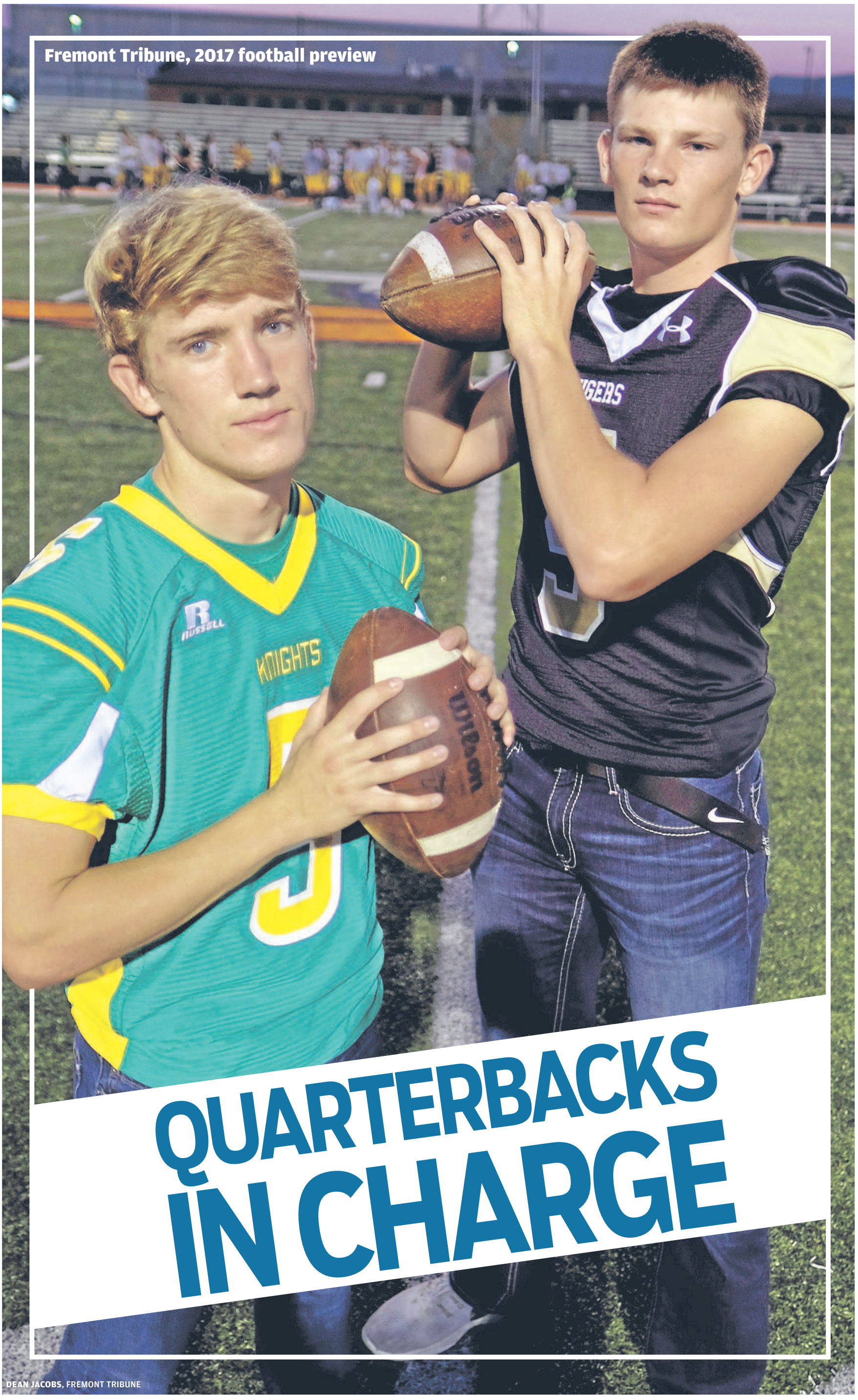
Fremont Tribune, 2017 football preview



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ALL AREA TEAMS HAVE A TERRIFIC SEASON!

FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Returnees boost FHS expectations

BRENT WASENIUS
Managing-Sports Editor

Many of the sophomores on the Fremont High School football team had on-the-job-training at the Class A level last season.

Tenth-graders like Dylan Kor, Cody Carlson, Jordon Woehrer and Spencer Fitz had to play prominent roles as the Tigers didn't have a lot of numbers in their senior class. Fremont finished 1-8, but those sophomores from 2016 — coupled with this year's seniors — have FHS optimistic about 2017.

"Those kids got a lot of action and they are hungry," Fremont coach Seth McClain said. "They want to improve over last year. It has been fun to watch those guys mature and they have bought into what the seniors are trying to accomplish."

The Tigers will especially look to improve on the defensive side of the ball. They surrendered 42 points or more in their eight losses.

"We have to improve on getting off the field and giving our offense a chance," McClain said. "I really like our offense, but if you want to win games you have to play defense. We've worked a ton on that. We need stops so we can get the ball in Riley's hands."

Riley is 6-foot-6, 225-pound senior quarterback Riley Harms. He threw for 1,409 yards and 12 touchdowns in eight games last fall and has attended camps at South Dakota, South Dakota State, Wyoming, Northern Iowa and Drake.

"He wants to win very badly," McClain said. "But he sees the big picture. He knows it takes more than one person."

The Tigers' line is big and experienced. Senior Bergan Hofer (6-foot-3, 290) is beginning his third year as a starter. Fitz (240 pounds) returns at left guard while senior center Colin Lottman (6-1, 230) also has starting experience. Senior Chase Lipsys (6-3, 270) is a veteran at right guard while the right tackle will be sophomore Kade Richardson (6-3, 235).

"We have a nice group of linemen that we really like," McClain said. "We're developing more and more depth."

Juniors Evan Glosser and Josh Walker will join Luis Castellanos as key backups.

Sophomore Carter Newil l(6-0, 200) leads a trio of tight ends that figure to play key roles. The others are junior Jake Heineman (6-4, 215) and senior Logan Sacco.

EVAN NORDSTROM / FREMONT TRIBUNE

Dylan Kor of Fremont High sacks Northeast quarterback Talon Little in a high school football game last season. Kor is a returning starting linebacker for the Tigers. The junior will also see action at running back.

"Carter makes plays and had phenomenal hands," McClain said. "Logan was a lineman, but he is fast so we moved him and Jake is a good tight end, too."

Seniors Jake Sellon and Nate Grimm will lead the receiving corps. They combined for 64 catches for 555 yards and two scores last year. They will be joined by seniors Joe Kment and Andrew Cusick.

"Joe and Andrew have paid their dues," McClain said. "They played junior varsity last year, but Riley trusts those guys. When their number is called, they make plays."

Junior Dillon Dix (5-10, 160) is also expected to provide another weapon at receiver. He is recovering from an offseason injury and is expected back sometime in September.

Leading rusher Justin Pettit graduated in May, but McClain is hopeful that a trio of backs can boost the FHS ground game.

Carlson (5-7, 140) will join senior Cody Fielder and Kor at running back.

"Fielder is a wrestler and he is tough," McClain said. "He is a flat-out scrapper and he brings it every day. Carlson is like tackling air and he plays cornerback like a mad man. He has a low center of gravity and can cut on a dime. Kor (6-1, 200) is a weight room warrior and he'll do some nice things back there. Carlson is probably our No. 1, but they are all going to play."

Varsity offense is something new to Kor, but playing defense on Friday night is not. He recorded 57 solo and 28 assisted tackles last year at linebacker to lead the Tigers. He will be at the Will position while Sacco is moving from defensive end to Sam. Lottman will man the Mike spot in the 4-3.

Lottman finished with 34 solo stops and 24 assisted tackles last year.

"He is physical and he had a good year there last year," McClain said.

Junior Ty Sookram can play either Mike or Will. Gabe Schindler and sophomores Colton McCurdy and Jacob Pettit could also push for playing time.

"McCurdy was a very good wrestler," McClain said. "He is a tough kid and he is a hitter.

Hofer will be at defensive tackle while Lipsys also figures to play a lot. Woehrer will play nose tackle.

"He is 6-7, 300 pounds and he can move," McClain said. "He is like an eclipse. He is huge and is very talented."

Woehrer will be backed up by junior Kevin Vuong (5-7, 230).

Heineman, who McClain said had a solid offseason, will be at one defensive end while Glosser will man the other. Fitz, Castellanos and Lipsys could also play there.

Sellon and Grimm return at the safeties while Carlson returns at one cornerback. Cusick and junior Austin Everitt are the top candidates to start at the other corner. Dix will also play a lot when he returns.

Everitt qualified for the state track meet last May in the long jump.

"He is a guy we won't hesitate to put in there," McClain said. "He is extremely quick and fast. He'll go up and get the football."

Junior Bryan Fernandez will be a backup at safety.

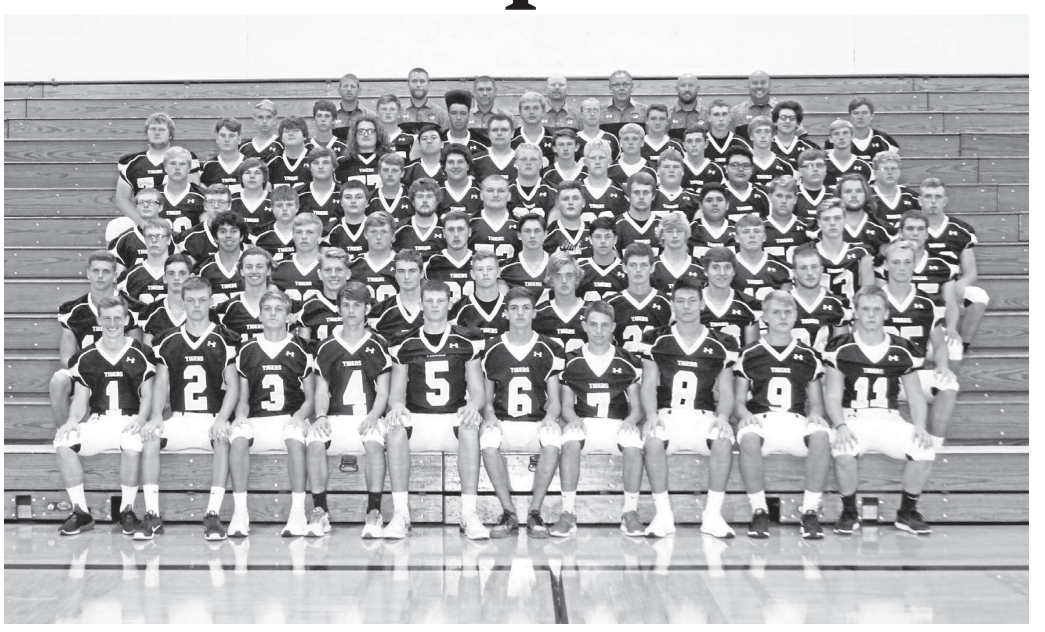
Senior Cameron Stewart will handle the punting duties while Nate Dillon will serve as kicker.

Fremont opens its season Aug. 25 at North Platte. The Bulldogs downed FHS 42-7 last season, but the Tigers are a different team.

"We have a great group of seniors and they hold each other accountable," McClain said. "It is a group that really loves football and being around each other. It has been a fun summer with them. I think we're all excited to get the season going."

McClain said it is crucial that the Tigers' reserves can come in and give two-way players like Lottman, Hofer, Sellon and Grimm a break when they need it.

"Injuries and depth are key factors," he said. "Our first-team guys are as good as anybody else, but in Class A you are only as good as your backups because it is a rough and tumble league."



COURTESY PHOTO / ALI GRANGER

Members of the Fremont High School football team, front row, from left, are: Hunter Wallace, Joe Kment, Nathan Dillon, Hunter Flittie, Riley Harms, Levi Duncan, Brody Sintek, Dylan Kor, Mason Moore and Jacob Pettit. In the second row, from left, are: Dylan Marchand, Cody Carlson, Dillon Dix, Jake Sellon, Cooper Leriger, Cameron Stewart, Spencer Sorensen, Thomas Rennie-Fowler, Mitchell Baxa, Nate Grimm and Nicholas Wimer. In the third row, from left, are: Camerine Flint, Bryan Fernandez, Tanner Renken, Jeffery Flint, Colton McCurdy, Logan Sacco, Ty Sookram, Hector Villagomez, Cody Fielder, Isiah Nielsen, Gabriel Schindler and Caleb Morrow. In the fourth row, from left, are: Lars Muhlbach, Jared Fisher, Quinton Muhlbach, Collin English, Joshua Brott, Chase Lipsys, Tyler Lisle, Gabriel Krueger, Sergio Chavez Morales, Carter Richmond, Luis Castellanos Nuno, Colin Lottman and Will Menking. In the fifth row, from left, are: Evan Glosser, Joshua Walker, Spencer Fitz, Tyson Barker, Angelo Rivera, Jackson Ritchhart, Keegan Menning, Conner Knoell, Jesus Morales-Sanchez, Christopher Marchese and Devin Wilnerd. In the sixth row, from left, are: Bergan Hofer, Kade Richardson, Jordan Woehrer, Aaron Egr, Kevin Vuong, Trent Mulford, Deven Brown, Andrew Cusick, Jonathon Kment, Seth Redding and Austin Everitt. In the seventh row, from left, are: Tristan Goracke, Brody Robinson, Carter Newill, Quinton Rudder, Jacob Heineman, Christian Green, Gabriel Steele, Quintin Cisler, Michael Samanieg and Drake Rector. In the eighth row, from left, are: Coaches Lee Jennings, Roger Brohimer, Dave Sellon, Seth McClain, Tony Weinandt, TJ Roffers, and Sean Murphy. Not pictured is Jeremy Larsen.

