

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

## **2022**

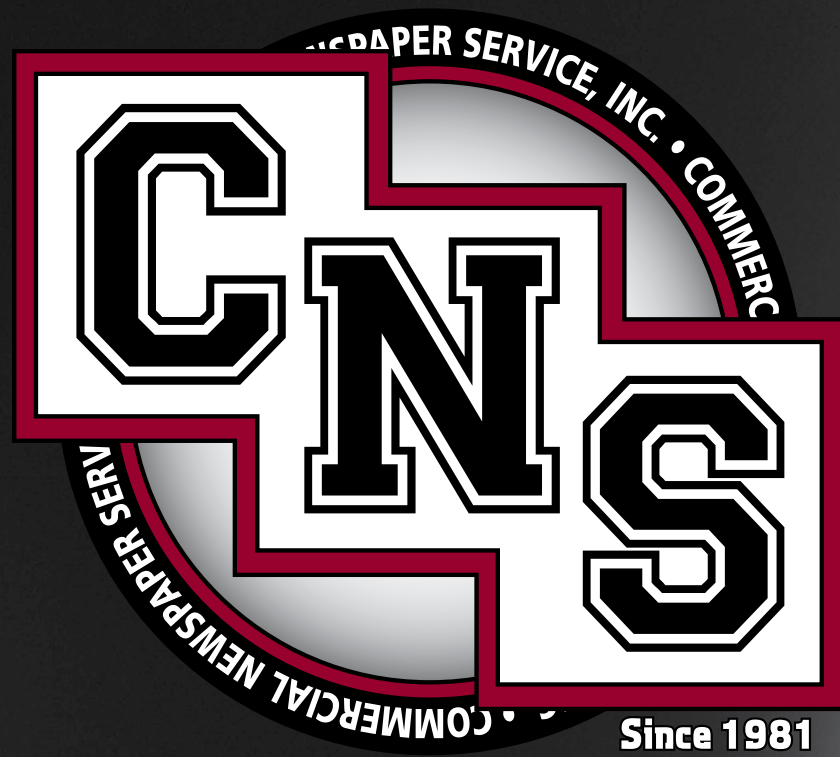
### **BEWARE OF THE BRONCS**

**Sheridan, Cody ready to defend title turf**



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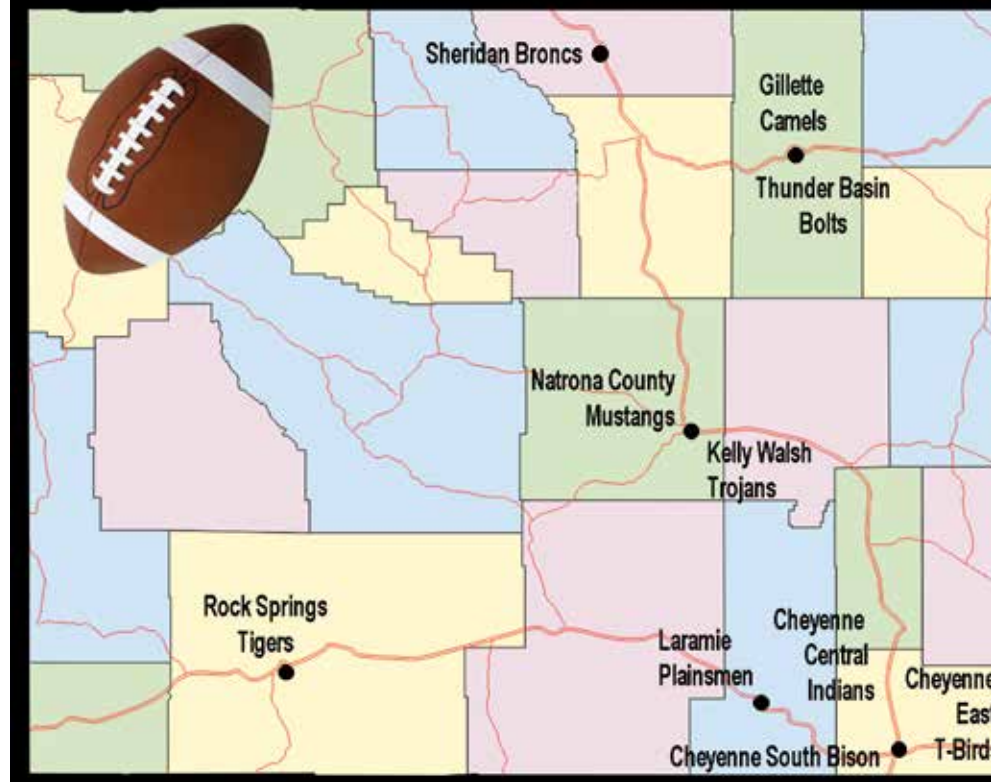
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# 4A Preview



## Colson Coon returns to lead Sheridan attack

By Patrick Schmiedt

### Four questions to answer

*Let's not mess around — who's gonna win it all this year?* The three favorites seem clear, and it's Sheridan, Cheyenne East and Natrona. Perhaps not coincidentally, these are the only three programs that have won 4A titles since 2009.

*Why those three ahead of the others?*

Experience, mostly. Sheridan gained a lot of love as the defending champion and has enough players returning to start near the top. East, though, might return more experience than any other 4A team. Meanwhile, Natrona is loaded with seniors.

*And the others — are they in the conversation at all?* Some are. In particular, Thunder Basin, Rock Springs and Cheyenne Central are all legit threats. However, Thunder Basin and Rock Springs will both rely on young and untested players, while Central will have the experience but is coming off a messy 2-8 season.

*What else should we watch for this season?*

A potential offensive explosion. Of the 10 returning first-team all-state players in Class 4A, eight of them are returning to spots on offense. Inexperience on defense might give offenses a boost, at least early.

### Four key games

*Cheyenne Central at Sheridan, Aug. 26.* On paper, the defending champs from up north

might look like they've got it easy in their season opener, but the Indians will be improved.

*Cheyenne East at Natrona, Sept. 2.* This game won't be a make-or-break one — early September ones rarely are. But it will be a key decider of how the top of 4A will shape up, and the loser here will have to chase the other the rest of the season.

*Thunder Basin at Rock Springs, Sept. 2.* Class 4A's dark horse might emerge right here. Both teams have earned big expectations, but similarly both teams have to overcome big graduation departures.

*Cheyenne East at Sheridan, Sept. 30.* Sheridan gets both East and Central at home this season, a little quirk in the schedule that will be a nice boost to the Broncos — if they can take advantage of home field.

### Predicted order of finish

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

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

*Cheyenne East 33, Sheridan 28.* If anyone is going to break up the triumvirate of typical 4A champions, they're going to eventually have to through one, or two, or three of them in the playoffs.

## State Champs

**Sheridan  
Broncs**



## 2021 State Playoffs

### 4A Championship

Sheridan 45, Rock Springs 27

### Semifinals

Sheridan 38, Natrona 24  
Rock Springs 55, Cheyenne East 34

### Quarterfinals

Sheridan 48, Cheyenne Central 14  
Natrona 17, Thunder Basin 14  
Rock Springs 42, Kelly Walsh 14  
Cheyenne East 31, Campbell County 12

## Players to watch

### Colson Coon, Sheridan

Only the second junior who's ever won Wyoming's Gatorade Player of the Year award is back for the defending state champions. Coon (1,648 rushing yards, 22 TDs, 69 tackles) has already proven he can take the focus of opposing teams and still generate huge games.

### Garet Schlabs, Drew Jackson and Dom Kaszas, Cheyenne East.

Kaszas, Sheridan's all-state receiver, transferred to East during the summer, bolstering what was probably already 4A's top receiving corps. They combined for 129 catches and 1,967 yards, giving East three game-breaking receivers.

### Ethan Brinkman, Cheyenne East

East's middle linebacker typically produces big numbers no matter who's there, and Brinkman led Class 4A in tackles with 122. East's defense is deep, but Brinkman is the undisputed leader on that side of the ball.

### Keagan Bartlett, Cheyenne Central

Bartlett broke 1,000 yards both rushing and passing last season, and did so on a team that finished 2-8. With improved players around him, this year could be huge.

### Carter McBurnett, Rock Springs

McBurnett doesn't have any eye-popping defensive statistics (24 tackles last season), but the senior lineman is the Tigers' only returning all-state player and has seen significant minutes since his freshman year. McBurnett doesn't have any eye-popping defensive statistics (24 tackles last season), but the senior lineman is the Tigers' only returning all-state player and has seen significant minutes since his freshman year.





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

**Coach:** Andrew Rose,  
fourth year at Campbell  
County

**2021 Record:** 4-6, lost to  
Cheyenne East in state  
quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**C/DT:** Cooper Stevens, Sr.  
**QB/SS:** Aidan Dorr, Jr.  
**QB/LB:** Mason Drube, Soph.  
**RB/CB:** Ian Carter, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** at Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.  
**9-2:** at Laramie, 6 p.m.  
**9-9:** vs. Rock Springs, 6 p.m.  
**9-16:** at Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.  
**9-23:** vs. Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.  
**9-30:** at Thunder Basin, 7 p.m.  
**10-7:** vs. Natrona, 6 p.m.  
**10-14:** vs. Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.  
**10-21:** at Sheridan, 7 p.m.

# Camels looking for fresh start

With only two starters returning on both offense and defense, Campbell County's prospects for 2022 could be looked at with pessimism.

But Camels coach Andrew Rose doesn't have time for that. Instead, he's looking at all the opportunities the Camels have to step into new roles, embrace new challenges and continue to grow as a program.

Moreover, competition for starting spots is a good thing. "If we have two guys fighting for a position, you're not out anything," Rose said. "It's a tough decision as a coach, but those are the decisions we want."

"... That's what we're really driving home on those competition positions. We want that same thought process, 'Well, if I don't get this position, where's another spot where I can help my team?' If we can get a full buy-in on that idea, we're going to be a dangerous team."

Although every position has such challenges, nowhere is it as evident as at quarterback. Sophomore Mason Drube and junior Aidan Dorr shared quarterbacking duties last year, Drube taking the bulk of the snaps. He completed 37 of 96 passes for 810 yards, with Dorr adding 21 completions for 433 yards.

Opportunities at other positions have also ratcheted up the competition level. The Camels graduated all three all-state and all

six all-conference selections, so "it's an open opportunity for kids to move into different positions," Rose said.

Senior Ian Carter was the Camel's No. 2 rusher last season, finishing with 564 yards on 107 carries, including five touchdowns.

Carter also finished with 19 tackles and led the team with two interceptions and tied for the team lead with six pass break-ups.

Rose said Carter will help show other players how to play "fast



and without reservations and with confidence."

On a defense that graduated its top four players in defensive points and its top six tacklers, that will be key.

"We need guys that are going to be physical, want to step up and play the game physically without hesitation and set that tone," Rose said.

Junior Levi Palmer is the top returning tackler, with 33 last season. Senior Jeff Pelton added 21.

Offensively, Pelton finished second last season on the team in receiving yards with 260, doing so on just seven catches (37.1 yards per catch). He is the only one of Campbell County's top six receivers to come back this year.

Senior Cooper Stevens returns as a starter at center.

Rose said several seniors, including wide receiver/defensive backs Rylan Kirkpatrick and Evan Vandom and fullback/defensive end Harland Washburn have also emerged as leaders.

The Camels also planned on taking 83 players to a team camp this summer – over 20 more than last season.

# Indians have returning talent

One statistic can't define a season – but one from Cheyenne Central's 2021 season can come close.

Cheyenne Central went 0-4 in one-score games last year, a constant frustration in a 2-8 season.

Partly attributable to a young group trying to figure out how to win at the varsity level, partly attributable to establishing the right mentality, and partly attributable to plain-old bad luck, the Indians' lack of success in close games will hopefully be a one-year aberration, coach Mike Apodaca said.

He's already seeing proof that it will be.

"When kids are invested ... I really do think they're able to find something different late in games," he said. "And I think this group has that, and I'm

excited to see that come out."

The sentiment makes sense when looking at Central's roster for this year. The Indians return four first-team all-conference choices, including senior all-state choice Keagan Bartlett, as well as seven starters on defense and six on offense.

Bartlett was one of the top dual-threat quarterbacks in the state last year, cracking the 1,000-yard mark in both rushing (1,227 yards) and passing (1,027 yards). He ran for 15 touchdowns and threw for nine more.

"His comfort level with us and our comfort level with him is worlds apart from where it was a year ago," Apodaca said. "... Now that he's comfortable, that next step of leadership starts to come out."

Senior Jackson Whitworth led the Indians in all major receiving categories with 22 catches for 262 yards and five touchdowns. Senior Ethan Reisdorfer was fourth in receiving yards, managing 111 on eight catches, while junior Miles Porwoll added 12 catches for 109 yards.

Senior Jaxon Lobatos was second for Central with 42

carries for 252 yards, while junior Zecha King added 29 carries for 146 yards.

Senior Chris Benboe was an all-conference choice and will help boost the offensive line along with senior Augie Lain and junior Colton Prindle.

The Indians also return four of their top five players in defensive points.

Senior Richard Prescott is Central's top returning tackler. He was second for the Indians last year with 67 tackles and also notched five pass deflections and two interceptions.

Junior Chase Talich was third on the team with 47 tackles, also picking up a pair of interceptions, while Lobatos had 46 tackles and Prindle contributed 31.

Bartlett (18 tackles), King (12), junior Mason Counter (11) and Porwoll (10) also finished with double-digit tackles.

Central had a young defense last year, and Apodaca said "it showed at times. I thought we were really competitive throughout the year."

"... We expect that to pay off and hopefully allows you to get a little bit quicker start."



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

**Coach:** Mike Apodaca,  
fifth year at Cheyenne  
Central

**2021 Record:** 2-8, lost  
to Sheridan in state  
quarterfinals

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** at Sheridan, 6 p.m.  
**9-2:** vs. Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.  
**9-9:** vs. Natrona, 6 p.m.  
**9-16:** at Thunder Basin, 6 p.m.  
**9-23:** at Laramie, 6 p.m.  
**9-30:** vs. Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.  
**10-7:** at Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.  
**10-14:** at Campbell County, 6 p.m.  
**10-21:** vs. Rock Springs, 6 p.m.

# T-Birds banking on experience

Gaining experience is different from having it.

Cheyenne East coach Chad Goff said the playing time that went to underclassmen last year under frustrating or uncertain circumstances will ultimately be good for the 2022 team.

"We ended up playing some younger kids, and I think bringing those kids back with that experience gives us an opportunity to have great leadership and just to be ready for the varsity game," Goff said.

East can depend on three returning all-state players, which is more than any other Class 4A team.

Seniors Ethan Brinkman, Trevor Eldridge and Gareth Schlabs were all-state performers last

year, while senior Jakob Culver and junior Drew Jackson were all-conference picks.

In addition, East picks up senior transfer Dominic Kaszas, who was an all-state wide receiver at Sheridan last season.

Schlabs was the top target in the passing game last season, catching 71 passes for 972 yards and 17 touchdowns. His numbers were tops among all receivers in Class 4A last season.

However, East actually returns its top three receivers in terms of yards from last year. Jackson added 29 catches for 541 yards, second for East in both categories, while Culver notched 15 catches

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



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

**Coach:** Chad Goff,  
17th year at Cheyenne  
East  
**2021 Record:** 8-3, lost  
to Rock Springs in state  
semifinals

## CHEYENNE EAST THUNDERBIRDS

**Key Players**  
**WR/CB:** Gareth Schlabs, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Trevor Eldridge, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Seth Scott, Sr.  
**RB/ILB:** Ethan Brinkman, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** vs. Campbell County, 6 p.m.  
**9-2:** at Natrona, 7 p.m.  
**9-9:** at Thunder Basin, 6 p.m.  
**9-16:** vs. Laramie, 6 p.m.  
**9-23:** at Rock Springs, 6 p.m.  
**9-30:** at Sheridan, 6 p.m.  
**10-7:** vs. Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.  
**10-14:** at Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.  
**10-21:** vs. Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.

## CHEYENNE EAST CONTINUED-

for 213 yards.

Kaszas added 29 catches for 454 yards and eight TDs at Sheridan.

"We want everyone to be a factor for us," Goff said. "We don't want you to be able to just focus on one guy."

Junior Cam Hayes is East's top returning passer and top returning rusher. He completed 59 of 96 passes for 831 yards and nine touchdowns in extended duty last season; he also had 52 carries for 217 yards to finish third for East last season.

Eldridge and senior Seth Scott return as starters on the offensive line, but Goff said the returning

starters need to mesh with the new starters "and make the other guys around them successful. They love that challenge."

The defense also has loads of experience, as the Thunderbirds return four of their top five tacklers from last year.

Brinkman was, by far, East's top tackler in 2021, finishing with 122 – almost double up any other player. He led the Thunderbirds with 45 solo tackles and 69 assists and also had seven tackles for loss.

Goff said Brinkman was moved from outside to inside linebacker to patrol both sidelines, not just one – something he did well last year.

Jackson finished with 64 tackles and had a pair of interceptions,

while Eldridge had 59 tackles and Culver had 51 tackles and three blocked kicks.

"That linebacking crew, were pretty excited about," Goff said.

Other defensive contributors included juniors Colby Olson and Caleb Ruff (27 tackles each) and Schlabs (15 tackles, three interceptions, seven pass break-ups).







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

**Coach:** Eli Moody, first year at Cheyenne South  
**2021 Record:** 0-9, did not qualify for playoffs

#### Key Players

**QB:** Osayas Garcia, Jr.  
**OL/TE/DL:** Dylan Choate, Sr.  
**LB:** Robert Campbell, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** James Hushbeck, Jr.

#### 2022 Schedule

**8-26:** at Thunder Basin, 6 p.m.  
**9-2:** vs. Sheridan, 6 p.m.  
**9-9:** at Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.  
**9-16:** vs. Campbell County, 6 p.m.  
**9-23:** at Natrona, 6 p.m.  
**9-30:** at Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.  
**10-7:** vs. Rock Springs, 6 p.m.  
**10-14:** vs. Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.  
**10-21:** at Laramie, 6 p.m.

## Bison building from ground up

In his first season as Cheyenne South's head coach, Eli Moody will be part coach, part salesman.

With the Bison in the midst of a 20-game losing streak across more than two seasons – and the closest of those losses by 23 points – Moody has to sell potential players on a program that is not a natural draw.

The spirit is willing. An assistant with the Bison last year, Moody wholeheartedly believes South has potential to develop into a consistently competitive Class 4A program.

"It definitely could be a diamond in the rough," he said. "There's a lot of great kids down here, a lot of great community support. It hasn't been the success on the field that they've wanted, but I think there's some great potential."

The restructuring of the Bison begins with the playbook. The veer offense is out; in is a two-back approach that focuses more on balance.

"Kids are buying into the new playbooks and some of them are buying into new positions," Moody said. "... (We have) a lot of excitement for the future at the moment, and we have a lot of guys that have a lot of varsity game time that are still around."

The defense highlights that experience, where South retains seven of its top 11 tacklers.

Junior Noah Haggberg finished

with a team-high 54 tackles and tied for the team lead with four tackles for loss.

Junior Aiden Weber added 36 tackles, senior Robert Campbell had 29 (including four for loss), senior Matt Rivera had 25, senior Livante Yobech had 21 and senior Dylan Choate had 17.

Eight starters are back on offense. Junior Osayas Garcia took over at quarterback last season and completed 53 of 146 passes for 496 yards and four touchdowns.

Weber, with 14 catches for 146 yards – good for second on the team last year – is South's top returning receiver.

Rivera was third for the Bison last year in rushing, carrying 22 times for 152 yards, and added four catches for 41 yards.

Junior James Hushbeck highlights the returners on the offensive line.

Also back are senior twins Jalen and Santana Trujillo, who sat out in 2021. They may not be alone.

"With the changing of the guard there's some guys who are deciding to come out or come back," Moody said. "... There's a lot of kids who when they came to South who went to avoid the football team who are now re-evaluating that."

On top of that, Moody said the Bison should have one of their biggest freshman classes in several years, giving the team more depth.

"I hope we can strive to make it a little more competitive across the board," Moody said.

"We have a lot of excitement for the future at the moment..."

~Coach Eli Moody

## Trojans have holes to fill

The scenario facing the Kelly Walsh Trojans this season is not unusual.

Players with limited varsity experience will have to fulfill important roles, as only a limited number of players will be back from 2021.

As usual, though, coach Aaron Makelky said he has faith that players who have had to wait to see varsity playing time will rise to the occasion once they have the opportunity.

"We go through this cycle every year, so it's nothing new," he said. "We have a large program with about 120 players each season, so we will never return a big group of starters. We have some hungry young guys who have been working to get ready for the season. They will find a way on to the field or at least push the guys ahead of them to get better through competition."

The offensive line will be the most experienced group coming back from last year's 3-7 team, as seniors Chris Pickering and Asher Vail both return as starters and junior Kason Adsit saw lots of time in 2021.

Makelky said the two senior returners will have to do more than just match their output from a year ago, though.

"We will need both of them to step up and not only be productive, but also mentor some younger guys who will be joining their varsity unit with no real experience," Makelky said.

Senior Gibson Sasser led the Trojans in

passing last year with 37 completions on 77 attempts for 444 yards and three touchdowns. He is also KW's top returning rusher, carrying 68 times for 215 yards to finish second on the team last year.

At the same time, junior Eric Whitley also started three games at quarterback, finishing the year with 23 carries for 154 yards.

Makelky said both will see time under center, and "we will try to find ways to get them both on the field at the same time."

The Trojans' receiving corps was hit hard by graduation, though, as no anticipated returner had more than one catch last season.

KW's defense was also hit by graduation but does return four players who started in 2021. One of those – senior Erich Hulshizer – was the team's top tackler a year ago.

Hulshizer, KW's only returning all-state or all-conference selection, led the Trojans' defense with 69 tackles, including 33 solo tackles. He also led KW with two interceptions and nine pass deflections.

"We expect his role as our most productive defensive player to continue," Makelky said. "We expect the vocal leadership role since he will be our most experienced defensive player."

Another key returner on defense is senior lineman Derek Burt, who had 28 tackles last year.



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

**Coach:** Aaron Makelky, fourth year at Kelly Walsh  
**2021 Record:** 3-7, lost to Rock Springs in state quarterfinals

#### Key Players

**QB:** Gibson Sasser, Sr.  
**C:** Chris Pickering, Sr.  
**SS:** Erich Hulshizer, Sr.  
**OT:** Asher Vail, Sr.

#### 2022 Schedule

**8-26:** vs. Rock Springs, 6 p.m.  
**9-2:** at Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.  
**9-9:** vs. Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.  
**9-16:** vs. Natrona, 6 p.m.  
**9-23:** at Campbell County, 6 p.m.  
**9-30:** at Laramie, 6 p.m.  
**10-7:** vs. Sheridan, 7 p.m.  
**10-14:** vs. Thunder Basin, 6 p.m.  
**10-21:** at Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.

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

**Coach:** Paul Ronga,  
second year at Laramie  
**2021 Record:** 1-8, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**OL/DL:** Abe Bangoura, Sr.  
**WR/CB:** Adrien Calderon, Sr.  
**WR/LB:** Jeremy Sanchez, Sr.  
**WR/S:** Mason Branch, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
8-26: vs. Natrona, 6 p.m.  
**9-2:** vs. Campbell County, 6 p.m.  
**9-9:** at Sheridan, 6 p.m.  
**9-16:** at Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.  
**9-23:** vs. Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.  
**9-30:** vs. Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.  
**10-7:** at Thunder Basin, 6 p.m.  
**10-14:** at Rock Springs, 6 p.m.  
**10-21:** vs. Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.



**Mascot:** Mustangs  
**Division:** Class 4A  
**Colors:** Black and orange

**Coach:** Steve Harshman,  
32nd year at Natrona  
**2021 Record:** 7-4, lost to  
Sheridan in state semifinals

**Key Players**  
**TE/DE:** Kayden Pharr, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Breckin McClintock, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Cody Crawford, Sr.  
**QB/LB:** Wyatt Powell, Sr.

# Plainsmen relying on ground game

The offensive priority for Laramie this season will be simple: Run the ball better than last season.

Laramie finished last in Class 4A last season with 75 rushing yards per game, nearly 40 yards per game behind any other 4A team.

Second-year coach Paul Ronga said a primary offseason emphasis was addressing that weakness, particularly in the weight room, with the ancillary motivation of committing to improving their on-field product against the state’s largest football programs.

“We’ve worked hard all offseason, including the season before when I was here, with changing the culture and the mindset, and we are embracing the culture change,” Ronga said. “... The biggest difference is the weight room. The weight room program was lacking in participation and commitment. We’ve hired a strength coach (Jake Morrison) and we believe we’ve flipped that switch for the better.”

Ronga said the entire offensive approach centers on the strength of the offensive line, where seniors Abe Bangoura, Chris Gonzales and Jessie Cruz will help set the pace.

“The offensive line is the whole key to everything offensively,” Ronga said. “Any attempt to pass the ball, any attempt to run the ball, any attempt to get the ball to any of the skill players is on the offensive line.”

Junior Ben Malone returns at quarterback and will be Laramie’s top returning rusher, as well. Malone completed 123 of 210 passes for 1,319 yards and nine touchdowns and ran 117 times for 184 yards and a team-high five touchdowns.

The receiving corps is deep. Senior Adrien Calderon was second for Laramie with 32 catches for 396 yards and three touchdowns last season.

Senior Mason Branch wasn’t far behind, with 19 catches for 315 yards and three touchdowns as well. Seniors Jeremy Sanchez, Mahlon Morris and Reese McIntyre will add depth.

In the backfield, juniors

# Tigers ready for next step

Each of the past three years, Rock Springs has finished with a better record than it had the previous season.

Last year’s 10-2 and state runner-up finish was the Tigers’ best season since 2002.

Repeating that run will be difficult with a small senior class, but coach Mark Lenhardt said he’s optimistic about building another state contender by, in part, relying on a large and talented junior class.

With only about nine or 10 seniors expected on the roster, that will be a necessity.

