

Midget Rods kick butt

By Jim Timlick

It may not be fancy but it sure works.

The St. James Rods are playing basic, no nonsense football that has vaulted them into a first place tie in the Manitoba Midget Football League. After six games, the Rods were in a dead heat with the East Side Eagles, both team's possessing 5-1 records.

St. James coach Jack Robinson said what the Rods are doing isn't innovative—they're just doing it well.

"It's just basic, knockout football. We've got no trick plays. We'll run a trap or a counter, that's about it," he said. "The majority of these kids, if they play as a team, we'll win. It ain't individuals."

As a team, the Rods are scoring at a pace of approximately 40 points a game. On defence they've allowed the opposition only 10 points per game. It may not be creative, according to St. James guard Jason McCatty, but there's no arguing that it's been successful.

"We're not doing anything special, we're not doing anything any other team doesn't do. I guess we've just had more success with the running backs we have with Greg (Boychuk) and (James) Kirkness."

It also helps that this year's edition of the Rods have been together since they played Pop Warner football. St. James lost only six players to graduation after last season and will lose a maximum of nine when the 1990 campaign ends.

Another common thread which runs through this year's squad is size. Fullbacks Marlon Mullings and Boychuk weigh in at 235 and 210 pounds respectively while tailback Eric Luke tips the scales at 200 pounds. Linebacker Garth Nickel and lineman Kevin Bowen provide size on defence.

Rods slotback-kicker John Robinson leads the league in scoring. He also happens to be the coach's son. Does that cause any problems?

"If he wasn't a good ball player and he was playing and another guy wasn't maybe it would," the Rods coach said. "Sometimes the other coaches have to pull me back because I give him a little more (heck)."

This isn't the first time the Rods have smelled a league championship. They went all the way to the league final last season only to lose by six points to the St. Vital Mustangs.

Linebackers Glenn Greaves said just getting to the final won't be enough this season.

"When we played St. Vital (two weeks ago) it motivated us a lot. Our whole team was hyped. If we keep playing the way we are and don't get all cocky we can go 10-0," said Greaves.

Following a 22-15 loss to the Fort Garry Lions Oct. 6, any thoughts of a perfect season have evaporated. Robinson said the loss could prove to be the best tonic heading into the playoffs.

"I think it will be a good thing for us. They're a hungry bunch again."

F.P. Weekly, Sunday - Oct 14/90