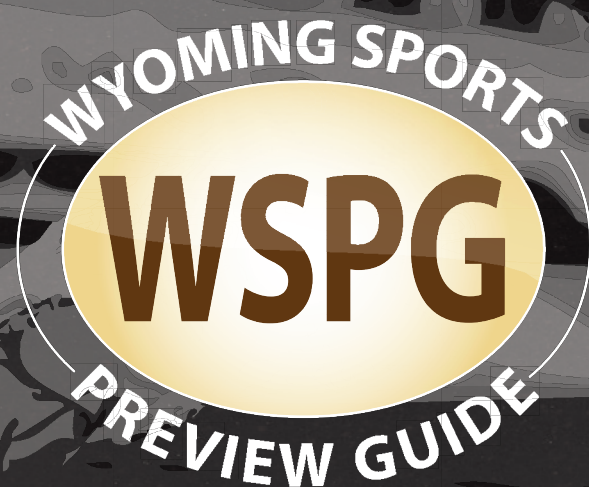


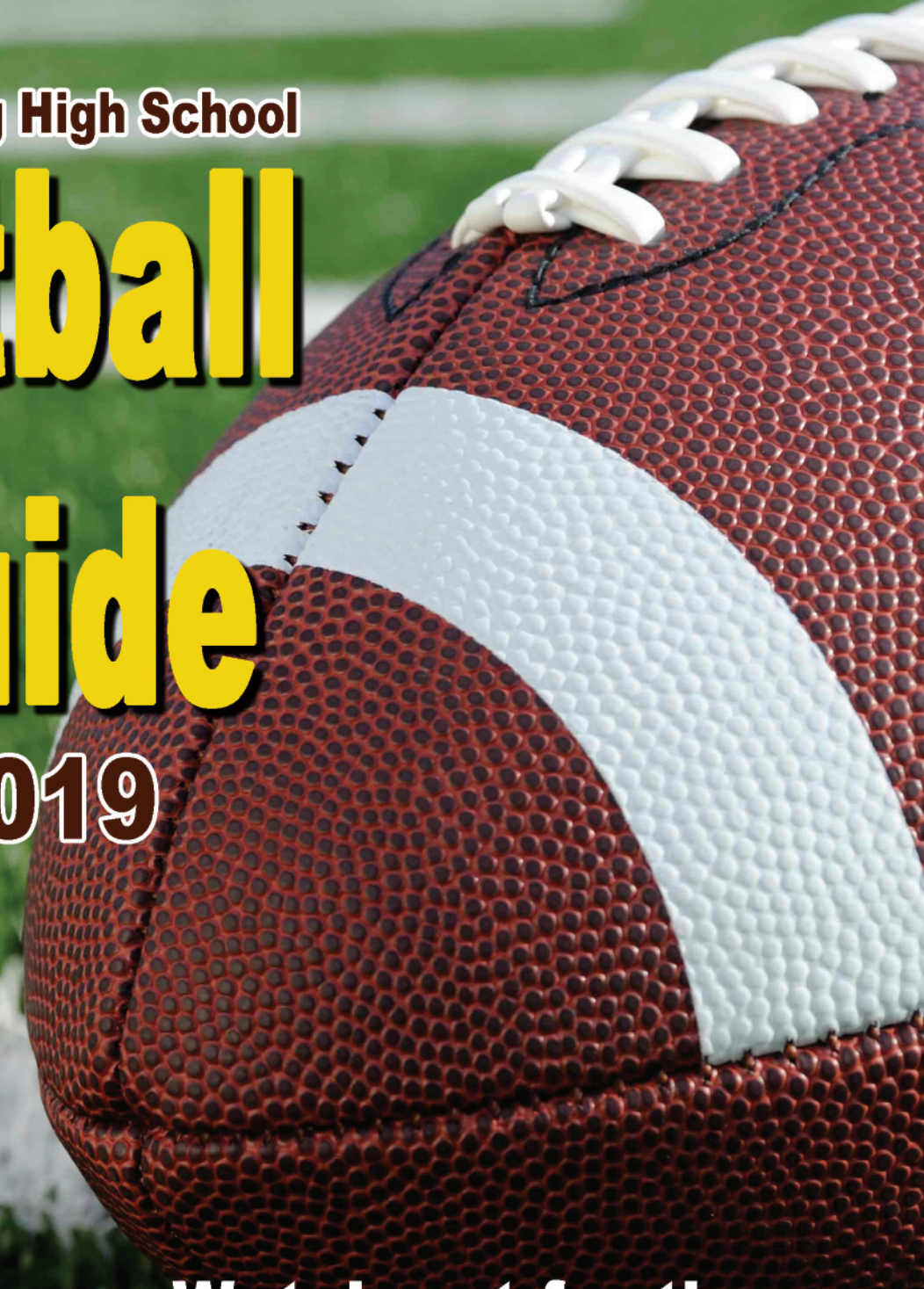
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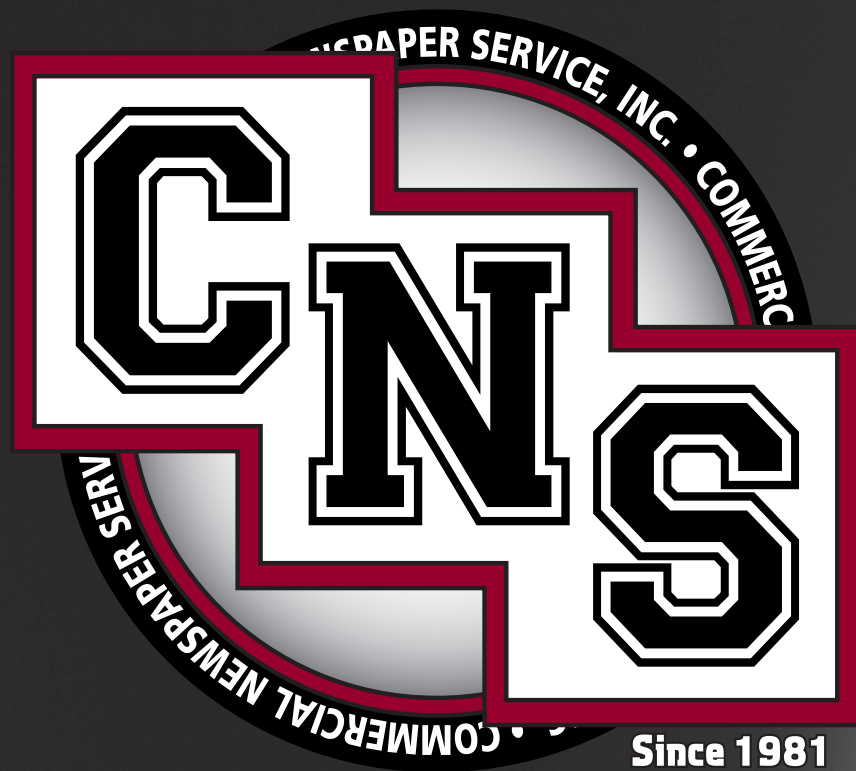
Watch out for the ...

Defending Champs

Natrona, Star Valley, Buffalo and Big Horn are ready to repeat



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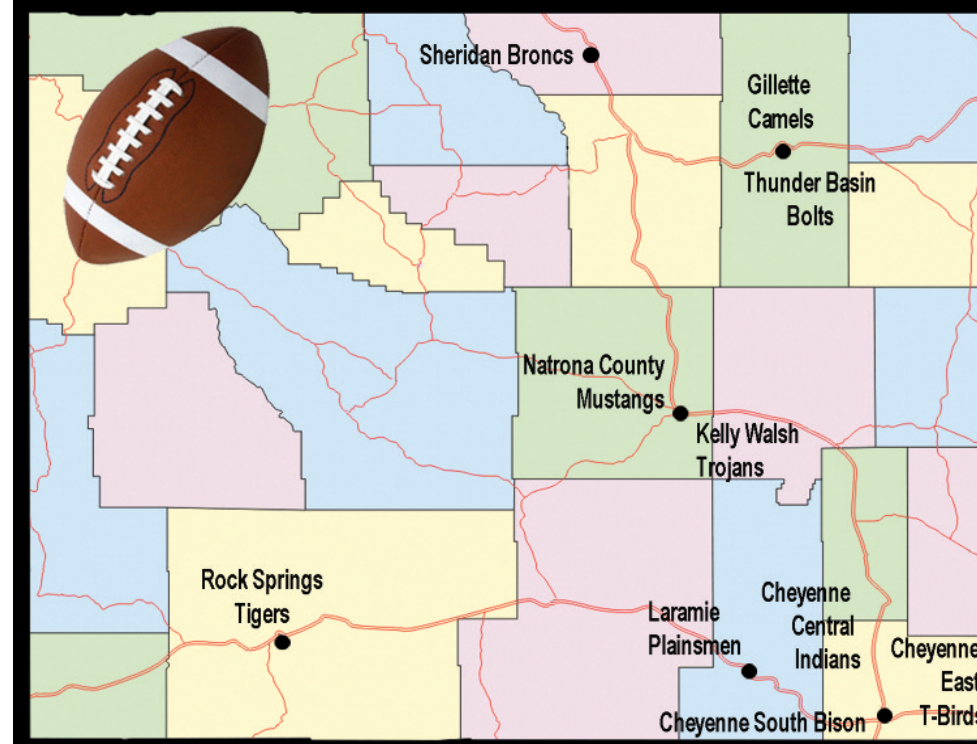
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4A Preview



Natrona will have challengers

By Patrick Schmiedt

Four questions to answer

Does Natrona start the season as the favorite? As THE favorite? No. As one of them? Yes. The defending champs lost a ton of quality contributors to graduation but return enough offensive firepower to remain a threat to repeat.

Who else is in the conversation? It's 4A, so Sheridan, Cheyenne East and Thunder Basin. Of those, Thunder Basin appears to be in the best position to actually make a move. After falling short in the semifinals against Sheridan last year, the 'Bolts' are motivated.

So, the Big Four again? Yep, the big four again. None of the other six teams in 4A have yet shown they're ready to be seriously considered as title contenders, or even semifinal contenders. However, three new coaches could bring shifting fortunes to 4A's second tier.

What was that about new coaches? Mark Lenhardt moves from back-to-back title game appearances at 3A Torrington to coach at Rock Springs, while Aaron Makelky moves from 2A Big Piney to Kelly Walsh. They, along with Andrew Rose – a promoted assistant at Gillette – will give 4A a new look this fall.

Four key games

Natrona at Sheridan, and Thunder Basin at Cheyenne East, Sept. 13. The third week of the season presents the first matchups of 4A's "Big Four." It's likely that all four teams will be 2-0 at this point, and a victory here sets

up the winners for the rest of the year.

Sheridan at Thunder Basin, Sept. 20. The rivalry game between the Broncos and the 'Bolts' doesn't have a name yet. Maybe in its third year, it should get one. How about the "Basin to Bighorns Bowl"? Despite all the "B's," expect an A-level performance in this one.

Natrona at Thunder Basin, Oct. 4. On paper, the Mustangs and 'Bolts' have the two most talented teams in 4A this year. This Week 5 game in Gillette will likely set the pace for the second half of the season.

Cheyenne East at Sheridan, Oct. 25. This game between two perennial contenders will have huge playoff implications. The fact that it comes right before the playoffs will only heighten the anticipation.

Predicted order of finish

Thunder Basin; Natrona; Sheridan; Cheyenne East; Rock Springs; Cheyenne Central; Kelly Walsh; Laramie; Gillette; Cheyenne South.

Way-too-early title-game score prediction Thunder Basin 35, Natrona 26

The 'Bolts' offensive stars will get a lot of the preseason, and mid-season, and post-season, attention. However, an unheralded but, by 4A standards, experienced defense could be the unit that carries Thunder Basin to its first state championship.



State Champs
**Natrona
Mustangs**

2018 State Playoffs

State Championship

Natrona 28, Sheridan 14

State Semifinals

Natrona 21, Cheyenne East 14

Sheridan 14, Thunder Basin 7

State Quarterfinals

Natrona 35, Kelly Walsh 7

Cheyenne East 37, Laramie 21

Thunder Basin 34, Chey. Central 0

Sheridan 41, Rock Springs 8

Five players to watch

Mason Hamilton and Blaine Allen,
Thunder Basin

You can't mention the 'Bolts' quarterback without mentioning his favorite receiver. Hamilton was dazzling as a junior, throwing for a state-high 2,592 yards and 31 touchdowns, while Allen led 4A with 805 receiving yards.

Dante Wallace, Natrona

Wallace was 4A's top rusher last year in basically every category. He had more carries (235), more yards (1,812) and more touchdowns (23) than any other back in 4A. And he's ready to help Natrona in its repeat attempt.

Garrett Coon, Sheridan

Coon is a bit of a throwback. As a mixture of fullback and linebacker, Coon is one of 4A's most physical players. He was fourth in 4A in defensive points and second in the classification with 101 total tackles.

Graedyn Buell, Cheyenne East

It might be easy to overlook Buell, whose sophomore season was cut short due to a broken ankle. But he put up steady stats (1,346 passing yards, 12 touchdowns to just three interceptions, 303 rushing yards) before the injury.



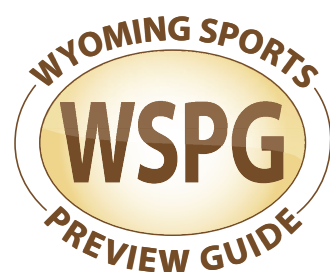
Mascot: Camels
Division: 4A
Colors: Purple and gold
Coach: Andrew Rose, first year at Gillette
2018 Record: 0-9, did not qualify for playoffs

Key Players

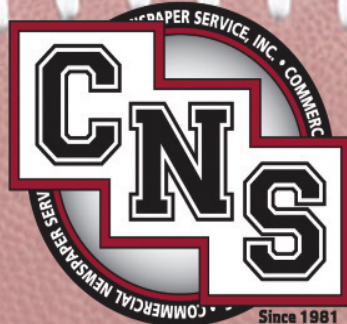
RB/LB: Vijay Pitter, Sr.
LB: Hunter Kramer, Jr.
LB: Dawsen Hayden, Sr.
OG/DE: Colter Rankin, Jr.

2019 Schedule

8-30: at Cheyenne East, 7 p.m.
9-6: at Natrona, 7 p.m.
9-13: vs. Laramie, 7 p.m.
9-20: at Cheyenne Central, 7 p.m.
9-27: vs. Thunder Basin, 7 p.m.
10-4: at Rock Springs, 6 p.m.
10-11: vs. Sheridan, 7 p.m.
10-18: vs. Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.
10-25: at Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.



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Rose ascends to leading role

During two years of winless football, the Campbell County Camels became complacent.

With a limited number of upperclassmen, the Camels' players didn't have to work as hard to see playing time.

Consequently, in 2018 Campbell County went 0-9 for a second consecutive season and saw its losing streak balloon to 19 games.

However, as the program prepares for 2019 with a full group of seniors for the first time in three years and new expectations, that complacency is dissipating, incoming head coach Andrew Rose said.

"I have demanded just as much and if not more out of players," Rose said. "It has made it to where some are not pleased because they were able to get away with quite a bit. Now it (appears) that I am shaking things up a little bit when in all reality, this is right along the norm for successful teams in 4A football."

The team returns eight to 10 starters on both offense and defense and lost just six seniors to graduation. That added depth has created more competition in the offseason, helping to make everyone better and potentially shaking up the lineups the Camels will have this fall.

"There may be some hurt feelings because others have stepped up to the plate and proved themselves," Rose said. "For the first time in a long time we have individuals on the teams we are in a position to be true leaders, not just verbally but by example."

On offense, the entire starting offensive line returns with seniors Dale Eliason, Adam French, Marcus Wilson and Austin Brandt and junior Colter Rankin.

Senior Kameron Martinson led the Camels with 428 rushing yards last year, while classmate Vijay Pitter added 172 yards and three rushing TDs.

And a handful of receivers, including senior Tanner Hilliard – who led the squad with 15 catches for 180 yards and two scores – return as well.

On defense, the Camels get back their top five tacklers – in order, junior Hunter Kramer, Pitter,

"Now it (appears) that I am shaking things up a little bit when in all reality, this is right along the norm for successful teams in 4A football."

~ **Coach Andrew Rose**

senior Dawsen Hayden, Rankin and junior Xander Beeson.

Kramer led the team in tackles with 21 solo and 32 assisted tackles, while Hayden led Gillette with five tackles for loss.

However, with a group of incoming sophomores who could potentially make moves into the starting lineup, Rose said no spots are guaranteed to returners.

Rose, a Gillette native who spent eight years as an assistant football coach, said the chance to coach his alma mater makes the rebuilding effort more personal.

"I love this team," Rose said. "I want them to be successful. I also want them to come back to their roots a little bit and understand what it means to be a part of something bigger than themselves."

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Indians are gaining experience

Cheyenne Central's final game of the 2018 season gave a glimpse into the Indians' future.

In a 34-0 loss to Thunder Basin in the Class 4A quarterfinals, the Indians started sophomores and freshmen in 10 different positions.

This year, with only six or seven seniors anticipated to be out and less than half of those expected to be key contributors, the Indians will have to look to those younger players – now juniors and sophomores – to keep Central competitive.

Second-year coach Mike Apodaca said the players now all have a year in his system, helping them transition into 2019 without having to learn new schemes and terminology as well as developing physically.

"I don't think we have any false impressions of sophomores

and JV juniors from last year setting the world on fire, but they just need to understand they just need to do their part," Apodaca said.

The Indians return three of their eight all-conference picks in senior quarterback Dawson Macleary, junior tight end Brady Storebo and junior linebacker Carter Lobatos.

Macleary will be one of Central's few, but key, senior leaders. Macleary threw for 1,977 yards and completed 16 touchdown passes against 15 interceptions in 2018.

"He is the general for lack of a better word," Apodaca said. "Dawson is so much comfortable in what we want to do. ... Just the fact that he's had a year in a system and a little more off-season time is critical."

Storebo was fourth for the In-

dians with 18 catches for 181 yards and one touchdown last year. Central graduated its top three receivers, though, making Storebo Central's top returning receiver.

Senior Andrew Johnson chipped in 108 receiving yards to finish fifth for Central.

Defensively, Lobatos led the Indians in several categories, including defensive points (151), solo tackles (43), assisted tackles (36) and tackles for loss (five). Lobatos is also Central's leading returning rusher and was second on the team a year ago; however, he only totaled 82 yards on a team that had just three rushing touchdowns last year.

On the defense, Lobatos will be surrounded by a bunch of newcomers, as Central graduated nine of its top 12 tacklers.

Johnson was fourth on the team in defensive points, while junior Nate Lundberg tied for ninth.

Apodaca said despite its youth, his team has had chances to get better with a full slate of offseason workouts, practices, camps and seven-on-seven tournaments.

"Those kids have been pretty committed to what we're doing," Apodaca said. "(They) just have to learn on the fly a little bit."

"... Those young guys are at least getting a ton of exposure, so hopefully the stage is a little less bright when it comes."



Mascot: Indians
Division: 4A
Colors: Red and black
Coach: Mike Apodaca, 2nd season at Central
2018 Record: 3-7, lost to Thunder Basin in quarterfinals

Key Players

QB: Dawson Macleary, Sr.
OL/DE: Tanner Bullock, Sr.
RB/LB: Carter Lobatos, Jr.
WR/DB: Andrew Johnson, Jr.

2019 Schedule

8-30: at Thunder Basin, 6 p.m.
9-6: vs. Sheridan, 6 p.m.
9-13: at Rock Springs, 6 p.m.
9-20: vs. Gillette, 7 p.m.
9-27: vs. Laramie, 7 p.m.
10-4: at Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.
10-11: at Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.
10-18: vs. Natrona, 7 p.m.
10-25: vs. Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.

Albertson's
 5800 Yellowstone Road Cheyenne



Mascot: Thunderbirds
Division: 4A
Colors: Columbia Blue & Black
Coach: Chad Goff, 14th year at East
2018 Record: 8-3, lost to Natrona in state semifinals

T-Birds have plenty of firepower

When Cheyenne East coach Chad Goff looks at his offense, he sees a lot of weapons.

The Thunderbirds return an explosive quarterback, all-state selections at both running back and wide receiver, and a bunch of other players who can light up defenses if given the chance.

They'll get those chances in 2019.

"We told our skill positions, 'You better make something happen when you touch the ball,'" Goff said. "... It's a good problem to have."

Running back Christian Anderton and wide receiver Chance Aumiller, both seniors, were all-state picks last year, while junior quarterback Graedyn Buell and senior wideout Cole Micheli were all-conference.

Buell started the season at quarterback and threw for 1,346 yards and 12 touchdowns – while adding

303 rushing yards and four rushing TDs, as well – before breaking his ankle against Rock Springs.

Anderton led East with 844 rushing yards and nine scores as the Thunderbirds' feature back.

The T-Birds spread the ball out through the air last year, with seven players notching at least 141 receiving yards but none more than 377. Of those seven, four return: Senior Ox Schroeder tied for second on the team with 263 receiving yards and led East with five receiving touchdowns, Aumiller had 255 yards and four TDs before moving to quarterback, Micheli notched 243 yards on 24 catches and Anderton had 10 catches for 141 yards.

The problem for the T-Birds' offense is as simple as its strength. Where the backs and receivers are full

Continued on Page 7



Bison will be tested early

In preparing for their first two games of 2019, Cheyenne South has two alternatives.

The Bison can be overwhelmed.

Or they can be opportunistic.

South coach Dan Gallas said he's hoping his team will take option No. 2.

By starting 2019 with road games against Natrona and Thunder Basin, who on paper are two of Class 4A's best teams, the Bison could play early spoiler.

Either way, they'll know where they stand early in the season.

"The kids know who we're playing," Gallas said. "Those teams are very good. ... But those are the teams we have to play. That's the great news, that we get to play the best and see how we measure up."

This year's Bison team lacks depth but returns key players in important spots, enough to keep South's hopes for the program's second playoff berth alive.

Senior running back Alex Soto is the lone returning all-conference choice the Bison have. Soto ran for 515 yards on 107 carries last year, leading the Bison's run-heavy offense. However, he's the only one of South's top four rushers to return.

"I think that what we're really looking for from him is his leadership," Gallas said. "We need him to lead us not only with his stats but with his attitude and his charisma."

Senior Hunter Scott led the squad with 15 catches and two touchdowns and was No. 2 on the team with 170 receiving yards. But Scott's return is uncertain, the other two of South's top three receivers graduated, and last year's starting quarterback, Cade Burns, has transferred, Gallas said.

On defense, senior Macarius Wright was No. 2 for South in defensive points last year and led the Bison with 29 solo tackles, four interceptions and four pass break-ups. Senior Joe Hanson was third in defensive points and tops for South with seven tackles for loss.

However, they're the only two of South's top seven tacklers to return this year.

"Those teams are very good. ... But those are the teams we have to play. That's the great news, that we get to play the best and see how we measure up."

~ Coach Dan Gallas

Sophomore Braeden Hughes (eighth) was also in South's top 10 tacklers a year ago.

Up front, the Bison will return a couple key linemen in seniors Griffin Beleski and Christian Martinez.

"They're going to be young (up front)," Gallas said. "It's going to take some time. We're going to have to gel quick and be ready to play."

Although South has yet to post a winning season since moving to the varsity level in 2011, Gallas said he likes what he sees heading into this season.

"We make little strides all the time and we continue to build on that," he said. "We build on the concept that we're going to bind as a team, work together, pump each other up, and work as hard as we can to make ourselves as good as we can."

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Makelky working on new culture

When Aaron Makelky took over as the head football coach at Kelly Walsh, he asked everyone associated with the program — from administrators to coaches to players to supporters — a series of questions.

What emerged from that research was a clearer understanding of the job ahead, as well as a vision for how to get there.

"The resources that they have (at KW) are immense," Makelky said, "the facilities, the coaching staff, people there who care. For a place that hasn't had a lot of win-loss success... there's a lot of people who care and are excited about what we do."

In 2017, KW finished with a winning record and a playoff victory for the first time since 2009; in 2018, the Trojans struggled and finished 3-7.

Former coach Jon Vance was let go, and Makelky was brought in from Class 2A Big Piney to develop the program.

"Our true focus this year is the culture of the team," Makelky said.

With that, Makelky said he plans to build KW's program by focusing on what the Trojans can do well and how they can cause problems for other

Key Players

WR: Emery Yoosook, Sr.

OL: Chance Burton, Sr.

OL/DL: Bastian Hansen, Sr.

OL/DL: Gatlin Edwards, Sr.

teams, finding ways to out-think and outplay opponents rather than trying to go toe-to-toe with them. That's clear in KW's team slogan for the year: "Built differently."

"When you go against the grain, you have an advantage," Makelky said.

Makelky said his opportunities to work with the team prior to fall camp were limited, but he liked what he saw from the players who committed to offseason camps and training.

On offense, Makelky said he planned to run an option offense, but run that offense through wide-open looks that can take advantage of mobile linemen and give athletes opportunities to make plays in one-on-one situations.

"I'd like to think with our kids and our support at Kelly Walsh and our resources, we could do a great job of running it... and be a pain in the butt for scout teams to run and for other defenses to prepare for," Makelky said.

To run that offense, Makelky will look to some experienced linemen — seniors Chance Burton, Bastian Hansen, Gatlin Edwards and Gavin Thomas. Three other seniors — slot receiver Emery Yoosook, running back Kole Kraus and defensive back Jevon Davis — also caught Makelky's eye early.

Yoosook was fifth on the team last year in defensive points and Davis was seventh. Thomas, an all-conference pick, tied for the team lead with two sacks, while Davis had a team-high five pass break-ups.

While the Xs and Os will be important, Makelky said developing the Trojans' attitude and building confidence will be the primary drivers for him and his staff this fall.

"I love the challenge," he said.



Mascot: Trojans

Division: 4A

Colors: Green, gold and white

Coach: Aaron Makelky, first year at Kelly Walsh

2018 Record: 3-7, lost to Natrona in state semifinals

2019 Schedule

8-30: at Laramie, 6 p.m.

9-6: vs. Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.

9-13: at Cheyenne South, 7 p.m.

9-20: vs. Rock Springs, 6 p.m.

9-27: at Sheridan, 7 p.m.

10-4: vs. Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.

10-11: at Natrona, 6 p.m.

10-18: at Thunder Basin, 6 p.m.

10-25: vs. Gillette, 6 p.m.



Key Players

QB: Graedyn Buell, Jr.

WR/DB: Chance Aumiller, Sr.

RB: Christian Anderton, Sr.

WR/DB: Ox Schroeder, Sr.



2019 Schedule

8-30: vs. Gillette, 7 p.m.

9-6: at Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.

9-13: vs. Thunder Basin, 6 p.m.

9-20: at Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.

9-27: at Natrona, 7 p.m.

10-4: at Laramie, 6 p.m.

10-11: vs. Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.

10-18: vs. Rock Springs, 6 p.m.

10-25: at Sheridan, 6 p.m.

EAST, Cont.

of players with experience, the offensive line is full of inexperience. Senior Zach Higgins is East's only returning starting lineman. However, Goff said he saw great progress from his linemen during a camp at Black Hills State in June.

"They started to understand their assignments better and just understand what the guy next to them is going to be doing," Goff said.

Defensively, the Thunderbirds graduated their top four tacklers, leaving Micheli — who had 95 defensive points, 41 total tackles and a team-high seven pass break-ups — as East's top returning tackler.

Aumiller finished seventh for East in defensive points and had a team-high seven interceptions, while Schroeder was ninth and junior Jaret Taylor was 11th.

Regardless, Goff said continuity will help East continue to be successful. Goff cited the fact that former players return to help the program helps "our youth to see high school football is a pretty

cool thing, and it's important to a lot of people."

Last year, East notched its seventh winning season in eight years.

"I think the biggest thing is we've been pretty lucky and blessed to have good kids, kids that work hard and show up to the opportunities to make themselves better," Goff said.

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Mascot: Plainsmen

Division: 4A

Colors: Maroon and white

Coach: Clint Reed, 3rd

year at Laramie

2018 Record: 4-6, lost to

Cheyenne East in state

quarterfinals

2019 Schedule

8-30: vs. Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.

9-6: at Rock Springs, 6 p.m.

9-13: at Gillette, 7 p.m.

9-20: vs. Natrona, 6 p.m.

9-27: at Cheyenne Central, 7 p.m.

10-4: vs. Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.

10-11: at Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.

10-18: vs. Sheridan, 6 p.m.

10-25: vs. Thunder Basin, 6 p.m.

Plainsmen building momentum

Laramie's 2018 senior class helped the program take a small leap.

Now, a small senior class, and a throng of juniors and sophomores, are responsible for helping the Plainsmen maintain that momentum.

The Plainsmen jumped from 3-7 to 4-6 last year, but the season still ended the way it has for each of the past six seasons – a loss in the first round of the Class 4A playoffs.

Laramie hasn't had a winning season since 2000, but the incremental steps help keep things moving in the right direction.

Coach Clint Reed said maintaining that momentum this year means on relying on a "talented but thin" senior class, "and they need to step up and be leaders for our team."

Added Reed, "Right now we're relying on a lot of sophomores and juniors. ... We're battling numbers again."

Laramie graduated four all-conference choices and almost 20 seniors, leaving the Plainsmen with just three returning starters on both offense and defense.

The offensive line returns two starters in seniors Calvin Webb and Jamen Livingston.

"It's really nice to have a couple guys there with experience who have played," Reed said.

However, the Plainsmen don't return a player who ran for more than 45 yards, threw for more than 88 or caught passes for more than 95 last

"Right now we're relying on a lot of sophomores and juniors. ... We're battling numbers again."

~ Coach Clint Reed

year.

Basically every position is up for grabs. The quarterback position is between junior Garrett Dodd and sophomore Jake Vigen, while junior running backs Colter Nunn and Isaac Sell are competing for the starting tailback spot.

