

2017 SOLLENBERGER'S AZ

FOOTBALL

PREP MAGAZINE



**TYLER SHOUGH
HAMILTON**



**DAMARIA NORRIS
CACTUS**



**JOSH WHITAKER
PIMA**



**SOLOMON ENIS
NORTH CANYON**

PHOTO BY:
MIKE JANES/MAXPREPS



**JAMARYE JOINER
CIENEGA**



**GUNNER CRUZ
CASTEEL**



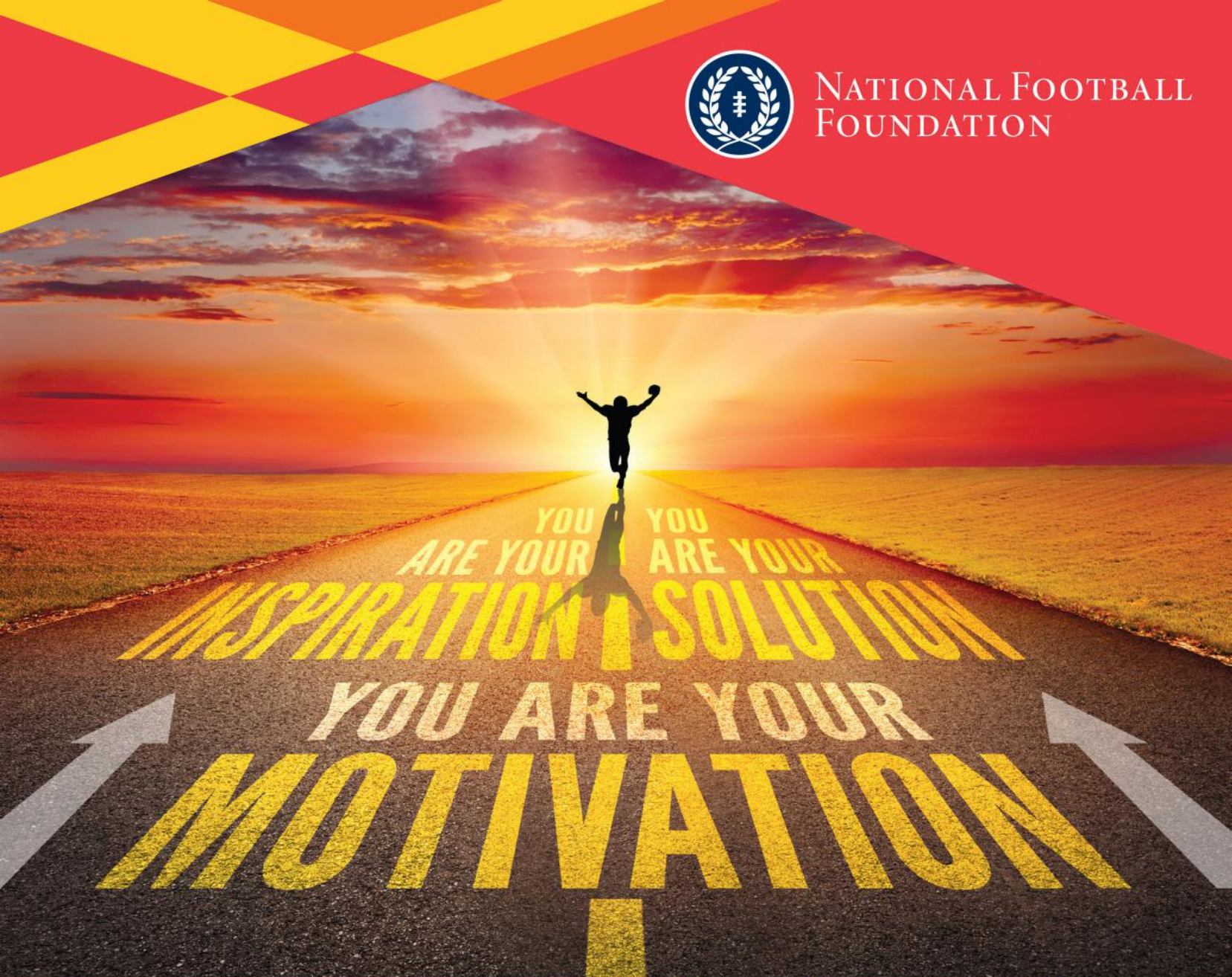
**DACODAH JENSEN
MAYER**

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AIA GAME OF THE WEEK

PRESENTED BY



Aug. 19 *Sollenberger Classic*
Brophy vs. Pinnacle @ 3 p.m. (azpreps365.com)

Aug. 25 *Perry at Millennium (azpreps365.com, The Fanatic)*
Ironwood Ridge at Sunnyslope (azpreps365.com)

Sept. 1 *Utah East at Saguaro (azpreps365.com, The Fanatic)*
Hamilton at Red Mountain (azpreps365.com)

Sept. 8 *Skyline at Desert Vista (azpreps365.com, The Fanatic)*
Peoria at Marcos de Niza (azpreps365.com)

Sept. 15 *American Leadership at Northwest Christian (azpreps365.com, The Fanatic)*
Tempe Prep at Scottsdale Christian (azpreps365.com)

Sept. 22 *Show Low at Casteel (azpreps365.com, The Fanatic)*
Centennial at Westview (azpreps365.com)

Sept. 28 *Salpointe at Cienega (azpreps365.com, The Fanatic)*
Desert Ridge at Gilbert (azpreps365.com)

*Remaining regular season broadcast schedule will be determined by the power rankings.
All games at 7 p.m. - Schedule is subject to change.*



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Contributors to the 2017 Sollenberger's AZ Football Prep Magazine are Jose Garcia, Andy Morales, Les Willsey, Brian Bolitho, Tanner Bush, David Kukulski, Andy Kukulski, Matt Kukulski, Sherrill Lee and Pam Kukulski. Special thanks to maxpreps and paynterspicks for the dozens of outstanding photos that appear in this publication. This magazine is dedicated to Barry Sollenberger, who published a preseason football magazine in Arizona for over three decades before his death in 2005. Hope you enjoy "Barry's Book!"

By Jose Garcia
 azpreps365.com

Brophy and Pinnacle haven't gotten on each other's nerves after seeing each other so many times in the past couple of years.

That's because they respect each other, and it begins with the head coaches. In a sign of high regard, Brophy coach Scooter Molander once asked Pinnacle coach Dana Zupke how he could balance the duties of a parent and coach when a son is on the team.

On the field, Brophy and Pinnacle have played in cleanly and tightly contested matches. Last year's Sollenberger Classic result, a 31-10 Brophy win, was the only lopsided victory in the non-region battles between the 6A teams in recent years.

Brophy has won the last three meetings, including two first round playoff victories. The Aug. 19 meeting in the 11th annual Sollenberger Classic at scenic Flagstaff Coconino will mark the fifth time that Brophy and Pinnacle have met since Sept. 2015.

"I have tremendous respect for coach Zupke," Molander said. "He's a good person and a fine coach. It's an honor to play him and his team."

Zupke echoed Molander's sentiments.

"It (2016 Sollenberger Classic) was a great event at a great venue," Zupke said. "We enjoyed it and how we were taken care of. It was also great competition against a class program like Brophy."

Pinnacle walked into last year's game with 10 sophomore starters and injured but is more experienced than Brophy this year.

Pinnacle quarterback Spencer Rattler wore a wrist brace while on the sidelines in the 2016 Sollenberger Classic, missing his only game last season. The highly-touted junior quarterback committed to the University of Oklahoma this offseason and has thrown for 5,274 yards and 48 touchdowns in his first two high school seasons.

"Spencer is one of the best I've ever seen," said Molander, a former pro quarterback. "You just hope to contain him. He can extend plays and make every throw. A 7 on 7 is like a walk in the park to him."

For the first time, Spencer will work with veteran Arizona high school coach Mike Brown, who took over as Pinnacle's offensive coordinator this year.

"We call Mike the Mad Scientist for a reason, and I know why now, because I see the methodology behind it and there is a method to his madness, which is pretty cool," Zupke said.

Pinnacle gained Brown but lost the versatility of LB/RB Hunter Griggs, who moved to California.

But Zupke said his team won't miss a beat with DE Thans



Brophy won the 2016 Sollenberger Classic, defeating Pinnacle by a 31-10 count (photo by Mark Jones of maxpreps.com).

Dixon and other players, including a sophomore Zupke didn't want to name but will likely be "very special." Brophy graduated its No. 1 running threat last year but might carry more depth at that position this year with four dependable backs.

A senior with mobility, Noah Gonzalez, will get his first shot to start at quarterback behind an offensive line that's bigger than last year. Strong safety Marques White also spent time running the offense in the offseason, but Brophy prefers to see him and his All-State secondary skills just on defense.

A top-rated long snapper, Colorado State commit Ross Reiter, will play nose guard for the first time this season.

"Ross is just a natural at nose guard," Molander said. "He's quick and has changed his body, dropping his weight but increased his strength."

Brophy might start a freshman, cornerback Denzel Burke, for the first time since the great Mike Mitchell did so in the late 1980s.

The 2017 Sollenberger Classic will start at 3 p.m. It's the second year in a row Coconino will host the game, which azpreps365.com will broadcast live.

SOLLENBERGER CLASSIC HISTORY

The Sollenberger Classic honors the late Barry Sollenberger, a former Arizona Interscholastic Association employee. As a sports historian, Sollenberger was devoted to the task of documenting the achievements of high school athletes in the state of Arizona.

2006: The first game honoring Sollenberger was held at Sun Devil Stadium on the campus of Arizona State University. Chandler Hamilton, the 2005 AIA 5A Division I state runner-ups, defeated Mesa Red Mountain 21-7.

2007: The Phoenix Brophy Prep Broncos hosted Tucson Salpointe Catholic at Phoenix College, with the Broncos defeating Salpointe Catholic 33-17.

2008: Phoenix Brophy Prep, the 2007 AIA 5A D-I state champions, defeated Las Vegas Bishop Gorman, the 2007 NIAA 4A state champions, 16-6. The game was played at University of Phoenix Stadium.

2009: The Sollenberger Classic was played in Reno, Nevada at MacKay Stadium on the campus of the University of Nevada, Reno. AIA 5A D-II defending state champion Peoria Centennial defeated NIAA 4A defending state champion Reno McQueen 51-20.

2010: The Hamilton Huskies and Bishop Gorman Gaels made their second Classic appearances at NAU's J. Lawrence Walkup Skydome. The Huskies, the AIA defending 5A-I state champion, defeated the Gaels, the NIAA defending 4A state champion, 24-17 in a tightly contested game.

2011: The Classic was hosted at University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, Ariz. This marked the first year the classic featured two games. In the first game, the NIAA Class 3A runner-up Moapa Valley defeated the AIA Class 3A defending state champion Show Low 28-26. In the second game, the NIAA Class 4A defending state champion Bishop Gorman defeated the AIA Class 5A-II defending state champion Chaparral 42-22.

2012: University of Phoenix Stadium was the host for the second straight year and third time in the history of the Classic. In the

first game, the AIA Division IV defending state champions, Blue Ridge, defeated the NIAA Class 3A runner-up, Moapa Valley, 23-14. In the second game, the AIA Division I state champion Desert Vista defeated the NIAA 4A Sunset Region runner-up, Palo Verde, 20-10.

2013: Fertitta Field on the campus of Bishop Gorman High School played host to the 2013 Classic, presented by Station Casinos. In the first game, 2012 AIA Division I State Runner-up Mountain Pointe defeated 2012 NIAA Division I Champion Bishop Gorman 28-21. In the second game AIA Division II State Semi-finalist Salpointe Catholic defeated 2012 NIAA Division I State Runner-up Liberty 48-7.

2014: The Classic, presented by Station Casinos, was again held at Fertitta Field on the campus of Bishop Gorman High School. In the first game, 2013 NIAA Division I Champion Bishop Gorman defeated 2013 AIA Division I quarterfinalist Brophy Prep 44-0. In the second game, 2013 AIA Division I Champion Mountain Pointe defeated 2013 NIAA Division I runner-up Reed 66-13.

2015: The Classic did not take place.

2016: The Classic, presented by the U.S. Army, was held in Flagstaff, Ariz. at Coconino High School. In the first game, 2015 AIA Division I State Quarterfinalist Brophy Prep defeated 2015 AIA Division I State Tournament team Pinnacle 31-10. In the second game, 2015 AIA Division II State Champion Desert Edge defeated 2015 AIA Division I State Champion Centennial 26-24.



Quarterbacks Aplenty in 2017

Some Tote High-Caliber Offers, Others Have Title Rings

By Les Willsey
azpreps365.com

The state's prep landscape is alive with quarterbacks as the 2017 season begins. Lots of ordinary ones. And seemingly an overflow of extraordinary ones. Heck, three (Spencer Rattler, Tyler Shough and Jacob Conover) have offers from defending national champion Alabama.

Pundits are salivating over the collection of arms and legs possessed overall. Especially a consensus top tier. The array of field generals offer a mix of pocket passers, spread specialists and/or dual threats. A couple -- at best - will emerge with a state title ring come November, but it's interesting to peruse those that have at least a full year under their belts.

THE VETERANS (two seasons starting)

Topping the list is Pinnacle's multi-sport leader Spencer

Rattler (6-foot-1, 175 pounds), also a very capable basketball player. A junior, Rattler enters his third season as the Pioneers' starter. He has passed for 5,274 yards and 48 touchdowns in two seasons. So far he's rustled up offense without much of a running game compared to other teams with high-octane QBs. He scrambled more last year and nearly tripled his rushing total from his freshman year. Earlier this summer, Rattler verbally committed to Oklahoma.

Breaking through in a huge way last year was Perry's Brock Purdy. Purdy (6-1, 197) is undecided on a college destination. He enters his senior year having passed for 4,527 yards and 50 TDs in two seasons. He's added 1,350 yards rushing and 10 TDs. Purdy shared quarterbacking duties for the Pumas in 2015 and missed three of 13 games in 2016 due to injury. Perry advanced to the 6A semifinals. He's a true dual-threat.

Lacking the supporting cast of Rattler and Purdy is Gilbert High quarterback Jack Plummer (6-5, 212). Plummer a senior, has made an oral commitment to Purdue. He's passed for 4,372 yards starting two years for the Tigers. Gilbert is 6-14 over that span.

STATE CHAMPS

A trio of quarterbacks fit this category after successfully navigating their first varsity season at the controls and landing championship rings. They are Chandler's Jacob Conover, Saguaro's Max Massingale and Williams Field's Zach Shepherd. Massingale is a senior. Conover and Shepherd are juniors.

The trio are different. Massingale (5-11, 180) is the latest in the line of run-pass dynamos at Saguaro. Massingale carved up defenses to the tune of 2,291 yards passing, 30 TDs and just four picks. He chipped in 1,012 rushing yards and 12 TDs. Defending Massingale can be maddening and made tougher with the presence last year of running back Shane Matthews, a 2,000-yard rusher his junior and senior seasons.

On the flip side is Conover (6-0, 185), who runs sparingly. No reason to just about any year of late at Chandler, which is overflowing with top-flight receivers and running backs. Conover threw for 3,715 yards and 32 TDs in 15 games last year. He tossed only five interceptions. He won't have TJ Green as a potent back to occupy defenses, but like Saguaro, Chandler has little trouble coming up with offensive pieces. Conover recently garnered an offer from Alabama.

Shepherd (6-0, 180) came out of nowhere and made a name for himself in his debut last season. He helped generate enough offense with his right arm to go with the Black Hawks' outstanding defense to turn back Centennial

HOW THESE TOP QUARTERBACKS RATE

Rankings nationally by 247 Sports as of 7/25/17

CLASS OF 2018

Hamilton's Tyler Shough ranked No. 4 nationally among pro style quarterbacks. Verbally committed to North Carolina. Received four other offers.

Gilbert's Jack Plummer ranked No. 22 nationally among pro style quarterbacks. Verbally committed to Purdue. Received 11 other offers.

Perry's Brock Purdy ranked No. 54 nationally among pro style quarterbacks. Has offers from NAU and UC Davis.

Cienega's Jamarye Joiner ranked No. 18 nationally among dual quarterbacks. Verbally committed to Arizona.

Saguaro's Max Massingale ranked No. 58 nationally among dual quarterbacks. Verbally committed to Air Force.

CLASS OF 2019

Pinnacle's Spencer Rattler ranked No. 3 nationally among pro style quarterbacks. Verbally committed to Oklahoma. Received 14 other offers.

Chandler's Jacob Conover not ranked. Has offers from Alabama, Utah State and Oregon State.

Williams Field's Zach Shepherd not ranked. No offers to date.

Casteel's Gunner Cruz not ranked. Has offers from ASU and South Dakota State.

CLASS OF 2020

Chaparral's Jack Miller no rankings. Has offers from Florida State, Mississippi, Arizona, Arizona State, Louisiana Tech and Memphis.

in the 5A championship game. Shepherd passed for 2,749 yards, 25 TDs and six interceptions. He completed 60 percent of his passes. Shepherd will be challenged bringing along a new receiving corps. He won't have a pair of 1,000-yard receivers to throw to. At least that we know of for now.

THE TRANSFER

A high-profile transfer from 2016 is sophomore Jack Miller, who left 2A Scottsdale Christian for 5A Chaparral. Miller (6-3, 197) wore out 2A foes as a freshman throwing for 3,653 yards and 53 TDs. He rushed for another 831 yards and eight scores. Miller will engage in a hardship appeal so his availability to the Firebirds may not start until midseason if his appeal is denied. Chaparral's offense certainly will be tailored to fit Miller, but the competition will ramp up from the 2A level. Many believe the jump up a few notches won't be a problem.

SEEKING DEEPER POSTSEASON RUNS

Three heralded players who saw their teams fall short of championship game appearances have legitimate chances to rectify that in their senior seasons. They are Cienega's Jamarye Joiner, Hamilton's Tyler Shough and Casteel's Gunner Cruz.

Joiner (6-2, 185) began his varsity prep career as a freshman in 2014 doing a little bit of everything (rushing, passing and receiving) for an 8-3 Salpointe Catholic squad. His 2015 (sophomore) season never materialized and he ultimately left Salpointe for Cienega. Joiner showcased the ability everyone got a glimpse of as a freshman. Last year he passed for 1,713 yards and 17 TDs and rushed for an additional 762 yards and 13 TDs. He has a verbal commitment to Arizona.

Shough (6-5, 187) will be the rare quarterback in this decade to pilot the Huskies for two varsity seasons. Shough, who recently gave a verbal commitment to North Carolina, threw for 2,079 yards and 27 TDs in helping the Huskies to the 6A quarterfinals. Shough got better and better as 2016 progressed and the Huskies are looking for the progression to continue. Shough spent the summer bouncing from one elite camp to another.

Cruz (6-4, 205) helped fledgling Casteel to a 9-2 record on a varsity squad comprised exclusively of sophomores in 2016. Cruz has a big arm, size that colleges crave and is field savvy beyond his years. He already has a couple offers with ASU one of them. The junior carved up 3A opposition to the tune of 2,600 yards passing, 30 TDs and just five picks. Casteel has bulked up its schedule subbing in two high-caliber opponents -- Show Low and Monte Vista, CA both of which were playoff teams. Monte Vista is few miles from San Diego. Those games figure to be a barometer for Cruz and Colts seeking a conference title sooner rather than later. Cruz recently was offered by ASU.



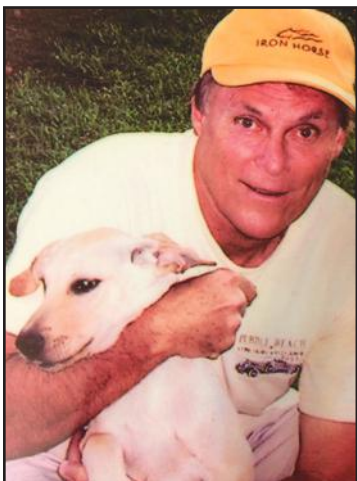
Hamilton's Tyler Shough (photo by Darin Sicurello of *maxpreps.com*)



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First AZ Prep Players to Play Pro Football



By Barry Sollenberger
(pictured here)

(The following story was originally published in the 2004 Phoenix Metro preseason football magazine, which Sollenberger helped publish along with his good friend Dave Kukulski and Kukulski's family. The first 12 Arizona prep players to reach the pro ranks did so between 1926-54.)

JAMES OLDHAM, PHOENIX UNION

The former Phoenix native is believed to be the first Arizona schoolboy product to play in the NFL, with the Racine Tornadoes in Wisconsin in 1926, the short-lived interstate rivals of the Green Bay Packers. Oldham, at 6-0, 190-pounds, was an all-around forward in basketball and excelled in the shot and discus for the Phoenix Union Coyotes. But in football his 21 touchdowns and 127 points from his fullback position earned Arizona Player of the Year honors and captain of The Arizona Republic's 1923 All-State squad. The state champions only set-backs during a 9-1-1 season were a loss to the University of Arizona's freshmen and a scoreless tie with San Diego High. Oldham's three-TD day against Mesa nailed down the state crown. His college career in Tucson was short-lived, and he lettered only one year for University of Arizona's legendary coach James "Pop" McKale. While with Racine, he played three positions, end, blocking back and wingback.

NORRIS STEVERSON, MESA

A charter member of three different sports hall of fames, Steverson was the first from Mesa's proud football heritage to play in the pros. He is also the first Arizona State alum to reach the NFL. The pride of Mesa lettered in football and basketball at ASU and was an all-conference halfback in 1931. He was a member of the first ASU squad to beat rival Arizona in the 20th century.

Steverson signed with George Halas and the Chicago Bears after the Bears played an exhibition game against a Phoenix all-star team in 1933. But the Bears traded him to the NFL Cincinnati Reds before the start of the season. The Reds disbanded after eight games, and the Mesa native later played with the St. Louis Gunners. Steverson taught physical education at ASU, where he helped coach a variety of sports and is credited with founding the gymnastics program. He lettered in four sports at Mesa.

EARLE NOLAN, TUCSON

The first Tucson High and second University of Arizona alum to land in the pro ranks was Nolan. Nolan was a first-team all-

state shot put and discus champion. In college, Nolan played three years for Wildcat coach Tex Oliver, and competed on the UA track team in all three weight events, including the javelin, and competed in the 1936 Olympic track and field trials. But football and boxing were his favorite sports. He won all 20 amateur boxing matches he entered.

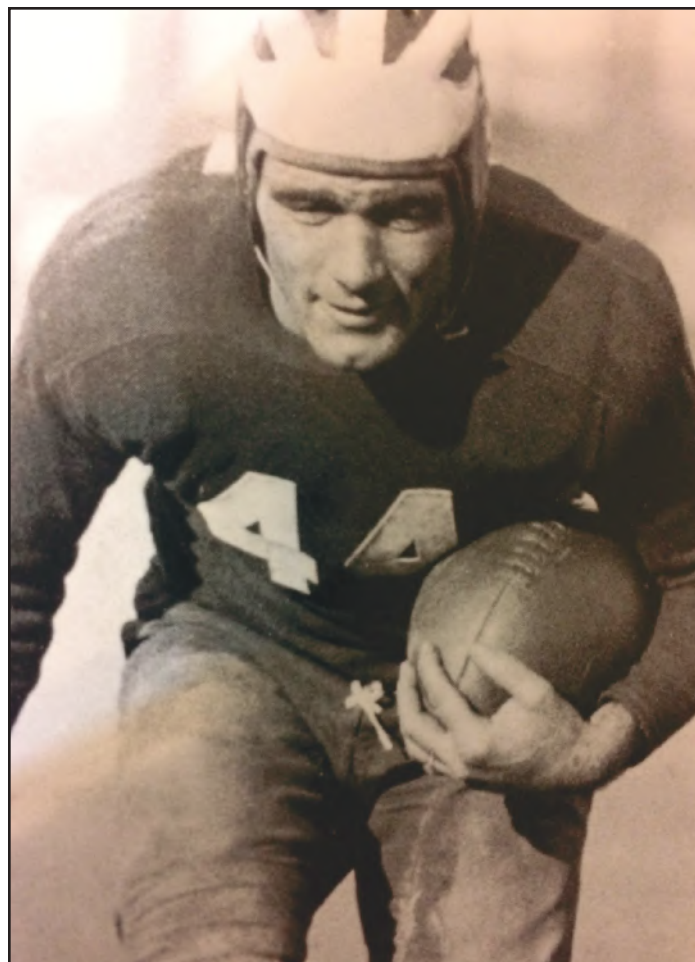
In 1937, Nolan signed as a tackle with the NFL Chicago Cardinals for \$135 a game. "The Cardinals coach, Milan Creighton, used all of his top players against me during a tryout," recalled Nolan in 1989. "Then the coach put on a football uniform and went against me. I made the team. I don't think they thought a player for a professional team could come from Arizona."

After two years in the NFL, Nolan joined the Marine Corps. He fought at Iwo Jima and Guadalcanal during World War II, received the Navy Cross and was promoted to captain.

"I don't think pro football had the same feel or spirit for him that college ball did," said Nolan's son-in-law John Krygelski, after Nolan's death in 1991. "Most of what he reminisced about were his college days."

CECIL AND CARL MULLENEAUX, PHOENIX UNION

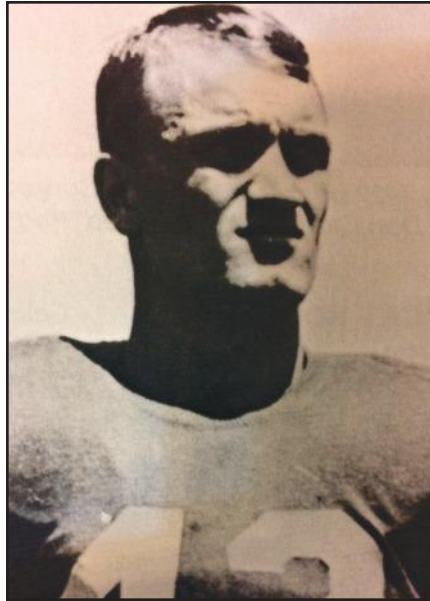
The first brother act from Arizona's high school ranks to play in the NFL, Cecil and Carl were multiple sport stars, and Cecil



Cecil Mulleneaux, Phoenix Union



Hal Prescott
Phoenix Union



Hank Stanton
Clifton



Carl Mulleneaux
Phoenix Union



Sonny Karnofsky
Phoenix Union

multiple teams, including the New York Giants, Pittsburgh Steelers, Packers and Columbus Bullies. Carl's career, which was interrupted briefly by military service, was more stable. He spent six years as a starting end for the Packers. The other receiver for the Packers was Hall of Famer Don Hutson.

TOM GREENFIELD, PEORIA

Peoria's inductee became one of the University of Arizona's most decorated football players, earning All-America and all-conference honors as a center. In basketball, he was a forward for U of A's Fred Enke's always strong Wildcat roundball teams. In 1949, Greenfield was selected to the school's half-decade team by the Arizona Daily Star and to the All-Time Rocky Mountain Collegiate Team. The 200-pound Peoria native played center for three years for the Packers under legendary coach Earl "Curly" Lambeau.

SONNY KARNOFSKY, PHOENIX UNION

As an underclassman, Karnofsky was a star on the school's six-man football team. He wound up helping the school win a state title and earned all-state and Six-Man All-America recognition as a sophomore in 1938.

Although World War II interrupted his college career, Karnofsky's place in NFL history took a strange twist after the war. When the world conflict ended, the popularity of the NFL boomed. Record crowds attended both pro and college games. On Sept. 16, 1945, in Philadelphia, Abraham "Sonny" Karnofsky, a rookie, scored two touchdowns on short runs as the Eagles upset the Green Bay Packers 28-21 before 90,218, the largest crowd to watch an NFL game at the time.

HENRY "HANK" STANTON, CLIFTON

The rangy end from Clifton, and one of University of Arizona's all-time greats, set NCAA records with 50 catches and 820 yards in 1941. Before two-platoon football, Stanton was a dangerous end-around artist, a damaging blocker and a gifted defensive player.

He wound up becoming U of A's first All-American receiver. During World War II, Stanton served as a captain in the U.S. Army. Prior to enlisting he was drafted by the Brooklyn Dodgers, but his military obligations put his pro career on hold. He eventually found

his way into the professional ranks, and played two years with the New York Yankees of the All-American Football Conference, a team that existed from 1946-49.

HAL PRESCOTT, PHOENIX UNION

The future pro made the most of his only varsity season as a versatile two-way end, the same positions he played at Hardin-Simmons in Abilene, Texas, and with three professional teams.

(nicknamed "Brute") was a two-time all-state pitcher. In 1928, Cecil teamed with star infielder Hank Leiber to guide the Phoenix Union Coyotes to the state baseball championship. Carl, nicknamed Moose, was an end and Cecil was a fullback on the state championship team they played on at Phoenix Union. Carl's college career flourished at Utah State, while his brother became a starter at Northern Arizona in Flagstaff. During a 10-year pro career, Cecil played fullback and center for

At Hardin-Simmons, which competed briefly in the old Border Conference, Prescott earned his spurs as a quality receiver and tough, hard-hitting defensive end. After World War II the former Phoenix native played one year with the Packers, three with the Philadelphia Eagles, and one with the New York Bulldogs. He was a member of the Birds' back-to-back NFL championship teams in 1948 and 1949.

MORRISON WARREN, PHOENIX CARVER

Warren's athletic career began at the Phoenix Colored School (later Carver High) during the Great Depression years in 1930s. In those days, African-American students weren't allowed to attend nearby Phoenix Union. The Monarchs, located on Grant Street, played an independent schedule in most sports, except for track, a sport they dominated at the state meets in Tucson. In 1946, Warren became one of the first two African-American athletes to play at Arizona State.

The other was teammate George Diggs. In 1947, as a fullback/linebacker, Warren played in the same college backfield with legend Wilford "Whizzer" White. "He was a great guy and a great person," said White after learning of Warren's death in 2002. "He was a real tough football player." Warren and Diggs often faced racial discrimination during Border Conference games. But when ASU refused to schedule schools which wouldn't allow every player to stay in hotels together, things changed for the better. A former president of the Fiesta Bowl, Warren played one year of pro ball after college with the Brooklyn Dodgers of the All-American Football Conference.

DON CORBITT, PRESCOTT

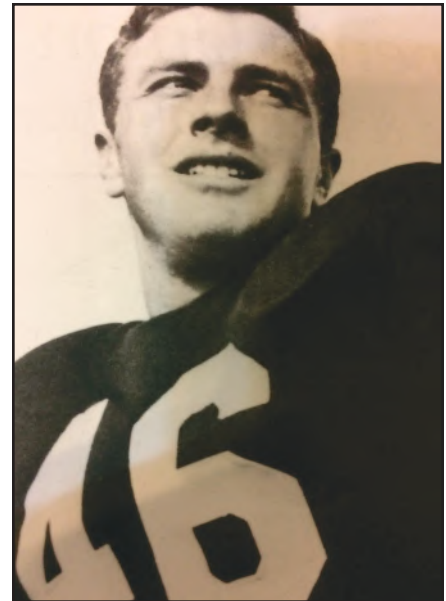
The first athlete from northern Arizona to reach the playing fields of the NFL, Corbitt was one of the state's all-time great high school and collegiate centers. He was the Washington Redskins' center in 1948. As a 6-3, 205-pound high school senior, Corbitt was a two-sport star and first-team center on The Arizona Republic's 1941 all-state squad. In Washington, Corbitt's quarterback was NFL legend Sammy Baugh. Corbitt's career was interrupted briefly by World War II, where he served in the Navy.

FRED ENKE JR., TUCSON

Tucson High's rich athletic heritage has had its share of legends, and Enke is near the top of the list. The son of the late University of Arizona basketball coach with the same name, Enke was a three-sport star at Tucson during the early 1940s, a Hall of Fame athlete at the University of Arizona, and the first quarterback from Arizona's high school ranks to start in the



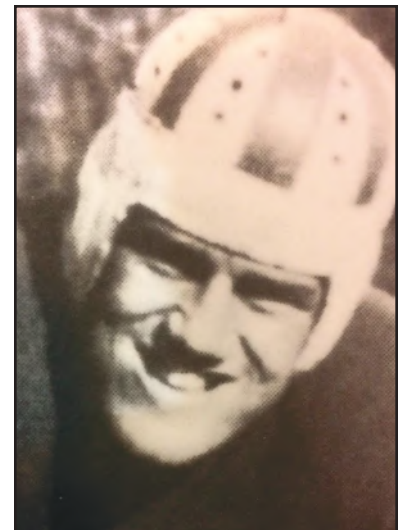
***Morrison Warren
Phoenix Carver***



***Fred Enke Jr.
Tucson***



***Don Corbitt
Prescott***



***Earle Nolan
Tucson***

NFL. With Enke in the Tucson Badgers' infield, Tucson started a 52-game winning streak — a state record which stands today. At U of A he lettered in football, basketball and baseball and played on three Border Conference championship basketball teams coached by his father. He set a Wildcat school record for total offense with 2,973 yards. Enke Jr. played pro football from 1948-54 with the Detroit Lions, Philadelphia Eagles and Baltimore Colts. 150



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The 2016 Chandler Wolves celebrate their 2016 6A Football State Championship (photo by Mark Jones of maxpreps.com).

By Les Willsey
 azpreps365.com

1. CHANDLER: The defending champs are loaded again. They lost elite running back to graduation, but with a highly efficient veteran quarterback, superb receivers and solid returners on defense the Wolves have much to look forward to. Chandler opens the season hosting Red Mountain on Aug. 18 and then challenges IMG Academy on Aug. 26 at Austin Field. Those will be good tests to see if the Wolves are up to the task of a repeat. In six seasons under current coach Shaun Aguano, Chandler is 62-17 and has reached the semis or better four straight years. Still looking for back-to-back crowns so that's a goal at the end of the rainbow.

2. MOUNTAIN POINTE: It wouldn't be the top four without the Pride checking in at one of the higher slots. Coach Norris Vaughan believes running back Gary Bragg is the best in the state. Bragg nearly topped 1,000 yards in half a season. Bragg is on the rebound from a season-ending knee injury. The defense, with loads of size and experience, should be enough for another title run after last year's runner-up finish. It will be the first full season for junior quarterback Nick Wallerstedt. Wallerstedt won't have to be special if the ground game is as good as it usually is and Bragg stays injury free. The Pride's defense should be able to offset any offensive shortcomings in tight games.

3. HAMILTON: Perhaps going out on a limb here, but the Huskies are hungry after the turmoil of the offseason. Interim coach Dick Ban-

iszewski is confident in this team. An improved defense is a must as the team suffered through its worst year ever stopping the opposition. Hamilton's 7-5 season was a two-point conversion stop away from advancing to the semifinals. With Tyler Shough at quarterback, one of the many elite-level QBs most contenders have, there is optimism for a deeper postseason run and less of a bumpy ridge getting there. Hamilton opens the season Aug. 18 against Boulder Creek.

4. PERRY: Offense shouldn't be a problem for the Pumas as they try to replicate last season's title run that maxed out in the semis but yearn to take it further. Playmakers abound with the prolific Brock Purdy, who may want to be a little more careful with the football this year. Where Perry must be stouter is on defense. It shouldn't take 60 points to win a football game, certainly not in the playoffs. Perry will conclude its first decade as a varsity program this year and has postseason appearances in seven of the nine (one year was an independent schedule). And while five of the seven were one-and-done, postseason is postseason. The Pumas are playing with the big boys now and need to continue an upward trend to reach the level of their Chandler brethren.

5. PINNACLE: Like most of the top teams in the conference, the Pioneers rarely lack offensive firepower. It won't be the case for the immediate future with Spencer Rattler at the controls. Pinnacle averaged 33 points a game last year, but gave up a like amount. The difference-making unit coach Dana Zupke is banking on in the new season is defense with as much experience back as any in recent memory. With that experience must come improvement. The Pio-

neers again face the conference's most treacherous non-region slate with games against Brophy Prep to open the year in the Sollenberger Classic in Flagstaff. That matchup is followed by Basha, Chandler, Mountain View, Centennial and Mountain Pointe. All of those teams qualified for the playoffs last year and three played in title games. Pinnacle won the Desert Valley Region last year to cement a playoff berth. Its region foes -- Boulder Creek, Desert Mountain, Horizon, Mountain Ridge and Sandra Day O'Connor-- all have new head coaches this season.

6. RED MOUNTAIN: After a somewhat rocky search for a new head coach the Mountain Lions settled on in-house staff member, defensive coordinator Mike Peterson, to pilot the program. Peterson must follow up Red Mountain's deepest playoff run since 2008 when the school last reached the semifinals. The largest school in the Mesa district has plenty of athletes to choose from and an abundance of key returnees. Red Mountain played its best football in the latter half of 2016. It avenged a regular-season loss to Skyline and beat Brophy in one of the typically close games the teams play. The Mountain Lions were able to hang with Mountain Pointe to the finish in a seven-point semifinal loss. Red Mountain's first three games are a swift test -- Chandler, Hamilton and Basha.

7. DESERT RIDGE: The Jaguars return a decent group of standouts, but are likely to fill holes with anywhere from five to eight sophomores. The transfer of sophomore Jason Harris to Higley leaves a gap, but coach Jeremy Hathcock's team will move forward and look to challenge for a region title with the likes of Mountain Pointe and Desert Vista -- teams the Thunder split with last season. Desert Ridge will have a smaller offensive line than usual to lead the way for talented backs Tyrese Allen and Donjae Logan. They led the Jags in rushing and are the top two returning receivers. Desert Ridge has pretty much trade-marked itself as a final-four program. That may be a tougher go this season with a younger set of varsity starters. Desert Ridge has reached the big-school final four six times in seven years this decade, including two finals.

8. SKYLINE: The Coyotes are itching to get back to competing after their gut-wrenching quarterfinal loss to Red Mountain last November. They'll have their share of new faces, but coach Angelo Paffumi practically wills the program to success. He is currently the dean of Mesa district head football coaches as he begins his sixth season at the helm. Skyline lacks the numbers of most of the other top contenders at the varsity level. It's earned its way to postseason four of the last five seasons with a relentless running game and good enough defense to win 74 percent of its games. Paffumi sports a 43-15 record in his five seasons as coach.

9. DESERT VISTA: The Thunder hit their stride late last season, winning five games in a row, to turn around a 2-4 record at the time. The season came to an abrupt halt with a 62-7 shellacking from the runaway train known as Chandler. Coach Dan Hinds is advocating a better passing game this year with untested quarterback Derek Kline, who moved in from Reno, Nev. Kline is 6-foot-5 and 210 pounds and possesses a strong arm. More starters return than graduated, which on paper is a plus. The season-opener with Perry should be interesting as the Pumas began their ascent to a breakout season last year with an overtime win. Desert Vista also faces Basha, Skyline and Brophy in its non-region contests.

10. WESTVIEW: The Knights are a perennial westside contender, giving the eastside dominance in the conference fits at times in the regular season and occasionally in the postseason. Coach Nick Gehrts enjoyed a productive first-year running the program, guiding them to the Southwest Region title. Westview's season ended with a 34-26 first-round playoff loss to Desert Ridge. Running the ball likely will remain Westview's forte with what is likely to be more a backfield by committee. Gehrts is excited about the ability of this year's defense, which will be tested by Centennial, Basha and Brophy in the early portion of the season.

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By Les Willsey
 azpreps365.com

METRO REGION

Alhambra

Head coach: George Madrano

2016 record: 6-4

Returning starters on offense: 5

Returning starters on defense: 6

Returning key players and stats: So. WR-DE Tony Miller (6-6, 220); Jr. WR-DB Anthony Drew (6-3, 170); Jr. RB-DB Joshua Eberlen (5-9, 170); Jr. OL Justin Cooley (6-0, 240); Sr. OL-DL Semisi Poes (6-1, 240); Sr. OL-DL Joseph Salazar (6-0, 220).

Strengths of offense during summer: We are learning to throw the ball much better than last year. We have some depth at quarterback and receiver.

Strengths of defense during summer: Our defense has some experience returning. Our off-season has done well for the defense. They are bigger and faster. We think we've moved some guys into the right positions.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Our offensive line has some depth this year so determining who will be in the starting lineup is the unknown.

Potential breakout players: Andi Carillo is going to be a sophomore. As of right now Andi is running the offense very smoothly. Miller and Drew as receivers who can be threats. Eberlen has had a great off-season and should be a threat running the ball.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the last 2-3 years: Joseph Salazar was a starter as a sophomore the year before I got here. This past year he started again as a junior and had a good year.

Central

Head coach: Jon Clanton

2016 record: 6-4

Returning starters on offense: 4

Returning starters on defense: 7

Returning key players and stats: Jr. TE-DE Casey Clanton (6-4, 225, 59 tackles); Jr. DE Cosmos Kwete (6-3, 210, 32 tackles, 7 sacks).

Strengths of offense during summer: We have great wide receivers who are fast and have good height.

Strengths of defense during summer: Our line and linebackers will be the best groups I have had in my seven years at Central.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We need to find a quarterback and some tackles to replace from last year's team.

Potential breakout players: We have a number of new kids and returning players that could break out this year for us.

Unique human interest story? We have two kids from the Congo that will be studs.

Cesar Chavez

Head coach: Manuel Alcantar

2016 record: 6-5

Returning starters on offense: 8

Returning starters on defense: 3

Returning key players and stats: Jr. RB-LB Andrew Blitzke (6-1, 200, 81 tackles, 12 sacks); Sr. OL-DL Javier Meza (6-3, 285);

Sr. QB Chris Russell (6-1, 165, 634 yards passing, 10 TDs, 1 INT); Sr. WR-S Corey Brown (6-0, 175); Sr. C Frankie Bal (6-2, 280); Sr. QB-S Carlos Ritchie (6-2, 165, 668 yards passing, 5 TDs, 6 INT); Jr. WR Thariyk Blue (5-10, 155).

Strengths of offense during summer: Speed. We are coming with a veteran group. All offensive linemen come back from last year. Both QB also come back. We have a very experienced group.

Strengths of defense during summer: Discipline. This year defense's main focus is discipline and we will be that.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Who is going to step up as leaders? We are a new staff working with a veteran offense and young defense.

Potential breakout players: Thariyk Blue was a sophomore last year, but plans to see the field more. Andrew Blitzke was primarily a linebacker last year and should get the load of the carries on our offense.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the last 2-3 years: Do not know. First-year staff. We are a young team heading into a new era with high expectations.



