

The Pueblo Chieftain

KICKOFF 2009

Thursday, August 27



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KICKOFF 2009

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Rookie coach McDaniels faces a Mile High task

New Broncos' head coach has resume for success but admits challenges await.

By **JEFF LETOFSKY**
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

ENGLEWOOD — The lanyard spins around his fingers hundreds of times at each practice.

Nervous energy, perhaps. Pressure, definitely.

Josh McDaniels has reason to be nervous. The new youthful head coach of the Denver Broncos has a Mile High task in front of him. At just 33 years old, the second-youngest head coach in the National Football League faces a rebuilding job of monumental proportions. The Broncos were 8-8 last season and McDaniels replaced popular coach Mike Shanahan, who won two Super Bowls in 14 years.

He's at the top of an organization that has won only one playoff game in a decade since John Elway led the Broncos to back-to-back Super Bowl championships at the turn of the century.

He's brought in nearly an entire new staff. And a myriad of new players — 47 of them at one point early in training camp.

His background is whitewashed with red, white and blue from his eight years as the offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach for Bill Belichick and the New England Patriots.

No doubt McDaniels has youthful exuberance and energy.

No doubt there's pressure on the son

of a coach to turn the fortunes of the Broncos around.

His background with the Patriots should help.

McDaniels was on the staff of three New England teams that won Super Bowls in 2001, 2003 and 2004. He also was the offensive coordinator when the Patriots became the first team to post a 16-0 regular-season record and went on to play in Super Bowl XLII in 2007. His offense was one of the most productive in NFL history with the Patriots setting league records for points scored (589/36.8 ppg) and touchdowns (75).

None of that will mean much unless McDaniels wins. And he knows that.

So, how will he turn the Denver Broncos around?

In training camp, he brought in a no-nonsense approach, making players run laps when they made mistakes. His theme of getting better each day was apparent.

"We're working on fixing things," McDaniels said early in training camp. "There's a lot of little things going on. Every day is different; I've learned that as a head coach. But I think there's steady improvement every day."

He's faced adversity from the get-go, trading strong-armed Jay Cutler for run-of-the-mill quarterback Kyle Orton from the Chicago Bears. And he's had to deal with controversial Brandon Marshall's shenanigans since McDaniels signed a four-year contract for \$8 million.

Yet, McDaniels trudges on, out to prove he can coach at the highest level of football.

SEE McDANIELS, 9



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/MIKE SWEENEY

Denver Broncos head coach Josh McDaniels quickly established himself as a man with a plan in the Mile High city.



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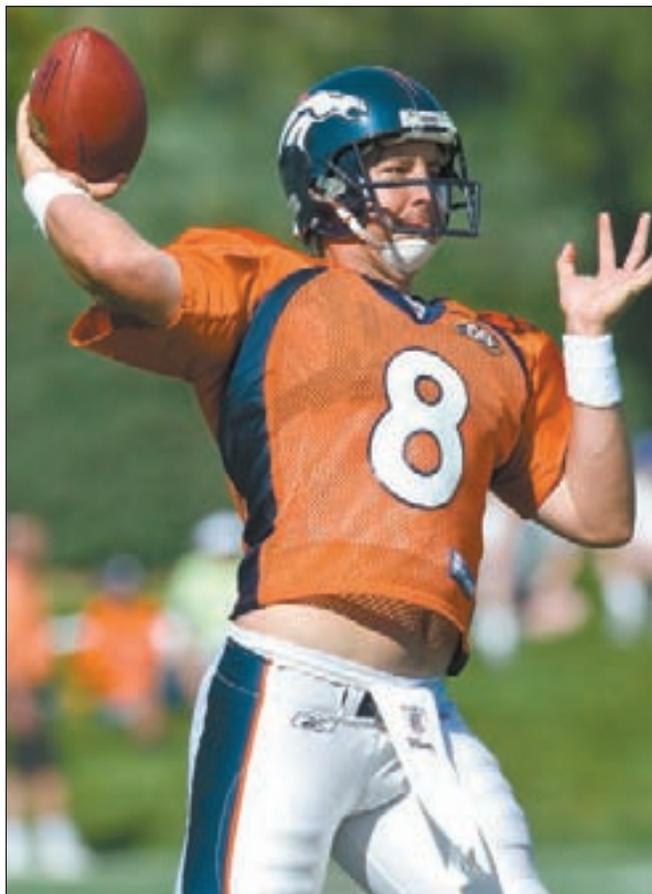
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KICKOFF 2009

Broncos begin era of uncertainty

By **JEFF LETOFSKY**
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN



Denver quarterback Kyle Orton throws a pass during drills at the team's Dove Valley training facility earlier this month. The Broncos received Orton from the Chicago Bears in a trade for Jay Cutler.

CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/MIKE SWEENEY

DENVER BRONCOS



Coach: Josh McDaniels, first season

2008 record: 8-8; tie/first in AFC West

Players to watch: Champ Bailey, cb, 6-0, 192; Correll Buckhalter, rb, 6-0, 217; Ryan Clady, t, 6-6, 325; Nic Clemmons, dt, 6-6, 300; Andra Davis, lb, 6-1, 250; Brian Dawkins, fs, 6-0, 210; Elvis Dumervil, de, 5-11, 260; Ronald Fields, nt; Vernon Fox, db, 5-10, 203; Jabar Gaffney, wr, 6-1, 200; Andre Goodman, cb, 5-10, 190; Daniel Graham, te, 6-3, 257; Ben Hamilton, og, 6-4, 290; Ryan Harris, ot, 6-5, 300; Renaldo Hill, s, 5-11, 205; Peyton Hillis, rb, 6-1, 250; Chad Jackson, wr, 6-1, 215; LaMont Jordan, rb, 5-10, 230; Brett Kern, p, 6-2, 215; Chris Kuper, og, 6-4, 303; Spencer Larsen, fb, 6-2, 240; Brandon Lloyd, wr, 6-0, 194; Ryan McBean, de, 6-5, 297; Knowshon Moreno, rb, 5-11, 205; Kyle Orton, qb, 6-4, 216; Jeb Putzier, te, 6-4, 256; Chris Simms, qb, 6-4, 220; Brandon Marshall, wr, 6-4, 230; Kenny Peterson, dt, 6-3, 300; Matt Prater, k, 5-10, 188; Eddie Royal, wr, 5-10, 182; Tony Scheffler, te, 6-5, 250; Brandon Stokley, wr, 5-11, 192; Casey Wiegmann, c, 6-2, 285; D.J. Williams, olb, 6-1, 240; Jack Williams, cb, 5-9, 186; Wesley Woodyard, olb, 6-1, 230.

By the numbers: 6 — Number of games against 2008 playoff teams.

Sideline chatter: McDaniels has brought the Patriot Way to Denver hoping to transform it into the Broncos Way.

Key game alert: Sept. 13 at Cincinnati. McDaniels and the Broncos will be under the microscope.

2009 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 13	at Cincinnati	11 a.m.
Sept. 20	Cleveland	2:15 p.m.
Sept. 27	at Oakland	2:15 p.m.
Oct. 4	Dallas	2:15 p.m.
Oct. 11	New England	2:15 p.m.
Oct. 19	at San Diego	6:30 p.m.
Nov. 1	at Baltimore	11 a.m.
Nov. 9	Pittsburgh	6:30 p.m.
Nov. 15	at Washington	11 a.m.
Nov. 22	San Diego	2:15 p.m.
Nov. 26	N.Y. Giants	6:20 p.m.
Dec. 6	at Kansas City	11 a.m.
Dec. 13	at Indianapolis	11 a.m.
Dec. 20	Oakland	2:05 p.m.
Dec. 27	at Philadelphia	11 a.m.
Jan. 3	Kansas City	2:15 p.m.

ENGLEWOOD — Starting over.

That best describes the feeling in Denver, Colorado and the entire Rocky Mountain region for the Denver Broncos.

Gone is Mike Shanahan, the Mastermind, the most successful coach in Broncos' history with two Super Bowl titles to his credit.

Gone is Jay Cutler, the closest thing to the heir apparent of John Elway, to the Chicago Bears.

Enter Josh McDaniels, the second youngest head coach in the NFL at age 33 who mentored under New England Patriots' guru Bill Belichick. Add a virtually entire new coaching staff, including new offensive coordinator Mike McCoy and new defensive coordinator Mike Nolan.

Enter Kyle Orton from the Chicago Bears, a quarterback with average talent, average numbers.

Throw in one of the most difficult schedules in the NFL and the season ahead looks more like a rocky ride to the top of Pikes Peak than a run to the Super Bowl.

OFFENSE

With a new regime, the numbers Denver put up last season mean little.

The Broncos were among the league's best offenses last season, averaging 395.8 yards per game with 279 coming through the air and 116 on the ground. Denver was 16th in the league in points per game (23.1).

But those came with Cutler at quarterback, Marshall at wide receiver and Shanahan calling the plays.

Orton steps into a new offense engineered by McCoy and McDaniels that is looking to reinvent the running game and add the short passing game with players from the old guard combined with a gaggle of new faces.

Orton will have plenty of talent to throw to on the flanks including returning starting wide receivers Brandon Marshall, Eddie Royal and Brandon Stokley and tight ends Daniel Graham and Tony Scheffler.

McDaniels brought in wide out Jabar Gaffney with him from New England. And the Broncos signed free agent Brandon Lloyd, who played with Orton in Chicago last season, hauling in 26 passes

for 364 yards and two scores.

Other wide outs in the mix includes Chad Jackson, who set a Denver single-game record in 2008 with eight kickoff returns, former Bronco Jeb Putzier, who has had stints with Houston and Seattle and undrafted free agents Nate Swift, Lucas Taylor, C.J. Jones and Marquez Branson.

Rookie tight ends Richard Quinn and Kenny McKinley were second and fifth round selections, respectively.

Finding running backs has been a priority with the 2009 club.

The Broncos lured Correll Buckhalter and LaMont Jordan to Denver with free agent contracts and nabbed University of Georgia standout Knowshon Moreno with the 12th overall pick in the NFL Draft. Another free agent, Darius Walker, also joined the mix.

They will battle for starting spots along with returnee Peyton Hillis.

DEFENSE

No way can Denver's defense be as bad as last season. Or can it?

The Broncos were among the worst teams in the NFL in four crucial defensive categories — giving up 28 points a game (30th), 374.6 yards a game (29th), 228.5 passing yards a game (26th) and 146.1 rushing yards a game (27th).

Enter Nolan as defensive coordinator. The former San Francisco 49ers head coach brings a wealth of experience to the Broncos, and more importantly, a knack of how to play defense.

Nolan will attempt to have Denver focus on stopping the run, put pressure on opposing quarterbacks and force turnovers. Typical stuff for a defense.

The big change will be a 3-4 scheme that lends itself to a more attacking style.

SEE BRONCOS, 9

KICKOFF 2009

CSU-PUEBLO
THUNDERWOLVES

Coach: John Wristen, second season.

2008 record: 4-6.

Players to watch: Da'Quan Cartwright, so., wr, 6-1, 192; Matt Cole, sr., lb, 6-4, 222; Jesse Lewis, so., rb, 5-6, 175; David Massulo, so., wr, 6-0, 190; Nick Sabye, so., ol, 6-6, 240; Kyle Tilford, sr., ol, 6-4, 320; Markus Turner, sr., wr, 5-8, 175; Colin Clancy, sr., qb, 6-4, 195; Chris Brown, jr., db, 5-9, 168; Jon Bailey, so., db, 5-11, 170; Aaron Hernandez, so., db, 5-9, 185; Grant Jansen, so., dl, 6-0, 225; Jamaal Johnson, so., rb, 5-9, 185; Marco Macaluso, so., db, 5-11, 190; Kyle Major, so., k, 6-3, 230; Jerry McWilliams, sr., lb, 6-2, 230; Lee Meisner, so, lb, 6-0, 215; Jerome Page, so., db, 5-9, 167; Sedric Patterson, sr., lb, 6-1, 245; Joe Pullara, so., fb, 5-11, 220; Craig Rush, so., ol, 6-5, 245; Chase Vaughn, sr., de, 6-2, 245; Brandon Williams, sr., lb, 6-2, 215.

Sideline chatter: Last season was the first in 24 years at CSU-Pueblo as the school resurrected its football program. A 4-6 record was remarkable under the circumstances. The T-Wolves expect to be better this season — and should be.

By the numbers: 8 — the number of seniors on the roster after having zero seniors a year ago.

Key game alert: Sept. 26 against Mines. The T-Wolves took the Orediggers to overtime last year and could pull off a major upset.

2009 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Saturday	Eastern N.M.	7 p.m.
Sept. 5	at NW Oklahoma St.	6 p.m.
Sept. 12	Fort Lewis	6 p.m.
Sept. 19	at Chadron State	noon
Sept. 26	Colorado Mines	2 p.m.
Oct. 3	at Nebraska-Kearney	noon
Oct. 10	Mesa State	6 p.m.
Oct. 17	at N.M. Highlands	7 p.m.
Oct. 24	Western State	2 p.m.
Oct. 31	Western N.M.	2 p.m.
Nov. 7	at Adams State	noon

It's business as usual at CSU-Pueblo

By JOE E. CERVI

THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Football returned to Colorado State University-Pueblo last season for the first time in nearly a quarter-century.

There was pomp.

There was circumstance.

There was excitement.

There was energy.

There was curiosity.

The ThunderWolves rose from the ashes and went 4-6. Without any discernible depth and just enough talent to make games interesting, CSU-Pueblo fought its way to instant respectability.

"Last year was a blur," ThunderWolves second-year head coach John Wristen said. "From putting the shovel in the ground and building a stadium to trying to put together a coaching staff and recruiting players, we did something here no one else in the country had done.

"But that was last year. It's easier this year in some ways, but it's a lot harder in some others."

The T-Wolves now understand that excitement and energy come with wins. And they are solely responsible for the product they put on the field. Offseason workouts, a solid recruiting class and several additions on the coaching staff give Wristen & Co. reason for tempered optimism.

OFFENSE

The offense, which ranked 143rd, or second-to-last, in the nation a year ago needs to improve immediately if the ThunderWolves want to be considered players in Division II football.

Senior Colin Clancy earned the starting nod at quarterback after a hard-fought preseason of drills. He has just one season of eligibility remaining and intends on making the most of it.

"This is it for me and I don't want to let the team down," said the 22-year-old from Longmont.

Clancy will hand the ball off to a pair of talented ball carriers in sophomores Jesse Lewis of Loveland and Jamaal Johnson of Fountain. Lewis rushed for 178 yards and a score in limited action last season. And Johnson moved from cornerback to tailback — a move he gladly welcomed.

The receiving corps is anchored by Arizona senior Markus Turner, former South standout Da'Quan Cartwright,



John Wristen returns for his second season as head football coach at Colorado State University-Pueblo.

CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/
CHRIS McLEAN

Fountain product David Massulo and Harrison High School standout Demetrius Gilmore. Also in the mix are Ayrius Justin and Marcial Williamson.

The biggest transformation will be along the offensive line. A year of maturity — and time spent in the weight room — will be key for the ThunderWolves and first-year line coach Chris Symington.

"The offense has come a long way in a year, but we still have a long way to go," Wristen said. "This team is still based on defense. We're not going to change that formula. But at least the offense is catching up."

DEFENSE

The most-experienced, strongest and meanest unit at CSU-Pueblo is its defense. The ThunderWolves were 38th in the nation in rushing defense and 37th in scoring defense, allowing 21 points per game.

Defense is the foundation, the cornerstone, of the rebuilding process.

"Absolutely, we know there's pressure on us to keep us in games. That's something we want," senior defensive end Chase Vaughn said.

SEE CSU-PUEBLO, 7

CSU-PUEBLO / from page 6

Vaughn was a unanimous preseason all-RMAC selection and earned Division II all-America consideration. He recorded 10½ sacks a season ago and he is surrounded by a physical and experienced group of teammates.

