

# Wyoming High School **Football** **Guide**

## 2020

Teams are Preparing for a ...

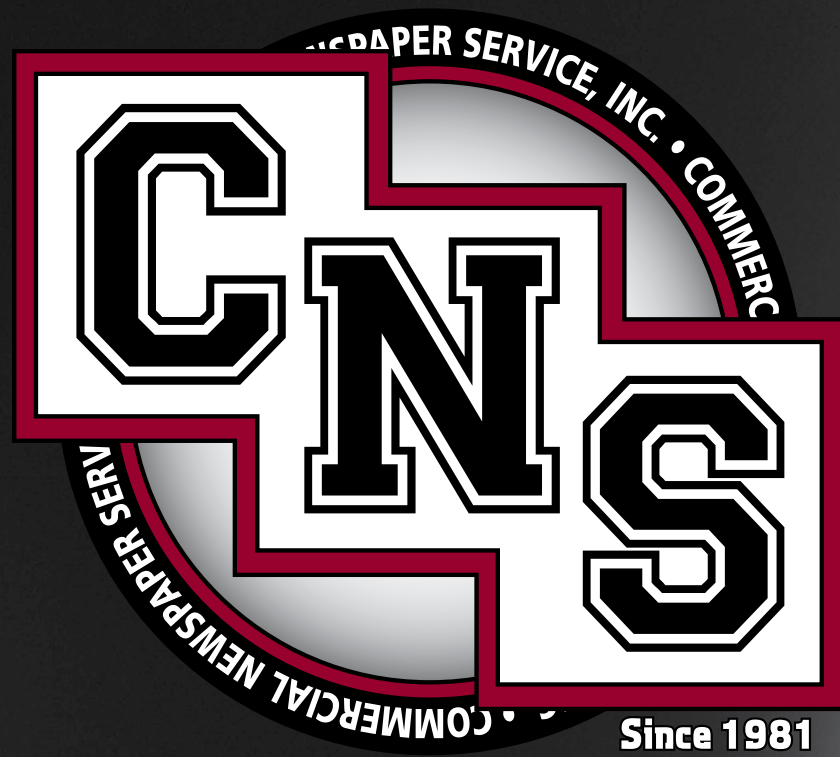
# **Power Shift**

**New nine-man division, realignments bring season of change**



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## CONTENTS:

4A Football  
Pages 3-11  
3A Football  
Pages 12-22  
2A Football  
Pages 23-35  
1A/9-Man Football  
Pages 36-44  
1A/6-Man Football  
Pages 45-55

Due to COVID-19 schedules for the 2020 season are subject to change.

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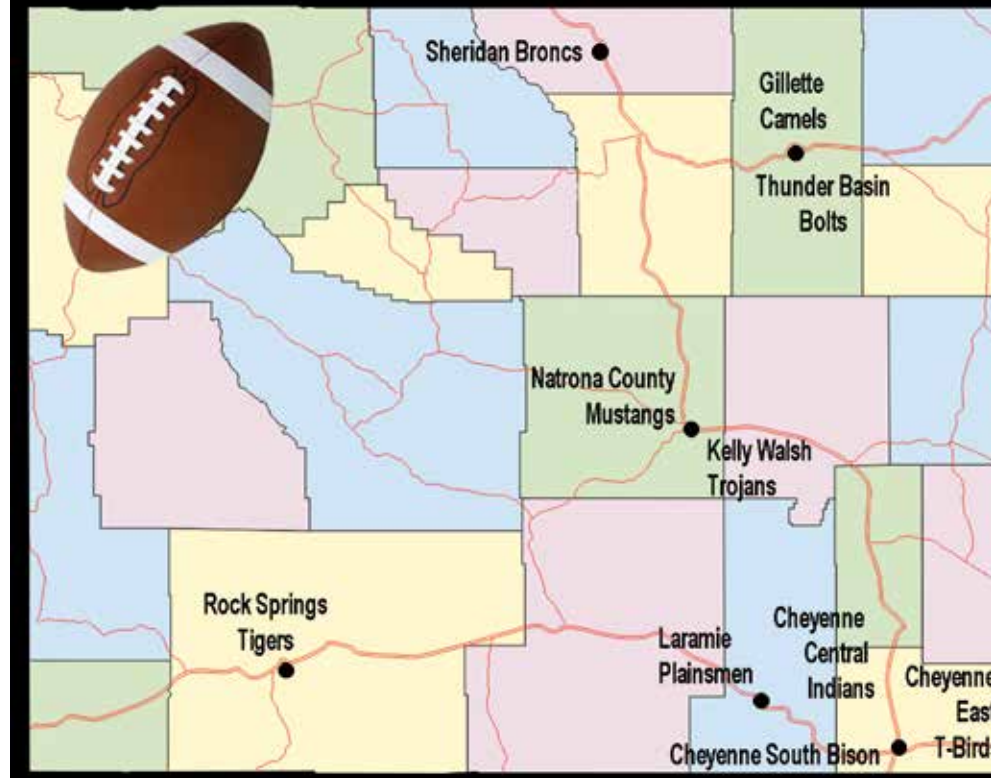
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# 4A Preview



## Cheyenne teams taking control

By Patrick Schmiedt

### Four questions to answer

*Is the guard really changing in Class 4A?* Yes, but don't get too excited. Cheyenne Central will be the fifth team in the title chase, breaking up the "Big Four" of Cheyenne East, Thunder Basin, Sheridan and Natrona. However, there's still a clear split between the top and the bottom of the classification.

*Who's going to win it all this year?* Probably a team from Cheyenne. Both East and Central are absolutely loaded this year, and it wouldn't be a surprise to see them play each other in the championship in November.

*Any hope for anyone else?* Not really. I love what I saw from Rock Springs last year, and if they can turn close losses into close victories, the Tigers can be one of those teams other coaches hate to see on a schedule.

*Really – nothing about Sheridan?* OK, time for the Broncos to get their love. They deserve it. With four championships in five years, Sheridan can never be ruled out of a 4A championship chase. No program develops talent faster or more consistently than the one up north.

### Four key games

*Week 0 games, Aug. 28.* The opening week has two games that will go far in shaping the 4A race – Central at Natrona and East at Thunder Basin. Both Cheyenne teams have high hopes. With a

1-0 record, those hopes turn into expectations.

*Thunder Basin at Rock Springs, Sept. 4.* The Tigers could be 4A's biggest surprise this year. All it would take is a couple attention-getting victories early in the season. Rock Springs has no better opportunity than this game against the 'Bolts in Sweetwater County.

*Cheyenne East at Sheridan, Sept. 25.* The Broncos have won the past seven games they've had with the Thunderbirds. East will need to find a way past Sheridan, at Homer Scott Field, to really show it belongs in the championship conversation.

*Cheyenne East at Cheyenne Central, Oct. 9.* The annual Capital Bowl takes on added fervor with both teams trying to stake claims to the top spot in 4A. This might be the most critical rendition of the intra-city rivalry in more than a decade.

### Predicted order of finish

Cheyenne East, Sheridan, Cheyenne Central, Thunder Basin, Natrona, Rock Springs, Laramie, Campbell County, Kelly Walsh, Cheyenne South.

### Way-too-early title game score prediction

*Cheyenne East 33, Sheridan 26.* Class 4A will probably be (and normally is) the classification with the most variability between teams from the beginning to the end of a season. The game we see between them in September will probably be wildly different from any playoff rematch.



**State Champs**  
**Sheridan**  
**Broncs**

## 2019 State Playoffs

### State Championship

Sheridan 35, Thunder Basin 26

### State Semifinals

Thunder Basin 27, Cheyenne East 21

Sheridan 62, Cheyenne Central 35

### State Quarterfinals

Thunder Basin 24, Gillette 20

Cheyenne East 35, Natrona 14

Sheridan 62, Kelly Walsh 14

Cheyenne Central 20, Rock Springs 16

## Four players to watch

### Graedyn Buell, Cheyenne East

Buell did something pretty rare last year – he was named the Class 4A offensive player of the year as a junior. He led Wyoming regardless of classification with 2,989 passing yards, completing 201 of 327 passes while sporting a 35-7 touchdown-to-interception ratio.

### Carter Lobatos, Cheyenne Central

No player in Wyoming will be a bigger threat on both offense and defense than Lobatos. He led the Indians' rushing attack with 1,238 yards last year, and he also led Central's defense with 127 tackles – second-best in 4A last year.

### Jaxon Pikula, Thunder Basin

Pikula was a consistent threat out of Thunder Basin's backfield, running for 1,189 yards and 16 touchdowns last year. He also caught 17 passes for 129 yards as part of a balanced 'Bolts offense.

### Andrew Johnson, Cheyenne Central

Johnson led Class 4A in receptions last year with 73 and was second in receiving yards with 994. On defense, he finished with five interceptions and 10 pass deflections.





**Mascot:** Camels  
**Division:** Class 4A  
**Colors:** Purple and yellow

**Coach:** Andrew Rose,  
second year at Gillette  
**2019 Record:** 2-8, lost  
to Thunder Basin in 4A  
quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**QB/S:** Kaden Race, Sr.  
**RB/OLB:** Will Miller, Jr.  
**DE:** Cayden Dymond, Jr.  
**LB:** Hunter Kramer, Sr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** vs. Rock Springs, 7 p.m.  
**9-4:** at Laramie, 6 p.m.  
**9-11:** vs. Cheyenne East, 7 p.m.  
**9-18:** at Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.  
**9-25:** at Thunder Basin, 7 p.m.  
**10-2:** vs. Cheyenne Central, 7 p.m.  
**10-9:** vs. Natrona, 7 p.m.  
**10-16:** at Sheridan, 7 p.m.  
**10-23:** vs. Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.



# Camels are gaining momentum

The Campbell County Camels aren't quite back yet to where they once were.

But if the 2019 season is any indication, they're on their way.

After a couple winless seasons, the Camels finished 2-8 last year and nearly upset top-seeded Thunder Basin in the first round of the Class 4A playoffs.

"They have a lot more confidence," coach Andrew Rose said. "The couple of wins that we had, they were great wins. We just hadn't won in so long we didn't know what to do after a win."

Managing success is a welcome problem to have, though. That taste of success has also generated more interest in the history-rich program.

Rose said the Camels have had high participation in offseason programs, including 75 players signed up for a summer minicamp – 25 more than those who attended camp last summer.

"We've seen a huge increase in kids that are going out for other sports, especially track and soccer, and that's led us to find some kids that are really well-rounded and coachable," Rose said.

Senior Hunter Kramer, an all-conference selection, led Gillette in defensive points and was second with 63 tackles. He finished with a team-high five tackles for loss and also had three sacks.

Including Kramer, four of Gillette's top nine tacklers return from 2019.

Senior Kaden Race finished tied for fourth on the team with 39 tackles. Junior Cayden Dymond was sixth for the Camels with 38 tackles, including a team-high five sacks. And junior Will Miller added 30 total tackles.

Many of Campbell County's returners are in the secondary, giving Rose high hopes for shoring up the Camels' pass defense, which finished last in 4A.

"We got a lot better as the year went on, so that's going to be a big strength for us," he said.

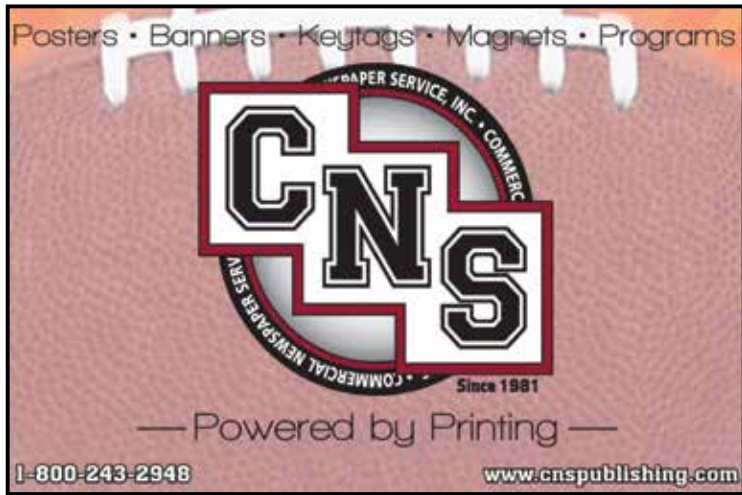
The offensive game plan centered on the rushing attack last season. The Camels ran for 5.4 yards per carry last year, third-best among Class 4A teams and a trend Rose said he wants to see continue. To do so, the Camels will need to rely on a young offensive line.

"We have some young guys that are coming up," Rose said. "It's just going to be a bit of a learning curve."

Miller is Campbell County's leading returning rusher and receiver. He finished second for the Camels in 2019 with 348 rushing yards and five rushing touchdowns, and he also led the team with 14 catches and was second with 145 receiving yards.

Race threw for 762 yards and ran for 332 more, combining for nine touchdowns.

Rose also said seniors Xander Beeson and Kyler Hanson and juniors Tim Verburg and Matt Engel would be big pieces of the Camels' plans.



# Indians a legitimate title threat

Cheyenne Central coach Mike Apodaca has seen enough from his 2020 team to have faith in their ability to keep the program's momentum going despite an extended period of separation.

The Indians' program momentum entering the 2020 season is grounded in their growth. In 2018, they went 3-7; last year, they finished 7-4 and reached the Class 4A semifinals for the first time since 2009.

Central's goals are higher this year. The Indians return 10 offensive starters, seven defensive starters and seven all-conference players, more than any other Class 4A program.

Apodaca said the Indians' offseason plans didn't come together as planned due to COVID-19, but "if I had to had a group that we didn't get to have

a lot of contact for the last three months, it's this group."

He said the Indians' mix of talent, experience and work ethic will keep Central on track.

Seniors Andrew Johnson, Jimmy Koenig, Carter Lobatos and Brock Storebo were all-state selections, while seniors Brady Storebo and Joey Kostelecky and junior T.J. Wilson joined them as all-conference players. They lead a group who's pushed Central into championship contention.

"That's one thing I tried to instill early on in this group is confidence, and having the onus on them to bring this program back to a place that in my mind it needs to be," Apodaca said.

Lobatos was Central's running game, carrying 197 times for 1,238 yards and 11 touchdowns. No other Central player had more than 80 rushing yards last season.

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Central will need to find a new quarterback, but that person will have myriad targets; every single player who caught a pass last year for Central returns.

Johnson led Central with 73 catches for 994 yards and 15 touchdowns last season.

Brady Storebo added 52 catches for 637 yards, Brock Storebo had 44 catches for 442 yards, junior Nathaniel Talich caught 29 passes for 307 yards and Lobatos had 14 catches for 182 yards.

Central's defense is stacked, returning seven of its nine top tacklers. Lobatos led Central's defense with 127 total tackles and 17 tackles for loss.

Kostelecky was third for Central in defensive points and was fourth in tackles with 70. He also had seven sacks, tops among Central's returners.

Johnson had 42 tackles and team-highs with five interceptions and 10 pass deflections.

Senior Jarrod Dilly added 63 tackles, senior Nate Lundberg had 41, junior Eli Castillo had 36 and Talich had 32.

Apodaca also said senior lineman Aiden Miller will be a key part of Central's approach.

Apodaca said the Indians' experience on defense "allows the kids to play faster. ... Once they stop thinking and just start playing, that athleticism will just start to take over."



**Mascot:** Indians  
**Division:** Class 4A  
**Colors:** Red and black

**Coach:** Mike Apodaca,  
third year at Central  
**2019 Record:** 7-4, lost to  
Sheridan in 4A semifinals

**Key Players**  
**RB/LB:** Carter Lobatos, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Andrew Johnson, Sr.  
**TE:** Brady Storebo, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Jimmy Koenig, Sr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** at Natrona, 7 p.m.  
**9-4:** vs. Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.  
**9-11:** at Sheridan, 6 p.m.  
**9-18:** vs. Thunder Basin, 7 p.m.  
**9-25:** at Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.  
**10-2:** at Campbell County, 7 p.m.  
**10-9:** vs. Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.  
**10-16:** vs. Rock Springs, 6 p.m.  
**10-23:** at Laramie, 6 p.m.

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# T-Birds have senior leadership

Cheyenne East's success this year isn't fully dependent on its senior class.

But that group is a good place to start.

With a senior class that has five returning all-state selections, more than any program in Class 4A, the Thunderbirds will bring both experience and talent to the 2020 season.

"It's a class of kids. ... I miss seeing every day," East coach Chad Goff said. "They're such good character and such well-rounded kids."

"To be able to coach kids like that and have a chance

to be successful is pretty exciting."

Trey Bower, Graedyn Buell, Dakota Heckman, Jackson Hesford and Julian Vigil were all-state selections last year, and as a group, they and their fellow juniors were a big part of a 7-4 team that had only nine seniors.

"A lot was asked of them last year," Goff said.

While the senior class gets the attention, Goff also noted that this year's juniors won the ninth-grade Geldien league as freshmen, and this year's sophomores

CONTINUED PAGE 7



**Mascot:** Thunderbirds  
**Division:** Class 4A  
**Colors:** Blue and silver

**Coach:** Chad Goff,  
15th year at East  
**2019 Record:** 7-4, lost to  
Thunder Basin in 4A  
semifinals





**Mascot:** Bison  
**Division:** Class 4A  
**Colors:** Black and gold

**Coach:** Dan Gallas,  
fifth year at South  
**2019 Record:** 1-8, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**TE:** Kobe Barto, Sr.  
**OL:** Matt Gabehart, Sr.  
**DL:** Colton Serena, Sr.  
**QB/DB:** Braeden Hughes, Jr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** at Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.  
**9-4:** vs. Sheridan, 6 p.m.  
**9-11:** at Thunder Basin, 6 p.m.  
**9-18:** vs. Campbell County, 6 p.m.  
**9-25:** vs. Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.  
**10-2:** at Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.  
**10-9:** vs. Rock Springs, 6 p.m.  
**10-16:** at Laramie, 6 p.m.  
**10-23:** vs. Natrona, 6 p.m.

## Youth a challenge for Bison

Cheyenne South's scoreboard success was fleeting in 2019.

A 36-35 victory against Laramie in Week 6 briefly brought South into the playoff discussion, but the Bison's eight losses were all by at least 32 points.

In its 1-8 season, South was outscored by an average of 53-11.

Graduation and program departures leave South with several questions entering this fall, but the team does return a junior dual-threat quarterback and a handful of last year's top defensive players.

While a lack of depth is a concern, South coach Dan Gallas said the team has good camaraderie.

"Our student athletes really do like each other and they have a good bond with each other," he said. "They like playing for each other."

Junior quarterback Braeden Hughes is South's leading returning passer and rusher; he threw for 541 yards and three touchdowns last year and also ran for 379 yards and two TDs.

Gallas said Hughes will have additional responsibilities in his second year as a starter.

"We're looking for him to be a bigger portion of our leadership, being able to direct his teammates when they have questions," Gallas said. "He's a good football player and loves the game and wants to be a

student of the game."

Senior tight end Kobe Barto, who had five catches for 41 yards last season, will be one of Hughes' top targets.

Aside from Hughes, no returning players ran for more than 15 yards last season.

The line returns a handful of players, and Gallas noted seniors Matt Gabehart and Colton Serena as potential leaders for that group.

The Bison lost their top five tacklers to graduation or program departure, but several players who had key roles on the defense return.

Junior Devon Simmons had 25 tackles to lead South's returners. Senior Sam Berry chipped in 20 tackles last year.

Junior Jeremiah Moyte had 15 tackles and a team-high three pass deflections. Seniors

Mychael Mascaranes (18 tackles) and James Wood (16 tackles) also saw significant time on defense.

The South program, now entering its 10th season, has yet to finish with more than three victories in any one season.

Gallas said the victories are less important than what happens to the players internally.

"We continue to build on the positives, to celebrate small victories that happen," Gallas said. "... We're in it to help these guys to become quality young men and be able to be a positive part of society when we're done, and I'm always looking for our kids, for our student-athletes, to come back and be a part of the program when they return. I want them to feel like this is a program and they want to be a part of it."

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## Trojans have weapons back

The strategy for the Kelly Walsh Trojans in 2020 can more or less be distilled into two ideas – loosen up on offense and tighten up on defense.

The offense can get a bit more flexible thanks to the returning experience the Trojans have in their backs and receivers.

The defense, meanwhile, loses most of its key contributors and will simplify its approach to help bring along younger players who will be asked to fulfill key spots.

Second-year coach Aaron Makelky said the players are further along mentally than they were at this time last year, even with the restrictions on in-person meetings and weightlifting that came with the spring and summer.

The offense will be led by a returning quarterback, running back and receiver.

Junior Cameron Burkett led the Trojans with 380 rushing yards on 55 carries last season. But he's the only one of KW's top five rushers to return this season.

Burkett also led KW with 189 receiving yards on nine catches.

"He's a multi-tool guy," Makelky said. "We can throw him the ball, he can run the ball, he can return the ball, and he blocks a lot in our offense."

At quarterback, senior Trenton Walker completed 56 of 133 passes for 681 yards and six touchdowns.

"This year, we kind of have a clear No. 1 guy who has a year of experience, and we can open things up a bit more because he understands what's going on," Makelky said.

Senior Caleb Cockrum had a team-high 17 catches and finished just behind Burkett with 185 yards.

### Cheyenne East Key Players

**QB:** Graedyn Buell, Sr.  
**WR/S:** Jackson Hesford, Sr.  
**C:** Dakota Heckman, Sr.  
**ILB:** Trey Bower, Sr.

### 2020 Schedule

**8-28:** at Thunder Basin, 6 p.m.  
**9-4:** vs. Natrona, 7 p.m.  
**9-11:** at Campbell County, 7 p.m.  
**9-18:** vs. Laramie, 6 p.m.  
**9-25:** at Sheridan, 6 p.m.  
**10-2:** vs. Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.  
**10-9:** at Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.  
**10-16:** vs. Kelly Walsh, 7 p.m.  
**10-23:** at Rock Springs, 6 p.m.

**CHEYENNE EAST CONTINUED**—were runners-up in the Geldien league last year.

They'll all be a part of the Thunderbirds' success this year.

"As a program, we've got kids who know how to win, and that's exciting," Goff said.

On offense, the conversation

starts with Buell, who was named 4A's offensive player of the year last season and will be in his third season as the Thunderbirds' starting quarterback. He completed 201 of 327 passes for 2,989 yards and 35 touchdowns in 2019. He also had 159 rushing yards.

His experience sets him apart, Goff said.

"He can look at a coverage and recognize what he wants to do before the ball gets into his hands," he said.

Hesford is the top returning target in the passing game. He was second for East last year across three categories – 54 catches, 697 yards and eight receiving touchdowns. But he's the only one of East's top five pass-catchers to come back this year.

The Thunderbirds' defense returns eight starters, including its top four tacklers and six of its top seven. The defensive front seven returns six starters, including all four linebackers – Bower and senior Adrian Hernandez inside, and seniors Shaye

The defense, though, will need to simplify somewhat, Makelky said, to help the Trojans play fast.

"We're really going to try to stay true to who we are this year," he said. "The more simple we can keep it, the more confidence our kids will have in what we want them to do."

KW returns its No. 2 tackler in Dominic Gray, who had 61 total tackles and was second for the Trojans with 19 solo tackles.

However, Gray is the only player among KW's top seven in defensive points to come back in 2020, and nine of KW's top 13 have graduated.

Senior Siope Palepale finished with 30 tackles and a pair of sacks, while senior Sam Henderson had 23 tackles and senior Latrelle Montgomery had 19.

Aaron Papich, the coach who helped Powell to a Class 3A state championship game appearance last year, will join the Trojans' coaching staff as defensive coordinator. Papich and Makelky went to school together at Montana State and briefly coached together at Bozeman High School in Montana.

"That's going to be as big as anything we do with our kids," Makelky said.

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**Mascot:** Trojans  
**Division:** Class 4A  
**Colors:** Green and yellow

**Coach:** Aaron Makelky,  
second year at Kelly Walsh  
**2019 Record:** 2-8, lost to  
Sheridan in 4A quarterfinals

### Key Players

**QB:** Trenton Walker, Sr.  
**RB:** Cameron Burkett, Jr.  
**WR:** Caleb Cockrum, Sr.  
**LB:** Dominic Gray, Sr.

### 2020 Schedule

**8-28:** vs. Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.  
**9-4:** at Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.  
**9-11:** vs. Rock Springs, 6 p.m.  
**9-18:** vs. Natrona, 6 p.m.  
**9-25:** at Laramie, 6 p.m.  
**10-2:** vs. Thunder Basin, 6 p.m.  
**10-9:** vs. Sheridan, 6 p.m.  
**10-16:** at Cheyenne East, 7 p.m.  
**10-23:** at Campbell County, 6 p.m.

Ellis and Jaret Taylor outside.

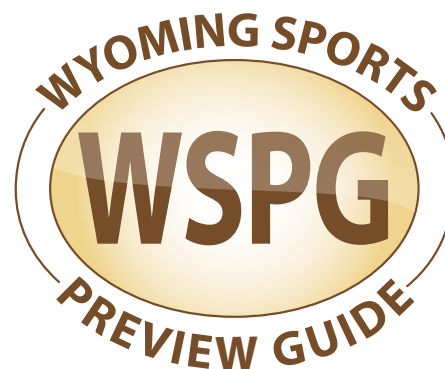
"I think the big strength of the team will be the trenches for us," Goff said.

Bower led East, by a bunch, in total tackles with 103. Hesford and Hernandez tied for second with 64 tackles, while Ellis finished fourth with 58.

The two returning starting linemen – Vigil and senior Bradley Whitwright – each had 51 tackles last year, and Vigil led the Thunderbirds with four sacks and 12 tackles for loss.

Taylor added 40 tackles and senior Jake Rayl led East with four interceptions last season.

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**Mascot:** Plainsmen  
**Division:** Class 4A  
**Colors:** Maroon and yellow

**Coach:** Clint Reed,  
fourth year at Laramie  
**2019 Record:** 1-8, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**QB/WR/S:** Garrett Dodd, Sr.  
**RB/WR/SS:** Isaac Sell, Sr.  
**RB/ILB:** Colter Nunn, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Julian Cortez, Sr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** at Sheridan, 6 p.m.  
**9-4:** vs. Campbell County, 6 p.m.  
**9-11:** at Natrona, 7 p.m.  
**9-18:** at Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.  
**9-25:** vs. Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.  
**10-2:** at Rock Springs, 6 p.m.  
**10-9:** at Thunder Basin, 6 p.m.  
**10-16:** vs. Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.  
**10-23:** vs. Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.



**Mascot:** Mustangs  
**Division:** Class 4A  
**Colors:** Orange and black

**Coach:** Steve Harshman,  
30th year at Natrona  
**2019 Record:** 6-4, lost  
to Cheyenne East in 4A  
quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**QB:** Harrison Taubert, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Jace George, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Colter Helm, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Brady Dutcher, Sr.

# Laramie primed for success

If any program is ready for a turnaround, it's Laramie.

