



By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Imperial's new football complex will get christened with its first game here this Friday night. Dan Lenner's Longhorn football team will open their season when the Holyoke Dragons visit here for a 7 p.m. kickoff.

This year's Longhorn squad stands at 34 strong led by returning senior letter winners Jeff Banks and Tyler Roenfeldt, juniors Alex Strand, Paul Gaschler, Jakob Burke, Tanner Stromberger, Trevor Fuehrer and Daniel Regier.

This year's team is heavy laden with juniors, totalling 16 of the 34. Banks, Roenfeldt and Francisco Valero are the only seniors on the team. Six sophomores and nine freshmen join the upperclassmen.

This will open up some opportunities for younger players to see some action as well as the season progresses, Lenner noted.

Lenner likes progress

After reviewing the film from Friday night's final pre-season scrimmage, Lenner said he is pleased with the team's progress so far.

"We're ahead of last year," Lenner said, but plenty of work remains.

"We are nowhere where we need to be," he said.

The goal will be to continue improving each week and become more consistent.

He said a lack of consistency remains the team's biggest challenge right now. "At times, we look good; other times, not so good," he added.

Coming off the scrimmage, Lenner said the offensive and defensive lines represent the team's biggest strength right now.

He said they're solid there, with as many as 10 kids who could play in the line.

Lenner expects Roenfeldt to start at center, as well as on the defensive line.

Others who will see action as guards and tackles on offense and defense include Fuehrer, Stromberger, Daniel Hogsett, Grant Lenner, Lucas Bauerle, Jonathan Hess, and Nathan Hinojosa.

Banks will likely see action at tight end but has also been working at guard, tackle and center, Lenner said.

Other ends include Keithan Cochran, Burke and Regier.

Alex Strand will take the reins at quarterback with Jeremiah Lueth at fullback and Fish and Gaschler as halfbacks.

Misael Garcia will likely see action at halfback as well and freshman Michael May could get some carries at the position.

On defense, the line will be comprised of the aforementioned players.

Strand, Regier and Stromberger will head up the linebacking corp with Lueth, Burke, Steven Fish and Charlie Haarberg at the corners.

Gaschler will return as safety and Cochran, Garcia and Fish will see action there as well.

Garcia will handle the place kicking duties and Regier or Fish will handle the punting.

No easy games

Looking across the schedule, Lenners said the Longhorns will have to be ready to play hard every week. There are no easy games, he added.

After the opener with Holyoke, the Longhorns travel to Southwest and play host to Cambridge on consecutive weeks.

The next two weeks will find the Longhorns on the road at Morrill and Sutherland.

Then, they get Bridgeport and Bayard here at home before completing the regular season at Grant.