



Pingree's power found in O-Line

Moving The Chains , Matt Jenkins

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Pingree football coach **Chris Powers** knows there is a secret to senior quarterback **Carlos O'Donnell's** success this fall.

Actually, it's five *small* (relatively speaking) secrets.

Through four games, O'Donnell has completed 43-of-71 passes for 662 yards, seven touchdowns, and only one interception. He's also run for 115 yards on 19 carries, and he is coming off a dandy individual performance where he tossed for 281 yards and four touchdowns in a 44-31 setback to Holderness.

Of course, the stats represent an individual's performance, but saying that anything O'Donnell does is individual is a minor mistake.

O'Donnell's five secrets are named **Jason Kramer, Michael Shaughnessy, Danny Rogers, Tim Weinstein, and Josh Shain.**

Also known as Pingree's offensive line, that blocking quintuplet, despite being undersized and overmatched on paper, has been opening holes for the Highlander running backs, and providing O'Donnell more free time than even Paris Hilton would know what to do with.

These guys do the job while giving up size to the opposition every single week.

Rogers, the center, for example, will be blocking Proctor Academy's **Josh Mays** tomorrow. Mays, a post-graduate student from Oklahoma, is 6-foot-3, 345 pounds. Rogers is 5-10, 175 pounds ("at best" Powers said).

Rogers is the smallest of the group, but not by much.

"Danny is facing a guy that outweighs him by 50, 60, 70 pounds every week," Powers said. "And he does a terrific job."

Kramer, the senior captain who plays left tackle, is the biggest of the group at 6-2, 215, followed by Shain (right tackle, 6-0, 200), Weinstein (right guard, 5-10, 195), and Shaughnessy (left guard, 5-10, 180).

"Week in and week out they are overmatched by 30 pounds per player," Powers said. "We really emphasize that they're on the smaller size, but they're all really quick. At St. John's Prep or some other local schools, some of these guys would be backs. They use quickness and angles and good technique to take care of bigger people."

Pingree's offense - a one-back set that spreads the field - also plays to the line's strengths.

"When we first started, we knew we'd be a little undersized and knew we could run this offense. It's even better if you have

size, but you can do it without size as long as you have solid skill people. We're fortunate to have some good skill people."

The Highlanders' offensive line also seems to enjoy the underdog tag it wears.

"They have this motto - One Good Block," Powers said. "That's what they say, and that's what they try to do."

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Is it quarterback controversy, quarterback competition or quarterback by committee?

Let's scratch quarterback controversy from that list right off the bat because that casts such a negative light over a program. However, it seems we do have both a quarterback competition and a committee situation right here on the North Shore in Marblehead and Beverly, respectively.

While neither Marblehead coach **Doug Chernovetz** nor Beverly coach **Dan Bauer** planned on using two quarterbacks during the preseason, both are making the best of it.

Beverly began using two quarterbacks early in the season, and Bauer is really just looking for his two sophomore signal callers - **Mark Theriault** and **Mark Hannable** - to manage the game. Neither has thrown for more than 80 yards on the season or rushed for more than 20.

Barring injury, the Panthers will use both QBs regularly throughout the season.

"I think the competition is good, and it takes some of the pressure off to have the opportunity to work on the things they need to. I think those are all good things, and it will continue for the rest of the season," Bauer said. "Obviously, you have in mind what you think might happen during the spring and summer when you're planning and the kids are working out. But once the season begins things can change, particularly with younger players, from week to week. You have to have team-centered players that have a lot of trust and faith in the system."

Bauer has praised Theriault and Hannable repeatedly throughout the season for their willingness to accept their roles and encourage each other during practices and games. Naturally, there is a sense of competition surrounding the Beverly quarterback job, but it's more of a motivational tool to push each quarterback to be better.

In Marblehead, meanwhile, Chernovetz has made it an open competition between junior **Ian McKinley** and sophomore **Hayes Richardson**. McKinley entered camp as an untested, completely inexperienced quarterback, and won the job. At times this season, the Marblehead coaching staff has questioned if McKinley gives the team the best chance to win. That led to them giving Richardson, who had been the JV quarterback, an opportunity.

Both McKinley and Richardson have been getting snaps recently.

McKinley started against Lynn English last week, but was replaced by Richardson after an interception. The Magicians lost to the Bulldogs, 21-0, and Chernovetz opened the job the next day.

So far this season, McKinley has thrown for 272 yards and three touchdowns, against five interceptions, while Richardson has thrown for 269 yards, two touchdowns and one interception.

"We're trying to find the kid that is going to do the best for us," Chernovetz said. "We're very young and we're trying to find the best 11 that will be able to get out and execute our offense. We felt that Hayes would do the best job (last weekend), and we spoke with both on Monday and said that right now the position is open. Both have accepted the challenge, and this week it will really be a game-time decision."

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There has been some discussion in both the Northeastern Conference and Cape Ann League about the possibility of mandated crossover games. If the idea ever comes to fruition, it is likely that the CAL Large teams would cross over to play the NEC North, while the CAL Small and NEC South would also play.

"The NEC would like to do it. We're looking to see if it's a possibility right now," NEC treasurer/secretary **Dick Baker** said. "Both leagues would have to agree, and I do the scheduling. In the past, the Cape Ann League has not wanted to do it. The NEC would like it to happen, but I'm not sure about the CAL."

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The football playoff system has been in place for a while now (since 2001, to be exact), but there's always something new to learn. Apparently, any team that is still in the running for a postseason berth must, according to the MIAA, play 10-minute quarters on Thanksgiving.

The idea is that 10-minute quarters (as opposed to 11) will be easier for the players to bounce back from if they are playing on the following Tuesday.

Moving the Chains is a column on North Shore high school football that runs each Friday during the fall season in The Salem News. Contact staff writer Matt Jenkins at mjenkins@ecnnews.com, or at 978-338-2648.

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