“We’ll be really, really, young, but I really like our current junior class,” Lenhardt said. “(It) is a good group of players... but they’re going to have to grow up in a hurry if we’re going to be good.”

However, the Tigers do have a blueprint for building success, and this year’s team will likely look different at the end of the season than at the beginning.

“I’m kind of hoping we can take that same kind of path with our junior group and our senior and sophomore classes can chip in as needed,” Lenhardt said. “... The problem is trying to find enough depth. Any time you have a class that’s small, you’ve got to make up for it in other places, and hopefully we can develop some depth.”

The Tigers graduated their top five rushers, top three receivers, their quarterback and four out of five offensive linemen; on defense, just two of Rock Springs’ top 13 tacklers will return, and none of the top five.

Senior lineman Carter McBurnett is the only one of eight all-state choices from Rock Springs to return this year.

McBurnett, a varsity contributor since his freshman year, will be key, Lenhardt said.

“To play on the interior as a freshman just shows what kind of maturity he has,” Lenhardt said. “He’s basically like a coach on the field. Our team changes quite a bit if he’s not out there.”

The exodus leaves junior Andre Graves (19 carries, 150 yards) as the leading returning

rusher. Senior Saben Carlsen (14 carries, 111 yards) also broke triple-digit yards last year.

Junior Michael Faigl, slated to be the quarterback, completed four passes for 34 yards last year and is the only returner who attempted a pass last year.


Carlsen was fourth for the Tigers in receiving yards last year, notching 10 catches for 154 yards. He is the only one of Rock Springs’ top seven receivers to return this fall, as no other receiver broke 25 yards last season.

Carlsen, who had 36 tackles and four pass deflections, had more tackles last year than any other returner.

McBurnett had 24 tackles, junior Goodness Okere added 22 and senior Trenton Butcher had 21.



**208-873-3700**



**Mascot:** Tigers  
**Division:** Class 4A  
**Colors:** Black and orange

**Coach:** Mark Lenhardt,  
fourth year at Rock Springs  
**2021 Record:** 10-2,  
lost to Sheridan in state  
championship

**Key Players**  
**OL/DL:** Carter McBurnett, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Saben Carlsen, Sr.  
**WR/DE:** Dalton Thomas, Sr.  
**QB:** Michael Faigl, Jr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** at Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.  
**9-2:** vs. Thunder Basin, 6 p.m.  
**9-9:** at Campbell County, 6 p.m.  
**9-16:** vs. Sheridan, 6 p.m.  
**9-23:** vs. Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.  
**9-30:** at Natrona, 6 p.m.  
**10-7:** at Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.  
**10-14:** vs. Laramie, 6 p.m.  
**10-21:** at Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.

**Natrona Mustangs  
2022 Schedule**

**8-26:** at Laramie, 6 p.m.  
**9-2:** vs. Cheyenne East, 7 p.m.  
**9-9:** at Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.  
**9-16:** at Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.  
**9-23:** vs. Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.  
**9-30:** vs. Rock Springs, 6 p.m.  
**10-7:** at Campbell County, 6 p.m.  
**10-14:** vs. Sheridan, 6 p.m.  
**10-21:** vs. Thunder Basin, 6 p.m.

# Mustangs bank on mental approach

Now in his 32nd year as the head football coach at Natrona, Steve Harshman used to say 90% of football is from the neck up.

“The more I’ve been doing this, I think it’s 98%,” he said.

That reliance on attitude, intelligence and focus will, as usual, be part of the Mustangs’ approach.

With it, the Mustangs are consistent contenders, and with several contributors from last year’s 7-4 and Class 4A playoff semifinal team back – including five first-team all-conference players, the most in 4A – that should be the case again this year.

Harshman said he will rely on a group of about 26 seniors to provide leadership and team-building.

“That’s more important than any talent, and that’s the hardest part of this,” he said. “They’ve got to make themselves come together, but we’ve

got to facilitate that, and that’s the challenge of every coach.

“That’s the tough thing about football, is that everybody needs everybody to survive... no one wins alone.”

The Mustangs’ defense returns several players who had key roles last year, although four of the top five players in defensive points graduated.

Senior Mason Weickum was fourth for Natrona with 62 tackles, while senior Wyatt Powell was right behind with 61 tackles, including a team-high seven tackles for loss.

Senior Cody Crawford added 44 tackles and two sacks, while senior Kayden Pharr had 21 tackles and six tackles for loss.

Offensively, Natrona returns numerous contributors, but Harshman emphasized Crawford, Pharr and seniors Colby Harlan

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NATRONA CONTINUED-

and Jared Markwardt as important cogs as the experienced players on the offensive line.

“The key to all of this is having solid linemen,” he said.

Four of the six Natrona receivers who reached triple-digit receiving yards are back.

Senior Breckin McClintock, Natrona’s only returning first-team all-state choice, was one of the top receivers in 4A last year, leading Natrona with 34 catches for 565 yards and four touchdowns.

Pharr was fourth on the team with 212 receiving yards and was third with 18 catches. Junior Preston Hytrek added 14 catches for 206 yards, while senior Luke Spencer had seven

catches for 109 yards.

Spencer led Natrona’s rushing game with 99 carries for 653 yards and four touchdowns, while Powell added 89 carries for 529 yards and 11 scores to finish second.

Powell also played some spot duty at quarterback, throwing for 192 yards, and will assume full control of that position this fall, Harshman said.

Regardless, Harshman said his players’ mental focus will still carry the season.

“We’ve never talked about winning,” he said. “We’re really focused on one day at a time and making sure our mind’s right and our effort’s great, and that’s a constant challenge to be working at it.”





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

**Coach:** Jeff Mowry,  
fifth year at Sheridan  
**2021 Record:** 11-1, beat  
Rock Springs in state  
championship

#### Key Players

**RB/LB:** Colson Coon, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Rater Tomlinson, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Mathew Ketner, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Dillan Bennett, Sr.

#### 2022 Schedule

**8-26:** vs. Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.  
**9-2:** at Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.  
**9-9:** vs. Laramie, 6 p.m.  
**9-16:** at Rock Springs, 6 p.m.  
**9-23:** vs. Thunder Basin, 7 p.m.  
**9-30:** vs. Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.  
**10-7:** at Kelly Walsh, 7 p.m.  
**10-14:** at Natrona, 6 p.m.  
**10-21:** vs. Campbell County, 7 p.m.

## Coon leading Broncos' attack again

Everyone in Class 4A already knows the name Colson Coon.

How well Sheridan does this season, though, will require the rest of Class 4A to get to know names of some other Sheridan Broncos.

The defending 4A champions return Coon, an all-state running back/linebacker who was the second junior ever selected as the Gatorade Wyoming Player of the Year.

The 4A offensive player of the year carried for 1,648 yards on 215 carries, notching 22 touchdowns, and also finished third for the Broncos with 69 tackles, including three sacks, and also had two interceptions and a fumble recovery.

To finish, he ran for more than 200 yards in each of Sheridan's last four games.

"He was clutch, performed in every game and he was tough," Sheridan coach Jeff Mowry said. "... (But) he's not going to surprise anybody so we've got to figure out how we're going to offset (that)."

The Broncos' necessity for other players to step up is clear. Seven other all-conference players are gone, six to graduation and one to transfer.

Mowry said the spots most in question for the Broncos are the offensive and defensive lines. Senior Dillan Bennett rotated in at offensive guard last season and will be a leader for the unit, but beyond that, Sheridan lacks much experience.

"We need some guys to grow up quickly," Mowry said.

Mowry said seniors Rater Tomlinson, Deedan Kirschner and Chance Larson will be important pieces of the lines.

Quarterback is open, but whoever takes that spot will have a ton of options, as three of the Broncos' top four receivers are back.

Coon was second with 18 catches for 305 yards and four touchdowns, senior Dane Steel had 14 catches for 245 yards and four TDs, and senior Mathew Ketner was fourth with 13 catches for 199 yards and a score.

Behind Coon in the backfield, junior Nahir Aguirre added 19 carries for 184 yards and three touchdowns, and Ketner added 104 rushing yards on just four carries.

Only three of Sheridan's top nine players in defensive points are back.

Along with Coon, Steel had 60 tackles, five pass deflections and two interceptions, while Ketner had 51 tackles and three pass deflections.

Junior Cody Dunham added 30 tackles and two interceptions, junior Jackson Lynn had 26 tackles and two interceptions, and Kirschner notched 21 tackles.

Sheridan will also return three players who suffered ACL injuries and did not play last season – senior Cael Gilbertson and juniors Terran Grooms and Ryan Metcalf.

Mowry said the seniors especially will be handed more responsibility.

"Their role significantly changes from being a guy on the team to being a leader on the team," he said. "They have to lead the charge."

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## 'Bolts building on momentum

After five seasons, Trent Pikula, the only head coach Thunder Basin's football team has ever had, said he sees the ways the program, and the school, are creating their own unique identity.

"We are still in the process of building tradition, but at this point we really want our traditions to start with being a team who plays for each other, a team who is academically strong, a team that plays with passion and effort, and a team that wins games by playing football together," Pikula said.

This year's team will be young but will still be in position for the playoffs, something the program has never missed.

Although senior lineman Jayden Luciano is the team's only returning all-state choice, Pikula said Luciano is stronger than last year and will help lead a line that's young, "but they are very athletic and will be one of our best position groups."

Senior Kayden LaFramboise was the 'Bolts' No. 2 receiver last year with 32 catches for 506 yards; he also led the team with seven touchdown catches. However, he is the only one of Thunder Basin's top seven pass-catchers to come back this year.

Also, Thunder Basin will need to find a new quarterback.

"We will have a nice battle for that spot, but regardless of who wins it, we will be inexperienced there," he said.

Senior Nic Black was second on the team last year with 146 yards on 32 carries, including a pair of touchdowns. He's the only returner who had more than 25 rushing yards in 2021.

On defense, seven of Thunder Basin's top nine tacklers graduated. Senior Dillon Glick, an all-conference choice, led the 'Bolts in defensive points and was No. 2 in tackles with 75. His 12 tackles for loss were tied for the team lead.

Senior Logan Loftus was fourth on the team with 64 tackles and led the squad with five sacks.

Together, Pikula said, the pair of linebackers will lead a strong front seven.

"Those two will make it hard for teams to run the

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ball consistently against our defense," Pikula said.

LaFramboise added 36 tackles and leads all returners with eight pass deflections last year. Four others – senior Elie Churches (21 tackles), juniors Caden Parker (12) and Payton Brown (11) and senior Colton Vetter (10) – had double-digit tackles last season.

Junior Kavontae Montgomery will add depth on the offensive and defensive lines.

Despite the relative varsity inexperience, Pikula said he has faith in his players and coaches to be ready when it's time.

"Our coaches do a great job bringing our young kids along and getting them ready to play at the varsity level when they get their number called," he said.



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

**Coach:** Trent Pikula,  
sixth year at Thunder Basin  
**2021 Record:** 6-4,  
lost to Natrona in state  
quarterfinals

#### Key Players

**WR/DB:** Kayden  
LaFramboise, Sr.  
**OT:** Jayden Luciano, Sr.  
**TE/DE:** Lane Catlin, Sr.  
**LB:** Dillon Glick, Sr.

#### 2022 Schedule

**8-26:** vs. Cheyenne South, 6 p.m.  
**9-2:** at Rock Springs, 6 p.m.  
**9-9:** vs. Cheyenne East, 6 p.m.  
**9-16:** vs. Cheyenne Central, 6 p.m.  
**9-23:** at Sheridan, 7 p.m.  
**9-30:** vs. Campbell County, 7 p.m.  
**10-7:** vs. Laramie, 6 p.m.  
**10-14:** at Kelly Walsh, 6 p.m.  
**10-21:** at Natrona, 6 p.m.

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## State Champs Cody Broncs

### 2021 State Playoffs

#### 3A Championship

Cody 41, Jackson 24

#### Semifinals

Cody 24, Star Valley 17  
Jackson 28, Douglas 20

#### Quarterfinals

Cody 40, Worland 7  
Star Valley 50, Lander 20  
Douglas 14, Powell 10  
Jackson 75, Buffalo 27

### Players to watch

#### Luke Talich, Cody

The Broncos' quarterback/safety can hurt defenses with both his arm and his legs, and he's one of Cody's top defensive players, as well. He is the centerpiece of Cody's three-peat attempt, and for the Broncos, that's a good thing.

#### Karson Ewing, Douglas

Last year's East Conference defensive player of the year didn't have huge numbers (39 tackles, 5 TFLs) but caused huge havoc to opposing offenses. His role will grow on a young defense.

#### Matt Nelson, Cody

Nelson had two of Cody's three consecutive pick-sixes in the second half of last year's title game. No surprise – the two-time all-stater has made it a habit to have big games in big moments.

#### Blake Bell, Buffalo

Bell had 37 catches, 829 yards and 11 touchdowns. His 22.4 yards per catch was the best among 3A's top receivers, but watch for Buffalo to take advantage of Bell's athleticism to keep defenses honest.

#### Kade Weber, Worland

Weber's eye-popping number under center is 70.1%, his completion percentage after finishing 143 of 204 passes for the Warriors last season. And he has experienced receivers with him this year.

# 3A Preview



## Cody has the horses for a third straight title

By Patrick Schmiedt

### Four questions to answer

*Can anyone stop Cody from three-peating?* Only Cody. One of the most amazing statistics of the 2022 offseason pertains to 3A all-state selections. Cody has six of them returning. The rest of 3A has four, combined.

*So no one else even has a chance?* Hey, it could happen. And if it's going to happen, it's likely to come from Douglas or Buffalo. Neither team enters the season as complete as Cody, but they could both end the season that way.

*What's up with the West?* After Cody, lots of uncertainty. Graduation left lots of questions for every team, and Jackson has a new coach. As a whole, the conference is down; as a group, it's as competitive as ever. After Cody.

*And out East — still Douglas?* Douglas is still the favorite, and Buffalo has been gaining some momentum and returns several key

### Key games

*Cody at Jackson, Sept. 23.* Although it's the rematch of the past two Class 3A title games, the two Broncos are trending in different directions. If Jackson can finally get a W in this series, it'll completely turn 3A expectations upside down.

*Star Valley at Powell, Sept. 30.* The West is always competitive, but the 2022 season brings a

ton of uncertainty to a usually steady conference. How it all shakes out, though, will be determined in great measure by what happens between the Braves and Panthers.

*Douglas at Buffalo, Sept. 30.* Douglas has won 14 of the past 17 in this series and the past two in a row. The Bison's conference title hopes will hang on this home game.

*Worland at Lander, Oct. 14.* Both teams have been on the 3A margins the past few years, not quite ready to be a title contender. Whoever wins here could be a big first-round spoiler if fate finally smiles on them.

### Predicted order of finish

*East Conference:* Douglas; Buffalo; Lander; Worland; Riverton; Rawlins.

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

*Preseason top five:* 1. Cody; 2. Douglas; 3. Buffalo; 4. Star Valley; 5. Lander.

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

*Cody 36, Douglas 20.* November football is always different from August football, and 3A teams have a way of pulling some postseason surprises. Still, the title is Cody's until someone else does something to show us otherwise that they deserve it.

## Bison have numbers to compete

As a small Class 3A school, Buffalo often ends up struggling with depth.

This year, though, the Bison have a roster deep and experienced enough to reverse the usual expectations.

The Bison return five all-conference players, most in the East Conference, and eight starters on both offense and defense. Moreover, the roster will top out above 50, a big number for Buffalo.

Coach Rob Hammond said he will have more than a dozen seniors, the most since Buffalo reached the Class 2A title game in 2019.

"It just makes things a little bit easier if you have a big senior class," Hammond said. "... Our (installation of schemes) is a little further ahead, and kids understand what we're trying to do on both sides of the ball."

Senior Blake Bell, Buffalo's only all-state selection, was joined on the all-conference team by seniors Michael Ihnat, Dawson Palser and Charlie Wonka and junior Eli Patterson.

Bell was one of Class 3A's top receivers last year and finished second in 3A in receiving yards per game (92.1). He had 37 total catches for 829 yards – an average of 22.4 yards per catch – and led Class 3A with 11 receiving touchdowns.

"Teams are going to scheme to take him away, but we're still going to have to get a lot of production out of him," Hammond said.



Buffalo also returns its No. 2 and 3 receivers in senior Gage Horetski (13 catches, 144 yards) and Ihnat (13 catches, 135 yards).

Patterson will step in to start at quarterback, and Hammond said it may take some time for a new signal-caller to develop chemistry with his receivers.

"That's going to take a while to develop with Eli, but it'll get there," Hammond said.

The running game will be less experienced. Wonka, with 16 carries for 94 yards, is Buffalo's top returning rusher. Junior Will Hammond will also add backfield depth.

The offensive line, where only two starters return, is the Bison's big question mark. Seniors Marko Glasscock, Brogan Byram and Daniel Brown will be the leaders in that area, coach Hammond said.

The Buffalo defense returns four of its top six tacklers.

Patterson led the Bison defense with 99 tackles. His 12 tackles for loss led the team, and he also had two interceptions and tied for the team lead with four pass break-ups.

Bell was third with 64 tackles and Ihnat had 36; they tied for the team lead with three interceptions.

Wonka had 35 tackles and four sacks, Glasscock added 25 tackles and two fumble recoveries, and Horetski contributed 22 tackles.

"We had a great summer with those guys, and we have a lot of guys who tackle really well," coach Hammond said.



Mascot: Bison

Division: Class 3A

Conference: East

Colors: Black and gold

Coach: Rob Hammond,

11th year at Buffalo

2021 Record: 5-4, lost

to Jackson in state

quarterfinals

### Key Players

WR/MLB: Blake Bell, Sr.

TE/DE: Charlie Wonka, Sr.

WR/OLB: Dawson Palser, Sr.

WR/CB: Michael Ihnat, Sr.

### 2022 Schedule

8-26: at Lovell, scrimmage, noon

(Zero Week)

9-2: vs. Newcastle, 7 p.m.

9-10: at Loveland Resurrection  
Christian, Colo., 6 p.m.

9-16: vs. Cody, 6 p.m.

\*9-23: at Lander, 6 p.m.

\*9-30: vs. Douglas, 7 p.m.

\*10-7: at Worland, 6 p.m.

\*10-14: vs. Riverton, 6 p.m.

\*10-21: at Rawlins, 6 p.m.

\* Conference game

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

**Coach:** Jay Rhoades,  
17th year at Douglas  
**2021 Record:** 8-2, lost to Jackson in state semifinals

**Key Players**  
**QB/S:** Jackson Hughes, Sr.  
**RB/OLB:** Karson Ewing, Sr.  
**OL:** T.K. Stenson, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Luke Skeen, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** vs. Cody, TBA (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** at Jackson, 5 p.m.  
**9-9:** at Gering, Neb., 7 p.m.  
**9-16:** vs. Powell, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** vs. Worland, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** at Buffalo, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** at Riverton, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** vs. Rawlins, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** vs. Lander, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Bearcats eye another playoff run

The physical nature of Class 3A football is not lost on the Douglas Bearcats.

With a thinner roster than usual, the Bearcats’ focus this season will be on making sure the physical part of the game has a chance to shine on Friday nights in games – not on weekday afternoons in practice.

“We’re really going to have to focus on not beating them up in practice, really taking care of our kids physically,” coach Jay Rhoades said.

If the Bearcats can stay healthy and injury-free, Rhoades said, “I feel like we can play with anybody.”

The Bearcats are coming off back-to-back semifinal losses, but even with a smaller roster than in previous seasons, Douglas has the talent and maturity to continue to play with anybody.

Senior Jackson Hughes returns under center after completing 67 of 132 passes for 813 yards and 11 touchdowns while also running 75 times for 379 yards and

two touchdowns. He is the only returner who was in triple-digit rushing yards last year.

Rhoades said Hughes and junior Trey Rinn will compete at quarterback, but both will play on offense.

“When we went to summer camp, we got to see both of them in action under center, we got to see both of them out on the perimeter as receivers, and they both did really well at both spots,” Rhoades said.

With that versatility, Rhoades said, “we can give some different looks and not be one-dimensional.”

However, the Bearcats’ top four receivers all graduated, leaving senior Luke Skeen – who had eight catches for 50 yards – as Douglas’ top returning pass-catcher.

On the line, seniors T.K. Stenson and Alex Virtue and junior Tegen Seeds will provide lead ership and experience.

Douglas’ defense returns its No. 1, 2 and 4 tacklers from 2021,

but they are the only three of the Bearcats’ top 10 tacklers returning.

Carter Archuleta was Douglas’ top tackler as a freshman last season, a rarity at 3A. He had 79 tackles, including three for loss, and tied for the team lead with 14 solo tackles.

Skeen had 52 tackles to finish second on the team and tied for the team lead with nine tackles for loss, while Ewing – who was the 3A East defensive player of the year last season and is Douglas’ only returning all-state choice – added 39 tackles, including a team-high five tackles for loss.

“All those kids have really good motors, and I think that’s something you really can’t coach,” Rhoades said. “It’s something that kids have or they don’t have. You add their already good motors with maturity, and hopefully you just have a great improvement from last season.”

Hughes had 18 tackles last year, while senior Brock Pyle notched 13.



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

**Coach:** John Scott,  
fifth year at Lander  
**2021 Record:** 4-5, lost to Star Valley in state quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**QB/FS:** Brenon Stauffenberg, Sr.  
**WR/LB:** Gabe Harris, Sr.  
**RB/DE/K:** Matisse Weaver, Sr.  
**OT/DE:** Jesse Dollard, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** vs. Pinedale, scrim., 4 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** at Green River, 7 p.m.  
**9-9:** at Powell, 7 p.m.  
**9-16:** vs. Evanston, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** vs. Buffalo, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** at Riverton, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Rawlins, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** vs. Worland, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** at Douglas, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Hastings looks to revamp Outlaws

Throughout his coaching career, David Hastings has always tried to find opportunities to turn around struggling programs.

So when the Rawlins coaching position came open, the former Rock Springs coach had immediate interest.

“I was looking for another opportunity to turn a program around, and I thought this would be a good spot and a good fit,” he said.

Of all the rebuilding projects, Rawlins is definitely one of the most challenging; the Outlaws have gone 0-9 each of the past two seasons, and their 18-game losing streak is the second-longest active losing streak in the state behind Cheyenne South.

One big question for Hastings and his staff to figure out will be how players respond when things go bad or when they make a mistake. Hastings said he wants to make sure that mistakes don’t feed into other issues later on so they can appropriately handle adversity.

“Our biggest focus is as a staff we need to find victories, whether it’s big victories or small victories, because there hasn’t been a lot of that over the last two years,” Hastings said.

Hastings said one of his philosophies will be to establish the running game, something

the Outlaws have struggled to accomplish.

Rawlins actually finished the 2021 season with negative rushing yards; those struggles were offset somewhat by 729 passing yards. The Outlaws gained 96.4 yards per game, less than half that of the next-best 3A team. Meanwhile, the defense gave up 350.2 yards per game.

No returning rusher carried for double-digit yards last year.

However, senior Eli Kern, Rawlins’ only all-conference selection last season, had 24 catches for 318 yards and two touchdowns to lead the Outlaws’ receiving game. Senior Braden Fritz added eight catches for 122 yards, third-best on the team.

Up front, the Outlaws lack experience, but Hastings said he liked what he saw from senior Michael Drayton and sophomore Vaughn Grant.

Senior Josh Smith is Rawlins’ top returning tackler, the only one of the top four to return. He was second on the team with 57 tackles last year.

Kern added 28 tackles, fifth on the squad.

Junior Sage Lonn had 13 tackles, Fritz had 12 and senior Dian Henson had 10.

Hastings said in his previous coaching stops, one key was to

“There are athletes here and there’s athletic ability here.”

**~Coach David Hastings**

find a way to best use the talent he had – and to get that talent onto the field in the first place.

Hastings said Rawlins has that kind of talent, evident in the Outlaws’ Class 3A basketball championship last season.

“When I was talking to people about this job, (athleticism) is one of the things they talk about a lot,” he said. “There are athletes here and there’s athletic ability here.”

**Key Players**  
**WR:** Eli Kern, Sr.  
**TE/LB:** Braden Fritz, Sr.  
**RB/OLB:** Josh Smith, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Michael Drayton, Sr.

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

**Coach:** David Hastings,  
first year at Rawlins  
**2021 Record:** 0-9, did not qualify for playoffs

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** Rawlins jamboree, 7 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** at Pinedale, 7 p.m.  
**9-9:** at Green River, 7 p.m.  
**9-16:** vs. Moffat County, Colo., 7 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** vs. Riverton, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** vs. Worland, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** at Lander, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** at Douglas, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** vs. Buffalo, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Tigers building on recent success

Lander’s past three seasons have all ended the same way – on the grass of Bill Bush Stadium in the Class 3A quarterfinals.

On the plus side, the Tigers have played well enough in the regular season to secure home playoff games for three consecutive years, a feat the program hasn’t accomplished since 2004.

But that success has yet to translate into a playoff victory, which has not happened for Lander since, again, 2004.

“The first year or two it was great getting into the postseason,” Lander coach John Scott said. “But we can’t make that our primary goal.

“... As a staff, these challenges drive us and we set out to find those who are effort guys and together we commit ourselves to compete with no excuses – we will find a way, that is a good thing.”

This year’s team will be younger than previous iterations of Tiger squads, but a core group of about 10 seniors will help set the pace for

the program. The group includes three all-conference players in Gabe Harris, Brenon Stauffenberg and Matisse Weaver.

“They understand what lies ahead and have a team first attitude,” Scott said, “as some will be playing new positions their senior year.”

Stauffenberg and Harris will stay put, though.

Stauffenberg completed 122 of 227 passes for 1,752 yards and 13 touchdowns last season and will start for the Tigers for a third year at quarterback.

Scott said Stauffenberg may have to make more plays with his legs this year.

“Every year we have added onto his plate and he has responded,” Scott said. “He knows our system and embraces a larger role.”

