

SPORTS

Football

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Offense

The probable starters on offense include junior quarterback Jayden Henson-Stice.

"Henson-Stice is really coming into his own as a junior, as a leader, as a quarterback of the football team," said Snider. "He has done an excellent, excellent job. He has really figured things out and he is really going strong right now."

The Purple Riders have a plethora of halfbacks that Sinder plans to rotate in and out.

"More than anything else we have four really good halfbacks that are going to be in for two spots and that is Ryder Wilcox-Rich, Lewis, Lindstrom and Barron.

"They all have worked their butts off and they are all doing a great job and to have that kind of depth at that spot is great," said Snider. "They are some guys with some different strengths. You look at Lewis and Wilcox-Rich they are the big burly type guys that are going to be physical in everything they do. Not that Lindstrom and Baron are not going to be physical, but both Lewis and Wilcox-Rich are pushing 200 pounds and then Lindstrom and Barron have an element of speed that the other two don't have."

Morford is the fullback while junior Caiden Helmuth is the tight end. Garza is the right guard, while Gael Elizondo (junior) is the right tackle, Guerra is the center, while sophomore Jackson Griffith is the left guard and Orlando Marcus (junior) is the left tackle.

"Those guys have really come together as a corps group," said Snider. "They are tight and they do a great job and they stay on each other.

They are also positive all of the time and to see them lift each other up when someone else does something wrong in a positive way to help make sure we get it right the next time. It is inspiring for me to see that they are a very close group that really takes care of each other and really does a good job."

Braden Phillips, a junior, is penciled in at wide receiver.

"He adds a lot of versatile options," said Snider. You talk about a kid with speed, but he is also 6-3 plus a solid body and a strong kid. So, he can run. He is going to be able to out jump a lot of guys that are corners at the Class 1A level and he is an excellent blocker."

The average offensive lineman is 6-1, 219.

"Our group of linemen definitely get along really well," said Guerra. "We are all friends. We all hang out outside of football and outside of school. We communicate really well. I think we are bigger than last year and it is a pretty good line. It is nice having guys next to you that are big and strong"

Defense

The defense has a 4-3 base but Snider said, "I really try and adjust to stop what the opponents are going to try and do game after game after game."

For example against Nokomis, Snider plans to move Lewis to safety from his linebacker spot, while the linebackers will be Wilcox-Rich, Barron and Morford, while Henson-Stice is the other safety.

"On the outside it is looking like Braden Phillips and more than Likely Brevyn Whisman who is playing football for the first time because of a heart condition. He has come out and has been tremendous. He shows up every day and works his butt off. He leans and he is a big physical kid. He is not

scared at all. He has really impressed most of the coaching staff with how quickly he has picked up everything and done. We are excited to have him and it has paid off so far for him."

Fighting for the two end positions are Elizondo, Griffith and Garza.

"We are looking at Orlando Marcos and Raul Guerra on the interior part of the defensive line with any and all rotation to keep those guys fresh. I think we have enough big bodies. The defensive line is where we need to get rest."

Elizondo will handle kick-off, punt, extra point and field goal duties, while Phillips is the long snapper and Henson-Stice is the holder.

"He (Elizondo) has been a relay grater with kicking and punting," said Snider. "He is excited about that. He is a soccer player so he has kicked the ball a ton before. We are just asking for him to kick it over instead of under now. He loves it and he is pretty darn good at it from what I have seen so far."

Snider praised the coaching staff.

"I have to give a huge shout-out to coach Olvera, coach Reel, coach Eddleman and coach Franco because they have done a tremendous job in teaching exactly the things that I want them to teach their position groups. I could not ask for better assistance in what they have done and how they have approached it. Because they didn't approach it with any skepticism. They said, 'Hey, we are all aboard for you and we are going to take care of it for you.' and they have. It has been absolutely great. They

have taken a huge weight off my shoulders and I can't thank them enough to make this transition as easy as possible."