QB Harms strives for perfection

BRENT WASENIUS
Managing-Sports Editor

"I was still rough around the edges. We had altered our offense and it was a lot of learning for everybody. I know coming off of last year there are a lot of things I can improve on. But I'm more focused on winning more than anything else."

Riley Harms said about 2016

Riley Harms doesn't like to leave anything to chance.

The Fremont High School quarterback is meticulous in his preparation as he begins his third year as the Tigers' starter.

Harms

"I think Riley is a lot like Tom Brady (New England quarterback) in that he is a perfectionist," Fremont coach Seth McClain said. "He is always working to improve. There are a lot of times I just have to tell him to go home from (workouts). It is unbelievable what this kid wants to accomplish. In his three years as a starter, he has seen a lot of things — the good, the bad and everything in between."

After a 1-8 season in 2016, Harms is hoping there are much better times ahead for the Tigers.

"We'll be improved," the 6-foot-6, 225-pound multi-sport athlete said. "We've got like 16 or 17 starters back from both sides of the ball. There is experience there and everyone is going to do better with a year of maturing. We'll be a lot better team."

While the Tigers struggled last year, Harms was a bright spot He connected on 133 of 235 pass attempts for 1,409 yards. He averaged 176 yards per game and threw for 12 touchdowns while earning Fremont Tribune All-Area honors.

As a sophomore, Harms was a backup to Bradyn Thomas. About midway through the season — after Thomas switched positions — Harms shared the quarterback duties with Chandler Lipsys. For the final three games, however, Harms was the starter. He started every game but one (due to an injury) last fall.

"I was still rough around the edges," Harms said about 2016. "We had altered our offense and it was a lot of learning for everybody. I know coming off of last year there are a lot of things I can improve on. But I'm more focused on winning more than anything else."

Harms will have some veteran receivers to throw to. Jake Sellon is back after hauling in a team-best 40 receptions for 334 yards. Also returning is fellow senior Nate Grimm. He caught 24 balls for 231 yards. Two other seniors, Joe Kment and Andrew Cusick, figure to play prominent roles as will junior Dillon Dix when he returns from a summer injury.

"I've been throwing to Jake and Nate since about sixth grade," Harms said. "I know where they are going to be and they know where I'm going to throw it. That is huge. Then you have a couple of guys like Joe and Andrew. They are smart players and they've gotten bigger, stronger and faster. I don't think we've lost anything in our receiving corps."

While opponents are well aware of Harms, he doesn't feel any pressure going into the season.

"I really don't," he said. "I feel we have enough guys around me to make big plays. I think I have more confidence than anything else. Obviously based on last year I don't think anyone is going to think much about us. Every team we play will think it will be a walk in the park, but it isn't going to be that way. I think that will help us. If we can punch them in the mouth early, they won't know what to do. We have enough (talent) on both sides of the ball that teams can't just worry about one guy."

Harms has already drawn the attention of college recruiters. He attended camps during the offseason at the University of South Dakota, South Dakota State, Wyoming, Northern Iowa and Drake.

"My priority right now is to have a good senior season," he said. "If things come up like a good offer, I might take advantage, but I think for the most part I'll wait (on a college choice) until after the season."

Harms said Mark Voss, a former quarterback at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, has served as a good mentor in his development as a player.

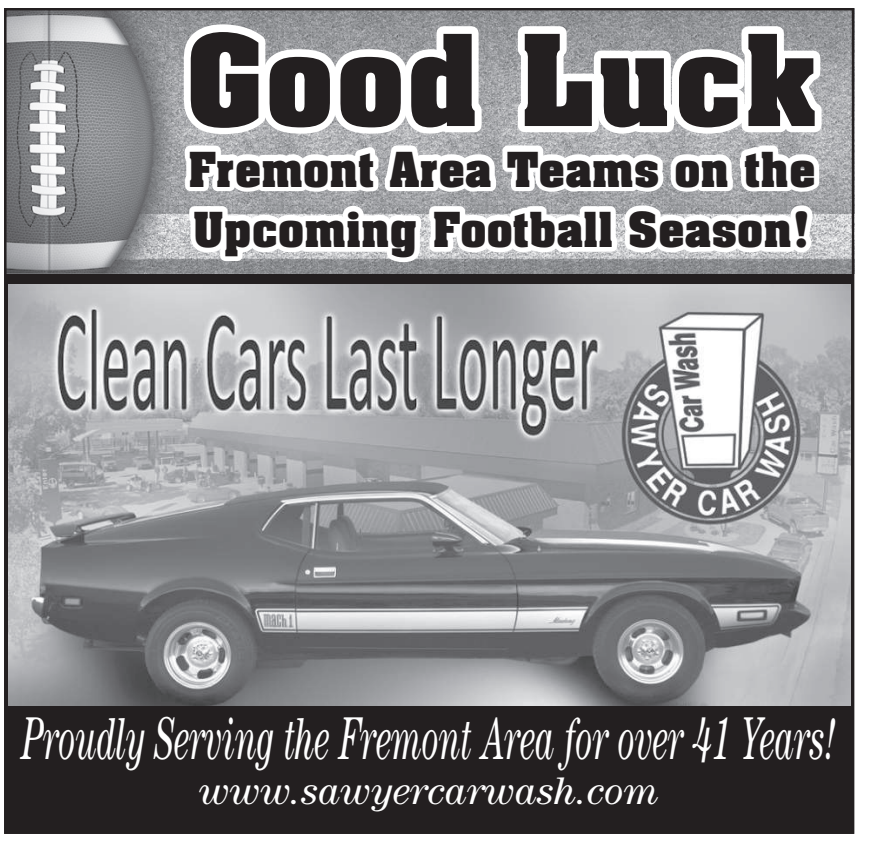
"I've had a lot of people that have helped me, but he has helped me a lot since about eighth grade," he said. "He is a volunteer assistant in the summer. He has helped me a lot with my footwork and understanding the game."

Harms has individual goals such as earning all-state honors and being selected for the Shrine Bowl, but they are secondary to helping the Tigers earn a berth in the postseason.

"In talking to most of my teammates, I think everyone's top goal is to qualify for the state playoffs," he said. "We want to qualify and see if we can make something happen from there."

EVAN NORDSTROM / FREMONT TRIBUNE

Quarterback Riley Harms of Fremont High scrambles for some yards during a game last fall at Heedum Field. Harms is a returning All-Area performer for the Tigers.



FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Love of football motivates Knights

BRENT WASENIUS
Managing-Sports Editor

Seth Mruz hasn't had to worry about the offseason commitment of his players on the Fremont Bergan football team.

"The kids have really gotten after the workouts this summer," he said. "They've worked hard and I feel like they have a pretty good focus and dedication to it. They are a group that really likes football."

The Knights finished 5-4 last season. Two losses were by one point (to Ponca and Omaha Brownell-Talbot). Their other losses were to state playoff qualifiers Battle Creek and Oakland-Craig.

Although the Knights had a winning record, they missed qualifying for the playoffs for the first time since 2001.

"The kids know the history and the tradition of the school," Mruz said. "We've had a good run of making the playoffs. The last time we didn't make it was my freshman year of high school. We were close that year and also last year. The kids have the pride of playing for (alumni). Those guys come back and watch them and our players want to do well for them and the community."

The Knights return a veteran at quarterback in Fremont Tribune All-Area pick Nick Burger. The 6-foot, 165-pound senior accounted for more than 1,600 yards in total offense as a junior.

"There were a few times last year he'd get in a situation and things would almost overwhelm him a little bit," Mruz said. "But the game has slowed down for him some. I think having a stronger offensive line this year and being a little more run-oriented will give him a boost of confidence."

Seniors Logan Brandt and Kolby Boggs and sophomore Ethan Villwok are veteran running backs.

Brandt rushed for 522 yards on 62 carries in six games. Villwok carried 52 times for 154 yards and

EVAN NORDSTROM / FREMONT TRIBUNE

Members of the Fremont Bergan football team, back row, from left, are: Caleb Villwok, Nick Herink , Riley Lindberg, Dylan Kucera, Eli Simonson, Dylan Gartner, Nick Burger, Trentin Ostrand, AJ Walter, Shea Gossett, Martin Meraz-Sierra. In the middle row, from left, are: Logan Brandt, Kolby Boggs, Jacob Johnson, Derek Smith, Jake Ridder, Eli Herink, Ethan Villwok, Colton Kempf and Andrew Fellers. In the front row, from left, are: Barry Field, Zayne Wallen, Zach Hamilton, Peyton Cone, Jacob Cook, Preston Ness, Jared Gibney and Kaeden Thomsen. Not pictured are Manny Meraz-Sierra and Dylan Wiesen

— like Brandt — scored four times. Boggs will also play receiver where he caught 28 passes for 321 yards and four scores as a junior.

"They are all tough runners," Mruz said. "They are capable, quick backs. They will get 4 yards whether you (as a defense) like it or not. Logan almost averaged 9 yards carry, but he was bothered by injuries. If he is healthy, he'll have a big year. He was there every single day this summer in the weight room."

Villwok was slowed by mono in the summer, but is healthy now.

"We didn't know how good he could be last year, but he had a fumble recovery for a touchdown in the first game against Ponca," Mruz said. "He plays so hard is physical. He was about as physical of a freshman as we've had in a long time. He'll only get better."

Burger and the backs will get to run behind a veteran line that includes left tackle Dylan Kucera (6-foot-4, 280-pound senior).

"He really didn't lift weights until he got here," Mruz said of the Howells-Dodge transfer. "He squatted

Kucera

C. Villwok

420 pounds the other day during testing. He is a big, strong kid and I expect a 110 percent improvement from last year. He'll do big things for us."

Junior Caleb Villwok (6-1, 210), in his third year as a starter, can play tackle, but he'll likely play guard for the Knights in 2017.

"He's gotten faster, but he is an extremely physical player with a good motor," Mruz said.

Senior Nick Herink (6-2, 235) will be at center. He also played fullback in some of the Knights' run packages last fall. Junior Riley Lindberg (6-4, 195) will be at right guard while sophomore Eli Simonson (6-6, 230) will play right tackle.

The Knights also have senior Derek Smith (5-10, 155), who started on the line the past two years, but may play a skilled position in 2017.

"Derek can play on the offensive line, but he is a very fast kid and he could factor into running the ball for us, too," Mruz said. "He could play in the backfield for us."

Depth will be provided by senior Colton Kempf (6-1, 235) and Fremont High transfer Manny Meraz-Sierra (5-10, 250).

Senior Trentin Ostrand (6-1, 175) only caught three passes last season, but that number figures to increase this year.

"He's transformed himself as an athlete the past two years," Mruz said. "He's pretty explosive."

Ostrand will play the tight end spot that Adam Dykman, Brian Wilmes, Austin Ottis and Jake Martin have had success at in the past.

"We're hoping Trentin will be that guy for us," Mruz said.

Along with Boggs, other receivers include sophomore Jake Ridder (6-0, 170) and juniors Dylan Gartner (6-3, 175), Jacob Johnson ((5-11, 160) and Eli Herink (5-10, 165).

"Jake has quickness and good hands," Mruz said. "Dylan has grown into his body. He had a good summer of 7-on-7. Jacob and Eli could see themselves out there, too. We'll mix things up and see who makes plays."

On defense, Kucera will be at nose guard on the Knights' three-man front. Nick Herink and Caleb Villwok will be the ends. The trio started the last five games together.

"They are all strong kids," Mruz said. "They'll be a problem for (opponents). We could go with a four-man front if we wanted to."

Simonson, Kempf and Meraz-Sierra could also figure into the mix on the line.

Boggs heads a deep linebacker corps after earning Tribune All-Area honors. He had 91 solo and 45 assisted stops as a junior.

"He's been around football a long time with his brothers (Bergan graduates Josh and Tanner Boggs)," Mruz said. "He's got a great intuition for the game and just knows what to expect. He plays faster than other people."

Ethan Villwok also returns after recording 23 solo stops, 13 assists and an interception a year ago. Smith and Lindberg are also in the mix while Ostrand, Eli Herink and Ridder are contending for the starting outside linebacker jobs.

Burger returns at safety after making 24 total tackles as a junior. The corners are expected to be Brandt and Johnson. The versatile Ridder, who is also Burger's back up at quarterback, could also play corner or safety.

Ostand will handle the extra-points and field goals while Ridder willl do the kickoffs. Both attended a kicking camp during the summer that was conducted by former Nebraska and Canadian Football League player Sandro DeAngelis.

"They loved it and they learned a lot from it," Mruz said.

The Knights open their season Friday at Ponca.

Absence from playoffs gnaws at Burger

BRENT WASENIUS
Managing-Sports Editor

Nick Burger is in his fourth year as a member of the Fremont Bergan football team, but the senior has seen a change in the Knights.

Burger

"This offseason has felt different from every other year I've been at Bergan," the senior quarterback/safety said. "I've never seen so many guys care about getting better. It excites me and I think we have a real shot of competing for a state championship this year because of how hard we work. I think as a group we are willing to do everything we can to win games."

Burger earned Fremont Tribune All-Area honors last year while leading the Knights to a 5-4 record. In eight games, he was 72 of 133 passing for 896 yards and 10 touchdowns. He also rushed 135 times for 757 yards and 10 scores.

"I expect a lot out of him this year and I think expects a lot out of himself, too," Bergan coach Seth Mruz said. "He is the go-to guy. He knows he is the best athlete and playmaker on the field. He also knows that his team needs him."

The Knights had a pair of one-point losses — 27-26 to Ponca and 7-6 to Omaha Brownell-Talbot (a game Burger missed due to an injury). Those two setbacks contributed to Bergan missing the playoffs for the first time since 2001.

The absence from the postseason gnawed at the Knights.

