

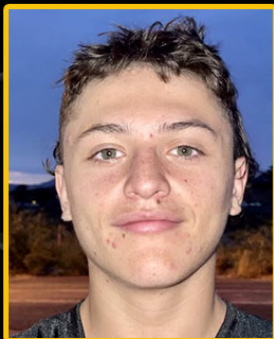
2021 SOLLENBERGER'S AZ FOOTBALL PREP MAGAZINE 50th Edition



KYION GRAYES
6A CHANDLER



ANDREW MORRIS
4A MESQUITE



GABE ESCOBEDO
2A MIAMI



ANTHONY LUCAS
CHAPARRAL



GAVIN BROSCIOUS
5A DESERT EDGE



RICHARD STALLWORTH
3A YUMA CATHOLIC



LANDON STEPHENS
1A MOGOLLON

COMPLETE ARIZONA FOOTBALL PREVIEW

• OPENING SOLLENBERGER'S ARCHIVE • ST. MARY'S-BROPHY RIVALRY • PLAYING DURING A PANDEMIC
• RETURN TO THE REZ • PEORIA TURNS 100 • PREVIEWS, RANKINGS ... AND MUCH MORE!!!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Top Story: Returning to Play During a Pandemic	8
Sollenberger: AZ Preps Ranks from the 1960s	10
Renewing the St. Mary's-Brophy Rivalry	12
Peoria High School Celebrates 100 Years	14
Football Returns to the Rez	16
Remembering Rich Alday	18
Changes for Southern Arizona Coaches	20
Football Rule Changes for 2021	22
Grand Canyon State Gridiron Club	24
Returning Statistical Leaders from 2020	26
Open Division Picks	27
 6A Conference	
Preseason Rankings	30
Team-By-Team Preview	32
Chandler's Kyion Grayes	33
Chaparral's Anthony Lucas	36
Mountain View's Joe Germaine	40
 5A Conference	
Preseason Rankings	42
Team-By-Team Preview	44
Desert Edge's Gavin Broschious	47
 4A Conference	
Preseason Rankings	52
Team-By-Team Preview	54
Mesquite's Andrew Morris	58
 3A Conference	
Preseason Rankings	66
Team-By-Team Preview	68
Yuma Catholic's Richard Stallworth	72
 2A Conference	
Preseason Rankings	78
Team-By-Team Preview	80
Miami's Gabe Escobedo	82
 1A Conference	
Preseason Rankings	90
Team-By-Team Preview	92
Mogollon's Landon Stephens	95
Past State Champions	98
2A-6A Individual Records	110
1A Individual Records	128

Sollenberger's AZ Football Prep Magazine is one of the two longest-running preseason high school primers in the nation.

By Jose Garcia
AZPreps365.com

Hello, and thank you for clicking on the latest issue of the Sollenberger, the 50th edition of a magazine named after a very special person. Barry Sollenberger devoted his life to guarding the history of Arizona's high school sports programs and athletes. He used his preseason football magazine to do just that, as well as promote as many student-athletes as possible.



As an ode to the late Arizona Interscholastic Association's historian and Sports Information Director, we sprinkled this year's Sollenberger magazine with historical text with help from the state's coaches, AZPreps365.com's staff and Barry himself. On pages 10-11, you'll find the very first Arizona high school football article Sollenberger archived in his magazine. The story, published in his magazine's first issue in 1970, focuses on the state's football phenoms of the 1960s. In the conference region previews of this year's magazine, you'll find more historical nuggets about the Grand Canyon state's high school programs. AZPreps365.com's staff writers also contributed articles on some headliners of yesteryear and today. The 50th edition of the magazine Sollenberger launched coincides with the reunion of arguably the state's most storied big school rivalry, Brophy-St. Mary's. After an eight-year hiatus, the parochial pillars will meet again. Speaking of history, this season AZPreps365.com will broadcast some of the rivalry games that help shape Arizona's high school football identity. The Sept. 3 game between Brophy-St. Mary's will be the first game on the docket.

This season also marks the 100th birthday of Peoria High School football, which helped construct the rich football tradition of the West Valley. Peoria's history and the Brophy-St. Mary's rivalry also are featured in the 2021 Sollenberger magazine. Without Sollenberger, Arizona wouldn't have a high school football record book also. Those archives are posted on AZPreps365.com as well as in this year's magazine. You'll also find in the 2021 Sollenberger for the first time a top-10 state record list for each category regardless of conference.

Barry died on his 60th birthday in 2005, but his good friend and publishing partner, Dave Kukulski, Kukulski's family and their staff kept standing watch over Sollenberger's magazine. 2013 marked the only year in which a Sollenberger preseason Arizona high school football outlook wasn't published in some form. But in 2014, the Kukulskis and AZPreps365.com joined forces to relaunch the magazine, renaming it in Sollenberger's honor. Dave Campbell's Texas Football Magazine and Sollenberger's AZ Football Prep Magazine are the longest running preseason high school football publications in the nation.

Last year was the first time that AZPreps365.com published the magazine on its own. It's an honor to also publish the 50th edition and continue to remember the man who started it all. But we are also cognizant that the golden anniversary edition of the Sollenberger is being published during a pandemic that's taken its toll. Arizona's high schools sports ranks are filled with resilient folks, though. Sollenberger was one of them. Financial hardships kept him and Kukulski from producing publications at times. But it never truly stopped them. Arizona's high school football programs will rebound just like the Sollenberger has through the years.

Magazine history: The 50th edition of this magazine is named after Barry Sollenberger, an Arizona high school sports historian and former SID for the Arizona Interscholastic Association.

AZPreps365.com staff writers: Jose Garcia, Andy Morales, George Werner, Les Willsey, ASU intern Hunter Hippel.

Designed by: Seth Polansky, AIA Sports Information Coordinator; Frankie Acosta, Brian Lukas and the Playfly Sports team.

Cover photo credits: Chaparral's Anthony Lucas/Darin Sicurello, MaxPreps. Chandler's Kyion Grayes/Darin Sicurello, MaxPreps. Desert Edge's Gavin Broschious/Mark Jones, MaxPreps. Mesquite's Andrew Morris/Steven Davis, MaxPreps. Yuma Catholic's Richard Stallworth/Jack Beasley, MaxPreps. Miami's Gabe Escobedo courtesy of Gabe Escobedo. Mogollon's Landon Stephens/Steven Davis, MaxPreps. Table of contents photo by Kevin French, MaxPreps.

Special thanks to all the coaches who turned in their questionnaires and shared their programs' insights.

