

Independence **KNIGHTS**

This marks the end of the first decade of Independence football, and the Knights have seen the expected ups and downs.

Independence won just one game during its inaugural campaign in 2014 but enjoyed a quick rise, going 9-3 just two years later.

The Knights would go .500 or better in each of the next four seasons, highlighted by a 11-2 season in 2019 that saw them reach the regional semifinals.

Independence dipped to 3-7 two years ago but enjoyed a resurgence last season in the first year under head coach Nick Stokes, as it posted a 8-3 record and returned to the playoffs.

If the Knights hope to continue that success, it will need newcomers to



PLAYER to watch

ELIJAH KNOTT WIDE RECEIVER / DEFENSIVE BACK

The Knights enter the season with only three returning starters and seven lettermen, meaning those select few will be relied upon to be leaders for a younger group. Knott is one of those players expected to fill that role. Last season, the senior earned second-team all-district honors at safety, where he recorded 28 tackles with two pass breakups and one quarterback hurry. Knott could also see time on offense where he had four receptions for 37 yards last season.

step up as they return only three starters and seven lettermen from last season's playoff squad.

Independence does have a proven playmaker in junior McKenzie West, who was a second-team all-district honoree. Last season, West was one of the team's top targets on the outside, where he had 26 receptions for 563

yards, an average of 21.7 yards per catch, with six touchdowns.

West also saw time in the backfield at running back, as well as at quarterback, where he might be asked to move this season with the graduation of starter Matteo Quattrin, who threw for 2,221 yards and 17 touchdowns a year ago.



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Senior Coburn Reese is another player who got a look under center a season ago, and he could also be an option, but is also a solid player on defense at linebacker, where he recorded 28 tackles, three sacks and an interception.

On defense, senior Daniel Ayuk returns after recording 28 tackles, with four for loss, 2.5 sacks and one quarterback hurry,

and senior defensive back Elijah Knott was a second-team all-district selection with 28 tackles.

Other players to watch include wide receiver/defensive back Ryder Grajo and senior tight end Blake Waligura, but the Knights will know much more about themselves a month from now when younger players have a few games under their belts.



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Varsity SCHEDULE

Aug. 25	Panther Creek	Ford Center at The Star	7 p.m.
Sept. 1	Heritage	Ford Center at The Star	7 p.m.
Sept. 9	Skyline	Kuykendall Stadium	11 a.m.
Sept. 15	Pittsburg	Kuykendall Stadium	7 p.m.
Sept. 22	BYE		
Sept. 29	Denton	C.H. Collins Athletic Complex	7 p.m.
*Oct. 6	Creekview	Toyota Stadium	7 p.m.
Oct. 13	Memorial	Ford Center at The Star	7 p.m.
Oct. 19	Argyle	Kuykendall Stadium	7 p.m.
Oct. 27	Lake Dallas	Falcon Stadium	7 p.m.
Nov. 2	Emerson	Ford Center at The Star	7 p.m.

*Homecoming