

Midnight Mayhem Kick Starts Bulldogs Six-Man Season By Judy Rogers

Midnight Mayhem kick-started the Golden Plains High School football season as they begin a new era of Bulldog football. The boys, coaches, parents, and fans showed up for the first day of fall sports practice at 12:01 am on August 15. “I want to thank all the students, parents and community members who came to our midnight practice!” said Head Coach Travis Smith. “It was nice and cool out and I thought we had a very productive practice. I’m as excited for this year as I have been in a long time!!

The boys hit the field for the Bulldogs first season playing six-man football with four returning seniors—Dawson Spresser, Nick Brown, Jesus Aragon, and Jose Ortiz—along with seniors Brett Gerbitz and Austin Rivera joining the team this year. Spresser and Aragon were all-league last season. They are joined by junior Jeron Schutte, sophomores AJ Camacho—all-league/all-district his freshman year, Caleb Korte, Dylan Spresser, Miguel Stephens-Monge, and freshmen Austin Patmon, Colby Lathrop, and Christopher Stoltz.

The ‘Dogs are looking forward to building a successful season. “We would like to see more people at our games,” said senior Jesus Aragon. “We want to have fun,” added Gerbitz. “One of our goals is to minimize injuries to keep everyone on the field,” continued Brown, “We (seniors) want to provide strong leadership for our less experienced teammates.” They all agreed their team goal is to get the chance to play in Dodge City in the division finals.

“Our goal will be to win our first playoff game and make the trip to Dodge City for a chance to win a trophy,” said Smith as he begins his seventeenth year as leader of the Bulldog squad. He is assisted by Heath Johnson for the third year.

The Bulldogs made the decision last year to join the newly formed six-man division. “With the move to six-man football this season, Golden Plains looks to be more competitive than the last few seasons,” added Smith. “We will be playing a group of schools we are more competitive with.” He added, “The smaller number of players allows us to scrimmage in practice to be better prepared in a game.”

Six-man football in Kansas dates back to 1935. Although it is not KSHSAA sponsored, this marks the third year since it has been reintroduced to the state. Six-man football varies slightly from eight-man football. The field is still 80 yards in length but the width is narrowed to 40 yards. The team must advance the ball 15 yards for a first down vs. 10 yards in 8 and 11-man ball. Quarters are 10-minutes instead of 12. Touchdowns are still worth six points, but a field goal scores four. Extra points vary with a field goal counting for two points and running the ball in counts as one. These changes make for a much faster game allowing for greater scoring and more excitement throughout the contest.

Golden Plains joins a number of WKLL league schools in the six-man division. The ‘Dogs will start their season in Natoma on September 2 and play Pawnee Heights for Homecoming on September 9. Additional opponents include Cheylin, Western Plains, Heartland Christian, Pawnee Heights, Weskan, and Wheatland/Grinnell. A full schedule can be found on the school web site at www.usd316.k12.ks.us