Tristan DeAngelo, Boulder Creek (photo by Mark Jones of maxpreps.com)

Maryvale

Head coach: George Martinez

2016 record: 4-6

Returning starters on offense: 2

Returning starters on defense: 5

Returning key players and stats: Sr. DB Abdul Turay (5-9, 145, 37 tackles); Jr. QB Major Shepherd (5-11, 175); Sr. SS Thomas Hawkins (5-9, 180, 62 tackles, 2 sacks); Jr. TE Adolfo Cano (6-2, 230); Sr. FB Jesse Valdez (5-10, 180).

Strengths of offense during summer: Our offensive line and tight end.

Strengths of defense during summer: Linebackers and secondary.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Defensive line and quarterback.

Potential breakout players: Abdul Turay, Hawkins and Shepherd.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the last 2-3 years: Abdul Turay

North

Head coach: Bernie Busken

2016 record: 5-5

Returning starters on offense: 7

Returning starters on defense: 11

Returning key players and stats: Sr. WR-DB Jason Cortez (5-11, 165, 24 receptions, 379 yards 2 TDs); Sr. WR-DB Eriq Saucedo (6-0, 165); Jr. DB X Enrique (6-0, 170); Sr. DB Andre Johnson (5-11, 175); So. LB Julio Ortiz (5-8, 210); Angel Sr. LB Angel Juarez (5-9, 185); Jr. DE Maxamus Valdez (6-1, 245, 45 tackles, 8 sacks); Sr. DL Francisco DeLa Rosa (5-7, 250); Sr. DL Gabriel Vega (6-0, 248); Sr. DE Nathan McGeorge (6-1, 225, 34 tackles, 4 sacks); Sr. OL Issy Lagod (6-1, 270); Sr. C Tony Salgado (6-0, 280); Sr. RB Dom Fiorucci (5-7, 155, 691 yards rushing, 6 TDs); Sr. OL Ignacio Venegas (5-8, 205); Sr. RB Milon Harvey (5-10, 180, 503 yards rushing, 3 TDs); Sr. K Carlos Cruz (5-9, 200).

Strengths of offense during summer: NA

Strengths of defense during summer: Experience with many starters returning.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: NA

Potential breakout players: NA

Trevor Browne

Head coach: Jeremy Zimmerman

2016 record: 1-9

Returning starters on offense: 3

Returning starters on defense: 3

Returning key players and stats: Sr. C-NG Robert Ramirez (5-7, 230); Sr. RB-CB Ambulai Quaye (5-7, 132); Jr. TE Omar Hernandez (6-0, 195).

Strengths of offense during summer: Size and hunger for success.

Strengths of defense during summer: Players ability to fill multiple roles.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Will leadership step up and who emerges as quarterback.

Potential breakout players: Quaye.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the last 2-3 years: Robert Ramirez.

DESERT VALLEY REGION

Boulder Creek

Head coach: Tony Casarella

2016 record: 4-6

Returning starters on offense: 4

Returning starters on defense: 3

Returning key players and stats: Sr. DB-RB-RS Murphy Hartmann (6-0, 175, 11 receptions, 246 yards, 4 TDs, 55 tackles); Sr. TE James Reed (6-5, 225); Sr. WR Tristan D'Angelo (6-4, 180, 36 receptions, 453 yards, 3 TDs); Sr. WR Chad Kautzman (6-2, 200); OL Preston Shepherd (6-4, 250); Sr. LB AJ Pirro (6-0, 200); Sr. LB Hunter Jaskey (6-3, 200); Sr. DL Ryan Cazares (6-0, 225, 30 tackles, 3 sacks); Jr. QB Hendrix Johnson (6-1, 170, 481 yards passing, 4 TDs, 4 INT).

Strengths of offense during summer: The offensive skill positions seemed to pick up the new offensive schemes rather quickly. It has been fun to watch our big skill players this past spring.

Strengths of defense during summer: The defense is young. We have some good solid players that are going to fill the shoes of last year's senior dominant defense. BC thrives on playing great team defense and that's what we believe will be our strength again this year.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Competing in 6A is a tough task. Boulder Creek has the potential to be a very good football team. Our players have to realize their potential and train at that level every day. Can we agree on a common goal and work together toward achieving that goal?

Potential breakout players: Hartmann, Reed, D'Angelo, Johnson and junior running back Patrick Serrano.

Desert Mountain

Head coach: David Sedmak

2016 record: 4-6

Returning starters on offense: 5

Returning starters on defense: 6

Returning key players and stats: Sr. WR-DB Josh Walker (6-1, 185, 56 Receptions, 844 yards, 11 TDs); Sr. RB-DB Nick Hill (5-11, 185, 846 yards rushing, 11 TDs, 46 receptions, 552 yards, 3 TDs); Sr. SS Luke Donovan (5-10, 175, 57 Tackles 3 INT); Sr. K-P Brayden Narveson (6-0, 180, 16 touchbacks, 51-yard FG).

Strengths of offense during summer: Walker and Hill are special. We also have another bunch of young receivers with excellent potential, as well as an up and coming QB in Kedon Slovis. **Strengths of defense during summer:** Defensive coordinator Art Alfred) will be in his second year and knows our personnel and opponents much better. Good competition for most spots on defense and some good young talent.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Depth and size as always.

Potential breakout players: Jr. Slovis, Jr. DB/LB Matthew Anderson, Jr. OT Ben Roots, Jr. WR/DE Jr. Brandon Kron, Jr. WR Armand Reichelt and Jr. WR/S Riley Tucker.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the last 2-3 years: Defensive lineman Andrew Vanhof. offensive tackle Ben Roots and offensive guard Ryan Pi-leggi.

Unique human interest story? Offensive coordinator and quarterback coach Kurt Warner was selected to the NFL Hall of Fame.

Horizon

Head coach: Ty Wisdom

2016 record: 6-4

Returning starters on offense: 5

Returning starters on defense: 6

Returning key players and stats: Sr. TE-LB Brett Rudolph (6-1,



QB Spencer Rattler, Pinnacle (photo by Paul Campbell of maxpreps.com)

215, 74 tackles); Sr. OL-DL Jonah Brownell (6-2, 235, 57 tackles); Sr. OL-DL Justin Segura (6-3, 255, 50 tackles, 4 sacks); Sr. OL Isiah Mursalat (6-5, 290); Sr. TE-DE Grant Mileski (6-4, 230); Sr. OLB-S Nathan Bucko (5-11, 170); Jr. RB-LB Nash Giffin (5-9, 175); Sr. WR Dylan Lizzaraga (5-10, 170, 13 receptions, 234 yards, 2 TDs).

Strengths of offense during summer: We will be lead by offensive line. Three Division I recruits.

Strengths of defense during summer: Six returning starters lead by senior captain Rudolph. Front seven will be the strength of our defense. A young, athletic secondary.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Wide receiver, secondary, and center.

Potential breakout players: Sr. DL Tali Anau; Giffin, Jr. RB-S Chris Grillo; So. WR-DB Canaan Mullin; So. OLB Jay Rudolph.

Mountain Ridge

Head coach: Vinny Ciliberti

2016 record: 3-7

Returning starters on offense: 4

Returning starters on defense: 5

Returning key players and stats: Sr. WR Aaron Pfannenstiel (5-9, 174); Sr. WR Owen Gordon (5-11, 160); Jr. FS Ethen Pfannenstiel (5-11, 160); Sr. QB Justin Hintze (5-11, 180); Sr. RB Ben Tye (5-9, 165); Jr. OL-DL Ethan Hudak (6-0, 220); Sr. OL-DL Anthony Trasancos (5-9, 230);

Strengths of offense during summer: We have a solid group of receivers with a healthy mix of experience and youth. Their speed will put pressure on opposing defenses and open up opportunity for us to spread the ball around and establish a mix of run and pass.

Strengths of defense during summer: We are loaded with linebackers that should be the strength of defense. We with a group with attack mentality so I expect them to put pressure on opposition and created turnovers and big plays.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We will be young and inexperienced at many positions so our biggest question marks will be how fast we can come together and play as a team and how fast we mature at those positions.

Potential breakout players: On offense, Justin Hintze is switching positions and playing quarterback this season. He brings speed and play making ability to the position. Aaron Pfannenstiel is coming off a season where he was injured and missed most of the year. If healthy he has the potential to be the main target at WR. We have a good group of young receivers with solid hands and good speed including David Doucet and Preston Miller. Hudak is a highly rated long snapper and will be a leader on the line for the next few years. Defensively, we have a strong group of linebackers including Danny Radan, Jacob Wen and Braiden Manusina. Ethan Oelschlager, Anthony DiGiorgio and Ridge Wilkenson will be dangerous in the secondary.

Pinnacle

Head coach: Dana Zupke

2016 record: 6-6

Returning starters on offense: 6

Returning starters on defense: 8

Returning key players and stats: Jr. QB Spencer Rattler (6-2, 180, 2893 yards passing, 29 TDs, 10 INT, 462 yards rushing, 5 TDs); Jr. RB Kaleb Covington (5-9, 170, 413 yards rushing, 3 TDs); Sr. OT Ben Fox (6-4, 300) 6-4, 300); Sr. C Luke Verbalaitis (6-2, 265); Sr. WR Parker Redd (6-2, 200, 33 receptions for 418 yardsm 4 TDS); Sr. WR-DB Dylan Stevenson (5-9, 170, 15 receptions for 283 yards, 2 TDs, 32 tackles, 5 INT); Sr. WR-DB Bennet Liebe (5-10, 175, 20 receptions for 274 yards, 2 TDs); Sr. DL-OL Luke Aschenbrand (6-4, 275); Sr. DL Lucas Jarvis (6-2, 265); Sr. LB Kyle Carriker, (6-2, 210, 39 tackles); Jr. WR Hayden Hatten (6-2, 205, 23 receptions for 456 yards, 4 TDs); Jr. DE Thans Dixon (6-1, 200, 32 tackles, 6 sacks); Sr. DE Brayden Smerz, (6-1, 195); Sr. S Tucker Parrish (6-0, 190).

Strengths of offense during summer: Balance. Great quarterback with up and coming running back. Solid line with a lot of experience

Strengths of defense during summer: Experience. Six of the front seven returns plus both corners. Good combination of size and speed.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: New coaches and new system.

Potential breakout players: Jr. receiver-defensive back Quinton Powell ia fastest player on team. Jr. OL Matt Mickelson a tremendous athlete with great size.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the last 2-3 years: Parker Redd. Moved from quarterback as a soph to receiver last year. Hard work has put him in starting role.

Unique human interest story? Verbalaitis family connection. Rick and Hugh Verbalaitis, who were products of Shadow Mtn. and both played D1, have collectively three sons in the program. They are also long-time assistant coaches. Andrew Hurley, son of former defensive coordinator Pat Hurley and Pinnacle standout alumn, will join the staff as defensive coordinator.

Sandra Day O'Connor

Head coach: Steve Casey

2016 record: 1-9

Returning starters on offense: 4

Returning starters on defense: 4

Returning key players and stats: Sr. LB Parker Willis (5-10-190, 67 tackles); Jr. LB Tanner Sharp (5-10 200), Jr. DE Bralen Trice (6-4-220); Sr. LB Logan Mahan (6-2 185, 40 tackles, 4 sacks); Jr. FS Tyler Bergstrom (5-9 155 37 tackles); Jr. DB Evan Barnes (5-8, 150); Sr. OL Andrew Scholtz (6-5, 280); Jr. C Ben Fuenmayor (6-1 260); OL Grant Berkely (6-2, 245); Sr. WR Ryan Langford (6-2 215); Sr. WR-DB Kendahl Johnson (6-2, 218); Sr. LS Steven Bird (5-10, 210); Sr. RB Danny Jelow (5'8 18, 374 yards, 5 TDs); Sr. RB Aiden Galbreath (5-10, 210).

Strengths of offense during summer: Several returning line-man and a new system installed.

Strengths of defense during summer: Athletic, quick and hungry to have some fun.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Who will be the quarterback.

Potential breakout players: Danny Jelow, Aiden Galbreath, Ryan Langford and Kendahl Johnson.

Unique human interest story? Do have a young lady, Fiona Halt, competing.

SOUTHWEST REGION

Copper Canyon

Head coach: Shawn Kemmer

2016 record: 3-7

Returning starters on offense: 9

Returning starters on defense: 7

Returning key players and stats: So. WR Jacob Rosario (5-9, 190, 24 receptions, 501 yards, 11 TDs); Jr. QB Chase Pope (6-2, 185, 2,728 yards passing, 30 TDs, 13 INT); Jr. DB Jamar Hall (5-10, 175, 41 tackles); Jr. OL Juan Aspiro (6-0, 230); Jr. LB-DL Jaden Curtis (6-0, 245, 46 tackles, 5.5 sacks); Jr. WR Tre Allen (5-11, 175, 61 receptions, 736 yards, 4 TDs); So RB Josue Menjivar (5-7, 165).

Strengths of offense during summer: Number of returning players. The former head coach Jerry Ball as signal caller. Also a two-year starter at quarterback along with very experienced line. **Strengths of defense during summer:** Number of returning players. Former head coach Bobby Barnes as signal caller. No players going both ways.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: The commitment is there. Now we must understand we are in a struggle to become relevant.

Potential breakout players: Running back Menjivar and sophomore offensive lineman Robert Miller, an out-of-state transfer.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the last 2-3 years: Linebacker Ernesto Alvarez's commitment to excellence is now paying off for him.

Unique human interest story? We had 16 players go to the FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes) which has caused a huge positive ripple effect throughout our program.

La Joya

Head coach: Josh Mitchell

2016 record: 4-6

Returning starters on offense: 2

Returning starters on defense: 3

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB Davon Jones (5-8, 170, 794 yards rushing, 9 TDs); Sr. OL-DL Alex Torres (6-1, 240); Sr. WR-FS Fernando Garcia (5-6, 135, 54 tackles); Sr. LB Saafir Newton (5-7, 165, 69 tackles); Jr. WR-DB Isaiah Kellum (6-0, 175).

Strengths of offense during summer: We have speed from a

number of different players. Jones and Kellum were part of the state qualifying 4X100 team. We will be effective running the football.

Strengths of defense during summer: Again speed. All of our positions can run including our projected DL. We will rally to the ball and force takeaways.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Quarterback. Little varsity experience at this position. It is a work in progress.

Potential breakout players: Kellum will help us as a receiver/defensive back, but also as a kick returner. Junior running back Alfred Jordan was the leading rusher and scorer for JV last year. Junior Anthony Nikias was the best defensive lineman on JV last year. I expect both of them to step up and be good varsity players.

Millennium

Head coach: Lamar Early

2016 record: 4-6

Returning starters on offense: 4

Returning starters on defense: 5

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Ernie Pina (603, 230, 1,718 yards passing, 14 TDs, 4 INT); Sr. OL Connor Roy (6-1, 270); Sr. DB-WR Aidan Diggs (6-0, 170, 45 receptions, 668 yards, 4 TDs; 52 tackles); Jr. DL Anthonie Cooper (6-2, 260); Sr. LB Brian Davison II (6-0, 190).

Strengths of offense during summer: Strengths will be our speed at the skill position and running after the carry or catch. **Strengths of defense during summer:** Speed will definitely be our strength and swarming to the football.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: How we bond as an entire program since coming over some adversity within the past few months of change.

Potential breakout players: WR-CB Quest Mays, DL Frankie Hollinquest, RB Davon Fountain, WR Jaleon Taylor, WR Isaac Oliver, DL Santana Simmons, CJ Palmore

Tolleson

Head coach: Jason Wilke

2016 record: 5-5

Returning starters on offense: 2

Returning starters on defense: 3

Returning key players and stats: Jr. QB Patrick Ortega (6-0, 165, 1,322 yards, 8 TDs, 8 INT); Jr. WR-DB Andre Johnson (6-3, 180); Sr. OL Fabian Raizola (5-11, 220); Sr. RB-DE Dayvon Duhart (6-2, 215, 204 yards rushing, 5 TDs, 24 tackles, 5 sacks); Sr. DE Dre Archer (5-10, 195, 23 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: Experience at quarterback position.

Strengths of defense during summer: Returning defensive ends.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Line play and playing for 48 minutes.

Potential breakout players: Senior Cristian Reyes. He's an athlete.

Unique human interest story? Dre Archer was a big surprise last year for us.

Valley Vista

Head coach: Josh Sekoch

2016 record: 7-4

Returning starters on offense: 5

Returning starters on defense: 6

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB Raymond Baquero (5-

8, 180, 1,218 yards rushing, 15 TDs); Sr. OL Dallas Pena (6-4, 265); Sr. OL Blake Relyea (6-0, 240); Sr. WR Braeden Houx (5-10, 185, 25 receptions, 355 yards, 5 TDs); RB German DeLeon (235 yards rushing, 3 TDs); Sr. LB Christian Alvarado (5-10, 195, 92 tackles, 6 sacks); Jr. DL Walter Fa'Apouli (6-2, 260); Jr. SS Alex Zacek (41 tackles, 3.5 sacks); Sr. DB Trevion Hunter (5-6, 151); Jr. LB Daniel Villegas (5-11, 170); Sr. LB Bruce Amieafola-Brown.

Strengths of offense during summer: Our offensive line should be a strength with both of our top running backs returning. Competition at quarterback as both candidates have to prepare and perform each day knowing it's tight competition.

Strengths of defense during summer: Returning all four starting linebackers and potential D-1 defensive end in Fa'Apouli. A corner who can cover man to man as well as anyone we have had in Hunter.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: NA.

Potential breakout players: Hunter has matured so much to be able to play both ways at WR and corner. Alvarado had a good junior year only eight months from total knee reconstruction and should only get better.

Unique human interest story? Wide receiver Braeden Houx and how far he has come in his life. From a poor home life, living in a car, etc. I think he would be a great story on how to overcome -- mentally and academically.

Westview

Head coach: Nick Gehrts

2016 record: 8-3

Returning starters on offense: 4

Returning starters on defense: 6

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Scott Fallers (6-2, 180); Sr. RB Bobby White (5-10, 195); Sr. RB Orange Mooney (5-11, 170, 516 yards rushing, 7 TDs); Sr. WR Michael McClain (6-4, 190); Sr. OL Jomari Santos (5-7, 185); Sr. WR Jared Garcia (5-11, 163); Sr. LB Joel Zurita (5-10, 175, 68 tackles); Sr. DB Elijah Boykins (5-7, 155); Sr. S Antonio Gilbert (5-8, 160, 87 tackles); Jr. DL Dominick Russell (5-10, 260, 71 tackles, 7 sacks); Sr. DE Matthew Mendez (6-4, 220, 35 tackles, 3.5 sacks).

Strengths of offense during summer: Lots of depth at running back. We have six who can be very productive in our offense. This will be one of the biggest lines we have had in a few years.

Strengths of defense during summer: Speed and we will be better in the secondary. We also gained depth in the back end of our defense.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: How well our offensive line developed over the summer. They've got to get stronger and be more aware.

Potential breakout players: Offensively it's Fallers. He has backed up Ryan Martinez for three years and is ready. Defensively look for Joel Zurita to have a big year and Dominick Russell is a guy who doesn't get much recognition, but he creates some havoc in the trenches.

Unique human interest story? Having former head coaches George Burgess and Rudy Pacheco and between them close to 100 years of coaching experience. Coach Pacheco is moving over to the defensive side of the ball to pair with coach Burgess who is our defensive coordinator. They both really have our defense going in the right direction. It is fun to learn from both of them.

EAST VALLEY REGION

Dobson

Head coach: Pete Wahlheim



RB Jawhar Jordan, Hamilton (photo by Darin Sicurello of maxpreps.com)

2016 record: 5-5

Returning starters on offense: 4

Returning starters on defense: 6

Returning key players and stats: Sr. C Ozzie Ledesma (5-9, 260); Sr. OT Marco Salas (6-5, 275); Sr. LB Jared Haggard (5-10, 195); Sr. FB-LB Hassiel Beltran (5-11, 185, 30 tackles, 4 sacks); Jr. LB Seth Stratman (6-2, 210, 27 tackles); Jr. DE George Lupe (6-3, 200, 26 tackles); Sr. LB Darien Washington (5-10, 206, 28 tackles, 2 sacks).

Strengths of offense during summer: Offensive line has good size and good feet. Solid in pass protection and run game.

Strengths of defense during summer: Athletic unit that runs well.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Since coaching staff came in late, will players solidly execute new schemes on both sides of the ball.

Potential breakout players: Issic Gomez, RB/DB; Mike Valdez, QB/S; Michael Johnson, TE; Fernando Marquez, CB. Coaching staff is extremely excited of the work ethic and energy the players have shown so far.

Mesa

Head coach: Kap Sikahema

2016 record: 4-7

Returning starters on offense: 6

Returning starters on defense: 6

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB Kris Jackson (6-0, 215, 775 yards rushing, 8 TDs); WR-DB – Eddie McClendon (6-1, 190, 24 receptions, 499 yards, 4 TDs); OL-DL Nate Montague (6-2, 260); So. OL-DL Lingi Havea (6-0, 310).

Strengths of offense during summer: Will be our rebuilt offensive line. They are stronger, bigger and more agile than last year. They will be key to our success as they open holes for Kris Jackson.

Strengths of defense during summer: Will be our front seven. We are much bigger, faster and stronger to defend the run compared to last year.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Trying to replace Leon Morgan in the return game. Also can the defense

gel to stop the run. Mesa will be a sleeper and a force to be reckoned with as the season progresses. I believe our underdog status will serve us well this year. We have 12 returners compared to 4 last year. That will be the difference in our growth this year.

Potential breakout players: Kris Jackson has the potential to have a great year if he stays healthy. The team will depend heavily upon him to carry them to the playoffs. Kalani Brubaker will be a force to be reckoned with at outside linebacker. Lineman Nate Montague. And keep an eye on junior Saafe Fetu'u. He is 6-5, 290 and our starting left tackle. He transitioned from the basketball team.

Mountain View

Head coach: Mike Fell

2016 record: 7-4

Returning starters on offense: 5

Returning starters on defense: 5

Returning key players and stats: Jr. WR Jacobby Dinwiddie (6-3, 185, 70 receptions for 1,012 yards, 6 TDs); Sr. FS-WR Tate Allen (6-0, 185, 64 tackles, 3 INT); Jr. MLB Jeremiah Hollen (6-2, 195, 85 tackles); Sr. DB Devin Waite (5-10, 165, 43 tackles, 5 INT); Sr. K Kevin Ryan (5-11, 160); Sr. OT Tate Moser *6-2, 285); Sr. C Ryan Taylor (5'0, 250); Sr. DE Jared Mix (6-3, 226, 57 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: Unit is strong with an athletic line. Second year of a new system and should be better. Dinwiddie is one of the top 5 WR's in the state. Kicker is excellent.

Strengths of defense during summer: Good strength and quickness. Hollen is an excellent MLB and state runner-up at 190 in wrestling. Defensive backs are experienced and good. Punter is excellent

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: A new quarterback needs to play. Brandon Nunez has skills but hasn't played. Three new receivers need to be worked in to the offense.

Potential breakout players: Brandon Nunez, running back Dean Yamada and Tate Allen.

Red Mountain

Head coach: 8-5

2016 record: Mike Peterson

Returning starters on offense: 4

Returning starters on defense: 7

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB-WR-QB Lance Lawson (5-9, 195, 1, 539 yards rushing, 21 TDs, 17 receptions, 224 yards, 4 TDs); Sr. LB-TE Mack Klafter (6-3, 205); Sr. SS Justin Coleman (5-10, 175, 46 tackles); Sr. LB Delton Jackson (6-1, 225, 82 tackles); Sr. LB Joey Sanchez (5-11, 195); Sr OL-DL Siope Kolomantangi (5-9, 260, 39 tackles, 4 sacks); Sr. S-DB Cannon Griner (6-1, 190); Sr. WR-DB, Gerald Wilbon (6-2, 175); Sr. OL Julina Chism (6-0, 250); Sr. OL-DL Andrew Mageo (6-4, 290); Sr. K Justin Huffman (6-4, 210); Sr. P Riley Pagel (6-0, 180).

Strengths of offense during summer: The "new pro-style" offense will have tempo, balance and execution.

Strengths of defense during summer: The defense is experienced, deceptive and very, very multiple.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Quarterback. Austin Duffy has decided to make a run this fall at the fall baseball circuit to be drafted high or well.

Potential breakout players: Lawson had a big year last year. Gerald Wilbon had an exceptional spring at receiver. Justin Coleman is an intuitive safety on the run & pass as we have ever had. Mack Klafter should simply dominate the line of scrimmage and

catch a million balls at tight end. Delton Jackson might put a hurtin' on his own mother at mike linebacker.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the last 2-3 years: Expect big things from Blake Fitch at receiver and possibly quarterback.

Unique human interest story? Carter Wheat, son of NFL lineman Warren Wheat (Seahawks), tore and ACL on the turf at Brophy in passing league last summer did not play last season due to that injur. We expected him to start at weak side outside linebacker and possibly tight end. He is back and is working hard, having a great spring and doing great things.

Skyline

Head coach: Angelo Paffumi

2016 record: 9-2

Returning starters on offense: 5

Returning starters on defense: 5

Returning key players and stats: Sr. DE-TE Aaron Romero (6-4, 245; 35 tackles, 9 tackles for loss and 3 sacks); Sr. DL Sam To'oto'o (6-0, 275, 29 tackles); Jr. RB Aaron Wood (5-9, 185, 876 yards rushing and 9 TDs); Sr. CB-WR Darius Glover (6-0, 160, 27 tackles, 2 INT, 9 receptions for 222 yards, 2 TDs); Jr. DE-TE Danny To'oto'o (6-2, 220, 27 tackles, 4.5 sacks).

Strengths of offense during summer: Led by junior quarterback Steven Castle and Wood, the offense will look to reload and continue a commitment to a physical ground game.

Strengths of defense during summer: Three of four returning starters on the line will help anchor a unit that may lack varsity



Lance Lawson, Red Mountain (photo by Paul Campbell of maxpreps.com)



Wide receiver Gunner Romney, Chandler (photo by Louis Lopez of maxpreps.com)

experience but is talented and physical.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Who separates themselves as starters on the offensive line out of a young talented group.

Potential breakout players: Sophomore linebacker Zach Kriens, sophomore RB-LB Ethan Trusedale and Castle.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the last 2-3 years: Senior linebacker Angelo Arvayo SR LB and junior safety Andrew Vadney.

Unique human interest story? Seven years ago varsity assistant coach Ken Polamalu had a stroke, but you would never know it. Coach Pola as he is known around the program is Skyline's equipment manager. But he is more than just the guy that sizes you for equipment. Coach Pola is always looking for ways to give back to a sport that he loves and last summer he gave back in a major way as part of the AIGA FOUNDATION which provides equipment clothing and coaching back to the Island of Samoa. Last summer with the help of the Arizona Cardinals as well as other high schools in western United States, Coach Pola was able to collect and send over 300 pairs of cleats to the Island. In addition he was able to send much needed equipment to such as shoulder pads and helmets that were also sent over to Samoa. Coach puts in countless hours of work in to a foundation that he truly believes in. Skyline is truly blessed to have someone like Coach Pola as part of its program and its growing football family.

Westwood

Head coach: Kyle Ide

2016 record: 2-8

Returning starters on offense: 7

Returning starters on defense: 5

Returning key players and stats: Sr. LB Braxton Adams (5-10, 190); Jr. TE-DE Reshard Antone (6-3, 275); Jr. TE-DE Tyler Ayre (6-4, 225); Sr. OL Cesar Bermudez (6-0, 230); Sr. WR-DB Grant Dillard (5-11, 17); Sr. QB-WR-DB Carter Layton (6-0, 170); Sr. QB Tanner Hornsby (6-2, 190); Sr. OL Mauro Roman (5-11, 245); RB-DE Jr. Junior Sonasi (6-2, 225); Sr. DB Chase Swanson (5-10, 155); Sr. OL Arnold Thomas (6-0, 235); Sr. TE-DE Bryson Palmer (6-0, 175); Jr. QB-WR-DB Manny Collier (5-10, 160); Sr. RB-LB Josh Mecham (5-10, 240).

Strengths of offense during summer: We have quality skill people returning. Our offensive line was young last year, but they are much improved under offensive line coaches Steve Zeiders and Tavon Rooks.

Strengths of defense during summer: On this side of the football we added defensive coordinator Jesse Hart to give us some much needed consistency.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Expect big things on both sides of the ball from returning starters Mecham, Collier, Ayer, and Sonasi. The starting quarterback spot is up for grabs. Seniors Layton and Hornsby have the inside track. Juniors Jerry Stayner and C.J. Banks are in the mix as well.

PREMIER REGION

Basha

Head coach: Rich Wellbrock

2016 record: 3-8

Returning starters on offense: 4

Returning starters on defense: 4

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB-LB Jett Campbell (6-0, 175); Sr. RB-DB Jaylyn Goodman (5-8, 155, 57 receptions for 537 yards, 3 TDs); Sr. RB-LB Rory McCloskey (5-8, 195); Sr. DL Brandon Myree (6-1, 245, 22 tackles, 6 sacks); Sr. WR-DB Colin Young (6-0, 175); Jr. QB Collin Collins (6-2, 180, 548 yards passing, 5 TDs, 2 INT, 339 yards rushing); Jr. OL-DL Roman DeWys (6-5, 260); Jr. OL-DL Jonathan Durand (6-4, 240); Jr. WR-DB Kenric Jameison (5-9, 160, 78 tackles, 5 INT); Jr. DE Parker Jacobs (6-3, 200); Jr. WR-DB Ty Sifferman (5-9, 160, 34 receptions for 564 yards, 4 TDs); Jr. WR-DB Bryson Yamamoto (5-9, 155).

Strengths of offense during summer: Speed and quickness on the perimeter and ability to get the ball in multiple hands..

Strengths of defense during summer: Cohesiveness and communication in learning a new system has been phenomenal.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: As we continue to get to know each other the question will be how they compete when things don't go as planned.

Potential breakout players: Gevon Grimes and Colin Young.

Brophy Prep

Head coach: Scooter Molander

2016 record: 8-4

Returning starters on offense: 3

Returning starters on defense: 5

Returning key players and stats: Jr. S Marques White (6-1, 195, 66 tackles, 5 INT); Sr. OT Bert Odinet (6-2, 210); Sr. DB Vashaun Benton (6-0, 160, 56 tackles); Sr. FB Erik Dimaria (5-10, 185, 17 receptions for 232 yards, 2 TDs); Jr. WR Elisha Brooks (6-0, 160); Sr. LB AJ Meyer (6-0, 202); Sr. NG-LS Ross Reiter (6-

0, 240); Jr. LB Will Broucek (6-1, 200); Jr. DL EJ Hamilton (6-1, 250).

Strengths of offense during summer: Versatility and the fact that we had a good spring session. We have good OL play and good depth at WR.

Strengths of defense during summer: Movement and various defensive looks and alignments. Defensive back play has been good. The LB crew has improved.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We have very few returning starters on offense or defense. We will need to trust each other and have fun getting better together.

Potential breakout players: Senior quarterback Noah Gonzales, junior linebacker Andrew Onyepunuka and sophomore offensive lineman Andrew Milek.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the last 2-3 years: Senior Ross Reiter. He was an OL last season and we moved him to DL and he has had a great spring and summer.

Chandler

Head coach: Shaun Aguano

2016 record: 13-2

Returning starters on offense: 6

Returning starters on defense: 5

Returning key players and stats: Sr. WR Gunner Romney (6-3, 200, 70 receptions for 1,309 yards and 9 TDs), Sr. DT Chris Manoa (6-0, 300, 41 tackles, 4 sacks); Sr. OL Tristan Rael (6-3, 295); Sr. DB Bryce Jackson (5-10, 190, 65 tackles, 2 INT); Sr. WR Jarrick Caldwell (26 receptions for 484 yards, 4 TDs); Sr. DE Brayden Flynn (6-3, 230); Jr. LB Zach Bowers (6-1, 215, 88 tackles); Jr. QB Jacob Conover (6-1, 195, 3,715 yards passing, 32 TDs, 5 INT), Jr. RB Decarlos Brooks (5-10, 190, 282 yards rushing, 3 TDs, 42 tackles); Jr. DB Avery Carrington (6-2, 190).

Strengths of offense during summer: Strength is our athleticism and returning starters.

Strengths of defense during summer: Our front seven are very good.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Youth in certain positions.

Potential breakout players: Junior wide receiver Brayden Liebrock, sophomore defensive back Gunner Maldonado, junior receiver Jake Delatorre and junior receiver Dillon Fernandez.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the last 2-3 years: Mathew Koziol and Randy Robinson.

Hamilton

Head coach: Dick Baniszewski

2016 record: 7-5

Returning starters on offense: 5

Returning starters on defense: 4

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Tyler Shough (6-4, 190, 2,079 yards passing, 27 TDs, 9 INT); Sr. RB Jawhar Jordan (5-10, 165, 1,269 yards rushing and 17 TDs); Sr. OT Hunter Mayginn (6-5, 305); Sr. WR Tim Lockhart (6-4, 188); Sr. DT Colin Maslin (6-1, 255, 57 tackles, 2.5 sacks); Sr. DL Ian Torrez (6-4, 250, 45 tackles, 3 sacks); Sr. OL Stason Makaila (6-4, 230); Sr. WR-HB Manuel Armenta (5-8, 150, 15 receptions for 200 yards, 2 TDs); Sr. K-WR Anthony Rusch (6-2, 160); Sr. DB Clayton Hooper (5-10, 170); Sr. OL Shay Zutshi (5-11, 270); Sr. OT-LS Kayden Scatena (6-4, 280); Sr. DT-LB Jamie Olivero (5-10, 215); Sr. DB Kwinton Lassiter (5-11, 145); Jr. DB-S Javin Wright (6-3, 180); Jr. WR Brandon Schenks (6-3, 190); Jr. DB Amil Meriwether (6-0, 165); Jr. WR-RS Mo Parson (6-1, 170); Jr. DE Dono-



Quarterback Brock Purdy, Perry (photo by Darin Sicurello of maxpreps.com)

van Corn (6-2, 180); Jr. LB Ryan Guerrero (6-1, 190); Jr. RB-DB Alphonso Taylor (5-10, 166).

Strengths of offense during summer: For the first time in years the Huskies will have a returning starter at quarterback in Shough. Jordan could be the most explosive running back in the state. Remember the name Brandon Schenk because he could be the next great Husky wide receiver.

Strengths of defense during summer: A new defensive coordinator and a new energy under long time coach Brian Belles. His first year at Hamilton. The defensive front is loaded with Maslin, Torrez, Corn and Guerreo is also a force.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Making sure the players are focused on the field and not listening to people that may attempt to distract their focus.

Potential breakout players: Schenks, Guerrero, Parson, Meriwether, Armenta, Rusch, Makaila and Olivero.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the last 2-3 years: Wide receiver Tim Lockhart.

Perry

Head coach: Preston Jones

2016 record: 11-2

Returning starters on offense: 8

Returning starters on defense: 8

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Brock Purdy (6-1, 197, 3,333 passing yards 42 TDs, 11 INT); Jr. WR-QB D'Shayne James (6-3, 210, 585 yards passing, 229 yards rushing, 35 receptions for 571 yards); Jr. WR Colby Dickie (5-9, 170, 61 receptions for 1,039 yards); Sr. TE Tate Speaker (6-5, 220, 14

receptions for 231 yards); Sr. C Zach Neff (5-11, 240); Jr. DE Travis Beckman (6-4, 240, 30 taackles, 3 sacks); Sr. LB Douglas "Javy" Reynolds (6-1, 220, 60 tackles); Sr. LB-S Cutter Hatch (5-9, 180, 87 tackles); Jr. DB David Eppinger (5-9, 160, 46 tackles, 5 INT); Sr. S Braden Ford (6-0, 180, 48 tackles); Sr. DB Darius Holton (5-10, 160, 22 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: Purdy missed the first three games of the season and was still threw for 3,333 yards. He is surrounded by a talented and young group of receivers with James, Dickie, Clay Schmitz and a big target tight end in Speaker. **Strengths of defense during summer:** Perry's secondary had a lot of growing pains with a complex new defense to learn, but as the season progressed there were glimpses of how talented this group really were. They are only getting better and are gaining more experience and confidence in their coverages. The Pumas have a solid core of three talented young men who do an excellent job for the defense -- Holton, Eppinger at the corners and Ford at safety.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Biggest question marks are with both their offensive and defensive lines. They have a lot of positions needing to be filled, but their line coaches Clatterbuck and Snyder on the offensive side and Harder and Scott on the defensive side always do a great job of getting these young men prepared and game ready for the season.

Potential breakout players: James, Holton and Reynolds. James on offense and Holton and Reynolds on defense. **Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the last 2-3 years:** It is always a pleasant surprise to get a sophomore who not only starts for a varsity team, but contributes to the squad significantly. Juniors David Eppinger at cornerback and Travis Beckman at defensive end, both fit the bill for Perry this last season. Both made essential contributions last season and will make Perry's defense even more competitive with their play. On the offense, Perry has junior wide receiver Clay Schmitz. Schmitz fills in as a reliable fourth target for quarterback Brock Purdy. Junior offensive tackle Brayden Rohme has demonstrated the potential to be a solid anchor for a young offensive line.

Unique human interest story? This will be Perry's 10th year as a program playing varsity football.

SOUTHERN REGION

Cibola

Head coach: Lucky Arvizo

2016 record: 6-4

Number of returning starters on offense: 1 (OL).

Number of returning starters on defense: 5 (3 DL, 2 LB).

Who are your key returning players? Sr. DL Tommy Mommer (6-4, 230, 34 tackles), Sr. DL Damian Magdaleno (6-0, 245, 20 tackles); Sr. DL Ronald Gayler (6-0, 195, 32 tackles).

What are the strengths of your offense heading into the summer? We will be extremely young on offense. There are many unknowns at this point.

What are the strengths of your defense heading into the summer? As stated above, our D-line should be our strength

What are your team's biggest question marks heading into the summer? Last year, we had very good senior receivers and running back. The big question is who will replace them.

Who has the potential to be your breakout player(s) in 2017? Tommy Mommer should do well on the D-Line...he is quick and strong.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? Too early to tell. We are very young and inexperienced in several positions.

Kofa

Head coach: Ben Franz

2016 record: 5-5

Returning starters on offense: 5

Returning starters on defense: 6

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB-DB Zac Miller (5-11, 150, 956 yards passing, 6 TDs, 6 INT, 46 tackles); Sr. WR-K Ariel Beal (5-10, 145, 19 receptions for 308 yards); Sr. RB-LB David Castaneda (5-9, 185, 891 yards rushing, 7 TDs, 51 tackles); Jr. WR-DB Gabriel Castaneda (5-7, 137, 40 tackles); Sr. RB-LB Isaac Marquez (5-9, 180); Sr. DL Cristian Meraz (5-11, 180, 24 tackles, 2.5 sacks).

Strengths of offense during summer: Skill position play is solid with many returning starters.

Strengths of defense during summer: Quality defensive back play and we feel really strong at the end position.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Offensive line play. We graduated all five of our starters from last year.

Potential breakout players: Sophomore defensive end Johnathan Hernandez, sophomore reciever-defensive back Jamar McFarlane and jumior receiver-defensive back Keith Beal.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the last 2-3 years: Castaneda brothers were a huge addition to our program last year. Cristian Meraz was a huge surprise at defensive end last year.

Rincon

Head coach: Cody House

2016 record: 3-7

Returning starters on offense: 11

Returning starters on defense: 8

Returning key players and stats: Sr. WR-LB Eric Petronella (6-2 180, 20 receptions for 358 yards, 1 TD); Sr. WR-DB Omar Carrillo (5-11 155); Sr. OL-LB Jared Bianco (6-1, 200); Sr. TE-DE Zach Giles (6-7, 240); Sr. OL-LB Andy Harris (6-0, 185); Sr. RB-DB Roman McDowell (6-2 175, 12 receptions for 190 yards, 1 TD); Sr. WR-DB Zion Noperi (5-8, 165); Jr. OL-DL Christian Begishe (6-0, 220).

Strengths of offense during summer: Strength will be the familiarity of running the same system for another year.

Strengths of defense during summer: Strength will be a majority of our starters are a year older and have valuable experience from playing last year.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Do we win the close games and who will step up and be a playmaker for us.

Potential breakout players: Giles, Bianco, Petronella and McDowell.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the last 2-3 years: Francisco Gutierrez, who started for us as a sophomore last year.

Tucson

Head coach: Justin Argraves

2016 record: 6-5

Returning starters on offense: 4

Returning starters on defense: 3

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB-DE Kashawn Crump-Valencia (5-11, 185, 370 yards rushing, 3 TDs, 32 tackles); Sr. RB-S Daniel Salamon (5-10, 170, 290 yards rushing, 4 TDs).

Strengths of offense during summer: Depth at the running back position and solid line.

Strengths of defense during summer: Solid line and smart secondary.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We graduated 30 seniors from last year so we will be extremely young. Talented junior varsity moving up, but inexperienced.

Potential breakout players: Junior quarterback Jesus Montano, junior two-way lineman Javier Diaz and senior receiver-defensive back Octavius Thomas.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the last 2-3 years: Daniel Salomon and Kayshawn Crump-Valencia.

CENTRAL REGION

Corona del Sol

Head coach: Jon Beckett

2016 record: 4-6

Returning starters on offense: 3

Returning starters on defense: 6

Returning key players and stats: Sr. DB-RB Kobee Marion (5-8, 165, 11 receptions, 152 yards, 2 TDs, 27 tackles, 2 INT); Sr. DE-TE Trey Bussler (6-4, 225, 29 tackles); Sr. WR-DB Brian McCluskey (5-10, 175, 75 tackles); Sr. LB-RB Evan McQueen (6-0, 205, 41 tackles); Sr. RB-DB Brandon Gavel (5-8, 165); Sr. OL Justus Stockton (6-3, 225); Jr. OL Michael Hall (6-1, 270); Jr. WR Ricky Pearsall (6-0, 170, 29 receptions for 390 yards, 3 TDs).

Strengths of offense during summer: The offense has a number of skill players who are good in space with the football. Will look to spread the ball around throughout the year.

Strengths of defense during summer: The defense has an experienced group returning with a number of guys who have been together for a couple of years.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: NA

Potential breakout players: Junior defensive end-tight end Jaron Reval, junior receiver-defensive back Josh Webb and quarterback Ryan Helt.

