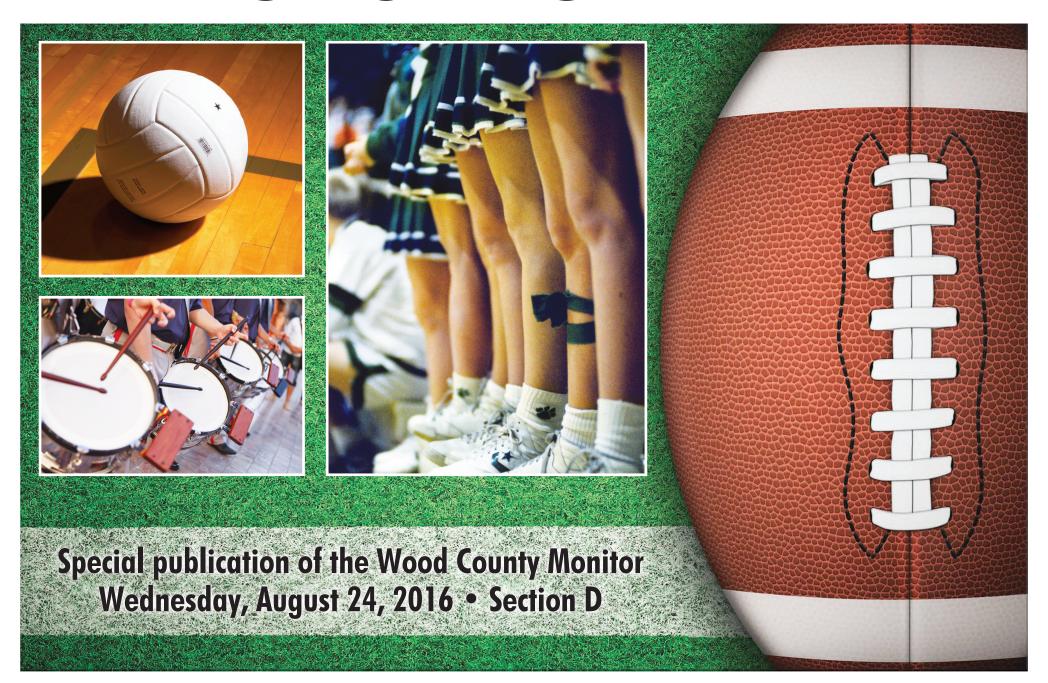
FALL SPORTS PREVIEW



Mineola-Winnsboro rivalry rekindles in district play

By LARRY TUCKER news@woodcountymonitor

The Mineola Yellowjackets and Winnsboro Red Raiders have a long and storied rivalry. The teams continued the rivalry through the years even when the University Interscholastic League (UIL) kept them apart. Mineola is the No. 1 ranked team in the state in preseason rankings in several publications, most notably Dave

Campbell's *Texas Football*. The new district 7-3A DI is full of rivalry contests. Mineola and Quitman is an age old gettogether. The addition of Grand Saline brings back years of hard fought rivalry games. Mineola-Grand Saline and Quitman-Grand Saline games have always been tense and wrought with hard-hitting and plenty of "talk" passed between the teams and communities.

The 'Jackets have the luxury of a bevy of returning starters with top offensive threats, including Jeremiah Crawford, Chantz Perkins and Frankie Meason, along with defensive stalwarts Courtland Sinches, Noah Sneed and Drevson Turner. The senior led Mineola squad has been to the state finals and semi-finals and are seeking another deep run in the playoffs.

Winnsboro also maintains years of epic battles with Quitman and the Red Raiders will have their yearly battle with

Mount Vernon in a district match-up.

The 'Jackets are expected to roll through district play, but the men of orange have scheduled an extremely tough nondistrict slate opening the season playing three teams from Class 4A District 8 D1 including Kaufman, Van, and Brownsboro along with 4A District 6 DII favorite Wills Points.

In most corners Winnsboro is tabbed for second place and the Red Raiders have the good fortune to have their bye week just before hosting Mineola. That gives the Raiders a little extra time to prepare for the game and get over the nicks and bruises of the season.

The Red Raiders return five starters on each side for the ball from last year's 7-4 team. Winnsboro's Steve Pinnell with 17 years at the helm is one of East Texas most prolific winners. Talented Logan Cortez is expected to fill the quarterback shoes of the graduated Lucas Pinnell. Running back Marcus Tucker is one of East Texas top runners and is a head hunter at linebacker.

It should be a good battle for the remaining playoff spots. Wood County football fans will be seeing Commerce and Farmersville in district play.

The Quitman Bulldogs and Grand Saline Indians each sport an enrollment of 320, two of the smallest Class 3A D1 schools. Quitman's only retuning lineman, big Isaac Sims is out for a few weeks due to an emergency appendectomy, but should be back to anchor the offensive line from his center spot. The Bulldogs are down in numbers, but have quality players in the skill positions. Ty Moss and Jake Farmer will lead the offense at quarterback. When one is at the QB slot, the other will be at the wide receiver spot.

The Bulldogs have nine returning starters on defense led by hard-hitting senior linebacker Brad Davenport. Quitman has speed in the backfield with A.J. Dunn and Kayden White while bulldozer Wacey Warren moves to fullback.

Grand Saline's Head Coach Michael Ridge watched his

team break through a 33 game losing streak to tie Alba-Golden for the top spot in district play last year. The Indians went 5-6 and return six starters on both sides of the ball. They will be led at quarterback by the multitalented Trent Easley and fellow seniors Chris Wilson at wide receiver and Luis Melesio at center.

Commerce was a 5-6 playoff team last season and return seven defenders and five offensive regulars. Defense will be the Tigers strength and they will be leaning on senior leader Oscar Ramirez anchoring the line. Running back Isaiah Askew will get to run behind behemoth senior linemen Justin Hall (6'5, 245) and Nic Smith

(6'5, 270).