Senior linebacker Sedric Patterson led the team in tackles a year ago and Lee Meisner developed into a force in the middle. Defensive end Grant Jansen earned RMAC defensive rookie of the year honors last season. And the secondary has been a battlefield for playing time throughout the spring and fall drills.

"I want us to have that swagger, that nastiness, that nose for the football," defensive coordinator Hunter Hughes said. "We have competition at every position and no one's job is safe. Our guys are going to fly around and get to the football and play hard on every play or they won't play."

SPECIAL TEAMS

The ThunderWolves are set in the kicking game with sophomore Kyle Major returning. He has a strong leg and was 8-13 with a long of 49 yards last season. Major nursed a sore ankle through the season but is back and

completely healthy.

Major also served as the team's punter a season ago, but the T-Wolves' coaching staff would like to find someone else to handle those duties. Linebacker Lee Meisner also punted last year and has a strong leg.

Punt returner Markus Turner is back for his senior season. He was an all-RMAC selection after returning 18 punts for 234 yards and a score last season.

INTANGIBLES

CSU-Pueblo hopes to be better than it was a year ago. But the ThunderWolves didn't sit around and wish for success; they spent the offseason working toward it.

A healthy, aggressive and productive offensive line is paramount. The running game, passing game and progression of the quarterback all hinge on the big boys up front.

Defensively, CSU-Pueblo can't sit back and act the part of a big-time defense. It needs to attack early and often. This collection of ThunderWolves has a chance to be one of the best in the RMAC.

The schedule, with two

non-conference games against quality opponents, doesn't allow CSU-Pueblo a week off in its 11-game season.

Yes, there are some pieces missing to the ThunderWolves' puzzle, and there will, no doubt, be frustrating moments throughout the season.

But the hardest-working businessmen tend to be the ones who have the most success. The hardest-working football player are called winners.

Football is business as usual at CSU-Pueblo.

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KICKOFF 2009

CSU RAMS



Coach: Steve Fairchild, second season.

2008 record: 7-6; beat Fresno State 40-35 in New Mexico Bowl.

Players to watch: Rashaun Greer, sr., wr, 6-1, 200; Adrian Martinez, sr., ol, 6-4, 299; Dion Morton, sr., wr, 5-10, 172; Zac Pauga, jr., fb, 6-0, 240; Cole Pemberton, sr., ol, 6-7, 318; Shelley Smith, sr., ol, 6-4, 300; Tim Walter, sr., ol, 289; Klint Kubiak, sr., db, 6-0, 212; James Moorehead, sr., dt, 6-6, 320; Nick Oppeneer, sr., cb, 5-10, 182; Mychal Sisson, so., lb, 5-11, 203; Gerard Thomas, so., db, 5-9, 171; Ben DeLine, so., k, 6-0, 175.

Sideline chatter: Fairchild's no-nonsense approach to practice and coaching has made football matter again in Fort Collins. Although the New Mexico Bowl is hardly the Rose Bowl, it signaled a change for the better at Colorado State.

By the numbers: 125 — the number of combined starts along the offensive line, the most in Division I.

Key game alert: Sept. 6 at Colorado in Boulder. This is the only national TV game for the Rams and winning in Boulder is never easy. A victory here could get the Rams noticed immediately.

2009 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 6	at Colorado	5 p.m.
Sept. 12	Weber State	3 p.m.
Sept. 19	Nevada	3 p.m.
Sept. 26	at BYU	4 p.m.
Oct. 3	at Idaho	3 p.m.
Oct. 10	Utah	4 p.m.
Oct. 17	at TCU	2 p.m.
Oct. 24	San Diego State	2 p.m.
Oct. 31	Air Force	2 p.m.
Nov. 7	at UNLV	8 p.m.
Nov. 21	at New Mexico	4 p.m.
Nov. 27	Wyoming	noon

Rams' renovation stays on schedule

THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

FORT COLLINS — Colorado State's football program needed to solidify a foundation before it could grow.

That foundation — after a 40-35 triumph in the New Mexico Bowl to stamp an exclamation point on Steve Fairchild's first season as head coach — is now in place.

So, where do the Rams go from here? Well, the road doesn't get any easier.

"Last year, we trained hard and made a step in the right direction," Fairchild said. "But the first steps are always the easiest. And now as we try to build back into the elite-type team that we think we can be, those next few steps are harder."

This offseason, Fairchild and his staff turned up the volume on the team's conditioning program, including the grueling mat drills that begin at 6 a.m. two days per week. The Rams did more of the mat drills, started them earlier and made them more difficult this season.

"I like the way our team's responded," Fairchild said, "and we just need to keep working."

The first order of business, now that the three phases of the offseason program are nearly history, is to begin assembling the fall depth chart, and there certainly are serious questions.

"But we had to fill some shoes last spring," Fairchild said. "Guys just have to step up and play and they know that. And we'll put the pieces together this spring. I'm really anxious to see what we look like this fall."

OFFENSE

Football architects who subscribe to the theory that a successful team builds itself around a solid offensive line would fall in love with the Rams.

Without question, at least entering spring, that line is the strength of the team. The roster leads the nation with 125 career starts at offensive line. And with the Rams needing to fill some gaping holes in their offensive backfield, returning four starters — all seniors — on the offensive line is a very good thing.

CSU returns both starting wide receivers, as well a jackpot of talented depth at that position. And if the Rams can find a successful quarterback — the same challenge that faced them before last season — someone who can quickly build rapport and chemistry with that group of talented receivers, the Rams might be among the most exciting offenses in the nation.



AP PHOTO/FILE

Colorado State head coach Steve Fairchild coaches against Fresno State in the New Mexico Bowl in Albuquerque, N.M., in December of 2008.

The first snaps in spring practice went to Grant Stucker, who led Ponderosa High School in Parker to the state championship.

Another candidate is newcomer Jon Eastman, a transfer from Snow College who led the Badgers to the 2008 junior-college national championship, where they lost in double overtime.

Two players could emerge in the running back battle. Miami native John Mosure, a quick and scrappy junior who has had several carries in his first two seasons, and newcomer Leonard Mason, a transfer from the College of the Desert, should see plenty of carries.

The Rams are solid at receiver with Rashaun Greer and Dion Morton.

DEFENSE

Every area of the Rams' defense — except cornerback — was hit hard by graduation.

"I was extremely pleased with the way we tackled and the way we kept the ball in front of us for the most part," Fairchild said. "We've got a developed depth in every area. I'm not sure we'll be the type defense we need to be right away, but I see us just quietly developing depth, quietly getting faster on that side of the ball."

The only returning starter on the line is James Morehead.

Graduation and unfortunate circumstances diluted the available contributors at linebacker. The team returns its leading tackler, the program's first-ever freshman all-American in Mychal Sisson. A slimmer, faster Sisson will change sides of the field, moving from strong side to weak side.

The move is due in part to the loss of Ricky Brewer, whose season-long suspension for a violation of team rules left a big hole at the linebacker position.

"The linebackers will be an area of wide-open competition," defensive coordinator Larry Kerr said.

Cornerback was perceived as a weakness and safety was a strength at Colorado State. Now, it's just the opposite.

CSU returns starters at each cornerback spot, senior Nick Oppeneer and sophomore playmaker Gerard Thomas.

SEE RAMS, 10

McDANIELS / from page 4

His meteoric rise is due to a background that has included football from Day One. His father, Thom, is an Ohio high school coaching legend. An undersized quarterback, McDaniels was a high school quarterback before converting to wide receiver at John Carroll University in Cleveland.

He received his first coaching job on Nick Saban's staff at Michigan State in 1999, sat out a season before joining Belichick's staff in 2001.

Denver's players are excited about having such a young coach with enthusiasm.

"He's shown that he can win in New England," defensive end Elvis Dumervil told a Denver newspaper. "We'll see what happens."

McDaniels takes over an offense that was second in the NFL in yardage but only 16th in scoring (23.1 ppg). He's brought in a 3-4 scheme on defense that has nowhere to go but up after finishing near the bottom in nearly every category last season.

Only time will tell if McDaniels is the right fit in Denver.

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BRONCOS / from page 5

That will start with four linebackers led by veteran returnees D.J. Williams and Wesley Woodyard. Tim Crowder, Jarvis Moss and Elvis Dumervil are part of the outside linebacker/defensive end package that comes with 3-4.

Former Cleveland Brown Andra Davis, coming off a 16-game, 134-tackle season, provides veteran leadership along with Nick Greisen, formerly of the Baltimore Ravens and Darrell Reid, an Indianapolis transplant. Spencer Larsen, a two-way player last season, is a backup inside linebacker.

Rookies to watch for at linebacker include Robert Ayers from Tennessee and Lee Robinson from Alcorn State.

There are a myriad of defensive linemen battling for playing time include returners Kenny Peterson, Nic Clemons and Marcus Thomas and newcomers Matthias Askew, Chris Baker, Ronald Fields, Ryan McBean, Everette Pedecleaux and Carlton Powell.

With All-Pros Champ Bailey and Brian Dawkins roaming in the secondary, Nolan has something to build on.

Dawkins was the biggest off-season acquisition as the seven-time Pro Bowl safety is one of only four players in NFL history with at least 33 interceptions

and 20 sacks. The addition of safety Renaldo Hill and cornerback Andre Goodman as free agents from Miami provide even more depth to a talented secondary.

Newcomers include draftees Alphonso Smith from Wake Forest and safeties Darcel McBeth from Texas Tech and David Bruton from Notre Dame.

SPECIAL TEAMS

A pair of incumbents are back to handle the kicking duties.

Matt Prater returns for his second season as the team's place kicker. As a rookie, Prater made 25 of 34 field goals and was 5-for-6 from 50 yards and beyond. He had his problems from the 40-49-yard range, connecting on just 5 of 11.

Brett Kern was Denver's punter all of last season. He punted 46 times for a 46.7-yard average with 13 inside the 20. His long punt was 64 yards.

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CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/MIKE SWEENEY

Champ Bailey (left) and Brandon Lloyd battle for a ball during Denver Broncos training camp in August.



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RAMS / from page 8

SPECIAL TEAMS

Ben DeLine returns for his sophomore season and picked up valuable experience as a true freshman a year ago.

Punter is another story. The Rams lose all-conference performer Anthony Hartz, who left the team on his own accord. The obvious replacement is prep All-American Pete Kontodiakos.

Scott Albritton returns at the

all-important longsnapper position, while Josh Mosure, Alex Square and Dion Morton provide experience in the return game.

"I like the way we're coaching and I think we're finding a way to win some close games," Fairchild said. "I think we're finding a way to not get discouraged if we're down, like in the UNLV game, when we're down 14-nothing. I think we're training hard to where we

feel like we've got something left in the tank at the end of a game.

"This was never going to be an easy project."

INTANGIBLES

Colorado State has a long way to go before making another run to the top of the Mountain West Conference. Fairchild has been there before as part of the Rams' coaching staff and he knows

what it takes to get there.

"We're a long way from being considered one of the elite teams in our league," he said at a coaches luncheon earlier this summer in Colorado Springs. "You can control how hard you work and how smart you recruit. And you can work to become a better coach."

"We feel like we're on the right track getting CSU back with the top teams in the conference."

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KICKOFF 2009

Falcons no longer fly under radar

By **JEFF LETOFSKY**
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

AIR FORCE ACADEMY — Troy Calhoun doesn't claim to be a miracle worker. But what he's done since becoming the head coach of the United States Air Force Academy football program is nothing short of phenomenal.

Since arriving at the academy just north of Colorado Springs in 2007, all Calhoun has done is win. In fact, he's the only coach in the 100-plus year history of service academy football to lead teams to at least eight regular-season wins and a bowl game in each of his first two seasons.

As the former Denver Broncos and Houston Texans assistant coach enters his third season with the Falcons, the expectations continue to grow.

Calhoun tried to downplay those expectations although his team's have posted 9-4 and 8-5 records in consecutive seasons capped by appearances at the Armed Forces Bowl. His ability to get the best out of his players has led to that success. And he passes off the credit to his players.

"What you will see is a great spirit out of these guys," Calhoun said. "How much they love to practice, love to play. They work really, really hard. And the camaraderie, team part of it, a sense of teamwork. They have a pretty good understanding of what that means.

"Here (at Air Force), it's got to be that way, the way you are dedicated, pull together and work but enjoy it a little bit too."

Calhoun enters '09 with a heavy dose of underclassmen as only 13 seniors are on the roster. The Falcons have a plethora of sophomores (54 on the preseason roster), many from Calhoun's first recruiting class, that form the nucleus of the team.

OFFENSE

There's no doubt where the strength of this version of the Falcons lies — with the offensive line.

All five starters return and all five are seniors. Guard Nick Charles, a first-team preseason all-MWC selection, is the ring-leader along with tackle Chris Campbell, a returning all-conference performer from a year ago. They are joined by tackle Ryan Gonzales, guard Peter Lusk and center Michael Hampton.

MWC Freshman of the Year Tim



Air Force Academy head coach Troy Calhoun brings fire and discipline to a program already full of both.

AP PHOTO/FILE

Jefferson returns for his sophomore season at quarterback after starting the final eight games of the 2008 season. He completed 44 of 80 passes for 655 yards and five TDs and rushed for 387 yards and three scores. He won his first five starts and has high expectations coming into the 2009 campaign.

"We're going to grow," Jefferson said. "We don't have that many seniors on the team . . . we're going to have to be really bonded together like a family. We have to do that to have a great season, which is what we expect."

Asher Clark, who started the final eight games at tailback last season, has been sharing time with Jefferson at quarterback to add depth. Clark was second on the team in rushing with 588 yards and five touchdowns in 2008. Joining him in the backfield is junior Savier Stephens (236 yards, 2 TDs) and fullback Jared Tew, the team's Armed Forces Bowl MVP with a career-high 149 yards rushing and two TDs.

The wide receiver slots are loaded with senior Josh Cousins, juniors Kevin Fogler and Kyle Halderman and sophomore Jonathan Warzeka returning along with tight end Sean Quintana. Cousins led the Falcons in receiving with 16 catches for 176 yards and two scores. Halderman was third with 12 catches for 266 yards and a team-high three scores.

DEFENSE

An experienced linebacking corps and a talented secondary are the strength on the defensive side of the ball.

Senior Justin Moore and juniors Ken Lamendola and Andre Morris Jr. returns as starters at linebacker. Lamendola was third in the conference in tackles (118) last season.

The secondary is led by MWC preseason first-team safety Chris Thomas, who has put together back-to-back 100 tackle seasons, including four fumble recoveries, two forced fumbles and an interception. Junior Reggie Rembert and sophomores Jon Davis and Anthony Wright join Thomas in the secondary.

AIR FORCE ACADEMY



Coach: Troy Calhoun, 2nd season

2008 record: 8-5 overall record, 5-3 in MWC, fourth

Players to watch: Zack Bell, jr., pk, 6-2, 180; Asher Clark, so., tb, 5-8, 185.; Josh Cousins, sr., wr, 6-0, 200; Nick Charles, sr., lg, 6-4, 285; Jon Davis, so., db, 6-1, 190; John Falgout, sr., ilb, 6-0, 225; Kevin Fogler, jr., wr, 6-5, 205.; Ben Garland, sr., dl, 6-5, 275; Brandon Geyer, sr., p, 6-4, 200; Ryan Gonzales, sr., lt, 6-3, 255; Kyle Halderman, jr., wr, 5-11, 175; Michael Hampton, sr., c, 6-2, 260; Anthony Hemphill, sr., wr, 6-1, 200; Patrick Hennessey, jr., olb, 6-2, 215; Tim Jefferson, so., qb, 6-0, 200; Peter Lusk, sr., rg, 6-3, 270; Justin Moore, sr., lb, 5-11, 225; Myles Morales, sr., de, 6-3, 250; Andrew Morris, jr., olb, 6-3, 235; Sean Quintana, sr., te, 6-2, 200; Reggie Rembert, jr., db, 5-8, 175; Rick Ricketts, sr., de, 6-3, 260; Savier Stephens, jr., tb, 5-11, 190; Jared Tew, jr., fb, 6-0, 210; Jonathan Warzeka, so., wr, 5-9, 175. Anthony Wright, sr., s, 5-10, 190.