"It upset a lot of us," Burger said. "We felt like we let everyone down who had played at Bergan before us. We were disappointed and a little embarrassed that we didn't make it. That has pushed us to be better and hopefully get back there."

Due to low numbers, Brownell-Talbot had to scrap plans for its 2017 varsity season. Bergan had the choice of either taking a forfeit win or adding Ashland-Greenwood to its schedule. Murz let the 2017-18 seniors decide and they opted for the latter.

"We looked at it that a sure win would look nice on our record," Burger said. "But we want to be playing the best football we possibly can be heading into the playoffs. Skipping a game wouldn't help us. We decided to put ourselves in the best position we could to challenge ourselves and that was to play Ashland-Greenwood."

For his part, Burger believes he is in the best shape of his career.

"I feel faster and quicker than I've ever been," he said. "We've all seen a lot physical improvement over the summer. It is not just me, we've built some monsters this year. We can't wait show everyone what we've got."

A veteran offensive line, including Dylan Kucera, Caleb Villwok, Nick Herink, Eli Simonson and Riley Lindberg, will be asked to protect Burger. Kucera, at left tackle, is 6-foot-4, 280 pounds while Simonson, at right tackle, is 6-6, 225.

"We haven't had the biggest guys in the last few years so I've had to rely on my speed a lot, but I'm sure glad we have some big boys this year," Burger said. "I don't know if I've ever met a group that is as tough as these guys are. They are mean on the football field — I would never want to go up against them — but they are nice when you get to know them."

Burger, who also excels in basketball and track, is keeping his options open for college.

"I'm not 100 percent on any one sport right now," he said. "I love them all. I could see myself running (track) for the next four years, but I'm not 100 percent. I'll just wait and see."

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FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Healthy for ’17, Hofer eyes big year

TONY GRAY / FREMONT TRIBUNE

Bergan Hofer of Fremont High tackles an Omaha Benson ball carrier during a game last season at Heedum Field. Hofer is a returning two-way starter for the Tigers.

BRENT WASENIUS
Managing-Sports Editor

Bergan Hofer is a two-way starter for the Fremont High School football team and the senior wouldn’t have it any other way.

“I like playing both ways because I feel like I’m always out there and helping the team,” the 6-foot-3, 290-pound tackle said. “I feel like I have more control on what is going on out there.”

Hofer earned Fremont Tribune All-Area honors as an offensive lineman last season despite battling knee problems.

“He basically played hurt all year,” Fremont High coach Seth McClain said. “His knees were killing him, but he did an amazing job. He is just a heck of a player and an outstanding worker.”

Hofer had offseason surgery to correct a genetic problem with both of his knee caps.

“It was a little bit of an issue last year, but I tried to ignore it and just play through it,” Hofer said. “When I was out there and the adrenaline was pumping during game, I didn’t notice it for the most part. I’m just glad I had (the surgeries). It took a big load off of my mind.”

Hofer is part of an offensive line that includes several veterans. Junior left guard Spencer Fitz and senior center Colin Lottman are both returning starters. Senior right guard Chase Lipsys is a returning letterman while right tackle Kade Richardson, a sophomore, is the lone newcomer.

“I feel like I’m the leader on the line, but the other guys also know the ropes,” Hofer said. “They are all smart and strong and know how to get it done.”

The Tigers relied primarily on their passing game last fall, but the running game figures to play a more prominent role in 2017.

“I think with a big, experienced offensive line that we’ll be more capable of running the ball and getting more yards,” Hofer said. “I think we will pass it some, but we’ll be much more balanced this year.”

Hofer has worked hard during the offseason on his pass-protection and run-blocking skills.

“This summer I’ve worked a lot on my footwork and my speed so I’ll have an easier time reaching people and getting up to the second level in blocking (opponents),” he said.

Fremont returns senior quarterback Riley Harms, who threw for more than 1,400 yards in eight game last fall. One of Hofer’s jobs is to protect the right-hander’s blind side on pass plays.

“I feel that is a big responsibility, especially with a big, tall quarterback like Riley,” Hofer said. “I do kind of take pride in that.”

With a veteran line, Harms and receivers Jason Sellon and Nate Grimm back, Hofer thinks the Tigers could end their postseason drought. Fremont hasn’t been in the Class A state playoffs since 2008.

“I think it is a very attainable goal for us to make the playoffs,” he said. “I think this is the most complete team that I’ve been on at Fremont High and we have a lot of experience. Over the past few years, all of the senior classes have tried to take a step up to help Fremont get over the hump. This is the year I think we’ll break through.”

Bergan linebacker Boggs follows family tradition

TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Fremont Bergan linebacker Kolby Boggs (3) joins teammate Logan Brandt in tackling Ryan Ehresman of Omaha Brownell-Talbot during a game last season at Heedum Field. Boggs earned Fremont Tribune All-Area honors in 2016.

BRENT WASENIUS
Managing-Sports Editor

Linebacker Kolby Boggs is following the lead of his older brothers when it comes to football prowess at Fremont Bergan.

“Kolby is a great leader,” Bergan quarterback/defensive back Nick Burger said. “Everyone wants to be the kind of defensive player that Kolby is. He has got a great football IQ that you just can’t teach. He is a Boggs, enough said there.”

Boggs

Kolby’s older brothers, Josh and Tanner, were standouts for the Knights before going on to play in college. Josh was a receiver and kick returner at Doane while Tanner will be a senior defensive back this fall at Nebraska Wesleyan.

Josh and Tanner helped teach their younger brother various lessons while he was growing up.

“I’m kind of in the middle of the pack,” said Kolby Boggs, who also has a younger brother, Jarett, who will be an eighth-grader this fall. “I’d always get beat on because I’d start stuff. They taught me not to start something you can’t finish. You have to finish all the way through and never quit.”

That approach has served Boggs, the son of former Midland University running back Lyle Boggs, well on the field. As a junior, Kolby earned Fremont Tribune All-Area honors. He had 83 unassisted tackles and 27 solo stops. He finished with the second-most tackles in a season in school history.

EVAN NORDSTROM / FREMONT TRIBUNE

Kolby Boggs of Fremont Bergan follows the block of Eli Herink and goes for a touchdown during a game last season against Omaha Brownell-Talbot. Boggs returns for his senior season with the Knights.

“He is very tough,” Bergan coach Seth Mruz told the Tribune. “The thing I like most about him is that even though he isn’t a huge guy (5-11, 180 pounds), he sticks his nose in there and gets the job done. He was very productive for us.”

Boggs was voted the Knights’ Most Valuable Defensive Player in 2016. It was an award that was well-deserved, Burger said.

“He just has a nose for the football,” he said. “He really doesn’t take any crap from anyone. He is the toughest kid I’ve ever met. He is willing to do the things that most guys won’t do. It doesn’t show in his (40-yard dash) time or anything, but he is one of the best football players on the team, if not the best true football player.”

Boggs stepped up as a full-time starter for the Knights last season. He also served as a quarterback of the defense, relaying the signals to his teammates.

“I think I did pretty well last year,” he said. “I’ve been watching (football) forever. Our coach says that when the lights turn on, I just hit a switch and become a really good football player. I just felt real comfortable out there.”

While Bergan had a winning record (5-4) last fall, the Knights failed to make the state playoffs. That absence didn’t go over well with the returning team members.

“We were a little bummed about not making the playoffs,” Boggs said. “That has made us work harder in the weight room this summer so it doesn’t happen to us again this year.”

With players like Burger, running back Logan Brandt and offensive/defensive lineman Dylan Kucera returning, Boggs thinks the Knights have the opportunity to return to the postseason.

“Our coach reminds us that we have a good chance of making the state playoffs and maybe the state final game,” he said.

While Boggs is best known for his defense — he had 11 tackles for loss and two sacks as a junior — he also plays fullback and slot receiver on offense.

“I really think our offense will be pretty good this year,” he said. “We’ll have a big offensive line and we should be able to run the football pretty well. We also have fast guys on the outside that Nick can pass to.”

Boggs is unsure if he’ll go on to play college football. He knows if he does, however, that there are family members he can turn to for advice.

“My older brother Tanner has helped me a lot,” he said. “Just watching him play linebacker, I always wanted to be like him. He’s been the biggest inspiration for me through football.”

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FOOTBALL PREVIEW

NU's Gates seeks consistency

STEVEN M. SIPPLE
Lincoln Journal Star

JAMES WOOLRIDGE, LINCOLN JOURNAL STAR

Nebraska offensive lineman Nick Gates (68) signals for a first down during the first quarter of Friday's game against Iowa. Gates is looking to be more consistent in his technique this season.

LINCOLN — There's plenty to like about Nick Gates as a football player.

Start with his size (6-foot-5, 300 pounds) and athleticism (he threw 92 mph as a star pitcher in high school).

Include this: He can be refreshingly blunt in his self-critiques.

The Nebraska junior offensive tackle was in self-critique mode last week as he discussed his performance this month during preseason camp.

"I feel my camp personally has gone really well other than the first probably five practices," Gates said. "I was leaning really bad. I had crappy hands. But the last couple (of weeks), I felt really, really good. I mean, my ankles are good. Knees are good. I've definitely worked on my technique a lot."

Gates, of course, has a critical job as the left tackle who protects right-handed quarterback Tanner Lee's blindside. So, regarding Gates' tendency to lean forward in his pass-blocking technique, well, it simply can't happen very often. Gates understands Lee must be protected as if he were a fine jewel, such is the transfer QB's value to Nebraska's hopes of being a serious threat to win the Big Ten.

As a quarterback protector and leader on a veteran Husker line — five players started at least four games last season — Gates knows he has to be consistently tough-minded and mindful of technique.

"When you lean, your hands are bad and you miss," he said. "Guys just rip right around the edge."

You probably can predict where this conversation is headed — to last year's Music City Bowl. Gates takes you there himself, saying his technique was sub-par Dec. 30, when Tennessee defensive end Derek Barnett owned Gates — by Gates' own admission.

Barnett, selected 14th overall by Philadelphia in the NFL Draft in April, was a constant presence in the Huskers' backfield.

It was startling to watch.

"That definitely taught me a lesson," Gates said during the spring. "I think I needed that lesson to be taught, too. I think it was good for me in the end."

His honest assessments indicate a willingness to learn from his struggles.

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"He's had some really good moments in practice," Nebraska offensive line coach Mike Cavanaugh said Thursday. "When he trusts his technique, he's doing great. And that's what it comes down to. It's all about what you do."

A native of Las Vegas, Gates said he's stronger physically than he's ever been as he enters his third season as a starter. He helps lead a line that is operating with a sense of urgency.

"(Cavanaugh) has picked it up a lot on us since last year," Gates said. "Last year he was kind of laid back. He expected a lot out of us, but he wasn't on us like he is now. He definitely comes out and expects a lot more energy. …"

A right tackle in 2015, Gates started 10 games, missing three in the middle of the season because of a high ankle sprain. Last season, he started all 13 games at left tackle, but said he was only about 70 percent healthy late in the year because of a bad ankle.

He said the injury was no excuse for his poor showing in the bowl game. He gives due credit to Barnett, who already has two sacks and a handful of quarterback hurries in the Eagles' two preseason games even though he's not a starter.

Gates knows opponents will watch that bowl video and try to exploit his flaws. In fact, he has to know that on Sept. 2, when Nebraska opens the season against Arkansas State, Red Wolves pass-rush demon Ja'von Rolland-Jones will be eager to duplicate Barnett's success.

The 6-2, 245-pound Rolland-Jones last season recorded a whopping 20.5 tackles for loss, including 13.5 sacks, for a top-30 defense. If Gates is looking to redeem himself, here's a chance right out of the gate.

"This summer definitely helped my confidence," he said. "Learning my technique again. Learning to trust it and not having a panic sense, as they call it."

You hope Gates understands that even the best tackles in the NFL lose battles to pass-rushers on occasion. The key is to avoid panicking and letting a setback affect ensuing plays.

One thing to remember about Gates: Even as a third-year starter at Nebraska, he still has plenty to learn. He didn't start playing football until he was a freshman in high school, having grown up playing mostly baseball. With his 92-mph fastball, Gates said he drew interest from a couple of junior colleges.

Neumann features veteran lineman Welsh

Tribune Staff

WAHOO — After graduating several key players off of last year's Class C-1 state runner-up team, some might think the talent cupboard at Wahoo Neumann is bare.

That would be wrong.

Coach Tim Turman, entering his 37th season, returns four starters on offense and four on defense. The Cavaliers fell 39-22 to O'Neill in the C-1 title game last November in Lincoln.

"The team will be different than last year as our strength will in be our offensive and defensive lines," Turman said. "Our weakness will be in the defensive backfield where we have to replace the entire secondary."

The returnees include Fremont Tribune All-Area defensive lineman pick Evan Welsh.

The 6-0, 240-pound senior had 29 solo tackles and 34 assists last year.

"He had 19 tackles for us behind the line of scrimmage and a fumble recovery returned 12 yards," Turman told the Tribune last fall. "He is a very dominating defensive player."

Other returnees include Caleb Benes, a 5-foot-10, 210-pound senior offensive-defensive lineman. Also back is 5-10, 205-pound senior guard/linebacker Nate Konecky.

Caden Johnson, a 6-0, 240-pound lineman, is another returning starter.

"He is a very hard worker," Turman said. "He works hard to improve."

Fremont Tribune Male Athlete of the Year Noah Vedral, a two-way starter, is now at the University of Central Florida. The quarterback role for the Cavaliers will now be handled by Eli Vedral, a 6-1, 180-pound junior.

Junior Brandon Blum might be the featured back and could help the Cavaliers in the secondary.