Farmersville returns five on offense and four on defense and the Farmers like to get the ball to Texas State committed Caleb Twyford and his brother Cade Twyford is effective running the ball. Chase Hacker takes over at quarterback. The Farmers are young, but have plenty of talent for veteran East Texas area coach Sammy Bur-

It all starts Aug. 26 with Quitman traveling to Big Sandy; Mineola at home against Van; Grand Saline hosting Como Pickton; Winnsboro at West Rusk; Farmersville hosting Cooper, Mount Vernon at Caddo Mills; and Commerce at

Panthers, Hawks striving for playoffs

Bv LARRY TUCKER

news@woodcountymonitor.com

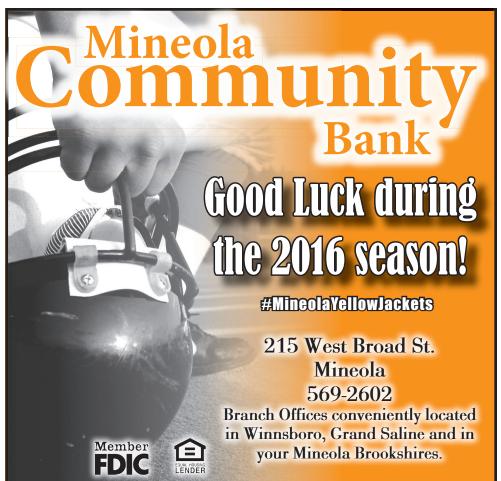
The Alba-Golden Panthers (District 8-3A DII) and Hawkins Hawks (District 10-2A DI) each have Aug. 26 circled on their respective calendars. This is opening night of the 2016 football season and the Panthers will travel east on Highway 80 to take on the Hawks in a renewal of a Wood County rivalry.

The Panthers are coming off a school record 8-3 year and lost several key seniors to graduation. They do have three starters returning on each side of the pigskin. The Hawks suffered through a tough 1-9 season last year, but

return eight starters on both sides of the ball. The Hawks have firepower to burn with speedsters at quarterback and running back. They have moved into a tough district with Union Grove, Big Sandy, Kerens, Cayuga and Cross Roads. Big Sandy and Union Grove are both expected to return to the playoffs. Big Sandy is the only returning school that posted a winning record in 2015.

Alba-Golden is in a new district with Harmony, Winona, Lone Oak, Edgewood and Como-Pickton. Harmony is expected to take off this year with a veteran team that made the playoffs last year in Class 3A D1. The Panthers will get solid leadership from seniors Freddie Reaves at wide receiver, Cody Frazier at free safety and running back, and Brady Rolen at quarterback when he is able to return from an injury.

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ALBA-GOLDEN



Alba-Golden Varsity Football Team



Alba-Golden Junior Varsity Football Team

Panthers looking for early spark

By EVAN DUDLEY sports@woodcountymonitor.com

It's going to be a battle all season for the 2016 Alba-Golden Panthers.

The scene was set shortly after last year's seniors walked off the sideline for the last time. The Panthers return two starters from each side of the ball but an unfortunate injury to the starting quarterback during the early summer has pressed a sense of urgency upon the young Panthers as they hope to reach the playoffs for a fourth consecutive year.

There are pieces in place for another playoff run. Head coach Ron Callahan is aware of his team's youth but knows they can achieve with the right mindset.

"We will have a lot of new faces in the starting lineup," said Callahan. "We lack Friday night experience. If we continue to work we will match last year's success but we have to set our goals high."

high."
Defensive end Evan Galyean returns to terrorize along with free safety Cody Frazier and defensive tackle Anthony Williams helping to anchor the defense until strong safety and starting quarterback Brady Rolen returns from a spiral fracture

According to Callahan, Rolen is expected to miss the first few games of the season but sophomores Zane Smith and Tom Mitchell have progressed rapidly. The Panthers will need their talents early with only one returning offensive lineman.

"They both can run well and both can pass well," said Callahan. "I'm very pleased with their play."

The offense will obviously change with a twoquarterback system in play but Callahan intends on playing to the opposing defenses' weaknesses.

"We'll run whatever the defense will give us," Callahan said. "I can't tell you before the snap what we're going to do. The quarterback has to read what they lineup in and then we go from there."



Alba-Golden Football Seniors

30 is magic number for Lady Panthers

By EVAN DUDLEY sports@woodcountymonitor.com

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The magic number is 30.

Even with an area and bi-district champion-ship, the Alba-Golden Lady Panthers were only one win away from the regional final and an opportunity at a spot in the final four of the 2015

playoffs.
The Lady Panthers fell to Farmersville in the regional quarterfinals but another run is possible in the steady hands of head coach TaShara Everett.

Alba-Golden lost six seniors – five of which were starters – from a 29-9 team but have five returning players including 2015 All-State selection Gracie Pendergrass. Having senior leaders such as Pendergrass and Briana Weissert will prove invaluable in the always tough 3A Region II District 12

II District 12.

"We look good," said
Everett. "We play really
well together and that's

always a positive."

The Lady Panthers, however, will have to come together quickly and develop a fighting mentality heading into this season. Coach Everett continues to schedule tough opponents outside of district play and it only gets tougher in district play against the likes of Quitman and Mineola.

But Everett knows what it takes to navigate a difficult schedule and the Lady Panthers' goals remain the same. Year in. Year out.



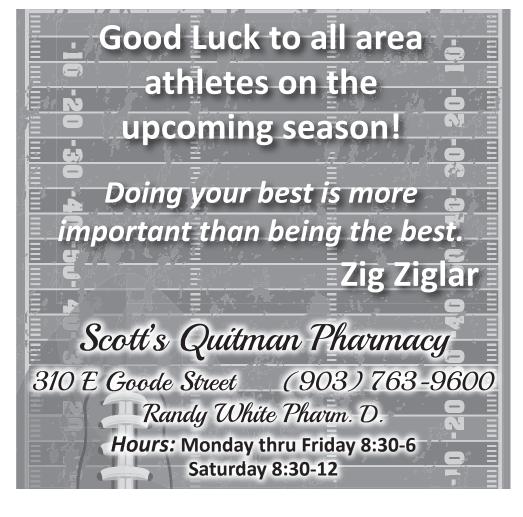
GO PANTHERS!