The Plainsmen have two factors going for them – renewed engagement in offseason training and fresh attitudes from immediate-impact transfers.

Coach Clint Reed said a good chunk of inspiration for Laramie's changes to its offseason came from the returning players.

The Plainsmen's 1-8 finish was the program's 18th consecutive losing season, but it also marked the first time since 2012 that Laramie did not qualify for the postseason.

"These juniors and sophomores just came right into my classroom the first week after the season (was done) and said, 'What can we do?'" Reed said.

They talked about just that, "but words mean very little if you don't go out and execute and carry out your words," Reed said.

Those conversations led to an offseason leadership program and, according to Reed, more engagement in that program, and in offseason training, than

Laramie has had in years.

"We've got like 23 seniors that are working out with us that summer," Reed said. "That's just amazing for us. We haven't had that many in a decade."

Laramie's backfield returns intact.

Senior Colter Nunn led Laramie across all rushing categories, carrying 65 times for 360 yards and four touchdowns. Senior Isaac Sell added 44 carries for 317 yards and three scores.

Senior Garrett Dodd completed 64 of 132 passes for 769 yards and six touchdowns, while junior Jake Vigen completed 37 of 76 passes for 381 yards and three scores.

Reed said both players will compete for quarterback, but if Vigen earns the spot, Dodd will move to flanker and is athletic enough to create matchup problems.

Sell, with 16 receptions for 161 yards last season, is Laramie's top returning pass-catcher.

Nunn was second for Laramie in total tackles (74) and defensive points last season. He's the only

one of the Plainsmen's top five players in defensive points to come back in 2020.

Junior Graham Jaques had 40 tackles, fifth-best for Laramie, while Sell notched 39 tackles, including 24 solo.

Seniors Lane Towle (24 tackles) and Travis Judd (21) and junior Jackson Devine (20) also saw significant defensive playing time.

Senior David Tangeman also returns at kicker and will likely be a starting defensive back, Reed said.

The transfers in will be significant, too.

Triplets Matthew, Michael and Micah Maiava, senior linemen who played at Denver's Mullen High last year, are scheduled to transfer to Laramie, as is tight end/linebacker Gavin Kopp, who played at Rocky Mountain in Fort Collins last year, and senior Evan Heck, Reed said.

"They've been working out this summer and checking in with me," Reed said. " ... I just hope it all pans out and everybody shows up on Aug. 10."

# Culture is Tigers' key word

For a program with one winning season in the past 16 years, one of the biggest challenges to overcome is learning how to win.

That's the quandary Rock Springs had in 2019.

The Tigers finished just outside winning-season range at 4-6 under first-year coach Mark Lenhardt. Of the six losses, five were by 10 points or fewer, and the sixth was by 16. And of the four victories, all were by at least 19 points.

Finding a way to win the close games is the Tigers' challenge for success in 2020. For Lenhardt, winning those games starts with changing the culture within the program.

"Culture trumps scheme any day of the week," Lenhardt said. " ... Ultimately (culture works) if they players buy into it and want to do it and pass it on to the next class of kids.

"That's what where trying to get to in Rock Springs."

Part of building culture is developing stability in the coaching staff – something Lenhardt said has started with the Tigers, who changed only one coach in the offseason.

"Hopefully that continues to translate over to good teaching to the players and good expectations," he said.

The other part of building culture is getting the most from returning players. This year, Rock Springs returns three all-conference choices, seniors Collin Madsen and Kyan DeBernardi and junior Isaac Schoenfeld, and enough players who played quality minutes last season to keep the Tigers competitive.

Madsen led Rock Springs' rushing attack with 137 carries for 624 yards, and also ranked third for the Tigers in total tackles with 47 and was second in defensive points.

Rock Springs does return three of its top four tacklers from last season but those three are the only three among the Tigers' top 10 to come back.

Junior Cadon Shaklee was second in tackles with 49, while senior Blaine Richards finished fourth with 45.

Junior Andrew Skorcz had 20 tackles and Schoenfeld 17, the only other returning players with double-digit tackles last season.

Offensively, Lenhardt said the transition to a balanced offense continues this year as players continue to learn new schemes and approaches after running a double-wing offense previously.

"Can we throw it enough to be successful, and can we stop other people from throwing it on us?"

*"Culture trumps scheme any day of the week."*

**~ Coach Mark Lenhardt**

Lenhardt said.

Schoenfeld and Madsen are Rock Springs' top returning receivers.

Schoenfeld was fourth on the squad last season with 130 receiving yards, those coming on 12 catches, while Madsen had 17 catches (third-best on the team) for 119 yards.

Seniors Debernardi and A.J. Kelly and sophomore Carter McBurnett will lead the offensive line.

Concurrently, developing confidence will continue to be a priority.

"Hopefully we can turn that corner quickly," Lenhardt said.



**Mascot:** Tigers  
**Division:** Class 4A  
**Colors:** Orange and black

**Coach:** Mark Lenhardt,  
second year at Rock Springs  
**2019 Record:** 4-6, lost to  
Cheyenne Central in 4A  
quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**OL/DL:** A.J. Kelly, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Collin Madsen, Sr.  
**FB/LB:** Blaine Richards, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Kyan Debernardi.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** at Campbell County, 7 p.m.  
**9-4:** vs. Thunder Basin, 6 p.m.  
**9-11:** at Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.  
**9-18:** vs. Sheridan, 6 p.m.  
**9-25:** at Natrona, 6 p.m.  
**10-2:** vs. Laramie, 6 p.m.  
**10-9:** at Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.  
**10-16:** at Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.  
**10-23:** vs. Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.

# Mustangs seek return to top

For better or worse, the Natrona County Mustangs have set a standard of excellence.

On the heels of three consecutive state championship game berths, and a state title in 2018, the 2019 Mustangs didn't match the near-impossible standard set by previous teams.

Although Natrona finished with a 6-4 record – finishing at .500 or better for the 26th time in 27 seasons – the Mustangs failed to win a playoff game for the first time since 2009.

Even though the playoffs didn't go Natrona's way, coach Steve Harshman didn't leave 2019 disappointed with his players' effort.

"We really fought hard last year," Harshman said. "We won every game at home, but we struggled on the road for whatever reason.

" ... And that last game, we had our chances, and then it got away from us on a couple key plays."

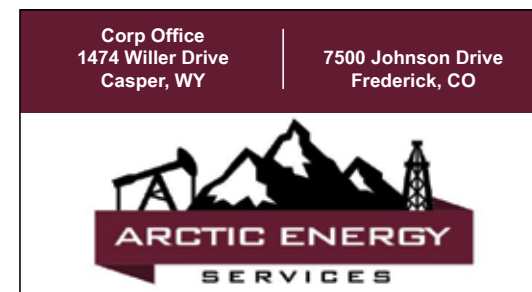
Natrona graduated all four of its all-state selections but returns four all-conference players in seniors Ben Hoppens, Harrison Taubert, Jace

George and Dominick Bradach.

Taubert completed 104 of 211 passes for 1,270 yards and 14 touchdowns; he's also NC's leading returning rusher with 118 carries for 664 yards and six touchdowns last year.

"He's really worked hard," Harshman said. "He's put on a lot of weight, done a nice job and been really committed. He'll be a good leader for us."

Up front, the Mustangs return several players with experience – in part because the Mustangs used nine different starting configurations on



## NATRONA CONTINUED-

the offensive line last season. Seniors George, Colter Helm, Brady Dutcher, Philip Bergman and D'Anthony Smith all will be counted on to anchor that area of the field.

"Hopefully we'll get a little more settled there," Harshman said.

Senior Braxton Bundy, who added 88 carries for 543 yards and three TDs, returns at running back.

Natrona also returns four receivers who cracked triple-digit yards. Senior Koby Kelly led Natrona's receivers with 265 yards through the air, coming on 17 catches. Junior Roman Overstreet added 12 catches for 208 yards, senior Myllian Allison had 17 for 196 and senior Avery Cox had 19 for 126.

Natrona returns only one of its nine top tacklers from last year but returns several players who helped give the Mustang defense depth last year.

Bradach, at middle linebacker, was second for Natrona with 93 tackles and third in defensive points. Junior Kaeden Wilcox chipped in 33 tackles, George had 23 and Helm had 21.

Senior Nolan Valdez added five pass break-ups.

Harshman said he was confident his returners could fill the spots left open by graduation and transfers.

"A lot happens in a young person's life in 12 months," he said. "They change and develop a lot. ... That depth, I think, will just keep developing."

## Natrona Mustangs 2020 Schedule

**8-28:** vs. Cheyenne Central, 7 p.m.  
**9-4:** at Cheyenne East, 7 p.m.  
**9-11:** vs. Laramie, 7 p.m.  
**9-18:** at Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.  
**9-25:** vs. Rock Springs, 6 p.m.  
**10-2:** vs. Sheridan, 7 p.m.  
**10-9:** at Campbell County, 7 p.m.  
**10-16:** vs. Thunder Basin, 7 p.m.  
**10-23:** at Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.





**Mascot:** Broncos  
**Division:** Class 4A  
**Colors:** Blue and yellow

**Coach:** Jeff Mowry,  
 third year at Sheridan  
**2019 Record:** 11-1, beat  
 Thunder Basin in 4A  
 championship

**Key Players**  
**OL/DL:** Quinton Mangus, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Kyle Meinecke, Sr.  
**QB/DB:** Zach Koltiska, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Xander Coon, Sr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** vs. Laramie, 6 p.m.  
**9-4:** at Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.  
**9-11:** vs. Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.  
**9-18:** at Rock Springs, 6 p.m.  
**9-25:** vs. Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.  
**10-2:** at Natrona, 7 p.m.  
**10-9:** at Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.  
**10-16:** vs. Campbell County, 7 p.m.  
**10-23:** vs. Thunder Basin, 6 p.m.

# Broncs remain the standard

Four times in the past five years – including last year – Sheridan has reached the pinnacle of Class 4A football.

A fifth title in six years is definitely possible, as Sheridan returns six all-conference players in 2020.

But coach Jeff Mowry knows not to count titles before they're won.

"I love what we look like on paper right now," he said. "I'm excited about it. ... Now it's a matter of putting that plan into action."

That approach is part what keeps Sheridan's program moving in a winning direction. The Broncos continue to work, even when success is the result.

"(We) can have successful teams, even though we're not the biggest, fastest or strongest team to step on the field," Mowry said. "... When it comes to football, it's not just about the players or coaches. It's about that program and that community."

That community and school support means the Broncos will be an early 4A favorite.

Senior Quinton Mangus and junior Carter McComb were all-state picks, while seniors Kyle Meinecke and Izak Aksamit and juniors Chris Larson and Michael Greer were all-conference.

Mowry noted the line, a group that includes Mangus, Larson, senior Ryan Steiner and several other experienced players, is particularly exciting.

"They're not incredibly big or athletic, but they are blue-collar young men who go to work and believe in our system," he said.

The defense is experienced and deep, as the Broncos return three of their top four tacklers from 2019 and 11 of their top 16.

Senior Zach Koltiska finished second for the

Broncs with 67 tackles last season; he also had a pair of interceptions.

Senior Reese Osborne was third with 63 tackles and also had six tackles for loss and four pass break-ups.

Larson had 56 tackles and led Sheridan with five sacks.

Others who saw significant time on defense last year included senior Xander Coon (45 tackles), Mangus (39 tackles, team-high eight tackles for loss), Aksamit (35 tackles), Meinicke and senior Matthew Taylor (26 tackles each), senior Ian Taylor (24 tackles) and seniors Carter Dubberly and Hunter Goodwin (21 tackles each).

Offensively, Aksamit was second for Sheridan last season in rushing yards, finishing with 546 on 67 carries.

Junior Brock Steel (17 catches, 200 yards) and Meinecke (11 catches, 184 yards) are the main receiving threats on a team that had seven players break triple-digit receiving yards a year ago. However, of those seven, just Steel and Meinecke return.

Sheridan will also need to find a new quarterback, but Mowry said Koltiska will likely take over there.

"We've got guys that can fill that void, they've just got to go to work and they've got to believe they can do it," Mowry said.

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# 'Bolts building a tradition

Thunder Basin didn't need long to shift the balance of Class 4A football.

In just its third year as a program, the 'Bolts notched an undefeated regular season and finished as 4A runners-up.

After graduating a deep and talented senior class, this year's challenge for Thunder Basin is to show the consistency needed to stay a consistent contender.

Two motivators will help the 'Bolts do that. First is the frustration of having their first loss come in the title game.

"Although we learned a lot about who we were and had an amazing run last year, to come up that short left a sting," coach Trent Pikula said.

The second is the motivation spurred by opportunity. The graduation of seven all-state players will present opportunities to the 'Bolts' up-and-coming players to maintain the program's ascent.

"Although we graduated some big-time players, I think we've got a lot of dudes that can move into those spots and become big-time players," Pikula said.

The 'Bolts graduated their quarterback and top three receivers but return six starters on offense. Moreover, Pikula said Thunder Basin has enough depth to prompt competition in practice and in the offseason.

However, Thunder Basin is set at running back. Senior Jaxon Pikula had 187 carries for 1,189 yards and 16 touchdowns on his way to all-state

recognition.

"He is a leader for us on and off the field, and the experience he has gained over the last two years will benefit him, as well as our team, tremendously," coach Pikula said.

Coach Pikula said Thunder Basin's offensive plans will rely on the running game more often, especially as the 'Bolts work in new starters at quarterback and wide receiver. The approach will also rely on a strong offensive line that includes all-state senior Nate Jones.

Senior Dyse Shepherd leads Thunder Basin's returning receivers with 20 catches for 191 yards last year, while Jaxon Pikula had 17 catches for 129 yards.

Senior kicker Garner Gauthier and junior kick returner Isaiah Haliburton give Thunder Basin some special teams weapons.

Senior Hunter Lunberg, whose 62 tackles was second for the 'Bolts in 2019, is the team's top returning tackler. However, he's the only one of Thunder Basin's top eight tacklers who's back.

Senior Dylan Catlin had 37 tackles last year, Shepherd had 30 and senior Gavin Carroll had 27.

Even with a less-experienced defense, coach Pikula said he's confident in his team's ability to overcome the learning curve quickly.

"Our defense over the last two years is a unit that we've kind of hung our hat on," he said. "The underclassmen see how it's supposed to be done so when it's their turn, they are ready to make their mark."

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**Mascot:** Bolts  
**Division:** Class 4A  
**Colors:** Blue and silver

**Coach:** Trent Pikula,  
 fourth year at Thunder Basin  
**2019 Record:** 11-1,  
 lost to Sheridan in 4A  
 championship

**Key Players**  
**RB/DB:** Jaxon Pikula, Sr.  
**TE/DE:** Dyse Shepherd, Sr.  
**FB/ILB:** Hunter Lunberg, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Nate Jones, Sr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** vs. Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.  
**9-4:** at Rock Springs, 6 p.m.  
**9-11:** vs. Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.  
**9-18:** at Cheyenne Central, 7 p.m.  
**9-25:** vs. Campbell County, 7 p.m.  
**10-2:** at Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.  
**10-9:** vs. Laramie, 6 p.m.  
**10-16:** at Natrona, 7 p.m.  
**10-23:** at Sheridan, 6 p.m.

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**Braves**

**2019 State Playoffs**

**State Championship**

Star Valley 49, Powell 13

**State Semifinals**

Star Valley 42, Jackson 21

Powell 20, Cody 13

**State Quarterfinals**

Star Valley 45, Douglas 12

Jackson 48, Riverton 6

Cody 55, Worland 26

Powell 41, Lander 14

**Four players to watch**

**Hyrum Hatch, Buffalo**

Already a two-time all-state selection in Class 2A, Hatch is especially tough to stop on defense, where he led the Bison defense in tackles a year ago with 100 and notched 34 solo tackles.

**Brant Nelson, Star Valley**

He completed an otherworldly 71.3 percent of his passes last year, completing 92 of 129 for 1,229 yards and 17 touchdowns last year. That'll keep an offense running.

**Jack Sweeney, Lander**

Sweeney's a double threat. He's one of 3A's top returning running backs, as he notched 534 yards and seven TDs last year. But he might be even more valuable on defense, where he finished tied for fourth in 3A in defensive points per game.

**Colter Dawson, Jackson**

Only a junior, Dawson was one of 3A's best defensive players last year. The linebacker had 108 tackles, including 10 for loss, and had just more than 19 defensive points per game.

# 3A Preview



## West foes challenge Braves' reign

By Patrick Schmiedt

**Four questions to answer**

*Is Star Valley's run over?* Maybe. The Braves have won four championships in the past five years, but making it back to Laramie will require a lot of growing up. Star Valley lost its top four rushers, top six receivers and 11 of its top 12 tacklers, so another championship run will rely on a bunch of players untested at the varsity level.

If not the Braves, then who? The West Conference is a murderer's row of opponents. Cody, Powell and Jackson all have the athleticism, depth and coaching to make the West the kind of conference that demands the best from every team every week.

*Will the East Conference have any title threats?* Probably not. It's hard to overlook how easily the West swept the East in the first round of the playoffs last season without thinking something similar could happen again this season. The first three weeks will show us a lot.

*What about the new coaches?* Green River, Powell, Riverton and Worland all have new coaches this fall. Don't expect wholesale changes for any of them, but do expect to see some tweaks that we didn't see last year from each of these programs.

**Four key games**

*Cody at Powell, Sept. 25.* If the Broncos haven't had this game circled on their calendars since five minutes after the end of last season, they'd be crazy. Revenge might be too kind a word for what Cody

wants, but Powell isn't an easy out by any stretch.

*Star Valley at Jackson, Sept. 25.* West Conference play starts for the defending champs against their regional rivals in the Fall Brawl. Jackson would absolutely love to get this one and force Star Valley to chase – a position the Braves haven't faced in a long time.

*Lander at Riverton, Oct. 9.* Combined, the Tigers and Wolverines have 10 returning all-conference selections; the rest of the teams in the East Conference have a combined six. In addition to being Fremont County's premiere rivalry, the conference championship may end up being decided here.

*Douglas at Buffalo, Oct. 16.* This game often decides who wins the conference, or at minimum who hosts a playoff game; this year's game will likely have similar high stakes.

**Predicted order of finish**

*East Conference:* Lander, Douglas, Riverton, Buffalo, Worland, Rawlins. *West Conference:* Star Valley, Powell, Jackson, Cody, Green River, Evanston.

**Way-too-early title game score prediction**

*Star Valley 20, Powell 18.* The kings of 3A are kings for a reason. West foes Powell, Cody and Jackson are all capable of throwing the Braves off the path (or winning the title themselves), but come the postseason, the Braves' newbies won't be newbies anymore.

## Bison return to 3A ranks

Rob Hammond's best perspective on Buffalo's classification change came from an incoming freshman.

The freshman came to Buffalo's head coach confused why people in town were complaining about the Bison's move from Class 2A to Class 3A.

The freshman had just finished a season playing with Buffalo's middle-school team. For him, playing 3A teams was actually a chance to play smaller schools. After all, Buffalo's middle school consistently plays teams from Gillette and Sheridan.

That perspective is exactly what Hammond said he hopes to see from his team.

"Every week is going to be a big game for us," he said. "We have to come out with our best every single week, which is a good thing for us."

Now back in Class 3A after back-to-back title game appearances in 2A, including a championship in 2018, the Bison won't have to rebuild their program. From offseason strategies to coaching to game plans – and even the attitude of incoming freshmen – Buffalo is ready for 3A.

"Our buy-in in the weight room is so much further along than it used to be," Hammond said. " ... It's just more of a system right now that we can fine tune instead of reinvent."

That said, the Bison will need to replace a deep senior class. Senior Hyrum Hatch is the only one of Buffalo's six all-state and nine all-conference selections to return in 2020.

Hatch was Buffalo's top tackler a year ago with exactly 100 total tackles. He also had seven tackles for loss and led the Bison with 34 solo tackles.

Hammond said Hatch helps Buffalo's defense in two ways – he limits opposing teams' ability to run inside, and he helps his teammates be in the right spots to make plays.

However, he's the only one of Buffalo's top four players in defensive points to return; just two of Buffalo's top eight in defensive points are back.

On offense, Buffalo graduated its quarterback, its top two rushers, its top two receivers and most of its line.

Junior Ben Camino, with 36 carries for 268 yards, is Buffalo's top returning rusher. And senior Calvin Rule, with nine catches for 176 yards, is Buffalo's top returning receiver.

Senior center Matthew Harrison leads an undersized but mobile line that will allow Buffalo to try new approaches in the running game, and senior Hunter Stone will take over at quarterback.

Defensively, senior Jace Skovgard added 67 tackles, including 22 solo. Rule had 43 tackles, and junior Anthony Peters added 15 tackles and three fumble recoveries.

"I know there's going to be growing pains and I know there's going to be hiccups... as long as they learn and grow from their mistakes, we'll be alright with that," Hammond said.



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**Mascot:** Bison

**Division:** Class 3A

**Conference:** East

**Colors:** Black and gold

**Coach:** Rob Hammond,  
ninth year at Buffalo

**2019 Record:** 10-1, lost  
to Mountain View in 2A  
championship

**Key Players**

**FB/MLB:** Hyrum Hatch, Sr.

**WR/OLB:** Calvin Rule, Sr.

**C/NG:** Matthew Harrison, Sr.

**RB/OLB:** Ben Camino, Jr.

**2020 Schedule**

**8-29:** vs. Big Horn, 1 p.m. (Zero Week)

**9-4:** vs. Newcastle, 7 p.m.

**9-11:** at Green River, 7 p.m.

**9-18:** vs. Cody, 6 p.m.

**\*9-25:** at Rawlins, 6 p.m.

**\*10-2:** vs. Riverton, 7 p.m.

**\*10-9:** at Worland, 7 p.m.

**\*10-16:** vs. Douglas, 7 p.m.

**\*10-23:** at Lander, 6 p.m.

\* Conference game





**Mascot:** Bearcats  
**Division:** Class 3A  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Blue and red

**Coach:** Jay Rhoades,  
15th year at Douglas  
**2019 Record:** 5-4, lost  
to Star Valley in 3A  
quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**RB/LB:** Gabe Borman, Sr.  
**RB/S:** Keltan Ewing, Jr.  
**WR/CB:** River Bergquist, Jr.  
**LB:** Koby Case, Jr.

## Bearcats haven't missed beat

Douglas' summer football training has been challenging.

With the specter of COVID-19 hanging over the summer, the Bearcats, like other teams, have had to adapt on the fly to new circumstances.

Despite it all, the Bearcats have flourished. Even with all the uncertainty, coach Jay Rhoades said this has been a strong summer for the team. The challenges presented by the logistics of training haven't gotten in the way of progress.

"This is probably one of our better summers," Rhoades said. "... We've had great attendance at our speed and agility work."

The preparation for 2020 is needed for a team that was senior-heavy last year. Douglas graduated eight of its 11 all-conference players, but seniors Gabe Borman and Kody Micke and junior Koby Case return.

With so many starting positions available, Rhoades said his players have been invigorated by competition for those positions.

"You're giving new kids a chance, and they're hungry for that opportunity," he said.

Douglas had a balanced rushing attack last season, with five players finishing between 171 and 508 yards. Three of those five return – Borman, who carried for 372 yards and a team-high 10 rushing touchdowns; Case, who contributed 203 rushing yards and had 8.1 yards per carry, and junior Keltan Ewing, who had 171 rushing yards before injury cut short his season.

The running-back-by-committee approach worked last year, and Rhoades said it may continue this year.

"When you have some of your good kids (who) are going both ways, you want to find some ways to get them some breaks here and there," he said.

Senior Nate Dowling was third on the team with 174 receiving yards, finishing with 12 receptions. Case added 16 catches for 124 yards. Of Douglas' seven players who had at least two catches last season, they're the only ones returning.

The Bearcats will also need to break in a new quarterback, and Micke is Douglas' only returning starting offensive lineman.

Rhoades said senior Reece Rogge and junior receivers River Bergquist and Rylan Wehr will also factor into the Bearcats' offensive plans, and senior Aaron Oria will be an important piece of the line.

Douglas' defense has more experience than its offense, as it returns four of its top seven tacklers.

Case and Borman finished first and second, respectively, in tackles last season, with Case finishing with 75 and Borman 73.

Senior Aaron Oria had 46 tackles, good for fifth on the team last season, while Micke had 35, good for seventh.

"When you have that experience back, it allows you to add some new things to what you're doing," Rhoades said, "and then also just (having) the leadership factor, having them be the leaders on the field (helps)."

### 2020 Schedule

8-28: vs. Cody, 6 p.m. (Zero Week)

9-4: at Torrington, 7 p.m.

9-11: at Belle Fourche, S.D., 7 p.m.

9-18: vs. Powell, 6 p.m.

\*9-25: at Riverton, 7 p.m.

\*10-2: vs. Lander, 7 p.m.

\*10-9: vs. Rawlins, 7 p.m.

\*10-16: at Buffalo, 7 p.m.

\*10-23: vs. Worland, 7 p.m.

\* Conference game

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## Tigers learned from playoff loss

In just one week, the Lander Tigers went from the heights of anticipation to the lows of an early playoff exit.

As Class 3A East Conference champions, Lander entered the 2019 playoffs on a six-game winning streak. That run ended abruptly with a 41-14 loss to Powell in the first round.

The Tigers' quick departure from the playoffs was a lesson for Lander's returning players, coach John Scott said.

"For the underclassmen, it was a sign that we had a ways to go yet," Scott said. "Powell out-hit and was more physical than us right from the start and we knew it."

"I think we got the message after that game. Each opportunity to get better presents us with a simple question, 'Are we going to make ourselves better today?'"

To repeat as conference champions, and to make a deep playoff run, the Tigers will lean on an experienced running game, a solid senior class and a defense that returns seven starters.

Senior Jack Sweeney was an all-state pick last year and classmates Eli Mazurie, Julien Guina and Mason Hutson were all-conference choices.

Sweeney and Mazurie were Lander's 1-2 running game punch, with Sweeney finishing with 534 rushing yards and seven touchdowns and Mazurie adding 525 yards and eight scores.

"On offense for us, I don't want to be one-dimensional with all riding on one kid's shoulders," Scott said. He also said he likes "having an offense where all are humble, unselfish and willing to work for each other."

Lander will need to find a new quarterback, and Sweeney and Mazurie are the only players back who caught more than one pass. Sweeney had 126 receiving yards last year, and Mazurie had 103.

Hutson will lead the offensive line.

Defensively, the Tigers return their top four tacklers and six of their top seven.

Sweeney and Mazurie also went 1-2 on defense, with Sweeney racking up a team-high 100 tackles and Mazurie adding 82. Sweeney led Lander with 24 solo tackles and also blocked four kicks.

Junior Robert Koivupalo was third for the Tigers with 68 tackles, including a team-high 10 tackles for loss.

Guina, meanwhile, was fourth on the team with 63 tackles and had a team-high five sacks. Senior Jaden Rivera was sixth with 46 tackles, while senior Conor Carey had 44.