GAME OF THE WEEK

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SEPT. 3

Saint Mary's
vs. Brophy

SEPT. 10

Maryvale
vs. Trevor Browne

SEPT. 17

Valley Vista
vs. Willow Canyon

SEPT. 24

Ironwood Ridge
vs. Salpointe Catholic

OCT. 1

Yuma Catholic vs.
Northwest Christian

OCT. 8

Mountain View (Mesa)
vs. Red Mountain

OCT. 15

Coolidge
vs. Florence

OCT. 22

Sandra Day O'Connor
vs. Boulder Creek

OCT. 29

Tempe
vs. Arcadia

NOV. 5

Millennium
vs. Desert Edge

NOV. 12

Coconino
vs. Flagstaff



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SOLLENBERGER'S MAGAZINE THROUGH THE YEARS



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SURGING COVID-19 NUMBERS PUT DAMPER TO SEASON'S START

By Les Willsey
AZPreps365.com

A question to ponder as prep football teams ready to return to the field after 2020's short and memorable season.

Will there be a return to normalcy or some form of it during 2021? At this point – as preseason practices are wrapping up – the Arizona Interscholastic Association is pointing toward it.

"We are ready to move forward," AIA Executive Director David Hines said. "Last year there were so many unknowns. Circumstances changed weekly, daily, sometimes hourly. I thought our staff did a tremendous job of adjusting in light of those."

Hines said optimism for fall 2021 arises out of the fact vaccinations are now available.

"We have to continue to be concerned, but people have a choice," he said. "We anticipate some incidences. Schools have some options. I'm sure we may see where several kids in a program are positive and they'll take a 10-day pause."



The AIA has and will continue to adhere to the Center for Disease Control guidelines. Cases are rising rapidly nationally and Arizona is not immune. Just last week reported cases in Arizona doubled one day to the next. As the first week of August commenced, however, COVID-19 struck hard with the Delta variant leading the charge. Outbreaks have started taking hold at schools and communities and have put a damper on the optimism that existed a couple weeks earlier.

Last year, more than 80 games were cancelled. When a window appeared to initiate football for 2020 in September, schools were relieved to have the opportunity. Games ultimately commenced the first week of October for most. Regular season games were limited to eight and playoff brackets truncated. There were no championship games played in non-high school stadiums. Some districts decided not to participate such as Phoenix Union and Tolleson as well as Native American schools, deciding to err on the side of caution due to heavy spread in their communities.

"Our community understood at the time the severity of cases and backed our decision not to play last fall (2020)," Tolleson district athletic director Derek Fahleson said. "We were able to have a modified season for our schools in district in the spring. We've been able to prepare much like normal this summer."

The truest words spoken - and likely thought of by other coaches and administrators - comes from Fahleson.



The AIA has removed mask mandates for participants and fans, but schools may elect to enact their own rules. (Darin Sicurello photo/MaxPreps)

“The ultimate reality is we are not in control,” Fahleson said. “COVID-19 is and we have to take steps accordingly if it takes off again.”

Just two weeks ago many coaches had sunny outlooks where 2021 was headed. Perry coach Preston Jones said at the time it felt like it was back to normal. Now....

“I’m seeing more masks worn at school,” he said. “When we started classes a month ago hardly anyone was wearing a mask. Now it’s more common again. We make our kids wear masks in the weight room. We’ve had one kid test positive so far. If kids are feeling sick, we tell them to stay away. Right now I don’t see it getting better.”

Recently, many school districts have issued mask mandates. The Mesa District, where Westwood football coach Kyle Ide resides, does not have a mandate at this time. Ide has a similar take to Jones.

“We were treating it as back to normal,” Ide said. “Although in the back of my mind was still kind of leery. In normal times if a kid told you he has a cold, you’d say, ‘Suck it up and get out there.’ Now if a kid says he has a cold, you don’t know if it is a cold or might be the start of COVID. So now what do I do. I can’t assume it’s just a cold.”

Two weeks later, Ide said the atmosphere is “a little more on edge”. It’s hard to know when or if it will hit a program hard.

“It’s kind of scary,” Ide added. “We’ve had a bunch of cases at our school, but only two players have tested positive. Our team hasn’t had any major issues yet. But the thing about it is it spreads so fast and is so contagious.”

Many schools across the state have reported outbreaks among students and players on their teams the first week of August. Desert Vista had to pause for eight days as did a number of other schools. Higley was set to practice for the first time Aug. 17 after pausing to manage an outbreak. Canyon View and West Point in the West Valley also have hit the pause button due to COVID outbreaks.

“We’ve had enough positive tests to follow the AIA guidelines of two or more to take a pause,” Canyon View coach Nick Gehrts said. “It doesn’t seem like it is going away. We’re not happy by any means. We’re taking precautions like we always have. The new strain is having more effect on younger people where early it was mostly adults. We hope to get past this and be able to start the season on time.”

Gehrts coached at Westview prior to this season and the Knights weren’t able to play last year because of COVID. The Tolleson district made the decision for its schools not to play in 2020.

Gehrts has many coaches on his staff from Westview last season with him now at Canyon View. The thought lurks in Gehrts’ mind the coaches are cursed.

“We’re trying to see what we can do to make some kind of sacrifice that will please the football gods,” Gehrts said.

The AIA also recently updated its return to play guidelines. You can click on this paragraph to access the document.

As August progresses it seems likely some schools might not get in the necessary number of practices in time to play their first game (10 is the amended minimum, down from 14 due to COVID). Game cancellations appear to be inevitable.

To that end, the AIA executive board passed a new rule at its first board meeting of the school year, noting (6A-2A) teams can qualify for postseason with a minimum of six games played and 1A a minimum of four games.

Should teams have to cancel a game, and it’s early enough in the season, they can try to make up the game later. Or try to find another opponent. Member schools are in charge of the regular season to do what they may to get their schools qualified for the postseason. If schools need to find fill-in games during the regular season, the AIA can help with that. Come the postseason, if a school cannot compete due to COVID, then it must forfeit.

Just like last year.

FINDING REPLACEMENT GAMES

If an opponent cancels due to COVID, the other team can search for a replacement game. To do so, the school’s AD can use his/her AIA admin to search to find opponents. The AD would login, click on schedules and then manage schedules. They would then select Football and select Varsity and then the Find Opponents button will appear to search available AIA opponents.



AZ'S PREP RANKS IN THE 1960s FILLED WITH LEGENDS

By Barry Sollenberger
From the first edition in 1970

The slickest quarterback in Mesa city history.

Two great brothers from Eloy. One of the finest backs in Arizona prep annals. A great two-way tackle from Tucson High.

