BJ's Printables Male Athlete Of Month For MELHS: Schilbe Returns As Starting Quarterback For Knights

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
September 1 2026 11:25 AM

EDWARDSVILLE — Ben Schilbe, the quarterback for Metro-East Lutheran's eight-man football team and a BJ's Printables Male Athlete of the Month at MELHS, is helping lead the Knights into the 2026 season after a 7-3 campaign in 2025 and opened the 2026 season with a 78-36 win over Martinsville on Aug. 29, 2026.

The Knights have their home opener at 7 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 4, 2026, against Oblong.

Schilbe said during a break in preseason practice Aug. 20 at Martin Luther Field that the Knights have returning players and newcomers to put together another strong season.

"It's been a good start this year," Schilbe said. "I like watching our guys come out and work. We don't have a very big group this year, but we have a lot of guys with a lot of heart, so I'm excited to see what we can do."

Metro-East Lutheran opened the season at 1-0 after the win over Martinsville. Schilbe completed 7 of 14 passes for 233 yards and five touchdowns in the opener.

The Knights' 2025 season ended in the opening round of the Illinois 8-Man Football Association playoffs with a 39-20 road loss to St. Anne. Schilbe was one of the team's leaders as Metro-East Lutheran won its first five games last season. Statistically, he completed 32 of 68 passes for 620 yards and seven touchdowns and ran 17 times for 189 yards.

The Knights fell 11 total points short of an undefeated regular season last year, and Schilbe said he believes that momentum can carry into the new season.

"I think it will carry a lot," Schilbe said. "We have a lot of guys who had a big impact on our team last year, and they're returning. So, I'm excited to see what we can do again this season.

"We have a lot of newcomers, just underclassmen that I think are ready to step up. So, taking the players we had last season, and joining them with the players we have this season, I think we can put together a pretty solid season this year."

As quarterback, Schilbe said he sees his role as being a leader, holding teammates accountable and encouraging them.

"I think for me, just a lot of leadership," Schilbe said. "Being the quarterback, everyone' s watching me. So, how can I always be positive, and have my teammates thinking I'm negative? Because if I'm negative, the whole team's going to be negative. So, leadership is getting on guys for not being at practice on time. And also not harping on people, but encouraging them. Telling people, 'That was a good rep,' or, 'This was good; what

could you do better?' I think just building up the team, and it's more than football. We're a family as well, so I think a big thing for me is just leadership."

Schilbe said several games stand out on the Knights' schedule, including their homecoming game against Unity Christian of Decatur on Oct. 2. He also pointed to road games against Catlin South Fork on Sept. 26 and Pawnee on Oct. 10, both teams Metro-East Lutheran lost to last season.

"A big game on our schedule is our homecoming game against Unity Christian of Decatur (Oct. 2)," Schilbe said. "I've never lost to them in my time here, and I'd like to keep it that way. We have a little trophy that goes back and forth, so I hope to keep that in our trophy case. Two more big games are against the teams we lost to last year, South Fork and Pawnee (both games on the road this year, on Sept. 26 and Oct. 10, respectively). Those are both really good teams, but I think we're also a really good team. So, I'm excited for those games as well. For a personal goal, I'd really like to get all-state honors, but the team is more important, so as long as we win, I'll be happy. I feel really confident."