Sideline chatter: The development of a huge sophomore class will have a direct impact on the Falcons' success.

By the numbers: 15 — The number of states represented by players on the varsity roster.

Key game alert: Oct. 3 at Navy. The Commander-in-Chief Trophy games are always the most important of the season for the Falcons, who lead the service academy series 48-26.

2009 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 5	Nicholls State	noon
Sept. 12	at Minnesota	6 p.m.
Sept. 19	at New Mexico	5:30 p.m.
Sept. 26	San Diego State	noon
Oct. 3	at Navy	3:30 p.m.
Oct. 10	TCU	5:30 p.m.
Oct. 17	Wyoming	noon
Oct. 24	at Utah	2 p.m.
Oct. 31	at Colorado State	2 p.m.
Nov. 7	Army	1:30 p.m.
Nov. 14	UNLV	4 p.m.
Nov. 21	at BYU	1:30 p.m.

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FALCONS / from page 11

Unlike the offense line, the defensive line must be rebuilt after getting hit hard by graduation. Senior Ben Garland is the lone returnee. He'll be joined by senior Myles Morales and junior Rick Ricketts.

Davis, who started eight games as a freshman, believes hard work will pay off for the defense.

"We'll never take a play off this year," he said. "We're trying to work as hard as possible and be smart out there, not have any busts. If we can limit mistakes, we'll be a pretty decent defense."

SPECIAL TEAMS

Gone is Ryan Harrison, who handled all the kicking duties that past two seasons. That leaves a gaping hole.

Senior Brandon Geyer is listed as the No. 1 punter, getting in nine kicks last season for a 48.9 average.

Junior Zach Bell and sophomore Garrett Jack are battling to take over the place kicking duties.

INTANGIBLES

As always, teams don't give the Falcons the respect they deserve. That may

change over the course of the next couple of seasons as the youngsters grow up.

"A lot of people take us for granted and think we're not that good because we have Air Force on our jerseys," Davis said. "We're moving up to be a premier team."

"We saw the impact right away with Coach Calhoun's first and second recruiting classes," Jefferson said. "Our sophomore class is going to be the bread and butter of the team. We have playmakers all over the field on both offense and defense. It's going to be exciting the next couple of years."

"After playing most of the season last season (as freshmen) we all got accustomed to what everyone expects out of us. It's more expectations for us now to get groomed into the game," Jefferson said.

The development of that sophomore class along with a mix of junior and senior veterans will answer many questions for the Cadets. How much better the team gets during the course of the season will have a big impact in the win-loss column.

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KICKOFF 2009

Buffaloes' fiery coach sets bar high

By **TRACY RENCK**
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

BOULDER — Frankly, no one thought Dan Hawkins was going to lead the University of Colorado football team to the national championship in three years.

Yet, Hawkins' 13-24 overall record, including an 8-16 mark in the Big 12, wasn't what fans expected either.

Now, in this his fourth season, Hawkins has bold ambitions.

"Well, I'm always a high-bar setter. I just believe in that standard of excellence," Hawkins said. "I think that we're poised to have some good things happen. We have to get our wide receivers and D-line to grow up, but I think we have some talent, some depth and experience in those other places. Hopefully, we can avoid the injury bug, but I think we have a chance to do some good things."

Hawkins has gone on record that he thinks his team will win 10 games, something which wasn't lost on CU's top returning running back, Rodney Stewart.

"If everybody stays healthy we should get those 10 wins like coach (Hawkins) has said," Stewart said.

A year ago, the Buffs were devastated by injuries, especially to key players.

"Coming into this year, we know the opportunity that we have in front of us," said Smart, who is scheduled to graduate in December. "I think it really shows by the attitude of the players and our expectations coming into camp. We believe that we can go out and win the Big 12 North and win a Big 12 championship."

CU also has 51 lettermen returning — 22 offense, 25 defense and four specialists.

OFFENSE

Last year, CU's offense was a disappointment at almost every level.

Quarterback Cody Hawkins was inconsistent all season and fellow signal-caller Tyler Hansen had his share of growing pains.

Hawkins threw for 1,892 yards and 17 scores. Hansen had 261 yards rushing and 280 yards through the air.

Now, Coach Hawkins is trying to figure out who he's going to give the keys to, if not both.

"The thing I'm really fired up about is that we have two pretty good players there. We have two guys that have some experience and snaps behind them. It's just obvious when you watch them compared to the other guys. They've been around a little bit and seen a few wars



AP PHOTO/FILE

Dan Hawkins enters his fourth year at the University of Colorado. He made a bold prediction in the offseason that the Buffs will win 10 games this season.

and that to me is very encouraging and we will just kind of see how it all shakes out. I don't like a two-quarterback thing, but I'm not saying we will do it, and I'm not saying that we will not do it. We'll just see how it plays out."

Hawkins and Hansen will be much better if the Buffs running game lives up to its potential.

Rodney Stewart, who led the team with 622 yards rushing last season is back.

Prior to Stewart's breaking his leg Nov. 1 against Texas A&M, he was on pace to break the CU freshman rushing record set by Lamont Warren of 830 yards in 1991.

Stewart will be joined in CU's running back fold with Darrell Scott, Demetrius Sumler and Brian Lockridge among others.

The Buffs' running backs all will have a chance to play well, if CU's offensive line can stay healthy.

The biggest area of concern for CU's offense is at the receiver position, especially with the departure of the dynamic Josh Smith, who left Boulder and now is at UCLA.

Scotty McKnight is CU's top returning wideout as he had 46 catches for 519 yards and five touchdowns.

Receiver Markques Simas also is expected to have an impact for the Buffs. Incoming juco wideout Andre Simmons and freshman Jarrod Darden also could see significant playing time.

DEFENSE

This unit has more questions than an episode of "Jeopardy!"

The Buffs' defensive line has talent, but literally no experience. Filling the void will likely be tackle Curtis Cunningham. Heralded recruit Nick Kasa, a defensive end from Legacy, was expected to make an impact, but he's out indefinitely with a knee injury.

COLORADO BUFFALOES



Coach: Dan Hawkins, fourth season.

2008 record: 5-7; 2-6 (tied for fourth place) Big 12 North, no bowl game.

Players to watch: Markques Simas, so., wr, 6-2, 200; Scotty McKnight, jr., wr, 5-11, 185; Nate Solder, jr., lt, 6-9, 300; Ethan Adkins, so., lg, 6-4, 295; Mike Iltis, so., c, 6-3, 275; Ryan Miller, so., rg, 6-8, 310; Bryce Givens, fr., rt, 6-6, 275; Riar Geer, sr., te, 6-4, 250; Patrick Devenny, sr., te, 6-3, 240; Tyler Hansen, so., qb, 6-1, 200; Cody Hawkins, jr., qb, 5-11, 190; Brian Lockridge, so., tb, 5-7, 175; Darrell Scott, so, tb, 6-1, 200; Rodney Stewart, so., tb, 5-7, 170; Demetrius Sumler, jr., tb, 5-10, 215; Jake Behrens, sr., fb, 6-0, 240; Marques Herzod, jr., de, 6-2, 265; Taj Kaynor, sr., dt, 6-5, 265; Eugene Goree, so., nt, 6-1, 295; Conrad Obi, so., de, 6-3, 265; Marcus Burton, sr., lb, 6-0, 260; Jeff Smart, sr., lb, 6-0, 220; B.J. Beatty, jr., lb, 6-2, 220; Jimmy Smith, jr., cb, 6-2, 200; Anthony Perkins, so., fs, 5-10, 200; Patrick Mahnke, so., ss, 6-1, 205; Benjamin Burney, sr., cb, 5-11, 190; Matt DiLallo, sr., p, 6-1, 200; Eric Goodman, jr., k, 5-10, 185; Jason Espinoza, so., pr, 5-8, 175.

Sideline chatter: This is the season for coach Dan Hawkins to prove his worth. The success of the Buffs, however, will be determined on the play of the quarterbacks and the offensive and defensive lines.

By the numbers: 121 — the number of games CU players lost to injury last season.

Key game alert: Sept. 6 vs. Colorado State: If the Buffs expect to make a bowl game this season, they have to beat the Rams.

2009 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 6	Colorado State	5 p.m.
Sept. 11	at Toledo	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	Wyoming	1:30 p.m.
Oct. 1	at West Virginia	5:30 p.m.
Oct. 10	at Texas	TBA
Oct. 17	Kansas	TBA
Oct. 24	at Kansas State	TBA
Oct. 31	Missouri	TBA
Nov. 7	Texas A&M	TBA
Nov. 14	at Iowa State	TBA
Nov. 19	at Oklahoma St.	5:30 p.m.
Nov. 27	Nebraska	1:30 p.m.

SEE BUFFS, 14

Grizzlies search for offensive production in '09

Adams State needs to score points to complement its talented defense.

By **JEFF LETOFSKY**
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

ALAMOSA — A late-season turnaround in 2008 has provided followers of Adams State College football optimism as the 2009 campaign approaches.

After losing five consecutive games to open the season, the Grizzlies won five of their past six games in 2008 to finish the season with a 5-6 overall record, 5-4 in the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference. And three of those wins came on the road.

With seven returning starters on offense and six on defense, second-year coach Marty Heaton has high hopes for the upcoming season.



Marty Heaton

“We know this league is going to be better this year than last year,” Heaton said. “And everyone is capable of beating everyone else. That’s what makes Division II football so much fun.”

The Grizzlies will play six of their 11 games at Rex Field in Alamosa, including RMAC contests against the University of Nebraska-Kearney, Western New Mexico (homecoming), Colorado

School of Mines, Western State and Colorado State University-Pueblo.

Adams State kicked off the season tonight at Dixie (Utah) State and entertains Humboldt (Calif.) State on Sept. 5 to complete the preseason.

Adams State has been picked to finish fifth in the 10-team RMAC. The Grizzlies also had three preseason all-RMAC selections in senior linebackers Oscar Villa and Levi Gallas and senior offensive lineman Randy Greenbaum.

OFFENSE

Putting the ball in the end zone will be a high priority for the Grizzlies, who struggled in that category a year ago averaging just 12.9 points a game. Adams State averaged just 243.5 yards of offense per game — 97.5 yards on the ground and 146 through the air.

Adams State’s red-zone offense was anemic as it scored only eight touchdowns in 26 opportunities (31 percent) and just 15 touchdowns overall — 13 offensively, two defensively.

“Definitely a goal is to improve our offense, that’s been a point of emphasis,” Heaton said. “We are looking for ways to score. We inherited a situation where we had no quarterback in the program. Plus, we were young and made a lot of mental mistakes.”

That should change with the return of the entire offensive line led by two-time all-RMAC left tackle Greenbaum at 6-foot-4, 270 pounds. Also returning are right tackle Dean Doderer (6-4, 280),

guards Patali Sili (6-0, 280) and Jeff Schossow (6-4, 290) and center Nick Karpilo (6-4, 270).

Stephen Baca returns for his senior season at quarterback after leading the Grizzlies in passing (113-219-9, 1,211 yards) and rushing (122-504).

The only other returning starter is tight end Dustin Bolt (6-1, 215), the team’s third leading receiver a year ago with 23 catches for 229 yards.

“We feel like the offensive line is our strength,” Heaton said. “Everyone says that offense starts up front. We’ll find out if that’s true.”

Finding running backs to carry the load will be paramount.

“We don’t have a kid in our program that had one carry last year,” Heaton said. “We’re using the preseason to figure out who is going to step up.”

DEFENSE

Villa and Gallas provide the Grizzlies with plenty of experience from the RMAC’s top-ranked defense. Villa (6-1, 225) led the team with 84 tackles, including 44 solos. And Gallas was close behind with 79 tackles for a defense that surrendered an RMAC-low 255.3 yards per game, eighth in the country.

Other returning starters include defensive end Thomas Porter (5-11, 230), nose guard Josh Teeple (6-1, 285), rover Bryant Williams (6-0, 180) and free safety Gates Shaklee (6-0, 175).

Adams State is hoping to duplicate

its performance from a year ago when it came up with 23 turnovers (11 interceptions, 12 fumble recoveries) and compiled 40 sacks.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Bolt returns as the place kicker and part-time punter. He was responsible for 46 of the team’s 142 points last season, connecting on 12 of 23 field goals and 10 of 12 extra points. He also punted 44 times for a 40.8-yard average, including 13 inside the 20.

Ryan Hedberg (6-2, 185) also is in the mix at punter. He punted 33 times last year for a 39.2-yard average.

INTANGIBLES

A couple of statistics must improve drastically if the Grizzlies are going to compete for an RMAC championship.

Adams State must find a way to score touchdowns and improve on a dismal 12.9 scoring average. That starts with cutting down on penalties where it was whistled for 101 last season for 77.4 yards per game.

“We didn’t have a lot of big plays last year,” Heaton said. “It’s tough in the this league to drive the ball all the way down the field and score. We’ll be looking for ways to score any way we can.”

If the offense can improve and the defense can put up similar numbers to last season, the Grizzlies could be a contender.

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BUFFS / from page 13

While youth is prevalent, the linebackers, led by Jeff Smart, should anchor the Buffs’ entire defense.

Actually, Smart, cornerbacks Cha’pelle Brown, Jalil Brown and Benjamin Burney and linebacker Shaun Mohler are the only starters returning on defense.

“I think our defense is really solid,” Smart said. “Throughout the spring and early into camp and throughout the summer we’ve done really well. We have changed some things up, but the new guys and young guys are learning well and picking things up quickly and we should be very solid.”

SPECIAL TEAMS

A year ago, place kicking was a nightmare for the Buffs. Aric Goodman was 5-of-14 on field goals and Jameson Davis

was no better.

Goodman, Davis and incoming freshman Zach Grossnickle will be battling it out to see who will be kicking field goals for the Buffs in 2009.

“Both our kickers last year (Aric Goodman and Jameson Davis) were first-year kickers,” Hawkins said. “It’s just amazing all that stuff brings up. The simple things are like ‘Oh my gosh.’ I think this year both of those guys will be a little more experienced and calmed down. I also think we have more depth at the position and that’s huge as well.”

Punter Matt DiLallo also is coming off a sub-par campaign and will likely have to beat out Grossnickle to win the starting job.

Stewart and Scott are expected to return kicks for the Buffs. Former Alamosa High School standout Jason

Espinoza is expected to the Buffs’ top punt returner.

“I’m working to get that spot as the punt returner,” said Espinoza, who played in just one game last season because of his nagging collarbone injury. “The second time my collarbone broke, they put in a steel plate and six screws and it’s solid now. When I’m back there (returning punts), I never want to fair catch. Some people say that’s not very smart, but I’m the type of person who wants to make a play and you don’t get very many opportunities to do that.”

Replacing Josh Smith on kick and punt returns will be no easy task. Smith set school records for the most kickoff returns (50) and yards (1,275) in a single-season at CU, along with the most return yards — punts and kickoffs

— combined 1,568 yards.

INTANGIBLES

After taking a step back last season, the heat is on the Hawkins family — Dan and Cody — to produce some favorable results in 2009.

Coach Hawkins has some talented players in place, and now is their time step up and perform.

With a solid offensive line in place, CU’s tailbacks should flourish. If the Buffs can play smash-mouth football and shorten games, they could do some great things.

Honestly, eight wins would be a stellar season for CU. At the very least the Buffs need to get to and win a bowl game. Another five-win season is not acceptable.

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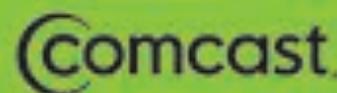
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KICKOFF 2009

CENTRAL WILDCATS



Coach: Dave Craddock, 15th season.

2008 record: 2-8 overall, 2-6 in league. Tied for sixth in Southern League. Did not make playoffs.