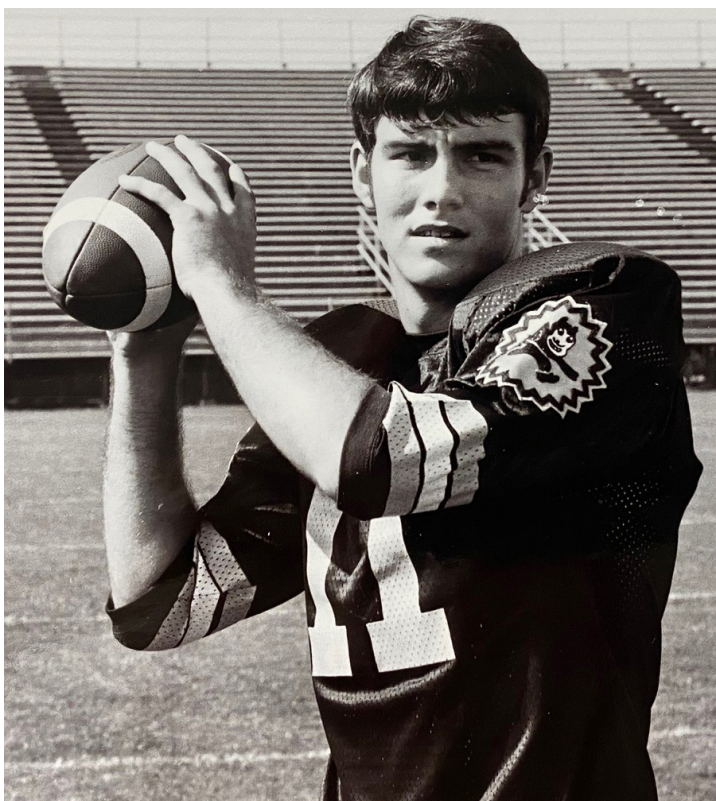
These players are part of Phoenix Metro Football Magazine's All-Decade (1960s) all-stars, comprised of three squads. When Andy Livingston was a 19-yard-old rookie with the Chicago Bears, he returned a kickoff 100 yards for a touchdown against the Minnesota Vikings. It was his first NFL game.

When he was a 16-year-old senior at Mesa High, he was the toast of the town. In 1961, Livingston, whose speed, strength and ability rank him with the best in Arizona history, was the highest scoring back in the state. In only eight games, Andy collected 21 touchdowns and scored 129 points. The 6-foot, 208-pound tailback scored five TDs against Phoenix Union. During a 25-7 win over California foe Fermin Lesauer of San Pedro, he rushed for 222 yards and three touchdowns, including a 82-yard run and 60-yard punt return.

The Jackrabbits finished 8-2 in 1961 after winning the state crown one year earlier. In the 1960 finals at Arizona State, Livingston scored three touchdowns against Yuma—a title game record.

In the 1962 state track meet in Tucson, "Handy" Andy led the 'Rabbits to the state title by running 100 yards in 9.7 seconds, 220 yards in 21.5, tossed the shot put 59 feet and anchored the winning 880 yard relay. Two weeks later, he won the state decathlon.

"Great backs will come and go," said *Mesa Tribune* sports writer Ed Wiggins. "But this state has never had a back like Andy Livingston."



Time will tell, but Danny White may have been the best quarterback to ever play in talent-rich Mesa. The slick Westwood signal caller passed for 1,365 yards last year for the near-perfect Warriors, considered by many the best team in the state. Coach Dave Gates' club averaged 37.8 points, most ever by a Mesa school. White also played safety in the secondary, which intercepted 24 passes. A basketball-baseball-track star, he's now a freshman at Arizona State.

Will Eloy ever run out of Malones? That's what prep coaches in the Class A ranks and college coaches in the WAC are asking these days. First, there was Art, currently a rookie with the Atlanta Falcons, who rushed for 1,746 yards and a state record 37 touchdowns in 1965. Then came Benny, who like his brother was a prep All-American. Ben rushed for 1,775 yards and 30 touchdowns. Both played for undefeated Santa Cruz High clubs for coach Lon Foster.

The dream team's receivers, Bob Wallace and Calvin Demery, both prepped at talent-rich South Mountain. Wallace, a good high hurdler in track, later played at Phoenix College and Texas Western, and is now with the Chicago Bears. The former South Mountain all-state led South to a near-perfect 9-1 record in 1963, when they fell to Mesa in the state semifinals.

Demery, a potential pro pick, starts for Frank Kush's Sun Devils and won all-state honors in 1967. "Demery was the best high school receiver I've seen in Arizona," says Kush. The South High grad hasn't let his coach down. During a 48-26 win over Minnesota last year, Demery caught 11 passes for 201 yards and two touchdowns.

In 1967, Ken Hatcher became the first prep All-American lineman from Mesa High since Glenn Bowers was picked by The Sporting News in 1950.

Center Hatcher is flanked by guards Ted Lawrence, the 1960 player of the year from South, and Agua Fria's Bill Lueck, now a starter with the Green Bay Packers. Phoenix Washington's Steve Combs and Tucson High's Bill Dawson, another prep All-American, now starts at Michigan State. Today, younger brother Mike has all-star potential for Tucson High's Big Red Machine, Arizona's top-rated club. With Bill in the lineup, Tucson won back-to-back crowns in 1965-66. Dawson, coached by John Mallamo, was the MVP in the 1966 state championship game.

The kicking game has improved the most in the high school ranks, and Saguaro's Marty Shuford and West High's Louis Vega were two of the best. Shuford, also an outstanding halfback, averaged 43.6 yards per pick for Marlin Spaw's club in 1967. That same year, West had one of the best teams in Phoenix because of defense and Vega's foot. He kicked 42-yard field goals against Yuma Kofa and Phoenix Union, and 26 extra points for the 7-3 Thunderbirds.

Tucson's Dawson is the only player to earn two-way honors. He is joined on the defensive line by Yuma's Curley Culp, the NCAA heavy-weight wrestling champ who starts for the Kansas City Chiefs, and two additional Sun Devil stars: Richard Griffin from Westwood and Eloy's Larry Shorty. Griffin was the highest touted player for "Mutt" Ford's undefeated Warriors in 1964. Shorty, a basketball and track star at Santa Cruz, joined teammate Ben Malone to lead Eloy to another undefeated season in 1969.

Three of the state's best ever linebackers include Phoenix Union's Fred Carr, an all-pro with the Packers, and prep All-America picks Ron Hendrix (Phoenix Camelback) and Dana Woudenberg (Arcadia). Carr did not play football his senior year at PU, but in 1962 helped the Coyotes to the state semifinals. They lost 20-12 to Tucson in a titanic defensive struggle. He earned first-team All-State honors and was a preseason All-America in 1963.

Danny White went on to play 13 seasons in the NFL with 21,259 passing yards, 155 touchdowns and earned a Super Bowl ring. (AIA photo)

Hendrix, who signed to play at Arizona State, was a prep All-America for Don Baker's 11-1 Spartans in 1964. Woudenberg, whose father John played for the San Francisco 49ers and Pittsburgh Steelers, was a three-year starter for Bob Hendricks' Titans. His college career at USC was cut short by injuries, but in 1962 he was a fullback/linebacker for one of the state's all-time best teams.

