

SPORTS



FROM LEFT, Evan Rardin, Brody Drake, Dawson McMillan and Brevyn Whisman running drills. Photo by Mike Monahan.

Snider feels Arcola football is ahead of where he thought they would be

By Mike Monahan

ARCOLA – Last season the Arcola football team opened the first day of practice at midnight. This year, the Purple Riders started at 7-8 a.m. and then went till 5-8 p.m. all under Steve Snider, who is in first year at the helm. He replaced Nick Lindsey, who remains the junior high/high school principal and athletics director.

With the weather in the mid 70s it was a bit different than years when it was in the 90s.

"You can't ask for better weather in central Illinois," said Snider. "I mean, holy cow, I have not lived here (from Orangeville in northwest Illinois) but I don't ever think I have had a first day of practice like this. That is great. Everybody is here and they are working hard. I think it is the most exciting day of the year. I don't care what anybody tells you. The first day of football practice, whatever level you are playing at, it is the most exciting day of the year. There is no argument in my mind."

A total of 36 players are out this season and Snider had figured they would have 36-40. The morning practice went well.

"The IHSA gives us basically a walk-through period," said Snider. "We walked through our offense and walked through our defense and started installing our special teams. It is a time where the kids don't have to worry about running. They don't have to worry about this or that. They can worry about listening and getting a little bit better mentally."

Snider said they are a step

above where he thought they would be at this time.

"The kids have all shown up to camp and we got a ton of stuff installed," said Snider. "I looked at the varsity and I said, 'We only have three more plays that I want to install before Nokomis (opening game at Thomas-Bradford Field in Arcola on Aug. 25)'. That is how good they did during camp of installing and retaining that stuff. That has been absolutely great to only have that to worry about because that just puts us ahead of schedule. It allows us to do things on our own terms instead of trying to play catch up. When you are playing from behind you are starting the year off wrong. We are playing from ahead right now and we will take it and keep working with that."

One person who is not out this year is junior to be Tanner Thomas. Thomas, who has verbally committed to play baseball at Louisville, suffered a hamstring avulsion and tendon rupture in a football game on Sept. 30 at Niantic in a 28-12 win over Sangamon Valley. Thomas, who was the quarterback, was out for the season, basketball as well, but did return for the baseball season on March 30 and helped the Purple Riders win their first regional title since 1984. In just six games last season Thomas averaged 50.3 yards rushing and 121.3 passing. He has been playing for the Midwest Canes 16U team, based in Indianapolis.

"The players know the deal," said Snider. "They are here for each other. They are not mad



ARCOLA'S ODEN BARRON, who will be a senior, goes through a drill done by assistant coach Tommy Eddleman. It is a ball carrier drill that is used for the boys to work on protecting the ball as well as their footwork. Photo by Mike Monahan.

at Tanner. They understand there are other things going on. They are going to be out here to win. They are not going to say, 'hey, he is not here, so we are not going to play hard.' It shows how much work that they have already put in to be

here anyway. They are not going to use that as an excuse. That is the great thing about this group. They are not going to use anything as an excuse. They are just going to go out there and try and win every game."

Nineteen out for volleyball on first day



THE ARCOLA VOLLEYBALL team does a drill where they pass a 10 pound weight around as quickly as possible while in a sitting position with a volleyball between their knees. It was the opening day of volleyball practice. Photo by Mike Monahan.

By Mike Monahan

ARCOLA – Nineteen Arcola High School girls awaited volleyball coach Katy Whisman's first day of practice last Monday at Nancy Stiff Gymnasium.

"We did some conditioning, some agility drills, and some passing," said Whisman.

The players, who had to jump across the sideline back and forth and side to side, could not do anything with the Illinois High School mandated dead period that was from July 31-Aug. 6.

"Most of the varsity players are in good shape," said Whisman, whose team also did practice serves.

Arcola was 5-21 overall and 2-9 in the Lincoln Prairie Conference last season.

"I think everybody is excited to start playing," said Whisman, who is assisted by Yessi Ramirez, a 2018 Arcola grad in her second season. "We have seen our potential over the summer and that really makes everybody excited to start playing games."

Whisman is a former all-Lit-

tle Okaw Valley Conference player and a 1998 Arcola grad and is in her third year as head coach.

The Lady Riders start the season Aug. 22 with a home non-conference match against Judah Christian.

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