The offense will benefit from the return of senior wide receiver Janson Adair, who missed last season due to injury, and juniors Connor Killpack and Caleb Eaton will also see time.

The defense will be young, as Nunn is the only one of Laramie's top seven tacklers to return this fall. Nunn, from the inside linebacker position, was second for the Plainsmen with 87 tackles last season and was third in total defensive points in

his sophomore year last year.

"We figured he's going to be the guy there for a couple years, so we wanted to get him in early," Reed said. " ... What's nice is in his offseason, he focused a lot on track, focused a lot on his quickness and speed."

Webb was eighth for Laramie in defensive points and had six tackles for loss. Eaton, who was 12th on the team in defensive points a year ago, is the only other returner to log more than 20 total tackles in 2018.

Despite a smaller senior class, Reed said having a young team isn't all bad for the program's long-term health.

"It's good to see that the program is generating a lot of interest," Reed said.

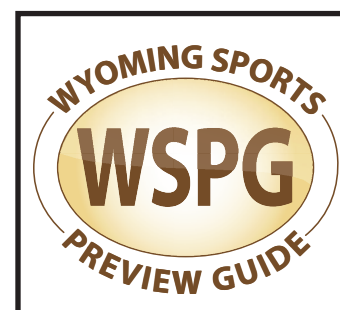
Key Players

OL/DE: Calvin Webb, Sr.

OL/DE: Jamen Livingston, Sr.

RB/LB: Colter Nunn, Jr.

QB/S: Garrett Dodd, Sr.



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Business as usual for Mustangs

Tradition alone doesn't win championships.

The Natrona County Mustangs know it, too.

One of the most tradition-rich football programs in the state, Natrona won its 18th state championship, and its fourth since 2010, by finishing 11-1 and beating three-time defending Class 4A champion Sheridan 28-14 in the 2018 Class 4A title game.

"Our guys expect to be really good," Natrona coach Steve Harshman said. " ... We've got a lot of tradition. We've been playing in that same spot (where the field is) for over 100 years and in that same stadium for well over 80.

" ... But it doesn't really have any bearing on the work we've got to do this year."

With that in mind, the Mustangs will try to remain competitive behind a small but hard-working senior class and a large group of underclassmen who will try to keep the tradition alive.

The Mustangs get back a pair of all-state players in seniors Dante Wallace and Johnathon True. Wallace was Natrona's featured back; he ran the football 235 times for 1,812 yards and 23 touchdowns last season. He also caught 10 passes for 105 yards.

Harshman said Wallace was aided by an offensive line that had a lot of experience; all five offensive linemen last year were seniors, leaving the Mustangs inexperienced up front this year.

"Like all offense, it begins with those five guys up front," he said.

With the inexperience on the line, Harshman said, "we're going to be really different, and as much as anything. ... (We) have to spread it around a lot, with our running back, quarterback

and other skill guys."

Junior Harrison Taubert split time at quarterback, completing 33 of 62 passes for 572 yards and nine touchdowns while running 70 times for 408 yards and six more scores.

Junior Morgan Pickett added 46 carries for 261 yards, and senior Cooper Quig, an all-conference pick, caught 10 passes for 169 yards and two touchdowns.

Defensively, the Mustangs graduated their top five tacklers, with True and his 32 total tackles – including nine for loss and four sacks – the top defensive returner. True is the only one of Natrona's top eight tacklers from last year to return, and Quig at ninth is the only other player out of Natrona's top 14 tacklers coming back.

Harshman said he was confident his up-and-coming players will put in the work to be ready to play in the fall and keep Natrona's tradition going.

Harshman said one of the beauties of football is "you don't play that many games, so you've got to enjoy the getting ready part. ... I think we have a good group of kids who have bought into that and really done that through the years."

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Lenhardt brings proven formula

In his first year as head coach at Rock Springs, Mark Lenhardt has clear priorities.

Those priorities start with the basics – the same basics that helped turn around the program at Torrington that Lenhardt led prior to taking over the Tigers.

"It is important we show our players what expect in terms of effort, practice habits and building a fundamental base," Lenhardt said. "Without those three components, scheme means nothing. That will be our primary focus this first year."

After leading Torrington to back-to-back appear-

ances in the Class 3A championship, Lenhardt said making the move to Rock Springs was based in part in the similarities he saw between the two communities.

"I was attracted to Rock Springs because it seemed to be a similar blue-collar, tough football type town as Torrington, but with more students to choose from," he said. "Rock Springs is a growing community and I love the fact that it is a one-school, one-team place. It has a small-school vibe with a large enrollment."

The Tigers' roster includes both size and experience, Lenhardt said. However, senior lineman Brandon Mortenson is the only returning all-conference player the Tigers have.

Seniors Favor Okere and Landon Toth were two of Rock Springs' top three rushers last year, with Okere notching 380 yards and Toth 358. Several other players could be in the mix in the backfield as Lenhardt looks for players to emerge.

"We will have to be running back by committee

Continued on Next Page

Mascot: Mustangs

Division: 4A

Colors: Orange and black

Coach: Steve Harshman, 29th season

2018 Record: 11-1, beat Sheridan in state championship

Key Players

QB: Harrison Taubert, Sr.

WR/CB: Cooper Quig, Sr.

TE/DE: Johnathon True, Sr.

RB: Dante Wallace, Sr.

2019 Schedule

8-30: vs. Cheyenne South, 7 p.m.

9-6: vs. Gillette, 7 p.m.

9-13: at Sheridan, 7 p.m.

9-20: at Laramie, 6 p.m.

9-27: vs. Cheyenne East, 7 p.m.

10-4: at Thunder Basin, 7 p.m.

10-11: vs. Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.

10-18: at Cheyenne Central, 7 p.m.

10-25: vs. Rock Springs, 6 p.m.

Mascot: Tigers

Division: 4A

Colors: Orange and black

Coach: Mark Lenhardt, first year at Rock Springs

2018 Record: 3-7, lost to Sheridan in state quarterfinals

2019 Schedule

8-30: at Sheridan, 6 p.m.

9-6: vs. Laramie, 6 p.m.

9-13: vs. Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.

9-20: at Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.

9-27: at Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.

10-4: vs. Gillette, 6 p.m.

10-11: vs. Thunder Basin, 6 p.m.

10-18: at Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.

10-25: at Natrona, 6 p.m.

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Mascot: Broncos

Division: 4A

Colors: Blue and yellow

Coach: Jeff Mowry, 2nd year at Sheridan

2018 Record: 9-3, lost to Natrona in state championship

Key Players

RB/LB: Garrett Coon, Sr.

QB/DB: Jacob Boint, Sr.

WR/DB: Toby Jacobs, Sr.

WR/DB: Ryan Sessions, Sr.

2019 Schedule

8-30: vs. Rock Springs, 6 p.m.

9-6: at Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.

9-13: vs. Natrona, 7 p.m.

9-20: at Thunder Basin, 7 p.m.

9-27: vs. Kelly Walsh, 7 p.m.

10-4: vs. Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.

10-11: at Gillette, 7 p.m.

10-18: at Laramie, 6 p.m.

10-25: vs. Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.

Broncs should be in title chase

For most first-year coaches and most programs, a state run-up finish is laudable.

Sheridan is no ordinary program. Under Jeff Mowry, in his first year leading Sheridan after several years as an assistant, the Broncos reached the Class 4A championship game for the fourth consecutive year – but for the first time in that stretch, the Broncos didn't win the state championship.

When Mowry looks back on his first year as head coach, he sees as close to a seamless transition as possible, where players and coaches continued the success the program had developed over the past decade. There's still a bit of regret, though.

"A state championship in the first year, obviously, would have been a little better," Mowry said.

As Sheridan tries to continue its program momentum in 2019, it will try to do so with a tested group that hasn't seen a ton of starts but has seen a lot of playing time. Senior Garrett Coon is the only one of Sheridan's five all-state and seven all-conference players to return. He's also one of four returning starters on defense and three on offense.

Coon was Sheridan's top tack-

"A state championship in the first year, obviously, would have been a little better."

~ Coach Jeff Mowry

ler last season, leading the Broncos with 167 defensive points, 101 total tackles, 69 assisted tackles, three fumble recoveries and three interceptions.

He was also Sheridan's No. 2 rusher, running 79 times for 458 yards and six touchdowns.

"He's got an incredible work ethic and he's really a guy you can build a program around," Mowry said.

The Broncos also return senior quarterback Jacob Boint, who completed 107 of 203 passes for 1,460 yards and 14 touchdowns.

Senior Toby Jacobs, who caught 16 passes for 237 yards to finish third on the team in both categories last year, is Sheridan's top returning receiver.

The line returns only one starter, but Mowry said he's excited by the potential he sees in a unit that had quite a bit of play-

ing time last year despite not always starting. The offensive line is also typically a key to Sheridan's success.

"We're a smaller team, and we've got to be really solid up front to run the ball against these bigger, more physical teams," he said. "Last year, we started five brand new offensive linemen in our first game, and that's not going to happen this year."

On defense, in addition to Coon the Broncos get back senior Ryan Sessions, who ranked fourth for Sheridan in defensive points last year and was fifth with 48 total tackles.

Senior Camden McArthur was seventh in defensive points and fourth in total tackles with 55, while Jacobs was eighth in defensive points. Of Sheridan's top 13 tacklers from 2018, they are the only four to return.

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TIGERS, Cont.

in the early stages of the season," he said.

Senior Justis Reese contributed 448 passing yards, completing 34 of 78 passes; however, the Tigers lose their top three receivers, and Reese will likely move to wide receiver as senior Seth Hymas takes over the quarterback position. Okere, with seven catches for 80 yards, is the only returning receiver with more than 40 receiving

yards in 2018.

"We have not been a real proficient passing team the last few years, so that will be a work in progress for us as well to achieve the balance we would like to have," Lenhardt said.

The defense returns a similar number of contributors, with five of the Tigers' top 10 tacklers returning in 2019.

Senior Chase Petty leads Rock Springs' returners with 55 total tackles last year, including 24 solo tackles.

Toth was fifth, while senior Randon Gresham was sixth, junior Blaine Richards was eighth and senior Ross Brown was 10th.

However, returning players start with no preconceptions on Lenhardt's end, he said, and players may fit into different roles based on the needs the program has.

"I want to evaluate the players with a clean slate and see how they fit into what we will be trying to do," he said.



Key Players

RB/WR/DB: Favor Okere, Sr.

QB/DB: Seth Hymas, Sr.

OL/DE: Randon Gresham, Sr.

WR/DB: Chase Petty, Sr.

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Mascot: Bolts

Division: 4A

Colors: Blue and Silver

Coach: Trent Pikula, 3rd year at Thunder Basin

2018 Record: 9-2, lost to Sheridan in state semifinals

Key Players

QB: Mason Hamilton, Sr.

WR/CB: Blaine Allen, Sr.

LB: Caleb Driskill, Sr.

C: Alec Ehrhard, Sr.

2019 Schedule

8-30: vs. Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.

9-6: vs. Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.

9-13: at Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.

9-20: vs. Sheridan, 7 p.m.

9-27: at Gillette, 7 p.m.

10-4: vs. Natrona, 7 p.m.

10-11: at Rock Springs, 6 p.m.

10-18: vs. Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.

10-25: at Laramie, 6 p.m.

Bolts building on initial success

From the first day, Thunder Basin football has had little trouble letting the rest of Wyoming know who it was.

Now in its third year as a program, the new guys from Gillette have an established style, attitude and tradition – something that often takes much longer to establish at startup programs.

"We feel like we really took strides in establishing our identity and what it means to be a Bolt," coach Trent Pikula said. "Our kids have bought into who we are and where we want to be every year."

Last season, the 'Bolts reached the Class 4A semifinals but lost 14-7 at home to Sheridan.

From that, though, Thunder Basin enters 2019 both motivated and experienced.

The 'Bolts return a pair of all-state players in quarterback Mason Hamilton and wide receiver Blaine Allen, both seniors, and five all-conference picks.

Hamilton led Class 4A in almost every major passing category; he completed 199 of 326 passes for 2,592 yards and 31 touchdowns. He was the only quarterback in Wyoming, regardless of classification, to throw for more than 2,000 yards last season.

And Allen led 4A with 805 receiving yards, tied for the class lead with 12 receiving touchdowns and finished second among big-school receivers with 46 catches.

"These two make up a pretty nice tandem for us," Pikula said. "They both had incredible seasons as juniors and we hope to see that chemistry work again in 2019."

Moreover, Pikula said Hamilton and Allen have taken on leadership roles beyond the field "and have worked extremely hard this offseason to continue to get better."

The 'Bolts get back their top two rushers, as well. Senior Tyson Edwards was Thunder Basin's top rusher last year with 120 carries for 794 yards and 11 touchdowns, and junior Jaxon Pikula added 67 carries for 486 yards and five TDs.

Behind Allen, Thunder Basin returns three of its top four receivers, with senior Tanner Richards (410 receiving yards) and Edwards

"We feel like we really took strides in establishing our identity and what it means to be a Bolt. Our kids have bought into who we are and where we want to be every year."

~ Coach Trent Pikula

(220) returning.

That experience allows the 'Bolts to be more diverse – something opposing teams got a taste of last year and something Pikula said he wants to continue.

"As the year progressed last year, we really opened up our playbook and let the kids run with it," Pikula said.

However, the offensive line loses four starters, leaving senior center Alec Ehrhard as the lone returning starter on that unit.

Thunder Basin's defense does lose its top three tacklers. Senior Colton Randall, who was fourth on the team in defensive points, is Thunder Basin's top returning tackler and leads all returners with 53 total tackles and six tackles for loss. Carr was fifth in defensive points, senior Caleb Driskill was sixth and Richards tied for ninth.

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State Champs
Star Valley
Braves

2018 State Playoffs

State Championship

Star Valley 35, Torrington 14

State Semifinals

Star Valley 33, Cody 0

Torrington 22, Jackson 21

State Quarterfinals

Star Valley 48, Worland 0

Cody 29, Douglas 26

Torrington 34, Evanston 7

Jackson 32, Lander 17

Four players to watch

Jeydon Cox, Jackson

2,257: That's the number of rushing yards Cox had last year. It's an insane level of productivity, and the Broncos will be one of the strongest teams in the state if for no other reason than Cox's return.

R.J. Cazier, Star Valley

While we're talking about running backs, let's not overlook Cazier, who ran for 1,212 yards last year in helping the Braves to the 3A championship. The consistency Cazier gives to the Braves will be key.

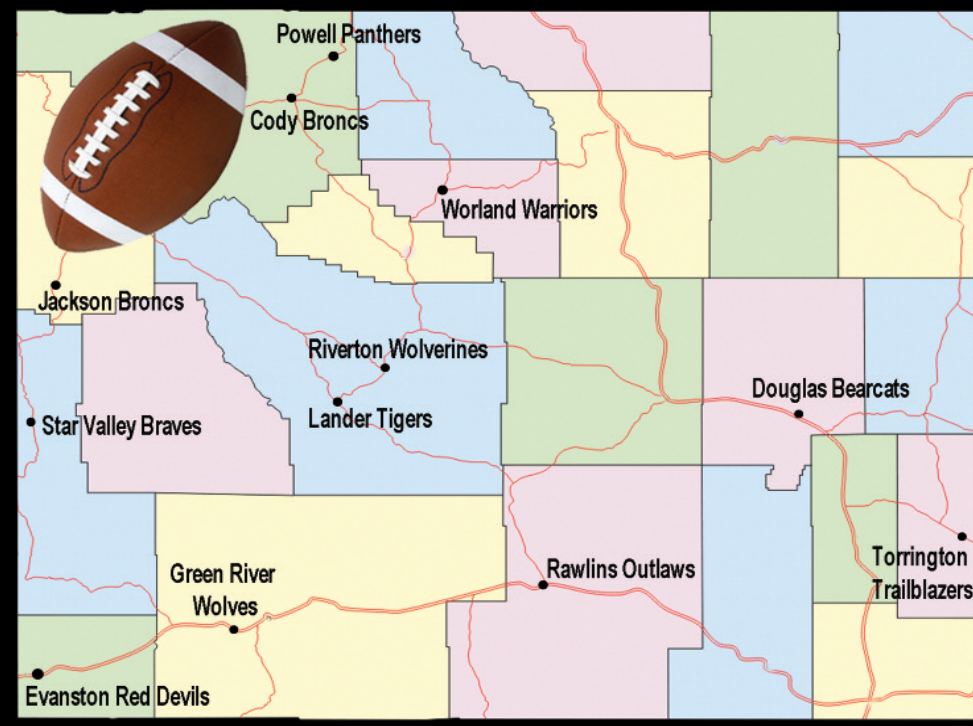
Chase Merrell, Star Valley

Merrell had a breakout junior season. He was Star Valley's leading receiver with 23 catches for 496 yards, and he was also the Braves' No. 2 tackler and led 3A with eight interceptions.

Parker Merritt, Star Valley

Merritt was the 3A West lineman of the year last year as a junior. He was a key piece of the Braves' rushing attack on offense, and on defense he efficiently racked up 50 tackles.

3A Preview



Star Valley, Jackson could collide

By Patrick Schmiedt

Four questions to answer

Can anyone catch Star Valley? Probably not. The Braves return five all-state and seven all-conference players; both those totals are higher than any other 3A team in the state. They return key players on the line and in the backfield.

Who's the Braves' biggest threat? Someone named the Broncos. Cody has four quality all-state players returning and has the most diversity and athleticism of any potential title-game opponent. Jackson, meanwhile, returns a ton of playmakers and is a legit title threat, as well.

Will the East Conference produce anyone who's a threat for the title? It's not likely. Douglas returns three all-staters and is the early favorite to win the conference, but the Bearcats will need something special to hang with the best from the West.

So, I should watch Star Valley every chance I get? If I have a chance to watch any 3A team this fall, I'm watching Jackson. Jeydon Cox is a dynamic rushing threat. Unofficially, only six Wyoming players have hit 2,000 rushing yards in a season, and Cox could be the first to make it happen twice.

Four key games

Jackson at Cody, Sept. 27. Both Bronco squads have visions of championships this season – and for good reason. The West Conference opener for both squads is key to fulfilling that vision, with the winner taking the

early lead for the conference title.

Torrington at Douglas, Oct. 4. Either Torrington or Douglas has won the East Conference championship every year since 2013. One way or another, the path to the East's top playoff seed still goes through this game.

Jackson at Star Valley, Oct. 11. One of the toughest things for Jackson this season is that the games that look like the Broncos' toughest – the ones against Cody and Star Valley – are both on the road. If Jackson can sneak out this road victory in a rivalry game, look out.

Star Valley at Cody, Oct. 18. This game between the Braves and Broncos has always been a key West Conference game. The past two years, though, the rivalry has taken on added meaning, as a pair of semifinal meetings has added a competitive spirit to a game that's already full of it.

Predicted order of finish

East Conference: Douglas, Worland, Torrington, Lander, Rawlins, Riverton.

West Conference: Star Valley, Jackson, Cody, Powell, Green River, Evanston.

Way-too-early title-game score prediction

Star Valley 35, Jackson 21

The Braves and the Broncos have enough returning talent to be the preseason favorites. Several things could derail this matchup – maybe a Cody victory in the West Conference opener, maybe a surge from Douglas, maybe a playoff upset.

3A EAST

DOUGLAS BEARCATS

PAGE 13

Bearcats have strength in numbers

The past two seasons have brought the Douglas Bearcats both frustration and an opportunity for reflection.

For the second straight season, Douglas finished 6-3 and lost in the first round of the Class 3A playoffs – the first time in coach Jay Rhoades' 13 seasons in Douglas that the Bearcats haven't won a playoff game in back-to-back seasons.

However, Rhoades said he was happy with the effort his players gave regardless of the outcome of the postseason games.

"I don't really feel like any season is not a success when our kids go out and play as hard as they can," Rhoades said. "... When it's all said and done, you really just have to evaluate where you're at as a program by the kids who are coming out of it. It can't be just

about whether you're going to the finals every year."

Consistently competitive, the Bearcats will have a good opportunity to capitalize on their effort and cultivate post-season success.

Douglas returns three all-state selections – triple the rest of the East Conference combined – and boasts one of the most formidable offensive and defensive lines in 3A.

The offensive line has four returning starters in seniors Edel Diaz-Jaime, Cody Pinkerton and Dawson Stinson and junior Kody Micke. Diaz-Jaime and Pinkerton were all-state selections last year.

"Returning four starting offensive linemen is always a huge plus," Rhoades said.

Senior quarterback A.J. Yeaman threw for 1,082 yards and 20 touchdowns last year, earn-

ing all-state honors in the process. He also ran for 166 yards and seven touchdowns. With Douglas' top two rushers graduating, Yeaman is Douglas' top returning rusher.

The Bearcats will also have to break in a new receiving corps; Douglas doesn't return any receivers who had more than one catch last year.

"Last year being a first-year starter, a lot was kind of thrust up on him, but he had senior receivers and backs to rely on," Rhoades said. "So this year, it's going to be his turn to be relied on."

Junior Gabe Borman, who was third on the team in defensive points and second in total tackles last year, is Douglas' leading returning tackler. Pinkerton was fourth in defensive points and tops for Douglas in tackles for loss with six and fumble recoveries with four.

However, Borman and Pinkerton are the only two of Douglas' top nine tacklers to come back in 2019.

Rhoades said he's still pleased with the direction of the program and what's been built there in the past decade-plus. It's a method that's brought both stability and success: The Bearcats have had just one losing season since Rhoades took over in 2006.

"We stay pretty consistent with what we do," he said.



Mascot: Bearcats

Division: 3A

Conference: East

Colors: Blue and red

Coach: Jay Rhoades, 14th year at Douglas

2018 Record: 6-3, lost to Cody in playoffs

Key Players

QB: A.J. Yeaman, Sr.

OL/DL: Cody Pinkerton, Sr.

OL/DL: Edel Diaz-Jaime, Sr.

OL/DL: Dawson Stinson, Sr.

2019 Schedule

8-31: at Wheatland, 10 a.m.

(Zero Week)

9-6: vs. Buffalo, 7 p.m.

9-13: vs. Belle Fourche, S.D., 7 p.m.

9-20: at Powell, 6 p.m.

***9-27:** at Rawlins, 7 p.m.

***10-4:** vs. Torrington, 7 p.m.

***10-11:** at Worland, 7 p.m.

***10-18:** at Lander, 7 p.m.

***10-25:** vs. Riverton, 7 p.m.

*** Conference game**

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Tigers looking to take next step

Mascot: Tigers

Division: 3A

Conference: East

Colors: Green and black

Coach: John Scott, 2nd year at Lander

2018 Record: 4-5, lost to Jackson in quarterfinals

2019 Schedule

8-30: vs. Pinedale, 7 p.m. (Zero Week)

9-6: vs. Green River, 7 p.m.

9-13: vs. Powell, 7 p.m.

9-20: at Evanston, 7 p.m.

***9-27:** at Torrington, 7 p.m.

***10-4:** vs. Riverton, 7 p.m.

***10-11:** at Rawlins, 7 p.m.

***10-18:** vs. Douglas, 7 p.m.

***10-25:** at Worland, 7 p.m.

*** Conference game**

The beginnings of a remarkable program turnaround began last season in Lander.

In coach John Scott's first season, the Tigers doubled their win total from the previous four seasons combined; the Tigers went 2-31 between 2014-17 but went 4-5 and qualified for the Class 3A playoffs in 2018. Ask Scott what changed, though, and it's tough to pinpoint.

"Not a lot changed," Scott said. "Much was in place from previous head coach. The seniors took the opportunity upon their shoulders and we prepared and played with a purpose. The seniors realized they had a one-time shot and made the most of it."

For the Tigers to continue their success in 2019, they'll need to rely on another group of seniors to preserve the momentum built in Scott's first year, much like last year's seniors.

However, Lander graduated all three of its all-state picks and four of its five all-conference choices, as senior John Fawson is Lander's only returning all-conference player.

Key Players

WR: John Fawson, Sr.

RB: Jack Sweeney, Jr.

RB/CB: Eli Mazurie, Jr.

QB/FS: Tyler Massey, Sr.

"I am sure we will have more than our share of growing pains," Scott said. "The few upperclassmen we have must provide to the younger players a sense of confidence that they are not alone out on the field. Young guys basically have to learn how to survive first. Then once they realize that they can compete, we move forward."

Scott refused to discuss any specific returning players and would not confirm if players who played key roles on last year's team as underclassmen were returning to the team.

However, juniors Jack Sweeney and Eli Mazurie led the Tigers in rushing last year. Sweeney carried 96 times for 401 yards, while Mazurie added

92 carries for 319 yards.

Senior Ty Massey had some reps at quarterback, finishing 17-of-31 for 221 yards. Fawson is Lander's top returning receiver; he was second last year with 19 catches for 248 yards.

Sweeney led Lander in defensive points last season and fronted the Tigers with 28 solo tackles. He's the only one of Lander's top five tacklers to return, as only two of Lander's top 10 defensive players are anticipated back for 2019. Mazurie tied for sixth in defensive points, while Fawson was 11th.

Scott — a former head coach at Black Hills State who's also led Gillette, Kemmerer and Tongue River to either championships or championship-game appearances — said the rebuilding process at Lander has bressembled his other coaching efforts.

"It is all the same," Scott said. "We go through almost exactly the same scenarios. Unlike the game of Monopoly, there is no 'Advance to Go.' We are enduring and battling through the same issues."

Offseason regimen could pay off

Riverton finished 0-9 last year — just the program's second winless season since 1932.

Following that finish, coach Pat Patterson used the lessons learned to bring the Wolverines, and everyone associated with the program, to an awakening.

"You've got to work in the offseason," Patterson said. "Last year we took 18 kids to camp, and we didn't have great turnout for our summer weights. So at the end of the season, I confronted the parents and said, 'This is what happens when we don't do what we need to do to get better in the offseason.'"

This year, the Wolverines took 40 players to summer camps, about two-thirds of their roster. Weight room attendance is up. Seniors have been vocal leaders.

"We've had a much better summer," Patterson said. "... We've got a different mentality." Patterson said he's hopeful the changes will pay off this fall, turning close losses into victories

— Riverton lost two conference games by three points apiece and another by eight.

Coming into 2019, the Wolverines have some holes to fill; Riverton graduated its top two rushers, its quarterback and its top receiver. However, the team still returns more than half its starters and a huge chunk of contributors on defense, including four of its top five tacklers.

Seniors Cade Werbelow and Zane Taylor, both all-conference choices last year, and junior Brock Hinkle were Riverton's top three players in defensive points last year. Werbelow led the Wolverines with 66 total tackles, 20 solo. Hinkle had 36 total tackles while Taylor and senior Blake Rumery-Rico had 35 apiece.

Senior Dillon Lange was eighth in defensive points and had 26 total tackles, while juniors Broden Mathes and Kaden Gautenbein each added more than 20 total tackles last year.

Patterson said that while the returners notched lots of tackles

in 2018, his hope is for those tallies to go down.

"We don't want to be on the field. Defensively, we want to be three and out," he said. "... That's just something we haven't been very good at."

Offensively, Patterson said the Wolverines don't have much speed but do have talented linemen and depth at running back, leading to a change in offensive philosophy.

"Where we've been more of a run-and-gun team, we're going to be more ground-and-pound," Patterson said.

Hinkle, who ran 46 times for 113 yards in 2018, is the team's leading returning rusher, and Werbelow, Rumery-Rico and senior Cade Campbell will also see time in the backfield. Junior Treysen Draper, who caught seven passes for 122 yards, is the leading returning receiver.

The line will be led by Taylor and a pair of juniors in center Rylan Koehn and tackle Skyler Soule.

Mascot: Wolverines
Division: 3A
Conference: East
Colors: Cardinal and white
Coach: Pat Patterson, 7th year at Riverton
2018 Record: 0-9, did not qualify for playoffs

Key Players

C/DE: Ryan Koehn, Jr.

OL/DL: Zane Taylor, Sr.

TB/LB: Caden Werbelow, Sr.

FB/LB: Blake Rumery-Rico, Sr.

2019 Schedule

8-30: vs. Powell, 7 p.m. (Zero Week)

9-6: vs. Cody, 7 p.m.

9-13: at Evanston, 7 p.m.

9-20: at Star Valley, 6 p.m.

***9-27:** vs. Worland, 7 p.m.

***10-4:** at Lander, 7 p.m.

***10-11:** vs. Torrington, 7 p.m.

***10-18:** vs. Rawlins, 7 p.m.

***10-25:** at Douglas, 7 p.m.

*** Conference game**

Outlaws continue building process

When Clayton McSpadden looks back at his first year as Rawlins' head coach, he sees bright spots.

All too often, though, those bright spots are overshadowed by the Outlaws' 2-6 record.

"If you win everything as a new coach your first year, I'm not sure if it's a good omen or a bad one," McSpadden said.

Although McSpadden said he wanted to send last year's seniors out with more success, the 2018 season could eventually be seen as the one that helped put Rawlins on a path to more success.

This year, the Outlaws start ahead of where they were last year. Multiple factors work into that: McSpadden and the other Rawlins coaches

had more opportunities for offseason work, including camps and individual work; the team will bring back 15 seniors; two of those seniors, Kadin Forney and Kie Foster, are returning all-conference choices; and maybe most importantly, Rawlins installed new weight room equipment this summer, prompting a resurgence in offseason weight training.

"Kids have been pumping iron like crazy," McSpadden said. "It's everything a coach dreams of." McSpadden said he will rely on those 15 seniors to lead the Outlaws, leading a team of about 50 total players.

Forney was Rawlins' No. 2 rusher a year ago, running 103 times for 472 yards. Senior Kenny Raymond also returns in the backfield; he ran 37 times for 110 yards last year.