Scott said recapturing the momentum gained in the 2019 regular season will rely on emphasizing the team concepts that brought them success.

"Simple things like not turning the ball over and capitalizing on opponents' mistakes really gave us confidence," Scott said. "Something good would go our way in a game and we just seemed to rally on it emotionally and make enough plays to pull the game out."



**Mascot:** Tigers  
**Division:** Class 3A  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Green and black

**Coach:** John Scott,  
third year at Lander  
**2019 Record:** 7-2, lost to  
Powell in 3A quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**RB:** Eli Mazurie, Sr.  
**OL:** Mason Hutson, Sr.  
**DL:** Julien Guina, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Jack Sweeney, Sr.

### 2020 Schedule

8-28: at Pinedale, 4 p.m. (Zero Week)

9-4: at Green River, 7 p.m.

9-11: at Powell, 7 p.m.

9-18: vs. Evanston, 7 p.m.

\*9-25: vs. Worland, 7 p.m.

\*10-2: at Douglas, 7 p.m.

\*10-9: at Riverton, 6 p.m.

\*10-16: vs. Rawlins, 6 p.m.

\*10-23: vs. Buffalo, 6 p.m.

\* Conference game

## Senior class leading Outlaws

Senior leaders can help make or break a team.

The Rawlins Outlaws hope their core group of seniors can make their 2020 season.

Rawlins will have a small, but steady, group of seniors leading the team this fall. This is in contrast to last year's Rawlins team, which had a much larger but at times inconsistent group of senior leaders.

Coach Clayton McSpadden said this year's group of seven seniors learned from last year's team about what works and what doesn't work when it comes to leadership. Specifically, McSpadden said, this year's returning seniors saw how, with consistency, both the team and the individual are better for it.

"They see that hard work pays off," McSpadden said. "... These kids totally buy in and they totally turn into new players."

For the Outlaws to grow this year, they'll rely on that small senior group of seven to lead the way.

Fortunately for Rawlins, "they're a good seven," McSpadden said.

Rawlins graduated all six of its all-conference

selections from last year's 4-5 team. The losses are most glaring on offense, where Rawlins lost every single player who gained a positive rushing yard, passing yard or receiving yard last season except one – senior Allen Ferrales had one catch for four yards.

The defense is in better shape, as the Outlaws return three of their top seven tacklers. Senior defensive end Evann Trevathan was third on the team in defensive points and second with 66 total

CONTINUED PAGE 16

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# Familiar face to lead Worland

When Worland went searching for a new head football coach, it didn't need to search far.

Patrick Sweeney, who's been an assistant coach with the Warriors the past five years, will take over the program as its new head coach this fall.

His goal will be to try to jumpstart a program that's stalled the past decade, with 10 consecutive losing seasons and zero playoff victories in the 2010s.

Sweeney said he doesn't anticipate making any huge schematic changes – the Warriors will continue to seek balance on offense and put out a four-man, but flexible, front on defense.

Sweeney said the Warriors do have good quickness and speed, but they will be undersized compared to other Class 3A programs in 2020.

The Warriors do return a pair of all-conference selections in seniors Rudy Sanford, who will play quarterback and linebacker/safety, and Trey Wright, who will help lead both the offensive and defensive lines. Overall, Worland returns five starters on both offense and defense.

Sanford completed 76 of 172 passes for 937 yards and eight scores; he also ran for 296 yards and a team-high six rushing touchdowns.

"Having a guy with superior skill and character lead from the quarterback position gives the offense a bit of a unique feel," Sweeney said. "It's key Rudy continues to lead with his words, actions, and how he executes on the field."

Junior Taylor Pierce was Worland's top rusher last year, carrying 104 times for 329 yards.

Junior Jorey Anderson, who had 12 catches for 135 yards to rank third for Worland in both categories, is the Warriors' top returning receiver. No other returning receiver had more than three catches last season.

The Warriors return several key pieces of the defense but also have to overcome some big losses to graduation and injury; of the 14 players who had at least 20 tackles, five are sure to return.

"Without a doubt there are some holes to fill," Sweeney

**Mascot:** Warriors  
**Division:** Class 3A  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Orange and black

said. " ... We'll emphasize fundamental defense but also strive to be dynamic. We know in this conference there will be multiple schemes to defend. We as a team have to match these multiples to be successful."

Junior Aaron Carver contributed 47 tackles and was anticipated to be Worland's top returning tackler. Pierce had 42 tackles, Wright had 34, senior Tucker Sullivan notched 26 and Anderson chipped in 22.

Anderson also picked off a team-high six passes.

Sweeney said the openings on the defense should generate some healthy competition.

"We also have some younger guys who have the opportunity to earn a spot," Sweeney said. "We have to get those kids up to speed mentally and physically as quick as we can through field work and scheme study."

## RAWLINS

### Key Players

**OT/DL:** Colton Ice, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Allen Ferrales, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Evann Trevathan, Sr.  
**HB/LB:** Josh Smith, Soph.

### 2020 Schedule

**8-28:** at Wheatland, 7 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-3:** at Lyman, 5 p.m.  
**9-11:** vs. Moffat County, Colo., 7 p.m.  
**9-18:** at Star Valley, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** vs. Buffalo, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** vs. Worland, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** at Douglas, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** at Lander, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** vs. Riverton, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

some game-breaking abilities.

"We have an outstanding amount of speed," McSpadden said, "but speed can only do so much in a game. It can do a lot, but it doesn't always win the game."

For Rawlins, the hope is that's where senior leadership can come into play.

# Riverton rising to challenge

Troy Anderson missed the in-person part of the first few months he had as Riverton's head football coach.

While serving in Afghanistan with the Wyoming National Guard, Anderson – who was hired in April but wasn't scheduled to return to Fremont County until late July or early August – did what he could for the Wolverines through virtual meetings.

Coincidentally, though, Anderson's time away came at the same time that many other coaches had to be away from their teams, too, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I think in some levels, in a traditional year, having your head coach gone, that would be a huge unknown," Anderson said, "but we've been living through unknowns since March."

"Hopefully we've gained a little resiliency from it."

Despite the challenges, Anderson said he is excited to

start coaching a team that quickly rebounded from a winless season in 2018 to host a playoff game last season.

The Wolverines get back five all-conference picks in seniors Jared Lucas, Rylan Koehn and Broden Mathes and juniors Lucas Engle and Kris Topaum.

Anderson has been with the high school program for two years and was previously a coach at Riverton's middle school, so he knows who he has and what they can do.

"The guys are there, so they're pretty exciting," Anderson said. "It's way more optimistic than stepping into a place that's on a complete rebuild."

Engle was an all-state selection last season, leading a unit that returns its top four receivers. Engle caught 30 passes for 517 yards and three touchdowns to lead the Wolverines in all three categories.

Junior Blake Dale added 266 receiving yards on 10 catches

and Lucas had eight catches for 139 yards.

Senior Trayton Hyatt was Riverton's No. 1 rusher last season with 149 carries for 556 yards and six touchdowns. Senior Brock Hinkle carried 42 times for 151 yards.

On the line, Koehn and senior Kaden Gantenbein lead an experienced group.

"Most of them are (seniors), and they've got a lot of experience," Anderson said of his line. "They shouldn't see a whole lot of things they haven't seen."

Senior Damon Devries saw time at quarterback last year, completing 16 passes for 259 yards.

The Wolverines' defense graduated seven of its top 10 tacklers.

Mathes had 48 tackles to lead all returners; his four sacks last season were a team-high. Topaum added 42 tackles and two sacks, and Gantenbein had 23 tackles.

Mostly, Anderson just wants to start coaching face-to-face.

"I don't think there's anything more exciting to do than to go out there with the guys and put them on a path (for success)," he said. " ... That's about as fulfilling as it gets if you can make it happen."



**Mascot:** Wolverines  
**Division:** Class 3A  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Red and black

**Coach:** Troy Anderson, first year at Riverton  
**2019 Record:** 4-6, lost to Jackson in 3A quarterfinals

### Key Players

**WR/DB:** Blake Dale, Jr.  
**WR/DB:** Lucas Engle, Jr.  
**QB:** Damon Devries, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Rylan Koehn, Sr.

### 2020 Schedule

**8-28:** at Powell, 6 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** at Cody, 7 p.m.  
**9-11:** vs. Evanston, 7 p.m.  
**9-18:** vs. Jackson, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** vs. Douglas, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** at Buffalo, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** vs. Lander, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** at Worland, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** at Rawlins, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game



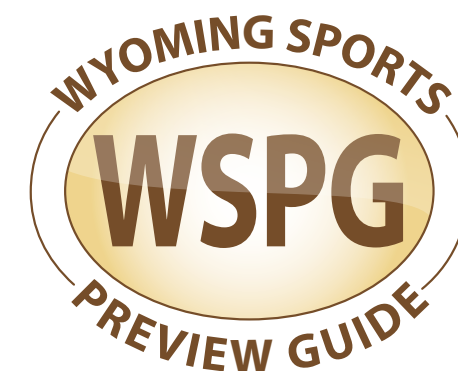
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**Mascot:** Broncs  
**Division:** Class 3A  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Blue and gold

**Coach:** Matt McFadden,  
eighth year at Cody  
**2019 Record:** 8-2, lost to  
Powell in 3A semifinals

**Key Players**  
**FB/LB:** Nic Talich, Sr.  
**TE/LB:** Keaton Stone, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Drew Trotter, Jr.  
**RB/DB:** Chaz Cowie, Jr.

## Broncs rely on running game

Cody's returning experience is not limited to just two positions. It just looks that way.

The Broncs, who finished 8-2 last season and lost in the Class 3A semifinals, return numerous players at running back and linebacker but aren't quite as experienced at other spots.

However, coach Matt McFadden said several juniors and sophomores will be important pieces to Cody's approach this year, and a small but dedicated senior class has been developing well.

With five starters returning on offense and only two on defense, the Broncs will rely on those younger players to develop quickly to keep the Broncs competitive.

"What we lack in experience we make up for with hunger and drive," McFadden said, "as the depth and dedication of our

*"What we lack  
in experience  
we make up for  
with hunger  
and drive."*

**~Coach  
Matt McFadden**

younger classes is exciting."

Seniors Keaton Stone and Nic Talich were both all-state selections and will make up the core of the defense at linebacker.

Of Cody's top nine players in defensive points, Stone and Talich are the only returners. They ranked third and fourth, respectively, in defensive points for the Broncs.

Stone led the defense with 65 total tackles and also tied for the team lead with three fumble recoveries. Talich added 56 tackles and tied for the team lead with six tackles for loss.

"Nic and Keaton are both very special linebackers," McFadden said. "... Their read and feel for the game is as good as we have had in a long time. We will rely on them to not only make plays but also lead our new starters around helping them settle in."

Senior Cody Phillips, who was

ninth on the team in tackles with 26, is the only other returning player with more than 15 tackles last season.

On offense, a balanced Cody rushing attack had four different players finish with between 66 and 77 carries. Three of those players return.

Talich led the bunch with 77 carries for 506 yards and seven touchdowns. Junior Chaz Cowie was second for the Broncs with 459 rushing yards on 66 carries, while junior Drew Trotter had 67 carries for 349 yards.

"We have always been a run-first team and that won't change," McFadden said. "In our offense, we need several running backs to make it go. We have always distributed the ball to multiple backs, and depth allows us to stay fresh and break tendencies."

Trotter leads Cody's returning receivers with 14 catches for 121

### 2020 Schedule

**8-28:** at Douglas, 6 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** vs. Riverton, 7 p.m.  
**9-11:** vs. Worland, 7 p.m.  
**9-18:** at Buffalo, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** at Powell, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** vs. Evanston, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** at Star Valley, 4 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** vs. Green River, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** at Jackson, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

  
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## Red Devils have resilient group

Evanston's 2019 season was the wrong kind of rolling snowball.

The Red Devils were not pushovers – they just couldn't win the close games. In the first six weeks of 2019, Evanston lost games by three, five, seven, 13, 14 and 15 points.

A couple losses to end the season later, and the Red Devils were 0-8, a tough finish for a team that had gone 6-4 in 2018 and reached the Class 3A playoffs.

"There were a lot of issues we ran into last year and the guys took them very hard," Evanston coach Jim Burton said. "The seniors from last year put a lot into it and only got life lessons out. This year's seniors are looking to improve and build on the experience from last year."

In 2020, the Red Devils return eight starters on offense and six on defense. Burton said Evanston will be undersized on the line, but he also said the team does have good speed and the right mentality to improve.

"It will be hard to replace the players that just graduated," Burton said. "They played a huge role in keeping us competitive throughout the season. A combination of moving players around and younger players getting more reps will have to fill some holes."

The Red Devils' rushing game had four players finish in triple-digit rushing yards, but none of the four had more than 200 for the season. Of those, three return.

Junior David Perez led the Red Devils with 190 rushing yards

and three touchdowns. Junior Jaxin Moore added 179 yards, while senior Jagger Mitchell contributed 114 yards and a pair of TDs.

"The key to our offense is the running game and timing, which should be better with those players returning," Burton said.

Seniors Nick Childs and Derek Johnson and junior Kody Rex will help give depth to the offensive line, a key piece of Evanston's run-based offensive attack.

Senior Cade Francom, who was second on the squad last season with seven catches for 95 yards, returns as Evanston's top aerial target. Moore added six catches for 73 yards.

On defense, just three of

Evanston's nine top tacklers return.

Moore finished third for Evanston in defensive points; although he only had 21 tackles, he led Evanston with three interceptions and nine pass break-ups.

Johnson leads Evanston's returners with 40 tackles, which was good for fourth on the team last season. Senior Stetson Wiedrich added 31 tackles.

Senior Nick Childs contributed 20 tackles, good for 10th on the team in 2019.

Improvement into 2020 was stalled a bit by the COVID-19 pandemic, as Burton said "it has held us back a little with camps and offseason workouts canceled and meetings only on Zoom."

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### 2020 Schedule

**8-28:** vs. Ogden, Utah, 7 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** vs. Mountain View, 7 p.m.  
**9-11:** at Riverton, 7 p.m.  
**9-18:** at Lander, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** vs. Green River, 2:30 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** at Cody, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** at Jackson, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** vs. Star Valley, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** vs. Powell, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

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**CODY CONTINUED-**  
yards – numbers that ranked second for the team last season.

Junior lineman Jon Williams and versatile sophomore Luke Talich will also contribute on both sides of the ball.

"Top to bottom in all positions we feel we are as athletic and fast as we have ever been," McFadden said.



**Mascot:** Red Devils  
**Division:** Class 3A  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Red and blue

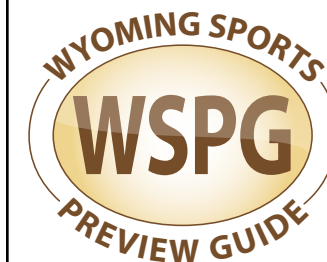
**Coach:** Jim Burton,  
second year at Evanston  
**2019 Record:** 0-8, did not  
qualify for playoffs

### Key Players

**QB/RB/LB:** Jagger Mitchell, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Cade Francom, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Stetson Wiedrich, Sr.  
**QB/RB/DB:** Jaxin Moore, Jr.

### 2020 Schedule

**8-28:** vs. Ogden, Utah, 7  
p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** vs. Mountain View, 7 p.m.  
**9-11:** at Riverton, 7 p.m.  
**9-18:** at Lander, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** vs. Green River, 2:30 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** at Cody, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** at Jackson, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** vs. Star Valley, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** vs. Powell, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game



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**Mascot:** Wolves  
**Division:** Class 3A  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Green and black

**Coach:** Kevin Cuthbertson,  
first year at Green River  
**2019 Record:** 2-6, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**QB:** Jacob Fuss, Sr.  
**TB:** James King, Sr.  
**WR:** Seth White, Sr.  
**TE:** Kolby Ivie, Sr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** vs. Mountain View, TBD (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** vs. Lander, 7 p.m.  
**9-11:** vs. Buffalo, 7 p.m.  
**9-18:** at Worland, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** at Evanston, 2:30 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** vs. Jackson, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** vs. Powell, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** at Cody, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** at Star Valley, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# New coach stresses teamwork

This year’s Green River Wolves won’t have anything handed to them this fall.

New head coach Kevin Cuthbertson will make sure of that.

Cuthbertson, who has been with the Green River program as an assistant coach since 2009, said he will use former UCLA basketball coach John Wooden’s approach: The star of the team IS the team.

Cuthbertson’s team-centric approach comes in part from his playing days – he was an all-stater at Green River and an all-conference player at Southern Utah before playing semipro football in Europe. He coached in St. George, Utah, for 12 years before moving home to Green River.

“We really preach being united,” he said. “We really preach football being the ultimate team sport.”

Consequently, the players taking the field for the Wolves this fall will be the ones who show they can handle both their individual responsibilities and that team mentality – and that doesn’t necessarily mean relying

on players who have played in the past.

“Every position is up for grabs,” Cuthbertson said. “... Each and every kid is going to get a fair shake and a chance to prove themselves.”

The Wolves return a good number of athletes from last year’s 2-6 team, and Cuthbertson said he’s excited to see how they work together. The excitement is spurred by offseason training regimen that’s bringing in more than 120 players in grades seven through 12.

“They’ve been working hard in the offseason,” Cuthbertson said. “They’re getting faster, they’re getting bigger, they’re getting quicker.”

Seniors Jacob Fuss, Kolby Ivie, James King, Seth White and Gabe Burdette and junior Dylan Taylor, the Wolves’ lone returning all-conference selection, will be at the forefront of Green River’s plans.

Burdette led the Wolves’ rushing attack last year with 124 carries for 411 yards and four touchdowns, all team-highs, but King will also

challenge for carries.

Senior Jacob Fuss completed 56 passes for 724 yards. Taylor was the Wolves’ leading receiver last year, catching 23 of those passes for 311 yards. Ivie was second with 10 catches for 182 yards.

“The offense we run is going to be balanced enough that we can take advantage of our athletes’ skills and strengths,” Cuthbertson said.

The offensive line play as a unit will also be key, Cuthbertson said.

Defensively, Burdette had 30 tackles, White had 18 and Fuss 17.

“We’ve got some athletes coming back, but that doesn’t change anything,” Cuthbertson said. The season’s going to be a grind... and we’ve got to work hard each and every week, each and every day.”

For Cuthbertson, the team approach also relies on how well each individual player executes their job.

“That will determine how successful we are this year,” he said.

# Playoff run primes Panthers

From fourth seed to Class 3A runners-up, Powell’s playoff run last season was the stuff of movies.

Powell returns numerous key contributors on both offense and defense, and new head coach Chase Kistler isn’t planning to mess with a successful formula. Kistler said he plans to advantage of his players’ high football IQ, their trust in each other and their athletic ability to remain a threat for a championship.

And the Panthers also have confidence.

“Going into next year, if they can’t believe that they can’t make it back to the state championship, I don’t know what else would have to happen,” Kistler said.

A member of Powell’s coaching staff for 12 years, including the past year and

a half as offensive coordinator, Kistler said the Panthers will have “a veteran team that knows the system.”

The Panthers also return Mike Heny as defensive coordinator, and although Kistler said Powell may make minor tweaks, the approach will remain basically the same.

The Powell defense is stacked, returning five of its top six tacklers from last season.

Senior Adrian Geller was second for the Panthers with 99 total tackles and led Powell with 42 solo tackles. He also had five tackles for loss, two interceptions and three pass break-ups.

Junior Toran Graham was third for Powell with 79 total tackles, while senior Kadden Abraham was fourth with 58; they tied for the team lead with eight tackles for loss.

Senior Riley Bennett was fifth with 42 tackles but had a team-high 10 pass deflections. Seniors Reed Smith (36 tackles) and Seth Horton (24) and junior Lane Shramek (22) also had big defensive roles.

Kistler said the chemistry the players have on defense will allow them to play fast. With experience, “that trust begins

to build, and the accountability really builds too,” he said.

The offense will have more depth this year – including several players who can run, catch and throw.

Abraham was second for the Panthers with 594 rushing yards and five rushing touchdowns last season. Graham added 384 rushing yards, while senior quarterback Landon Lengfelder had 144 rushing yards but a team-high nine rushing scores.

Lengfelder completed 41 passes for 605 yards and four touchdowns last year.

Senior Jesse Trotter led Powell in receiving yards last year with 232 on just seven catches, an average of 33.1 yards per catch. He’s the only Powell player with more than three catches last year to return.

Senior Geordan Weimer, Powell’s only returning all-stater, will lead the offensive line.

Kistler said he’s happy with the number of players who have stuck to summer workout routines in preparation for another deep playoff run.

“We definitely want to keep growing as a team,” he said.



**Mascot:** Panthers  
**Division:** Class 3A  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Orange and black

**Coach:** Chase Kistler,  
first year at Powell  
**2019 Record:** 7-5, lost  
to Star Valley in 3A  
championship

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** vs. Riverton, 6 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** at Worland, 7 p.m.  
**9-11:** vs. Lander, 7 p.m.  
**9-18:** at Douglas, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** vs. Cody, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** vs. Star Valley, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** at Green River, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** vs. Jackson, 5 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** at Evanston, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Title is Broncs’ next goal

From a winless season in 2017 to state title contenders the past two years, Jackson’s vault up Class 3A was as definitive as it was fast.

Jackson reached the Class 3A semifinals for the second consecutive year, but for the second consecutive year went no further.

Coach David Joyce said the program’s growth is satisfying, “but when you go into these things, it’s an all or nothing. There’s no in between. So I still feel really disappointed that we didn’t close things out last year versus Star Valley (in the semifinals).”

This year, the Broncs will rely on a deep and talented junior class to continue the momentum of the past two years and push Jackson past the semifinal plateau.

Juniors Colter Dawson and Sadler Smith were both all-state choices last year, and classmate Nate Keipert was an all-conference pick.

But the Broncs did graduate seven other all-conference selections, so there are spots the Broncs need to

fill.

One spot that doesn’t need filled is quarterback – Smith has that down. He completed 95 of 165 passes for 1,391 yards and 13 touchdowns last season, all while the focus on the Jackson’s offense – the top-ranked offense in 3A with 409.1 yards per game – was mostly on the running game.

Joyce said Smith will have more opportunities to lead the offense as a junior.

“We’re pumped to see what he can actually do back there,” he said.

Keipert finished second for Jackson in catches (23), receiving yards (368) and receiving touchdowns (three) and is the only one of the Broncs’ top five receivers to come back.

Junior Brody Hasenack is Jackson’s top returning rusher; he was second for the Broncs last season with 216 rushing yards on 26 carries.

Jackson’s defense loses eight of its top 12 tacklers from last season,

but returns Dawson, who was by far Jackson’s leading tackler last year. He finished with 108 total tackles, including team-highs with 37 solo tackles and 10 tackles for loss.

Joyce said Dawson’s range from sideline to sideline is unmatched. Moreover, Dawson has played Jackson’s varsity middle linebacker spot since halfway through his freshman year.

“Once he got in there as a sophomore, he already half a season under his belt,” Joyce said.

Junior William Pew was fourth in defensive points and tied for third on the team with 42 total tackles. He led the team with three fumble recoveries and leads all of Jackson’s returners with five sacks last season.

Senior Sam Lopeman added 35 tackles and three interceptions, while Hasenack had 31 tackles.

“We had a bunch of sophomores out there (last year),” Joyce said. “We were still good defensively, but we will be much improved defensively just due to maturation.”



**Mascot:** Broncs  
**Division:** Class 3A  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Black and orange

**Coach:** David Joyce,  
fourth year at Jackson  
**2019 Record:** 7-4, lost to  
Star Valley in 3A semifinals

**Key Players**  
**QB:** Sadler Smith, Jr.  
**TE/LB:** Colter Dawson, Jr.  
**RB:** Brody Hasenack, Jr.  
**WR:** Nate Keipert, Jr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** at Teton, Idaho, 7 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** at Bear Lake, Idaho, 7 p.m.  
**9-11:** vs. Pocatello, Idaho, 7 p.m.  
**9-18:** at Riverton, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** vs. Star Valley, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** at Green River, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** vs. Evanston, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** at Powell, 5 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** vs. Cody, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game



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**Mascot:** Braves  
**Division:** Class 3A  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Maroon and yellow

**Coach:** McKay Young, fifth year at Star Valley  
**2019 Record:** 12-0, beat Powell in 3A championship

**Key Players**  
**QB/FS:** Brant Nelson, Sr.  
**OL/TE/DE:** Lucas Chappell, Jr.  
**OL/NG:** Gabe Nield, Sr.  
**OL/LB:** Jaaren Smith, Sr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** vs. Summit Academy, Utah, 7 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** vs. Preston, Idaho, 7 p.m.  
**9-11:** at Sugar-Salem, Idaho, 7 p.m.  
**9-18:** vs. Rawlins, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** at Jackson, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** at Powell, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** vs. Cody, 4 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** at Evanston, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** vs. Green River, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Braves on impressive streak

Tradition doesn't build itself. It needs sustaining. The Star Valley Braves have built their tradition the past few years on their core principles – trust, love and commitment – and it's paid off handsomely.

In 2019, the Braves won their fourth Class 3A championship in the past five years, finishing 12-0 – the program's first undefeated season since 1967 – while winning every game by at least 13 points.

In the past five seasons, the Braves are a combined 53-5, including 21 consecutive victories entering 2020.

"We have an awesome community full of great tradition and high expectations," Young said. "These young men's fathers, uncles, grandpas, neighbors, teachers, church leaders... had success on the gridiron and they expect the current group to do the same."

Star Valley's three returning all-state players is more than any other Class 3A team in Wyoming. Seniors Brant Nelson and Gabe Nield and junior Lucas Chappell earned those honors last season.

However, the Braves graduated 10 other players who earned all-state honors. The Braves graduated their top four rushers, top six receivers and 11 of their top 12 tacklers.

Even with a small returning core of varsity players, Star Valley will benefit from an upcoming crew of JV players. Star Valley's JV hasn't lost to another Wyoming JV team in five years, and last year's JV played three varsity opponents – Lyman and Cokeville as well as Rivier, Idaho. Although they lost those games, Young said the lessons will pay off.

"The ability to create as many opportunities as we can for our younger players to play football rather than watch football is so important," Young said.

Nelson returns under center, and he's 23-0 as a starter, Young noted. He completed 92 of 129 passes – a 71.3 completion percentage – for 1,229 yards and 17 touchdowns. He's also Star Valley's leading returning rusher with 74 yards gained, and Young said he'll be asked to play some defense this year, too.

Chappell could move around and play running back and tight end after playing offensive line in 2019. Senior Jaaren Smith is Star Valley's leading returning tackler. He was third for Star Valley with 65 tackles in 2019. Nield had 20 tackles and senior Anthony Mickelsen had 11.

Together, they're part of a Star Valley tradition that feeds off both the success of the past and the preparation for the future.

"We try to make football fun," Young said. "... We take time to celebrate success. We try not to take ourselves too seriously. Football is a numbers game where you need as many young men as possible to come out and be a part of the team, and we try to create a family atmosphere where guys enjoy being."