Located on the North side of the square

Senior Gracie Pendergrass takes flight during the opening match of the 2016 season. (Photo courtesy of Chad Parrish.)

"Our goals are to reach the regional tournament," Everett said. "The magic number is still 30. Thirty wins and we have a good chance to advance."

All Alba-Golden football photos courtesy of Gene's Photography





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in Alba

HAWKINS

New-look Hawks with something to prove in 2016

By EVAN DUDLEY sports@woodcountymonitor.com

On the east side of County Wood Hawkins, a town of approximately 1,200 residents. But what the small Texas town lacks in population they more than make up for in passion and support of their football team.

Nestled across the railroad tracks on the south end of town is Lowrance Field. Here is the site where the 2016 Hawkins Hawks will look to improve upon a disappointing 2015 season with experience, youth and a philosophical change to highlight the talents of their athletes.

The Hawks will see a few new faces this year with district realignment but familiar teams just to the east of Hawkins – Big Sandy and Union Grove - will still make their presence known in District 10-2A Division 1.

Hawkins and fifth-year head coach Marty Moore look to build confidence early in the non-district portion of the schedule.

"It's going to be important to us to win early and have success in nondistrict," said Moore. "We're going to be competitive."

The Hawks lack bodies across the board but look to prove doubters wrong with their brand of Iron-Man football.

The offense returns seven starters with sophomore running back Tristian Garrett leading the way after a promising freshman season. He'll be joined by sophomore quarterback Akim Richmond who gained valuable varsity experience in the secondary during

the 2015 campaign. The two young players will lead the Hawks with a new look spread option offense that Moore hopes will emphasize the talents of the backfield tandem.

"He's (Richmond) very talented," Moore said. "He'll be able to make up inexperience through talent but we'll have to be patient and rely on the run until he gets there."

Senior Dustyn Threlkeld returns lead the defense while also serving as a utility player on offense. He'll be joined by seven other returning starters - including senior linebacker Brian Torres – on the defensive side of the ball which will switch to a 3-4 alignment this year to take advantage of experience in the secondary which will allow the front seven to make plays at the point of at-

"We got a little bit of experience and we have a lot of talent," said Moore. "Any inexperi-



Hawkins Hawks varsity football, front from left, Brian Torres, Krispen Wooten, Sam Turner, Everin Gibson, Chris Jackson, Daniel Robinson and Dustin Threlkeld; back from left, Cadarius Strange, Jordan Cervantes, Jackson Prater, Caleb Thompson, Kyle Williams, Kris Layman, JD McGowan, Tristan Garrett, Collin Barber and Cameron Taylor. Deonte Strange and Akim Richmond not pictured. (Monitor photos by Evan Dudley)



Hawkins Junior Varsity Football Team



Hawkins Football Seniors

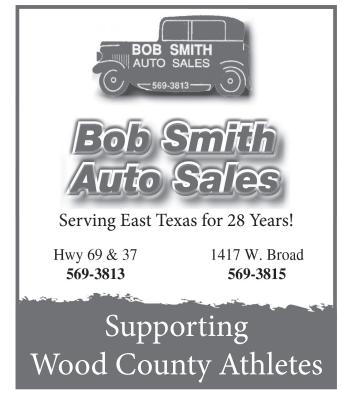
ence we do have will be compensated by talent until they (defense) grow more comfortable in their roles."

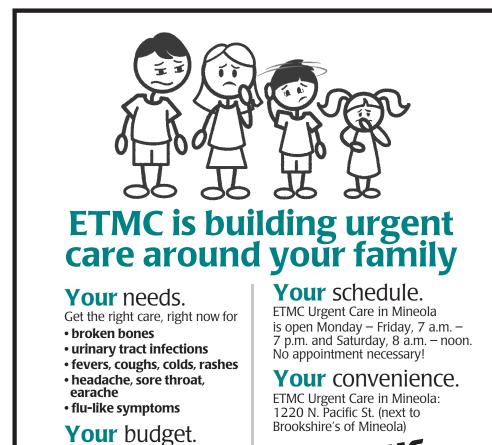
Following a 1-9 season, expectations could be tempered but Moore and the Hawks are looking to compete and win early to build confidence heading into district play. With defensive day, Aug. 26.

experience and a faster athletic offense, Moore believes a district championship and spot in the playoffs is not out of the realm of possibility.

The Hawks look to avenge an early season loss from last year as they open the season on the road against the Alba-Golden Panthers Fri-







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The Hawkins Lady Hawks varsity volleyball players are, front from left, Silvia Montgomery, Madison Staruska and Destiny Chapman; back from left, Hannah Langford, Taylor Jones, Raeli Smith, Natalie Smith, Emily Hodges and Haleigh Dollins. Sydnee Miller not pictured. (Photo courtesy of Quiana Conde.)

YANTIS

Lady Owls build for playoff run behind sophomore leader

By LARRY TUCKER news@woodcountymonitor.com

Class 2A and 1A volleyball playoffs can be a bit confusing. During the regular season, every team in Texas is in Class 2A, but at playoff time, schools with the lower enrollments go into the Class A tournament while the larger schools remain in 2A.

Yantis Coach Jamie Garcia is in her fourth year in the district and third year as volleyball coach. Her Lady Owls have been in the gym working hard to accomplish their goal of having a successful season topped off with a playoff appearance. The Lady Owls are in a district with their chief rival, Miller Grove, along with Boles, Cumby, Fruitvale, and North Hopkins.

The Owls return a pair of seniors, Gracie Beech, and Bailey Bush, along with juniors Jackie Lopez and Madison Jones, sophomores Ashton Burnett, Montana Wetzel, Sarah Wilkie, Maddie Hooker, and Maggie Hooker on the varsity. Garcia also expects another senior, Natalie Colombo, to be on the squad soon.

