



NCS runner-up Willits knows only winning

Donaldson hopes talented call-ups fuel another run

By JEFF CASPERSEN

The Daily Journal

"I have yet to be on a non-championship team since my freshman year," Willits tackle/defensive end Billy Freudenberg proudly proclaimed.

The senior certainly doesn't expect anything different in 2005 as the Wolverines look to again dominate their league, which this year is in the North Central League I North.

"These kids are expecting to win," said Willits head coach Jeff Donaldson, who has helped direct the Wolverines into the North Coast Section playoffs five of the last six seasons. "The seniors playing now have had a league championship every time they've taken the field. Two varsity titles and three JV titles."

That collective attitude is what has Donaldson thinking championship again this year despite losing big-numbers running back Levi Leon to graduation. Running out of Willits' fly offense, the back amassed 2,554 and 28 rushing touchdowns last season, helping Willits advance all the way to the North Coast Section Class A title game. Justin-Siena — the defending back-to-back Class A champs — handed the 12-1 Wolverines their lone loss in that tilt, running away with a 28-0 win.

Donaldson hopes to see players like senior running back Jeremy Lopez fuel a playoff run this season. Lopez, who in limited action gained 166 yards on the ground in 2004, will anchor the back-



Jeff Caspersen/The Daily Journal

With the graduation of 2,500-yard rusher Levi Leon, Willits running back Jeremy Lopez has big shoes to fill in the Wolverines' backfield.

WILLITS SNAPSHOT

Mascot: Wolverines.

Head coach: Jeff Donaldson.

League: North Central League I North.

Classification: A.

Last year's record: 12-1 overall, 6-0 in the NCL I; was NCS Class A runner-up (lost to Justin-Siena 28-0 in final).

field this year, Donaldson said.

"He's probably a step faster than Levi," said the coach, whose backfield racked up 4,677 yards in 2004.

Charles Wright, a junior varsity passer for a team that went 9-1 last year, will step in as the varsity starter. The 6-

foot-2 Wright brings size to the position.

With Wright and a big receiving corps, Donaldson says Willits will go to the air more in '05.

Anchoring the offensive line is senior Mike Sala, an all-Redwood Empire pick as a junior. In general, the line is a Wolverine strong suit.

"We have lots of good linemen," Donaldson said of the unit. The Wolverines are relatively large up front, going 200-plus almost all the way across.

Shutdown defensive back Corey Villalobos is the most well-rounded athlete on the defensive side of the ball.

"He's just an explosive kid," said Donaldson of his DB, who had three picks and three sacks last year. "He's

one of the better DBs we've ever had."

A fairly fresh-faced defensive unit will take the field in 2005 looking to imitate the efforts of a group that permitted just 9.7 points a game last

WILLITS ROSTER

- ✓ Cole Alavesos
- ✓ Kevin Arreguin
- ✓ E.P. Beltran
- ✓ Mark Brinkerhoff
- ✓ Billy Chase
- ✓ Billy Freudenberg
- ✓ Dennis Garcia
- ✓ Logan Glanders
- ✓ B.J. Goforth
- ✓ David Heaney
- ✓ Jeremy Lopez
- ✓ Chris Martin
- ✓ Robert Norton
- ✓ Victor O'Brien
- ✓ Calvin Ray
- ✓ Brian Retzloff
- ✓ Michael Sala
- ✓ Heath Segan
- ✓ Richard Sollid
- ✓ Bryan Stanisloo
- ✓ Joe Stanisloo
- ✓ Corey Villalobos
- ✓ Charles Wright

season.

Donaldson expects his Wolverines and 2004 NCL II champion Middletown (9-2) to duke it out for the NCL I North crown. Middletown and Willits are paired in the same division this year as a result of realignment. Fort Bragg, Kelseyville and Lower Lake round out the newly formed NCL I North roster.

"We're hoping everybody thinks we'll drop off the face of the earth," said Donaldson. "We feel we can surprise teams."

**Fidelity National
Title Company**
345 N. State St.
Ukiah • 463-3474

Visit Us On-line at
ukiahdailyjournal.com

The Ukiah
DAILY JOURNAL

