

Del City

Talent runs deep on defense

By Jeff Harrison

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Defense has been Del City's bread and butter the past several years.

And with elite talent at all three levels, the Eagles defense will be hard to beat again this fall.

Up front, the Eagles have one of the state's best in sophomore David Stone. The 6-foot-3, 255 pound lineman received offers from Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Texas, and Wisconsin. Junior Jaedon Foreman has also received offers from Oklahoma State and Memphis. Senior Darius Hampton, who has offers from UCO, East Central and NWOSU, joins them up front.

"When you have three collegiate defensive linemen it just puts you in a position to be successful," Jones said.

At linebacker, senior Jayson Smith takes the lead role. He will also play running back on offense. Virgil Yates, who plays quarterback, and Aaron Carter will help at outside linebacker.

"I'm old school, and Virgil Yates is



Del City sophomore defensive lineman David Stone (Left) tries to shed a block from Rayvon Swindall (Right) during a scrimmage Robert Kalsu Stadium earlier this year. PHOTO BY JEFF HARRISON

going to play some outside linebacker too," Jones said. "With his size, I would be doing him a disservice if I didn't play him both ways."

Jones believes Carter is ready for a breakout year.

"He's going to be a name to know after this year," Jones said.

Brian Stocker will also play at inside linebacker after seeing some varsity action last year.

In the secondary, the Eagles have another good one in junior Kanijal Thomas who started at cornerback since his freshman year. Thomas has offers from Oklahoma State, Iowa State, Texas Tech and Memphis. Jaylin Sweet, Jaiden Jones, Logan Wright and Dkalen Godwin will also play in the defensive secondary.

Nino Williams is the team's new defensive coordinator, replacing Jones who served in the role for four years. Williams was a standout at the University of Missouri and has coached at several schools – most recently at Westmoore.

"I knew that I had to hire someone that really brings a lot of passion and energy. And he has really taken on that role and even elevated it," Jones said. "His relationships with the kids are really strong after just three months. So I'm excited to see him excel."

"Each of those first three games is against a team that has aspirations to go play in the state championship," Jones said.

District 6A-II-2 will again be competitive with Stillwater, Midwest City, Putnam City North and Del City likely vying for the top spot.

The Eagles open district play Sept. 24 against Northwest Classen. They follow with a tough three-game stretch that includes Stillwater (Oct. 1), Midwest City (Oct. 8) and Putnam City North (Oct. 14).

This will be Del City's last year in Class 6A-II according to the OSSAA's recent enrollment figures. The Eagles will move back to 5A.

"If this is our last year in 6A, I'd like to go out on top," Jones said.

Offense:

From Page 14

who served as the team's strength and conditioning coach. "Our kids are in tip top shape. And they're ready to play both ways."

Jones believes the move will help them develop a tough mentality on offense.

Del City has a couple of quarterbacks competing for the starting spot with Virgil Yates and George Gouldsby. Yates is making the shift after playing running back last year. Yates has good speed and strength.

"When you can run a 4.5 40-yard dash, when you're strong and when people have to respect our receivers, it's going to create a lot of opportunities for him to take off with the ball that I think can really hurt people," Jones said about Yates.

Gouldsby has more experience at the position and started last year on the freshman team.

"He has more of that quarterback savvy than Virgil but we're going to let it play out," Jones said.

In the backfield, the Eagles will rely on Jayson Smith and Kanijal Thomas to carry the load on the ground. The 6-foot-2, 235-pound Smith has great speed and size and will also play linebacker. Thomas, who starts at cornerback, has excellent speed out of the backfield.

"Jayson Smith is a big power back who runs a 4.6 40-yard dash so he moves well," Jones said. "And then you mix him with Kanijal [Thomas] who is more of a speed back. I think that tandem is really going to throw teams off."

The Eagles will have a lot of size and strength on the offensive line. The group includes Gabe Rios, who is a two-year starter at guard. Center Jaelen Owens is one of the stronger players on the team. Rayvon Swindall returns at offensive tackle. They have several other players competing for spots.

"I think this is going to be our toughest and biggest offensive line since I've been here," Jones said.

The receiving crops will include Jaylin Sweet, and Dkalen Godwin. Jaedon Foreman will help at tight end and receiver.

On special teams, Stanley Johnson returns at kicker and punter.

Del City:

From Page 13

Washington last year in the opener.

Things won't get any easier the following week when they travel to Carl Albert to face the five-time defending state champions and their previous coach Mike Dunn. Jones and Dunn are close friends and coached together several years in Texas and Del City.

"I love that rivalry. It has a bedlam type feel to it because the schools are close, he was the coach here, I went to school there and there's a lot of connections," Jones said.

Del City wraps up the non-district schedule with Bishop McGuinness, who has finished state runner-up to Carl Albert four of the past five years.

DCHS Schedule

Sept. 3	Tulsa Washington
Sept. 10	at Carl Albert
Sept. 17	Bishop McGuinness
Sept. 24	NW Classen
Oct. 1	at Stillwater
Oct. 8	Midwest City
Oct. 14	at Putnam North
Oct. 22	at Deer Creek
Oct. 29	at U.S. Grant
Nov. 5	at Lawton