

DEWITT VS HASLETT... SOME RECENT MEMORIES.



1994 The Quagmire: DeWitt has its best team since the 1989 Silverdome team. Gail Thornton's wishbone option attack has both power and speed to burn led by quarterback DJ Reyburn. After a good week of practice in the dry October weather, the Panthers arrive at Haslett and the field is more like a marsh. The Panthers stand in several inches of mud on the sideline and the field is equally as mushy. Apparently the grounds person "forgot" to turn off the sprinklers the night before. The mud slows the speedy Panthers but they prevail 14-0.

1999 Welcome to the Neighborhood: Coming off a Silverdome appearance in 1988, the powerful Vikings are marching toward another deep run into the playoffs. Led by quarterback Nick Schiebly, Haslett welcomes new DeWitt coach Rob Zimmerman to the Ingham County League with a 44-20 thumping at Haslett and the Vikings end up in the semi-finals.



2000 Which one? Once again at Haslett. This year the Panthers shut down the powerful "T" running attack of Haslett and featured back Brain McIntosh and the Vikings do the same against Zimmerman's new flex-option offense. In an off/on cold rain the teams trade punts and play most of the game between the 30 yard lines. Late in the game, the rain subsides and Tony Pulice hits Cole/Tyler Thelen (we can't remember which one) for a 34 yard touchdown pass to give the Panthers a hard fought 7-0 win. It was Cole.



DEWITT PANTHER FOOTBALL

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2001 Student Body Left: At DeWitt. Another hard fought game between Otlewski's powerful "T" and Zimmerman's hi-octane flex option-offense. With the crowd ringing the entire north end of the field three and four deep, the Vikings featured their backfield-brother tandem of Brian and Brent McIntosh and the Panthers with Tyler and Cole Thelen. The Panthers score late on a Chad Alger to AJ Muysenberg pass with Muysenberg falling out of bounds to catch the pass to tie the game at 14. In overtime toward the flag pole end of the field, the Panthers loose the ball on a fumbled pitch. The Vikings score on their first play from the 10 yard line on a "student body left" play which Coach Otlewski said he had saved for just such an occasion. Behind the tight-end and all three backs leading the way, McIntosh scored untouched. The Vikings win 20-14.

2002 Part 1: The Comeback: At Haslett. The top ranked Panthers had rolled to four wins with Zimmerman's new spread offense directed by quarterback Chad Alger. The Vikings lost their first two games but turned it around and blistered Perry and Williamston. Before another overflow crowd, the scoreboard blinks several times just before the game and decides to call it a night and goes out for the remainder of the night. Behind three long "fullback traps" by Brian McIntosh, the Vikings stun the



huge crowd with a 28-12 half time lead. The Panthers regroup at half time and behind the clutch passing of Alger to Williams/Holland/Lloyd/Way, power running of Bunce and a tightened up defense led by Eric Schaar, who seemed to be in the Viking huddle, the Panthers rally for an exciting 41-34 win.



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2002 Part 2: Fourth and Goal at the One: At DeWitt. The Panthers draw a much-improved Haslett team in the first round of the playoffs at DeWitt. A much different game unfolds this time around as the Panthers hold a commanding 21-7 lead mid-way through the fourth quarter. But, Coach Otlewski rallies his team and they score two late touchdowns to send the game into overtime. At the north end of the field, Haslett has the ball first and after three running plays, the ball lay on the one yard line on the western hash-marks. Fourth and goal from the one. When you need a yard, where to you run? Behind your all-state 280 pound left tackle Mike McMahanaman if you are Haslett. As the Vikings broke the huddle, 180 pound Panther lineman Eric Schaar turned to linebacker Tim Ramieriz and tells him to come in high right behind him because the play is coming here. On the snap, Schaar undercuts the Viking all-stater McMahanaman making a pile and Rameriz comes in over the pile and stuffs McIntosh short of the endzone setting off a wild celebration on the Panther side. After one running play, Zimmerman has had enough and calls in Luke Wey to kick a 25 yard field goal giving the Panthers a 24-21 victory. The Panthers go onto the Silverdome for the first time since 1989. Prior to game, in attempt to silence "The Panther" the 480 volt power feed to the scoreboard is cut with tree pruners with shocking results.



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2003 The Comback Falls Short: At Haslett, the Vikings run over, around and through the Panthers in the first half and take a 28-7 lead into the locker room. The Panthers roar back in the second half behind quarterback Dan Bleemaster to tie the game at 28. A late Haslett field goal gives the Vikings a 31-28 win. The Panthers gel late in the season and go onto the Division 4 State Finals.