The Outlaws will need to fill the quarterback spot, but McSpadden said senior Quinten Romero should fill that position. Foster and senior Victor Fonseca will provide experience on the offensive and defensive lines.

Forney is also Rawlins' top returning receiver; with the Outlaws' top two receivers from last year graduated, Forney's three catches for 43 yards last season is enough to give him that honor.



Mascot: Outlaws

Division: 3A

Conference: East

Colors: Red and black

Coach: Clayton McSpadden, 2nd year at Rawlins

2018 Record: 2-6, did not qualify for playoffs

Key Players

RB/LB: Kadin Forney, Sr.

WR/DB: Connor Mendez, Sr.

OL/DL: Kie Foster, Sr.

OL/DL: Victor Fonseca, Sr.

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"If you win everything as a new coach your first year, I'm not sure if it's a good omen or a bad one,"

~ Coach Clayton McSpadden

Forney also led the defense in total points, racking up 112 total tackles — including team highs with 49 solo tackles and 60 assists. Forney's defensive point total was more than double Rawlins' second-place player.

"Putting him at middle linebacker, I was always confident that he was going to make the tackle," McSpadden said. "... (This year) he's put on the size, he's put in the time in the weight room. ... He's going to make

2019 Schedule

8-30: at Lyman, 2 p.m.

9-6: vs. Evanston, 7 p.m.

9-13: vs. Green River, 7 p.m.

9-20: at Cody, 6 p.m.

***9-27:** vs. Douglas, 7 p.m.

***10-4:** at Worland, 7 p.m.

***10-11:** vs. Lander, 7 p.m.

***10-18:** at Riverton, 7 p.m.

***10-25:** at Torrington, 7 p.m.

those tackles behind the line and not for a gain of two or three."

To keep some of the pressure off Forney in that spot, McSpadden said the Outlaws will unveil an entirely new defensive system.

Raymond was fourth on the team in defensive points and third in tackles, while Foster tied Cody Newbrough for seventh.

Seniors Connor Mendez and Kyson Robinson also had at least 20 tackles apiece last season.



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Mascot: Trailblazers

Division: 3A

Conference: East

Colors: Maroon and gold

Coach: Russell Stienmetz,

first year at Torrington

2018 Record: 10-1, lost to Star Valley in state championship

2019 Schedule

8-31: at Southeast Jamboree, 9 a.m. (Zero Week)

9-6: vs. Glenrock, 7 p.m.

9-13: at Gering, Neb., 7 p.m.

9-20: at Green River, 7 p.m.

***9-27:** vs. Lander, 7 p.m.

***10-4:** at Douglas, 7 p.m.

***10-11:** at Riverton, 7 p.m.

***10-18:** vs. Worland, 7 p.m.

***10-25:** vs. Rawlins, 7 p.m.

*** Conference game**

Key Players

OL/DL: Corbin Harris, Sr.

OL/DL: Tyler Schaub, Sr.

OL/DL: Rhiley Grubbs, Jr.

QB/DB: Sam Firminhac, Sr.

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Blazers will have new look

In many ways, this year's Torrington team will be quite similar to last year's team, which went 10-0 in its first 10 games before losing to Star Valley 35-14 in the Class 3A championship.

In two key ways, though, it won't.

The Trailblazers will have a new coach and almost an entirely new lineup; however, new head coach Russell Stienmetz has spent 12 years on the Trailblazers' staff as an assistant, easing the transition into 2019.

"We know what the expectations of the program are and we will strive to keep that reputation going," Stienmetz said. "I am fortunate to have this group of (coaches) around me during the season. I trust and believe in my assistant coaches to demand a great deal from the players, (and) that will in turn keep the program at or near the top."

The players on the field will be almost completely new, though. Torrington graduated all eight of its all-state choices, and seniors Corbin Harris and

"Once these players get some confidence, they should be ready for some challenges."

~ Coach Russell Stienmetz

Tyler Schaub are the lone holdovers from 11 all-conference picks. Gone from 2018 are Torrington's top five rushers, its quarterback, its top six receivers and its top nine tacklers.

When Stienmetz looks at his team, he sees some bright spots — namely an offensive line that returns three starters.

"The experience is in the offensive line and this is where we will build from," Stienmetz said.

"This is a good place to build from as I believe if we are going to be successful, then our line needs to be good and we have to establish a running game."

Up front, the 'Blazers bring

back Harris, Schaub and junior Rhiley Grubbs on the offensive line. Senior Sam Firminhac will likely be called on to lead the team at quarterback, and a sophomore class that's raw but talented could be asked to fill other spots.

Stienmetz said senior tight end/linebacker Jackson Jones and junior lineman Gabe Mitchell will help add experience and depth to the roster.

"Our skill players are going to be inexperienced, but us coaches have talked about how simplicity will be significant for the growth of the players," Stienmetz said. "Once these players get some confidence, they should be ready for some challenges."

The transition on defense will be eased by Stienmetz, who spent nine years as the defensive coordinator. The Trailblazers led Class 3A in total defense, allowing only 235.4 yards per game, but only two starters return from that unit.

Harris is Torrington's leading returning tackler. He was 10th on the squad in defensive points and sixth in tackles with 43. Grubbs, who had 31 tackles last year, is the only other player on the team to have more than 10 total tackles last season.

Good Luck Trail Blazers!

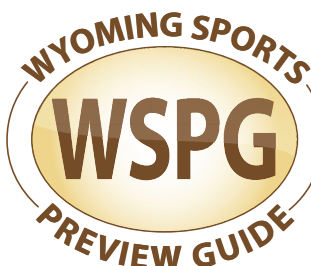


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Warriors gaining consistency

The Worland Warriors are piecing together the elements not only for a breakthrough season, but also for a breakthrough program.

Entering his third season as head coach, Ryan Utterback is excited to see what his returners can do with both experience in his system and experience on the field.

"I think having the same things in place for a while and knowing what to expect is something that's definitely helping the program," Utterback said.

Last year, Worland qualified for the playoffs for the second consecutive year. And for the second consecutive year, the Warriors were outmatched by a conference champion in the first round of the playoffs, as eventual Class 3A champion Star Valley ended Worland's season with a 48-0 shutout in the first round last year.

However, the Warriors return seven starters on both offense and defense. The defense in particular is one of 3A's most experienced, boosting Worland's excitement for 2019.

Moreover, Utterback said the Warriors can add, change, remove or rework bits of their approach thanks to the continuity that already exists in the program, something that was tougher to do prior to this year.

"It's nice to be able to add

"I think having the same things in place for a while and knowing what to expect is something that's definitely helping the program."

~ Coach Ryan Utterback

those things, or maybe take things a step further with some certain nuances," he said.

Senior Devon Mercado, Worland's only all-state selection in 2018, comes back this year to lead the Warriors. Mercado led Worland's rushing game, carrying 81 times for a team-high 492 yards and four touchdowns.

Also back for Worland's offense is senior quarterback Rudy Sanford, who completed 48 of 97 passes for 529 yards and seven touchdowns and also ran for 194 yards and three more TDs last year.

Two of Worland's top three receivers also come back in senior Luke Mortimer (13 catches, 172 yards) and Mercado (eight catches, 150 yards).

Up front, Worland doesn't have much size or experience, but senior Brody Hernandez returns as a starter in that unit, and "we've got some good athletic

guys we can put in there," Utterback said.

On defense, the Warriors get back a huge group, with eight of the team's top nine tacklers scheduled to come back.

That group is fronted by senior Chase "Tudge" Hofmann, who was second on the squad with 80 total tackles last year.

Mercado led the squad with three interceptions and three pass break-ups and added 41 tackles.

In addition, Mortimer, Sanford and Hernandez will join seniors Jaime Luna, Domanic Hartley, Brandon Haun and Regan Schmeltzer and junior Luke Goncalves to form a solid returning group. Each of these returners had at least 20 tackles last season.

"It's nice when you have guys who have been there a number of years and know the system," Utterback said.



Mascot: Warriors

Division: 3A

Conference: West

Colors: Black and orange

Coach: Ryan Utterback, 3rd year at Worland

2018 Record: 3-6, lost to Star Valley in state quarterfinals

Key Players

RB/DB: Devon Mercado, Sr.

WR/DB: Luke Mortimer, Sr.

RB/OLB: Jaime Luna, Sr.

QB: Rudy Sanford, Jr.

2019 Schedule

8-31: at Buffalo, 1 p.m. (Zero Week)

9-6: at Powell, 7 p.m.

9-13: vs. Cody, 7 p.m.

9-20: at Jackson, 5 p.m.

***9-27:** at Riverton, 7 p.m.

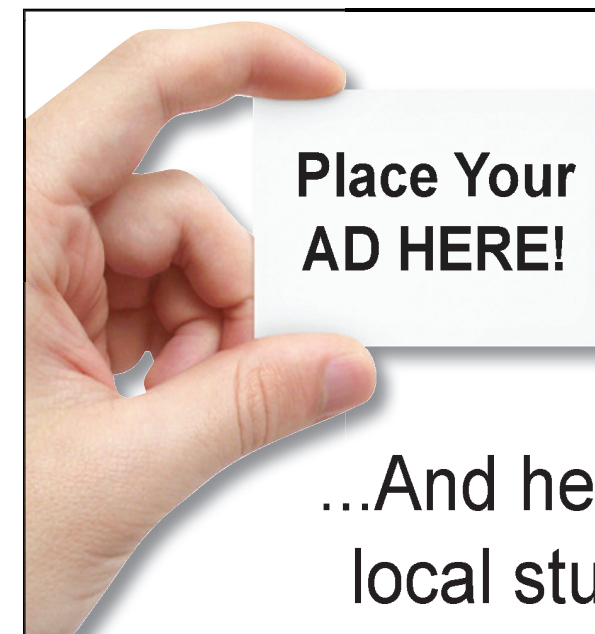
***10-4:** vs. Rawlins, 7 p.m.

***10-11:** vs. Douglas, 7 p.m.

***10-18:** at Torrington, 7 p.m.

***10-25:** vs. Lander, 7 p.m.

*** Conference game**

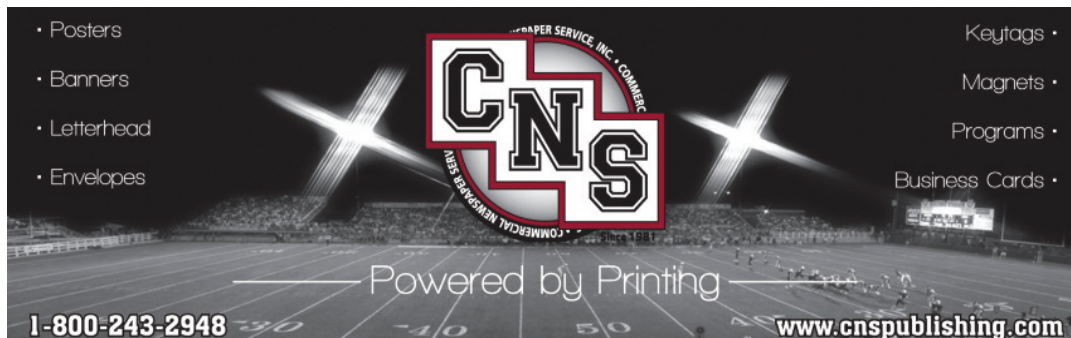


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Broncs have seasoned group

This year, the Cody football team has what every program wants year in and year out.

Success usually happens when talented, hard-working seniors lead the squad, and that's exactly what the Broncos have this fall. Cody returns four senior all-state players – second only to Star Valley in Class 3A. Beyond those four, the Broncos have a senior class that's not only deep but has also developed good chemistry.

"They have good numbers and have played together for a long time," McFadden said. "They are multi-sport kids that work year-round to be better athletes and leaders."

Those returners include the four all-state choices from a year ago: Charlie Beaudrie, Tristan Blatt, Keith Connor and Jeff Williams. In addition, seniors Devon Brown and Hunter Hays were all-conference picks, and seniors like running back/linebacker Matt Sandoval and lineman Duncan Radakovich add depth and expertise.

Together, McFadden said the Broncos have good team speed and depth at several positions, although several offensive linemen will be enthusiastic but, early in the season, will be untested.

McFadden said the Broncos will "have some very talented (linemen) waiting for their chance to step it up."

Beaudrie is the Broncos' main offensive threat. He led the team with 134 carries, 960 rushing yards and 16 rushing touchdowns. He also tied for the team lead in catches with 15 while piling up 212 receiving yards.

"He is a threat to score any

"They have good numbers and have played together for a long time."

~ Coach Matt McFadden

time he touches the ball," McFadden said.

Hays, who McFadden called "a coach on the field," completed 65 passes for 874 yards and eight touchdowns last year, and Blatt led Cody in receiving yards with 243 on 11 catches.

Together, McFadden said Hays' experience will allow for an expanded passing game that can take pressure off Beaudrie and the other running backs.

Senior Matt Sandoval leads a deep crew of returners on defense that returns four of its top five tacklers – a fact not lost on McFadden.

"It allows us to play faster and to get deeper into our playbook," he said. "These kids are very ver-

satile and athletic."

As a unit, the Broncos return seven defensive starters, including all of their linebackers and most of their defensive backs.

Sandoval was second on the team in defensive points and notched 71 total tackles, including a team-high 33 solo tackles.

Connor added 67 tackles and tied for the team lead in tackles for loss (eight), sacks (four) and fumble recoveries (two).

Beaudrie was fourth for Cody in defensive points and was second with 29 solo tackles, while senior Paul Lovera was fifth.

Blatt was sixth, Williams ninth and Radakovich was 10th in defensive points, all racking up at least 40 points.

Mascot: Broncos

Division: 3A

Conference: West

Colors: Blue and gold

Coach: Matt McFadden, 7th year

2018 Record: 7-3, lost to Star Valley in state championship

Key Players

RB/DB: Charlie Beaudrie, Sr.

OL/DL: Keith Connor, Sr.

QB: Hunter Hays, Sr.

OL/DL: Jeff Williams, Sr.

2019 Schedule

8-30: Big Horn, 3 p.m. (Zero Week)

9-6: at Riverton, 7 p.m.

9-13: at Worland, 7 p.m.

9-20: vs. Rawlins, 6 p.m.

***9-27:** vs. Jackson, 6 p.m.

***10-4:** at Evanston, 7 p.m.

***10-11:** vs. Powell, 7 p.m.

***10-18:** vs. Star Valley, 5 p.m.

***10-25:** at Green River, 7 p.m.

*** Conference game**

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New coach to lead Red Devils

A football season tends to be full of peaks and valleys, but Evanston's 2018 season was basically one big peak followed by one big valley.

Evanston started 5-0 but finished 0-3, compiling an overall mark of 6-4. The 2019 season will be one of transition, as the program looks to reinvent itself with a new coach, a new offensive philosophy and a cadre of up-and-coming players all looking to bring the program out of the valley that ended last season.

New head coach Jim Burton brings 13 years of coaching experience, including the past three years as the freshman team's head coach at Evanston.

"It has always been a goal to head coach high school football," Burton said. "The players here are hardworking and very passionate about the game. I am excited to be a part of that."

Entering 2019, Evanston has work to do. The Red Devils graduated all seven of their all-conference choices. They also lost their top six rushers, their top two re-



ceivers and seven of their top 10 tacklers.

Consequently, Burton said the team he inherits will be "very young on both sides of the ball."

"The younger group is talented, but needs to come together and work hard to fill some big shoes," Burton said.

The biggest change Burton brings to the Red Devils comes on offense, where the team will change to a triple option offense, one that fits small, but tough, offensive linemen.

"We have had some time to work on it," Burton said. "It'll be a big adjustment and take some time. The system fits the type of lineman that we have year in and out. ... Players are getting more excited about it as we go."

Senior David Baxter took

about half the snaps under center for Evanston last year, finishing with 242 passing yards and three touchdowns. However, Burton said the Red Devils will enter fall camp with open competition for the quarterback spot between Baxter, junior Jagger Mitchell and sophomore Jaxon Moore.

The top returning receiver is senior Rigden Wagstaff, who was third for Evanston in 2018 with eight catches for 75 yards. Senior Jesus Quintano returns as a key leader on the offensive line.

Burton enters 2019 excited for the potential he sees in the defense. The Red Devils return seven players who saw time as a starter on that side of the ball.

Wagstaff was second for Evanston in defensive points, finishing with 61 total tackles and five tackles for loss.

Mitchell was sixth and senior lineman Bryson Davis eighth in defensive points last season for the Red Devils.

"(The) offseason is progressing and looks good, but (we) can always improve," Burton said.

GREEN RIVER WOLVES



Mascot: Wolves

Division: 3A

Conference: West

Colors: Green and white

Coach: Marty Wrage, 2nd

season at Green River

2018 Record: 2-6, did not qualify for playoffs

Key Players

OT/ILB: Payton Tucker, Sr.

RB/ILB: James King, Jr.

WR/OLB: Riese Allison, Sr.

OL/DL: Thomas Harvey, Sr.

2019 Schedule

8-30: vs. Mountain View, 6 p.m. (Zero Week)

9-6: at Lander, 7 p.m.

9-13: at Rawlins, 7 p.m.

9-20: vs. Torrington, 7 p.m.

***9-27:** vs. Star Valley, 7 p.m.

***10-4:** at Jackson, 6 p.m.

***10-11:** vs. Evanston, 7 p.m.

***10-18:** at Powell, 7 p.m.

***10-25:** vs. Cody, 7 p.m.

*** Conference game**

Wolves working on running game

The 2019 version of the Green River Wolves will have a new look – both by design and by necessity.

After finishing the 2018 season as the only team in Class 3A with more passing yards than rushing yards on offense, coach Marty Wrage said one of his goals for this season is to nudge the Wolves in the direction of a more ground-based attack.

While the passing game gave Green River balance in 2018, it also didn't hide inefficiency in the running game. Consequently, Green River finished without a playoff victory for the first time in three years. Beyond that, at 2-6, the Wolves didn't even qualify for the postseason.

Re-establishing the running game is now one of Wrage's priorities for 2019.

He noted that the Wolves will try to put 70-75% of their offense into the running game.

Last year, the Wolves' play-calling almost matched that ratio – they were about 65 percent running plays to 35 percent pass-

ing plays – but the passing game gained 123.8 yards per game to the rushing game's 115.6.

Green River finished 11th of the 12-team Class 3A in rushing last season.

"We (will) look to be more dynamic on offense," Wrage said. " ... We return four varsity running backs. We return an athletic receiving crew. (The) offensive line is developing depth and will be improved."

The Wolves lost five all-conference players to graduation, but they do return six players with starting experience on both offense and defense.

Junior James King took the reins at running back last year and led the Wolves with 474 rushing yards.

Green River will need to find a new quarterback, and Wrage said the competition right now is between junior Jacob Fuss and sophomore Davis Wrage. However, the Wolves return one of their top receivers in junior Seth White, who had 308 receiving yards on a team-high 22 catches

last season.

Meanwhile, Wrage said the defense will need to continue to work on defending the run – the Wolves finished eighth in 3A in rushing yards allowed per game – but the experience returning on that side of the ball should help Green River improve its defensive output.

"On defense, we have to fill some spots but hopefully depth with be an advantage," Wrage said.

The Wolves do return a solid core of defensive contributors, including two of their top four tacklers from last year in King and senior Payton Tucker. Tucker was second on the team in total tackles last year with 57 and led the squad with seven tackles for loss. King was third in tackles.

Seniors Thomas Harvey, Riese Allison and Tayler Jensen and junior Gabe Burdette also all finished among Green River's top 12 tacklers last year.

Mascot: Red Devils

Division: 3A

Conference: West

Colors: Red, white, blue

Coach: Jim Burton, first year at Evanston

2018 Record: 6-4, lost to Torrington in state quarterfinals

Key Players

QB/DB: David Baxter, Sr.

QB/RB/LB: Jagger

Mitchell, Jr.

OL/DL: Jesus Quintano, Sr.

WR/DB: Rigden Wagstaff, Sr.

2019 Schedule

8-30: Open (Zero Week)

9-6: at Rawlins, 7 p.m.

9-13: vs. Riverton, 7 p.m.

9-20: vs. Lander, 7 p.m.

***9-27:** at Powell, 7 p.m.

***10-4:** vs. Cody, 7 p.m.

***10-11:** at Green River, 7 p.m.

***10-18:** vs. Jackson, 6 p.m.

***10-25:** at Star Valley, 6 p.m.

*** Conference game**



Broncs have head of steam

Mascot: Broncos
Division: 3A
Conference: West
Colors: Orange and black
Coach: David Joyce, 3rd year at Jackson
2018 Record: 8-3, lost to Torrington in state semifinals

2019 Schedule

8-30: vs. Teton, Idaho, 7 p.m. (Zero Week)
9-6: vs. Bear Lake, Idaho, 7 p.m.
9-13: at Pinedale, 7 p.m.
9-20: vs. Worland, 5 p.m.
***9-27:** at Cody, 6 p.m.
***10-4:** vs. Green River, 6 p.m.
***10-11:** at Star Valley, 6 p.m.
***10-18:** at Evanston, 6 p.m.
***10-25:** vs. Powell, 5 p.m.
*** Conference game**

After going 0-9 in 2017 – and entering 2018 on a 15-game losing streak – the Jackson Broncos turned it around in 2018.

And how. Jackson finished 8-3 in 2018, finishing second in the Class 3A West Conference and winning a playoff game for the first time since 2015.

Although the season ended with a 22-21 loss to Torrington in the 3A semifinals, coach David Joyce said the foundation of work ethic and toughness laid in 2017 paid off in 2018.

"When you do that, you lose a lot of kids that first year," Joyce said. "(In 2017) we had 19 kids. ... But the kids who were there were the ones who bought into the standard. The foundation is laid, and over time they can grow and the system can grow."

The Broncos ran for 321.2 yards per game and gained 439.4 yards per game, both tops in Class 3A. The defense, meanwhile, allowed only 243.7 ypg, third-best in 3A.

The Broncos lost four of their five all-state players, but the one returner – senior running back

Key Players
RB/FS: Jeydon Cox, Sr.
RB/LB: Kirby Castagno, Sr.
WR/CB: Peter Goettler, Sr.
QB: Pearson Evans, Sr.

Jeydon Cox – has teams keeping an eye on the Broncos.

Cox ran 299 times for 2,257 yards and 21 touchdowns; his total carries and yards gained were tops in 11-man regardless of classification in Wyoming last year. Cox was also Jackson's No. 2 receiver, catching 22 passes for 253 yards.

"He's probably the best player in the state," Joyce said. "... Having a kid like that back just enhances everybody else's ability to have opportunities."

Cox is surrounded by other playmakers on offense, too.

Senior Kirby Castagno – an all-conference pick – ran 103 times for 519 yards and 10 touchdowns, good for second on the team in all categories. He also

snagged 17 passes for 231 yards.

Senior Peter Goettler was Jackson's top receiver last year, grabbing 28 passes for 424 yards and five touchdowns. And senior quarterback Pearson Evans, who threw for 1,179 yards and 10 touchdowns while chipping in 244 rushing yards, also returns.

"We'll have a lot of experienced players on the field, which is always a positive," Joyce said.

The defense returns eight players who started at some point last season. Castagno is Jackson's leading returning tackler; he was second on the squad in defensive points and total tackles last season. Senior A.J. McCool was third, while sophomore Colter Dawson was seventh, Goettler was eighth and Cox was ninth. Goettler led Jackson with four interceptions in 2018.

"We are a defensive football program through and through, and we don't get too cute," Joyce said. "We want the other team to have to physically beat us."

For the rest of Class 3A, that's becoming tougher and tougher to do to Jackson.

Mascot: Panthers
Division: 3A
Conference: West
Colors: Black and orange
Coach: Aaron Papich, 2nd season at Powell
2018 Record: 2-7, did not qualify for playoffs

2019 Schedule

8-30: at Riverton, 7 p.m. (Zero Week)
9-6: vs. Worland, 7 p.m.
9-13: at Lander, 7 p.m.
9-20: vs. Douglas, 6 p.m.
***9-27:** vs. Evanston, 7 p.m.
***10-4:** at Star Valley, 3 p.m.
***10-11:** at Cody, 7 p.m.
***10-18:** vs. Green River, 7 p.m.
***10-25:** at Jackson, 5 p.m.
*** Conference game**

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Continued on Next Page

Braves have talent to repeat

"We may take some lumps early, but I have confidence in our guys to be playing very good football by the time we get to league play."

~ Coach McKay Young

Star Valley's success the past four years sets the pace for the rest of Class 3A.

The Braves have rolled up three championships in four seasons and four consecutive double-digit-victory seasons.

With five returning all-state selections, more than any other program in Class 3A, the Braves enter 2019 ready to add to their program's tradition.

"This senior class has been among the most committed groups I've ever been around since they were coming out of middle school," coach McKay Young said. "They've looked forward to this fall for a long time."

They're building on a tradition that's been rolling strong through the back half of the 2010s. The 2018 chapter showed the Braves overcoming losses in two of its first three games to out-of-state opponents to roll to nine straight victories to close the season. In the playoffs, the Braves won by scores of 48-0, 33-0 and 35-14.

"The grit of last year's team was unlike any other group I've coached," Young said. "They never gave up on their goals no matter the adversity."

And with five returning all-state selections in seniors R.J. Cazier, Trent Clark, Chase Merrell, Branden McDonald and Parker Merritt, as well as all-conference returnees in senior David Castillo and junior Brant Nelson, Star Valley is ready to continue its success.

On offense, the discussion be-

gins with four returning starting linemen in Clark, McDonald, Merritt and junior Gabe Nield.

"We are a blue-collar football team that does most of our work on the ground, and that starts with those big boys paving the road," Young said.

Cazier benefited from that last year, carrying 209 times for 1,212 yards and 20 touchdowns, while Castillo added 93 carries for 542 yards. Nelson completed 34 passes for 608 yards and nine touchdowns. Senior Dean Shaw

started at quarterback but was injured early in the season; he returned in time for the playoffs and finished with 15 completions for 263 yards.

Young said both Nelson and Shaw will play this year, and he said he has faith in both to run the offense.

Merrell was the Braves' top receiver, catching 23 passes for 496 yards and seven touchdowns, all by far team highs.

Continued on Next Page

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POWELL, Cont.

Papich said the Panthers have talent but need to develop depth to keep the players fresh both in games and throughout the season.

"We just have to figure out the best way to bring the whole team together to best benefit our program," Papich said. "... A lot of those guys too start also on offense, so it's definitely something that you have to think about."

Asher, Karhu, Abraham will combine in the offensive backfield. Last year, Abraham ran 76 times for 260 yards; Karhu ran

Key Players
QB/CB: Ethan Asher, Sr.
RB/LB: Brody Karhu, Sr.
RB/LB: Kadden Abraham, Jr.
C/DL: Seth Horton, Jr.

61 times for 249 yards; and Asher completed 72 of 162 passes for 668 yards and also ran 79 times for 184 yards and a team-high three rushing touchdowns.

However, Powell's top five receivers all graduated, leaving

Abraham (five catches, 19 yards) as the Panthers' top returning pass-catcher.

Papich said he's satisfied with the direction of the program and excited for the progress the team could make this season.

"If we trust in what we're doing and trust in the process, then we might find ourselves where we are deep in the playoffs," he said. "... Ultimately we can't control that happening, but we're certainly going to do the things that will lead to that every single day."

"These guys have put in the time, so I'm very pleased."



Mascot: Braves
Division: 3A
Conference: West
Colors: Maroon and gold
Coach: McKay Young, 4th season at Star Valley
2018 Record: 10-2, beat Torrington in state championship

2019 Schedule

8-30: at Salt Lake (Utah) Summit Academy, 7 p.m. (Zero Week)
9-6: at Blackfoot, Idaho, 7 p.m.
9-13: vs. Sugar-Salem, Idaho, 7 p.m.
9-20: vs. Riverton, 6 p.m.
***9-27:** at Green River, 7 p.m.
***10-4:** vs. Powell, 3 p.m.
***10-11:** vs. Jackson, 6 p.m.
***10-18:** at Cody, 5 p.m.
***10-25:** vs. Evanston, 6 p.m.
*** Conference game**

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"We just have to figure out the best way to bring the whole team together to best benefit our program."

~ Coach
Aaron Papich

Panthers have brighter outlook

Powell's dip into Class 3A obscurity may not last long.

A consistent 3A contender, the Panthers struggled last season. At 2-7, the Panthers had their second consecutive losing season – the first time that's happened in Powell since the 2003-04 seasons. They missed the playoffs for the second consecu-

tive year and finished winless in West Conference play.

However, the Panthers return several key players, including eight on both offense and defense with starting experience.

Also, with another year in coach Aaron Papich's system, Powell is poised for a rebound year in 2019.

"We have a lot of strong leaders on our team, so I really think that's going to be a differentiator," Papich said. "You're really going to see our talent because of the leaders we're going to have."

A huge reason for Powell's optimism springs from an experienced defense that returns three of its top four tacklers.

Junior Kadden Abraham was first and senior Brody Karhu third in defensive points for the Panthers last season. Abraham led Powell with 72 total tackles, including 52 assisted tackles, and a team-high three sacks. Karhu was second with 64 total tackles.

Senior Carson Olsen was fourth in defensive points and had four tackles for loss, while junior Adrian Geller was sixth and senior Ethan Asher was eighth for Powell.

Senior Ryan Good and junior Kobe Ostermiller added at least 30 defensive points apiece last season.

Continued on Next Page



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STAR VALLEY BRAVES

BRAVES, Cont.

Cazier added nine catches for 129 yards.

He also ranked second for Star Valley in defensive points, leading the squad with eight interceptions and three pass break-ups in addition to notching 47 total tackles. However, he's the only one of Star Valley's top four tacklers to come back; the defense returns five starters.

Cazier was fifth in defensive points and third in total tackles

Key Players

WR/FS: Chase Merrell, Sr.