Desert Ridge

Head coach: Jeremy Hathcock

2016 record: 8-4

Returning starters on offense: 5

Returning starters on defense: 4

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB-DB Donjae Logan (5-10, 170, 535 yards rushing, 5 TDs; 9 receptions, 267 yards, 3 TDs; 37 tackles, 2 INT); Sr. RB Ty Allen (5-7, 180, 1,305 yards rushing, 9 TDs, 9 receptions, 119 yards, 1 TD); Sr. OL-DE Christian Medeiros (6-3, 225, 54 tackles, 3 sacks); So. QB Matt Purnell (6-1, 185, 562 yards passing, 6 TDs, 5 INT); Sr. OL-DL Apollo Ta'ase (6-0, 260, 40 tackles, 2 sacks); Sr. OL Cooper Stauss (6-0, 275).

Strengths of offense during summer: Very hard working group. Young but very talented, good speed. Good character. **Strengths of defense during summer:** Very hard working. Nasty, gritty group of kids. What we expect from a Desert Ridge defense.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Being a very young team and how will they adapt to varsity football.

Potential breakout players: So. Deonce Elliott; Matt Purnell, Donjae Logan, Ty Allen, So. Isaiah Eastman, Sr. WR Caden Bethel, Christian Medeiros, Sr. TE Ethan Winfield, Apolo Ta'ase, Sr. FB-LB Desha Bennett.

Desert Vista

Head coach: Dan Hinds

2016 record: 7-5

Returning starters on offense: 6

Returning starters on defense: 6



QB Jack Plummer, Gilbert (photo by Darin Sicurello of max-preps.com)

Returning key players and stats: Sr. TE-DE James Stagg (6-4, 245, 22 receptions for 338 yards, 3 TDs, 36 tackles, 5.5 sacks); Sr. SS Caleb Humphrey (6-3, 215, 59 tackles); Sr. QB Derek Kline (6-5, 214); Jr. DB Alijah Gammage (5-11, 180, 7 INT); Sr. OL-DL McKenzie Potterf (6-3, 285); Sr. WR-DB-RS Keishaud White (5-7, 165, 38 receptions for 497 yards, 2 TDs, 221 yards rushing, 5 TDs); Sr. LB Larry Davis (6-1, 230, 93 tackles, 6.5 sacks).

Strengths of offense during summer: Strong in a few key positions that will enhance the passing game.

Strengths of defense during summer: Entire secondary returning along with some great young kids as well.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: How team chemistry comes together.

Potential breakout players: All of the above with Stagg leading the pack.

Unique human interest story? Garrett Chavez, who broke his femur last year, has made a 100% comeback. Will start in the defensive secondary.

Gilbert

Head coach: Derek Zellner

2016 record: 1-9

Returning starters on offense: 8

Returning starters on defense: 6

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Jack Plummer (6-5, 212, 2,475 yards passing, 18 TDs); Sr. SS Corvan Otanez (6-3, 205, 134 tackles); Sr. OL Garrett Fulton (6-0, 245); WR-KR Dawson Tanner (5-9, 150, 33 receptions, 397 yards, 7 TDs); Sr. RB Camden Middleton (5-9, 175, 19 receptions, 177 yards); Sr. RB Dominic Amendolara (5-9, 170); Jr. RB-LB Ray Vega (5-11, 200);



Kenny Churchwell, Mountain Pointe (photo by Mark Jones of maxpreps.com)

Sr. LB-RB Tyler LaGanke (5-11, 190); Sr. OL Garron Chatfield (6-5, 290); Jr. OL Tyler Turcotte (6-0, 220); Jr. WR-TE Jaquez Barrow (6-4, 205); Jr. LB-TE Will Plummer (6-1, 200); So. DE Desmond Bunting (6-6, 220); So. DB Tyler Hironaka (5-9, 150); Sr. WR Garrett Luton (5-11, 175); So. OL-DL Jordan Mendez (6-2, 225).

Strengths of offense during summer: We were very committed to the weight room this offseason. Last season we were very young. We are eager to see how our injured players return from last season. We need to protect the ball and establish a better run game.

Strengths of defense during summer: We are more confident in our players understanding of the scheme. We need to execute better and be a better tackling team.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Who will be our unsung heroes and raise their games. Can we stay healthy and away from season-ending injuries.

Potential breakout players: Middleton, LaGanke, Vega, Connor Nolan, all of whom were injured last season. Also Amendolara, Luton, Fulton and Will Plummer.

Highland

Head coach: Brock Farrel

2016 record: 3-7

Returning starters on offense: 4

Returning starters on defense: 8

Returning key players and stats: LB-DB Jacob Wood (5-11, 215, 217 yards rushing, 2 TDs, 51 tackles); Sr. LB Tate Stevens (6-2, 225, 85 tackles); SS-RB Khoner Cullimore (6-1, 195, 664 yards rushing, 6 TDs, 25 receptions for 202 yards); Sr. LB-SS Tylert Brady (5-11, 185); Sr. DL Dallin Clement (6-1, 245); Sr. DL Noah Evans (6-0, 250, 30 tackles); Sr. DL Riley Bond (6-0, 235);

Sr. C-DT Jacob Trejo (6-1, 230); Sr. OL Connor Williams (6-0, 260); Sr. OL Tre Davis (6-0, 230); Sr. FS Hunter Short (5-10, 165); Sr. WR-DB Jalen Johnson (5-7, 160).

Strengths of offense during summer: If our line stays healthy we will have a strong running game with an experienced group of up front and two returning starters at running back.

Strengths of defense during summer: Our front seven have a lot of varsity experience. During spring practice I have seen them exhibit good instincts and energy. I expect them to lead our defense this year starting with our two inside linebackers

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: There will be a tight battle at quarterback and wide receiver. The quarterback battle will probably take us up to the first week of the fall season and the wide receivers are changing to a system that they are not used to and will have the hardest adjustment. On defense we have

a talented secondary, but lack coverage experience.

Potential breakout players: Cullimore and Wood will be the few two-way players that we have. They have the potential to do some special things.

Mountain Pointe

Head coach: Norris Vaughan

2016 record: 13-1

Returning starters on offense: 7

Returning starters on defense: 7

Returning key players and stats: Jr. QB Nick Wallerstedt (6-3, 180, 558 yards passing, 4 TDs, 5 INT, 301 yards rushing, 2 TDs); Sr. RB Gary Bragg (5-9, 180, 891 yards rushing, 11 TDs); Sr. OL Mason Honne (6-2, 272); Sr. OL Alex Vogel (6-1, 255); Sr. WR Sky Hinojosa (6-0, 165); Sr. RB Delano Salgado (5-10, 180, 730 yards rushing, 6 TDs); Sr. FB Keion Russell (5-10, 225); Sr. DB Kenny Churchwell (6-2, 185, 73 tackles, 5 INT); Sr. DB Donte Lindsey (5-11, 181, 38 tackles); Sr. DB Marshawn Gibson (5-11, 167, 53 tackles); Sr. LB Jacob Olsen (87 tackles, 6 sacks); Sr. DL Shomari Hayes (6-3, 295, 74 tackles); Jr. DL Matthew Pola-Mao (6-2, 308, 52 tackles); Jr. DL Anthony Dedrick (6-4, 235).

Strengths of offense during summer: We will be solid on the line and at running back.

Strengths of defense during summer: Experience. Return eight guys that started most games and will be very good in secondary.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Our major concern is depth.

Potential breakout players: Dedrick, Wallerstedt; Olsen, offensive lineman Cole Cundary and receiver Lacaera Pleasant-Johnson.

Returning Statistical Leaders

2016 PASSING

Gr. Name/School ... Passing Yards/Yds/G ... TDs/Int
 Jr. Jacob Conover, Chandler ... 3,715/247.7 ... 32/5
 So. Jack Miller, Scottsdale Christian ... 3,653/281.0 ... 53/15
 Sr. Brock Purdy, Perry ... 3,333/333.3 ... 42/11
 Sr. Israel Loveall, Bagdad ... 3,083/280.3 ... 59/4
 Sr. Jared Wood, Florence ... 2,870/239.2 ... 37/7

2016 RUSHING

Gr. Name/School ... Yards/Yds/G ... Yds/C ... TDs
 Sr. Draycen Hall, Higley ... 2,298/176.8 ... 8.6 ... 29
 Sr. Damaris Norris, Cactus ... 2,209/184.1 ... 7.9 ... 28
 Sr. Mike Rogers, Cesar Chavez ... 1,941/176.5 ... 13.2 ... 22
 Sr. Zidane Thomas, Centennial ... 1,888/134.9 ... 11.1 ... 18
 Jr. Tyreck Cosay, Alchesay ... 1,803/180.3 ... 9.1 ... 30

2016 RECEIVING

Gr. Name/School ... Yards Yds/G ... Yds/R ... TDs
 Sr. Gunner Romney, Chandler ... 1,309/87.3 ... 18.7 ... 9
 Sr. Jacob Kaite, Scottsdale Chr. ... 1,179/90.7 ... 21.1 ... 22
 Sr. Solomon Enis, North Canyon ... 1,144/127.1 ... 17.9 ... 10
 Jr. Colby Dickie, Perry ... 1,039/79.9 ... 17.0 ... 12
 Sr. Xavier Watkins, Paradise V. ... 1,017/101.7 ... 19.2 ... 8

2016 SCORING

Gr. Pos/Name/School ... Points ... Pts/G ... TDs
 Sr. RB Draycen Hall, Higley ... 248 ... 19.1 ... 40
 Jr. RB Tyreck Cosay, Alchesay ... 222 ... 22.2 ... 34
 Sr. RB Damaris Norris, Cactus ... 180 ... 15.0 ... 30
 Sr. RB Mike Rogers, Cesar Chavez ... 154 ... 14.0 ... 25
 Sr. QB Lance Lawson, Red Mountain ... 154 ... 12.8 ... 25

2016 TACKLES

Gr. Pos/Name/School ... Total Tackles ... Tackles/G
 Sr. LB Cole Bauer, Scottsdale Christian ... 176 ... 19.6
 Jr. LB Tanner Gibson, Scottsdale Christian ... 164 ... 14.9
 Sr. LB Gabe Velasquez, San Manuel ... 159 ... 14.5
 Sr. LB Dacodah Jensen, Mayer ... 154 ... 19.3
 Sr. LB Jess Pennington, Tonopah Valley ... 150 ... 15.0

2016 SACKS

Gr. Pos/Name/School ... Total Sacks ... Sacks/G
 Sr. DE Ryan Salmon, Scottsdale Christian ... 19.0 ... 1.5
 Jr. DE BJ Bryant, NFL Yet ... 15.0 ... 1.7
 Sr. LB Jakob Redford, American Leadership ... 13.0 ... 1.0
 Sr. LB Richard Molina, Yuma Catholic ... 12.5 ... 1.1
 Jr. LB Andrew Blitzke, Cesar Chavez ... 12.0 ... 1.2

(Source: maxpreps.com)

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Take Cover, West Valley O-Lines Rumbling Through



Three of Centennial's finest offensive linemen – Daniel Thomas (78), Trevor Renfro (74), Carson Keltner (65) (photo by Paul Campbell of maxpreps.com)

By Jose Garcia
azpreps365.com

Tectonic plates aren't shifting within a 35-mile radius in the West Valley.

It's just the state's best offensive lines rumbling across football fields. Those units belong to Goodyear Desert Edge, Peoria Centennial and Glendale Deer Valley, where some of the top-rated movers and shakers in the 2018 senior class also play.

Besides the proximity of these West Valley trench-men, the other intriguing story line is that these three o-lines likely will have a big hand in determining the 5A race. Centennial is the preseason favorite in the 5A, Desert Edge is a top-5 team, and Deer Valley, the home of Arizona's No. 1 high school offensive lineman recruit, Joey Ramos, will be in thick of things as well.

"2017 is a stellar year for offensive linemen on the west side," said one of Arizona's leading recruiting voices, Jason Jewell. "Which one is the top line? Who cares. All are very talented."

CENTENNIAL

Coming off a 2016 state runner-up finish, Centennial returns four of its starting o-linemen, right guard Trevor Renfro, left tackle Jacob Fyffe, right tackle Daniel Thomas and center Carson Keltner.



Austin Young (76), Connor McGee (53) and Max Wilhite (71) are mainstays in the Desert Edge O-Line (photo by Mark Jones of maxpreps.com).

They also played a big role two years ago when Centennial won a championship.

"They are bigger and faster than last year," Centennial coach Richard Taylor said.

Renfro (6-3, 268), a senior, just set a school bench press record (465 pounds), and Carson (6-2, 270) added 30 pounds to his frame.

Taylor was skeptical of Renfro's prediction of starting for Centennial when Renfro was a 160-pound freshman.

"He was a skinny kid, and I just told him, 'Well, keep working,'" Taylor said.

He did just that and then some to become a team leader.

"I haven't had a player as dedicated and hard working as Trevor is in a long time," Taylor said. "He is self made. He made himself into an outstanding player."

Taylor also praised offensive line coach Joe McDonald for preparing not just this year's road graders but also the numerous linemen, including several college players, that have played for Centennial in the past 24 years.

"Joe does a heck of a job," Taylor said. "He doesn't care about wide receiver formations or the what the running backs are doing. All he cares about are his five guys and making sure they are ready."

"He's also always concerned that they are doing the right

things in the classroom. Character is also important to him."

McDonald's boys this year aren't as big as his previous classes, but Centennial's defensive linemen might disagree.

"They (offensive line) are blue collar guys who come and work hard every day," Taylor said. "They are going to be efficient and be very good at completing tasks. It's a goal-oriented and driven group. As a matter of fact they are beating the crap out of our defensive line right now."

The next batch of Centennial's hosses are on campus already.

Taylor said his freshman line might be bigger than the varsity's line.

DESERT EDGE

Like Centennial, Desert Edge's line also starts experienced, lunch pail-type guys who tend to eat defensive linemen for lunch.

"When they came in as freshmen it was mind blowing," Desert Edge coach Jose Lucero said. "There's not a lot of holes with this group. They like to have fun, but when it's time to work and flip the switch they flip the switch."

Center Max Wilhite looks somewhat menacing, with his size (6-3, 300) and multi-bar face mask.

Not only is he the leader of his group, he's also the brains (4.0 GPA) in Desert Edge's zone scheme.

The 4-year starter can play all five spots on the line and has offers from New Mexico State, Air Force and Northern Arizona University. Another 4-year starter, left guard Tyson Jones, is the school's multi-sport star.

He's got a chance to break the longest held Arizona high school state track and field record, the shot put, in the spring.

"Tyson is a happy-go-lucky kid with a mean streak," Lucero said.

He's also got the longest arms on the team, and the 6-5, 300-pound force moves well, Lucero added.

Jones might continue playing football and throw the shot put at the next level. The most explosive of Desert Edge's linemen is the third 4-year starter, Austin Young (6-4, 335), who can squat 550 pounds.

Young also is one of the more athletic right tackles in Arizona, and, like Jones, has a mean streak, which has become his calling card. Senior right guard Connor McGee is no slouch either and is a three-year starter.

A couple of players were competing for the left tackle spot before the start of the season, but Lucero already knows where his offensive line ranks.

"I've been doing this for 11 years now, and this is the most talented group I've ever coached," Lucero said.

Lucero's big boys will see how they match up against Deer Valley and Centennial up close when they play them in the 2017 regular season.

DEER VALLEY

Coach Eric Bolus' history with Deer Valley's football program goes as far back as 1985.

To Bolus, this year's Deer Valley's senior class stand out like no other.



Brandon McCrea (75) and Joey Ramos (76) are leaders up front for the Deer Valley Skyhawks (photo by Mark Jones of maxpreps.com).

"The tone these seniors set is unlike anything I've seen," Bolus said.

Three of those senior character establishers are on Bolus' o-line, Ramos, Xavier Robinson-Thomas and Brandon McCrea.

There's no argument that Ramos is Deer Valley's chief. He holds 11 of the 22 college offers that the offensive linemen of Deer Valley, Desert Edge and Centennial have earned.

He might not have a badge, but Ramos is also his team's social media top-cop. He'll ask a teammate to delete something if it misrepresents Deer Valley on social media.

On the field, policing takes a different form for Ramos against opponents.

"Joey is just nasty, but he'll kick the snot out of somebody and then pick them up," Bolus said.

Bolus said that Robinson-Thomas is learning to exhibit more of an edgier attitude while plowing throw defenders.

But Robinson-Thomas, a right tackle, doesn't need coaxing to pull, which he does exceptionally well and a lot in Deer Valley's run game. Last year's right tackle, McCrea, is moving to center this year because he can fill the void that was left by a senior last year.

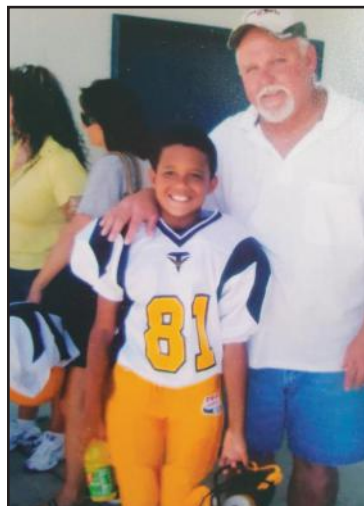
"McCrea has done a great job in the weight room," Bolus said. "He's got a chip on his shoulder because he doesn't get the attention Xavier and Joey get."

But this season might be different for McCrea.

He's part of an offensive line, along with with Desert Edge's and Centennial's, that are already sending temblors before the season even starts.

By Jose Garcia
azpreps365.com

Rocks were added to the desert landscaping of Solomon Enis' home in north Phoenix, but the real rocks of the North Canyon High's football star are inside his home.



A young Solomon Enis and his grandfather, George Sigmond (photo courtesy of the Marrero family)

Enis' father, Curtis, also plays a, albeit distant, role in his son's life. After an All-American career at Penn State as a running back, Curtis' brief professional career was curtailed by knee injuries.

Curtis often gets mentioned in recruiting news about his son, but Enis was raised by the very committed Tiffanie, Marlon and the Sigmonds. Marlon and his own two sons, Estefon and Dione, and Tiffanie's sons, Enis and Samson, don't use 'step' next to parents, brothers and sons.

The first impression of Enis is that he's shy. There was a time, you might not believe this, says his mom, that Enis couldn't stay quiet for at least five minutes even if you paid him.

Enis, however, won't hide his drive, intelligence and big heart behind his now reserve, level-headed personality. Asked if he had a Plan B if football doesn't pan out, his response was as quick as some of his touchdown bursts.

"My Plan A is to get my business management degree and open up my own sneaker boutique, sell street wear fashion and have my brothers work with me," he said. "Plan B is the NFL."

Football is his passion but so are sneakers.

Enis began painting sneakers last year first for himself and then for his friends, who pay him to paint designs on their shoes.

"It's a stress relieve," Enis said.

He loses track of time as he's brushing away from his other

canvas, a football field, where defenders sometimes look like blotches on the field after they fall chasing Enis.

Besides his once very talkative days, it's also hard to picture that the tall and slender Enis was once a lineman. The standout wideout is also a great blocker partly due to his days pulling and blocking for players, including Estefon, in Pop Warner.

"To this day I still miss playing with Solomon," said Estefon, who along with Dione will run for Grand Canyon University this year. "He was a leader and made everybody better."

Enis and Estefon didn't plan to, but they became the cupids of their parents.

Marlon handed Enis a Gatorade when Enis said his mom failed to bring him water to a Pop Warner game in 2008. Tiffanie to this day disagrees that she forgot, but she's the alpha in the house, so her first-meeting version trumps Marlon's, said Marlon laughing.

Marlon, 50, is a disabled Marine veteran who injured his knees during a mission in northern Iraq, and he also survived colon cancer twice. He worked as a drug enforcement agent after his service in the military and is currently training police officers and military in hand-to-hand tactics.

Tiffanie was a single parent to Enis and his 14-months older brother, Samson, for about seven years before the disciplinarian and sociable forces of Marlon and Tiffanie met. After Tiffanie and Curtis separated, she and her two sons moved in with her heroes, George and Barbara, affectionately known as Grami and Grampi to the grandkids.

Enis' male role model was George, who was barrel-chested and blue-eyed, a Grizzly Adams-type with softball sized calves.

"George could build a house with a Q-tip and a toothpick," Barbara said matter-of-factly.

But the biggest accomplishment of the 57-year-old George will be his family.

"He (George) was such a great man," Tiffanie said. "The



From left to right Solomon Enis, Estefon Marrero, Marlon Marrero, Barbara Sigmond, Tiffanie Marrero, Dione Marrero, Samson Enis (photo courtesy of the Marrero family)



Solomon Enis running away from the opposition for the Rattlers (photo by Mike Janes of maxpreps.com)

impact he had on Solomon and Samson was just phenomenal. He was the boys' rock. He was everything to them."

Enis spent a lot of time outdoors with George, fixing trucks, at archery events and had a lot of heart-to-heart conversations along with another "protector" of Enis, Samson.

"Grampi taught me about being a young man and being respectful," Enis said. "To do good things and being a good person in life and to learn how to depend on myself."

The week after George died of lymphoma in September, Enis dedicated the next game to his grandfather.

In that game, the heavy-hearted Enis produced single-game career highs in receiving yards (237) and touchdowns (4) and rushed five times for 104 yards and a touchdown to boot.

"Grampi was my guy, my dude, my best friend all in one guy," Enis said. "He was my dad. He raised me."

Barbara is one of Enis' biggest cheerleaders.

She attended the Nike Opening in Oregon this summer, where the best-of-the-best are invited to train for four days. When he was in middle school, the very driven Enis told Marlon that he'd earn an invite to The Opening for high school football players.

During Enis' 7 on 7 championship game in Oregon, his family could hear Barbara's loud cheers during the live broadcast on Facebook Live.

"I am proud of all my grandsons," she said.

Marlon often jokes with Tiffanie that he married her because of her parents.

George and Barbara doted on Marlon's kids, Estefon and Dionea, just like they did Enis and Samson.

When Marlon had to travel to the Tucson VA hospital for cancer treatment, Tiffanie traveled back and forth daily to the Valley while helping taking care of Marlon and their four sons.

"It was amazing how strong she was and how she handled the family while making the trips," Marlon said. "I fell in love with her after we became friends. She parents the same way I do with a lot of discipline. I felt so bad when I got cancer the second time because it happened when we were together."

But cancer wasn't going to keep Tiffanie away.

"God gave him (Marlon) to me to be honest," Tiffanie said.

"I needed a good man, and he came to me. We battled together. We are good team for sure."

Marlon stepped in during one of Tiffanie's toughest moments. While living on her own with her two sons, she was at one point working three jobs, but then her hours were cut just as her car broke down. She was down to one paying job.

It was around that time that Tiffanie met Marlon, whose faith and family are his foundations.

The two soldiered on together, keeping their united front moving forward.

Tiffanie is now a branch manager escrow officer.

"Words can't describe how much I appreciate my mom," Enis said. "She's my rock, my No. 1. No one can come over her. Samson and I just love her to death."

All of the sacrifices that Tiffanie and Marlon made are being rewarded.

Another hard worker, Enis, is up to 16 college offers. One of those offers is from Penn State, Enis' father's alma mater.

The two started re-communicating just before Enis enrolled in high school.

"We got it (relationship) going in the right direction," Enis said. "He (Curtis) had to fix some things that happened after the NFL."

Tiffanie doesn't keep her sons from patching up their relationship with their father.

She knows her sons' intentions are good.

"I'm in love with all of my kids," she said. "Their souls are good. That's why they make it easy to parent them."

Enis is targeting for this season another postseason berth for North Canyon and a 2,000-yard receiving season.

But his ultimate goal, now that he has the option to play at the next level, is to help his teammates get noticed.



One of the shoe designs painted by Enis (photo courtesy of Solomon Enis)

"I want to do everything I can for them," the 17-year-old said.

Enis said he'll cut his college list to a top-5 just before the season starts.

What he's looking for in a school are strong academic programs, to compete as a freshman, good relationships with his coaches and the feel of a second home. A tip for coaches that are recruiting him.

Don't tell Tiffanie that they'll help develop Enis into a better man.

"You don't need to make him a better man," Tiffanie said. "I and my family did that. What they need to is help him further with what he needs. With his heart and his soul, you are getting a really good person."

5A Conference Football Preseason Rankings



Centennial should contend for the 5A title in 2017 (photo by Paul Campbell of maxpreps.com).

By Les Willsey
azpreps365.com

1. CENTENNIAL: The Coyotes advanced to their fifth title game in the seven years this decade last season falling in a defensive struggle to Williams Field. Coach Richard Taylor returns a formidable ground attack with veterans up front and damage inflictors Zidane Thomas and Alex Escobar in the backfield. Thomas will submit a hardship appeal to be eligible for the entire season after briefly transferring out of state and returning. Thomas is easily one of the top three backs in the state. Quarterback Ruben Beltran also returns lending a steady hand to the offense. Defense is the area of concern at the outset, but history has shown the Coyotes can rebuild a unit quickly (they lost eight starters). The heaviest portion of their schedule is the first half featuring games with Desert Edge, 6A Pinnacle and Westview and rounding out with Florida power St. Thomas Aquinas (Fort Lauderdale, FL).

2. WILLIAMS FIELD: It will be a challenge for the Black Hawks to match last year's finish as state champion -- an unbeaten one at that. Similar to Centennial, Williams Field has gone deep in postseason often this decade with five semifinal appearances or better, including three title game visits. Also

like Centennial, the Black Hawks are more experienced on offense than defense coming back. The offense is powered by junior quarterback Zach Shepherd, who turned in an outstanding debut varsity campaign. Shepherd breaks in essentially an entirely new set of receivers with the graduation loss of a pair of 1,000-yard catchers in Justis Stokes and Max Fine. That won't be easy. Last year's defense yielded just 11 points a game and was outstanding in the game that mattered most limiting Centennial to six points in the final. With a lot of routs in 2016 coach Steve Campbell's staff was able to lend considerable playing time on defense to those beyond opening-game starters.

3. CIENEGA: Coach Pat Nugent inherited a playoff-proud program in 2015 when he took over for Nemer Hassey. That year was a tough one with the Bobcats finishing 4-6 and no playoffs. The comeback was on last year with a 12-1 mark ending with a semifinal loss to Centennial. The addition last season of junior quarterback Jamarie Joiner had a lot to do with the marked improvement. Joiner supplied just short of 2,500 yards rushing and passing and 30 TDs. Joiner is back for another bid at a title as are half of last year's first-teamers. Cienega will be able to score with anyone as it did last year with skill positions its primary strength. It's defense that must

make strides, particularly when the competition ramps up in postseason. Cienega gave up 108 points last year in its three playoff games (36 ppg). The Bobcats allowed less than half that total in their other 10 contests.

4. QUEEN CREEK: It hasn't mattered the division or conference the Bulldogs play in this decade. It's semifinals or better the last seven years with two championship appearances and one championship (2012). Half of the starters from last year return and coach Travis Schureman is anxious to see a promising junior class fill in with some senior leaders. Junior quarterback Devin Larsen acquitted himself well as the starter last year with 2,500 yards passing and overall efficient work. Players back on defense like Dante Coleman, Addison Udall and Copper Wetch defense combined 17 sacks and a slew of tackles. The bug-a-boo for Queen Creek jumping from conference to conference has been Saguaro, Williams Field and in order to win 5A besting the likes of Centennial. Queen Creek lost twice to Williams Field last year and battles them again as they compete in the same region for the fifth time in the last six years.

5. DESERT EDGE: New head coach Jose Lucero steps in to fill the shoes of Rich Wellbrock after a one-year stint as head coach at North Canyon. Lucero, a former offensive coordinator under Wellbrock for six seasons, has a good nucleus to work with in his debut season. A veteran, massive offensive line led by seniors Max Wilhite, Tyson Jones and Austin Young are the focal point. It doesn't hurt having senior running back Rocky Perez with two 1,000-yard rushing seasons behind him. The Scorpions will introduce a new quarterback after the summer competition ends to follow prolific three-year starter Tehran Thomas. An advantage on paper for the Scorpions is battle-tested defenders returning led by linebacker Milton Rodgers and lineman Nasir Sims. Desert Edge's defense was just behind Centennial and Williams Field in fewest points allowed in the conference.

6. NOTRE DAME PREP: The Saints had to sit on the sidelines when November arrived last year despite an 8-2 record due to the probation brought on by violating AIA rules. They also were banned from conducting spring football so the multitude of returning players are anxious to get after it. If they can attain similar success -- and that possibility is high -- they should be eligible this time around. New coach George Prelock, who has toiled as the program's freshman coach prior, has a rapport with the senior-rich roster. The offense features key skill position returnees Cole Fisher at running back and Jordan Stengel and Blake Storey at receiver. Quarterback Kylan Weisser got in enough action to know the feel of varsity play. There is experience on defense up front, at linebacker and hugely in the secondary. Lineman Kyle White, linebacker Vince Elrod and safety-linebacker Joey Jaquint enjoyed productive time last year.

7. MARANA: The Tigers were unbeaten in region play in win-

ning the Sonoran Region crown. They bowed out of postseason with a quarterfinal loss to eventual champ Williams Field. The school hadn't been to a playoff game since 2007 so excitement is on the rise. On paper they have a clear advantage to repeating as region champs with 14 starting spots back. Marana returns seasoned quarterback Trenton Bourguet, running back Zach Roberts and top receiver by receptions Tariq Jordan. Roberts only played the first three games of the season and averaged 112 yards rushing per contest. The Tigers averaged 39 points a game last year. Leading the defense are first-team all-region lineman John Morgan and first-team all-region defensive back Anthony Valencia.

8. CHAPARRAL: Will the young talent (1 senior on offense) jell and adjust quickly to some of the new coaching leadership? Will QB transfer Jack Miller play immediately? Is the entire new defense ready? What isn't being questioned is the depth at RB. Ohio Soph. RB Darvon Hubbard (5 D-I offers) moved in this week. Atlanta RB transfer Josh Edwards (5-10, 200) and returning back Marqui Johnson, Chap's best DB, also will be difficult to stop. No surprise that Soph. Tommy Christakos is already the team's No. 1 WR. One of the new coaches on staff is ex-Chaparral, U of A WR DaVonte' Neal.

9. VERRADO: The Vipers qualified for the playoffs for the third consecutive year in 2016. Their season ended with a first-round loss to Desert Edge. They enter the new season with interim coach Tom Ward taking over for Derek Wahlstrom. Ward has run Verrado's defense the last couple of seasons. Ward has more experience to work with on offense led by versatile running back JaTai Jenkins and his 1,100-plus yards rushing and receiving last year. A threat in the passing game is wide out Marcus Rivera, the Vipers leading receiver last year. Defense has been solid under Ward's tutelage. Verrado has progressively allowed fewer points each of the last four seasons. The Vipers gave up just 17 points a game in 2016. The leader coming back is linebacker Zach Juernigan. More new faces than old ones will dot the lineup so Verrado seeks rapid maturity with speed and quickness making up for a lack of size.

10. LIBERTY: The Lions finished up a playoff season (7-4) with back-to-back losses. Both were to conference runner-up Centennial by similar margins. The Lions are just two seasons removed from a runner-up finish, Liberty will rely on an experienced defense, especially its secondary and to a lesser extent up front. Junior safety Ryan Puskas leads the secondary and senior John Clark at the line of scrimmage. The defense must play well as the offense will be quite green to start with breaking in the line and most skill positions. The schedule's toughest games are neatly spaced with Verrado (fourth game), Chaparral (seventh) and Centennial (10th). That affords the offense time to meld and coach Mark Smith and his staff time to assess under fire what they can expect.



OL Joey Ramos, Deer Valley (photo by Mark Jones of max-preps.com)

By Les Willsey
 azpreps365.com

DESERT WEST REGION

Agua Fria

Head coach: Ross Crow

2016 record: 2-8

Returning starters on offense: 5

Returning starters on defense: 5

Returning key players and stats: Sr. WR Cooper Niezgodzki (5-10, 165), Sr. LB Nicholas Thyfault (60, 215, 75 tackles); Sr. QB Nate Verduzco (6-2, 175, 639 yards passing, 4 TDs and 10 INT), So. OL Carson Kennedy (5-11, 230), Sr. TE Dorien Haney (5-10, 150), Jr. SB Mike Martinez (5-9-155, 14 receptions for 101 yards).

Strengths of offense during summer: Experience at the the skill positions.

Strengths of defense during summer: Talent at the skill positions.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: The offensive and defensive lines.

Potential breakout players: Niezgodzki, Verduzco and Thyfault. The Owls graduated 24 seniors, but have an influx of youthful talent from last year's freshman class that went 6-3. There have been many strides made during the offseason and spring with over 100 players participating in spring practices.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? Cooper Niezgodzki

Goldwater

Head coach: Doug Provenzano

2016 record: 1-9

Returning starters on offense: 8

Returning starters on defense: 5

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB-SB Ben Smith (6-0, 170, 427 yards rushing, 5 TDs); Sr. RB-SB Sebastian Valles (5-9, 180, 689 yards rushing, 2 TDs); Sr. TE-LB Calvin Fletcher (6-3, 215, 81 tackles, 4 sacks); Sr. OT Tofiga Liaiga (6-3, 260); Sr. OL Elijah Jurewicz (6-2, 210, 48 tackles); Jr. QB Chris Beck (6-3, 170).

Strengths of offense during summer: Our strengths are that we are very fast and versatile.

Strengths of defense during summer: Our strengths are that we are very aggressive. We have a very strong secondary and will do very well against the pass.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We had a great camp and are looking forward to the season.

Potential breakout players: Ben Smith and senior RB-LB Wade Daigneault.

Any unique human interest stories about your players, coaches or program: This is the rebuild of a program that has won one game in two years. I feel this is a very talented group of young men that have a burning desire to win. The plan is to stay healthy and if we can do that, I feel that we are going to shock a lot of teams this year. My first day at work, upon my hire, I had 27 total athletes show up to our first team meeting and now we are in the 70's. I am looking forward to a very positive year.

Deer Valley

Head coach: Eric Bolus

2016 record: 6-4

Returning starters on offense: 5

Returning starters on defense: 9

Returning key players and stats: Jr. RB, Dez Melton RB (6-4, 200, 1,362 yards rushing, 15 TDs and 17 receptions for 271 yards receiving in 2016); Sr. LB-RB Talianuu Tanai (5-9, 220, 396 yards, 7 TDs and 85 tackles); Sr. WR-S Chandler Pearson (5-10, 170, 63 tackles, 3 INTs); Sr. OL Joey Ramos (6'5 285); Sr. OL Brandon Mccrea (6-3, 275); Sr. OL, Xavier Delgado (6-5, 300); Sr. TE-DL Ryley Conaway (6-3, 200. 10 receptions 119 yards, 2 TDs, 77 tackles and 7.5 sacks); Jr. FB-DL Aluea Mckenzie (6-0. 250).

Strengths of offense during summer: Our run game is our biggest strength. We have a big line that is physical and fast. We also have two running backs who are physical and explosive and not afraid to hit the hole.

Strengths of defense during summer: The strength is our returners. Nine total and they are very physical.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Quarterback position.

Potential breakout players: LB-WR Justin Quintero, DL-TE Gabe Young; LB-TE Alex Mckeen; DL-OL Gunnar Johnson; CB-WR Ja'wan Casteal; WR-CB Keyvaughn Williams; WR-CB Aring-

ton Danzy. Excited for this year. Our boys having been putting great effort in the weight room and has shown in the spring. This senior class was 2-8 as sophomores and still have that chip on their shoulders.

Desert Edge

Head coach: Jose Lucero

2016 record: 10-3

Returning starters on offense: 7

Returning starters on defense: 5

Returning key players and stats: Sr. OL-DL Max Wilhite (6-3-300); Sr. OL-DL Austin Young (6-4, 330); Sr. OL-DL Tyson Jones (6-5, 295); Sr. WR-DB, Treyvon Williams (5-11, 180, 51 tackles, 2 sacks); Sr. RB-LB Rocky Perez Jr. (5-9, 185, 1,032 yards rushing, 6 TDs); Jr. RB-LB Milton Rodgers (5-10, 205, 90 tackles, 4 sacks); Jr. OL-DL Nasir Sims (6-3, 290, 70 tackles, 5 sacks).

Strengths of offense during summer: Strength is OL and run game. We have four returning starters on O-Line and Perez with back-to-back 1,000-yard rushing seasons.

Strengths of defense during summer: Our front seven led by Sims and Dylan Scovill and Rodgers.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: In the middle of a quarterback competition between two guys. Need to replace some great leaders and playmakers.

Potential breakout players: Perez and Rodgers.

Lake Havasu

Head coach: Karl Thompson

2016 record: 4-6

Returning starters on offense: 4

Returning starters on defense: 4

Strengths of offense during summer: NA

Strengths of defense during summer: Core group returning and understanding task ahead.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: How hot it will be.

Potential breakout players: NA.

Verrado

Head coach: Tom Ward

2016 record: 7-4

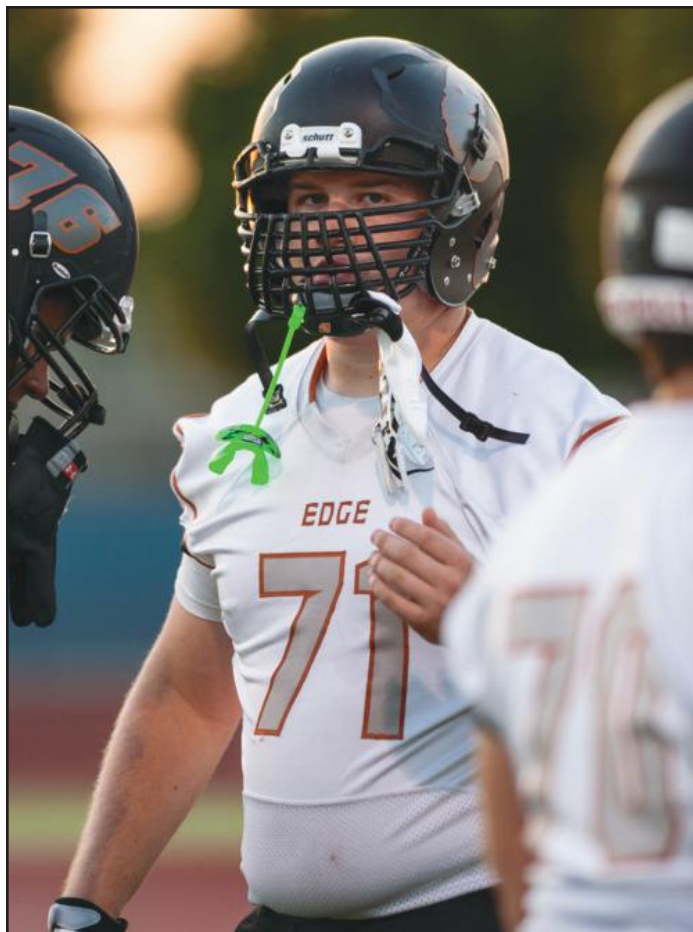
Returning starters on offense: 7

Returning starters on defense: 4

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB-RS JaTai Jenkins (5-10, 190, 853 yards rushing, 14 TDs and 34 receptions for 278 yards, 1 TD in 2016); Sr. OL Sean Anderson (6-5, 305); Sr. LB-TE Blake Spear (6-1, 210); Sr. WR-DB Marcus Rivera (5-8, 165, 41 receptions for 765 yards, 6 TDs); Jr. QB Titan Widjaja (5-10, 160); Sr. OL Jake Brieze (5-10, 245); NG-DE Cooper Stigsell (5-11, 195); Sr. DE Logan Mahoney (5-11, 205); Jr. DE Jonathon Parks (6-4, 230); RB-DB Eli Johnson (5-7, 160, 28 receptions for 308 yards), So. S Jayden Capwell (5-11, 175); Sr. OL Isaac Covarrubias (5-10, 260); Sr. WR-DB Jonah Alicea (5-10, 160, 15 receptions for 311 yards, 5 TDs); Sr. LB-RB Zach Juernigan (5-11, 180, 71 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: Depth and experience on the line and an emphasis on the running game to utilize our stable of talented backs. A mobile quarterback adds to the offensive scheme. Good speed, depth and experience at wide receiver.

Strengths of defense during summer: Lack size, but quickness and experience is a plus. Team speed is greatest asset.



Lineman Max Wilhite, Desert Edge (photo by Darin Sicurello of maxpreps.com)

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Secondary is a work in progress and need linebackers to step up for graduated players.

Potential breakout players: Logan Mahoney. Never played football until freshman year. One of strongest athletes in the program.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years?: Logan Mahoney never played football until his freshman year. True leader, great motor, one of the strongest athletes in our program, honors student, and talented musician.

Unique human interest stories about your players, coaches or program? Coach Urquieta, a retired Lieutenant Colonel, Army Rangers, is our defensive line coach, who brings a vast experience in organization, leadership, and toughness. He is firm but fair and our young men will run through walls for him. Blake Spear has quietly had a nice career and is a member of our Leadership Council, captain, and recently completed his Eagle Scout requirements. Mentors elementary school children in reading and mathematics.

METRO REGION

Apollo

Head coach: Zack Threadgill

2016 record: 4-6

Returning starters on offense: 6

Returning starters on defense: 4

Returning key players and stats: Sr. OL-DL Kaleb Seu-



Josiah Bailey, Raymond Kellis (photo by Mark Jones of max-preps.com)

manutafa (6-2, 290); Sr. OL-DL IIm Manning (6-4, 245); Jr. RB-DB Ali Mohamed (5-10, 165); Jr. QB Frank Sanchez (5-10, 165, 952 yards, 10 TDs, 3 INT); Sr. WR-DB Adrian Henry (5-11, 175, 58 tackles, 2 INT); Sr. WR-DB Adam Pierii (5-8, 150); Sr. LB-TE Jaguar Mixson (6-1, 178, 39 tackles, 5 sacks); Sr. LB Jonathan Kasongo (5-9, 179, 45 tackles); Sr. LB Jose Delgado (5-8, 175); Sr. WR-DB Trevor Clark (5-8, 185); Sr. WR-DB Keon Knight (5-9, 167); Sr. OL-DL Chris Arriola (6-0, 260); Sr. OL-DL Abdel Ahmad (6-1, 280).

Strengths of offense during summer: Experience at quarterback and line. Effort and attitude.

Strengths of defense during summer: Number of players returning with game reps and experience.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Need to limit number of two-way starters in order to maintain depth on both sides of the ball. Kicker is another question mark.

Potential breakout players: Ali Mohamed. A junior this year, he missed all but one game last year.

