

'Vanilla Crush' & Co. force Ranger wins

By Scott Williams

While most of you were still enjoying your summer vacation way back in August, our Mather Rangers were self-inflicting long, hot, and exhausting practice football sessions in hopes of building a winning team. Spirit and enthusiasm have always been characteristics of the team, but this year they have added talent and determination while fighting their way into second place of the Public League 4-A Blue North Division.

Led by coaches Chet Ziemba and Don Fontana, the Rangers defeated Waller 26-6 in the first regular season game. It was Mather's outstanding defense that preserved this victory by forcing five Waller fumbles, sacking the quarterback 11 times, and allowing the opposing team only five first-downs and a total of 30 yards.

In their second game of the season, the Rangers outlasted Manley for a 14-6 victory. This time it was two touchdown passes from quarterback John Van Dermeir that paved the way to Mather's second win -- one 5-yard toss to Tom Peterson, and another 15-yard six-pointer to Howard Kadet. The Rangers' defensive attack was led by captain Frank Wolf with 14 tackles, Danny Levy with 13 tackles, and Greg Moore with three quarterback sacks, one for a safety.

For their third consecutive conference victory, the Rangers crushed Wells 44-0. On their first play from scrimmage, quarterback John Van Dermeir threw a 50-yard touchdown pass to Howard Kadet. Before the day was over, Kadet would catch another 35-yard TD pass from Van Dermeir, and carry the ball on a 50-yard sprint for a total of 135 yards and 18 points. Van Dermeir also threw a 45-yard TD pass to Tom Peterson and scored on a 10-yard quarterback sneak. David Held, who substitutes for Van Dermeir,

completed two passes to Robert Venturini for 114 yards and one touchdown. Mather's "Vanilla Crush" defense again led by captain Frank Wolf with 11 tackles, forced four Wells fumbles, and sacked the quarterback six times.

Early in the season, coach Ziemba attributed the team's success to the vigorous practices. "You'll notice that they're not huffing and puffing as much, and that's because they're in better physical shape. We've been running them a lot more," he said.

In their Homecoming game against Kelvyn Park, a game that was dedicated by the team to ex-linebacker Barry Applebaum, sidelined for the season by a knee injury suffered during summer practice, the Rangers over-powered Kelvyn Park 41-6. Mather didn't take charge until the second quarter when a 20-yard pass from John Van Dermeir to Tom Peterson set up a one-yard touchdown run by Bob Berland. Before the half, Van Dermeir passed to Peterson again, this time for the score. In the third quarter, Berland scored again on a tough 8-yard run, giving Mather a 20-0 lead. Kelvyn Park's only score of the game came on a surprise 65-yard touchdown bomb. The Rangers scored three more times in the fourth quarter: a 30-yard run by John Van Dermeir, a 45-yard return on Robert Venturini's third interception of the day, and a 20-yard run by Venturini. This win gave the Rangers a 4-0 record in second place of their division behind Collins. On October 28, Mather will meet Collins in the most decisive contest of the year.

There are many reasons for this team's success. Defensive captain Frank Wolf says, "The key is desire and dedication." The players agree unanimously that it is a "total team effort". But offensive guard Jeff Mendel said it best when he said, "The last two games will tell the tale."