Other promising players include: Thomas Benes, a junior running back/defensive back; junior linebacker Sam Kavan, junior lineman Conrad Sander, wide receiver Jake Unger, junior linebacker Cade Welsh, senior Zach Meduna, junior lineman Tanner Woita, and sophomore lineman Dalton Bartek.

The Cavaliers open the season at Norfolk Catholic.

LEE NEWSPAPERS

Nate Konecky of Wahoo Neumann picks up a blocked punt and runs for a touchdown during the Cavaliers' Class C-1 state semifinals win over Kearney Catholic last fall. Konecky is a returning starter for the Cavaliers.

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FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Tigers aim for continued improvement

BRENT WASENIUS
Managing-Sports Editor

NORTH BEND — After a successful first season as the North Bend football coach, Ryan Stieren is looking for even better things from the Tigers in 2017.

After going 1-8 in 2015, the Tigers improved to 4-4 during Stieren's first year as head coach.

"I think going 4-4 was a pretty big deal for us," Stieren said. "I think winning is important, but I was really pleased with our daily improvement that helped us win those games. There is a lot of excitement right now. The kids are ready to go."

The Tigers' graduation losses included Fremont Tribune All-Area pick Dawson Poessnecker. The versatile Poessnecker accounted for 1,011 all-purpose yards. As a safety, he had 39 solo tackles and 24 assists. He also averaged 35.5 yards per punt.

"Dawson was a really good football player with great instincts," Stieren said. "But we have some nice young players like Jacob Ray."

The junior is expected to be the Tigers' main running back this fall.

"We went to the Midland team camp this summer and he ran well," Stieren said. "He is a kid that has earned it because last year at this time he really wasn't on our radar. He just kept working hard and got some carries in some JV (junior varsity) games and all of a sudden he was doing some good things. He also got a few carries on varsity at the end of the year and now he is ready to take on that role."

Senior Joel Hines returns to run the Tigers' spread offense.

"Whenever you have a quarterback with starting experience returning, that is a really big deal for a team," Stieren said. "We can build on what he already knows. I think Joel is going to have a really good season."

Stieren said Hines does a good job of running the Tigers' attack.

DEAN JACOBS / FREMONT TRIBUNE

Members of the North Bend football team, front row, from left, are: Ethan Mullally, Peyton Mitties, Jace Owen, Hunter Johnston, Jacob Sousek, Demarius Bosveld, Landon Krenzer, Austin Taylor, Breckin Peters, Jarrett Poessnecker In the second row, from left, are: Louis Johnson, Cody Nelson, Jacob Ray, Brandon Wardman, Trevor Nelson, Sam Buckingham, Brock Ray, Colton Mitties, Josh Strauss, Noah Brodd, Joel Hines, Jared Spiker, Daden Farrens and Jaren Ortmeier. In the back row, from left, are: Hunter Poland, Cole Johnson, Ben Rehda, Ben Buresh, Peter Emanuel, James Seymour, John Emanuel, Gavin Peterson, Dalton Mueller, Brendan Pojar, Tyler Obershaw, Austin Endorf, Jeremy Doernemann, Cody Pospisil, Ben Rolenc, Zach Ortmeier and Joe Bautista.

Hines

Seymour

"He is a good athlete and more of a runner than a thrower," he said. "We're not going to throw it 80 percent of the time. We want some balance and a lot of our passes are quick throws on the edge."

Additional help in the backfield will come from senior Josh Strauss and freshman Ethan Mullally.

"Ethan is physically and mentally ready to play," Stieren said. "He'll get some carries for us."

A pair of seniors, James Seymour and Colton Mitties, have starting experience at tight end-receiver. Another senior, Peter Emanuel, returns as a receiver.

"He is an explosive player and maybe is our best all-around athlete," Stieren said. "He can run and jump. Peter can be the type of guy Dawson was, but he probably won't get any carries unless it is on a jet sweep. He'll be at the slot and we'll work to get him the ball.

The offensive line will feature senior Brock Ray, who will likely be at guard.

"He is a special kid to coach," Stieren said.

Senior Tyler Obershaw will be at center while junior Jeremy Doernemann is the leading candidate to play the guard opposite of Ray.

"Tyler has had a good summer," Stieren said. "I think he is ready to go. Jeremy looks the part and has good measurables in the bench press and squat."

Senior Brendan Pojar is expected to be at right tackle while junior Trevor Nelson will be at the left tackle.

"Brendan is a tall, long kid and is very smart," Stieren said. "Trevor knows what to do out there for us."

Senior Joe Bautista and sophomore Cole Johnson will also be in the hunt for playing time.

The 3-5 defense will be anchored by Brock Ray, who had 43 solo stops and 25 assists last year at middle linebacker.

"I think he is one of the best in Class C-1 at that spot," Stieren said.

Mitties will be to the right of Ray while the middle linebacker on the left will either be sophomore Gavin Peterson or senior Dalton Mueller. Mullally will also see some playing time.

The outside backers will be Seymour and Emanuel.

"James is probably an all-district caliber player," Stieren said. "Peter is moving there this year, but he is a fast kid that we can drop back to safety if we need to."

Up front, Obershaw or senior Jared Spiker will be at nose tackle.

"We'll rotate those two so we can get the most out of them," Stieren said.

EVAN NORDSTROM / FREMONT TRIBUNE

Joel Hines of North Bend Central returns a kickoff against West Point-Beemer during a game last season. Hines returns as the Tigers' starting quarterback.

Doernemann, Bautista, Nelson and Pojar are vying for the other two starting spots.

"I think they are a formidable group," Stieren said. "We had some good kids last year, but I think these guys are as good or better than that group and that is on both sides of the ball."

Brandon Wardman, who Stieren calls the team's "best tackler" will be at one corner. John Emanuel and fellow junior Sam Buckingham are in the mix to start at the other corner. Jacob Ray, though, could play there or at safety.

"Safety is the one piece of the defense we have to work on," Stieren said. "Dawson was an outstanding player, but I think we have capable kids to fill those big shoes in Jacob, Joel Hines and Sam."

The Tigers open the season Friday night by hosting Louisville.

"These are talented kids and I think we are ready to take the next step," Stieren said. "We just have to go out and earn it, but I think we have a chance to do some good things."

Team comes first for veteran Brock Ray

BRENT WASENIUS
Managing-Sports Editor

NORTH BEND — Brock Ray might be the epitome of a "team-first" football player.

The North Bend senior showed that this summer when Tigers' coach Ryan Stieren asked him to make a position change on offense. The 5-foot-8, 210-pounder was expected to be at running back, but circumstances called for a switch.

Brock Ray

The Tigers lost several interior line players to graduation in May of 2017. Another lineman chose not to play this season causing Stieren to rethink his offensive plans.

"All winter and into the spring I would see Brock and I would tell him it was his time," Stieren said. "Even going into the summer we were ready for him to be our main back, but we had some things happen. To maximize the talent on our roster, we needed him on the line. I knew he'd give 110 percent in whatever role he gave him. I knew he would be a leader in that regard and just step up and take on that challenge."

The switch to guard also gave Ray's younger brother, junior Jacob Ray, the opportunity to start at running back.

"Jacob is very, very capable in that spot," Stieren said. "But it also put our most physical guy on the front line."

Brock Ray didn't balk at the move.

"I'm just happy to be out there and help the team in any way that I can," he said.

Ray did that as a junior. As a middle linebacker, he had 43 solo tackles and 25 assists while helping the Tigers finish 4-4 — a big improvement from a 1-8 season in 2015. He also had 15 tackles for loss.

Ray said the Tigers want to show more improvement this season.

"We're looking for the playoffs this year," he said. "We have the talent. We have a ton of new kids that will get playing time. As a team we just need to make sure everybody is ready to play."

Ray is no stranger to varsity football. He is in his fourth season as a starter.

"I think starting earlier rather than later and getting see what it was like as a freshman helped me develop quicker," he said. "If I didn't have that experience I probably wouldn't be where I'm at right now."

While Ray is a solid football player, he also excels for the Tigers in track and wrestling. In the latter sport, he finished fourth in the Class C 182-pound division at the state tournament.

"I kind of like all of my sports about the same," he said. "It is just fun to be out there doing something in general. You get to be with your teammates and enjoy the high school experience."

One of those teammates is Ray's brother. The two have a healthy sibling rivalry.

"I guess we push each other and make each other want to be better," Brock Ray said. "We try to far exceed the other's expectations. We just try to outdo each other."

If the Tigers are to have a good season in 2017, the brothers will likely play key roles in that success. Brock's unselfishness hasn't gone unnoticed.

"I can't overstate how much our team appreciates the sacrifices he is making for his teammates and the program," Stieren said. "It is not an easy thing to do to put aside personal ambitions for the team, but Brock has done that. I commend him for doing that and it will make a big difference in our program."

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FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Eagles hit hard by graduation losses

JACK DENKER
Tribune Correspondent

ARLINGTON — Arlington Coach Steven Gubbels said he will implement a more meaningful version of the "next man up" philosophy when putting together the pieces of his 2017 varsity football team.

Making those pieces fit won't be easy as Gubbels must replace 21 of 22 starters from a team that went undefeated (9-0) during the regular season, won the Class C1-1 district title and finished the 2016 season with the best record in school history (10-1).

"The 'next man up' is not a new thing," Gubbels said, "it just has a bit more meaning this year as virtually every position will be filled by the next man up. While we do not have many returning starters, we do have a number of players who have Friday night snaps. We will have to rely on their limited experience as a strength as we enter the season."

The first priority for Gubbels will be to find replacements at the skill positions. Gubbels said senior Jake Vogt will take over for Andy Theiler at quarterback, while senior Jackson Borgmann will replace Garris Karr at tailback. Borgmann finished second on the team in rushing last season with 669 yards and eight touchdowns.

"Jake is a good leader with a very good arm and understanding of the offense," Gubbels said. "Jackson, while not an offensive starter last year (although he did start against Concordia during the regular season when Karr was out), had a good number of carries last season and has a great skill set and athleticism."

In terms of replacing Grant Miller at the lead receiver spot, Gubbels said he will call on a number of individuals to fill that void. Gubbels indicated that seniors Austin Kruse and Caleb Caskey, along with junior Talon Mues, will be some of the players that will be instrumental in the passing game.

PHOTO / ENTERPRISE PUBLISHING

Members of the Arlington football team, front row, from left, are: Justin Allen, Jackson Borgmann, William Byers, Caleb Caskey, Brynden Kinnaman, Zach Kozak, Austin Kruse, Zach O'Flaherty, Ben Riecken, Conner Scheer, Jake Vogt and Derek Warner. In the second row, from left, are: Ryan Arnett, Trent Borgmann, Blake Kracl, Talon Mues, Cameron Rathjen, Daniel Salazar, Trevor Smailys, Ty Buckley, Jake Ernesti, Jacob Gaffney and Remington Gay. In the third row, from left, are: Cooper Hilgenkamp, Jadyn Kinnaman, Casey Kirk, Logan Kirk, Jacob Kozak, Jacob Pavlik, Justin Pavlik, Tanner Pittman, Travis Warner and Kobe Wilkins. In the fourth row, from left, are: Jake Bartosh, Trevor Cooley, Chris Everitt, Aiden Foreman, Jacob Hoefs, Lane Johnson, Josh Miller, Cole Scalf, Jesse Thompson and Nolan Thomsen. In the fifth row, from left, are: Managers Kailynn Gubbels, Addie Schiemann and Josh Howland, coaches Conner Eurek, Colter Mattson, Steven Gubbels, Tyler Spitzer and Steve Henry, water boys Nick Smith, Hunter Travis and Logan Kaup.

JACK DENKER / TRIBUNE CORRESPONDENT

Arlington defensive back Sam Plugge tackles Boys Town wide receiver Dylan Randall during a high school football game last season that the Eagles won 18-6. Plugge is one of several starters the Eagles lost to graduation from their 2016 state playoff team.

The second priority will be to replace the entire offensive and defensive lines. Every member of those two units will be made-up of newcomers this season. Gubbels said he will be looking at a lot of players to potentially fill all five starting spots and supporting roles this fall.

Some of the linemen who Gubbels said are in contention for playing time are seniors Will Byers, Bryndan Kinnaman, Ben Reicken, Connor Scheer and Derek Warner, along with sophomores Remington Gay and Kobe Wilkins.

The third priority will be to shore-up the second and third levels on defense. Borgmann, who made 38 tackles in 2016 at cornerback, is the Eagles only returning starter.

Seniors Jacob Allen, Caskey and Zach O'Flaherty all played supporting defensive roles on the varsity last year. Gubbels said all three of those players will compete for playing time at linebacker, cornerback and safety this season.

"With so many untested players this season on defense," Gubbels said, "we need to get players on the field and establish an identity before we will be able to talk strengths and weaknesses of our defensive unit."

Even with all those unknowns, Gubbels believes the potential is there for his defense to be a good one.

"I am confident that our players will play the disciplined, assignment football that we demand," Gubbels said. "But, we will need time to develop continuity as a group early on."

With only one returning starter and 11 returning letter-winners on hand this fall, Gubbels knows his "next man up" philosophy will be tested. However, he is confident that the core values of his program will ease the transition.

"Along with that (the 'next man up' philosophy) is an even more important aspect that all of our players are well aware of, and that is versatility," Gubbels said. "We talk about this every single day and is the core component of our Eagle Player's Pledge. We have to be versatile in our positions, meaning that players have to learn to be able to play multiple positions; and it is even more important this year as we work to fill so many spots on offense and defense."

The Eagles will open the season on Friday night when they host West Point-Beemer High School.

Borgmann ready for bigger role for AHS

EVAN NORDSTROM / FREMONT TRIBUNE

Jackson Borgmann of Arlington looks for running room during a Class C-1 state playoff game last season against Boys Town. A backup to Garris Karr the last two seasons, Borgmann is expected to be the starting running back for the Eagles this fall.