Harris, meanwhile, was Lander’s top pass-catcher with 33 catches for 526 yards and seven touchdowns. Moreover, he was Lander’s top tackler, too, notching 96 total tackles – including 45

solo – while tying for the team lead with three pass deflections.

As a high-effort player at linebacker, Harris has high expectations from the coaches.

“We expect Gabe to not only play to his level, but to help bring others to their best levels,” Scott said.

That will be needed, since Harris is the only one of Lander’s top six tacklers to return this year.

Weaver had 26 tackles last season, while Stauffenberg had 25. Stauffenberg also led Lander with four interceptions and had three pass deflections of his own.

Seniors Jack Pasquinelli (15 tackles), Rope Glick (13) and Jesse Dollard (10) also had double-digit tackles last year.

In the offensive backfield, Weaver – who was an all-state choice at kicker in 2020 – was Lander’s No. 2 rusher last year, running 94 times for 357 yards and a pair of touchdowns. No other returner aside from Stauffenberg had double-digit carries last season.

# Warriors keep climbing the ladder

Entering his third season as Worland’s head coach, Patrick Sweeney strikes an optimistic tone. It’s not because of his team’s depth; the Warriors graduated a huge class of seniors, nearly 20 deep, and this year’s team will rely a lot on juniors and sophomores.

It’s not because of the program’s recent history; 2021 represented Worland’s 12th consecutive losing season.

And it’s not because of any

postseason progress; although the Warriors made the playoffs last year, they failed to get out of the first round for the fifth consecutive year.

Instead, Sweeney said he sees incremental progress that continues to shape the Warrior program positively.

“It’s one small win at a time,” he said. “I think kids committing to the weight room, doing three sports and taking our football offseason

seriously is going to make all the difference, and it has.”

However, he also noted, “You’ve got to be more than hopeful. You’ve got to go make it happen.”

This year’s team will have a much smaller group of seniors but will rely on some athleticism to keep building. Senior Kade Weber was an all-state selection and senior Brock Douzenis, an all-state choice in 2020, was all-conference last


CONTINUED PAGE 16



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

**Coach:** Patrick Sweeney,  
third year at Worland  
**2021 Record:** 4-5, lost to Cody in state quarterfinals





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

**Coach:** Troy Anderson,  
third year at Riverton  
**2021 Record:** 1-8, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**HB/MLB:** Braden Vincent, Sr.  
**OG/DE:** Jackson Hill, Sr.  
**RB/OLB:** Dominick Payne,  
Sr.  
**QB/S:** Darrick DeVries, Jr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** at Powell, 6 p.m.  
(Zero Week)  
**9-2:** at Cody, 7 p.m.  
**9-9:** vs. Evanston, 6 p.m.  
**9-16:** vs. Star Valley, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** at Rawlins, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** vs. Lander, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Douglas, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** at Buffalo, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** at Worland, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

WORLAND CONTINUED-

year. Weber was efficient at quarterback last year, completing more than 70% of his passes (143 of 204) for 1,658 yards and 17 touchdowns. He’s also Worland’s top returning rusher, carrying for 335 yards – good for second on the team last year – and 11 more touchdowns. Douzenis led the Warriors with 54 catches for 560 yards, scoring four touchdowns. Senior Carter Clark was second on the team in receptions (35) and third in yards (359) but led the squad with six receiving

# Wolverines have increased energy

When Riverton coach Troy Anderson considered last year’s 1-8 season, he saw one glaring need – ownership from the players. So, he started meeting with a group of incoming seniors and juniors, once a week, over lunch. He involved those players in decisions, providing transparency about his direction for the program and the path he envisioned to get there. Before the 2022 season even starts, Anderson sees that time and energy paying off. “It’s pretty exciting to see them take ownership of that and self-regulate the program,” Anderson said. “... They’re starting to put the foundational things in place.” Last year’s team had a group of contributing seniors that could be counted on one hand. With such a small class of seniors, lots of juniors and sophomores saw playing time last year, setting up this year’s team up for more success, Anderson said. “Our record showed we had a lot of young guys playing,” he said. “... (But) they know what it feels like, the physicality of it. They know what a varsity rep feels like.” Consequently, the Wolverines return almost a dozen players who started at some point on

either offense or defense last year, giving this year’s team a jumpstart. Much of the improvement will come on the offensive and defensive lines, Anderson said. “Last year we had to completely piecemeal together a front ... and this year we’ve got a much clearer look of what contributing guys could be (there),” he said. That includes senior Jackson Hill and junior Lyric Gordon, who was an all-conference offensive lineman last year. Behind and outside that are players who saw plenty of time last year. Senior Dominick Payne led the Wolverines’ rushing game, carrying 92 times for 418 yards and three touchdowns. The Wolverines graduated their top two receivers but return senior Kade Gabrielsen, whose 107 yards on six catches put him third on the team, and junior Ty

Sheets, who was No. 3 on the team with eight catches, racking up 75 yards. Defensively, Gabrielsen, at safety, tied for the team lead in defensive points and was third on the team with 51 tackles. He tied for the team lead with four interceptions. Senior Braden Vincent, another all-conference pick, led the Wolverines with 62 tackles from the middle linebacker position. On a team that returns only four of its top 10 tacklers from last season, those two players will be the lynchpins. “Those guys are the guys that we’ve got to get loose,” Anderson said. Payne had 37 tackles, good for fifth on the team, while junior Ryan Watson chipped in 20 tackles. Junior defensive backs Darrick DeVries and Ty Sheets will add both experience and depth.

*“It’s pretty exciting to see them take ownership of that and self-regulate the program.”*

**~Coach Troy Anderson**

**WORLAND Key Players**  
**QB:** Kade Weber, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Brock Douzenis, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Carter Clark, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Rugar Mascaro, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** vs. Thermopolis, scrim., 7 p.m.  
(Zero Week)  
**9-2:** vs. Powell, 7 p.m.  
**9-9:** at Cody, 7 p.m.  
**9-16:** vs. Green River, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** at Douglas, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** at Rawlins, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Buffalo, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** at Lander, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** vs. Riverton, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Broncs working for rare threepeat

The 2022 Cody Broncos haven’t won a game, much less a championship. It’s an understanding the two-time defending Class 3A champs are taking into the season – past success is not future success. Fortunately for Cody, coach Matt McFadden said his players are taking that to heart. “I feel this team is as driven and hungry as any I have coached,” McFadden said. “They are a close group and enjoy playing for one another. They understand and embrace the work in-season and out-season it takes to meet those expectations.” Expectations are high for a reason. Cody is coming off the first back-to-back titles in program history, and the 16 consecutive games the Broncos have won are just three off the program record. This year’s team returns players who know how to win. Cody returns six all-state selections – two more than the rest of Class 3A combined. They’re all seniors – Grayson Beaudrie, Remy Broussard, Jace Grant, Matt Nelson, Jack Schroeder and Luke Talich. All six return as starters on defense, and five – Beaudrie, Schroeder, Broussard, Talich and Grant – were among Cody’s top six in defensive points last season. Beaudrie led the Broncos with 95 tackles, including 36 solo tackles and six sacks. Schroeder had 77 tackles, second-best on the team, and had 11 tackles for loss, tied with Grant for tops

among returners. Talich had 64 tackles, including a team-high 40 solo tackles, and five pass deflections. Grant had 55 tackles, as well as five sacks, while Broussard had 50 tackles, four fumble recoveries and three interceptions. Nelson contributed 32 tackles and three interceptions, including two pick-sixes in last year’s championship game. Senior Graidin Arnold added 20 tackles last season. Offensively, the Broncos are less experienced, returning just three starters. However, McFadden said his players are “extremely unselfish” and buy into the concept of spreading the ball to multiple playmakers. “To play in our offense you must find joy in other people’s success,” he said. “This approach has allowed us to develop depth and experience that you need across a season.”



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Talich completed 93 of 176 passes for 1,369 yards and 17 touchdowns against only three interceptions. He also carried 84 times for 443 yards and six scores. Schroeder is Cody’s top returning rusher and the only one of the Broncos’ top three ground-gainers to return. He was second on the team with 633 rushing yards, carrying 97 times with nine touchdowns. The Broncos did graduate their top four receivers, leaving senior Wilkins Radakovich (eight catches, 95 yards) as the top returning pass-catcher. McFadden said the offensive line will need to grow into their roles. “We have some hungry kids who have put in the work but lack experience,” he said.



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*“To play in our offense you must find joy in other people’s success.”*

**~Coach Matt McFadden**



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

**Coach:** Matt McFadden,  
tenth year at Cody  
**2021 Record:** 11-0,  
beat Jackson in state  
championship

**Key Players**  
**QB/S:** Luke Talich, Sr.  
**RB/OLB:** Remy Broussard, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Jack Schroeder, Sr.  
**C/RB/WR:** Matt Nelson, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** at Douglas, TBA  
(Zero Week)  
**9-2:** vs. Riverton, 7 p.m.  
**9-9:** vs. Worland, 7 p.m.  
**9-16:** at Buffalo, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** at Jackson, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** vs. Green River, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** at Star Valley, 5 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** vs. Evanston, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-21:** at Powell, 7 p.m.  
\* Conference game





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

**Coach:** Jim Burton,  
fourth year at Evanston  
**2021 Record:** 5-4, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**OL/DL:** Braxton Bauer, Sr.  
**QB/LB:** Cohen Marrow, Jr.  
**RB/DB:** Karter Randall, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Kai Barker, Jr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** vs. Ben Lomond, Utah, 7 p.m.  
**9-2:** at Jordan, Utah, 7 p.m.  
**9-9:** at Riverton, 6 p.m.  
**9-16:** at Lander, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** vs. Star Valley, 3 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** at Jackson, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Powell, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** at Cody, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** vs. Green River, 7 p.m.  
\* Conference game

## Red Devils look to regain steam

Through five weeks of the 2021 season, Evanston was Class 3A's breakout team.

After finishing a combined 1-16 the previous two seasons, the Red Devils found their stride early last season and won their first five games.

Then came conference play, and breakout turned into breakdown.

In the rough-and-tumble 3A West, Evanston lost its last four games, missing the playoffs.

Even so, the Red Devils finished with their first winning season since 2018 and established a new winning habit. Evanston's first four victories were all by six points or less; in the previous two seasons, Evanston had gone 0-5 in one-possession games.

"Winning can become a habit and that is what we try to do," coach Jim Burton said.

Continuing that momentum into 2022 will be challenging. The defense returns some experience, but the offense lost basically every player who had a noticeable impact. The Red Devils graduated their top four rushers, including their quarterback, and their top six receivers.

"This will be a great team,

(but) we are not as deep as we were last year," Burton said.

Junior Kai Barker leads Evanston's returners in rushing, carrying 12 times for 116 yards last year. Junior Cohen Morrow (24 carries, 76 yards), who will likely take over at quarterback, is the only other returner who had more than three carries last season. Senior Karter Randall and junior Brady Roberts will also compete for time in the backfield.

Barker, with one catch last season, is the only Evanston returner to have a pass reception in 2021.

Burton did not go into specifics, but he noted he has high hopes that those returning players and others can step in and step up.

"The younger players and a few role players from last year are developing well," he said.

Seniors Braxton Bauer and Carsen Vangiesen will be the most experienced returners on the offensive line.

As a unit, Burton said "they are coming along very well, (and) so far (they) should be a good group."

The defense is in better shape, with the team's top three tacklers – Barker, Morrow

and Roberts – all returning. However, even though five starters return, 12 of the team's top 17 tacklers graduated.

Barker led Evanston with 91 tackles, including a team-high 34 solo. Morrow had 70 tackles and Roberts had 60 and three pass deflections.

Randall was sixth on the team with 35 tackles and led Evanston with a pair of interceptions.

Senior linebacker Carter Blair added 13 tackles, the only other returner with double-digit tackles last season.

Burton said a team camp at Western Colorado helped build chemistry, and a taste of success renewed their commitment.

"Kids are hungry and working hard in the weight room," Burton said.

*"Winning can become a habit and that is what we try to do."*

**~Coach  
Jim Burton**

## Wolves have formed unique bonds

The losses Green River's football team had on the field in 2021 did not compare to the losses off it.

During the season, the Wolves had eight team members who had family members die.

"We had players who lost their fathers, who lost their brothers, grandparents, and the season was extremely difficult," coach Kevin Cuthbertson said. "... The experience they're bringing back is not just football experience, it's life experience. They've dealt with hardship and lots of obstacles. To watch them band together... and to get them through those hard times not just on the field but off the field, it's a special thing to see."

Although the Wolves want to improve after their first winless season since 1936, the true success won't reveal itself until years after the last football game, and if the players still support and care for each other the way they did in their hardest times.

"That's really what we're

going to judge our success by," Cuthbertson said.

Bonded by last season's struggles, the Wolves will be full of seniors and led by seven returning starters on both sides of the ball.

"We were extremely young last year, and this is the most experienced team with the most returning starters that I have ever had," Cuthbertson said.

The defense returns four of its top six tacklers, including the leader of the group in senior linebacker Jack Mitchell.

Cuthbertson said Mitchell, a three-year starter, acts like another coach on the field.

"From day one of camp, that communication aspect was there," Cuthbertson said. "It's so hard to teach. You can usually get one or two of your leaders to do that, it's another to get your entire defense to do it."

Senior Conner Todd is the top returning tackler; he was third in 2021 with 41 tackles.

Mitchell had 35 tackles last season and senior Skyler Lee had 32 tackles and two interceptions.

Four other seniors saw significant playing time on defense. Jeremiah Salmo added 26 tackles, Gage Finley added 21, Nate Mitchell had 16 and Tanner Moseley had 15.

The offense will be led by senior Bracken Miller, a three-year starter who was the team's top rusher last year. He had 102 carries for 448 yards and five touchdowns.

Senior Caleb Lake returns under center after completing 88 of 164 passes for 1,191 yards and seven touchdowns. He also ran 58 times for 141 yards and four scores.

The offensive line returns four starters, including senior Kyler Bartlett.

The Wolves' top two receivers graduated, leaving Lee, with 74 yards on three catches, as Green River's top returning receiver. Miller added 13 catches for 68 yards and is the top returning receiver by receptions.



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

**Coach:** Kevin Cuthbertson,  
third year at Green River  
**2021 Record:** 0-8, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**QB:** Caleb Lake, Sr.  
**RB:** Bracken Miller, Sr.  
**FB/MLB:** Jack Mitchell, Sr.  
**WR/CB/KR:** Skyler Lee, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** vs. Uintah, Utah, 7 p.m.  
**9-2:** vs. Lander, 7 p.m.  
**9-9:** vs. Rawlins, 7 p.m.  
**9-16:** at Worland, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** vs. Powell, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** at Cody, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Jackson, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** at Star Valley, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** at Evanston, 7 p.m.  
\* Conference game

## White brings new look to Jackson

New Jackson coach David White has made a career out of bringing a fresh perspective to high school programs.

In his first year in Jackson, he won't have a choice.

Jackson graduated seven all-state and eight all-conference picks, demanding a new look regardless of coach.

White – who has coached at five other high schools across the country as well as at the universities of Oklahoma and Nevada – said the opportunity in Jackson was one he couldn't pass up.

"It's going to be an interesting challenge, and it's going to be a challenge that I like," White said.

While only a handful of players who were part of back-to-back Class 3A runner-up finishes are back this season, White said he is excited for the chance to implement a system that fits the Broncos' personnel. White said he will use some air raid concepts on offense, plus a pistol set, and use the run game out of the pistol to cause match-up problems

for defenses.

At the same time, he said the offense will need "to rally to our strengths," and the offensive approach will be stylized to fit Jackson's players.

"I realize as a coach, as I've went through my career so far, you get what you emphasize, not what you coach," White said. "... You've got to connect on their level, but still push them and create opportunities."

Jackson's top four rushers and top six receivers are gone either to graduation or transfer, and no players return with more than one completion.

At quarterback, senior Owen Janssen and junior Seb Brunner will compete for the spot. Brunner, who ran four times for 15 yards last season, is Jackson's top returning rusher.

Senior Lukas Gralund, who had four catches for 23 yards, is the top returning receiver.

Gralund is also Jackson's top returning tackler; he had 36 a year ago to finish tied for sixth on the

team. Gralund also had six tackles for loss and five sacks, tops among Bronc returners.

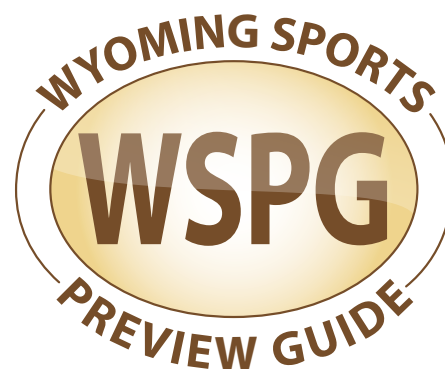
Janssen led Jackson with four interceptions and five pass deflections and chipped in 12 tackles.

Senior Kaleb Lunde added a pair of interceptions and had seven tackles. However, no other Jackson returner was in double-digit tackles last year.

Nevertheless, White said he liked the looks of his returners. White said senior running back/linebacker Jack Jenkins, senior wide receiver Xander Witt, senior linemen Kris Phillips, Wyatt Ross and Carson Heffron, junior wideout Andrew Hanna and senior linebacker Drew Griebel have shown promise early.

"At this level, if you get a handful of kids and a handful to compete with them... you've got a chance," White said. "Having those six, seven guys, that at least puts you in the conversation."

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

**Coach:** Chase Kistler,  
third year at Powell  
**2021 Record:** 6-4, lost  
to Douglas in state  
quarterfinals

#### Key Players

**QB:** Jhett Schwahn, Jr.  
**WR:** Trey Stenerson, Jr.  
**C:** Dillon Melton, Sr.  
**TE:** Austin Graft, Sr.

#### 2022 Schedule

**8-26:** vs. Riverton, 6 p.m.  
(Zero Week)  
**9-2:** at Worland, 7 p.m.  
**9-9:** vs. Lander, 7 p.m.  
**9-16:** at Douglas, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** at Green River, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** vs. Star Valley, 5 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** at Evanston, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** vs. Jackson, 5 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** vs. Cody, 7 p.m.  
\* Conference game

## Panthers need to gain experience

Powell's jerseys will be the same color as last year.

But that is about the only thing that will be the same.

As Powell graduated seven all-state selections from last year's 6-4 team, coach Chase Kistler realized the approach the Panthers used last season would not have the same effect. So, as the personnel changes, so does the approach.

"Last year we were big up front with two tight ends, so we ran a lot of heavy set," Kistler said. "... (This year) we're going to have to get a little bit more spread out, a little bit more diverse."

While the identity might be different, the Panthers will still rely on a core group of seniors and juniors to get the job done – something that might have been worrisome at the end of last year but is now a strength in the coach's eyes.

"I'm seeing guys that are starting to step up and fill the leadership role, which we really

need," Kistler said.

The gaps are evident, but so are the strengths.

Junior Jhett Schwahn returns at quarterback after completing 88 of 154 passes for 1,177 yards and seven touchdowns.

As Powell looks to stretch teams this season, Kistler said Schwahn's accuracy will be key, something they emphasized in the offseason.

"His accuracy is improving every week," Kistler said. "That's going to help us be a little bit more balanced offensively."

Junior Trey Stenerson was fourth in receiving yards (124) and third in receptions (12) last year and is Powell's top returning receiver. Senior Austin Graft added six catches for 113 yards and senior Nathan Feller had nine catches for 106 yards.

However, the Panthers graduated their top three rushers; no returner had more than 30 yards on the ground last season.

The offensive line will be young but deep and experienced,

as many players had to step in to fill spots left open last year by injury or sickness.

Senior Dillon Melton returns at center, and juniors Jimmy Dees, who is returning from offseason shoulder surgery, and Wyatt Blackmore add experience.

Defensively, the gaps are more apparent, as the Panthers graduated eight of their top 10 tacklers.

Dees had 35 tackles to lead all Powell returners, while Schwahn added 32 tackles in addition to a pair of fumble recoveries and interceptions.

Sophomore Zane Graft notched 21 tackles and Blackmore had 20.

Kistler said he knows he needs to be patient with his young team this season.

"We're one of those teams that's going to have to get better every week, especially in our conference," Kistler said. "We know we're not going to be the top dog (in) Week 1 and we've got to earn our stripes."

*"We're one of those teams that's going to have to get better every week..."*

**~Coach Chase Kistler**

## Braves enjoy unique opportunity

Star Valley is the only team in the state guaranteed to play on the turf of a Mountain West football stadium this season.

The Braves wouldn't mind doing so twice.

Star Valley's 2022 season starts with a game at Boise State University against Shelley, Idaho.

"I think they were hoping to showcase some of their talented players on a big stage, and they reached out to us this past winter to be a quality opponent for them," Star Valley coach McKay Young said. "The chance to play on the blue turf will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our guys, and we hope the atmosphere in Boise will serve us later in the year with the goal that we finish the season in another Mountain West stadium in Laramie."

The Braves will have to rely on some new faces, as they graduated all the starters on the offensive defensive lines as well as their defensive backfield. However, Star Valley's junior varsity and sophomore teams were a combined 15-0 last season.

Young said the success of the sub-varsity teams bodes well for this season.

"They get the opportunity to play a lot of football while they are developing in our program," Young said.

Senior Taft McClure returns under center after completing 92 of 159 passes for 1,271 yards and 15 touchdowns. Young said McClure took over early last season at quarterback after injury and "we feel

he has a chance to be really special."

Senior Chase Stewart was second for the Braves in both receptions (15) and receiving yards (291). Senior Jake Hodges was third in yards (168) on six catches. However, of the six receivers who reached triple-digit yards, they're the only two who return.

However, McClure (6-foot-5) has Hodges (6-5) and senior tight end Dimitri Douglarakis (6-4) as big targets.

Senior Tom Cunningham had occasional starts on the offensive line, and senior Brandon Cook and junior Jesse Gibson will add depth there.

The Braves graduated their top three ball-carriers. Senior Kaleb Spalding (nine carries, 58 yards) is the top returning rusher, and juniors Jesse Leavitt and Jaden Crook and senior Izak Nield will also compete for time.

Senior Derek Astle, the Braves' only returning all-state choice, was the Braves' top defensive playmaker last season, leading the squad with 80 tackles, including a team-high 42 solo. The linebacker had six tackles for loss, recovered two fumbles and broke up three passes.

However, of the Braves' top 10 players in defensive points, Astle is the only one returning.

Senior linebacker Brandon Beck had 35 tackles, ranking seventh on the team.

Stewart, with 16 tackles, and junior Clay Merritt with 13 tackles are the only other returners who had double-digit tackles a year ago.



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

**Coach:** McKay Young,  
seventh year at Star Valley  
**2021 Record:** 6-5, lost to  
Cody in state semifinals

#### Key Players

**QB:** Taft McClure, Sr.  
**LB:** Derek Astle, Sr.  
**WR/LB:** Chase Stewart, Sr.  
**WR:** Jake Hodges, Sr.

#### 2022 Schedule

**8-26:** vs. Shelley, Idaho, 7 p.m.  
(at Boise, Idaho)  
**9-2:** vs. Preston, Idaho, 7 p.m.  
**9-9:** at Sugar-Salem, Idaho, 7 p.m.  
**9-16:** at Riverton, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** at Evanston, 3 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** at Powell, 5 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Cody, 5 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** vs. Green River, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** at Jackson, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

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### 2A Championship

Lyman 8, Lovell 6

### Semifinals

Lyman 38, Wheatland 28

Lovell 35, Torrington 7

### Quarterfinals

Lyman 42, Big Horn 20

Wheatland 45, Big Piney 0

Torrington 21, Cokeville 14

Lovell 21, Upton-Sundance 8

## Players to watch

### Ashton Houskeeper, Lyman

The reigning Class 2A offensive player of the year led 2A in total rushing yards, finishing with 1,451 on 222 carries, and scored a classification-high 25 rushing touchdowns. He also threw for 700 more yards.

### McKoy Smith, Lyman

On defense, he had 61 tackles and led Lyman with 35 solo tackles; he also had a team-high four interceptions. Offensively, he scored 12 total touchdowns and was Lyman’s top receiver.

### Logan Jones, Glenrock

Jones led Class 2A with 146.9 rushing yards per game, finishing 2021 with 1,175 yards on 236 attempts. Watch for his touchdown count, only five a year ago, to go up as a senior.

### Cael Thompson and Landon Walker, Cokeville

The Panthers’ two returning all-state players tied for the team lead in tackles last year, notching 60 apiece. Offensively, Thompson will lead Cokeville’s offensive line while Walker takes the snaps and directs the offense.

### Cooper Garber, Big Horn

A returning all-stater, the Rams’ entrenched starter at quarterback for 1,518 yards and 13 touchdowns last year and 1,276 yards and 12 touchdowns as a sophomore.

# 2A Preview



# Lyman reloads to defend state title, winning streak

By Patrick Schmiedt

## Four questions to answer

*Is anyone beating Lyman this year?* Maybe not. In a year where most other teams are trying to find their footing with new personnel, the Eagles return a ton of contributors who have helped the program win 19 consecutive games. *Who’s got the best chance to do that?* Pick ’em. Lovell and Cokeville have gotten a lot of love in the preseason as the West’s best chances to take down the Eagles, Lovell in particular after an 8-6 loss in the championship and enough returners to be a legit contender. *Is anyone coming out of the East?* A tentative no. Only two all-state players return in the entire East Conference. The evacuation of talent via graduation leaves the whole East as a toss-up. Everything’s jumbled, which should make for some really competitive and exciting football, just maybe no one who can threaten Lyman. *Who’s going to surprise in 2022?* Kemmerer. The Rangers have only had one postseason appearance in the past nine years but have the look of a team on the rise. They return eight starters and could be challenging.

## Key games

*Lovell at Lyman, Sept. 16.* The Bulldogs and Eagles won’t spend a lot of time reminiscing about their 2021 games — Lyman won both of them, including the state championship — because they make acquaintances, and both new memories and new motivations, in Week 3.

