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Sports

Classified
section inside

● B6-10

● NFL

Martz code

What can fans expect from Bears' new offense? Will complex system work in Chicago?

By Scott Gleeson
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To say Mike Martz's offense is complicated is an understatement.

In fact, the Chicago Bears' offensive coordinator has a difficult time explaining it himself.

"I don't know what our offense is. It changes every week," Martz said sarcastically when asked about his complex scheme. "If someone could tell what we do, I'd be happy."

Influenced by former NFL coaches Sid Gillman and Don Coryell — both known for their passing offenses — Martz was hired in February with one objective: turn the Bears' offense into something resembling "The Greatest Show on Turf" — the nickname of Martz's prolific offenses while coaching the St. Louis Rams.

Known for its aggressive passing style and giant playbook, the offense was perhaps the biggest conversation topic at this year's training camp at Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais. It's quite a change from the more conservative styles of former coordinators John Shoop, Terry Shea and Ron Turner.

Just how puzzling is Martz's offense? "It's complicated at first," quarterback Jay Cutler said. "Once you get into it and really learn the little details to it, a lot of it starts to make sense. But at first, whenever you take a look at that book, you're overwhelmed because there's just so much information to retain."

Training camp lasted three weeks, but for an offense learning a new curriculum, there has been enough studying to make the off-season feel like summer school.

"It's so much studying," said Devin Hester, the Bears' top receiver last season. "You have to put a lot of time in this offense to get to the point where you need to be, where you're not taking a step back."

What makes Martz's system so complicated? For starters, its "War and Peace"-sized playbook.

"We've worked really hard putting (plays) in," Cutler said. "We've spent a lot of hours just going over and over to make sure we're completely comfortable because there are a

lot of plays. There's a lot for a quarterback to know. But once you grasp the basic concepts, you can kind of decode it."

Compared to other styles of offense, Martz's relies on more decisions made at the line of scrimmage and more motion by the receivers before the snap. It often features five wide receivers and requires precision passing and crisp route-running.

It can be overwhelming at first, backup quarterback Caleb Hanie said, but once perfected, its aggressive style will "put defenses under pressure."

"I saw it on tape, saw the success, and I liked it. "But it looks easier on tape than when you get out on the field and try to do it."

One difference between this offense and Turner's is wide receiver routes. Turner's featured two primary patterns when the Bears got close to the end zone: jump ball fades and stop routes, which utilize a receiver's size and strength.

Martz's offense, on the other hand, focuses on receivers' timing and quickness to create separation from the defense.

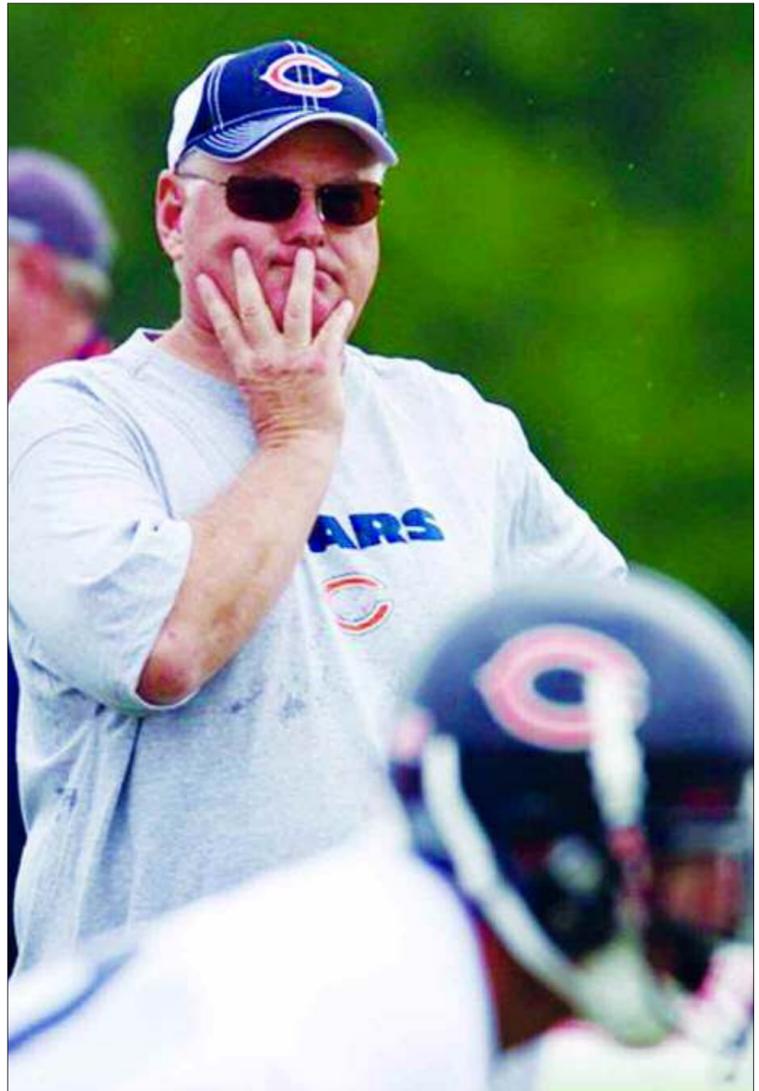
"It's an adjustment," Cutler said. "The last three or four years, it's been just seeing guys and kind of letting (the ball) fly. In this offense, you're throwing the ball before your guys are ready sometimes and before the defense is even expecting the ball to come out."

