

Eagles looking to take next step

Del City making move to Class 6A-II

By **Jeff Harrison**
Managing Editor

Del City's football program has been on a steady climb in recent years.

The Eagles have made the playoffs six years in a row and have produced numerous Division I players.

Coach **Mike Dunn** believes they're ready to take that next step.

"It seems like there's a glass ceiling. Some really good coaches like **Jeff Craig, Nick Warehime and Jake Corbin** have come in and done a great job. I think we're right there and need to take that next step and bust through that ceiling."

If the Eagles take that next step, they'll do so against stiffer competition. After several years of competing in Class 5A, Del City is headed back to Class 6A. The OSSAA moved Del City and Booker T. Washington, the two largest 5A schools, to Class 6A-II after Capitol Hill and U.S. Grant chose to play an independent schedule instead of compete in 6A.

Dunn says his team will be ready for the move, and he doesn't believe there is much of a difference between 6A-II and the top teams in 5A. The biggest change is in the week-to-week schedule.

"We need to play week in and week out," he said. "There are no gimmes in 6A-II and we realize that. That's why we work so hard in the offseason."

For the Eagles, the offseason started in November, just three days after their 2017 season ended with a bitter first-round loss to Bishop McGuinness. Dunn said the players have been committed to becoming stronger physically and mentally



Tyus Messner (22) was the Eagles top running back last year and is expected to carry the bulk of the load this season.

-File photo

and follow their five core values: commitment, discipline, effort, toughness and pride.

"Our kids are striving every day to become better in those places and we're really close," he said. "We have had a really good summer and these kids are very dedicated."

The Eagles took some hits with graduation last year but return a host of starters on both sides. And for the first time in three years, they will have the same head coach. Dunn will also bring back his top two assistants in **Robert Jones**, defensive coordinator, and **Jason Madonna**, offensive coordinator, and their plans.

"This will be the first time that the senior class has had the same schemes two years in a row and that

will pay dividends," Dunn said.

Del City will open the season with a familiar foe in Bishop McGuinness on Aug. 31. They have non-district dates with two-time defending 5A state champion Carl Albert and Bartlesville.

The District 6A-II-1 schedule starts Sept. 21 at home against Choctaw. The Eagles have home games against Putnam City West, Putnam City, Midwest City and Stillwater. They're on the road against Deer Creek and Lawton.

Dunn believes defending district champion Midwest City, Lawton, Stillwater and Putnam City will again be the teams to beat in the district.

"Every week we'll see good teams and we just need to be ready to go," Dunn said.

DCHS Schedule

Aug. 31	at McGuinness
Sept. 7	Carl Albert
Sept. 14	at Bartlesville
Sept. 21	Choctaw
Sept. 28	Putnam West *
Oct. 5	Deer Creek
Oct. 12	at Putnam City
Oct. 18	Midwest City
Oct. 25	at Lawton
Nov. 2	Stillwater**
* Homecoming, **Senior Night	