

FRUITDALE PIRATES

PIRATE EXCITEMENT



The 2017 Fruitdale High School Pirates

Fruitdale photos by William Gray/Call News

“They’re excited about playing football, they’re excited about getting in the weight room, and they’re excited about getting out on the field and running and throwing the football around.” — Coach Mike Davis

Fruitdale players work on getting stronger in weight room in hopes of becoming a Class 1A contender this season

BY LEEQUINTON BLACKMON
Call News Correspondent

The number seven is probably a number people associated with Fruitdale High School football have become all too familiar with in recent years, as that’s the amount of games the Pirates have lost each of the past two seasons.

To help them get things back on the right track and return to the winning ways they had in 2014, Fruitdale has hired longtime Beulah High School assistant Mike Davis to head their football program.

Davis made his ultimate goal for the team very clear on Aug. 3, as he told a room full of reporters that he wanted Fruitdale to be talked about in the same light as Class 1A powerhouses like Linden and Sweet Water.

In order to do that, Davis has set a very simple goal for his team to accomplish this upcoming season.

“When the season is over,” Davis said, “my hope is for Fruitdale to have gotten better. I hope we’ve gotten bigger, I hope

we’ve gotten stronger, I hope the kids have gotten more confident in themselves and in the things we’re going to do in the future. We’re not going to worry about wins and losses right now, we’re just going to worry about getting better. I believe if we do that, then the rest will take care of itself.”

One of the ways Davis plans on making the Pirates a better team this year is to have them focus more on how they utilize their time off the field, by placing an emphasis on weight training and conditioning — which hasn’t always been a priority in the Pirates’ football program.

“The biggest thing is that we’ve been able to get in the weight room right away,” Davis said. “Some of them said they have not been in the weight room since January or February, so it’s really important for us that we go into the season placing an emphasis on that. We’ve been able to get in the weight room and get busy in there and get a lot of things done, so I think we’ve gotten stronger

this summer. I think that’s been a big key for us. We haven’t been able to get on the field as much as we’ve wanted to, but the plan is to show them that what they do off the field is going to help them out tremendously on the field.”

The reason the Pirates haven’t been able to see much of the practice field this summer is because for the second straight season, the Pirates have missed out on having a spring game and have gotten another late start to the season due to coaching changes. Davis, who was hired May 25, wasn’t able to join the team until June 12. Since then, the Pirates have hit the ground running at full speed to make up for lost time.

So far, the weather has been the Pirates biggest enemy, as Davis says it’s been almost impossible to get outside and practice.

“Since we didn’t get spring, and I got there late this summer,” Davis said, “we’ve just been trying to get some basic things covered and talked about. The plan is to get started (Aug. 7) and

be able to hit the ground running. We’re doing a lot of basic stuff right now, so that we’re not starting from scratch once we get out there on the field at practice. The main thing is we want to be able to maximize our time as much as possible before the season starts.”

The Pirates will have a lot of work to do in a short time, as they look to open the season at Holy Spirit on Aug. 25, but in the meantime Davis says there is a sense of excitement surrounding the team that he can’t quite explain.

“It’s a very exciting time around here right now,” he said. “I don’t know if it’s because of me or they were just uncertain of what’s going on, but they’re excited right now. They’re excited about playing football, they’re excited about getting in the weight room, and they’re excited about getting out on the field and running and throwing the football around. Now it’s just time to carry that excitement over into the season.”

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