OL/DL: Parker Merritt, Sr.

QB/DB: Dean Shaw, Sr.

RB/LB: R.J. Cazier, Sr.

with 59, while senior Parker Merritt was seventh in defensive points and fifth with 50 total tackles.



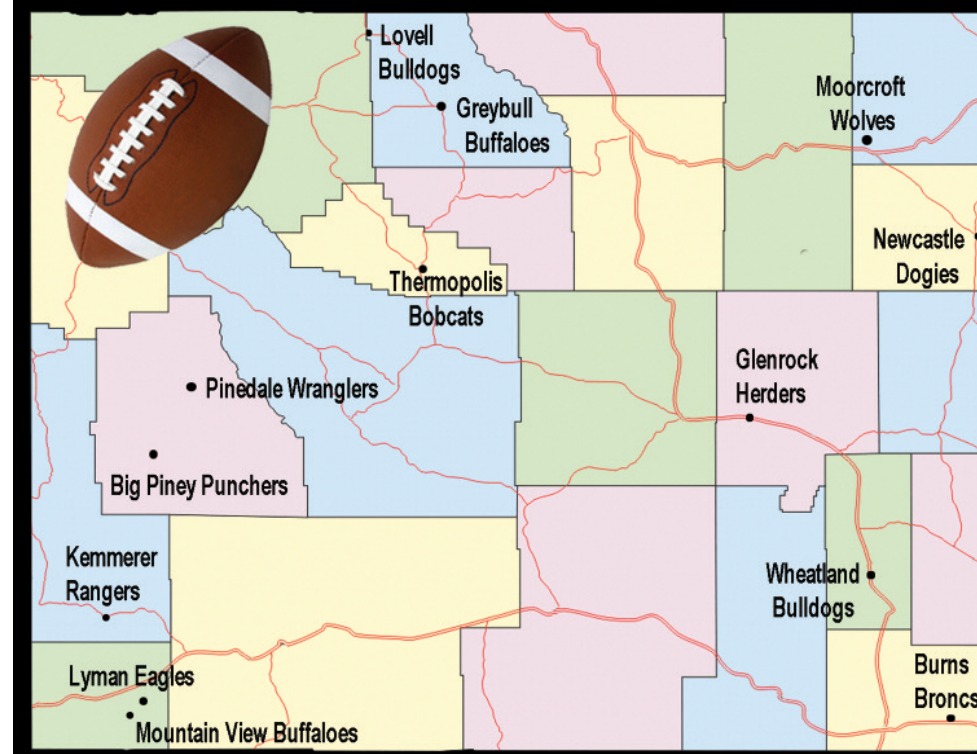
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2A Preview



Bison are the hunted

By Patrick Schmiedt

Four questions to answer

Was Buffalo's championship the start of a new 2A dynasty? Possibly. The Bison return five all-state players from last year's title team, setting them up well for a repeat. If that momentum can keep building, the Bison could be the team to beat in 2020, too.

Who's Buffalo's biggest threat? Mountain View. Just like Buffalo, Mountain View returns five all-state players. And like Buffalo, Mountain View has seen a ton of success in the postseason recently. Mountain View is the favorite in the 2A West.

Will anyone else challenge for a championship? Probably not. Mountain View and Buffalo return five all-state players apiece; the rest of 2A, combined, has four (Burns' Boe Clayson, Kemmerer's A.Q. Martinez, Moorcroft's Rowdy Pfeil and Thermopolis' Logan Cole). The talent gap between Buffalo and Mountain View and the rest of 2A is pretty wide.

Will the West Conference have as much parity in the middle as it did last year? Almost certainly. With basically every team (outside of Mountain View) returning similar talent at similar levels, the rest of the West appears to be a crapshoot, one that will be decided in tight games week after week.

Four key games

Pinedale at Kemmerer, Sept. 20. With the parity on display in the West Conference last

year, this Week 3 game will tell us a lot about the makeup of a tumultuous West Conference.

Buffalo at Burns, Sept. 20. The Bison's first road conference game of 2019 will be in eastern Laramie County against an up-and-coming Burns squad. A Buffalo victory here will be key in a repeat attempt.

Greybull at Mountain View, Oct. 25. These two teams have been in the West Conference's top three finishers every season since 2014. A Week 8 showdown could determine the conference champion again this year.

Thermopolis at Burns, Oct. 25. Both teams are ready to make leaps up the East Conference standings this season. If they both capitalize on that potential through the season, this Week 8 meeting could be absolutely huge.

Predicted order of finish

East Conference: Buffalo, Thermopolis, Burns, Glenrock, Wheatland, Moorcroft, Newcastle.

West Conference: Mountain View, Greybull, Kemmerer, Big Piney, Lovell, Lyman, Pinedale.

Way-too-early title game score prediction:

Mountain View 28, Buffalo 26

The Buffaloes have been scary consistent, with four trips to Laramie in the past six years. With a deep and motivated senior class, this just might be Mountain View's year to return to the top of 2A. But Buffalo won't make anything easy.



State Champs
Buffalo
Bison

2018 State Playoffs

State Championship

Buffalo 43, Mountain View 18

State Semifinals

Buffalo 50, Wheatland 7

Mountain View 33, Glenrock 21

State Quarterfinals

Buffalo 56, Kemmerer 20

Wheatland 21, Greybull 14

Mountain View 41, Thermopolis 0

Glenrock 45, Big Piney 0

Seven players to watch

Hunter Gross, Mountain View

When coaches get together to award player of the year honors, they almost always go to a senior. Not last year, and not for Gross, who won the 2A lineman of the year award as a junior. He was second for the Buffalos in defensive points and racked up a team-high eight sacks.

Rowen Ruby, Buffalo

Ruby was one of 2A's most consistent running backs last season, finishing with 1,072 yards (7.5 per carry) and 14 touchdowns. Buffalo graduated its quarterback, its top receiver and its No. 2 running back, putting Ruby in a much brighter spotlight.

Dawson Hatch, Buffalo

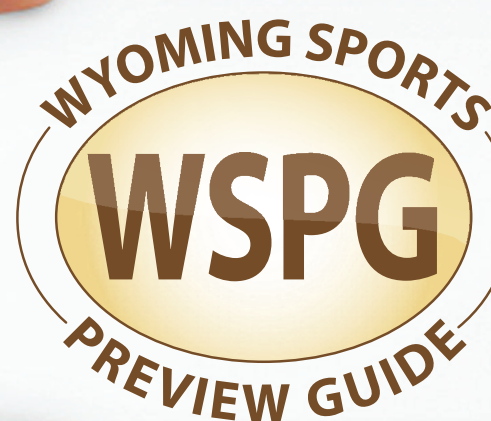
Hatch was all over the field for the Bison last year, finishing first for the team in defensive points. He was also Buffalo's No. 2 receiver and even carried the ball a few times.

Everyone from Mountain View's backs and receivers

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Mascot: Bison
Division: 2A
Conference: East
Colors: Black and gold
Coach: Rob Hammond, 8th season
2018 Record: 10-1, beat Mountain View in state championship

Key Players

OL/DL: Hunter Pope, Sr.
QB/WR/SS: Dawson Hatch, Sr.
RB/DB: Rowen Ruby, Sr.
C/LB: Nathan Swanston, Sr.

2019 Schedule

8-31: vs. Worland, 1 p.m. (Zero Week)
9-6: at Douglas, 7 p.m.
***9-13:** vs. Thermopolis, 7 p.m.
***9-20:** at Burns, 6 p.m.
***9-27:** vs. Glenrock, 7 p.m.
***10-4:** at Moorcroft, 7 p.m.
***10-11:** vs. Wheatland, 6 p.m.
10-18: vs. Big Piney, 7 p.m.
***10-25:** at Newcastle, 7 p.m.
*** Conference game**

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Champs have returning firepower

To everyone else in Class 2A, it must have looked like Buffalo pushed the Staples "EASY" button.

The Bison romped in their first year in Class 2A, winning all but one game by double digits and losing only to Class 3A Douglas in the season opener. A 43-18 victory against Mountain View gave Buffalo its sixth state title and its first since 2005.

To Buffalo, though, the title was the product of hard work, a trend coach Rob Hammond said has continued into offseason preparation for 2019.

"I think that they have stayed hungry and they've stayed motivated," Hammond said. "We've talked every single year that we have to start every year brand new."

Consequently, Hammond said the Bison have had "great turnout in the weight room, (and) our numbers have been higher than ever in our summer camps. We even had an extra camp. ... Kids are just excited and proud to be a part of the football team."

The Bison return five all-state players – matched by Mountain View for the most in 2A – in seniors Dawson Hatch, Hunter Pope, Rowen Ruby and Nathan Swanston and junior Hyrum Hatch.

Hammond said the all-state returners set an example for the rest of the team to follow through hard work, leadership and confidence.

"If you want to be successful, this is the path you have to take," he said.

The rushing game is in good hands. Ruby led Buffalo with 1,072 rushing yards and 14 rushing touchdowns. Also, the entire starting offensive line returns with Swanston, Pope, senior Austyn Carder, and senior Anthony Graves – who missed almost all of last season due to injury but who Hammond said might be Buffalo's best player – leading the charge up front.

"We've talked every single year that we have to start every year brand new."

~ Coach Rob Hammond

"We're pretty intact there," Hammond said of his linemen. "They understand our schemes and they've played together."

That experience could shift the Bison's offensive approach this year to more of what Hammond called "old-fashioned Bison football" that emphasizes the running game, with Ruby earning touches in different ways depending on who emerges as Buffalo's quarterback.

Additionally, the Bison they lost four of their top five receivers to graduation. Dawson Hatch had 21 catches for 378 yards and six touchdowns – second for the team in all categories.

Dawson Hatch was also Buffalo's top tackler last year with 168 defensive points and team highs in tackles for loss (10), interceptions (six) and pass break-ups (5).

Hyrum Hatch was third on the team in defensive points, while Pope was sixth, senior Dakota Lopez was eighth and Ruby was 10th.

Hammond said the experience the returning players have is invaluable.

"Those guys have been there, done that, so they play with a ton of confidence," he said.

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Broncs ready for breakout campaign

The Burns Broncos' breakthrough has been years in the making.

With 12 seniors leading this year's team, and with a new system no longer new, second-year coach Brad Morrison sees just how good the Broncos could be this year.

"The community is really pumped up for this year, and they should be," Morrison said. "... We will have about 15 more kids in our school coming out for football than we did last year, and that's probably a good barometer for how the community and student body view the program."

The Broncos finished 4-4 – the program's first non-losing season since 2013. However, they also failed to make the playoffs, finishing fifth in the 2A East.

Morrison said the Broncos have the chance to be better this year as the relationships develop between the players and coaches.

"(The) biggest thing is that the players and I have trust and belief in each other now, that's been earned over the last year," he said.

Senior Boe Clayson, the Broncos' only all-state selection a



year ago, returns after leading Burns with 958 rushing yards and nine touchdowns; he also led the team with 16 catches for 227 yards and three more scores. He was also one of Burns' top defensive players, finishing second on the team in defensive points.

Morrison said Clayson's success carried over to wrestling, track and field and the weight room.

"He leads by example that way," Morrison said. "I definitely trust him to uphold our standards."

Burns also returns seniors Kaden Lakin, who was an all-conference selection last year, and lineman/linebacker Mitch Miller, who was the team's top tackler last year.

On defense, Burns returns three of its top four tacklers and seven of

its top nine from last year. Miller led the Broncos with 45 assisted tackles and 65 total tackles while Clayson tied for the team lead with four tackles for loss.

Senior Kolton Keslar was fourth on the team in defensive points last year.

Senior Logan Lerwick was seventh, while Lakin was eighth and junior lineman Lincoln Siebert was ninth; Siebert tied with Clayson for the team lead with four tackles for loss and also had a team-high three fumble recoveries.

Morrison said the level of returning experience should help Burns play faster defensively than it did last year, but the individual success is secondary.

"We don't put much stock into who did what last year because, at the end of the day, it doesn't matter and we have to get better whether we were good or bad," he said. "I can think of several kids who didn't play a lot or at all last year that could be really good players this year defensively."

Coach: Brad Morrison, 2nd season at Burns
2018 Record: 4-4, did not qualify for playoffs

Key Players

RB: Boe Clayson, Sr.
QB: Kaden Lakin, Sr.
DL: Ben Banville, Sr.
LB: Mitch Miller, Sr.

Mascot: Broncos

Division: 2A

Conference: East

Colors: Black and orange

2019 Schedule

8-31: at Southeast Jamboree, 9 a.m. (Zero Week)
9-6: vs. Wright, 6 p.m.
***9-13:** at Moorcroft, 6 p.m.
***9-20:** vs. Buffalo, 6 p.m.
***9-27:** at Wheatland, 7:30 p.m.
***10-4:** vs. Glenrock, 7 p.m.
10-11: at Pine Bluffs, 7 p.m.
***10-18:** at Newcastle, 6 p.m.
***10-25:** vs. Thermopolis, 7 p.m.
*** Conference game**

New coach keeping the tradition

Yes, the double wing is staying at Glenrock.

New head coach Ryan Collier isn't removing the characteristic that makes Glenrock unique – a double wing offense that has its roots in the community's youth football programs.

Although Collier, who spent six years as an assistant with the Herders before ascending to the top spot, will institute some changes, "for most people, they won't even notice the change," he said.

The system has worked.

Glenrock reached at least the semifinal round for the fourth

consecutive year, but a loss to Mountain View in the semis denied the Herders a chance to win their first state championship since going undefeated in 2008.

The Herders get back just one of their eight all-conference choices, senior Julih Pittsley, and return only four offensive starters, three defensive starters and only about five total seniors.

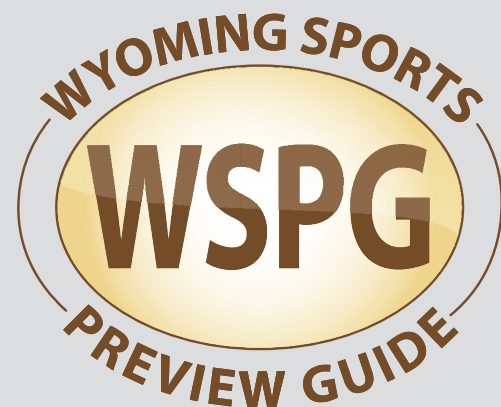
Preserving a system that's led to success is different from maintaining success, though, and Collier said "we're definitely going to have to have some kids step up and learn to play at the varsity level."

The Herders will also need to find a new quarterback to run their double wing offense. And even though passing is mostly an afterthought for Glenrock, senior Dawson Blaylock – who had two catches for 32 yards to finish third on the team last year – is the team's top returning aerial threat.

Blaylock could move to running back, though, and senior Bryston Jennings provides depth at the end spot.

Sophomore Kade Guenther is Glenrock's top returning rusher;

Continued on Next Page



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Wolves building on last year's success

Mascot: Wolves

Division: 2A

Conference: East

Colors: Green and white

Coach: Travis Santistevan,
2nd year at Moorcroft

2018 Record: 3-5, did not
qualify for playoffs

2019 Schedule

8-30: at Wright, 7 p.m. (Zero Week)

9-6: at Tongue River, 7 p.m.

***9-13:** vs. Burns, 6 p.m.

***9-20:** at Thermopolis, 6 p.m.

***9-27:** at Newcastle, 6 p.m.

***10-4:** vs. Buffalo, 7 p.m.

10-12: vs. Gillette sophs, 6 p.m.

***10-18:** at Wheatland, 6 p.m.

***10-25:** vs. Glenrock, 7 p.m.

*** Conference game**

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The Moorcroft Wolves know how to win.

Six consecutive Class 2A wrestling championships prove that. Now, second-year head football coach Travis Santistevan is hoping some of the wrestling success carries over to the gridiron.

"Hopefully we can get that carryover," he said.

In Santistevan's first year in Moorcroft, the Wolves finished 3-5, missing the playoffs and posting a losing record for the 10th consecutive year.

However, with the same coaches in place and the program not needing to look too far for success, Santistevan has high hopes. Moreover, the program is growing as he learns more about not only who he has this year, but who he'll have in future years.

"I have a better knowledge of the kids, knowing what we're going to have back and what's incoming as I help with the junior high program here in Moorcroft," he said.

Although the Wolves return eight starters on both offense and defense, one player sticks out as Moorcroft's key returner.

Key Players

RB/LB: Rowdy Pfeil, Sr.

QB/WR/LB: Parker Seeley, Sr.

OL/DL: Parker Schlater, Sr.

WR/QB/DB: Zane Linder,
Soph.

Senior Rowdy Pfeil was an all-state choice last year. He led Class 2A in defensive points per game last year, racking up 111 tackles, 48 solo tackles, 15 tackles for loss, five sacks and four fumble recoveries, leading his team in all categories. On offense, he ran 156 times for 940 yards and 12 touchdowns.

And he did all that despite missing Moorcroft's final game and a half due to injury.

"Obviously, Rowdy's going to be everybody's key," Santistevan said. "... People have to game plan for him, whether it's stopping him or making sure he doesn't stop them."

Senior Parker Seeley returns at quarterback after completing 39 passes for 570 yards and nine

touchdowns.

Senior Christian Robinson, who caught 12 passes for 113 yards to finish second for the Wolves in both categories, returns as Moorcroft's top receiving threat.

The offensive line did lose two starters, and Santistevan said the players and coaches are "going to try to get creative on who's going to play where and who's going to give us the best chance of being competitive on Friday night."

On defense, Moorcroft returns six of its top eight tacklers. In addition to Pfeil, the Wolves also return senior lineman Parker Schlater, who was third on the team in tackles last year; Seeley, who was fifth; sophomore Zane Linder, who was sixth; and juniors Dekeen Mayer and Clay Stripp, who were seventh and eighth.

Santistevan said defensive coordinator Matt Albertson helped build a defense that grew throughout the season and left the Wolves in a good spot.

"That was a good strong point for us last year," Santistevan said.

Dogies grew while taking lumps

For several years, Newcastle had avoided injuries. Then 2018 happened.

With more than half a dozen injuries that ended or severely limited players, the Dogies slipped hard last season, falling to 1-8. Newcastle's only victory in that stretch came via forfeit against Rocky Mountain. For the season, Newcastle was outscored 350-53, an average of 44-7.

Rebuilding this year means relying on the experience younger players gained last year, playing more varsity reps than anticipated at the beginning of the season due to those injuries.

"The No. 1 thing you've got to look at is the experience these young guys got on the field," Newcastle coach Matt Conzelman said.

Newcastle gets back three of its top rushers and its top passer but graduates its top three receivers; on defense, the Dogies graduated six of their top eight tacklers.

The Dogies had seven different players complete

at least one pass last year, but senior Bradyn Frye emerged as the team leader in passing yards with 207. Conzelman said Frye will likely split quarterback duties with sophomore Slade Roberson, with Roberson responsible for more of Newcastle's spread packages.

The passing game will need to be reworked, with sophomore Brandon Donner's two catches for 45 yards last season the highest among Newcastle's returners.

With senior Conagher Testerman's transfer to Wright, junior Christian Santos is Newcastle's top returning rusher. He carried 61 times for 147 yards last year.

Newcastle does return its top tackler in junior Kale Corley, who led the Dogies with 40 total tackles, 13 solo tackles and 25 assists. However, Newcastle's next four top tacklers graduated, with junior

Continued on Next Page



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Mascot: Dogies

Division: 2A

Conference: East

Colors: Orange and black

Coach: Matt Conzelman,
11th year

2018 Record: 1-8, did not
qualify for playoffs

Key Players

QB/TE/LB: Bradyn Frye,
Sr.

OL/DL: Kale Corley, Jr.

RB/LB: Chauncey Jennerou, Jr.

RB/DB: Christian Santos,
Jr.

HERDERS, Cont.

he was fifth on the squad a year ago with 113 rushing yards. The double wing approach could see more aerial attacks in 2019, Collier said.

"It just depends on what we have as a team and we'll play to our strengths," he said.

The defense enters the year lacking experience. Only one of Glenrock's top six tacklers, and

only four of the top 13, return from 2018.

Blaylock was fourth for the Herders in defensive points a year ago, while Pittsley was seventh, senior Cade Griffiths was eighth and Guenther was 10th. Blaylock finished with 60 total tackles, good for third on the team.

However, just as the double wing is ingrained as part of

youth football, so too is the defensive approach – something Collier hopes will bring some success.

"These kids have been in this system ever since they were playing midget football, so the system hasn't really changed," he said.

However, Collier said a system alone won't keep Glenrock on the right track.

Key Players

RB/TE: Dawson Blaylock, Sr.

OL: Cade Griffiths, Sr.

TE: Bryston Jennings, Sr.

OL/DL: Julih Pittsley, Sr.

"As a coaching staff, we've got to make sure we're putting them in a position to be successful," Collier said. "We've got to realize they're different players and we've got to play to their strengths."

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Mascot: Bobcats
Division: 2A
Conference: East
Colors: Purple and yellow
Coach: Matt McPhie, 4th year at Thermopolis
2018 Record: 3-6, lost to Mountain View in state quarterfinals

2019 Schedule

8-31: at Shoshoni Jamboree, 11 a.m. (Zero Week)
9-6: vs. Big Horn, 6 p.m.
***9-13:** at Buffalo, 7 p.m.
***9-20:** vs. Moorcroft, 6 p.m.
9-27: vs. Mountain View, 6 p.m.
***10-4:** at Wheatland, 6 p.m.
***10-11:** vs. Newcastle, 6 p.m.
***10-18:** at Glenrock, 7 p.m.
***10-25:** at Burns, 7 p.m.
*** Conference game**



2019 Schedule

8-30: vs. Custer, S.D., 6 p.m. (Zero Week)
***9-6:** at Wheatland, 7 p.m.
***9-13:** at Glenrock, 6 p.m.
9-20: vs. Rocky Mountain, 6 p.m.
***9-27:** vs. Moorcroft, 6 p.m.
10-4: at Lusk, 6 p.m.
***10-11:** at Thermopolis, 6 p.m.
***10-18:** vs. Burns, 6 p.m.
***10-25:** vs. Buffalo, 7 p.m.
*** Conference game**

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Bobcats keep making strides

Bit by bit, the Thermopolis football program continues to grow.

In Matt McPhie's four years as coach, the Bobcats' 2A East Conference victory total has gone from one to two to three.

However, 2018's end had a familiar feel.

For the second consecutive year, and for the third time in four years, the Bobcats finished their season the same way — with a 3-6 record and a loss on the road in the first round of the playoffs.

Even so, McPhie said the strides the Bobcats have made in the 2A East are stepping stones to bigger goals.

"We intend to build off of this," he said. "We're never satisfied. Our goal is to win. We are building and moving in the direction of success."

The biggest victory of the season came in the season finale against Burns. Facing a win-to-qualify scenario against Burns, the Bobcats won 42-26 to qualify for the playoffs.

The momentum didn't carry over — Thermopolis lost to West Conference champ Mountain View 41-0 in the quarterfinals — but the Bobcats will get back

Key Players

RB/LB: Logan Cole, Jr.
RB/DB: Blake Williams, Sr.
TE/DE: Jarron Mortimore, Sr.
OL/DL: Remington Ferree, Jr.

six starters on both offense and defense as they try to continue to grow.

This year's discussion of Thermopolis' hopes starts with junior Logan Cole, the team's only returning all-state selection.

Cole was second for the Bobcats with 110 carries for 834 yards and five touchdowns on the ground. He also led Thermopolis' receiving corps with 21 catches for 172 yards and three scores.

He's also the only one of Thermopolis' top five tacklers to return this year. Cole finished the season second on the team in defensive points and third in total tackles with 50. He also had 27 solo tackles, second-best for the Bobcats, and he led the team with five sacks.

"Logan is a very talented

athlete," McPhie said. "... We believe Logan can be an incredible defender, and it is our goal to develop him in that role."

Several other key contributors return, too. Senior Jarron Mortimore and junior Remington Ferree were all-conference selections.

Senior running back Blake Williams added 32 carries for 318 yards and four touchdowns while also snagging eight receptions for 143 yards to finish second in receiving yards for the Bobcats.

Senior Dustin "Duder" Harvey had 114 receiving yards to finish third on the squad.

Harvey was sixth in tackles with 34, while Mortimore (25), senior Riley Shaffer (25 tackles) and senior Cade McLean (21) all logged at least 20 total tackles, as well.

Their goal is to help Thermopolis continue to improve, moving beyond the familiar feeling of recent finishes and continuing to build on past successes.

"There is still a gap between the true contenders and the playoff eligible teams," McPhie said. "We are closing that gap."

Bulldogs will rely on youngsters

In his first season as head coach, Cody Bohlander helped keep Wheatland competitive in the Class 2A East Conference with enthusiasm, a bunch of seniors and a diverse offensive attack.

Preparing for his second season, Bohlander still has the enthusiasm and the diverse offense — but to sustain success, the Bulldogs will need contributions from players who didn't see the field much in 2018.

Wheatland had the No. 2 offense in Class 2A, racking up 350.9 yards per game, and led 2A with 179.3 passing yards per game. However, the Bulldogs return only three starters on offense and only three on defense. Of Wheatland's seven all-conference choices, only senior Todd Paisley returns.

Regardless, Bohlander said he's happy with the program's direction after finishing 6-4 last year, reaching the 2A semifinals.

"I made the goal right away to get my philosophy and my program going right away when I got the head spot," Bohlander said. "This year, we are just looking to build off of what was started last year and continue to grow."

Bohlander said the Bulldogs have good chemistry despite being young — a group of sophomores could see lots of varsity playing time this year. With that, they bring a lot of potential for success, he said.

"(They) really play well with one another and hold each other accountable on the field," Bohlander said. "I feel their drive to do things right will help them really grow over the year. ... I feel these kids will mesh really well with one another and do some great things for us on the field."

Paisley led Wheatland's defense last year in defensive points and tied for the team lead with 56

"We are just looking to build off of what was started last year."

**~ Coach
Cody Bohlander**

total tackles. He finished with nine tackles for loss and tied for the team lead with three sacks. However, of Wheatland's top seven tacklers, he's the only returner.

Senior Kobey Preuit, who had 15 catches for 302 yards, leads all returners in that area. Of Wheatland's five receivers to finish with more than 25 yards receiving, Preuit is the only one returning.

And junior Adam Suko is Wheatland's leading returning rusher. He was third for the Bulldogs with 25 carries for 198 yards.

Also, Suko was eighth in defensive points and had 49 total tackles, while Preuit added 26 tackles. Of the 13 players who posted double-digit tackles, only Paisley, Suko and Preuit return.

Paisley and Preuit, as seniors, will have more responsibilities to be leaders this year, Bohlander said.

"They are both very smart players and can teach the young guys a lot," he said. "I feel they will do a good job this season of making sure all of the players on the field are where they should be."



Mascot: Bulldogs
Division: 2A
Conference: East
Colors: Blue and yellow

Coach: Cody Bohlander,
 2nd year at Wheatland
2018 Record: 6-4, lost to Buffalo in state semifinals

Key Players

TE/LB: Todd Paisley, Sr.
WR/DB: Kobey Preuit, Sr.
OL/DL: Kaleb Peterson, Sr.
RB/LB: Adam Suko, Jr.

2019 Schedule

8-31: vs. Douglas, 10 a.m. (Zero Week)
***9-6:** vs. Newcastle, 7 p.m.
9-13: at Upton-Sundance, 6 p.m. (at Sundance)
***9-20:** at Glenrock, 7 p.m.
***9-27:** vs. Burns, 7:30 p.m.
***10-4:** vs. Thermopolis, 6 p.m.
***10-11:** at Buffalo, 6 p.m.
***10-18:** vs. Moorcroft, 6 p.m.
10-25: at Pinedale, 7 p.m.
*** Conference game**

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PREVIEW GUIDE



Mascot: Punchers
Division: 2A
Conference: West
Colors: Red and white
Coach: Ryan Visser, first year at Big Piney
2018 Record: 5-4, lost to Glenrock in state quarterfinals

2019 Schedule

8-30: at Cokeville, 4 p.m. (Zero Week)
9-6: vs. Shoshoni, 2 p.m.
*9-13: vs. Mountain View, 2 p.m.
*9-20: at Greybull, 4 p.m.
*9-27: at Kemmerer, 7 p.m.
*10-4: vs. Lovell, 2 p.m.
*10-11: vs. Pinedale, 3 p.m.
10-18: at Buffalo, 7 p.m.
*10-25: at Lyman, 3 p.m.
* Conference game

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New coach likes what he's inherited

When Ryan Visser started investigating the head coach opening at Big Piney, well before he interviewed for or accepted the position, he figured out quickly that the Punchers were not part of a program in disarray.

Visser, who was an assistant coach at Preston, Idaho, for six years, learned quickly that Big Piney had a solid foundation, both physically and culturally.

He said building culture is "a huge part of building a high school program. ... It's a lot easier when there's some kind of culture actually built."

The Punchers are coming off back-to-back winning seasons, something that hasn't happened in the program since the 2006 and 2007 seasons. Visser also was impressed by Big Piney's facilities, including weight room equipment and a recently upgraded stadium and turf that helped show both investment and commitment from the community and from administrators. Visser also said he came away with a good feeling after conversations with people in the school and community.

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Key Players

QB/OLB: Kaden Raza, Jr.

WR/DB: Teagan Elliott, Sr.

WR/DB: Bryan Pluid, Sr.

C/DT: Wyatt Mager, Jr.

"I'm excited," Visser said. "It's a good group of kids, I can tell."

Even without a new coach, Big Piney would have been in a time of transition: Big Piney loses all three of its all-state selections and all but one of its seven all-conference picks from 2018. Junior quarterback Kaden Raza is the lone all-conference returner.

However, Raza will be a key cog in Visser's offensive approach, which will rely on spread formations.