2004 Steam-rolled: The 2004 edition of the Panthers squad was "Paving the Way". At DeWitt, before another huge crowd, Haslett takes the opening kickoff and marched 80 yards in 17 plays in eight minutes. The rest of the night belonged to the Panthers as Braska, Brynic, Seinz, Curtiss, Worden shut down the Vikings and make holes for Meeder as the Panthers steam roll the Vikings 21-7 and roll all the way to the 'Dome for the third consecutive year.

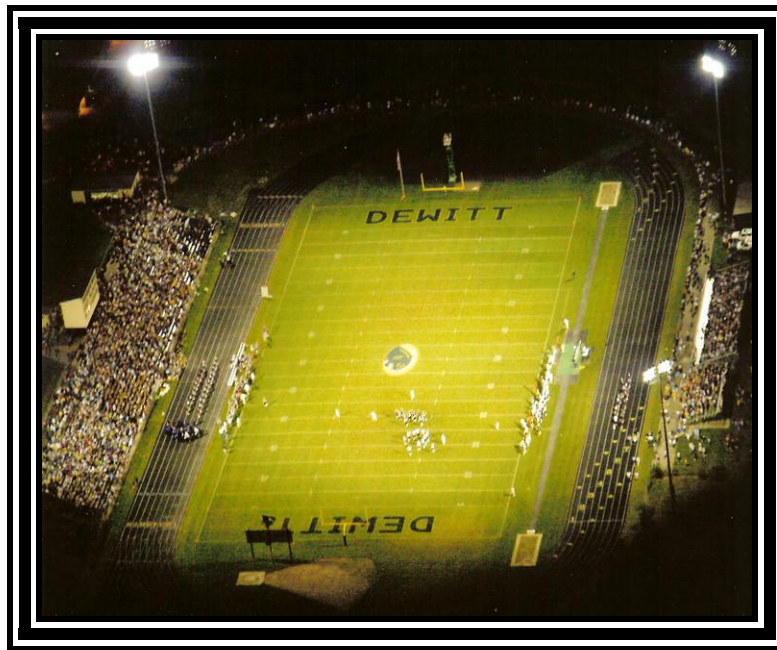


Photo by Jim Sigmon, Pilot Matt Brynic (2004)

2005 Turner-ed: Once again the winner of the CAAC conference makes the State finals. However, this year it is Haslett's turn as Nate Turner turns on the afterburners and scorches the Panthers 49-28 in week eight of the season. However, the 28 points are the most given up by Haslett until the regional finals. This marked the emergence of a young sophomore quarterback for DeWitt, Dan Van Dreumel (DVD). It is the only year a Zimmerman coached team has not made the playoffs.

2006 Twice as Nice: At DeWitt, The Vikings have no answer for the latest Zimmerman offense as DVD rushes for 154 yards and passes for 215 and the Panthers route the Vikings 42-14.

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2006 Playoffs: Again the Panthers draw Haslett for the first round of the playoffs. The Panthers are ranked #1 in the State and behind the passing of DVD to Celentino, Horn, Fleet, Tait and Schaar and the running of Blankenship and DVD, the Panthers cruise to a 34-7 victory and drive to the semi-finals.



2007 Twice Again?: After two lopsided losses in 2006, Coach Otlewski takes his coaching staff to Florida in the off season and comes up with a new defense to throw at the hi-powered Panther offensive attack, rushing only three down linemen and leaving eight back in pass coverage trying to slow the passing attack of Dan VanDreumel.



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The first game of the year, DVD shreds the Viking defense with three touchdown passes and a rushing attack of Bliesner, Thompson and Grice for a 41-18 drubbing.

2007 Whew: Again, the Vikings and Panthers meet in the playoffs. The Vikings defense stymies the #1 ranked Panther attack. With the Vikings clinging to a 3-0 lead at the half. DVD finds Jason Fleet for a touchdown pass in the fourth quarter to give the Panthers a tenuous 7-3 lead. On a second and short at the Viking 42, Coach Otlewski sneaks a tight end behind the Panther secondary for a 58 yard touchdown pass and run, giving the Vikings a 10-7 lead late in the game. The Panthers mount a furious drive behind the passing of DVD and Fleet and get inside the Viking 10 with under a minute to play. With less than 10 seconds to play, the Panthers face a fourth down on the one yard line. With a double tight end set and Fleet double teamed at split end, DVD takes the snap in the shot gun formation, tucks the ball under his arm and heads for the goal line. Suddenly he pulls up and lofts a floater of a pass that resembles a free throw, into the hands of a leaping 6'5" JT Whitman at back of the end zone, giving the Panthers a 14-10 victory.

Again, it is Haslett week. High school football rivalry at it's best.



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