As for goals Lewis said, as a team I think right now our focus is to just win week one and continue to get better at practice. I think one thing we are focusing on this year is to not focus too far ahead. Set the goal right in front of us. Focus on that goal, get the goal accomplished and then focus on another goal. Keeping small steps on time instead of trying to look at that bigger picture."

2023 Arcola Football Roster

Head coach: Steve Snider 1st year at Arcola; (6th year overall 15-28 .349)

Assistant coaches: Tommy Eddleman, Steven Franco, Ronny Olvera and Adam Reel

Managers: Conner Truex, Blain Helmuth (Name, height, weight, position)

Seniors

Oden Barron*	5-10	175	RB/LB
Aaron Gaona	6-1	225	OL/DL
Anthony Garza*C	6-3	250	OL/DL
Raul Guerra*C	6-0	225	OL/DL
Alex Hawn	6-0	185	OL/DL
Wayne Humphrey	5-8	160	OL/DL
Tyson Lewis*C	5-10	185	RB/LB
Ryan Lindstrom*	5-8	150	RB/DB
Brokton Morford*	6-1	200	RB/LB
Chris Olivar	6-1	150	WR/DB

Juniors

Carson Brawner	5-8	190	OL/DL
Gael Elizondo	5-10	200	OL/DL
Alan Guevera	5-11	155	WR/DB
Brayden Hatchel	5-10	185	OL/DL
Caiden Helmuth*	6-2	205	TE/DL/LB
Jaden Henson-Stice C	5-10	165	QB/DB
Orlando Marcos*	6-0	230	OL/DL
Logan Messer	5-8	160	RB/DB
Braden Phillips*	6-3	180	WR/DB
Ryder Wilcox-Rich	5-10	200	RB/LB

Sophomores

Brody Drake	5-9	150	RB/DB
Hunter Drake	5-8	160	OL/DL
Jackson Griffith	6-1	205	OL/DL
Brandon Lyons	5-9	165	OL/DL
Haris Mayhall	6-0	160	TE/LB
Dawson McMillan	5-10	185	RB/LB
Brevyn Whisman	6-2	175	TE/DB

Freshmen

Anthony Burgos	5-7	145	RB/DB
Anthony De La Garza	5-10	220	OL/DL
Oliver Diaz	5-8	160	RB/LB
Carson Jewell	5-9	165	TE/LB
Brody Phillips	5-9	155	QB/DB
Evan Rardin	5-7	140	WR/DB
Remi Roberts-McGheon	6-1	150	WR/DB
Gavin Storm	5-11	185	OL/DL

*-returning lettermen; C-captains

2023 Arcola varsity schedule

(last year's scores in parentheses; all games are Lincoln Prairie Conference contests; all games at 7 p.m.)

- Aug. 25 NOKOMIS
- Sept. 1 at Sullivan vs. Sullivan/Okaw Valley
- Sept. 8 at Argenta-Oreana (W, 47-23)
- Sept. 15 TRI-COUNTY (W, 46-14)
- Sept. 22 VILLA GROVE (L, 20-6)
- Sept. 29 at Cumberland (L, 28-38)
- Oct. 6 SANGAMON VALLEY/TRI-CITY* (W, 28-12)
- Oct. 13 ARTHUR-LOVINGTON-ATWOOD-HAMMOND (L, 49-21)
- Oct. 20 at Cerro Gordo vs. Cerro Gordo/Bement (W, 45-6)
- Oct. 21 playoff pairings announced
- Oct. 27 first round of playoffs
- *-Homecoming; !-Senior Night

2023 Junior varsity schedule

- (All games start at 6 p.m.)
- Aug. 28 NOKOMIS
- Sept. 4 at Sullivan/Okaw Valley (at Sullivan)
- Sept. 11 at Argenta-Oreana
- Sept. 18 TRI-COUNTY
- Sept. 25 VILLA GROVE
- Oct. 2 at Cumberland
- Oct. 9 SANGAMON VALLEY/TRI-CITY
- Oct. 16 ARTHUR-LOVINGTON-ATWOOD-HAMMOND

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