

Warriors to host La Salle Prep

September 5, 2019



For the third consecutive week, Del Norte High School's football team faces a squad playing its first game of the season, when it hosts La Salle Prep of Milwaukie, Oregon at Mike Whalen Field.

This Friday's game will be at 7 p.m. There's no junior varsity game on the docket.

The Warriors are 2-0 this season, after a one-point victory on the road against highly regarded Moreau Catholic in week one, then a 62-0 win over Yreka at home last Friday.

Taking on a team that hasn't played yet this season has both advantages and disadvantages.

Teams that have played tend to have better communication, more time to practice and install systems, and the coaches have an understanding of how each player likely will respond under pressure.

On the other hand, playing a team that hasn't been on the field yet means Del Norte has no game footage of its opponent. It also means, in this case, that La Salle Prep has video from both of Del Norte's wins, and the Falcons have had extra time to focus exclusively on the Warriors.

After last Friday's victory, Del Norte coach Nick White said it would be a top priority to find out everything possible about the team standing between the Warriors and a 3-0 record.

What Del Norte does know is that the Falcons were 6-4 overall last season, falling in the first round of the Oregon Class 5A playoffs. Primarily noted as a basketball power, the private school was 1-8 in coach Aaron Hazel's first season, in 2014, and has slowly gotten better thereafter.

Last year seemed to be feast-or-famine for La Salle. It's average margin of victory was 23.5 points per game. It's average margin of loss ... 33.5.

Back in the fold for the Falcons is junior James Menor, who was a surprise second-team all-conference running back, cornerback and kick returner in 2018.

He will be running behind an offensive line anchored by big senior Zachary Quiones, a 290-pounder who was also a second-team all-conference selection last season.

Who will be handing the ball off to Menor remains to be seen. Standout Ethan Edgerly graduated. Transfer Ryan Rosumny may get the nod.

Del Norte ran the ball almost exclusively in its win over Moreau Catholic, wearing down the Mariners in the second quarter. Against Yreka, the Warriors were able to turn quarterback O.J. Calleja loose. He responded by completing 89% of his passes for a pair of touchdowns and 166 yards.

The Warrior coaching staff hopes it can find that kind of balance against the Falcons, although Del Norte will certainly plan to use its punishing running game to wear down the deeper La Salle team.

Up front, Del Norte's size and experience has dominated, giving running backs Levi Cox-Cooley, Chase Blackburn and Kobe Mitchell lanes to run. The result: Del Norte's top three backs are averaging just shy of 7.5 yards per carry.

This will be Warrior fans' last chance to see their team at home until the end of the month. Del Norte goes to Petaluma next week, then travels to Klamath Falls for a battle with the Vikings of Mazama High.

They'll return home Sept. 27 for an annual non-conference battle with Fortuna.

Following Friday night's game, go to www.triplicate.com for a complete review of the action.