

## New coach hopes to make Bulldogs an annual playoff team

**By Mike Lee**  
**Eagle Contributor**

Mullin has a mostly new football staff, including new head coach Randy Sims, plus a new offense that the Bulldogs hope will spread out opposing defenses.

Sims was a Bulldogs' assistant coach the last three years, but he has a completely new staff, including offensive coordinator Shawn Rogers, a Mullin native who helped Richland Springs win seven of its eight state championships.

"I'm excited for the opportunity to mold these young men into a playoff contender every year," said Sims, who is inheriting a team that last year finished 6-3 overall and 2-2 in District 12-1A Division II. "Coach Rogers has put in a new offense, and the kids are picking it up. We had been more of a tight formation team. We're spreading things out to take advantage of our height and speed. All of our players except for two are 6-foot or taller."

On paper the six-man Bulldogs are still a young team, with Ricky Dela Rosa listed as the lone senior on the roster. Mullin also lost three seniors from last year's roster. However, the Bulldogs were forced to play without two of those seniors for most of the 2016 district schedule.

"We're still really young, but we have a lot of kids coming back that played a lot last year," Sims said. "We plan to be fighting for a district championship and then a playoff spot."

Panther Creek, a regional finalist last year, easily won the district in 2016. In a game for the final playoff berth, Mullin was impacted by injuries and surprised by Brooke-

smith 54-36.

This year's district race again appears wide open after Panther Creek, which was 12-1 last year and drew a No. 10 preseason statewide Division II ranking from Texas Football magazine. Brookesmith, Sidney and Gustine combined for a 7-22 record last year.

Mullin returns plenty of all-district players, including Dela Rosa, a first-team running back and safety who led the Bulldogs in rushing and tackles last year. Jyles Wootton, a 6-foot, 155-pound junior, will focus on playing end this year after playing multiple positions last year. His brother, 6-2 sophomore Jaxon Wootton, returns at quarterback. Both Wootton brothers were all-district last year.

Junior Bobby Salinas returns at center and may also play some at receiver. Sophomore Alex Porter (6-1, 190) will play some at center. There are multiple receiver candidates, including junior Jace Porter (6-1, 165), sophomores Skyler Smith (6-2, 180) and Nicholas Allyn (5-11, 210), and freshman Cody Knight, who may also see time at running back.

The Bulldogs also have new running back Dontrel Dale, a 5-2, 160-pound junior who played for San Angelo Central's JV last year.

Defensively, Dela Rosa returns at safety along with the Wootton brothers at the end positions and Salinas at linebacker. Dale figures to play cornerback. Other end prospects include Alex Porter, Jace Porter, Smith, Allyn and Knight.

"Quickness should be our main strength," Sims said. "Ricky Dela Rosa and Dontrel Dale both run a 4.6 in the 40 (yard dash), and we have several kids that can run

under 5-flat. We want to use our speed to get around the corner or throw it deep if the defense moves its corners up to stop the run."

The Bulldogs last year averaged 46 points per game and allowed 35, which was a 25-point improvement over recent seasons defensively.

With 10 players on the presea-

son roster, staying healthy will be the biggest key to Mullin's success. In 2014, the Bulldogs remained healthy and made the playoffs. In the last two seasons, they've experienced injuries and just missed the postseason.

Sims hopes to have 13 or 14 players by the first regular-season game.



**Randy Sims**  
**Head Coach**



**Chayden Feist**  
**Athletic Director**



**Kolby Richardson**  
**Assistant Coach**



**Shawn Rogers**  
**Offensive Coordinator**

**Not Pictured: Paul Knight, Asst. Coach**