Garcia believes leadership will be important for the Lady Owls this season. "I really look to all my varsity athletes to



The 2016 Yantis Lady Owls are hoping to win their way to the state playoffs again this year. The Lady Owls are, first row from left, Madison Jones, Jackie Lopez, Ashton Burnett, Bailey Bush and Montana Wetzel; second row from left, Gracie Beech, Maddie Hooker, Maggie Hooker and Sarah Wilkie; top, Head Coach Jamie Garcia. (Monitor Photo by Larry Tucker)

to choose one athlete, it would be Ashton Burnett. Last year as a freshman, she was the team Most Valuable Player," Garcia noted. "She shows so much dedication and hustle, which is all any coach looks for in a leader."

According to Garcia,

while Wilkie, Wetzel, and Jones are the hitters and

blockers. With the playoff structure as it is, Yantis will be in the playoffs regardless of their district finish. The district competition will come from Miller Grove and North Hop-

"Our goal is to beat Miller Grove. Last year we went straight to area and got beat by Union Hill," Garcia said. "I expect everyone in district will be better and I think we will be much better this year. We need to come together as a team. For us to be successful it will take real teamwork more than anything, besides listening to the coach, of course. I am very excited about this season.

Garcia hopes to have an active junior varsity as the total number of players and the program has grown. Other players coming out to the early practices are Jazlyn Jenkins, Ana Gon-

zales, Hope Dixon, Sydney Williams, Michaella Maksud, Emily Favis, Harley Sanchez, Avery Humphrey, and Jocelyn Hodges.

The Lady Owls face a tough pre-season facing Rivercrest, Detroit, Como-Pickton, Dodd City, C.H.E.S.S., and Union Hill. District play begins on the road September 23 at Boles and September 27 at Fruitvale. The district home opener will be September 30 against North Hopkins.

more time Lady Hawks seeking to repeat 2015 **SUCCESS**

One

By EVAN DUDLEY sports@woodcountymonitor.com

It was a banner year for the Hawkins volleyball team in 2015.

Although the nonconference schedule was unkind to the Lady Hawks, a 5-2 record in district propelled them into the playoffs. The Lady Hawks won bi-district and area championships before falling to the Windthorst Trojans in the regional quarterfinals.

The Lady Hawks lost a majority of their starting line from last year's team but head coach Terri Boyd is looking for a similar run through district play in 2016 with the hopes of reaching the playoffs for a second straight year.

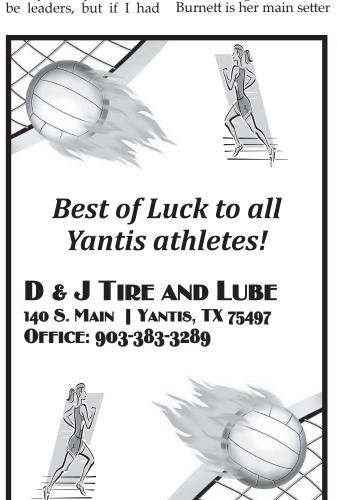
Although the Lady Hawks lost all but one of their hitters, the team is experienced with seven seniors and three juniors returning.

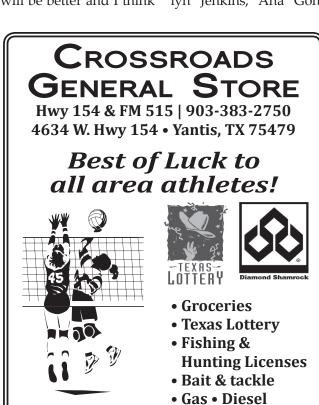
"We have to learn how to play without the ones we lost and play with the ones we have," said Boyd. "When you had as much success as we had last year then it's going to be a learning curve. We're going to have to play our way into how we're going to play and we can't play the way we did last year because we don't have those players anymore."

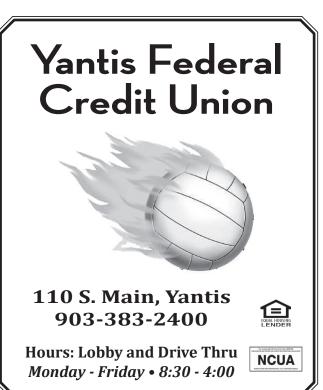
The schedule for this year is certainly not for the faint of heart. Boyd continuously schedules teams out-of-district that are usually a higher classification and have success year-in and year-out. The Lady Hawks record after a demanding nonconference schedule may not be what some envision but playing better competition will make a team better and prepare them for the district schedule.

Adjusting to new starters and playing a difficult schedule is nothing new to Boyd and her program. Discovering how the team will play and how they respond to adversity will be the challenge of the 2016 season.

"We're pretty scrappy," she said. "That may have to be our M.O."







WINNSBOR(



Winnsboro Varsity Football Team

Winnsboro Red Raiders look to challenge Mineola

By LARRY TUCKER news@woodcountymonitor.com

The bye in the District 7-3A D1 schedule falls on a convenient date this year for Winnsboro. The Red Raiders will play nine games before taking off October 28. Their final game November 4 will be at home against the state's pre-season number one Mineola Yellow Jackets.

The week off before what could be the district championship should be an advantage for the Red Raiders. It will give them the extra time to prepare for the game as well as recover from the nicks and bruises of a tough regular season. It will further be a great playoff atmosphere before bi-district match-

Athletic Director and Head Coach Steve Pinnell is not only a former Raider, he has been coaching at his alma mater for 17 years. The Raiders return five offensive and five defensive regulars from a 7-4 team who made the playoffs.

The big name on offense is rugged Marcus Tucker who uses his size (6'1, 205) and speed to elude defenders. He had over 1,200 rushing yards and 17 touchdowns last year. He is also a stellar linebacker who nailed 85 tackles last season.

Logan Cortez steps in at quarterback to take over the Red Raider grind it out flex-bone type offense. Other players to watch for Winnsboro will be Jonathan Spurlin at fullback/linebacker; Colby Brown running back/ linebacker; and junior center Jared Yarborough. The Red Raiders also have big Isaiah Benton, who at just less than six feet and 220 pounds, will be a big target for Cortez at tight end and will secure one of the defensive sides as defensive end.

