

Jackets looking to put up big numbers

By **Ryan Horton**
Staff Writer

Choctaw's coaches believe their roster contains what it takes to put up big numbers this season.

Choctaw High School put up 260 points last year, and the Yellowjackets hope to beat that this season as second-year head coach **Jake Corbin** and his staff implement some changes and new weapons.

As always, important components of the Jacket offense remain a talented quarterback, long list of skilled and athletic receivers combined with fast and physical running backs.

However, Corbin notes what will separate this year's lineup from previous Jacket squads will be the offensive line and the implementation of a tight end.

Corbin says the team's success begins and ends with their offensive line. He is confident following summer conditioning his roster is in better physical shape than any previous Jacket lineup, and he says his linemen are the proof.

"All of our offensive linemen can do multiple pull-ups now. That's a big deal to have guys that are not only big, but athletic and in control of their bodies," explained Corbin. "They've lost a lot of weight, and gained a lot of muscle. They're athletic and big which is a good combination, and on top of that they're really bright kids."

Corbin says those elite athletes making up one of the best offensive lines he's ever been around include seniors **Jacob Slavick, Cade Kelly, Tye Gilbert** and **Paydon Spencer**, and also juniors **Jake Lovinggood** and **Andrew Beabout**.

"Three of those guys (**Cade Kelly, Tye Gilbert** and **Paydon Spencer**) currently hold college offers," said Corbin. "Obviously, we hope to add some more as we go."

A noticeable change will be visible this season as Choctaw plans to lineup with a tight end in play.

"We think this tight end setup will let us do a lot more," Corbin said. "We'll still do the up tempo, no huddle, spread offense as people call it. But we'll step up and be more physical with our run game than we were a year ago."

Isaiah Sumlin, an experienced defensive lineman, will step up to fill this offense hybrid role for Choctaw.

"He played D-line for us a year ago and he still will, but we want to take advantage of his offensive abilities," said Corbin.

Coaches expect some new opportunities to develop as the tight end will open up some big run plays and provide an option for the quarterbacks to find a receiver and avoid getting themselves trouble.

Junior **Thad Williams** will step up as the starting quarterback for Choctaw this season.

"Thad has a really big arm, is a great kid, works hard and is just a great teammate. He has all the intangibles you want with a QB. He's a junior, but he's like having a returning star," said Corbin. "He picks things up fast and has gotten really comfortable over the summer. He has done a camp almost every weekend this summer in addition to being here every day. He's throwing a really good ball right now."

Sophomore **Spence Templeton** is prepared to back up Williams as the young Jacket has shown much improvement since last season.



-Staff photo by Ryan Horton

Senior Zane Coleman is the Yellowjackets top returning receiver.

"You could argue for him as most improved from last year," said Corbin. "He's come leaps and bounds as far as foot work, timing and everything."

Choctaw may have less varsity QBs ready to play than in years past, but coaches are confident in their skilled players. Choctaw's junior and sophomore QB duo are the most experienced in the position, and a plethora of skilled freshmen are taking notes.

"Next year we'll be deep in the QB position, because we have like three freshmen that are really good," said Corbin. "**Angel Ackerman** will be our emergency quarterback. He's a really good athlete."

Zane Coleman returns as Choctaw's leading receiver, while plenty of talent and depth makes a long list of potential receivers.

"Our leading receiver is returning. Three-time state champion wrestler Zane Coleman, who just committed verbally to Arizona State for wrestling," said Corbin. "He returns with a bunch of receptions and touchdowns from a

year ago. He's gotten his football shape back and then some. He's added a lot of size this year for us."

Others expected to make major receptions include Angel Ackerman, **Gabe Johnson, Caden Young, Jordan Mukes** and **Isaiah Sumlin**.

At running back Choctaw senior **Blake Muse** has ambition of setting a new school record, while a sophomore Jacket in **Corey Williams** is looking to create his own legacy.

"(Corey) Muse has had a tremendous summer. He's a great team leader, and has just done an awesome job all summer. He has added size, and cut his speed down so he can really fly now," Corbin said.

The school has a long history of talented kickers moving through the program, and this year a pair of juniors plan to make sure that tradition continues.

Jacob Dunning, who had over 50 points a year ago, returns as Choctaw's PAT/FG kicker.

Jonah Zook will contend for the role of kickoff specialist.