*Torrington at Big Horn, Sept. 23.* The schedule did no favors to the Trailblazers, who have to make back-to-back trips to Sheridan County in weeks 4 and 5. This is the first of those trips.

*Wheatland at Upton-Sundance, Oct. 7.* In 2021 Wheatland finally picked up its first victory in the series. With both teams likely in the East running, this will end up being a must-win for both teams.

*Lyman at Cokeville, Oct. 21.* If both teams can stay healthy, avoid upsets and capitalize on their talents, the regular-season finale could be the game that decides home-field advantage in the playoffs. But a lot of football needs to be played between then and now.

## Predicted order of finish

*East Conference:* Torrington; Wheatland; Big Horn; Upton-Sundance; Tongue River; Newcastle; Burns; Glenrock.

*West Conference:* Lyman; Lovell; Cokeville; Kemmerer; Mountain View; Thermopolis; Pinedale.

*Preseason top five:* 1. Lyman; 2. Lovell; 3. Cokeville; 4. Torrington; 5. Wheatland.

## Way-too-early title game score prediction

*Lyman 20, Lovell 19.* The Eagles’ three-peat hopes are real, but Lovell is in the best position to challenge Lyman’s ascent to dynasty status.

2A EAST

BIG HORN RAMS

PAGE 23

# Rams looking to extend playoff run

Just like Santa Claus, the Big Horn Rams have made it a habit to show up when the wind turns cold and the snow starts to fly.

Every year since 1999, Big Horn has been in the playoffs, a run of 23 consecutive seasons. That nearly ended last year, when the Rams barely sneaked into the playoffs last season with a 3-5 record and a handful of tiebreakers on their side.

The lessons the Rams picked up in 2021, including an 0-3 record in one-score games, will pay off this year with an experienced senior class that’s seven players deep and talented enough to keep things going in the right direction.

“A lot of these guys have seen significant playing time since their sophomore year, and I can see big things for them this year,” coach Kirk McLaughlin said.

Seniors Wyatt Brown and Cooper Garber and junior Kiefer Dunham were all-conference choices last year.

Garber completed 118 of 235 passes for 1,518 yards and 13

touchdowns. He also was second for the Rams with 259 rushing yards and three rushing TDs.

McLaughlin said Garber has a strong grasp of the offense and continues to grow into the position.

“Cooper is more confident than ever as the quarterback of this team,” McLaughlin said. “... Cooper is also a hard worker and will be prepared for the season. He also has some great guys around him that will make his job easier.”

The Rams lose their top two receivers but return senior Dylan Greenough-Groom (23 catches, 248 yards), Brown (six catches, 110 yards) and senior Dawson Richards (eight catches, 87 yards).

Richards added 53 carries for 211 yards, but no other returner cracked 50 total rushing yards last season.

Dunham and senior A.J. Moline will help carry a growing set of linemen.

The defense has loads of returners, as the Rams return

four of their top six players in defensive points and eight of their top 11.

Brown and Dunham finished second and third, respectively, in tackles for the Rams last season. Brown had 85 total tackles and led the Rams with 10 tackles for loss, while Dunham had 66 tackles and was second with three sacks.

Moline had 59 tackles, Richards added 53 tackles and Garber had 46.

Greenough-Groom had 33 tackles and three interceptions, while senior Cade Baker added 28 tackles and three picks of his own and junior Drew Heermann added 29 tackles.

McLaughlin said he expects the defense to be “much improved” over 2021. Last year’s team finished 12th in total defense out of the 16 teams in Class 2A.

“I think the extra year of maturity and experience will make them more aggressive defensively,” he said.

BURNS BRONCS

2A EAST

# Coach Romsa feels right at home

Sometimes, it takes a while for a new head football coach to learn the culture of a school and a community.

Not in Burns.

Travis Romsa’s first year as head coach has been aided by two keys: First, Romsa has been an assistant coach for the Broncos for the past three years, getting to know the players and their strengths.

Second, Romsa is a Burns alumnus, having graduated in 2014.

Suffice to say, the switch to Romsa will be easier than most.

“It will be a lot easier stepping in at Burns after being here for three years,” Romsa said. “I know the school and kids and it has been an easy transition.”

The Broncos will have the benefit of what Romsa called “a great group of seniors” to lead the way this season. However, Burns will need younger and less experienced players to step up; the Broncos will return five offensive and seven defensive starters, and senior Cooper Lakin is the only

returning all-conference choice.

Romsa was particularly high on Burns’ defense entering this year.

“I expect our defense to be one of the top in the conference,” he said. “We will just have to prove ourselves that we can be as good as I believe.”

The Broncos return several key defensive playmakers but will still need to build depth. Burns gets back three of its top four tacklers but just four of its top eight.

Lakin and senior Riley McLaughlin ranked second and third, respectively, for the Broncos in tackles last season. Lakin had 65 and McLaughlin 61.

Senior Carter David was fourth with 38 tackles and led Burns with four pass break-ups.

Senior Cody Hape had 21 tackles and a team-high three interceptions, while senior Brandon Winslow had 20 tackles.

On offense, the Broncos will need a new quarterback, but the receiving corps returns its top two players in Lakin and Hape. Hape led the Broncos in receptions (21), receiving yards (441) and



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

Coach: Kirk McLaughlin, fifth year at Big Horn  
2021 Record: 3-6, lost to Lyman in state quarterfinals

### Key Players

QB/LB: Cooper Garber, Sr.  
OL/DL: A.J. Moline, Sr.  
OL/DL: Kiefer Dunham, Jr.  
WR/LB: Wyatt Brown, Sr.

### 2022 Schedule

8-27: vs. Natrona sophs, 11 a.m. (Zero Week)

9-2: vs. Lovell, 6 p.m.

\*9-9: at Upton-Sundance, 7 p.m. (at Sundance)

\*9-16: at Glenrock, 7 p.m.

\*9-23: vs. Torrington, 6 p.m.

\*9-30: vs. Wheatland, 6 p.m.

\*10-7: at Newcastle, 6 p.m.

\*10-14: vs. Tongue River, 2 p.m.

\*10-21: at Burns, 2 p.m.

\* Conference game

receiving touchdowns (three), while Lakin had 20 catches for 312 yards and a pair of scores.

Senior Baylen Smith was fourth for Burns with eight catches for 139 yards and a score.

The Broncos’ rushing game was split among five players, none of whom topped McLaughlin’s 157 total yards. Two others return, as Lakin was second with 114 yards and senior Jared Allen had 83.

Allen is tentatively set to take over at quarterback.

Romsa said the Broncos will try to “mix in the run more this year” to both take pressure off Allen and to provide balance. Burns was last in Class 2A in rushing yards per game last year with 82.1 but finished fourth in passing with 172.6 ypg. That disparity was 2A’s largest.

*“We will just have to prove ourselves that we can be as good as I believe.”*

~Coach Travis Romsa





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

**Coach:** Carl Federer,  
first year at Glenrock  
**2021 Record:** 2-7, did not  
qualify for playoffs

#### Key Players

**RB/DB:** Logan Jones, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Ryland Orozco, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Tristen Fleming, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Dusty Cox, Sr.

#### 2022 Schedule

**8-26:** at Rawlins jamboree, 7 p.m.  
(Zero Week)  
**9-2:** vs. Kemmerer, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** at Tongue River, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** vs. Big Horn, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** at Wheatland, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** vs. Burns, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** at Torrington, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** vs. Newcastle, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** at Upton-Sundance, 6 p.m.  
(at Upton)  
\* Conference game

## Herders ready to take next step

When new Glenrock football coach Carl Federer first met with his seniors prior to the summer, he asked about their biggest goal.

In a word: playoffs.

For a program that hasn't been to the postseason in three years, and one that finished 2-7 last year and went winless in conference play for the first time since 1997, the goal was what Federer wanted to hear.

"It's going to be tough, and it's going to be hard, but we'll work our tail off and whatever happens, happens," Federer said.

For the Herders, instilling a mentality that will get them to the postseason starts by reverting back to the offense that made the program successful for decades, the double wing. Federer, who was an assistant for 17 years with the Herders, said last year's I-back approach was an aberration.

"(The double wing) has been here as long as I've been here, since I started, and when you've had the success with the offense and the defense we've ran, especially the offense, the kids buy into that because they know it will work," Federer said. "... We're going to have to get back to (being) hard-nosed, being tough and running the football."

Senior Logan Jones, who was

Glenrock's only all-state choice last year and is the only returning all-conference pick, will be a centerpiece in that approach. Jones carried 236 times for 1,175 yards and five touchdowns last season.

Senior Dusty Cox added 63 carries for 288 yards and three touchdowns to finish second behind Jones.

Senior Brayden LaPointe finished with only 13 completions and 140 passing yards last year and will see time in the backfield, while Jones (three catches, 22 yards) and Cox (two catches, six yards) are the only returning players who caught a pass last season.

Defensively, the same two players will lead the efforts for a group that returns seven starters. Jones and Cox ranked first and

second last year for the Herders in tackles, with Jones leading the way with 47 and Cox notching 45. Cox led the team with seven tackles for loss and four sacks and tied for the team lead with two fumble recoveries.

Senior Rylan Orozco finished with 31 tackles; senior Hayden Huyser added 30 tackles;

LaPointe had 26 tackles and three pass deflections; senior Tristen Fleming had 17 tackles; and junior Adam Johnson had 15.

Federer said depth will be a concern, with only 20 to 23 players expected out. However, community support consistently swings Glenrock's way, a fact not lost on the new head coach.

"The expectation in Glenrock is if you (are coming off) a down year or a good year, they expect a state championship," he said.

*We're going to have to get back to (being) hard-nosed, being tough and running the football."*

**~Coach Carl Federer**

## Dogies moving in right direction

After three seasons of struggles, the Newcastle Dogies finally found some momentum in 2021.

Newcastle finished 3-6, just barely out of the race for the last playoff spot in the 2A East. A 40-38 loss to Wheatland in the final week of the season was all that separated the Dogies from their first playoff berth since 2017.

Now, coach Matt Conzelman said he has high hopes this year's team will continue to capture that momentum and build the program.

"They're motivated, motivated to be the change," Conzelman said.

The Dogies have two returning all-conference selections – seniors Heath Henkle and Holden McConkey – and five starters on both offense and defense.

McConkey led the Dogies' rushing attack last year with 116 carries for 461 yards and was

second for the team with 65 tackles.

Henkle, meanwhile, started at Center and had 22 tackles at defensive end.

Around them, several other key contributors return.

Senior Hogan Tystad was the No. 2 receiver, finishing with 22 catches for 195 yards.

Senior Quint Perino chipped in 73 rushing yards, third-best on the team, and 70 receiving yards, fourth-best for the Dogies. This year, though, Conzelman said Perino will likely move to the quarterback position, which is where he filled in as a starter as a sophomore due to injury; that year, he completed 42 of 99 passes for 501 yards and four touchdowns.

Newcastle graduated its top three players in defensive points, but its next seven are all back.

In addition to Henkle and McConkey, Perino and Tystad had 36 tackles apiece, senior Jacob Prell had 35 and sophomore Connor Stolhammer had 14.

Also in the mix this year are junior Colton Vanderpool-Mobley, who had a back injury last year but will bring speed to the outside and is slated to step in at both defensive

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE -



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

**Coach:** Matt Conzelman,  
14th year at Newcastle  
**2021 Record:** 3-6, did not  
qualify for playoffs

#### Dogies 2022 Schedule

**8-26:** at Hot Springs, S.D., 6 p.m.  
**9-2:** at Buffalo, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** at Wheatland, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** vs. Burns, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** at Tongue River, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-29:** vs. Upton-Sundance, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Big Horn, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** at Glenrock, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** vs. Torrington, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game



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

**Coach:** Steve Hanson,  
 sixth year at Tongue River  
**2021 Record:** 5-4, did not  
 qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**WR/LB:** Nate Guimond, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Scott Arizona, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Tavis Aksamit, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Caleb Kilbride, Jr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-27:** vs. Sheridan JV, 10 a.m.  
 (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** at Thermopolis, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** vs. Glenrock, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** at Upton-Sundance,  
 7 p.m. (at Upton)  
**\*9-23:** vs. Newcastle, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** vs. Torrington, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** at Burns, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** at Big Horn, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** vs. Wheatland, 6 p.m.  
 \* Conference game

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 TONGUE RIVER EAGLES
 2A EAST

# Speed is Eagles’ secret weapon

Where had this been hiding?

The Tongue River Eagles produced something during the 2021-22 school year that hadn’t been done since 1985: They won a state track and field championship.

The success on the track caught the attention of the football coach – and with it brought a new strategy for attacking opposing offenses.

“Our boys won the 2A state track title and showed some real team speed that I hadn’t seen before,” Hanson said. “So I feel like we can bring between three and six guys every play and still cover the back end on defense.”

Defense should be one of Tongue River’s strengths this fall, as the Eagles return their top three tacklers on defense this season and five starters in all from last year’s 5-4 team. With that experience and athleticism, Hanson said the Eagles should have a chance “to take more risks than the past.”

Senior Tavis Aksamit, Tongue Rivers’ only returning all-conference player, was the Eagles’ clear leader on defense, racking up 79 tackles – 23 more than anyone else on the team – and leading the squad with 24 solo tackles.

Junior Caleb Kilbride notched 54 tackles, second to Aksamit,



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2A EAST
 TORRINGTON TRAILBLAZERS
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# Blazers look to new set of leaders

Two consistent seasons of success in Torrington somewhat delayed opportunities for varsity experience for this year’s players.

Many players were on lower spots on the depth chart due to the skill, strength and experience of last year’s seniors.

Even so, coach Russell Stienmetz said the buildup and anticipation has been motivating for this year’s team, including the six seniors expected to lead the way.

“Several of these players have been waiting patiently to play varsity football for the Blazers and are extremely excited,” Stienmetz said.

Stienmetz said one of the hallmarks of this year’s group is how hard they work, whether that’s with football or with other sports and activities, “and there is nothing like competition” to bring out the best in them.

The Trailblazers graduated four all-state and six all-conference players from last year’s semifinal team but return a trio of all-conference picks in seniors Dylan Packard and Sam Birdsall and junior Bryce Hager.

One of Torrington’s biggest strength is its line, where Birdsall, senior Kaden Miller and junior Ty Bennick lead a host of returners.

“We return all our lineman, so we are hoping that we can run the ball more efficiently,” Stienmetz said.

Hager is Torrington’s leading returning rusher and receiver; he was fourth for the team last year with 38 carries for 164 yards and was also fourth in receiving with eight catches for 131 yards. However, Stienmetz indicated Hager may move to quarterback this season.

Senior Brendan Flock also contributed in the passing game, catching seven passes for 99 yards, while senior Ryan Baker had three catches for 52 yards.

Seven of Torrington’s top nine players in defensive points have graduated, but the two who return each played big roles.

Packard led the Trailblazers with 87 tackles last season, while Hager was third with 74.

Stienmetz said Packard led the way at inside linebacker while Hager played both outside linebacker and defensive end.

“I am excited to watch both of these players get after teams defensively as they have great motors and hard-nosed players,” Stienmetz said.

After that, experience wanes, but Baker was ninth in tackles with 33, Birdsall had 27 tackles and junior Brayden Frazier added 26.


Stienmetz also noted senior Juan Stevens as a key contributor this season both at defensive back and wide receiver.

The summer was a critical time for the players to find their chemistry, something Stienmetz said is happening.

“A good core of these players have been in the weight room three to four days a week and (are) starting to mesh well,” he said. “The timing of throws from a new QB is taking time, but I feel that these players will keep putting in time to improve their skills.”



*“...there is nothing like competition to bring out the best in them.”*  
**~Coach Russell Stienmetz**



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

**Coach:** Russell Stienmetz,  
 fourth year at Torrington  
**2021 Record:** 8-3, lost to Lovell in state semifinals

**Key Players**  
**OL/DL:** Sam Birdsall, Jr.  
**WR/DB:** Brendan Flock, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Dylan Packard, Sr.  
**QB/LB:** Bryce Hager, Jr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** at Gering, Neb., 7 p.m.  
**9-2:** vs. Mitchell, Neb., 7 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** at Burns, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** vs. Wheatland, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** at Big Horn, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** at Tongue River, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Glenrock, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** vs. Upton-Sundance, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** at Newcastle, 6 p.m.  
 \* Conference game

NEWCASTLE CONTINUED-

back and slot receiver.

One trait Conzelman said he has noticed is his players’ physical development and their play recognition. He said the players are starting to implement in-game adjustments much faster thanks to that maturity.

The biggest boost, though, may come from a freshman class that is 22 players deep. Conzelman said in his 20 years as an assistant and head coach at Newcastle, it’s the biggest single class he has seen. Plans are in the works for a freshman schedule, as well, something that hasn’t happened in several years.

On top of all that, the new Dogies enter into a program that finally has positive momentum, even if the season ended short of the postseason.

“It’s kind of hard to really be down on them because they gave everything they’ve got and played the way they need to, and the cards just didn’t fall,” Conzelman said.

for a freshman schedule, as well, something that hasn’t happened in several years.

On top of all that, the new Dogies enter into a program that finally has positive momentum, even if the season ended short of the postseason.

“It’s kind of hard to really be down on them because they gave everything they’ve got and played the way they need to, and the cards just didn’t fall,” Conzelman said.

**NEWCASTLE**

**Key Players**

**RB/MLB:** Holden McConkey, Sr.

**QB:** Quint Perino, Sr.

**OG/DE:** Jacob Prell, Sr.

**C/DT:** Heath Henkle, Sr.



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*“They’re motivated, motivated to be the change”*

**~Coach Matt Conzelman**



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

**Coach:** Andy Garland,  
19th year at Upton-Sundance  
**2021 Record:** 6-3, lost to  
Lovell in state quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**QB:** Keaton Mills, Jr.  
**OL/DL:** Jeral Nehl, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Eli Gill, Soph.  
**C/LB:** Jameson Fleenor, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** Open (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** Open  
**\*9-9:** vs. Big Horn, 7 p.m.  
(at Sundance)  
**\*9-16:** vs. Tongue River, 7 p.m.  
(at Upton)  
**\*9-23:** at Burns, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-29:** at Newcastle, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Wheatland, 6 p.m.  
(at Sundance)  
**\*10-14:** at Torrington, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** vs. Glenrock, 6 p.m.  
(at Upton)  
\* Conference game

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# Patriots need to mature quickly

Don’t let the ages fool you. Yes, the Upton-Sundance Patriots will be one of Class 2A’s younger teams this fall. That does not mean the Patriots won’t be one of the less competitive or less talented. Coach Andy Garland said the Patriots won’t have a big senior class, with no seniors from Upton and maybe five from Sundance, so there will be “a bit of rebuilding” this season. However, “those younger kids have some experience coming back,” Garland said. This includes a huge chunk of defensive contributors, an all-conference quarterback and a line that knows how to get things done. Five of the Patriots’ nine players who notched at least 40 tackles are back from last year’s 6-3 team. Junior Keaton Mills and senior Jeral Nehl, the Patriots’ only two returning all-conference choices, are tied for the lead among returners in tackles with 48 last year. Mills also led the team with two interceptions. Garland said Mills’ place on defense is still uncertain, but what is certain is that he will be somewhere in the starting lineup, while Nehl will anchor the defensive line. Junior Ben Miller had 43 tackles last year, sophomore Eli Gill had 42 and senior Kaedyn Fletcher added 41 tackles and three sacks. Junior Chase Mills contributed 27 tackles and junior Hayes Haiar added 23, including three sacks. “It’s nice to have a decent sized group coming back on defense, for sure,” Garland said. Offensively, things will run through Keaton Mills, who completed 76 of 147 passes for 1,140 yards and 18 touchdowns. He was also third for Upton-Sundance in the rushing game, carrying 60 times for 164 yards and a team-high six touchdowns. “He did a nice job for us, so I expect that he’ll have a good year for us,” Garland said. “He’s a good leader for our younger kids.

“... We’ll have high expectations for Keaton, especially trying to replace offensively those key players that we have to replace.” Nehl, Fleenor, Miller and Chase Mills will lead efforts on the line. “We’ll have a little more experience in guys coming back on the offensive and defensive lines,” Garland said. “That will be a strength.” Senior Jesse Harmon is the top returning receiver; he finished fourth for the team in catches (eight) and receiving yards (105) last season.

*“We’ve always had good buy-in from the communities, so I really think that it’s going strong.”*

**~Coach  
Andy Garland**

Senior Ryder Downey added 40 carries for 148 yards to supplement the running game, and Garland said Gill will also see time in the backfield. The 2022 season will also mark the 11th year of the Sundance and Upton co-op. “We’ve always had good buy-in from the communities, so I really think that it’s going strong,” said Garland, who has been head coach for each season.

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# Bulldogs have solid core returning

It might be easy to overlook the Wheatland Bulldogs coming into 2022. To do so would be a mistake, though, said fifth-year coach Cody Bohlander. “I have been super pleased over the years with our players hard work in the offseason and seeing the amount of guys we get to camp and in the weight room,” Bohlander said. “... The kids have a high expectation for one another and will push themselves to get to where they need to be.” Although the Bulldogs finished 8-3 last season, their under-the-radar look for 2022 is based on some big losses to graduation and a small senior class for this year. Still, Wheatland returns five starters on offense, six on defense and three seniors who were all-conference choices last year – Maxx Meyer, Ryland Petroski and Drew Smialek. “We bring back a really good core and just need to find some pieces to fill the holes we have with the seniors that we lost this last season,” Bohlander said. Senior Aric Suko was Wheatland’s top ground gainer last year, carrying 136 times for 643 yards and seven touchdowns. He’s the only one of Wheatland’s top four rushers to come back this year. Bohlander said Suko’s emergence, in part due to injuries to other backs that forced Suko to carry the ball more, helps as the Bulldogs look to their seniors for stability in the backfield. “(The) senior group is a tough class and has a lot of physical guys in it,” Bohlander said. “It will be fun to see what our best duo is in the backfield or what sets of duos we can create over the off season to help us be successful.” Petroski contributed 27 carries for 107 yards. Senior J.P. Anderson finished third for the Bulldogs in receiving with 15 catches for 182 yards, while Suko lended 12 catches for 114 yards. No other returner had more than two catches last season. Smialek will lead the efforts on the offensive line. On defense, only two of Wheatland’s top seven tacklers are returning this season. Meyer, entering his third year as a starter, finished just one tackle away from the team lead last season, finishing with 91. His tallies included team-highs with 10 tackles for loss and three sacks. Petroski added 69 tackles to finish third on the team. Smialek had 30 tackles last season, Anderson had 19 and junior Wyatt Kafka 15. Bohlander said a deep junior class, including wide receiver/defensive back Bryce Stenson, running back/linebacker Cole Goertz and tight end/defensive back Tagg Mickelsen, will be key, as will sophomore lineman Bode Stone. “It will definitely be a quick and physical group that we put on the field this season,” Bohlander said.

**Mascot:** Panthers  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Orange and black

**Coach:** Marty Linford  
first year at Cokeville  
**2021 Record:** 5-4, lost to Torrington in state quarterfinals


**Key Players**  
**QB/LB:** Landon Walker, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Jesus Bencomo, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Cael Thompson, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Micah Petersen, Jr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** at Kemmerer jamboree, 2 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**8-31:** at Smithfield Sky View, Utah, JV, 4 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** at Lovell, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** vs. Pinedale, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** vs. Kemmerer, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** at Mountain View, 4 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Rich County, Utah, 1 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** at Thermopolis, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** vs. Lyman, 1 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# New Panthers coach is familiar face

Don’t worry – Cokeville football will still look like Cokeville football. With a new head coach for the first time since 1980, Marty Linford said the Panthers will still bear the trademarks that have worked so well for so long. Linford, who has coached with Cokeville’s junior high and sub-varsity football programs for more than 20 years, understands why the Panthers have had the success they’ve had, and he wants to keep that going. “Almost 90-plus percent of our kids participate,” Linford said. “They’re all involved, and we expect to be good. ... We expect to win state championships. We’ll never be the biggest and we’ll probably never be the most athletic, but we’re going to give it a great shot.” That’s what the Panthers do. With 22 state championships in program, history, including 20 in the past 40 years, high expectations come with the territory. Linford’s first year leading the way, though, will be helped by a core group of returners who understand the system, the expectations and their roles. Both seniors Cael Thompson and Landon Walker were all-state choices in 2021; only defending champion Lyman has more returning all-state selections in Class 2A this year. Walker completed 51 of 113 passes for 854 yards and eight touchdowns last year and also added 111 carries for 311 yards and eight scores. Junior Jack Dayton led the Panthers in receiving yards (339), notching 19 catches and three touchdowns, to lead the returning receiving corps. He also had 60 carries for 356 yards. Junior Micah Petersen will also add depth in the backfield. Thompson, along with senior all-conference choice Jesus Bencomo, will return as starters on the offensive line. On defense, the Panthers get back seven of their top 13 tacklers. Linford said the defensive line is an area of particular strength with Bencomo and Thompson, while Walker returns as the team’s top tackler at linebacker. Walker finished second in defensive points for the Panthers last season, while Thompson, Bencomo, Dayton, Petersen, senior Tanner Hatch and sophomore Justin Moyes all had big responsibilities on defense. Walker and Thompson split the team lead with 60 tackles apiece, and Thompson shared the team lead with eight tackles for loss. Bencomo chipped in 42 tackles, while Dayton had 35 tackles and three pass deflections. Moyes (31 tackles), Petersen (28) and Hatch (21) also contributed. Even with numerous returners in key positions, Linford said several younger players, including Moyes and fellow sophomore Kayson Walker, will need to help bolster a roster that Linford said may only include five or six seniors after some key players transferred to programs in other states. “We have to have kids step into roles and see how they do,” Linford said.





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

**Coach:** Bart Jernigan,  
sixth year at Kemmerer  
**2021 Record:** 2-6, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** at Kemmerer jamboree,  
2 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** at Glenrock, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** vs. Thermopolis, 5 p.m.  
**9-16:** vs. Rich County, Utah, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** at Cokeville, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-29:** at Lyman, 4 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Pinedale, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** vs. Lovell, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** at Mountain View, 3 p.m.  
\* Conference game

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KEMMERER RANGERS

2A WEST

# Rangers ready for playoff ride

The steps the Kemmerer Rangers made last season may not look like much from the outside.

