

# MARY G. MONTGOMERY

## Offensive tackle Faessel: MGM has fresh attitude

*New coach pushes to get 'little things right'*

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Mary G. Montgomery offensive tackle Brady Faessel said he feels with new head coach Stan McCain leading the program the Vikings will take the necessary steps to get back on the winning track.

"He's definitely unlike the coaches we had in the past," said Faessel of McCain. "I'm not saying they were bad coaches, but (coach Chris) Wilson was definitely one who got loud. You can't learn if someone is screaming at you."

That doesn't mean that McCain doesn't believe in hard work; quite the contrary.

"He's definitely very strict," Faessel said. "We have to run for a lot of different reasons. It's not for punishment, mostly, but to get us better and try to get us to do the little things right on the field."

It's that attitude, Faessel said, that will help MGM — which suffered through an 0-10 season last year, the result of a mixture of having a bunch of inexperienced players on the field and not having a serious attitude when they were on the football field — make positive steps this year.

He echoed teammate Brandon Lockett's assertion the Vikings will have to have a serious attitude, especially in the always tough Class 7A, Region 1.

"Like Brandon said, we've got to be more serious," said Faessel. "We really have to work and strive to be better in the weight room, classroom and on the field. We've really just got to be better."

"We had three people (on offense) who took a varsity rep. I was not one of those three people. But this spring I felt that me,



MGM offensive tackle Brady Faessel

Photo by John O'Dell/Call News

as a person and player, got better and (I'm now) playing on another level, and I think our whole offense is trying to get there too."

Two years ago, the Vikings came close to earning a playoff berth, which would have been their first since 2002. Faessel said in order for MGM to have a shot at a playoff berth again, there will have to be more enthusiasm during practice.

"You've got to have people who want to be there, and we do this year," he said. "In years past, it was, 'Oh, I've got to get through this practice,' or, 'I don't want to practice.' They just didn't want to be there. Now, it's almost exciting to come to

practice every day and get better."

Faessel said he feels the offensive line has progressed to the point where it's a well-oiled machine.

"We're all brothers," he said. "We're almost like a brotherhood."

That brotherhood will be crucial to the Vikings' offense, which scored a paltry 85 points last season. Faessel said establishing a strong ground game will be a good start toward improving the offensive output.

"Definitely, we're going to try to run the ball effectively," he said. "I think our passing game is a little bit weaker, but I think we can improve on it."

## VIKINGS: MGM is taking steps to be better team

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now. We feel that the future is going to be bright for us. We've got a long way to go, but we're taking those baby steps right now and getting everything like it needs to be."

The one positive the Vikings have is there are a lot of players coming back from last year's team. Last year, MGM relied on youth to bolster its offense and especially its defense, and that youth was evident in several games.

There are five starters returning on offense and seven on defense. With that much experience returning, it appears the 2018 season could indeed be better. But with all the experience returning, McCain feels there is one intangible that must be developed — learning how to win.

"It all begins with the mind," he said. "We have to learn to compete and compete well. We have to get our mindset right, and that's what we've been working on. It's just the little things we've got to get right."

Right now, the offensive and defensive lines appear to be MGM's strength.

"The defensive line and second-level linebackers are right now the biggest strength of the team so far," said McCain. "I think we can roll out seven or eight guys that can play on Friday night and play well."

Among the leading

candidates on the defensive line are senior Ethan Rushing (a former offensive tackle and tight end), sophomore Conner Cates and junior Kerrick Bumpers.

Offense is another matter.

"We've got a little ways to go offensively. We're trying to find out what we can do well and hopefully it will be in the running game," McCain said. "We're just trying to get some discipline back in the program, and we're trying to get things right."

Summer workouts were inconsistent because of conflicts with players' schedules, but McCain said fall workouts would have more consistent turnouts.

"We needed to kind of hone in on summer," he said. "It's kind of hit and miss sometimes when you don't have everybody there at every practice because of vacations, work, things like that. Once school started, it's a lot better."

"When you have a couple of players miss one day and another two different ones the next day, it's kind of tough, but we'll have to get cohesiveness on both sides of the ball and find a couple of playmakers offensively. That's going to be a big deal. We've got some guys who can potentially make big plays. They've got to show us that they can make them."

**Good Luck Vikings. May you have a successful season.**

*Senator Jack Williams, District 34*

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*Good luck Vikings!*

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