



Photo by Stephen Goldsmith

Princeton High head football coach Joe Gargione enters his second season with a more experienced roster.

# Productive off-season has PHS football feeling good

## Gargione is happy to have more experience

By Bob Nuse  
Sports Editor

Joe Gargione's first year as head football coach at Princeton High School was learning experience all the way around.

"Last year very tough not only because of the record, but the injuries and inexperience of the players on field," said Gargione, whose team finished 0-10 a year ago. "The cool thing about this year is the first full year as far as having an off-season.

"When we finished with our banquet in December we took a couple weeks off and then we were lifting hard. The kids not playing a winter sport were lifting four days a week. In the spring it was the same thing and that led to the summer.

Gargione has been thrilled with the off-season work ethic of his team, which is far more experienced than the one that started the season last year.

"I like what I see," said Gargione, who had previously been an assistant on the

Little Tigers' staff. "The tempo has been up. The kids have in the back of their mind don't want to go through that again. They worked hard in the summer. We had 24 sessions and then had some time off and started fresh (last) Monday. The first few days have been great. The kids are really pulling for each other."

Princeton entered last season with little in the way of returning experience, then saw some of its key players go down with injuries. The upside to last year was a lot of players gained experience that they can take into this season.

"We had some juniors who for them it was the first time on the varsity field and now they are seniors," Gargione said. "The sophomores got experience and now they are juniors. We are trying to build and get the kids out there. When you don't win a game you worry about numbers. Our numbers are OK.

"We need everybody to stay healthy. Injuries are something that will sit in the

back of our minds. We do not have a lot of depth, but can't worry about that. We have to worry about now and what the coaches are seeing."

Gargione and his staff have a good senior core group of leaders to build on. They will be the foundation Princeton builds around.

"Our quarterback, Alex Mitko, played baseball but he was there in the winter," Gargione said. "Fernando Silva and Jeff Barsamian on the offensive line are acting as leaders. Kevin White at receiver along with Eric Shorter, they are building off what they did last year. Colin Bell worked really hard. They are all seniors and worked real hard. We have a good senior group and hopefully the juniors and sophomores will learn from that.

"The first week has been good. Our main goal for our first scrimmage is to execute everything we have practiced. Based on what I have seen from our leaders and how we work, things are on the upswing."