From the inside, though, the Rangers’ program is far ahead of where it has been the last few years.

With eight starters returning from last year, Kemmerer enters 2022 as a confident bunch, ready to improve on last year’s 2-6 record, which in and of itself was a big step forward.

“The success we found seemed to translate into a little more buy-in in the weight room,” coach Bart Jernigan said. “Morale has been good and kids have been using the other sports seasons and weight room time to help develop.

“The biggest barometer of last season’s impact will be participation: If we are able to parlay our success last year into five or six more kids on the roster, it will represent a huge shift for the program. A team of 30 kids would open up a lot of opportunities for us.”

Senior Riggen Walker, Kemmerer’s lone returning all-conference pick, led the way rushing with 108 carries for 370 yards.

He also leads Kemmerer’s defensive returners; his 48 tackles last season was second for Kemmerer and leads all returners.

Senior Jake Kampman was Kemmerer’s top receiver; he led the Rangers with 13 catches for 213 yards and had the only two receiving touchdowns of the season.

However, no other returner finished with more than one catch last season.

The line returns several key players, with senior Tim Peck, juniors Gabe Emery and Tanner Schramm and sophomore Derek Hagler all contributing last season. Senior Landon Heaps is versatile enough to play in the backfield or on the line.

“We will be bigger on average this year, but we don’t have the size up front to try and take on some of the bigger lines we face head on, so we have to get creative against those teams,” Jernigan said.

Kemmerer returns three of its top five players in defensive points and nine of its top 13 tacklers.

In addition to Walker, Kampman had 37 tackles and three sacks and Heaps had 28 tackles.

Also back are junior Tyler McKane, who led Kemmerer with seven tackles for loss and had 29 tackles on the season, and senior Karl Haslem, who notched 22 tackles.

“The hope is that we can become a little more multiple in our defensive packaging this season to provide a few more looks to the opponent and complicate their rules and responsibilities,” Jernigan said. “We have been a little bit too predictable in seasons past and want to bring some variety to help confuse our opponents.”

Hagler (19 tackles), Emery (18) and Schramm (13) also finished in double-digit tackles last year.

Key Players

RB/LB: Riggen Walker, Sr.  
RB/DB: Seth Krell, Sr.  
TE/DE: Jake Kampman, Sr.  
QB/OL/LB: Landon Heaps, Sr.

2A WEST

LOVELL BULLDOGS

# Bulldogs want to take last bite

After coming up just short of a Class 2A championship, the Lovell Bulldogs aren’t sweating the what-ifs.

They’re more concerned about the what-nows.

An 8-6 loss to Lyman in last year’s championship provided all the offseason motivation Lovell needed.

“When you’re within a couple points of winning a state championship, it obviously leaves you hungry to come out on the right end of that,” coach Nicc Crosby said. “So I feel like they’ve used that as a motivating factor, from what I’ve seen so far.”

The Bulldogs graduated six all-state players. Despite this, the Bulldogs still manage to return seven players on both offense and defense who started at some point last season.

“You might get more athletic or bigger, but experience, the only way to gain it is by playing,” Crosby said. “And we’ve got a lot of guys who have played a lot of football together.”

Seniors Ben Nichols and Preston Nichols, twin brothers, were both all-conference choices.

Good thing for the Lovell defense, as they finished first and second, respectively, in tackles and defensive points for the Bulldogs last season.

Preston Nichols led the way with 113 tackles and nine tackles for loss, while Ben Nichols added 70 tackles, two fumble recoveries and two interceptions.

While they’re the only two of Lovell’s top five players in defensive points to return, several other key defensive contributors are back, including nine of Lovell’s 13 top tacklers.

Among the key returners: Senior Zane Collins had 46 tackles, senior Meyjl McArthur had 31 tackles and led the team with three interceptions and 10 pass break-ups, junior Adnan Khan notched 37 tackles, senior Connor Strom had 27, senior Joel Padilla had 18 and juniors Jared Mangus and Weston Crumrine had 15 apiece.

“We will need some guys to step in and plug some holes on the defensive line for us, but I think our defense as a whole will be something that we can hang our hats on again this season,” Crosby said.

Ben Nichols and Preston Nichols finished third and fourth, respectively, in rushing last season for Lovell. Ben Nichols ran 70 times for 542 yards, while Preston Nichols had 88 carries for 525 yards. Both had seven touchdowns.

Khan chipped in 22 carries for 118 yards.

Sophomore Davin Crosby took most of the snaps under center last year and returns after completing 36 of 71 passes for 509 yards and four touchdowns last season.

Two of Lovell’s top three receivers also return, with McArthur, whose 175 receiving yards on six catches led the Bulldogs last year, fronting that effort. Preston Nichols led the Bulldogs in receptions with 15, going for 105 yards.

Ben Nichols chipped in four catches for 55 yards.



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

**Coach:** Nicc Crosby,  
fourth year at Lovell  
**2021 Record:** 9-2, lost to  
Lyman in state championship

**Key Players**  
**FB/MLB:** Preston Nichols, Sr.  
**TB/LB:** Ben Nichols, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Connor Strom, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Zane Collins, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** vs. Buffalo, scrimmage,  
noon (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** at Big Horn, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** vs. Cokeville, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** at Lyman, 1 p.m.  
**\*9-24:** vs. Pinedale, 1 p.m.  
**9-30:** at Rich County, Utah, 4 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Mountain View, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** at Kemmerer, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** at Thermopolis, 7 p.m.  
\* Conference game

2A WEST

LYMAN EAGLES

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# Eagles have talent for threeppeat

The focus for the Lyman Eagles the past three years has been on having players be the best versions of themselves, whether on the field, in school or in life.

Something about the approach is working – the Eagles have won back-to-back Class 2A championships and come into this year on a 19-game winning streak, the longest active streak in the state.

“You never want to put too much pressure on kids... but you want to have high expectations,” coach Dale Anderson said. “... Everything they do, we can deal with a lot of different outcomes if you’re giving effort and trying to be the best version of you.”

The two-time defending Class 2A champions went 12-0 last season and are poised to be the team to beat again in 2022. Lyman leads Class 2A with three returning all-state players; the rest of the classification combined only has four.

Seniors Braydon Bradshaw, Ashton Houskeeper and McKoy Smith were all-state in 2021, and junior Morgan Hatch was an all-conference choice.

Houskeeper kept defenses off balance with both his running and throwing, where he led the Eagles in both categories. He ran 222 times for 1,451 yards and 25 touchdowns, and he also completed 40 of his 82 passes for 697 yards and six more touchdowns.

Anderson said Houskeeper has focused on becoming a better passer to make the Eagle offense more versatile.

“To his credit, he’s really put the time in,” Anderson said. “The run game, he understands really well... so it is nice having that.”

Smith, who was also an all-state choice in 2020, led the Eagles in receptions (17), receiving yards (378) and receiving touchdowns (five), and also contributed 29 carries for 245 yards and four more scores.

For as experienced as the backfield is, the lines are just as inexperienced, where just one starter – Hatch – returns.

“I think that’s going to be an area where we’ve got to get caught up on and get up to speed,” Anderson said.

The defense, meanwhile, returns four of its top five players in defensive points in Smith, Bradshaw, Hatch and sophomore Max Gregory.

Gregory emerged as a leader in his first year, finishing second on the team with 69 tackles. Smith had 61 tackles and led Lyman with four interceptions and seven pass deflections.

Hatch tallied 52 tackles and Bradshaw had 37 tackles, five sacks and five pass break-ups.

Senior Gage Neilson had 31 tackles, Houskeeper had 27 and junior Carter Bradshaw had 23.

Anderson said on defense, “our kids really do step up and work hard, and each week’s a little different. We don’t have much depth, so what your job is one week might be completely different the next.”




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

**Coach:** Dale Anderson,  
11th year at Lyman  
**2021 Record:** 12-0, beat  
Lovell in state championship

**Key Players**  
**QB:** Ashton Houskeeper, Sr.  
**WR/RB/DB:** McKoy Smith, Sr.  
**TE/DE:** Brayden Bradshaw, Sr.  
**WR/DB/K:** Gage Neilson, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** at Malad, Idaho, 7 p.m.  
**9-2:** at Bear Lake, Idaho, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** at Pinedale, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** vs. Lovell, 1 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** at Mountain View, 4 p.m.  
**\*9-29:** vs. Kemmerer, 4 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Thermopolis, 2 p.m.  
**10-14:** at Rich County, Utah, 1 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** at Cokeville, 1 p.m.  
\* Conference game



**Mascot:** Buffalos  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Purple and silver

**Coach:** Brent Walk,  
11th year at Mountain View  
**2021 Record:** 1-7, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**RB/WR/SS:** Braden Walker, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Kole Behunin, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Carson Eardley, Jr.  
**WR/LB:** Dane Branson, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** at Rawlins jamboree, 7 p.m.  
(Zero Week)  
**9-2:** at Wheatland, 7 p.m.  
**9-9:** vs. Rich County, Utah, 1 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** at Thermopolis, 3 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** vs. Lyman, 4 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** vs. Cokeville, 4 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** at Lovell, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** at Pinedale, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** vs. Kemmerer, 3 p.m.  
\* Conference game

MOUNTAIN VIEW BUFFALOS

2A WEST

# Buffalos have something to prove

Last season, for the first time in Brent Walk’s decade as the head coach at Mountain View, the Buffalos finished a season with a losing record.

The 1-7 finish was a frustrating culmination to a frustrating year.

“My main goal with these kids is to make sure we learn from what happened last year and to make sure it never, ever happens again,” Walk said.

This year’s team will be young, as Walk has the smallest senior class – just three players – that he’s ever had. Even so, Walk said, “we’re not going to take a big step back and say this year is a rebuilding year because that’s not our philosophy as a program.

“... It’s all a matter of how we handle a situation that we haven’t had before.”

Senior Dane Branson is the lone all-conference returner and will help lead a defense that returns four of its top six players in defensive points.

Branson led the Buffalos with 72 tackles; he led the team in solo tackles, assisted tackles and sacks.

Walk said Branson had always played defensive line but shone after moving to linebacker midway through the season. Similarly, he may move from line to wide receiver on offense this year.

“It’s kind of interesting to find the best spot where he’s going to fit this year, and (fit) the guys going around him,” Walk said.

Junior Jayce Schultz was second on the team with 51 tackles and fourth in defensive points.

Senior Brade Walker had 39 tackles and junior Carson Eardley chipped in 31 tackles and blocked a pair of kicks. Juniors Konnor Schneider (22 tackles) and Tyler Mair (21) also topped the 20-tackle barrier.

On offense, Walk said he’s excited by the growth on the line, with a core of juniors – among them Mair, Schneider, Coby Jones, Fletcher Black.

“We’re really excited about what those guys are doing,” Walk said.

Eardley was Mountain View’s top receiver last year across all three major categories – catches (25), yards (361) and touchdowns (three).

Walk said Eardley has some of the best speed he’s seen as a coach, and “we need to make sure we get the ball in his hands.”

Senior Kole Behunin was third for the Buffalos with 11 catches for 107 yards. No other returner had more than 20 receiving yards.

Meanwhile, senior Braden Walker – who played lineman, receiver and running back last year – will move to a receiver’s spot full-time. Walk said they may even design some tight-end formations, something the Buffalos don’t normally do, to take advantage of Walker’s athleticism.

The backfield is more open. Who will play quarterback is still uncertain, while Schultz (13 carries, 81 yards) is the leading returning rusher.





**Mascot:** Wranglers  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Green and orange

**Coach:** David Thrash, first year at Pinedale  
**2021 Record:** 0-8, did not qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**OL/DL:** Cade Covill, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Woody Green, Jr.  
**WR/LB:** Sawyer Siefkes, Sr.  
**RB/S:** Ethan Jensen, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** at Lander, scrimmage, 4 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** vs. Rawlins, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** vs. Lyman, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** at Cokeville, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-24:** at Lovell, 1 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** vs. Thermopolis, 4 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** at Kemmerer, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** vs. Mountain View, 6 p.m.  
**10-21:** at Rich County, Utah, 4 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Wranglers have reason for optimism

When David Thrash looks at the halls of Pinedale High School, he sees potential. And as the new head coach of the Wranglers, he wants to see that potential turned into something tangible. With Pinedale in the midst of a 14-game losing streak, Thrash said his top priority is simple: get players out. “In a perfect world, I would have every boy that walks the halls (out), just to generate that competition,” Thrash said. Already, Thrash, an assistant at Pinedale for three years and for five years at Campbell County before that, has seen that focus pay off. The Wranglers should be deeper and more experienced than last year. “Hopefully we’re playing to the strengths of those players on the field and creating sustainable depth through that to where we are also developing the players that are behind them to give them an opportunity to continue building,” Thrash said. The Wranglers will rely a lot on senior Ethan Jensen, the team’s leading returning rusher and tackler and an all-conference choice. As a running back, he compiled 94 carries for 373 yards last year, and he’s the only one of the Wranglers’ top three rushers coming back this year. And at safety, he led Pinedale with 49 tackles – a good place to start on an improved defense that returns six of its top eight tacklers. Junior Bodie Jensen was second with 41 tackles last year, and senior Luke Gray was second in defensive points and tied for the team lead with 20 solo tackles. He also had a team-high three pass deflections. Junior Dustin Larsen had 34 tackles, junior Cordelle Lane had 32 and junior Austin “Woody” Green had 31 tackles and two fumble recoveries. Pinedale’s passing game – which only gained 127 yards all season last year – will need a new quarterback, with Gray slated for that spot. Larsen led the Wranglers’ receivers with seven catches for 46 yards, and all six players who caught a pass last season are back. Up front, senior Cade Covill, who is returning from injury, will help anchor the line along with Lane. Senior Sawyer Siefkes will add depth at wide receiver and linebacker. In addition, Thrash said other athletes are coming out again after missing a year or two or coming out for the first time “to see if they can help rebuild the program, and turn a corner and help build a culture.” “Having the opportunity to take over the program is humbling but exciting at the same time, for the opportunity to be able to fulfill that desire and to work with these young men in working with becoming what I think and what my staff think they can be,” he said.




A BRANCH OF  
BANK  
OF  
JACKSON  
HOLE

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# Young Bobcats have some talent

No one got a later, or weirder, start to the 2021 football season than Thermopolis. As a school closure related to COVID-19 shut down the facility for two weeks, the Bobcats were left idle. One game was forfeited, another rescheduled, and Thermopolis didn’t see a game until Sept. 17, more than a month after the first practice. Through it all, the Bobcats fought hard but still finished outside the postseason, tallying a 3-5 record for the second consecutive season. Despite being “dealt a bad hand,” Thermopolis coach Matt McPhie offered no excuses for not reaching his team’s expectations. “We dealt with it and didn’t get it done,” he said. Through that experience, though, this year’s team will be ready to adapt to any weird circumstances thrown their way. The team will be young, as only three seniors are expected out on the roster that should top 35 total players. However, the Bobcats will be led by two backfield seniors who have proven they can shine. Seniors Roedy Farrell and Gavin Shumway were both all-conference choices last year. Farrell led the Bobcats in all major rushing categories, carrying 80 times for 611 yards and six touchdowns. Farrell also leads Thermopolis’ returning receivers; he was third on the team with 13 catches for 177 yards last season. However, Farrell is the only returning player who caught a pass last season. Shumway completed 61 of 123 passes for 786 yards and seven touchdowns and also ran 62 times for 281 yards and three scores. “They are both good athletes,” McPhie said. “They will cause some teams some fits with their combined abilities. Both of them are elusive. Farrell has some absolute power and top end speed to go along with the ability to catch the ball and make some kids miss. We are excited about these guys leading a group of younger players.” Up front, juniors Porter McCumber and Brody Sorensen will lead the offensive line’s efforts. The Bobcats graduated their top four tacklers, leaving Farrell as the top returner on that side. He had 37 tackles last year. Sophomore Chris Arends (31 tackles) and Shumway (26 tackles) also contributed on defense; no other returner broke into double-digit tackles last year. However, McPhie said the Bobcats’ younger players are assimilating well. Specifically, McPhie noted that Arends’ twin brother Ryan, junior running back/linebacker Jessen Basse and sophomore back Zane Stam will be key parts of the plan this season. “We took a bunch of young guys to camp,” he said. “We have a crew of aggressive tough kids who can get after it. “... We are excited about the future and prospects of a bunch of kids we have in the program.”

**Key Players**  
**RB/LB:** Roedy Farrell, Sr.  
**QB/DB:** Gavin Shumway, Sr.  
**OL/DE:** Porter McCumber, Jr.  
**RB/LB:** Jessen Basse, Jr.



**Mascot:** Bobcats  
**Division:** Class 2A  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Purple and yellow

**Coach:** Matt McPhie, seventh year at Thermopolis  
**2021 Record:** 3-5, did not qualify for playoffs

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** at Worland, scrimmage, 7 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** vs. Tongue River, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** at Kemmerer, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** vs. Mountain View, 3 p.m.  
**9-23:** vs. Rich County, Utah, 3 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** at Pinedale, 4 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** at Lyman, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** vs. Cokeville, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** vs. Lovell, 7 p.m.  
\* Conference game



# Shoshoni may roll out more red title red carpet


By Patrick Schmiedt

**Four questions to answer**  
*Is this going to be the best year of nine-man yet?* Absolutely. When the four teams from the previous year’s semifinals combine to return 20 all-state players, some things are about to go down. That’s the case with Shoshoni, Rocky Mountain, Pine Bluffs and Wind River. *What about the other 12 teams?* Competitive, but also-rans. Lingle will be improved, Big Piney will be challenge the West, and Saratoga, Greybull, Lusk and Riverside will all be capable teams. But nine-man will be stratified entering 2022. *So who’s gonna take it all?* \*shrug emoji\*. Shoshoni got a lot of love in the preseason as the defending champions; Rocky Mountain returns a ton of players; Pine Bluffs has top-tier individual talent that’s harnessed well in a team concept; Wind River is capable of beating them all. *Is nine-man really this top-heavy, and are the top teams really this even?* Yep. Every single game among those top four will be must-see football. If one of the other 12 programs can pull an upset to make it a five- or six-team race, watch out.

**Four key games**  
*Pine Bluffs at Shoshoni, Sept. 1.* Shoshoni’s only loss in last year’s title run was to the Hornets. While the championship rematch the Hornets sought never materialized, this Week 1 showdown will give an indication of who’s this season’s favorite. *Lingle at Lusk, Sept. 9.* Lingle might be the most improved team in 1A nine-man this year, and the Doggers’ hopes for a breakout season may just rest on their East Conference opener. *Rocky Mountain at Shoshoni, Sept. 23.* This game has significant intrigue not only for the West Conference race but for the entire season, as the Wranglers and Grizzlies reprise last year’s state championship game. *Rocky Mountain at Wind River, Oct. 20.* Don’t forget about the Cougars — they’re loaded for another deep playoff run. This regular-season finale against the Grizzlies might just be a surprise in waiting.

**Predicted order of finish**  
*East Conference:* Pine Bluffs; Lingle; Saratoga; Lusk; Wright; Southeast; Guernsey; Moorcroft. *West Conference:* Shoshoni; Rocky Mountain; Wind River; Greybull; Big Piney; Riverside; St. Stephens; Wyoming Indian. *Preseason top five:* 1. Shoshoni; 2. Pine Bluffs; 3. Rocky Mountain; 4. Wind River; 5. Lingle.

**Way-too-early title game score prediction**  
*Shoshoni 32, Pine Bluffs 28.* No one can say for sure how this will shake out. Whoever wins it all in nine-man this year will have absolutely earned their praise.



**State Champs**  
**Shoshoni Wranglers**

**2021 State Playoffs**  
**1A/9-Man Championship**  
Shoshoni 19, Rocky Mountain 6

**Semifinals**  
Shoshoni 27, Wind River 0  
Rocky Mountain 30, Pine Bluffs 24

**Quarterfinals**  
Shoshoni 55, Wright 0  
Wind River 36, Lusk 26  
Pine Bluffs 35, Riverside 8  
Rocky Mountain 37, Southeast 22

**Players to watch**  
**Stu Lerwick, Pine Bluffs**  
Last year, he completed 134 of 211 passes (63.5% completion) for 2,215 yards and 23 touchdowns against only three interceptions — this after throwing for 1,857 yards as a sophomore.

**Pehton Truempler and Alex Mills, Shoshoni**  
Mills is the returning Class 1A nine-man defensive player of the year, intercepting 11 passes and scoring two defensive touchdowns. Offensively,, he threw for 1,181 yards and 20 touchdowns. Truempler tied for the team lead with 100 tackles and ran for 1,521 yards and 21 TDs.

**Nate Minemyer, Rocky Mountain**  
Named by the coaches as the classification’s top lineman last season, Minemyer was particularly problematic on defense, where he ran up 74 total tackles but made a bunch of big plays.

**Jaycee Herbert, Wind River**  
He led the Cougars with 92 tackles and had a team-high 14 tackles for loss. He also led the team in scoring (13 touchdowns) and in all-purpose offense as a rusher, receiver and kick returner.

**Ryan Fornstrom, Pine Bluffs**  
A two-way threat, Fornstrom led the Hornets in defensive points and led nine-man in catches (38) and receiving yards (647) last year.





**Mascot:** Vikings  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Black and yellow

**Coach:** Curtis Cook,  
seventh year at Guernsey  
**2021 Record:** 3-6, lost to  
Encampment in 1A six-man  
quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**TE/DL:** Alex Sturdivant, Sr.  
**FB/LB:** Chase Thompson, Sr.  
**WR/S:** Aidan Noggle, Jr.  
**QB/S:** Brian McCoid, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-27:** Open (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** vs. Wyoming Indian, 4 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** vs. Pine Bluffs, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** at Lingle, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** vs. Saratoga, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** at Southeast, 1 p.m.  
**\*10-6:** vs. Wright, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** at Lusk, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** at Moorcroft, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Vikings adjusting to nine-man game

The shift the Guernsey-Sunrise Vikings have to make is unlike any other shift in the state.

As the only program in Wyoming moving from six-man to nine-man play this year, the Vikings are in a unique situation.

“We’re having to redesign the entire program,” said coach Curtis Cook, referring to everything from the playbook to the playing field itself. “We pretty much have to change everything. ... I’m confident that we will, that we’ll be able to handle that and navigate that and be competitive in the fall.”

The Vikings will transition Class 1A divisions from six-man to nine-man this fall, a move prompted by shifting enrollment that placed the Vikings out of the home they’ve had in six-man since 2009.

The challenge is clear. Between transfers and decisions not to play, the Vikings will have a smaller roster this year in nine-man (15 to 16) than they did last year in six-man (about 20).

Still, Cook said he’s optimistic that, despite all the changes, the Vikings will not be pushovers in their new league.

“I think we’ll be competitive,” he said. “I think we’ll surprise some teams with how competitive we are.”

“... I’m pretty optimistic about the variety and depth of our playbook, and we’ve got smart kids that are going to pick it up and have started picking it up pretty quickly.”

Senior Brian McCoid and junior Aidan Noggle were all-conference choices last year, and the Vikings will rely on five seniors to carry many responsibilities into the new season.

McCoid provided the aerial yards, completing 55 of 100 passes for 929 yards and 15 touchdowns. He also was second in the rushing game with 43 carries for 339 yards and four touchdowns.

Noggle added eight catches for 122 yards to finish third on the team and is also the Vikings’

leading returning tackler, with 46 a year ago to finish third on the team – the only one of Guernsey-Sunrise’s top four tacklers coming back this fall.

McCoid added 34 tackles and had the team’s only two interceptions last year, and senior Chase Thompson (12 tackles) also contributed defensively.

Cook said he was also counting on a pair of seniors, tight end/defensive lineman Alex Sturdivant and running back/linebacker Colton Weinkauff, to provide quality minutes this fall.

Cook said the big key will be breaking old six-man tendencies, something that will be challenging because most of his players have only ever played six-man.

“I think by the time the season hits in the first week of September, I think we’ll be good with understanding the whole playbook and I think we’ll be ready to go,” Cook said. “... I have faith in my guys to pick that up.”

# Skeen moves up to lead Tigers

Decades and decades ago, the sub-varsity teams for the Lusk Tigers were called the Kittens.

This year’s Tigers could adopt that mascot quite easily.

The team will feature more sophomores and freshmen than in previous years; first-year coach Chris Skeen said he only anticipates three seniors and three or four juniors but up to 10 freshmen to come out for the team in 2022.

Skeen, an assistant coach with Lusk for the past nine years, said the overriding coaching philosophy is to tailor the approach to the strengths of the players.

“We’re going to have to rely on our young kids quite a bit, but the good thing is they’re going to build that solid core,” Skeen said. “... By knowing the kids ahead of time, the families, the expectations, it makes it so much easier.”

On the plus side, Lusk returns several players with experience up front, and upon that experience the Tigers can

hang their hopes for a third consecutive winning season and playoff berth.

Senior Dayne Lamp was an all-state choice for the second time last season, and classmates Miles Ashurst and Blake Miller were all-conference choices. The strength of the Tigers is up front, as all three returning all-conference players were starters on the offensive line last year.

Moreover, juniors Donovin Kraft and Kort Bannon will add depth and competition for time to those spots.

Skeen said the line’s experience should help the running game with less experienced backs.

Junior David West was third for the Tigers in rushing yards last year and is the top returning ballcarrier. He ran 21 times for 203 yards and three touchdowns last year.

Lamp chipped in 24 carries for 153 yards and four touchdowns.

Junior Quintin Bieri and sophomores Ridge Kupke and Jackson Smith will all

chip in offensively, as well.

However, quarterback is open, and not a single player returns who caught a pass last season.

Lamp was a terror on defense, piling up a team-high 139 tackles, including 49 solo tackles, 15 tackles for loss and four sacks.

