

# Experience fuels Panthers offense

By John Martin  
Staff Writer

Even though Harrah's sparkling new football complex at Evans Field is now a year old, the 2018 Harrah Panthers will sport a brand new look for the upcoming football season with 24 seniors gone from last year's squad.

But always confident and upbeat coach **Phil Webb** prefers to concentrate on the present and the future and not the past.

"We have had a fabulous summer. We just finished another year of Summer Pride with the most participation since we started the program. We had 60 in the 9-12 group participate and 30 of them had 100 per cent attendance.

"Plus we had 40 from the 7-8 grade group which means we have 100 players ready for a new year of football in Harrah," Webb said.

Webb continues the emphasis on "ONE TEAM."

"We emphasize consistency, in our program, in our kids and especially on the coaching staff. We

have had our struggles the past couple of years, but never lacked in effort and dedication. We think this group of kids will be off the chart with athleticism. There are some talented guys that people are going to enjoy watching" he added.

The Panthers will have a new leader this year at quarterback. Jeff Roberson, who handled the signal calling duties last year and carried most of the offensive load, is moving to his more natural position at I-Back to take advantage of more effective blocking.

Hard-working senior Carson Bell is back at the H-back slot where he will be Roberson's lead blocker and also a threat to run the ball and has sure hands as a receiver.

The battle for the quarterback slot has narrowed down to sophomore Chase Jackson and junior Brian Byers, who handled the JV quarterbacking job last year before suffering an injury.

"They are both excellent athletes, good leaders and make good decisions. Both are extremely athletic and both will play on both offense and

defense, so there will be no losers in the battle," said Webb. Speedy Gage Payne, an explosive kickoff and punt returner, is injury free and also will see some carries out of the backfield, along with small but mighty Anthony Portuguese, a sophomore.

Whether it's Jackson or Byers calling the signals, the receiving corp will be solid with juniors Brent Wilson and Kolby Visnieski, either Byers or Jackson, Gaven Revene, a talented move-in from Midwest City and seniors Nick Wenzl and Seth Hensley.

The entire front wall of the offense is gone from last year, but the cupboard is hardly bare with Colton Siler, Hunter Thomason, Gauge Inman, Mason Story, Blake Harbison, Jeremy Baker, Tyson Williams, Carson McBrayer and baseball standout Gene Thompson all vying for positions.

The schedule makers didn't do the Harrah Panthers any favors when they realigned the state's district football schedules for the next two years.

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