JACK DENKER
Tribune Correspondent

For most of his career, Arlington's Jackson Borgmann has been half of a terrific tailback tandem. A 6-foot and 165-pound bolt of lightning, he split time with the more physical Garris Karr, who led the Eagles in carries and rushing yards each of the last two seasons. Now that Karr has left to play college football at Nebraska Wesleyan (after his senior campaign last fall), it's Borgmann's turn to finally step into a leading role.

Borgmann

"We felt Jackson had a productive season in his supporting role as a running back behind Garris," Arlington Coach Steven Gubbels said. "We are looking for him to take an even larger role this season, of course, and I have a lot of confidence in his ability to step into the full-time duties of running back."

Despite seeing limited carries as Karr's backup the last two seasons, Borgmann was still a rising star. As a sophomore he ran for 501 yards and four touchdowns, before rushing for 669 yards and eight touchdowns as a junior.

Borgmann's breakout game was against Omaha Concordia last year. With Karr unable to play due to an injury, Borgmann earned his first career start at running back. He responded in a big way by rushing for 124 yards on 31 carries to help the Eagles earn a 20-8 victory over the Mustangs.

"While Garris was more of a downhill physical runner, Jackson was a great change-up on the field last year as more of a slash-and-dash runner," Gubbels said. "He showed his ability to be a physical runner as well in that game last year and we are expecting him to bring both of those running abilities to his game this season."

His signature play in the Concordia game came late in the fourth quarter. With Arlington leading by a touchdown and threatening to score again, Borgmann took the ball from quarterback Andy Theiler (on a play called 33-Iso), chose his gap and punched the gas. Almost immediately Borgmann realized a Mustang linebacker had plugged the hole on the left side. It seemed inevitable that third-and-goal would give way to a dicey fourth-down situation.

As the Concordia linebacker lunged forward, Borgmann showed off his balance and agility as he slid left, avoiding a full-on collision and then wrestling his leg from the defender's desperate grasp. Just before Borgmann crossed the goal line for a touchdown, that sealed the victory and helped preserve the Eagles undefeated regular season (9-0), he looked over his right shoulder and smiled.

"That game really helped my confidence a lot," Borgmann said. "It proved to me that I could handle the big-time carries that matter the most. It also prepared me for how this year is going to look."

How this season will look for Borgmann is quite clear: the 18-year-old senior will be very, very, busy.

Not only will Borgmann be the workhorse offensively for Arlington this fall, but he will also play a key role on defense. A two-year starter at cornerback for the Eagles, Borgmann has made 76 tackles and three interceptions the last two seasons.

In order to prepare for his increased workload in 2017, Borgmann said he trained harder than ever before during the off-season.

"By putting in a lot of work over the summer, I've got my body to a point where I am in the best physical shape I could be in to handle the load," Borgmann said. "Considering the amount of running plays we do, I knew I had to get into great shape and continue to lift hard and get stronger, because otherwise my body would be worn out by the fourth quarter from all of the carries."

With Arlington set to begin the season at home against West Point-Beemer on Aug. 25th, Borgmann said he's ready to accept the responsibilities that come with his new leading role.

"I definitely want to do the best I can to bring a winning mindset and lead our team to get better every day," Borgmann said, "so that we are playing our best football at the end of the year."

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FOOTBALL PREVIEW

COURTESY PHOTO

The Scribner-Snyder football team finished 1-7 in 2016. The Trojans will open the 2017 season on Friday night at Mead. After another road game at Bloomfield on Aug. 31, the Trojans will have their home opener Sept. 8 against Emerson-Hubbard.

Trojans to rely on size, experience

COLIN LARSON
Fremont Tribune

SCRIBNER — The Scribner-Snyder Trojans may not have a large quantity of players, but what they lack in overall numbers they will make up for in size and experience in 2017.

With several 300-pounders anchoring the offensive and defensive lines, the Trojans will look to overpower opponents in the typically smaller, faster eight-man game.

"Overall we are very big," Scribner head coach Anthony Ruzicka said. "If we played tonight our starting line would go, 265, 300, 300, 190, and 200 pounds across the board so we have really good size for an eight-man school."

Up front the Trojans will be anchored by a trio of big men with seniors Harrison Riggle and Victor Zamora and junior Tristan Claussen all coming in at more than 300 pounds.

"We are going to try to get all three of them on the field at the same time defensively," Ruzicka said. "With that size our middle should be taken care of, as long as we use our technique there are not a lot of teams that will be able to run up the A gap and B gap on us."

Riggle is a returning starter at both center and nose tackle for the Trojans and Ruzicka looks for him to be a cog in the middle throughout his senior season.

"When he is on his game and he feels good, he is a bull," Ruzicka said. "He's just hard to stop when he gets his weight going downhill."

Along with using size to their advantage, the Trojans will depend on the overall experience as they enter the season with five seniors and five juniors.

"We are definitely upper-class loaded," Ruzicka said. "So having those 10 guys coming from those classes will help us a lot."

Offensively Scribner-Snyder will rely on first-year starting quarterback Austin Peters who started at tight end for the Trojans last season.

"He (Peters) is football savvy. He is athletic and smart and the other kids respect him so he was the logical choice to step in," Ruzicka said. "He's had some growing pains that come along with learning something new but he has (the ability) to do what we need him to do."

According to Ruzicka, on offense the Trojans plan to use their overwhelming size up front to their full advantage.

"Our offense might be 4 yards and a cloud of dust," he said. "But if we can get a good push up front, and play sound we will be able to move the ball."

With only 15 players on the roster, Scribner-Snyder will have to rely on younger guys to make contributions throughout the season.

"I have already told all of them that with 15 of us everybody is going to have to play at some point," Ruzicka said. "Our freshman are little but they are scrappy, so they should fill in nicely where we need them to."

The Trojans kick off their season at home as Mead comes to town on Friday. Scribner-Snyder will look to avenge a 63-0 loss to the Raiders a season ago.

"Mead graduated a really good senior class that gave them lots of production, but they return some pretty good athletes," Ruzicka said. "Their speed overall as a team will provide us some trouble, but I expect a really good competitive game back and forth."

With several weeks of practice under their belt, Ruzicka said the Trojans are ready to show what they can do this season.

"Im just ready to play," Ruzicka said. "We've gotten better every day and I know the kids are chomping at the bit to get after somebody else."

Knights prepare for another playoff run

BRENT WASENIUS
Managing-Sports Editor

OAKLAND — With eight starters back on offense and seven others on defense, Oakland-Craig appears ready for another state playoff run.

The Knights finished 9-2 last year and advanced to the second round of the Class C-2 state playoffs. Battle Creek was the only school to beat them in 2016, prevailing 21-12 in the regular season and 49-21 in the postseason.

"We lost some key pieces from last year's 9-2 team," Oakland-Craig coach Joe Anderson said. "But we return a good group of kids that should be able to compete with most teams."

Senior Evan Reinert, a 6-foot, 175-pound senior, returns at quarterback after passing for 1,124 yards and 12 touchdowns as a junior. Although Fremont Tribune All-Area pick Hoss Smith graduated, Anderson believes the Knights' running game is in capable hands with senior Ben Smith (5-9, 16) and junior Robby Mayberry (170) in the lineup.

"Evan had a solid year at quarterback while Ben and Robby give us some good experience at running back," he said.

The offensive line returns a trio of starters. Center Marcos Quintero, a 5-11, 195-pound senior, is at center. Also back are juniors Cole Bures (6-3, 190) and Tyson Harney (6-3, 220).

Anderson is also counting on key contributions from junior Justyn Hale (6-0, 260) and sophomore Laurence Brands (6-4, 220). Two other players that could help on the interior line are junior John Werner (5-11, 170) and sophomore Max Ward (5-10, 180).

When Reinert passes, he'll have one of the best weapons in the area to throw to in senior Garrett Seagren. The veteran receiver hauled in 38 passes for 775 yards and 11 touchdowns last fall. Another threat is senior Kobe Benne. He caught 21 balls for 302 yards and three scores as a junior.

Defensively, Seagren, Benne, Jefferson McNeill (160-pound junior) and Mayberry have starting experience in the secondary. Wyatt Uhing, a 5-9, 160-pound junior started eight games while Daniel Sechler, a 175-pound junior, started four at outside linebacker.

Smith also has starting experience at linebacker while Werner and junior Jared Mulder could also be in the mix.

Quintero (64 tackles), Hale, Harney and Bures will play on the interior line.

"Overall it should be a solid year," Anderson said. "We will still be relying on quite a few sophomores and juniors to step up as our senior class is not very big (just five players — Seagren, Quintero, Benne, Reinert and Smith)."

The Knights open the season Friday night by hosting Malcolm. They will then travel to Battle Creek on Sept. 1 before back-to-back games with Crofton and Ponca.

"Our schedule will test us early in the year," Anderson said.

Seagren strengthens O-C's air attack

BRENT WASENIUS
Managing-Sports Editor

OAKLAND — On an early August day, Oakland-Craig wide receiver Garrett Seagren was asked what he thought some of his strengths as a player were.

"I think I'm pretty fast," the 6-foot-2 senior said. "I wouldn't say I'm the fastest guy out there, but I'm fast enough to get where I want to be. I also feel like I can go up and get the ball pretty well."

It would be difficult to find a 2016 Knights' opponent that would disagree with that assessment. Seagren earned Fremont Tribune All-Area honors as a junior after catching 38 passes for 775 yards and 11 touchdowns. He set a school record with 185 receiving yards against Battle Creek in a Class C-2 state playoff quarterfinals game.

"He is a big-time playmaker who really can go up and get the ball," O-C coach Joe Anderson told the Tribune last season. "His combination of size, speed and leaping ability make him tough to cover one-on-one."

The Knights finished with a 9-2 record last season with both of their losses occurring to Battle Creek — 21-12 in the regular season and 49-21 in the playoffs.

Gone from that O-C team are some talented seniors, including All-Area pick Hoss Smith, but Seagren said the Knights have players that are ready for the challenge.

"We have a lot of guys back and that is nice. I think we're always expected to pretty far in the playoffs, but this year I feel like we have a really good shot," he said. "It just seemed from the team camps we attended that everyone knows the plays well and we seem further ahead that we usually are at this point."

The Knights' aerial attack should be solid again. Senior Evan Reinert was 74 of 143 passing for 1,124 yards and 12 touchdowns. Junior Jared Mulder was 11 of 16 for 318 yards and three scores.

Reinert and Seagren have connected in the passing game for many years, although their roles have reversed.

"Evan and I have a pretty good relationship," Seagren said. "He is one of my really good friends and we've been playing catch a lot, even back in grade school. But back then, I was the quarterback and he was the receiver. It kind of changed in junior high."

Seagren enjoys his role as a playmaker in the O-C attack. Getting his name in the record books in a school rich in football tradition meant something to him.

"That was a pretty good feeling," he said. "I've put in a lot of hard work and it is nice to be up there with others that have been good receivers at Oakland. There have been a lot of good receivers that have come through the school."

Like most boys growing up in the state, Seagren follows the University of Nebraska team. He has great admiration for receiver Jordan Westerkamp, who completed his four-year career last season.

"He's probably the receiver I look up," Seagren said. "I think what he's done is pretty unbelievable for his size. He is not super athletic, he just goes up and catches the ball. He's probably my favorite because I don't watch too much NFL, I just like college football."

Seagren also starts in the secondary for the Knights. He recorded 21 solo tackles and nine assists.

"I like playing defense, too," Seagren said. "If I play football in college, it wouldn't matter to me if I play receiver or cornerback."

Seagren has other college options. He spent the summer playing for the Bison-Nebraska Red all-star basketball team, that also included Ben Moxness of Logan View, in tournaments in Kansas, Missouri, California and South Dakota.

He is undecided on what he would like to do at the next level.

"I'll just take what comes my way and also look at the best fit," he said. "But I'd like to play at the highest level I can."

EVAN NORDSTROM / FREMONT TRIBUNE

Garrett Seagren, second from left, competes against Pete Burke of Wahoo Neumann during the North Ben Invitational last spring. Seagren is multi-sport standout for the Knights and is a returning Fremont Tribune All-Area wide receiver.

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FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Veteran Sellon eager for new season

BRENT WASENIUS
Managing-Sports Editor

Jake Sellon may be one of the best pole vaulters in the state, but football is never far from his mind.

Sellon is a returning two-way starter for Fremont High School. As a junior wide out, he led the Tigers with 40 receptions and was second to Nolan Dillon (now playing soccer at Alabama Huntsville) in receiving yards with 334. He also caught one touchdown.

The Tigers, though, had a young roster and one of the toughest schedules in Class A. That translated into FHS finishing 1-8, but those players are a year older and more experienced in 2017.

"We're very optimistic about how this season could go," Sellon said. "Last year we didn't have very many seniors that played for us. This year we have quite a few and we're looking forward to being a more competitive team."

Success in the fall often starts with work in the summer. Sellon said he has been pleased with how the team has responded the past two months.

"We've been working hard," he said. "I think we've done more stuff this summer than the previous years I've been in high school. We're just really excited for that first game."

The Tigers open the season Friday at North Platte. While Dillon and leading rusher Justin Pettit graduated, the Tigers' offense returns Fremont Tribune All-Area quarterback Riley Harms as well as receiver Nate Grimm (24 catches for 231 yards).

"I think our offense is ready to go," Sellon said. "Nate had almost 30 catches and Dillon Dix, who is hurt right now but will be back, will help. We've got a couple senior receivers in Joe Kment and Andrew Cusick who haven't played a lot of varsity, but they've played a lot of JV (junior varsity). We've done a lot of things like 7-on-7 and I think we'll be fine in the wide receiver department."