Ironwood

Head coach: Ian Curtis

2016 record: 2-8

Returning starters on offense: 7

Returning starters on defense: 7

Returning key players and stats: Sr. OL Grant Wojnarowski (6-2, 320); Sr. WR Brandon Villa (5-8, 170); Sr. WR Jacob Taylor (5-10, 170); Jr. LB Jory Johnson (6-0, 185, 62 tackles); Jr. LB-RB Devante Wimbish (5-10, 190, 174 yards rushing, 1 TD, 81 tack-

les, 4 sacks); Jr. LB Stone Aguirre (5-8, 200, 76 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: We are bigger, faster, stronger and more experienced than last year.

Strengths of defense during summer: Experience. Started three sophomore linebackers last season and all of them continue to work hard and ready to rid the foul taste of last season.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Who wins the quarterback battle. We have a few players vying for the position.

Potential breakout players: Wimbish is going to have a big year. No doubt. We expect to win our region this season. The players have one clear goal -- region title.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? Grant Wojnarowski, Grant has worked diligently to turn himself into a dominant offensive lineman.

Maricopa

Head coach: Chris McDonald

2016 record: 5-5

Returning starters on offense: 8

Returning starters on defense: 4

Returning key players and stats: Jr. OL Trey Keel (6-3, 290); Sr. OL Taylor Belcher (6-4, 240); Jr. ATH-DB, 5-8, 160); Sr. SB Kemo Akins (5-5, 145); Sr. TE-LB Edward Donaldson (6-2, 210); Jr. LB Tylen Coleman (6-0, 215); Sr. OL Baylen Refern (6-3, 265); Jr. C Jake Meyer (6-0, 220); Jr. DE Jimmy Cutajar (6-1, 220); Jr. ATH Alec Smith (6-0, 205); Jr. ATH Angel Nelson (5-10, 155).

Strengths of offense during summer: We have a lot of experience back on offense at both the offensive line and skill positions. The quarterback position is open and will be a competition between Alec Smith and Angel Nelson. Both offer different skill sets and can both be used in the same game. They will have a surrounding cast of experience which will help the transition.

Strengths of defense during summer: Our team speed on defense is a plus. The defense overall will be younger than the offense but some really good pieces on the defensive side to work with and it's our job as coaches to put that puzzle together. Can be an exciting group.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Quarterback and depth overall. We need to focus on building depth.

Potential breakout players: All of our key returning players have an opportunity to break out this year. They all played well this past season and got plenty of snaps. I think it would be unfair at this point to identify just a couple because they are all working extremely hard developing their bodies in the weight room, leading the team and mastering their craft/position.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? Kemo Akins. He is one of our better football players despite his size.

McClintock

Head coach: Corbin Smith

2016 record: 3-7

Returning starters on offense: 6

Returning starters on defense: 8

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB Tyrese Green (5-8, 163, 2,000 all-purpose yards in 2016); Sr. LB Alay'Jon Tamplin (5-10, 230, 75 tackles, 2 fumble recoveries, 1 INT); Sr. WR Jarone Davison (6-1, 163, 40 receptions, 8 TDs); Sr. RB-WR-DB Stacey Boyd (5-11, 175).

Strengths of offense during summer: Returning starters, speed and skill positions.

Strengths of defense during summer: Maturity, All linebackers and two of four defensive backs return. Speed and depth as well.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Learning how to win. New staff, system and high staff expectations.

Potential breakout players: Boyd and Dylan McMonigal, transfers from Chandler. Also quarterback Cordell Colter and wide receiver Will Roberts.

Any unique human interest stories about your players, coaches or program? Bringing back the tradition from the Kiefer Era. A lot of connections with myself and the rest of the staff to the alumni. We have a great staff. Zac Griffin, our defensive coordinator, was the DC at Mountain Pointe. Mike Sanchez, OL-DL, who was the OC at Dobson. BJ Dennard, former Brophy and UA standout. Kevin Singleton, former UA standout. Chris Colter, former McClintock standout and all-stater of the McClintock Colters.

Raymond Kellis

Head coach: Shawn Copeland

2016 record: 9-2

Returning starters on offense: 2

Returning starters on defense: 6

Returning key players and stats: Sr. WR-DB Josiah Bailey (5-9, 162, 1,316 all-purpose yards, 18 TDs, 34 tackles, 3 INT); Sr. LB Nicholas Bejarano (5-9, 204, 87 tackles); Sr. DB-RB Quentin

Estice (5-10, 170), Sr. WR Dylan Naylor (5-10, 145, 23 receptions for 367 yards, 3 TDs).

Strengths of offense during summer: Skill players and quarterbacks are very good. Great speed and knowledge.

Strengths of defense during summer: Experience and ability at all 11 positions. Should be one of the best in 5A.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Have guys who can physically play the position, but are unproven.

Potential breakout players: Estice, Naylor and Cade Peterson.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? Almost the entire offensive line.

Sunnyslope

Head coach: Damon Pieri

2016 record: 7-3

Returning starters on offense: 2

Returning starters on defense: 6

Returning key players and stats: Jr. DL Bub Dixon (6-1, 245); Jr. LB Jordan Gray (6-1, 188); Sr. DB Aaron Turrey (5-9, 168); Sr. DE Spencer Jones (6-2, 195); Sr. LB Donavain Adair (5-8, 180); Sr. DB Jaran Whitfield (5-10, 172).

Strengths of offense during summer: We think we can have a balanced offense with the ability to both run and pass.

Strengths of defense during summer: Have 6 returning starters who understand the defensive scheme and have shown good leadership.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Inexperience at quarterback and we need to find some more offensive and defensive linemen.

Potential breakout players: Bub Dixon if he stays healthy can be very disruptive. Ahman Hamid 125lb CB who excels in coverage and is very ball savvy..

Unique human interest story: Ahman Hamid is a 125-pound corner back who excels in coverage and is very ball savvy.

NORTHEAST REGION

Arcadia

Head coach: Tony Stillings

2016 record: 2-8

Returning starters on offense: 4

Returning starters on defense: 5

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Luke Ashworth (6-3, 195, passed for 1,250 yards, 14 TDs, 8 INTs in 2016); Sr. WR-DB Marq Wilkerson (5-9, 170); Sr. WR-DB Mitch Arndt (6-2, 195); Sr. DB-WR Josh Peterson 95-11, 160); Jr. LB-DB Jon Hunter (5-10, 180); Sr. OL TJ Feulner (6-1, 245); Sr. OL Sam Ellington (6-3, 260); Sr. DL Logan Tomasek (6-1, 235).

Strengths of offense during summer: We have a quarterback with a live arm and will be able to put some speed on the field in space and have a strong vertical passing game.

Strengths of defense during summer: The kids are quick learners, work hard, and hustle. We have a good mix of new talent and upperclassmen leadership which will enable us to play fast.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Completely new offensive and defensive schemes for the players to learn. How quickly they can pick it up is our biggest question. Next would be depth.

Potential breakout players: Sophomore DB-WR Kadin Beler and sophomore wide receiver Samaury Alexander.



Offensive lineman Sean Anderson, Verrado (photo by Steve Paynter of paynterspics)

Chaparral

Head coach: Thomas Lewis

2016 record: 5-6

Returning starters on offense: NA

Returning starters on defense: NA

Returning key players and stats: Jr. RB Marqui Johnson (5-8, 160, 970 yards rushing, 11 TDs and 211 yards receiving, 3 TDs); So. WR Tommy Christakos (6-3, 185); Transfer So. QB Jack Miller (6-3, 205, passed for 3,653 yards, 53 TDs and 15 INT and rushed for 831 yards, 8 TDs at Scottsdale Christian).

Strengths of offense during summer: NA

Strengths of defense during summer: NA

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Will Miller get a full season or sit out five games due to transfer.

Potential breakout players: NA

North Canyon

Head coach: Airabin Justin

2016 record: 6-4

Returning starters on offense: NA

Returning starters on defense: NA

Returning key players and stats: Sr. WR Solomon Enis (6-4, 200); Jr. G-NG Chase Killough (6-4, 300); Sr. MLB-SS Tre O'Guinn (6-0, 195); Sr. WR-DB Cedric Byiringiro (5-11, 160); Uriel Hernandez (6-4, 275); SR. RB-DB Joseph Hoffman (5-6, 150); Sr. OL-DL Angel Hernandez (6-0, 220); Sr. C Billy Cain (6-2, 260); So. OL-DL Trajan Forrester (6-2, 215).

Strengths of offense during summer: From the summer it looks like we have a lot of firepower. We have a lot of good wide receivers that can make things happen.

Strengths of defense during summer: I think our strength will be in our speed. We have really good athletes and of course I will always believe our secondary will be good.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: I would say that we must get the offense and defense down. It's a new system for the kids so we have to make sure that they understand why they are doing what they are doing.

Potential breakout players: We have two that people are very familiar with which are Solomon Enis, and Tre O'Guinn. But I think kids that will stand out next year that people aren't familiar with are Cedric Byiringiro, Louis Contreras, Alex Morgan and Trajan Forrester.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? I didn't coach last year, but we have multiple athletes that drastically improved since the spring.

Unique human interest story: We have a lot of coaches that have played professional or at the collegiate level. Most of our kids feel overlooked so they are determined to turn heads this year.

Notre Dame Prep

Head coach: George Prelock

2016 record: 8-2

Returning starters on offense: 8

Returning starters on defense: 8

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Kyran Weisser (6-3, 190, 487 yards, 4 TDs, 3 INT); Sr. RB Cole Fisher (5-11, 185, 866 yards, 14 TDs); Sr. WR Jordan Stengel (6-3, 195, 17 receptions 327 yards, 1 TD, 3 INT); Sr. WR Blake Storey (6-3, 170, 30 receptions, 428 yards, 5 TDs); Sr. DE-TE Kyle White (6-0, 220, 55

tackles, 8 sacks); Sr. OL-DL Garret Zimmerman (6-3, 250); Sr. FS Ricky Manning (6-2, 180, 60 tackles, 3 INT); Sr. SS Joey Jaquint (5-11, 185, 100 tackles); Sr. LB, Vincent Elrod (6-22, 215, 121 tackles). Sr. FS Alex Nyberg (6-1, 175, 51 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: Number of returning starters, many two years on varsity. Picking up new concepts and terminology we've installed.

Strengths of defense during summer: Same as offense. Many returning, experienced players.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: How we respond not having spring ball.

Potential breakout players: So. G-DT Cade Bennett and Jr. DT-G Cale Gregory.

Paradise Valley

Head coach: Greg Davis

2016 record: 2-8

Returning starters on offense: 7

Returning starters on defense: 8

Returning key players and stats: Sr. TE Bric Hudnutt (6-4, 230, played 5 different positions last year); Sr. WR Xavier Watkins, (6-0, 170); Sr. LB Max Seifer (6-0, 205); So. QB Ben Finley (6-0, 160).

Strengths of offense during summer: Our passing game looks strong. We've had the leading wide receiver for two years in a row and looking to do it a third consecutive year.

Strengths of defense during summer: Unit looks much improved since platoon system is back in place. Good linebacker play is the key.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We are super young and have small numbers in the program. Need guys to step up in line play.

Potential breakout players: Hudnutt. Looking for him to be DI level tight end and already has full ride offer.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? Cruz Campoy is a starting offensive lineman. Does a great job with the skill set that he has.

UNION REGION

Betty Fairfax

Head coach: Dylan Winemiller

2016 record: 8-3

Returning starters on offense: 4

Returning starters on defense: 2

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB Antwan Craig (5-8, 165, 767 yards rushing, 9 TDs); Jr. RB Anthodius Ashley (5-9, 179); Jr. FS-WR Jalen Holmes (6-0, 165).

Strengths of offense during summer: Offensive line and running game. Team speed.

Strengths of defense during summer: Lots of new faces, very inexperienced.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Youth. Graduated 37 seniors.

Potential breakout players: NA

Camelback

Head coach: Joseph Brissette

2016 record: 3-7

Returning starters on offense: 6

Returning starters on defense: 6

Returning key players and stats: Jr. WR Shawn Charles (6-1,

175, 32 receptions, 630 yards, 2 TDs); Sr. RB Abukar Abdi (5-8, 175, 808 yards, 7 TDs); Jr. QB Eric Marquez (5-9, 185, 950 yards, 4 TDs, 12 INT); Sr. OT Eliu Figueroa (6-0, 250.); Sr. RG Amary Smith (6-1, 265)

Strengths of offense during summer: The big fellas up front. They are not only the strength of our team but also the most consistent part if our team.

Strengths of defense during summer: Our secondary will be solid and the best part of our defense this year.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: How do we respond to adversity.

Potential breakout players: Marcus Williams, a 5-11, 165-pound sophomore wide receiver/running back.

Carl Hayden

Head coach: Randy Gross

2016 record: 3-7

Returning starters on offense: 5

Returning starters on defense: 3

Returning key players and stats: Sr. OL-DL Able Martinez (5-11, 250); Sr. RB-DL Giovannie Arevalo (5-11, 280, 20 tackles, 4 sacks); Jr. OL-DL Kyle Boone (5-9, 210); Sr. RB-DB Eric Baeza (5-7, 150, 292 yards rushing, 2 TDs); Sr. RB-LB Fernando Becerra (5-8, 175, 28 tackles, 8 sacks).

Strengths of offense during summer: Line play on both sides of the ball.

Strengths of defense during summer: Line play on both sides of the ball.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Team speed and quality depth.

Potential breakout players: Justis Delgado and Jorge Mendez.

Glendale

Head coach: Rob York

2016 record: 5-5

Returning starters on offense: 7

Returning starters on defense: 3

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB Isaiah Briggs (5-8, 155, 346 yards rushing, 7 TDs); Jr. QB Tim Owens (319 yards passing, 348 yards rushing); Jr. WR-CB Johnny Apodaca (12 receptions, 209 yards, 1 TD); Jr. LB Devon Moreland (52 tackles); Sr. OL Augie Rodriguez; Jr. LB-WR Andre Neal (5-10, 175).

Strengths of offense during summer: We have a solid tailback with very good speed, we are bigger and stronger up front than last season and have a returning quarterback with some athletes to throw to.

Strengths of defense during summer: Returning starting middle linebacker and have good competition at the cornerback spots.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Numbers. We are pretty thin with our depth chart.

Potential breakout players: Junior safety Matthew Mullen could have a chance to make big strides this year. He worked hard in the off season and it's really starting to show on the field. Junior linebacker Andre Neal moving from corner to outside linebacker will be a big change for him but he will have a chance to make a lot of plays for us. Isaiah Briggs could have a big year if he can stay healthy.

Independence

Head coach: Santiago Maldonado

2016 record: 4-6

Returning starters on offense: 5

Returning starters on defense: 3

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Adrian Talbo (6-3, 205); Sr. RB-SS Alfredo Beltran (5-6, 165); Sr. OL Parris Jack (5-10, 265); Sr. LB Tirhga Gadallah (6-0, 160).

Strengths of offense during summer: Three-year starter at quarterback who is a leader. Depth at running back and a cohesive line.

Strengths of defense during summer: Athletes in the secondary and bigger bodies in the box.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Our overall depth.

Potential breakout player: Simmon Torres.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? Parris Jack has been a pleasant surprise with leadership and effort on the line. We are returning most of our JV and varsity coaching staff for the first time in several years. We are happy to be on the map. We played for a region championship last year and learned how to compete and win.

South Mountain

Head coach: Mark Carter and Marcus Carter

2016 record: 1-10

Returning starters on offense: 4

Returning starters on defense: 5

Returning key players and stats: Sr. WR Jacori Murphy (6-2, 155, 26 receptions, 439 yards, 6 TDs); Sr. WR Dontae Lee (5-5, 130, 14 receptions, 109 yards, 2 TDs); Jr. WR Marvin Cotton (5-10, 150); Sr. QB Jeremiah Williams (5-9, 160), 953 yards passing, 13 TDs, 7 INT); Jr. DB-WR Jaiden Hayes (5-10, 165, 31 tackles); Sr. DL Saevon Green-Clarke (5-9, 238); Jr. DB Everard Taylor (5-11, 168, 39 tackles); Sr. DL Joel Martinez (5-10, 180).

Strengths of offense during summer: Our strengths are that we have players who are now more familiar with our system. Last year was all new to the players. We had one player on offense with varsity playing experience so now they know what it takes to win. We competed all season so we're happy with the progression.

Strengths of defense during summer: Same as the offense. New system and young players.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: How they adjust to the pressure that will be put on them. After having some success it leads to higher expectations. How we handle that is yet to be seen.

Potential breakout players: Cotton, Lee, linebacker-receiver Cesar Caperon, Green-Clarke, Hayes, free safety-receiver Kyler Traini, Williams and Murphy.

SOUTHERN REGION

Buena

Head coach: Joe Thomas

2016 record: 0-10

Returning starters on offense:

Returning starters on defense:

Returning key players and stats:

Strengths of offense during summer:

Strengths of defense during summer:

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer:

Potential breakout players:

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years?



OL Jayden Lee, Campo Verde (photo by Darin Sicurello of maxpreps.com)

Cienega

Head coach: Pat Nugent

2016 record: 12-1

Returning starters on offense: 5

Returning starters on defense: 6

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Jamarye Joiner (6-2, 200, 1,713 yards passing, 17 TDs, 6 INT, 762 yards rushing, 13 TDs); Jr. WR-CB Terrell Hayward (5-9, 160, 30 receptions 582 yards, 8 TDs, 61 tackles); Sr. WR-FS Terrell Huggins (5-10, 170; Sr. SS Dylan Hoose (6-0, 190, 52 tackles); Sr. LB-TE Steven Harshman (6-1, 220, 89 tackles); Sr. LB-FB Nahan Amico (6-0, 215); Sr. WR-CB Rodney Rodgers (5-10, 150); Sr. DE-OL Carter Clarke (6-2, 240, 5 sacks); Sr. DE-OL Daunte Boudy (6-2, 250); Jr. RB-FS Thomas Webb (5-10, 155; Sr. WR Jerry White (6-3, 190).

Strengths of offense during summer: Joiner unbelievable athlete. A game changer. Plus multiple skill players.

Strengths of defense during summer: Four of five secondary players return.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Offensive line.

Potential breakout players: Hayward, Rodgers and Webb.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? Clarke, Rodgers and Harshman.

Ironwood Ridge

Head coach: Matt Johnson

2016 record: 9-3

Returning starters on offense: 2

Returning starters on defense: 3

Returning key players and stats: Sr. DL Brayden Smith, 6-4, 270; Sr. QB Heath Beemiller (6-4, 190); Sr. OL Noah Becerra (6-2, 250); Sr. RB-DB Nick Brahler (5-11, 185, 1004, yards rushing, 15 TDs); Sr. WR-DB Noah Pallanes (5-11, 180, 8 receptions, 175 yards, 2 TDs, 42 tackles, 3 INT); Sr. OL Aaron Valenzuela (6-2, 250).

Strengths of team during summer: Great attitude and competition at every spot.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We lost 17 starters among our 22 spots on offense and defense. Four of five offensive linemen graduated.

Potential breakout players: Linebacker Octavio Audry-Cobos, a 6-3, 210-pound sophomore.

Marana Mountain View

Head coach: Clarence McRae

2016 record: 7-4

Returning starters on offense: 6

Returning starters on defense: 6

Returning key players and stats: Jr. LB Calib McRae (6-1, 220); Sr. DL-OL Kai Golden (6-3, 290, 40 tackles, 4.5 sacks); Sr. OL-DL Tavian Robey (6-0, 285, 34 tackles, 4.5 sacks); So. RB-DB Varney Larson (5-7, 180); Sr. RB Wyatt Adams (5-6, 179, 522 yards rushing, 6 TDs, 13 receptions, 186 yards, 2 TDs); Sr. OL Sean Benke (6-3, 275); Sr. LB Weston Aguilar (6-0, 200, 53 tackles); Sr. DB Gbara Mene-bie (5-11, 178).

Strengths of offense during summer: High powered uptempo offense which uses every inch of the field. Playmakers at every position.

Strengths of defense during summer: Dominant front seven. A lot of experience in the line and linebacker groups. Very talented in the secondary.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Wide receiver. Lost two all-states caliber players in Isaiah Lovett and Sebastian Spencer.

Potential breakout players: Adams, running back Josh Hart, receiver Edward Gastelum and Larson.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? OL Miguel Guzman and OL Sean Benke

Unique human interest story: Head coach played at the University of Arizona from 2002 until 2004. Then coached on Mike Stoops' staff from 2005-11.

Sahuaro

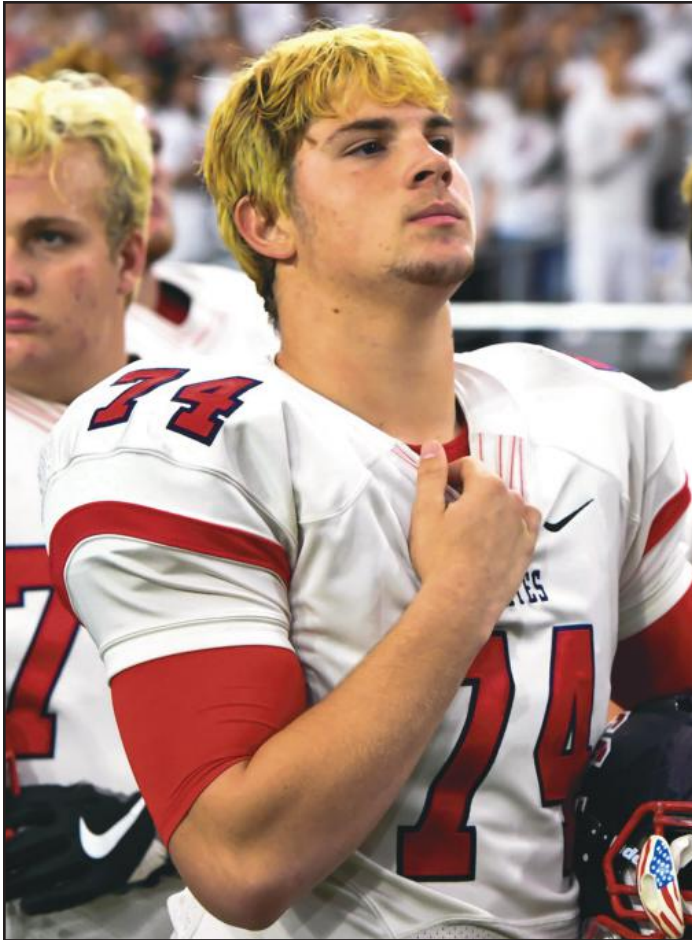
Head coach: Scott McKee

2016 record: 3-7

Returning starters on offense: 8

Returning starters on defense: 6

Returning key players and stats: Sr. DB-WR Kobi Bell (5-10, 165); Sr. DB-WR Lincoln Stewart (5-11, 185); Jr. WR Amir Hunter-Higgins (6-2, 165); Sr. OL Zack Cisney (5-11, 225); Jr. RB Abrien Painter (5-10, 175); Jr. DB-WR Avery Ndisabiye (6-3, 150); Jr. LB Jakob Goerke (5-11, 185); Jr. DE Chris Williams (6-3, 200); Jr. LB Cameron Williams (5-11, 185); Sr. DB-RB Goddy Amon-ra (5-9, 150).



Offensive lineman Trevor Renfro, Centennial (photo by Mark Jones of maxpreps.com)

Strengths of offense during summer: Coach-ability. Willing to work together and improve together. Great work ethic and teamwork.

Strengths of defense during summer: Competitiveness and versatility. Team speed and togetherness.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Developing the offensive line. Developing our young first-year starting quarterback.

Potential breakout players: Kobi Bell, Abrien Painter and Devin Green.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? Devin Green

SAN TAN REGION

Campo Verde

Head coach: Max Ragsdale

2016 record: 7-3

Returning starters on offense: 5

Returning starters on defense: 5

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB EJ Galvez (6-0, 190, 1,190 yards passing, 10 TDs, 7 INT; 530 yards rushing, 7 TDs); Sr. OT Jozia Myers (6-4, 270); Sr. OT Jayden Lee (6-3, 305); Sr. Riley Langton (5-9, 155, 29 receptions for 410 yards and 6 TDs). Jr. LB Trevor Kauer (6-3, 195, 37 tackles, 9.5 sacks).

Strengths of offense during summer: Returning quarterback and linemen.

Strengths of defense during summer:

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Depth.

Loss of many key starters on defense from 2016.

Potential breakout players: NA

Mesquite

Head coach: Chad DeGrenier

2016 record: 8-4

Returning starters on offense: 5

Returning starters on defense: 7

Returning key players and stats: Sr. WR Deandre Kelsey (5-9, 145, 302 yards rushing and 5 TDs in 2016, 40 receptions for 372 yards, 1 TD); Sr. DT Robert Jordan (6-3, 205, 50 tackles and 9 sacks).

Strengths of offense during summer: Receiving corps.

Strengths of defense during summer: Defensive backs.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer:

Progress of offense.

Potential breakout players: NA

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? Robert Jordan

Queen Creek

Head coach: Travis Schureman

2016 record: 10-3

Returning starters on offense: 6

Returning starters on defense: 5

Returning key players and stats: Jr. QB Devin Larsen (2,524 passing yards, 25 TDs, 6 INT); Sr. WR Garrett Duke (5-10, 160); Jr. RB Dylan Borja (5-8, 160, 234 yards rushing, 1 TD); Jr. OL Dakota Banning (6-1, 225); Sr. K-WR Jacori Wooten (6-0, 162); Sr. LB Dante Coleman (6-0, 205, 67 tackles, 9 sacks); Jr. DL Cooper Wetch ((6-1, 240, 34 tackles, 4 sacks); Sr. DE Addison Udall (5-11, 195, 46 tackles, 4 sacks).

Strengths of offense during summer: We are deep at the skill positions as we've ever been. We must show it on the field.

Strengths of defense during summer: We have returning players at key positions, including line and linebacker.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Anxious to see our juniors, who we believe have the ability to be really good. We have good depth so it will be interesting to see which guys rise to the top.

Potential breakout players: Larsen, Borja, Fritzny Niclasse at linebacker and Udall.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? We expect all of our players to blossom, but I've been especially impressed with the performance of Larsen and Duke, Borja hasn't started previously, but played a lot as a sophomore. Wetch has a chance to be dominant along the D-line.

Vista Grande

Head coach: Tracy Stuart

2016 record: 2-8

Returning starters on offense: 6

Returning starters on defense: 3

Returning key players and stats: Sr. TE-DL D'Montae Williams (6-1, 190); Sr. OL Tyler Rice (6-0, 225); Sr. WR Damir Evans (6-2, 225); Sr. RB-SS Jace Jayne (5-10, 185); Sr. OL Pedro Cor-relejo (6-3, 305); Sr. RB Kenyata James (5-8, 168).

Strengths of offense during summer: We are a little more athletic and have a little more speed.

Strengths of defense during summer: We are very young, but the work ethic is great.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Our young players.

Potential breakout players: D'Montae Williams.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? Darien Bouregard, Devyn Sopha, Brice Gay and Kolton Dowdle

Williams Field

Head coach: Steve Campbell

2016 record: 14-0

Returning starters on offense: 6

Returning starters on defense: 3

Returning key players and stats: Jr. QB Zach Shepherd (6-2, 190, 2,749 yards passing, 25 TDs, 6 INT); Jr. FS-WR Noa Polagates (6-2, 185, 61 tackles); Sr. DT Jackson Vaught (6-1, 265, 41 tackles); Sr. OT Vinnie Meloy (6-5, 290); Sr. OT Brogan Heath (6-3, 270); Sr. G Cooper Udall (6-5, 305); Jr. C Ryan Wearne (6-0, 295); Sr. RB Jordan Neal (6-0, 205, 311 yards rushing, 4 TDs).

Strengths of your offense heading into the summer? Returning quarterback and veteran offensive line.

Strengths of your defense heading into the summer? Line and Secondary have kids with quality playing time from last season even though they weren't listed as starters.

Team's biggest question marks heading into the summer? Replacing some of the skill players and kicking game from last season.

Potential breakout player(s) in 2017: Every kid has that potential in every program. It is the kids that seize opportunities that make it happen.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? Cooper Udall. He used to purposely leave stuff at home so he couldn't play in the Frosh B games and now he is going to be a 2-year starter on the varsity.

Any unique human interest stories about your players, coaches or program? Zack Shepherd's connection and friendship he has formed with a disabled student that he met while the football team was helping with a fun run at a district elementary.

NORTHWEST REGION

Centennial

Head coach: Richard Taylor.

2016 record: 13-2.

Returning starters on offense: 8.

Returning starters on defense: 3.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Jr. C Carson Keltner (6-2, 265); Sr. G Trevor Renfro (6-1, 255); Sr. OT Daniel Thomas (6-2, 275); Jr. OT Jacob Fyffe (270); Sr. Ruben Beltran (6-0, 189, 1,498 yards passing, 14 TDs, 5 INT, 202 yards rushing); Sr. RB Zidane Thomas (5-11, 209, 1,888 yards rushing, 18 TDs); Sr. RB Alex Escobar (5-8, 180, 297 yards rushing, 4 TDs); Sr. LB-SS Jordan Ware (6-1, 205, 81 tackles); Sr. NG-LB Anthony Campbell (5-10, 214, 53 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: Four of five OL back and 2,000 yard back (Thomas) returning.

Strengths of defense during summer: Speed. Willingness to learn and work hard.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Finding eight defensive players.

Potential breakout players: So. WR Dyelan Miller, Jr. WR/S AJ Jackson, Sr. DE/LB Jacob Franklin.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into a



QB Zach Shepherd, Williams Field (photo by Mark Jones of maxpreps.com)

starter over the past 2-3 years: Jr. OL Trevor Renfro. Started last after being a 150-pound freshman.

Liberty

Head coach: Mark Smith

2016 record: 7-4

Returning starters on offense: 2

Returning starters on defense: 5

Returning key players and stats: Sr. DL John Clark (6-2, 280); Jr. DB Ryan Puskas (6-2, 200, 54 tackles); Sr. DB Kade Heddings (6-2, 170, 43 tackles); Sr. DB DJ Mumin (6-1, 175); Jr. DL Braxton Croteau (6-4, 210); Sr. QB Ryan Bendle (5-10, 170, 662 yards rushing, 11 TDs, 21 receptions for 196 yards, 2 TDs); Jr. RB Dax Shields (6-0, 190, 211 yards rushing, 2 TDs).

Strengths of offense during summer: Continuity. The staff is in its third year together and the knowledge base of our team is way ahead of last two years.

Strengths of defense during summer: The back end of the defense is strong with three four players returning. We also return Clark, an all-state defensive end.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Offensive line will have five new starters and linebackers will be competing to replace three of four departures via graduation.

Potential breakout players: Running back Jett Kinsch, linebacker Quadeer Mumin, linebacker Cole Nixon, defensive back Elijah Pittman; linebacker Ryan Pitts, linebacker Brodie Curry, defensive lineman Dylan Cutting, receiver Dylan Bieber and re-

ceiver Jace Johnson.

Unique human interest stories: Added two new coaches who both played collegiately at Utah State, Alumnus Travis Seefeldt (2011) and Agua Fria graduate Rajric Coleman.

Shadow Ridge

Head coach: Bob Chappelle

2016 record: 2-8

Returning starters on offense: 5

Returning starters on defense: 7

Returning key players and stats: Jr. WR Zaach Cullop (6-3 190, 2016 44 receptions for 660 yards and 6 TDs in 2016); Sr. RB Scotty Nixon (5-6, 170, 800 yards rushing, 10 TDs); Jr. ILB George Lamb (5-10, 210, 80 tackles); Jr. ILB Travis Pantazis (6-0 200, 60 tackles); Sr. SS Kyle Lundberg 5-10, 175, 40 tackles). Strengths of offense during summer: The offensive line will be improved with more size and depth. The return of Cullop as a receiver and Scotty Nixon as a running back gives us very good skill guys.

Strengths of defense during summer: Defense will be led by Lamb and Pantazis at LB.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: The quarterback position is still up for grabs. Senior Esteban Lopez and junior Jordan McBeath-Navarro battling.

Potential breakout players: Sophomore receiver Nate Duran and junior receiver Darius Moore.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into a starter over the past 2-3 years: SS Kyle Lundberg has become a very good football player.

Sierra Linda

Head coach: Luie Contreras

2016 record: 0-10

Returning key players and stats: LB-RB Michael Hill (5-11, 220, 237 yards rushing, 1 TD, 34 tackles); OL Cristian Williams (6-5, 290); LB-RB Pedro Donis (5-6, 180, 277 yards rushing, 2 TDs); QB-S Jalil Mitchell (6-1, 195, 789 yards rushing, 8 TDs).

Strengths of your offense heading into the summer? Having our best lineman (Cristian Williams) and QB (Jalil Mitchell) returning for another season is a huge bonus for our team. They gained a great deal of experience from last season and hopefully that will carry over into the season. We also have a lot of young guys ready to step in and help on the line and at the skill positions

Strengths of your defense heading into the summer: We have a few key starters Mitchell, Hill and Donis that will help solidify the back seven of our defense. We also have some kids returning at the safety and corner positions who learned a lot from last season and should be able to make our secondary one of the strongest position groups on our team

Team's biggest question marks heading into the summer?

Depth is going to be a major question as we move into the summer. Outside of the few returners we have we will be very young and will have a lot of learning to do to get caught up with the speed of the game.

Potential to be your breakout player(s) in 2017: Junior quarterback JJ Player has a chance to have a huge year for us. He will be able to help us out all over the field, and despite our depth concerns, he provides us depth at QB which is the most important position.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? Mason Suarez, Gabriel Still,

and Luis Rivas have all worked hard to find themselves a starting position over the last couple of years. Gabe really came on last summer and then had an injury early on, that slowed him down a little, but he came on strong again as the season ended. Mason came out of nowhere to step in and start for us on the offensive line. We had a kid go down, and we had to throw Mason into the fire, and he stepped up in a huge way. Luis just works hard and has a relentless motor that we could not keep off the field. He is a little undersized for his defensive end position but he's as tough as they come.

Any unique human interest stories about your players, coaches or program? We had a group of about 12 kids who went and volunteered at the Special Olympic Games at Raymond Kellis High School in May 5. It was a very good experience for those kids and they were really motivated by the kids who were participating in the games.

Willow Canyon

Head coach: Joseph Martinez

2016 record: 1-9

Number of returning starters on offense: 4

Number of returning starters on defense: 4

Who are your key returning players? Sr. RB Dominic Cardoza (5-8, 170, 346 yards rushing, 3 TDs); Jr. TE Zack Enhelder (6-4, 230, 11 receptions, 119 yards, 1 TD); Jr. DE Jalen Schaefer (6-3, 230, 27 tackles); Sr. S Ezekiel Rangel (5-10, 145, 35 tackles); Sr. DE Austin Dylong (5-10, 225, 35 tackles, 5 sacks).

What are the strengths of your offense heading into the summer? The strength in our offense is our running game. We think we have refined our philosophy with our running attack and believe we have some backs and a solid group of linemen to solidify our identity.

What are the strengths of your defense heading into the summer? The strength of our defense is our defensive line. We have an athletic group of defensive linemen returning and have good depth.

What are your team's biggest question marks heading into the summer? We need to rebuild our linebacking core.

Who has the potential to be your breakout player(s) in 2017? Two juniors and one senior. Junior Zack Enhelder, junior Jalen Schaefer and senior Dominic Cardoza.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? Austin Dylong has become a staple at defensive line. Although a bit undersized, he plays with great leverage and explosiveness. The other is Ezekiel Rangel, who shows great instincts at the safety position.

SONORAN REGION

Cholla

Head coach: Ryan Scherling

2016 record: 1-9

Returning starters on offense: 6

Returning starters on defense: 6

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB-DB Jordan Porter (5-11, 180, 1,084 yards passing, 12 TDs, 6 INT; 304 yards rushing, 4 TDs, 20 receptions, 225 yards, 3 TDs); Sr. RB-LB Christian Vil-laescusa (5-11, 190, 40 tackles); Sr. WR-DB AJ Blair (5-9, 170, 27 receptions, 512 yards, 4 TDs, 31 tackles); Sr. WR-DB Devin Stubblefield (6-1, 180, 53 receptions, 691 yards, 6 TDs, 41 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: Speed and athleticism. Have had good timing this summer as we head into the fall.

Strengths of defense during summer: Speed and athleticism. Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Offensive and defensive line play. Need some young guys to step.

Potential breakout players: Jordan Porter, Christian Villacusa, AJ Blair and Devin Stubblefield.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? Junior OL-DL Daniel Robledo, who is 6-3, 240.

Desert View

Head coach: Robert Bonillas

2016 record: 8-3

Returning starters on offense: 6

Returning starters on defense: 5

Returning key players and stats: Sr. FB-DE Mario Vallejo (5-10, 195, 218 yards rushing, 4 TDs, 27 tackles); Sr. OL-DL Jesus Samaniego (5-10, 225); Sr. WR-DB Chris Aros (5-10, 150, 240 yards rushing 2 TDs, 28 tackles, 3 INT); Sr. QB-DB Gabriel Waer (5-7, 148); Sr. RB-LB Oscar Morineau (5-3, 155); Jr. TE-DL Ervyn Rivas; Sr. FB-LB Edward Baca (5-7, 185, 19 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: Our offensive strengths will consist of our players eliminating mistakes and moving the chains.

Strengths of defense during summer: The team is working hard to understand their assignments in order to play fast.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Making sure they play for each other.

Who has the potential to be your breakout player(s) in 2017? Chris Aros, Mario Vallejo, Cameron Denson

Flowing Wells

Head coach: Mark Brunenkant

2016 record: 6-5

Returning starters on offense: 4

Returning starters on defense: 4

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Dylan Allison (6-1, 200, 885 yards passing, 9 TDs, 4 INT); Sr. WR-CB Xavier Hawkins (6-1, 180 24 tackles); Sr. G-MLB Charlie Reyes (5-9, 205, 56 tackles); Sr. FS Deven Contreras, 25 tackles); Sr. DE Matthew Abrams (6-1, 178, 34 tackles); Jr. DT Wesley Kavathas (5-10, 210).

Strengths of offense during summer: The continuity of the returners knowing how to execute our scheme.

Strengths of defense during summer: Our team is very enthusiastic to improve on our strengths from last season.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Our underclassmen have to grow up very quickly for us to be successful.

Potential breakout player(s): Sophomore RB-LB Rashaad Henderson and sophomore TE-DE Thor Martinez.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 years? Matthew Abrams

Marana

Head coach: Andy Litten

2016 record: 9-3

Returning starters on offense: 6

Returning starters on defense: 8

Returning key players and stats: Sr. DL John Morgan (6-3, 260, 47 tackles); Sr. LB-RB Zach Roberts (5-7, 135, 335 yards rushing, 3 TDs); Sr. DB-RB Anthony Valencia (5-11, 148, 91 tackles); Sr. OL-DL Angel Ledezma (6-1, 230); DB-WR Tito Valenzuela; Sr. OL-DL Noah Hedgepeth (6-2, 215); Jr. QB Trenton Bourguet (5-11, 155, 1,397 yards passing, 15 TDs, 5 INT); Jr. WR Tariq Jordan (6-2, 200, 43 receptions 596 yards, 4 TDs); Jr. WR-DB Diego Miranda (6-0, 175, 25 receptions, 472 yards, 3 TDs); Jr. RB Rene Valenzuela (5-10, 165); Jr. LB TJ Cephers (6-0, 200, 98 tackles); So. WR-DB Alfred Ebunoha (6-3, 175).

Strengths of offense during summer: We have very good skill position players.

Strengths of defense during summer: We have a depth of knowledge with this unit and many key returners.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Offensive line is the biggest concern.

Potential breakout players: Morgan, Bourguet, Jordan, Roberts, Rene Valenzuela.

Which of your player(s) unexpectedly blossomed into a starter over the past 2-3 years? Center Angel Martinez.

Poston Butte

Head coach: Dain Thompson

2016 record: 4-6

Returning starters on offense: 9

Returning starters on defense: 8

Returning key players and stats: Sr. LB-RB Tyler Thompson (5-9, 172, 483 yards rushing, 6 TDs); Sr. TE Carter White (5-11, 212, RB last year with 639 yards rushing, 8 TDs); Jr. DL Thomas Gaitan (5-10, 270);

Strengths of offense during summer: The strength for 2017 will be balance. New offensive coordinator Chris Semore will be the play-caller as the Broncos change from a run-only offense to a less predictable and more balanced attack. Multiple players with significant varsity experience will be key in making this a smooth transition.

Strengths of defense during summer: Moving offensive starters Gabe Cude and Gaitan to defense should provide some strength and talent to the front line of an already very experienced defense. Attitude will define this defense.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: How quickly can the younger players move into important roles with this senior-dominant team?

Potential breakout players: I expect this team to have many players step up at different times. Last year we had six different players rush for over 100 yards in a game. They all return. Returning quarterback Connor McDonald has experienced targets all around him and a run-pass, balanced attack should give a number of players the chance to make plays.



Cienega QB Jamarye Joiner (photo by Andy Morales of azpreps365.com)

By Andy Morales
azpreps365.com

Cienega standout Jamarye Joiner verbally committed to play for the University of Arizona last September and the standout quarterback went on to throw for 1,713 yards and 17 touchdowns to help lead the Bobcats to a 12-1 record, a No. 1 ranking in the 5A Conference and a semifinal finish in the state playoffs.

Joiner also rushed for 762 yards and he collected 13 more TDs on the ground, giving the Southern Arizona Player of the Year almost 200 yards a game in offense. Joiner shared QB duties with Tyler Hammons (627 yards passing and nine TDs) last year as he watched from the sidelines in several games due to a 47-16 average margin of victory in the regular season.

Prior to transferring to Cienega as a sophomore, Joiner earned Southern Arizona Freshman of the Year honors at Salpointe and he was also named to the MaxPreps Freshman All-American Team as well as earning a spot at the Adidas Freshman All-American Bowl.

Joiner sat out his sophomore year and his presence on the Cienega roster in his junior season made it a no-

brainer to include the Bobcats in our preseason Top-10 poll last year.

Jamarye Joiner made a visit to the University of Arizona on June 5 of 2016 and he was officially offered by the Wildcats that August.

"We are very excited and feel very blessed that he has chosen Arizona," his mother, Christina Pena, said.

Joiner has turned a few heads by openly talking to and about other programs but he offered this when he committed to Arizona:

"I would like to thank God most importantly. Also, my coaches and my mom for helping me through my decision. I am very blessed to say that I will be furthering my education and football career at the University of Arizona."

ASU offered Joiner a scholarship this past June after the standout led Cienega to a championship over Gilbert in ASU's passing league tournament, followed by a visit to the camp offered by the program. Joiner also led the Bobcats to a championship in the Pima Passing League tournament.

