

Fear Branca Sidelined With Knee Injury; Two Upper Merion Aces Out

Seniors were getting in their final licks in practice uniform this week at Norristown High, preparatory to donning Blue and White game regalia in Thursday morning's Roosevelt Field engagement with neighborhood foe Upper Merion.

Nine top classmen will have a bit more incentive, perhaps, than their fellow teammates in questing victory over the Spartans—a victory that could wind up the first undefeated and untied NHS grid season since 1923. A fitting way to bow out.

Heading the list of 1958 June graduates is Capt. Bob Eastwood. The husky tackle has been a consistent campaigner all season, a fine leader and a great competitor.

Along with Eastwood will go three members of the starting backfield, clever Stew Percy, the quarterback; fleet-footed Willie Suber, halfback, and battering ram Charlie Holmes, fullback.

Other backs departing are Gene Bishop, reserve quarterback, whose extra point kick was the margin of 7-6 victory over a Lower Merion team that was unbeaten in 32 Straight games; defensive back Bob Melnick, reserve offensive halfback Bob Johnson, and halfback Richard Daddona.

Only one lineman besides Capt. Eastwood carries senior class books. He is Phil Knerr, an unsung campaigner who has been in the thick of action all season at center.

Coach Roy Kent was hopeful his young charges would be 'up' for the season finale, but the skipper was worried today that the Eagles might be looking upon Upper Merion too lightly since the Spartans experienced that licking from Swarthmore the past Friday.

Kent, too, wore a frown when asked about physical condition of his club. He reported that his fine young middle guard, junior Mike Branca, may not be able to see action against Upper Merion.

Branca suffered a knee injury in the title-clinching win over Chester; and the injury has not responded to treatment as well as had been hoped.

In the event Branca can't perform on Thanksgiving Day, his assignments will be handled by Bob Hopple. By coincidence, both Branca and Hopple are juniors, 5-foot-10 and 185 pounds.

Upper Merion Prepared To Thwart Eagles Hopes At Tomorrow Morning

A Norristown High team hoping to link arms with only a few predecessors in the school's history stacks up against an Upper Merion High squad intent upon spoiling somebody's turkey.

It's the local headliner in Thanksgiving Day football, and it's scheduled for a 10 A. M. kickoff at Roosevelt Field.

Carrying a nine-game undefeated and untied streak into combat, Coach Roy Kent's Eagles figure to match NHS perfect seasons last recorded in 1922 and 1923. That they will get an argument for it is gleaned from the intense preparations the Upper Merion boys have been making the last several days. Coach Ogie Martella's Spartans have been looking forward to this one for a long time. Upper Merion lost a mid-season game to undefeated and untied Radnor, then got a big surprise from underrated Swarthmore last Friday.

The Spartans lost two big men in that one early, speed merchant Moses Scott and Frank Janoski. Injuries to these two key players, plus the fact that Upper Merion could have been looking beyond Swarthmore to tile Norristown game, were major items in defeat.

Meanwhile, at NHS, all has been well in the camp of the Suburban One League champions—with one notable exception. Mike Branca, junior guard stalwart, suffered a knee injury in the Chester game ten days ago, and his status tomorrow is uncertain.

Kent was expected to start Bob Hopple in Branca's post, with Bob Spence handling the other offensive guard assignment.

Phil Knerr, steady pivotman, anchors the line again in his swan song. Likewise, Capt. Bob Eastwood, who pairs off at the tackle slots with Roddy Duckworth, will be playing his finale for NHS, too. Roger Adelman and Joe Bono will handle the terminal posts.

Kent will start his high-powered backfield directed by quarterback Stew Percy, with Willie (TD) Suber and Bobby Lee at halfbacks and big Charlie Holmes in the fullback berth.

Defensively, Ted Avery moves in at guard, with Jim Shells at end, Bob Melnick in the secondary, and Frank Bishop at safety.

Upper Merion is scheduled to take the field against NHS with Ken Schofield and Carl Hassinger at the wing posts, Don DeNick and Jeff Fichter at the tackle berths, John Backetti and Bob Profera in the guard slots, and Dave Anselm, center.

If Frank Janoski can play, he will open at fullback with Steve Bednar directing the club from quarterback. The halfbacks will be Fred Arbo-gash and Bob Lacy, with a remote possibility that Moses Scott may get into action.