EVAN NORDSTROM / FREMONT TRIBUNE

Jake Sellon of Fremont High School clears a height in the pole vault during the Pat Murphy Track Invitational in April. Sellon, one of the top vaulters in the state, is also a two-way starter for the Tigers' football team.

Harms, who threw for more than 1,400 yards last fall in eight games, is the key to the offense.

"It is awesome to play with a guy like him," Sellon said. "We're very fortunate to have a quarterback that is talented, motivated and natural leader like he is. Riley really takes charge on the field and obviously he can throw the ball very well. It is great to have a guy like him leading the team."

Sellon said his teammate also possesses good instincts as a signal caller.

"There are times that I might be running a route and something will happen and I know this route won't work," he said. "Riley will notice it, too, and we'll change it on the fly. We both kind of know what we are going to do. We have a good connection out there."

Along the Harms, the Tigers also have an offensive line that is led by All-Area pick Bergan Hofer.

"I think our offense will be pretty explosive," Sellon said. "We have a lot of linemen that are back and some new ones that are pretty big."

Sellon's uncle, Dan Sellon, played in the Shrine Bowl before going on to play at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. His father, Dave, was a pole vaulter at Midland University and is the head boys track coach at FHS.

Both sports are appealing to Jake Sellon when asked about his collegiate plans.

"Right now I'm open to doing both of them or either/or," he said. "I'm just waiting to see how it is going to play out."

Last spring, Sellon set a personal best of 15-0 in the vault and was considered a strong contender to medal at the Class A state meet. However, a few days before the competition at Omaha Burke, he had to undergo a medical procedure that hindered his performance. He didn't place.

"That definitely motivates me," Sellon said about the disappointment. "I had some goals. It motivates me to have an even better season next year and leave a bigger mark."

He is grateful that he has his father to instruct him about the intricacies of such a technical event.

"There are times that we get on each other and we have to realize that he is the coach and I'm the athlete," Sellon said. "But for the most part it has been great. He really knows his stuff and I respect his opinion a lot."

Sellon, who recorded 11 solo tackles and three pass breakups as a starting safety last fall, wants to first help the Tigers to success on the football field. He said the players have a goal of making it to the state playoffs.

"We did our best last year and we just had to accept the fact we had more sophomores starting than we had seniors. That is kind of hard to do in Class A football," he said. "This year we look to reap the rewards. It is nice to have those sophomores back that are juniors. They know what varsity football is like and they won't be shocked by it."

AREA HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SCHEDULES

Class A
Fremont High
Aug. 25 at North Platte
Aug. 31 vs. Norfolk
Sept. 8 vs. Creighton Prep
Sept. 15 at Omaha Benson
Sept. 22 vs. Kearney
Sept. 28 at Lincoln Northeast
Oct. 6 vs. Lincoln High
Oct. 13 vs. Millard North
Oct. 20 at Papillion-LaVista

Class B
Blair
Aug. 25 at Bennington
Sept. 1 vs. Elkhorn
Sept. 8 at Gretna
Sept. 15 vs. Nebraska City
Sept. 22 at Elkhorn South
Sept. 29 vs. Plattsmouth
Oct. 6 vs. Schuyler
Oct. 13 at South Sioux City
Oct. 20 vs. Columbus
Elkhorn High
Aug. 24 vs. Plattsmouth
Sept. 1 at Blair
Sept. 8 at Beatrice
Sept. 15 vs. Omaha Skutt Catholic
Sept. 22 at Crete
Sept. 29 vs. Waverly
Oct. 6 at Elkhorn South
Oct. 13 vs. Gretna
Oct. 20 vs. Mount Michael Benedictine
Mount Michael Benedictine
Aug. 25 at South Sioux City
Sept. 1 vs. Platteview
Sept. 8 at Nebraska City
Sept. 15 at Omaha Concordia
Sept. 22 vs. Schuyler
Sept. 29 vs. Gross Catholic
Oct. 6 at Gretna
Oct. 13 vs. Elkhorn South
Oct. 20 at Elkhorn
Schuyler
Aug. 25 at Platteview
Sept. 1 vs. Hastings
Sept. 8 vs. York
Sept. 15 at Seward
Sept. 22 at Mount Michael Benedictine
Sept. 29 vs. Omaha Roncalli Catholic
Oct. 6 at Blair
Oct. 13 vs. Columbus
Oct. 20 vs. South Sioux City

Class C-1
Arlington
Aug. 25 vs. West Point-Beemer
Sept. 1 at Madison
Sept. 8 at Wayne
Sept. 15 vs. Pierce
Sept. 22 vs. Louisville
Sept. 28 at Douglas County West
Oct. 6 vs. Fort Calhoun
Oct. 13 at Boys Town
Oct. 20 vs. Omaha Concordia
Bishop Neumann
Aug. 24 at Norfolk Catholic
Sept. 1 vs. Columbus Scotus
Sept. 8 vs. Syracuse
Sept. 15 at Milford-Dorchester
Sept. 22 vs. Aquinas Catholic
Sept. 29 vs. Boys Town
Oct 5. At David City
Oct. 13 at North Bend Central
Oct. 20 vs. Wahoo
Douglas County West
Aug. 25 vs. Auburn
Sept. 1 at David City
Sept. 8 at Raymond Central
Sept. 15 vs. Conestoga
Sept. 22 at Omaha Concordia
Sept. 28 vs. Arlington
Oct. 6 at Malcolm
Oct. 13 at Fort Calhoun
Oct. 20 vs. Boys Town
North Bend Central
Aug. 25 vs. Louisville
Sept. 1 at West Point-Beemer
Sept. 9 vs. Tekamah-Herman
Sept. 15 at Madison
Sept. 29 vs. Wahoo
Oct. 6 at Aquinas Catholic
Oct. 13 vs. Bishop Neumann
Oct. 20 at David City
Wahoo High
Aug. 25 vs. Ashland-Greenwood
Sept. 1 at Lincoln Christian
Sept. 8 at Norfolk Catholic
Sept. 15 vs. Louisville
Sept. 22 vs. David City
Sept. 29 at North Bend Central
Oct. 6 at Syracuse
Oct. 13 vs. Aquinas Catholic
Oct. 20 at Bishop Neumann
West Point-Beemer
Aug. 25 at Arlington
Sept. 1 vs. North Bend Central
Sept. 8 vs. Wisner-Pilger
Sept. 15 at Fort Calhoun
Sept. 22 vs. O'Neill
Sept. 29 at Madison
Oct. 6 at Wayne
Oct. 13 vs. Pierce
Oct. 20 vs. Norfolk Catholic

Class C-2
Archbishop Bergan
Aug. 25 at Ponca
Sept. 1 vs. Palmyra
Sept. 8 at Ashland-Greenwood
Sept. 15 vs. Battle Creek
Sept. 22 at Wisner-Pilger
Sept. 29 vs. Logan View
Oct. 6 at Tekamah-Herman
Oct. 13 at BRLD
Oct. 20 vs. Oakland-Craig
BRLD
Aug. 25 at Hartington Cedar Catholic
Sept. 1 at Crofton
Sept. 8 vs. Ponca
Sept. 15 vs. Omaha Brownell Talbot
Sept. 22 at Oakland-Craig
Sept. 29 vs. Tekamah-Herman
Oct. 6 at Wisner-Pilger
Oct. 13 vs. Archbishop Bergan
Oct. 20 at Logan View
Logan View
Aug. 25 vs. Palmyra
Sept. 1 at Central City
Sept. 8 vs. Yutan
Sept. 15 vs. Stanton
Sept. 22 at Tekamah-Herman
Sept. 29 at Archbishop Bergan
Oct. 6 vs. Oakland-Craig
Oct. 13 at Wisner-Pilger
Oct. 20 vs. BRLD
Oakland-Craig
Aug. 25 vs. Malcolm
Sept. 1 at Battle Creek
Sept. 8 vs. Crofton
Sept. 15 at Ponca
Sept. 22 vs. BRLD
Sept. 29 vs. Wisner-Pilger
Oct. 6 at Logan View
Oct. 13 vs. Tekamah-Herman
Oct. 20 at Archbishop Bergan
Tekamah-Herman
Aug. 25 vs. Madison
Sept. 1 vs. Ponca
Sept. 8 at North Bend Central
Sept. 15 at Doniphan-Trumbull
Sept. 22 vs. Logan View
Sept. 29 at BRLD
Oct. 6 vs. Archbishop Bergan
Oct. 13 at Oakland-Craig
Oct. 20 vs. Wisner-Pilger
Yutan
Aug. 25 vs. Battle Creek
Sept. 1 at Centennial
Sept. 8 at Logan View
Sept. 15 vs. Humboldt-Table Rock-Steinauer
Sept. 22 vs. Elmwood-Murdock
Sept. 29 at Omaha Brownell Talbot
Oct. 6 at Wilber-Clatonia
Oct. 13 vs. Malcolm
Oct. 29 at Lincoln Lutheran

Class D-1
Guardian Angels Central Catholic
Aug. 25 at Nebraska Christian
Sept. 1 vs. Clarkson-Leigh
Sept. 8 vs. Plainview
Sept. 15 at Lourdes Central Catholic
Sept. 22 vs. Omaha Nation
Oct. 6 at Homer
Oct. 13 vs. Winnebago
Oct. 20 at Pender
Howells-Dodge
Aug. 25 vs. East Butler
Sept. 1 at Osmond
Sept. 8 at Omaha Nation
Sept. 22 vs. Neligh-Oakdale
Sept. 29 vs. Elgin Public-Pope John
Oct. 6 at Humphrey-Lindsay Holy Family
Oct. 13 vs. Homer
Oct. 20 at Clarkson-Leigh

Class D-2
Cedar Bluffs
Aug. 15 vs. Weeping Water
Sept. 1 vs. Allen
Sept. 15 at Mead
Sept 22 vs. Osceola
Sept. 29 vs. Tri County
Oct. 5 at Fullerton
Oct. 13 vs. Humphrey St. Francis
Oct. 20 at Scribner-Snyder
Mead
Aug. 25 vs. Scribner-Snyder
Sept. 1 at Osceola
Sept. 15 vs. Cedar Bluffs
Sept. 22 at Falls City Sacred Heart
Sept 29 at Friend
Oct. 6 vs. Weeping Water
Oct. 13 at Parkview Christian
Oct. 20 vs. Exeter-Milligan
Scribner-Snyder
Aug. 25 at Mead
Aug. 31 at Bloomfield
Sept. 8 vs. Emerson-Hubbard
Sept. 15 vs. Winside
Sept. 22 at Fullerton
Sept. 29 at Humphrey St. Francis
Oct. 13 vs. Osceola
Oct. 20 vs. Cedar Bluffs

Siemian appears to have won Broncos QB job

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) — Even though coach Vance Joseph isn't saying it, the steady and solid Trevor Siemian appears to have won the Denver Broncos' quarterback derby for the second straight summer.

The seventh-rounder from Northwestern has outplayed former first-round pick Paxton Lynch of Memphis, whose flashes of athleticism and agility remain overshadowed by poor decisions and bad throws.

Although Joseph isn't declaring a winner yet, Siemian has impressed a second set of coaches running a second offensive scheme, and Lynch, while he's shown some progress, still doesn't look ready to run a team.

Joseph appeared to squelch the notion that the decision could come down to which one has the higher perceived upside, insisting: "That does not matter. Whoever wins the job, wins the job — he's the best guy for our football team. So, where you're drafted does not matter. It's about performance, not potential."

Yet Joseph declined to declare a winner in this QB competition following Denver's 33-14 preseason win at San Francisco on Saturday night.

"I saw Paxton make some plays with his legs, which he should. He's an athlete. And Trevor, he was solid. He was Trevor. He made good decisions. His ball placement was on point tonight. You know, he controlled the huddle, so I was pleased with Trevor," Joseph said.

Joseph wouldn't say if the decision was imminent, suggesting: "Again, the timeframe is not important. What's important is that we get it right. So, it could be this week, it could be next week. But, we're going to go back and watch the tape and see where we are."

This is what Joseph and his staff would see:

— Lynch overlooking Demaryius Thomas streaking across the middle uncovered on third down and instead forcing the throw to Virgil Green into double coverage for an incompletion.

— Lynch scrambling for 27 yards on three runs but getting sacked after failing to diagnose a blitz quickly enough and averaging just 3 yards per pass attempt as he throws for just 39 yards in five drives.

— Siemian taking over with 3:23 left before halftime and coolly throwing a 19-yard TD strike to Jordan Taylor one play after his 9-yard TD toss to De'Angelo Henderson was negated by a fourth penalty on rookie left tackle Garett Bolles.

— Siemian finishing with a 128.2 passer rating (and 8.5 yards per pass attempt) compared with Lynch's 72.3.

Lynch had two promising practices against the 49ers but didn't follow up with the big game he needed to challenge Siemian. The three scoring drives he directed covered a total of 48 yards and ended in two field goals and a 1-yard run by C.J. Anderson.

"You can't complain about getting points," Lynch said, "but I think that we left some points out there."

Siemian followed up his quick strike TD drive just before halftime — which included a nifty sack escape — with a 12-play drive that ate up more than six minutes in the third quarter and ended in a field goal.

"I think so," Siemian said when asked if he felt he'd done enough to win the job. "I'm not the coach, but I think so."

While Joseph was noncommittal, he reiterated that it would indeed be best if he had his starting QB in place by the time the Broncos host the Packers next weekend in their final tuneup for the regular season.

"Absolutely, because our starters should play a half of football versus Green Bay, and that's going to be our first official game-plan game of the season," Joseph said. "So, that would be ideal, yes."

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AP PHOTO / ERIC RISBERG

Denver Broncos quarterback Trevor Siemian (13) throws against the San Francisco 49ers during the first half of a preseason NFL football game on Saturday. The Broncos won the game 33-14.