"My objective every week is to stretch the defense both vertically and horizontally and make them have to cover every blade of grass," Visser said. "It's a scheme that underutilized at this level sometimes."

"... If you've got a quarterback, and we do, then it puts a lot of stress on a defense."

Raza threw for 649 yards

and nine touchdowns last season. By default, Raza is also Big Piney's leading returning rusher with his 60 yards from last year, as the Punchers graduated their top three rushers from 2018.

Senior Teagan Elliott, who was fourth on the squad with six catches for 65 yards, is the Punchers' top returning receiver.

Junior center Wyatt Mager will help lead the offensive line, Visser said.

Defensively, Visser said the Punchers will run a base 4-3, "but it's much more complicated than that."

Senior Bryan Pluid is Big Piney's top returning tackler; he was fourth for the Punchers in defensive points in 2018. Junior lineman Cam Thomas was fifth and is the team's leading returner in tackles for loss with five. They're the only two of Big Piney's top eight tacklers returning.

Elliott was ninth and led Big Piney with four interceptions last year, while junior Tayton Wing was 10th. Both topped 60 defensive points for the season.

"It's a lot easier when there's some kind of culture actually built."

~ Coach Ryan Visser

Buffaloes have unfinished task

Greybull finished 2018 feeling closer to a state title than its finish showed.

That finish – a 21-14 loss to Wheatland in the Class 2A quarterfinals – came with several key contributors sidelined due to injury and an offense that wasn't quite complete.

The Buffaloes and coach Eli Moody are ready to atone for that with "a new look, a new feel and a new swagger" for 2019, Moody said.

"I believe we have the tools to take our game to that next step," Moody said. "We lost some of our big-name kids that everyone planned for, but we still have plenty of weapons and are getting some key (players) back from injury that will boost the team."

Seniors Felipe Gaytan and Ben Kraft were all-conference selections last year. However, they both finished 2018 on the sidelines with injury.

They weren't alone, as senior lineman Ethan Dalin (who missed the last half of the year) and senior tight end/defensive end Carlos Garay (who missed the entire season) also feel victim to injuries.

All four are back this year – and all four are healthy. Their returns will help bolster a team that returns six starters on both offense and defense but also has significant gaps to fill.

On offense, Greybull graduated its quarterback, its top two rushers and most of its offensive line.

Senior Caleb Bottom returns as the team's leading rusher and receiver. He led Greybull with 13 catches for 305 yards and four touchdowns – all team-

"I believe we have the tools to take our game to the next step."

~ Coach Eli Moody

highs last year – and he also ran 34 times for 174 yards and two touchdowns.

Senior Elian Davila added 12 catches for 247 yards and four scores, while Gaytan chipped in nine catches for 111 yards; however, Gaytan will likely move to quarterback this season, Moody said.

While the offense had a good bit of diversity, Moody said in his second season as head coach, the Buffaloes should have more chances to present different looks and keep opposing defenses guessing.

"It took us a lot of the season to get the bases of my offense down, so we didn't have a lot of

time to get into the more advanced aspects of it," Moody said. "Now with a large number of the kids still on the team, we can dive deep into that stuff, the misdirection, setting up plays better, even how we are lining up."

Rebuilding the defense will be more challenging.

The Buffaloes graduated their top six tacklers. Davila is the team's top returning defensive player; he was seventh in defensive points and led Greybull with four interceptions and eight pass break-ups.

Kraft was eighth and notched 41 total tackles, including four tackles for loss, while Bottom was ninth and Gaytan was 10th.

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Coach: Eli Moody, 2nd year at Greybull
2018 Record: 5-4, lost to Wheatland in state quarterfinals

Key Players

QB/LB: Felipe Gaytan, Sr.

RB/FS: Caleb Bottom, Sr.

HB/LB: Benjamin Kraft, Sr.

WR/DB: Elian Davila, Sr.

Mascot: Buffaloes

Division: 2A

Conference: West

Colors: Blue and yellow

2019 Schedule

8-30: vs. Tongue River, 7 p.m. (Zero Week)
9-6: vs. Rocky Mountain, 7 p.m.
9-13: at Big Horn, 7 p.m.
*9-20: vs. Big Piney, 4 p.m.
*9-27: at Pinedale, 4 p.m.
*10-4: vs. Kemmerer, 4 p.m.
*10-11: at Lovell, 7 p.m.
*10-18: vs. Lyman, 6 p.m.
*10-25: at Mountain View, 3 p.m.
* Conference game

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Mascot: Rangers
Division: 2A
Conference: West
Colors: Black and red
Coach: Bart Jernigan, 3rd year
2018 Record: 3-5, lost to Buffalo in state quarterfinals

Key Players
QB/CB: Dawson Schramm, Sr.
RB/CB: A.Q. Martinez, Jr.
OL/DL: Brendan Miller, Sr.
WR/LB: Colter Brunski, Sr.

2019 Schedule
8-31: at Shoshoni Jamboree, 11 a.m. (Zero Week)
9-5: vs. Riverton JV, 7 p.m.
***9-13:** at Lyman, 1 p.m.
***9-20:** vs. Pinedale, 7 p.m.
***9-27:** vs. Big Piney, 7 p.m.
***10-4:** at Greybull, 4 p.m.
10-11: at Glenrock, 7 p.m.
***10-18:** vs. Mountain View, 7 p.m.
***10-25:** at Lovell, 5:30 p.m.
*** Conference game**

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PAGE 32

KEMMERER RANGERS

2A WEST

Rangers relying on new leaders

Surely and consistently, the breakthroughs keep happening for the Kemmerer football program.

The Rangers finished 3-5 and reached the playoffs last season – a big step for a program that had just one victory from 2013-17 and hadn't made the playoffs since 2012.

Now, with a group of streak-breaking seniors gone, the question for coach Bart Jernigan becomes finding a way to repeat success rather than trying to instigate it.

"Qualifying for the playoffs last year meant a whole lot to this program," Jernigan said. "We knew as a coaching staff that the talent was there to do so, but the question of getting our young men to believe that."

With the belief of success now in place, Jernigan said upcoming players have a renewed vigor, but the program still has room to grow.

"(A playoff berth) had been a long time for this team and town," Jernigan said. "Going forward, our boys have a focus on making the playoffs perennially. That is the new expectation and belief in Kemmerer."

This year's team will be younger, but "scrappy and resilient," Jernigan said. Junior A.Q. Martinez was an all-state choice last year and is the only returning all-state choice in the West Conference outside of Mountain View. Senior Dawson Schramm was an all-conference choice.

Jernigan said rebuilding the defense will be a priority, as the Rangers lost their top six tacklers to graduation. Senior Colter Brunski, who had 50 defensive points and 27 total tackles last year, is Kemmerer's top returning tackler.

Schramm was ninth and Martinez 10th in defensive points for Kemmerer last year. They tied for the team

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2A WEST

LOVELL BULLDOGS

New coach bleeds Bulldog blue

When victories don't happen as often as they used to, confidence doesn't come naturally.

The Lovell Bulldogs are living that fact right now.

In 2018, the Bulldogs produced just one victory, their lowest single-season total since going 1-6 in 1996. And the program missed the playoffs for the second time in three years.

New head coach Nicc Crosby will be Lovell's third head coach in three seasons, but he brings with him a special connection to Lovell – it's his hometown.

"It's an honor, privilege, and an incredible responsibility to be coaching at my alma mater," Crosby said. "I followed Lovell athletics while I was away from home, and I always felt a sense of pride as I observed their accomplishments."

With that, he said his top priority for rebuilding the Bulldogs is to rebuild confidence.

"I don't think these kids realize how good they can be yet," he said. "When things aren't

going well, one of the first things players struggle with is confidence. It has been great to watch that confidence level grow in my short time with this group."

Crosby said he plans on adopting a physical style that will give players a chance to showcase their speed – something the Bulldogs have this year. The defense will be simplified to allow players to "play fast."

Crosby started working with Lovell's players in early June.

"I have been quite pleased with the participation and commitment level of the players," he said. "They have been more than willing to put in the required work to turn things around in our program."

Lovell graduated its three all-conference picks but returns five starters on both offense and defense. Junior C.J. Lindsay led Lovell with 102 carries for 443 yards and five scores. Seniors Hunter Harris and Thomas Hinckley also contributed significantly to the ground game, with

Harris carrying 43 times for 192 yards and Hinckley 48 times for 123 yards.

Junior Tyler Nichols saw some time at quarterback last season, completing 15 passes for 192 yards. The Bulldogs lost their top three receivers, with Lindsay and junior Aden Mayes, who each had 60 receiving yards last year, returning as the team's top returning pass-catchers.

Lovell also returns a significant number of key defensive players. Harris was second and Nichols tied for third in defensive points last season.

Sophomore Quinn Lindsay was fifth, senior Quinton Hecker seventh, Hinckley 10th, C.J. Lindsay 11th and Mayes 12th in defensive points. Quinn Lindsay led Lovell with three sacks.

Crosby also noted that several other seniors, including linebacker Coy Trainor, lineman Jaxson Jasso and defensive back Zane Hitz, have been key players and leaders in offseason preparation.

Mascot: Bulldogs
Division: 2A
Conference: West
Colors: Blue and white
Coach: Nicc Crosby, first year at Lovell
2018 Record: 1-8, did not qualify for playoffs

Key Players
FB/LB: Coy Trainor, Sr.
RB/LB: Hunter Harris, Sr.
OL/DL: Jaxson Jasso, Sr.
WR/DB: Quinton Hecker, Sr.

2019 Schedule
8-31: vs. Natrona JV, 2 p.m. (Zero Week)
9-6: at Wind River, 7 p.m.
9-13: vs. Shoshoni, 7 p.m.
***9-20:** at Mountain View, 3 p.m.
***9-27:** vs. Lyman, 7 p.m.
***10-4:** at Big Piney, 2 p.m.
***10-11:** vs. Greybull, 7 p.m.
***10-18:** at Pinedale, 7 p.m.
***10-25:** vs. Kemmerer, 5:30 p.m.
*** Conference game**

2A WEST

LYMAN EAGLES

PAGE 33

Eagles will be numbers challenged

The scoreboard hasn't always flickered in favor of Lyman the past couple seasons.

The Eagles finished 2-6 last season and missed the playoffs for the second consecutive year, the first time that's happened in the seven years that Dale Anderson has been Lyman's head coach.

However, Anderson said the scores – while important – aren't a reflection of how hard his players worked or how far they've come.

"As coaches, you look for successes in different ways," Anderson said. "You might not always be winning games, but you can see improvement and focus on their effort. ... The wins come when you do the right things the right way."

This year, Lyman faces a challenge similar to squads of the past couple years – competing in the Class 2A West Conference with fewer players than typical. Anderson said he anticipates about 25 players to come out this fall, including about five or six seniors.

"That (senior) experience is invaluable," he said. " ... They understand what we're trying to accomplish."

However, Brendan Martin, who led the team in rushing yards and defensive points last year, left Lyman over the summer, leaving a bigger gap to fill than the Eagles had anticipated after last season.

Senior quarterback Hagen Lamoreaux had 120 carries for 467 yards and five touchdowns

"We just find some ways to do the same things to take advantage of the kids we have."

~ Coach Dale Anderson



Key Players
QB/DB: Hagen Lamoreaux, Sr.
WR/DB: Blake Palmer, Sr.
WR/DB: Richie Brewer, Sr.
OL/DL: Hansen Bradshaw, Jr.

and is Lyman's top returning rusher. Junior Preston Brewer contributed 37 carries for 202 yards.

Brewer and Lamoreaux split time at quarterback but combined for only 10 completions and 157 passing yards in Lyman's run-heavy offense. Senior Blake Palmer was the main target in that area of the offense, catching five passes for 109 yards and three touchdowns.

Bradshaw, Palmer and senior Hunter Gines also contributed on defense last season, each notching at least 20 tackles.


"We get a lot of our skill kids back, and a couple of them have started even since they were freshmen," Anderson said. " ... We have some experience there, and some kids that have put in some time and done some things, so I think that'll be something we can build on."

"It does help to have kids like that that know what we're trying to accomplish and we're not having to reteach everything."

However, the offensive line is inexperienced, with junior Hansen Bradshaw, the Eagles' only returning all-conference pick and the only returning starter on the offensive line, providing the most experience.

"That'll be one of the big keys for us this year, is to put a decent offensive line in front of some pretty good skill kids," Anderson said.

Lamoreaux and Brewer were also among Lyman's top five defensive players last year. Brewer had 32 tackles and a team-high three sacks, while Lamoreaux had 30 tackles.



Mascot: Eagles
Division: 2A
Conference: West
Colors: Blue and white
Coach: Dale Anderson, 8th year
2018 Record: 2-6, did not qualify for playoffs

2019 Schedule
8-30: vs. Rawlins, 2 p.m. (Zero Week)
***9-6:** vs. Pinedale, 1 p.m.
***9-13:** vs. Kemmerer, 1 p.m.
9-20: at Cokeville, 1 p.m.
***9-27:** at Lovell, 7 p.m.
10-3: at Star Valley JV, 3 p.m.
***10-11:** vs. Mountain View, 1 p.m.
***10-18:** at Greybull, 6 p.m.
***10-25:** vs. Big Piney, 3 p.m.
*** Conference game**

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Mascot: Buffalos
Division: 2A
Conference: West
Colors: Purple and white
Coach: Brent Walk, 8th year
2018 Record: 9-2, lost to Buffalo in state championship

2019 Schedule

8-30: at Green River, 6 p.m. (Zero Week)
9-6: vs. Cokeville, 4 p.m.
***9-13:** at Big Piney, 2 p.m.
***9-20:** vs. Lovell, 3 p.m.
9-27: at Thermopolis, 6 p.m.
***10-4:** vs. Pinedale, 1 p.m.
***10-11:** at Lyman, 1 p.m.
***10-18:** at Kemmerer, 7 p.m.
***10-25:** vs. Greybull, 3 p.m.
*** Conference game**

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Buffalos should be in title chase

This year's Mountain View football team has an internal focus, one that plays itself out in a variety of mantras that emphasize the need for players to both improve and challenge one another.

Coach Brent Walk said he hopes the work ethic to improve plus the athleticism, knowledge and talent his players possess will translate into continued success for a program that's reached the Class 2A state championship game in four of the past six seasons.

"It all goes back to our work ethic," Walk said. "... The credit goes to the kids and the parents and the community. But our culture, it really is something special."

Mountain View's dreams of a repeat championship came to a sudden halt in last year's 2A title game, where Mountain View fell behind to Buffalo 29-0 and eventually lost 43-18.

This year, though, the Buffalos return five all-state players,

"It all goes back to our work ethic."

~ Coach Brent Walk

under center, with Madsen throwing for 866 yards and nine touchdowns and Walk adding 381 passing yards and three scores.

Bluemel ran for 1,106 yards and 19 touchdowns, with Madsen contributing 985 yards and 12 scores and Walk another 179 and six TDs.

As receivers, Walk led Mountain View with 22 catches for 468 yards and six touchdowns, while Schofield added 18 catches for 300 yards, Bluemel 19 catches for 163 yards and Madsen eight catches for 140 yards.

Defensively, the Buffalos lose their top tackler to graduation but return their next eight in Gross, Bluemel, Barnes, Schofield, Walk, Madsen, Meeks and senior Caleb Knutson. Gross leads all

under center, with Madsen throwing for 866 yards and nine touchdowns and Walk adding 381 passing yards and three scores.

Bluemel ran for 1,106 yards and 19 touchdowns, with Madsen contributing 985 yards and 12 scores and Walk another 179 and six TDs.

As receivers, Walk led Mountain View with 22 catches for 468 yards and six touchdowns, while Schofield added 18 catches for 300 yards, Bluemel 19 catches for 163 yards and Madsen eight catches for 140 yards.

Defensively, the Buffalos lose their top tackler to graduation but return their next eight in Gross, Bluemel, Barnes, Schofield, Walk, Madsen, Meeks and senior Caleb Knutson. Gross leads all

Cundall moves up to lead position

Clay Cundall's transition to head coach at Pinedale fulfills a lifelong dream.

The former Greybull and Chadron State player knew he wanted the position, and after three years as an assistant with the Wranglers, the head coach's job is now his.

"I've always aspired to be a head coach and I've had a lot of

good head coaches of various sports throughout my lifetime," he said. "I've always wanted to emulate those people. And we've got a group of coachable, hardworking kids who are coming up. They're great to work with. They work hard and want to be coached."

Cundall said he anticipates about 30 players will come out

this fall for Pinedale, which finished 3-5 last season and was one victory away from a play-off berth. The problem, though, is this year's senior class is small and the largest class will likely be the freshmen.

On top of that, Pinedale graduated all five of its all-conference picks, its top three rushers, its top four receivers and almost every key defensive player.

Cundall, though, is focused on who he has back.

"Obviously, the rapport's established with our staff," Cundall said, noting that only one new staff member is joining the coaching staff in the fall. "... I think it makes for a smooth transition that the lifting in the offseason will be similar to what we've done in the past and our fall camp will be somewhat familiar to them."

Senior Thomas Harnack split time at quarterback last year but will likely move to running back this fall. He'll join junior Colby White in the backfield.

Up front, senior Riley Wilson and junior Dodge Westercamp will help bolster the offensive line, which lost three starters.

On defense, the Wranglers graduated their top six tacklers and nine of their top 10, and the lone returning player in the top 10 won't be with the team in the fall, Cundall said.

However, White, Westercamp and junior Carson

Mascot: Wranglers
Division: 2A
Conference: West
Colors: Green and white
Coach: Clay Cundall, first year at Pinedale
2018 Record: 3-5, did not qualify for playoffs

Key Players

RB/DB: Thomas Harnack, Sr.

RB/LB: Colby White, Jr.

OL/DE: Riley Wilson, Sr.

OL/DL: Dodge Westercamp, Jr.

2019 Schedule

8-30: at Lander, 7 p.m. (Zero Week)

***9-6:** at Lyman, 1 p.m.

9-13: vs. Jackson, 7 p.m.

***9-20:** at Kemmerer, 7 p.m.

***9-27:** vs. Greybull, 4 p.m.

***10-4:** at Mountain View, 1 p.m.

***10-11:** at Big Piney, 3 p.m.

***10-18:** vs. Lovell, 7 p.m.

10-25: vs. Wheatland, 7 p.m.

*** Conference game**

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Continued on Next Page

MOUNTAIN VIEW BUFFALOS

returners with 13 tackles for loss and eight sacks; Bluemel had a team-high 10 pass break-ups; Schofield picked off seven passes to lead the Buffalos.

Even so, coach Walk said every player's position is up for grabs, thanks to deep and talented groups of juniors and sophomores – an internal competition that continuously stokes the players' work ethic.

"They know if they don't work, they're not going to start

Key Players

RB/S: Briggan Bluemel, Sr.

OL/DE: Hunter Gross, Sr.

QB/WR/LB: Kimball Madsen, Sr.

QB/WR/S: Braeden Walk, Sr.

this year," Walk said. "... It's not difficult to keep these kids motivated. They love it."

PINEDALE WRANGLERS

PINEDALE, Cont.

Gregory all contributed to the defense in 2018, notching at least 20 defensive points apiece.

Cundall said the Wranglers will build on the systems they have already established the past few years.

"Last year we transitioned to a new offense, so that in itself is still pretty fresh," he said. "They'll be some new aspects to the offense, and even some

new aspects to defense. Some things may look familiar, but there will be a lot of differences as well."

As for the inexperience, Cundall said team camps in the summer, as well as camp in Chadron, Nebraska, helped build camaraderie, chemistry and confidence.

"It was good to go to a highly competitive camp versus a lot of highly competitive teams," Cundall said.

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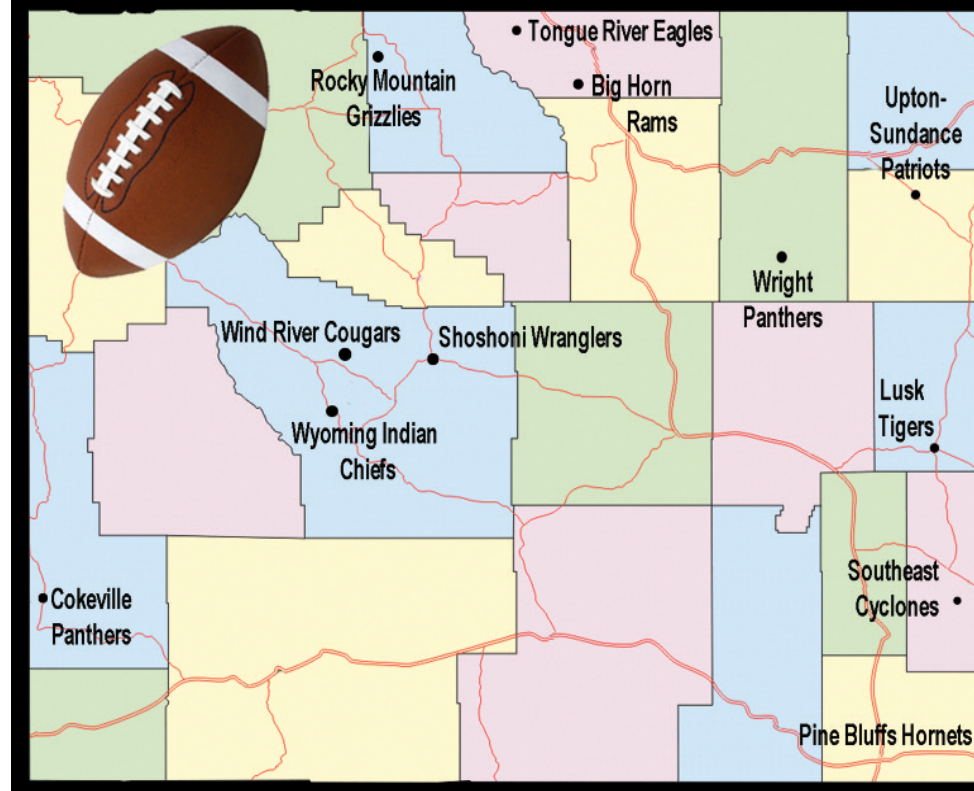
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1A/11-man Preview



State Champs
Big Horn
Rams

2018 State Playoffs

State Championship

Big Horn 56, Cokeville 3

State Semifinals

Big Horn 68, Pine Bluffs 13

Cokeville 25,
Upton-Sundance 6

State Quarterfinals

Big Horn 67, Wind River 8

Pine Bluffs 54, Shoshoni 0

Cokeville 61, Wright 8

Upton-Sundance 56,
Rocky Mountain 0

Four players to watch

Quinn McCafferty, Big Horn

McCafferty led Class 1A 11-man with 1,731 passing yards (157.4 per game). His completion percentage of 63.4 (92 of 145) was by far the best among 1A, and he had a 27-to-3 touchdown to interception ratio.

Will Pelissier, Big Horn

He was ninth in 1A in rushing last year, carrying 82 times for 653 yards and 10 touchdowns, but he was just as dangerous through the air, finishing with 20 catches for 429 yards. As a senior, both yardage totals could go up.

Dax Yeradi, Wright

As the Class 1A 11-man leader in defensive points each of the past two years, Yeradi has consistently proven his ability to provide huge plays (class-high seven interceptions last year) and keep Wright in games.

Jaydon Caylor, Upton-Sundance

As a junior, Caylor was instrumental in the Patriots' run in the playoffs. He led U-S in several key statistics, including rushing, receiving, scoring, tackles, and defensive points.

Rams favored for repeat

By Patrick Schmiedt

Four questions to answer

What makes Big Horn the favorite again? Returning firepower. No other team returns what Big Horn returns this fall. The six returning all-state players is the highest number in the state regardless of classification.

Who's most likely to challenge Big Horn for the top spot? Is "pick 'em" an option? Several squads return key chunks of players, including Upton-Sundance, Pine Bluffs and Lusk from the East and Cokeville, Rocky Mountain and Shoshoni from the West. They're all capable of pulling off a first-round playoff victory given the right circumstances.

What was that about Lusk? The Tigers return four of their five all-conference choices from last year, including a pair of all-staters in senior Damien Molzahn and junior Drake Lamp. After missing the playoffs last year thanks to a little bad luck in a coin flip, Lusk should be a contender this year.

What about the West Conference? With Saratoga playing six-man and Wyoming Indian playing a patchwork schedule, four teams are eligible for the four playoff spots out of the West — not exactly conditions conducive to creating playoff-ready, tested squads.

Four key games

Big Horn at Upton-Sundance, Sept. 27. This showdown between the Patriots and the Rams is always key — and the Rams have always had the upper hand. Big Horn is 2-0

against the U-S co-op.

Cokeville at Rocky Mountain, Oct. 11. The Panthers appear to be ready to cruise to yet another West Conference title. However, the up-and-coming Grizzlies, at home in Week 6, are in the best position to catch the Panthers in a potential trap game.

Upton-Sundance at Pine Bluffs, Oct. 18. This game between the Patriots and Hornets has had playoff implications for several years. Expect similar stakes this year, where a victory could mean the difference between having a home playoff game and not.

Pine Bluffs at Lusk, Oct. 25. A lot of people are looking at Lusk as a potential breakout team. If the Tigers uphold their end of the expectations, this Week 8 meeting at home against Pine Bluffs could have high stakes.

Predicted order of finish

East Conference: Big Horn, Upton-Sundance, Pine Bluffs, Lusk, Tongue River, Wright, Southeast.

West Conference: Cokeville, Shoshoni, Rocky Mountain, Wind River, Wyoming Indian.

Way-too-early title game score prediction

Big Horn 34, Upton-Sundance 26

By acclimation, the Rams are the favorites in 1A this year. A surprise might be waiting somewhere along the line, but for now, the Rams are in the best position to be the last team standing come November.



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Mascot: Rams
Division: 1A/11-mn
Conference: East
Colors: Maroon/yellow
Coach: Kirk McLaughlin, 2nd year at Big Horn
2018 Record: 11-0, beat Cokeville in state championship

Key Players
QB/LB: Quinn McCafferty, Sr.
TE/LB: Kyler Ostler, Sr.
OL/LB: Cutler Bradshaw, Sr.
RB/DB: Will Pelissier, Sr.

2019 Schedule
8-30: at Cody, 3 p.m. (Zero Week)
9-6: at Thermopolis, 6 p.m.
9-13: vs. Greybull, 7 p.m.
***9-20:** vs. Wright, 7 p.m.
***9-27:** at Upton-Sundance, 7 p.m. (at Upton)
***10-4:** vs. Pine Bluffs, 5 p.m.
***10-11:** vs. Tongue River, 6 p.m.
***10-18:** at Lusk, 6 p.m.
***10-25:** at Southeast, 5 p.m.
*** Conference game**



Mascot: Tigers
Division: 1A/11-man/East
Colors: Red and white
Coach: Ryan Nelson, 5th year at Lusk
2018 Record: 4-4, did not qualify for playoffs

Key Players
FB/LB: Damien Molzahn, Sr.
RB/S: Drake Lamp, Jr.
RB/DE: James Stone, Sr.
OG/DT: Jasper Caldera, Jr.

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Rams have tough act to follow

When the 2019 season starts, every team in Class 1A 11-man will look at Big Horn as the pacesetter.

Big Horn is coming off one of the most dominant seasons not only in school history, but in state history. The Rams won every game last year by at least 21 points and won every playoff game by at least 53. They set all-time 11-man state records for most points (577) and most average points (52.45).

But for coach Kirk McLaughlin, and for the Rams, last year's title and the respect it brings only goes as far as the next game.

"Last year was a special year, but we need to stay focused on the present and do what we have to do to reach the success levels that our seniors and leaders wish to accomplish," McLaughlin said.

From last year's title team, six all-state choices return – seniors Cutler Bradshaw, Quinn McCafferty, Kyler Ostler, Will Pelissier and Nolan Rader and junior Car-

son Bates.

"Day one will be great because we have a good number of returning players that can help our young players learn our schemes, drills, and our culture," McLaughlin said. "Our seniors are also aware of what it takes to get to the top."

The Rams run a diverse offense; they led Class 1A 11-man in both rushing yards (262.8) and passing yards (168) per game last year.

McCafferty led the classification with 1,731 passing yards, tossing 27 touchdowns to just three interceptions.

"Knowing we have someone special like Quinn (at quarterback) can really open the door to many different offensive schemes and possibilities," McLaughlin said.

Pelissier is Big Horn's top returning rusher and receiver. He was second on the team last year with 653 yards and 10 touchdowns on the ground; he was also No. 2 on the team in receiv-

ing yards (429) and catches (20).

Bates added 488 rushing yards and six TDs, while McCafferty contributed 140 yards and five touchdowns. Bates was also third on the team with 255 receiving yards and second with six receiving touchdowns.

The defense doesn't have quite the returning experience as the offense, as Bradshaw is the only one of Big Horn's top six tacklers back. Bradshaw was second for Big Horn in defensive points last season, finishing with 92 total tackles and a team-high 67 assisted tackles.

Ostler was seventh, Pelissier eight, McCafferty ninth and Rader 11th in defensive points for the Rams last season.

Big Horn enters 2019 without the depth it had last year. With that, the Rams still have unanswered questions about several spots.

"This year we will be asking a lot of players to step up and fill positions left open by graduating seniors," McLaughlin said.

Tigers set sights on playoffs

Lusk coach Ryan Nelson has a bunch of reasons to feel good about the Tigers' 2019 season.

Those reasons start with the Tigers' returners. With nine returning starters on both offense and defense, Lusk has both the experience and athleticism to reach the playoffs for the first time since 2014.

Specifically, a senior class with motivation and a junior class with the ability to add depth has Lusk in that position.

"They've come a long ways since being thrown in as freshmen," Nelson said. "They just need to take that next step to get in the postseason, and then they could surprise some people."

The Tigers don't need to look any further than last year's finish for motivation.

