

PREVIEW DISTRICT 3-5A DIV. I

New division, same result for Aledo.

Despite starting 0-2 last season, the Bearcats regrouped and proceeded to rattle off 14 straight wins to capture a record-setting 11th state championship in their first season as a member of Class 5A Division I.

TCU commit Hauss Hejny returns to quarterback an Aledo offense that averaged

43.3 points per game in 2022. He threw for 2,094 yards and rushed for 1,276 yards with 35 total touchdowns. Hejny and seniors Hawk Patrick-Daniels and LSU commit Davhon Keys combined for 48 rushing touchdowns last year. Keys also plays linebacker for a Bearcat defense that held opponents to 16.3 points per game.

Denton Ryan was picked to finish second in the 3-5A

Division I coaches poll, and the Raiders are ready to right the ship after finishing with seven wins last season – their fewest since 2014 – and losing a 21-point lead in a stunning overtime loss to Red Oak in bi-district. Junior linebacker Dillon Arkansas was a first-team all-district performer last season after he finished with 80 tackles.

The Colony will lean on a fast

and athletic defense to deliver the first playoff appearance for the Cougars since 2019. Junior quarterback Carson Cox won offensive newcomer of the year as a sophomore after he threw for 1,730 yards with 23 total touchdowns.

Burleson Centennial is coming off its best season since the school opened in 2010. The Spartans posted a program-best 12 wins a year ago

and seek a 10th playoff appearance in 14 seasons. Centennial brings back six all-district performers, though its roster took a big hit to graduation.

Northwest seeks a fifth consecutive playoff appearance.

Azle, Brewer, Saginaw and Fort Worth South Hills look to bounce back after combining to finish 6-27 in district play last season.

The Colony COUGARS

3-5A, DIV I

Last season saw a big geographic change in the district landscape for The Colony's football team. The Cougars went from playing six Frisco-isd foes in District 5-5A Div. I to seven teams from the Fort Worth area in 3-5A Div. I, which also included a familiar foe to The Colony in state power Denton Ryan.

The Colony, in search of its first playoff berth since 2019, is ranked third in the district coaches' poll, trailing only defending 5A Div. I state champion and projected favorite Aledo and Denton Ryan.

With seven returning starters on each side of the ball, the Cougars have the experience

necessary to end a four-year playoff drought.

Defensively for The Colony, it starts with pressure.

The Cougars boast a multiple-front defensive unit that is led by senior defensive linemen Kiyen DeCluette (47 tackles, nine quarterback pressures, four sacks) and William Adegbenro (46 tackles, nine quarterback pressures, two forced fumbles, three sacks), plus junior outside linebacker Ivan Bliznick (two sacks, 17 tackles, three quarterback pressures).

Anchoring the secondary will be seniors Dominic Scales and Zion Brown, and junior Adyn Henry.

The Cougar offense will bring

back its potent, fast-paced style but will also lean on a stable of backs that includes seniors Harold Gibson and Rodney Gould.

To help things run smoothly, junior quarterback Carson Cox will be back under center. Cox, who was named the district's co-newcomer of the year last season, accounted for 24 total touchdowns with 2,000 passing yards and 452 rushing yards.



PLAYER to watch

CARSON COX QUARTERBACK

The Colony switched to an up-tempo, spread offense last season and that schematic change fit perfectly with Cox's unique skill set. Whether it was a run to break contain or a long throw up the field, Cox helped to ignite a Cougar offense that accounted for just three passing scores two years ago – albeit in a run-based offense – to 13 last year. Cox had two games with at least five touchdowns, including a 418-yard performance through the air in a 58-34 win over Azle.



Varsity SCHEDULE

Aug. 25	Red Oak	Tommy Briggs Cougar Stadium	7 p.m.
Sept. 1	Royse City	Royse City ISD Stadium	7 p.m.
*Sept. 8	Fort Worth South Hills	Tommy Briggs Cougar Stadium	7 p.m.
Sept. 15	Burleson	Centennial Burleson ISD Stadium	7 p.m.
Sept. 21	Denton Ryan	C.H. Collins Athletic Complex	7 p.m.
Sept. 29	Aledo	Tommy Briggs Cougar Stadium	7 p.m.
Oct. 6	Fort Worth	Brewer Bear Stadium	7 p.m.
Oct. 13	Justin Northwest	Tommy Briggs Cougar Stadium	7 p.m.
Oct. 20	Azle	Hornet Field	7 p.m.
Oct. 27	Saginaw	Tommy Briggs Cougar Stadium	7 p.m.
Nov. 3	BYE		

*Homecoming