Trent Thompson



Byram Brown

Players to watch: Max Lerille, sr., qb, 5-9, 185; Chris Garcia, sr., ot/dt, 6-3, 285; Trent Thompson, sr., te/lb, 6-3, 195; Andres Apodaca, sr., fb/lb, 5-10, 210; Byram Brown, sr., wr/db, 5-9, 170; Nick Eurich, jr., fs/wr, 5-9, 165; James Martinez, jr., wr/db, 5-9, 165; Phillip Vigil, jr., wr/db, 5-11, 170; Dell Veltri, sr., c/dl, 6-1, 255; Darian Hatchett, so., rb/lb, 5-8, 155; Camaron Tripp, sr., ol/dl, 6-0, 190.

Sideline chatter: Central was in plenty of games last year and only a handful of poor fourth quarters and key mistakes led to a .200 record. The Wildcats have focused on reversing last season's wrongs and staying together as a team, which could get this veteran squad over the hump.

By the numbers: 54 — Percentage of passes Max Lerille completed last season en route to throwing for 1,408 yards, the second highest passing total among Pueblo quarterbacks.

Key game alert: Sept. 18 at Falcon: After two home games, the Wildcats should learn if they are among the Southern League elite.

2009 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 4	Centaurus	7 p.m.
Sept. 10	Woodland Park	7 p.m.
Sept. 18	at Falcon	7 p.m.
Sept. 25	at Thornton	7 p.m.
Oct. 2	Centennial	7 p.m.
Oct. 9	at Alamosa	4 p.m.
Oct. 15	Harrison	7 p.m.
Oct. 23	East	7 p.m.
Oct. 30	at Canon City	7 p.m.
Nov. 6	at Pueblo County	7 p.m.

Wildcats' hopes high once again

By TOM PURFIELD

THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Central High School's football team was full of optimism early last year, returning an experienced squad and being ranked in the top five in Class 3A.

Despite facing the frustration of forfeiting two wins and stumbling to a 2-8 record, the Wildcats' hopes are again high.

"Even more so, because this senior group was targeted and brought up as sophomores," veteran coach Dave Craddock said. "Now's the time to put it together. If they want to go to the playoffs, now's the time to make that happen."

Central has reason to dream big, returning starters all over the field. Both lines are nearly intact and every unit on each side of the ball has holdovers from last year.

"It makes things much easier and it says we've done our job of developing talent," Craddock said. "Our holes are less and it's not always like that."

The 'Cats also bring back two of the Southern League's most talented players. Quarterback Max Lerille will be a third-year starter and Trent Thompson is one of the top tight ends in the state.

"Max started at a young age and got the hard knocks. He's done a wonderful job of stepping up his game each year," Craddock said. "This year, I've seen a firm grasp of the offense and he's doing it second-nature. With his leadership, this is his football team."

Thompson, who soared for the game-winning two-point conversion in overtime of last year's Bell Game, led all Pueblo receivers with 44 catches for 791 yards.

"This kid just doesn't drop the ball. He absolutely has the best hands I've ever been around," Craddock said. "Trent's going to be a force blocking this year, too, and we can put him out at wide receiver. His skills just open up our offense greatly."

OFFENSE

Lerille and Thompson are the anchors of an offense that returns every lineman except one tackle in addition to solid receiver Byram Brown.

The only jobs open are at tailback, which should feature some great competition during camp.



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/FILE

Central High School quarterback Max Lerille, shown here getting knocked out of bounds in the Bell Game, is one of the top passers returning in Pueblo this season.

"The offensive line was one of the best areas of our team last year, so we're expecting big things out of those kids," Craddock said. "Offensively, I have very high expectations. I'm looking for the output we had last year minus the mistakes."

DEFENSE

The Wildcats' defense also has returners everywhere, although linebackers Tony Amaya and Joe Duran will be missed.

"Those two did so much for us, but I think these guys have a chance to be a little more consistent as a group," Craddock said.

Andres Apodaca leads the defense at middle linebacker and Central is opening up spots for players to go both ways, making for better competition in camp.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Nate Richards returns to handle the kicking duties and Craddock is hoping he's developed the leg strength to handle kickoffs as well. Brown leads a solid group of punters.

Special teams coach Dean Gray handles mostly second-string players who are battling for a roster spot and Craddock said Gray should have a better core to work with this year.

SEE WILDCATS, 19

WILDCATS / from page 18 INTANGIBLES

Central has the goods to contend for the Southern League title, but the key may be a sustained focus that prevents letdowns which can derail a season.

"We've got to be more stable; control what we can control, which is practice and how we prepare for Friday nights," Craddock said. "If you want it, you have to be mentally tough enough to bring it 10 times this year."

"If we can build off that, with the type of offseason we had and the maturation process, they're ready to go and put their best foot forward."

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Central's Byram Brown heads toward the end zone after shedding the tackle of a Centennial defender during the Bell Game in 2008. Central beat Centennial 22-21 in overtime.

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NFL TEAM-BY-TEAM SCHEDULES

Arizona Cardinals

Sept. 13 San Francisco, 2:15 p.m.
 Sept. 20 at Jacksonville, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 27 Indianapolis, 6:20 p.m.
 Oct. 4 BYE
 Oct. 11 Houston, 2:15 p.m.
 Oct. 18 at Seattle, 2:05 p.m.
 Oct. 25 at N.Y. Giants, 6:20 p.m.
 Nov. 1 Carolina, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 8 at Chicago, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 15 Seattle, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 22 at St. Louis, 2:05 p.m.
 Nov. 29 at Tennessee, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 6 Minnesota, 2:15 p.m.
 Dec. 14 at San Francisco, 6:30 p.m.
 Dec. 20 at Detroit, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 27 St. Louis, 2:05 p.m.
 Jan. 3 Green Bay, 2:15 p.m.

Atlanta Falcons

Sept. 13 Miami, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 20 Carolina, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 27 at New England, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 4 BYE
 Oct. 11 at San Francisco, 2:05 p.m.
 Oct. 18 Chicago, 6:20 p.m.
 Oct. 25 at Dallas, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 2 at New Orleans, 6:30 p.m.
 Nov. 8 Washington, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 15 at Carolina, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 22 at N.Y. Giants, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 29 Tampa Bay, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 6 Philadelphia, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 13 New Orleans, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 at N.Y. Jets, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 27 Buffalo, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 at Tampa Bay, 11 a.m.

Baltimore Ravens

Sept. 13 Kansas City, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 20 at San Diego, 2:15 p.m.
 Sept. 27 Cleveland, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 4 at New England, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 11 Cincinnati, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 18 at Minnesota, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 25 BYE
 Nov. 1 Denver, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 8 at Cincinnati, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 16 at Cleveland, 6:30 p.m.
 Nov. 22 Indianapolis, 11 a.m.

Nov. 29 Pittsburgh-x, 6:20 p.m.
 Dec. 7 at Green Bay, 6:30 p.m.
 Dec. 13 Detroit, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 Chicago, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 27 at Pittsburgh, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 at Oakland, 2:15 p.m.

Buffalo Bills

Sept. 14 at New England, 7 p.m.
 Sept. 20 Tampa Bay, 2:05 p.m.
 Sept. 27 New Orleans, 2:05 p.m.
 Oct. 4 at Miami, 2:05 p.m.
 Oct. 11 Cleveland, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 18 at N.Y. Jets, 2:15 p.m.
 Oct. 25 at Carolina, 2:05 p.m.
 Nov. 1 Houston, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 8 BYE
 Nov. 15 at Tennessee, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 22 at Jacksonville, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 29 Miami, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 3 N.Y. Jets at Toronto, 6:20 p.m.

Dec. 13 at Kansas City, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 New England, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 27 at Atlanta, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 Indianapolis, 11 a.m.

Carolina Panthers

Sept. 13 Philadelphia, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 20 at Atlanta, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 28 at Dallas, 6:30 p.m.
 Oct. 4 BYE
 Oct. 11 Washington, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 18 at Tampa Bay, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 25 Buffalo, 2:05 p.m.
 Nov. 1 at Arizona, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 8 at New Orleans, 2:05 p.m.
 Nov. 15 Atlanta, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 19 Miami, 6:20 p.m.
 Nov. 29 at N.Y. Jets, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 6 Tampa Bay, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 13 at New England, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 Minnesota-x, 6:20 p.m.
 Dec. 27 at N.Y. Giants, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 New Orleans, 11 a.m.

Chicago Bears

Sept. 13 at Green Bay, 6:20 p.m.
 Sept. 20 Pittsburgh, 2:15 p.m.
 Sept. 27 at Seattle, 2:05 p.m.
 Oct. 4 Detroit, 11 a.m.

Oct. 11 BYE

Oct. 18 at Atlanta, 6:20 p.m.
 Oct. 25 at Cincinnati, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 1 Cleveland, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 8 Arizona, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 12 at San Francisco, 6:20 p.m.
 Nov. 22 Philadelphia-x, 6:20 p.m.
 Nov. 29 at Minnesota, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 6 St. Louis, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 13 Green Bay, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 at Baltimore, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 28 Minnesota, 6:30 p.m.
 Jan. 3 at Detroit, 11 a.m.

Cincinnati Bengals

Sept. 13 Denver, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 20 at Green Bay, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 27 Pittsburgh, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 4 at Cleveland, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 11 at Baltimore, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 18 Houston, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 25 Chicago, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 1 BYE
 Nov. 8 Baltimore, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 15 at Pittsburgh, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 22 at Oakland, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 29 Cleveland, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 6 Detroit, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 13 at Minnesota, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 at San Diego, 2:05 p.m.
 Dec. 27 Kansas City, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 at N.Y. Jets, 11 a.m.

Cleveland Browns

Sept. 13 Minnesota, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 20 at Denver, 2:15 p.m.
 Sept. 27 at Baltimore, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 4 Cincinnati, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 11 at Buffalo, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 18 at Pittsburgh, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 25 Green Bay, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 1 at Chicago, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 8 BYE
 Nov. 16 Baltimore, 6:30 p.m.
 Nov. 22 at Detroit, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 29 at Cincinnati, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 6 San Diego, 2:05 p.m.
 Dec. 10 Pittsburgh, 6:20 p.m.
 Dec. 20 at Kansas City, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 27 Oakland, 11 a.m.

Jan. 3 Jacksonville, 11 a.m.

Dallas Cowboys

Sept. 13 at Tampa Bay, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 20 N.Y. Giants, 6:20 p.m.
 Sept. 28 Carolina, 6:30 p.m.
 Oct. 4 at Denver, 2:15 p.m.
 Oct. 11 at Kansas City, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 18 BYE
 Oct. 25 Atlanta, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 1 Seattle, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 8 at Philadelphia, 6:20 p.m.
 Nov. 15 at Green Bay, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 22 Washington, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 26 Oakland, 2:15 p.m.
 Dec. 6 at N.Y. Giants, 2:15 p.m.
 Dec. 13 San Diego, 2:15 p.m.
 Dec. 19 at New Orleans, 6:20 p.m.
 Dec. 27 at Washington-x, 6:20 p.m.
 Jan. 3 Philadelphia, 11 a.m.

Denver Broncos

Sept. 13 at Cincinnati, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 20 Cleveland, 2:15 p.m.
 Sept. 27 at Oakland, 2:15 p.m.
 Oct. 4 Dallas, 2:15 p.m.
 Oct. 11 New England, 2:15 p.m.
 Oct. 19 at San Diego, 6:30 p.m.
 Oct. 25 BYE
 Nov. 1 at Baltimore, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 9 Pittsburgh, 6:30 p.m.
 Nov. 15 at Washington, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 22 San Diego, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 26 N.Y. Giants, 6:20 p.m.
 Dec. 6 at Kansas City, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 13 at Indianapolis, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 Oakland, 2:05 p.m.
 Dec. 27 at Philadelphia, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 Kansas City, 2:15 p.m.

Detroit Lions

Sept. 13 at New Orleans, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 20 Minnesota, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 27 Washington, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 4 at Chicago, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 11 Pittsburgh, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 18 at Green Bay, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 25 BYE
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 Nov. 15 at Minnesota, 11 a.m.

Nov. 22 Cleveland, 11 a.m.

Nov. 26 Green Bay, 12:30 p.m.
 Dec. 6 at Cincinnati, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 13 at Baltimore, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 Arizona, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 27 at San Francisco, 2:05 p.m.
 Jan. 3 Chicago, 11 a.m.

Green Bay Packers

Sept. 13 Chicago, 6:20 p.m.
 Sept. 20 Cincinnati, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 27 at St. Louis, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 5 at Minnesota, 6:30 p.m.
 Oct. 11 BYE
 Oct. 18 Detroit, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 25 at Cleveland, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 1 Minnesota, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 8 at Tampa Bay, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 15 Dallas, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 22 San Francisco, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 26 at Detroit, 12:30 p.m.
 Dec. 7 Baltimore, 6:30 p.m.
 Dec. 13 at Chicago, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 at Pittsburgh, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 27 Seattle, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 at Arizona, 2:15 p.m.

Houston Texans

Sept. 13 N.Y. Jets, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 20 at Tennessee, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 27 Jacksonville, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 4 Oakland, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 11 at Arizona, 2:15 p.m.
 Oct. 18 at Cincinnati, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 25 San Francisco, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 1 at Buffalo, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 8 at Indianapolis, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 15 BYE
 Nov. 23 Tennessee, 6:30 p.m.
 Nov. 29 Indianapolis, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 6 at Jacksonville, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 13 Seattle, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 at St. Louis, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 27 at Miami, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 New England, 11 a.m.

Indianapolis Colts

Sept. 13 Jacksonville, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 21 at Miami, 6:30 p.m.
 Sept. 27 at Arizona, 6:20 p.m.
 Oct. 4 Seattle, 11 a.m.

Oct. 11 at Tennessee, 6:20 p.m.

Oct. 18 BYE
 Oct. 25 at St. Louis, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 1 San Francisco, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 8 Houston, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 15 New England, 6:20 p.m.
 Nov. 22 at Baltimore, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 29 at Houston, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 6 Tennessee, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 13 Denver, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 17 at Jacksonville, 6:20 p.m.
 Dec. 27 N.Y. Jets, 2:15 p.m.
 Jan. 3 at Buffalo, 11 a.m.

Jacksonville Jaguars

Sept. 13 at Indianapolis, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 20 Arizona, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 27 at Houston, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 4 Tennessee, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 11 at Seattle, 2:15 p.m.
 Oct. 18 St. Louis, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 25 BYE
 Nov. 1 at Tennessee, 2:05 p.m.
 Nov. 8 Kansas City, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 15 at N.Y. Jets, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 22 Buffalo, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 29 at San Francisco, 2:05 p.m.
 Dec. 6 Houston, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 13 Miami, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 17 Indianapolis, 6:20 p.m.
 Dec. 27 at New England, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 at Cleveland, 11 a.m.

Kansas City Chiefs

Sept. 13 at Baltimore, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 20 Oakland, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 27 at Philadelphia, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 4 N.Y. Giants, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 11 Dallas, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 18 at Washington, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 25 San Diego, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 1 BYE
 Nov. 8 at Jacksonville, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 15 at Oakland, 2:05 p.m.
 Nov. 22 Pittsburgh, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 29 at San Diego, 2:05 p.m.
 Dec. 6 Denver, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 13 Buffalo, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 Cleveland, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 27 at Cincinnati, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 at Denver, 2:15 p.m.

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NFL TEAM-BY-TEAM SCHEDULES

Miami Dolphins

Sept. 13 at Atlanta, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 21 Indianapolis, 6:30 p.m.
 Sept. 27 at San Diego, 2:15 p.m.
 Oct. 4 Buffalo, 2:05 p.m.
 Oct. 12 N.Y. Jets, 6:30 p.m.
 Oct. 18 BYE
 Oct. 25 New Orleans, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 1 at N.Y. Jets, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 8 at New England, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 15 Tampa Bay, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 19 at Carolina, 6:20 p.m.
 Nov. 29 at Buffalo, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 6 New England-x, 6:20 p.m.
 Dec. 13 at Jacksonville, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 at Tennessee, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 27 Houston, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 Pittsburgh, 11 a.m.