Lusk finished just short of a playoff berth.

"They've come a long ways since being thrown in as freshmen."

~ Coach Ryan Nelson

The Tigers tied for the No. 4 seed from the Class 1A 11-man East Conference but lost a coin flip to make the playoffs.

Nelson pointed out that with this year's rule changes for tiebreakers that use point differential prior to turning to a coin flip, Lusk would have

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Hornets are on winning roll

Pine Bluffs' football is in its renaissance.

The Hornets have put together three consecutive winning seasons, the first time the program has had that many consecutive above .500 finishes since garnering nine consecutive winning seasons from 1963-71.

And although last year's 6-4 finish wasn't the same as winning a state championship, as the Hornets did in both 2016 and 2017, Pine Bluffs showed it plans on remaining competitive for years to come.

"As a program we've really

keyed on developing our young players into guys that can be successful at the varsity level," coach Will Gray said. "We've had good numbers, which has essentially allowed us to redshirt our freshmen and use practice time to focus on fundamentals and specifics of our schemes without having to throw them into varsity roles that they are not ready for."

Last season, Pine Bluffs started 4-0, but three consecutive losses to Big Horn, Burns and Upton-Sundance derailed conference championship hopes.

Key Players

OL/LB: Brian Steger, Sr.
OL/LB: Kyle Thurin, Sr.
QB/DE: Donte Jacobsen, Sr.
OL/DL: Thayne Vialpando, Sr.

Gray said the difference was simple: The Hornets didn't run the ball well and didn't tackle well down the stretch.

"The kids know we weren't good (in those areas), and they want to fix it," he said.

Senior Brian Steger is Pine Bluffs' only returning all-state player from a team that reached the Class 1A 11-man semifinals, but senior Donte Jacobsen joined Steger on the all-conference team.

Jacobsen returns as the Hornets' quarterback; he completed 87 of 162 passes for 1,281 yards and 12 touchdowns last season. However, three of Pine Bluffs' top four receivers graduated, leaving senior

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Justus Golding (14 catches, 181 yards in 2018) as the Hornets' top returning receiving threat.

Steger was Pine Bluffs' No. 2 rusher last year, running 129 times for 517 yards and six touchdowns. However, Gray said Steger – as well as senior Kyle Thurin – volunteered to move to the offensive.

"They are team-first guys who want to do everything they can to be successful as a program," Gray said. "We struggled to run the ball against good teams last fall and that has been a focus for us this offseason. We were able to throw the ball consistently for the most part, but we have to fix our run game to be successful late in the season."

Thurin is the only one of Pine Bluffs' top five tacklers to return this fall. Thurin was No. 3 on the team in total tackles and led the squad with 32 solo tackles; he also had seven tackles for loss.

Steger was sixth in tackles and led Pine Bluffs last season with seven sacks, while senior Thayne Vialpando was 10th on the team with 57 total defensive points and 31 tackles.



Mascot: Hornets
Division: 1A/11-man
Conference: East
Colors: Purple and yellow
Coach: Will Gray, 9th year
2018 Record: 6-4, lost to Big Horn in state semifinals

2019 Schedule
8-30: vs. Glenrock, 5 p.m. (Zero Week)
9-6: at Yuma, Colo., 7 p.m.
***9-13:** at Wright, 6 p.m.
***9-20:** vs. Southeast, 7 p.m.
***9-27:** vs. Tongue River, 7 p.m.
***10-4:** at Big Horn, 5 p.m.
10-11: vs. Burns, 7 p.m.
***10-18:** vs. Upton-Sundance, 5:30 p.m.
***10-25:** at Lusk, 7 p.m.
*** Conference game**

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PREVIEW GUIDE

made the postseason last year.

"The guys were upset," Nelson said, "but all agreed if we'd taken care of business on the field it would have come down to a coin flip."

Senior Damien Molzahn and junior Drake Lamp were both all-state picks last season, and senior James Stone and junior Jasper Caldera were both named to the all-conference team. Lusk returns four of its five selections from that all-conference team, second only to Big Horn in the East Conference.

The Tigers' offense returns its top four rushers, four of its top five receivers, its quarterback and several offensive linemen; the defense returns its top five tacklers and 10 of its top 12.

"We're as experienced as we've been since I took over, and the upperclassmen are very motivated," said Nelson, who's in his fifth year as head coach. "They've committed to summer

weights, camps... and are getting the younger guys involved."

Lamp led the rushing attack with 149 carries for 926 yards and four touchdowns last year, while Molzahn added 119 carries for 435 yards.

Senior quarterback Wyatt Stauffer completed only 20 passes, but they went for 436 yards and five scores.

"I'm hoping we'll be able to play faster on both offense and defense," Nelson said. "With so many returning (players) we shouldn't have to spend as much time getting stuff installed."

Molzahn led the Tigers in defensive points and total tackles (90) and tied for the team lead in solo tackles (29) and tackles for loss (nine).

Sophomore Dylan Molzahn was second in defensive points, also contributing 29 solo tackles, while Stone was third, Caldera was fourth and junior Ryan Bruegger was fifth.

8-31: at Southeast Jamboree, 9 a.m. (Zero Week)
***9-6:** at Upton-Sundance, 7 p.m. (at Upton)
***9-13:** vs. Tongue River, 6 p.m.
9-20: at Wind River, 5 p.m.
***9-27:** at Southeast, 7 p.m.
10-4: vs. Newcastle, 6 p.m.
***10-11:** at Wright, 7 p.m.
***10-18:** vs. Big Horn, 6 p.m.
***10-25:** vs. Pine Bluffs, 7 p.m.
*** Conference game**



Cyclones small, but seasoned

When Southeast coach Mark Bullington looks at his roster, he sees the Cyclones' biggest problem right there in black and white: lots of kids who weigh 150 pounds.

For a team that prides itself on running the ball and controlling the line of scrimmage, the physical manifestations of the realities of the roster bring sharp focus to the biggest thing Southeast needs to do to rebuild.

"We just have to develop some linemen," Bullington said. "We just don't have big kids."

As for some of those 150-pounders?

"Some of them might be linemen," Bullington said.

Southeast went an un-Southeast-like 0-8 last season, just the second losing season for the Cyclones since Bullington took over as head coach in 1999.

With low numbers and little size, the Cyclones didn't enter last year with any delusions.

"We knew it'd be a rough year," Bullington said. "We just tried to stay positive. The kids were working hard, as hard as they could work."

But the fall was definitive, as

Key Players

TE/LB: Tate Carson, Sr.

QB/S: Hayden Anderson, Jr.

WR/RB/LB: Brant Fullmer, Jr.

WR/LB: Patrick Swank, Sr.

the Cyclones only had one game in which the final margin was fewer than double digits.

However, Southeast had just two seniors on last year's roster, giving the Cyclones an experienced roster for 2019 and nine returning starters on both offense and defense.

Junior quarterback Hayden Anderson completed 46 passes for 455 yards and five touchdowns.

Sophomore Cord Herring was Southeast's leading rusher with 56 carries for 330 yards. Junior Brant Fullmer added 74 carries for 225 yards.

Senior Tate Carson was Southeast's leading receiver with 22 catches for 227 yards and four scores, while Fullmer added eight catches for 125 yards.

Bullington said the offense may change a bit to fit the problems

present on the line, potentially running more out of a shotgun formation than under center.

"We're doing a lot this summer with that, and our quarterback's a year older and more confident," Bullington said.

The Cyclones return their top eight tacklers on defense. Junior Harrison Hall led the Cyclones with 37 total tackles, including 22 solo, while Herring added 31 tackles and a team-high six tackles for loss.

Carson had 34 tackles, while senior Greg Logsdon added 23 and Anderson 22.

Seniors Patrick Swank and Jacob Chapman will also be key contributors to this year's team, Bullington said. He said he expects about 25 players to come out, five of those seniors.

"That group of juniors and seniors, they've been in the weight room all summer, lifting, working hard," Bullington said.

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Patriots' co-op working well

When the Upton-Sundance co-op started prior to the 2012 season, no one was quite sure how it would work.

Now, as the Patriots prepare for their eighth year together, coach Andy Garland said the agreement between the two schools is working well.

"The kids know the expectations now and they know the system that we're running," Garland said. "... As a coaching staff, we're real happy with how we've done, the success we've had."

Each year, the Patriots field a team of about 25-30 players. With a pending move to Class 2A in 2020, a move that will keep Upton-Sundance an 11-man program, the ability U-S has to grow in ways together that it couldn't separately becomes even more apparent.

Garland noted the co-op allows for enough players for a scout team. The season can run

differently, too, as the program can run a junior varsity schedule.

"It's been really nice," Garland said. "Injuries are always still a concern. ... We're not up over 30 kids or anything like that, so you're always just an injury away from taking a big hit."

Upton-Sundance has put together five consecutive seasons of reaching, at minimum, the Class 1A 11-man semifinals.

This year, the Patriots will likely remain in contention for the top spot behind one of the classification's most dynamic

Continued on Page 43



Mascot: Patriots

Division: 1A/11-man

Conference: East

Colors: Blue and red

Coach: Andy Garland, 16th year

2018 Record: 8-2, lost to Cokeville in state semifinals

Key Players

TB/LB: Jayden Caylor, Sr.

RB/S: Jess Claycomb, Jr.

WR/DB: Kye Taylor, Sr.

OL/LB: Jo Bishop, Sr.

Eagles learn from last year's lumps

Entering his first season as Tongue River's coach, Steve Hanson knew the transition would be tough. It was; after back-to-back Class 1A 11-man runner-up finishes, the Eagles fell to 2-6. Now, as Hanson enters his second season at Tongue River, he's thrilled at the progress he's seen from last offseason to this offseason.

"Last year we were so young and green that it took a year of lumps to help build who we are, and this year we are a far improved team from last year," Hanson said. "The things we can do and the depth we built will definitely pay off this year."

The Eagles have nine starters returning on both offense and defense. And toughness might be the team's calling card.

"We took 15 kids to Chadron State for camp this summer and they played hard, both sides of the ball, and nobody quit," Hanson said. "These seniors are dogs – not fast, not big but they don't back down. We won't win many beauty of finesse contests, but we do come to work."

The Eagles do two-thirds of

Key Players

OL/DL: Marcus Sharp, Sr.

RB/S: Kyle Breen, Sr.

QB/OLB: Daie'n Bear Don't Walk, Sr.

WR/S: Cade Reish, Sr.

their all-conference selections in seniors J.T. Hammond and A.J. Lytton; however, Hammond will miss the first half of the season for a rule violation.

Senior Zach Schankey was the team's top rusher last year, carrying for 367 yards; classmate Elias Dillon-Bennett added 239 yards on the ground.

Senior Luke Stutzman, who threw for 191 yards, returns as quarterback, while Hammond had 143 receiving yards to lead the Eagles last season.

The Eagles return five of their top eight tacklers from 2017.

Schankey was Tongue River's top tackler last year; he led the

team in both solo (26) and assisted (21) tackles.

Hammond tied for the team lead with three interceptions, while Lytton, Dillon-Bennett, Stutzman and juniors Marcus Sharp and Kyle Breen all finished with at least four defensive points.

"I am very confident in this team and what they can bring," Hanson said. "We are not going to shock anyone athletically, but this team is very eager to prove that last year was not the norm."

Therein is Tongue River's problem. In finishing 2-6, the Eagles were out-gained by more than a 2-to-1 ratio, giving up 291.3 yards per game while gaining just 141.9 yards per game.

However, Hanson said he has faith in his team to not only pick up the lessons he's teaching but to make the team their own, as well.

"I think my boys know who I am and what I want and expect," he said, "but more than that I think they know it is their team, and they are beginning to own that idea."



Mascot: Eagles

Division: 1A/11-Man

Conference: East

Colors: Green and white

Coach: Steve Hanson, 3rd year at Tongue River

2018 Record: 3-5, did not qualify for playoffs

2019 Schedule

8-30: at Greybull, 7 p.m.

9-6: vs. Moorcroft, 7 p.m.

***9-13:** at Lusk, 6 p.m.

***9-20:** vs. Upton-Sundance, 7 p.m.

***9-27:** at Pine Bluffs, 7 p.m.

***10-4:** vs. Southeast, 6 p.m.

***10-11:** at Big Horn, 6 p.m.

10-19: at Sheridan JV, 11 a.m.

***10-25:** vs. Wright, 6 p.m.

*** Conference game**



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Mascot: Panthers

Division: 1A/11-man

Conference: East

Colors: Black and gold

Coach: Larry Yeradi, 25th year

2018 Record: 3-6, lost to Cokeville in state quarterfinals

Key Players

QB/S: Dax Yeradi, Sr.

OL/DL: Zeb Goodrich, Sr.

RB/LB: Kayden Mack, Jr.

WR/DB: Kaden Tescher, Jr.

Panthers trending in right direction

A noticeable shift has taken place in Wright's offseason.

After last season, in which the Panthers made the playoffs for the first time since 2009, weight room attendance has been up, a supportive team culture is strengthening and excitement is building.

"Our weight room numbers are as good as any year I've coached," coach Larry Yeradi said.

"The kids are spending time with each other outside the weight room, and the culture of working for something bigger than self is growing."

"I don't know if this is from a playoff appearance or just the next group of kids and the leadership upperclassmen are providing."

Whatever spurred the change, Yeradi said he appreciates the work he's seeing from his players

so far. To continue success, they'll need it.

After last year's playoff berth, the Panthers lose some key players; they only return six letter-winners, lost an all-state player to transfer, and can count the number of seniors they'll have out this year on one hand. However, they also return two-time all-state senior Dax Yeradi and about half their starters on both offense and defense.

Yeradi led Wright in both passing and rushing. He completed 38 passes for 541 yards while running 89 times for 533 yards.

He had 1,510 yards of all-purpose offense – exactly half of Wright's total from 2018. In part, that success "creates challenges for our staff to find packages that help alleviate tendencies," coach Yeradi said.

Dax Yeradi also led the defense in almost

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2019 Schedule

8-30: vs. Moorcroft, 7 p.m. (Zero Week)

9-6: at Burns, 6 p.m.

***9-13:** vs. Pine Bluffs, 6 p.m.

***9-20:** at Big Horn, 7 p.m.

9-27: vs. Wind River, 7 p.m.

***10-4:** at Upton-Sundance, 7 p.m. (at Sundance)

***10-11:** vs. Lusk, 7 p.m.

***10-18:** vs. Southeast, 7 p.m.

***10-25:** at Tongue River, 6 p.m.

*** Conference game**

"The kids are spending time with each other outside the weight room, and the culture of working for something bigger than self is growing."

~ Coach Larry Yeradi

for 20 yards last year – as Wright's top returning receiver.

"We will have many younger and inexperienced players and that is what makes coaching exciting," coach Yeradi said. "The best part of coaching is teaching, and I feel our staff does a tremendous job of teaching. It will be on us to have the entire team well pre-

pared for every contest and if that occurs, their confidence will be high and the team will be successful."

Of Wright's top eight tacklers from last year, Dax Yeradi is the only returner. Lewis (18 tackles), junior Kaden Tescher (16) and senior Zeb Goodrich (10) added double-digit tackles last year.



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UPTON-SUNDANCE PATRIOTS

1A/11-MAN EAST

PATRIOTS, Cont.

players and a supporting cast that has experience.

Senior Jayden Caylor is the only one of the Patriots' four all-state choices to come back in 2019. He was huge for Upton-Sundance a year ago, leading the rushing game with 90 carries for 779 and 13 touchdowns, leading the receivers with a team-high 331 receiving yards on 20 catches, and leading the team in defensive points, total tackles (91) and solo tackles (35).

"He's very vital," Garland said. "We're going to be doing a lot with him. He's a very versatile player."

Senior Kye Taylor was also an all-conference choice; he added 22 catches for 323 yards and a team-high five receiving touchdowns.

Junior Jess Claycomb added 25 carries for 201 yards and 11 catches for 170 yards last year.

The Patriots averaged 382.8 yards per game, second in 1A 11-man and one of just two schools to gain more than 300 yards per game.

While the Patriots retain many backs and receivers, the offensive line loses four starters.

"Filling those spots up front will definitely be a challenge," Garland said.

The defense lost six of its top nine tacklers to graduation.

Claycomb was fifth in defensive points and added 29 tackles and team highs with four interceptions and five pass break-ups.

Senior Jo Bishop had 39 tackles, junior Wyatt Gillespie added 34 and Taylor chipped in four interceptions and 10 tackles.



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2019 Schedule

8-30: at Lead-Deadwood, S.D., 7 p.m. (Zero Week)

***9-6:** vs. Lusk, 7 p.m. (at Upton)

9-13: vs. Wheatland, 6 p.m. (at Sundance)

***9-20:** at Tongue River, 7 p.m.

***9-27:** vs. Big Horn, 7 p.m. (at Upton)

***10-4:** vs. Wright, 7 p.m. (at Sundance)

***10-11:** at Southeast, 7 p.m.

***10-18:** at Pine Bluffs, 5:30 p.m.

10-25: vs. Shoshoni, 2 p.m. (at Casper, Natrona)

*** Conference game**

Mascot: Panthers
Division: 1A/11-man
Conference: West
Colors: Orange and black
Coach: Todd Dayton, 40th year
2018 Record: 10-1, lost to Big Horn in state championship
2019 Schedule
8-30: vs. Big Piney, 4 p.m. (Zero Week)
9-6: at Mountain View, 4 p.m.
9-12: at Evanston JV, 7 p.m.
9-20: vs. Lyman, 1 p.m.
***9-27:** at Shoshoni, 4 p.m.
10-3: vs. Natrona JV, 3 p.m. (at Green River)
***10-11:** at Rocky Mountain, 6 p.m.
10-17: vs. Star Valley JV, 4 p.m.
***10-25:** vs. Wind River, 4 p.m.
*** Conference game**

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COKEVILLE PANTHERS

1A 11-MAN WEST

Panthers ready for another run

Few Class 1A 11-man teams lose as many key players as Cokeville lost this year. At the same time, few Class 1A 11-man teams return as many key players as Cokeville returns this year. That dichotomy – the ability to reload – helps keep the Panthers in contention for state titles every single year. Cokeville lost all eight of its all-state picks to graduation. However, the Panthers had 13 all-conference choices, and five of those – seniors Devyn Donahue, Garrett King and Matt Thomas and juniors Nate Barnes and Tyler Moyes – return to try to get the Panthers back to the title game after finishing as the 1A 11-man runners-up last year. "I've got a lot of confidence in these young kids," said Cokeville coach Todd Dayton, who's entering his 40th year as head coach. "We may not be as good as we want to be at the beginning of the year, but I have a lot of confidence we'll be where we want to be by the end of the year."

Key Players

QB/LB: Matt Thomas, Sr.
RB/LB: Nate Barnes, Jr.
OL/DE: Garrett King, Sr.
RB: Devyn Donahue, Sr.

One of the ways Cokeville can reload every year is by playing younger players in varsity action. Dayton says Cokeville only gets to play one or two junior varsity games per year, so a lot of the program's development comes by playing younger players on varsity. "If we have an opportunity to play a young kid, we're going to play them," Dayton said. "And if we get scored on or fumble a ball, we're still going to play them, because that's their time to grow." Donahue is Cokeville's leading returning rusher and receiver; he was fourth on the team last year with 259 rushing yards on 40 carries and he was third on the squad in both catches (five) and

receiving yards (81). Sophomore Treyson Dayton added 150 rushing yards on 41 carries, while Moyes added 144 yards on 25 carries. Cokeville will need to find a quarterback, but Thomas will likely take over that position after playing backup in 2018. On defense, the Panthers lose six of their top seven tacklers to graduation. Barnes was second on the team with 166 defensive points, notching nine tackles for loss and four sacks. Dayton was eighth on the team in defensive points, while Moyes was 12th and Donahue 13th. The lesson last year's Panthers learned – both in going undefeated for the regular season as well as a crushing 53-point loss in the championship game – will be part of this year's team. "Our kids know that they've got to get better for sure," Dayton said. "... If we're going to compete with those schools, we have got to get better. We have to be stronger and bigger and tackle better."

ROCKY MOUNTAIN GRIZZLIES

1A/11-MAN WEST

Grizzlies ready for next step

Over one season, the Rocky Mountain Grizzlies went from forfeiting games to fighting for a home playoff game. Thanks to the lessons of the 2018 season, though, the Grizzlies should be much more competitive this season, as the team loses only two players to graduation and brings back one of the strongest and most experienced junior classes in Class 1A 11-man. "We are a year older, and that will help last year's young players a great deal," coach Richard Despaign said. Many players had a baptism by fire, so to speak, and will benefit from having played last year with older, more experienced players." With only four upperclassmen on the roster last year, sophomores had to carry the load – and they did. Junior Cason James was an all-state pick and leads a crew of five more players who were all-conference choices as sophomores last year. Classmates Tyler Banks, Austin Haslem, Zane Horrocks and Trace Moss were all-conference picks, as

Key Players

OT/DE: Kyle Hoyt, Sr.
OL/DL: Nathan Hatch, Sr.
LB: Travis Lytle, Sr.
C: Jaxon Jolley, Soph.

was returning sophomore Tyson Christiansen. Last season's struggles bottomed out in Week 3 when the Grizzlies had to forfeit a game because they didn't have enough players to field a team. By Week 7, the Griz had recovered. They upset Wind River 13-12; Wind River had beaten Rocky Mountain 28-0 in a nonconference game in Week 2. "With such a young team, we grew every game last year, and it was a big boost for the players to beat Wind River the second time we saw them last year," Despaign said. "They took a good deal of confidence from that game, and saw how their work and effort can pay off." Rocky returns its backfield intact, with running backs James (48

carries, 160 yards) and Banks (44 carries, 148 yards) and Horrocks at quarterback (31-of-88 passing, 373 yards). Banks and Haslem both broke the century mark in receiving yards last season. Rocky Mountain also returns four of its top five tacklers, including top tacklers Horrocks and James. James led Rocky with 51 total tackles, while Horrocks had a team-high 18 solo tackles and 41 total. Moss was fourth for Rocky in defensive points, while junior Trevor Jewell was fifth and had a team-high four pass break-ups. Banks chipped in 29 tackles last season, and junior Jaxon Jolley will add depth to the line. "They got their game experience at the varsity level instead of JV, so they have taken lumps, and the speed of the game, and the physicality will not be a surprise to them this year," Despaign said. "I expect a good year from them, and I expect them to have a turnaround year, and build on the success and learning they showed at the end of last season."

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Mascot: Grizzlies
Division: 1A/11-man
Conference: West
Colors: Brown and yellow
Coach: Richard Despaign, 4th year at Rocky Mountain
2018 Record: 3-6, lost to Upton-Sundance in state quarterfinals
2019 Schedule
8-31: at Powell JV, 11 a.m. (Zero Week)
9-6: at Greybull, 7 p.m.
9-13: vs. Wind River, 7 p.m.
9-20: at Newcastle, 6 p.m.
9-26: vs. Natrona JV, 5 p.m.
***10-4:** vs. Shoshoni, 7 p.m.
***10-11:** vs. Cokeville, 6 p.m.
***10-18:** at Wind River, 6 p.m.
***10-25:** vs. Wyoming Indian, 6 p.m.
*** Conference game**

1A/11-MAN EAST

SHOSHONI WRANGLERS

PAGE 45

Depth a luxury for Wranglers

Coach Tony Truempler noticed the Shoshoni Wranglers' lack of depth most in a pair of games against Class 2A foes last year. When going up a classification, the Wranglers played with those teams for the first half but faltered in the second half as they couldn't keep up with the depth of bigger schools.

This year, though, the Wranglers' depth problems might be over thanks to, of all things, freshmen.

"I think this is the first year... that I can truly say that I've got depth at every position, that can play right away," Truempler said. With small senior classes both last year and this year, the 2019 Wranglers will be young again. However, Shoshoni's preliminary roster had 42 players, including 15 freshmen.

The freshmen will add depth immediately to a program that desperately needs it. "What's nice about it is we're going to have depth, and with this freshman class coming in, they're a very athletic class," Truempler said. "We have size and speed coming in with this freshman class. "... I think that'll be a nice change for us. We're so used to not having depth. These (return-

"I think this is the first year... that I can truly say that I've got depth at every position."

~ Coach Tony Truempler

ing) guys play so much. It's been hard to find breaks for them, even on special teams." Those returners will set the pace for the squad this fall, and Shoshoni has four of its seven all-conference selections in senior James Knigge and juniors Kade Fike, Johnny Hilder and Tryston Truempler. Tryston Truempler led the offense in rushing yards, carrying 78 times for 294 yards, and passing yards, completing 42 passes for 679 yards and seven touchdowns. Fike contributed 78 carries for 283 yards, while Knigge was third on the team with 186 rushing yards and McCoy fourth with 103. The offensive line is still young, but Truempler said he had faith in the unit. The group includes Hilder; Hilder, Tryston Truempler and Fike have been starters since their freshman year. With a more experienced

team, coach Truempler said the playbook has expanded. "The playbook definitely has a different look than over the last few years, that's for sure," he said. The Wranglers do lose their top two receivers; Knigge's six catches for 97 yards is tops among Shoshoni's returners, and senior tight end Justin Weaver also returns. The Wranglers' defense returns four of its top five tacklers from last year in Truempler, Fike, Knigge and sophomore Jace LeClair. Truempler had a team-high 25 solo tackles; Fike had 58 total tackles and a team-high 41 assists; LeClair had 21 tackles and three interceptions; and Knigge added 28 tackles. Hilder, meanwhile, was seventh on the team in defensive points. "They've (had) to grow up real fast, and they've done well," coach Truempler said.

Coach: Tony Truempler, 7th year
2018 Record: 2-7, lost to Pine Bluffs in quarterfinals
Key Players
RB/LB: James Knigge, Sr.
TE/DE: Justin Weaver, Sr.
QB/S: Tryston Truempler, Jr.
RB/LB: Kade Fike, Jr.

Mascot: Wranglers
Division: 1A/11-man
Conference: West
Colors: Blue and yellow
2019 Schedule
8-31: Shoshoni Jamboree, 11 a.m. (Zero Week)
9-6: at Big Piney, 2 p.m.
9-13: at Lovell, 7 p.m.
9-19: vs. Riverton JV, 6 p.m.
*9-27: vs. Cokeville, 4 p.m.
*10-4: at Rocky Mountain, 7 p.m.
*10-11: vs. Wind River, 7 p.m.
10-17: at Natrona sophs, 6 p.m.
10-25: vs. Upton-Sundance, 2 p.m. (at Casper, Natrona)
* Conference game

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Mascot: Cougars
Division: 1A/11-man
Conference: West
Colors: Black and purple
Coach: Mykah Trujillo, 5th year at Wind River
2018 Record: 4-5, lost to Big Horn in state quarterfinals

1A/11-MAN WEST

WIND RIVER COUGARS

Cougars are building momentum

Coming into 2019, the Wind River Cougars will be significantly different. They graduated numerous key contributors. They had several players from last year move out of the district. They rebuilt their offense. All of that aside, coach Mykah Trujillo said the coachability and work ethic of the returning players will help keep the Cougars competitive and the keep the program growing. Last year's team didn't quite catch that lesson. "Probably one of the biggest things for the kids is their personal decisions affect the team," Trujillo said. "And that's just something that we had to deal with last year."

The Cougars started 4-2, but losses to Rocky Mountain and Cokeville in the final two games, as well as a coin-flip gone

wrong, relegated Wind River to the West Conference's No. 4

Continued on Next Page

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Good Luck, Teams!



Mascot: Chiefs
Division: 1A/11-man
Conference: West
Colors: Blue and red
Coach: Nate Reinhardt, first year at Wyoming Indian
2018 Record: 1-4, did not qualify for playoffs

Key Players

C: Theron Mason, Sr.
WR: Enean Bitsinni, Sr.
DE: Santee Frost, Soph.
DE: Xavier Albright, Soph.

2019 Schedule

8-31: at Shoshoni Jamboree, 11 a.m. (Zero Week)
9-3: at Worland JV, 5 p.m.
9-14: vs. Natrona frosh, 10 a.m.
9-28: at Cokeville JV, 1 p.m.
10-10: vs. Cody JV, 5 p.m. (site TBD)
10-18: vs. Shoshoni JV, 7 p.m.
***10-25:** at Rocky Mountain, 6 p.m.
*** Conference game**

New coach has unique background

New Wyoming Indian football coach Nate Reinhardt was attracted to Fremont County by, of all things, the Lander swimming program.

Reinhardt said his daughter is one of the top swimmers in the country in the 11-year-old age bracket. When the Wyoming Indian football job came open, along with an opportunity to teach business classes at WIHS and to move his family to a city where swimming is a priority, Reinhardt said it was "now or never" to take the chance.

Although this is Reinhardt's first head football coaching job, he has almost 20 years' worth of coaching experience at various levels. He has previously been a head basketball coach at Kemmerer (girls) and Guernsey (boys) and was also Guernsey's head track coach. He also coached at Poplar, Montana, and was an assistant at Highwood, Montana, where his teams won four Montana six-man championships in his five years as the defensive coordinator.

He said his philosophy with the Chiefs will center on his experience with six-man football as well as his prior experience with a reservation school at Poplar. That philosophy includes a quick short passing game that uses space to create mismatches and score quickly.

For now, Reinhardt said his focus will be to build up the offense to score points and bring the

defense along as the season progresses.

"It's not that we'll forget about defense, but we want to get some points out there and get the kids excited," he said.

He installed a similar system while the head coach at the middle school in Poplar. His first year, he had 18 players; after that, he consistently had 30-40 players out each year, after the excitement grew.

The plan is to develop something similar for the Chiefs, who early in the summer had more than 20 players signed up to be a part of the team.