Unlike typical quarterbacks, Joiner has welcomed the term "athlete" when people discuss his abilities, and with good reason. Joiner took second place in the 110-meter hurdles in the Division II state meet and he earned another second place finish in the long jump. His performances at the state meet set new track and field records for Cienega.

Further, Joiner was a receiver on the National-champion Tucson Turf 7-on-7 team this summer while, at the same time leading the Bobcat 7-on-7 team and training with the Cienega football team.

His ability to move, throw and read defenses has caused other Division I programs to take notice like Oregon, Utah and Nebraska.

Despite his commitment and his other options, some outlets have been slow to pick up on his abilities. His selection as a top "Surprise Performer" at the Los Angeles Nike Opening Regional Camp in March was a head-scratcher for instance.

Running backs Dakota Poe (710 yards rushing) and Aaron Sauls (693) have graduated along with receiver Breabon Bolton (1,076 yards) but Terrell Hayward (1,283 all-purpose yards) returns for his junior year along with linebacker Steven Harshman (89 tackles).

The Bobcats open up at Marana on Aug. 25. There will be ten teams on the Bobcats schedule looking for revenge with a rematch with Salpointe scheduled for Sept. 28. While all games are important, that one could decide the mythical Southern Arizona championship.

NOTE: His uncle, Tamoni Joiner, gained 1,040 yards in his senior season with Amphitheater in 1995, a year after reaching 1,000 yards as a junior. The Southern Arizona Player of the Year went on to play defense for Oregon.



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Trio of Standouts Are Set to Lead Salpointe

By Andy Morales
 azpreps365.com

Ranked second in our 4A Conference preseason poll, Salpointe Catholic returns from a 10-3 season loaded and ready to improve upon an already incredible semifinal finish. The quarterback position is the remaining question for the Lancers but there are a lot of other answers to be found on the newly-installed turf at Ed Doherty Stadium.

The Lancers went 14-0 and won the Division II state championship in 2013. It was a team built on a balanced attack with QB Andrew Cota throwing for 2,748 yards to go along with his 657 yards rushing. Jay Williams added 858 yards on the ground, Cameron Denson caught 73 passes for 1,453 yards and Kaelin DeBoskie added 964 receiving yards. Jake Casteel and Taylor Powel combined for 328 tackles. That was a fully-loaded team.

Cota finished his career with 6,635 passing yards, good enough for third best in the history of Southern Arizona. Cota replaced Jordan Scelfo (2,234 passing yards in 2010), Scelfo replaced current San Francisco Giant pitcher Dan Slania and Slania replaced Trevor Eggleston (4,224 career passing yards). In short, the Lancer program was built on a strong QB foundation.

Sammy Muniz replaced Cota and threw for 1,059 yards in 2014 but that was his senior season and 2015 saw the transfer of Jamarye Joiner to Cienega, along with key injuries, and the Lancers finished the season 5-5. Sean Barton took over in his senior year in 2016 and he collected 845 yards but the balanced attack had already shifted to a powerful rushing machine led by sophomore Mario Padilla (2,051 all-purpose yards) and freshman Bijan Robinson (767 APYs).

Padilla's first cousin, Johnny Pena, graduated in 2013 with school records in rushing yards (4,681) and rushing touchdowns (61) and Padilla hopes to break both records but it will be a huge task with 1,516 career rushing yards and 18 TDs to his credit but, if anyone can do it, it would be Padilla.

"I really love this team," Padilla said. "I really feel this team has the potential to be so much stronger this year and that includes the players and the coaching staff."

Leading the coaching staff is longtime head coach Dennis Bene. Bene (149-40) played QB at Salpointe (1980-84) and he took over the coaching job in 2001. Bene still holds the school record for passing yards in a game (425) and he played under legendary coach Ed Doherty.

"I told coach that everyone on social media is talking about the Mountain View game and people are asking about Cienega and Saguaro but he told us to be grounded and prepare for St. Mary's," Padilla added.

Salpointe will host St. Mary's in the "Ed Doherty Classic" on Aug. 18. It will be the opening game for both squads. Doherty coached the Knights to two state championships and he led the Lancers to the 1981 state final and, as mentioned before, he coached Bene.

"This game is like a state championship to coach and we respect that, Padilla said. "We know that game means a lot to coach and to the school and that's the only game we are looking at."

Robinson has already been offered by Arizona, Washington, Utah and ASU. The sophomore to be is the grandson of all-state



Lancer RB Mario Padilla had 2,051 all-purpose yards in 2016 (photo by Andy Morales of azpreps365.com).

athlete Cleo Robinson and his great-uncle, Paul Robinson, was the AFL Rookie of the Year in 1968 after finishing his career at Arizona.

Already well-known by those who follow youth football, Bijan Robinson came in as a "veteran" of sorts when he first suited up at Salpointe. His abilities were only a secret to the media but the media has caught on and his MVP trophy from the Rivals 3 Stripe Camp in April has only made the spotlight brighter.

"I'm going to keep on doing what I have been doing," Robinson said during a break at the Rich Rodriguez Passing Tournament this summer. "We expect bigger things this year."

Offensive lineman Matteo Mele committed to play for Washington and he had tons of choices. Literally. Always the master, Bene shifted the tight end to his offensive line (where he would be more suited for college) and a dozen or D-I offers came rolling in.

Standing 6-foot-6 and weighing 277 pounds, Mele already had the size to draw attention but his mobility (as displayed by his performance as a tight end in 2016) set him apart from the typical lineman. He can block, he can catch, he understands offensive and defensive schemes and he is highly coachable. The Wildcat and Sun Devil faithful lost a big one.

"I am shutting down my recruitment and am 100% committed to the University of Washington," Mele wrote in a Twitter announcement.



Saguaro finished off last year with another state crown (photo by Mark Jones of maxpreps.com).

By Andy Morales
 azpreps365.com

1. Saguaro: What can be written about Saguaro that hasn't been said before? The Sabercats won their fourth championship in a row last year, ninth since 2006 and tenth overall. The championships came in four different classifications and a runner-up finish in 1995 came in 5A competition.

A playoff contender every year since 2004, the only "down years" were a semifinal finish in 2004, a first-round appearance in 2005, a semifinal finish in 2009 and a quarterfinal finish in 2012. Technically, if one erased the 4-6 2003 campaign, then one would find about five more good years prior. In short, the Sabercats are not a recent phenomenon.

Often the scorn of coaches and fans of other programs, the Sabercats have been shifted to several classifications with the same results. Jason Mohns has gone 61-7 since he took over in 2012. His last loss came on September 4 of 2015 to Pinnacle at home. Since then, he has gone 25-0 with no victory coming closer than eight points.

Is there another state championship in the books for his year?

According to Mohns, the program returns six starters on offense

and only three on defense. That may be cause for concern for a lot of programs but Saguaro has the ability to reload. By his own account, Saguaro will be, "Returning All-State QB (Max Massingale) surrounded by a deep and experienced group of skill players."

Massingale threw for 2,291 yards last year for 30 touchdowns and he ran for 1,012 yards more with another 31 TDs added on. His 3,303 total yards is roughly 52% of the team's 6,390 yards of offense. Sure, the Sabercats lose 2,189 yards gained by RB Stone Matthews but the program has shown they can overcome one player as they did when Christian Kirk graduated and took 2,927 yards of offense with him in 2014 and Kare Lyles graduated with 3,625 yards a year later.

Simply, Saguaro has reloaded and the Sabercats are an easy top pick.

NOTE: Saguaro's new turf field will be named after former equipment manager Mike "Tug" Garcia who passed away unexpectedly back in 2013.

No. 2 Salpointe: The Lancers finished 10-3 last year, ultimately falling to Saguaro 24-3 in the semifinals. Salpointe handled state-runner up Catalina Foothills 34-7 in the regular season and Dennis Bene brings back Mario Padilla, Matteo Mele and Bijan Robinson. A clear choice for the second spot. The Lancers lost to 6A Tucson

(14-3) and 5A Cienega (51-14) at home last year and the team pulled off a 10-6 win over regional rival Canyon del Oro in the first round of the playoffs, one week after blasting the Dorados 31-14. Tucson and Cienega are on the schedule again and CDO is once again listed as the last game of the regular season. That game could decide the region title.

No. 3 Higley: Higley lost 62-37 to Catalina Foothills in the other semifinal game. Senior running back Draycen Hall collected 2,298 yards rushing in 2016 along with ,908 all-purpose yards and 40 touchdowns. The Knights travel to Saguaro on Sept. 8. The Saber-cats won 49-15 at Higley last year. All eyes will be on this game to see how much of a difference year came make.

No. 4 Sunrise Mountain: Lost a back-and-forth battle with Catalina Foothills (52-49) in a tough quarterfinal match for both squads. This shows how important seeding matchups are come playoff time. The Mustangs are the fourth team with a legitimate shot at the title. The Mustangs were another team bitten by the Saguaro Sabercats last year. The 34-6 loss at home spoiled an undefeated regular season. It doesn't get any easier this year because Saguaro plays host on Sept. 22.

No. 5 Cactus: The Cobras gave Higley a scare in another huge quarterfinal game last year. Senior quarterback Mahal Lee (1,786 yards passing and 23 touchdowns) and Sr. running back Damaria Norris (2,209 yards rushing and 28 TDs) will give cactus a boost. The Cobras started out 1-2 last year but Marcos de Niza and Min-gus will pay a visit to Cactus this year. Odds are better for a much better start for the Cobras.

No. 6 Peoria: The Panthers finished in the quarterfinals last year and senior quarterback Nate Dobson (2,074 yards passing, 850 yards rushing and 30 combined touchdowns) gives Peoria a shot.

The third team from the West Valley Region, the Panthers played Cactus close (35-28) at home but also had huge losses to non-region opponent Marcos de Niza and West Valley champion Sunrise Mountain.

No. 7 Bradshaw Mountain: The Bears won the Grand Canyon Region last year and the team should be in playoff position again this year with half the starters returning under first-year coach Chuck Moller. The Bears gave up a lot of points last year, including a 70-49 loss at Cactus to start the season off. Giving up 27 points a game is difficult to overcome.

No. 8 Marcos de Niza: The Padres lost Naz Greer and his 9,953 career passing yards to graduation but legendary head coach Paul Moro should have things running smoothly again. Another difficult non-region schedule with Saguaro, Cactus, Peoria, Cactus Shadows and Bradshaw Mountain ahead. The Padres won four of those last year.

No. 9 Catalina Foothills: Jeff Scurran has taken three 0-10 teams to a state-final appearance and he should have a bit more magic in his back pocket with the loss of Rhett Rodriguez, his top four running backs, his top seven receivers and his top six defenders. The Falcons host Saguaro on Aug. 18. But the name of the game is region play and that doesn't start until Spt. 28. That's almost two months of preparation for Scurran.

No. 10 Canyon del Oro: The Dorados are back on the scene with senior running back Eli Carey (1,005 yards rushing) leading the way. The younger brother of Ka'Deem Carey, Eli looks to make a name for himself this year. The Dorados look to compete for the region title this year but just as easily be on the other side of the play-offs. The team will have to forget about Salpointe and take care of business early.



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By Andy Morales
azpreps365.com

BLACK CANYON REGION

Apache Junction

Head coach: Vance Miller

2016 record: 4-6

Returning starters on offense: None. We are starting three sophomores, 12 juniors and seven seniors this year.

Returning starters on defense: Three.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. SS Ethan Zimmerman (6-3, 170, 57 tackles, 402 all-purpose yards, four field goals in 2016).

Strengths of offense during summer: We are very young with mostly sophomores and juniors. They don't have any bad habits, so we can mold them.

Strengths of defense during summer: Returning LB core and SS.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Can we compete emotionally. We are very, very young.

Potential breakout players: Zimmerman and Sr. OLB Gabe Marquez.

Unique human interest story: Former Apache Junction head coach Rich Milligan has returned as the Varsity RB/WR coach.

Combs

Head coach: Travis Miller

2016 record: 2-8

Returning starters on offense: Eight.

Returning starters on defense: Ten.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. WR/DR/Returner Nicholas Howland (6-0, 175, 644 all-purpose yards, 34 tackles in 2016); Sr. MLB Zeke Sanchez (5-9, 190, 57 tackles, three TFL); Sr. DT Adam Berthelot (6-5, 250); Sr. DT Jordan Reaser (6-1, 280) Sr. FB/DE Isiah Jacobs (5-10, 217 41 tackles, two TFL); Jr. C/DT Cole Evans (5-10, 240); Sr. T/DT Colten Shaw (6-0, 240).

Strengths of offense during summer: The lineman. Five out of the six consistently starting lineman return from last year. There are also another four lineman that saw significant playing time that are also returning.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: RB and QB. We have no returning starters at either position. There will be an open battle throughout spring ball and the summer. Potential breakout players: Jr. FB/LB Sonatane "Jon" Taunima (5-9, 185). He filled in a great need last year on the varsity as a sophomore. He is a state qualifying wrestler. He is extremely aggressive and I view his impact on the varsity team as potentially huge.

Unique human interest story: This is my first year as the head coach.

Coronado

Head coach: Curt LeBlanc

2016 record: 5-5

Returning starters on offense: Three.

Returning starters on defense: Three.

Returning key players and stats: Jr. DB Josh Fong (5-8, 170;; Sr. RB Akime Coney (6-0, 175, 162 yards rushing); Sr. WR Zach Lewis (5-9, 150, 224 yards receiving).

Strengths of offense during summer: Too early to tell, installing a new system.



FB/DE Raymond Cruz, Dysart (photo by Mark Jones of max-preps.com)

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Honestly, will we have the numbers to compete week in and week out. The few we have are solid, just not much depth. Also, can we avoid the academic eligibility issues that plagued this squad last year.

Potential breakout players: Fong, Coney, Lewis, Jr. DE Saul Favela and So. QB Mikel James.

Cortez

Head coach: Anthony Groth

2016 record: 2-9

Returning starters on offense: Unknown.

Returning starters on defense: Unknown.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB Omar Lopez (5-9, 185, 112 yards rushing in 2016); Sr. WR Zack Jerome (6-2, 160, 255 yards receiving).

Strengths of offense during summer: The offensive line is very mobile.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Will our young QBs be ready to play at a varsity level?

Dysart

Head coach: John Ganados

2016 record: 9-2 (Region Champion)

Returning starters on offense: Seven.

Returning starters on defense: Seven.

Returning key players and stats: OT/LB Cade Elston (6-2, 215); Sr. OT/DE Gabriel Leasau (6-2, 195); Jr. C/NG David Leasau (5-11, 290); Sr. WR/LB Marcus Banda (6-2, 220, 144 yards receiving, 66 tackles); Jr. QB Kobe Ganados (6-0, 165, 979 yards passing); Sr. FB/DE Ray Cruz FB/DE (6-0, 225, 80 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: Returning four offensive linemen.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Running back position is open, lost a great back. But our O-line is back.

Potential breakout players: Cade, Cruz, Ganados, Gabe Leasau, Banda, Jr. OL/DL Will Rawlins, Sr. WR/LB Tyler Prettyman and Jr. WR/DB Adam Campbell.

Unique human interest story: I graduated from here back in 1990. My dream was to someday become the head coach here. My dream came true now it's time to build a winning tradition at this school.

Washington

Head coach: Tim Mayfield

2016 record: 1-9

Returning starters on offense: Unknown.

Returning starters on defense: Unknown.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. FB/DE Michael Burgess (6-0, 185, 218 yards rushing, 53 tackles in 2016).

DESERT SKY REGION

Casa Grande

Head coach: Jake Barro

2016 record: 6-4

Returning starters on offense: Two.

Returning starters on defense: Two.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. WR/KR/PR Cameron Gardner (5-10, 215, 1,201 all-purpose yards in 2016); Sr. RB/DB Jose Seaton (5-8, 185, 183 yards rushing); Sr. OLB Angel Campa (6-1, 205); Sr. OL Robert Davis (6-4, 285) Jr. DL Trysten Williams (6-3, 255)

Strengths of offense during summer: We will have some speed in the skill positions. Cameron Gardner is an extremely explosive player that can play multiple spots on the offense.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Youth. We only return two players that have any varsity experience.

Potential breakout players: Look Williams, Sr. RB Seth Keeton and SS Jacob Madrid to have breakout seasons.

Higley

Head coach: Eddy Zubey

2016 record: 11-2 (Region Champion)

Returning starters on offense: Six.

Returning starters on defense: Six.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB/KR Draycen Hall (5-8, 170, 2,298 yards rushing, 3,908 all-purpose yards, 40 touchdowns in 2016); Sr. LB Cade Mathews (6-1, 210, 109 tackles) Sr. DB Makel Hubbard (6-3, 185, 46 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: We return four of our five OL and our Gatorade POY (Draycen Hall) who led the state in rushing and TDs last year.

Potential breakout players: So. DE Jason Harris (6-7, 215) transferred in from Desert Ridge.

Marcos de Niza

Head coach: Paul Moro

2016 record: 8-4

Returning starters on offense: Two.

Returning starters on defense: Four.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. WR/DB Joren Davis (6-2, 178, 374 yards receiving in 2016); Sr. WR/DB Anthony Steinpreiss (5-10, 175, 350 yards receiving); Jr. OT/DT Eilye Hill (6-4, 303); Jr. LB Mario Gastelum (6-0, 185); Sr. DL Alex Torres (5-10, 170); Jr. DL Shad Tuiaani (6-1, 300).

Strengths of offense during summer: Marcos de Niza is a school that likes to throw the ball around and we have the receivers to do it. We will be working hard all summer in 7-on-7 games.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We have three QBs and we need to settle on one.

Potential breakout players: Offensively, Davis, Steinpreiss and Keondre Greer, Defensively, Gastelum, Hill and DB Ethan Venegas.

Seton Catholic

Head coach: Gary Galante

2016 record: 4-6

Returning starters on offense: Eight.

Returning starters on defense: Seven.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. OL/DL Roman Decaro (6-2, 205); Sr. TE/MLB Max Kulak (6-2, 195); Sr. OL/DL Sean Rodriguez (6-0, 200); Sr. WR/DB Mason Toyne (5-10, 175); Sr. WR/FS Dominic Sycamore (5-11, 175); Jr. RB/OLB Nick Wade (5-11, 170, 580 yards rushing in 2016); Jr. QB Vincent Wallace (5-11, 165, 689 yards passing); Jr. WR/DE Jacob Hansell (6-5, 210, 308 yards receiving).

Strengths of offense during summer: Balanced attack with experienced key skilled players coming back from last year and young group of kids.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Development of younger kids to occupy starting roles both offensively and defensively.

Potential breakout players: Sycamore, Kulak, Decaro and Rodriguez.

Tempe

Head coach: Brian Walker

2016 record: 5-5

Returning starters on offense: Six.

Returning starters on defense: Five.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. SS Stevie Maddox (6-1, 185, 308 yards receiving in 2016); So. DT Sione Tonga'uiha (6-0, 260); Sr. SS Moses Ruiz (6-1, 188); Jr. DT Soane Leha (6-0, 275); Sr. WR Isaiah Bruner (5-11, 170, 218 yards receiving); Jr. QB Nathan Clayton (6-4, 185, 502 yards passing).

Strengths of offense during summer: Due to unfortunate circumstances last season, we were forced to play a lot of young guys up front. These young men struggled but got better, and all but one starting lineman is returning. We also have a young but talented QB with quite a few weapons that should be able to help stretch the field.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We have many positions to fill. We lost some key pieces so it will be important for us to get quality depth in a lot of our positions.

Potential breakout players: Tonga'uiha, Maddox and Clayton should position themselves to have a pretty good season for us.

GILA REGION

Amphitheater

Head coach: Jorge Mendivil

2016 record: 8-3 (Region Champion)

Returning starters on offense: Unknown.

Returning starters on defense: Unknown.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB Zulu Deah (5-8, 190, 418 yards rushing in 2016); Sr. OT/DT David Watson (6-6, 320).
Unique human interest story: Watson committed to play for the University of Arizona.

Douglas

Head coach: James Fitzgerald

2016 record: 5-5

Returning starters on offense: Five.

Returning starters on defense: Seven.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Chris Galaz (5-10, 150); Sr. CB Pablo Bello (5-8, 150); Sr. SS AJ Moreno (6-0, 154); Sr. DL Martin Cornejo (6-0, 295); Sr. DL Sammy Valenzuela (6-0, 245); Sr. LB/DE Jeremiah Washington (6-0, 215).

Palo Verde

Head coach: Laurence Ruhf

2016 record: 2-9

Returning starters on offense: Four.

Returning starters on defense: Four.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. LB Ethan Bell (5-10, 180); Sr. DB Eddie Garcia (5-6, 135); Jr. OL Armando Montano (6-0, 200); Jr. OL Anthony Crawley (6-0, 320); Jr. QB Marcel Sears (6-2, 155); Sr. LB Logan Purvance (5-11, 165).

Strengths of offense during summer: Everyone is a year older. Had a sophomore line last season, now Junior line.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Will the basketball players help us physically in August and September.

Potential breakout players: Sr. ATH Davante Bates Basketball player, looked great in spring practice; Jr. SS Noah Allen also looked great in spring practice.

Pueblo

Head coach: Brandon Sanders

2016 record: 6-4

Returning starters on offense: Eight.

Returning starters on defense: Eight.

Returning key players and stats: RB/WR/DB Ruben Rivera IV (6-2, 190, 1,323 all-purpose yards in 2016); LB/RB Julio Carino (5-11, 190, 115 tackles); LB/TE Alonzo Saldivar (6-2, 230, 53 tackles); QB/DB Dominick Carrillo (6-0, 180); OL/DL Flavio Gonzalez (6-5, 270); DE/FB Omar Ibanez (6-1, 200); OL/DL Damon Yrigolla (6-0, 250).

Strengths of offense during summer: Running game and experience. Many of our top players were sophomores and juniors last year. Near the end of the season we also brought up a few guys from the JV team and gave them experience as well.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Who will take over the QB starting position. Carrillo played a few games at QB and started a couple however Ricardo Medina started the last two games of the season due to injury and showed promise. The next will be my OL play due to the departures of our All-Region performers from the last couple of seasons.

Potential breakout players: Rivera is our "do all" player. In his first game last year, he rushed for 208 yards off of 10 carries. Carrillo has big play capability as a dual threat QB and WR, he returned a kickoff 80+ yards last season and also had a 60 yard touchdown vs. Salpointe. Carino lead the team in tackles last season with 115 total tackles and he was only a sophomore.

Rio Rico

Head coach: Zach Davila

2016 record: 4-6

Returning starters on offense: Unknown.

Returning starters on defense: Unknown.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB David Sosa (5-8, 145, 525 yards passing in 2016); Sr. RB Ricky Perez (5-9, 160, 1,235 yards rushing, 295 yards receiving, 15 touchdowns).

GRAND CANYON REGION

Bradshaw Mountain

Head coach: Chuck Moller

2016 record: 8-3 (Region Champion)

Returning starters on offense: Five.

Returning starters on defense: Four.

Returning key players and stats: QB/LB Timmy Young; FS/WR Luke Huenemeyer; WR/DB Devon Olson; OL/DL Colby Meldrum.
Strengths of offense during summer: New system with a new coach.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Replacing 12 starters.

Coconino

Head coach: Jeremiah Smith

2016 record: 2-8

Returning starters on offense: Four.

Returning starters on defense: Eight.

Returning key players and stats: Jr. FS/QB Ty Furr (160-170, 1,170 all-purpose yards in 2016); Jr. RB/LB Kyle Sauer (6-0, 170, 30 tackles); Sr. FB/LB Zack Christopher; Jr. LT Dion Clark; Jr. OL/LB Dawson Buckley (5-9, 210).

Strengths of offense during summer: Being familiar with the offense and how things need to be run. We can build onto what we started last year.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Having a new Defensive Coordinator and adjusting to new coaches.

Potential breakout players: Christopher and Furr.

Flagstaff

Head coaches: Bob Castillo and Paul Wolf

2016 record: 5-5

Returning starters on offense: Unknown.

Returning starters on defense: Unknown.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. OL/DL Everett Evangelista (5-6, 235); Jr. QB Henry Tagle; Sr. Shane Lusk (5-11, 150); Sr. WR/DB Ben Beamer (5-11, 160); Sr. WR/DB Cody Phillips (5-9, 155).

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: New quarterback.

Lee Williams

Head coach: Clint Sasse

2016 record: 4-6

Returning starters on offense: Six.

Returning starters on defense: Eight.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. ILB Kael Juelfs (5-10, 195); Sr. TE/DE Edmond Ashton (6-2, 215); Sr. OLB/RB Michael Thomas (5-10, 170); Jr. QB/CB AJ Herrera (6-2, 165); Jr. QB/OLB Enzo Marino (6-1, 165); Sr. DE Marco Navarte (6-2, 215); Sr. OL/LB Matt Shaw (5-11, 205); Jr. OL/DL Mike Bathauer (6-1, 220); Jr. OL/DL Mike Bathauer (6-1, 230); Sr. RB/DB Paul Giglio (5-10, 170); Sr. RB Tyler Miner (5-9, 165).

Strengths of offense during summer: Our strength is in our skill positions. We have a lot of talented athletes that we can shuffle around to all our various positions. We are also blessed with some kids up front who are big and have bought into the weight room this offseason.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Our QB position. We have two guys that will continue to compete for the job through the summer. Each guy has his own style which

are both useful so we will incorporate them both into the offense as we see fit.

Potential breakout players: Jr. RB/OLB Cameron Ott has a lot of potential. Mike and Matt Bathauer Have had a great offseason in the weight room. Navarte will have a great season (Last year was his first year playing football). Juelfs is our leader and I expect him to be around the ball every play and Paul Giglio should have a great year for us in our offensive and defensive systems. Unique human interest story: Navarte, our defensive end, is in his second year of playing football. Last year, he had a great year without knowing much about football, and this offseason he has put in a lot of work. Marco is deaf and wears a cochlear implant under his helmet. He is a great kid and a hard worker who does not find excuses for himself. Our stud OL and DL brothers Mike and Matt Bathauer are also twins, both are three sport athletes, very good baseball players.

Mingus

Head coach: Bob Young

2016 record: 6-5

Returning starters on offense: Three.

Returning starters on defense: Six.

Returning key players and stats: Jr. LB Kendrew Streck (6-0, 220); Jr. LB/RB Alex Nelson (5-10, 180, 86 tackles in 2016); Jr. DB/RB Colby Fanning (5-9, 175, 50 tackles); Sr. LB/RB Tyler Kelly (5-9, 190, 243 yards receiving in 2016); Sr. DB/WR Jordan Huey (6-0, 170); Jr. DB/QB Chaz Taylor (6-3, 180); Jr. OL/DL Gabe Meyers (6-0, 220).

Strengths of offense during summer: Skill positions and running backs.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Must replace all OL and DL.

Potential breakout players: Nelson and Martin Soria.

Mohave

Head coach: Rudy Olvera

2016 record: 1-9

Returning starters on offense: Unknown.

Returning starters on defense: Unknown.

Returning key players and stats: Jr. QB Gavin Valdivia (5-9, 150); Sr. RB Deven Lobato (374 yards rushing in 2016, 43 tackles);

Prescott

Head coach: Michael Gilpin

2016 record: 6-4

Returning starters on offense: Six.

Returning starters on defense: Four.

Returning key players and stats: Jr. QB Austin Clark (6-3, 180, 398 yards passing, seven touchdowns in 2016); Jr. LT Max Flores (6-3, 275); Sr. WR/DB John Chaffeur (5-10, 175, 203 yards receiving); Sr. WR/RB Ryan Greene (6-1, 175, 906 yards rushing, 12 TDs); Sr. G Rodney Pitts (6-2, 215); Jr. K Bryce Peters (6-0, 165) Sr. TE Jake Gathman (6-0 220).

Strengths of offense during summer: We will have a much improved passing game to go along with our traditionally strong ground attack. Our receiving corps is very, very good.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Offensively, can senior tailback Spencer Hall step up and carry the ground game this year? Defensively, who will emerge in our linebacker crew?

Potential breakout players: QB Clark. He is making huge strides. He is big, smart and can make all the throws.

KINO REGION

Canyon del Oro

Head coach: Dustin Peace

2016 record: 6-5

Returning starters on offense: Five.

Returning starters on defense: Five.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB/LB Eli Carey (5-11, 202, 1,005 yards rushing in 2016); Sr. OL/DL Preston Flack (5-10, 240); Sr. OL/DL Wyatt Dobson (6-0, 280); Sr. FB/LB Jeremy Vallejos (5-10, 180); Sr. DB/WR Joe Lettera (5-11, 155); OL/DL Diego Lujan (6-1, 250); Sr. RB/LB James Garrett (5-10, 190).

Strengths of offense during summer: We will have our leading ball carrier back with three returners at the oline position. Also, our JR QB Zach Eidenschink has a strong arm and will allow our offense to spread out more than last season.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Numbers we will only have about 32 varsity players.

Potential breakout players: Jose Cruz and Juan Ramos who are speedy slots and DBs. Eidenschink at QB, Lujan who is going to be a SO OL/DL and who may be the second strongest on our team.

Unique human interest story: We had an ex-player who was trying to get back in school at CDO and on the team accidentally kill himself this spring. Several of our players considered the young man their best friend and we have been working through this tough time together as a family!



Andrew Young, Cactus Shadows (photo by Paul Campbell of maxpreps.com)

Catalina Foothills

Head coach: Jeff Scurren

2016 record: 11-3

Returning key players and stats: SR. WR/CB Chris Kowalczyk (5010, 165); SR. DE Dawson Hand (50 tackles).

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Top QB, top four rushers, top seven receivers and 10 of the top defenders to graduation.

Nogales

Head coach: Kevin Kuhm

2016 record: 4-6

Returning starters on offense: Four.

Returning starters on defense: Six.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. WR/DB Leo Yepiz (5-10, 170); Sr. WR/DB Luis Lopez (5-9, 175); Sr. LB Martin Mendoza (6-0, 185, 83 tackles in 2016); Sr. DL/OL Nick Damon (6-0, 300); Sr. DL Fabian Cooper (5-7, 215).

Strengths of offense during summer: Our passing offense looks much improved. Our wide receivers are running good routes, our quarterbacks are throwing accurate passes and our offensive linemen have improved their footwork in pass blocking. Additionally, the timing looks good.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Our biggest question mark is our offensive line. We will have four new starters.

Potential breakout players: Jaime Ostler, who may not be a starter but will play on offense and defense. He didn't play as a sophomore because he was in England as a foreign exchange student and had a strong JV season last year after returning.

Salpointe Catholic

Head coach: Dennis Bene

2016 record: 10-3 (Region Champion)

Returning starters on offense: Six.

Returning starters on defense: Four.

Returning key players and stats: Jr. RB Mario Padilla (5-9, 165, 1,427 yards rushing, 2,051 all-purpose yards, 18 touchdowns in 2016); So. RB Bijan Robinson (6-0, 185, 767 all-purpose yards); Sr. OL Matteo Mele (6-6, 270); Sr. DB Derick Bush (6-1, 175); LB Chris Aguirre (5-10, 200).

Strengths of offense during summer: Stronger at the OLine positions and more athletic at the skill spots

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Quarterback position.

Potential breakout players: So. WR Lathan Ransom (6-0, 170); Jr. DB Alex Withers (6-1, 170).

Walden Grove

Head coach: Corey Noble

2016 record: 3-7

Returning starters on offense: Eight.

Returning starters on defense: Seven.

Returning key players and stats: Jr. LB/RB Brad Capen (5-9, 165); Sr. WR/DB Bernie Zavala (5-10, 170); Sr. WR Ty Chapman (5-11, 180); Sr. QB Nick Flores (6-1, 165, 448 yards passing in 2016).

Strengths of offense during summer: Experience. We have a Dual Threat QB returning as well as three of four receivers and a RB returning with varsity starts or experience

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: All but one of our four linebackers graduated so replacing them will be a challenge

Potential breakout players: Brad Capen. He started last year as a sophomore at MLB and also play minutes at RB. Very talented player that could put himself on the map this year



RB Mario Padilla, Salpointe Catholic (photo by Mark Jones of maxpreps.com)

SKYLINE REGION

Cactus Shadows

Head coach: Michael Hudnutt

2016 record: 6-5

Returning starters on offense: Four.

Returning starters on defense: Five.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB/FS Andrew Young (6-2, 190, 1,137 yards passing in 2016).

Strengths of offense during summer: Our strength should be in our receiving core and QB this is the area that we have the most returning letter winners.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Re-building an entire offensive line.

Saguaro

Head coach: Jason Mohns

2016 record: 14-0 (Section and State Champion)

Returning starters on offense: Six.

Returning starters on defense: Three.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Max Massingale (6-0, 190, 2,291 passing yards, 30 touchdowns in 2016); Sr. ATH Josiah Bradley (6-1, 215, 609 all-purpose yards); Sr. WR Zach Wilson (6-1, 195, 401 yards receiving); Sr. ATH Giovanni Miranda (6-4, 215, 361 all-purpose yards); Sr. C Ruben Pimbert (5-10, 240); Sr. ATH Logan Pettijohn (6-2, 188).

Strengths of offense during summer: Returning all-state QB surrounded by a deep/experienced group of skill players.



Senior ATH Josiah Bradley, Saguaro (photo by Mark Jones of maxpreps.com)

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Replacing 4 of 5 starters on the offensive line.

Potential breakout players: Outside of our usual suspects, we are expecting big years from seniors RB/SB Antonio Cuevas, RB/MLB LS/OL/DL La'Ray Lucas, and Patrick McNerney.

Unique human interest story: We are getting a new turf field installed this summer and plan on naming the new field after our former equipment manager Mike "Tug" Garcia who passed away unexpectedly back in 2013.

Shadow Mountain

Head coach: Ron Fagan

2016 record: 5-5

Returning key players and stats: Jr. RB/SS Ronnie Fagan (6-0, 155, 316 yards rushing in 2016); Jr. WR/SS Nainoa Shin (6-0, 155, 50 tackles).

St. Mary's

Head coach: Tommy Brittain

2016 record: 4-7

Returning starters on offense: Four.

Returning starters on defense: Three.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. OT/DT Nick France (6-1, 270); C/LB Trey Hixon (6-0, 250); Sr. OG/DE Frank Palacio (6-1, 185); Sr. OG/DE Damian Yanes (6-0, 245); Sr. WR/SS Chris Castillo (5-8, 170); Sr. OT/DT Jalen Mendez (6-1, 240); Sr. WR/CB Omar Morales (510, 175); Jr. OT/DT Quentin Duran (6-3, 260).

Strengths of offense during summer: We will have an experienced and physical offensive line. We have two excellent players competing for the starting QB job.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Who will step up to replace an excellent senior class at the skill positions.

Unique human interest story: This is Saint Mary's centennial year as we were founded in 1917.

Thunderbird

Head coach: Brent Wittenwyler

2016 record: 5-5

Returning starters on offense: Four.

Returning starters on defense: Six.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Andy Wittenwyler (6-1, 195, 1,459 yards passing in 2016); Sr. OL/LB Quaid Veidmark (6-2, 200); Sr. OL/DL Eric Mickelson (6-2, 215); Sr. WR/DB Jayden Erbsoesser (6-3, 175); Jr. WR Kain Rean (6-1, 185, 468 yards receiving); Jr. OT/DE Dominick McNutt (6-2, 210).

Strengths of offense during summer: More athleticism and speed on outside than last year. Smart QB who understands football.

Potential breakout players: Veidmark, Wittenwyler, Ream, Sr. WR/CB Joel Golbourne, McNutt, Jr. Tyler Dungan, Jr. OL/DT TJ Franklin and Jr. RB/DB Andrew Walker.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Numbers and if young kids can step up. Only have 12-13 Seniors out and some of them are new.

SOUTHWEST REGION

Buckeye

Head coach: Kelley Moore

2016 record: 8-3 (Region Champion)

Returning starters on offense: Six.

Returning starters on defense: Four.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB JC Perez (5-10, 155, 1,270 yards passing, 15 touchdowns in 2016); Sr. RB/FS Javon Sheron (5-8-150); Sr. WR Anthony Smart (6-0, 176); Sr. RB Jaiden Segundo (5-8, 145, 1,045 yards rushing); Sr. OT/OG Angel Gordillo (6-2, 284); Sr. OG Eduardo Zaragosa (6-3, 312); Sr. DL Boyce English (6-2, 279); Sr. CB Darzel Smith-McClelland (6-0, 183) LB Sr. Carlos Matherson (5-10, 188).

Strengths of offense during summer: Although the bulk of our offensive returners are skill position athletes, I still believe that our strength as a team is our offensive line. Weight room, work ethic and grit has been a mainstay in this group.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Inexperience on the O-Line and Defense

Potential breakout players: Sr. QB/DB Albert Buelna, Sr. C/NG Troy Delgado, Omar Parker, Smith, Sr. OL Jesus Mireles, Jr. OL/DL Justin Parker, Sr. OL/LB Montel Hibbitt.

Estrella Foothills

Head coach: Derek Wahlstrom

2016 record: 5-5

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB/MLB Tyler Godfrey (5-9, 190, 512 yards passing, 176 yards rushing in 2016); Sr. WR/CB Trent Campbell (5-11, 160, 171 yards receiving).

Gila Ridge

Head coach: Corey Semler

2016 record: 1-9

Returning starters on offense: Two.

Returning starters on defense: Six.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. OL/DE Rafael Duarte (5-10, 225, 8.5 sacks, 36 tackles in 2016); Sr. DT Angel Encinas (6-

0, 240, 50 tackles); Sr. MLB Christopher Valdez (5-9, 190, 93 Tackles); J. CB Ryan Hoskins (5-10, 140); Sr. C Koby Fike (6-0, 280).

Strengths of offense during summer: We have the ability to spread the field out with our athletes, but also mix in the power run game with our personnel packages. We are very young, with only two returning starters so there will be a learning curve.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Our biggest question marks are definitely on the offensive side of the ball. With only two returning starters, there are several spots up for grabs.

Potential breakout players: So. DE Taylor Deibert. Very high motor and physically gifted for his age. Sr. WR Joel Adetiba. With his physical stature he is a mismatch for cornerbacks in the area. He has the potential to put up solid numbers with a great summer.

Unique human interest story: New head coach, Corey Semler, is a Gila Ridge Alumnus (graduated from GRHS in 2011) and is looking to provide stability to a program that has had five head coaching changes in the school's ten years of being open.

Youngker

Head coach: Tony Cluff

2016 record: 2-10

Returning starters on offense: Seven.

Returning starters on defense: Four.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB Greg Dotstry (5-11, 170, 691 yards rushing in 2016); Jr. RB Xavier Reeves (5-11, 185, 622 yards rushing); Sr. LB Nathen Blowers (6-0, 190, 109 tackles); Sr. TE Anthony Cluff (6-0, 180); Sr. OL/DL Chris Roger (6-3, 260); Sr. OLB Cisco Caldera (5-9, 165).

Strengths of offense during summer: We bring our two leading rushers and our leading receiver back from last year

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Quarterback.

Potential breakout players: I look for Dotstry to continue to shine, and Cluff, Reeves and Blowers will have a great year.

Yuma

Head coach: Curt Weber

2016 record: 2-8

Returning starters on offense: Eight.

Returning starters on defense: Six.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB/LB Isaiah Joya (380 yards rushing in 2016); Jr. WR/DB Erick Flores; Sr. WR/LB Damian Miller; Jr. WR/DB Tyler Hamilton; Sr. RB/DB Tevon Poulton; OL/DL Shane Garcia; Sr. QB/LB Issac Ignacio (531 yards passing I 2016); Jr. OL/DL Marcos Reyes; Sr. WR/P Anthony Mosqueda.

Strengths of offense during summer: Returning QB with four varsity starts and all wide receivers and running backs

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Offensive and defensive lines will be new and inexperienced.

WEST VALLEY REGION

Cactus

Head coach: Larry Fetkenhier

2016 record: 7-5

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Mahal Lee (6-2, 195, 1,786 yards passing, 23 touchdowns in 2016); Sr. RB Damaria Norris (5-10, 195, 2,209 yards rushing, 28 TDs); Sr. SS Jake Russet (5-9, 180, 82 tackles).

Greenway

Head coach: Ed Cook

2016 record: 3-7



Mahal Lee, Cactus (photo by Steve Paynter of paynterspics.com)

Returning starters on offense: Four.

Returning starters on defense: Three.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. OL/LB Kevin Altmaier (6-1, 215); Sr. RB/LB Blake Bouche (5-8, 170); Jr. QB Tyler Duncan (6-0, 165, 1,682 yards passing in 2016); Jr. TE/MLB Caden Hughes (6-2, 210); Sr. HB, OLB Brody Jones (5-8, 175); Sr. OL/DL Treven Lanam (6-3, 260); Sr. RB/OLB Parker Reeves (5-10, 180, 1,108 yards rushing).

Strengths of offense during summer: Offensive line is where it all starts, we have some quality linemen good size and athletic. We have two solid running backs in Reeves and Jr. TJ Murphy. Duncan is adjusting to new system and is embracing the change and is a great fit for what we are trying to do. We will be rotating receivers but right now we are looking for big plays from Jr. Julian Arias.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Depth, we need to find and develop players to be ready to step in and fill roles for us

Potential breakout players: The unsung guys up front on both sides of the ball. If they play well our skill kids will have big years.

Moon Valley

Head coach: Seth Millican

2016 record: 4-6

Returning starters on offense: Six.

Returning starters on defense: Four.

Returning key players and stats: TE/DT Malik Clark (6-2, 280; 46 tackles, 3 sacks in 2016); RB/SS/LB Lio Teutupe (5-11, 185, 42 tackles, 739 yards rushing.); WR/FS Timmy Knight (6-0, 165, 499 yards receiving); WR/CB Bobby Carlon (5-10, 150, 32 tackles, 287 yards receiving).



TE/DT Malik Clark, Moon Valley (photo by Steve Paynter of paynterspics.com)

Strengths of offense during summer: We have a balanced team with two very capable running backs and six receivers with speed and ball skills. We should be able to take whatever the defense gives us on a consistent basis.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: How will the team respond to the new, first-year coach. Will they buy in? Will the coach make too many first year mistakes?

Unique human interest story: We have begun our selfless events! Our team will average one selfless event a month from now until I am no longer the head coach. We started by working the Special Olympics Summer Games on May 3rd. We took 80 kids (football players and cheerleaders), and they did a GREAT job of working with the athletes. Planned selfless events include: The Arizona Humane Society, North Hills Church, The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Maggie's Place and St. Mary's Food Bank.