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## Realignment brings a free-for-all

By Patrick Schmiedt

**Four questions to answer**

*What's new in 2A?* Is "everything" too strong a word? Class 2A's dynamics shifted completely with the introduction of five new programs and the departure of three others. Those changes may have made 2A the most interesting, and competitive, classification of football in Wyoming.

*Which conference will be the most fun to follow?* The West. Of the six games between the teams that finished 2-5 in the conference standings (Lyman, Big Piney, Lovell and Pinedale), five were decided by eight points or fewer. With Mountain View graduating a bunch, and Thermopolis and Cokeville joining, the 2A West could be the most parity-filled conference in Wyoming.

*So no love for the East?* The East will be fun to follow for its uncertainty. With four new teams, including a handful who have never faced each other, the East will be a new adventure every week.

*So who's gonna win it all?* Of course, defending 1A 11-man champ Big Horn is up there, as is last year's 2A champ Mountain View. But at least four or five other teams are true, legit threats to make it to War Memorial this season.

**Four key games**

*Week 2's West Conference games, Sept. 11.* Gaining a victory early could be the momentum

spark for the rest of the season. Those Week 2 games (Big Piney at Thermopolis, Lyman at Cokeville, Mountain View at Lovell and Pinedale at Kemmerer) will be crucial.

*Wheatland at Torrington, Oct. 16.* If anyone in the East can hang with the Rams or Patriots, it'll likely be one of these two. If the Bulldogs or 'Blazers can knock off either one of the frontrunners, this game could have huge playoff implications.

*Mountain View at Thermopolis, Oct. 16.* Even with all the parity in the West, this Week 7 matchup could decide who the conference's top seed is in the playoffs.

*Big Horn at Upton-Sundance, Oct. 23.* The showdown between what might be the top two teams in the East doesn't come until Week 8. The Rams have historically dominated this series, but both teams could be undefeated in conference play by the time this one rolls around.

**Predicted order of finish**

*East Conference:* Big Horn, Upton-Sundance, Torrington, Wheatland, Glenrock, Newcastle, Burns, Tongue River. *West Conference:* Mountain View, Thermopolis, Big Piney, Lovell, Cokeville, Lyman, Pinedale, Kemmerer.

**Way-too-early title game score prediction**

*Big Horn 35, Mountain View 30.* Even with a move up, the Rams are still loaded for a deep playoff run in 2020. Don't be surprised to see them win their third in a row.



## 2019 State Playoffs

### State Championship

Mountain View 24, Buffalo 14

### State Semifinals

Mountain View 56, Burns 12

Buffalo 45, Thermopolis 22

### State Quarterfinals

Mountain View 72, Wheatland 0

Burns 57, Big Piney 6

Buffalo 28, Lovell 6

Thermopolis 49, Lyman 14

## Four players to watch

### Carson Bates, Big Horn

He's a dual threat on offense – he ran for 1,169 yards and also had 523 receiving yards last year. He might be the most prominent big-play threat in 2A this year, and his 12.6 yards per carry helps show that.

### Nate Barnes, Cokeville

As a junior, he ran for 996 yards and eight touchdowns, but he also fronted Cokeville's defense with 151 total tackles, a number topped by only one other player in all of 11-man football in Wyoming last year.

### Logan Cole, Thermopolis

Cole had a smaller piece of the running game last year but was a bigger piece of the Bobcats' approach in the passing game. On defense, he comes into 2020 as Thermop's leading returning tackler.

### Colby White, Pinedale

White was one of 2A's top tacklers a year ago, finishing second in the class in defensive points per game while notching 82 total tackles, including 32 solo and seven for loss. He also led the Wranglers' rushing game with 803 yards.





**Mascot:** Rams  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Maroon and yellow

**Coach:** Kirk McLaughlin,  
third year at Big Horn  
**2019 Record:** 11-0,  
beat Cokeville in state  
championship

**Key Players**  
**RB/WR/DB:** Carson Bates, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Ayden Phillips, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Winfield Loomis, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Josh Thompson, Jr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-29:** at Buffalo, 1 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** vs. Lovell, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** vs. Wheatland, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** at Newcastle, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** at Burns, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** vs. Torrington, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** at Glenrock, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** vs. Tongue River, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** at Upton-Sundance, 6 p.m.  
(at Sundance)  
\* Conference game

# Rams move up in competition

After three championships in four years, the Big Horn Rams are ready for a new challenge. Playing in Class 2A this year will provide that.

After winning back-to-back Class 1A 11-man championships the past two years, winning 22 consecutive games in the process, the Rams have opted up to Class 2A this year.

Even with new challenges, coach Kirk McLaughlin said he has faith in his squad to stay competitive in the new classification.

“The culture that has been created over the last several years helps build confidence moving forward into the new conference,” McLaughlin said. “We know our competition will not be the same as last year but we are confident we can compete.”

That’s not blind optimism. The Rams won 2A championships in 2013 and 2016 before moving to 1A.

Big Horn also has the talent to compete, bringing back six all-state players from 2019. No other team in the state, regardless of classification, returns as many all-state selections as Big Horn.

Those players include seniors Carson Bates, Winfield Loomis, Ayden Phillips, James Richards and Christian Walker and junior Josh Thompson. Additionally, seniors Gentry Lattin and Luke Mullinax and junior Ethan Weiss were all-conference selections; no other team in Wyoming returns as many all-conference picks as the Rams, either.

“We have a good chunk of returners from last year’s team that are excited about proving themselves this year,” McLaughlin said. “... This is a unique group of seniors that I am excited to coach. They are a very competitive group that has shown tremendous leadership on the field.”

Bates ran for 1,169 yards and 14 touchdowns last year, averaging 12.6 yards per carry. He also led the Rams with 22 catches for 523 yards and six more TDs.

“He is capable of breaking any game wide open,” McLaughlin said. “He is a scary individual with the ball in his hands. We have had the good fortune of being able to spread the ball around to many talented football players over the last few years and Carson has been limited in the amount of football touches he has gotten. However, if Carson was on a team that gave him the ball 30-plus times, his stats would be record-breaking to say the least.”

Phillips caught 17 passes for 184 yards and four touchdowns. Big Horn did lose four of its top five tacklers to graduation. Richards, who had 60 total tackles and was second for the Rams with 42 assisted tackles, is Big Horn’s top returning tackler. Mullinax added 43 tackles, while Walker had 21 and tied for the team lead with four interceptions.

Lattin, Phillips, Loomis and Weiss all had at least 22 tackles apiece, as well.

# Broncs continue upward trend

The past three seasons, Burns has grown into a contender. Now, Burns’ challenge is to remain a contender despite heavy graduation losses.

After notching the program’s first playoff victory since 2008, the Broncs will now rely on their younger players to help develop Burns into a self-sustaining program.

“This year, we can’t be happy with doing as good as we did last year,” coach Brad Morrison said. “... If we’re going to be a program and not just a one-off team, the expectation is that we just pick it up where we left it off and move it forward.”

Burns graduated four all-state players and seven of its eight all-conference players, with senior lineman Wade Pollock the only returning all-conference selection. Burns graduated its quarterback, top two rushers, top three receivers and top eight tacklers from 2019.

While the Broncs have players to fill those responsibilities, Morrison – entering his third year at Burns – said Burns will rely more on the program’s foundations to develop younger players.

“We have a real well-refined sense of love, and discipline, and respect,” he said. “... For the first year, they’re talk. The second year, kids will try it. And then the third year, it’s proven.”

The offense returns just a pair of starters, Pollock and senior Lincoln Siebert, both offensive linemen.

Junior Joel Morales, who ran 21 times for 121 yards last year, is Burns’ top returning rusher; sophomore Cooper Lakin, who had three catches for 55 yards last year, is the only returning receiver who had more than one catch last season.

Junior Caden David will move to quarterback after playing wide receiver last year.

“We’ve had a lot of kids that haven’t got to play who maybe would have started for other teams,” Morrison said. “... Carries and opportunities were few and far between for those guys last year, but when they got them, they looked like varsity players.”

David returns as the Broncs’ top defensive player from 2019. He was ninth for Burns with 56 defensive points, including 25 tackles and three interceptions.

Junior Cody Winslow added 18 tackles, senior Lincoln Siebert added 16, Morales and Lakin added 13 tackles apiece and Pollock chipped in 11.

Morrison said he only anticipates three seniors will be on the roster – Pollock, Siebert and Hayden Fogg, who missed last year with a leg injury.

Morrison said the Broncs will need time to figure out their identity.

“We’re going to center around our strengths,” he said, “and there’s going to be a lot of finding what our strengths are.”

But the expectation for success remains high.

“They’ve seen it done, and now they want to go out and do better,” Morrison said.



**Mascot:** Broncs  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Orange and black

**Coach:** Brad Morrison,  
third year at Burns  
**2019 Record:** 7-3, lost to Mountain View in 2A semifinals

**Key Players**  
**OL/DL:** Wade Pollock, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Lincoln Siebert, Sr.  
**FB/DL:** Hayden Fogg, Sr.  
**QB/DB:** Caden David, Jr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** vs. Yuma, Colo., 7 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** at Mitchell, Neb., 7 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** vs. Tongue River, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** at Glenrock, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** vs. Big Horn, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** at Wheatland, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** vs. Upton-Sundance, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** at Newcastle, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** vs. Torrington, 7 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Herders boast senior leadership

After having just four seniors on the roster last year, and only three who had played consistently, Glenrock will push double digits on the number of seniors this year.

That may make a huge difference for a team that struggled to find its stride last season.

“They did everything they could,” coach Ryan Collier said of last year’s seniors. “There just weren’t very many of them.”

Last year’s 2-6 finish was Glenrock’s first losing season since 2014 and ended a streak of four consecutive Class 2A semifinal appearances.

“The nucleus of any good varsity team is their seniors,” Collier said. “And when you have a big enough senior group to make a difference, that makes a big difference.”

Glenrock returns four of its five top rushers – a key aspect of the team’s run-heavy double wing offense – as well as nine of its top 13 tacklers.

Senior Kade Guenther is Glenrock’s only returning all-conference player; he is the Herders’ leading returning tackler on a team that graduated three of its top four.

Guenther was third on the team in defensive points and was tied for the team lead with 14 solo tackles.

Junior Aidan Orozco was fifth in defensive points and also had 14 solo tackles.

Senior Gavin Swanson finished seventh on the team in defensive points, while Simmons was eighth (including a team-high three pass break-ups). Seniors Jonah Young, Andrik Moreno, Jacob Redman and Lane Raney all finished with double-digit tackles a year ago.

Offensively, Orozco was second for the Herders last season in rushing yards, carrying 84 times for 467 yards. Guenther chipped in 66 carries for 402 yards. Both scored five rushing touchdowns.

Senior Dustin Simmons added 63 carries for 318 yards, while Young, at quarterback, contributed 36 carries for 194 yards.

Collier said he’s excited to have a returning group of running backs who understands the team’s offensive approach, “to have those kids that understand where the hole’s going to be and how to hit that hole.”

Collier also said the players understand the mental aspect of running the ball as part of the double wing.


“It’s an innate toughness, a willingness to go out there and mix it up every single play,” he said. “... To have running backs that understand that mentality is huge for our offense.”

The Herders only competed four of 19 passes last season.

The line will be led by Moreno and Redman and juniors Will Pinkerton and Terin Fauber.

However, Collier said not everyone will return in the same spot they had last year.

“There’s going to be some shifting and moving, so they’re going to have to take some time to get used to that,” he said.



**Mascot:** Herders  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Purple and silver

**Coach:** Ryan Collier,  
second year at Glenrock  
**2019 Record:** 2-6, did not qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**QB/LB:** Jonah Young, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Kade Guenther, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Andrik Moreno, Sr.  
**RB/LB/S:** Aidan Orozco, Jr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** vs. Natrona sophs, 3:30 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** vs. Pinedale, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** at Torrington, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** vs. Burns, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** at Wheatland, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** vs. Glenrock, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** vs. Big Horn, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** at Upton-Sundance, 6 p.m. (at Upton)  
**\*10-23:** at Tongue River, noon  
\* Conference game

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**Mascot:** Dogies  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Orange and black

**Coach:** Matt Conzelman,  
 12th year at Newcastle  
**2019 Record:** 1-8, did not  
 qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**OL/FB/LB:** Kale Corley, Sr.  
**WR/OLB:** Christian Santos, Sr.  
**OG/DE:** Skylar Jenkins, Sr.  
**QB/FS:** Slade Roberson, Jr.

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## Dogies have bright future

Even after back-to-back 1-8 seasons, Newcastle coach Matt Conzelman is optimistic about the Dogies' chances in 2020.

That's because he knows the kind of potential his team has.

The Dogies lost only one player to graduation. Injuries, transfer and ineligibility have taken a toll during the offseason, though, so younger players will still need to fill some holes. Even so, the Dogies are prepared to make the climb back up the Class 2A East Conference standings thanks to the experienced players the program gets back.

And the climb may not stop in 2020.

"I'm real excited about the next three years for us," Conzelman said. "... We've struggled the last two years big-time, so I think this is going to be our awakening these next three, and hopefully we take a big step forward this season, even."

Senior Kale Corley was Newcastle's lone all-state selection last year, and he's back.

Corley led Newcastle's defense – by far – in several defensive categories. He had team highs with 122 defensive points, 85 total tackles, 19 solo tackles and eight tackles for loss.

He also leads Newcastle's linemen, but he could also play some running back this year,

too, Conzelman said.

"Kale isn't afraid to speak up, and it's just nice to have him out there," he said.

Corley leads a defensive unit that returns numerous key contributors. Senior Christian Santos added 43 tackles and sophomore Taten Engle had 40. Junior Slade Roberson (37 tackles) and junior Josh Womack (30) also saw significant defensive playing time.

"I think that makes it exciting to see what they could do," Conzelman said. "Last year you could see glimpses of it, it just wasn't very consistent."

Although the Dogies' offense graduated its top receiver, the passing game returns several experienced players. Roberson, an all-conference pick, completed 52 passes for 723 yards and seven touchdowns.

Santos added 11 catches for 157 yards, junior Aidan Chick contributed eight catches for 104 yards and sophomore Hogan Tystad had eight catches for 73 yards.

Sophomore Holden McConkey also has good speed and could be a threat on offense.

"We didn't get it in the end zone as much as we would like last year, so hopefully we can make up for it this year," Conzelman said.

## Eagles face tough transition

Tongue River's challenge in 2020 is twofold.

First, the Eagles need to find a way to replace a senior class that carried quite a bit of the load for last year's group.

Second, the Eagles need to make the adjustment from Class 1A 11-man to Class 2A, a tall task for a team that finished 2-6 last season.

Nevertheless, coach Steve Hanson said he likes what he sees from his team, and the Eagles have a few things going for them that will keep other teams honest against them.

"Obviously this year, it looks very different than in years past, but we have some real buy-in this year from the young

guys," Hanson said. "We are going to take our lumps in 2A but that is the transition we are in and hopefully everyone is up for the challenge."

The Eagles graduated two of their top three rushers, their quarterback, five of their top six receivers and two of their top three players in defensive points.

However, the offensive and defensive lines return more or less in tact.

"We only had one starting lineman graduate, so the bulk of the offensive and defensive lines are back," Hanson said.

Up front, senior Sam Patterson and juniors Jacob Knobloch and Adam Stainbrook will help lead the way.

Senior Tony Perfetti was second for the

Eagles in rushing yards last year, carrying 81 times for 323 yards. Junior Cashe Van Tassell added 29 carries for 201 yards.

Junior Eli Cummins will move into the quarterback spot. He was a receiver last year, catching five passes for 63 yards, but Hanson said Cummins "is a true dual threat player who is capable of making some big plays."

Hanson said Van Tassell, Perfetti and senior Greg Bolds, a transfer from NSI Academy, will do the bulk of the carrying.

Perfetti led the Eagles in defensive points and tackles last season. He had 58 total tackles, including a team-high 25 solo tackles and four tackles for loss.

Knobloch was fourth on the team in defensive points with 67 and third with 41 tackles.

Van Tassell was fifth in defensive point and tackles, finishing with 32 tackles and team-highs in sacks (four) and fumble recoveries (two).

Sophomore Nate Guimond was sixth on the team with 30 tackles. Senior Sam Patterson contributed 27 tackles and tied Van Tassell for the team lead with four sacks of his own. And senior James McKenzie finished with 22 tackles.

Cummins (14 tackles), Stainbrook (14) and sophomore Tavis Aksamit (12) also finished in double-digit tackles last season.

"We have some solid players but we need to establish our scheme so our guys can pick it up and run with it," Hanson said.



**Mascot:** Eagles  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Green and white

**Coach:** Steve Hanson,  
 fourth year at Tongue River  
**2019 Record:** 2-6, did not  
 qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**FB/LB:** Tony Perfetti, Sr.  
**OT/DE:** Jacob Nobloch, Jr.  
**QB/DB:** Eli Cummins, Jr.  
**RB/LB:** Cache Van Tassell, Jr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-29:** at Lovell, 1 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** at Thermopolis, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** at Burns, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** vs. Torrington, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** vs. Newcastle, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** at Upton-Sundance, 6 p.m. (at Sundance)  
**\*10-9:** vs. Wheatland, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** at Big Horn, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** vs. Glenrock, noon  
 \* Conference game

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**Dogies 2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** at Hot Springs, S.D., 7 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** at Buffalo, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** vs. Upton-Sundance, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** vs. Big Horn, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** at Tongue River, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** at Glenrock, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** vs. Torrington, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** vs. Burns, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** at Wheatland, 6 p.m.  
 \* Conference game

### NEWCASTLE CONTINUED-

The line will be led by seniors Skylar Jenkins and Kilian Gorman; Gorman missed all of 2019 due to injury.

Conzelman said he hopes the Dogies can regain the competitiveness they had early in 2019; Newcastle lost its final four games by scores of 60-8, 67-16, 46-0 and 62-14.

"There were a few games last year where we just got lambasted and couldn't do anything about it," he said.

That could change in 2020.

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**"I'm real excited about the next three years for us."**

**~Coach Matt Conzelman**

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**Mascot:** Trailblazers  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Maroon and white

**Coach:** Russell Stienmetz,  
second year at Torrington  
**2019 Record:** 1-7, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**OL/DL:** Rhiley Grubbs, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Gabe Mitchell, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Kieser Wolfe, Jr.  
**RB/DB:** Trace Floyd, Jr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** at Gering, Neb., 7 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** vs. Douglas, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** vs. Glenrock, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** at Tongue River, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** vs. Upton-Sundance, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** at Big Horn, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** at Newcastle, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** vs. Wheatland, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** at Burns, 7 p.m.  
\* Conference game

## Blazers could benefit in 2A

Torrington's move to Class 2A comes at an opportune time for a program needing a break.

For 2020, the Trailblazers will rely on a junior class that took its lumps as sophomores in a 1-7 finish last year in Class 3A.

Second-year coach Russell Stienmetz said he started six sophomores during most games last season.

"We are hoping that this experience will pay off this season and into next season," he said.

But Stienmetz is also cautious; he's well aware that a move from 3A to 2A won't translate into immediate success without hard work through the transition.

"Most of the community cannot believe that we are 2A," Stienmetz said. "But the truth is, that Torrington High School does not have 500 students roaming the halls any longer. Our enrollment is in the 320s."

Although Torrington will now be the largest 2A school – instead of the smallest 3A school – Stienmetz said in games against 2A competition over the past few years, Torrington has often been challenged.

"I have watched 2A football over the years, as some of our opponents in the past years are tough 2A teams," Stienmetz said. "It is good, hard-nosed football just like the rest of the state."

Torrington's line will be its most senior group.

The front will be led by seniors Rhiley Grubbs, Gabe Mitchell and

Dylan Dreiling; Dreiling wasn't with the Trailblazers last year but moved back to Torrington to finish his high school career. Juniors, though, will handle the bulk of the other positions around the field.

Juniors Trace Floyd and Carson Schultz were 1-2 for Torrington last year in rushing; Floyd had 99 carries for 383 yards while Schultz carried 38 times for 241 yards.

Junior Kieser Wolfe led Torrington in catches (25), receiving yards (308) and touchdowns (three). Junior Deagan Keith added 14 catches for 118 yards, fourth on the team in both categories.

Junior Beau Bivens takes over at quarterback after spot duty last season.

The Trailblazers do lose their top two defensive players to graduation, though. Mitchell leads Torrington's returners with

74 total tackles and four sacks last year.

Floyd was fourth for Torrington in defensive points, notching 51 tackles and a team-high two interceptions, while Grubbs added 62 tackles and a pair of sacks.

Schultz (42 tackles) and fellow juniors Cole Parriot (35 tackles), Keith (30 tackles) and Kyler Shields (24 tackles) also gained significant experience on defense last season.

With so many returning players, Stienmetz said the Trailblazers could be more diverse in their defensive approaches.

"It would be nice to be able to disguise coverages, fronts, blitzes, and such with players that have some experience," he said. "I guess time will tell if this will be possible."



## Good Luck Trailblazers!



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## Experience paying off for Bulldogs

Sophomores carried a lot of the load for Wheatland's football team last year.

The growing pains showed – losses of 55, 43 and 72 dotted the Bulldogs' 2019 season.

But so did the talent – Wheatland won four games, reached the playoffs and scored a combined 140 points in their final two regular-season games.

"We were able to play a very young team last year and they showed some great growth throughout the year and were able to do some great things," coach Cody Bohlander said. "I really enjoy the fact knowing I will have a strong group of guys back that will be able to lead the team in the direction we want to head."

Junior Jake Hicks was an all-state pick last year, while senior Adam Suko and junior Kade Preuit were all-conference selections.

The duo of Hicks and Preuit make for a tough-to-defend aerial combination.

Preuit completed 87 of 185 passes for a Class 2A-high 1,576 yards. He had 20 touchdowns.

Hicks caught 21 passes for a team-high 562 yards and 10 TDs. "Our goal is to always spread the ball around and keep a balanced attack," Bohlander said, "and these two will definitely help us accomplish that this coming season."

Suko led the Bulldogs' rushing game with 110 carries for 573 yards and seven touchdowns, all team-highs, while junior Rodee Brow added 14 catches for 353 yards and four TDs.

The Bulldogs graduated their top two players in defensive points but return six of their top 10 and eight starters. Among Wheatland's returners, Suko leads the defense 110 defensive points, including 69 tackles.

Junior Ora Borton was fourth in defensive points but second in tackles with 70 a year ago.

Hicks contributed 41 tackles and three interceptions, while senior Keegan Meyer had 38

tackles and four pass break-ups. Senior Noah Whitfield had 19 tackles and Brow 17.

"We have a lot of speed that we can play with which will allow us to do some new things this year with our defense," Bohlander said. "Our goal is always to play fast and play aggressive."

Bohlander said he hopes to see more aggressiveness from his team this year. The 2019 team played fast but, due to the inexperience, didn't always play with the aggressiveness necessary for success, he said.

The way the 2019 season ended, with a 72-0 loss to eventual 2A champion Mountain View, helped show Wheatland what was missing. Bohlander said he's excited to see his returners apply those lessons.

"I am excited to have a lot of guys coming back that have started and know what they are doing," Bohlander said. "It will allow us to get started into the things we want to a lot sooner."

**Mascot:** Patriots  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Blue and red

**Coach:** Andy Garland, 17th  
year at Upton/Upton-Sundance  
**2019 Record:** 9-2, lost  
to Cokeville in 1A-11  
semifinals

**Key Players**  
**QB:** Brad Kruger, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Jess Claycomb, Sr.  
**WR/LB:** Brayden Bruce, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Wyatt Gillespie, Sr.

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**UPTON-SUNDANCE CONTINUED-**  
tackles and tied for the team lead with three interceptions.

Garland said Bruce and Claycomb moved into linebacker positions last season after previously playing in the secondary. After moving up to linebacker, "they played really well and did a nice job," Garland said.

They're not alone among the Patriots' defensive returners, though.

Senior Ethan Mills was sixth on the team in defensive points and had 32 tackles and nine pass break-ups; junior Reece Barritt added 19

tackles, two interceptions, three fumble recoveries and nine pass break-ups.

On offense, senior quarterback Brad Kruger completed 70 of 127 passes for 946 yards and 12 touchdowns; he also ran 59 times for 227 yards and four scores.

Claycomb finished second for U-S a year ago with 111 carries for 627 yards and six touchdowns.

The Patriots also return two of their top three receivers in Bruce (15 catches, 206 yards) and Claycomb (14 catches, 150 yards).



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

**Coach:** Cody Bohlander,  
third year at Wheatland  
**2019 Record:** 4-5, lost  
to Mountain View in 2A  
quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**QB:** Kade Preuit, Jr.  
**WR/DB:** Jake Hicks, Jr.  
**RB/LB:** Adam Suko, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Rodee Brow, Jr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** vs. Rawlins, 7 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** vs. Kemmerer, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** at Big Horn, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** at Upton-Sundance, 6 p.m. (at Upton)  
**\*9-25:** vs. Glenrock, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** vs. Burns, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** at Tongue River, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** at Torrington, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** vs. Newcastle, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

Garland said the experience doesn't necessarily mean Upton-Sundance will do more offensively.

"You just have a little more confidence (because) they've had a lot of reps the last couple years," Garland said.

The Patriots will need to work on rebuilding their line, but Gillespie and junior Nathan Baker will help provide leadership in that area.

"Replacing some linemen will be a big deal for us, finding the right guys for those spots," Garland said.

## Patriots welcome 2A challenge

Upton-Sundance's shift from Class 1A to Class 2A this season has given the Patriots' players some added motivation this offseason.

"They're excited about it," coach Andy Garland said. "They're looking forward to playing new teams. They understand that it's a step up from 1A. Every week you're playing someone who's going to be pretty salty."

Upton-Sundance isn't alone in making this shift, as East Conference cohorts Big Horn and

Tongue River are making the change as well. And Upton-Sundance has played current 2A East teams Wheatland and Newcastle within the past four years.

In that time, the Patriots have proven they can hang with, and beat, 2A teams. Continuing that trend this year will mean relying on a trio of all-state players but also finding a way to rebuild a young offensive line.

The Patriots get back three all-state players in seniors Brayden Bruce, Jess Claycomb and Wyatt Gillespie, who were the team's top three players in defensive points last season.

"We're excited to have those guys back," Garland said. "They're fun to coach and have good attitudes."

The trio is part of a group that includes seven returning starters on both offense and defense.

