

NO AVERAGE JOE

Wallenpaupack running back Joe Defebo will own the school record books after 2009

By Joshua Funk

For PA Football News

When a Wallenpaupack player was last selected as a 1st-Team All-Stater, Bill Clinton was President. That player was Joe Wasylyk, a two-time All-State selection at defensive back in 1996 and 1997.

Wasylyk was also the Buckhorn's starting quarterback, throwing for 3,000 career yards and leading the Hawley-based school to the 1996 Division III Eastern Conference championship game, a 34-6 loss to Bangor.

Fast forward 12 years later, to 2008, when feature tailback Joe Defebo torched his competition week in and week out, and, ultimately earned a 1st-Team All-State selection at running back.

It was the second straight year a District 2 "AAAA" running back made the AP's first team. Hazleton's Nate Eachus led the Cougars on a magical playoff run during the 2007 season before falling to Parkland in the 2/11 championship game. Eachus ran for over 2,200 yards and 28 touchdowns.

Defebo wreaked a little bit of havoc during the 2007 football season when the Buckhorn's feature tailback went down with an injury.

"He came in the last four or five games and ran for over 800 yards (843, to be exact)," said Wallenpaupack head coach Dr. Mark Watson. "At that point, we knew we had something special."

To date, Defebo has run for 3,164 yards and 40 touchdowns. He's just 836 yards shy of becoming the school's first-ever 4,000-yard rusher. That, however, isn't the only milestone that he could set in the coming season.

Here is a list of the potential records Defebo could break, or, for lack of a better term, shatter:

SINGLE GAME RECORDS

Rushing attempts: Defebo already owns the record for single-game rushing attempts, with 40. The previous record of 34, owned by Tim Watson, had stood for just four seasons.

Rushing yards: This is another record owned by Defebo. In the Buckhorn's season opener, he ran for 328 yards against Pocono Mountain West. He surpassed 300 yards rushing later in the season against Scranton, running for 310 yards and four touchdowns. Previous single-game bests belonged to Tim Watson (298 yards, 2003) and Brad Kiesendahl (258, 1993).

Rushing touchdowns: Defebo is currently in a three-way tie for this record, with five. Tim Watson scored five touchdowns in a game in 2004; Brad Kiesendahl scored five times in a game in 1993.

SINGLE SEASON RECORDS

Rushing attempts: Defebo could break his own record he set last season, of 320 carries. Prior to 2007, the previous Buckhorn record for carries in a season belonged to Justin Conlon, who toted the rock 222 times in 1999.

Rushing yards: Defebo already owns this record, with 2,321 yards. He shattered the old record, set by Brad Kiesendahl in 1993, who ran for 1,697 yards.

Rushing touchdowns: Again, Defebo would be breaking his own record. He scored 29 rushing touchdowns last season, breaking Kiesendahl's record of 25 set in 1993.

Scoring: Defebo doesn't yet own this record, but he may come close to it or even break it. Kiesendahl scored 32 total touchdowns in 1993. Defebo just missed the mark last year, scoring 31 total touchdowns.

In terms of single-season points, Kiesendahl again owns the record, scoring 220 points in 1993. Defebo scored 186 points last season.

CAREER RECORDS

Rushing attempts: Defebo will easily shatter this record. At 450 attempts, he's currently 23 carries shy of tying Tim Watson's record of 473 set between 2002-'04.

Rushing Yardage: Defebo already set the career rushing yardage record last season. At 3,164 yards, he's easily surpassed Tim Watson's 2,808 rushing yards ('02-'04) and Brad Kiesendahl's 2,525 yards ('91-'93). To give you an idea, 2,500 rushing yards this season for Defebo would double the old rushing record.

Rushing touchdowns: Defebo owns this record with 40, but could put quite some distance between himself and second place. Tim Watson's record of 37 could be doubled up if Defebo scores 34 rushing touchdowns in 2009.

Career average per rush: Defebo's career isn't over yet, but if he had been a senior last season, he'd own this record as well. His current career average per rush is 7.03 yards, nearly three-tenths of a yard better than Brad Kiesendahl's record of 6.8 yards per rush set between 1991-'93.

Scoring: At 263 points, Defebo is 39 points shy of Wallenpaupack's career scoring record, which belongs to Brad Kiesendahl, who scored 302 points in his career.

Touches: Defebo is 114 touches shy of tying the school record of 573, held by Tim Watson.

Total yardage: Brad Kiesendahl owns this record, with 4,697 total yards. Defebo could break that record in rushing yardage alone, but, to date, he's sitting at 3,247 yards, 1,450 yards shy of Kiesendahl's record.

Total touchdowns: Defebo currently has 42 career touchdowns, tied with Tim Watson's career total and three shy of Kiesendahl's record of 45.

If you add it all up, Defebo has a chance to break a possible 16 school records this upcoming season, in addition to the records he already set last season.

And if he's successful in getting all of those 16, he'll probably be reading his name in the Associated Press' All-State 1st-Team once again, or maybe the school's Hall of Fame, or perhaps even a Division-1 college football team's roster.

It proves that this running back is no "Average Joe."