Peoria

Head coach: Will Babb

2016 record: 8-4

Returning starters on offense: Six.

Returning starters on defense: Six.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Nate Dobson (6-0, 190, 2074 yards passing, 850 yards rushing, 30 combined touchdowns in 2016); Sr. RB Sonny Zabala (5-9, 180, 759 yards rushing, 230 receiving); Sr. RB Juwaun Price (5-10, 185); Jr. TE Trevor Babb (6-2, 180, 300 yards receiving); Jr. TE Jake Golden (6-5 245); Sr. LB Austin Enteman (5-11, 200, 94 tackles); Sr. DB Aaron Owsiany (5-11, 175, 46 tackles); Sr. WR/DB Eli Neal (6-1, 175, 50 tackles, 3 interceptions); Sr. OL Tomas Gutierrez (6-2, 270) OL Chris Stratton (6-0, 260); Sr. DL Sebastian Delgadillo (5-11, 240); Sr. DL Dylan Gibson (5-11, 215); Sr. DB Noah Serna (5-8 185, 48 tackles)

Strengths of offense during summer: Experience in the backfield. Versatility and competition depth.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Creating depth on both lines.

Potential breakout players: Neal, Zabala, and Price.

Sunrise Mountain

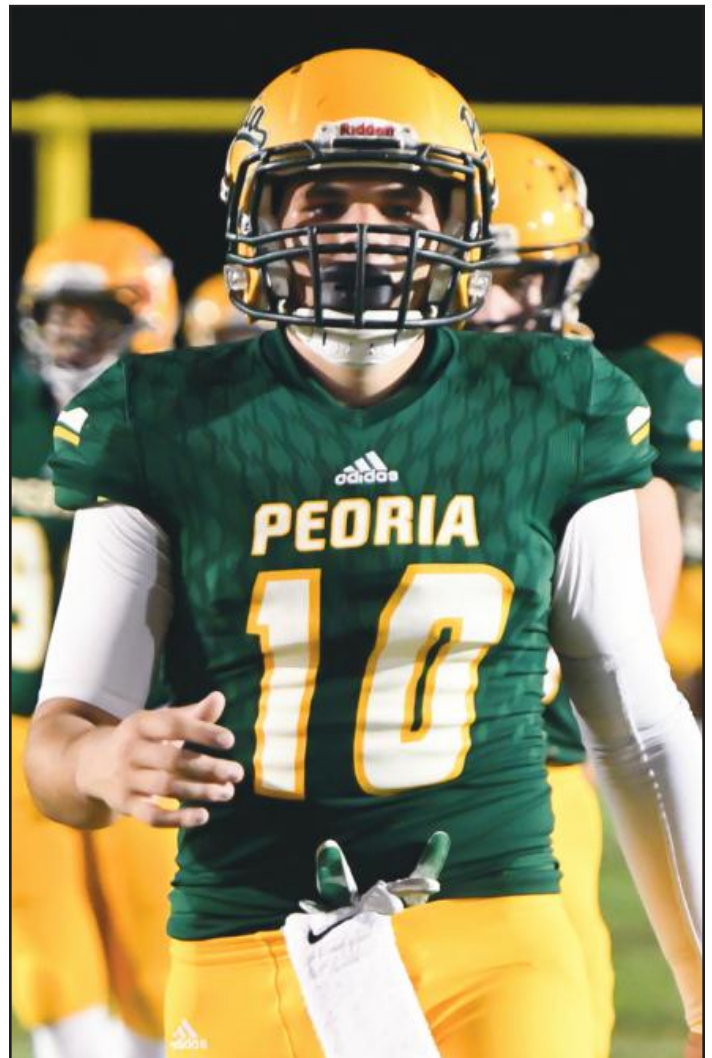
Head coach: Steve Decker

2016 record: 10-2 (Region Champion)

Returning starters on offense: Four.

Returning starters on defense: Three.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. DE Gavin Chaddock (6-2, 220); Sr. Bobby Ramirez (6-0, 185, 125 tackles in 2016); Sr. Ar-rick Dowe (6-0, 190); Sr. WR Angel Ruiz; Sr. OT Jake Wagner (6-2, 290); Sr. EJ Sua (6-2, 230); Sr. Brody Webb (6-2, 200); Jr. QB Keegan Freid (6-3, 175); Jr. K Jaxen Meskimen (5-10, 195); Jr. Slot/RB/Returner Jay Anderson (6-0, 185); Jr. RB Jake Flores (5-9, 180).



Quarterback Nate Dobson, Peoria (photo by Mark Jones of maxpreps.com)

Saluting Our Football Coaches ... Past and Present

1A CONFERENCE

Anthem Prep	Nathan Miller
Baboquivari	Bright Benson
Bagdad	Dalton Mills
Bowie/San Simon	Jason Jones
Cibecue	Steve Cywinski
Duncan	Eldon Merrell
El Capitan	Ash Timpson
Fort Thomas	Bracken Walker
Fredonia	Darrell Robinson
Greyhills Academy	Kyle Blackrock
Hayden	John Estrada
Joseph City	Eldon Larsen
Mayer	Mike Gutierrez
Mogollon	Timothy Slade
NFL Yet	Armando Ruiz
Patagonia Union	Kenny Hayes
PDS	David Huber
Ray	Frank Lechuga
Rough Rock	Eugene Badonie
Salome	Bryan McCarty
San Pasqual	Jason Sanchez
St. David	Mike Brogan
Superior	Ryan Palmer
Trivium Prep	Michael Spencer
Valley Lutheran	Mark Kempf
Valley Union	Ephram Ausseresses

2A CONFERENCE

Alchesay	Brendon Newcomb
Antelope Union	Gary Mauldin
Arete Prep	Cord Smith
Arizona College Prep	Myron Blueford
Arizona Lutheran	David Peter
Benson	Chris Determan
Bisbee	Chris Vertrees
Bourgade Catholic	Marcel Lopez
Camp Verde	Jerry Rhoades
Chandler Prep	Chris Goodman
Gilbert Christian	Scott McDaniel
Glendale Prep	Jamie Self
Hopi	Raleigh Namoki Jr.
Joy Christian	Patrick Blakesley
Kingman Academy	Dan Stroup
Many Farms	Gary Begay
Miami	David Klassen
Mohave Accelerated	Adam Gibson
Morenci	David Gallegos

"The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office."

General Dwight D. Eisenhower



Vern Friedli, one of the most successful coaches in Arizona prep football history, recently passed away. He posted a remarkable 331-159-6 record, which ranks second in our state's history for all-time wins (photo by Andy Morales of azpreps365.com).

Paradise Honors	Duane Brown
Parker	Jeston Lotts
Phoenix Christian	Brian Cole
Pima	Jace Hancock
Pinon	John Hubbell
Red Mesa	Pita Olomua
Rock Point	Brandon Jones
Round Valley	Marcus Bell
San Carlos	Shawn Pietila
San Manuel	Daniel Williams
San Tan Foothills	George De La Torre
Santa Cruz Valley	Rishard Davis
Scottsdale Christian	Chuck Gibbs
Scottsdale Prep	David Primavera
Sedona Red Rock	John Bradshaw
St. Johns	Mike Morgan
Tempe Prep	Joshua Brittain
Thatcher	Sean Hinton
Tombstone	Mike Hayhurst
Tonopah Valley	Dustin Johnson
Valley Sanders	Chris Flores
Veritas Prep	Jim Ellison
Willcox	Alonzo Highsmith

3A CONFERENCE

American Leadership	Rich Edwards
ASU Prep	Byron Evans
Benjamin Franklin	Dave Jefferies
Blue Ridge	Robert London
Casteel	Spencer Stowers
Catalina Magnet	Joseph Butler

Chinle	Timoti Su'e
Chino Valley	Wade Krug
Coolidge	Bill Godsil
Empire	W.T. Jeffries
Florence	Scott Howard
Fountain Hills	Jason Henslin
Ganado	Chris McNabb
Globe	Nathan Morales
Holbrook	Kelly Kinghorn
Kingman	Cam Wierson
Monument Valley	Bryan Begay
North Pointe Prep	Danny Norris
Northwest Christian	David Inness
Odyssey Institute	Dwayne Simmons
Page	Mitchell Stephens
Payson	Jake Swartwood
Pusch Ridge	Jerry Harris
River Valley	David Klassen
Sabino	Ryan McBrayer
Safford	Michael Alba
Sahuarita	Rodney Day
Santa Rita	Felix Jamero
Show Low	Monte Maxwell
Snowflake	Kay Solomon
Tanque Verde	Jeremiah Johnson
Tuba City	Rick Benjamin
Valley Christian	Jeff Rutledge
Wickenburg	Carson Miller
Window Rock	Wilbur Begay
Winslow	Brandon Guzman
Yuma Catholic	Aaron Cheatwood



We also lost another coaching legend, when Jesse Parker passed away in July. His record was 309-139-4, good enough for sixth in all-time wins (photo by Rick Apple).

4A CONFERENCE

Amphitheater.....Jorge Mendivil
 Apache Junction.....Vance Miller
 Bradshaw Mountain.....Chuck Moller
 Buckeye.....Kelley Moore
 Cactus.....Larry Fetkenhier
 Cactus Shadows.....Mike Hudnutt
 Canyon Del Oro.....Dustin Peace
 Casa Grande.....Jake Barro
 Catalina Foothills.....Jeff Scurran
 Coconino.....Jeremiah Smith
 Combs.....Stacy Johnson
 Coronado.....Curt LeBlanc
 Cortez.....Ross Luna
 Douglas.....James Fitzgerald
 Dysart.....John Ganados
 Estrella Foothills.....Derek Wahlstrom
 Flagstaff.....Bob Castillo
 Gila Ridge.....Corey Semler
 Greenway.....Ed Cook
 Higley.....Eddy Zubey
 Lee Williams.....Clint Sasse
 Marcos de Niza.....Paul Moro
 Mingus.....Bob Young
 Mohave.....Brad Hoffmeyer
 Moon Valley.....Seth Millican
 Nogales.....Kevin Kuhm
 Palo Verde.....Larry Ruhf
 Peoria.....Will BaBb
 Prescott.....Michael Gilpin
 Pueblo.....Brandon Sanders
 Rio Rico.....Zach Davila
 Saguaro.....Jason Mohns
 Salpointe Catholic.....Dennis Bene
 Seton Catholic.....Gary Galante
 Shadow Mountain.....Ron Fagan

St. Mary's.....Tommy Brittain
 Sunrise Mountain.....Steve Decker
 Tempe.....Brian Walker
 Thunderbird.....Brent Wittenwyler
 Walden Grove.....Corey Noble
 Washington.....Tim Mayfield
 Youngker.....Tony Cluff
 Yuma.....Curt Weber

5A CONFERENCE

Agua Fria.....Ross Crow
 Apollo.....Zac Threadgill
 Arcadia.....Tony Stillings
 Barry Goldwater.....Doug Provenzano
 Betty Fairfax.....Dylan Winemiller
 Buena.....Joe Thomas
 Camelback.....Joseph Brissette
 Campo Verde.....Max Ragsdale II
 Carl Hayden.....Randy Gross
 Centennial.....Richard Taylor
 Chaparral.....Thomas Lewis
 Cholla.....Ryan Scherling
 Cienega.....Pat Nugent
 Deer Valley.....Eric Bolus
 Desert Edge.....Jose Lucero
 Desert View.....Robert Bonillas
 Flowing Wells.....Mark Brunenkant
 Glendale.....Robert York
 Independence.....Santiago Maldonado
 Ironwood.....Ian Curtis
 Ironwood Ridge.....Matt Johnson
 Lake Havasu.....Karl Thompson
 Liberty.....Mark Smith
 Marana.....Andy Litten
 Maricopa.....Chris McDonald
 McClintock.....Charlie Marshall

Mesquite.....Chad DeGrenier
 Mt. View (Marana).....Clarence McRae
 North Canyon.....Airabin Justin
 Notre Dame Prep.....George Prelock
 Paradise Valley.....Greg Davis
 Poston Butte.....Dain Thompson
 Queen Creek.....Travis Schureman
 Raymond Kellis.....Shawn Copeland
 Sahuaro.....Scott McKee
 Shadow Ridge.....Robert Chappelle
 Sierra Linda.....Rico Tipton
 South Mountain.....Mark Carter
 Sunnyslope.....Damon Pieri
 Verrado.....Tom Ward
 Vista Grande.....Tracy Stuart
 Williams Field.....Steve Campbell
 Willow Canyon.....Joe Martinez

6A CONFERENCE

Alhambra.....George Medrano
 Basha.....Rich Wellbrock
 Boulder Creek.....Anthony Casarella
 Brophy Prep....."Scooter" Molander
 Central.....Jonathan Clanton
 Cesar Chavez.....Manuel Alcantar
 Chandler.....Shaun Aguano
 Cibola.....Lucky Arvizo
 Copper Canyon.....Shawn Kemmer
 Corona del Sol.....Richard Mettlach
 Desert Mountain.....David Sedmak
 Desert Ridge.....Jeremy Hathcock
 Desert Vista.....Dan Hinds
 Dobson.....Pete Wahlheim
 Gilbert.....Derek Zellner
 Hamilton.....Richard Baniszewski
 Highland.....Brock Farrel
 Horizon.....Ty Wisdom
 Kofa.....Ben Franz
 La Joya.....Josh Mitchell
 Maryvale.....George Martinez
 Mesa.....Kap Sikahema
 Millennium.....Lamar Early
 Mountain Pointe.....Norris Vaughan
 Mountain Ridge.....Vincent Ciliberti Jr.
 Mt. View (Mesa).....Mike Fell
 North.....Bernie Busken
 Perry.....Preston Jones
 Pinnacle.....Dana Zupke
 Red Mountain.....Mike Peterson
 Rincon/University.....Cody House
 Sandra Day O'Connor.....Steve Casey
 Skyline.....Angelo Paffumi
 Sunnyside.....Roy Lopez
 Tolleson.....Jason Wilke
 Trevor Browne.....Jeremy Zimmerman
 Tucson.....Justin Agravas
 Valley Vista.....Josh Sekoch
 Westview.....Nick Gehrts
 Westwood.....Kyle Ide

Sources: aiaonline.org and Kukulski Brothers

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Higley Multi-Purpose Threat Hall Primed for Senior Season State's Reigning Gatorade POY Thirsts for More



Higley standout running back Draycen Hall (photo by Andy Silvas @photosilvas.com)

By Les Willsey
azpreps365.com

Higley's Draycen Hall got a glimpse of varsity football action as a freshman. It was a kickoff return for short yardage in the Knights' 2014 playoff loss vs. Tempe High. The result was Hall's amazement at the speed of the game at that level.

"He came to the sideline after that and his eyes were as big as saucers," Higley coach Eddy Zubey said.

Hall absorbed a taste of what freshman opponents often experienced defending him week to week with his speed of the game. It was Hall's effort as a freshman that earned him a playoff promotion. Zubey recalled a moment that exemplified the promise and prowess of Hall.

"Our freshman team was 8-0 his freshman year and one week we decided initially to hold Draycen out to play him in a JV game later," Zubey said. "The freshman team was at Cactus Shadows. He rode over with them not planning on playing. We thought we could win without him."

At halftime of the game, Cactus Shadows had shocked Higley and played them to a standstill for 24 minutes. A cross-town phone call ensued to Zubey.

"I was at home and the game was close at half," Zubey said. "Our freshman coach (Don Rosenberger) told me Draycen brought his uniform with him. He asked me if I wanted to let Draycen play the second half? It was a chance for the freshmen to stay undefeated. I said go ahead."

Hall suited up in time for the second half. Scored three touchdowns in the half, accounting for 105 yards rushing and 121 yards receiving. Higley won going away, 52-27.

"I wasn't there," Zubey said. "But I think it was kind of like Superman being in his street clothes and coming out of the phone booth ready to go".

That performance, along with the other six freshman games he played, cemented his status as a player to watch in the future. There has been no disappointment. Only more of the same.

Hall is readying for his swan-song season at Higley. The 5-foot-8, 170-pound senior, is an offensive dynamo serving as running back, slot receiver and return specialist. His performance in 2016 as a junior earned him Gatorade Player of the Year honors

in the state of Arizona last December. Hall amassed 3,908 all-purpose yards -- 2,298 rushing, 641 receiving and 969 returning kickoffs and punts. He scored 41 touchdowns. Those figures more than doubled his sophomore output-- 1,743 yards.

Zubey's first look at Hall didn't come until summer of 2014. He saw a player more fit and in shape than the average incoming freshman.

"When we did 7-on-7 that summer we could tell he could be special," Zubey said. "Nothing changed once we put on the pads for practice."

Hall's family relocated from Marana to Higley so he began his career fresh at Higley. Hall has been excited about the program ever since. He's loved the roles in the offense he's been handed out of design or need.

"I love getting a chance to make a play in the open field," Hall said. "Returning kicks and playing receiver in the slot allows me a lot of opportunities to do that."

In 2015 Hall led Higley in receiving (71 catches for 788 yards) as a slot back. The plan in 2016 was to play him there again, but prior to the season starting the Knights' top rusher from the year before quit. Hall was installed more at running back and he managed the workload seamlessly that increased by 58 touches over the year before.

"After watching him a game or two, we were convinced he could handle the extra load," Zubey said. "He has a work-ethic that's second to none. That's what helps make him as good as he is."

What makes him unique among skill players is a combination of speed (10.75 in the 100) and an uncanny ability to make people miss via whiff or when making contact. He's played football since he was six and only one brand -- tackle. No flag football.

"I've always had the ability to slip out of tackles," Hall said as modestly as he could. "Since I'm a little smaller I can get away from people, especially if they don't wrap up or hit me high. I don't know how it happens. It just comes naturally."

A memorable varsity game from Hall was Higley's playoff opener last year against St. Mary's. On that night he piled up 327 all-purpose yards -- 193 rushing, 64 receiving and 70 on punt returns. He scored four touchdowns. The scores came on runs of 29 and 44 yards, a catch and run of 25 yards and a 43-yard punt return. He had a second punt-return TD called back to begin the final period. Most of Hall's production came in the second and third quarters. He sat the fourth and had a tough time getting going in the first period due to fired up play from St. Mary's defense.

Two weeks later, Higley's season ended. The Knights fell a game short of a trip to the 4A final last year with a sobering loss in the semis to Catalina Foothills. That loss still stings.

"I think it was one of those games we all played a bad game," Hall said. "Not just a couple guys. Everyone. (Catalina Foothills) played well. I think we overlooked them. Their front seven was really good. Hopefully, we learned from that."

Hall is eager to crank it up for his final season. He seems likely to land at one of the service academies -- Air Force, Army or Navy. The work ethic, leadership -- he's been team captain as a sophomore and junior -- stand out. So does a 4.1 GPA. And of course, his ability.

"He's a player," Zubey said. "Being a multi-sport athlete he always gives 100 percent to the sport at hand. He never puts the current sport on cruise control when the next is approaching. He's shown he can take the wear and tear. You don't get many like him."



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2017 should be another good year for American Leadership, the defending 3A champs (photo by Jim Willittes of maxpreps.com).

By Andy Morales
azpreps365.com

1. American Leadership: Rich Edwards returns 15 starters from his state championship run and it looks like the Patriots are ready for another run despite losing QB Dallin Edwards (1,578 yards passing and 483 yards rushing), Jeremiah Boyd (1,456 yards rushing), Donovan Hanna (989 yards receiving), Farrell Memmott (97 tackles) and Chandler Way (92 tackles) to graduation.

Matt Neville had 1,098 yards passing last year, Tarrick Workman added 343 yards rushing and Bujan Boyd had 688 yards receiving. There are 34 seniors and 28 juniors on this team and most of those players contributed heavily to the success of 2016 with 60 percent of the offense coming from the sophomore and junior class.

The question for Edwards, however, will be 2018. Can the program maintain this level of play once his first full class of players graduates? But 2018 is for another day....

The Patriots scheduled "Freedom games" against Pusch Ridge, Sabino and Northwest Christian. It's a high-risk schedule but one has to applaud that strength of schedule.

No. 2 Florence: Jared Wood (2,870 yards passing and 37 touchdowns) returns for his senior year and the program returns over 2,000 yards rushing. The two losses suffered by the Gophers came at the hands American Leadership including a loss in the quarterfinal round. An interview with Wood can be found in this edition of the Sollenberger Magazine. The Gophers should be 6-0 heading into their game with American Leadership. It might be the game of the week at that point.

No. 3 Sabino: Ryan McBrayer takes over for legendary head coach Jay Campos and he has to go without University of Arizona commit Drew Dixon. Dixon threw for 1,177 yards, rushed for

901, collected 564 yards receiving and had 330 return yards. Dixon was roughly responsible for half the Sabercat offense and a fourth of the total points. But, just like American Leadership, the Sabercats have a lot more returning – and tradition. We should know pretty quick, with the first four games coming on the road including one at Sahuaro and one at American Leadership.

No. 4 Show Low: A 23-21 loss to Sabino in the semifinal round ended a shot at the program's fifth title. Six-year assistant coach Monte Maxwell takes over for Randy Ricedorff and the team lost QB Rhett Ricedorff (2,787 yards passing and 30 TDs) to graduation but RB Westin Keime, RB James Turner and WR Jake Reid-head all return. The trio accounted for over 2,000 yards of offense.

No. 5 Northwest Christian: A semifinal finish last year has the Crusaders excited and ready for another run. The team will go up American Leadership in Week Four, which just happens to be the week when the 3A Conference starts to take shape. David Inness is waiting for a running back to step up this year. His top four rushers graduated, taking 2,000 yards with them.

No. 6 Snowflake: Despite earning a No. 2 seeding. Snowflake was upset in the first round by No. 15 Payson last year. The team has to replace QB Trey Schneider (1,120 yards passing), RB Zach Solomon (1,178 yards rushing, 99 tackles) and WR JT Tate (716 yards receiving) and the top six defenders including NG Leon LaGrange (101 tackles). The team will have two quarterbacks to choose from and the Lobos should be in good shape once that is in place.

No. 7 Yuma Catholic: Having four starting offensive linemen returning (out of five) is huge no matter what program one is talking about, let alone a power-team like the Shamrocks. The team opens up at St. Mary's followed by a trip to California. A 2-0 start under those circumstances would open some eyes.

No. 8 Pusch Ridge: The Lions always seem to pull something together come playoff time, and this year should be no different, but the Lions will have to accelerate their development because they are set to host American Leadership to open the season. This will be a test for both teams. If the Lions win that game then an eight-win season (at least) might be in the cards and that would translate to a high seed.

No. 9 River Valley: A surprise team comes through every year and the Dust Devils could be that team this year. David Klassen takes over in his first year The Dust Devils could be 3-0 heading into a trip to play Yuma Catholic. Jesse Bravin caught 698 yards from his tight end position. He will be the key.

No. 10 Monument Valley: The Mustangs have put together back-to-back 10-1 seasons. According to head coach Bryan Begay, that kind of success was a first for a reservation school. The Mustangs beat Winslow for the first time in school history last season, the first reservation team to beat them since 2000. "We expect the most and the best," Begay said. "We are going to compete with the best." Winslow will host Monument Valley to open the season.

3A Conference Team-By-Team Preview

By Andy Morales
azpreps365.com

CENTRAL REGION

American Leadership

Head coach: Rich Edwards

2016 record: 14-1 (Region Champion & State Champion)

Returning starters on offense: Seven.

Returning starters on defense: Eight.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB/LB Tarrick Workman (6-0, 185, 343 yards rushing in 2016); Sr. LB/OL McKay Moon (6-0, 215); Sr. CB/WR/KR Bujon Boyd (6-0, 180); JR. Kicker Talen Rider (5-10, 170); Sr. WR/CB Kade Lunt (6-1, 170); OG Kane Dougherty (5-10, 230); DE/TE Jacob Redford (6-3, 230); CB/WR Josh Eames (5-10, 170); Sr. QB Matt Neville (5-10, 180, 1,098 yards passing); SS/QB Jake Vurpillat (6-0, 180); NG/T Cameron Rogers (6-1, 245); WR Haiden Stowers (5-11, 185); SS Jacob Hansen (5-10, 180).

Strengths of offense during summer: The strength of our offense is our running backs and wide receivers. We will have two good backs that have great vision and really hit the hole quickly. Our wide receivers are all experienced and can make plays. Our quarterback has played in some big games for us and his experience will help. We have the ability to be balanced and keep teams honest.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Our biggest question mark will be whether or not we can stay humble, work hard to earn success. Coming off a championship is new to us and we will need to be ready to take every one's best shot week in and week out.



Bujon Boyd, American Leadership (photo by Darin Sicurello of maxpreps.com)

Potential breakout players: Workman, Trey Miller, Boyd, Vurpillat, Moon and Redford.

Benjamin Franklin

Head coach: Dave Jefferies

2016 record: 7-3

Returning starters on offense: Seven.

Returning starters on defense: Nine.

Returning key players and stats: Jr. RB/WR/DB Chandler Miles (5-6, 150, 532 yards rushing and 380 yards receiving in 2016); Sr. TE/OLB Seth Hamblin (6-0, 180); Sr. TE/OLB Powell Skiba (6-0, 170); Sr. OL Justin Scott (5-11, 310).

Strengths of offense during summer: We return our QB and several possession receivers that will fit well into our multi-formation spread passing attack.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Who will fill the shoes of our top rusher from last year?

Potential breakout players: We lost our top DL Brandon Teuscher (Sr. OL/DL) (5-9, 200) to injury right before half time of game four last season. He already had four sacks up to that point. He has been putting in the off-season work to make 2017 a great senior year.

Unique human interest story: Last year, with one of the smallest enrollments in 3A and our first year in 3A, we had our first winning season in school history at 7-3 and finished No. 16 in power points.

Coolidge

Head coach: Bill Godsil

2016 record: 2-8

Returning starters: 18

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB/LB Jared Hunt (5-11, 180); Jr. WR/DB Marcus Harris (5-9, 175, 297 yards rushing in 2016).

Strengths of offense during summer: Versatility.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Quarterback position.

Potential breakout players: Harris.

Unique human interest story: First-year coach.

Florence

Head coach: Scott Howard

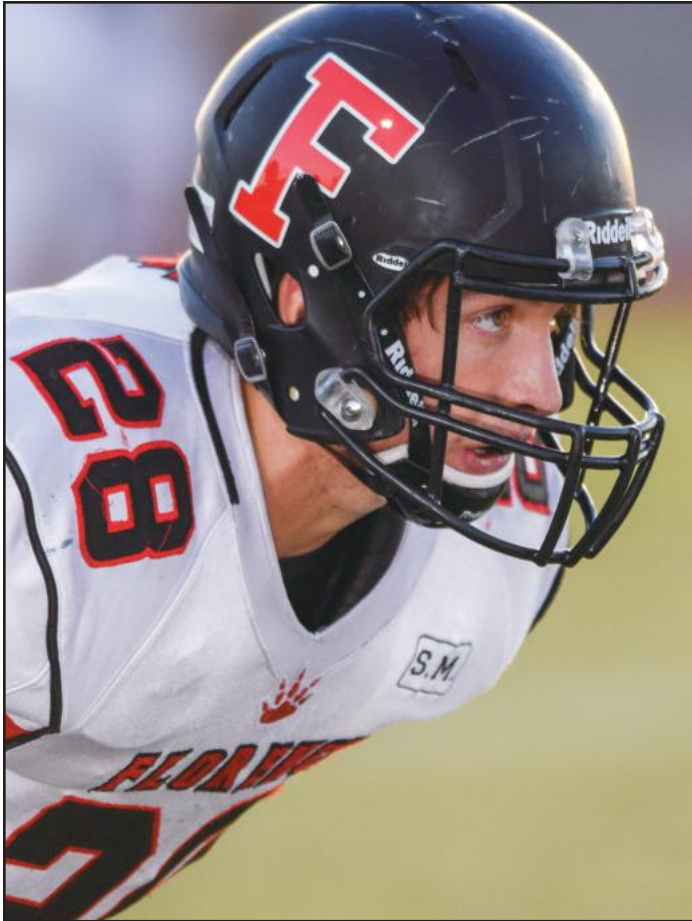
2016 record: 10-2

Returning starters on offense: Six.

Returning starters on defense: Six.

Returning key players and stats: QB Jared Wood (6-2, 205, 2,870 yards passing and 37 touchdowns in 2016); RB Nolan Susel (5-10, 185, 1,200 yards passing, 18 TDs); OLB Shelton Mathis (6-0, 190, 107 tackles, 11.5 sacks, 18 TFLs); DT Nikolas Arnold (6-3, 280, 77 tackles, 6.5 sacks); C/DT Quinton Tucker (6-1, 250); S/WR Shane Mathis (5-10, 180); OT Eli Boyd Volakis (6-3, 180); DE Trevor Heikes (6-2, 190); OT Rarey Sommer (6-5, 235); ATH Joshua Maignan (5-10, 185).

Strengths of offense during summer: Our running game will be one of our strengths as we return primarily the entire offensive line and 1,800 yards of rushing. We will be explosive in the pass-



Outside linebacker Shelton Mathis, Florence (photo by Darin Sicurello of maxpreps.com)

ing game as well with one of the top QBs in the state coming back (Wood).

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Wide receivers and defensive backs.

Potential breakout players: Maignan, Arvonte Neal, Jacob Mejia, Shane Mathis and Sommer.

Unique human interest story: Florence is a small town school trying to become one of the elite programs at the 3A level. Everyone thinks of Show Low, Blue Ridge, Snowflake, Northwest Christian, Pusch Ridge, and rightfully so, but Florence plans on being a part of that conversation as well.

Globe

Head coach: Nathan Morales

2016 record: 4-6

Returning key players and stats: 15 seniors return.

Safford

Head coach: Michael Alba

2016 record: 5-6

Returning starters on offense: Six.

Returning starters on defense: Three.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. OL Ralph Frias OL (6-7, 320); Sr. WR/DB Cameron Abril WR/DB (6-4, 190, 702 yards receiving in 2016); Sr. QB/LB Manuel Aparicio (6-0, 200, 982 yards passing and 1,022 yards rushing); Sr. TE/OLB Gabriel Ornelas; Sr. LB/RB Bailey Sanford (5-10, 200) Jr. OL/DL Josh Martinez.

Strengths of offense during summer: The big play potential

from the offense. We have our leading receiver (Abril) returning and leading rusher and leader in passing yards returning (Aparicio).

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Defensive Back - only one player with varsity playing experience

Potential breakout players: So. RB/LB Robert White; Jr. RB/DB Dawon Andrews; Jr. WR/DB Hunter Mullins; So. TE/DE Colin Thompson; So. QB/DB Mason Duros.

EAST REGION

Blue Ridge

Head coach: Bob London

2016 record: 2-8

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB Luis Rosales (276 yards rushing in 2016); Sr. RB/LB Colton Penrod (245 yards rushing, 5-10, 170); Sr. RB (John Crow, 5-10, 151, 227 yards rushing)

Holbrook

Head coach: Kelly Kinghorn

2016 record: 2-7

Returning starters on offense: Six.

Returning starters on defense: Five.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Ryan Short (5-9, 154, 199 yards rushing, 1,162 yards passing in 2016); Sr. RB Zakhari Waits (5-0, 211, 480 yards rushing); Sr. WR Cole McDaniel (5-6, 120, 282 yards receiving; Sr. LB Frankie Ulibarri (92 tackles).



Linebacker Frankie Ulibarri, Holbrook (photo by Mark Jones of maxpreps.com)



Senior WR Jake Reidhead, Show Low (photo by Mark Jones of maxpreps.com)

Strengths of offense during summer: We are running a new offense, but having key returners should help us move the ball. We have strong, physical backs.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: How will we respond to a change in coaching staff and our new style? Will our defense get to the level it needs to be at to compete in our region?

Potential breakout players: Waits, McDaniel, Jr. RB Jeffrey Jones

Unique human interest story: First-year head coach.

Payson

Head coach: Jake Swartwood

2016 record: 6-6

Returning starters on offense: Five.

Returning starters on defense: Five.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. OL/LB Sammy Bland (6-0, 210, 65 tackles in 2016); Sr. OL/DT Trent Cline (6-2, 225); Sr. C/NT Seth Allison (5-10, 245); Sr. OL/LB Wyatt Taylor (5-10, 185); Sr. SS/HB Dre Terry (6-1, 185, 65 tackles, 355 all-purpose yards); Sr. FS/HB Julian Parker (5-10, 180, 45 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: Overall team speed and returning three starting linemen from last year.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We will be entering the season with a new quarterback in junior Brock

Davis, and are excited to see his growth from a good sophomore season and off season and who will take the bulk of carries after losing our RB last year?

Potential breakout players: Davis, Parker, Terry and Bland.

Show Low

Head coach: Monte Maxwell

2016 record: 12-1 (Region Champion)

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB Westin Keime (5-10, 180, 711 yards rushing in 2016); Jr. RB/FS James Turner (5-7, 140, 571 yards rushing, 81 tackles); Sr. WR Jake Reidhead (5-11, 175, 714 yards receiving);

Unique human interest story: Head coach Randy Ricedorff left the program to start the new Leadership Academy in Gilbert. Longtime assistant coach Monte Maxwell takes over.

Snowflake

Head coach: Kay Solomon

2016 record: 9-2

Returning starters on offense: Two.

Returning starters on defense: Three.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB/DB Trace Hancock (5-8, 150); Sr. FB/LB Jace Merrell (5-10, 180); Sr. TE/DE Garrett Wood (6-3, 200); Sr. TE/LB Davis Kay (5-9, 130); Sr. OL/DL Brendan Flake (6-0, 190); Sr. OL/DL Joey Fish (6-2, 210); Sr. OL/DL Luke Whittle (5-11, 220); Sr. OL/DL Hunter Taylor (5-10, 220); Sr. TE/DB Tyler Brimhall (5-11, 180); Sr. DB Daniel Reel (6-0, 170); Sr. Taden Flake (6-2, 175); Jr. RB/QB/DB Luke Patterson (5-8, 140); Jr. QB/LB Traegon Standerfer (6-0, 210); Jr. RB/LB David Brimhall (5-10, 170); Jr. RB/LB Brydon Hatch (5-11, 165); Jr. RB/DB Nathan Penrod (5-9, 1555); Jr. RB/LB Cody Fox (5-11, 160); Jr. OL/DE Caleb Uchytel (6-1, 190); Jr. OL/DL Justin White (5-10, 190); Jr. RB/DB Sam Ruehle (5-8, 135); Jr. Jake Christensen (5-8, 140).

Strengths of offense during summer: Players have a lot of experience in our offensive scheme. Both QB prospects have strong arms and read coverages well. Passing game is well ahead of where we have been coming out of spring ball in years past.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Inexperience is a big factor for this Lobo team, but we made great strides to overcome that during spring football this year. Offensively we will be trying to decide between two new QBs. We will have to decide which fits our system best and/or what adjustments we might need to make to our offense based on our personnel.

Potential breakout players: Jace Merrell, Joey Fish, Garrett Wood, Cody Fox and David Brimhall.

Winslow

Head coach: Brandon Guzman

2016 record: 7-5

Returning starters on offense: Seven.

Returning starters on defense: Seven.

Returning key players and stats: QB Ricardo Villanueva, (6-0, 165, 1,563 total yards, 18 touchdowns, 48 tackles in 2016); LB Ahli Foster (5-11, 215, 150 tackles, 3.5 sacks); RB/DB Mikel Bonner (5-8, 165, 888 rushing yards, 10 TD, 531 reciving. 32 tackles); FB/LB Damon Avelar (755 yards rushing, 82 Tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: Almost all of our skill

players return, QB RB's and WR's, everyone who touches the ball can score.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Depth on the OL and DL, lost key players at Tackle and Defensive End.

Potential breakout players: Fr. Yoann Djassa and So. Nick Reyes.

Unique human interest story: Coaching Icon, former Winslow coach Emil Nasser passed away in December. He was 95 years old, Hall of Fame coach who played at NAU. He made three different coaching halls of fames.

METRO REGION

ASU Prep

Head coach: Byron Evans

2016 record: 2-7

Returning key players and stats: Sr. SB/FS Ben Chambliss (5-10, 170); So. MLB Daniel Olivas (5-8, 190).

Casteel

Head coach:

2016 record: 9-2

Returning key players and stats: Jr. QB Gunner Cruz (6-4, 200, 2,600 yards passing, 30 touchdowns in 2016); Jr. RB/SB Mack Johnson (939 yards rushing, 17 TDs); Jr. RB/FS Casen Simonton (6-0, 155, 362, rushing yards); Jr. WR/CB Zach Nelson (6-0, 170, 720 yards rushing); Jr. MLB Jehrt Flitton (5-8, 180, 81 tackles); So. WR Brandt Goodwin (5-9, 155, 918 yards receiving, 10 TDs); Jr. OLB/TE Jaren Rucker (6-1, 195, 76 tackles).



Harrison Long, Yuma Catholic (photo by Darin Sicurello of maxpreps.com)

Unique human interest story: Second year at the varsity level.

Fountain Hills

Head coach: Jason Henslin

2016 record: 3-7

Returning starters on offense: Seven,

Returning starters on defense: Six.

Returning key players and stats: TE Tom Ferington (6-2, 200); WR Ian Mackiewicz (5-9, 165); SS Davis Smith (5-11, 165); MLB Andrew Hoyt (6-0, 195).

Strengths of offense during summer: We have several key players returning that have been starting since they were sophomores. We have a lot of depth at WR, RB, and QB.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Quarterback. We have two seniors, Derek Weinreich and Garrett Renner, who split time last year at the position. I would feel comfortable with either one as our starter, we'll just have to wait and see who separates themselves as we get closer to the season.

Potential breakout players: Brett Gratz and Dakota Hamby.

Unique human interest story: Fourth coach in four years.

North Pointe Prep

Head coach: Danny Norris

2016 record: 0-10

Returning starters on offense: Five.

Returning starters on defense: Seven.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB/LB Daniel Ritchie (5-8, 185); Jr. OL/DL David Vargas (5-10, 240); Jr. OL/LB Michael Zipprich (6-2, 250); Jr. QB/RB/DB Joey Faast (5-9, 165). Jr. OL/DL Oscar Molinar (6-3, 270); So. OL/DL Matthew McGovern (6-2, 240); So. OL/DL Connor Christensen (6-2, 230); So. Kicker Ali Al-Shiteawi (5-7, 145).

Strengths of offense during summer: Our offensive line is going to be one year older and much more matured. We have some big guys up front that have been working hard in the weight room to get their strength up and in the field to perfect their technique and footwork.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Our QB competition will go through the summer as we have three hardworking, disciplined young men that are vying for the position.

Potential breakout players: Jr. RB/LB/SS Juan Medina; Jr. QB/RB/DB Joe Soriano; Zipprich; Jr. TE/DL Nijel Rosado.

Unique human interest story: Danny Norris is in his first season as the Falcons head coach, it will be his third year total with the program, previously served as the defensive coordinator the last two seasons.

Valley Christian

Head coach: Jeff Rutledge

2016 record: 3-7

Returning starters on offense: Three.

Returning starters on defense: Three.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB Jake Orth (5-10, 175, 1000 yards rushing in 2016); Jr. QB Peyton Hanzal (6-3, 170, 1000 yards passing); So. QB/WR Vinnie Degato; Jr. OL Evan Shiel; Sr. OL Jake Dinsmore; Jr. WR Matt McGreight.

Strengths of offense during summer: Passing game.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We need to find depth at certain positions.

Potential breakout players: Orth, Hanzal and Degato.

Unique human interest story: Valley has two coaches who coached in the NFL on staff; Ron Aiken and Jeff Rutledge.

Yuma Catholic

Head coach: Aaron Cheatwood

2016 record: 9-3 (Region Champion)

Returning starters on offense: Eight.

Returning starters on defense: Six.

Returning key players and stats: Jr. MLB Jason Pisano (92 tackles, three sacks in 2016); Jr. OLB Harrison Long (104 tackles, three sacks) So. RB Ean Chavez (206 yards rushing).

Strengths of offense during summer: Offensive Line. Four of the five starters from last year are returning.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Replacing pass rusher (Daniel Callendar) DE from last year had 23 sacks.

Potential breakout players: Chavez, John Henderson and Zeke Rios.

NORTH REGION

Chinle

Head coach: Tim Su'e Su'e Liufau

2016 record: 4-6

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Antwan Gray; Sr. RB/WR/DE Daniel Nave.

Ganado

Head coach: Chris McNabb

2016 record: 6-4

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB Justin Curley (390 yards rushing in 2016); Sr. RB/LB Rayshawn James; Sr. OLB Chancey Chicharello (57 tackles).

Monument Valley

Head coach: Bryan Begay

2016 record: 10-1 (Region Champion)

Returning starters on offense: Five.

Returning starters on defense: Six.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB/S Billy Mitchell III (500 yards rushing in 2016); Jr. OL/DL Tyrrell Holiday; Sr. OL/DL Joseph Hawley; Sr. SB/DB/KR Dylan Etsitty; Sr. QB/DB Jonah Hale; SB/LB DeMarquez Benson; Stanislaus John; LB Treavore Russell.

Strengths of offense during summer: Had a good spring ball, hoping our experience from last season can continue with a tougher summer passing tournament schedule- Nike 7's, SDSU Passing Tournament, NAU and Grand Junction Mesa State camps. Looking forward to new leadership among the seniors and new group of students leading.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Leadership, lost 24 seniors.

Potential breakout players: Etsitty, Russell, Mitchell III, Hale and Holiday.

Page

Head coach: Mitchell Stephens

2016 record: 6-5

Returning starters on offense: Six.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB/RB Jacob Doyle (6-1, 165, 562 yards passing in 2016); Jr. RB/LB Kele Merideth (5-10, 166, 1,084 yards rushing; Jr. RB/DB Hayden Gracia; OL/DL

Jacob McCabe; OL/DL Kyle Ybanez; FB/LB Jarrard Mountain; WR/DB Christian Penrod; FB/LB Jeremy Tallsalt; OL/DL Levi Telshaw; RB/LB Christian White, TW/DE Cheyenne Richardson.

Strengths of offense during summer: Most of the back field from last year returns, including the QB, Doyle, and two running backs, Merideth and Gracia, with close to 1,000 yards. McCabe and Ybanez are both strong guys at the tackle position. Cheyenne Richardson will be a force at TE, as a big body with athleticism.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We will have to replace several OL and a very good LB.

Potential breakout players: Gabe Gomez and Nikekilo Kinsel.

Tuba City

Head coach: Rick Benjamin

2016 record: 5-5

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Barlow Marquez (713 yards passing in 2016); Sr. Bauer Zach (54 tackles).