Bruce led the team with 87 tackles and 14 tackles for loss. Gillespie added 78 tackles, three sacks and three fumble recoveries, while Claycomb had 73



**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** vs. Lead-Deadwood, S.D., 6 p.m. (Zero Week, at Upton)  
**9-5:** at Campbell County JV, 10 a.m.  
**\*9-11:** at Newcastle, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** vs. Wheatland, 6 p.m. (at Upton)  
**\*9-25:** at Torrington, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** vs. Tongue River, 6 p.m. (at Sundance)  
**\*10-9:** at Burns, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** vs. Glenrock, 6 p.m. (at Upton)  
**\*10-23:** vs. Big Horn, 6 p.m. (at Sundance)  
\* Conference game

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**Mascot:** Punchers  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Red and silver

**Coach:** Ryan Visser,  
second year at Big Piney  
**2019 Record:** 5-5, lost to Burns in 2A quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**TE/DE:** Cam Thomas, Sr.  
**QB/DE:** Kaden Raza, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Carlos Munoz, Sr.  
**LB:** Liam Hughes, Sr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** at Kemmerer Jamboree, 4 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-3:** vs. Evanston JV, 4 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** at Thermopolis, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** at Pinedale, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** vs. Lyman, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** vs. Lovell, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** at Mountain View, 3:30 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** at Cokeville, 3 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** vs. Kemmerer, 2 p.m.  
\* Conference game



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Between moving and meeting players and establishing community connections, Ryan Visser didn't have much of an opportunity to build an offseason routine when he started coaching at Big Piney last year.

His second time around is much different, as he has seen the Punchers commit to building the team year-round.

"The participation's been awesome," he said. "There's been a lot more buy-in and the kids are starting to get it. If we want to compete with some of these teams, we've got to put in the time."

With a deep and talented senior class, the Punchers will have a chance to do just that this season.

The Punchers' defense returns a stacked unit, as five of the team's top seven tacklers are back.

Senior Liam Hughes was Big Piney's No. 2 tackler last season, finishing with 49 total tackles. Senior Cam Thomas added 39 tackles, including a team-high eight tackles for loss.

Seniors Kaden Raza and Kolby Lucas both had at least 30 tackles apiece in 2019, while classmate Carlos Munoz had 21 tackles, a pair of sacks and a pair of pass break-ups.

Juniors Jaron Petty, Seth Stoutenburg and Karson Cline and sophomore Thomas Howard also logged significant time on defense last year, all finishing among Big Piney's top 13 tacklers. Of those top 13, nine return, including four all-conference selections (Raza, Hughes, Munoz and Thomas).

Visser said the Punchers' defensive scheme is "simple but lethal... it lets the kids just play ball and have fun, and fulfill their responsibilities."

"Defense is a lot about desire, just wanting to get the job done, and we have a lot of kids that want to do that."

Raza, an all-state choice, led the Punchers' offense, completing 89 of 139 passes for 1,258 yards and 14 touchdowns.

"It's hard playing quarterback on 'Madden,' let alone in real life.... Having a second-year system (quarterback) with some pretty good talent around him is pretty exciting," Visser said.

Lucas is Big Piney's leading returning rusher; he was second for the Punchers last year with 147 yards on 41 carries. Hughes added 44 carries for 118 yards.

Munoz is the team's leading returning receiver; he was third in receptions (14), yards (155) and touchdowns (two) for Big Piney last season.

The Punchers are also drawing inspiration from a place they'd rather not. Taytan Wing, an all-conference selection last year as a junior, died in April in an accidental, self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Visser said Wing's death transcended sports and was a loss for the school and community. It's also become a motivator for this year's returners.

"They definitely have a real sense of how life is fragile and (to) take advantage of every opportunity," Visser said.

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Since 2016, Cokeville is 9-2 against current Class 2A West Conference teams, including victories against playoff qualifiers Big Piney and Lyman last year.

Now, the Panthers will be one of them.


Cokeville coach Todd Dayton said the program's decision to move to Class 2A and continue playing 11-man football was simple for Cokeville, which last year had a high school population of 79 – nearly 100 students smaller than any other 2A school.

"We've got a lot of kids coming up in our junior high, and we've played 11-man, and that's what we want to do," he said.

"We do realize it's going to be a big step up. ... We know we're going to have to play football every week."

The Panthers have the talent and the numbers to be competitive at the 2A level. This year, Cokeville's conversation starts with three returning all-state selections, as seniors Nate Barnes, Ethan Bird and Tyler Moyes all come back to lead a senior class of about six and a total roster near 30.

Barnes was Cokeville's leading rusher last season, carrying



**Key Players**  
**RB/LB:** Nate Barnes, Sr.  
**E/DB:** Tyler Moyes, Sr.  
**C/DE:** Ethan Bird, Sr.  
**OT/DE:** Eli Linford, Sr.

Kemmerer coach Bart Jernigan isn't always sure how the scoreboard will turn out.

But he is sure about the effort his players will bring to each game.

"I know that the kids that we've got are going to come out and they're going to scrap," Jernigan said. "They're not going to be the biggest, but we're going to go out and do our damndest to maximize every bit of potential we have."

Last year, the Rangers fought hard but still couldn't put together a victory. Across an 0-8 season, Kemmerer was outscored by an average of 35-6.

This year's Ranger team has the right attitude for success, Jernigan said, and he said he's excited to see both the physical and mental development of his players.

"I think even one or two of them were (starting at) 14 years old... so I'm excited to see that growth and that physical maturity that's hopefully going to come into place," he said.

Senior A.Q. Peternal is Kemmerer's lone returning all-conference selection. Peternal, whose last name was Martinez last season, led Kemmerer in both rushing and receiving in 2019. He carried 123 times for 641 yards and five touchdowns while catching 13 passes for 103 yards. He was also fourth for Kemmerer in defensive points and finished with 32 tackles last year.

Offensively, he's Kemmerer's only returner who reached triple digits in rushing yards or who had more than 30 receiving yards in 2019.

The challenge for Jernigan and the Rangers is to keep opposing defenses from keying solely on Peternal.

"He's been a kid who's been relied on heavy for the last three years in this program," Jernigan said. "... We're going to have to find a way to get him the ball in space. We're going to have to find ways to get production from other areas in our offense so the defense doesn't pack the box as full."

Kemmerer did not have a passing touchdown in 2019, and the Rangers will need to find a new quarterback in 2020. Jernigan said junior Tommy Skidmore and sophomore Klayten Piippo are the frontrunners to fill that spot.

The line does return some experience, led by senior Aaron Ortiz and junior Matt McMillan.

The defense, meanwhile, returns five of its top eight defensive point-talliers from 2019.

Junior Tyson McKane was second in defensive points and third in tackles for the Rangers last season. He leads all of Kemmerer's returners with six tackles for loss last season.

McMillan was sixth in defensive points and fourth with 38 tackles, while Ortiz was seventh and Piippo was eighth, respectively, in defensive points.

Sophomores Jake Kampman (23 tackles) and Riggen Walker (18 tackles) also contributed defensively.

**Key Players**  
**RB/LB:** A.Q. Peternal, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Aaron Ortiz, Sr.  
**OL/LB:** Matt McMillan, Jr.  
**WR/LB:** Tyson McKane, Jr.

**COKEVILLE**  
**Mascot:** Panthers  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Black and orange

**Coach:** Todd Dayton,  
41st year at Cokeville  
**2019 Record:** 10-2, lost to Big Horn in 1A-11 championship

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** at Kemmerer Jamboree, 4 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** vs. Rich County, Utah, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** vs. Lyman, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** at Mountain View, 4 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** vs. Pinedale, 1 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** at Thermopolis, 5 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** at Kemmerer, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** vs. Big Piney, 3 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** at Lovell, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

**COKEVILLE CONTINUED-**  
128 times for 996 yards and eight touchdowns. He also led Cokeville's defense with team-highs of 151 total tackles, 54 solo tackles, four sacks and six fumble recoveries. He also had 15 total tackles for loss, good for second on the team.

"Nate is a very fine football player," Dayton said. "His potential is unlimited. He's a great athlete, and he's going to have to play big for us for us to be successful."

The Panthers return four of their top six tacklers.

Junior Treyson Dayton was third in defensive points and chipped in seven tackles for loss.

Sophomore Landon Walker was third on the team with 71 total tackles; he also had nine tackles for loss and four pass break-ups.

Moyes finished sixth for Cokeville in defensive points, while Bird was eighth and junior Garrett Reese was 10th. Junior Ian Clements and sophomore Tanner Brown also played significant minutes on defense.

"We look for their leadership," Dayton said of his returners. "... They're solid and they're going to help our other kids become solid."

Treyson Dayton is Cokeville's leading returning receiver; he led the Panthers with 16 catches last season and was second on the team with 262 receiving yards and three receiving touchdowns.


He also added 284 rushing yards.

Seniors Eli Linford and Matt Thompson will help lead the offensive line.

However, Cokeville will need to replace its quarterback, two of its top three rushers and two of its top three receivers.

"These young kids are going to have to step up and play, but I think our experience is going to help us," coach Dayton said.

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**Mascot:** Rangers  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Red and black

**Coach:** Bart Jernigan,  
fourth year at Kemmerer  
**2019 Record:** 0-8, did not qualify for playoffs

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** Kemmerer Jamboree, 4 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** at Wheatland, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** vs. Pinedale, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** vs. Thermopolis, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-26:** at Mountain View, 11 a.m.  
**\*10-2:** at Lyman, 3 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** vs. Cokeville, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** vs. Lovell, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** at Big Piney, 2 p.m.  
\* Conference game





**Mascot:** Bulldogs  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Blue and white

**Coach:** Nicc Crosby,  
second year at Lovell  
**2019 Record:** 6-4, lost to  
Buffalo in 2A quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**OL/DL:** Cruz Garcia, Sr.  
**RB/DE:** C.J. Lindsay, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Tyler Nichols, Sr.  
**QB/DB:** Cason James, Sr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-29** vs. Tongue River, 1 p.m.  
(Zero Week)  
**9-4:** at Big Horn, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** vs. Mountain View, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-19:** at Lyman, 3 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** vs. Thermopolis, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** at Big Piney, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** vs. Pinedale, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** at Kemmerer, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** vs. Cokeville, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Bulldogs ready for next step

Not many teams jump from one victory to six in one season, but that's exactly what the Lovell Bulldogs did in 2019.

With new head coach Nicc Crosby, a Lovell alumnus who had previously been an assistant at Star Valley, the Bulldogs finished 6-4 and lost in the first round of the Class 2A playoffs.

Crosby said the goal for Lovell this year is to continue to build on last year's jump.

"I couldn't believe last year how well last year's team embraced our culture and picked up on schemes," Crosby said. "I really think the leadership from our upperclassmen was key to making this happen."

Lovell graduated three all-state players and six seniors in all but returns three all-conference selections in seniors Cason James, C.J. Lindsay and Tyler Nichols.

Lovell had a rushing game by committee last season, with five players finishing between 279 and 494 total yards. Of those, four return.

Lindsay leads the returners; he had 78 carries for 492 yards last year. Junior Dallen Mangus added 47 carries for 443 yards, while James had 78 carries for 372 yards and Nichols chipped in 34 carries for 279 yards.

"I'm very excited to see what this year's stable of backs can accomplish," Crosby said. "It's even more exciting when I see the type of work the linemen have been putting in during the offseason."

Senior Cruz Garcia and junior Quinn Lindsay will lead that line.

James, a quarterback who transferred to Lovell from Rocky Mountain prior to the 2019 season, completed 40 of 79 passes for 573 yards and seven touchdowns.

Lovell loses its top two receivers, and senior Aden Mays (three catches for 85 yards) is the team's top returning pass-catcher.

The Bulldogs bring back their top two defensive players in Nichols and senior Aaron

Jones. Nichols led Lovell with 64 total tackles, while Jones led the Bulldogs in defensive points with 118, including four pass-breakups and five sacks.

Overall, Lovell gets back six of its top nine players in defensive points. Senior Myzek McArthur was sixth in defensive points and had a team-high six sacks last year.

Junior Casen Hiser was seventh in defensive points and had 38 total tackles, junior Quinn Lindsay added 31 tackles and Mayes notched 19.

Seven starters return on both offense and defense, so the Bulldogs' approaches might be a bit different in Crosby's second year. That's by design.

"Now that kids have an understanding of our offensive and defensive schemes and principles, we will definitely be able to do more this year—especially offensively," he said.

"We really had to lean on our defense last year. I hope to see our offense make some big strides in my second year."

# Buffalos seek another crown

For success to perpetuate, the vision needs to be on the future.

So even though the Mountain View Buffalos won Class 2A titles in 2017 and 2019 and finished runners-up in 2018, they aren't going to let that define, or limit, what could happen this season.

Coach Brent Walk said he's addressed that concern with his returning players.

"In 2019, you were part of a state championship, and that was great, but you're now a part of 2020," he said he told his team. "... And now we're moving on."

Certainly, the 2019 season was special. Mountain View finished 11-0, its first undefeated season since 1997. The Buffalos scored 549 points, second-most in Wyoming's 11-man history, and allowed only 51.

This season, the Buffalos will rely on 16 seniors, a group that's never had a high school season without a title-game appearance, to preserve the program's momentum.

"We graduated a very talented class, but this senior class is the biggest senior class I've had at Mountain View," he said. "... We really like where these kids are at. It's just a matter of getting on the field to see what they're capable of. "Now is their time, and that's kind of their mindset."

One point of pride for Walk is how his team continued to work in the offseason. He has consistently had 45-50 of his 53 players coming to weightlifting sessions, staggered due to COVID-19.

All-state senior Hunter Meeks will front both the offensive and defensive lines. Out of Mountain

View's top nine players in defensive points last season, Meeks is the only returner.

He finished fifth on the team with 57 total tackles, including three tackles for loss. Walk said Meeks could move from defensive tackle to defensive end to take advantage of his athleticism and quick feet.

Four other returning players finished with double-digit tackles in 2019. Senior Sam Porter notched 36 tackles, including four for loss; senior Ashton Schofield contributed 19 tackles, two interceptions and four pass break-ups; senior Bryson Walker had 18 tackles and two pass break-ups; and Collins had 13 tackles.

Offensively, Schofield, an all-state choice, finished with 11 catches for 296 yards and five touchdowns, good for second in all three categories on the team last year. However, he's the only one of Mountain View's top six receivers to come back.

Walk said Schofield could figure into the offense in myriad ways.

"We're going to figure out the best way to get him the football because he's a dangerous, dangerous threat every time he touches the ball," he said.

Junior Tanner Collins is Mountain View's top returning rusher. Collins was fourth for the team in 2019 with 228 yards on 39 carries.



**Mascot:** Buffalos  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Purple and silver

**Coach:** Brent Walk,  
ninth year at Mountain View  
**2019 Record:** 11-0, beat  
Buffalo in 2A championship

**Key Players**  
**WR/DB:** Ashton Schofield, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Hunter Meeks, Sr.  
**OL/LB:** Sam Porter, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Bryson Walker, Sr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** vs. Green River, TBD (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** at Evanston, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** at Lovell, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** vs. Cokeville, 4 p.m.  
**\*9-26:** vs. Kemmerer, 11 a.m.  
**\*10-2:** at Pinedale, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** vs. Big Piney, 3:30 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** at Thermopolis, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** vs. Lyman, 3 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Eagles build on surprising run

Lyman's leap forward in 2019 only surprised those outside Lyman.

Fighting from behind most

of the season, Lyman scraped together five victories, enough to finish with the No. 2 seed from the Class 2A West Conference,

giving the team its first home playoff game since 2014.

"You get a glimpse of what could be," coach Dale Anderson said, "and that's always exciting."

For the Eagles, who lost only four seniors to graduation, the opportunities to catch people by surprise are gone. No one will overlook a team that returns two all-state selections (seniors Hansen Bradshaw and Preston Brewer) and a host of other key players who try to will keep Lyman in contention.

"I think our kids, for the most part, are pretty excited about that," Anderson said. "You get a taste of that success and



**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** at Malad, Idaho, 7 p.m.  
(Zero Week)

**9-3:** vs. Rawlins, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** at Cokeville, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-19:** vs. Lovell, 3 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** at Big Piney, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** vs. Kemmerer, 3 p.m.  
**\*10-10:** vs. Thermopolis, 11 a.m.  
**\*10-16:** at Pinedale, 5 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** at Mountain View, 3 p.m.  
\* Conference game

**Lyman**  
**Mascot:** Eagles  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Blue and white

**Coach:** Dale Anderson,  
ninth year at Lyman  
**2019 Record:** 5-5, lost  
to Thermopolis in 2A  
quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**OL/DL:** Hansen Bradshaw, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Preston Brewer, Sr.  
**QB/LB:** Carter Smith, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Briggs Richards, Jr.

*LYMAN CONTINUED-*  
hopefully that drives them to want it a little more."

The returning pair of Bradshaw and Brewer did plenty of damage on defense.

Brewer finished second for Lyman in defensive points last season and led the Eagles with 11 tackles for loss and 10 sacks.

Bradshaw – who Anderson called one of the state's best interior linemen regardless of classification – was third in defensive points and tackles, notching five sacks of his own.

Of Lyman's top five tacklers in 2019, though, they're the only two to return.

However, junior Chevy Fackrell, senior Braxton Sabey,

junior Rho Mecham, sophomore McKoy Smith, Carter Smith and junior Alex Bradshaw all logged at least 23 defensive points apiece. Mecham finished with four sacks and Bradshaw tied for the team lead with three pass break-ups.

"We're short in a few positions," Anderson said.

"With our linebackers, we're still trying to figure out which one of the guys to put there. ... (But) that doesn't hurt to have some kids with experience as underclassmen who can now step into roles as juniors and seniors."

Bradshaw and junior Briggs Richards, who was an all-conference choice last year, will help lead the offensive line.

Brewer ran for 218 yards

on only 22 carries – 9.9 yards per carry – and also chipped in seven catches for 93 yards. He's Lyman's leading returning receiver.

"The nice thing with him is he can do a little bit of everything," Anderson said. "... He does a lot of things pretty well, so we try to utilize that to our benefit."

Senior Carter Smith returns under center; he completed 46 of 93 passes for 552 yards and six touchdowns while also rushing for 259 yards – No. 2 on the team last year – and three more TDs.

Anderson said Lyman's run-often approach no longer has to be the only option.

"Hopefully we'll have a more balanced attack," he said.



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**Mascot:** Wranglers  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Green and orange

**Coach:** Clay Cundall,  
second year at Pinedale  
**2019 Record:** 2-6, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**RB/LB:** Colby White, Sr.  
**C/DE:** Carson Gregory, Sr.  
**OG/DT:** Dodge Westercamp, Sr.  
**QB/DB:** Konner Ziegler, Jr.

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# Business as usual for Pinedale

In an unexpected twist, Pinedale's geography might be the best thing going for it this season.

Thanks to Pinedale's isolation, COVID-19 hasn't been as much of a problem there as it has been in other communities.

Consequently, the Pinedale football team started its summer workout program on time, something that not a lot of schools could do this year.

"We're pretty fortunate to live in a town that hasn't seen much in the way of infections," second-year coach Clay Cundall said. "Because of that, we've been able to lift since the very beginning of summer and we were able to have our team camp at the very beginning of summer."

The Wranglers' roster is only slightly changed from 2019

to 2020, as only four seniors graduated. Of this year's 32 anticipated players, about 10 will be seniors.

"It'll be very exciting to see that come together this year," Cundall said. "... Now they get their shot to make some noise."

Senior Colby White, Pinedale's only all-state selection from 2019, will help that effort.

White led Pinedale's rushing game with 131 carries for 803 yards and nine touchdowns, all team-highs.

White also led the Wranglers' defense, more than doubling up all his teammates with 82 total tackles and 157 defensive points. His 32 solo tackles, seven tackles for loss and three fumble recoveries all led Pinedale last season.

"He's been a workhorse for us, and he's tough, and he's durable,

and he's coachable," Cundall said.

Moreover, Cundall said White has developed as a leader and has shown younger players "how to work hard, how to be reliable, those kinds of things we look for."

But he won't be alone.

The Wranglers' four returning all-conference selections – White, seniors Dodge Westercamp and Carson Gregory and junior Konner Ziegler – is second in number to only Big Piney in the Class 2A West Conference.

Ziegler ran 94 times for 336 yards and also completed 19 of 40 passes for 282 yards. Only four players caught passes for Pinedale last year, but three of them return – including senior Kaleb Bigelow, who had 90 receiving yards on a team-high

# Bobcats make steady strides

Four years of steady improvement have brought the Thermopolis Bobcats to this point.

The Bobcats are growing into a consistent Class 2A contender; last year, Thermopolis won its first playoff game since 2013.

This year could top that.

"We are proud of the growth and culture we have instilled in this program," said Matt McPhie, who became Thermopolis' coach in 2016. "The players have bought into a culture of strength and conditioning and the results speak for themselves."

"... We have some really talented kids who have set some lofty goals, and we expect to be in the mix late in the playoffs."

Thermopolis returns two all-state players, seniors Logan Cole and Remington Ferree. However, five other all-conference selections graduated. Fortunately for the Bobcats, they have players ready to step in.

"We have some inexperience all over the field," McPhie said, "which will provide opportunities for some of our young players to step up and play on Friday nights."

Junior Jase Longwell is Thermopolis' top returning rusher.

He was second for Thermopolis last year with 47 carries for 474 yards, an average of 10.1 yards per carry, and seven touchdowns.

Sophomore Roedy Farrell contributed nearly identical numbers: 43 carries, 429 yards and six touchdowns.

Cole, all-state as a sophomore and junior, ran 52 times for 394 yards and seven scores, taking on responsibilities beyond being the featured piece of the running game.

"Logan embraced his role both with the ball and without last season by being a great lead blocking back as well," McPhie said "... His toughness and physicality will lead us. He has the ability to catch the ball also which opens some things up for us."

Cole was the Bobcats' leading receiver, catching 22 passes for 372 yards and five touchdowns. Farrell added 10 catches for 222 yards.

Ferree and senior Hyrum Rich will help anchor the offensive line.

The Bobcats graduated their top three players in defensive points but return their next eight – and they'll be fitting into new roles as defined by a new defensive coordinator in 2020.

Cole is Thermopolis' leading tackler; he had 46 last season, including three sacks.

Ferree and junior Eli McCumber had 43 tackles apiece, and Ferree had three sacks.

McLean had 27 tackles but also contributed three interceptions and a team-high five pass break-ups.

Longwell and senior Jaxon Jensen finished with 31 tackles each, while Farrell had 28 and senior Jesse Skelton had 27.

Thermopolis will move from the East to the West Conference this year and play eight new regular-season opponents.

"We don't have the familiarity with these teams," McPhie said. "This goes both ways, but we are excited for the opportunity in front of us."



**Mascot:** Bobcats  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Purple and yellow

**Coach:** Matt McPhie,  
fifth year at Thermopolis  
**2019 Record:** 5-5, lost to  
Buffalo in 2A semifinals

**Key Players**  
**RB/LB:** Logan Cole, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Remington Ferree, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Roedy Farrell, Soph.  
**OL/DL:** Hyrum Rich, Sr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-29:** at Worland, 1 p.m.  
(Zero Week)  
**9-4:** vs. Tongue River, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** vs. Big Piney, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** at Kemmerer, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** at Lovell, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** vs. Cokeville, 5 p.m.  
**\*10-10:** at Lyman, 11 a.m.  
**\*10-17:** vs. Mountain View, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** at Pinedale, 5 p.m.  
\* Conference game

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**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** vs. Lander, 4 p.m.  
(Zero Week)  
**9-4:** at Glenrock, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** at Kemmerer, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** vs. Big Piney, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** at Cokeville, 1 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** vs. Mountain View, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** at Lovell, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** vs. Lyman, 5 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** vs. Thermopolis, 5 p.m.  
\* Conference game

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**PINEDALE CONTINUED-**  
10 catches.  
Gregory, Westercamp and junior Skyler Erickson are returners on the offensive line.  
Bigelow was second on the team in defensive points and finished with 35 total tackles and a team-high three pass break-ups.  
Erickson was fourth in defensive points, finishing with 38 total tackles and three sacks, which led the team.  
Gregory finished with 33 tackles, while seniors Troy Later (23 tackles) and Westercamp (22 tackles) also contributed on defense.  
"I feel like they're just a great group of kids," Cundall said, "and I'm excited to see them and what they can do this season."





## State Champs Big Horn Rams

### 2019 State Playoffs (11-man)

#### State Championship

Big Horn 55, Cokeville 7

#### State Semifinals

Cokeville 16, Upton-Sundance 7

Big Horn 48, Southeast 7

#### State Quarterfinals

Cokeville 20, Wright 16

Upton-Sundance 53, Rocky Mountain 7

Big Horn 82, Wind River 0

Southeast 25, Shoshoni 6

### Four players to watch

#### Drake Lamp, Lusk

Lamp is trying for something rare this season – his fourth all-state selection. He led Class 1A 11-man in rushing last season in both total yards (1,633) and yards per game (204.1). But he's never had a chance to play in a playoff game, and that's gotta be motivating.

#### Tryston Truempler, Shoshoni

He was third in all of Class 1A 11-man last season with 26.4 defensive points per game and was by far Shoshoni's leading tackler. He also led Shoshoni in both passing yards (747) and rushing yards (640), accounting for 11 touchdowns.

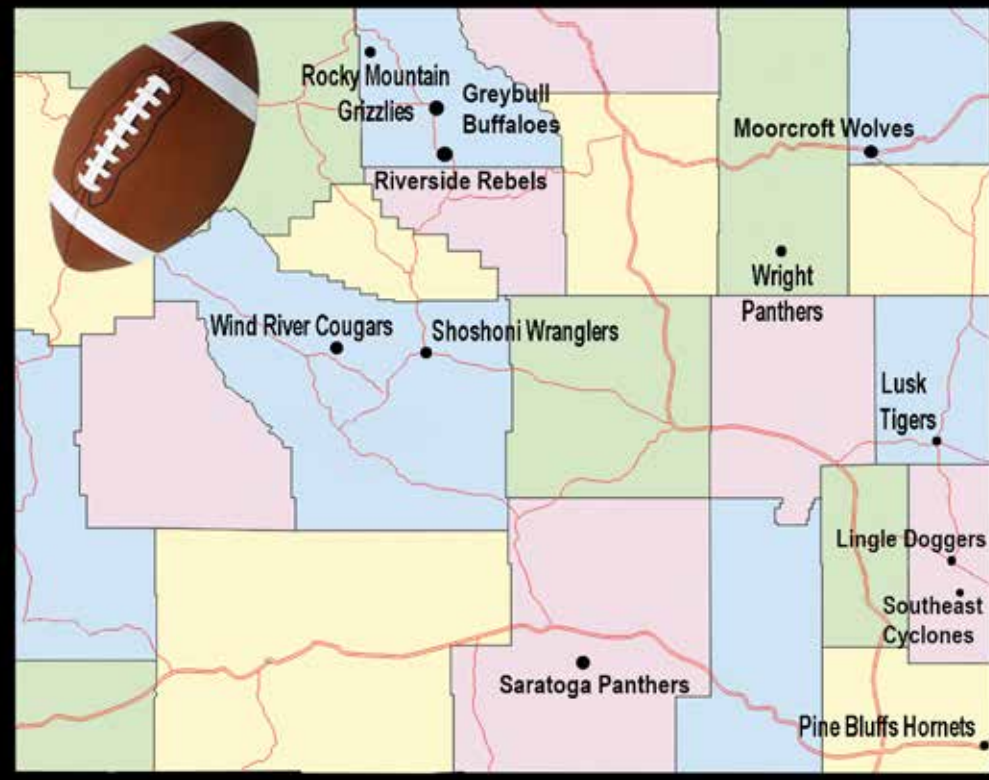
#### Tyler Banks, Rocky Mountain

On a senior-laden Grizzly team, Banks has plenty of support. But he is a leader on both sides of the ball – he ran for 1,049 yards and eight TDs last year and was also second on the team with 66 tackles.

