

Harrah

Panthers eye playoff berth

By John Martin
Staff Writer

An exciting summer workout schedule is complete and the Harrah Panthers are excited to go against someone other than their teammates as Chris Bliek goes into his second season at the helm of the Panthers.

"We are excited for the upcoming season," said Bliek. "I can't wait to take the field with these young men and our coaches, so that the student body, parents and the townspeople can see the results of a dedicated summer of work that these guys have put in."

The Panthers participated in some 7 on 7 Camps and finished second in a strong field at Henryetta. Numbers are up considerably from past summer workouts. After a 2020 season that was plagued by COVID shutdowns, quarantines, games cancelled, practices disrupted, school dismissed and many more disruptions, the Panthers are ready to get back to normal.

"We had our share of problems, starting with the situation at Seminole when several of our guys were exposed," said Bliek. "I am proud of the manner in which our players, their parents and our school personnel worked to keep things as normal as possible."

The traditional opener against Seminole remains on schedule for Friday, Sept. 3 at Evans Field and the Chieftains' head coach Mike Snyder has become the winningest coach in the history of high school football in the State of Oklahoma since the two teams opened the 2020 season.

The Panthers gave Seminole a scare a year ago before the Chieftains rallied for a 21-12 victory.

Next up will be a return battle against the Bridge Creek Bobcats, who fell victim to a vicious Panther attack on Evans Field a year ago as Nolan Boone and Co. administered a 12-0 shutout.



Harrah senior Zeke Caldwell is one of several returning starters on the Panthers' offensive line. PHOTO BY JASON TURNER

The Battle of Country Boy Corner between neighborhood rivals McLoud and Harrah fell victim to the Pandemic and the two teams could never come up with a date both could reschedule last season.

But mark your calendar for Friday, Sept. 17 at Evans Field in Harrah for a renewal of the rivalry.

Then comes district play and traditional powers Tuttle, Ada and Blanchard have been ranked in the top 10 of the state and will be hard to

dislodge in district play.

The Panthers open district play against SAS Classen, who did not enjoy their visit to Harrah a year ago and they shut down their season shortly after the Panthers administered a 59-14 whipping.

Homecoming is scheduled against John Marshall on Oct. 1. The Bears were another victim of the COVID and the game with the Panthers was not played in 2020.

Then comes a visit to the defending

Harrah Schedule

Sept. 3	Seminole
Sept. 10	at Bridge Creek
Sept. 17	McLoud
Sept. 24	at Classen
Oct. 1	John Marshall
Oct. 8	at Tuttle
Oct. 14	Ada
Oct. 22	Tecumseh
Oct. 29	at Blanchard
Nov. 5	Cushing

state champion Tuttle Tigers, followed by home games against Ada and Tecumseh, then a battle against the Blanchard Lions.

The 2021 Senior Class football players will be honored on Senior Night in the regular season finale against Cushing, which could also be a game that would decide the playoff qualifier.

NEW DISTRICTS. The OSSAA has announced realignment of the state football districts for the 2022 and 2023 seasons. The Panthers will remain in District 4A but the league will have a slightly different appearance following realignment.

HARRAH WILL face three new foes as Bliek preps his Panthers toward a spot in the playoffs. Bridge Creek is already on the non-district schedule and will replace John Marshall on the Panthers' district slate.

Bethany will replace Cushing and Newcastle will take the place of Ada in the district which also includes Blanchard, Classen (if they field a team), Tecumseh and Tuttle. McLoud and Seminole will likely remain on the non-district schedule but a replacement will have to be found for Bridge Creek.