Window Rock

Head coach: Wilbur Begay Jr.

2016 record: 2-8

Returning starters on offense: Eight.

Returning starters on defense: Six.

Returning key players and stats: Jr. RB/LB Colbren Nez and Sr. TE Shamon Salway.

Strengths of offense during summer: Offensive experience. We will be running our offense for two years, players will know how to do their jobs, as years before we have been learning new coach schemes and offenses.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We are going to be young and don't really know how we are going to respond.

Potential breakout players: Nez as a backup last year had some good experience and we believe he will have a good season. Salway will be even tougher to stop as TE receiver.

SOUTH REGION

Catalina

Head coach: Joseph Butler

2016 record: 0-10

Returning starters on offense: Seven.

Returning starters on defense: Six.

Returning key players and stats: Jr. DE Jose Lugo (6-3, 245); Jr. DB/WR Leon Hayes (5-9, 185); Jr. ILB/OL Jose Crucella (6-2, 220); Jr. RB/OLB Tra Daniels (6-0, 190); Jr. WR/S Phillippe Kijana (6-3, 180); Sr. WR/DB/K Clemente Quintero (6-1, 175).

Strengths of offense during summer: Passing game. We have spent most of our spring working on running better routes, working on timing, and multiple route concepts attacking various coverage. Our QB was a sophomore last year, and he is getting better at identifying coverage. He is entering his second season in the same system and he is gaining confidence and he is starting to mature. Last season, the only way we could really move the ball was in the air, not having much of an offensive line. We have some larger and stronger bodies this year at offensive line and should see an improvement on the ground as well.

Potential breakout players: Lugo, Kijana and Hayes. All are returning starters and have gotten bigger, faster and stronger and more confident in their second year in our system.

Unique human interest story: We have a lot of group home



Quarterback Alex Bell, Sabino (photo by Mark Jones of max-preps.com)

kids and student athletes who qualify as YOTO (youth on their own).

Empire

Head coach: W.T. Jeffries

2016 record: 4-6

Returning starters on offense: Six.

Returning starters on defense: Three.

Returning key players and stats: Jr. RB Wyatt Jeffries (6-0, 175, 702 yards rushing in 2016); Jr. DL/LB Isaiah Sierra (5-11, 250; 33 tackles, five Sacks).

Strengths of offense during summer: Our Strengths are up front and with our core group of running backs. We graduated our top two running backs but we return Wyatt Jeffries who was third on the team in rushing as a sophomore playing in only seven games. We also have some juniors returning who saw plenty of action, Jalen Smith and Justin McKnight, are expected to pick up the slack. We have our junior starting QB returning, Alex Verdugo who is going to be starting his second year and has plenty of experience running our offense. We have a talented WR, Brandon Walker, who we are looking to get more opportunities. We have a steady offensive line that has been working really hard under our offensive line coach Dave Ivey. We played and started a lot of sophomores on offense last year so we can't use youth as an excuse for performance this year. I am looking forward to seeing our progress over the summer.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Our biggest question mark is our defense. We will be putting in lots of time finding the key pieces to solidify the defense.

Unique human interest story: Head coach Jeffries had his kidney removed last spring and coached through summer and the season and is now cancer free.

Pusch Ridge

Head coach: Jerry Harris

2016 record: 7-4

Returning starters on offense: Nine.

Returning starters on defense: Six.

Returning key players and stats: RB/LB Dakota Haynes (6-0, 200, 778 yards rushing in 2016); QB/DB Christian Fetsis (6-2, 175, 1,304 yards passing); OL/DL Kendall Tobin (6-4, 240); RB/DB Mitch Maas (5-8, 155, 525 yards rushing).

Strengths of offense during summer: Game experience.

Seven returning starters have played in 25 varsity games going into their senior year.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Defensive line.

Potential breakout players: So. RB/DB Gavin Davis broke his collarbone last season late in the year, but was impressive as a freshman playing varsity.

Sabino

Head coach: Ryan McBrayer

2016 record: 12-2 (Region Champion)

Returning starters on offense: Three.

Returning starters on defense: One.

Returning key players and stats: WR/LB Luke Moran; Sr. QB Alex Bell (5-9, 161, 1,759 yards passing, 19 touchdowns); OL/DE Frank Oviedo; LB/RB Will Offerman.

Strengths of offense during summer: We are led by a returning senior QB who is a true leader and can make all the throws

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Who is going to step up and fill the roles of some elite play makers that helped us reach the state championship last year

Potential breakout players: Bell, RB Isaiah Smotherman, WR Bennett Nottingham, WR Larry Gerald and CB Jimmy Hamilton.

Unique human interest story: First-year coach.

Sahuarita

Head coach: Rodney Day

2016 record: 4-6

Returning key players and stats: Jr. P Emilio Mendez (5-10, 144), Sr. TE Brady Seibel (6-5, 230).

Santa Rita

Head coach: Felix Jamero

2016 record: 1-9

Returning key players and stats: Sr. DL Chase Fowlkes (5-7, 165); Jr. OL Kyon Smith (6-1, 350).

Tanque Verde

Head coach: Jeremiah Johnson

2016 record: 3-7

Returning starters on offense: Six.

Returning starters on defense: Six.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. CB Eric Teitelbaum (5-9, 150); Sr. RB Marlo Corona (5-10, 145, 496 yards rushing in 2016); Sr. DB/RB Gavin Johnson (5-8, 145); Jr. LB Jacob Jacome (5-7, 168); Jr. DB/RB Tanner Foshay (5-7, 160); So. C Colton Karulski; So. QB Aiden Gonzalez (5-11, 155); So. TE/DE Jordan Bunting.

Strengths of offense during summer: Heading into summer we already have a good understanding of the base offense we run. I am excited to see them evolve as they get great at the small details that make an offense really work.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: What type of team we will be. Hard work this summer will reveal a lot about this question.

Potential breakout players: Corona, Teitelbaum, Bunting, Ja-come, Foshay, Johnson, Gonzalez, LB Brandon Torres, Karulski, G Peter Olberding and RB Saul Moreno.

WEST REGION

Chino Valley

Head coach: Wade Krug

2016 record: 5-5

Returning starters on offense: Five.

Returning starters on defense: Six.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. TE/DE Colton Sandberg (6-5, 205); Jr. RB/DB Michael Paulus (5-9, 175, 606 yards rushing in 2016); Sr. DL Darren Phipps (6-1, 195); OL/DL Cameron Morgan; OL/DL Johnny Ayala.

Strengths of offense during summer: Team chemistry and determination. There has not been a turnover in coaches in three years, so stability will be a strength with small changes/modifications to the offense are made to accommodate the players.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Depth at skill positions.

Potential breakout players: Paulus. He has been a starter on offense and defense since his freshman year. He will be looked at to carry a large responsibility of the offense, either at QB or RB, or both. Sandberg is a tall, rangy TE/DE

Kingman

Head coach: Cam Wierson

2016 record: 1-9

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Miguel Salinas (5-10, 155, 396 yards rushing, 597 yards passing in 2016); Sr. RB Austin Reed (411 yards rushing); Sr. WR James Carter; Sr. Cody Turner (5-8, 160, 33 tackles).

Northwest Christian

Head coach: David Inness

2016 record: 10-3

Returning starters on offense: Five.

Returning starters on defense: Five.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB/LB Jarin Davis (6-2, 190, 57 tackles in 2016); DB Bronson Sanich; Sr. WR/DB Dylan Smith (200 yards receiving); Sr. WR/DB Jackson Groff; Sr. OL/DL Jaden Hoyt (6-4, 285, 46 tackles); Jr. OL Derek Henderson (5-10-240, 36 tackles); Sr. OL/LB Harmon Shacklette (6-4, 240); Sr. LB Spencer Valerius (110 tackles); Jr. WR/DB Dusty Inness (121 tackles); Jr. DB/RB Aren Van Hofwegen; Jr. Kicker Ben Ogan; TE/DT Zack Johnson (6-4, 215).

Strengths of offense during summer: OL-DL. We have a lot of experience coming back with size and they will lead us. Really like our skill positions, can't wait to see who will step up for us at running back

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Running back and depth at receivers.

Odyssey Institute

Head coach: Dwayne Simmons

2016 record: 2-8

Returning key players and stats: So. QB Andrew Caufield (6-1, 140); So. RB Chris Weaver (5-10, 153, 756 yards rushing in 2016); Sr. WR/DB/KR Walter Morman (6-0, 160, 397 yards receiving, 200 rushing).

River Valley

Head coach: David Klassen

2016 record: 8-3

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB/FS/K Devin Read (5-5, 130, 379 yards rushing in 2016); Sr. TE/OLB Jesse Bravin (6-3, 200, 698 yards receiving, 48 tackles);

Unique human interest story: First-year head coach.

Wickenburg

Head coach: Carson Miller

2016 record: 8-3

Returning starters on offense: Five.

Returning starters on defense: Five.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. RB/LB Alex Carrasco (5-10, 195, 1,121 yards rushing, 14 touchdowns in 2016); Sr. OL Anthony Dennis (6-1, 280); Jr. RB/LB Kegan Lindsay (5-9, 170, 210 yards rushing); Jr. RB/DE Joe Moder (5-10, 230).

Strengths of offense during summer: Led the entire state in rushing for a 10 game season at over 4000 yards and are looking for more in 2017. Leading rusher in Alex Carrasco, is back for his senior season and will run behind two year starter on O-Line in Anthony Dennis. We play an old school, tough, in your face brand of football that represents what our kids and town value the most: toughness.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Youth. Wranglers only return five players that will be seniors in 2017, though after success of making the playoffs last season, many more players are coming out to play again.



Senior lineman Jaden Hoyt, Northwest Christian (photo by Mark Jones of maxpreps.com)

Florence's Jared Wood Emerged in 2016 As Top 3A QB in 1st Varsity Season

By Andy Morales
 azpreps365.com

In his first season on varsity, Florence senior quarterback Jared Wood threw for a 3A Conference best 2,870 yards and 37 touchdowns to help Florence finish with a 10-2 record last year.

He has caught the eye of the University of Washington and took part in the Nike and Elite 11 QB experiences this past summer.

"Jared is a student of the game," Florence coach Scott Howard said. "He studies film like no other quarterback I have coached. He has improved over the past year in his leadership. He has gone from being the quiet leader to the vocal leader of our team."

We asked Wood to reflect on last year, when his team lost to region foe American Leadership 38-21 in the quarterfinals, his summer and what he sees for 2017. The last time Florence won a state championship was in 1991.

The last time Florence experienced this kind of success you were in middle school. Can you describe the atmosphere that surrounded the team from the local community and the school?

"It was an unbelievable feeling and atmosphere around the school and around town. It seemed like that's all everyone talked about was how well the team was doing, and at each game having the almost the entire town there supporting us was just an unbelievable feeling."

When did you get a feeling last year was going to be a special season? "I had the faith and believed in our team that we were going to make a run from the first week. I just had a gut feeling that this year could be a special year for us."

American Leadership was your only roadblock last year, and you will not get a chance to play them again until the end of September. Has your team talked about remaining focused?

"Our team has talked about it many of times. Not only with American Leadership but with all the teams we are going to face this year. We can't just be focused about one game. We need to be focused on our game and how we play the game each and every week. We need to go into each week just like we would the next, focused on us executing on each side of the ball and playing Florence football."

This has been your team for a couple of years now and you are less than 200 yards away from breaking 5,000 career yards. Can you describe the success you had last year and what it will take to continue that success this year? "It's a great feeling to be able to have the success I have had these last few years. I wouldn't have been able to do what I have done without the help of my teammates. It just shows the hard work we put in as teammates last year. This year we just got to keep working on our timing and routes and getting a feel for each other on the field."

Tell us about your visit to Washington and any other college visits you may have taken. Did the visits give you an idea of where you need to improve? "The visit to Washington was a great experience and I was able to take a lot from it, along with my visit to Northern Arizona. The visits just helped me realize that even being from a small school you can be seen and you can get noticed. The visits also helped me realize how fast the next level is, and that is one of the main things I need to work on in my game."

Tell us a bit about the Nike and Elite 11 experience. "The Elite 11 experience was a once in a lifetime experience. The honor to be there and learn from these great quarterback coaches like Jordan Palmer was an honor. I just went into the camp focusing on taking in and learning everything I can from them and putting it into my game back here in Florence."

Was it more difficult to get noticed from a rural area like Florence or was that just another hurdle you had to overcome? "I feel like it's just another obstacle that we have to get through down



Senior quarterback Jared Wood keys the Florence offensive attack (photo by Darin Sicurello of maxpreps.com).

here. I feel being from a small school it just gives us something to prove that even kids from a small school can get to where they want to be."

You have an incredible crew of running backs playing their senior year with you. Nolan Sussel and Shane and Shelton Mathis gained close to 2,000 to help open up your passing game. Do you see another balanced attack this year? "I would not have the success I have had in the passing game without the help from our running game. Being able to have that threat of handing the ball to my back whether it is Nolan, Shelton, or Shane is an incredible weapon to have. It helps keeps defense on their toes because we can use both effectively."

On the other side, you lost your top five receivers to graduation. How has the timing and patterns worked out this summer with the newer guys? "I did lose my top five receivers last year but we have some tremendous talent coming up. We have just been trying to come together and repeat our routes and throws and get everyone on the same page as to what we are trying to do as a team this year."

You also return an incredible defense, and most of them will be seniors also. What kind of bond is there between the offense and the defense in your program? "We have an unbreakable bond between offense and defense in our program. Each side knows that we need the other to push us to be better. Each side works hard to help the other see what exactly they need to work on and improve on."

Finally, is there anything else you would like to say to your parents or the Florence faithful? "I just want to thank my parents for being there for me through all my high school career and I want to thank the town of Florence and all the faithful fans for being there for us and to support us at every game. Looking forward to another great season."



The 2016 Thatcher Eagles, 2A Football State Champions (photo by Jim Willittes of maxpreps.com)

By Jose Garcia
 azpreps365.com

No. 1 Thatcher. The team's days of playing possum are over. Despite just missing the playoffs two seasons ago, Thatcher had the goods last year when it won the 2A title. A lot of the defending champ's key players graduated last year, but losing talent hasn't kept Thatcher from posting double digit victories in five of the past six seasons. Also, Jack Kortsen, Willcox's starting QB last year, moved in and might run Thatcher's potent option attack from the start if his transfer is approved in August. On defense, new defensive coordinator Russ Jones might switch to a three safety alignment.

No. 2 Phoenix Christian. The championship buzz is nothing new to Brian Cole, the first-year multi-championship coach who left Joy Christian for family reasons. Two of those reasons, Cole's sons, QB Hunter and OL Zachary, are starters on this year's PC team. Hunter,

a senior, will for the first time start at QB and run Cole's system, which Hunter started learning in middle school. About 18 seniors, a luxury in 2A, also have their sights set on a championship run. Look for WR/DB Corey Leary to have a breakout year.

No. 3 Round Valley. With only 3-5 seniors in the program this season, coach Bell will unveil his youngest team in his seven years at the helm. But what isn't new are the high expectations for a program that's reached the state semifinals in three of the past four seasons. The next 1,000-yard rusher figures to be last year's second-leading tackler, Dylan Workman, who's got a little Draycen Hall of Higley in him, Bell said. The muscle in Round Valley's back field this year will be fullback Colter Hogle, who will continue his nose guard duties this year. Three players were competing for starting quarterback duty.

No. 4 Pima. The program reached the state quarterfinals last year. Not bad after leaving 8-man football just two seasons ago. QB Josh

Whitaker lost his No. 1 target, but he still has 4-5 skill players at his disposal this year. State championship wrestler Ryan Lewis will continue to play linebacker but will also play some tight end this year. The defense needs to replace its defensive ends. "We should be able to regroup and be as good as we were last year," coach Jace Hancock said. "But we play in the toughest region in the state."

No. 5 Tempe Prep. The Knights will still run but unlike previous seasons the strength of this year's team will be their skill players. The plan is to get the ball in space more often with the help of Sr. QB Max Rich (13 career starts) and 1,000-yard rusher Ahmad Jones. The very physical Jr. Cannon Kartchner weighs just 175 pounds but will likely fill one of the two openings on the offensive line. The defense is a little banged up with non-football injuries, but nine defensive players started last year, and the secondary is one of the best in 2A.

No. 6 Scottsdale Christian. "We are going with who we got," coach Chuck Gibbs said. "I wish them (players who transferred) the best. I hope they did it for the right reasons." Two quarterbacks and the team's starting strong safety were among the 3-4 players who transferred. Soccer player Grant Schryer, a dual-threat, will start at QB. About 17-18 of the team's 45 players played about 400 snaps last year. "I like our prospects when it comes to November," Gibbs said. We'll see who's healthy."

No. 7 Paradise Honors. The Panthers won 10 in a row and their first playoff game last year in their first postseason appearance. This season, the team is capable of accomplishing more — if a couple of things fall into place. First, the new fulltime offensive linemen need to settle into their new roles. RB Sekou Tyler will try to take care of the rest and shoot for a 2,000-yard season with a deeper backfield. Jr. Dillon Behymer broke his jaw in Week 2 last year but is returning this year and ready to provide pressure off the edge.

No. 8 Santa Cruz. Since he's replacing 19 starters from a state semifinal team, coach Rishard Davis isn't as worried as you might think. He is, however, taking a wait-and-see approach this year. But his confidence rises knowing RB Titarro Jones, WR Raoul Corrales, QB Jesus Cosillos, OT Jose Salazar, MLB Curtis Banks and talented newcomers RB/LB Alec Meza and FS/TE Samuel Camacho are on the team. Camacho, a senior, is the school's starting goalkeeper but will see if his athleticism can also benefit the football team for the first time. Meza will have to sit out the first half of the season since he transferred from Casa Grande Vista Grande.

No. 9 Gilbert Christian. In his first season as head coach, former 3-year assistant Scott McDaniel will direct 17 returning starters and the team's flashy offense. The entire offensive line is back to protect QB Nick Hershey (only 8 INTs last year), the No. 1 returning QB in 2A in terms of passing yards (2,316) and TDs (31) despite missing four games last year. Sr. Max Webb (445 rushing yards in 2016) is moving to his natural position, slot, this year. The team is expecting more big things from Jr. LB Mitch Sullivan, who will also carry the ball this year. Sr. DB/WR Blake Kelly and Sr. DE/WR Brayden Finkbeiner didn't play last year but will this year, and they have All-Conference potential, McDaniel said.

No. 10 Benson. The Bobcats have more returning linemen on both sides of the ball compared to last year, which bodes well for Benson's wing-T, veer run game. "For us everything is won up front," 14-year coach Chris Determan said. But the running backs are new and young. Former Payson defensive coordinator Chris Taylor, who played for Determan, moved over to handle the DC duties at Benson. The Bobcats' four-man defensive front will welcome four returners.



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Zabriel Saenz, Miami (photo by Darin Sicurello of maxpreps.com)



OL/DL Sam Nicholas, Thatcher (photo by Darin Sicurello of maxpreps.com)



Dylan Workman, Round Valley (photo by Darin Sicurello of maxpreps.com)

By Jose Garcia
 azpreps365.com

EAST REGION

Miami

Head coach: B. Radke.

2016 record: 4-7.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Sr. QB Zaberiel Saenz (5-11, 185. 57/143 for 947 total yards, 9 TDs, 116 carries for 707 yards and 10 TD's); Sr. RB Gabe Gomez (5-6, 170. 101 carries, 528 total yards, 4 TDs); Jr. MLB Raymond Galvan (5-9, 175. 129 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: Returning QB and RB who are leading the team as expected and staying on track for a successful season.

Strengths of defense during summer: Excitement. Learning a new system that the team is enjoying. They are anxious to get on the field and create problems for the opposing offense.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Offensive line. We are young at this position. So far they are performing well but seeing how they will compete when the season starts is a question mark.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Saenz. The offensive system is geared for his type of athleticism, and if he runs the offense they way I expect him to run it, he will put up big numbers.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: David Pena. He has always been undersized but gave 100 percent every opportunity he had. His hard work and dedication to the sport has paid off and will be a standout corner this junior year.

Morenci

Head coach: David Gallegos.

2016 record: 5-5.

No. of returning starters on offense: 3.

No. of returning starters on defense: 3.

Returning key players: Sr. WR/DB Brayden McCarthy; Jr. DT/OT Matthew Garcia; Sr. RB/DB Steven Chavarria; Sr. OL/DL Isaiah Sanchez; Sr. OL/DL Markus Sanchez; Sr. WR/DB Nico Carrasco.

Strengths of your offense during the summer: We have a knowledgeable O-line.

Strengths of your defense during the summer: The strength of our defense is at linebacker.

Your team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We are a young team with limited varsity experience. Which of our younger players are going to fill eight position spots on offense and defense?

Potential breakout players: Mark Roybal, Steven Chavarria.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Isaac Pacheco.

Round Valley

Head coach: Marcus Bell.

2016 record: 13-1.

No. of returning starters on offense: 3.

No. of returning starters on defense: 3.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Jr. LB/RB Dylan Workman (124 tackles, 433 all-purpose yards); Jr. RB/DL Colter Hogle (95 tackles, 8 sacks); Sr. OL/DL Dylan Wilkinson; Jr. LB/WR Brian Yellowhorse (50 tackles); Jr. OL/DL Andrew Cisco; Jr. DB/QB Kason Woolf (223 rushing yards, 40 tackles); Sr. DB/WR Marcus Adams (111 receiving yards, 2 TDs, 36 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: We're working to find out.

Strengths of defense during summer: We're working to find out.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Find some starters.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Dylan Workman.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Brian Yellow Horse and Andrew Cisco.

San Carlos

Head coach: Shawn Pietila.

2016 record: 1-9.

No. of returning starters on offense: 5.

No. of returning starters on defense: 5.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Jr. RB/LB Tristan Sneezy (5-7, 145. 375 rushing yards, 4 TDs, 400 receiving yards, 3 TDs, 1,370 all-purpose yards, 79 tackles); Jr. DB/WR Raymond Sneezy (163 rushing yards, 2 TDs, 550 total yards, 70 tackles); DE Xavier Allen; DB/WR Eliah Victor (6 INTs); Jr. LB/G Charles Mendoza Jr. (27 tackles); Jr. TE/DE Nathaniel Moses Jr.

Strengths of offense during summer: Our Strengths are experience at the skill positions. We expect to have a good balance of run and pass game.

Strengths of defense during summer: Our strengths on defense are speed and youth.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer:

Biggest question marks are if underclassmen can fill the void of lack of seniors. As of now we only have five going into this season.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Tristan Sneezy, Raymond Sneezy, Eliah Victor.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: CB DeAndre Dude, DT Elijah Thompson, CB Jaden Harney.

Unique human interest story: Although playing in an extremely tough conference/region, 2A East, we have been able to play well against teams on our skill level. We defeated Valley Sanders 51-16 last season and Red Mesa 33-20 the previous year.



Tyreck Cosay, Alchesay (photo by Rodney Haas of the Eloy Enterprise)

St. Johns

Head coach: Mike Morgan.

2016 record: 7-4.

No. of returning starters on offense: 4.

No. of returning starters on defense: 3.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Sr. RB/LB Joe Ramsey (6-0, 190. 374 rushing yards, 4 TDs, 288 receiving yards, 971 all-purpose yards, 53 tackles); Sr. OL/DL T.J. Heap (6-0, 210. 68 tackles); Sr. OL/DL Pacer Wiltbank; Sr. OL/DL Jon Holden (6-0, 240); Sr. OL/DL Diego Hernandez (6-0, 200); So. QB/LB Ramon Sanchez (5-10, 190); Sr. WR/DB Jon Robertson (6-3, 180. 638 passing yards, 9 TDs, 678 total yards); Sr. RB/DB Jared Fielder (6-1, 180); Sr. DE/TE Ethan Jessop (6-0, 185. 31 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: Offensive line and quarterback.

Strengths of defense during summer: Defensive line.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Very young.

Potential breakout player in 2017: QB Ramon Sanchez.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Joe Ramsey (1,102 rushing yards last year).

Thatcher

Head coach: Sean Hinton.

2016 record: 12-2.

No. of returning starters on offense: 2.

No. of returning starters on defense: 4.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Sr. QB/S Tyler Roebuck (6-1, 190. 103 receiving yards, 1 TD); Sr. RB/LB Jordan Herbert (6-1, 190. 23 tackles); Jr. OL/DL Quinten Mack (5-10, 225. 21 tackles); Jr. RB/DB Quinten Turley (5-9, 175. 43 stats); Jr. OL/DL Sam Nicholas (6-2, 250); Sr. TE/DE Layton Alder (5-11, 190).

Strengths of offense during summer: A good group of young guys eager to fight for lots of open spots. A good understanding of the offense and great team chemistry.

Strengths of defense during summer: Hard hitting and fast group with lots of talent looking to keep the tradition alive.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Lots of shoes to fill but a lot of feet to choose from. We're looking for new guys to step and fill lots of empty holes.

Potential breakout players in 2017: QB Tyler Roebuck was a starting WR last year and is looking good along with fellow senior and returning starting LB Jordan Herbert. Our three starting sophomores from last year's team will play key roles also, Quinten Mack, Quinten Turley and Sam Nicholas. After sitting out half the year with an injury then making the play of the game in the championship game, Layton Alder could surprise teams.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Layton Alder.

Unique human interest story: Coach Battraw was my high school coach as a freshman and coach Morales was my junior high coach. Both are veteran coaches that bring a lot to the table.

NORTH REGION

Alchesay

Head coach: Brandon Newcomb.

2016 record: 7-4.

No. of returning starters on offense: 4.

No. of returning starters on defense: 5.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Jr. RB/FS Tyreck Cosay (5-8, 170. 1,803 rushing yards, 34 TDs); Sr. OL Joseph Riley (6-0, 205), Sr. DL Josiah Colelay (6-1, 215), Jr. OL Cesario Hernandez (5-11, 250); Jr. QB/DB Kellen Parrish (5-10, 140); Jr. LB

Micah Bones (5-10, 160); Jr. LB Adriano Perry (5-10, 160); Jr. LB Nick Kitcheyan (5-5, 120).

Strengths of offense during summer: We return All-State RB (Cosay). Our QB (Parrish) started five games for us last year in place of his brother, who was injured, so QB experience is beneficial. Riley and Hernandez are returning lineman along with Colelay, who split time on the O-line. These players give us a good foundation to start with while we try to fill in holes of graduated players.

Strengths of defense during summer: Defensively, Bones and Perry saw significant time at LB. Cosay returns as our FS, and Colelay was a starter, who returns as a DT.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We must replace eight seniors who were either 1st or 2nd team All-Region players. We will have a small number of seniors, but our junior class is filled with talented football players who will have to mature quickly. We open the season versus a very talented Phoenix Christian squad. We will have to have a great summer and fall camp to be prepared for the Cougars.

Potential breakout players for 2017: Cosay should continue to be one of the top players in 2A. Riley and Colelay will have to provide senior leadership for us. Hernandez should blossom into a two-way lineman.

Unique human interest story: Parrish will be the third straight Parrish boy to play QB at Alchesay. His older brothers, Brannen ('12) and Jalin ('17), played QB at Alchesay for multiple seasons. I like to compare them to the "Manning Family of the Whiteriver."

METRO WEST REGION

Arizona Lutheran

Head coach: David Peter.

2016 record: 3-7.

No. of returning starters on offense: 10.

No. of returning starters on defense: 11.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Jr. RB/S Brandon Garcia (6-1, 175); RB/LB Jackson Gray (5-9, 170. 1,046 rushing yards); Jr. TE/DE Dylan Cook (6-3, 225); Sr. OL/DL Alex Jordan (5-10, 190); Jr. RB/CB Matthew Bernthal (5-8, 160. 7 TD's, 29 tackles); Sr. QB/CB Nick Naber (6-0, 170).

Strengths of offense during summer: More experience than last year. We had one senior on last year's team and started numerous sophomores. They're more familiar with our scheme.

Strengths of defense during summer: More experience and strength than last year. We've been working to be a bigger and stronger team.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Even though we will have more depth than last year, it's always a question in smaller schools. We aren't rolling out 55-plus guys in a program like some 2A schools.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Cook. Last year was his first year, and he has tremendous potential. He's the younger brother of graduate Brady Cook. I think he will be a strong and a physical player for us.

Bourgade Catholic

Head coach: Marcel Lopez.

2016 record: 2-8.

No. of returning starters on offense: 8.

No. of returning starters on defense: 6.

Returning key players: So. RB/DB Josh Dreher (5-7, 165); Sr. WR/LB Jaylen Reed-White (6-1, 190); Sr. OL/DL Jonathon Guzman (6-3, 265).

Strengths of offense during summer: Overall speed.

Strengths of defense during summer: The line.



QB Nick Hershey, Gilbert Christian (photo by Jim Willittes of maxpreps.com)

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Line play.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Dondre Villalobos; Carson Barney.

Gilbert Christian

Head coach: Scott McDaniel

2016 record: 6-5.

No. of returning starters on offense: 9.

No. of returning starters on defense: 8.

Returning key players: Sr. QB/DB Nick Hershey (5-10, 165); Sr. WR/DB Drew DeBree (6-2 185); Sr. WR/DB Max Webb (5-9, 165); Jr. RB/DE Mitch Sullivan (6-0, 180); Jr. OL/DL Hunter Trask (5-10, 210); Soph. OL/DL Joe Dickerson (5-10, 195); Sr. C/DL Carson Pogue (5-10, 250).

Strengths of your offense during the summer: The entire offensive line and most of our skill positions are returning this year. We did suffer two big losses (Caleb Young to graduation and Kyle Patterson to transfer). We expect to improve our running game behind the seasoned offensive line and should be great passing the ball with Sr. QB Nick Hershey throwing to returning receivers Drew DeBree and Max Webb.

Strengths of your defense during the summer: We have made huge strides in our pass defense over the summer. With a heavy focus on coverages and some strength and growth at our defensive line, we are looking forward to seeing big improvements on the defensive side of the ball.

Your team's biggest question marks heading into summer:

Our biggest concern coming into the summer was increasing the number of kids we have on the team. We have continued to build excitement in what we are doing in football and have been able to add to our overall team size.

Potential breakout players: Drew DeBree is looking to take over the primary receiver position vacated via graduation. While he was the No. 5 receiver in the section last year, we are expecting huge numbers from Drew this year. Max Webb is strong, fast and has great hands. Mitch Sullivan is moving into his junior year and has really focused on increasing his strength and speed. Where Mitch will shine is on defense. Finishing the year with 10 sacks last year, Mitch has focused on his defensive technique and is on the verge of becoming one of the best defensive players in 2A. Nick Pappas is new to Gilbert Christian but has shown to be coachable with great hands and defensively he has great instincts.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Senior Kolton Hobbs has been with us for four years and has continued to grow in confidence and skill. Kolton is undersized for a defensive lineman but provides the type of quickness and agility that will drive offensive linemen mad.

More about the team: The most notable thing about the 2017 Knights is the number of kids we have been able to bring out to play football. Last year, having 18 kids was tough. Practices were limited due to numbers and kids had to play offense, defense and special teams. This year we expect a final roster of about 40 kids and have some prior players returning to help lead us. Additionally, we have added a new offensive coordinator, Nathan Gregston, who is adding some octane to our offense.



WR Corey Leary, Phoenix Christian (photo by Mark Jones of maxpreps.com)

Joy Christian

Head coach: Pat Blakesley.

2016 record: 0-8.

No. of returning starters on offense: 9.

No. of returning starters on defense: 9.

Returning key players: So. LB Mason Rhynard (6-1, 185); Jr. RB Colt Sands (6-0, 170).

Strengths of offense during summer: Big line. Fast backs. Smart QB.

Strengths of defense during summer: Same as offense.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Re-building.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Rhynard.

Unique human interest story: Program is a complete rebuild. Most of the boys have never played. Completely different focus than the past.

Phoenix Christian

Head coach: Brian Cole.

2016 record: 10-2.

No. of returning starters on offense: 8.

No. of returning starters on defense: 7.

Returning key players: Sr. C Tito Figueroa (5-10, 250); Sr. OL Isaac Pittman, (6-2, 210); Sr. OL Omar Navarro (6-1, 230); Sr. WR/DB Corey Leary (5-9, 170); Sr. WR/DB Daniel Frampton (6-1, 180); Sr. DL Jonathan Herrera (5-9, 220); Sr. DL Joey Thomas (5-10, 250); Sr. WR/DB Frankie Orosz (6-2, 175); Sr. QB Hunter Cole (6-1, 195); Sr. DB Kyle Janes (5-10, 170); Sr. TE Kole Ebert (6-4, 200); Jr. RB Malik Taylor (5-10, 180); Jr. DB/DL Dontae Gilbert (5-10, 250); So. LB Donte Gordon (6-1, 215).

Strengths of offense during summer: O-Line has five starters returning. They all spent a lot of time in the weight room this off season. QB position is solid with either Hunter Cole or Donte Gordon.

Strengths of defense during summer: The strength of our defense should be our D-line, as we have three starters returning. We also return all four starters at DB, including All-State corner Dan Frampton.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Are the players going to pick up the new system.

Potential breakout players: Leary will be a two-way player who will have a ton of touches on the offensive side of ball. Hunter Cole has waited his turn and will have an opportunity to have a big year at QB. Donte Gordon could emerge as one of the best linebackers in the state. Dontae Gilbert should cause teams headaches on both sides of the ball.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Joe Burke and Mitch Schilling, both seniors, have worked really hard and will be key players for us.

More about the team: We have a very good senior class. I hope to get excellent leadership from them. If the team can pick up our offensive and defensive schemes, we should be very competitive.

Scottsdale Christian

Head coach: Chuck Gibbs.

2016 record: 10-3.

No. of returning starters on offense: 7.

No. of returning starters on defense: 9.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Sr. WR Jacob Kaite (5-10, 170. 56 receptions, 1,179 yards, 21.1 ypc); Sr. OL/DL RJ Li-aiga (6-2, 310); RB Shayne Pahnke (5-10 174. 10.2 ypc, 956 rushing yards); Sr. Cole Bauer (6-0, 180. 170-plus tackles); Sr. Ryan Salmon (6-3, 184. 19 sacks, 9 tackles for loss, 121 tackles, 5 fumble recoveries); Sr. LB Banks Madden (143 tackles); Jr.

Tanner Gibson (140 plus tackles); Sr. CB/WR/KR Josh Phillips (5-9, 165. 68 tackles, 4 INTs); Sr. P/DE/TE Matthew Tooker (6-3, 210. Averaged 42.2 per punt); Sr. G Dominic Lorenzi (5-10, 205).

Strengths of offense during summer: The RB and WR positions are deep with a lot of experience. SCA also returns four starting OL who get better each year. Since 2013, SCA has averaged more than 9.3 yards per rush and expect 2017 to be no different. Seniors RJ Liaiga, Dominic Lorenzi and Dimitri Anthis are extremely talented, with junior starters Reece Uphaus and Hunter Hancock returning. Over the past two seasons, SCA's offense logged 536 All-Purpose yards/game and averaged over 41 points game.

Strengths of defense during summer: We return a tremendous amount of talent and experience. The DL returns seven players who started games last season. The LBs have six returning starters. The secondary has three returning starters, with three more who saw a ton of action. There is a great mix of size, speed and experience that will allow SCA to be very aggressive and continue the great tradition of takeaways and defensive scoring. Over the past two years, SCA's defense has recorded 55 takeaways and 13 Defensive scores, while surrendering just 17 points per game.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: QB and TE positions.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Seniors Jacob Kaites, RJ Liaiga, Dom Lorenzi, Josh Phillips, Ryan Salmon, Matthew Tooker, Bennett Reimers, Mathew Tooker, Jesse Moffett, Cole Bauer, Banks Madden, Devin McClay, Dimitri Anthis, Ashton Otto & Tanner Hoffman. Juniors Shayne Pahnke, Reece Uphaus, Hunter Hancock & Christian Pahnke. Sophomore Christopher Popkey.

Players who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Seniors Jesse Moffet, Cole Bauer, Banks Madden, Bennett Reimers and Devin McClay have earned their positions. Others: Hunter Hancock, Chis Popkey and Ben Con-salvo.

More about the team: I am excited about where our program is right now, regardless of a few transfers. SCA will field a tougher team than in years past, and our players are grinding in the weight room. This is the most experience SCA has returned in a decade or so. Last year marked SCA's first back to back 9-win season and the first 10-win season since the 8-man program won 1A state in 1983. We must continue to execute our systems, relentlessly get after people, and have fun as a brotherhood. The results will take care of themselves.

Tempe Prep

Head coach: Joshua Brittain.

2016 record: 8-3.

No. of returning starters on offense: 8.

No. of returning starters on defense: 8.

Returning key players: Sr. LB/G Brendan Phelan (5-9, 212); Jr. DT/OT John Phelan (6-3, 286); Sr. QB Max Rich (6-2, 190); Sr. RB/LB Ahmad Jones (6-1, 190); Sr. WR/DB Liam Collins (5-11, 170); Sr. WR/LB/DB Carter Sampson (6-0, 175); Sr. DT/G Max Hoyt (5-10, 220); Sr. LB/TE Eddie Pivonka (5-10, 175).

Strengths of offense during summer: We have a lot of experience on the offensive side of the ball. We return our QB, leading rusher, top 2 receivers and 3 of our best linemen. I am excited about our experience.

Strengths of defense during summer: The strength of our defense should be our D-line. We also will have good experience and some very intelligent players at linebacker this year.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We



Jacob Kaites, Scottsdale Christian (photo by Mark Jones of maxpreps.com)

need to fill out and complete our offensive line. If we can fill two of the spots left by graduation, I think we will be in a good spot.

Potential breakout players in 2017: George Allen SarSar is a very athletic and big body who I think is going to burst on to the scene this year. He is strong and has increased his speed in the off-season. We are expecting great things.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Eddie Pivonka has been steadily getting better day in and day out. He is a little undersized but he has turned himself into an every-down player and a cornerstone of our defense.

More about the team: Going for 10th playoff appearance in the last 11 seasons.

METRO EAST REGION

Antelope Union

Head coach: Gary Mauldin.

2016 record: 1-8.

No. of returning starters on offense: 4.

No. of returning starters on defense: 4.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Sr. LB/RB Seth Guerrero (5-11, 220). Sr. DE/TE Brandon Jaime (5-10, 210. 28 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: Talent and speed. We also have some height this year.

Strengths of defense during summer: Speed and a tendency to love to hit.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Lost a number of seniors. We do have talent, but inexperience at the varsity level.

Potential breakout players in 2017: QB Dylan Thomas and WR/DB Dustin Ryker.

Unique human interest story: My high school coach when I played for Benson was Mike Hayhurst. Hayhurst is now the coach at Tombstone. We open up with Tombstone this season.

Chandler Prep

Head coach: Chris Goodman.

2016 record: 8-3.

No. of returning starters on offense: 3.

No. of returning starters on defense: 2.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Sr. QB Alex Brandt (5-9, 170. 316 rushing yards, 6 TD's, 86 tackles); Sr. C/DT Stirling Buske (6-1, 175. 42 tackles); Jr. G/DT Alex Bell (5-8, 200); Jr. RB/WR/C Ely Sannes (5-9, 150); Jr. RB/CB Izzat Mansour (5-7, 165).

Strengths of offense during summer: Our main strength is at quarterback, and it will determine how successful we are this season.

Strengths of defense during summer: We have guys that have been around a couple of years and understand the system, but have big shoes to fill as it is now their turn.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We have question marks everywhere. Everywhere.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Mansour, Jr. T/G/DT Brody Gregory, Jr. T/G/DT Griffin Serra.

Players who unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 seasons: Buske and Bell.

More on program: Our field is getting resurfaced throughout the summer.

Glendale Prep

Head coach: Jamie Self.

2016 record: 4-5.

No. of returning starters on offense: 4.

No. of returning starters on defense: 4.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: TB/LB Shane Kennedy (5-9, 150. 46 tackles); TB/LB Noah Roundy (5-10, 185. 531 rushing yards, 50 tackles); S Gino Vargas (6-0, 165. 224 receiving yards, 3 TDs, 20 tackles); QB/LB Luke Martinez (5-9, 155).

Strengths of offense during summer: Experience in the skill positions led by Martinez. We are fast and feisty.

Strengths of defense during summer: Ball-hawking, opportunistic defense with experience in the secondary.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Offensive line is young and inexperienced.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Martinez, Kennedy and Roundy. (Martinez is a) senior leader who has experience and the keys to the offense. (Roundy is a) natural football player who will get multiple carries per game. Kennedy is a tackling machine.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Martinez. He began as our QB last year and ended up starting every game. He showed toughness and has worked hard this year to become a passing threat.

Unique human interest story about program: This is our second year playing 11-man football. We have limited numbers on our roster. Our success this year will make a perfect movie script.

San Tan Foothills

Head coach: George De La Torre.

Number of returning starters on offense: 5.

Number of returning starters on defense: 5.

Strengths of your offense during the summer: We have two

quarterbacks battling, Sr. Brandon Williams (5-9, 170) and So. Zach Herrera (6-3, 150). Brandon is our running and throwing QB. He is known for his quickness and hard running as a RB last year. Zach can see the field and has good game management fundamentals. Sr. DeRonte Pope (6-0, 170), So. Amahri Bailey (6-0, 175) and Sabastian Penaflor (5-10, 155) are the backfield and are very capable of both running and catching the football. At our WR, we have Michael Holmes, So. Dilan Barazza (5-10, 150), Jacob Begley (5-9, 150), and So. Greyson Husar (5-9, 138). On the offensive line, we return a very capable group led by Sr. Steve Arant (5-11, 255), Jr. Brock La Point (6-4, 285) and Jr. Brandon McMahan (5-8, 190). Others who are expected to help include Jr. Lorenzo Cruz, Sr. Mason VanWinkle, Sr. Tristan Prado and Sr. Daniel Thomas.

Strengths of your defense during the summer: Our defense is lead by the returners in the secondary, Penaflor, Williams and Pope. We will have to rebuild our DL with Arant, LaPoint and Prado. McMahan and Bailey will help at LB and So. Adam Brogdon (5-11, 190) and Lorenzo Cruz (6-0, 260) will help with that process. Also, making an impact in the spring are new comers and brothers Jr. Caden Husar (5-10, 170) and So. Greyson Husar. Pushing for a starting position are So. Jacob Begley, Sr. Kyle Christiansen, So. Jacob Manalo, and Sr. Daniel Thomas.

More about the program: As in most 2A programs, the lack of depth makes practice interesting. We are working on a recruiting program on campus. We have 30 freshmen who have been at summer workouts and expect more when school begins.