#### Noah Rimmer, Saratoga

He led Class 1A six-man in receiving yards last year despite not playing in the postseason, and he finished fourth in six-man in defensive points. His skills translate well to nine-man, and he'll help the Panthers stay in the East Conference race.

# 1A/9-man Preview



## Nine-man setup stokes rivalries

By Patrick Schmiedt

### Four questions to answer

*What should we expect from this classification in 2020?* In short, who knows? As an amalgamation of former 11-man and six-man teams, literally anything is possible. The only team that reached the 1A 11-man semifinals last year that's still around in 1A nine-man this year is Southeast, and that vacuum at the top creates opportunities for something new.

*Does any one team have the advantage in nine-man's first season?* No. But three teams keep getting mentioned by nine-man coaches: Lusk, Southeast and Rocky Mountain. Those programs have the talent and experience that other coaches envy, and that edge puts those three programs near the top in nine-man's first go-round.

*What about the former six-man programs?*

Watch out. Four former six-man teams are moving to nine-man this year, and they've all got potential. Saratoga, Riverside and Lingle all bring back at least one player who was all-state at six-man.

*What's the most overlooked thing about nine-man's new setup?* The renewed rivalries. Lingle-Southeast is returning to Goshen County, and Riverside-Greybull comes back to Big Horn County.

### Four key games

*East-West Jamboree, Aug. 28.* In a classification with so much uncertainty, a series of scrimmages during Zero Week in Casper could

be the source of a lot of clarification. Nine teams are scheduled to attend.

*Lingle at Southeast, Sept. 11.* Both the Doggers and Cyclones want to challenge for the top spot in the East. The fact that the Goshen County rivals face each other in the conference opener is certainly clear, and motivating, to both squads.

*Rocky Mountain at Shoshoni, Sept. 11.* Two top contenders for the West championship also meet in the conference opener in Week 2. This game, win or lose, will help set the pace for the rest of the season.

*Riverside at Greybull, Oct. 9.* These two rivals haven't played each other since 2014, and Riverside hasn't won this game since 2008. Having the rivalry back is nice, but this game will also likely have big postseason implications, too.

### Predicted order of finish

*East Conference:* Southeast, Lusk, Saratoga, Lingle, Moorcroft, Wright, Pine Bluffs. *West Conference:* Rocky Mountain, Shoshoni, Riverside, Greybull, Wind River, Wyoming Indian, St. Stephens.

### Way-too-early title game score prediction

*Southeast 28, Rocky Mountain 26.* Class 1A nine-man should be a class full of parity, and several other teams have the goods to make runs to Laramie. On paper, though, the Cyclones and Grizzlies have the best chances to be there in November.

## Doggers excited for change

Why is Lingle-Fort Laramie excited to move to nine-man football in 2020?

Let us count the ways.

First: the planning. Coach Matt Cornelius said six-man football, which the Doggers had played the past four years, didn't allow for much game-planning.

"In six-man, if you have one or two athletes, you could virtually out-run a lot of defensive sets," Cornelius said, "and as a coach, there was not a lot of things that you could do to counter sheer speed.

".... There will be much more scheming and film study with us coaches and kids than in the past."

Second: the schedule. Lingle will play regional rivals like Southeast, Pine Bluffs and Lusk. The Doggers haven't played any of them since 2015.

Third: the roster.

Cornelius said he anticipated five seniors would lead the Doggers, but with only one junior, a "hard-working set" of sophomores and raw freshmen will need to give the Doggers depth.

Overall, Cornelius said he expected about 21 players out – at least that's the number that are showing up to weight room sessions. That's triple the number of players on the roster compared to two years ago.

"(We) can't be more excited that our program is growing back, hopefully, to the level of competition the Doggers enjoyed in years past," Cornelius said. Lingle had a pair of all-state choices in 2019, and seniors Cordell Forkner and Cooper Hill both return this fall.

Hill led the Doggers' rushing attack with 87 carries for 651

yards and six touchdowns, and he was third for the Doggers with 142 receiving yards on seven catches. Forkner, meanwhile, ran 49 times for 200 yards but piled up a team-high 16 rushing touchdowns.

In between, sophomore Slade Hopkins added 74 carries for 451 yards and seven scores.

Forkner also completed 45 passes for 763 yards and nine touchdowns. Senior Ty Prall, who tied for the team lead with 218 receiving yards and had four of his 11 catches go for scores, also returns.

Cornelius said the Doggers will focus on the pass, but an offensive line that averages more than 200 pounds per player will give Lingle options.

"Getting those kids the ball in space, we hope, is going to cause fits for defenses," Cornelius said.

Lingle returns four of its top five tacklers.

Hill and Forkner went 1-2 for Lingle in defensive points last year, with Forkner leading the team with 58 total tackles and three interceptions while Hill notched 55 tackles, 10 tackles for loss, three fumble recoveries and two interceptions.

Senior Dustin Swartwood had 52 tackles, Hopkins added 28 tackles and sophomore Hadley Fleming had 20.

Senior lineman Jessy Valentine, an all-conference pick, also figures into the Doggers' plans.



**Mascot:** Doggers

**Division:** Class 1A nine-man

**Conference:** East

**Colors:** Blue and red

**Coach:** Matthew Cornelius,

fifth year at Lingle

**2019 Record:** 5-5, lost to Hanna in 1A-6 semifinals

### Key Players

**DL:** Cordell Forkner, Sr.

**WR/DB:** Cooper Hill, Sr.

**C/DL:** Jessy Valentine, Sr.

**WR/DB:** Ty Prall, Sr.

### 2020 Schedule

**8-28:** at Casper East-West Jamboree, 11 a.m. (Zero Week)

**9-4:** vs. Wind River, 5 p.m.

**\*9-11:** at Southeast, 7 p.m.

**\*9-18:** vs. Wright, 7 p.m.

**\*9-25:** at Lusk, 7 p.m.

**\*10-2:** vs. Saratoga, 6 p.m.

**\*10-9:** at Moorcroft, 6 p.m.

**\*10-16:** vs. Pine Bluffs, 7 p.m.

**10-23:** at Greybull, 5 p.m.

\* Conference game

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## Good Luck Doggers!



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**Mascot:** Tigers

**Division:** Class 1A nine-man

**Conference:** East

**Colors:** Red and white

**Coach:** Ryan Nelson,

sixth year at Lusk

**2019 Record:** 4-4, did not qualify for playoffs

### 1A 9-MAN EAST

### LUSK TIGERS

## Tigers open up the offense

The Lusk Tigers might have one of Class 1A nine-man's most versatile offenses this season.

That versatility may not be defined by the number on the jersey, either.

"With more freedom in nine-man, we're just looking to get our athletes the ball as much as possible," Lusk coach Ryan Nelson said. "We've had some very versatile linemen that now may have the chance to carry the ball."

Some of the Tigers' key returners, including senior Jasper Caldera, junior Dylan Molzahn and sophomore Dayne Lamp, might play both on the line and in the backfield, giving Lusk's opponents a lot for which to prepare.

CONTINUED PAGE 38



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**Mascot:** Wolves  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Green and black

**Coach:** Travis Santistevan,  
third year at Moorcroft  
**2019 Record:** 3-5, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**RB/DL:** Hunter Garoutte, Sr.  
**QB/S:** Zane Linder, Jr.  
**OL/LB:** Dekken Mayer, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Clay Stripp, Sr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**9-4:** vs. Greybull, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-12:** at Saratoga, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** vs. Lusk, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** at Wright, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** at Southeast, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** vs. Lingle, 6 p.m.  
**10-16:** at Riverside, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** vs. Pine Bluffs, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Wolves welcome new format

Travis Santistevan has been through this. As a football coach at Britton-Hecla High in South Dakota, he was part of a staff that helped a program transition from 11-man to nine-man. Now, in his third year at Moorcroft, Santistevan will help the Wolves make the same transition. “Just with the amount of kids we get out, it made more sense to play at that level,” he said. “That’s kind of the level we’re at, even though our school enrollment says different.”

By opting down from Class 2A, the Wolves will be ineligible for the playoffs. Regardless, Santistevan said with a small group of juniors and seniors, the time was right for a switch. “Players have definitely responded well to it,” he said. “They’re the ones that get tired of playing schools two to three times our size.”

“... We might not be able to win a state championship, but we can always go win a conference championship... and we can always battle for an undefeated season. That would put up two big markers for Moorcroft football.”

With only five seniors expected on the Wolves’ 25-player roster, their challenge is clear.

Santistevan was frank about his team’s weaknesses – speed and size. The Wolves aren’t blessed with either. Regardless, Moorcroft does return six starters on both offense and defense, which should keep the Wolves competitive.

Senior Hunter Garoutte and junior Zane Linder were both all-conference selections.

Linder completed 43 passes for 508 yards and five touchdowns. However, Garoutte (with seven catches for 59 yards last year) is the only returning player who caught more than two passes last season.

Garoutte is also Moorcroft’s leading returning rusher and was second on the team in rushing yards last year, but that’s a bit misleading – he had just 42 yards on 13 carries.

The Wolves’ returners on offense scored only one of Moorcroft’s 22 touchdowns last year.

Garoutte is the only one of Moorcroft’s top four tacklers to come back in 2020. He was third on the team in defensive points and had 52 total tackles; he tied for Moorcroft’s team high with four sacks and two fumble recoveries.

Senior Dekken Mayer was fifth for Moorcroft in defensive points and had 43 tackles.

Linder tied for seventh and had 22 tackles and three pass break-ups, while junior Randy Peters had 25 tackles and senior Clay Stripp added 18.

Mayer, Linder and senior Lane Wood each had a pair of interceptions last year, as well, tying for the team lead.

In addition to Santistevan’s experience coaching nine-man, assistant coach Jake Keffeler played nine-man while in high school in Faith, S.D.

As for the game itself and its fundamentals?

“Really, they’re not that different,” Santistevan said.



# Hornets focus on ground game

When Pine Bluffs coach Will Gray looks at what needs to change for his team to find some success, he can concentrate on two related statistics – rushing offense and rushing defense.

The Hornets finished last in Class 1A 11-man last season in both of those statistics.

Consequently, Pine Bluffs went 1-7. “Last year we couldn’t run the ball or stop the run to save our lives,” Gray said. “We flat-out struggled. That has to improve.”

To prepare for the transition from 11-man to nine-man and make those improvements, “I think our staff has watched every nine-man game on YouTube and the NFHS Network,” Gray said. “... There is a lot more space in the nine-man game, and open-field tackling and blocking look to be the most important of the fundamentals. We’ve been looking at ways to incorporate more individual and group drills to rep these skills during practice.”

Ryan Fomstrom, who made the all-conference team as a freshman last season, is the only returning player who had positive rushing yards last season – and he finished the season with 1

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** at Casper East-West Jamboree, 11 a.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** vs. Riverside, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** at Lusk, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** vs. Saratoga, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** vs. Southeast, 7 p.m.  
**10-3:** at Shoshoni, 1:30 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** vs. Wright, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** at Lingle, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** at Moorcroft, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

rushing yard.

However, Gray said the Hornets have multiple players who can fill those backfield spots. Some players may come from other spots on offense, as Pine Bluffs returns four of its top five receivers, including three who finished with triple-digit yards in 2019.

Junior Reed Thompson led the Hornets with 16 catches for 189 yards, while Fomstrom added 12 catches for 122 yards.

Junior Ty Sweeter only had three catches, but they went for 111 yards.

Pine Bluffs will also have junior Andrew Loya, who transferred in last year and is eligible for varsity play this

year. “He was exciting to watch at the JV level last fall,” Gray said.

At quarterback, sophomore Stu Lerwick completed 18 passes for 200 yards in backup and spot starting duty last season. He’ll work with a young line that will look to seniors Isiah Schultz and Austin Mondragon for leadership.

Pine Bluffs also graduated five of its top six players in defensive points.

Sweeter finished third on the team in defensive points and was fifth with 27 total tackles. He also had two sacks.

Fomstrom added 31 tackles, including 14 solo tackles.

Others who saw significant defensive playing time included junior Scott Fomstrom (21 tackles), Thompson (20), Mondragon (19), senior Marvin Reza (17), junior Tyler Christofferson (15) and sophomore Diego Paniagua (15). Senior J.T. Mohren will also be key.

“We will be young all over the field on defense,” Gray said, “but we feel like this group of kids is hungry and they don’t like how last season turned out. They’ve been very motivated to do what it takes to be successful.”



**Mascot:** Hornets  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Purple and yellow

**Coach:** Will Gray,  
10th year at Pine Bluffs  
**2019 Record:** 1-7, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**WR/RB/DB:** Ryan Fomstrom, Soph.  
**QB/LB:** Stu Lerwick, Soph.  
**OL/DL:** Scott Fomstrom, Jr.  
**WR/LB:** Reed Thompson, Jr.

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# Panthers are seasoned group

With only two seniors gone from last year’s roster, Saratoga enters Class 1A nine-man with one of the most experienced teams in the classification.

Panther coach Logan Wright said he is excited to see what that group can do – especially since his players have the skills to match the playing time they’ve received.

“Experience doesn’t mean a lot if they’re not talented,” Wright said.

Beyond that, though, Wright said he’ll ask those talented, experienced players to work hard enough to build Saratoga into a contender in a new classification.

Wright said the Panthers’ time in Class 1A six-man helped his players explore their talents. The six-man game made Saratoga’s players better players in the open field, something they will try to exploit in 2020.

On offense, that starts at quarterback. Senior Teegan Love is a dual threat, having completed 109 of 199 passes for 1,671 yards and 26 touchdowns – against just four interceptions – while leading the Panthers with 95 carries for 798 yards and 10 more TDs in 2019.

Senior Noah Rimmer, Saratoga’s

only all-state selection last season, was the top target, leading Class 1A six-man with 730 receiving yards on 34 catches, including 10 touchdowns.

“If we do things the right way, we can emulate what last year looked like, because there were times last year when we were unstoppable,” Wright said.

The line is more of a question mark. Sophomore center Kellen Reeder will be an important part of the approach, but who will fill the other spots on the line isn’t clear yet.

“We have the kids to do it, we’re just not sure who it’s going to be yet,” Wright said.

Saratoga’s defense returns its top four tacklers, and they will be led by Rimmer at middle linebacker. He had almost double the number of tackles of any other Panther in 2019, finishing with 85 total tackles and five sacks. He also contributed four fumble recoveries.

Love added 44 tackles, while senior Justin Shotwell and junior Alex Irby had 38 tackles apiece. Senior Gavin Bartlett added 23 tackles, and five other returners had at least 10 tackles last year.

Wright said junior Geoffrey Johnson and sophomore Heston Fisher will also figure into the Panthers’ plans.

Wright said his players’ biggest defensive challenge will be re-learning how to stop power running teams, something they didn’t see much in six-man.

Still, the Panthers’ experience and athleticism will also be tough for other teams to stop.

“Who knows who has the advantage?” Wright said. “Is it the 11-man team cutting two tackles off or the six-man teams trying to spread you out and play a game closer to six-man?”

“Hopefully we’re one of the best teams at that.”



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## LUSK CONTINUED-

Even so, Lusk’s offense will still flow through senior Drake Lamp, who is trying to become one of only a handful of Wyoming players to become four-time all-state choices.

Lamp led the Tigers with 188 carries for 1,633 yards and 19 touchdowns last season. However, of the three Lusk players who had more than 20 rushing yards last year, he’s the only one to return.

“Drake could put up monster numbers,” Nelson said. “He’s bought in to the offseason program, was excited to go to camp, he’s finally realized some of his potential. Our crazy spring (and) summer has made things a bit different, but he’s got the school rushing record in his sight and wants to get after it.”

Although the Lusk passing game was quiet last year – only seven completions all season – the Tigers do need to find a quarterback, and Drake Lamp (three catches, 20 yards) is the only player back with more than one catch last year.

Juniors Mason Wells and Riley Blackburn will add depth



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to the offensive line, while

Lusk gets back three of its top four tacklers from 2019. Molzahn, an all-state choice last season, led the Lusk defense with 77 tackles in 2019, including 27 solo tackles and nine tackles for loss.

Dayne Lamp was second in tackles with 76 and third in defensive points.

Caldera tied for fourth on the team with 32 total tackles; he also had six tackles for loss and two fumble recoveries.

Junior Mason Wells added 26 tackles, while Drake Lamp and senior Arie Eaton tied for the team lead with four pass break-ups apiece.


Nelson said junior quarterback/safety Walter Kupke, junior tight end/defensive back Aiden Applegarth and sophomore running back Collin Taylor will also figure into Lusk’s plans.

Back-to-back 4-4 seasons without reaching the playoffs also has Lusk motivated. Nelson said the Tigers are “starting to realize what it takes to get over that hump and make the next step to get to the playoffs. We felt we lost to some teams we shouldn’t have but that has motivated them to buy in.”

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## LUSK

### Key Players

**RB/DB:** Drake Lamp, Sr.  
**RB/OL/LB:** Dylan Molzahn, Jr.  
**OL/RB/DL:** Jasper Caldera, Sr.  
**OL/RB/LB:** Dayne Lamp, Soph.

### 2020 Schedule

**8-28:** at Casper East-West Jamboree, 11 a.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-5:** at St. Stephens, 1 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** vs. Pine Bluffs, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** at Moorcroft, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** vs. Lingle, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** at Wright, 6 p.m.  
**10-9:** vs. Rocky Mountain, 5 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** at Southeast, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** vs. Saratoga, 5 p.m.  
\* Conference game





**Mascot:** Cyclones  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Blue and silver

**Coach:** Mark Bullington,  
22nd year at Southeast  
**2019 Record:** 6-4, lost to  
Big Horn in 1A-11 semifinals

#### Key Players

**QB:** Hayden Anderson, Sr.  
**OG/MLB:** Harrison Hall, Sr.  
**WR/RB/DB:** Brant Fullmer, Sr.  
**FB/OLB:** Cord Herring, Jr.

#### 2020 Schedule

**9-4:** vs. Shoshoni, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** vs. Lingle, 7 p.m.  
**9-18:** at Wind River, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** at Pine Bluffs, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** vs. Moorcroft, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** at Saratoga, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** vs. Lusk, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** at Wright, 7 p.m.  
\* Conference game

## Cyclones have title ingredients

How's this for straightforward?  
When thinking about his team's  
strengths entering 2020, Southeast  
coach Mark Bullington didn't mess  
around.

"We have speed, we have size and  
we have depth," Bullington said.

The Cyclones tick all the boxes  
needed for a successful football  
team.

Bullington said his team has nine  
seniors and seven juniors, and all of  
them should play important parts in  
a run at a championship in the first  
year of Class 1A nine-man.

"These kids have paid their dues,"  
Bullington said.

Have they ever. After finishing  
0-8 two years ago, the Cyclones  
went 6-4 and reached the Class 1A  
11-man semifinals last year, losing to  
eventual champion Big Horn.

From that team, the Cyclones  
return their quarterback, top four  
rushers, three of their top four  
receivers and their top two tacklers.

Bullington counted nine returning  
players who were starters at some  
point last season.

Senior Harrison Hall and junior

Ryan Clapper were both all-state  
choices, while seniors Hayden  
Anderson and Bodie Herring and  
junior Cord Herring were all-  
conference picks.

The rushing attack will feature  
Cord Herring (91 carries, 409 yards),  
Clapper (68 carries, 377 yards),  
Anderson (67 carries, 280 yards) and  
senior Brant Fullmer (29 carries, 155  
yards).

Anderson completed 27 of  
60 passes for 518 yards and six  
touchdowns last year, with Clapper  
leading the team in receiving yards  
(139 on four catches) and Bodie  
Herring leading the team in catches  
(11 for 104 yards).

Bullington said the returning  
experience gives Southeast plenty of  
offensive options, and the switch to  
nine-man doesn't change how many  
of those options can be on the field  
at once.

"We'll have so many weapons,"  
Bullington said.

Clapper will also handle kicking  
duties.

Although Southeast graduated  
three of its top five tacklers, the

Cyclones' top two tacklers return in  
Cord Herring and Hall. Cord Herring  
had 53 tackles, including team-highs  
with 28 solo tackles and seven  
tackles for loss. Hall, meanwhile, led  
the Cyclones with 56 total tackles.

Senior Sawyer Anderson and  
senior Ethan Steinhausen had 28  
tackles, while junior Kirk Kay added  
26.

Bullington also said seniors Brock  
Blevins, Reece Robertson and  
Durward Randall will help provide  
depth and experience. Also part of  
the mix is junior Will Baker, who  
didn't play last year but comes in  
at 6 feet 8 inches tall and about 300  
pounds.

With a deep and athletic team,  
Bullington said some players who  
have had to play both offense and  
defense may have the luxury of  
some rest time this season – and to  
play on defense, players will have to  
prove their ability to make plays.

"We've told the kids if you can't  
tackle in space in nine-man, you  
probably won't be on the field,"  
Bullington said.

## Panthers won't alter approach

The Wright Panthers just might be the perfect  
team for nine-man football.

As the Panthers make the transition this fall,  
they have three big things going for them.

First: Wright graduated seven senior starters,  
so this year's returners will have the opportunity  
to ingrain nine-man habits without restructuring  
11-man tendencies.

For coach Larry Yeradi, who said he wants to  
find ways to continue running an option offense at  
nine-man, developing timing is important.

"I'm still an option guy, but I'm not real sure  
how that option's going to look when you only  
have three linemen," Yeradi said. "You don't have  
as many holes to run through."

Even so, Yeradi said the Panthers return three  
capable linemen, and seniors Kayden Mack  
and Ethan Zancanella were both all-conference  
selections last season.

"We're going to be pretty OK with our linemen,  
mainly because we only have to come up with  
three of them," Yeradi said. "And we've got three  
good kids coming back."

Second: The Panthers have the right numbers.

For close to a decade, Yeradi said, Wright hasn't  
scrimmaged in practice due to low numbers,  
relying on coaches, managers, trash cans or "Mr.  
Invisible" to fill scrimmage spots.

With an anticipated roster of 20 or 21 players,  
the Panthers can scrimmage full at nine-man,  
developing players more efficiently.

The Panthers lose their quarterback, top three

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**Mascot:** Panthers  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Black and gold

**Coach:** Larry Yeradi,  
26th year at Wright  
**2019 Record:** 4-5, lost  
to Cokeville in 1A-11  
quarterfinals

#### Key Players

**OL/FB/LB:** Kayden Mack, Sr.  
**QB/HB/DB:** Kaden Tescher, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Ethan Zancanella, Sr.  
**QB/DB:** Parker Worman, Soph.

#### 2020 Schedule

**8-28:** at Casper East-West  
Jamboree, 11 a.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** at Rocky Mountain, 6 p.m.  
**9-11:** vs. Wyoming Indian, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** at Lingle, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** vs. Moorcroft, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** vs. Lusk, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** at Pine Bluffs, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** at Saratoga, 5 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** vs. Southeast, 7 p.m.  
\* Conference game

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**Mascot:** Buffaloes  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Blue and yellow

**Coach:** Eli Moody,  
third year at Greybull  
**2019 Record:** 1-7, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**RB/DB:** Irving Castro, Jr.  
**TE/LB:** Jesus Hernandez, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Chase Oster, Soph.  
**FB/LB:** Jake Schlattmann, Soph.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** at Casper East-West  
Jamboree, 11 a.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** at Moorcroft, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** vs. Wind River, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** at Wyoming Indian, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** vs. Rocky Mountain, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** at St. Stephens, 1 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** vs. Riverside, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-15:** at Shoshoni, 6 p.m.  
**10-23:** vs. Lingle, 5 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Same game in Greybull

The 2020 season will bring the community of Greybull something it’s never had before – football that isn’t 11-man.

Class 1A’s top division switched from 11-man to nine-man, and with Greybull’s enrollment placing the Buffaloes in the 1A division, change was coming regardless.

Coach Eli Moody said his team has a “football is football” approach, but also spending time watching game films from South Dakota and Minnesota to make nine-man’s wrinkles work for the Buffs.

“They are excited for a new challenge and to play some new teams,” Moody said. “Also with everything going on in the world right now, they just want to get together and work and play.”

Senior Jesus Hernandez, an all-conference selection in 2019, led Greybull with 61 total tackles last year and was second in defensive points.

“He is a natural linebacker,” Moody said. “Last year was his first year of high school football, so we spent a lot of the season getting the rust knocked off, so it will be fun to see his growth moving forward.”

Junior Irving Castro was fourth in defensive points and had team-highs with three interceptions and three pass break-ups. While they’re the only two of Greybull’s top six defensive point-talliers to return, Greybull does return eight of its top

14 tacklers.

Six other Buffaloes finished with double-digit tackles in 2019 – seniors Avery Swiftney (35 tackles) and Camryn Chapman (17), sophomores Beto Diaz-Rios (16), Cade Cooper (16) and Jake Schlattmann (15), and junior Weston Haley (14).

On offense, Castro led Greybull with 113 carries for 345 yards. He’s also Greybull’s leading returning receiver, finishing third for Greybull in receiving yards (79) and second in catches (nine).

“Coming in as a junior with all the experience he has, he will be one of the leaders of the offense and will help set the tempo,” Moody said.

Sophomore Aiden Reece saw some time under center last year, completing 14 passes for 120 yards. Senior wide receiver/defensive back

Isaac Thueson will also be key, and sophomore lineman Chase Oster will work with Diaz-Rios and Haley to lead efforts up front.

Greybull will also be buoyed by several players returning from injury and an influx of freshmen from an eighth-grade team that had just one loss in 2019. In all, the offense has eight players returning who started at least two games and the defense has nine.

“We have a lot of kids that were forced to see the field last probably before they were truly ready, but they gained a ton of experience on the fly and grew from it,” Moody said. “We also have quite a few kids coming up from the middle school that are competitive and ready to push the upperclassmen.”



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# Rebels planning playoff push

The buzzword around Basin this offseason? Playoffs.

The Riverside Rebels haven’t had the chance to play for a postseason berth in any of the past four years after opting down to play six-man football.

Now, in Class 1A nine-man, the postseason is again on the Rebels’ radar.

“When you take away the opportunity for playoffs, that’s pretty depressing,” first-year head coach Greg Mendenhall said. “... Everyone that I’ve talked to on the team has been excited for the opportunity to make playoffs again.”

The Rebels had only one senior on last year’s roster, so Mendenhall inherits a team that can compete immediately. With that experience, the Rebels can focus more on

executing new schemes with three more players on the field.

