

Sports

Gannett Newspapers/Thursday, September 10, 1998

Vaccaro brothers on different sidelines

John ready to make his debut with Rye Neck/Blind Brook while Joe coaches the Dobbs Ferry/Hastings squad

By Leslie Beth Feffer
Staff Writer

Big Brother won't be watching.

That's too bad for Rye Neck/Blind Brook football coach John Vaccaro, who will be making his head coaching debut Saturday,

Football

while older brother Joe will be pacing the sidelines for Dobbs Ferry/Hastings at the same time.

"I've been really curious to see his team," Joe Vaccaro said. "I'm dying to see his practices."

As an assistant coach to Joe at Dobbs Ferry/Hastings for the last seven years, the younger Vaccaro learned a great deal from his brother.

"We'll be very similar as to what we're going to run, offensively and defensively," John Vaccaro said, crediting his brother as being his biggest influence.

Joe Vaccaro has high hopes

and expectations for his sibling. He points to John's excellent football knowledge, skills as a communicator, sense of discipline and love for the game as factors in his projected success.

"He'll do a great job," the older brother said. "He's an excellent coach. We worked well together and learned a lot from each other."

Hopefully, the younger Vaccaro has learned enough to be able to turn around the Panthers, who were 0-8 last fall. With few veterans returning, this will be a difficult year for Rye Neck/Blind Brook.

"I've been working hard, but having a lot of fun," John Vaccaro said. "It's a different feeling being a head coach, but I feel I'm ready for it and I'm comfortable with it."

Although both played football at Hastings, there is a five-year age difference, so they never played together. However, Joe was an assistant coach at the

school when John was playing in 1984.

"We've always had a good relationship with that," John said. "He's always had respect for me and I for him. We've always remained good friends."

While their teams won't meet during the season — Dobbs Ferry/Hastings is in Class B while Rye Neck/Blind Brook is in D — the brothers may still face one another in battle — to determine which games their parents will attend.

"My wife and I go to all the games and we haven't missed one since they were playing," Joe Vaccaro Sr., the coaches' father, said. "But now we don't know what to do."

It was much easier when the brothers coached together, but they're taking it in stride and with good humor.

"I've called dibs on them because I've been doing it longer," Joe Jr. said, chuckling.