Minnesota Vikings

Sept. 13 at Cleveland, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 20 at Detroit, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 27 San Francisco, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 5 Green Bay, 6:30 p.m.
 Oct. 11 at St. Louis, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 18 Baltimore, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 25 at Pittsburgh, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 1 at Green Bay, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 8 BYE
 Nov. 15 Detroit, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 22 Seattle, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 29 Chicago, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 6 at Arizona, 2:15 p.m.
 Dec. 13 Cincinnati, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 at Carolina-x, 6:20 p.m.
 Dec. 28 at Chicago, 6:30 p.m.
 Jan. 3 N.Y. Giants, 11 a.m.

New England Patriots

Sept. 14 Buffalo, 7 p.m.
 Sept. 20 at N.Y. Jets, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 27 Atlanta, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 4 Baltimore, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 11 at Denver, 2:15 p.m.
 Oct. 18 Tennessee, 2:15 p.m.
 Oct. 25 at Tampa Bay in London, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 8 BYE
 Nov. 15 Miami, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 22 N.Y. Jets, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 29 at Indianapolis, 6:20 p.m.
 Nov. 22 N.Y. Jets, 2:15 p.m.

Nov. 30 at New Orleans, 6:30 p.m.
 Dec. 6 at Miami-x, 6:20 p.m.
 Dec. 13 Carolina, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 at Buffalo, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 27 Jacksonville, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 at Houston, 11 a.m.

New Orleans Saints

Sept. 13 Detroit, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 20 at Philadelphia, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 27 at Buffalo, 2:05 p.m.
 Oct. 4 N.Y. Jets, 2:05 p.m.
 Oct. 11 BYE
 Oct. 18 N.Y. Giants, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 25 at Miami, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 2 Atlanta, 6:30 p.m.
 Nov. 8 Carolina, 2:05 p.m.
 Nov. 15 at St. Louis, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 22 at Tampa Bay, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 30 New England, 6:30 p.m.
 Dec. 6 at Washington, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 13 at Atlanta, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 19 Dallas, 6:20 p.m.
 Dec. 27 Tampa Bay, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 at Carolina, 11 a.m.

New York Giants

Sept. 13 Washington, 2:15 p.m.
 Sept. 20 at Dallas, 6:20 p.m.
 Sept. 27 at Tampa Bay, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 4 at Kansas City, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 11 Oakland, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 18 at New Orleans, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 25 Arizona, 6:20 p.m.
 Nov. 1 at Philadelphia, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 8 San Diego, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 15 BYE
 Nov. 22 Atlanta, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 26 at Denver, 6:20 p.m.
 Dec. 6 Dallas, 2:15 p.m.
 Dec. 13 Philadelphia-x, 6:20 p.m.
 Dec. 21 at Washington, 6:30 p.m.
 Dec. 27 Carolina, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 at Minnesota, 11 a.m.

New York Jets

Sept. 13 at Houston, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 20 New England, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 27 Tennessee, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 4 at New Orleans, 2:05 p.m.
 Oct. 12 at Miami, 6:30 p.m.
 Oct. 18 Buffalo, 2:15 p.m.
 Oct. 25 at Oakland, 2:05 p.m.

Nov. 1 Miami, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 8 BYE
 Nov. 15 Jacksonville, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 22 at New England, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 29 Carolina, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 3 Buffalo at Toronto, 6:20 p.m.

Dec. 13 at Tampa Bay, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 Atlanta, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 27 at Indianapolis, 2:15 p.m.
 Jan. 3 Cincinnati, 11 a.m.

Oakland Raiders

Sept. 14 San Diego, 10:15 p.m.
 Sept. 20 at Kansas City, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 27 Denver, 2:15 p.m.
 Oct. 4 at Houston, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 11 at St. Louis, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 18 Philadelphia, 2:05 p.m.
 Oct. 25 N.Y. Jets, 2:05 p.m.
 Nov. 1 at San Diego, 2:05 p.m.
 Nov. 8 BYE
 Nov. 15 Kansas City, 2:05 p.m.
 Nov. 22 Cincinnati, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 26 at Dallas, 2:15 p.m.
 Dec. 6 at Pittsburgh, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 13 Washington, 2:05 p.m.
 Dec. 20 at Denver, 2:05 p.m.
 Dec. 27 at Cleveland, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 Baltimore, 2:15 p.m.

Philadelphia Eagles

Sept. 13 at Carolina, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 20 New Orleans, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 27 Kansas City, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 4 BYE
 Oct. 11 Tampa Bay, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 18 at Oakland, 2:05 p.m.
 Oct. 26 at Washington, 6:30 p.m.
 Nov. 1 N.Y. Giants, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 8 Dallas, 6:20 p.m.
 Nov. 15 at San Diego, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 22 at Chicago-x, 6:20 p.m.
 Nov. 29 Washington, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 6 at Atlanta, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 13 at N.Y. Giants-x, 6:20 p.m.
 Dec. 20 San Francisco, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 27 Denver, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 at Dallas, 11 a.m.

Pittsburgh Steelers

Sept. 10 Tennessee, 6:30 p.m.
 Sept. 20 at Chicago, 2:15 p.m.

Sept. 27 at Cincinnati, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 4 San Diego, 6:20 p.m.
 Oct. 11 at Detroit, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 18 Cleveland, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 25 Minnesota, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 1 BYE
 Nov. 9 at Denver, 6:30 p.m.
 Nov. 15 Cincinnati, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 22 at Kansas City, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 29 at Baltimore-x, 6:20 p.m.
 Dec. 6 Oakland, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 10 at Cleveland, 6:20 p.m.
 Dec. 20 Green Bay, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 27 Baltimore, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 at Miami, 11 a.m.

St. Louis Rams

Sept. 13 at Seattle, 2:15 p.m.
 Sept. 20 at Washington, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 27 Green Bay, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 4 at San Francisco, 2:15 p.m.
 Oct. 11 Minnesota, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 18 at Jacksonville, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 25 Indianapolis, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 1 at Detroit, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 8 BYE
 Nov. 15 New Orleans, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 22 Arizona, 2:05 p.m.
 Nov. 29 Seattle, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 6 at Chicago, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 13 at Tennessee, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 Houston, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 27 at Arizona, 2:05 p.m.
 Jan. 3 San Francisco, 11 a.m.

San Diego Chargers

Sept. 14 at Oakland, 10:15 p.m.
 Sept. 20 Baltimore, 2:15 p.m.
 Sept. 27 Miami, 2:15 p.m.
 Oct. 4 at Pittsburgh, 6:20 p.m.
 Oct. 11 BYE
 Oct. 19 Denver, 6:30 p.m.
 Oct. 25 at Kansas City, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 1 Oakland, 2:05 p.m.
 Nov. 8 at N.Y. Giants, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 15 Philadelphia, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 22 at Denver, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 29 Kansas City, 2:05 p.m.
 Dec. 6 at Cleveland, 2:05 p.m.
 Dec. 13 at Dallas, 2:15 p.m.
 Dec. 20 Cincinnati, 2:05 p.m.
 Dec. 25 at Tennessee, 7:30 p.m.

Jan. 3 Washington, 2:15 p.m.

San Francisco 49ers

Sept. 13 at Arizona, 2:15 p.m.
 Sept. 20 Seattle, 2:05 p.m.
 Sept. 27 at Minnesota, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 4 St. Louis, 2:15 p.m.
 Oct. 11 Atlanta, 2:05 p.m.
 Oct. 18 BYE
 Oct. 25 at Houston, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 1 at Indianapolis, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 8 Tennessee, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 12 Chicago, 6:20 p.m.
 Nov. 22 at Green Bay, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 29 Jacksonville, 2:05 p.m.
 Dec. 6 at Seattle, 2:15 p.m.
 Dec. 14 Arizona, 6:30 p.m.
 Dec. 20 at Philadelphia, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 27 Detroit, 2:05 p.m.
 Jan. 3 at St. Louis, 11 a.m.

Seattle Seahawks

Sept. 13 St. Louis, 2:15 p.m.
 Sept. 20 at San Francisco, 2:05 p.m.
 Sept. 27 Chicago, 2:05 p.m.
 Oct. 4 at Indianapolis, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 11 Jacksonville, 2:15 p.m.
 Oct. 18 Arizona, 2:05 p.m.
 Oct. 25 BYE
 Nov. 1 at Dallas, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 8 Detroit, 2:05 p.m.
 Nov. 15 at Arizona, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 22 at Minnesota, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 29 at St. Louis, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 6 San Francisco, 2:15 p.m.
 Dec. 13 at Houston, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 Tampa Bay, 2:15 p.m.
 Dec. 27 at Green Bay, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 Tennessee, 2:15 p.m.

Tampa Bay Buccaneers

Sept. 13 Dallas, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 20 at Buffalo, 2:05 p.m.
 Sept. 27 N.Y. Giants, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 4 at Washington, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 11 at Philadelphia, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 18 Carolina, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 25 New England at London, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 1 BYE
 Nov. 8 Green Bay, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 15 at Miami, 11 a.m.

Nov. 22 New Orleans, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 29 at Atlanta, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 6 at Carolina, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 13 N.Y. Jets, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 at Seattle, 2:15 p.m.
 Dec. 27 at New Orleans, 11 a.m.
 Jan. 3 Atlanta, 11 a.m.

Tennessee Titans

Sept. 10 at Pittsburgh, 6:30 p.m.
 Sept. 20 Houston, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 27 at N.Y. Jets, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 4 at Jacksonville, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 11 Indianapolis, 6:20 p.m.
 Oct. 18 at New England, 2:15 p.m.
 Oct. 25 BYE
 Nov. 1 Jacksonville, 2:05 p.m.
 Nov. 8 at San Francisco, 2:15 p.m.
 Nov. 15 Buffalo, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 23 at Houston, 6:30 p.m.
 Nov. 29 Arizona, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 6 at Indianapolis, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 13 St. Louis, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 20 Miami, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 25 San Diego, 7:30 p.m.
 Jan. 3 at Seattle, 2:15 p.m.

Washington Redskins

Sept. 13 at N.Y. Giants, 2:15 p.m.
 Sept. 20 St. Louis, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 27 at Detroit, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 4 Tampa Bay, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 11 at Carolina, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 18 Kansas City, 11 a.m.
 Oct. 26 Philadelphia, 6:30 p.m.
 Nov. 1 BYE
 Nov. 8 at Atlanta, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 15 Denver, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 22 at Dallas, 11 a.m.
 Nov. 29 at Philadelphia, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 6 New Orleans, 11 a.m.
 Dec. 13 at Oakland, 2:05 p.m.
 Dec. 21 N.Y. Giants, 6:30 p.m.
 Dec. 27 Dallas-x, 6:20 p.m.
 Jan. 3 at San Diego, 2:15 p.m.

The Associated Press
 All Times Mountain
 (x-Sunday night games subject to change)

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KICKOFF 2009

SOUTH COLTS



Coach: Mark Haering, 12th season.

2008 record: 10-1 overall, 8-0 league. First in Foothills League. Lost 37-22 to Dakota Ridge in first round of the Class 4A playoffs.



Kivon Cartwright



Niklas Spinuzzi

Players to watch: Kivon Cartwright, sr., lb/te, 6-4, 215; Tyler Clark, sr., db/wr, 6-0, 175; Zack McGinn, sr., rb/ss, 5-10, 190; Stephen Munoz, sr., g/lb, 5-9, 205; Niko Smith, sr., lb/rb, 5-10, 170; Cody White, sr., fs/wr, 6-1, 175; Brian Castellucci, jr., lb/te, 6-4, 205; Ronnie Gutierrez, og/lb, jr., 5-8, 195; Brett Nielsen, jr., ot/de, 6-3, 225; Cory Kemling, jr., fb/dl, 5-11, 185.

Sideline chatter: South is the epitome of a successful football program in these parts, a team that has consistently reloaded new players and maintained a high level of play. If the impressive run is to avoid a let-down, a large number of underclassmen will need to perform beyond their years.

By the numbers: 2 — Number of playoff wins for the Colts during the last four years, the same span in which they compiled 40 regular-season wins in a row.

Key game alert: Sept. 4 at Pueblo West: These young Colts will be thrown to the fire in a season-opener.

2009 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 4	at Pueblo West	7 p.m.
Sept. 11	at Mesa Ridge	7 p.m.
Sept. 17	Liberty	7 p.m.
Sept. 25	at Wasson	7 p.m.
Oct. 2	at Castle View	7 p.m.
Oct. 9	Air Academy	7 p.m.
Oct. 16	at East	7 p.m.
Oct. 23	at Cheyenne Mtn.	7 p.m.
Oct. 29	Lewis-Palmer	7 p.m.
Nov. 6	Sierra	7 p.m.

Colts encounter youth movement

By **TOM PURFIELD**

THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

During Mark Haering's 11 years as South High School's football coach, complete with his 100-plus wins and array of amazing streaks, he has never gone into a camp quite like this one.

With just seven seniors and precious few returning starters, the Colts are true to their namesake this year: Young.

"It's been a lot different. We had to start from scratch," Haering said. "Sometimes you get in the habit of continuing to assume the kids know things and when you get a group like this, being so young, you realize you need to start from step one and go from there."

South could see this one coming. There were only eight juniors on last year's team, which was simultaneously loaded with a standout senior class.

Getting back to teaching has, in fact, been a good experience for Haering.

"Year-in and year-out, we've had a lot of large senior classes and sometimes you can take coaching for granted," Haering said. "A year like this kind of makes you start all over and really start coaching. It's been enjoyable."

This group has some sky-high standards to be measured against. South has strung together four consecutive 10-0 regular seasons and won nine Foothills League titles in a row.

Despite being raw, these Colts will be held to the same standard.

"Obviously the bar has been set very high by previous teams. Each class feels a little bit of pressure, but it's not bad pressure," Haering said. "They know what's been before them, what's been established, and they want to carry that tradition on. We have to make sure, as a team and as a staff, that we keep those expectations the same."

OFFENSE

Zack McGinn came on strong last year and will be the featured tailback, Kivon Cartwright is a big, athletic tight end and, for just the second time in Haering's career, the Colts will start a junior at quarterback in Niklas Spinuzzi.

"We run a multiple offense and we'll have to figure out what's going to work for us, starting a junior quarterback. As a staff, we'll have to see what he's going to be comfortable with and what the offensive line can establish," Haering said. "I feel good about the offensive line. I think



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/FILE

Senior running back Zack McGinn (32) will be one of the primary weapons in the Colts' offense this season.

they're solid."

DEFENSE

Only one starter returns for the Colts on defense in senior defensive back Tyler Clark. Others saw action as backups but there will be a lot of new faces, starting with "a real fresh look on the defensive line."

"It will be hard to match the last couple years, the speed and quickness we had defensively," Haering said. "We've got to focus on tackling and putting yourself in the right position. We'll start with the basics, see what they can handle and what this group is going to be good at."

SPECIAL TEAMS

South has been the best around on special teams, from take-it-to-the-house return men to stout coverage units to outstanding kickers Stephen O'Dorisio and Brandon Kliesen. Haering expects this group to remain strong.

"We put a lot of emphasis on it. A lot of people say it's a third of the game, but do they really believe it?" Haering said. "Also, a lot of it has to do with the scheme on our special teams."

INTANGIBLES

If South is to remain the 4A big dog south of Denver, it will have to play beyond its years this season.

"We've got to mature quickly. We're going to make mistakes, but we can't dwell on them," Haering said. "The physical ability is there, it's just the experience and we also have to develop depth to be good."

tpurfield@chieftain.com

The annual Cannon Game between South and East is Oct. 16 at Dutch Clark Stadium. The Colts have won 12 in a row, though the Eagles appear to be closing the talent gap.



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/FILE

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CANON GAME - FRIDAY, OCT. 16, 2009

COLTS

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KICKOFF 2009

CENTENNIAL BULLDOGS



Coach: Mike Palumbo, third season.

2008 record: 3-7 overall, 1-7 league. Ninth in Southern League. Did not make playoffs.