“We should have a strong defense,” Mendenhall said. “Offense is a whole new animal, though, so that’s up in the air.” As expected, the defense is loaded with returners.

Senior Tate Clutter, an all-state selection last year, led the Rebels in defensive points and tackles. He had 63 total tackles, including 35 solo and 13 for loss. He also intercepted three passes.

Junior Nathaniel Boreen was second for Riverside in defensive points and had 57 tackles, 13 for loss.

Senior Cash Duncan contributed 34 tackles, junior Garrett Ellis Rudd added 30, senior Zac O’Roake 29 and junior Griffin Zapata 23. O’Roake led Riverside with six sacks and Rudd had a

team-high seven pass break-ups.

Mendenhall said the Rebels are solid tacklers, especially in the open field.

“Coming from six-man, we’re pretty solid in that,” he said.

On offense, Duncan completed 123 of 207 passes for 1,765 yards and 27 touchdowns last year. Clutter caught 38 of those passes for 587 yards and 10 touchdowns, good for second on the team in all three categories last season.

Of the six players who broke into triple-digit receiving yards last season, five return.

Boreen added 14 catches for 212 yards and nine scores, O’Roake had 14 catches for 206 yards and three TDs, Rudd had 15 catches for 186 yards and eight scores and Zapata had 10 catches for 171 yards and a score.

Clutter led the Rebels’ rushing game with 62 carries for 316 yards. Duncan added 174 yards on the ground.

Mendenhall, who was previously the head coach for the six-man team at Terry, Montana, said he’s built an expansive playbook but whittles down the selections to fit the players he has.

“Since none of them have single nine-man snap... it’s going to be a little bit exciting what comes out of them and what plays fit the particular players,” he said. “... I’ve got a lot of smart, good kids here, so we’ll make the transition fine.”



**Mascot:** Rebels  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Red and silver

**Coach:** Greg Mendenhall,  
first year at Riverside  
**2019 Record:** 5-3, ineligible  
for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**FB/LB:** Tate Clutter, Sr.  
**QB/LB:** Cash Duncan, Sr.  
**WR/LB:** Zac O’Roake, Sr.  
**RB/S:** Nathaniel Boreen, Jr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** at Casper East-West  
Jamboree, 11 a.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** at Pine Bluffs, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** vs. St. Stephens, 1 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** at Rocky Mountain, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** vs. Wyoming Indian, 1 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** vs. Wind River, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** at Greybull, 6 p.m.  
**10-16:** vs. Moorcroft, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** at Shoshoni, 5 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Grizzlies have grown up

The move from 11-man to nine-man football comes at an odd time for Rocky Mountain.

With a deep senior class of a dozen, a potential roster floating around 32 players, and enough experience to make the Grizzlies immediate contenders, coach Richard Despain said his team is approaching the change with excitement.

Just a couple years ago, the Grizzlies were in an opposite position – a thin roster led to some pretty bad losses and even

a forfeit.

The sophomores on that team are now seniors, ready for a big season.

“Coaching good kids is fun, and coaching kids who have taken the lumps, and the hard and occasionally lopsided losses to more experienced, and mature teams brings a level of anticipation and excitement,” Despain said. “... With nine-man, we should be able to give younger guys more experience at the appropriate level, and keep

a team of players with each guy playing a position for which they are more suited.”

The Grizzlies lost just one senior from last year’s 6-4 team, so Rocky Mountain is primed for a deep playoff run this season.

Rocky Mountain had six all-conference selections last year, and all six are back in 2020.

The Grizzlies return two all-state selections in seniors Tyler Banks and Trace Moss, while four others – seniors Austin Haslem, Zane Horrocks



**Mascot:** Grizzlies  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Brown and yellow

**Coach:** Richard Despain,  
fifth year at Rocky Mountain  
**2019 Record:** 6-4, lost to  
Upton-Sundance in state  
quarterfinals

## Grizzlies Key Players

**FB/MLB:** Trace Moss, Sr.  
**RB/OLB:** Tyler Banks, Sr.  
**QB/S:** Zane Horrocks, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Jaxon Jolley, Sr.

## 2020 Schedule

**9-4:** vs. Wright, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** at Shoshoni, 3:30 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** vs. Riverside, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** at Greybull, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** vs. Wyoming Indian, 6 p.m.  
**10-9:** at Lusk, 5 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** vs. Wind River, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** at St. Stephens, 1 p.m.  
\* Conference game

*ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONTINUED-*  
and Jaxon Jolley and junior Tyson Christiansen – were all-conference choices.

But for a team that returns as many players as the Grizzlies do, those players are just the tip of the talent iceberg.

Moving to nine-man means not everyone who started last year will start this year – the Grizzlies return 10 players on offense and 11 players on defense who started last year.

Banks was the main cog in the rushing attack, running 146

times for 1,049 yards and eight touchdowns.

Haslem had team-highs in catches (16), receiving yards (337) and receiving touchdowns (4). Senior Taylor Winland (129 receiving yards) and Banks (102) also reached triple-digit receiving yards in 2019.

Horrocks and sophomore Carsyn Weber split time under center, with Weber throwing for 464 yards and Horrocks for 365.

The Grizzlies’ defense is also experienced – the top nine tacklers are back. Moss led the Grizzlies with 86 total tackles, 24

solo tackles, 10 tackles for loss four fumble recoveries, while Christiansen had a team-high five sacks with his 28 tackles.

Banks added 66 tackles, while Horrocks had 51 and Jolley 33.

Senior Tonka Lytle (28 tackles), sophomore Nate Minemyer (25 tackles), senior Trevor Jewell (24) and senior Dawson May (20) also played key roles on the defense in 2019.

Two other linemen, sophomore Dylon Clendenen and junior Colter Thormahlen, are also key parts of the Grizzlies’ approach, Despain said.





**Mascot:** Wranglers  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Blue and yellow

**Coach:** Tony Truempler, eighth year at Shoshoni  
**2019 Record:** 4-5, lost to Southeast in 1A-11 quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**OT/DE:** Johnny Hilder, Sr.  
**QB/LB/P:** Tryston Truempler, Sr.  
**WR/CB:** Nathon Cousineau, Jr.  
**RB/LB:** Kade Fike, Sr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** at Casper East-West Jamboree, 11 a.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** at Southeast, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** vs. Rocky Mountain, 3:30 p.m.  
**\*9-17:** at St. Stephens, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-24:** at Wind River, 7 p.m.  
**10-3:** vs. Pine Bluffs, 1:30 p.m.  
**\*10-10:** at Wyoming Indian, 1 p.m.  
**\*10-15:** vs. Greybull, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** vs. Riverside, 5 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Changes afoot for Shoshoni

Shoshoni’s plans for transitioning to nine-man football are straightforward. Tweak the offense. Completely overhaul the defense. “It’s easy to convert our offense to a nine-man offense,” coach Tony Truempler said. “Defensively we’ve had to make some changes and right now that’s our biggest focus. ... It’s almost a clean slate. The fundamentals are the same on defense, but our schemes and stuff are a little bit different.”

Fortunately for the Wranglers, they return their top three tacklers and nine players in total who started at some point on defense last year. Senior Tryston Truempler, Shoshoni’s only all-state choice, leads the defensive charge. He had 120 total tackles, including 49 solo and 15 for loss, and finished third in Class 1A 11-man with 26.4 defensive points per game.

Meanwhile, senior Johnny Hilder, an all-conference pick, finished with a team-high six sacks and two fumble recoveries, while sophomore Pehton Truempler was second on the team with 70 total tackles. Together, they were the top three tacklers on Shoshoni’s roster last year.

Junior Duke Gibbel and sophomore Dominic Jarvis added 44 tackles apiece, Fike had 34 and senior Ty Nordwick had 25. Sophomore Alex Mills led the Wranglers with six interceptions.

On offense, Tryston Truempler led Shoshoni in both rushing and passing, running 98 times for 640 yards while completing 41 passes for 747 yards.

“In a lot of ways, he played like a senior last year,” coach Truempler said. “ ... I knew he was tough, but I didn’t realize how tough he was.”

However, the Wranglers’ top two receivers graduated. Junior all-conference selection Nathon Cousineau (11 catches, 186 yards) is

Shoshoni’s leading returning receiver. Senior Kade Fike added 162 rushing yards on 53 carries. His return is still tentative as he recovers from injury. Hilder and Gibbel will join a pair of sophomores, Jaxson Stanley and Korbin Dewitt, in leading the offensive line. Coach Truempler said the Wranglers will only have about four seniors this year, and of those, only two have played three full seasons. Consequently, Shoshoni will need to rely on younger players, specifically a deep sophomore class, to be successful, coach Truempler said.

The depth question is less of a question, though, at nine-man, and coach Truempler said his players have responded well to the change. The Wranglers’ lack of depth is nothing new, and playing Class 2A teams the past couple years – where Shoshoni could hang for a half before their depth ran thin – showed that nine-man is a good fit for the program.

The players are ready for the changes, too, coach Truempler said. “The players are kind of like, ‘We just want to play football,’” he said. “ ... They’re just happy we’re still playing football.”



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# Depth a luxury for Cougars

The change to nine-man football at Wind River has created a unique side effect. With two fewer players on the field at a time, two fewer players will earn starting positions. The Cougars’ players have realized this, coach Mykah Trujillo said, and in turn have been motivated to do more.

“It doesn’t sound like a lot, taking away two positions, but for us at a small school it adds a lot of competition,” Trujillo said. “ ... The players, I know, it’s got their wheels turning, thinking, ‘Who am I going to have to beat out for a spot?’”

With upwards of 30 players coming out for Wind River this fall, the competition will be one more motivating factor for a team that is trying to improve on last year’s 1-8 finish.

Trujillo said younger players saw the importance of leadership during last year’s struggles. “I think they saw the power that they have when they’re in that position for everyone else on the team,” he said. “ ... I think the younger kids saw how vital that is for team success.”

The Cougars do return three all-conference players in seniors Colter Colver and Charles Dillon and junior Jaden Miller.

Wind River does get back three of its top four tacklers in Colver, Miller and Dillon, and overall returns seven of its top nine.

However, the Cougars’ defense allowed at least 52 points in all but one game last year, and Trujillo said the change to nine-man will force those returners to rethink their roles. “Some of those people are going to have to adjust their mindset and pick up an extra duty,” Trujillo said. “ ... But I think, for them, I think it’ll be a

pretty easy shift because we have a lot of kids back on that end of the ball.”

Colver had 46 tackles a year ago, including five for loss, while Miller had 45 tackles and Dillon 32.

Three juniors – Shawn Reid, Landen Brownlee and Trey Mulholland – all saw time on defense last year. Reid had 23 tackles, Brownlee 20 and Mulholland 16.

Two linemen, senior Cole Barrett and sophomore Tucker Jensen, are key pieces of the approach as well.

While Wind River does lose its quarterback, the Cougars do return two of their top three rushers and everyone who caught more than one pass.

Colver led the ground game with 225 rushing yards. Miller led the Cougars with 12 catches for 123 yards. Brownlee added four catches for 98 yards, second on the team in both categories.

Moreover, Trujillo said some initial hesitation with the change to nine-man has waned.

“Any day with football, whether it’s nine or 11 (players), is a good day,” Trujillo said.



**Mascot:** Cougars  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Purple and black

**Coach:** Mykah Trujillo, sixth year at Wind River  
**2019 Record:** 1-8, lost to Big Horn in 1A-11 quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**RB/LB:** Colter Colver, Sr.  
**RB/WR/S:** Jaden Miller, Jr.  
**OL/DL:** Cole Barrett, Sr.  
**WR/OLB:** Charles Dillon, Sr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**9-4:** at Lingle, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** at Greybull, 7 p.m.  
**9-18:** vs. Southeast, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-24:** vs. Shoshoni, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** at Riverside, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-8:** vs. St. Stephens, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** at Rocky Mountain, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-23:** vs. Wyoming Indian, 7 p.m.  
\* Conference game



# Six-man race is wide open

By Patrick Schmiedt

**Four questions to answer**

*Can Snake River make another shutout run like last year’s?* No. Snake River’s nine consecutive shutouts last year is a feat we’ll likely never see again in six-man. And the Rattlers graduated six all-state players, leaving opportunities for several other teams.

*But can Snake River repeat as champs?* Ask the coaches, and they’ll give you the standard answer – they’re the champs until someone beats them. But six-man should have parity at the top this season, and several teams are capable of making a title run.

*So who’s the favorite?* Dunno. One of the challenges in assessing the preseason prospects is that of the 40 players selected all-conference last season, only 14 return, thanks to graduation and teams moving to nine-man. Farson and Burlington have three returners apiece, and Hanna and Kaycee two apiece.

*What’s new this year?* With a little luck, two new teams. Encampment played a mix of varsity and sub-varsity teams last year and finished 5-2, and the Tigers will be a fully-fledged West Conference team this year. Meanwhile, Ten Sleep has missed the past two seasons but is scheduled to return.

**Four key games**

*Snake River at Hanna, Sept. 5.* Both the Rattlers and Miners are going to look drastically different than they did last season. And if either

wants to return the championship game again this season, a victory here in this non-conference but intra-county contest will be mighty helpful.

*Farson at Burlington, Sept. 11.* The West Conference is always competitive in six-man. Winning this one – the West Conference opener for both squads – will go a long way in reaching the goal of a conference championship.

*Snake River at Encampment, Sept. 12.* The Tigers’ first official conference game comes at home against the defending state champions. What an opportunity for Encampment to prove it belongs in the discussion as something more than a novelty.

*Hanna at Kaycee, Oct. 23.* On paper, the Miners and Buckaroos should be near the top of the East Conference again this season, so when they meet in the regular-season finale, it’ll likely be for way more than just pride.

**Predicted order of finish**

*East Conference:* Hanna, Kaycee, Hulett, Guernsey-Sunrise, Midwest, NSI Academy. *West Conference:* Farson, Burlington, Snake River, Encampment, Dubois, Meeteetse, Ten Sleep.

**Way-too-early title game score prediction**

*Farson 44, Burlington 38.* The West Conference will be top-heavy, and that’ll prepare those teams for postseason play. That said, though, six-man appears to have more balance than usual, so don’t look for one team to dominate the season like we’ve traditionally seen.



**State Champs**  
**Snake River Rattlers**

2019 State Playoffs
State Championship
Snake River 71, Hanna 38
State Semifinals
Hanna 92, Lingle 58
Snake River 61, Hulett 0
State Quarterfinals
Hanna 73, Meeteetse 36
Lingle 73, Burlington 38
Snake River 59, Kaycee 0
Hulett 60, Farson 13

## Four players to watch

**Parker Clawson, Farson**

Clawson was valuable on a balanced Pronghorn team last season, leading them in receiving (30 catches, 436 yards) and finishing second in tackles. He’s also Farson’s only returning all-state pick.

## Devon Grosstick and Jase Smith, Hanna

They put up similar numbers in 2019. Grosstick, a senior, caught 25 passes for 376 yards and had 202 defensive points; Smith, a junior, caught 22 passes for 290 yards and had 208 defensive points. As Hanna’s two returning all-state picks, they’ll be key in getting the Miners into title contention.

## Zander Risner, Snake River

The Rattlers’ only returning all-stater has a lot on his shoulders as a junior. He’s Snake River’s only returning player who had more than 20 tackles last year – and he had 78. That total included 11 sacks.

## Dalton Peterson, Encampment

Even though the Tigers didn’t play a full varsity season last year, Peterson led 1A six-man in defensive points per game with 33.4 and was one of only three six-man players with at least 100 tackles.




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**Mascot:** Vikings  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Black and yellow

**Coach:** Curtis Cook,  
 fifth year at Guernsey  
**2019 Record:** 2-6, did not  
 qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**QB/S:** Brian McCoid, Soph.  
**RB/LB:** Justin Malcom, Sr.  
**OL/S:** Brock Hohnholt, Sr.  
**FB/DE:** Hunter Warner, Jr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** at Encampment jamboree,  
 noon (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** at Farson, 1 p.m.  
**9-11:** Open  
**9-18:** at Sioux County, Neb., 2 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** vs. Hanna, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-3:** at Hulett, 1 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** vs. Kaycee, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-16:** vs. NSI, 5 p.m.  
**\*10-24:** at Midwest, 2 p.m.  
 \* Conference game

# Vikings have young core

The Guernsey-Sunrise Vikings had a fresh approach in 2019 – fresh as in freshman. With a young team that relied on ninth-graders to fill key spots all over the field, the Vikings missed the playoffs for the first time since 2011, finishing 2-6 and in sixth place in the Class 1A six-man East Conference.

“When half your team are freshmen on both sides of the ball, you just get through it and get that experience,” Guernsey coach Curtis Cook said.

Guernsey’s victories came by 10 points over NSI and by forfeit over Midwest. The Vikings’ six losses were all by at least 49 points.

“There’s nowhere else to go but up,” Cook said. “It was rock bottom for us.”

Now the climb out begins, and Cook said he’s optimistic his team can take the lessons from last year and apply them to 2020.

“We have a long way to go, but I think the kids will make pretty good strides from one year to the next,” he said. “... I think the experience that the younger kids got last year is going to be a strength for us, a positive, but the negative is we’re still young. We’re still going to be mostly underclassmen.”

Cook said he anticipates 15 or 16 players coming out this year, but of those, he only anticipates three seniors and two juniors.

“Hopefully those younger kids, they’ll be able to contribute and we’ll be able to be more competitive in our conference than we were a year ago,” Cook said.

Two seniors, Justin Malcom and Brock Hohnholt, each carry a different responsibility. Malcom is Guernsey’s key cog on offense; he led the Vikings with 57 carries for 481 yards last year.

Hohnholt leads all of Guernsey’s defensive returners; he had 19 tackles and a team-high three interceptions in 2019.

Stepping in for an injured senior, sophomore Brian McCoid took the majority of snaps at quarterback last year and finished with 29 completions for 151 yards. Malcom, with six catches for 44 yards, is Guernsey’s top returning receiver.

The Vikings’ two seniors were Guernsey’s top two tacklers, leaving some work to be done to improve the defense.

In addition to Hohnholt, Malcom added 14 tackles and junior Hunter Warner had 11. Hohnholt also showed potential in the return game on special teams, and junior lineman Rawland Isabelle will also be a big part of the plans in 2020, Cook said.

Even though Guernsey will still be young, Cook said expectations remain high. The Vikings’ goals in 2020 include a return to the postseason and restarting the playoff streak that ended last year.

“We’ve been talking about not just making the playoffs this year, but hosting,” Cook said.

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**Mascot:** Miners  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Blue and orange

**Coach:** Zack Scott,  
 eighth year at Hanna  
**2019 Record:** 10-1, lost  
 to Snake River in 1A-6  
 championship

**Key Players**  
**RB/LB:** Devon Grosstick, Sr.  
**C/DT:** Ura Schmidt, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Jase Smith, Jr.  
**FB/DT:** Joseph Borah, Jr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**9-5:** vs. Snake River, noon  
**9-12:** at Natrona frosh, 10 a.m.  
**9-18:** Open  
**\*9-25:** at Guernsey-Sunrise, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-3:** vs. Midwest, noon  
**\*10-10:** at NSI, 1 p.m.  
**\*10-17:** vs. Hulett, noon (at Midwest)  
**\*10-23:** at Kaycee 1 p.m.  
 \* Conference game

# Miners expect competitive run

When coach Zack Scott looks at what’s possible for the Hanna-Elk Mountain-Medicine Bow Miners this season, he starts by looking at what his team accomplished last season.

A record-setting Miner team notched a second consecutive undefeated regular season. A deep playoff run culminated in a Class 1A six-man runner-up finish.

Even though the Miners graduated three all-state players, they’re still a threat for another deep playoff run thanks to who they return this fall and what those players have learned through success.

“I truly believe these boys are



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ready to step up,” Scott said. “Many of them have been ready for football since the last play of the state championship game last year.”

Even with the losses to graduation, HEM is in better position than most teams to sustain its success. The Miners return a pair of all-state selections in senior Devon Grosstick and junior Jase Smith; no other team in Class 1A six-man returns more than one all-state player.

“It is an amazing luxury to have two incredibly capable football players leading our team next year,” Scott said.

Maintaining last year’s record-setting pace might be difficult, though. Hanna averaged 72.3 points per game, an all-time state record. To reach that number, the Miners scored 116 touchdowns last season, but players who accounted for 86 of those touchdowns have graduated.

Senior Andrew Scott is HEM’s top returning rusher; he

# Red Devils need youth movement

Hulett’s path to success is clear. After watching a deep senior class finish 8-2 and reach the Class 1A six-man semifinals – just the program’s second trip that deep in the playoffs since joining six-man in 2011 – this year’s Red Devil team knows what it will take to stay successful.

The challenge is doing so without the help of the seniors who paved the path. Seven of Hulett’s 21 roster spots last year belonged to seniors, so this year’s Red Devils will need to find a way to apply the lessons those players shared while still forging their own version of success.

“Our biggest thing for this year is trying to find out identity this year as a football team,” coach Boz Backen said. “... I feel the younger classmen have learned a lot from them. I hope they understood the process of what those boys went through. It takes a lot of work to get to where we were last year, and having our freshman and sophomores last year see the process, you only hope they learned a few things from them.”

Senior Joseph Kennah is the only one of Hulett’s four all-conference players to return this year. He’ll lead a group that has enough senior leadership to continue the team’s success.

Running backs Deonte Taylor and Morgan Munch, linemen Sheldon Jolley and Isaac Welch and tight end Jacob Bush are all seniors, and they’ll help lead the charge, too.

Of Kennah, Backen said, “his growth from his sophomore to his senior was fun to watch and I only expect him to get better this year. As for the rest of the seniors, I hope they all come in and set the same expectations the seniors last year did.”

Junior quarterback and defensive back Tyler Kromarek will also have a key role on the team, Backen said.

The Red Devils finished second in the East Conference behind Hanna last season. The Red Devils won six straight games at one point, capping that run with a 60-13 victory against Farson in the 1A six-man quarterfinals. Hulett did not compile team or individual statistics last season.

Although Hulett’s title dreams ended with a 61-0 beating from eventual champion Snake River in the semifinals, Hulett’s 8-2 record was its best since 1994.

The playoff victory was just the second for the program since moving to six-man in 2011; the other came in 2015.

“I know most of the kids after our tough game against Little Snake, talk(ed) about what do we need to do to make sure we are playing meaningful games in November,” Backen said. “So I think they still have desire to keep the momentum going for us.”



**Mascot:** Red Devils  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Red and black

**Coach:** Boz Backen,  
 sixth year at Hulett  
**2019 Record:** 8-2, lost  
 to Snake River in 1A-6  
 semifinals

**Key Players**  
**WR/LB:** Joseph Kennah, Sr.  
**RB/DB:** Deonte Taylor, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Sheldon Jolley, Jr.  
**QB/DB:** Tyler Kromarek, Jr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**9-5:** vs. Burlington, 1 p.m.  
**9-11:** at Sheridan JV, TBD  
**9-18:** Open  
**\*9-25:** at Kaycee, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-3:** vs. Guernsey-Sunrise, 1 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** at Midwest, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-17:** vs. Hanna, noon (at Midwest)  
**\*10-24:** vs. NSI, noon  
 \* Conference game

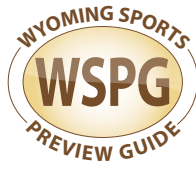
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finished third for the Miners last season with 235 rushing yards and four touchdowns on 18 carries. Sophomore Thomas Wagner (173 yards) and Smith (143 yards) also broke triple-digit rushing yards last season.

Grosstick was second for the Miners in both catches (25) and receiving yards (376) last season, while Smith was third in catches (22) and fourth in yards (290).

Smith and Grosstick are the only two of the Miners’ top five players in defensive points who are returning in 2020. Smith had 102 total tackles, good for second on the team last year, and had 53 solo tackles, a team-high four sacks and three interceptions.

Grosstick had 79 tackles and team-highs with seven interceptions and nine pass break-ups.

Senior Ura Schmidt added 45 tackles and junior Joseph Borah added 32.

Scott said the returning players have both the experience and the will to win to help the program remain a challenger for conference and state championships.

Scott also said this year’s team will need to establish its own identity separate from last year’s squad, and the pace of that development will be key. However, the coach said he likes what he has seen so far.

“The boys developed a close team (and) family relationship and are eager to prove they are up to their new roles as leaders,” he said.





**Mascot:** Buckaroos  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Blue and red

**Coach:** Dave Largent,  
second year at Kaycee  
**2019 Record:** 4-5, lost  
to Snake River in 1A-6  
quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**TE/DE:** Nathan Largent, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Dylan Fauber, Sr.  
**WR/C/DL:** Rhys Stafford, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Josh Cleveland, Jr.

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# Kaycee learned from setbacks

Kaycee’s near-misses helped define their 2019 season – and what they learned in those games could help define their 2020 season.

Kaycee lost games last year by scores of 53-52, 36-27 and 48-45. By contrast, the Buckaroos’ four victories were all by at least 20 points, and three of the four were by 40-plus.

Coach Dave Largent said the lessons Kaycee learned in those close games should apply in games this year.

“I think they learned that they could do more than what anyone expected them to do,” he said. “On paper, we should have never have even been in the game with those teams, and yet Kaycee made them earn their win.”

Kaycee had only nine players last year, but only two graduated. Still, a small roster will once again dictate the Buckaroos’ approach.

“Unless something changes and some of the other athletes come out for football this year, we are facing a short roster once again,” Largent said.

The Buckaroos will likely have three seniors. Kaycee returns two

2020 Schedule

9-4: at Dubois, 2 p.m.

\*9-12: at NSI, 1 p.m.

9-19: vs. Sheridan sophs, noon

\*9-25: vs. Hulett, 2 p.m.

10-2: vs. Farson, 2 p.m.

\*10-9: at Guernsey-Sunrise, 7 p.m.

\*10-16: vs. Midwest, 2 p.m.

\*10-23: vs. Hanna, 1 p.m.

\* Conference game

all-conference players, tied with Hanna for the most in the East, in Dylan Fauber and Rhys Stafford, and Nathan Largent rounds out the senior group.

Junior Josh Cleveland led the Buckaroos’ rushing game with 48 carries for an even 500 yards last season. Fauber was third on the team with 45 carries for 314 yards.

The Buckaroos will need to find a new quarterback, but junior Harley Davis did complete nine passes for 130 yards and three touchdowns in mop-up duty last season.

Kaycee had six players finish with between 150 and 354 receiving yards. Five of those players return.

Fauber was Kaycee’s top receiver in terms of yardage. He

had 14 catches for 354 yards – an average of 25.3 yards per catch – and nine of his catches went for touchdowns.

Davis added 19 catches for 295 yards, good for second on the team in both categories.

Stafford chipped in 12 catches for 212 yards, Cleveland had nine catches for 202 yards and Nathan Largent chipped in 17 receptions for 150 yards.