The secondary is loaded with talent. It includes Flagstaff's legendary James Dugan, Arcadia's gifted Bill Diple, Tucson Pueblo's record-setting Rudy Quihuis, and Chandler's three-sport star Gordon Rule. Dugan, a prep All-America in football and basketball, plus an all-state catcher in baseball, was the state player of the year in 1963. Before singing with Ohio State, he scored 155 points, including 30 during a five-touchdown night against North High.

In the 1964 all-star game, during a wild second quarter scoring burst in which three touchdowns were scored in 33 seconds, Dugan returned a kickoff 88 yards for a score. His North squad beat the South, 28-20. Diple was co-captain of The Arizona Republic all-state squad as a junior in 1965 while helping Arcadia, top-ranked most of the season, through an 8-2 campaign. He intercepted 12 passes, 17 during his career, but was most dangerous as a flanker. He caught 35 passes for 573 yards from all-state quarterback George Mattingly, who also had gifted ends Johnny Black and Gary Kron to throw to.

In 1967, Pueblo dropped a 34-22 decision to St. Mary's in the state finals. Pueblo, coached by Lou Faber, intercepted 32 enemy aerals, with Rudy Quihuis stealing a record 18. Gordon Rule is probably the most heralded athlete in Chandler history. Like Arcadia's Diple, Rule was a track star, running the 120 high hurdles in 14.1 seconds and excelling in the decathlon. He was a quarterback on the football team, and won all-star honors in basketball. He currently is a safety with the Green Bay Packers, and is the second Chandler grad to play in the NFL, joining former quarterback Eddie Wilson.

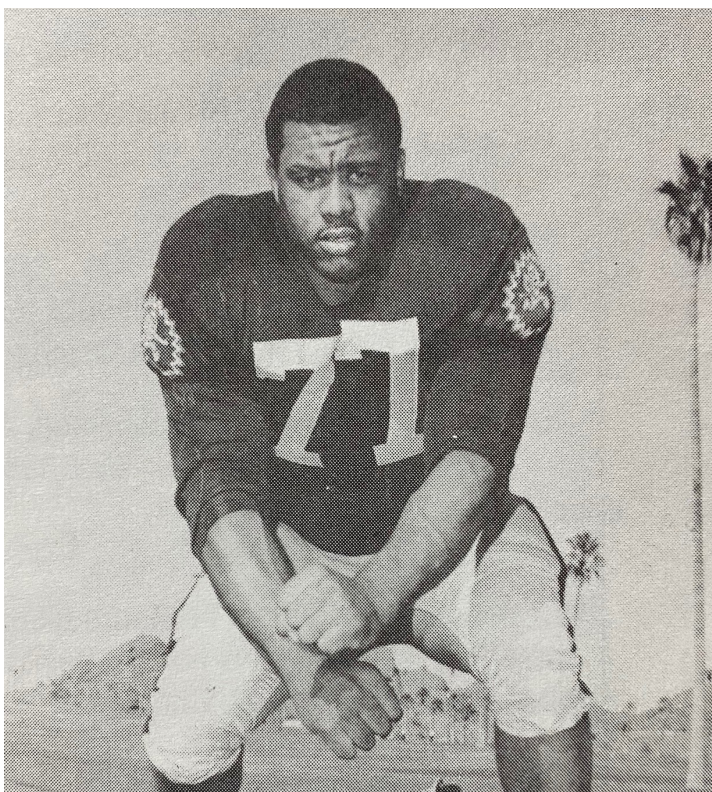
Proof of the strength of the All-Decade first team is the talent of the second. Arcadia quarterback Kenny Johnson now plays for Colorado. Fullback Jim Bramlet started at Arizona State. Tight end Mike Bowling became a basketball star at ASU, and split end Dick McCombs was a catcher for USC's NCAA championship baseball team. Eloy defensive back Paul Ray Powell played football for Frank Kush, but now plays pro baseball. Marana kicker Cleveland Colter rewrote the state record books, while defenders Greg Boyd of Saguaro and Mike Clupper of Maryvale started for the Wildcats and Sun Devils, respectively. Third-team signal caller, Cortez's Bill Demery, now plays for Arizona, along with tackles Fernie Mendoza, Richard Dodson, Bill McKinley and Bob Crum.

Altogether, the three All-Decade teams sport 23 former first-team prep All-Americans plus a host of gifted baseball stars, including Scottsdale end Jim Palmer, now a star pitcher for the Baltimore Orioles, Westwood linebacker Jay Rokey, a catcher at Arizona, and Arcadia outfielder James "Nicky" Nichols, the MVP in the '64 all-state football game in Flagstaff.

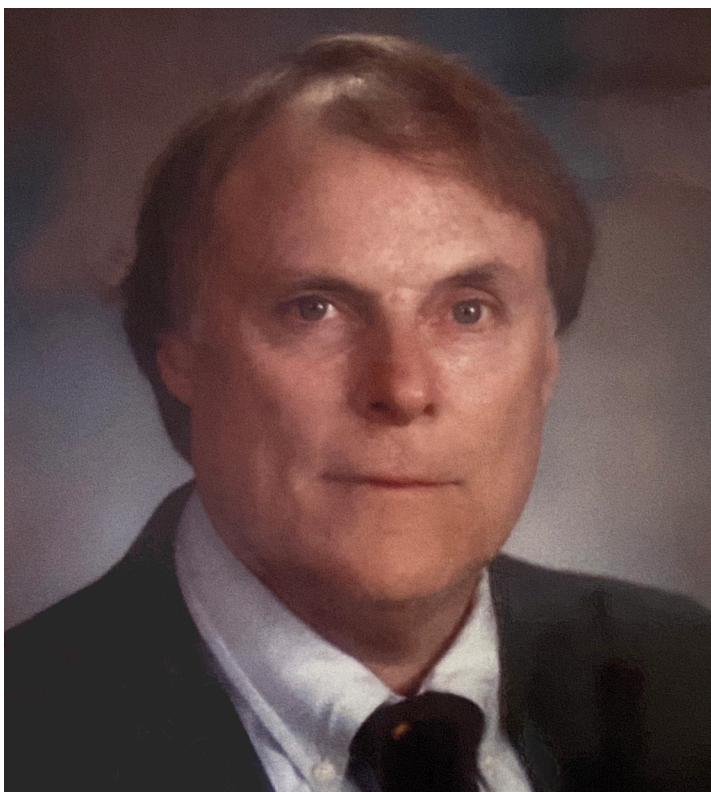
"It is doubtful that any state in the country, with a similar population as Arizona, produced as many talented football players and teams as the Grand Canyon State did during the 60s," wrote Art Johlfs of the National Sports News Service in Minneapolis.

Such players as Mesa's Andy Livingston, Eloy's Art and Ben Malone, Tucson Bill Dawson, Yuma's Curley Culp, South Mountain's Bob Wallace and Phoenix Union's Fred Carr and Flagstaff's James Dugan stood tall above the field.