Scottsdale Prep

Head coach: David Primavera.

2016 record: 3-6.

No. of returning starters on offense: 4.

No. of returning starters on defense: 6.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Sr. RB Karsten Santella (548 rushing yards, 3 TDs, 39 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: We have a strong running game. We have some experience on the offensive line.

Strengths of defense during summer: We have experience on the defensive line.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: A new quarterback.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Clark Benham, Ryan Arnsmeier, Caleb Trevino, Adam Musial.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Alex Wiley.

Veritas Prep

Head coach: Jim Ellison.

2016 record: 3-7

No. of returning starters on offense: 6.

No. of returning starters on defense: 6.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Sr. FB Sebastian Butatista (5-10, 205. 1,047 Yards 8 TDs, 420 rushing, 3 TDs receiving).

Strengths of offense during summer: Four starters on the line are returning.

Strengths of defense during summer: Six very good starters are returning.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We are young at some of the skill positions.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Gus Burch.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Joseph Hirsch.

CENTRAL REGION

Camp Verde

Head coach: Jerry Rhoades.

2016 record: 4-6.

No. of returning starters on offense: 4.

No. of returning starters on defense: 5.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: RB/LB Ryan Loza (6-0, 185. 243 receiving yards, 2 TDs, 96 tackles). QB Payton Sarkesian (6-0, 180. 1,084 passing yards, 9 TDs).

Strengths of offense during summer: Our offense took a hit with graduation. Our strength has to be our QB coming back.

Strengths of defense during summer: Honestly, not sure.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Youth and depth. We are going to be really young.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Alec Moore, Dominiq Bruno or Kevin Oothoudt.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Alec Moore.



Austin Barney, Benson (photo by Mark Jones of maxpreps.com)



RB/DB Titarro Jones, Santa Cruz (photo by Darin Sicurello of maxpreps.com)

Kingman Academy

Head coach: D.B. Stroup.

2016 record: 6-4.

No. of returning starters on offense: 8.

No. of returning starters on defense: 6.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: WR/CB Nate Carter (5-9, 160. 330 receiving yards); WR/FS Haven Potter (6-4, 200. 326 receiving yards, 3 TDs., 443 all-purpose yards.); QB Kekoa Makaiwi-Stroup (6-0, 159. 746 passing yards).

Strengths of offense during summer: Solid QB, great receivers, 4-5 offensive linemen returning. All with at least two years starting.

Strengths of defense during summer: Changing to 3-5-3 will allow for more athletes on the field.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Depth, like always, with a small school.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Joseph Trevino, Tyler Wheeler and Bryson Salazar.

Players who unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 seasons: Bryan Jones and Seth Pitts.

Tonopah Valley

Head coach: Dustin Johnson.

2016 record: 5-5.

No. of returning starters on offense: 7.

No. of returning starters on defense: 8.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: LB/TE Jess Pennington (5-11, 190. 150 tackles); QB Chris Davis (6-3, 218. In 2016, 1,015 passing yards, 10 TDs, 6 rushing TDs); RB Angelo Anderson (5-10, 180. Rushed for 870 yards, 4 TDs in 8 games.); OL/DL Pablo Beltran (6-4, 260); DB Anfernee Valdez (5-9, 160. 118 tackles); FS Sebastian Young (5-10, 180).

Strengths of offense during summer: Experience with seven returning starters. Athleticism. We worked very hard in the offseason. Cohesion. QB Davis gets the receivers together and throws on the weekends.

Strengths of defense during summer: Experience. Eight starters return. We fly to the football. We are very multidimen-

sional on defense this year. We have a lot of speed on defense.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Depth at certain positions. Overall size of the line.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Pablo Beltran has become a monster. He is very young for his grade, so he will play his senior year like he is a junior. Between QB Davis having the best off-season he has ever had, and with RB Angelo Anderson being healthy, those two should have a solid year on offense.

Players who unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 seasons: OL Pablo Beltran, OL Jesus Hernandez, WR Dalton Thompson.

Unique human interest story: Our players have been great members of the community. On April 1st, our players hosted a camp for the youth in the community where there was a great turnout.

Other details about your program: We are hungry after a disappointing season last year. With myself as head coach, offensive coordinator Nathan Bolden, and defensive coordinator Zack Gable, we were all first timers in our respective positions. This season, not only do our players have more experience but our staff as well. Line coach Josh Oliver also returns to us from a year stint at Westview, which is huge for us.

Paradise Honors

Head coach: Duane Brown.

2016 record: 10-2.

No. of returning starters on offense: 6.

No. of returning starters on defense: 8.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Jr. RB/DB Jordan Gortley; Sr. RB Sekou Tyler (1,843 all purpose yards, 6 tackles per game, 6 INTs.); Sr. LB Shane Kratzer (5-9, 185. 11.2 tackles per game 19 for loss); Sr. RB/LB Cristian Moga (102.2 yds per game, 9.1 tackles per game); Sr. LB Donovan Provenzano (8 tackles per game).

Strengths of offense during summer: Overall Athleticism and team speed

Strengths of defense during summer: Team speed.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Offensive and defensive lines.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Shane Kratzer, Sohn Simms, Jordan Gourley.

Players who unexpectedly blossomed into starters over the past 2-3 seasons: Dillan Behymer, Cody Lackhan.

Parker

Head coach: Jeston Lotts.

2016 record: 3-7.

No. of returning starters on offense: 7.

No. of returning starters on defense: 7.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Sr. SS James Hoban (640 rushing yards, 8 TDs, 920 all-purpose yards; Jr. OL/DL Hayden Sale; Sr. DB Pacen Scogin; Marcos Andrade; Jr. RB/DB Angelo Carballo; Jr. FB/ILB Shane Gottula (447 rushing yards, 9 TDs); Jr. OL/ILB Brannon Miller; Sr. OL/DL Alejandro Carballo; Sr. CB Michael Rodriguez (31 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: The amount of returners at key positions and experience.

Strengths of defense during summer: Speed looks to be better this year and experience.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Leadership and buy in in the weight room.

Potential breakout players in 2017: QB Adam Baldanegro and FB Shane Gottula.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Angelo Carballo and Michael Rodriguez.

SOUTH REGION

Santa Cruz

Head coach: Rishard Davis.

2016 record: 11-1.

No. of returning starters on offense: 5.

No. of returning starters on defense: 6.

Returning key players and stats: RB/WR/DB Raoul Perales (289 rushing yards, 3 TDs, 188 receiving yards, 3 TDs, 46 tackles); QB Jesus Cosillos (355 all-purpose yards, 59 tackles); RB/DB Titarro Jones (754 rushing yards, 11 TDs, 24 tackles). Strengths of offense during summer: These kids have been in the same system since freshman year.

Strengths of defense during summer: We are faster as a team compared to last year. The defense should play faster and more physical.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Offensive line.

Potential breakout players in 2017: OL Jose Salazar, DE/TE Curtis Banks, RB/LB Joel Salazar.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Curtis Banks.

Unique human interest story: Jose Salazar is a lineman that has been waiting for two years. He's a big lineman who unfortunately played behind a well-experienced line his whole career. He is hungry and excited about finally getting a chance in his senior season.



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Loveall Making a Name for Himself



Entering the 2017 campaign, Israel Loveall has thrown for an astounding 109 touchdowns in his career at Bagdad (photo by Jim Willittes of maxpreps.com).

By Jose Garcia
azpreps365.com

Israel Loveall doesn't really know the origin of his unique last name but was told that the first Lovealls who settled in Arizona were robbers.

What he does know, however, is how to throw at a record pace. Last year, Loveall stole the show in 1A, establishing conference season passing and touchdown state marks en route to leading Bagdad to a state title.

His 59 touchdowns and 3,083 passing yards in 2016, when he also became 1A's career touchdown leader with 109, pushed him ahead of schedule of becoming the best quarterback, in terms of numbers, to play 8-man ball.

Loveall just needs to toss 598 yards to take over as 1A's career all-time passing leader and 22 more touchdowns to become the first Arizona prep QB to throw 131 career TDs. The national record for career touchdown passes in 8-man is 143.

Understandably so, the senior and his eye-catching statistics get lost among the traffic of elite signal callers stationed in Arizona this year. But the accomplished small school standout knows where he stands.

After all, the 5-10, 190-pound quarterback is seeking state titles not individual records. And if his pursuit of more championship bling leads to a larger following and football scholarships, then he'll welcome it.

But he actually wants to continue playing baseball at the next level. What Loveall is also after is that dang baseball championship trophy, which Bagdad let slip through its grasp the past two years.

Before football came into the picture, the first love of Loveall, a lefty and potentially the best pitcher in 1A, was baseball. This summer he is playing baseball in the Valley to see if it can help him continue to play the sport after high school.

But a football is never too far away. azpreps365 caught up with Loveall this summer as he was traveling to a summer passing event.

The topics of conversation ranged from his individual feats to his family name to his summer job, mixed in with a bunch of laughs. Loveall is certainly enjoying his run as one of the best to ever suit up in 1A.

"To me," said Bagdad's sixth-year coach Dalton Mills, "Israel is the best 8-man quarterback I've seen. He's a humble kid who works hard and demands the same from his teammates."

Q & A WITH LOVEALL

How's your summer going?: "Well. I'm playing summer baseball with AZ Pro. I've been playing in Phoenix for the summer. The coach came and saw me play during one of our regular season games and asked if I was interested in playing for AZ Pro."

When did you start playing baseball and football?: "Baseball was always my first love. I've played it since I was little. I started playing football in fifth grade. My mom (Monica) wasn't too big on the hitting and pads, though. So she never encouraged us to play. My mom was always scared. My dad (Michael) calmed her down a little, but she still freaks out. My dad records the games for the football team and sometimes you can hear my mom's voice in the background. Even last year she still worries after every hit."

You did hurt yourself last year in the state quarterfinals. How do you feel?: "I'm 100 percent. I flipped over a guy, but he clipped my foot, and I over rotated and landed on the side of my neck. It hurt. There was pain down my left side and lower back, and it was hard to throw. I just practiced once leading up the state semifinal. (Loveall threw five touchdowns in the semifinals.) But it was the playoffs. I couldn't miss the game."

Your coach told me that you were also working in the Valley while playing baseball: "I'm working with my brother, who's a subcontractor for Moon Valley nurseries. I do different jobs, but the main one is irrigation. We put lines in for trees and shrubs and plant them. We also bring in rock."

Being a state record breaking starting quarterback isn't as glamorous as it seems, huh?: "Nope. (laughs). But my



In 2017 Loveall could set the all-time Arizona prep record for career passing yards (photo by Jim Willittes of max-preps.com).

parents taught me that we have to earn what we want. But the heat is a factor. It gets hot. It was crazy when it was 118, 119. I always mess with them (his crew) that when I buy my house I'm going to hire them in the summer and have them come do my yard while I supervise."

That was a quite a year you put together in 2016. You broke three state records and capped the year off with a title.: "It was a year to remember. One of the high lights of my career. The main thing for me, and I always talk to it about my dad (Michael), is that no body will remember the stats. What I will always remember and what I was more focused on was winning a state championship. Once you do that everybody will remember that. It was a bonus with the records."

It sounds like your father plays a big role in your athletic career?: "It's pretty amazing having him around. He's coached us (Loveall and brothers) ever since we've been in Little League. He knows how to calm you down and what to say. He's more in the dugout. He knows all of the guys and is a great guy to have around. He doesn't let us get down."

Speaking of your brothers (Benjamin, 18, James, 22, Zach, 24), this will be the last year a Loveall will play football at Bagdad. In your opinion, which brother, including yourself, is the best athlete in the family?: (Pause.)

Be careful. Remember, you are the youngest so you don't want your brothers after you.: "(Laughs). It has to be Benjamin, athletic wise. With his speed and jumping, he had the ability to do a lot of things. Zach and James were equal. Me? I'll just say we are all athletic. But Benjamin still weighs 145. He wasn't the biggest. We still try to get him in the weight room."

Williams, the team you beat in the final last year, is being mentioned as the favorite this year. You lost a lot of experience last year. Your thoughts and expectations about this year?: "I'm really excited. We have a lot of young guys, especially in our sophomore class. They have to step up for us. We lost six starters on defense. With Williams being the favorite, anything can happen. You always want to believe you want to be the favorite. Williams wants us. They've lost three in a row to us. In my opinion I want to be the favorite. If we work hard, I think we can step up and have a good shot."

What's it going to take to finally get over the hump in baseball? "The past two years have been tough. It was funny. We were talking one day about how it can't get any worse than losing 2-0 to Pima in the final two years ago. Then we lose 1-0 in the semifinals this past year. Baseball is a weird game. Anything can happen. We have a couple of starting pitchers coming back. They've been competing well. We'll see how it goes this year. We have the talent to make another run in both sports. We just have to play hard."

You've thrown 50 or more touchdowns in each of the past two seasons. Can we expect another 50 this year? "I don't shoot for a number. But that would be crazy if I was able to accomplish that again, especially since I lost my top three receivers. I was with them for three years. But we have some good receivers this year. I just have to learn what they like to do."

Random question. What's your favorite subject in school?: "Math. I took pre calculus last year. Bagdad is linked with Yavapai Community College, so I will be able to take my college math prerequisites this year."

What are your career goals?: "I want to be a helicopter pilot. Four years ago we went on a cruise to Alaska. We were in one of the small towns and had a helicopter ride around the glaciers and fell in love with it."

What's the story behind the Loveall name? I bet a lot of folks poke fun at it.: "Some people actually mispronounce it. It's funny to hear all of the mispronunciations. I have to actually tell them it's Love-all. How it (last name) came about? I'm not to sure. I heard a rumor when I was little. These guys back east were robbers, moved out west and ended up with the name."

Just having fun here, but have you ever stolen anything?: "No! And even if I did, I wouldn't say anything (laughs)."



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The Bagdad Sultans, 2016 1A State Champions (photo by Jim Willittes of maxpreps.com)

By Jose Garcia
 azpreps365.com

No. 1 Bagdad. Nose guard Scott Finnerty is the new No. 1 option for QB Israel Loveall. Finnerty also might run this year. One of the new offensive faces already making strides is sophomore Jauregui Elias. The team lacks depth for the first time under fifth-year coach Dalton Mills, who will design more runs plays for Loveall. "I really feel Williams has the best athletes overall, but Israel gives us a chance no matter who we play. He is the wild card."

No. 2 Williams. Its dual-threat QB transferred but three-year backup Diego Pedraza likely will step in. The defense, which returns its three leading tacklers, is led by one of 1A's best, LB Tate Grantham. LB Chance Pearson had 72 tackles as a freshman last year. Jr. WR/DE Zack Perkins had 11 sacks and is the team's returning leading receiver.

No. 3 Valley Union. Coach Ephram Ausseresses has a lot of letters in his last name and starters (12) back. What Coach A also wouldn't mind collecting more of this year are wins in his first year as a head coach. He's a disciple of Benson's coach Chris Determan's school of blocking and having multiple options in the backfield, something Valley Union has this year. What Valley Union also possesses is one of 1A's great multi-threats, QB/LB Derek Hahn, a senior who's more than ready to lead.

No. 4 Joseph City. After three uncharacteristic .500 or worse seasons, the Wildcats' mojo returned last year after reaching the state quarterfinals. LB Kaden Westover, a senior last year, will be missed after his 14 sacks, 77 tackles 2016 season. Last year, Sr. Matt Fields scored 19 of Joseph City's 54 TDs and rushed for 960 of the team's 2,111 yards. Seven of the team's 22 players last year were seniors in 2016.

No. 5 Mogollon. Last year was the first time the program didn't win at least seven games in more than 13 years. With the experience returning, don't expect that to become a two-year trend. Its leading all-purpose players of last year, Devon McLean and Trey Tenney, have two more seasons to do more damage together. But three of the four leading tacklers were seniors last year, so DB Seth Reidhead and the new new faces on defense will need to step up.

No. 6 NFL Yet. One of the biggest questions in 1A is if one of the conference's more explosive players, Shekeedran "BJ" Bryant (6-5, 190, 15 sacks last year), will play football in 2017? If he does, Bryant can help form an explosive triple punch along with WR/LB Dre'Quan Bryant and RB/DB Tyrail Carrethers. Coach Armando Ruiz is back, but for just one more season. He'll eventually fully promote his son, Armando Jr., to head coach. Soph. Isaiah Caston will step in as starting QB, and NFL Yet's offensive line will be comprised of freshmen, including Matthew Mata (6-2, 300).

No. 7 Mayer. The team lost its starting RB, TE and a LB but not its confidence and athletes who can step in and continue the momentum. Second-year quarterback Dylan Willhide is more composed, LB Dacodah Jensen is stronger, and look for Dade Hebert's quickness to be a big factor. Second-year coach Mike Gutierrez played on Mayer's 1995 championship team, was an assistant coach the last time Mayer won a title, 2006, and is one of three Mayer coaches who graduated from the school.

No. 8 Superior. The team will dress 12 new starters, but the new batch of players are ready to prove that they can continue the program's quest for a state title under 10-year coach Ryan Palmer. Steven Ybarra will take over as QB this year after paying his dues in the trenches last year. This year's teams also will be younger with the addition of a strong freshmen class that won middle school state championships. The program started with 30 players last year, but this year only 20 will begin the march toward another playoff berth. One of those players is one of the state's standout wide receivers, Marcos Bueno.

No. 9 Ray. Ray's new two quarterback system and experience (12 returning starters), especially in the secondary, should help rectify last year's problem spots. The strong-willed Jaden Pace joins the strong-armed Fabian Valenzuela as a signal caller this year. Valenzuela and Pace as well as Sr. Nathan Molar also are expected to lead the way in the secondary. Game cancellations, injuries and ineligibility issues also tripped up Ray last year, but that shouldn't be the case this season, second-year coach Frank Lechuga said.

No. 10 Salome. The Frogs will start about seven sophomores but most of them saw action last year, when the team continued its 6-year playoff streak. The leaders of the sophomores are RB/DB Pedro Velasquez, DB Joel Gonzales and RB/LB Octavio Martinez. The team also picked up a couple of key pieces, C Hugo Smith, who has recovered from an ACL injury, and Jose Armenta. Armenta didn't play last year but

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WEST REGION

Anthem Prep

Head coach: Nathan Miller.

2016 record: 2-6.

No. of returning starters on offense: 3.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Jacob Miller, Zach Kuchta, Zack Wood, Andrew Linden, Kaleb Dixon.

Bagdad

Head coach: Dalton Mills.

2016 record: 11-0.

No. of returning starters on offense: 4.

No. of returning starters on defense: 2.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB Israel Loveall (5-10, 190. 138/198 3,083 Yards, 59 TD's, 4 INT's); Sr. WR/DB Scott Finnerty (5-11. 10 catches for 163 yards, 3 TD's, 26 assisted tackles, 43 total tackles, 8 INT's, 1 fumble); Jr. C Owen Barton. (Zero bad snaps last year, 31 Tackles, 4.5 Sacks, 2 caused fumbles).

Strengths of offense during summer: We return our full starting O-line and have the best QB in 1A.

Strengths of defense during summer: Very Young but hungry and want to prove that they belong after waiting in the wings last year.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Offensively, the running back position. Defensively, replacing a lot of spots.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Besides Israel Loveall, Scotty Finnerty has the receiving skills to be one of the best receivers in the conference

More on the program: This will be a challenging year for us. We have our youngest team in the last five years, but have some quality younger players. Success will depend on how quickly we grow up.

Mayer

Head coach: Mike Gutierrez.

2016 record: 6-5

No. of returning starters on offense: 3-5.

No. of returning starters on defense: 4-5.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB/DB Dylan Willhide (5-10, 140. 1,004 passing yards, 483 rushing yards, 9 TDs, 79 tackles); Sr. FB/LB Dacodah Jensen (6-1, 190. 154 tackles, 1A's leading tackler last year.); Sr. TE/LB Matt Bywater (5-11, 185); Jr. TB/DB Dade Herbert (5-10, 140. 206 rushing yards, 4 TDs, 884 all-purpose yards, 44 tackles); Sr. C/DL Trane Hummel (5-11, 205); Jr. DB Zack Young (5-6, 110); Jr. OL/DL Cameron Henager (6-2, 190. 91 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: Quickness, athleticism and a core that has played together for a couple years.

Strengths of defense during summer: Being aggressive, fast. More experienced this season.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Depth.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Dade Herbert, Cameron Henager.



Junior center Owen Barton, Bagdad (photo by Jim Willittes of maxpreps.com)

Salome

Head coach: Bryan McCarty.

2016 record: 4-4.

No. of returning starters on offense: 4.

No. of returning starters on defense: 5.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Sr. QB Oscar Cruz (5-9, 180. Threw for more than 500 yards and rushed for 828, scoring total of 14 TDs last year).

Strengths of offense during summer: Speed and quickness. This is one of the fastest teams I've had heading into the summer. Our team will be very young, but most of them played significant minutes last season.

Strengths of defense during summer: Speed. We are thin at the LB position but we have a lot of DB's, and they are very quick and physical. We have some good speed/power/experience on the DL and 2 ball-hawking safeties.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Depth on the offensive and defensive line. We have a solid starting line, but behind them, we will have to see who emerges coming out of the summer.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Junior Coby Hager, great speed and vision, just has to get consistent and protect the ball. Senior Jose Armenta. Back after taking a year off. Very gifted ath-

lete who gives our team something we didn't have last year, a home run threat every time he touches the ball. Junior Jacob Phillips. First time coming out for football but has incredible size/speed ratio. Is the power forward on the basketball team. **Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons:** Sophomores Pedro Velasquez, Octavio Martinez, Joel Gonzalez and Fabian Perez. They all started last season as true freshmen, and I wasn't expecting that. They played a huge part in getting us into the playoffs last season.

EAST REGION

Duncan

Head coach: Eldon Merrell.

2016 record: 4-5.

No. of returning starters on offense: 3.

No. of returning starters on defense: 3.

Returning key players and stats: Jr. RB/LB Wesley Conyer (1,115 rushing yards, 14 TDs, 42 tackles); Sr. C Talbot Wearne; Sr. TE/DE Matthew Basteen; Sr. DB/return specialist Kade Stacy (201 rushing yards, 3 TDs, 970 all-purpose yards); Sr. WR/DB Braden Basteen.

Strengths of offense during summer: We will be strong and physical.

Strengths of defense during summer: We will be strong and physical.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Which underclassmen will step up and fill the holes we have.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Gerardo Cerna.

More on program: We have a lot of questions to answer after graduating a large senior class. There will be a lot of new faces on the field this year.

Superior

Head coach: Ryan Palmer.

2016 record: 9-1.

No. of returning starters on offense: 2.

No. of returning starters on defense: 2.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Sr. WR Marcos Bueno (6-2, 190, 822 receiving yards, 13 TDS); Jr. QB Steven Ybarra (5-11, 185).

Strengths of offense during summer: Bueno is a tough matchup for opponents at WR. I expect he will draw some double teams and or zone coverage, which should open up our speed option run attack.

Strengths of defense during summer: Our defense is fast and we will try to capitalize on our strengths by utilizing a variety of blitz packages to pressure opponents.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We lost several very talented seniors to graduation. We have been a contender each of the last two years. The biggest question will be can these underclassmen step up and fill the void left by those seniors.

Potential breakout play-



Marcos Bueno, Superior



Quarterback Oscar Cruz, Salome (photo by Jim Willittes of maxpreps.com)

ers in 2017: Bueno will be a standout and I believe would be competing for a starting WR position on any team, at any high school division. Steven Ybarra is a great athlete and is a playmaker. He played offensive guard for us last season, not because he wouldn't have been a standout playmaker last season, but because it was what was best for the team. Look for Ybarra to shine.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: We had a few freshmen that really contributed a lot last season. They have been working very hard in the weight room and expect a group of sophomores led by Daniel McConnell to play a key role on both sides of the ball.

Ray

Head coach: Frank Lechuga.

2016 record: 3-5.

No. of returning starters on offense: 6.

No. of returning starters on defense: 6.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Sr. QB/WR/DB Fabian Valenzuela; Jr. RB/DB Nathan Molar (86 tackles, 3 INTs); Jr. CB/WR/QB Jaden Pace; Sr. DE Dyllin Lopez (31); Sr. OL/DL Gabriel Schwartz; RB/DB Jando Felix; So. WR/RB/CB Eric Manriquez.

Strengths of offense during summer: With six returning starters our offensive players have a very relaxed feeling towards

each other since playing together last year. This will help out greatly in installing our offensive schemes.

Strengths of defense during summer: With our leading team tackler (Nathan Molar) returning, our defense will be ready to press the ball with our 11 other returning players that will help fill the void of losing two starters.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Conditioning and pass defense. We need everyone to buy in to the program to get ready for the season. Improvement on our pass defense from last year will be key for us.

Potential breakout players in 2017: This year we will be junior heavy. These players will have to step up and take on more responsibility and be major contributors.

Players who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Jando Felix, Eric Manriquez, Bryen Lopez and Romeo Varley.

NORTH REGION

Joseph City

Head coach: Eldon Larsen.

2016 record: 7-3.

No. of returning starters on offense: 5.

No. of returning starters on defense: 5.

Returning key players and stats: RB/LB Mathew Fields (6-2, 220. 960 rushing yards, 11 TDs); OL/DL Rance Haddox (5-11, 190. 31 tackles).

Strengths of offense during summer: Our running game is a strong point. We have strong running backs.

Strengths of defense during summer: Up the middle defense.



Junior Wesley Conyer, Duncan (photo by Darin Sicurello of maxpreps.com)

Our nose guard and middle linebacker will be very strong.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Offensive line needs to be rebuilt. On defense we will need to replace one of the best DBs in the league.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Latrelle Kinlicheenie, Eligh Ashcroft.

Mogollon

Head coach: Tim Slade.

2016 record: 5-4.

No. of returning starters on offense: 4.

No. of returning starters on defense: 3.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Sr. RB Devon Mclean (998 rushing yards, 14 TDs); Jr. QB Trey Tenney (1,110 passing yards, 2 INTs, 355 rushing yards); Sr. WR Noah Horn (333 receiving yards, 6 TDs); Sr. WR/DE Dustin McLaws; Sr. DE Josef Watkins (48 tackles); Jr. RB/DB Seth Reidhead (79 tackles, 291 rushing yards).

Strengths of offense during summer: Good speed at RB.

Good size and skill at WR. Returning starter at QB.

Strengths of defense during summer: Some experience at DB. Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: Defensive players and offensive linemen.

Potential breakout players in 2017: QB Trey Tenney, RB/DB Seth Reidhead.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Reidhead started as a freshman on defense.

Unique human interest story: Freshman Jayk Kelton could see some varsity time. His grandfather is assistant coach Rick Samon.

Williams

Head coach: Jeff Brownlee.

2016 record: 9-2.

No. of returning starters on offense: 5.

No. of returning starters on defense: 6.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Sr. RB/DB Daniel Lopez (6-1, 150. 371 receiving yards, 4 TDs, 54 tackles); Sr. LB Tate Grantham (5-10, 200. 111 tackles.); Sr. OL/DL Emmanuel Flores (5-10, 200); Jr. WR/DE Zack Perkins (6-3, 180. 409 receiving yards, 6 TDs, 69 tackles); So. RB/LB Chance Pearson (5-10, 185. 559 all-purpose yards, 72 tackles); Sr. QB Diego Pedraza (5-10, 170); QB/returner Kolby (5-6, 140); Sr. WR/CB David Lozano (6-0, 160).

Strengths of offense during summer: Much more experienced team playing 8-man football. Have all of our skilled kids coming back, with the exception of our QB from last year, as he transferred to another high school. Most likely, Diego Pedraza, will lead our team this year. Has been a solid backup for three years and excited to have the opportunity to lead the team. Have solid underclassmen, which will help with team depth.

Strengths of defense during summer: The defense will be solid with lots of team depth. Core of defense returning. Returning is Tate Grantham, who was the Defensive Player of the Year. Our defense will play a vital role in our success this year.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: New QB as our junior QB transferred to another high school. Deigo Pedraza will lead our team this year. He already knows the offense and excited for the upcoming season.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Daniel Lopez and Chance Pearson. Lopez is explosive offensively and is a solid cover man who loves to hit. Pearson played LB for us last year and was a starter until an early injury in the season against Joe City. Pearson will be playing both sides of the ball as a LB and RB.



Senior LB Tate Grantham, Williams (photo by Jim Willittes of maxpreps.com)

Grantham should have another solid year.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Mike Bolen. He has worked hard for three years and should be a solid lineman for us.

More about the program: We are a very excited about the upcoming year. As a team we feel we have some unfinished business to take care of. We know everyone will be gunning for us and we like the thought of that as it will drive us harder. Getting back to the championship game will not be easy and we'll play one game at a time and work to get into the playoffs.

East Region

NFL Yet

Head coach: Armando Ruiz Jr. and Armando Ruiz Sr.

2016 record: 7-2.

No. of returning starters on offense: 4.

No. of returning starters on defense: 4.

Returning key players and 2016 stats: Jr. DE/WR Shekeedran 'BJ' Bryant (6-4, 180. 15 sacks, 37 tackles); Sr. WR/LB Dre' Quan Bryant (6-0, 170. 5 TDs, 50 tackles); Sr. RB/DB Tyrail Carrethers (5-8, 155. 986 yards, 18 TD's); Sr. WR/LB Frank Garcia (5-10, 160. 79 solo tackles, 122 total tackles last season).

Strengths of offense during summer: Our skill positions and

incoming lineman are all freshmen and sophomores with a lot of room to grow and become the future of our program. A lot of speed, size and ambition from the young group.

Strengths of defense during summer: Our defensive line and defensive backs are our strongest position groups on defense. We have experience and grit in those positions and we are looking forward to their football IQ growth this summer.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: The quarterback position is our biggest question mark, as well as our young offensive line being able to adapt to High School Football. Potential breakout players in 2017: WR/DB Mark Ayala. He is an incoming sophomore with extreme athleticism and the desire to grow into one of our leaders. Also LB/FB Cristian Rueda. He is an incoming senior with leadership skills to help guide our team and the hard working attitude that will put him on the path to succeed.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: WR/DB Jose Carrillo. Really good footwork and a knack for finding the football. He has blossomed as a sophomore coming into his junior year. He has learned everything we have asked and continues to grow.

Unique human interest story: We are an inner-city program with a culturally diverse group of kids, who come from economically challenged backgrounds but thrive under these circumstances.

More about the program: Third year in AIA. Our campus is growing every year and we are preparing our kids to be future servant leaders in our community through our sports programs.

SOUTH REGION

St. David

Head coach: Mike Brogan.

2016 record: 7-3.

No. of returning starters on offense: 0.

No. of returning starters on defense: 1.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. WR James Brogan had 13 catches for 131 yards and 2 TDs last year.

Strengths of offense during summer: We have the benefit of having coach Davis helping with the offensive game planning.

Strengths of defense during summer: Defensively we have a lot of questions to answer. At this point we are not even sure of our scheme.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We have new coaches and zero returning players from last year. Experience will be our biggest drawback.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Our three seniors will all have an opportunity to contribute. James Brogan, Christian McGrath and Dawson Meador.

More info on program: This is a rebuild in the truest sense of the word. We will work hard over the summer and into the season to put a competitive team on the field. The weight room is where the process will begin. Our freshman class is talented and has a chance to contribute right away. We are looking forward to the season.

Trivium Prep

Head coach: Michael Spencer.

2016 record: 3-5.

No. of returning starters on offense: 8.

No. of returning starters on defense: 8.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. WR/DB Adan Sanders (454 receiving yards, 6 TDs); Sr. OL/DL Zach Hager (1st team all-region); Jr. QB Mason Moore (557 yards passing, 8 TDs); Sr. TE/LB Colby Bader.



Frank Garcia, NFL Yet (photo by Darin Sicurello of maxpreps.com)

Strengths of offense during summer: We have everyone returning from last year's team except one graduating senior. We are stronger and faster than last year and have continuity after a year of learning a new system.

Strengths of defense during summer: Experience and size will be a big factor for the upcoming year. The players had a year in the weight room will help matchup better against bigger players.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We have had some new players join the team and will have to adapt very quickly to find a role on the team. We will be competing against bigger schools this summer in passing leagues and I am curious to see how we hold up against them.

Potential breakout players in 2017: RB Martin Bui made it to the state finals in the 100m for 2A and should have a solid year. Robert Sanders has size and speed also at RB and OLB and is poised for a big year. Matt Moore is 6-3, 285 and is on mission to have a breakout year.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Zion Gamilla was a freshman who has had huge success in the weight room and is a great leader already on the team. Will play both OL & DL.

More about the program: Last year was our first year in the AIA with only 35 seniors in the entire school. This year's senior class has only 15 boys in the entire class but fortunately 11 of those boys play football. This will be the last year in 1A and will make a jump to 2A next year.

Valley Union

Head coach: Ephram Ausseresses.

2016 record: 7-3.

No. of returning starters on offense: 6.

No. of returning starters on defense: 6.

Returning key players and stats: Sr. QB/LB Derek Hahn (5-10, 175. 877 passing yards, 14 TD, 0 INTs, 317 rushing yards, 9 TDs, 29 Tackles); OL/DL Tristan Lawson (6-2, 230); RB/WR/C (5-8, 160); Sr. RB/WR/C Anthony Zamora (5-8, 160. 434 receiving yards, 6 TDs, 23 tackles); Sr. DE/FB Jesus Smith (5-9, 175. 26 tackles, 7 sacks).

Strengths of offense during summer: The return of starting QB Derek Hahn will be a huge asset to our offense this year. We also have several returning specialty players that should make our offense explosive and fun to watch.

Strengths of defense during summer: We have some returning players that will make sure our defense is a strong unit.

Team's biggest question marks heading into summer: We have a few positions where we have some depth. It will be interesting to see who will start in certain positions.

Potential breakout players in 2017: Derek Hahn and Larry Stewart.

Player who unexpectedly blossomed into starter over the past 2-3 seasons: Kelan Richardson.

2016 6A State Championship Bracket

Fri, Nov 4

Thurs, Nov 10

Fri, Nov 18

Sat, Nov 26

Cesar Chavez (#16)

Mountain Pointe (#1)

Westview (#9)

Desert Ridge (#8)

Pinnacle (#12)

Brophy Prep (#5)

Red Mountain (#13)

Skyline (#4)

Valley Vista (#14)

Perry (#3)

Tucson (#11)

Hamilton (#6)

Desert Vista (#10)

Mesa Mt. View (#7)

Basha (#15)

Chandler (#2)

Mountain Pointe

(52-14)

Desert Ridge

(34-26)

Brophy Prep

(52-42)

Red Mountain

(16-13)

Perry

(56-33)

Hamilton

(47-30)

Desert Vista

(28-14)

Chandler

(48-6)

Mountain Pointe

(47-21)

Red Mountain

(34-33)

Perry

(63-60 OT)

Chandler

(62-7)

Mountain Pointe

(21-14)

Chandler

(36-17)

Chandler

(62-20)

2016 5A State Championship Bracket

Fri, Nov 4

Thurs, Nov 10

Fri, Nov 18

Sat, Nov 26

Betty Fairfax (#16)

Cienega (#1)

Mesquite (#9)

Marana Mt. View (#8)

Liberty (#12)

Centennial (#5)

Verrado (#13)

Desert Edge (#4)

Flowing Wells (#14)

Ironwood Ridge (#3)

Desert View (#11)

Queen Creek (#6)

Raymond Kellis (#10)

Marana (#7)

Chaparral (#15)

Williams Field (#2)

Cienega

(49-14)

Mesquite

(21-19)

Centennial

(24-10)

Desert Edge

(34-10)

Ironwood Ridge

(50-20)

Queen Creek

(62-0)

Marana

(28-21)

Williams Field

(37-14)

Cienega

(63-38)

Centennial

(21-6)

Queen Creek

(42-26)

Williams Field

(41-14)

Centennial

(56-21)

Williams Field

(37-12)

Williams Field

(14-6)

2016 4A State Championship Bracket

Fri, Nov 4

Thurs, Nov 10

Fri, Nov 18

Sat, Nov 26

Amphitheater (#16)

Saguaro (#1)

Bradshaw Mountain (#9)

Peoria (#8)

Buckeye (#12)

Marcos de Niza (#5)

Canyon Del Oro (#13)

Salpointe Catholic (#4)

Mingus (#14)

Sunrise Mountain (#3)

Cactus Shadows (#11)

Catalina Foothills (#6)

Dysart (#10)

Cactus (#7)

St. Mary's (#15)

Higley (#2)

Saguaro

(56-7)

Peoria

(29-24)

Marcos de Niza

(41-36)

Salpointe

(10-6)

Sunrise Mountain

(49-6)

Catalina Foothills

(35-31)

Cactus

(62-17)

Higley

(44-0)

Saguaro

(61-6)

Salpointe

(48-6)

Catalina Foothills

(52-49)

Higley

(49-35)

Saguaro

(24-3)

Saguaro

(42-14)

Catalina Foothills

(62-37)

2016 3A State Championship Bracket

Sat, Nov 5

Sat, Nov 12

Sat, Nov 19

Sat, Nov 26

Page (#16)

Show Low (#1)	Show Low (56-6)		
Casteel (#9)		Show Low (28-26)	
Yuma Catholic (#8)	Yuma Catholic (35-0)		
Safford (#12)		Sabino (23-21)	
Sabino (#5)	Sabino (45-7)		
Winslow (#13)		Sabino (48-0)	
Monument Valley (#4)	Winslow (40-6)		
Wickenburg (#14)			Amer. Leadership (31-14)
Amer. Leadership (#3)	Amer. Leadership (56-37)		
River Valley (#11)		Amer. Leadership (38-21)	
Florence (#6)	Florence (54-7)		
Pusch Ridge (#10)		Amer. Leadership (41-21)	
NW Christian (#7)	NW Christian (28-21)		
Payson (#15)		NW Christian (31-13)	
Snowflake (#2)	Payson (7-6)		

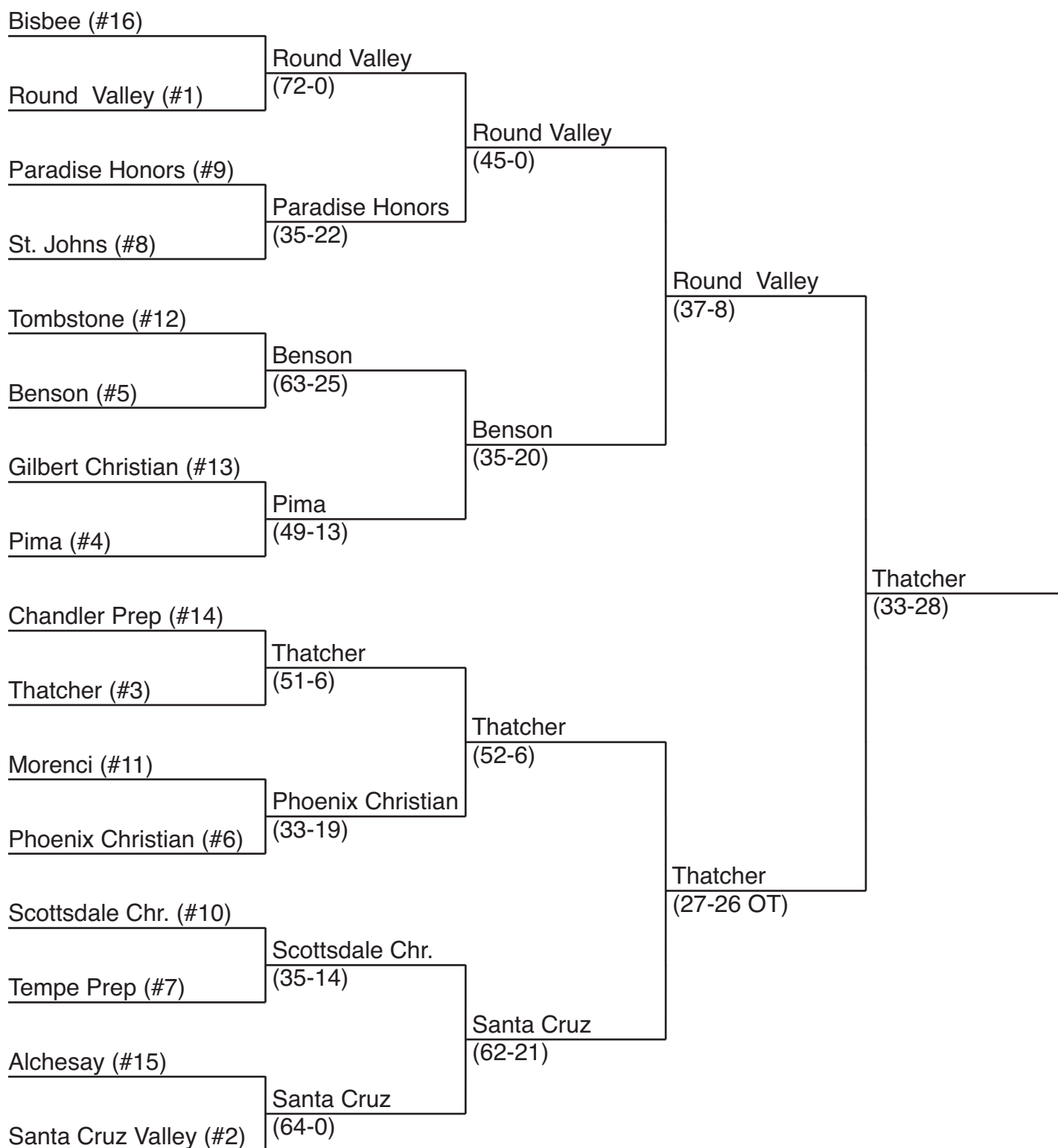
2016 2A State Championship Bracket

Sat, Nov 5

Sat, Nov 12

Sat, Nov 19

Sat, Nov 26



2016 1A State Championship Bracket

Sat, Oct 22

Sat, Oct 29

Sat, Nov 5

Sat, Nov 12

Hayden (#9)

Mayer (#8)

Hayden
(36-14)

Bagdad (#1)

Bagdad
(66-26)

Duncan (#12)

NFL Yet (#5)

NFL Yet
(64-26)

St. David (#4)

St. David
(60-22)

Bagdad
(54-12)

Salome (#11)

Valley Union (#6)

Valley Union
(68-26)

Williams (#3)

Williams
(72-28)

Williams
(42-40 OT)

Mogollon (#10)

Joseph City (#7)

Joseph City
(63-46)

Superior (#2)

Superior
(52-21)

Bagdad
(60-6)

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