



Detroit Lions Football Education Division

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For Immediate Release
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MATT BIRD OF GRAND LEDGE HIGH SCHOOL NAMED DETROIT LIONS/FARM BUREAU INSURANCE OF MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACH OF THE WEEK FOR WEEK #1

Farm Bureau Insurance of Michigan to Present Detroit Lions High School Football Coach of the Week Program in 2017

Detroit, MI—The Detroit Lions have named Matt Bird of Grand Ledge High School the week one recipient of the 2017 Farm Bureau Insurance of Michigan High School Football Coach of the Week Program. Bird's Grand Ledge Comets defeated Hudsonville 41-14 during opening week of the 2017 high school football season.

Bird is in his 24th season coaching and his 12th season as head coach at Grand Ledge. He has led Grand Ledge to the playoffs eight times while reaching the Division 1 semi-finals in 2015. His career record is 78-36. Bird has been an assistant coach at Lansing Eastern as well as Grand Ledge and was a member of the 2000 Grand Ledge Division 1 State Championship team. On Thursday, August 31, the Comets travel to DeWitt for a week two regular season matchup.

High School Football Coach of the Week Program

Each week throughout the 2017 nine-week high school football regular season, one coach that best develops his players' character, discipline, and football skill in addition to emphasizing player health and safety in their program, will be recognized for his commitment to the team, school, and community. The winner is selected by a panel of high school football media members—**Mick McCabe (former Detroit Free Press sports writer), Hugh Bernreuter (Saginaw News), Bret Bakita (WOOD Radio-106.9 FM, ESPN 96.1 FM-Fox 17/Grand Rapids), and James Cook (Traverse City Record-Eagle).**

This season's program will award \$22,000 to aid in the development and promotion of high school football in the state of Michigan, thanks to contributions from the Detroit Lions, the NFL Foundation, presenting partner, Farm Bureau Insurance of Michigan and associate partner, Gatorade.



Each winning coach during the regular season will receive a \$2,000 donation to his school's football program and a sideline kit, courtesy of Gatorade. At the conclusion of the 2017 Michigan High School Football season, the Lions will also select the High School Football Coach of the Year. This season's Coach of the Year will receive a \$4,000 donation to his school's football program, in addition to the Gatorade sideline kit. All winners will receive a certificate signed by Lions' head coach **Jim Caldwell** and National Football League (NFL) commissioner **Roger Goodell**, a personalized game ball as well as acknowledgement at an upcoming Lions home game.

Currently in its' 21st year, the Detroit Lions High School Coach of the Week program has awarded \$389,000 to high school football programs throughout the state of Michigan. For more information on the Detroit Lions High School Coach of the Week program, contact Chris Fritzsching, Lions' Director of Football Education, at 313-262-2248.

About Farm Bureau Insurance: Farm Bureau Insurance of Michigan was founded in 1949 by Michigan farmers who wanted an insurance company that worked as hard as they did. Those values still guide the company today and are a big reason why they are known as Michigan's Insurance Company, dedicated to protecting the farms, families, and businesses of this great state. Farm Bureau Insurance agents across Michigan provide a full range of insurance services—life, home, auto, farm, business, retirement, Lake Estate®, and more—protecting nearly 500,000 Michigan policyholders.

About the NFL Foundation: The National Football League Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of those touched by the game of football – from players at all levels to communities across the country. The NFL Foundation represents the 32 NFL clubs and supports the health and safety of athletes, youth football, and the communities which support our game.