Sollenberger's AZ Football Prep Magazine is named after Barry Sollenberger, an Arizona high school sports historian. The article on the state's 1960 all-stars was published in 1970 in the Arizona high school football preseason magazine Sollenberger launched. He was the AIA's official Sports Information Director from 1999 until his death in 2005.



Curley Culp helped lead Yuma to the 1965 state title game before starting at ASU and in pro football. (AIA photo)



Barry Sollenberger served as the AIA's informal historian for decades before becoming Sports Information Director in 1999. (AIA photo)

ST. MARY'S AND BROPHY - HOW THE MOST STORIED RIVALRY RETURNED

By Hunter Hippel
AZPreps365.com

Jose Lucero could just feel it.

The COVID-19 pandemic didn't allow the St. Mary's Knights-Brophy Broncos boy's basketball game on Jan. 27 to be the spectacle it should have been, as crowds were limited due to virus protocols. But the game was among the Knights' closest contests during their state championship season, and Lucero could sense it around the St. Mary's community and campus: the energy, the vibe and the history of one of Arizona's most storied rivalries.

"People were extremely excited about that," Lucero, the Knights' second year head football coach, said of the basketball game. "I know how excited our school was, and I know the Brophy fans were excited as well."

It got Lucero thinking. Sure, his football team hadn't played Brophy since 2012 because of a widening competitive gap between the two programs. But that didn't keep Lucero and Brophy head coach Jason Jewell from scheduling a scrimmage between the two schools before the 2020 season. The pandemic's grasp, however, wiped out that reunion. It was a devastating blow.

"You could feel that the school community was really excited to play against Brophy, whether it was a scrimmage or whether it be a regular season game, people were pumped for it," Lucero said.

In the beginning of his tenure as head coach in 2019, Lucero's Knights weren't ready to face the 6A menace Brophy had become. The rivalry's resumption was supposed to be low stakes, hence the scrimmage that was cancelled in 2020. But eventually, Lucero, his team and

the community turned a corner, swooping enough to encompass the Broncos and leading to the Sept. 3rd matchup between the two schools – the first in almost a decade. AZPreps365 will broadcast the game to kick off its Game of the Week "rivalry schedule" for this season.

Jewell was surprised when Lucero mentioned a regular season contest between the two schools. He, like Lucero two years ago, thought St. Mary's wouldn't be ready. But Lucero had initiated the conversation, and Jewell didn't hesitate.

"It took me about three seconds to say 'Yes' and then I called my athletic director and said, 'Let's make this happen,'" he said.

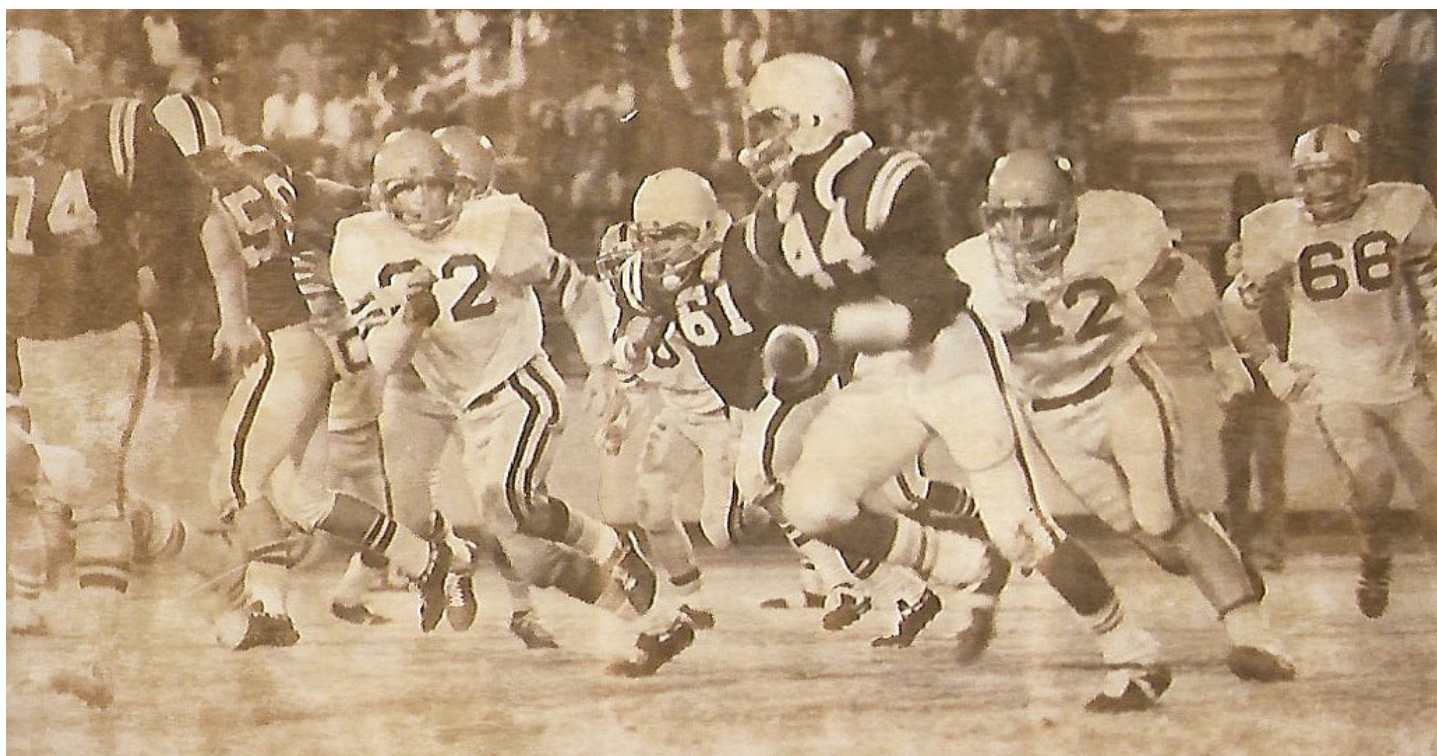
The rivalry has a twist this year: it'll be played in Week 1 at Central High School, Brophy's new home field, which could change, according to Jewell. Such an important and hyped opener could be stressful for both teams, but neither coach seemed too worried.

"It's nice to play against a really quality opponent because win or lose you have the rest of your year to improve and you get a chance to see where you're at and what your strengths and weaknesses are," Lucero said.

He did, however, use the phrase nerve-wracking, simply because of the big expectations not only for the game, but for the 2021 season, which is a year that follows St. Mary's most successful in awhile – the Knights went 6-2 and lost in the state quarterfinals to ALA-Queen Creek.

"You never know what you're going to get," Lucero said. "We lost really key guys last year due to graduation, so we'll have some new faces that are going to need to step up."

