

# Linemen to lead Little River squad in 2018

By MIKE COURSON

The Redskins advanced to the 8-Man, Div. I playoffs in 2016 in spite of a losing record. Last year, new head coach Chad Lafferty got his team back on the plus side with a 7-3 record and another playoff berth. This year, Lafferty has back five starters on both sides of the ball but must replace some key skill players.

"This year our team's success will greatly depend upon our offensive line," Lafferty said. "We have a lot of experience returning at those positions, and if they can continue to build upon their success at the end of last season, they have the potential to be very good. Our skill players have decent speed and if our line can open up some gaps in the defense they have the capability of creating a big play."

Little River returns three of its starting linemen from a year ago in seniors Trey Baldwin (6-3, 295) under center, and seniors Kody Hawkinson (6-0, 275) and Ethan Schaffer (5-10, 200) at guard.

Gone to graduation are Levi Swenson and Peyton Harvey. As quarterback, Swenson, who threw for 661 yards and eight touchdowns and rushed for another 529 yards and 10 scores. Harvey rushed for 659 yards and 13 scores.

But that offensive line will be trying to make room for last year's biggest threat in senior Hunter Thomas. As a junior, Thomas ran the ball 93 times for 711 yards and 17 touchdowns to earn first-team Wheat State League honors.

The new quarterback loses the team's top receiver last year in Harvey, but Brayden Sears returns as fullback and tight end after earning first-team all-league honors in 2017. He pulled in five receptions for 90 yards.

That group will also form a talented defense. Sears earned first-team all-league honors last year at linebacker with 103 tackles. Thomas was a first-team all-leaguer at defensive back, and sophomore Graham Stephens earned an all-league honorable mention as a defensive back. Hawkinson and Schaffer return as defensive ends.

"We return the most experience in the defensive backfield and the defensive end position," said Lafferty. "Key to our defense is everyone doing their job and reading their keys. We will need to shore up the middle with a nose guard and another linebacker."

Stephens will once again kick and punt for the Redskins. Fifty-two of his 62 kicks last year resulted in touchbacks, and he averaged just over 48 yards a punt. Lafferty also expects big things out of senior Matt Dougherty (6-0, 178) as a tight end and wideout.

Last year, Little River's three losses came against teams with a combined 24-7 record, including Central Plains. The Oilers will again be pushing for a district title, but the Redskins will see some new district teams in Pratt-Skyline, Macksville, and Moundridge with Ellinwood moving back to the 11-man ranks.

# Six starters back for Rolfs in Little River

By MIKE COURSON

The introduction is out of the way, it's time to make progress. Kim Rolfs is back for a second season as coach in Little River, and her volleyball team returns six starters and eight letterwinners from a year ago.

"I'm seeing a little momentum with this team," Rolfs said. "After coaching them a year I feel they know my coaching style and what's expected and I'm beginning to understand my team."

"We have made tremendous strides this summer and that's completely due to the girls commitment to the sport. I've always told my players that if they work hard good things will happen and they are seeing some of those positive results. As coaches, we will continue to dangle a carrot out in front of them because I do believe they haven't reached their ceiling."

The Lady Redskins will still be relatively young. Senior Gracie Richardson missed last



2018 Little River Lady Redskin volleyball team

year but returns as a leader for her final campaign.

Juniors Jaylie Bergkamp, Abbie Hudson, Morgan Konen, Emma Wright, and Isabelle Eberle, and sophomore Bella DeBaere are all returning starters.

Bergkamp took over setting duties last year and Rolfs says she is on the verge of becoming a great

player. At 5-11, Hudson has blossomed into a leader both physically and mentally. Konen will join Hudson to provide some power up front.

Wright returns as the high-energy libero, Eberle will continue to make an impact after healing from knee surgery, and DeBaere is carrying momentum from late last season.

Rolfs also has some players in the wings. At 6-1, freshman Lily Boughfam could make an immediate impact on the court. Freshman McKenzie Renken is also looking for varsity time.

"She has proven this summer that she is only going to get better as a volleyball player and positively contributes to our team," said Rolfs.

# Schneider takes over Chase football team

By MIKE COURSON

After three-straight winning seasons, including a pair of unbeaten regular seasons in 2014 and 2015, the Chase football team took a couple steps back last year to finish at 2-7. With seven starters back, Brent Schneider has higher expectations for his first season as head coach with the Kats.

"We have a solid group of kids that work hard and are willing to do what it takes to steer the program in the right direction," said Schneider. "They have worked hard this summer and are ready to get on the field and start putting it all together."

Schneider brings a wealth of experience to the program. He was

a 4-year player at Sterling High School and Sterling College. He was a defensive back in college. He spent a season as a student coach at Sterling College before taking an assistant coaching job at El Dorado High School for three years. From 2014-2016, Schneider was the head coach in Ellsworth, leading the Bearcats to a 15-13 record.

"I bring a Christian and servant leader mentality," he said. "Also, I was very fortunate to have terrific mentors and role models as coaches during my time as a player. I look to fill that role for the students in USD 401."

As for the players, senior Lance Hinderliter established himself as the team's quarter back last year.

Team statistics on maxpreps.com do not included losses against Sylvan-Lucas or Ashland. In Hinderliter's six games listed, he completed 26 of his 60 pass attempts for 330 yards, four touchdowns, and four interceptions. He was also the main threat on the ground with 303 yards and eight touchdowns on 89 attempts.

Sophomores Dylan Miller and Tylon Ibarra also return as offensive threats. In his seven games listed last year, Miller rushed for 292 yards and four touchdowns on 75 carries. Ibarra ran the ball 79 times in those seven games for 290 yards and three scores.

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