The Raiders play a tough non-district slate starting the season on the road at West Rusk, a Class 3A DII team whose only two losses last year came from district rival and state champion Waskom going 12-2. West Rusk has six offensive and seven

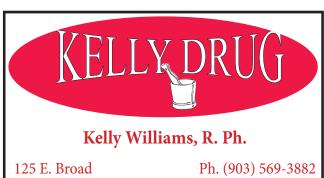
Mineola, TX 75773

defenders returning.

The Raiders also face Class 4A Quinlan Ford followed by a homecoming game against Prairiland and a road game at Sabine before opening district play at Quitman September 23.

Photo courtesy of Ross Hunter, Winnsboro News

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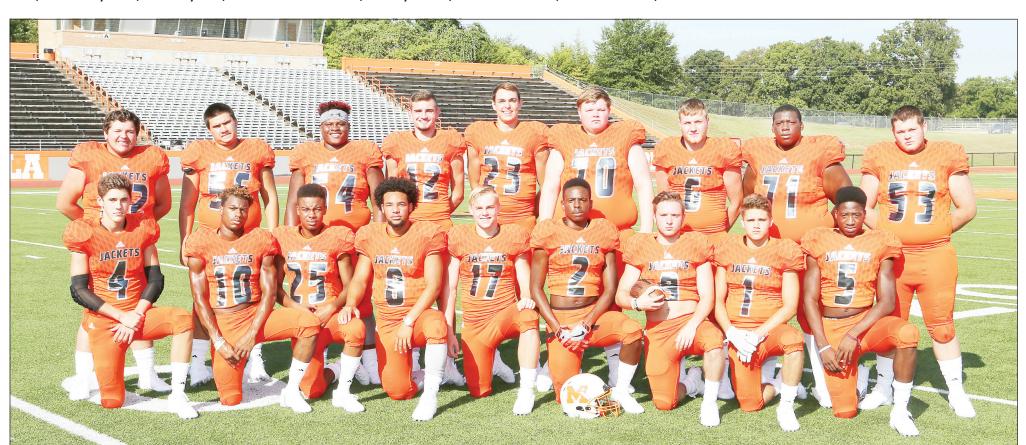


Refresh your Space





Coaches, trainers and players for the 2016 Mineola YellowJackets are, front row from left, Aaron Stanford, Kourtland Sinches, Cody Ford, Cameron Hays, Devante Wright, Noah Sneed, Jermiah Crawford, Chantz Perkins, Kartney Hampton, Michael Drennon and Frank Meason. Second row from left are trainer Lacie Brown, trainer Triston Mosher, Cameron Sorrenson, Seth Hudgins, Preston Lankford, Curtis London, Jacob Ford, Devon Goggon, Jamichae Brown, Dalton Harris and trainer Rachel Drennon. Third row from left are trainer Erin Johnson, Cameron Wise, Luke Bowdoin, Dreason Tennor, Dalton Roblus, Hugo Sanchez, Tracy Murphy, Eli Dobbs, Dolton Hargrove, KJ Hawkins, Eon Thompson and Head Coach Joe Drennon. Back row from left are Coach Brian Pullum, Coach John Van Dover, Coach Ryan Stedman, Coach Tony Riley, Coach Kyle Little, Coach Charlie Feller, Coach Jeffery Tiddle, Coach Billy Dunn, Head Trainer Ben Melancon, Coach Kyle Austin, Coach Luke Blackwell, Coach Steve Almute, Coach Bill Self and Coach Brent Hutto.



2016 Mineola YellowJackets seniors are, front from left, Cameron Hays, Kartney Hampton, Jamichae Brown, Jermiah Crawford, Seth Hudgins, Kourtland Sinches, Chantz Perkins, Aaron Stanford and Devante Wright. Back row from left, Tracy Murphy, Dalton Roblus, Dreason Tennor, Frank Meason, Devon Goggon, Dolton Hargrove, Noah Sneed, KJ Hawkins and Luke Bowdoin.

time's a charm for Yellowjackets

By EVAN DUDLEY

sports@woodcountymonitor.com

This is the year. It's been talked about hours at coffee shops, weekends and probably between sermon at their faithful with a

in the early morning church. This is the year championship. that the Mineola Yelthe famers' market on lowJackets will silence all doubters and reward

The 2016 YellowJackets return nearly their entire team intact from last season with the exception of the Anderson twins, who took their talents to College Station to play in the mighty SEC. Head Coach Joe Drennon is not concerned, however, as he has built Mineola into a sustainable engine that reloads each

season. "Our expectations, I don't believe, are ever going to change. I think we're going to be really good again, I really do," said Drennon. "Obviously we're never going to replace Austin and Riley, but we have good high school football players."

The entertainment division of this enterprise is the offense, centered around seniors Jeremiah Crawford and Chantz Perkins. Mineola's dynamic duo amounted to more than 5,000 yards of offense last year and

are expected to repeat or even surpass those numbers this year.

It may seem like a tall task, considering the departure of the Andersons, but Crawford sees the glass as half-full.

"I'm excited," he said. "This is the first year I can actually see over my offensive line."

But this team is not just an offensive juggernaut. The defense returns every starter from a unit that allowed a meager 12.3 points per game during an undefeated 2015 season. There are no superstars but these guys come together as a cohesive unit that looks to cause chaos and havoc this upcoming season.

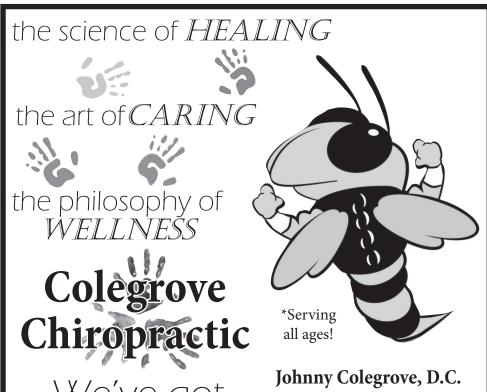
Junior Cameron Sorenson and senior Noah Sneed are manning the secondary, seniors Dreason Tenner, Kourtland Sinches and Devante Wright load the line and Drennon leads the pack from the middle of the field.

"Having everybody back is an advantage," said Drennon. "We're always building each other up and helping each other out when someone gets down."