Jewell had zero hesitations, even after a season in which Brophy didn't win a game partly because of an injury to then-junior starting quarterback Elijah Warner.



David Mitchell could outrun or run over defenders. The 1976 grad is one of St. Mary's all-time greats and had his No. 44 retired by the school. (ALA photo)

"All of our games are big games," Jewell said. "Our schedule was brutal [last season]. Last year, we wouldn't have it any other way. I set up our schedule for our kids to have fun and to be challenged athletically, and this is exactly how I want it. No nervousness whatsoever."

Lucero wasn't quite ready to share his strategy for the big game yet, but he believes that the most important key might be dealing with some foreign pressures.

"It's going to be handling the moment," he said. "Going from last year and the minimized crowds and the small atmospheres every single game and not having pep assemblies at school, everything was so different to now, where we're now stepping into game one, where the environment is going to be extremely exciting, and there's going to be a lot of people there."

Brophy is simply ready to get Warner back, and if the Broncos protect him, then Jewell believes his team is in a good spot.

"Keeping EJ healthy is huge for us as we found out last year," he said. "Not having him was difficult for our team. If we can control the line of scrimmage, then we'll be alright."

Strategy does seem to be on the mind of former St. Mary's coach Pat Farrell, who applauded the rivalry's resumption but fears for its sustainability over time.

"On one hand I thought it was a good thing to be a part of again and create and see how it goes, but on the other hand, the differences between the programs over the last decade or so have grown to be pretty distinct," Farrell said. "When [the rivalry] is very competitive, it really heightens the game, sometimes to almost a state championship level. It's proved to be very intense at times."

Arizona High School Hall of Fame coach Tim Sanford, Brophy's former coach, who happens to be a St. Mary's graduate, believes nothing compares to the rivalry when it's at its peak.

"It's different than all the others because it's a Catholic rivalry," he said. "You can look all over the country where they have Catholic schools like this and there are great rivalries there. This has been important because of that. There are a lot of public school rivalries that have always been great, but there's something different about it being two Catholic schools."

Farrell recalled the tension the two schools shared at the height of the rivalry, which began in 1959, and described an atmosphere seldom seen in high school sports.

"The game was really electric and was played in front of 10,000 or 12,000 people," he said. "The stands were jammed at 6 p.m. Tailgaters were out barbecuing and carrying on for hours. It was quite a Friday night."

To help young Brophy players who haven't experienced the rivalry at all, Jewell is having Sanford speak to the team the week of the game.

"If there's anyone who knows how meaningful this game is, it's Tim Sanford," Jewell said.



Before dressing for Stanford, Mike Mitchell (Class of '93) became one of the most feared offensive weapons in Arizona football history. The Brophy alum rushed for over 5,000 yards for the Broncos. (AIA photo)

Lucero thinks it can return to the level Farrell and Sanford mentioned again, and for his own good, he wants it to.

"This is going to sound cliché, but I've always had the dream of coaching at St. Mary's," said Lucero, an alum of the school. "It's always been something I wanted to do. Coaching in the Brophy game is a part of that."

"It's one thing for it to be your dream and another to have it come true."



St. Mary's and head coach Pat Farrell capped a perfect 1985 season with 5A state championship over Apollo. (AIA photo)

HONORING HISTORY: PEORIA TURNS 100

By Hunter Hippel
AZPreps365.com

You won't find their names easily, but deep within the record book and within the walls of Peoria High School, their legend and allure lives on.

Running back Roger Hightower and center/linebacker G. Thomas Greenfield probably aren't the most famous or most successful alums in school history, but they set the foundation for almost a century's worth of football history and success at the Peoria District's oldest school. Now, as the Panthers celebrate their 100th year, names like Hightower's, Greenfield's and others come to light.

But Peoria's 100th season is more than just a number. To players on the field today, it's something that everyone ever involved with the team or school can feel and relate to. Connections run deep, and it's those bonds that help Peoria High School continue to come alive.

"(Turning 100) is a culmination of all of the good things that happened here at this school and all the teachers and all the good students that have gone through here and all the good things they've produced that you might not know about," said former head coach and 1966 alum of Peoria Tony Gonzalo.

The Beginning

Hightower and Greenfield gave Peoria perhaps its first taste of superstardom in the 1930s. Hightower's teams in 1933 and 1934 went a combined 14-2 with coaches Barto Davis and future legend Edgar Mutt Ford at the helm, respectively. Hightower then went to NAU on a football scholarship, and was entered into the school's Hall of Fame in 2001.

Greenfield's teams weren't quite as dominant, though Ford produced a winning campaign in two of the future Green Bay Packer's three seasons. Greenfield went on to become a star at the University of Arizona before being drafted in the 15th round of the 1939 NFL Draft by the Green Bay Packers, where he won the NFL Championship as a rookie center.

Still, even with first players who dominated Peoria's record books, the school was on the outside looking in when it came to statewide success.

The Turning Point

Fortunes changed when Ray Mitokawa was hired as head coach in 1955. While his first season as head coach saw the team go 2-6-1, Mitokawa righted the ship by 1959, and had the Panthers losing no more than two games a year until 1964.

"His offense was real simple, and his defense was real simple, and it was more a matter of execution than it was anything else," Gonzalo said. "He was very much a player's coach."

The 1964 season, when Peoria went 1-8 in what was Gonzalo's junior year, was a mess to the fault of no one. Injuries hampered a talented Panthers squad. But like Mitokawa had done earlier in his career, he bounced back with the help of his players.

"The next year we decided that we didn't want to go through a season like that again and just basically prepared during the summer and

got together as a football team without coaches," Gonzalo said. "We did training on our own, and then we came back and had a good year. It just carried forward and set the whole thing on fire."

A 1-8 record was reversed into 8-1 in each of the next four seasons, including the Panthers' first appearances in the Arizona state championship game. Though Peoria lost in both – to Santa Cruz in 1965 and Coolidge in 1968 – Mitokawa had gotten the program to heights it had never reached before.

"It was an honor," Gonzalo said of playing for Mitokawa. "He ended up being more than just a coach early on. He ended up being, for me, a mentor and one of my best friends."

When Mitokawa finished his coaching career at Peoria in 1974, tougher times fell on the school. Consistent success – and coaching – was hard to come by. Gonzalo was hired in 1978 to coach, but turned in a career record of 17-22-1 in four seasons. Mark Matheson replaced him in 1982 and appeared to have the school back on track by his third year when Peoria found itself in the state title game and lost. However, Matheson left to coach Ironwood after the 1985 season after the Panthers went 6-3-1.

To replace Matheson, Peoria hired one of his assistants, Doug Clapp. What followed in the months and years after might be hard for even Hollywood to script.



