbers and the confidence of the team has increased from last season's winless campaign. Mesick started 2004 with 13 players and ended with 16, but are expected to open 2005 with 18 players.

"We've got a real good group of kids," Lipke said. "The attitudes are different. They're working real hard and I think they really want to win."

Mesick is changing its offense from the veer to a full-house wishbone. Lipke said this set should allow the Bulldogs a good chance to take advantage of its personnel.

Now the goal is to take a talented group of juniors and post a few victories.

"I think we're going to scare an awful lot of people in the conference," Lipke said. "It's not going to be a cakewalk for our opponents like it was last year."