Among some of the Chiefs' players on last year's roster are seniors Theron Mason, an all-conference choice last year, and Enean Bitsinni and sophomores

Santee Frost, Xavier Albright and E.J. Enos.

Much like last year, the Chiefs will play a patchwork schedule of mostly junior varsity teams. Reinhardt said his goal this year is to build the program up to a point where it can return to a full varsity schedule when the program transitions to the new nine-man division in 2020.

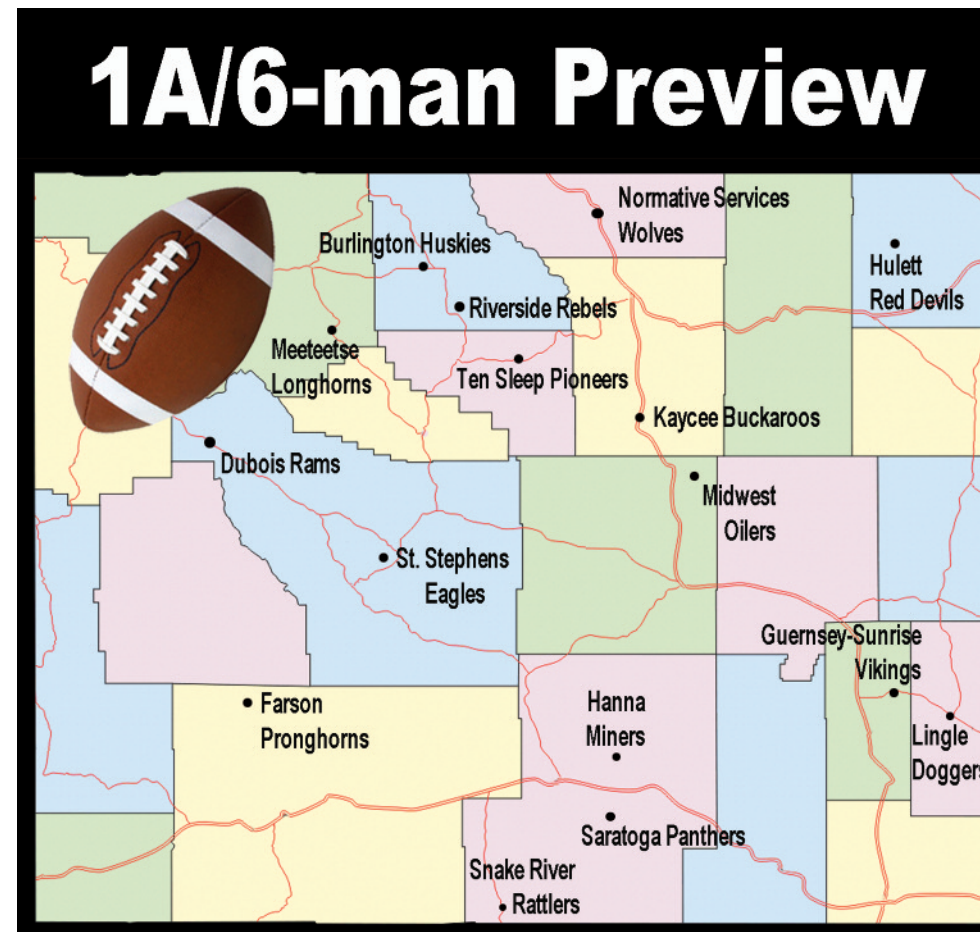
Reinhardt also said the eighth- and seventh-grade classes have large numbers of boys, meaning the future is bright if the excitement can be cultivated.

"Hopefully we can get some excitement going and get more kids interested in it," Reinhardt said. "... We've got to learn to compete first. Once we learn to compete, then we have a chance to win."



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Good Luck, Teams!



Power may shift to East

By Patrick Schmiedt

Four questions to answer

What's different about six-man this year? The conference balance. Last year, the West dominated the East; the West was much stronger, top to bottom, and East teams didn't win a single playoff game. This year, though, the East has 14 returning all-conference players, total, while the West has eight.

Which team from the East has the best chance of upsetting the West's dominance? Hanna. The Miners were undefeated in the regular season last year and return most of their key players, including the McGraw twins (Conor and Shane), who play equally important roles.

So let's get to it -- who's gonna win the state championship? Probably Snake River. The Rattlers will have close to double digits of seniors on this year's team, including a pair of all-stars in Riggen Myers and Wyatt Duncan.

Who's ready to surprise everyone? Riverside. The Rebels had a roster last year that included zero seniors, one junior, three sophomores and eight freshmen. They could have a heck of a final year in six-man if the young players develop quickly.

Four key games

Kaycee at Burlington, Sept. 7. Both programs have had recent success, but neither is in the early talk for state title contenders. That could change with a statement victory against the other on opening weekend.

Farson at Snake River, Oct. 12. This Sat-

urday matchup between the Pronghorns and Rattlers in Baggs might determine the West's No. 1 seed. On paper, they're the two best teams entering 2019, which means something will have to give.

Burlington at Farson, Oct. 18. The rematch of last year's state championship game comes in Week 7 in Farson – and both teams will need to win here to keep hopes of a No. 1 seed alive.

Hanna at Guernsey, Oct. 25. Hanna finishes its schedule with its two toughest games – at Kaycee in Week 7 and at Guernsey in Week 8. Whether the Miners muster a postseason push that gets them to Laramie may well depend on whether they can win here.

Predicted order of finish

East Conference: Hanna, Guernsey, Hulett, Lingle, Kaycee, Saratoga, NSI, Midwest.

West Conference: Snake River, Farson, Burlington, Meeteetse, Riverside, St. Stephens, Dubois, Ten Sleep.

Way-too-early title game score prediction Snake River 54, Hanna 52

On paper, these are the two best teams entering the season. Both teams return bunches of players from competitive teams, and either one could be six-man's most dominant program in 2019. Call this pick a bias for geography: It'd be fun to see two Carbon County rivals play each other in the championship.



State Champs Farson Pronghorns

2018 State Playoffs

State Championship

Farson 73, Burlington 38

State Semifinals

Farson 62, Snake River 19

Burlington 57, Meeteetse 18

State Quarterfinals

Farson 90, Hulett 22

Snake River 71, Kaycee 18

Meeteetse 47,
Guernsey-Sunrise 30

Burlington 61, Hanna 36

Four players to watch

Riggen Myers, Snake River

Myers was a beast on both offense and defense for the Rattlers. Last year, he ran for 1,398 yards and 24 touchdowns while also piling up 207 defensive points and 71 total tackles. On a senior-laden Rattler team, Myers will be the pacesetter.

Conor McGraw, Hanna

The Miners' dynamic McGraw twins fulfill different, but similar, roles. It's Conor McGraw's role to run the ball (881 yards, 14 touchdowns last year) and lead the defense (207 points, second-best in six-man last season).

Shane McGraw, Hanna

Meanwhile, it's Shane McGraw's role to pass (558 passing yards, 12 TDs and zero interceptions), run (762 rushing yards, 13 TDs) and support defensive efforts (fourth on the team with 139 defensive points, including three sacks and three pass break-ups).

Jarom Davidson, Burlington

Davidson is the only returning all-state selection for Burlington. He led the Huskies and was fifth in the state in defensive points last year, racking up 127 total tackles. He was also the Huskies' top receiver.

COUGARS, Cont.

seed. In the opening round of the playoffs, eventual 1A 11-man champion Big Horn routed the Cougars 67-8, prematurely ending a promising season.

This year, Trujillo said he's seen buy-in to offseason weight training and to a renewed commitment to the program.

"It's a vision of something bigger than themselves," Trujillo said. "... The kids are starting to pick up on that, and they're starting to see the big picture."

For the Cougars, that growth starts with their best player.

Senior Colton Befus has been an all-state selection the past two years; however, of Wind River's eight all-conference picks from 2018, he's the only one who's

back.

"He's critical," Trujillo said. "He'll do anything that we ask him, and he does it with a great attitude."

"... He's just a great all-around character athlete and he displays true grit for those kids coming into the program."

Befus led Wind River's defense with 55 total tackles and 27 assisted tackles. He also tied for the team lead with a pair of sacks.

Beyond that, the Cougars graduated their top three rushers, their top two passers and two of their top three receivers, and transfers away from the program also hurt depth. Consequently, Trujillo said Wind River will restructure its offense to fit its personnel.

Junior Colter Collver was 10th in defensive points last year and had 22 tackles; he will move from the offensive line to the backfield this year and also shifts from defensive end to linebacker.

Junior lineman Cole Barrett and sophomore wideout Jaden Miller have also fostered the type of culture Trujillo is hoping to see.

"The weight rooms starting to finally take off, so we've got more kids coming there," he said.

A freshman class with several linemen will help give the Cougars depth.

"We're going to be able to fill the gaps," Trujillo said. "A lot of those younger guys have shown up."

Key Players

OL/LB: Colton Befus, Sr.
RB/LB: Colter Collver, Jr.
OL/DL: Cole Barrett, Jr.
WR/S: Jaden Miller, Soph.

2019 Schedule

8-31: at Shoshoni Jamboree, 11 a.m. (Zero Week)
9-6: vs. Lovell, 7 p.m.
9-13: at Rocky Mountain, 7 p.m.
9-20: vs. Lusk, 5 p.m.
9-27: at Wright, 7 p.m.
10-4: vs. Natrona sophs, 7 p.m.
***10-11:** at Shoshoni, 7 p.m.
***10-18:** vs. Rocky Mountain, 6 p.m.
***10-25:** at Cokeville, 4 p.m.

*** Conference game**



Mascot: Vikings
Division: 1A/6-man
Conference: East
Colors: Black and white
Coach: Curtis Cook, 4th year at Guernsey-Sunrise
2018 Record: 4-5, lost to Meeteetse in state quarterfinales

2019 Schedule

8-30: Guernsey-Sunrise Jamboree, 6 p.m. (Zero Week)
9-7: at Farson, 1 p.m.
***9-13:** vs. Hulett, 1:45 p.m.
***9-20:** at Kaycee, 2 p.m.
***9-27:** vs. NSI, 1 p.m.
***10-4:** at Saratoga, 6 p.m.
***10-11:** at Midwest, 7 p.m.
***10-18:** vs. Lingle, 7 p.m.
***10-25:** vs. Hanna, 6 p.m.
*** Conference game**

Mascot: Miners
Division: 1A/6-man
Conference: East
Colors: Blue and orange
Coach: Zack Scott, 7th year
2018 Record: 7-1, lost to Burlington in state quarterfinales

Key Players

RB/LB: Shane McGraw, Sr.
RB/LB: Conor McGraw, Sr.
QB/WR/LB: Brendon Reeves, Sr.
WR/RB/LB: Devon Grosstick, Jr.

Vikings focus on making stops

The primary goal for Guernsey-Sunrise this fall is clear: Get better on defense.

Vikings coach Curtis Cook said his experienced offense has time and again proven it can move the ball and score, but its defense has yet to show it can stop an opponent from doing the same.

"We're going to have to find an identity," Cook said. "That was our biggest problem last year. ... We've got to turn that around. We've got to get more guys involved and find some stability in our defense, and that's going to be a focus for us."

The Vikings return a trio of all-conference selections in seniors Alex Delgado and Jeremy Hartt and junior Justin Malcom.

Their impact last year was felt most acutely on defense, where Malcom, Hartt and Delgado were first, third and sixth, respectively, in defensive points. Senior Preston Elmore, who was fourth for Guernsey in defensive points, will join them in forming an experienced defensive unit.

Malcolm led Guernsey with 48 solo tackles and 25 assists, while Hartt and Elmore each finished with 55 total tackles.

Sophomore Rawland Isabelle also saw significant playing time on defense in 2018.

There's just one problem with having so many returners on that side of the ball – even with all the individual talent, the Vikings finished last in six-man in yards allowed per game.

Cook said the solution to the problem rests with a more physical approach in practice.

Key Players

QB: Alex Delgado, Sr.

FB: Jeremy Hartt, Sr.

WR: Preston Elmore, Sr.

LB: Justin Malcom, Jr.

"We're going to focus on the physicality of our defense week in and week out," Cook said. "We've got to get tougher defensively, and then the individual stuff, the fundamentals of tackling and pass coverage, we're going to harp on that. ... but we also need to make sure that we're getting more physical in everything we do."

The offense has fewer question marks, as the Vikings return a quarterback with tons of starting experience (Delgado) in addition to their top rusher (Malcom) and top receiver (Elmore). The offense

kept Guernsey in games last year, and the squad finished 4-5, qualifying for the playoffs for the seventh consecutive year.

Delgado completed 32 passes for 588 yards and 11 touchdowns last year.

Malcom is Guernsey's top returning rusher; he was third on the squad with 56 carries for 306 yards last year.

Elmore led the Vikings with 254 receiving yards on just nine catches. Of the three Guernsey receivers who broke 40 total yards last year, he's the only one who's back.

The experience of the seniors – including Delgado, Hartt and Elmore – gives the offense stability and flexibility.

"From their sophomore year on, they've been starters," Cook said. " ... It gives me a lot of confidence. In the past, we were really young."

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HANNA-ELK MOUNTAIN MINERS

1A/6-MAN EAST

Miners should be in hunt

In the past six decades, the Hanna-Elk Mountain-Medicine Bow football team has one state championship to its name.

This year, though, the Miners have high expectations.

And if things go their way, that total could double by the second weekend in November.

Why the high expectations? Well, it's simple: The Miners have five returning starters on both offense and defense from a team that went undefeated in the regular season last year.

Moreover, the Miners have

motivation, trying to avenge a loss that put a screeching halt to the momentum they had built.

After a 7-0 regular season, the Miners were upended by Burlington in the first round of the postseason, falling 61-36 at home.

"Obviously we were all devastated," HEM head coach Zack Scott said, "but it has given our team determination to improve this upcoming season. The kids have been working hard to improve their skills and putting time (in) the weight room."

Only two seniors were on last year's roster, so it's not surprising the Miners return their top three rushers, two of their top three passers, their top three receivers and their top four tacklers.

Seniors Conor McGraw and Shane McGraw were all-state picks last year, and point-blank, they're fast – at the state track meet in May, Conor was the Class 1A runner-up in the 100-meter dash while Shane was the runner-up in the 200.

HEM has good depth, too, as and Brendon Reeves and junior

Red Devils could realize potential

The breakthroughs may just be starting at Hulett.

The Red Devils start 2019 as an improved team – one that returns five starters on offense and four starters on defense. The team graduated only three players and return key pieces of the 2018 team that got Hulett into the playoffs for the first time in three years.

Having so many returners "definitely makes things easier for us," coach Boz Backen said. "All we really have to do is get the upcoming (freshmen) caught up in understanding our schemes and our concepts."

The Red Devils' trip into the postseason in 2018 ended with a 90-22 loss to eventual state champion Farson. Even so, Backen said the experience of a play-off berth will carry over to this season, both from the game as well as from the preparation leading into it.

"I believe the boys learned a bunch about themselves that day," Backen said. "I think the week of building up to the Farson game, we had our best week

Key Players

QB/DB: Jhett Letellier, Sr.

RB/DB: Dalton Butler, Sr.

RB/DE: Dawson Butler, Sr.

WR/DE: Joseph Kennah, Jr.

of practice. I think kids learned that we have potential of being a good football, they just need to work harder than what they are used to. I am seeing it now. The boys are coming to the weight room as much as they can and are pushing each other in the room."

Senior Jhett Letellier was the Red Devils' lone all-state selection last

year. He held down the responsibilities as Hulett's quarterback and was also one of the team's top tacklers, all while playing through a torn tendon in his thumb most of the year.

"He does so many things for us on both sides of the ball," Backen said. " ... He's a smart kid that has a very good feel for the game."

Senior Dalton Butler joined Letellier on the all-conference team. Letellier and Butler split the bulk of Hulett's rushing responsibilities.

On defense, Butler, Letellier and senior Dawson Butler were Hulett's top three tacklers a year ago. Senior Logan Kromarek also saw significant playing time on defense in 2018.

The Red Devils will be deeper this year, with seniors Taylor Dykes and Hunter Bailey and junior Joseph Kennah bringing experience to the squad. In all, the Red Devils will likely have about 20 players out this fall, including eight seniors.

"I think our biggest strength this year is we have a big group of seniors and juniors who have been playing together since their days in peewee football," Backen said. "I think they have developed a pretty good chemistry with each other."

HANNA-ELK MOUNTAIN MINERS

Devon Grosstick were all-conference selections; senior Basil Phillips, an all-conference choice last year, is questionable for this season due to an ACL injury.

The McGraws split the bulk of the rushing responsibilities, combining for 1,643 yards (Conor with 881, Shane with 762).

They also make up a big chunk of the returning passing game, with Shane McGraw leading the team with 558 passing yards and Conor McGraw adding 214.

Conor McGraw was Hanna's leading receiver with 20 catches for 408 yards. Reeves added 378 yards on 15 catches, while Grosstick was third with 13 catches for 199 yards.

Conor McGraw, Phillips, Grosstick and Shane McGraw ranked first through fourth, respectively, in defensive points for Hanna in 2018. Conor McGraw led the team with 48 solo tackles and 12 tackles for loss, Grosstick had a team-high 34

9-7: vs. St. Stephens, 2 p.m.
***9-14:** vs. Midwest, 2 p.m.
***9-21:** vs. Hulett, 1 p.m. (at Midwest)
***9-28:** vs. Lingle, 2 p.m.
***10-4:** at NSI, 1 p.m.
***10-12:** vs. Saratoga, noon
***10-19:** at Kaycee, noon
***10-25:** at Guernsey-Sunrise, 6 p.m.
*** Conference game**

assisted tackles, Phillips topped HEM with six fumble recoveries and Shane McGraw had a team-high three sacks.

That's good news for the Miners, who led Class 1A six-man in total defense last year, allowing only 267.1 yards per game.

"Having this much experience is a blessing, and helps build our younger athletes' knowledge base," Scott said. " ... The kids are very adept at changing on the fly, and the entire playbook is open."

Mascot: Red Devils
Division: 1A/6-man
Conference: East
Colors: Black and red
Coach: Boz Backen, 5th year at Hulett
2018 Record: 3-5, lost to Farson in state quarterfinales

2019 Schedule

8-31: Hulett Jamboree, noon (Zero Week)
9-7: vs. Ten Sleep, 2 p.m.
***9-13:** at Guernsey-Sunrise, 1:45 p.m.
***9-21:** vs. Hanna, 1 p.m. (at Midwest)
***9-28:** vs. Saratoga, 2 p.m.
***10-4:** at Kaycee, 2 p.m.
***10-12:** vs. NSI, 1 p.m.
***10-18:** at Midwest, 7 p.m.
***10-26:** vs. Lingle, 1 p.m.
*** Conference game**

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Mascot: Buckaroos
Division: 1A/6-man
Conference: East
Colors: Blue and red
Coach: Dave Largent, first year at Kaycee
2018 Record: 5-4, lost to Snake River in state quarterfinals

Key Players

QB/DE: Dion Ealy, Sr.
RB/S: Nathan Largent, Jr.
TE/DE: Rhys Stafford, Jr.
RB/LB: Dylan Fauber, Jr.

2019 Schedule

8-31: at Hulett Jamboree, noon
(Zero Week)
9-7: at Burlington, 1 p.m.
***9-13:** at Saratoga, 6 p.m.
***9-20:** vs. Guernsey-Sunrise, 2 p.m.
***9-27:** at Midwest, 6 p.m.
***10-4:** vs. Hulett, 2 p.m.
***10-11:** at Lingle, 6 p.m.
***10-19:** vs. Hanna, noon
***10-26:** vs. NSI, 1 p.m.
*** Conference game**

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Buckaroos always have tradition

Small senior class.
New head coach.

Key losses to graduation.
From an outside perspective, Kaycee's 2019 season shapes up to be one of transition.

From inside the program, new head coach Dave Largent said he sees a chance for new players to emerge and a program tradition to continue.

"We're a family, we work together, we're a team, we're a unit, we watch out for the guys next to us, and I don't think that's going to change," Largent said.

That approach has been fruitful for Kaycee from the start of the program. The Buckaroos have posted at least four victories in every season they've had since starting six-man football in 2009.

However, after three consecutive Class 1A six-man championships, Kaycee finished 5-4 last season and lost in the playoff quarterfinals.

Kaycee graduated four seniors from last year's squad and may only have 10 players out this year, including potentially only one senior in Dion Ealy.

For Largent, though, he knows what kinds of players will make up the program – he was an assistant on last year's team and spent the previous three seasons working with Kaycee's middle school program – and he remains confident. He also said he's not planning any big scheme changes, giving the program continuity.

"They're tough and they work well together as a team, and I think they're pretty focused on coming out and doing the best job they can," he said.

Ealy and junior Nathan Largent were all-conference choices in 2018. A handful of other juniors, including end Rhys Stafford and running back/linebacker Dylan Fauber, will give the program stability.

Ealy was Kaycee's No. 2 ground gainer, rushing for 559 yards on 91 carries; he also completed 16 of 23 passes for 302 yards. Largent had team-highs in both catches (12) and receiving yards (257).

Stafford added 198 receiving yards on 12 catches, while Ealy had seven catches for 141 yards. Together, they represented Kaycee's top three receivers in

2018.

Largent was second for the Buckaroos a year ago in defensive points and led the team with 57 total tackles. However, he's the only one of Kaycee's top four tacklers to come back in 2019.

Stafford was fifth, Ealy sixth and Fauber seventh in defensive points. Stafford tied for the team lead with 39 assisted tackles and Fauber was second with five pass break-ups.

Coach Largent said his motivation in his first year as the program's leader is simple.

"I care about the kids, I care about the program, I want to see it continue on," he said. We've had a history of having some pretty good coaches in Kaycee and some pretty good kids, and I just want to see that program (tradition) continue."

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LINGLE DOGGERS

1A/6-MAN EAST

Doggers putting in some new looks

The names and numbers will look similar for the Lingle-Fort Laramie Doggers this year.

What those players do on the gridiron won't be the same.

On a team that returns all but one starter on both offense and defense, the Doggers and coach Matthew Cornelius are going to try to take advantage of the experience they have back to try

some new schemes and improve on last year's finish.

"We will have a completely different feel on both sides of the ball," Cornelius said, "and the kids are already taking nicely to our new schemes.

"... I don't believe in making kids adapt to a scheme, but as a coach I need to create a scheme that puts players in the best position."

The Doggers graduated just two seniors from the 2018 team. Consequently, that young team finished 2-5, never fully getting on track while also losing time

due to injuries.

"We weren't exactly a juggernaut, so the kids know that although we have some experience coming back, we still need to get to work," Cornelius said. "The kids have responded well this summer and have the best off-season work ethic I have ever seen since I have been here."

With lots of learning behind them, 2019 will bring a Lingle team full of returning players ready to contribute.

Both senior Alex Pugsley and junior Cooper Hill were all-con-



Mascot: Doggers
Division: 1A/6-man
Conference: East
Colors: Blue and red
Coach: Matthew Cornelius, 4th year at Lingle
2018 Record: 2-5, did not qualify for playoffs

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Oilers looking for new leader

The Midwest football program will have a different look this fall.

What exactly that look will be is still in question.

As of deadlines for this magazine, Midwest had not yet hired a new head football coach for 2019.

Former coach Ken Swieter, who led the Oilers for 12 seasons, resigned in June to take an assistant coach's position with Kelly Walsh, his alma mater.

This year's Oilers will need to find a way to re-establish some competitive base after struggling in 2018, failing to win a game in the Class 1A six-man East Conference.

The Oilers never quite found their footing after beating Dubois in last year's season opener. After that, Midwest didn't win a game, finishing 1-6 – the program's worst record since going 0-7 in 2007.

Midwest also went winless in East Conference play, the first time the program had done that since six-man was reinstituted in 2009. Consequently, Midwest missed the playoffs for the first time in three seasons.

However, a lack of depth played a role in that, as the Oilers had only 11 players on the roster for last

year.

Of those 11, three graduated, leaving the Oilers potentially reliant on a young group this year. Of the 11, the Oilers potentially return two seniors, two juniors and four sophomores.

Statistics provided for last year's team were incomplete, showing totals only through the team's first five games, but they do show some trends.

Senior Zack Kohtala was the Oilers' No. 2 rusher a year ago, running for 163 yards and three touchdowns through the first five games.

Senior Austin Sansoucie and junior Justin Robles were the top two receivers for Midwest a year ago, with Sansoucie going for 140 yards and Robles 113 through five games. Midwest will need to find a new quarterback to run its system, though, as Kaleb Smith – the team's top rusher and the only passer the Oilers had – has graduated.

Sansoucie led the Oilers' defense in several key categories – defensive points, solo tackles and tackles for loss. Robles was fourth and Kohtala fifth in defensive points for Midwest through five games.

Junior Peter O'Brien and sophomores Lawson Lawrence and Will Gottsch also chipped in defensively last season for Midwest.

The Oilers' upper classes might be a bit thin this fall. Sansoucie and Kohtala were the only juniors on last year's roster, and Robles and O'Brien were the only sophomores.

Swieter finished a combined 58-51 in his 12 seasons in Midwest. The Oilers' best finish under him came in 2013, when they finished as state runners-up. Prior to Swieter taking over in 2007, and aside from a non-varsity season in 2002, Midwest had not had a winning season since 1991.

Coach: TBD
2018 Record: 1-6, did not qualify for playoffs

Key Players

TE/LB: Austin Sansoucie, Sr.
RB/DB: Zack Kohtala, Sr.
RB/LB: Justin Robles, Jr.
RB/LB: Peter O'Brien, Jr.

Mascot: Oilers

Division: 1A/6-man

Conference: East

Colors: Maroon and silver

2019 Schedule

8-30: at Guernsey Jamboree, 6 p.m. (Zero Week)
9-7: at Dubois, 2 p.m.
***9-14:** at Hanna, 2 p.m.
***9-20:** vs. NSI, 6 p.m.
***9-27:** vs. Kaycee, 6 p.m.
***10-4:** at Lingle, 7 p.m.
***10-11:** vs. Guernsey-Sunrise, 7 p.m.
***10-18:** vs. Hulett, 7 p.m.
***10-25:** at Saratoga, 6 p.m.
*** Conference game**

LINGLE DOGGERS

1A/6-MAN EAST

ference choices last season.

Pugsley led Lingle in rushing with 135 carries for 773 yards and 10 touchdowns; Hill was second with 311 yards, while junior Cordell Forkner added 201 yards and seven scores.

Hill threw for 715 yards and nine scores, while Forkner added 175 passing yards and

four scores.

Forkner and Pugsley were the Doggers' main aerial targets last year, with Forkner catching 26 passes for 341 yards and seven touchdowns while Pugsley caught 21 passes for 231 yards and five scores.

Hill, Pugsley and Forkner were also the leaders on de-

fense, with Hill leading the team in defensive points, tackles for loss (12) and sacks (four), Pugsley topping the team in solo tackles (27), interceptions (three) and pass break-ups (four), and Forkner chipping in 43 total tackles and nine tackles for loss.

Senior Zane Rising and juniors Bailey Powell and Jesse Valentine also contributed significant minutes on defense; the Doggers return their top six tacklers from last season.

Cornelius said he expects between 16 and 18 players out this season, including some from transfer, new players from the existing students in the school and a group of competitive freshmen who will compete for playing time immediately.

"We are hoping to have challenges for positions this year as well as strong competitive practices," Cornelius said.

TB/S: Alex Pugsley, Sr.
QB/LB: Cooper Hill, Jr.
FB/LB: Cordell Forkner, Jr.
OL/LB: Zane Rising, Sr.

2019 Schedule

8-30: at Guernsey-Sunrise Jamboree, 6 p.m. (Zero Week)
9-6: vs. Sioux County, Neb., 6 p.m.
***9-13:** at NSI, 1 p.m.
***9-20:** vs. Saratoga, 7 p.m.
***9-28:** at Hanna, 2 p.m.
***10-4:** vs. Midwest, 7 p.m.
***10-11:** vs. Kaycee, 6 p.m.
***10-18:** at Guernsey-Sunrise, 7 p.m.
***10-26:** at Hulett, 1 p.m.
*** Conference game**

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Mascot: Wolves
Division: 1A/6-man
Conference: East
Colors: Blue and silver
Coach: Chad Lobdell, first year at NSI
2018 Record: 3-4

Key Player
RB/LB: Greg Bolds, Soph.

2019 Schedule
8-29: vs. Sheridan JV, 6 p.m.
9-6: at Riverside, 2 p.m.
*9-13: vs. Lingle, 1 p.m.
*9-20: at Midwest, 6 p.m.
*9-27: at Guernsey-Sunrise, 1 p.m.
*10-4: vs. Hanna, 1 p.m.
*10-12: at Hulett, 1 p.m.
*10-19: vs. Saratoga, 1 p.m.
*10-25: at Kaycee, 1 p.m.
* Conference game

New coach wants to create bonds

NSI Academy's new head football coach knows all about the challenges the Wolves face to put together a competitive six-man football team.

Chad Lobdell said he hopes the team can overcome all those obstacles, both on the field and off, to put together a team capable of hanging with squads that have all the advantages the Wolves don't.

"I think football is very important to our kids," Lobdell said. "... It allows them to build some teamwork and build some positive relationships and play on an organized sports team. A lot of our kids don't have that opportunity."

As a residential institution for teens with emotional or behavioral problems, NSI's enrollment is constantly shifting. Students typically stay less than one year.

Consequently, the rosters for NSI's sports teams are always in flux. Last year's roster of 17 players had no seniors and only two juniors; of those, only sophomore running back/linebacker Greg Bolds returns this year.

Lobdell said the biggest challenge at NSI is "trying to bring kids from all different backgrounds to try to form a team. ... Creating that team atmosphere is super difficult."

Lobdell is NSI's admissions director and has worked at the academy for five years. He was part of the Wolves' football coaching staff in both 2014 and 2015 before taking time away to pursue a master's degree.

