

SPORTS

TREND SETTERS

1994 Alexandria football team changes a program with 1 big year

By Jared Rubado
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What does it take to change the perception of a team? In some cases, a new coaching staff can reinvigorate the players and reroute them on a path to success. In other instances, it's one breakout season that pushes the players to buy into a system. For the Alexandria football program, all it took was one win over highly-ranked Wayzata in 1993.

The Alexandria football team's identity today is a large group of talented kids that are going to beat teams with skill and strength. They're going to throw the ball around the field and pound the rock with its talented running backs behind a stout offensive line. In recent years, the Cardinals added some finesse to their playbook, and its captivated local audiences.

Rewind 30 years and the Cardinals looked different. "People saw us as 'Little Alexandria,'" Russ Hinrichs, former player and a current assistant coach said. "We struggled to get guys to come out for football. Back then, you'd be lucky to have the best athletes in the school playing football, and then you'd have them playing both ways. When we went down to play Wayzata, everybody thought we were going to get killed."

Alexandria pulled off a postseason upset to beat the Trojans. The win followed a 4-4 regular season but led to one of the biggest wins in program history.

"We had never really beat a ranked opponent before," former Cardinal Nick Heydt said. "We got to them pretty good, and that was certainly foretelling what was coming the next season. That was coming off of the year before, where I'm not sure if we had won a game.

It was a stepping stone for us." Hinrichs' last game was at the end of 1993 in a loss to Elk River. He said that even though the Wayzata win was monumental, the Cardinals were still too undersized to keep winning that year. However, Hinrichs stuck around as a volunteer assistant in '94.

"That Wayzata game gave a lot of those guys hope," Hinrichs said. "Beating Wayzata proved to themselves that if they put the work in, they can do something special. I watched those kids put the time in the weight room. That was the first time kids took lifting seriously. They went from being the team that was going to take a hit to the team that would deliver it."

The Cardinals started the 1994 season 5-0, but waiting in week six was one of their biggest rivals. The Brainerd Warriors traditionally got the better of Alexandria in year's past, and the perfect season was almost cut short.

"Back then, you had to beat two teams," Mike Quist, former assistant coach, said. "Brainerd and Willmar were the games you circled on the calendar. They were both good back then, and you knew exactly what you were going to get each time."

Brainerd jumped out to an early lead before Alexandria responded midway through the first quarter. The Cardinals scored two more touchdowns before Brainerd cut the lead to 19-14. In the fourth quarter, Bill Zacher punched in the game-winning touchdown as Alexandria took sole possession of the Central Lakes Conference with a 26-20 win.

"That was the game where you could tell that this could be something different," Hinrichs said. "We had just beat Willmar the week before, and now we were 6-0. Everybody bought into what we were doing. The other



Echo Press File Photos
Alexandria guard Josh Waldorf (74) eyed a defender to block for quarterback Andy Quist during Alexandria's 22-19 win over Blooming Jefferson in the 1994 state Class AA semifinal in the Metrodome.

thing that helped was we were very fortunate with injuries." Alexandria had 40-50 guys go out for the football team and a small group of starters that played on both sides of the ball. Throughout the entire 1994 season, the Cardinals stayed on the right side of the injury bug.

"We couldn't get anybody hurt," Quist said. "It's amazing we got through the year. I had five offensive linemen with one sub. On defense, it was five or six guys to work with. We got pretty beat up by the end of the year, but we were fortunate to have the injury luck that we got."

Wayzata awaits

The Cardinals finished the regular season with a perfect 8-0 record in Class AA, the highest class in Minnesota High School Football at the time. Despite an undefeated regular season, Alexandria struggled

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Alexandria senior linebacker David Thomson (57) joined teammate Josh Sinning (81) to stop Bloomington Jefferson's Brant Grimes (22) during the 1994 Class AA state semifinal game. Alexandria beat Bloomington Jefferson 22-19 to win its 13th game of the season.

Resorters Tournament will run with a full field

COVID-19 guidelines in place

By Eric Morken
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Being an outdoor activity has allowed golf tournaments around Minnesota and the country to withstand the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as any sport.

Many events on the course have been played as scheduled this summer, and the 99th Resorters Tournament at the Alexandria Golf Club will join that list as the match-play tournament is ready to run from Aug. 2-8.

"There's a lot of changes," AGC golf professional Kyle Lee said on July 20. "We're definitely communicating as best we can with the contestants, giving them the lay of the land, informing them on our COVID policy."

The primary goal of the Resoters committee is to



Eric Morken / Echo Press

Miles McCarthy, a golfer for the University of St. Thomas, lines up his putt during the men's championship division finals in the 2019 Resorters Tournament. The 2020 Resorters Tournament at the Alexandria Golf Club will run from Aug. 2-8 this summer with a full field of participants across 10 divisions.

remove as many contact points on the course as they can. That includes taking advantage of technology as it pertains to scoring.

Lee said the Resorters committee has looked at

how the Minnesota Golf Association has handled its tournaments this summer. The MGA's guidelines have included tracking scores

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AGC Women's Member-Guest Tournament a fun-filled event

By Jared Rubado
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Betty Johnson and Jan Zorbak have golfed together for many years. The best-friend duo links up each week and plays a round at the local courses. On Wednesday morning, they did something they hadn't done before – they won the Alexandria Golf Club Women's Member-Guest best-ball tournament in the net division.

"We're surprised we did so well," Zorbak said. "We just come out here for fun and hope for the best. We've done well before, but today is about having fun."

Zorbak is a member at AGC, while Johnson belongs to Geneva Golf Club and the Lake Milto-na Golf Club. They play in league events weekly while socializing on the course. Each year they make it out to AGC for the annual member-guest tournament. While winning is nice, the goal is to have fun.



Jared Rubado / Echo Press


Jan Zorbak (left) and Betty Johnson (left middle) finished with the best net score in the Alexandria Golf Club Women's Member-Guest tournament on Wednesday. Jill Wagner (middle right) and Debbie Beach finished in second.

"We play together a lot," Johnson said. "I always say it's like Forrest Gump because you never know what you're going to get. So we play together at the guest stuff here and Geneva. It's like our own tradition, if you will."

AGC member Jill Wagner and friend Debbie Beach make sure their families

stay close throughout the year. During the winter, Beach lives next door to Wagner's sister in Rogers. In the summer, they are on opposite ends of a lake in Alexandria. Each year they make it a point to make it out to the Alexandria Golf Club Women's

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