Kurtis Pugh



Ben Tillman

Players to watch: Kurtis Pugh, sr., rb/lb, 5-9, 160; Tyler Nunez, sr., wr/db, 5-7, 135; Kevin Hobbs, sr., te/lb, 6-1, 180; John Vela, jr., rb/db, 5-6, 155; Geno Lucero, jr., ol/dl, 6-3, 310; Daniel Winegardner, jr., ol/lb, 5-10, 210; Ben Tillman, so., qb/lb, 5-9, 220; Cody Johnston, sr., rb/lb, 6-1, 175; Damien Miles, sr., ol/dl, 6-3, 250; Derek McDonald, sr., ol/dl, 6-2, 285.

Sideline chatter: Centennial's backfield should be able to run the ball with anybody, but the 'Dogs must clean up turnovers behind a sophomore QB and the defense needs to protect against the big play.

By the numbers: 4 — The number of returning starters the Bulldogs bring back on each side of the ball, a deceptive experience indicator considering the injuries they suffered last year.

Key game alert: Sept. 11 at East: The Bulldogs should find out early if they'll be a factor in the Southern League race, facing a rival which also happens to be a tough league opener.

2009 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 5	at Adams City	1 p.m.
Sept. 11	at East	7 p.m.
Sept. 18	Alamosa	7 p.m.
Sept. 25	Harrison	7 p.m.
Oct. 2	at Central	7 p.m.
Oct. 10	Coronado	7 p.m.
Oct. 16	at Pueblo County	7 p.m.
Oct. 22	Falcon	7 p.m.
Oct. 30	at Woodland Park	7 p.m.
Nov. 5	Canon City	7 p.m.

Bulldogs eager to flip the script

By TOM PURFIELD

THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Frustrated is a mild description of how the Centennial High School football team felt about its season last year.

After an offseason that thrilled coach Mike Palumbo, huge size in the trenches and a year of experience in his system, the Bulldogs were ravaged by injuries — reaching a peak of 13 starters out — and plummeted to the basement of the Southern League.

Coupled with the fact Centennial's big three boys varsity sports failed to reach 10 wins combined (9-43 in football, basketball and baseball) last year, and the Bulldogs are starving to bring their biggest program back to prominence.

"They feel like there's a huge lack of respect for their efforts and are out to prove they're better than our record showed last year," Palumbo said. "It's a frustrated group, but they've worked hard and deserve to have some success."

Centennial's coaching staff has also been revamped with Ken Shorten (defensive coordinator), Terry Sanchez (offensive assistant, quarterbacks and defensive backs) and Gerald Cooper (defensive backs and receivers).

The most notable addition is Troy Niccoli returning as the head junior varsity coach and varsity running backs and linebackers coach. Niccoli resigned following the 2006 season after seven years as the Bulldogs' head coach.

It all adds up to a new beginning for the 'Dogs.

"Our theme is to reverse our record," Palumbo said. "We're determined to have a winning, successful season."

OFFENSE

Centennial will stick with the triple-option and, as of the start of camp, is handing the reins to sophomore Ben Tillman. Palumbo said Tillman is a defensive-minded player at quarterback, understands the reads involved and "will bring a lot more to what we can do offensively than we could in the past."

Johnny Vela and Kurtis Pugh had explosive games last year out of the backfield, and Tyler Nunez provided solid relief when they were hurt. Palumbo is encouraged by all of his skill players, which may expand the Bulldogs' play book.

The offensive line is actually bigger than last year's mammoth unit and has a better understanding of what the option is trying to accomplish.



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/FILE

Centennial High School running back John Vela (22) returns for his junior season in the Bulldogs' backfield.

DEFENSE

Palumbo said Shorten helped with the defense last year and it should remain consistent with a simple, aggressive approach. The secondary is the strength and will combine with the linebackers to give the 'Dogs speed in flying to the ball.

"Our biggest concern is just the kids knowing their assignments," Palumbo said. "We want them to do their job, execute and not have to think."

SPECIAL TEAMS

Palumbo hopes the kicking game will be decent with "a soccer kid out for football." A host of quality underclassmen skill players will get their varsity shot in the return game but if it becomes necessary, Palumbo won't hesitate to insert his starters.

INTANGIBLES

It's been difficult for the Bulldogs to come together during Palumbo's two seasons, following his inaugural campaign with an injury-plagued one. Bonding is a key to this group reversing its fortunes.

"The big thing we've been working on is improving our overall team chemistry, which is something we've lacked" Palumbo said. "We've done a good job of that and that's what it's going to take for us to be successful."

tpurfield@chieftain.com

CENTENNIAL-CENTRAL

Year-By-Year

1892—Central 4, Centennial 0
 1893—Centennial 4, Central 0
 1897—Centennial 16, Central 0
 1898—Central 74, Centennial 0
 1900—Centennial 30, Central 0
 1900—Centennial 11, Central 0
 1903—Centennial 10, Central 0
 1904—Centennial 70, Central 0
 1905—Centennial 11, Central 0
 1906—Central 4, Centennial 0
 1907—Central 6, Centennial 6
 1921—Central 13, Centennial 0
 1922—Central 9, Centennial 0
 1923—Centennial 5, Central 0
 1924—Central 22, Centennial 13
 1925—Central 43, Centennial 0
 1926—Central 6, Centennial 3
 1927—Central 13, Centennial 6
 1928—Central 21, Centennial 0
 1929—Centennial 12, Central 0
 1930—Central 20, Centennial 0
 1931—Central 24, Centennial 6
 1932—Centennial 0, Central 0
 1932—Centennial 27, Central 0
 1933—Centennial 26, Central 13
 1933—Centennial 12, Central 6
 1934—Centennial 26, Central 2
 1934—Centennial 7, Central 6
 1935—Central 21, Centennial 6
 1935—Central 13, Centennial 0
 1936—Centennial 0, Central 0
 1936—Centennial 0, Central 0
 1937—Centennial 7, Central 7
 1938—Central 13, Centennial 7
 1939—Centennial 20, Central 13
 1940—Centennial 7, Central 6
 1941—Centennial 1, Central 0
 1942—Centennial 0, Central 0
 1942—Central 12, Centennial 7
 1943—Centennial 13, Central 0
 1943—Central 7, Centennial 0
 1944—Central 40, Centennial 0
 1945—Centennial 19, Central 0
 1946—Centennial 26, Central 21
 1947—Central 33, Centennial 13
 1948—Central 7, Centennial 6
 1948—Centennial 13, Central 0
 1949—Central 19, Centennial 9
 *1950—Central 40, Centennial 27
 1950—Central 25, Centennial 15
 1951—Central 13, Centennial 7
 1952—Centennial 14, Central 0
 1953—Central 32, Centennial 14
 1954—Central 24, Centennial 0

1955—Central 19, Centennial 14
 1956—Central 0, Centennial 0
 1957—Central 19, Centennial 0
 1958—Central 26, Centennial 12
 1959—Central 13, Centennial 6
 1960—Central 6, Centennial 0
 1961—Central 28, Centennial 14
 1962—Central 13, Centennial 0
 1963—Centennial 14, Central 7
 1964—Central 7, Centennial 0
 1965—Central 46, Centennial 0
 1966—Central 7, Centennial 7
 1967—Central 10, Centennial 0
 1968—Centennial 13, Central 6
 1969—Central 44, Centennial 13
 1970—Central 21, Centennial 0
 1971—Central 6, Centennial 0
 1972—Central 7, Centennial 7
 1973—Central 17, Centennial 14
 1974—Centennial 13, Central 12
 1975—Centennial 19, Central 0
 1976—Central 14, Centennial 7
 1977—Centennial 6, Central 0
 1978—Centennial 13, Central 7
 1979—Central 16, Centennial 3
 1980—Centennial 19, Central 7
 1981—Central 35, Centennial 8
 1982—Central 35, Centennial 0
 1983—Central 20, Centennial 0
 1984—Centennial 13, Central 6
 1985—Central 14, Centennial 6
 1986—Centennial 14, Central 0
 1987—Centennial 28, Central 10
 1988—Central 15, Centennial 12
 1989—Centennial 29, Central 17
 1990—Central 20, Centennial 18
 1991—Centennial 40, Central 15
 1992—Centennial 30, Central 6
 1993—Centennial 34, Central 15
 1994—Centennial 26, Central 0
 1995—Central 21, Centennial 14
 1996—Centennial 28, Central 25
 1997—Centennial 7, Central 6
 1998—Central 27, Centennial 9
 1999—Centennial 69, Central 53
 2000—Central 28, Centennial 13
 2001—Centennial 20, Central 0
 2002—Centennial 42, Central 14
 2003—Central 19, Centennial 13
 2004—Centennial 58, Central 14
 2005—Centennial 35, Central 13
 2006—Centennial 32, Central 14
 2007—Central 14, Centennial 6
 2008—Central 22, Centennial 21, OT



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/FILE

Central High School tight end Trent Thompson (49) celebrates with teammates after catching the winning 2-point conversion in overtime against Centennial last season. The Wildcats won 22-21.

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KICKOFF 2009

EAST EAGLES



Coach: David Ramirez, third season.

2008 record: 7-4 overall, 6-2 league. Third in Southern League. Lost 45-27 to Mountain View in the first round of the Class 3A state playoffs.



Spencer Torrez



Dre Hall

Players to watch: Spencer Torrez, sr., k/wr/fs, 5-10, 156; Josh Sandoval, sr., wr/cb, 5-11, 150; Dre Hall, sr., qb/db, 5-10, 155; Leo Ybarra, sr., ol/dl, 6-1, 258; Trevor Woolley, sr., ol/dl, 6-2, 261; Misha Milovidov, jr., te/lb, 6-3, 185; Patrick Smith, jr., ol/dl, 6-2, 290; Anthony Rubio, jr., ol/dl, 6-1, 288; Alex Benavidez, sr., wr/lb, 5-11, 155; Keith Medina, sr., ol/dl, 5-7, 199; Will Torres, sr., ol/dl, 6-1, 260; Carlos Lovato, sr., rb/lb, 5-7, 171; Cruz Gonzales, sr., rb/lb, 5-8, 178; Daryion Morgan, jr., wr/db, 5-9, 155; Jose Arellano, jr., wr/db, 5-9, 147; Matt Vasquez, jr., rb/de, 5-10, 210; Nalu Santiago, jr., te/lb, 6-3, 180; Corey Laughlin, so., qb/lb, 5-11, 170; Lawrance Lucero, so., rb/db, 5-9, 150; Tre Pena, so., ol/dl, 6-2, 280; Brandon DeJesus, so., ol/dl, 6-3, 215.

Sideline chatter: That foundation up front, combined with the confidence gained from reaching the playoffs, could put the Eagles in the mix again.

By the numbers: 4 — Number of starting offensive linemen who return for the Eagles.

Key game alert: Sept. 24 vs. Canon City: East starts a brutal four-game stretch against the Tigers, followed by match-ups with Pueblo County, Falcon and South.

2009 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 5	Ridge View Academy	1 p.m.
Sept. 11	Centennial	7 p.m.
Sept. 18	at Harrison	7 p.m.
Sept. 24	Canon City	7 p.m.
Oct. 2	at Pueblo County	7 p.m.
Oct. 8	Falcon	7 p.m.
Oct. 16	South	7 p.m.
Oct. 23	at Central	7 p.m.
Oct. 30	Alamosa	7 p.m.
Nov. 6	at Woodland Park	7 p.m.

Eagles aim to keep drive alive

By TOM PURFIELD

THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Just what does the East High School football team plan to do for an encore to its best season in a dozen years?

"The goal is to be even better than last year," Eagles coach David Ramirez said. "Our last time on the field ended with a loss and we want to get back out there and get back to winning."

East football enjoyed a renaissance last season, finishing third in the hyper-competitive Southern League and making the playoffs for the first time since 1996. The program had been in the dumps for years, winning just 4 percent of its games from 2003-07.

Led by the energy, smarts and toughness of Ramirez, the Eagles hope the success is contagious.

"The Monday after our playoff loss, guys were playing catch and lifting," Ramirez said. "Going into this offseason, I wasn't pulling the same teeth. These guys are hungry and motivated. A lot of these kids have winning backgrounds and are willing to put forth the work to make it happen."

East thrived behind the skill and leadership of quarterback Jordan Ward and tight end/linebacker Nick Taibi last year. The duo was lost to graduation and a big question will be if the Eagles can find new playmakers close to that caliber.

"We lost those guys and they were good ballplayers for us," Ramirez said. "This year, we're bigger and stronger. We're beefy up front with most of our linemen back and that should take some of the pressure off the guys who are stepping in behind them."

OFFENSE

East will keep its spread offense for the second year with Dre Hall stepping in to fill the considerable shoes of Ward.

"We're sticking with it. We have a number of offensive weapons and want to have them strike at any time," Ramirez said. "Dre is fully capable and he's dedicated himself to being our guy. He's by far the fastest kid on the team and his speed will make up for inexperience early on."



Receiver Josh Sandoval will be counted upon to lead an inexperienced group of skill players for East.

CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/FILE

SEE EAGLES, 27

EAGLES / from page 26

Do-it-all Spencer Torrez and Josh Sandoval will lead the offense at receiver, and Matt Vasquez and Lawrance Lucero will provide a thunder-and-lightning combo at tailback.

“Josh and Spencer are going to be the skill position leaders, and both have big-play capabilities and experience,” Ramirez said. “Those two will be leaders in the same way we looked at Jordan and Nick last year.”

DEFENSE

It will be an entirely new group at linebacker, but players have been moved to give the unit varsity experience and possibly more quickness.

“We bring a lot of experience, some guys with two years under their belts,” Ramirez said. “We moved guys like Misha (Milovidov) to linebacker to put quality guys there and make it a great unit, maybe faster.”

East returns its entire secondary and, like on offense, the defensive front is a year older and better.

“We have guys who like to eat mud and tear up that grass in the trenches,” Ramirez said. “Our linemen really want to be the foundation of this team.”

SPECIAL TEAMS

Torrez was one of the state’s top kickers last year and has worked on the fine points to become even better, giving East an invaluable weapon.

“Spencer went to a couple kicking camps because that’s where he wants to play (in college),” Ramirez said. “He’s really dedicated and he spent a lot of time in the offseason working on his form. Any kicker can always be more consistent with it.”

He is also dangerous on returns and several other players will get their shot at returning punts and kickoffs, including Lucero, Daryion Morgan and Jose Arellano.

INTANGIBLES

Ramirez feels the Eagles got by on finesse a bit too much last year and he’s placed a premium on becoming more physical.

He’s got that with his quality linemen and, combined with excellent chemistry and team speed, East wants to prove last year was no fluke.

“I feel we are more physical with our line, but we need to use our confidence as a weapon,” Ramirez said. “We can’t get cocky, but we need to have that confident presence on the field that we are a good team now and will continue to be.”

tpurfield@chieftain.com



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/FILE

EAST-SOUTH

Year-by-year

1959—South 48, East 6
 1960—South 0, East 0
 1961—East 26, South 21
 1962—South 14, East 0
 1963—East 7, South 0
 1964—South 12, East 6
 1965—South 27, East 0
 1966—South 13, East 7
 1967—East 7, South 0
 1968—South 20, East 6
 1969—East 8, South 0
 1970—East 32, South 12
 1971—South 9, East 7
 1972—South 10, East 0
 1973—East 14, South 12
 1974—South 20, East 7
 1975—South 14, East 0

x-1976—South 27, East 21
 1977—South 13, East 6
 1978—East 31, South 14
 1979—East 14, South 8
 1980—East 24, South 0
 1981—East 21, South 20 (OT)
 1982—East 17, South 12
 1983—South 34, East 13
 1984—South 27, East 6
 1985—South 34, East 8
 1986—South 34, East 9
 1987—South 34, East 0
 1988—South 25, East 16
 1989—South 63, East 12
 1990—South 39, East 22
 1991—South 17, East 14

1992—South 34, East 18
 1993—East 3, South 0
 1994—East 9, South 7
 1995—East 28, South 27
 1996—East 31, South 7
 1997—South 17, East 6
 1998—South 24, East 18
 1999—South 32, East 12
 2000—South 47, East 14
 2001—South 21, East 0
 2002—South 49, East 6
 2003—South 45, East 14
 2004—South 28, East 12
 2005—South 34, East 12
 2006—South 41, East 5
 2007—South 54, East 13
 2008—South 37, East 31

x-Begins Cannon Game era
 ● South leads overall 34-15-1
 ● South leads Cannon series 24-9
 ● Both high schools opened their doors in 1959.
 ● The cannon is a real, working Civil War-era cannon (Al Valiant). It was donated by the Steel City Kiwanis in 1976, along with the Key Clubs from both schools. It cost about \$800 30 years ago.