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FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Yutan hopes to build off playoff run

BRENT WASENIUS
Managing-Sports Editor

YUTAN — Dan Krajicek believes Yutan has talent on its football team, but it remains to be seen how that talent performs this fall.

Last fall the Chieftains were the surprise of the Class C-2 state playoffs. After compiling a 6-3 regular-season record, Yutan stunned top-seeded Centennial 34-6 in the first round of the postseason. The Chieftains then knocked off ninth-seeded St. Paul 39-7 before losing to eventual state champion Wilber-Clatonia 19-6 in the semifinals.

"We have a lot of holes to fill from last year's team," said Krajicek, who is beginning his fifth season as head coach. "We have a lot of potential, but that doesn't mean anything."

The Chieftains return six starters on offense and six on defense.

Heading the list of returnees is Fremont Tribune All-Area pick Colton Feist. The versatile athlete anchored the offensive and defensive lines for the Chieftains last fall, but he is switching to fullback in 2017.

Bryland Menicucci also returns. The 5-foot-8 senior set a state record with six punt returns for touchdowns last year and was also an All-Area selection. He has 10 kick returns for touchdowns in his career and will be at running back.

Menicucci finished with 590 yards on 73 carries. He was third on the team in rushing behind Trevor Ziemba (874 yards) and Parker Strand (592 yards) — both graduated in May.

Krajicek also likes the potential of junior Blake Hutton (5-11, 180) in the backfield.

"He is very fast and athletic," the coach said.

Also back are offensive linemen Cole Egr, a 190-pound senior, and Jadyn Stuart, a 6-3, 280-pound senior. Sophomore Chase Perchal, who Krajicek calls "the best athlete on the team," returns at wide receiver.

Perchal had a solid freshman season, leading the Chieftains in receptions (28), receiving yards (449) and tying Scott Wuster for the team lead in scoring receptions (five).

"He's gotten bigger, stronger and faster," Krajicek said.

The Chieftains also have a large target at receiver with 6-7, 200-pound senior Alan Leahy.

Preseason camp was spent looking for a quarterback to replace 2016 starter Jerrad O'Malley, who passed for 1,378 yards and nine scores.

Senior Brett Heurtz (6-4, 180) has battled sophomore Griffin Hendricks for the starting job.

"We've got weapons to get the ball to," Krajicek said. "It is just a matter of keeping everyone healthy."

Feist, a two-time all-state pick, finished with a team-best 115 tackles last season. He also had eight sacks.

Menicucci (35 total tackles) and Perchal (36 total tackles) are returning starters in the secondary. Stuart (39 total tackles and two tackles for loss) joins Feist as a starter on the defensive line. Heurtz had 14 total stops as a defensive end.

Krajicek also thinks several other players could contribute, including: senior linemen Lucas Powels (6-0, 260), Sam Elgert (6-1, 190) and Logan Cogdill (6-2, 205), junior receiver/defensive back Clayton Nelson (6-1, 175), junior tight end Jay Smith (6-1, 185) and sophomore running back/defensive back Ethan Strand.

"We have a lot of very good athletes for a Class C-2 school," he said. "Colton should be a monster and we have a back log of skill guys to touch the ball."

Just like last year, the Chieftains face a tough early-season schedule. They host Battle Creek in their opener Friday night before traveling to Centennial on Sept. 1.

Cloyd takes control of Wildcats

TAMMY GREUNKE
Fremont Tribune

CEDAR BLUFFS — Being a first-year head coach isn't the only thing Justin Cloyd has had to adjust to since taking over the football program at Cedar Bluffs High School.

Cloyd, who graduated in May from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, spent his high school years playing football at Platteview High School. That included a state runner-up finish in 2011.

The past two years, the Springfield native was an assistant coach at his alma mater.

Once Cloyd was hired by Cedar Bluffs, he had to begin getting adjusted to learning the ins and outs of eight-man football.

"All of March and April was just me watching a lot of film and talking to a lot of eight-man guys, trying to figure out the differences," Cloyd said. " A lot of the plays transition over from 11-man and vice-versa, but there's just a lot more open space.

"The biggest thing I heard over and over from a lot of guys I talked to who either played or coached eight-man is just focus on the fundamentals and teach your guys how to tackle and block. At the end of the day it's football, so you've just got to focus on doing those things right and that kind of eliminates some of that extra space on the field."

Cloyd inherits a Cedar Bluffs team which finished with a 3-5 record a year ago. Five seniors are among the 18-player roster who have been getting to know their new coach over the past few months.

"Something I've been really proud of them for and something that's really been a surprise to me is how well they've been able to transition. Especially these seniors because I know I'm their third coach in four years, so that was kind of one of the things I was worried about coming in," Cloyd said. "They've probably done better than I ever could have imagined welcoming me and welcoming kind of a new system on offense and defense.

DEAN JACOBS / FREMONT TRIBUNE

Gage Vacha of Cedar Bluffs fights for yards near the goal line during a game last season against Omaha Christian Academy. Vacha is a senior this year for the Wildcats, who open the season Friday against Weeping Water.

COLIN LARSON / FREMONT TRIBUNE

Members of the Cedar Bluffs football team, front row, from left, are: Zach Zakovec, Nick Antsey, Levi Janousek, Carson Shanahan and Gage Vacha. In the second row, from left, are: Mason Thiesen, Lane Siems, Nate Guerrero and Xandir Grieve. In the third row, from left, are: Tanner Kiefer, Grant Plaskac, Dominic Goodwin, Hunter Bacon and Kolby Hermanson. In the fourth row, from left, are: Brody Ptomey, Chris Vasquez, Gabe Anaya and Lane Kremlacek.

"They've been really open to try and learn the stuff I want to do here. We're really trying to create a culture of success, not only as football players but as individuals in the community and in their families and churches, and all of those kinds of things. They've been more than willing to accept that and take on those roles that maybe they hadn't done before."

Zach Zakovec will take over as the Wildcats' starting quarterback this season. The 175-pound senior who was the back-up quarterback a year ago also will play linebacker on defense.

"He's a good leader and the guys look up to him, " Cloyd said. "He's a guy who's here every day ... and puts in the work."

Zakovec will be operating behind a line that will be dominated by seniors.

Nick Anstey (5-foot-11, 275 pounds) is back as a four-year starter and will play center and nose guard. Levi Janousek, a 165-pound senior is set to play guard and linebacker while fellow senior Carson Shanahan (215 pounds) will be at right guard and defensive end.

"I think that might be our strength up there (on the line), trying to get behind those guys and do some stuff," Cloyd said.

Gage Vacha, also a senior, will be starting at running back and linebacker. Sophomore Xandir Greve will be playing running back and defensive back.

As opposed to previous years when the Wildcats' offense has focused more on the passing game, Cloyd wants to establish the run game first. He hopes that will slow down the game to help the Wildcats' defense which allowed 58.9 points a game last season.

"We're just trying to focus more on fundamentals on defense so that we're able to tackle, be in the right position, be assignment sharp and those kinds of things," the Wildcats' coach said.

A pair of juniors — Nate Guerrero and Mason Thiesen — also are expected to contribute on the field this season at wide receiver and in the defensive backfield.

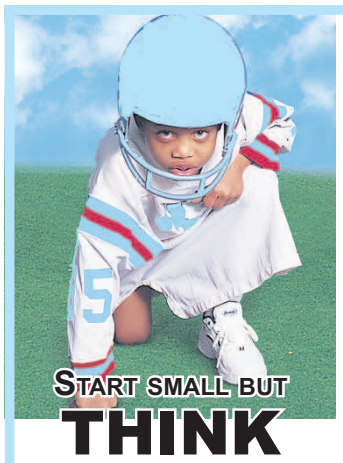
"Most of our guys that are underclassmen are going to be right there at second string on the depth chart, so if we ever need to give a guy a break we'll have those guys ready to go in," Cloyd said. "It's the same for special teams. A lot of those guys have shown in practice that's something they can handle. You'll probably see a lot of the younger guys on special teams."

After meeting individually with the players, Cloyd and his assistant coaches — Mike Kroupa and Jay Parker — gathered with the team to determine some team goals. The main goal is simple: to make the playoffs.

"With as tough as a schedule as we have, it doesn't have to be a certain recipe to do that," Cloyd said. "Our goal is to take it game-by-game and deal with what is right in front of us. If we can do that each week, we are hoping to set ourselves up for an opportunity to find the playoffs."

The Wildcats open the season at home on Friday against Weeping Water, a team they defeated 34-14 last season. Their schedule also includes four teams which qualified for the playoffs a year ago in Osceola, Mead, Fullerton and Humphrey St. Francis.

"I've been telling the guys, 'Just focus on the things that you can control,'" Cloyd said. "If we can execute and do those things, I think we'll put ourselves in a position to win.'



Just like football... when you start with a solid foundation and build momentum, there's nothing that can't be accomplished.

Good Luck to Our Cedar Bluffs Wildcats!

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FOOTBALL PREVIEW

DEAN JACOBS / FREMONT TRIBUNE

Members of the Logan View football team, front row, from left, are: Beto Valdivia,, Ty Miller, Garret Palmer, Jadin Beckwith, Dru Mueller, Connor Larson, Riley Hoetkfelker, Austin Muhsman, Jaden Korman, Brett Uhing, Andrew Cone, Keyshawn English and Hunter McNulty. In the middle row, from left, are: Brady Hull, Alex Wagner, Sam Hilbers, Nathan Wacker, Martin Valencia, Eric French, Alex Miller, Dale Ward, David Manzer, Isaac Gahner, Brant Schuler, Bailey Licht, Zach McGee and Lucas Schneck. In the back row, from left, are: Coach McCain, Coach Clausen, Jacob Polk, Nolan Miller, Nathan Taylor, Nate Adams, Jayvin Benavente, Brandon Hagerbaumer, Preston Kotik, Coach Dustin Sealey, Coach Jenkins, Coach Bo Krivohlavek.

Sealey looks to build on first season

COLIN LARSON
Fremont Tribune

HOOPER — In his second year at the helm of the Logan View Raiders football team, head coach Dustin Sealey is looking to build on his team's 4-5 record from 2016 with help from a group of returning starters.

"We have some guys coming back at really important positions, and we're going to rely on those older guys to bring all of the younger guys along," Sealey said.

The Raiders will be led by senior quarterback Jacob Polk, who last year passed for 646 yards, ran for 508 more and finished with 14 total touchdowns.

"He (Polk) runs the ball well, he is a slippery guy," Sealey said. "I want him to make the decision a lot of the time, if he is going to run it or give it off. We like the ball in his hands."

Joining Polk in the backfield will be fellow senior Nolan Miller and returning starting running back Brady Hull.

"Brady (Hull) is a big strong tough kid and power is his game," Sealey said. "Nolan Miller is a nice addition to the backfield. He's got speed and he's a strong kid too so I like our running backs."

On the defensive side, the Raiders will be anchored by another senior in Nathan Taylor who finished the 2016-17 season with 64 tackles and 2 interceptions from the linebacker spot.

TONY GRAY / FREMONT TRIBUNE

Logan View running back Brady Hull looks for running room during a game against Fremont Bergan in 2015. Hull is a returning starter for the Raiders.

"He (Taylor) is another senior who had a heck of a junior year on both sides of the ball, and we expect that to continue this season with him in the middle defensively," Sealey said.

With returning starters Eric French and Lucas Schneck on the defensive line, and with Taylor and Hull at the linebacker spots, the Raiders look to have a strong front seven this season.

"We have a lot of guys coming back up front and have a good group of linebackers, so we have got to stop the run and that's what we have been working on doing," Sealey said.

With a year of experience as head coach, Sealey says he and his players have become more comfortable with one another.

It's been a good offseason for us," he said. "I have a much better relationship with the kids having a year under my belt. It's all about developing their trust and if we got that things will work out one way or another."

Along with building a trusting relationship with his players, Sealey also has a better grasp of what his guys can do as far as X's and O's.

"We were running a little bit of everything a year ago, until about game five and we figured out what we were going to be able to do well," he said.

The Raiders will kick off their season at home against Palmyra on Friday before heading out for their longest road trip of the season. They play at Central City on Sept. 1.

"That first game is always kind of a mystery. You practice practice practice but it is never the same when you get on the field," Sealey said. "I just hope that we play hard more than anything. Usually the team that plays the hardest on Friday wins."

Raiders' QB Polk loves to compete

BRENT WASENIUS
Managing-Sports Editor

HOOPER — Jacob Polk doesn't like to have much idle time in the summer.

The Logan View multi-sport standout plays baseball, competes in Nebraska Select basketball and also participates in the Raiders' 7-on-7 football passing league.

Polk

"I like to stay busy," the 6-foot-1 quarterback said. "If I'm not doing those sports, I'm out golfing with my dad (Jason) and we make it a competition between us."

The love of competition fuels Polk. Last spring he qualified for the Class C state track meet in the 1,600 and 3,200 meters. This winter he will be one of five returning senior starters for Coach Sean Forbes' boys basketball team.

"It is hard to choose a favorite (sport)," Polk said. "I'd just say it is usually the one I'm playing. If it is basketball season, I love that. If it is football season I love that. If it is track time, I'm all track. I'm just that way."

Polk earned Fremont Tribune All-Area honors last fall. He helped the Raiders to a 4-5 in Coach Dustin Sealey's first season. He finished with 646 yards passing and 508 yards rushing. As a punter, he averaged 37 yards per kick.

"We had a new coach last year and he was very enthusiastic," Polk said referring to Sealey. "Our offense didn't change that much, which was pretty good. We came out with a good record for a first-year coach and I think we can look for even better things this year."

