By Russ Pankonin
The Imperial Republican

Coach Dan Lenners will take his 2012 football team to Gordon Friday night for the Longhorns' season opener.

For Gordon-Rushville, it will be their second game. They defeated Ainsworth last week 7-3, with a lone fourth quarter touchdown.

Lenners will rely on the leadership of eight seniors who all bring starting experience to the squad.

He said the first three weeks of practice have gone well. They go into the game with only one player questionable due to injury.

Friday's game will give Lenners and his coaching staff the opportunity to evaluate just what kind of progress was made in the off-season and pre-season.

He said it's hard to do that when the first team goes against the second team in practice.

As a result, Lenners said they tried to practice some of the first teamers against each other on both sides of the ball.

Offense

Offensively, Lenners brings back nine starters, with experienced players at the other positions.

Callin Ledall will anchor the line at center, with Justus Wallin and Brian Bell at the guards, and Ethan Haarberg and Spencer Hartman at the tackles.

Kelton Fisher and Isaac Sorenson will play at tight end, with Hunter Spady and Kevin German at split end.

Kale Gockley will lead the team at quarterback with Justin German behind him at fullback, Dan Sullivan and Trey Milner at I-back, and Michael May and Jeff Dickey at slot back.

Lenners said they have been working on both the ground game and passing game in preparation for Friday's contest.

Defense

Defensively, Lenners said they have lots of experience on that side of the ball as well.

He said they've really been coming together and had a good summer in preparation for the season.

Lenners said they will likely open in a 3-5 defense against Gordon-Rushville but will also be ready to play a 4-5.

Look for Bell at nose guard, with Ledall and Tyler Oxford anchoring the ends.

German, Wallin, Dickey, Spady and Sorenson will stack up at linebacker. Cornerbacks will be Sullivan and Milner with Gockley, Fisher and May in the secondary.

Another strong asset for the Longhorns will be a strong kicking game led by David Almanza.

Almanza kicked well last season and attended two kicking camps this summer. Lenners said he's been really accurate on extra-point kicks and has a good range of 32-35 yard range.

Playing in Class C1

The Longhorns will compete in Class C1 for the next two football seasons. With the low number

of C1 schools out west, the Longhorns will find themselves with some long road trips.

This year, the schedule includes away games at Gordon, Chadron, Cozad and Kearney Catholic.

The Longhorns will be home against Sidney, Mitchell, Gothenburg and Minden.

The other C1-9 district teams include Cozad, Gothenburg, Minden and Kearney Catholic.

Friday's game at Gordon begins at 7 p.m. MDT.

Team members include:

Seniors—Callin Ledall, Brian Bell, Spencer Hartman, Justin German, Kale Gockley, Hunter Spady, Ethan Haarberg, Tyler Oxford and Michael May.

Juniors—Charles Holman, Sam Haarberg, Sam Cahow, Dan Sullivan, Trey Milner, Justus Wallin, Khris Kuhlman, Kevin German, David Almanza, Shay and Eidson.

Sophomores—Fred Kasselman, Jacob Christensen, Allen Smith, Kelton Fisher, Jeff Dickey, Ryan Moline, Isaac Sorensen, Jake Leuth and Travis Luhrs.

Freshmen—Destyn Milner, Eli Engbrecht, Taylor Wilson, Hunter Dillan and Caleb Bubak.