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KICKOFF 2009

PUEBLO WEST CYCLONES



Coach: Monte Pinkerton, fifth season.

2008 record: 5-5 overall, 4-3 league. Fourth in Pikes Peak League. Did not make playoffs.



Ethan Ward



Colton Vaughan

Players to watch: Hans Ask, sr., qb, 6-2, 185; Aaron Drake, sr., wr/lb, 6-2, 195; Aaron Krakow, sr., fb/lb, 5-11, 205; Austin Payne, sr., ot, 6-5, 220; Colton Vaughan, fb/lb, sr., 6-1, 205; Ethan Ward, sr., dl/ol, 6-3, 245; Justin Berns-LaBorde, jr., dl, 6-0, 205; Ian Immamura, jr., te/dl, 6-3, 190; Jordan Ruiz, jr., wr/db, 5-8, 165; Justin Sanchez, jr., tb, 5-8, 175; Lyndon Stoudmire, jr., dl, 6-0, 195.

Sideline chatter: West will surely be tested all season, as the Pikes Peak has emerged as one of the toughest leagues in 4A. Pine Creek made the 2008 quarterfinals, Fountain won a playoff game and Rock Canyon qualified. Any team that plays an 11th game this year will have earned it.

By the numbers: 6 — Number of teams the Cyclones played last year that qualified for the playoffs, and this season is the second in a home-and-away two-year schedule cycle.

Key game alert: Oct. 9 vs. Pine Creek: West enters the meat of its league schedule against the Eagles, who ran the regular-season table last year and were the No. 1 seed in the playoffs.

2009 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 4	South	7 p.m.
Sept. 11	Mitchell	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	at Pueblo County	7 p.m.
Sept. 26	at Widefield	7 p.m.
Oct. 2	Montrose	7 p.m.
Oct. 9	Pine Creek	7 p.m.
Oct. 16	at Sand Creek	7 p.m.
Oct. 23	at Coronado	7 p.m.
Oct. 30	Fountain-FC	7 p.m.
Nov. 6	at Rock Canyon	6 p.m.

Cyclones out to show playoff moxie

By TOM PURFIELD

THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Hopes of defending its 2007 Class 4A state championship were alive for the Pueblo West High School football team all the way to Week 10 last year.

But after a 20-14 loss at home to Rock Canyon, a return trip to the playoffs as a wildcard was dashed.

"We had a shot to be there. I think it's made this group a little bit hungrier to step it up," coach Monte Pinkerton said. "Just missing gives you that much more to chew on during the offseason. We've been working hard to not just get back, but make something happen once we get there.

"Last year was a disappointment for all of us and we've got something to prove as a program."

This year's Cyclones roster is spattered with players who return and Colton Vaughan, Hans Ask and Ethan Ward bring experience from key roles they played as sophomores during West's magical title run.

Now West will need to reach into its deep pool of players to complete a team that will be tested to the fullest during one of the toughest schedules, in one of the toughest leagues, in Class 4A.

"We've got guys back but at the same time, there are holes to fill," Pinkerton said. "You work with them all spring and summer to get them ready and we think we have guys who can step in. But you're not sure until you get under the lights."

OFFENSE

West returns the bulk of its skill players, led by quarterback Ask, fullback Vaughan and tailback Justin Sanchez. Pinkerton revealed Ask played hurt last year and had knee surgery following the last game.

"That's a testament to him and his will, and I think things will slow down for him a little bit. We're expecting big things from Hans," Pinkerton said. "Colton is the guy back there and we're going to get him the ball. Justin added 20-25 pounds of muscle and he has a natural instinct in the open field to do some things."

The key to West's offense is filling three spots on the offensive line as "running the ball is key for us and it's about coming together as an offensive line and getting the experience we need there."



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/FILE

Hans Ask returns at quarterback to lead Pueblo West's offense.

DEFENSE

Pinkerton feels good about his defensive line, led by Ward. It's a unit that will be under the gun in the run-heavy Pikes Peak League.

"We feel that should be a main focus of our defense," Pinkerton said. "We'll try to use our athleticism and see what happens."

The entire secondary will be new and the linebacking corps will sorely miss stand-out Chris Sager. Vaughan is a quality replacement and some shifting combined with newcomers could form a solid group at linebacker.

SPECIAL TEAMS

When an outstanding kicker like Albert Padilla graduates, it leaves a huge void. Kicking and punting is a big part of West's commitment to controlling field position and Padilla's successor has yet to be determined.

On the other side, Pinkerton said coverage and returns should be solid as West has "real good depth as far as athletes and football players go, guys who are fighting for positions."

INTANGIBLES

West has the numbers and leaders to compete for a playoff spot, but Pinkerton stresses it is a 10-week journey to survive the brutal Pikes Peak.

"A lot of it is just perseverance, the struggle, the challenge of the season with the schedule the way it is," Pinkerton said. "There's no time to take a week off. It's not always about talent, it's about the effort and the other things that make it happen."

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Pigskin returns to Dutch Clark Stadium

THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

They had to play for something. District 70 in 2000 began a series featuring its two high schools at opposite ends of Highway 50 as it runs through Pueblo.

Pueblo County, long established as a solid school and football program, welcomed Pueblo West into

the fold with their first meeting in 2000. They call it the Pigskin Classic and the winner earns a monstrous trophy so big that it needed wheels. It has its own sound system and the sculpted helmets are interchangeable with the schools' logos.

The Hornets, not the most-gracious of hosts, proceeded to win the first five meetings between the

schools.

In 2005, however, as the Cyclones' community began to grow, so did its football program. West won that meeting convincingly, 37-13. It has won three of the last four, including a 20-6 decision last year.

This year, the Class 3A Hornets play host to the Class 4A Cyclones on Sept. 20 at Dutch Clark Stadium.

COUNTY-WEST

- 2000 — Pueblo County 27, Pueblo West 7
 - 2001 — Pueblo County 54, Pueblo West 15
 - 2002 — Pueblo County 42, Pueblo West 12
 - 2003 — Pueblo County 29, Pueblo West 27
 - 2004 — Pueblo County 24, Pueblo West 0
 - 2005 — Pueblo West 37, Pueblo County 13
 - 2006 — Pueblo West 20, Pueblo County 6
 - 2007 — Pueblo County 24, Pueblo West 21
 - 2008 — Pueblo West 20, Pueblo County 6
- Pueblo County leads the series 6-3



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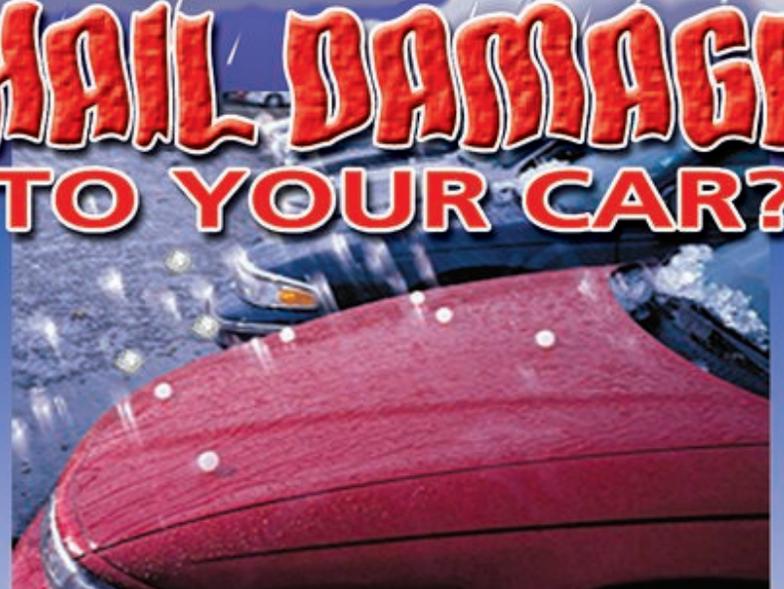
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KICKOFF 2009

Hornets blaze trail to playoffs

By TOM PURFIELD

THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

No Pueblo football team has experienced as much consistent playoff success recently as Pueblo County High School.

The Hornets have won six playoff games in the past three years, reaching the 2006 Class 3A state championship game, followed by runs to the semis and quarterfinals.

"We're at that place in our program where that's the expectation. Every kid in the program right now hasn't known a losing season, so they don't know anything different," Pueblo County coach Jeff Wilson said. "That's the way we think, the way we talk. But it could all change within one year."

The biggest challenge to the Hornets maintaining their current level is finding the bread for their butter. Traditionally a hard-nosed, ground-based team, Pueblo County needs linemen for the first time in a long time.

"That's the big challenge. We've got five guys on the offensive line who don't have any experience. None," Wilson said. "But they're a good bunch. It's a combination of program seniors and youngsters who will have to get it done up front for us."

Not only will Pueblo County's line be inexperienced, it will lack the beef recent teams boasted. Only two probable starters weigh more than 200 pounds.

"Our philosophy isn't going to change," Wilson said. "You can do a lot more with guys who can move. You can pull, trap and counter; get them in on the point of attack."

If the Hornets can refurbish their line — which previously carried the identity of standout Jarret Martinez for four years — they have the playmakers to once again be in the mix for the playoffs.

OFFENSE

The Hornets will surely miss the speedy Marshall Stout and his big-play capability, but they return plenty in the backfield led by quarterback Austin Wallingford.

"Austin became a weapon the second half of last season," Wilson said. "People think our quarterback position isn't that important because we don't pass a lot. That's not the case."

Junior Mike Hasenack averaged 105 yards rushing per game after taking over



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/FILE

Pueblo County High School quarterback Austin Wallingford (left) runs with the ball as Steamboat Springs defender Eric Bonner tries to bring him down during their Class 3A playoff game at Hornets Stadium in 2008.

for injured fullback Josh Greenhood, who also returns. Levi Martinez and Brett Avila also give the Hornets experience running the ball.

DEFENSE

Losing a noseguard, defensive end, three inside linebackers and a cover corner is reason for concern for any team.

"Defensively, we took a hit. We're going to have a lot of new faces in there," Wilson said. "Again, we might be smaller, but quicker. Our emphasis again is that we can't have people running on us. We'll probably go man a little more, maybe come after you a little bit more."

SPECIAL TEAMS

A rare year of having a capable kicker is gone with the exit of Eric Molina, prompting Wilson to say "we have nobody even in mind for kicking," and "we'll be going for two a lot."

Returns are another story, as Avila is a threat to go the distance in addition to plenty of other capable return men.

INTANGIBLES

Returning linemen Mike DeLuca (the only regular starter last year) and Cody Prutch will need to mentor an inexperienced and smallish line for the Hornets' quality skill players to be effective, on both sides of the ball.

"Our offensive line will need to grow up really fast," Wilson said. "Defensively, we need to find our identity."

tpurfield@chieftain.com

PUEBLO COUNTY HORNETS



Coach: Jeff Wilson, 10th season.

2008 record: 8-4 overall, 7-1 league.

Tied for first in Southern League. Lost 16-7 to Mountain View in the Class 3A state quarterfinals.



Mike Hasenack



Mike DeLuca

Players to watch: Austin Wallingford, sr., qb/cr, 6-1, 185; Josh Greenhood, sr., fb/lb, 5-8, 185; Mike DeLuca, sr., te/de, 6-1, 190; Cody Prutch, sr., ol/ng, 6-0, 220; Brett Avila, sr., rb/cb, 5-9, 170; Scott Lindenmuth, sr., ol/lb, 5-10, 180; Levi Martinez, sr., rb/lb, 5-7, 160; Mike Hasenack, jr., rb/de, 5-11, 185; Mitch Miller, jr., rb/lb, 5-10, 170; Hank Martinez, so., te/lb, 5-10, 190; Joe Marquez, sr., ol/ng, 5-9, 250; Mike Marino, jr., ol/ng, 5-10, 190; David Espinoza, sr., te/de, 5-10, 175; Dominic Ortiz, sr., te/de, 5-10, 175; Chris Rodriguez, jr., rb/qb/fs, 5-10, 165.

Sideline chatter: The first three games must be productive for the Hornets' inexperienced linemen.

By the numbers: 1 — Returning starter on the offensive line, the key unit in the Hornets' smashmouth running game that has been a force for three years.

Key game alert: Sept. 11 at Harrison: Wilson said that this team, which is rebuilding from the inside out, can only be concerned with winning its first league game of the season.

2009 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 4	at Palisade	8 p.m.
Sept. 11	at Harrison	7 p.m.
Sept. 19	Pueblo West	7 p.m.
Sept. 25	at Alamosa	4 p.m.
Oct. 2	East	7 p.m.
Oct. 9	at Canon City	7 p.m.
Oct. 16	Centennial	7 p.m.
Oct. 23	Woodland Park	7 p.m.
Oct. 30	at Falcon	7 p.m.
Nov. 6	Central	7 p.m.

KICKOFF 2009

Scorpions fight for respectability

By **TRACY RENCK**
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

This offseason, the Dolores Huerta football program didn't fly under the radar.

Ted Hernandez, a successful businessman and middle school coach, was hired as the Scorpions' new head coach in February. Hernandez replaced Jerry Salazar.

The DPHH program is only two years old and Salazar was the program's only coach.

"I'm very excited to start coaching," Hernandez said. "We have some good players and we just want to go out there and compete."

In mid-August, DPHH made headlines again when the Colorado High School Activities Association placed the football program and Hernandez on probation for one year as a sanction for violating its recruiting bylaws.

Hernandez and several football players appeared on a video posted on YouTube in which they talked about the academic and athletic benefits of the school. The phrase "come to DPHH" was used several times.

"The hardest part, to be perfectly honest, is getting to know all the CHSAA stuff," Hernandez said. "We're ready to put all that in the past and just move forward."

During DPHH's two football seasons, it compiled a 6-13 record. The Scorpions played as a 2A independent in 2007 and were in the 2A Tri-Peaks League last season, which is where they will remain this year.

DPHH will play all four of its home games at the Neta & Eddie DeRose ThunderBowl.

OFFENSE

The Scorpions' offense should receive a jolt with the return of junior quarterback J.R. Harris.

"J.R. started seven games last year and that experience should really benefit him," Hernandez said. "I know that I'm expecting a lot from him this season."

In the backfield, Mario Garcia should set the pace for the Scorpions and Hernandez is counting heavily on young offensive linemen Ricco Gallegos and Joe Kovach.

"Offensively, I want us to pound the ball," Hernandez said.

The true talent of the Scorpions' offense might not be known until



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/BRYAN KELSEN

New Dolores Huerta football coach Ted Hernandez talks with players prior to a recent practice.

midseason, depending on when the eight transfers from other Pueblo schools who are now at DPHH become eligible to play.

Adrian Hernandez, the coach's son, Mario Chavez, and Michael Lobato are just a couple of the transfers who coach Hernandez is looking forward to getting on the field.

Alec Hernandez, coach Hernandez's nephew, will be playing immediately for the Scorpions after transferring from Cherry Creek. The senior will play wide receiver and defensive back.

"Alec is a great athlete and should really help our team," Coach Hernandez said.

DEFENSE

This unit will be spearheaded by Garcia at middle linebacker.

Garcia, a junior, has placed third and fourth in the Class 2A and 3A state wrestling tournaments the past two years and his toughness is unquestioned.

Coach Hernandez pointed to linemen Gallegos and Kovach, plus defensive back Joe Eunice and Alec Hernandez, as other key cogs in the defense.

"My philosophy on defense is to be aggressive," Coach Hernandez said. "We're not going to sit back on our heels and wait for things to happen."