G. Thomas Greenfield was a first team Little All-America selection in 1938, was named to the Arizona Daily Star half-decade All-Arizona football team (1949), and was the starting center for the Green Bay Packers for three seasons while winning an NFL title in 1939. (AIA photo)



Peoria players rush the field to celebrate their 29-23 win over Agua Fria in the 1986 3A championship game after a string of postseason upsets. (M.J. Hoppes photo/News-Sun)

Leading Men

Marvin Johnson was a newbie on the Peoria field in 1986. Current head coach, former Peoria quarterback and Johnson's teammate, Will Babb, said Johnson was a tough, typical hard-nose Peoria kid. But Johnson felt he wasn't quite getting the opportunity he deserved at the start of the year at running back. So when the Panthers started the season 0-3, Clapp made a change. Johnson was inserted as the starter, and things changed in an instant.

"They didn't know what I could really do," Johnson said. "Before the Week 4 game, they finally inserted me as the starter and we won. I'm going to say it was because of me, but I believe some of those early games, I'm not saying we would have won, but I think we would have had a better showing if I had been the starting running back the first three games."

Clapp's Panthers got that first win in Week 4 and won in Week 5, but they finished the year at .500 and just barely sneaked into the playoffs despite a Week 10 loss to Agua Fria.

"Many times in the world today, if you're 0-3 and not getting what you want, people throw in the towel," Babb said. "I think losing the last game and us getting in the playoffs, I don't think we felt like we couldn't win a state championship, because that team was resilient and willing to battle back in the beginning. Why couldn't they at the end?"

The 0-3 start could be explained by reasons outside of running back. The Panthers lost to the No. 1, No. 3 and No. 8 ranked teams in Arizona to open the year, including rival Cactus, who was the first task when the playoffs began. Peoria pulled off the upset, and did so three more times in the postseason to claim the first title in school history.

"When you beat the No. 2 seed [Cactus] on their home field, I think that gives you confidence in general, and we just kind of rode that wave," Babb said.

Peoria could have been seen as a bit of a fluke the year before heading into 1987, but Babb and company put that narrative to bed by winning the state title yet again. The two runs are the only football titles in school history that weren't shared.

"It means a lot," Johnson said. "With all the new schools that have come in, for us to have done what we did outright, we have ownership."

Time to Party

The Panthers shared the state title with Tucson Sahuaro in 1994, which remains the team's last. But with Babb at the helm, Peoria has rattled off five straight winning seasons. Only two years of Babb's tenure have seen him post a below .500 record.

Peoria is still seeking a return to the state title game, though, and can only hope that such a trip would come during its historical season.

"We're going to have to come together as a team," Babb said. "We have talent. On paper, are we going to be judged as the most talented team in 4A? No. Talent will get you so far. But if you become a team, you can win a lot of games and take that next step."

"It would be special, but it'd be special for me because it'll be special for our kids."

Peoria has three sets of uniforms it's donning this year, including one inspired by what it wore when the Panthers were known as the Horned Toads in the 1920s.

Uniforms and mascots aside, it's time to celebrate the people who have made Peoria High what it is today.

"We have established something here through the years," Shane Sullivan, a former wide receiver for the Panthers who graduated in 2007, said. "We've established a community here. Being a part of it is something that I'm grateful for. We're still the same team, still have the same goals, now just comes the 100th year."



Peoria will be rocking 1920s era uniforms on the gridiron this season. (Peoria High School photo)

THE RETURN OF FOOTBALL FOR SCHOOLS ON THE REZ

By George Werner
AZPreps365.com

Beginning on Friday, Aug. 27, sports on the Navajo Reservation come back to life.

Although the full slate of football games involving 11 schools may not signal any official end to the Coronavirus and its effects it continues to have on those susceptible, it will mark the end of a tumultuous 21-month period of severe illness, forced separations, shutdowns of athletic events and all other group gatherings, and more than 1,100 deaths.

"I think everyone is excited that we actually have sports back," said Bryan Begay, long-time head coach at Monument Valley High School and athletic coordinator in the Kayenta Unified School District. "Now that we can actually do it in our own communities, it brings a sense of relief."

The Mustangs, led by senior All-North Region first-team quarterback Andrew Sheppard, are one of six Navajo schools in the 3A Conference competing against each other and a select group of mostly close regional rivals this fall. Looking strictly at their schedules and their alignment in the North Region, nothing much seems to have changed since their spring sports seasons were cut unexpectedly short after two weeks of play in March 2020.

At one of Begay's rivals, Chinle High School third-year head coach Alan Barwick praised his incoming offense, including senior Dejuan Kinlichee, for its "continuity"—and his defense, led by juniors like nose guard Olin White, defensive end Dion Tsosie and linebackers Carlos Miranda and Garrett Yazzie, for their "commitment," among other qualities.

But travel to Page High School, a mere three miles from the Nation border, or browse over to even glance at the five smaller Navajo schools in the 2A Conference, and what COVID-19 has wrought becomes immediately noticeable.

"It seemed to lighten as time passed," said Leland "Bubba" Billie, second-year head football coach at Page, "but it was a real roller coaster of emotions as we had a season, then no season, then a delayed season, and then a spring season, then no season again."

The next-closest high school to the Nation, Winslow, couldn't accommodate Navajo athletes suddenly locked down in 2020 either.

"We have a dorm that allows students from the Reservation to live in Winslow and attend WHS," veteran Winslow High School head coach Brandon Guzman said. "[The] dorm was not open this year due to the Navajo Nation being on lockdown during football season."

"That hurt our numbers for the program; we missed out on a lot of good kids that would contribute to the team."

Even Barwick's two major concerns, heading into this summer, were "Will there be a season?" and "If we get to have summer practice, will we be able to get the kids to the field and weight room?"

Like in 3A, there were supposed to be six 2A Navajo schools competing this fall, with their one long trip a three-plus-hour bus ride south to Whiteriver and Alchesay High School on the Fort Apache Reservation. Piñon, Red Mesa and Rock Point even broke off from the Little Colorado Region to compete against nearby Hopi High School in the new San Juan Region.

But as COVID-19 infection numbers went back up in July, the expected fifth San Juan school dropped out.

"Greyhills Academy has cancelled fall sports and will not have a football team," said Vincent Lee, second-year head coach at Tuba City High School, the only Rez team with a cross-town rival in the form of Greyhills. "We have had difficulty reaching (other) schools as well when trying to schedule a football scrimmage."

Lee admitted that Tuba City, like most other areas of the Navajo Nation, was "hit hard" by the Coronavirus. "We have had a handful of athletes at spring workouts," said Lee, whose first team in 2019 won just two of its 10 pre-pandemic games. "We started a lot of underclassmen."

But through the efforts of Lee and his staff, featuring former players like Tyrick Eltsostie, 10 juniors and seniors have returned to form a nucleus of a Tuba City team that will bring in American Leadership Academy - Ironwood on Sept. 24.