Miller was fourth on the team with 38 tackles; he had three sacks, as well. However, Lamp and Miller are the only two of Lusk’s top six tacklers to return.

Ashurst added 31 tackles and three sacks, while West also had 31 tackles. No other returner had more than two tackles last year.

Skeen said the defensive game plan puts Lamp at the center, as he is the player with the most returning experience. Skeen said Lamp’s experience helps him make sure alignments are correct.

“When you have those kinds of eyes on the field, it certainly makes the coaching side of it a whole lot easier,” Skeen said.



**Mascot:** Tigers  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Red and white

**Coach:** Chris Skeen,  
first year at Lusk  
**2021 Record:** 6-3, lost to  
Wind River in state  
quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**C/LB:** Dayne Lamp, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Miles Ashurst, Sr.  
**OL/DE:** Blake Miller, Sr.  
**RB/DB:** David West, Jr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** at Casper jamboree, noon  
(Zero Week)  
**9-2:** vs. Big Piney, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** vs. Lingle, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-17:** at Saratoga, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** vs. Southeast, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** at Pine Bluffs, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** at Moorcroft, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** vs. Guernsey, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** at Wright, 7 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Doggers have talent to be dangerous

Lingle’s focus this season is the Ex-es and O’s.

Ex-es as in experienced, excited, explosive.

O’s as in oh-my-gosh.

With all but one starter returning, the Doggers are set for a breakout season in 2022 after going 3-5 last year.

“We have a lot of guys with a ton of varsity experience,” second-year coach Brandon Gifford said. “We also return everyone from the offensive side of the ball, which should allow us to hit the ground running and become more efficient.”

All four of Lingle’s all-conference choices are back in seniors Hadley Fleming and Owen Schilreff, junior Nolan Spears and sophomore Loudan Bremer.

Spears, who was also an all-state choice, led the offense by rushing 150 times for 897 yards and nine touchdowns. He also took care of passing duties, although Lingle’s offense didn’t ask much of him for that – he only completed 12 passes for 210 yards all season.

Bremer added 39 carries for 371 yards and five touchdowns, good for second on the team, and senior Slade Hopkins chipped in 84 carries for 290 yards and five scores.

Sophomore Kaiden Riggs led that passing game with three catches for 97 yards, while Bremer had three catches for 67 yards and the only two aerial touchdowns of the season.

“We have more familiarity with our offensive schemes and should be able to play much faster this year, which will help,” Gifford said. “The expectations are clear and there won’t be any more growing pains from last year.”

Lingle’s top nine tacklers all return.

Bremer had a huge season on defense, notching 81 tackles to lead the Doggers. His 43 solo tackles and four interceptions led the squad.

Fleming chipped in 64 tackles and tied for the team lead with six tackles for loss.

Senior Cooper Fauber added 41 tackles and tied Spears for the team lead with six pass deflections;

Spears also had 34 tackles.

Riggs (36 tackles), senior Boyd Oliver (35), Schilreff (28), sophomore Cooper Smith (23) and senior Corey Ducheneaux (20) all cracked the 20-tackle barrier. Smith’s five sacks led the team.

However, Gifford said the returning experience is a double-edged sword, as the Doggers were second-to-last in Class 1A nine-man in yards allowed per game (335.7).

“We were at the bottom of the league statistically last year and we need to improve a lot in order to compete to make a deep run into the playoffs,” Gifford said.

“... There is a lot of excitement and anticipation for this season. The guys know we have a great opportunity in front of us, but we must take advantage of that and do the work in the offseason to improve, otherwise that is all it will be, just an opportunity.”

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**Mascot:** Doggers  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Blue and red

**Coach:** Brandon Gifford,  
second year at Lingle  
**2021 Record:** 3-5, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**QB:** Nolan Spears, Jr.  
**RB/S:** Loudan Bremer, Soph.  
**OL/DL:** Owen Schilreff, Sr.  
**TE/LB:** Hadley Fleming, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** vs. Pine Bluffs, scrim., 4 p.m.  
(Zero Week)  
**9-2:** at St. Stephens, 1 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** at Lusk, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** vs. Guernsey, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** at Wright, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** vs. Moorcroft, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** at Southeast, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** vs. Pine Bluffs, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** vs. Saratoga, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

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**Mascot:** Wolves  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Green and white

**Coach:** Clayton McSpadden, first year at Moorcroft  
**2021 Record:** 0-8, ineligible for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**WR/S:** Kyler Smith, Sr.  
**WR/DE/LB:** Chaz Dewey, Jr.  
**LB:** James Long, Sr.  
**C/NG:** Dakota Tobin, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-27:** at Shoshoni jamboree, 10 a.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-1:** at Greybull, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** vs. Saratoga, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** at Southeast, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** vs. Pine Bluffs, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** at Lingle, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Lusk, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** at Wright, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** vs. Guernsey, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

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MOORCROFT WOLVES

1A 9-MAN EAST

# New coach goes back to basics

Taking over as the head coach of a program that didn't win a game the year before is always challenging.

For Moorcroft's first-year coach, Clayton McSpadden, the approach he hopes to bring to the Wolves will be one that mirrors the hard-working attitude of the community.

McSpadden said whether the playbook is six plays or 60, "we're going to bring that (hard-working) attitude into it. It may be some monotonous work, but we're going to be darn good at what we do."

The Wolves lost only two seniors from last year's 0-8 team but still will have to replace their quarterback, top two rushers and two of their top four tacklers.

McSpadden said from what he saw on film, the Wolves showed potential last season despite the lack of success.

"A winless season doesn't dictate the (quality of) kids at all," he said.

However, McSpadden also said the Wolves will need to commit to the weight room and build both speed and size at all positions to build competitiveness.

"We have some big dudes, but our speed dudes don't have a lot of size," he said.

The line returns several key players, though, with seniors Dakota Tobin and Dane Connally and sophomore Oliver Gorsuch playing on both sides last year.

The receivers have shown potential, as well. Junior

Chaz Dewey and senior Kyler Smith were the top targets in the passing game in 2021. Each caught 21 passes – Dewey for 281 yards, Smith for 241. Junior Cade Williams added 12 catches for 130 yards.

Smith, who ran 11 times for 40 yards, is also the Wolves' top returning rusher.

Defensively, senior James Long tied for the team lead in tackles last year with 52, while Smith tied for third with 45 and had a team-high three sacks.

Gorsuch notched 44 tackles and Tobin added 41.

Dewey, with 30 tackles and two interceptions, and Connally, with 25 tackles, also saw consistent defensive playing time.

McSpadden is also no newbie to football without 11 players, having coached some eight-man in the past.

"I'm not too scared," he said. I know I've got to do some studying and make sure my plays all mesh on players as well."

Beyond building a successful program on the field, McSpadden also said he wanted to build buy-in into the program. He said he will lean on Moorcroft's seniors to help develop that buy-in and build connections with younger players.

With that kind of buy-in – from players, then from the school and the community – the program will continue to grow.

"There's got to be buy-in before I can do anything," McSpadden said. " ... (With it) I can draw (game plans) in crayon and still be successful."

1A 9-MAN EAST

SARATOGA PANTHERS

PAGE 37

# Panthers looking to find paydirt

One statistical anomaly caught Saratoga coach Logan Wright's eyes during the offseason.

As a team, the Panthers ranked seventh among Class 1A nine-man teams in offense. But they ranked 10th in touchdowns.

"We'd always end up with a good amount of yards, but we weren't very good about putting it in the end zone," Wright said. "If I could swap those two, I would."

Saratoga enters 2022 with a focus on finishing the job, something that could help an experienced team stay competitive among a tough group of foes in the classification this season.

With six returning starters on both offense and defense, the Panthers will be among the East Conference's more experienced teams.

"I just think we're balanced," Wright said. " ... We can put a lot of kids at a lot of positions. One of our goals as a coaching staff is to sub a lot more than we ever have."

The experience and focus start on defense, as Saratoga returns two of its top three tacklers and seven of its top nine.

Senior Slayd Daley, Saratoga's only

all-state choice in 2021, was Saratoga's leading tackler with 79 total, including 35 solo, at middle linebacker.

"He's just bigger and stronger (than last year) already, too, so putting him right in the middle makes a lot of sense for us as a team," Wright said.

Senior Kellen Reeder had 44 tackles, including five for loss.

Together, Wright said, the duo has the potential to shut down an entire half of the opposing offense's choices by shutting down one side of the field as linebackers.

"If they are only trying to block Slayd, I think that that would be a mistake," Wright said.

Senior Heston Fisher, an all-conference pick, added 27 tackles, and junior Douglas Campbell had 25. Junior Josiah Stockwell (16 tackles) and sophomore Allyster Ingraham (15) also contributed, and Wright said senior Silas Vannett could be a part of things at either linebacker or nose guard.

The Panthers' entire offensive line returns, anchoring a crew that could be dangerous through the air but will continue to strive for balance.

Fisher led the receiving corps with


31 catches for 550 yards and seven touchdowns; his 78.6 receiving yards per game led Class 1A nine-man last season.

Senior Deke Herring had 10 catches for 105 yards. Wright said Herring's presence will help keep defenses honest, and if the opposition focuses too much on Fisher, Herring could have a big season.

Moreover, every player but one who caught a pass last season returns. That will help senior Frank Crimmins as he takes over at quarterback. Crimmins started one game last year and saw limited time, but Wright said, "This is his year."



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**Mascot:** Panthers  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Purple and yellow

**Coach:** Logan Wright, fifth year at Saratoga  
**2021 Record:** 3-5, did not qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**WR/DE:** Heston Fisher, Sr.  
**OG/LB:** Slayd Daley, Sr.  
**QB:** Frank Crimmins, Sr.  
**WR/DE:** Deke Herring, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** at Casper jamboree, noon (Zero Week)  
**9-1:** vs. Wind River, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** at Moorcroft, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-17:** vs. Lusk, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** at Guernsey, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** vs. Wright, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** at Pine Bluffs, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** vs. Southeast, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** at Lingle, 6 p.m.  
\* Conference game

1A 9-MAN EAST

PINE BLUFFS HORNETS

# Hornets loaded for championship run

Trying to differentiate between the 2021 and 2022 Pine Bluffs football teams will be tough.

After all, almost everyone is back for the Hornets. With seven starters back on both offense and defense from last year's 9-1 team, it's not surprising to see the Hornets listed among Class 1A nine-man's favorites.

Four of Pine Bluffs' five all-state choices are back, all seniors: Ryan Fornstrom, Stu Lerwick, Diego Paniagua and Dalton Schaefer. Lerwick and Paniagua were all-state picks for the second time last season. Three others – seniors Collin Jessen, Alex Sloan and Sean Rhoads – were all-conference picks.

In simpler terms, the Hornets are loaded.

Coach Will Gray said he is aware of just what his roster looks like.

"We have a ton of athletic kids who are willing to be physical," Gray said.

Most of the Hornets' key playmakers on offense are back, and it starts under center. Lerwick had a huge season through the air, completing 134 of 211 passes for 2,215 yards and 23 touchdowns, against only three interceptions.

His yards, completions and touchdowns all led Class 1A nine-man statewide last year. He also chipped in three rushing touchdowns and 160 rushing yards.

"Stu is one of the best I've ever had the privilege of coaching," Gray said. "His biggest challenge this year will be to see the whole field and get the ball to our talented corps of playmakers around him."

Fornstrom led the Hornets' receiving game with 38 catches for 647 yards and nine touchdowns. No player in Class 1A nine-man had as many total catches, yards or touchdowns through the air as Fornstrom.

Jessen was fourth on the team with 16 catches for 304 yards, while Sloan added 16 catches for 172 yards and Schaefer 10 catches for 136 yards.

Rhoads and Schaefer each had a hand in the running game. Rhoads led Pine Bluffs with 869 yards on 84 carries, including 13 touchdowns, while Schaefer had 108 carries for

674 yards and 16 TDs.

One challenge for the Hornets will be continuing to spread the ball to their multiple weapons.

"Our roster is full of kids with maturity who can handle it, and will make the most of their opportunities," Gray said.

Pine Bluffs also returns its top five tacklers on defense.

Paniagua fronted the Hornets in tackles with 112 and also had seven tackles for loss.

Fornstrom led the Hornets in defensive points, though, tallying 110 tackles, including a team-high 35 solo, to go along with 11 tackles for loss, three fumble recoveries, two interceptions and three blocked kicks.

Schaefer added 73 tackles, while Jessen and junior James Langlois had 68 tackles apiece.

Rhoads added 46 tackles, Sloan had 30 and senior Kashen Martinez added 21.



**Mascot:** Hornets  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Purple and yellow

**Coach:** Will Gray, 12th year at Pine Bluffs  
**2021 Record:** 9-1, lost to Rocky Mountain in state semifinals

**Key Players**  
**WR/DB:** Ryan Fornstrom, Sr.  
**QB:** Stu Lerwick, Sr.  
**OL/LB:** Diego Paniagua, Sr.  
**RB/DB:** Dalton Schaefer, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** at Lingle, scrimmage, 4 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-1:** at Shoshoni, 4 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** at Guernsey, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** vs. Wright, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** at Moorcroft, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** vs. Lusk, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Saratoga, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** at Lingle, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** vs. Southeast, 7 p.m.  
\* Conference game

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**Mascot:** Cyclones  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Blue and silver

**Coach:** Mark Bullington, 24th year at Southeast  
**2021 Record:** 4-5, lost to Rocky Mountain in state quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**FB/MLB:** Wyatt Campbell, Sr.  
**WR/RB/CB:** Austin Short, Sr.  
**C/DT:** Alex McIntyre, Sr.  
**RB:** Matthew Chapman, Jr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** TBD (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** at Riverside, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** at Wright, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** vs. Moorcroft, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** at Lusk, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** vs. Guernsey, 1 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Lingle, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** at Saratoga, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** at Pine Bluffs, 7 p.m.  
\* Conference game

SOUTHEAST CYCLONES

1A 9-MAN EAST

# Cyclones will move like the wind

The Southeast Cyclones will have one of the most versatile set of players in Class 1A nine-man this fall.

That's partly by design, partly by necessity.

Longtime Cyclone coach Mark Bullington said some players who were backfield players will move to the line, and vice versa, in an effort to come up with the right mix of talent to put on the field.

Bullington said the Cyclones have good team speed, but with only three seniors, it will take some time to feel out who's best suited for what spot on the field.

For example, senior all-conference selection Wyatt Campbell, who was a mainstay on the line last year, will likely move to fullback to take advantage of his speed, something that was on display when he finished third in the Class 1A 100-meter dash this spring.

But that move leaves a hole on the line, and any one of a number of players could fill it.

"All in all, I think we have

good, solid kids," Bullington said. " ... (But) they're going to have to step up, both sides of the ball."

Some players are set, though.

That includes senior Austin Short, an all-conference pick who led the Cyclones with 23 catches for 361 yards and four touchdowns. However, no other returner had more than one catch last season.

Junior Matthew Chapman is the only returning player who gained more than one rushing yard last season; he carried 16 times for 45 yards. The Cyclones graduated their top three rushers and every player who threw for double-digit passing yards.

Bullington said sophomore Ayden Desmond will likely take the snaps.

Up front, a bevy of returners – senior Alex McIntyre, juniors Tiegen Thompson and Lance York and sophomores Emmett Coxbill, Sebastian Brumley and Alec Demarce will compete for time. Junior Cole Sauer will also be in the mix at end.

"A lot of those kids had playing

time last year," Bullington said.

Defensively, the Cyclones get back exactly half of their top 10 tacklers from last year.

Campbell was second for Southeast in defensive points. He had 90 tackles, including four for loss.

Bullington said Campbell, who grew into his role as a junior after missing time due to a knee injury early in his career, will have increased responsibilities in his final season.

"He's going to have to be the leader, especially on the defensive side," he said. " ... He's got that speed and size, and he loves contact."

Chapman was fourth on the team with 52 tackles, also chipping in five for loss. Thompson added 51 tackles and Short had 31, while Desmond had 19 tackles in extended action.

Chapman, Short and Desmond each added an interception on defense.



# Community is behind new coach

After one day as Wright's new head coach, Adam Shankle knew he had made the right choice.

An assistant with the Panthers for the 2019 and 2020 seasons, Shankle posted on Facebook when he heard that he had been named Wright's new coach this summer.

Immediately, the support rolled in.

"I've already had parents from the community messaging me and texting me... and telling me how excited they are," Shankle said. "I feel like I've already got a support system in place, and that helps so much when you're trying to get kids out for football and get the program going."

The team Shankle will take over is in the midst of 15 consecutive seasons finishing either at or below .500, but the Panthers were 4-5 last season and return several key contributors, especially on defense.

Moreover, the players already have a rapport with the new coach.

"I've coached every one of the kids that will be playing for us this year," Shankle said. "It's not like they're getting somebody

brand new. ... They know what they're getting already."

Seniors Parker Worman and Boe Preston were all-conference picks in 2021.

Worman pulled double-duty as both a rusher and a passer last year. Most of the damage came on the ground, where Worman carried 77 times for 619 yards and eight touchdowns to finish as the Panthers' No. 2 ground gainer. He also completed 13 passes for 199 yards to lead a team that didn't pass much – Wright only completed 15 passes all season.

No other returning rusher had more than 20 yards last year.

The Panthers spread around receiving duties last year, with junior Angel Hernandez (two catches, 78 yards), senior L.J. Morgan (three catches, 54 yards) and sophomore Layne Strohschein (two catches, 41 yards) the top returners.

Preston, along with junior Richard Avalos and Kouper Douglas, will help lead efforts on the offensive line.

On defense, Wright loses two of its top three tacklers but returns six of its top eight.

"I'm really hoping that that experience that we have will equate to being able to shut people down," Shankle said. "... They've played those positions. In a lot of the cases, I've already coached them in the positions they'll be playing this year."

Worman was second for the Panthers last year with 69 tackles and led Wright with 45 solo tackles and two pass deflections.

Sophomore Cadence Norris contributed 32 tackles and a team-high four sacks and three fumble recoveries, finishing fourth on the team in defensive points.

Hernandez added 31 tackles and led the Panthers with three interceptions.

Morgan and Avalos had 27 tackles apiece, junior Pace Garrett added 22 tackles and Preston had 20.



**Mascot:** Panthers  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** East  
**Colors:** Black and gold

**Coach:** Adam Shankle, first year at Wright  
**2021 Record:** 4-5, lost to Shoshoni in state quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**QB/FS:** Parker Worman, Sr.  
**OL/DE:** Boe Preston, Sr.  
**TE/LB:** L.J. Morgan, Sr.  
**NG:** Cadence Norris, Soph.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** at Casper jamboree, noon (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** at Rocky Mountain, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** vs. Southeast, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** at Pine Bluffs, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** vs. Lingle, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** at Saratoga, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-6:** at Guemsey, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** vs. Moorcroft, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-21:** vs. Lusk, 7 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Punchers have new challenges

When Jeromy Moffat became Big Piney's new head football coach this spring, he knew the challenge that was ahead.

The Punchers were already undergoing a big shift, moving from Class 2A to Class 1A nine-man.

On top of that, Big Piney graduated all seven of its all-conference selections from its 2A West play last season.

But Moffat, a Big Piney alumnus, sat down with his three assistants – all Big Piney alums, too, and all of whom were with the program last year – and figured out a plan.

"We basically started from the ground up designing our playbooks," he said. "That's been kind of a fun challenge because we've never coached nine-man before."

"... We're very, very excited about the season and the possibilities we could have on offense and defense."

The continuity off the field should help on the field, where the Punchers do return several players with varsity experience despite

losing so many seniors.

"We've got depth at skill positions," Moffat said. "We've got probably eight or nine kids that we could put at basically any skill position and I think they would excel. And I really like our team speed."

Senior Jovany Munoz was the team's top rusher last season. His 73 carries, 306 yards and three rushing touchdowns led the Punchers in all rushing categories.

Munoz also leads Big Piney's defensive returners. He led the team with 57 tackles and 10 tackles for loss last season and was third with 89 defensive points.

"We're really going to look to him to be a catalyst for the offense and a leader on defense," Moffat said. "He's an excellent linebacker and he can see the field well."

Senior Thomas Howard was third on the team with 240 rushing yards last year, was tied for fourth-best on the team last year with 42 tackles and tied for the team lead with four sacks.

"He has the athletic ability to

basically play anywhere, and he probably will play everywhere except wide receiver and quarterback," Moffat said.

The Punchers will need to find a new quarterback, as no returning player attempted a pass last season. Also gone are Big Piney's top three receivers.

Junior Karsyn Gurr leads the returners with 95 receiving yards last season on six catches, while Munoz added 76 yards on nine catches.

Defensively, nine of Big Piney's top 12 tacklers graduated, leaving Howard, Munoz and junior Ruben Stoutenburg (42 tackles) as the leading returners. Junior lineman Zach Murphy and sophomore running back/linebacker Kaden Clifford also saw time last year.

Newcomers Brandon Jones and Hunter Fisher, both seniors, and Dylan Woodward and Preston Bennett, both juniors, will add depth.

"We couldn't be more excited about what's to come," Moffat said.



**Mascot:** Punchers  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Red and white

**Coach:** Jeromy Moffat, first year at Big Piney  
**2021 Record:** 6-4, lost to Wheatland in 2A quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**OL/RB/LB:** Thomas Howard, Sr.  
**RB/MLB:** Jovany Munoz, Sr.  
**WR/OLB:** Ruben Stoutenburg, Jr.  
**C:** Zach Murphy, Jr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** at Kemmerer jamboree, 2 p.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** at Lusk, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** vs. Rocky Mountain, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-15:** at Greybull, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** vs. Wind River, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-1:** at St. Stephens, noon  
**\*10-6:** vs. Shoshoni, 4 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** at Wyoming Indian, 5 p.m.  
**\*10-20:** vs. Riverside, 4 p.m.  
\* Conference game

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**Mascot:** Buffaloes  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Blue and yellow

**Coach:** Jeremy Pouska, second year at Greybull  
**2021 Record:** 3-5, did not qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**OL/DE:** Chase Oster, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Aiden Reece, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Cannon Cook, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Jake Schlattmann, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-27:** at Shoshoni jamboree, 10 a.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-1:** vs. Moorcroft, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-8:** at Shoshoni, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-15:** vs. Big Piney, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-22:** at Wyoming Indian, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** vs. Rocky Mountain, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Wind River, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** at Riverside, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-22:** at St. Stephens, noon  
\* Conference game

# Buffaloes are long in the tooth

In a year of senior-heavy Class 1A nine-man teams, Greybull might just be the one most dependent on its seniors for success.

With as many as a dozen 12th graders ready to suit up for the Buffaloes this season, second-year coach Jeremy Pouska said his team will benefit from having a year of experience together and many years of gridiron experience from which to draw.

"The guys are getting a better understanding of what style of football we're going to run, and they're fully invested," Pouska said. "... We solidified that last year, especially at the end of the year. And moving forward we all share the same goal, and that's to create a successful program."

An experienced group of players returns from last year's 3-5 team, including one of nine-man's best defensive players in senior

linebacker Jake Schlattmann.

Schlattmann was Greybull's only all-state selection last year, racking up 119 tackles, including 55 solo and five for loss. If not for a forfeit victory that Greybull had in its favor, Pouska said, Schlattmann likely would have finished as nine-man's top tackler.

"He does not care about who's

on the other side of the ball," Pouska said. "... He really has that aggressive nature."

Schlattmann isn't alone. The Buffaloes' defense returns eight starters and several other contributors.

Senior Aiden Reece, an all-

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**Mascot:** Rebels  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Red and silver

**Coach:** Jason Mitchell, second year at Riverside  
**2021 Record:** 4-5, lost to Pine Bluffs in state quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**TE/LB:** Dylan Alexander, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Porter Duncan, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Ty Strohschein, Jr.  
**QB/DB:** Trenton Coronel, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-27:** at Shoshoni jamboree, 10 a.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** vs. Southeast, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** vs. Wyoming Indian, 1 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** at Wind River, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** vs. St. Stephens, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-29:** at Shoshoni, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** at Rocky Mountain, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** vs. Greybull, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-20:** at Big Piney, 4 p.m.  
\* Conference game

#### GREYBULL CONTINUED-

conference selection, was second in defensive points thanks to 45 tackles, three tackles for loss, four fumble recoveries and five pass deflections.

Senior Bryan Galvez notched 46 tackles and three tackles for loss, while senior Chase Oster had 44 tackles and a pair of fumble recoveries.

Junior Carlos Rodriguez had 29 tackles and three pass deflections, junior Joel Miller added 25 tackles and senior Cannon Cook notched 18.

“They feel better about what they’re expected to do on the defensive side of the ball,” Pouska said. “When these guys are making big plays... it really helps boost our confidence and believe in the systems.”

Offensively, senior Cale Wright

*“...they have a strong attitude about not giving up no matter what the scoreboard says.”*  
**~Coach Jeremy Pouska**

## Rebels moving in right direction

It’s perhaps more accurate to say that Riverside coach Jason Mitchell is just ending his first year as head coach than starting his second year.

That’s because Mitchell was brought on mid-summer last year and had few chances to work with his team before the season started.

This year, though, everything has changed – and summer, not fall, might be the biggest change of all.

The Rebels joined with nearby Greybull last year just to have enough players to go to a team camp. This year, they had enough players (15) to go to the Black Hills State camp on their own.

“That’s one big plus was I was happy with the numbers that signed up to go to team camp,” Mitchell said. “... I’m hoping having all of those kids coming back we can do things this summer other than just implementing a system.”

Beyond that, the Rebels return six starters on both offense and defense, giving them the experience and talent to be

competitive in a challenging West Conference.

Seniors Dylan Alexander and Porter Duncan and junior Ty Strohschein were all-conference selections last year. Their contributions come on both sides of the ball but stick out most on defense, where they comprised Riverside’s top three tacklers. In all, Riverside returns six of its top 10 tacklers.

Alexander had 103 tackles, including 41 solo, to lead Riverside, while Strohschein had 87 tackles. They each had 14 tackles for loss to top the team.

