Eagles' 2019 Nondistrict Opponents Capsules

By Mike Lee
Eagle Contributor

Winters Blizzards

Enrollment: 164 (Class 2A Division I).

Last Year's Record: 8-4, 2-2 in District 3-2A DI.

Last Playoff Appearance: 2018.

Last District Title: 2014.

Head Coach: Matt McCarty, fifth year at Winters.

Head Coach's Record: 17-26, all at Winters.

Returning Experience: 15 lettermen, 4 offensive and 5 defensive starters.

Players to Watch: OL-DL Hunter Duggan, 6-3, 270, Sr.; WR-DB Miguel Rodriguez, 5-9, 150, Sr.; WR-DB Sema'jae Jackson, 5-7, 160, Sr.; OL-DL Felipe Erazo, 6-1, 230; QB-DB Alex Salas, 6-0, 160, Sr.;

FB-LB Ethan Sanchez.

Strengths: eight wins last year, fifth year in Coach McCarty's system.

Weaknesses: speed, overall inexperience.

Key Stats: Winters loses the bulk of its offensive production from last year, but Sema'jae Jackson returns after rushing for 406 yards and 7 TDs. He may move to receiver, though. Veteran lineman Hunter Duggan logged 72 tackles and 6 sacks last year, and will anchor the offensive line as well. LB Ethan Sanchez had 32 stops and 5 sacks last year. Winters last year averaged 30 points per game and allowed 20.

Noteworthy: Goldthwaite leads its all-time series against Winters 14-8, even though the Blizzards won last year 34-14. … Winters has won 13 games and made the playoffs the last two years after back-to-back 2-8 finishes in 2015 and 2016. The Blizzards beat Alvord in the playoffs last year before falling to Panhandle in the area round.

Junction Eagles

Enrollment: 173 (Class 2A Division I).

Last Year's Record: 2-9, 2-3 in District 14-2A DI.

Last Playoff Appearance: 2018.

Last District Title: 2003.

Head Coach: John Contrucci, first year at Junction.

Returning Experience: 15 lettermen, 6 offensive and 6 defensive starters.

Players to Watch: OL Will Chapman, 6-6, 265, Sr.; WR-DB Isaac Rosas, 5-10, 160, Sr.; RB-DB Isaiah Gonzales, 5-10, 155, Sr.; OL-LB Michael Van Winkle, 6-0, 220, Sr.; QB-DB Will Castleberry, 6-1, 165, So.

Strengths: size, five straight playoff berths.

Weaknesses: coaching instability, depth, speed.

Key Stats: Isaac Rosas had 750 receiving yards last year, and Isaiah Gonzales returns at running back. Will Castleberry, the top QB candidate, is a sophomore. … Junction last year averaged 17 points per game and allowed 34.

Noteworthy: Junction was the only team Goldthwaite beat last year, but Junction rebounded to make the playoffs. Junction lost to Holland 63-12 in bidistrict. … John Contrucci, a former Brownwood assistant, will be Junction's third head coach in four years. … Junction's win total has dropped from eight in 2015 to six in 2016 to three in 2017 to two in 2018. The Eagles made the playoffs in 2017 and 2018 despite winning just five games in the two seasons combined … Goldthwaite has won five of its six all-time meetings with Junction, including last year's 13-10 decision.

Coleman Bluecats

Enrollment: 241 (Class 3A Division II).

Last Year's Record: 2-8, 1-6 in District 4-3A DII.

Last Playoff Appearance: 2017.

Last District Title: 2014.

Head Coach: John Elder, sixth year at Coleman.

Coach's Record: 36-23, all at Coleman.

Returning Experience: 18 lettermen, 5 offensive and 5 defensive starters.

Players to Watch: OL-DL Kayden Castleberry; OL-DE Gauge Sikes; OL-DL Bobby Burrow; LB Blake Greaves; OL-DL Joe Robles; QB-DB Corbin Rosales.

Strengths: line experience and depth.

Weaknesses: inexperienced skill players, five wins the last two seasons.

Key Stats: After winning 31 of 38 games from 2014-2016, including five playoff wins, Coleman slipped to 3-8 in 2017 and 2-8 last season. Last year's 1-6 district record ended the Bluecats' playoff streak at five straight years. Coleman averaged 12.2 points per game last year and was shut out four times. The Bluecats allowed 40.5 points per game in 2018.

Noteworthy: Coleman and Goldthwaite played last year for the first time since 2003. The Bluecats won last year's meeting 31-24 and lead the all-time series 12-7-2.

Tolar Rattlers

Enrollment: 238 (Class 3A Division II).

Last Year's Record: 4-6, 1-4 in District 6-3A DII.

Last Playoff Appearance: 2017.

Last District Title: 2009.

Head Coach: Jeremy Mullins, third year at Tolar.

Coach's Record: 11-11 at Tolar.

Returning Experience: 9 lettermen, 3 offensive and 5 defensive starters.

Players to Watch: RB-LB Braegen Berry; OL-DL James Marshall; WR-LB Brett Jackson; WR-DB Reese Robinson; QB-DB Wesley Miller; WR-DB Macaine Tucker.

Strengths: Line experience, third year in Coach Mullins's system.

Weaknesses: inexperienced skill players, must replace 14 starters.

Key Stats: Last year's 1-4 district record ended the Rattlers' playoff streak at six straight seasons. The Rattlers lost 14 seniors from last year's team. Braegen Berry made 82 tackles last year, including 13 for losses, at linebacker and figures to play more at running back this year as well. Brett Jackson made 75 tackles at linebacker last year, and Reese Robinson caught 3 TD passes.

Noteworthy: Tolar has won two of three all-time meetings with Goldthwaite, including last year's 48-0 decision. The Rattlers last year averaged 26 points per game and allowed 23. QB-DB Wesley Miller is the son of Scotty Miller, a former all-state player on Goldthwaite's 1985 state championship team.

Hamilton Bulldogs

Enrollment: 240 (Class 3A Division II).

Last Year's Record: 5-6, 1-3 in District 8-3A DII.

Last Playoff Appearance: 2018.

Last District Title: 2001.

Head Coach: Casey Jones, second year at Hamilton.

Coach's Record: 5-6 at Hamilton.

Returning Experience: 15 lettermen, 6 offensive and 7 defensive starters.

Players to Watch: TE-DE Ty Bates, 6-3, 125, Sr.; OL-DL Jacob King, 5-11, 240, Sr.; OL-DL John Ceresini, 6-0, 275; QB Colby Bailey, 6-0, 185; LB Stuart Cortez, 5-7, 170; WR-DB Luis Najera, 5-10, 165; RB-LB Shane Catoe.

Strengths: line experience, second year in Coach Jones's system.

Weaknesses: inexperienced skill players, no proven QB.

Key Stats: Colby Bailey had 3 interceptions last year in the secondary, but will get a look at quarterback this year. Shane Catoe had 4 sacks last year. King had 40 tackles last year in the line. Bates had 213 receiving yards in 2018. The Bulldogs last year averaged 25 points per game and allowed 38.

Noteworthy: The Bulldogs hope to get help from last year's 6-3 JV team. Hamilton leads the all-time series against Goldthwaite 25-22, including last year's 53-14 decision.