SPECIAL TEAMS

The versatile Eunice will be the punter for the Scorpions and he has plenty of experience at the position.

"I just haven't settled on a kicker yet," Coach Hernandez said.

INTANGIBLES

This should be an interesting season for DPHH. Hernandez is ready to prove he can coach at this level. His biggest obstacles will be playing in a tough Tri-Peaks League and getting all his transfer players eligible.

tracyr@chieftain.com

DPHH SCORPIONS



Coach: Ted Hernandez, first season.

2008 record: 2-8; 0-8 (last place) Tri-Peaks.



Mario Garcia



J.R. Harris

Players to watch: J.R. Harris, jr., qb, 6-0, 165; Mario Garcia, jr., fb/lb, 5-9, 205; Lawrence Barreras, jr., wr, 6-0, 165; Joe Eunice, sr., db/p, 5-10, 170; Ricco Gallegos, so., dl, 5-11, 235; Joe Kovach, fr., dl, 6-0, 235; Alec Hernandez, sr., wr/db, 6-0, 175; Adrian Hernandez, jr., db/wr, 5-8, 180; Donovan Chavez, jr., rb/lb, 5-9, 165; Michael Lobato, jr., rb/db 5-8, 145

Sideline chatter: Hernandez was a successful middle school coach for years. He's hoping that translates to the next level. The Scorpions return some talented players that will be mixed in with an influx of transfers.

By the numbers: 0 — The number of Tri-Peaks League games and road games DPHH won a year ago.

Key game alert: Sept. 4 at Vista Ridge. This game marks the Scorpions' season opener and Hernandez's high school coaching debut.

2009 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 4	at Vista Ridge	7 p.m.
Sept. 11	Ellicott	7 p.m.
Sept. 18	at La Junta	7 p.m.
Sept. 25	Florence	7 p.m.
Oct. 2	at Trinidad	7 p.m.
Oct. 9	at Manitou Springs	7 p.m.
Oct. 16	Lamar	7 p.m.
Oct. 24	at Front Range	1 p.m.
Oct. 31	at CSCS	7 p.m.
Nov. 6	St. Mary's	7 p.m.

KICKOFF 2009



T-Bolts eye encore performance

By **JUDY HILDNER**
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN



Coach: Jeff Bailey, 18th season

2008 record: 11-1; Advanced to Class 1A semifinals, lost to Wray 27-0.



Luke Van



Jake Van

Players to watch: Jake Van, sr., rb-db, 5-7, 140; Luke Van, sr., rb-db, 5-7, 145; Chris Lewis, sr., ol-de, 230, 6-0; Chaz Guerrero, sr., rb-lb, 5-9, 165; Landon Williams, sr., te-lb, 6-1, 185; Jeremiah Lopez, sr., ol-dl, 5-10, 250; Brandon Bickle, sr., ol-dl, 5-11, 230.

Sideline chatter: Every school seems to have one class rich in athletes and that's the senior group at Rye this fall. A number of players are four-year starters and they know what it takes to win after losing to Wray in the playoffs two years in a row.

By the numbers: 37 — Number of players who reported for the T-Bolts' first practice.

Key game alert: Oct. 23 at Rocky Ford. Bailey hates to point to the Meloneers, saying every Santa Fe League game is crucial, but the Rye-Rocky game has frequently been played for the league title.

2009 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 4	Del Norte	7 p.m.
Sept. 11	Centauri	7 p.m.
Sept. 18	at Salida	7 p.m.
Sept. 26	at Calhan	1 p.m.
Oct. 2	at Crowley County	7 p.m.
Oct. 9	John Mall	7 p.m.
Oct. 16	Las Animas	7 p.m.
Oct. 23	at Rocky Ford	7 p.m.
Oct. 30	Custer County	7 p.m.

RYE — Forgive veteran Rye High School coach Jeff Bailey and his football players if they occasionally get lost in time.

No, they're not in some strange science fiction movie; they could just have a strong case of *deja vu*.

Bailey has been looking at some of his seniors' faces for four years as starters, many on both sides of the ball. If that wasn't enough, this fall's Santa Fe League schedule is identical to last year's — same opponents in the same order on the calendar.

In fact, everything is the same except that games have been flipped in the traditional home-and-away format.

And the T-Bolts would like nothing better than to march through this fall in identical fashion to 2008 when they won 11 in a row to gain a berth in the Class 1A state semifinals. A 27-0 loss to Wray, the second playoff defeat in two years by the Eagles, ended one of Rye's most successful campaigns.

"This team has the potential to repeat that kind of season," Bailey said. "We're excited."

Rye participated in the team camp at the University of Colorado in June and Bailey was pleased with their progress. He also had several players commit to a speed and agility camp at Raton, N.M., again this summer.

"It's made a difference. They work on special drills to improve football speed," Bailey said.

One missing component this August was the Bolts' annual backpack trip on Greenhorn Mountain. The memorial service for a popular former player who died in a climbing accident took precedence in mid-month.

"We missed welcoming the freshmen to the team," one of the Rye seniors said about no backpack trip for this year's team.

It might not matter with an already close-knit group.

"We feel we can be very strong again with returning players at nearly every position."

Quarterback is the one job that is wide open for the T-Bolts. Bailey said Ty Van Ort or Cameron Reeves will be in the starting lineup when Rye entertains Del Norte in its home opener.



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/FILE

Rye High School's Jake Van gets stuffed at the line of scrimmage by Wray's Brady Buck (left) and Tim Krebs during their Class 1A football state semifinal game last season at Rye.

OFFENSE

Jake Van returns as the Bolts' leading rusher after earning all-conference and all-state honors as a junior last fall. Van is one of the fastest players on the team although he's just 140 pounds and his twin brother, Luke, is a compliment both on offense and in the defensive backfield. Bill Forell will take over at fullback after serving as a backup at that position last year. Up front, the Bolts will have four-year starters Chris Lewis and Brandon Bickle, both 230-pound seniors.

SEE T-BOLTS, 35

T-BOLTS / from page 34

DEFENSE

Lewis, who also earned all-conference and all-state honors, returns at defensive end while Chaz Guerrero is back at linebacker. Landon Williams joins Guerrero at linebacker. With the Vans in the backfield, the Bolts also will have some coverage speed.

Rye was unable to stop a couple of game-breaking plays by Wray in the state semifinals last year after playing toe-to-toe for nearly a half. That wasn't

the case during the regular season when the T-Bolts shut down nearly every team they faced.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Junior Kip Castanha will handle the kicking duties for the T-Bolts again this year after doubling up on the soccer team at Pueblo West. Rye's speed is a big asset on both kickoffs and punts.

Special teams almost always are vital to the success of small-school football

programs and the T-Bolts place great emphasis on them during practices.

INTANGIBLES

There has always been a strong winning tradition at Rye. The T-Bolts routinely advance to the playoffs and that has been particularly true under Bailey, who enters his 18th season as head coach.

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'This team has the potential to repeat that kind of season. We're excited.'

JEFF BAILEY
Rye head coach

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CNM Sports again to air prep football

THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Another long-standing tradition in Pueblo continues this season as the Center for New Media, a partnership between Pueblo Community College and Colorado State University-Pueblo, will air high school football.

The 10-game schedule, along with a coaches' kickoff show and any applicable playoff games, will air on Comcast

cable Channel 19.

Executive producer/director Scott Richards and his crew of professionals and students from both colleges will produce the broadcasts.

"We're excited to broadcast the prep games again," Richards said. "Not only do we help students at PCC and CSU-Pueblo grow in careers in the field, we feel like we're providing a much-anticipated service to the viewers in the area."

Each game airs six times during the following week. This year, CNM Sports continues another tradition by broadcasting the Bell Game and Cannon Game live.

Jim Brooks returns for his 14th season as play-by-play man, and Joe E. Cervi, Deputy Sports Editor at The Pueblo Chieftain, is back for his 11th season doing color commentary. Kevin Millis will again handle sideline reporting.

PREPS ON TV

(Subject to change)

- Sept. 4—South vs. Pueblo West
- Sept. 11—East vs. Centennial
- Sept. 18—Alamosa at Centennial
- Oct. 2—The Bell Game (live)
- Oct. 9—Air Academy at South
- Oct. 16—The Cannon Game (live)
- Oct. 23—East vs. Central
- Oct. 29—Lewis-Palmer at South
- Nov. 5—Canon City at Centennial
- Nov. 6—Central at Pueblo County

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2008 POSTSEASON

Class 5A

Quarterfinals

Cherry Creek 26, Grandview 20; Columbine 23, Pomona 8; Mullen 38, Rocky Mountain 21; Poudre 31, Douglas County 17.

Semifinals

Cherry Creek 27, Columbine 25; Mullen 48, Poudre 21.

Championship

Mullen 20, Cherry Creek 16.

Class 4A

First round

Pine Creek 28, Broomfield 7; Heritage 50, Sierra 19; Montrose 21, Niwot 14; Greeley West 37, Littleton 14; Dakota Ridge 37, Pueblo South 22; Longmont 28, Monarch 14; Fountain-Fort Carson 23, Ralston Valley 21; Wheat Ridge 59, Fountain-Fort Carson 13.

Quarterfinals

Pine Creek 17, Heritage 7; Greeley West 22, Montrose 8; Dakota Ridge 51, Longmont 44; Wheat Ridge 28, Fountain-Fort Carson 13.

Semifinals

Greeley West 49, Pine Creek 6; Wheat Ridge 21, Dakota Ridge 16.

Championship

Wheat Ridge 35, Greeley West 31.

Class 3A

First round

Glenwood Springs 52, Roosevelt 10; Berthoud 40, Centaurus 26; Pueblo County 44, Steamboat Springs 14; Mountain View 45, Pueblo East 27; Windsor 20, Conifer 6; D'Evelyn 30, Palisade 28; Summit 17, Canon City 3; Fort Morgan 32, Elizabeth 0.

Quarterfinals

Glenwood Springs 50, Berthoud 39, Mountain View 16, Pueblo County 6; D'Evelyn 31, Windsor 14; Fort Morgan 21, Summit 3.

Semifinals

Glenwood Springs 47, Mountain View 14; Fort Morgan 42, D'Evelyn 24.

Championship

Glenwood Springs 23, Fort Morgan 14.

Class 2A

First round

Platte Canyon 40, Holy Family 19; Pagosa Springs 40, Manitou Springs 7; Erie 16, Platte Valley 14; Florence 36, Aspen 13; Olathe 55, Buena Vista 10; Kent Denver 39, Eaton 35; Brush 34, Grand Valley 6; Faith Christian 56, Classical Academy 16.

Quarterfinals

Platte Canyon 30, Pagosa Springs 26; Erie 35, Florence 10; Olathe 27, Kent Denver 6; Faith Christian 36, Brush 22.

Semifinals

Erie 28, Platte Canyon 21, Olathe 14, Faith Christian 6.

Championship

Olathe 22, Erie 21 (OT)

Class 1A

First round

Akron 53, Custer County 0; Calhan 50, Ignacio 14; Hotchkiss 68, Holyoke 26; Yuma 19, Burlington 0; Limon 42, Rocky Ford 0; Wray 42, Lutheran 13; Lyons 18, Paonia 17; Rye 33, Dolores 13.

Quarterfinals

Akron 35, Calhan 0; Yuma 34, Hotchkiss 20; Wray 34, Limon 20; Rye 45, Lyons 10.

Semifinals

Akron 28, Yuma 0; Wray 27, Rye 0.

Championship

Akron 37, Wray 8.

8-man

First round

Dayspring Christian 62, Flagler 22; Granada 51, Dove Creek 18; Stratton 40, Walsh 14; Hoehne 58, Haxtun 28; Sanford 48, Norwood 8; Merino 44, Hugo 6; Caliche 63, Miami-Yoder 26; McClave 49, Antonito 12.

Quarterfinals

Dayspring Christian 61, Granada 26; Hoehne 48, Stratton 0; Merino 28, Sanford 8; Caliche 63, McClave 0.

Semifinals

Dayspring Christian 40, Hoehne 24; Merino 24, Caliche 6.

Championship

Dayspring Christian 26, Merino 8.

6-man

Quarterfinals

Hi-Plains 62, Vilas 16; Otis 52, Fleming 32; Idalia 69, Peetz 31; Briggsdale 67, Kit Carson 34.

Semifinals

Hi-Plains 54, Otis 6; Idalia 40, Briggsdale 32.

Championship

Hi-Plains 74, Idalia 24.

Playoff berths motivate teams

By JUDY HILDNER

THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

There were no gold footballs carried off the field to celebrate a state championship in Southern Colorado last fall but many area teams fared well, nonetheless.

Rye High School advanced to the semifinals of the Class 1A state playoffs and Hoehne did the same in 8-man.

In the larger classifications, Canon City rode the strong shoulders of tailback Damon McCain into the opening round of Class 3A and Florence advanced to the quarterfinals of 2A.

In all, 11 area teams earned state playoffs berths, including seven in 8-man's opening round of 16 teams.

Canon City's Tigers have a solid nucleus back from last year's team although McCain, who rushed for more than 2,500 yards as a senior tailback, graduated.

"Obviously, as the state's leading rusher last year, he'll be hard to replace," Tiger coach Chris Coppa said. "But we're committed to a physical style with a strong tailback. That's our tradition."

That said, Coppa has 5-foot-10, 185-pound quarterback Mitch Uhland back for his senior season and the Tigers also return a trio of two-way starters in a group of seven offensive and six defensive veterans.

Going both ways will be seniors H-back and linebacker Kenny Blair, H-back and defensive end Mike Catalenic and lineman David Huffington.

"We have a lot of skill people returning," Coppa said.



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/FILE

Rye's Chaz Guerrero (left) tries to chase down Wray quarterback Brady Buck during their Class 1A football state championship semifinal game in Rye in 2008.

He also has players to fill the holes created by graduation but they have limited varsity experience. The all-important tailback spot was up for grabs during the early stages of practice.

"Our schedule gives us an advantage since we play our two non-league games to open the season," Coppa said about fine-tuning his lineup.

The Tigers were 7-1 in the Class 3A Southern Conference last fall and finished 9-2 overall after losing to Summit 17-3 in the opening round of the 3A playoffs.

Florence made its debut in 2A last year and advanced to the quarterfinals.

The always-tough Huskies dumped Aspen 36-13 in the opening round before losing 35-10 to Erie.

Rye was the class of area teams in 1A, compiling an 11-0 record before losing to eventual state runner-up Wray 27-0. The 'Bolts look strong again with a good nucleus returning.

Hoehne used a wide-open running attack to reach the 8-man semifinals with nearly 3,500 yards of offense behind Cody Roberts and Kurt Paradisa. The Farmers compiled a 10-2 record, ending with a 40-24 loss to Dayspring Christian.

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Dutch Clark Stadium bleachers undergo makeover

THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

For anyone who has ever left Dutch Clark Stadium with a tiny piece of the bleachers in his or her behind, relief is here.

The stadium this summer was updated with new bleachers. At a cost of \$160,000 — all from corporate sponsorship — the old fiberglass-covered

wooden bleachers have been replaced with aluminum seating.

Nick Pannunzio of Premier Homes, Ted Hernandez Inc., DD Marketing and Loaf 'N Jug each pledged \$50,000 over the next five years to cover the project. Pannunzio, who built the Eddie & Neta DeRose ThunderBowl at Colorado State University-Pueblo, also donated his time to oversee installation of the new bleachers.

“These are the exact same bleachers as they have out at the college,” Pannunzio said. “They won’t have the chair-backs like the college, but the bleacher part is the same.”

Pannunzio said the fiberglass coverings were installed “somewhere around 1976 or ‘77. And they covered wood that might have been original. It was definitely time to upgrade.”

The project took a little more than

two weeks from start to finish.

Pueblo City Schools Athletics Director Bobby Gonzales said the old bleachers were in disrepair.

“There were some that were cracked, broken or completely off their brackets,” Gonzales said. “This is something that needed to be done.”

Central christens the new seating arrangement when it plays host to Centaurus at 7 p.m. on Sept. 4.

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