Duncan added 67 tackles. “Our linebacking corps should be as good as any linebacking corps in our class,” Mitchell said.

Junior Josh Wildman had 34 tackles and two interceptions, senior Trenton Coronel notched 24 tackles and sophomore Avery Clifford had 17.

Offensively, Strohschein was Riverside’s top offensive ground weapon last year, carrying 166 times for 831 yards and five

touchdowns.

Duncan was second with 26 carries for 180 yards and five more touchdowns. However, no other returner had more than 30 rushing yards.

Coronel completed 62 of 142 passes for 746 yards and eight touchdowns.

Alexander led the Rebels in receptions with 24 and was second in receiving yards (311) and receiving touchdowns (three). Duncan’s had seven catches for 58 yards.

Still, Riverside’s success will be tied to, in part, a full summer with their coach, who’s working to make sure it’s an important part of the plan in his first full opportunity to do so.

“I think we have everyone on the same page in terms of expectations,” Mitchell said. “I still think we’re fighting a little bit of the idea that if you really want to compete against teams that have traditionally won, it requires more than just the work you put in during the season.”

## Grizzlies hope to dodge injuries

The folks who sell crutches in Big Horn County were busy last fall.

The problem for Rocky Mountain’s football team is that too many crutches went to their players.

“We had at least one different starter go down in each of our first four games last year,” coach Richard Despain said. “Nine-man is a game that does not have a great deal of depth by its nature, so it was great to see guys step up and play positions they had not played, and improve as much as they did to end up where we did.”

Where the Grizzlies ended up was War Memorial Stadium, playing in a state championship.

With seven starters back on offense, five on defense, five all-staters returning and three seniors back from injury, Rocky Mountain will be a threat to be there again.

Rocky Mountain’s five returning all-state selections is second only to defending champ Shoshoni.

The all-state returners are all seniors – Dysten Clendenen,

Russell Crosby, Collin Haslem, Nate Minemyer and Carsyn Weber.

In addition, three seniors return from injury in Jackson Hanusa, Maddox Ames and Kelden Boettcher, and seniors Ben Simmons and Brady Fossen who will add depth and experience.

Despain said he expected to have 11 seniors on a roster of about 30 players. And they’re motivated to finish what they started last season.

“I think (the offseason) started with frustration, but that energy has switched to inspiration for the team,” he said. “They made great memories on the trek last year, but winning it all this year is their goal.”

Weber was a dual-threat quarterback, completing 65 of 135 passes for 1,209 yards and 16 touchdowns (only three interceptions) while running 127 times for 875 yards and 11 touchdowns, leading the Grizzlies in all categories.

Junior Wil Loyning was second behind Weber in rushing, carrying

65 times for 477 yards and six touchdowns. Haslem added 17 carries for 154 yards.

Simmons and Haslem made up two big chunks of the passing game. Simmons led Rocky with 403 receiving yards on 18 catches, including four touchdowns, while Haslem led the Grizzlies in catches (26) and receiving touchdowns (nine) while piling up 394 yards.

Six of Rocky Mountain’s top eight tacklers return.

Crosby led the defense with 121 tackles, including 44 solo tackles and 10 tackles for loss, all team highs.

Crawford added 95 tackles, while Minemyer, 1A nine-man’s lineman of the year last year, had 74 tackles and team highs with four sacks, three fumble recoveries and three blocked kicks.

Haslem had 57 tackles and a team-high five pass deflections, Simmons added 51 tackles and led the squad with three interceptions, Clendenen had 45 tackles, and Weber had 44 tackles and two interceptions.



**Mascot:** Grizzlies  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Brown and yellow

**Coach:** Richard Despain, seventh year at Rocky Mountain  
**2021 Record:** 9-2, lost to Shoshoni in state championship

**Key Players**  
**OL/DL:** Nate Minemyer, Sr.  
**QB/DB:** Carsyn Weber, Sr.  
**WR/DB:** Collin Haslem, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Dysten Clendenen, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-27:** at Shoshoni jamboree, 10 a.m. (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** vs. Wright, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** at Big Piney, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-17:** vs. Wyoming Indian, 1 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** at Shoshoni, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-30:** at Greybull, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Riverside, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-13:** vs. St. Stephens, 5 p.m.  
**\*10-20:** at Wind River, 5:30 p.m.  
\* Conference game



**Mascot:** Wranglers  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Blue and yellow

**Coach:** Tony Truempler, 10th year at Shoshoni  
**2021 Record:** 10-1, beat Rocky Mountain in state championship

**Key Players**  
**RB/DE:** Cannon Campbell, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Pehton Truempler, Sr.  
**QB/S:** Alex Mills, Sr.  
**WR/CB:** Trey Fike, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** at Casper jamboree, noon (Zero Week)  
**9-1:** vs. Pine Bluffs, 4 p.m.  
**\*9-8:** vs. Greybull, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** at St. Stephens, 1 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** vs. Rocky Mountain, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-29:** vs. Riverside, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-6:** at Big Piney, 4 p.m.  
**\*10-13:** at Wind River, 7 p.m.  
**10-20:** vs. Natrona JV, 5 p.m.  
\* Conference game

## Wranglers poised to defend crown

The excitement surrounding Shoshoni’s first state football championship since 1985 can be summed up in one sentence from Wrangler coach Tony Truempler:

“We had three different parades,” he said.

How many parades will the Wranglers get if they repeat?

Well... They might just find out.

The Wranglers return seven all-state selections – more than any other 1A nine-man school – from last year’s championship team. They’re all seniors: Cannon Campbell, Korbin Dewitt, Trey Fike, Dom Jarvis, Alex Mills, Jaxson Stanley and Pehton Truempler.

Also back is senior Tucker Maddock, who was an all-conference choice despite missing half the season due to injury.

“They’re just a really close-knit crew,” coach Truempler said. “... They’re really tight so we get a lot of stuff accomplished at practice and even over the summer.

“... I think that’s the thing that’s really cool about these guys is they’re pretty humble and they know every game is going to be harder (this year) because you’re defending state champs.”

The Wranglers get back their top five rushers, five of their top six receivers and their quarterback.

Pehton Truempler carried a big chunk of the offense on the ground, carrying 187 times for 1,521 yards and 21 touchdowns.

Campbell added 75 carries for 449 yards and five touchdowns, while Mills, the quarterback, ran 74 times for 372 yards and seven scores.

Mills completed 66 of 120 passes for 1,181 yards and 20 touchdowns, allowing only three interceptions.

Fike was the top target in the passing game, leading the Wranglers with 27 catches for 381 yards. Six of those went for touchdowns.

“It’s pretty nice to be able to be as balanced as we are,” coach Truempler said. “We try to move the ball around as much as we can because it makes it hard to scout us, as well.”

The defense returns its top four players in defensive points and seven of its top nine.

Jarvis and Pehton Truempler each had 100 tackles to lead the Wranglers last season, while Campbell had 64 tackles, including a team-high seven sacks, to go with three fumble recoveries, an interception and three pass deflections.

Mills constantly created turnovers, picking off 11 passes and recovering two fumbles while also tallying 38 tackles.

Stanley added 48 tackles, Fike had 40 and Maddock had 27.

However, coach Truempler said he knows the Wranglers can’t start clearing space for another banner just yet, especially in a year where most of last year’s top teams return loads of talent.

“We’ve got to hit the ground running right away,” he said. “We don’t have that honeymoon period at the start of a season that some younger teams get, because obviously there’s a lot more expected of you.”







**Mascot:** Eagles  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Red and black

**Coach:** Dee Harrison,  
third year at St. Stephens  
**2021 Record:** 1-7, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**WR/RB/S:** Bluebird  
Talksdifferent, Sr.  
**QB/CB:** Aynjle Monroe, Sr.  
**RB/OLB:** Tyren Ridgely, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Virgil Monroe, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** Open (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** vs. Lingle, 1 p.m.  
**\*9-8:** at Wind River, 5:30 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** vs. Shoshoni, 1 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** at Riverside, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-1:** vs. Big Piney, noon  
**\*10-7:** at Wyoming Indian, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-13:** at Rocky Mountain, 5 p.m.  
**\*10-22:** vs. Greybull, noon  
\* Conference game

# Eagles taking one step at a time

To hear St. Stephens coach Dee Harrison talk about the Eagles’ prospects for 2022, the key takeaway almost sounds too obvious to be insightful.

“We’re sitting where we’re one year better than we were last year,” Harrison said.

For Harrison and the Eagles, though, it’s not quite so obvious – and for a team that lost only one senior to graduation, it’s definitely insightful.

Although St. Stephens only had 15 players on its roster last year and had to forfeit three games on its way to a 1-7 season, Harrison said he is excited to see the growth his players made.

Numbers are up, perhaps as many as 30 players by season’s start, and so is enthusiasm. Harrison said a focus on the mental part of the game and preparation has translated into excitement.

“There isn’t much that didn’t surprise them in each game that we played, which was kind of nice,” he said. “They’ve never had that before, so that was an aspect they kind of grabbed on to. They see the potential, so that’s nice to see that they’re buying into that.”

The room for growth still exists, as the Eagles’ four on-field losses came by a combined score of 292-42.

However, the lone victory came in a 38-0 shutout at the expense of county and

conference rival Wyoming Indian.

“It was huge for us,” Harrison said. “Guys were excited. They know that they can get better and they’re working about getting better, and that’s the good thing about it.”

Senior Bluebird Talksdifferent led the Eagles in rushing with 18 carries for 148 yards. Senior Ayden Spoonhunter (68 yards) and junior Jai’ron Rhodes (33 yards) and sophomore Daniel Black (28 yards) also broke into double-digit rushing yards last season.

Senior quarterback Aynjle Monroe completed 17 of 28 passes for 276 yards and a pair of touchdowns last season.

However, only three players caught passes last season; Talksdifferent, with six catches for 101 yards, is the Eagles’ top returning pass-catcher.

Rhodes and Talksdifferent were the Eagles’ top two tacklers last season in limited action, notching 22 and 20 tackles respectively. Rhodes led the team with three tackles for loss, while Talksdifferent had 15 solo tackles to front the team.

Junior Wyatt SunRhodes, senior Adrian C’Hair and Monroe had double-digit defensive point efforts last season, while senior Virgil Monroe, sophomore J.J. Lawson and several others saw extensive defensive playing time. The Eagles return their top seven tacklers and 14 of the 15 players who made at least one tackle.

With all that returning experience, plus renewed enthusiasm? It’s not trite, it’s true: St. Stephens is definitely one year better.

“It’s going to be a different story this year,” Harrison said.

*“We’re sitting where we’re one year better than we were last year...”*

**~Coach Dee Harrison**

# Chiefs measure success in small steps

Despite one of its most difficult seasons of football in recent memory, Wyoming Indian managed to keep making progress in 2021.

“Over the season, scores were rough but we did gain a lot overall,” coach Nate Reinhardt said. “The kids, they worked hard. They were consistent at showing up for practice. Even when we were getting some butt-whoopings, they weren’t skipping practices.”

Moreover, the roster wasn’t thinned out through attrition or frustration – almost all of the players who were playing at the beginning of the season were still playing at the end.

In an 0-8 year where the Chiefs only had 401 yards of total offense (85 rushing, 316 passing) and gave up 2,104, highlights were few and far between. But the lessons the Chiefs learned through those challenges will help the team in 2022.

Reinhardt said this year’s success will start with a group of about a half-dozen seniors who will help lead a roster of about 25 players.

Included in that senior group are lineman Ben St. Clair, running back/defensive backs Jason Slow Bear and Kieran McCorley and quarterback Everett Segura.

“Our kids in the senior class now have had a few years of football in them, so they will be able to bring some experience for us,” Reinhardt said.

Wyoming Indian also returns three of its top four tacklers.

Junior Teryn Martel was the Chiefs’ leading tackler last season, finishing with 24 total. Slow Bear was right behind, finishing with 22, including a team-high 16 solo.

Junior Leland Fighting Bear contributed 20 tackles, as well.

Segura, with 10 tackles, is the only other returners who had double-digit tackles last season.

On offense, Martel finished as Wyoming Indian’s leading rusher, carrying 32 times for 92 yards and the Chiefs’ lone touchdown of the 2021 season. Segura, who started the season at center but ended it at quarterback, completed 18 of 47 passes for 208 yards and also ran 35 times for 72 yards.

Fighting Bear also finished in double-digit rushing yards with 43 yards on six carries. Reinhardt said Slow Bear and McCorley will also see time in a deep backfield.

Reinhardt said he likes what he sees from his experienced rushers.

“When they get the ball, they look to run hard,” he said. “They try not to have one guy take them down.

“ ... We’ve got some kids that will try, and try to get something positive out of it.”

Martel and McCorley notched four catches apiece, Martel for 18 yards and McCorley for 31.

Reinhardt also said five or six freshman are coming up from the junior high program.

Between graduation and transfers, “that should replenish us from what we lost,” he said.

*“Over the season, scores were rough but we did gain a lot overall...”*

**~Coach Nate Reinhardt**



**Mascot:** Chiefs  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Blue and red

**Coach:** Nate Reinhardt,  
fourth year at Wyoming Indian  
**2021 Record:** 0-8, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**QB/LB:** Everett Segura, Sr.  
**RB/S:** Jason Slow Bear, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Ben St. Clair, Sr.  
**RB/CB:** Kieran McCorley, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** Open (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** at Guernsey, 4 p.m.  
**\*9-9:** at Riverside, 1 p.m.  
**\*9-17:** at Rocky Mountain, 1 p.m.  
**\*9-22:** vs. Greybull, 5 p.m.  
**\*9-29:** at Wind River, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. St. Stephens, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** vs. Big Piney, 5 p.m.  
**10-22:** at Shoshoni JV, 4 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# Cougars won’t sneak up on foes

Wind River’s breakthrough season in 2021 seemingly came out of nowhere.

After 11 consecutive losing seasons and zero playoff victories, the Cougars finished 7-3 last year and reached the Class 1A nine-man semifinals.

This year’s Cougars will resemble last year’s in many ways, thanks to returning eight starters. But the biggest change may not register to casual fans – new coach Rod Fredrick.

Frederick said he was encouraged to apply for the head

coaching position after learning that assistants Hoag Mulholland and Kyle Hunter were staying on with the program.

“That was kind of a huge push, too, knowing I was going to have them with me,” Frederick said.

Knowing Wind River’s personnel will help, too.

“It feels like it’s a lot smoother,” he said. “You don’t really have that worrisome part where you don’t know who you have or who’s going to come out.”

With that knowledge,

Frederick said the Cougars will basically run the same schemes as last season.

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**Mascot:** Cougars  
**Division:** Class 1A nine-man  
**Conference:** West  
**Colors:** Purple and silver

**Coach:** Rod Frederick,  
first year at Wind River  
**2021 Record:** 2-5, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**

**RB/LB:** Jaycee Herbert, Sr.  
**RB/LB/S:** Cooper Frederick, Jr.  
**OL/FB/DL:** Calder Johnson, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Tucker Jensen, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**

**8-26:** at Casper jamboree, noon (Zero Week)  
**9-1:** at Saratoga, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-8:** vs. St. Stephens, 5:30 p.m.  
**\*9-16:** vs. Riverside, 6 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** at Big Piney, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-29:** vs. Wyoming Indian, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** at Greybull, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-13:** vs. Shoshoni, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-20:** vs. Rocky Mountain, 5:30 p.m.  
\* Conference game

“We really have everybody back in their same spot, and so were not going to have to change too much,” he said.

The Cougars get back four all-state selections in seniors Jaycee Herbert, Tucker Jensen and Calder Johnson and junior Cooper Frederick.

In addition, senior Casey Befus and junior Chris Burk were all-conference choices.

Frederick and Herbert were a dynamic 1-2 punch in the running game, with Frederick carrying 126 times for 946 yards and 12 touchdowns and Herbert carrying 73 times for 870 yards and 10 touchdowns.

Burk chipped in 62 carries for

289 yards.

Burk and Frederick split quarterbacking duties, each completing nine passes – Burk for 144 yards, Frederick for 133. Burk will likely see the most time under center, coach Frederick said.

Herbert was the top aerial target, catching five passes for 117 yards to lead the Cougars.

Johnson, Jensen and Befus will lead blocking efforts, along with senior Kaden Jones. Johnson and Jones may also rotate into the backfield at times.

The Cougars’ four all-state picks last year were also the team’s top four tacklers last year. In all, the Cougars get back eight of their top nine tacklers.

Herbert led the Cougars in a variety of defensive categories, including total tackles (92), solo tackles (39) and tackles for loss (14).

Frederick added 67 tackles and also had seven tackles for loss.

Jensen had 45 tackles and nine tackles for loss, while Johnson had 42 tackles and nine TFLs and Befus had 28 tackles and seven for loss.

Two other seniors also saw extensive time defensively, as T.J. Hallock added 23 tackles and Remington Herbert had 18.

Juniors Blake Snyder, Isaac Gardner, Tucker Hardcastle and Kyzaia Jones will give the Cougars depth, coach Frederick said.





## State Champs Snake River Rattlers

### 2021 State Playoffs

#### 1A/6-Man Championship

Snake River 65, Encampment 24

#### Semifinals

Snake River 47, Meeteetse 46  
Encampment 56, Dubois 36

#### Quarterfinals

Snake River 62, Kaycee 8  
Meeteetse 60, Midwest 0  
Encampment 68, Guernsey-Sunrise 0  
Dubois 56, Hulett 49

### Players to watch

#### Wyatt Trembly, Dubois

As a sophomore last year, Trembly led six-man with 1,634 rushing yards, notching a classification-high 30 total touchdowns. He was also the No. 2 tackler in six-man with 143, while also notching 18 tackles for loss, four sacks and 17 pass deflections.

#### Kannadis Peroulis, Snake River

Peroulis was the Rattlers' go-to player on the ground, rushing 125 times for 1,571 yards and 21 touchdowns. His 12.6 yards per carry was one of the best marks in six-man. He also notched 72 tackles.

#### Seth Wardell, Burlington

Wardell's return is a big reason why Burlington is expected to have a big turnaround this season. He topped six-man with 233.3 passing yards per game and completed almost 62% of his passes last year.

#### Quade Jordan, Encampment

As a sophomore, Jordan finished third in rushing in six-man last year, carrying for 1,537 yards; he had 27 total touchdowns. He also had 68 tackles, four sacks and four fumble recoveries.

#### Joseph Pina, Meeteetse

The Longhorn's 5-foot-6 junior dynamo ran up 135 total tackles. His coach said Pina can play basically any position on defense, a good thing considering he's the Longhorns' only all-conference player to return.

# 1A/6-man Preview



## Snake River has talent for another title charge

By Patrick Schmiedt

### Four questions to answer

*Is anyone catching Snake River?* Probably not. Last year's undefeated state champions return almost everyone, including four all-state players. No one in 1A six-man can come close to that. The Rattlers won't have it easy, but to start, everyone's chasing Snake.

*So who can give the Rattlers fits?* Encampment and Dubois. The Tigers and the Rams are the only two teams who return more than one all-stater (each return two). Although Snake beat them both easily last year, each has athleticism and experience.

*What about the North Conference?* Not just yet. Burlington should rebound well after a one-win season, and Meeteetse, Midwest and Hulett all look fairly even entering 2022. Of the group, Burlington is the one most likely to cause some postseason trouble.

*What do the coaches think about the new North-South conference setup?* Meh. The coaches like that it would reduce travel for most teams, and they liked having a chance to see some new opponents in conference play. Beyond that? A lot of ambivalence.

### Four key games

*Snake River at Dubois, Sept. 9.* Both teams have championship dreams this season, so it seems a bit weird that this game will be in Week

2. Both will have to be on point early to stay atop the West.

*Burlington at Hulett, Sept. 10.* The direction of the new North Conference will take shape early, as this one is the conference opener for both teams. They staged a classic last season, and this year might bring another.

*Snake River at Encampment, Oct. 8.* This rematch of last year's championship game comes right in the middle of the conference season, and if both teams can carry the 2021 momentum into 2022, this one will be huge.

*Midwest at Meeteetse, Oct. 14.* The North Conference schedule ends with three Week 7 games, and none may be bigger than this one between two teams who want to prove themselves postseason capable.

### Predicted order of finish

*North Conference:* Burlington; Meeteetse; Hulett; Midwest; Kaycee; Ten Sleep.

*South Conference:* Snake River; Encampment; Dubois; Farson; Hanna.

*Preseason top five:* 1. Snake River; 2.

Encampment; 3. Dubois; 4. Burlington; 5.

Farson.

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

*Snake River 54, Encampment 39.* The South's top three are more or less unanimous across coaches statewide. If it's anyone other than the Rattlers, Tigers or Rams in the title game, be surprised.

### 1A 6-MAN NORTH

### BURLINGTON HUSKIES

### PAGE 45

## Huskies pose problems for opponents

When the Burlington Huskies take the field this fall, they will present their opponents with one big problem.

Burlington's depth and athleticism will force opposing teams to pull off a defensive maneuver sometimes uncomfortable to six-man — they'll have to stop everyone.

With a multitude of offensive options returning, as well as five starters on defense, the Huskies could be Class 1A six-man's most improved team this year.

"I'm hoping that having more options on offense will allow us to be fresher later in the year," Burlington coach Trent Aagard said. "Plus, if we have injuries again, we will be better prepared to deal with them."

The Huskies will be an experienced bunch this year, with six seniors leading the way, among them returning all-state selection Seth Wardell.

Wardell led the Huskies' offense at quarterback, completing 141 of 228 passes for 1,633 yards and 23 touchdowns.

The receivers last season were diverse, as seven players finished in triple-digit receiving yards. Of those, six return.

Across the board, Aagard said, the Huskies have good team speed and solid playmaking abilities.

"I think this year they will understand the system and what we are trying to do a little better, which should help them out," Aagard said.

Senior Noah McMackin leads Burlington's returning receivers; he was second on the team with 27 catches for 326 yards last year and led the Huskies with seven receiving touchdowns despite missing part of the season.

Senior Cohen Schlenker added 14 catches for 219 yards while also missing part of 2021.

Senior Pablo Mendez had 10 catches for 167 yards; junior Jordan Michaels had 15 catches for 159 yards; junior Mickey Maroni, had

14 catches for 138 yards; and senior Carson Jones had 12 catches for 109 yards.

They fit a system well where the passing game is emphasized. Burlington led six-man with 251 passing yards per game last season and had 21.3 completions per game, more than seven better than any other squad.

"In our system it is nice to have playmakers to spread over the field," Aagard said.

McMackin and Michaels finished first and third, respectively, in rushing yards for the Huskies last season. McMackin led Burlington with 176 yards on 29 carries, while Michaels had 24 carries for 143 yards.

Defensively, six of the eight players who had at least 19 tackles a year ago are returning, including five starters.

Sophomore Joe Bassett is Burlington's top returning tackler; he had 31 tackles, including a team-high three sacks, last season.

Also back are Maroni, who notched 30 tackles, and McMackin, who had 29.

Michaels added 25 tackles, Jones had 21 and Wardell had 19, while Schlenker (eight tackles, team-high three pass deflections) adds depth.



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**Mascot:** Huskies  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** North  
**Colors:** Black and orange

**Coach:** Trent Aagard,  
seventh year at Burlington  
**2021 Record:** 1-6, did not  
qualify for playoffs

#### Key Players

**QB/DB:** Seth Wardell, Sr.  
**WR/RB/DB:** Cohen Schlenker, Sr.  
**RB/WR/LB:** Noah McMackin, Sr.  
**OL/DL:** Carson Jones, Sr.

#### 2022 Schedule

**8-26:** Open (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** Open  
**\*9-10:** at Hulett, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-17:** vs. Midwest, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-22:** at Meeteetse, 7 p.m.  
**9-30:** vs. Farson, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Kaycee, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-15:** at Ten Sleep, 2 p.m.  
**10-21:** vs. Dubois, 1:30 p.m.  
\* Conference game

### 1A 6-MAN NORTH

### HULETT RED DEVILS

## Red Devils looking to make amends

In some ways, Hulett's disappointing end to 2021 may portend good things in 2022.

After an 8-0 regular season, the Red Devils' drive for a championship ended sooner than they would have hoped.

In the quarterfinal round against Dubois, two key seniors went down with injuries, and Hulett's undefeated season ended with its first playoff game.

However, Hulett coach Boz Backen said several players coming back to this year's team will take some powerful lessons from that loss.

"After the game, we talked about being resilient and we could have just laid down, but we kept fighting back," Backen said. "In a weird way, I think it helped us in the long run letting the kids see that they could compete and play with one of the better teams in Wyoming last year."

Hulett's 2022 squad will return three seniors, including a pair of all-conference picks in seniors Hunter Reilly and Kade Smith, but also loses four all-conference players and seven total seniors to graduation.

M.J. Ulmer, the only other senior on the team, is the only one of the top six Hulett backs to return this year. His 32 carries for 164 yards and four

touchdowns was good for third on the team in all three categories.

Reilly was second for the Red Devils with 313 receiving yards and six touchdowns on just 11 catches. Meanwhile, Smith was second for the Red Devils in receptions with 13 and tied for third on the team with 168 receiving yards; he scored five touchdowns through the air.

Ulmer (six catches, 24 yards) is the only other returner who caught a pass last season.

Backen said the Red Devils will continue to rely a lot on those three players this year.

"All have been heavily involved since freshman (year)," he said. "I am looking forward to seeing

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



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**Mascot:** Buckaroos  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** North  
**Colors:** Blue and red

**Coach:** Dave Largent,  
fourth year at Kaycee  
**2021 Record:** 2-6, lost  
to Snake River in state  
quarterfinals

#### Key Players

**C:** Coy Bumell, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Vaun Pierson, Jr.  
**TE/DE:** Ruben Cleveland, Jr.  
**TE/LB:** Wyatt  
Ramsbottom, Soph.

