

Mullin battles low numbers, inexperience

By Mike Lee
Eagle Contributor

Another new head football coach at Mullin faces the same recurring challenge: low numbers.

New Mullin head coach Brent Williamson put nine players through preseason practices as the Bulldogs began work on improving last year's 3-7 finish that included a 1-3 record in District 15-1A Division II. The Bulldogs' roster includes only one senior, newcomer Jayden Fulcher, and one junior, veteran Cody Knight, and four total returnees from last season.

In recent seasons, Mullin has fielded a six-man team with about 10 players.

"Our main focus is staying healthy. With nine or 10 players, we can't afford any injuries," said Williamson, the Bulldogs' fourth head coach in the last four years. "We also want to build confidence. We're obviously young and we don't have much size, but I look forward to working with these kids for the next few

years."

Knight, a wide receiver and defensive back, will be a third-year starter this season--making the 6-foot-1, 160-pound junior by far the Bulldogs' most-experienced player.

The offensive backfield will include sophomore Trent Coston and freshman Abel Martinez. Freshman Cyrus Jackson is the Bulldogs' projected starter at quarterback.

The front end of Mullin's offense is expected to include freshman center Esteban Hernandez, sophomore guard Travis Lytle and Fulcher, the team's lone senior, at tight end.

"We'll start out in the tight formation, but we'll eventually be multiple on offense. We'll run some spread here and there," Williamson said. "We've been struggling a little to get our front three (linemen) set."

Mullin will seek to improve an offense that last year averaged 28.4 points per game and was limited to 20 or fewer points in half their games. The Bulldogs

were shut out twice.

Defensively, Lytle and sophomore Brian Moore are the projected starters at end. Coston figures to start at middle linebacker. Knight heads up the secondary and will be joined by Fulcher and Martinez. Jackson will provide the back-end of the defense at safety.

The Bulldogs' defense allowed 45.4 points per game last season -- an 18-point improvement over 2017. Still, the Bulldogs allowed 52 or more points in six of their first seven games last year.

"Our strengths are our work ethic and our willingness to work," Williamson said. "Any time you have a new coach, you have to go through the process of the players buying into what you're doing. We're working on the buy-in, but I've been pleased with their work ethic."

A challenge for the young Bulldogs will be playing five consecutive road games from Sept. 13-Oct. 11 at Cranfills Gap, Lometa, Santa Anna, Rochelle and Sidney in the district open-

er.

In District 15-1A DII, defending champion Blanket, which finished 11-1 last year, is the heavy favorite to repeat with eight of 12 starters returning. Brooksmith, last year's runner-up at 6-4, returns 10 starters. Sidney made a big improvement last year to 7-3, but will field a young team. Mullin finished fourth last year, and Rising Star was fifth.

"It's a tough district. Blanket and Brooksmith have a lot of returning starters, and Sidney looks solid. We're hoping to get in there and contend for that No. 2 playoff spot," said Williamson, 54-39-1 with four playoff appearances in nine seasons as a head coach at Zephyr, Blanket, Gorman, High Island and Gustine.

"Mullin has had success in the past. If they work hard and believe in themselves, I think they can be successful again."

Mullin is seeking its first playoff berth since 2014 and its first district title since 2004.



Brent Williamson
Head Coach



Randy Sims
Asst. Coach



Matthew Lawrence
Asst. Coach



Shawn Welch
Asst. Coach