Davis, Fauber and Stafford all finished among Kaycee’s top four tacklers a year ago, with Davis finishing with 79 total tackles, Fauber 73 and Stafford 72. Stafford also had six sacks and five pass break-ups, while Fauber had eight pass deflections.

Cleveland was fifth on the team with 56 tackles and had a team-high seven sacks, while Nathan Largent had 45 tackles.

Junior Sam Ramsbottom will also be key on both offense and defense.

Coach Largent said returning a defensive group with so much experience will help the Buckaroos hang with teams – and, if fortunes turn, turn close losses into victories. “They are a great bunch of boys,” he said.



**Mascot:** Oilers  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Maroon and white

**Coach:** Joe Campbell,  
first year at Midwest  
**2019 Record:** 1-7, did not  
qualify for playoffs

# Numbers a challenge for NSI

The NSI Academy program is always prepared for change.

From season to season, the Wolves’ roster is in a constant state of flux as students enter and leave the facility near Sheridan. It’s common for the Wolves to have as few as one or two players come back from the previous season.

This year is no different, as only one player returns from 2019 – senior quarterback Ayden Hurse.

The Wolves, as usual, lack the experience of their opponents, but this year depth is the bigger question. Coach Chad Lobdell said he hoped for a roster of about 10 players this year, a number that’s unusually low for the program.

“It’s a little slim this year,” he said. “ ... Most of them have never played football before, so (we’ll focus on) just the basics and becoming a team.”

Lobdell said the school attendance has been steady, but many of the NSI student residents don’t have an interest in football.

On the bright side, the school’s offseason has gone as smoothly as it possibly could with regard to COVID-19, as the institution has had zero confirmed cases.

“...our kids  
were doing  
a great job  
of being  
respectful.”

~Coach  
Chad Lobdell

That’s made focusing on football that much easier.

NSI went winless last season, finishing the season outscored by a combined 505-204. The Wolves’ closest games came midseason, with a 38-32 loss to Midwest and a 56-46 loss to Guernsey.

Outside those two games, NSI’s closest loss was by 29 points.

Lobdell said some tweaks to the offense this year may bring the Wolves more consistency on that side of the ball in 2020.

Nevertheless, Lobdell said he

was pleased with how his players dealt with the adversity.

“I had a couple guys that earned sportsmanship awards, and our officials noticed that our kids were doing a great job of being respectful,” he said. “ ... That’s something I’ll emphasize this year.”

Hurse led the Wolves in passing yards last season, completing 23 of 57 passes for 288 yards and three touchdowns while sharing time under center. He also ran for 37 yards and caught a pair of passes for 15 yards.

Defensively, Hurse was sixth on the team with 25 defensive points.

“He’s going to be the leader of the team,” Lobdell said. “Last year was his first year playing six-man, so he was under the gun a little bit.

“Having a year under his belt, he’s going to be able to come in and do good things. ... Having that leadership at the quarterback is going to be huge.”

Around Hurse, though, the Wolves will need to develop quickly to remain competitive. A focus on the fundamentals will be key, Lobdell said.

“We’re going to be pretty small and young this year,” he said.



**Mascot:** Wolves  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Blue and black

**Coach:** Chad Lobdell,  
second year at NSI  
**2019 Record:** 0-8, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Player**  
**QB:** Ayden Hurse, Sr.

2020 Schedule

9-5: vs. Meeteetse, 1 p.m.

\*9-12: vs. Kaycee, 1 p.m.

9-19: at Ten Sleep, 1 p.m.

\*9-26: at Midwest, 2 p.m.

10-1: vs. Sheridan JV, 1 p.m.

\*10-10: vs. Hanna, 1 p.m.

\*10-17: at Guernsey-Sunrise, 5 p.m.

\*10-24: at Hulett, noon

\* Conference game

# New coach excited for six-man

Joe Campbell saw the opportunity to coach high school football, and he jumped.

Now the coach at Midwest, he’s excited to try something new.

“I really love coaching football, and I thought it was time for me to move up into the high-school ranks,” Campbell said.

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Campbell spent 12 years coaching youth football in his hometown of Casper. However, he never coached six-man, and he never coached in Midwest.

Both of those facts will change this season. He takes over a program in need of new direction, as last year’s Midwest team couldn’t finish the season.

Midwest started with a roster of 10 players, including two seniors, but by midseason the Oilers couldn’t keep up those numbers. By the end of September, the season was over, as the Oilers had to forfeit their final four games of the season.

The high point of the 2019 season came in Week 3 when Midwest defeated NSI Academy 38-32. However, the Oilers’ other games didn’t go as well – a 70-10 loss to Dubois, an 83-14 loss to Hanna and a 61-0 loss to Kaycee that ended up being Midwest’s

between 10 and 12 players to come out for the team this season. With such a small roster, limiting injuries will be a priority, Campbell said.

He said the Oilers’ offense would likely use a pistol look with lots of motion and quick passes. If all goes right, he said, Midwest can run an up-tempo offense to keep defenses off-balance.

The defensive transition is still in the works, Campbell said, but he said he’s been taking a lot of time to watch film on six-man to learn the games and schemes.

“This is definitely my first toes in the water (with six-man), but I’ve definitely been studying a

lot of six-man and a lot of our opponents,” Campbell said. “I like it. It’s pretty exciting.”

The Oilers’ biggest question, though, is participation.

Campbell said his approach for program building will be “just talking to the kids, letting them know it’s going to be a totally different style of program than has ever been ran.”

“...it’s going to be a  
totally different style of  
program than has ever  
been ran.”

~Coach Joe Campbell





**Mascot:** Huskies  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Black and orange

**Coach:** Trent Aagard,  
 fifth year at Burlington  
**2019 Record:** 4-4, lost to  
 Lingle in 1A-6 quarterfinals

#### Key Players

**RB/LB:** Gideon George, Sr.  
**RB/QB/LB:** Kolby Broederlow, Sr.  
**WR/QB/DE:** Kody Gotfredson, Sr.  
**C/NG:** James Aagard, Sr.

#### 2020 Schedule

**9-5:** at Hulett, 1 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** vs. Farson, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-19:** at Snake River, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-25:** at Meeteetse, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** vs. Dubois, 2 p.m.  
**10-9:** Open  
**\*10-16:** vs. Ten Sleep, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-24:** at Encampment, 3 p.m.  
 \* Conference game

## Huskies have returning talent

2019 – 1 = 2020

The math may not work on paper, but it works for the Burlington football team.

Here's how: Burlington had just one senior on last year's roster.

With only one player gone from last year's 4-4 team, the Huskies and coach Trent Aagard are optimistic they can improve.

"I think that having last year under their belts has given them the confidence that they can compete," Aagard said. "We started slow last year, changed some things and won some important games, but limped to the finish line."

The Huskies have good speed, depth and size, Aagard said, but they also need to find their leaders to give the kind of consistency needed for a deep playoff run.

Aagard said one goal is "getting everyone into the position that will best help the team. Last year we ended with kids moving positions a lot. I hope to avoid that this year."

Burlington returns three of its four all-conference selections in seniors Gideon George, Kody Gotfredson and Kolby Broederlow.

George and Broederlow were 1-2 rushing the ball, with George carrying 87 times for 716 yards and 15 touchdowns, while Broederlow added 42 carries for 339 yards.

Gotfredson and Broederlow split time throwing the ball, with Gotfredson completing 48 passes for 665 yards and Broederlow notching 27 completions for 308 yards.

Senior center James Aagard was second on the team last season with 19 catches for 225 yards; he's Burlington's top returning receiver.

Broederlow added 161 receiving yards and

George had 147.

"We have some young guys who are going to be trying to get into the mix, so I don't think we will be the same as we were last year," coach Aagard said, "but it is nice to know kind of what you can get from returning guys."

On defense, George finished with 73 tackles and led the Huskies with five interceptions and three pass deflections. Broederlow added 62 tackles last season.

Juniors Brac Walker (36 tackles) and Jack Gotfredson (29) and Aagard (26) also saw significant time.

Aagard said this year's team stacks up similarly to Burlington's 2018 team, which finished as Class 1A six-man runners-up. This year's team, though, may have more depth.

"I've been telling the boys that this year is wide open and they have as good a chance as anyone if they work hard and put their minds to it," coach Aagard said.

Coach Aagard also cautioned that realizing the potential, not the potential itself, is key.

"I'm looking forward to some of our younger kids stepping up this year also," he said. "I feel that we will have a much deeper team and will have a lot of kids pushing for playing time."



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## Growing pains boost Dubois

Nobody could call the Dubois Rams unprepared, then or now.

With no seniors on the roster for either the 2018 or 2019 seasons, they saw potential struggles coming their way. Without any senior experience, the Rams won one game the past two seasons combined.

But now Dubois and coach David Trembly see the way out – and they're ready for a resurgence with experienced players.

"We saw that dip coming," he said. "The kids knew that dip was coming. We just didn't have that many boys. We expected it. But now we've got a hump coming."

Combine an athletic group of freshmen with players who have been through some of the toughest learning experiences football can throw at a team, and the Rams are poised to emerge with its strongest team in years.

And they're building for both the present and the future.

The Rams will still be young – last year's roster had no seniors and three juniors, but Trembly said he expects to have 13 to 16 players out,

including about five freshmen.

"We've got a really good freshman group coming up," he said. "... Some of the strongest and fastest kids in our building are freshmen."

"Our eighth graders last year didn't lose a game and they won handily."

The returners, too, have key roles to play.

Junior Max Claar was Dubois' only all-conference selection. He led the Rams in every rushing category: 149 carries, 836 yards, 12 touchdowns. He also led the Rams with 65 total tackles, including 45 solo tackles.

Claar has earned the respect of his teammates, Trembly said.

"They've always followed Max, and Max is a good kid to follow," he said.

Senior Jaryd Wells added 229 rushing yards on 53 carries. He and sophomore Ryan Wells split time under center with Jaryd Wells throwing for 593 yards and Ryan Wells tossing for 316 yards.

Four Rams finished in triple-digit receiving yards, with junior Jack Hinkle leading the way with 21 catches for 368 yards and nine

touchdowns.

Sophomore Clayton Rux added 17 catches for 230 yards; Claar had 14 catches for 215 yards; and junior River Beazley had seven catches for 103 yards.

Trembly said the Rams stripped down their playbook in anticipation for 2020, simplifying the plans to focus on what works best for the personnel they have.

"They're not going to be able to just put three guys on Max," Trembly said.

Jaryd Wells racked up the most defensive points for the Rams last fall but was actually fourth on the team with 35 total tackles. However, he had a team-high five interceptions and broke up 16 passes.

Rux added 59 tackles, sophomore Kaden Chamley added 47 and Hinkle chipped in 23.



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**Mascot:** Rams  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Blue and yellow

**Coach:** David Trembly,  
 23rd year at Dubois  
**2019 Record:** 1-7, did not  
 qualify for playoffs

#### Key Players

**QB/DB:** Jaryd Wells, Sr.  
**RB/DE:** Max Claar, Jr.  
**TE/DE:** Jack Hinkle, Jr.  
**TE/LB:** Clayton Rux, Soph.

#### 2020 Schedule

**8-28:** at Encampment, noon  
 (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** vs. Kaycee, 2 p.m.  
**9-12:** at Midwest, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** vs. Meeteetse, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-26:** vs. Snake River, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-2:** at Burlington, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** at Farson, 1 p.m.  
**\*10-17:** vs. Encampment, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-24:** at Ten Sleep, 2 p.m.  
 \* Conference game

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**Mascot:** Tigers  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Red and black

**Coach:** Kegan Willford,  
 second year at Encampment  
**2019 Record:** 5-2, ineligible  
 for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**OL/DL:** Kelton Koehn, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Dalton Peterson, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Koye Gilbert, Jr.  
**WR/LB:** Michael Anderson, Jr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** Encampment jamboree, noon  
 (Zero Week)  
**9-5:** vs. Midwest, 3 p.m.  
**\*9-12:** vs. Snake River, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** at Farson, 2 p.m.  
**9-25:** at Natrona JV, TBD  
**\*10-3:** vs. Meeteetse, 3 p.m.  
**\*10-10:** at Ten Sleep, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-17:** at Dubois, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-24:** vs. Burlington, 3 p.m.  
 \* Conference game

# Tigers are building unity

In starting its six-man football program, Encampment has seemed to find answers for every problem it has encountered.

Playing experience? Check. Encampment finished 5-2 last season playing a patchwork schedule made up of three varsity teams from Wyoming, one varsity team from Colorado and three games against sub-varsity teams from Natrona.

Encampment beat both Meeteetse (45-15) and Dubois (60-24), but lost to Farson (32-6) and to Fleming, Colorado (48-14). The Tigers rounded out the season with three victories against Natrona's freshman and junior-varsity teams.

From last year's Encampment team, five starters return on both offense and defense, giving the Tigers a fighting chance to be competitive in their first full year of varsity play in three decades.

Coach Kegan Willford said the players were happy to get the experience they did in 2019, "but everyone on the team is very excited for the opportunity to play a full varsity schedule this season."

Needing a home field? Check. Willford said the Tigers' field

hadn't been used all that much since 1990, when Encampment last sponsored football. Once the prairie dogs were evicted, volunteers revamped the field with a lot of grass and fresh soil.

On Oct. 12, the Tigers played on their home field for the first time since bringing back football. The Tigers didn't disappoint the home crowd, defeating the Natrona freshman team 53-14.

"The community has been very supportive in helping make football in Encampment a reality," Willford said. "It has been a complete community effort for this to happen. The team is very grateful for the community support. The atmosphere for our first and second home games were amazing.

"Everyone was excited to see football in Encampment again for the first time in 29 years."

Reaching competitiveness quickly? Check. Last year's team had 15 players on it, and of those, seven had previously played football thanks to Encampment's co-op agreement with Saratoga. This year, about 16 players, including five seniors, will bring more

experience and savvy to the field.

Dalton Peterson, who had more than 100 tackles in just seven games last year, is one of those seniors.

Senior Kelton Koehn and juniors Koye Gilbert, Michael Anderson and Caysen Barkhurst also showed flashes of potential last season and will be among the leaders on this year's team. Peterson and Gilbert will likely do the bulk of the ball-carrying, while Barkhurst and Anderson are both receivers and Koehn will front the efforts with blocking.

But other elements helped Encampment grow its program quickly.

"A lot of that credit can go to all of the basketball they have played with each other for several years as well as the family atmosphere we have at our school," Willford said.



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# Farson could make deep run

The Farson Pronghorns are ready to turn what might have been into what could be.

In 2019, limited by a small senior class and by injuries, Farson's championship chase ended in the Class 1A six-man quarterfinals.

This year, though, the Pronghorns are loaded for a deeper playoff run thanks to the experience they return and the injuries that have healed.

"We've got great athletes and a great attitude, and good leadership coming back," coach Trip Applequist said. "... I think the boys are really confident."

Senior Parker Clawson, Farson's only all-state selection last year, returns along with seniors Colby Jones and Zander Reed, who were all-conference choices.

But they're just the tip of the iceberg on a team that lost only three seniors and also returns two players, senior Colin Malec and junior Levi Johnson, who saw limited time last season due to injury.

Johnson played only six games and Malec seven before being lost for the season to those injuries. Lacking the necessary depth, the Pronghorns' playoff run ended early with a 60-13 loss to Hulett in the first round of the playoffs.

"They're kind of disappointed with how the season ended last year, so they're ready to get after it," Applequist said of his team.

Johnson and Malec, despite their limited games, led the rushing attack, with Johnson running 53 times for 488 yards and Malec

*"We've got great athletes and a great attitude, and good leadership coming back."*

**~Coach Trip Applequist**

running 60 times for 461 yards. Senior Triston Lamorie was third on the team with 41 carries for 323 yards.

They'll all have a part in the approach this season.

"If you have multiple weapons who you can get the ball to or who can be a threat in the open field, that's a big luxury," Applequist said.

Farson does lose its quarterback but returns Clawson, who was Farson's top receiver. He caught 30 passes for 436 yards and seven touchdowns in 2019. No other Pronghorn receiver finished with double-digit catches.

The Pronghorns return six of their top seven tacklers on defense.

Colby Jones led the Pronghorns in total tackles (57), tackles for loss (13) and total defensive points.

Clawson added 40 tackles, including a team-high 20 solo, and eight pass deflections.

Senior Carson Jones chipped in 36 tackles, junior Klaine Holladay added 32, and Reed and Johnson had 27 apiece.

With such an experienced group, Applequist said the unit's goal won't be to do anything all that different, but he will try to find ways to take advantage of the playing time the group has accumulated.

"I don't foresee any big changes," he said. "... (But) because they have experience, that allows you to take some risks, do some stunting and some things that maybe you wouldn't normally do."



**Mascot:** Pronghorns  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Green and yellow

**Coach:** Marvin "Trip" Applequist,  
 ninth year at Farson  
**2019 Record:** 6-3, lost to  
 Hulett in 1A-6 quarterfinals

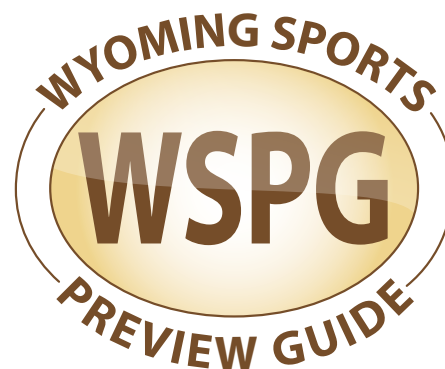
**Key Players**  
**C/DL:** Colby Jones, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Zander Reed, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Parker Clawson, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Levi Johnson, Jr.

**2020 Schedule**  
**8-28:** TBD (Zero Week)  
**9-4:** vs. Guernsey-Sunrise, 1 p.m.  
**\*9-11:** at Burlington, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-18:** vs. Encampment, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-26:** at Ten Sleep, 2 p.m.  
**10-2:** at Kaycee, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-9:** vs. Dubois, 1 p.m.  
**\*10-17:** vs. Meeteetse, 1 p.m.  
**\*10-24:** at Snake River, 2 p.m.  
 \* Conference game

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**Mascot:** Longhorns  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Red and white

**Coach:** Zeb Hagen,  
fifth year at Meeteetse  
**2019 Record:** 3-5, lost to  
Hanna in 1A-6 quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**WR/DB:** Calvin Erickson, Jr.  
**TB/DE:** Hadley Abarr, Sr.  
**QB/FS:** Dace Bennett, Jr.  
**TE/DE:** Mickle Ogden, Jr.

**2020 Schedule**  
8-29: at Cody JV, 2 p.m. (Zero Week)  
9-5: at NSI, 1 p.m.  
\*9-12: vs. Ten Sleep, 2 p.m.  
\*9-18: at Dubois, 2 p.m.  
\*9-25: vs. Burlington, 2 p.m.  
\*10-3: at Encampment, 3 p.m.  
\*10-9: vs. Snake River, 2 p.m.  
\*10-17: at Farson, 1 p.m.  
10-24: vs. Cody JV, 2 p.m.  
\* Conference game

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# Numbers challenge Longhorns

Meeteetse’s biggest challenge to start the 2020 season is figuring out how to practice. With only about eight players expected to come out for the Longhorns this year – one senior, four or five juniors, no sophomores and three or four freshmen – Meeteetse will need to figure out ways to prepare for a season without having an opportunity for a six-on-six session prior to the first game. This isn’t a new problem: Four of Meeteetse’s 10 players last year were seniors, and the Longhorns still qualified for the playoffs. “Our girls’ (numbers) are high right now, but our boys are down,” coach Zeb Hagen said. “And then it’s going to switch again... in three or four years.” Meeteetse’s 3-5 finish last season was the program’s first losing season since 2011, but the Longhorns will have enough key players back to stay competitive. “We might not be the biggest, but we can tackle well and be there all the time,” Hagen said. The offense returns a pair of players who make up one of Class 1A six-man’s best aerial duos. Junior Dace Bennett completed 42 passes for 778 yards and 12 touchdowns last season. Classmate Calvin Erickson was his favorite target – he had 26 catches for 600 yards and six

touchdowns, the only Meeteetse receiver to finish with triple-digit receiving yards. The Longhorns graduated their top two rushers, and Bennett (50 carries, 318 yards, three TDs) is Meeteetse’s top returning rusher. With the Bennett-Erickson duo leading the passing game, Hagen said the Longhorns will probably feature a more wide-open offensive approach. “We’re not as big a team as we were last year,” Hagen said. “Our four seniors were all bigger kids last year, so we did run the ball and pack things in. ... This year we don’t have any other choice, so I’m looking forward to seeing how Dace grows over the offseason and hopefully a couple other guys can step up and be weapons in the passing game.” Erickson, who wasn’t an all-conference selection last year, led Meeteetse in defensive points, finishing with team-highs in total tackles (96), solo tackles (52), interceptions (5) and pass deflections (11). Senior Hadley Abarr was second on the team with 91 tackles, including a team-high 16 tackles for loss. Erickson and Abarr are the only two of Meeteetse’s top five tacklers to come back, though. Hagen said their return helps establish the right mentality for the Longhorns’ defense. “Those guys set a pretty good tone,” Hagen said. “They’re always around the ball, so I think that’s the biggest thing.” Bennett added 47 tackles and three interceptions, while juniors Mickle Ogden (14 tackles) and Jonathan Blessing (13) also had double-digit tackles.

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# Rattlers have big shoes to fill

The question facing the Snake River program in 2020 is where to go from here. Riding the momentum created by a strong and deep senior class, the Rattlers’ 2019 team went to unprecedented heights, not just for them but for six-man football in Wyoming. In a 10-0 season, Snake River had nine consecutive shutouts – an amazing feat for any football team but almost unheard of at the six-man level. The shutout streak ended in the 1A six-man championship game against Carbon County rival Hanna, but the Rattlers traded the end of the streak for the championship they earned in a 71-38 victory. To defend their championship, the Rattlers will have to lean on a bunch of younger players, as six of Snake River’s seven all-state selections graduated. Junior Zander Risner is the only returning all-state selection. Coach Jack Cobb said the 2020 Rattlers will be athletic, but young,

**Key Players**  
**FB/DE:** Zander Risner, Jr.  
**QB/S:** Hadley Myers, Soph.  
**RB/LB:** Kannadis Peroulis, Soph.  
**RB:** Wyatt Adams, Jr.

and will need to build some team chemistry to keep the success rolling. “Given the situation we are in, it’s been difficult to start to build that chemistry,” Cobb said, “but all the boys have been in our system so I’m confident we can get to the first practice and build it quickly.” Risner was third for the Rattlers in rushing last year with 34 carries for 261 yards. Juniors Jordy Valles (112 rushing yards) and Wyatt Adams (108) also saw some time in the backfield in reserve roles. However, those three players are the only ones who had much of a say in Snake River’s offensive approach last year who are back this year. Cobb said sophomore Hadley Myers is a top candidate for quarterback, and sophomore

Kannadis Peroulis will also play a part in the offensive approach. Risner was second for the Rattlers in defensive points and led the team with 78 total tackles. He finished with team-highs in tackles for loss (19) and sacks (11) and recovered six fumbles. However, after graduation, transfers and injuries are accounted for, Risner is the only one of the Rattlers’ top eight tacklers who will return this year. No other returning player had more than five tackles in 2019. Cobb said he does not expect a repeat of 2019 – no one is – but he said the lessons learned from that run will pay off for seasons to come. “I don’t think I will ever see another season like last year’s team put together, but it showed the determination they had to be their very best all the time,” Cobb said. “... I hope the younger boys learned how difficult it is to win a championship and how much work and commitment it takes to do what our 2019 team accomplished.”



**Mascot:** Rattlers  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Purple and yellow

**Coach:** Jack Cobb,  
fourth year at Snake River  
**2019 Record:** 10-0, beat  
Hanna in 1A-6 championship

**2020 Schedule**  
9-5: at Hanna, noon  
\*9-12: at Encampment, 2 p.m.  
\*9-19: vs. Burlington, 2 p.m.  
\*9-26: at Dubois, 2 p.m.  
\*10-3: vs. Ten Sleep, 2 p.m.  
\*10-9: at Meeteetse, 2 p.m.  
10-15: vs. Natrona sophs, 4 p.m.  
\*10-24: vs. Farson, 2 p.m.  
\* Conference game

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**Mascot:** Pioneers  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Blue and red

**Coach:** TBD  
**2019 Record:** Did not field a team

**Key Players**  
TBD

**2020 Schedule**  
9-4: at Bridger, Mont., 7 p.m.  
\*9-12: at Meeteetse, 2 p.m.  
9-19: vs. NSI, 1 p.m.  
\*9-26: vs. Farson, 2 p.m.  
\*10-3: at Snake River, 2 p.m.  
\*10-10: vs. Encampment, 2 p.m.  
\*10-16: at Burlington, 2 p.m.  
\*10-24: vs. Dubois, 2 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Pioneers have question marks

Ten Sleep has been struggling to put a football team on the field for the better part of three years. The Pioneers’ players and coaches had planned to have football teams each of the past two years. And each of the past two years, Ten Sleep hasn’t had enough players come out for the team to make the seasons go. This year, the Pioneers’ fortunes are still in question. As of mid-July, the Pioneers had not hired a head coach for the 2020 season. However, the season was still scheduled; Ten Sleep has a full slate of games on the docket. Last year, though, Ten Sleep’s football struggles hit in full force after practices began in August. Although seven players came out for the team, the Pioneers’ two oldest players – the team’s only senior and the team’s only junior – both suffered injuries. One of the injuries was season-ending, while the other was serious enough to put into question whether the Pioneers

would have enough players. Rather than play with five healthy players and one injured player, Ten Sleep ended its season in late August, before their first game. Faced with similar problems, Ten Sleep’s middle school team also failed to go in 2019. The 2018 team, meanwhile, never even got to the first practice. That season, only four players showed an interest in playing for the Pioneers, forcing the school to end the season prior to the first practice being played. Lusk native Taylen Arnett had been hired to coach the team in 2019, but Ten Sleep activities director Sarah Novak said via email in mid-July that Arnett is no longer the coach. Novak also said Ten Sleep hadn’t yet hired a new head coach for the 2020 season. Prior to 2018 and 2019, Ten Sleep had fielded a football team every year since 1991. However, Ten Sleep’s last

winning season came in 2011. That season, the Pioneers finished 6-4 and lost in the first round of the playoffs. In 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 – the team’s final four seasons before back-to-back season cancellations – the Pioneers had one victory per season, going 1-6, 1-6, 1-7 and 1-7, respectively. Ten Sleep’s last victory came in the second week of the 2017 season, when the Pioneers beat St. Stephens 57-38. Ten Sleep closed that season with six consecutive losses. In its program history, Ten Sleep has won two playoff games. One came while playing in a Montana six-man league, in 2005. The other, the program’s only Wyoming playoff victory, came in 2010 when the Pioneers beat Meeteetse 93-38 in the Class 1A six-man quarterfinals. The next week, Ten Sleep finished one point away from a state championship game berth but lost 33-32 to Hanna.



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