#### 2022 Schedule

**8-26:** Open (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** at Hanna, noon  
**\*9-10:** vs. Meeteetse, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-17:** at Ten Sleep, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-24:** vs. Midwest, 2 p.m.  
**9-30:** vs. Encampment, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** at Burlington, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-15:** vs. Hulett, noon  
**10-22:** at Farson, 3 p.m.  
\* Conference game

## Buckaroos need maximum efficiency

By the end of this season, Kaycee might be one of Class 1A six-man's most experienced teams.

For the Buckaroos, that's less by design and more by necessity. With only nine anticipated players this season, this year's team will both have and gain experience this year, leaning on what they've already learned about playing with a small roster.

Last year's Kaycee team had a similar problem. Fortunately, the Buckaroos have learned how to navigate the season with numbers that are less than ideal, coach David Largent said.

Largent said his team's unity and work ethic will be key this fall. "If there is an upside to low numbers, it is that the team can come together very quickly, and everyone gets game experience from the outset," he said.

At the front of that experience are two returning all-conference selections, junior Vaun Pierson and senior Coy Bumell.

Pierson led the Buckaroos in catches (21), receiving yards (294) and receiving touchdowns (two). No other returning player had more than 40 receiving yards.

Pierson is also Kaycee's top returning rusher after finishing last season third on the team with 54 carries for 164 yards.

Defensively, Pierson is the top returning tackler, too. He had 48 tackles and a team-high seven tackles for loss last year.

He compiled all of that while missing the first two games of the season while recovering from offseason surgery.

"He was thrust into a starting role early in his freshman season

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due to injuries and quickly learned the system and began to step up and get comfortable in his role," Largent said. Bumell will return at center

on the Buckaroos' offense, while running back/defensive end Xavier Strothman will join Bumell as likely the only seniors on the roster.

In the backfield, junior Ruben Cleveland added 20 carries for 134 yards and sophomore Grady Alger had 30 carries for 70 yards. Both return and will be key to the season, Largent said.

The defense does return several key contributors. In addition to Pierson, Cleveland had 33 tackles and Alger 28, while sophomore Wyatt Ramsbottom had 26. Ramsbottom's three sacks led the team.

"The freshmen and sophomores from last year saw significant minutes, garnering them valuable experience that we are hoping will pay dividends moving into this season," Largent said. "... (Experience) combined with some physical maturity should give them an edge over last year and something they can pass on to our freshmen, as they too will be asked to play some big minutes."

To the nine Buckaroos' credit, Largent said he likes what he has seen.

"We came out of camp with some confidence, cohesiveness and rhythm that should give us a good start going in August," he said.

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#### HULETT CONTINUED-

them step up and become the leaders of this team."

Only one player – junior Cash Huven – completed a pass year, and Huven's only completion in 2021 went for a 66-yard touchdown.

Bigger gaps exist on defense. Six of Hulett's top seven players in defensive points have graduated, leaving Reilly – who had 31 tackles and four sacks – as the player carrying the bulk of the defensive experience.

Smith chipped in 18 tackles, Ulmer had 17, junior Christian Reilly had 15 and Huven had 13.

Backen said despite the young nature of Hulett's roster, he is hopeful that they players will develop an on-field chemistry quickly.

"We have a good eighth-grade class coming in that will mesh well with the core group we have now," Backen said. "I think a strength is these kids have been through our system and understand what we are trying to accomplish."



#### Key Players

**WR/DE:** Hunter Reilly, Sr.

**RB/LB:** M.J. Ulmer, Sr.

**WR/DE:** Kade Smith, Sr.

#### 2022 Schedule

**8-27:** Open (Zero Week)  
**9-3:** vs. Dubois, 2 p.m. (at Ten Sleep)  
**\*9-10:** vs. Burlington, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-17:** at Meeteetse, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-24:** vs. Ten Sleep, 2 p.m.  
**10-1:** vs. Snake River, 2 p.m. (at Midwest)  
**\*10-7:** at Midwest, 1:30 p.m.  
**\*10-15:** at Kaycee, noon  
**10-21:** vs. Edgemont, S.D., 1 p.m.  
\* Conference game

## Longhorns rely on youth infusion

Meeteetse will have a unique way of welcoming its incoming freshmen to the team this year – a whole lot of varsity playing time.

With seven incoming freshmen on a roster that may not even be double that in total, the Longhorns have no choice but to rely on ninth-graders to step into big roles this season.

Even so, that doesn't mean Meeteetse enters 2022 inexperienced.

"We lost a good senior class, but there's quite a few kids who have gotten to play in big games," Longhorn coach Zeb Hagen said. "I think our experience is better than average considering that."

Junior Joseph Pina was an all-state pick last year, but he's the only one of the Longhorns' four all-state and five all-conference choices to come back.

But seniors Kiernan Ehrhart-

Mukiibi and Sam Hollinger, junior Jason Moody and sophomore Luukas Ryhti have all played in big games for the Longhorns, who have had winning seasons nine of the past 10 years.

Defensively, Pina is the only one of Meeteetse's top five tacklers to come back this season. He was second on the team with 135 tackles last year and tied for the team lead with 13 tackles for loss.

"He's going to move around a lot where teams aren't going to be used to him in one spot," Hagen said. "Last year, he proved he can play at any spot on defense regardless of size (5-foot-6, 160 pounds)."

Moody added 31 tackles, while Hollinger and Ehrhart-Mukiibi each had 21. Five of Hollinger's tackles were for loss.

The offense will have receiving experience: Pina was second on

the team last year with 16 catches for 322 yards, while Ehrhart-Mukiibi had seven catches for 182 yards and Moody notched 13 catches for 103 yards.

Pina is the only player returning who carried the ball for double-digit yards last year; he ran 17 times for 68 yards.

Ryhti rotated into several spots that opened up due to injury and was versatile, Hagen said.

The seven freshmen will work their way into the mix around the more experienced players.

"That's definitely going to be nice, considering we're probably only going to have 11 or 12 (players)," Hagen said. "... Some of these guys are going to get forced into it faster than most. But these kids, they have bought into the offseason and have really put the time in.

"... As long as they keep their mind on improving their game throughout the season, and not getting down on one mistake or fixated on one good thing... they'll be a lot better football players (by November).

"... That's what we want as coaches, and that's what we'll push them to do."



**Mascot:** Longhorns  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** North  
**Colors:** Red and white

**Coach:** Zeb Hagen,  
eighth year at Meeteetse  
**2021 Record:** 5-4, lost  
to Snake River in state  
semifinals

#### Key Players

**TB/LB:** Joseph Pina, Jr.  
**WR/DB:** Kiernan  
Ehrhart-Mukiibi, Sr.  
**C/DE:** Jason Moody, Jr.  
**FB/LB:** Luukas Ryhti, Soph.

#### 2022 Schedule

**8-27:** vs. Bridger, Mont., 7 p.m.  
**9-2:** vs. Snake River, 7 p.m.  
**\*9-10:** at Kaycee, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-17:** vs. Hulett, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-22:** vs. Burlington, 7 p.m.  
**10-1:** at Dubois, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-8:** at Ten Sleep, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** vs. Midwest, 7 p.m.  
**10-21:** vs. Cody JV, 7 p.m.  
\* Conference game

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**~Coach  
Zeb Hagen**



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**Mascot:** Oilers  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** North  
**Colors:** Maroon and white

**Coach:** Joe Campbell, third year at Midwest  
**2021 Record:** 4-5, lost to Meeteetse in state quarterfinals

**Key Players**  
**RB/OLB/RS:** Enrique De'Lara, Jr.  
**HB/DE/K:** Quincy Paris, Soph.  
**FB/WR/OLB:** Gage Palmer, Soph.  
**QB/DB:** Francisco De'Lara, Soph.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-27:** at Encampment jamboree, noon (Zero Week)  
**9-3:** vs. Kelly Walsh JV, noon  
**\*9-10:** vs. Ten Sleep, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-17:** at Burlington, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-24:** at Kaycee, 2 p.m.  
**9-30:** vs. Hanna, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Hulett, 1:30 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** at Meeteetse, 7 p.m.  
**\*10-22:** at Encampment, 2 p.m.  
\* Conference game

1A 6-MAN NORTH TEN SLEEP PIONEERS

New coach looks to revive Pioneers

Dan Cheatham may have the hardest coaching job in all of Wyoming this season.

Other new head coaches take over programs that had teams last year. As the new head football coach in Ten Sleep, Cheatham doesn't have that luxury.

In fact, only once in the past four years has Ten Sleep successfully fielded a team.

The Pioneers did not field a team in 2018, 2019 and 2021. In 2020, the Pioneers went 1-7; even in that season, though, Ten Sleep lost twice by forfeit due to low numbers. In the past four years combined, the Pioneers have played six games.

Still, Cheatham is carrying his optimism into a unique situation.

"In six-man football, anything is possible," he said.

Cheatham comes to Ten Sleep from a unique set of coaching experiences, including both 11-man coaching at Cloud Peak Middle School and at Moorcroft as well as some eight-man assistant coaching in Kansas. He has also coached junior high basketball and track.

Moreover, for the past 11 years, Cheatham has served as the scorekeeper for Snake River, one of the most successful six-man programs in Wyoming.

"I've seen a lot of the schools that Ten Sleep will be playing against, how they play," Cheatham said.

Cheatham said he knows the Pioneers' numbers may be low again this season. The 2020 roster had 10 players on it, including five players who might be seniors this year and one potential junior.

Potential incoming seniors from the 2020 roster are Walker Cooper, Ian Turgeon, Aidan Dykstra, Cole Nichols and Eli Mitchell. The lone potential upcoming junior from that roster is Canyon Egger.

Full 2020 stats are not available for the Pioneers, but in three games with stats available, Cooper both carried and caught the ball, notching seven carries for 89 yards and three catches for 78 yards.

Cooper also led all potential returners with 12 tackles, while Turgeon had six, Dykstra four and Mitchell two.

However, before the first practice or team meeting, Cheatham said he was unsure what the numbers would look like. Regardless, Cheatham said he knew what he hoped his team could do throughout the season to improve.

"Six-man football is a fast game, so what I'm hoping to be able to accomplish is to help the players become fast – fast ones to become faster and slower ones to become fast – to make a good showing on the field," Cheatham said. "Six-man football, you have to know enough to be able to adjust very quickly during a play and you have to know what's going to happen next.

"... One of our goals and objectives (for players) is to understand the game so they know how to adjust during the play."

Oilers continue to build steam

When Joe Campbell first started as the coach at Midwest for the 2020 season, he had a roster of six.

Yes, six.

That first year, Midwest finished 0-8. But with time came growth and an influx of talent. Last year, they improved to 4-5 and hosted a playoff game.

Now, the Oilers will enter 2022 with a roster of about 15, and with leaders who have an attitude that can deliver success.

"I'm starting to see the change," Campbell said. "They want it. They want to work in the offseason and be successful. That's good to see. ... It's tough to change a mentality, but I think we're doing it."

The Oilers graduated five seniors but still return a huge core of their team from 2021, including three all-conference players in junior Enrique De'Lara and sophomores Gage Palmer and Quincy Paris.

However, the 2022 team will likely have no seniors on it.

"We're young still," Campbell said. "Hopefully we can build on what we started last year."

Sophomore Francisco De'Lara completed 32 of 89 passes for 457 yards and 10 touchdowns last season. Enrique De'Lara was the top target, catching 13 of those passes for 250 yards and six scores.

Paris notched seven catches for 109 yards while Palmer had nine catches for 101 yards.

In the running game, Enrique De'Lara finished second for the Oilers with 41 carries for 285 yards, while Francisco De'Lara had 14 carries for 113 yards.

Campbell said his returners impressed him with their team speed at summer camp. Without much size, Campbell said, "we're going to be spreading it out a lot more this year."

On defense, experience abounds. Four of Midwest's top five tacklers return this year in the De'Laras, Palmer and Paris.

Enrique De'Lara led the Oilers in defensive points and was second with 50 total tackles. He also led the team with four fumble recoveries.

Palmer added 49 tackles and a team-high three interceptions. Paris had 41 tackles and a pair of interceptions while Francisco De'Lara had 23 tackles.

However, no other returner finished in double-digit tackles last year.

Even so, Campbell said the growth he has seen from his returners has him fired up for what's possible, not only this year but into the future. He said this year's team should have less of the "deer in headlights" look when stronger or more experienced teams lay down the challenge.

"They've been working their tails off, getting stronger and getting in the weight room," Campbell said. "... It's going to be pretty exciting the next three years or so. This core of players, as long as they keep getting stronger and smarter on the field, they should do something special."

Rams ready for a thrill ride

Dubois coach David Trembly has seen the small-school talent roller coaster in action before, where the fates of a football program ride on the both the talent and the numbers of athletes in the school at any given time.

Right now, the Rams are on the fun part of that coaster.

With a talented group of upperclassmen, the Rams will be contenders for a state title this year – much like they were in basketball last year, where they finished as runners-up. With talented athletes competing on the wrestling and track teams, too, Dubois has built a group that has weathered the climb to be competitive, and Trembly's hope is that momentum continues.

"It's a good culture to have, and you just keep trying to build on that as much as you can," he said.

With five starters returning on both offense and defense from last year's semifinal team, including a pair of all-state picks in senior Ryan Wells and junior Wyatt Trembly, the Rams will be in good shape.

Last year's playoff berth was the program's first since 2015 and helped Dubois realize its potential.

"When these guys were freshmen and sophomores... they were taking lumps," coach Trembly said. "But now all those kids who were

(26).

"(Defense) is, I think, one of our huge strengths, and if we can utilize that, that could get us to some good places," coach Trembly said.

The offense, meanwhile, returns six-man's top rusher and one of its top passers in Wyatt Trembly and Wells, respectively.

Wyatt Trembly was the Rams' go-to rusher, picking up Class 1A six-man best 1,634 yards and 26 touchdowns on 193 carries.

Wells complemented that by throwing for 1,362 yards, completing 92 of 192 passes and notching 23 touchdowns.

Trembly finished second on the team in receiving with 20 catches for 369 yards and is Dubois' top returning receiver.

Chamley added 18 catches for 178 yards, good for third on the team, while Rux added nine catches for 106 yards.

Coach Trembly said what sets the team apart, though, is its chemistry, built over five years of football together and camaraderie from not just football but other sports, too.

"When you just put this group together, they really think together well, and I'm hoping that that continues on," he said.

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taking lumps are moving up."

On defense, the Rams return six of their top seven tacklers.

Trembly's 143 tackles last year was second-best in six-man and is tops among this year's returning players.

Senior Clayton Rux, an all-conference choice in 2021, added 117 tackles, and senior Kaden Chamley had 94.

Also seeing time on defense were junior Jonah Oard (76 tackles), Wells (42) and junior Kaleb Gleim



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**Mascot:** Rams  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** South  
**Colors:** Blue and yellow

**Coach:** David Trembly, 25th year at Dubois  
**2021 Record:** 5-5, lost to Encampment in state semifinals

**Key Players**  
**QB/DB:** Ryan Wells, Sr.  
**TE/LB:** Clayton Rux, Sr.  
**TE/DE:** Kaden Chamley, Sr.  
**RB/LB:** Wyatt Trembly, Jr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-27:** at Encampment jamboree, noon (Zero Week)  
**9-3:** vs. Hulett, 2 p.m. (at Ten Sleep)  
**\*9-9:** vs. Snake River, 3 p.m.  
**\*9-17:** at Encampment, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-24:** vs. Farson, 2 p.m.  
**10-1:** vs. Meeteetse, 2 p.m.  
**10-6:** vs. Natrona JV, 4 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** at Hanna, noon  
**10-21:** at Burlington, 1:30 p.m.  
\* Conference game

ENCAMPMENT TIGERS 1A 6-MAN SOUTH

Tigers look to maintain momentum

In just their third year back as a football program, the Encampment Tigers played in a state championship game.

The rise of the Tigers in Class 1A six-man came fast, but not so fast that the players in the program think it's their destiny to be christened as a championship contender every year.

Coach Kegan Willford said his players know they have to keep working hard to maintain the success the program has seen in its nascent stages.

"Each season we set weekly goals and yearly goals," Willford said. "We talk each week on what we are going to do to work toward achieving each goal. This has helped our team stay focused and hopefully keep from becoming complacent."

Last year's state runners-up graduated seven players from a team that finished 8-2 – with both losses to Carbon County rival and eventual state champion Snake River – but return enough key contributors to remain in the hunt for title consideration.



**Mascot:** Tigers  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** South  
**Colors:** Red and black

**Coach:** Kegan Willford, fourth year at Encampment  
**2021 Record:** 8-2, lost to Snake River in state championship



**Mascot:** Pioneers  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** North  
**Colors:** Blue and red

**Coach:** Dan Cheatham, first year at Ten Sleep  
**2021 Record:** Did not field a team

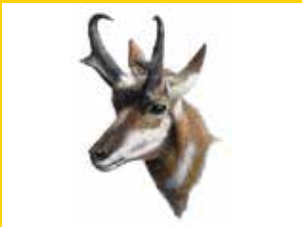
**Key Players**  
TBD

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** Open (Zero Week)  
**9-3:** at Encampment, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-10:** at Midwest, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-17:** vs. Kaycee, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-24:** at Hulett, 2 p.m.  
**9-30:** Open  
**\*10-8:** vs. Meeteetse, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-15:** vs. Burlington, 2 p.m.  
**10-22:** at Hanna, noon  
\* Conference game



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**Mascot:** Pronghorns  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** South  
**Colors:** Green and yellow

**Coach:** Ryan Lay,  
first year at Farson  
**2021 Record:** 3-4, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**C/DL:** Connor Weese, Jr.  
**RB/S:** Matthew Smith, Sr.  
**OL/FB/LB:** Ory Johnson, Jr.  
**FB/LB:** Simeon Stotts, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-27:** at Encampment jamboree,  
noon (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** TBD  
**\*9-10:** vs. Encampment, 3 p.m.  
**9-16:** TBD  
**\*9-24:** at Dubois, 2 p.m.  
**9-30:** at Burlington, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** vs. Hanna, 1 p.m.  
**\*10-15:** at Snake River, 2 p.m.  
**10-22:** vs. Kaycee, 3 p.m.  
\* Conference game

# New Pronghorns coach not a new face

Whenever a football program changes head coaches, a period of transition is inevitable. For new Farson coach Ryan Lay, that period of transition will probably be as short and as simple as any like it in the state. Lay has been in Farson for eight years, working for the past six as an assistant coach for the high school and as the head coach for the middle school. He said the program will see minor tweaks, but the big picture remains the same. “Hopefully, you see the same intensity and discipline on the field that has made Farson-Eden football successful,” Lay said.

He added that since he’s already worked with the players since middle school, “it will help keep the transition of head coach as smooth as possible. We’ve all been together their whole careers at Farson-Eden football, so we have that respect and mutual understanding of what is expected and focus that is needed.” This year, the Pronghorns will have good depth with about 20 players out, although only three will be seniors. Lay said although the roster looks young, “a lot of the underclassmen have had lots of playing time.”

Senior Matthew Smith was second for Farson last year in the rushing game, finishing with 44 carries for 343 yards and four touchdowns. He’s the only one of Farson’s top five rushers to come back in 2022. Senior Simeon Stotts led the Pronghorns in receiving yards last year, piling up 259 on 17 catches, while junior Connor Weese led the team in receptions with 18, leading to 190 yards through the air.

Junior Ory Johnson was third in receiving with 11 catches for 131 yards. No returning player threw more than one pass last season. Lay said the Pronghorns have strength in their rushing attack but will try to develop the passing game more as the season progresses. On the other side of the ball, Farson returns four of its top seven players in defensive points. Johnson was second on the team last year with 52 tackles and tied for the team lead with four tackles for loss. Right behind was Weese, who had 51 tackles and recovered a team-high four fumbles. Stotts notched 38 tackles and Smith had 22. Lay said senior Sage Romero, juniors Cash Jones and Kresten Mines and sophomore Griffin Romero will also be called on to fulfill key roles. Program-wide, Lay said the place the football team has in the community will also be important to preserve and nurture. “The support that the community has given to the program since its return has also been amazing and key to the program,” Lay said. “Keeping that tradition alive is going to be important.”

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## ENCAMPMENT CONTINUED-

Within the roster of about 15 players, only about three or four will be seniors this year, so Encampment will rely a lot on its junior class, including three returning starters and two all-state choices in Quade Jordan and Ryon Miller, to supplement and add depth. Jordan was Encampment’s top rushing threat as a sophomore, carrying 161 times for 1,537 yards and 25 touchdowns. Willford said Jordan’s success was a reflection both of Jordan’s commitment as well as the commitment of his teammates to improve.

“Every player on our team goes out each day and works towards finding ways they can contribute to making the team as successful as possible,” Willford said. “It helps having players, such as Quade, who can help push their teammates each day to get better.” Senior Brayden Barkhurst added 11 carries for 120 yards to supplement the rushing attack. Junior Kaben Pickett completed 54 of 104 passes for 1,002 yards and 20 touchdowns. However, the Tigers’ top three receivers have graduated, leaving Jordan (eight catches, 68 yards) as the top returning receiver. The Tigers do return three of their top five tacklers from last

season in their three returning junior starters – Jordan, Pickett and Miller. Pickett was third on the team with 73 tackles last year and tied Jordan for the team lead in sacks with four. Jordan added 68 tackles and had a team-high eight tackles for loss. And Miller contributed 65 tackles, two sacks and three pass deflections. Senior Bristin Sifford notched 37 tackles, good for seventh on the team. “Each of our returners can play multiple positions, and the positions they play may change depending on the team we are playing,” Willford said. “It’s nice to have the ability to move multiple players.”

**ENCAMPMENT**  
**Key Players**  
**RB/LB:** Quade Jordan, Jr.  
**RB/DB:** Ryon Miller, Jr.  
**QB/DL:** Kaben Pickett, Jr.  
**RB/LB:** Bristin Sifford, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-27:** at Encampment jamboree,  
noon (Zero Week)  
**9-3:** vs. Ten Sleep, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-10:** at Farson, 3 p.m.  
**\*9-17:** vs. Dubois, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** at Hanna, noon  
**9-30:** at Kaycee, 2 p.m.  
**\*10-8:** vs. Snake River, 2 p.m.  
**10-14:** Open  
**10-22:** vs. Midwest, 2 p.m.  
\* Conference game


# Miners have gleaned some positives

The positives present in the season the Hanna-Elk Mountain-Medicine Bow Miners had last season may not have been clear to the casual observer. For coach Zack Scott, though, last year’s winless season was not a lost cause. Despite the struggles, the fire that last year’s players saw will help turn this year’s Miner team into an experienced team that developed solid experience even in a down year, and this year they will be led by a group of seniors ready to re-establish the program trajectory. With five starters back on both offense and defense, and with only two seniors gone from last year’s roster, HEM should be one of Class 1A six-man’s most improved teams. “We will have a pretty large senior class with lots of experience from last year,” Scott said. “I hope to see them really take a step forward and lead our incoming (and) new players.” The Miners went 0-6 last year, losing every game by at least 43 points and canceling two others. The Miners’ roster was only 10 players deep last year, forcing the coaches and players to get a bit creative. “Practice can be difficult at times, especially when you are trying to polish offense or defense,” Scott said. “Without enough kids to even simulate what the other side will look like, let alone what it will feel like, can make preparing for games incredibly difficult. Oftentimes the varsity offense would be taking on one player and maybe two coaches.” This year’s roster will still be small but will include five seniors. Senior Tom Wagner, Hanna’s lone all-conference choice, took the bulk of the rushing load last year, running 93 times for 398 yards and two touchdowns. No other returning player had more than 50 yards last year. “We will likely lean on him like we did last year, with hopes of some other athletes really

# Rattlers still have plenty of bite

One of the clichés of sport is that for as hard as it is to get to the top, it’s even harder to there. Cliché as it is, it’s true, and the Snake River Rattlers know it. The Rattlers finished 10-0 last season and won the Class 1A six-man championship. With beaucoup returning talent, they’re the favorites again. To stay on top, though, coach Jack Cobb said his team has to stay hungry and keep working hard. Fortunately, he said his players understand that. “I feel with the leaders we do have we don’t have to worry about this team becoming complacent,” Cobb said. “They seem to be focused and determined to get back to Laramie and play for a championship.” The Rattlers return four all-state players from last year’s undefeated state championship team. Seniors David Hernandez, Hadley Myers and Kannadis Peroulis and junior Seth Maxson were all-state last year. The four returning all-state choices is tops in six-man; the remaining teams in the classification have six returning all-state choices, total. Junior Zane Matheson was an all-conference choice, as well. The Rattlers get back five of their starters on offense and four on defense. Peroulis led the Rattlers’ offensive attack, carrying 125 times for 1,571 yards – an average of 12.6 yards per carry – and 21 touchdowns. Cobb said Peroulis was strong as a junior but “looks even stronger going into his senior season.” He won’t have to carry the load alone, though. Myers was second with 69 carries for 681 yards and nine touchdowns, while Maxson was third with 80 carries for 577 yards and seven TDs. Matheson and Myers split quarterbacking duties, with Matheson completing 43 of 72 passes for 605 yards and 12 scores and Myers chipping in 16 completions for 289

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**Mascot:** Miners  
**Division:** Class 1A six-man  
**Conference:** South  
**Colors:** Blue and orange

**Coach:** Zack Scott,  
tenth year at Hanna  
**2021 Record:** 0-6, did not  
qualify for playoffs

**Key Players**  
**RB/LB:** Tom Wagner, Sr.  
**C/DT:** Rayce Ward, Sr.  
**FB/DE:** Jesse Deegan, Sr.  
**WR/DE:** Howard Bame, Sr.

**2022 Schedule**  
**8-26:** Open (Zero Week)  
**9-2:** vs. Kaycee, noon  
**9-10:** vs. Cheyenne East frosh, noon  
**\*9-17:** at Snake River, 2 p.m.  
**\*9-23:** vs. Encampment, noon  
**9-30:** at Midwest, 6 p.m.  
**\*10-7:** at Farson, 1 p.m.  
**\*10-14:** vs. Dubois, noon  
**10-22:** vs. Ten Sleep, noon  
\* Conference game



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