Beyond replacing two SEC-caliber lineman, the only question this team will have to answer is how will they battle complacency. Remembering how they played to this point and executing it will be far more important than just stats in a box score.

"We have got kids that have been starting for us for two and three years now," Drennon said. "Hopefully, our maturity will show. They have played in a lot of games and a lot of big games."

All Mineola football, volleyball, band and cheer photos courtesy Gene's Photography



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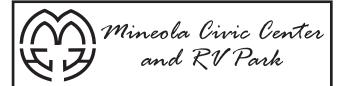
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Mineola Junior Varsity Football Team





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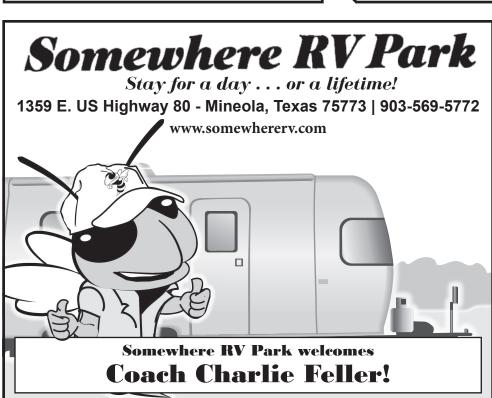
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Young Lady Jackets seek return to playoffs

By EVAN DUDLEY sports@woodcountymonitor.com

Youth is the name of the game for the 2016 Mineola Lady Jackets and head coach Kerry Van Cleave. The Lady Jackets return five players, including two seniors, from last year's team that lost to Farmersville in the opening round of the playoffs.

What the Lady Jackets lack in experience they will make up for in ath-

"We're young but athletic," said Van Cleave. "It's going to take time playing together but they have the potential and need to realize that they have it. We need the experience on the floor."

This year's team will face another daunting schedule in 3A Region II District 12. Van Cleave



The 2016 Mineola Varsity Volleyball players are front from left, Vanessa Spurgeon, Jessiah Riley, Jadi Lopez, Abby Hagan and Lanie Kelley. Back row from left, Kiley Banks, Lauren Almuete, Jaycee Whitehead and Sabria Dean. They are shown with Head Coach Kerry Van Cleave, center, and assistants.

TACHIKARA Senior Lauren Almuete Van



Senior Jadi Lopez

reached over time but the Lady Jackets will have to grow up quickly before district play begins.

Senior Lauren Alm-

believes potential can be uete is the leader. She is arguably the best player in the program, has intimate knowledge of the game and expects to keep playing the game

beyond high school. "Almuete is a beast,"

Van Cleave said, "She's smart, sees the floor and can lead this team."

There are other players

Cleave expects to step up and have a big year beyond her senior leader. And they're only freshman.

"Sabria Dean and Jessiah Riley can be big hitters for us but they have to grow into it and gain that confidence," said Van Cleave.

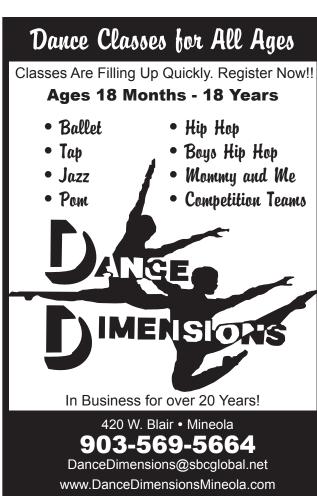
If the Lady Jackets can enter district play with a solid record the team can make a third straight appearance in the playoffs. But fighting off the likes of perennial powers Alba-Golden and Quitman will be the true test of how far Van Cleave has built this program in her fourth year back after a short stint away.

"It's good for us," said Van Cleave. "It's good for us to see that level of play and it's good to see that we hang with them. It's learning. If we make the playoffs we'll be playing teams of that caliber.'





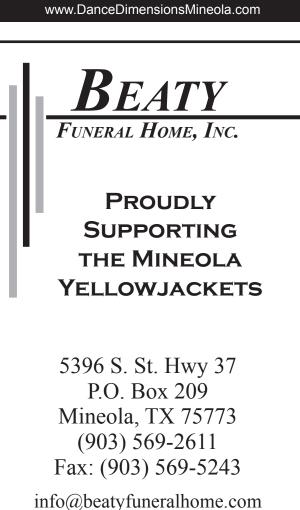


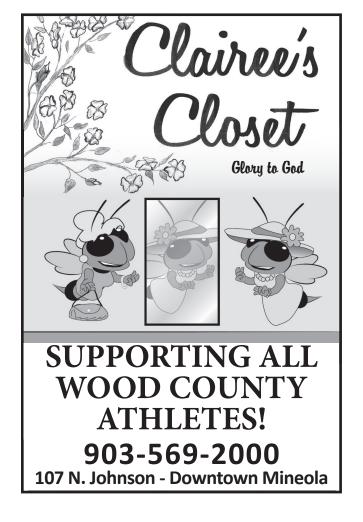






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QUITMAN

Lady Bulldogs have big goals

By LARRY TUCKER news@woodcountymonitor.com

Returning a veteran team this season, the Quitman Lady Bulldogs and Coach Ashlee Lingo have set a deep playoff run as a realistic goal. Last year's team had just one senior and a core of sophomores led them to a third place finish and a trip to the state playoffs.

Those sophomores from last year, Molly Tanner, Kaci Raley, Cammie Hicks, and Rebekah Corrior are now experienced juniors to go with senior leadership from Macy Wilson, Shelby Smith, and Brittney Walls, along with last season's district newcomer Madalyn Spears and fellow sophomore, Abby Dobbs.

The bi-annual University Interscholastic League (UIL) realignment finds Quitman heading south instead of north. They will compete in District 12-AAĀ against old district foes Alba-Golden, Mineola, Grand Saline, and Edgewood along with new additions Eustace, Kemp, and Scurry-Rosser.