He said this year's team has some potential, including some players from Montana who have some six-man experience and a player who was a backup quarterback last year at one of Montana's larger schools.

Lobdell said he hoped for a roster of about 20 players this year.

"Granted, many of them don't make it through the season," Lobdell said. "By the end of the season we're usually down to about 14, and we have kids discharge in the middle of the season or we get new kids in. It's constantly changing."

Last year's team showed some progress, though. The Wolves finished 3-4 and actually outscored their opponents 389-363, the first time NSI had been able to claim that since 2004.

NSI started the season 3-0, beating Riverside, Lingle and Midwest, before a four-game losing streak ended postseason dreams. Even so, the Wolves played within 12 points of Guernsey, 11 of Hulett and nine of Kaycee, all East Conference teams that reached the postseason.

Lobdell said he would likely preserve elements of the Wolves' offensive approach but might change depending on the players on the roster – something that's even more challenging at NSI.

"I love our offense that we've used in the past," Lobdell said. "I love that wide-open style, but I also might have a running back that can allow us to run some power football."

Huskies breaking in new group

The 2018 season was the breakthrough the Burlington Huskies needed.

As a No. 4 seed, they beat East No. 1 seed and undefeated Hanna in the first round of the playoffs before coasting past Meeteetse in the semifinal.

Although the Huskies lost to Farson in the six-man championship – the program's first championship appearance since 2008 – coach Trent Aagard said his players came away from last year's runner-up finish inspired to do more.

"I don't think anybody would say they didn't want to do that again," Aagard said.

Entering 2019, the Huskies will likely have only one senior on the roster and just two returning starters on both offense and defense. Still, Aagard said the team's attitude is in the right place.

"I think we are a hard-working group," Aagard said, "and although we are going to miss some of our playmakers, there is going to be a great opportunity for some other kids to contribute and make a name for themselves."

Senior Jarom Davidson is the



team's only returning all-state or all-conference selection. Davidson led the Husies in catches (45), receiving yards (583) and receiving touchdowns (11), defensive points (247), total tackles (127), solo tackles (48), tackles for loss (11), fumble recoveries (three) and blocked kicks (four) last year.

"He is a great competitor (and) leader, and is a very hard worker," Aagard said. "If some of your better players are the hardest workers it goes a long way."

Junior Kolby Broderlow, who ran for 301 yards and three touchdowns, is Burlington's top returning rusher – the only player coming back with more than 20 yards under his belt from last year.

The Huskies worked four different players under center last

year, and two – junior Kody Gotfredson, who threw for 269 yards and five scores, and sophomore Brac Walker, who notched 157 passing yards and five more scores – return this year.

Junior Eric Davidson bolsters the receiving corps. He was third for Burlington with 375 receiving yards. The Davidsons are the only two of Burlington's top six receivers to come back this year.

On defense, the Huskies lost several key pieces but do return Jarom Davidson, Eric Davidson, junior Gideon George, Broderlow and junior James Aagard, who all saw significant time and finished among Burlington's top 10 tacklers in 2018.

Eric Davidson was Burlington's leader in interceptions (two) and pass break-ups (seven). George added eight tackles for loss.

"Most years we have had around five seniors coming back, so we will be a little greener in other positions," coach Aagard said. "It's hard to replace athletes like some of the ones we lost, but it seems like every year someone is ready to step in a fill a role."

Coach: Trent Aagard, 4th year at Burlington
2018 Record: 6-5, lost to Farson in state championship

Key Players

FB/LB: Jarom Davidson, Sr.
WR/DB: Eric Davidson, Jr.
RB/DE: Gideon George, Jr.
QB/DB: Kody Gotfredson, Jr.

Mascot: Huskies

Division: 1A/6-man

Conference: West

Colors: Orange and black

2019 Schedule

8-31: at Riverside Jamboree, 1 p.m. (Zero Week)
9-7: vs. Kaycee, 1 p.m.
*9-14: at Snake River, 3 p.m.
*9-20: vs. St. Stephens, 2 p.m.
*9-27: vs. Meeteetse, 2 p.m.
*10-4: at Dubois, 2 p.m.
*10-11: vs. Ten Sleep, 2 p.m.
*10-18: at Farson, 1 p.m.
*10-25: at Riverside, 3 p.m.
* Conference game

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SARATOGA PANTHERS

1A/6-MAN EAST

Panthers return to varsity scene

Last year, this year, and next year, Saratoga is a program in transition.

In 2018, after a late switch to six-man, the Panthers finished 4-2, with the only losses coming to six-man championship game participants Farson and Burlington.

This year, Saratoga is a member of the Class 1A six-man East Conference, with a fully fledged conference schedule but, as the Panthers are opting down, no chance at a playoff berth.

Next year, the Panthers will make the move to nine-man football. Through it all, coach Logan Wright said he has found a handful

Key Players

TE/DE: Memphis Smith, Sr.
C/ILB: Noah Rimmer, Jr.
QB/RB/OLB: Teegan Love, Jr.
RB/DB: Alex Irby, Soph.

of players who are willing to be part of that transition.

"They enjoy sports, they enjoy each other and they enjoy the game of football," Wright said. "They're competitive, and they're just complete athletes who enjoy sports for what they're supposed to be."

This year, the Panthers return five players from last year's team but will be filled out by a big group of freshmen and some more players from higher levels who hadn't played prior to this year.

"I don't have a kid (who was on the team) last year that isn't going to play this year," Wright said. "That means something to me."

Those returners include only one senior, Memphis Smith, juniors Noah Rimmer and Teegan Love and sophomores Alex Irby and Geoffrey Johnson.

Rimmer was a force on defense,

leading not only Saratoga but the entire six-man classification in defensive points per game. He put up 106 total tackles, including 43 solo, and led the Panthers with five tackles for loss and four sacks.

"Noah Rimmer's one of the best linebackers in the state, definitely in terms of six-man, so I think if we can keep teams toward the middle of the field, we should be able to get some stops," Wright said.

Irby was third on the squad with 49 total tackles and had a team-high three fumble recoveries. Love was fourth on the team in defensive points and led Saratoga with two interceptions, and Smith had more than 50 defensive points last season as well.

Irby, who ran 18 times for 174 yards, is Saratoga's leading returning rusher. Love added 18 more carries for 145 yards and also completed 11 of 16 passes for 279 yards to be Saratoga's No. 2 passer last season.

Wright said he anticipates about 14 players on the roster this fall.

"I like our chances to win some games and be competitive," Wright said.



Mascot: Panthers
Division: Class 1A/6-man
Conference: East
Colors: Purple and yellow
Coach: Logan Wright, 2nd year at Saratoga
2018 Record: 4-2, ineligible for playoffs

2019 Schedule

8-30: at St. Stephens Jamboree, noon (Zero Week)
9-6: vs. Snake River, 7 p.m.
*9-13: vs. Kaycee, 6 p.m.
*9-20: at Lingle, 7 p.m.
*9-28: at Hulett, 2 p.m.
*10-4: vs. Guernsey-Sunrise, 6 p.m.
*10-12: at Hanna, noon
*10-19: at NSI, 1 p.m.
*10-25: vs. Midwest, 6 p.m.
* Conference game

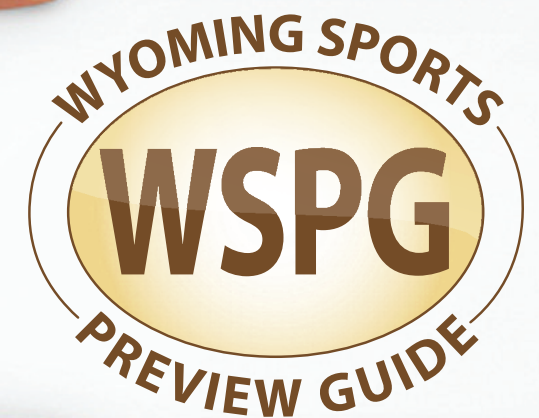


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Rams could have growth spurt

Of all the rosters fielded in Wyoming in the 2018 football season, Dubois' was by far the most unusual.

Perhaps not coincidentally, the Rams' makeup also provided the most opportunity for growth.

Dubois finished 0-8 last season, with the closest loss by 36 points. But with a roster of just seven players – five freshmen, two sophomores – a down season wasn't all that unexpected.

At a certain point last season, the Rams understood the season wasn't going to be one full of victories. Instead, the Rams' players spent 2018 focused on improving their skills, remaining realistic about what such a small, young group of players could accomplish.

"They knew what we were up against," Trembly said. "They were proud of the fact that they completed their season against a very tough six-man West (Conference)."

This year's roster will be bigger, as coach David Trembly said he expected about 10 players to come out for the Rams this fall.

However, they'll still be young, with an anticipated zero seniors, three juniors, four sophomores and three freshmen, and they'll still be learning on the fly.

"We will have some knowledge from our returners, but will still be very young," Trembly said.

With such a small roster, Trembly and his coaches often had to improvise during practices.

"We will have some knowledge from our returners, but will still be very young."

~ Coach David Trembly

However, he said the roots of coaching don't change, even with a young and small team.

"Having a scrimmage is interesting," he said, "(and) playing live in practice looks different. Coaching is the same (though). You find points you need to improve and you work on those, then you find other points and you work on those."

Despite finishing winless, players still gave the Rams highlights throughout the season.

Freshman Max Claar provided the bulk of the offensive spark, rushing for 946 yards and 10 touchdowns. Junior Jaryd Wells added 660 passing yards and five touchdowns, while sophomore Jack Hinkle added 29 catches for 425 yards and Claar chipped in 20 catches for 247 yards.

Defensively, Claar led the Rams in several key categories – defensive points, solo tackles, assisted tackles, tackles for loss and fumble recoveries.

Sophomore Dre Sanderson was second for the Rams in defensive points, while Hinkle as

well as Wells contributed at least 50 defensive points apiece.

"They gained lots of experience," Trembly said. "We got tougher. We are still young but are a year older."

Trembly said junior James Dowd will help provide experience and depth this season, as well. However, the Rams will likely have no seniors and not enough players to run a full scrimmage. Regardless, Trembly likes his players' attitude and focus.

"They have been learning and lifting," he said. "We will still be (young) but a year older."



Defending champs have holes to fill

If Farson coach Marvin "Trip" Applequist had any fears about a post-championship lull, his players gave him reasons not to worry.

Applequist said the Pronghorns' summer weight room ran at 6 a.m. five days a week. On a team that's only expected to have 18 players, the Pronghorns consistently had 15 showing up.

That commitment, coupled with a successful showing at a team camp in Chadron, Nebraska, has Applequist optimistic about 2019.

"They're coming along nicely," Applequist said. "I was really pleased with team camp, with how we looked and how they performed. We definitely have some things to clean up, but it looked pretty promising."

After back-to-back runner-up finishes, the Pronghorns broke through for their first state championship in 2018, going 11-0. However, the Pronghorns graduated all five of their all-state choices and all six of their all-conference picks.

"We lost a lot of seniors, and so we have a lot of people that need to step up into roles," Applequist said.

One thing about going 11-0 is that the Pronghorns played in several lopsided games, which gave younger players a chance to play against opposing varsity squads.

Sophomore Levi Johnson, junior Colin Malec and junior Carson Jones all topped triple digits rushing last season; Johnson, with 200 rushing



yards on 19 carries, is Farson's top returning running back.

Junior Colby Jones – Carson's twin brother – was Farson's starting center and top receiver last year with 13 catches for 289 yards. However, he's the only returner to have more than two catches last season.

Carson Jones, Farson's only returning defensive starter, was fourth on the team in defensive points last year, finishing with 52 total tackles and tying for the team lead with eight pass break-ups, but he is the only one of Farson's top seven tacklers to come back this fall. However, both Johnson and senior Karson Keeler both logged significant defensive playing time, as well, each finishing with 31 total tackles.

During the Chadron camp, Applequist said he could see the returners' experience on display.

"It's obvious these kids have played a lot of football," he said. "They've been in game situations, they've been out on the field and know how our system works, so I think that's huge for us."

"... These boys work hard and they've had that (in-game) experience, so we're really optimistic about how this next season will go."

The other piece of the equation this year is that Farson is now the defending state football champion, something other Pronghorn teams haven't had the opportunity to say.

"It was really special," Applequist said. "We'd come close a couple times and had not been quite able to get over the hump."

Key Players

RB/OL/LB: Karson Keeler, Sr.

C: Colby Jones, Jr.

DB: Carson Jones, Jr.

WR/DB: Parker Clawson, Jr.

2019 Schedule

8-30: at Green River Jamboree, TBA (Zero Week)

9-7: vs. Guernsey-Sunrise, 1 p.m.

*9-14: at Ten Sleep, 2 p.m.

*9-20: vs. Dubois, 2 p.m.

*9-27: vs. Riverside, 2 p.m.

*10-4: at Meeteetse, 6 p.m.

*10-12: at Snake River, 2 p.m.

*10-18: vs. Burlington, 1 p.m.

*10-25: vs. St. Stephens, 1 p.m.

* Conference game

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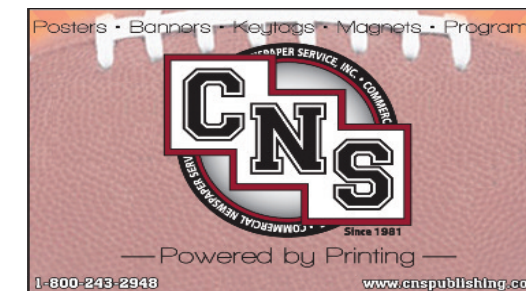
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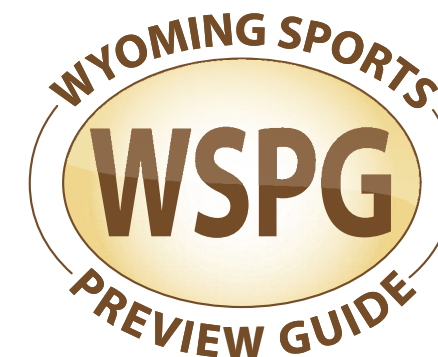
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Mascot: Longhorns
Division: 1A/6-man
Conference: West
Colors: Red and white
Coach: Zeb Hagen, fourth year at Meeteetse
2018 Record: 7-3, lost to Burlington in state semifinals

2019 Schedule

8-31: at Hulett Jamboree, noon (Zero Week)
9-7: vs. Encampment, 2 p.m.
***9-14:** at St. Stephens, 2 p.m.
***9-20:** vs. Snake River, 7 p.m.
***9-27:** at Burlington, 2 p.m.
***10-4:** vs. Farson, 6 p.m.
***10-11:** at Riverside, 2 p.m.
***10-18:** vs. Dubois, 6 p.m.
***10-25:** vs. Ten Sleep, 7 p.m.
*** Conference game**

New head coach has familiar face

As coaching transitions go, Meeteetse's has gone about as smoothly as possible.

The switch from former coach Matt Jensen to new coach Zeb Hagen went without too many hitches, in part because Hagen was the Longhorns' defensive coordinator last year and has also spent the past two years as Meeteetse's boys basketball coach.

Therefore, when the Longhorns start play this fall, they'll use many of the same schemes and approaches they already understand.

The biggest changes will be attributable to different players fulfilling key roles on both offense and defense.

"I'm pretty big on keeping similar terminology, especially being involved with that program last year," Hagen said. "... But I'm also pretty big on adapting to who your current kids are, your current team is, and it's definitely a different team from last year."

Meeteetse won a playoff game for the sixth time in seven seasons but had their champi-

Key Players

C/TB/MLB: Asa Eldredge, Sr.
TB/TE/DE: Courtney Braten, Sr.
TE/DE: Kaden Redding, Sr.
QB: Dace Bennett, Soph.

onship hopes dashed in a 57-18 home playoff loss to Burlington — a team Meeteetse had beaten 38-28 during the regular season.

From that team, though, senior Asa Eldredge is Meeteetse's lone returning all-state player, while classmate Kaden Redding was an all-conference choice for the Longhorns last season. They, along with fellow senior Courtney Braten, will bear the leadership role this fall.

"The seniors themselves are pretty hardworking group of kids," Hagen said. "They just go out there and get it done. They're not flashy by any means, they just work hard for you."

Eldredge was Meeteetse's No. 2 receiver last year, finishing with eight catches for 222 yards. He's the only one of the Longhorns' top three receivers to return.

Junior C.J. Justice was third on the team with 42 carries for 407 yards; he's Meeteetse's lead-

ing returning rusher.

Four different players completed passes for Meeteetse last year, but none more than sophomore Dace Bennett, who completed 32 of 76 passes for 586 yards and 13 touchdowns.

On defense, the Longhorns graduated their top two tacklers but return Eldredge, Justice and Redding, who went 3-4-5, respectively, in defensive points for the Longhorns in 2018.

Redding finished with a team-high nine tackles for loss, while Justice leads all Meeteetse returners with five pass break-ups.


Braten, sophomore Calvin Erickson and junior Hadley Abarr all finished with at least 50 defensive points a year ago, as well.

Hagen, who was the Longhorns' head coach from 2006-08, said offseason preparation has gone well, and the team should pick up on changes quickly when fall camp starts.

"It's nice to be able to not have to spend the first couple weeks of two-a-days not going over that (offensive and defensive systems), or going over your expectations, because a lot of them already know that," Hagen said.

"They just go out there and get it done. They're not flashy by any means, they just work hard for you."

~ **Coach Zeb Hagen**



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Good Luck, Teams!

Rebels are young, but have experience

Riverside's 2018 roster looked like it was tailor-made for a junior varsity.

With 10 total players, including no seniors and only one junior, the Rebels spent last year growing into roles and learning systems.

Riverside will be young again this year, with Ryan Miller the team's only senior,

but it will be uniquely positioned as a squad with both youth and experience.

"The fact that we didn't lose anybody was huge, and that's kind of bolstered by the fact that we're going to get out a couple (players) that haven't been out in the past," coach Sam Buck said.

With more players this year,

the Rebels will be deeper and more competitive, both against their opponents and in practice.

"Now I really think with the numbers we'll have, we'll have to compete for spots, and I think that will really improve the product we can put out there each week," Buck said.

Junior Tate Clutter was Riverside's only all-conference pick last season. He led the Rebels in both rushing yards (528) and receiving yards (503) and had 27 total touchdowns.

Sophomore Garrett Ellis Rudd completed 102 of 182 passes for 1,117 yards and 12 touchdowns, and he was also Riverside's No. 2 rusher with 49 carries for 186 yards.

A host of receivers, including Miller (389 receiving yards), sophomore Nathaniel Boreen (137), Ellis Rudd (134), junior Zac O'Roake (102) and sophomore Griffin Zapata (95),

Continued on Page 59



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Mascot: Eagles
Division: Class 1A/6-man
Conference: West
Colors: Red and black
Coach: Billy Brost, 3rd year at St. Stephens
2018 Record: 1-6, did not qualify for playoffs

Key Players

HB/LB: Little-Sun Felter, Sr.
QB/KR: Trenton Friday, Sr.
C: Salem Ynostrosa, Sr.
RB/OLB: Jeremiah Willow, Soph.

2019 Schedule

8-30: St. Stephens Jamboree, noon (Zero Week)
9-7: at Hanna, 2 p.m.
***9-14:** vs. Meeteetse, 2 p.m.
***9-21:** at Burlington, 2 p.m.
***9-28:** vs. Snake River, 2 p.m.
***10-5:** at Ten Sleep, 2 p.m.
***10-12:** at Dubois, 2 p.m.
***10-19:** vs. Riverside, 2 p.m.
***10-26:** at Farson, 1 p.m.
*** Conference game**

Eagles are gaining steam

In his second full season as head coach at St. Stephens, Billy Brost's overhaul of a football program that needed it is beginning to show progress.

"We've had to implement a ton of change in a very short period of time, and it's probably overwhelming to a lot of our kids," Brost said.

Now, though, the Eagles' framework leaves nothing untouched, from offense to defense to special teams to offseason training to fundraising to staffing to working with the middle-school program. Consequently, he's seen more buy-in from players.

"The dedication to becoming better football players and better athletes has improved tenfold," Brost said.

Although the Eagles finished 1-6 last year, notching their only victory against winless Dubois, the squad still scored more points and gave up fewer points than at any point since brining back varsity six-man football in 2013.

Senior Trenton Friday was St. Stephens' only all-conference

choice last year. Friday and classmates Little Sun Felter and Ronnie Monroe, junior Isaiah Felter and sophomores Jeremiah Willow and Jude Jenkins are among the Eagles' key returners this fall.

"Now they're comfortable," Brost said. "Last year, there were still growing pains."

The Eagles also entered into a co-op agreement with Western Heritage Lutheran Academy in Riverton; through that, the Eagles will have junior Kaden Dower, a two-time Class 1A champion in the 100-meter dash, join the squad.

Brost said the addition of Dower — a 6-foot-2-inch, 190-pound tailback — adds "another wrinkle that we've never had before, so we're going to try to utilize him to the best of our ability."

The Eagles bucked six-man trends by fielding a massive offensive line last year. That changes this year as those players have graduated, leaving smaller, but faster, players to fill those spots.

"It's going to be a much different dynamic on the offensive

Mascot: Rebels

Division: 1A/6-man

Conference: West

Colors: Red and gray

Coach: Sam Buck, 7th year

2018 Record: 3-5, ineligible

for playoffs

2019 Schedule

8-31: Riverside Jamboree, 1 p.m. (Zero Week)
9-6: vs. NSI, 2 p.m.
***9-13:** at Dubois, 2 p.m.
***9-21:** vs. Ten Sleep, 2 p.m.
***9-27:** at Farson, 2 p.m.
***10-4:** at Snake River, 2 p.m.
***10-11:** vs. Meeteetse, 2 p.m.
***10-18:** at St. Stephens, 2 p.m.
***10-25:** vs. Burlington, 3 p.m.

*** Conference game**

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Mascot: Rattlers
Division: 1A/6-man
Conference: West
Colors: Purple and yellow
Coach: Jack Cobb, 3rd year at Snake River
2018 Record: 7-3, lost to Farson in state semifinals

2019 Schedule

8-30: Open (Zero Week)
9-6: at Saratoga, 7 p.m.
***9-14:** vs. Burlington, 3 p.m.
***9-20:** at Meeteetse, 7 p.m.
***9-27:** at St. Stephens, 2 p.m.
***10-4:** vs. Riverside, 2 p.m.
***10-12:** vs. Farson, 2 p.m.
***10-19:** at Ten Sleep, 2 p.m.
***10-25:** vs. Dubois, 2 p.m.
*** Conference game**

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Mascot: Pioneers
Division: 1A/6-man
Conference: West
Colors: Blue and red
Coach: Taylen Arnett, first year at Ten Sleep
2018 Record: Did not field a team

2019 Schedule

8-31: at Riverside Jamboree, 1 p.m. (Zero Week)
9-7: at Hulett, 2 p.m.
***9-14:** vs. Farson, 2 p.m.
***9-21:** at Riverside, 2 p.m.
***9-28:** vs. Dubois, 2 p.m.
***10-5:** vs. St. Stephens, 2 p.m.
***10-11:** at Burlington, 2 p.m.
***10-19:** vs. Snake River, 2 p.m.
***10-25:** at Meeteetse, 7 p.m.
*** Conference game**

Rattlers loaded for a run

Snake River has two keys working in its favor this fall: numbers and athleticism. With a senior class full of committed athletes and a group of underclassmen in position to provide depth, the Rattlers could make a deep playoff run this season.

Moreover, coach Jack Cobb said Snake River brings an intangible not every team can match, a work ethic that shines through everything they do.

"As a coach, you can't ask for anything more than that, is give me all you have," Cobb said. "And that's one thing I don't think I have to worry about with this team."

The Rattlers return a pair of all-state selections in seniors Riggen Myers and Wyatt Duncan – as many all-state returners as the rest of the West Conference combined. They are part of a senior class that will run seven or eight players deep, a wealth of talent for six-man.

Myers led Snake River's rushing game with 129 carries for 1,398 yards and 24 touchdowns; he also led the Rattlers with 207

Key Players

RB/LB: Riggen Myers, Sr.
TE/DE: Wyatt Duncan, Sr.
TE/CB: Tony Enriquez, Sr.
QB/S: Taylor Otte, Sr.

defensive points, 71 total tackles, 29 solo tackles, six fumble recoveries, seven interceptions and six pass break-ups.

"I've never coached anyone as competitive as Riggen," Cobb said. "... Whatever season it is, whether it's football or basketball or rodeoing, it's 100 percent. He's dialed in and concentrating on that. No one's every criticized him for not giving effort."

"He can bring a lot of different options for us, and the fun thing about this year is we have kids who can join in with him so he doesn't have to carry the load."

Cobb said where Myers leads by example, Duncan leads vocally. He led the Rattlers with 248 receiving yards and added 52 tackles and a team-high nine

tackles for loss.

The depth grows from there. Senior Tony Enriquez was an all-conference choice last season; he had 77 carries for 515 yards, as well as 48 tackles and four interceptions on defense.

Senior Taylor Otte took care of the bulk of the quarterbacking duties, throwing for 639 yards and six touchdowns, while Myers added 252 passing yards and three more scores.

Senior Oscar Herrera added 109 receiving yards and more than 30 tackles, classmate Karter Evans runs the center position and leads blocking calls – and also had more than 30 tackles on defense – and sophomore Zander Risner chipped in 328 rushing yards, 41 tackles and five fumble recoveries.

The Rattlers' defense returns its top six tacklers in Myers, Enriquez, Duncan, Risner, Herrera and Evans.

"These kids have committed to it, and it's going to be a fun year just watching them compete and seeing the younger kids raise their game to match what the seniors bring," Cobb said.

Tigers revive program

Encampment's football history is limited to only five seasons – a pair of six-man seasons in 1956 and 1957 and three seasons of eight-man and nine-man play from 1988-90.

Since the end of the program, Encampment players who wanted to play football had to go to Saratoga, 20 miles up the road.

For years, that co-op agreement worked for both schools. However, this year, Encampment struck out on its own to start a six-man football program.

The change didn't come from coaches or community members or parents.

"The motivation to start a program in Encampment came directly from the students in our school," Willford said. "This group of boys really want to have their own identity for football and have a lot of pride in representing their school. ... (They) really feel like they have the numbers to sustain a six-man team moving forward."

School board financial support for the program was initially tentative, but the board has agreed to pay officials for home games, Willford said. Beyond that, the program has been supported through fundraising, donations and Encampment's "E Club" boosters.

"Encampment is a very giving community and takes great pride in the school and its programs," Willford said.

The Tigers' plan is to play sub-varsity this year

"This group of boys really want to have their own identity."

~ Coach Kegan Willford

and move to a full varsity schedule in 2020 as part of the Class 1A six-man classification.

Between 13 and 16 players will be out for the team this fall, Willford said – a good showing for a program in its infancy. Only two of those are seniors, setting up the program well for future success.

Junior Kelton Koehn might be the most experienced player the Tigers have. Last year, playing for Saratoga's six-man team, Koehn finished sixth in defensive points, notching 29 total tackles, a sack and an interception.

Junior Dalton Peterson was also part of the Saratoga program, but only as a freshman. That year, he was the Panthers' No. 4 tackler, No. 2 receiver with five catches for 52 yards, and No. 4 rusher with 21 carries for 51 yards.

Junior Kagan Gilbert was also part of Saratoga's team as a freshman, finishing seventh on the team in defensive points.

Willford said senior Dayne Anderson and sophomore Koye Gilbert have also previously played, giving depth to the team.

Willford said one of the team's strengths is chemistry – the Tigers consistently have a competitive basketball team and finished as the Class 1A runners-up in 2018. But they lack consistent football experience and need to learn the ins and outs of six-man football.

"This is a great group of boys that are hardworking and committed," Willford said. "They are a great group to have while trying to start a new program."



REBELS, Cont.

gave Riverside a diverse passing attack.

Buck said he has three players he trusts at quarterback. Buck also said the running game could have a bigger effect on the Rebels' fortunes.

"(The running game) was solid, it was good, but I think

it's going to be a lot better this year," Buck said.

Boreen and Clutter led the defense last year, with Boreen leading the team in solo tackles (20), sacks (four), fumble recoveries (seven) and blocked kicks (five), and Clutter fronting the Rebels in total tackles (67) and tackles for loss (16).

Miller added a team-high five interceptions and six pass break-ups, while Ellis Rudd, O'Roake and Zapata also played significant minutes on defense.

With that diversity of experience, Buck said he wants to add a few new wrinkles.

"We're definitely going to be able to do a lot more this year," he said. "The understanding of our offense and defense is going to be completely different, because (last year) we were really working with a crew where we were starting from scratch... The core of our group, (they) kind of had to get



Mascot: Tigers
Division: NA; will play JV six-man schedule
Colors: Red and black
Coach: Kegan Willford, first year at Encampment
2018 Record: No team

Key Players

OL/DL: Kelton Koehn, Jr.
RB/WR: Kagan Gilbert, Jr.
RB: Koye Gilbert, Soph.
RB: Dalton Peterson, Jr.

2019 Schedule

8-30: at St. Stephens jamboree, TBA (Zero Week)
9-7: at Meeteetse, 2 p.m.
9-13: at Farson JV, TBA
10-24: vs. Cheyenne East sophs, 4 p.m. (date uncertain)
Three games have been added against Natrona's sophomore and freshman teams, but dates, times and locations are not official. More games will be added if possible during the season



Coach: Sam Buck, 5th year
2018 Record: 4-4, ineligible for playoffs

Key Players

RB/WR/DB: Ryan Vigil, Sr.
RB/WR/DB: Ryan Miller, Jr.
RB/LB: Tate Clutter, Soph.

over that middle school mentality, and that's tough. That's a jump."

With a year to work through that jump, the Rebels will have a roster more built for varsity games in 2019.