Polk started a few games as a sophomore after Garrett Knoell was injured. He became a full-time starter at quarterback in 2016.

"The first few games last year were still pretty nerve-racking," Polk said "But now I feel pretty comfortable to go out there and lead the team. I do that in some of the other sports, too. The experience just made me more comfortable."

Polk said the Raiders made a lot of progress in Sealey's first season.

"He has us on the (right) path and not just with the football program," he said. "He does our weight program and makes sure we realize how important it is to do our stuff in the offseason."

Polk will head an offense that also counts running backs Brady Hull and Nolan Miller and linemen Nathan Taylor and Eric French among its returning starters.

"We can spread teams out," Polk said. "We don't like to throw long passes, but we'll dink and dunk and throw the short ones. We like to try and cut defenses apart. What we want to do is spread the defense out and then we can run up the middle because they are having to worry about the guys on the outside."

With Taylor anchoring the defense at middle linebacker and other key players like lineman Lucas Schneck and defensive back Clay Kruger in the mix, Polk thinks the Raiders could make a run at the state playoffs.

"My goal every year is to make the state tournament and I think that should be every high school player's goal," Polk said "If we make that we'll see what happens from there. First off, though, we have to get a winning record."

The state tournament is also a real possibility for Logan View/Scribner-Snyder in basketball. Polk, Ben Moxness, Alex Hagerbaumer, Taylor and Alex VonSeggern are all returning starters from last year's 18-6 squad.

"I think all of us are extremely excited about this year," Polk said. "We've been playing together since fifth grade. Every year our goal is to make the state tournament. If we could do it this year, it would be the first time Logan View qualified in school history. That would be awesome."

First up, though, is football. Polk has been around the game his whole life as his father, Jason Polk, has coached at the high school and junior high level.

"I remember as a little kid running around and being a student manager for him," Polk said "He has been a big influence in my life. He has taught me a lot about the game and how to play it the right way. I thank him a lot for that."

Feist make move from lineman to the backfield

BRENT WASENIUS
Managing-Sports Editor

YUTAN — Yutan football opponents might be breathing a little easier knowing that Colton Feist isn't going to be on the Chieftains' offensive line this season.

That is where the good news ends for Yutan's rivals.

Feist, a 6-foot-2, 225-pound Class C-2 all-stater, is moving to fullback for his senior season.

"I'm very excited about it. I ran the ball in junior high so I've had a little bit of experience that will help me. We have a good running backs coach (Nate Jones) that is helping me. I'm looking forward to running the ball and also be able to block going downhill. You get a little extra space that way instead of just blocking the guy right in front of you."

Colton Feist

"I'm very excited about it," Feist said. "I ran the ball in junior high so I've had a little bit of experience that will help me. We have a good running backs coach (Nate Jones) that is helping me. I'm looking forward to running the ball and also be able to block going downhill. You get a little extra space that way instead of just blocking the guy right in front of you."

The Chieftains contemplated moving Feist off the interior line last season.

"They were looking at moving me to tight end, but our line didn't quite get developed," he said. "This year, though, our line is more developed so I can move from there."

Feist helped Yutan to a memorable season in 2016. After compiling a 6-3 regular season, the Chieftains were the 16th seed for the state playoffs. They avenged a regular-season defeat by trouncing top-seeded Centennial 34-6 before beating ninth-seeded St. Paul 39-7. Eventual champion Wilber-Clatonia downed the Chieftains 19-7 in the semifinals.

"We started off the season in some trouble," Feist said, referring to the Chieftains' 0-2 start that included a 20-14 loss to Battle Creek and a 14-12 setback to Centennial. "But things started to click. We played Wilber (a 35-15 regular-season loss) and even though they defeated us, that game showed we could play with anyone. We kind of used that as our motivation going into state."

That confidence was evident during the state-playoff run.

"We knew we could beat Centennial because we played them earlier in the season," Feist said. "We won that next one, too, but we just couldn't get over the hump against Wilber. Hopefully this year we can get to the finals. I think that is our goal."

While Feist excelled as an offensive tackle, he was also a disruptive force at defensive tackle.

He finished with 18 tackles for loss, eight sacks and three blocked kicks. He also registered 115 tackles for the season.

"Colton's motor never stopped," Yutan coach Dan Krajicek told the Tribune last year. "He was everywhere all the time."

Feist is aware that he will face his share of double-teams this fall.

"I think that is definitely going to happen, but I think I will embrace that," he said. "I will fight through it I can get through double-teams."

Feist was also a Fremont Tribune All-Area selection in basketball. He averaged 17 points and an eye-popping 13 rebounds per game. At 6-2, he is shorter than most players that accumulate big rebounding numbers. While he believes positioning and anticipation are key to rebounding, a lot of it comes down to desire.

"I can definitely read where the ball is going to go (on a shot)," he said. "But I think it just all comes down to you are either going to get the rebound or you're not. It is the mindset that I'm going to get that rebound."

That determination also helps him excel on the football field.

"I like going hard every play and being one of the leaders for the team," Feist said. "I like to get guys hyped up for games."

FOOTBALL PREVIEW

McLaughlin happy to call MU home

BRENT WASENIUS
Managing-Sports Editor

It is difficult for Bryan McLaughlin to even fathom as he enters his final season at Midland University.

When the Elkhorn High graduate was looking for a college to attend about four years ago, Midland wasn't even on his radar.

"I thought there was no way I would ever go to Midland, but eventually I took a campus visit," the senior will linebacker said. "I told my dad (Mark) that I really liked Midland and that I'd probably go there. I haven't looked back and I've loved the decision I made."

The Warriors are also glad McLaughlin, who considered Nebraska Wesleyan among other schools, chose Midland. He was third on the team in tackles (an average of 6.4 per game) in 2016 while earning All-Great Plains Athletic Conference second-team honors.

McLaughlin was also part of a resurgence the program experienced in 2016. After a 1-10 finish in 2015, the Warriors went 7-4 last fall in head coach Jeff Jamrog's first season.

"I thought it was a really good turnaround, especially for the seniors who had been through some bad seasons," McLaughlin said. "We have a phenomenal coaching staff and it has been incredible to play for Coach Jamrog. He tells us just about every day that he'll treat us like his own sons. He truly means that and he has brought in a lot of talented recruits, which makes it good for us veterans and also the newcomers because there is good competition."

Although Midland won six more games last year than in 2015, McLaughlin was disappointed in how the season unfolded. The Warriors started 5-0, but then won only two more (including a forfeit by Northwestern).

"We definitely would've liked to have gone farther and won more games," he said. "I don't think we met our maximum potential. It seemed like after we lost to Doane and then Morningside, we were like, 'What do we do now?' The season slowly died off and our potential was never reached."

In order to reach that potential this fall, several Warriors participated in summer workouts in Fremont.

"I think we had a pretty good level of commitment from the freshmen and the returning guys," McLaughlin said. "Quite a few dudes were here during the summer. I think we had between 60 to 70 here every single day. On Saturdays it was a lot more. You could tell in the first week of practice the guys that have been here all summer."

EVAN NORDSTROM / FREMONT TRIBUNE

Midland linebackers Wyatt Tremayne (40) and Bryan McLaughiin (32) tackle Jalen Sykes of Bethel for no gain in a college football game Saturday last September at Heedum Field. Tremayne and McLaughlin are returning starters for the Warriors.

That commitment could help ease the loss of some key pieces from the Warriors' 2016 defense, including All-GPAC picks Ethan Renner and Lucas Schawang.

Midland finished fifth in scoring defense and fourth in total defense in the GPAC last season. McLaughlin said the Warriors are looking to improve in those areas.

"Our defensive coordinator (Jamie Bisch) likes to stress to us MPET, which means mentally, physically, emotionally tough," McLaughlin said. "We have high goals and want to be the No. 1 defense overall."

McLaughlin will have plenty of help on the defensive side of the ball. Mike linebacker and leading tackler Wyatt Tremayne returns. Mitchell Penny played significant time on the defensive line as did linebacker Tanner Swett. Exavier Edwards, a former receiver, has shifted to cornerback.

"He has looked really good at corner," McLaughlin said. "He plays physical and he covers his guy like glue."

McLaughlin and Tremayne have the most experience for Bisch's crew, but all of the defenders are accountable.

"A lot of the guys on the defense share in the leadership (role)," McLaughlin said. "I'm not much of a vocal person, but we have vocal leaders. We don't have to do much because those guys get in the right mindset by going up against our offense every day."

McLaughlin learned the intricacies of being a collegiate linebacker from former MU defender Troy Rodriguez.

"He graduated a few years ago, but I leaned on him pretty hard when I was a freshman and sophomore," he said. "I really looked up to him and also Ethan Renner because he knew what he was doing."

McLaughlin hopes to close out his MU career with a GPAC championship and a berth in the NAIA playoffs. Personal accolades — such as all-conference honors — are dwarfed by team achievements.

"I don't really think about personal stuff. I don't look at my stats or anything," he said. "Those things don't make or break me as a player. I just play football with my guys and whatever happens in the end, happens in the end. I just want to win and play my best for the other 10 dudes that are out there with me."

AREA PREP CAPSULES

TRIBUNE STAFF

Douglas County West

Coach: Kyl Gillespie

Record in 2016: 4-4

Returning Starters: Senior RB-CB Caden Hays, Senior RB-CB Spencer Hays, Senior RB-LB Peyton Weiss, Junior LB Jack Hodge, Senior LB Andy Carlson, Senior LB-K Tyler Heston, Junior OL-DL Trevan Billings, Junior OL-DL Kaleb Lawson, Senior OL Brock Renter, Senior OL-DL Tyler Pitzl

Promising Newcomers: Junior Ty Eggen, Senior Cade Moore, Junior Ethan Ruelie.

Outlook: Weiss rushed for 610 yards on 110 carries last season and also averaged 42 yards per punt. Caden Hays (248 yards rushing, 164 yards receiving) and Spencer Hays (288 yards rushing 355 yards receiving) are also offensive threats. Heston finished with 41 tackles and was 38-for-40 on extra-points. Carlson had 35 tackles and Pitzl 22.

"We are in a very tough district and have a tough non-district schedule," Gillespie said. "We will have to play well week in and week out to compete and earn those wins."

Mead

Coach: Terry Hickman

Record in 2016: 4-5

Returning Lettermen: Junior Aidan Mongan (5-foot-8, 220), Senior Back/Safety Josh Quinn (5-9, 150), Senior OL-DL Cole Zima (6-1, 225), Sophomore Back/Safety JT Haag (6-0, 135), Junior End-LB Caleb Dickes (5-9, 170), Sophomore OL-DL Tyler Engle (5-7, 160), Sophomore Back-LB Riley Mayfield (5-5, 130), Junior End-DL Alexis Cruz (5-9, 160).

Promising Newcomers: Sophomore OL-DL Riley Etherington (5-6, 160), Freshman Back-Safety Hunter Pickworth, Freshman lineman Cade Mongan (5-8, 175), Freshman lineman Bayley Lacroix, Freshman safety Calvin Muhlback (5-2, 115), Freshman End-LB Blaine Nicola (5-3, 120).

Outlook: Quinn is a talented athlete who accounted for 1,240 all-purpose yards and recorded 56 tackles on defense. Aidan Mongan is a two-starter and had 87 tackles last season. Zima is a two-year offensive line starter. "We lost a big group of seniors, who had started for us for a number of years," Hickman said. "The road may be a little bumpy, but as we gain experience we should be a better team at the end of the year than at the beginning."

Wahoo High

Coach: Chad Fox

Record in 2016: 9-2

Returning Lettermen: Senior RB-DB Dylan Egr (5-foot-9, 160), Senior QB-DB Cameron Quick (6-3, 195), Junior WR Zane Bennett (5-9, 165), Junior lineman Sam Kolterman (6-0, 195), Senior QB-DB Billy Hancock (5-10, 165), Senior WR-DB Brendan Lacey (6-1, 165), Senior TE Will Shanahan (6-4, 190) , Senior RB-LB Ryan Ickler (5-9, 160), Senior TE-LB Cade Belitz (6-1, 190), Senior WR-DB Bret Walker (5-8, 145), Junior OL-DL Jack Sutton (6-2, 230), Senior OL-DL Tucker Hancock (5-10, 190), Senior OL-LB Logen Walling (5-7, 155), Senior Trevor McEvoy (6-1, 185).

Promising Newcomers: Sophomore RB-DB Trevin Luben (5-10, 155), Sophomore RB-LB Luke Partridge (6-1, 180), Sophomore OL-LB Kole Bordovsky (5-11, 180), Sophomore OL-DL Gunnar Vanek (6-1, 215).

Outlook: Egr is a returning All-Area pick who rushed for 1,118 yards last fall. Quick started two games at quarterback. "Graduation has taken a toll on our team as we lost a fair amount of players that started two or three years for us," Fox said. "Reloading our offensive and defensive lines is going to be the biggest priority."

West Point-Beemer

Coach: Troy Schlueter

Record in 2016: 4-5

Returning Lettermen: Junior WR Ben VanderGriend, Junior WR-DB Kade Hughes, Junior DL Blake Anderson (6-foot-2, 190), Senior QB Cole Hughes (6-0, 160), Junior RB-LB Gage Vance, Senior OL Devon Priestley, Senior OL-DL Chase Streeter, Senior OL-DL Austin Streeter, Senior OL-LB Ronny Petersen, Senior OL Gustavo Villasenior, Senior Back-LB Hunter Pilakowski.

Outlook: Schlueter calls Kade Hughes, "a good athlete, great hitter with the ability to be a game-changer." Anderson is a team leader while VanderGriend is a weapon in the passing game. "We have improved leadership with close to 20 seniors on the roster," Schlueter said. "This is year two of a new system. That leads us to believe this could be an exciting year."

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