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McDowell County

Excitement Mounting At Gary As Big Game Nears

Cure Believes Balance is Key For Coaldiggers

Coach Sid Cure of the Gary Coaldiggers feels this year's football team could be West Virginia's best high school gridiron team, possibly better than the Charleston Mountain Lions.

Gary will clash with Oceana for the Double-A State Championship Saturday at Mitchell Stadium in Bluefield and the fever is starting to run high at the Gary school.

"We hit and hit some more last night and these kids are ready to play for all the marbles Saturday. We feel we can play with anybody in the state, including Charleston," Cure stated.

Gary has rung up ten straight victories and their opponent from Wyoming County has likewise done the same thing with ten victories.

Cure believes the key to success for this year's club is the overall balance on the team. The Coaldiggers have scored 339 points, but the scoring is about even among the backfield members.

"We have five real good boys in the backfield and one is about as good as the other. Our quarterback, Steve Thornton, has done a fine job for us this year and has thrown nine touchdown passes on the season. One thing that may not be

known is that Steve is third academically in his junior class," Cure added.

Gary runs out of the triple option and pro set offensive alignments, with the ball carrying duties being divided between halfbacks Eddie Reeves and Chester Thomas and 205 pound fullback Phillip Dillon and scatback David Callahan who can run from either position.

A big, big line compliments Gary's fine running attack with 6'3, 265 pound center Mike Tolley and 6'6", 285 pound Oakley Dalton the biggest members of the squad. The line averages over 200 pounds for the Coaldiggers.

Oceana also has a double barrel attack in that the offense has scored over 350 points on the season while the defense has yielded only 18 points in ten games.

Gary's "gravedigger" unit gave up only 30 points on the season so the two teams are quite similar in structure on defense. Both teams will be ready for the big clash and both squads should be at full strength.

John Beckleheimer has molded a fine football team at the Wyoming County school and one big asset for both teams is the mounting excitement at both schools.

Although few people give Oceana very little chance for a victory Saturday, Cure

feels this game is going to be tougher than what people think.

Cure said that the kids wanted this game badly Saturday, that he usually started getting nervous two or three days before a game of this type, and that he could feel the tension and excitement as the team worked out on the football field yesterday.

Cure brought one state championship home in 1966 when his Coaldiggers took Cerado-Kenova in the state Double-A playoffs. Gary just missed a playoff berth last year in posting a 7-3 record. Oceana gave Hinton all they wanted two years ago before falling 10-0 at Beckley.

One of the biggest crowds to see a playoff game is looked for Saturday at Bluefield between these two fine Southern West Virginia schools.

Tickets On Sale

Gary Principal Charlie Dean announced that tickets for this Saturday's game between Gary and Oceana are on sale at Gary Filling Station, Union Supply Store, Bobo's Barber Shop and Gary High School. Tickets are two dollars for adults and one dollar for students. Admission at the gate Saturday will be two dollars for everyone.