

Canton focuses on 'establishing your culture'



Canton — Fall's not here yet, but signs of it are all around. Along with unseasonably chilly morning temps, football practice started at high schools around the state Monday morning.

Canton's practice started bright and early at 8 a.m.

"This day is about establishing your culture," coach Tim Baechler said. "It's about establishing your work ethic and how we are going to operate. We're going to be very hard and critical about everything. We're going to install our offense and defense, and that stuff's important, but it's about establishing how we operate here with these kids, and it all builds discipline and toughness, and that carries over to Friday night."

Baechler says he relies on the seniors to help instill the team's work ethic, including his son, linebacker and tight end Lou Baechler.

“It feels great coming back with the boys again after these long summer workouts,” the younger Baechler said. “We’ll have fun, just doing repeats together and struggling together.”

“Repeats are an intense workout we do before practice,” senior cornerback and running back Colin Troup said.

Intense is an understatement.

The players line up with helmets on and go through a series of up-downs, pushups, sit-ups and myriad other gut-busting exercises. Perfect unison must be maintained throughout, plus players have to bark out the number of each rep. If coaches are unsatisfied, the “repeat” starts all over again. “That was the fun part,” Troup said post-repeats, between big swigs of water.

Like most high school sports, football is a nearly year-round activity, so Canton’s players are used to their coaches’ attention to detail on nearly every aspect of practice.

“We’re going to be very hard and critical about everything. When they’re stretching it’s not just a goof-off time. I want everybody perfect, looking the same,” coach Baechler said.

And they did.

Canton kicks the season off against Muskegon Mona Shores on Saturday, Aug. 26.