

Mustang

Broncos look to keep building and winning

By Stan Moss
Contributing Writer

Finally. After months of dealing with COVID-19 and all the changes it has caused to what we used to call a normal life, the citizens of Mustang get a small return to normalcy when the Broncos football squad hits the field to play their archrival Yukon on Sept. 5. The team never missed a beat this summer, lifting weights, getting in shape, going to Zoom meetings, and running drills while dealing with the Coronavirus. The guidelines were followed to a T. Masks were worn, temperatures were taken, social distancing was practiced, and all of the other guidelines were followed to make sure the players, coaches, and support staff remained safe.

But enough about that. Football is in the air, and the Broncos couldn't be more excited about the season. Coach Lee Blankenship has instilled a more than positive attitude into everyone involved with the program, and his philosophy is to build the boys up to be strong character leaders. Blankenship was asked if the team had a mantra or a slogan for the team this year.

"It's the same every year," said Blankenship. "Win today! It means that we want to be our best each day. We are a 'play the next play' type of program. We focus on what we can control, which is attitude and effort. Obviously we would have loved to have had spring practice and team camp, but I'm really pleased with where we're at. The coaches do an unbelievable job of preparing the kids and getting them in the right



Mustang is looking to build off a successful 7-4 season in 2019. The Broncos open their season Saturday, Sept. 5 against rival Yukon. -File photo

positions in order to be successful. We have a lot of little things that we need to tighten up and fix, but we're pointed in the right direction."

The Broncos have four new coaches this year. Jeremy Harris will be the assistant linebackers coach working under the direct tutelage of defensive coordinator Sam Dollar. Jaxon Uhles will coach the running backs and Colton Strickland comes all the way from Naples, Florida to work with the defensive linemen. Drew Rosko joins the staff as a graduate assistant who will be a defensive back

Mustang Broncos 2020 Schedule

Sept. 5	at Yukon
Sept. 11	Stillwater
Sept. 18	Norman
Sept. 25	Norman North*
Oct. 1	at Southmoore
Oct. 9	Tulsa Union
Oct. 15	at Edmond North
Oct. 23	Owasso**
Oct. 30	at Putnam City
Nov. 6	at Moore
*Homecoming, **Senior Night	

coach working under Coach Waleed Gaines.

Gaines will not only be the defensive backs coach, but Blankenship has named Gaines the

Assistant Head Coach.

The Broncos were 7-4 last year and made it into the playoffs. They beat Tulsa Union for the first time in school history, and

shut out rival Yukon 38-0 in the season opener.

Nobody picked Mustang to do that well last year, and it's a tribute to the coaching staff and players that such a remarkable season was turned in under a first-year head coach.

The Broncos lost some great players to graduation, but there are players who are ready to step in and replace them. Devyn Martin and Elijah Young at running back replace last year's thunder and lightning, Harvey Phillips and Khari Brown, and look more than capable. Junior Y-back

and D-1 recruit Andre Dollar returns, along with defensive stalwarts senior linebacker Koreion Hayden and sophomore defensive back Jacobe Johnson. The quarterback position is still up for grabs, with junior Ethan Young and sophomores Tristen Russell and Logan Towe vying for the starting job in a friendly, spirited competition.

The team is looking to make their second straight appearance in the playoffs, and hopefully make a deep run. With these players and this coaching staff, don't count them out to do just that.

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Offense replacing key skill players

By Stan Moss
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The offense for the Broncos has a year of experience under its belt playing in assistant coach Cody McDaniel's scheme, and should be better in year two of coach Lee Blankenship's regime. The Broncos will have to replace the quarterback and the top two running backs, but McDaniel believes he has the talent to do just that.

At quarterback, there is a healthy competition between three players. Junior Ethan Young and sophomores Tristen Russell and Logan Towe will try and fill the void left by the graduation of last year's starter Hayden Conrad.

"We're still battling it out," said McDaniel. "Those guys are competing every second of every day; they're loving the camaraderie of the position as well. They all have great skills in their own skillset. It's going to be a tough call when the first game rolls around. Ethan Young can run and pass, but he is more of a pass-first guy. Tristen Russell is an athlete; he's a gamer. He does a really good job with his feet when he's supposed to, but he also keeps his eyes up and makes a pass when he needs to make it. Logan Towe is a great passer, and he is a great kid to coach. When you correct him, it's corrected."

The running backs will be a strength of the team. Seniors Devyn Martin and Elijah Young will fill the spots left by Harvey



-File photo

Mustang tight end Andre Dollar is one of the Broncos top offensive weapons and a highly sought after recruit.

Phillips and Khari Brown. "Devyn has done a great job transitioning from being a backup to being one of the guys we really think we can rely on this year," said McDaniel. "Same thing with Elijah. He's coming off of an injury from last year, but he's looking really good through fall camp. The big surprise is sophomore Jay Bedford. He's explosive, and he's made some plays in fall camp already and we're super excited about the future he has with our offense. Jay Bedford is a name you'll want to remember."

The receiver and Bronco Back positions will also see some new faces. Junior D-1 recruit Andre Dollar will return at Bronco Back, as well as

senior Dominique Dunn. "We have some young guys that are stepping up and making plays," said McDaniel. "Senior Dylan Bohuslavicky heads up that group, along with sophomore Jacobe Johnson, junior Cameron Broadus, junior Josh Rose, and sophomore Keegan Bass. The offensive line returns three players with extensive experience, so only two spots need to be replaced. "We have some really talented juniors and seniors," said McDaniel. "I'm not hesitant about any of these guys. We have guys up front who can fill those spots and continue our success in the run game and the pass game that we started last year"

Mike Fink



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