

BOBCATS READY FOR 2008

by Rick Poulter

Physical toughness, consistent play and added speed are the key ingredients that Head Coach Brad Wright is instilling into his 2008 Texas State football team.

“We tried to develop a physical presence in spring practice and will continue doing that next fall because usually, the more physical and consistent football team is going to win games,” Wright said.

Right after last season’s 4-7 campaign, Wright put his returning players through a vigorous off-season conditioning program that continued through Texas State’s spring practice. Among those returning players, Texas State has 17 starters back with nine on offense and eight on defense.

Senior wide receiver Cameron Luke heads the list of nine offensive starters after earning All-Southland Conference First Team honors in a record-setting season as a junior. Luke set school receiving records for most receptions (60), receiving yards (1,035) and touchdown receptions (12). The Bobcats also return Adrian Thomas at another wide receiver spot after he caught 24 passes for 301 yards. Wright also added some speed to his receiving corps with the addition of junior college transfer E.J. LeBlanc.

The receivers will be catching passes from experienced quarterbacks Bradley George and Clint Toon. George is a two-year starter who threw for 2,099 yards and

16 touchdowns last season. Toon is a senior who earned additional playing time as a result of his hard work during offseason.

But, the deepest position for Texas State’s offensive unit is running back, where Southland Conference Offensive Freshman of the Year Karrington Bush, senior Stan Zwinggi and junior Alvin Canady return.

Bush ran for 1,059 yards and three touchdowns, while Zwinggi rushed for 497 yards and nine scores despite missing three games with an injury. Canady was the team’s second-leading receiver with 37 catches.

Senior Blake Burton also returns as a three-year starting fullback after coming to Texas State as a walk-on player.

Up front, the Bobcats return John Gilley and Andrew Brooks at tight end. Three returning starters on the offensive line are Jeff Bowen at center, with Calvin Gore and Alex Luna at the two tackle positions. Redshirt sophomore Winston Ruelas and redshirt freshman D.J. Hall need to continue developing as new starters at the two guard spots.

The Bobcats also need to improve on the defensive side of the football, where they have a revamped defensive scheme.

Texas State will feature two-year lettermen Joe Bell, Marcus Clark and Bryan Iwuji at the three linebacker spots. Clark led the Bobcats in tackles as a true freshman.

The defensive line has Ray Parker returning at nose tackle, Wellington Deshield at the other tackle position and Donovan King at right defensive end. Travis Houston will man the left end spot after playing linebacker last season.

“We feel pretty good about our top four guys on the defensive line,” Wright said. “But, we need to develop some solid backups.”



The Bobcats also need two players to emerge at the safety spots from among Michael Rutledge, Brian Williams, T.P. Miller and Jamal Williams.

“This is the area that needs the most improvement,” Wright said. “We have four guys who need to be more consistent rather than having a good play and then a bad play.”

A strength in the defensive backfield should be cornerbacks Drenard Williams, Will Thompson and Morris Crosby. Williams is a transfer from Iowa State, while Thompson was fifth among Texas State’s team leaders in tackles, and Crosby moved over from wide receiver.

“Defensively, we became a more physical football team last spring and need to continue that this fall. Offensively, we need to have more consistency,” Wright said. “You always enter the season with high hopes.”★

2008 Schedule

Aug. 30	Angelo State	San Marcos
Sept. 6	at SMU	Dallas
Sept. 20	at Northern Colorado	Greeley, Colo.
Sept. 27	Southern Utah	San Marcos
Oct. 4	Texas Southern	San Marcos
Oct. 11	at McNeese State	Lake Charles
Oct. 18	Central Arkansas (HC)	San Marcos
Oct. 25	at Stephen F. Austin	Nacogdoches
Nov. 1	Northwestern St.	San Marcos
Nov. 8	at Southeastern La	Hammond, La.
Nov. 15	Nicholls State	San Marcos
Nov. 22	at Sam Houston State	Huntsville

For tickets, call 512.245.2272 or visit <http://txstatebobcats.cstv.com/>.