"We are in a new district and don't know a lot about the new teams, although we do know Eustace is going to be good. They have a great coach in Chuck Power. He really knows volleyball and his teams are always fundamental and good. Alba-Golden is the defending district champion, but lost several seniors, but they still have a lot of talent and they have Gracie Pendergrass, a really great player," Lingo explained. "Kemp and Scurry-Rosser each have new coaches. Mineola will be young, but they had talent. Grand Saline lost some good players, but they have a good thing going on over there and we are going to have to be ready for them, and Edgewood has a new coach, Štacy Parker, who will have them ready for district play.'

Once again, Lingo has scheduled a tough preseason for her Lady Bulldogs. "Growing up and playing for Coach Guyon (Keith) always played a scary schedule. I remember my senior year and looking at the schedule thinking this is ridiculous thinking there was no way we would be successful," Lingo said. "We ended up just losing two games, one of them the state final."

Lingo said there were reasons to schedule good competition. "We need to see and play against the tough competition. It really prepares us for district, and hopefully the playoffs. Playing a tough schedule gives you confidence and experience," Lingo claimed. "We will be in the Tyler tournament again with some good 5A and 6A schools and the White Oak tournament always has some of the best teams in the state competing."



The Quitman Lady Bulldog Varsity volleyball team is expecting a banner year. They are, bottom from left, Cammie Hicks, Brittany Walls, Abby Dobbs, Rebekah Corrior and Madalyn Spears; back from left, Macy Wilson, Molly Tanner, Kaci Raley and Shelby Smith. (Monitor Photo by Larry Tucker)

Lingo said the Lady Bulldogs have set goals and been through team building exercises. They have looked ahead to tournament play. "We broke down each tournament and talked about who was there, who they can beat and who they will have a tough time with," Lingo noted.

Senior Macy Wilson and Spears are the outside hitters while Tanner and Raley control the middle. Walls and Corrior take care of the right side with Dobbs handling the libero spot. All State setter Cammie Hicks runs the offensive attack with Smith being the team's utility player, checking in wher-

State Farm

ever Lingo needs her.

In an effort to get better, the Lady Bulldogs started playing club volleyball last November after their playoff loss ended the season. Lingo and the Lady Bulldogs want to win a district crown. "The goal is to be at the top of

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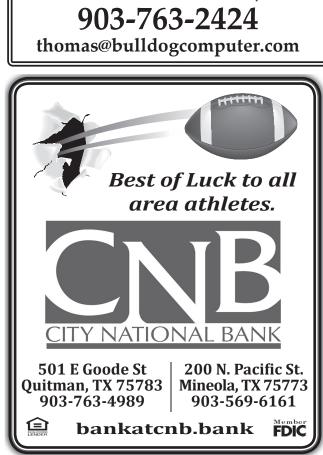
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Bulldogs hungry for turn around

By LARRY TUCKER news@woodcountymonitor

For 13 seniors, the time to win for the Quitman Bulldogs is now. An experienced team with a bulk of returning starters gives the Bulldog faithful hope for the coming season.

Quitman will line up six returning starters on offense and nine back on the defensive side of the ball. The Bulldogs are ready to prove all the doubters wrong who have picked them to finish at the bottom of District 7-3A Division 1.

Athletic director and Head Coach John Woodard heads into the season with optimism. "We are bigger, faster, and stronger this year. These kids have worked hard year around and they are ready to play some football. We are now in our third year of the program. The kids know the coaches and we know them," Woodard said. "We know we have that 0-20 hanging behind us, but if we win one, we can win a bunch. Getting that win will change things for us quickly. Our staff and kids will always come to play."

Realignment finds the Bulldogs headed north instead of east this season. The only holdover from the old district is the state's number one Class 3A team Mineola. The Bulldogs and Yellowjackets find themselves joined by old Wood County nemesis Winnsboro, Van Zandt County rival Grand



Quitman Bulldog varsity football, front from left, Teague Stewart, Gavin Derryberry, Anthony Januszewski, David Henderson, Nick Poppenhusen, Kayden White, Wacey Warren, Jake Farmer, Brad Davenport, and A.J. Dunn; back from left, Reggie Bowser, Dylan Pope, Gage Tolle, Cody White, Santos Morua, Grant Derryberry, Isaac Sims, Noah Llewelling, Sebastian Howell, Guydon Williams, and Aaron McDade.

Saline, up from Class 3A Division II, along with Mt. Vernon, Commerce, and Farmersville.

Quitman and Grand Saline, each with an enrollment of 320, are the smaller schools in the district. The largest school in the group is Commerce with at 463, followed by Farmersville with 454, Mt. Vernon 449, Mineola 444, and Winnsboro 427.

Having lower enrollment numbers means smaller coaching staffs. "That's just the way it is. You have to have teaching positions for coaches, but our coaches are all dedicated. All of our coaches coach all of our football teams," Woodard explained. "It takes dedication from your staff and your kids to be successful, and we have that here in Quitman. Our strength is we are so much stronger and the kids have worked hard to get there."

Joining Woodard on the staff are Steve Stewart (offensive coordinator), Josh Wade (defensive coordinator and linebackers), Ronnie Webber (secondary), James Warren (receivers), David Reynolds, Jim Reid, and Lee LaPrade (defensive line). LaPrade is the only newcomer on



Quitman Junior Varsity Football Team

the staff and he comes to the Bulldogs from Grand Saline. Reynolds and Reid coach the junior high, but all the coaches work with the seventh and eighth graders during their athletic period.

Woodard said the team has been concentrating on not turning the ball over this year. "In the past fumbles and other mistakes hurt us at crucial times in games where we had the chances to win. So far in practice this year, we have only fumbled once and that was on a pitch. It's great we are getting that eliminated,"

Woodard noted.

Leadership will be a key for Bulldog success this season. "Senior leadership is awesome. We have had those kids since they were sophomores. What we teach, they do. They have worked hard and have totally changed the attitude of off-season," Woodard claimed. "They are totally unselfish. We had a guard tweak a shoulder the other day and a senior jumped up and said 'coach, I will do it." These are kids who will do anything to help their team win. They don't care who gets the glory, they just want to win.

They are saying, I will sacrifice any glory for the good of the team."