Martz's formations typically don't use a fullback, and tight ends are asked to block more than catch passes. However, tight ends Greg Olsen and Desmond Clark were primary targets in training camp.

Pass protection by the offensive line is also a top priority. Line play wasn't a strength last year, and Cutler was sacked five times in the first half of Saturday's preseason game — a loss to the Oakland Raiders at Soldier Field.

That leaves three weeks and two preseason games to fix the problems before the season opener Sept. 12 against the Detroit Lions.

"We've got a long ways to go," Martz said before leaving training camp. "It's too early to say we're successful about anything yet. We've got a lot to develop still."



The Associated Press file photo Chicago Bears offensive coordinator Mike Martz watches his team during practice at Olivet Nazarene University this year.

Pulling rank

Mike Martz-coached teams and where they've ranked among the NFL's 32 teams in points scored per game:

YEAR	TEAM	RANK	ROLE
99	STL	1	OC
00	STL	1	HC
01	STL	1	HC
02	STL	23	HC
03	STL	2	HC
04	STL	19	HC
05	STL	11	HC
06	DET	21	OC
07	DET	16	OC
08	SF	22	OC

OC: offensive coordinator
HC: head coach

SOURCE: Pro-Football-Reference.com



Trampled underfoot

Raiders 32, Bears 17

Cutler sacked five times in preseason loss ● B2

● Athletes Around Campus

Malmer expecting another successful season for Olivet

After surgery, senior hopes to return soon

By Tim Ahrens
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Soccer is a rougher sport than many think.

Olivet Nazarene University's Christine Malmer, a graduate of Bradley-Bourbonnais Community High School, can attest to that.

Toward the end of last season, Malmer injured her knee, although she can't exactly pinpoint when or how it happened.

"There were a couple of games that got really physical," Malmer said. "It probably happened then."

Malmer had surgery on her left knee in January, but it became infected. That required



Malmer

Athletes AROUND CAMPUS

another surgery, and the former Boilermakers' standout is still waiting to get back on the field.

"It just depends on when my trainer says I'm strong enough," the senior midfielder said. "I've been working hard in rehab, and I am able to run now. I'm just ready for my senior season. It seems like the time has flown by."

Malmer anticipates returning by midseason, but she hopes it's even sooner. She is expecting big things from her team this season.

Olivet, which finished 18-3-3 last year, just missed advancing to the NAIA National Tournament. A trip there would be wonderful icing on her senior season's cake.

"I think we have a promising team," she said. "We have nine

On the pitch

Local athletes who are playing college soccer this fall:

PLAYER	COLLEGE	YR	HIGH SCHOOL
Diana Anderson	Trinity International	JR	Bradley-Bourbonnais
Jordan Chapman	Blackburn	SO	St. Anne
Zak Christensen	Olivet Nazarene	SO	Bishop McNamara
Michelle Davis	Olivet Nazarene	SR	Bradley-Bourbonnais
Arturo Galvez	Parkland	SO	Bradley-Bourbonnais
Jack Klasey	KCC	SO	Kankakee
Kyle Krutsinger	North Park	FR	Bradley-Bourbonnais
Steve Lacosse	Olivet Nazarene	SO	Manteno
Thomas Malia	KCC	FR	Peotone
Christine Malmer	Olivet Nazarene	SR	Bradley-Bourbonnais
Allie Newsom	Illinois State	FR	Manteno
Aryn Newsom	Illinois State	FR	Manteno
Juan Santoliva	St. Francis	JR	Bradley-Bourbonnais
Nick Spencer	KCC	FR	Bradley-Bourbonnais
Erik Villagomez	KCC	SO	Kankakee

new freshmen, and it will take a few weeks for them to get used to our routine."

Malmer recalled her freshman season, when it took a few weeks to realize things weren't too different from her days at Bradley-Bourbonnais, where she was a standout defender.

"I think it was mostly nerves,

but once we worked together, I realized I was playing with friends, just like high school," she said.

Malmer is an exercise science major and plans to attend graduate school next year to concentrate on physical therapy. She is the daughter of Kirk and Tammy Malmer, of Bradley.

Briefs

● HIGH SCHOOL GOLF

Irish land 3 in 70s

BLUE ISLAND — Zach Lewis, Anthony Gilbert and Kyle Dwyer each shot rounds of 79 and the Bishop McNamara High School boys' team posted its best score in three years Saturday at the Mt. Carmel Invitational.

The Irish finished with a team score of 319, good enough for eighth place in the 17-team field at The Meadows Golf Club.

"It was great to get three guys in the 70s," coach Matt Dwyer said, "but there's no reason we can't have four guys in the 70s."

Macaulay McClintock rounded out McNamara's card with an 82. Providence Catholic (287) edged Brother Rice (288) for the title.

— The Daily Journal staff report

● ANNOUNCEMENTS

Herscher meeting set

The Herscher High School Booster Club will meet at 7 p.m. Wednesday in the high school cafeteria.

— The Daily Journal staff report

● GOLF

Tyrell notches ace

Jim Tyrell, of Bourbonnais, recorded a hole-in-one Thursday at Aspen Ridge Golf Club in Bourbonnais.

Tyrell used his 7-iron to ace the course's 147-yard No. 8 hole. Loren Scharp, of Manteno, witnessed the feat.

— The Daily Journal staff report