The team has built their attitude and effort on belief in each other and their coaches. "If I ask a kid who is a linebacker to play defensive tackle, that kid would go in there and give us everything he could for his team. That's because it is all about family. When we break, we break with 'family' and these kids are a good group," Woodard confirmed. "They have a common interest. They want to win, they are so hungry, which is beautiful, and when they get a win, there's no telling what will happen after that. They are extremely serious about what they are doing out there in

Woodard said being down in numbers is a concern. "We are one of the smallest 3A DI schools in the state. Our numbers may not be where I would like them. We are looking at about 21 or 22 kids on

varsity, but they all can play several positions," Woodard added. "We can put out 11 good kids on offense, 11 on defense, and 11 on special teams, those are ones, but you win games with the twos, those who come in to replace those ones when they have to come off the

field." The Bulldogs return one starter on the offensive line, but he is a good one. Center Isaac Sims stands almost 6'3" and weighs just under 300 pounds. He has drawn interest from several collegiate programs. He will anchor a line including Sebastion Howell, Noah Lewelling, Gage Toll, Teague Stewart, David Henderson, Aaron McDade, Santos Marua, and Guydon Williams. Each one of the "big guys" can go on offense and defense.

"Our offensive line will average 250 pounds and each one of those guys can play whatever position we have to fill," Woodard added. "I am extremely pleased with their desire and effort. They constantly have each other's back."

The quarterback chores will be handed over to Ty Moss and Jake Farmer. Whichever one of those is under the center, the other will be on the field as a wide receiver. "Both kids are doing good right now. Moss got some experience at quarterback last year when we had all the injuries. Farmer has some great speed which gives us another dimension on

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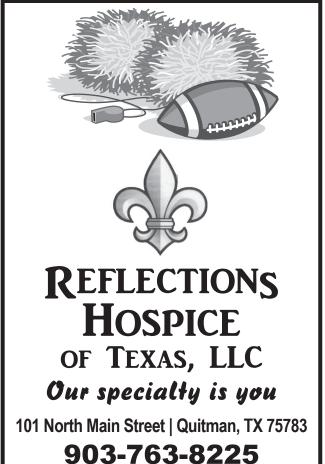


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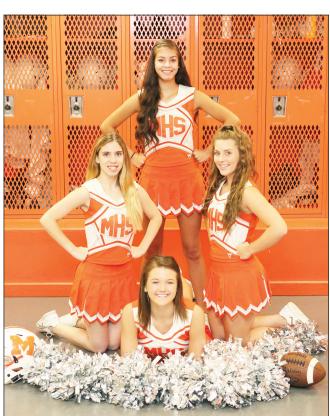




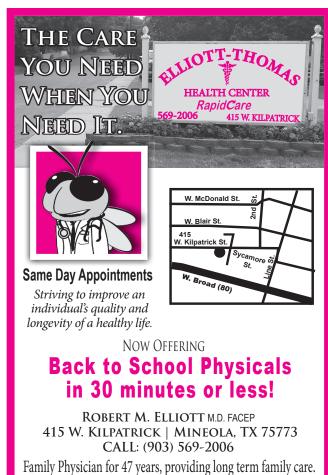


Quitman Varsity cheerleaders (front row, left to right) Faith Fitch, Brittany Walls (Captain) Caroline Cameron, Brittany Glover; (middle row (left to right) Emma VanBeceleare, Abby Dobbs, Halee Hightower; (back row, left to right) Judith Delgadillo, Aleigh Farnham, Lyndsey Barnett (mascot), Jentri Jackson, Cameron Williams. Avary Stevens is not pictured.

Mineola Varsity Cheer



Mineola Junior Varsity Cheer





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Bulldogs

From page 10D

offense," Woodard asserted. "We feel good about our running backs A.J. Dunn, Kayden White, and Brad Davenport. They all have experience and come ready to compete every practice and every game. I am excited because we have quality athletes at each position."

Fullback Wacey Warren will be at full speed this year after spending much of last season on the injury list. The rugged 220 pounder is a tough runner and he also is a devastathard, has good vision and has explosion in his running," Woodard said. "He is good running back with size and actually has some moves. In the past we have had guys who would just run over you."

Bulldog newcomer Regbrought a lively spirit and effort with him. All the Bulldogs have been this season is different and they start a winning tradition. Rounding out the varsity and expecting to see plenty of action are Grant Derryberry, Gavin Derryberry, Nick Pop-

Cody White. "Every kid on our varsity has a role if not multiple roles on this team, whether or not it's starting or on special teams," Woodard stated.

The Bulldogs open the season at Big Sandy, followed by a game at gie Bowser has moved Eustace, before their in from Gilmer and has home opener September 9 against Beckville and homecoming September 16 taking on Harmony. working to make sure District action starts with Winnsboro at home September 23 and Mineola on the road September 30. The Bulldogs get a bye October 7 and finish with Farmersville, Mt. Vernon, Grand Saline, and Commerce.

Receivers for the 2016 Quitman Bulldogs are, from left, Guydon Williams, Gavin Derryberry, Dylan Poe, Cody White, Aaron

McDade and Da-

vid Henderson.



Backfield personnel for the 2016 Quitman Bulldogs are, from left, Nick Poppenhusen, Grant Derryberry, Brad Davenport, Santos Marua, Kayden White, Reggie Bowser, Wacey Warren, A.J. Dunn and Jake Farmer.



ing blocker. "Wacey runs penhusen, Dylan Poe, and themselves, but if we can district and do well in the playoffs." stay healthy, we should have a shot at it," Lingo The quest for a district observed. "One of the championship and a shot From page 9D things with this group at the state playoffs be-

The Quitman Bulldog senior class will lead their team into the 2016 season. They are, from left, Agron McDade, Guydon Williams, David Henderson, Reggie Bowser, Brad Davenport, Santos Morua, Nick Poppenhusen, Grant Derryberry, Wacey Warren, Jake Farmer, and Noah Llewelling. Ty Moss is not pictured.

Ouitman

the district. The girls set a goal to go undefeated in district. That is a lot of pressure they put on

is convincing them how good they can become. They are unselfish and they are hungry to win Rosser.

gins in earnest as district play opens September 9 at home against Scurry-



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