"Lots of guys ready to step up," said Lee, who is counting on junior cornerback Devyn Hardy to take the reins at quarterback. "Lots of experience coming back [and] wide receiver depth, including brothers Lincoln and Maric Bilagody and junior Jakobe Dodson."

Still, most of Lee's players will need to play both ways, including 265-pound senior Tryrin Mann, who took time away from training for the rodeo circuit to help bring the rest of the team back out of isolation.



Monument Valley's players couldn't wait to get back on the field after the 2020 season was cancelled. (Bryan Begay photo/Monument Valley)



*The Mustangs are looking to get back to the playoffs for the first time since their undefeated 2016 regular season.
(Bryan Begay photo/Monument Valley)*

"He has become a leader on the offensive line and is really pushing the program forward," Lee said. "He has a great work ethic and has the potential to play at the next level."

Lee looks to senior Casey Draper and juniors like 245-pound Nathaniel Fulton, 235-pound Rylan Piestewa and Dale Manygoats to support Mann's blocking for senior running backs Xander Mitchell and Levander Yazzie.

The struggle for these 12 schools just to find enough players to field a varsity has always been real, even before the pandemic.

Ganado, for instance, will have to account for the loss of running back and 2019 North Region Player of the Year Tony Shirley. As will Red Mesa, after the lost senior season of 2019 Little Colorado Region Co-Defensive Player of the Year Karl Bigman.

Sheppard, along with fellow 2019 all-region first-teamers Blane Begay and Darnell Johnson, had a "lost season" in 2020 due to COVID-19, according to their Mustangs head coach.

Only 17 players who competed for Begay in 2019 returned for summer workouts, and he had 38 just start practicing in helmets Monday, Aug. 2. Before that, his offensive and defensive units each practiced just two days per week since summer workouts began the second week of June. Even traveling to two 7-on-7 events in Holbrook since then has been strictly voluntary; players could not travel together but had to be driven there by their parents.

"We had 16 months off of football, and our conditioning is not very good right now," Begay said. "Our X's and O's, our ability to recognize a defense, is slow going. So, since June 14, the coaching focus has been on individual areas, like linebacking techniques."

Page, Begay believes, is further ahead in its development, although the Sand Devils have had their own challenges with numbers as well as phasing in new offensive and defensive coordinators.

Just four varsity and another 16 junior varsity players return from Billie's 4-6 first season – the other 38 in summer workouts, Billie said, have "cycle[d] through" a program that, only three seasons ago, went undefeated in the 3A North and were ranked fourth heading into the 2018 state 3A playoffs, steamrolling Pusch Ridge Christian Academy in the first round, 48-2.

"The majority of our team is very young and inexperienced," Billie said. "It has been a bit odd that we sort of have two freshmen classes, as we have two full classes that have never played high school football."

"We will have a full JV schedule, which will help us tremendously as we get back into the swing of things."

One vital link from that team remains: Hunter Richardson, who, one month prior to the playoff win, intercepted a pass and ran in a two-point conversion during the Sand Devils' 94-0 destruction of Window Rock High School.

The Fighting Scouts, under fifth-year head coach Wilbur Begay, Jr., lost the region's Defensive Player of the Year in Caleb Dickson but look to upperclassmen like running back Russell Yoe and wide receiver Gemini Bitsie to help pass their final pre-region test, Phoenix Christian, by the time the Cougars visit Sept. 24.

As for Richardson, he will at least have two athletic wideouts to throw to this fall in senior Josh Tenpenny and junior Ashton Penrod, who has put on 25 pounds and grown two inches since spring workouts began. Richardson will also have two "big, powerful and quick on their feet" offensive guards to run behind "as much as possible," Billie said, in senior Kaleb Slim and junior Austin Wilson, both tipping the scales over 240 pounds.

"These two worked their butts off during the extended offseason," Billie added. They came into spring workouts bigger, stronger and faster."

Begay just hopes the Rez can play a full season.

"If not, we will have some really nice uniforms that have not been used for two seasons," he said.

OPENING NIGHT SCHEDULE • AUGUST 27

- Piñon at Chinle, 6 p.m.
- Winslow at Monument Valley, 6 p.m.
- Ganado at Holbrook, 7 p.m.
- Kanab (UT) at Page, 7 p.m.
- Many Farms at Rock Point, 7 p.m.
- Valley (Sanders) at Hopi, 7 p.m.
- Window Rock at Alchesay, 7 p.m.

REMEMBERING FORMER TUCSON HIGH QUARTERBACK RICH ALDAY

By Andy Morales
AZPreps365.com

Most people remember Rich Alday as a baseball legend, but he also led the Tucson High School football team to an undefeated state championship in 1965 as a senior.

The former quarterback passed away this past January at the age of 71. Most memorials listed his 1,032 wins as a college baseball coach as his greatest sports accomplishment, but there was so much more to Alday.

TRUSTING ALDAY

Tucson High went 3-5-1 in 1964 under legendary coach John Mallamo.

That team was a couple of years removed from a state runner-up finish that was followed by a very successful 8-1 campaign in 1963. That 1964 squad proved to be a hiccup for what came next when the Badgers went on a 24-1 streak that produced two more state championships, ending a 13-year drought when the power program won it all in 1951 and 1952.

Media reports called the beginning of the 1965 season a return to the "old teams of yesteryear," but those same reports also spoke of a "diminutive quarterback" named Rich Alday. Alday led his team to victory after victory that year, but his defense was giving up more passing yards than he could produce. Still, Tucson kept winning and did so in the state championship game when its defense came through with four interceptions to help lead Tucson to a 27-7 victory over Yuma.

Alday only threw for 45 yards in the championship game, but his double-fake pass for 36 yards to Ron Sainz put the Badgers up 21-0. Yuma never recovered. Alday was honored by the Tucson Coaches Association the next day with a second-team All-City placement. Catalina junior John Svob was placed on the first team even though the Trojans finished 2-7, including a 41-6 loss to Alday and the Badgers. In that head-to-head match, Svob threw for 189 yards and a touchdown to Alday's 113 yards and two touchdowns. Alday also had two interceptions.

But Alday was never one to feel slighted. On the contrary, football brought him glory in high school, but baseball brought him a career and lifetime of touching the lives of countless teammates and then players as a high school, college and Team USA coach. Alday, the University of New Mexico's all-time leader in baseball coaching victories, won over 500 games at UNM and at Pima Community College as well.

The Badgers didn't win a state title in baseball while Alday was there, but the "diminutive" QB was one of the best catchers to ever play the game in Tucson and was an easy choice for first-team All-City in 1965.

As a junior, Alday started the 24-1 streak in the final game of that dismal 1964 football season when he beat Phoenix Union 45-21, going 3-for-3 for 142 yards and three touchdowns. Mallamo let his juniors take on Phoenix Union because he had nothing to lose. Reports say Tucson's younger players actually beat the seniors 40-12 in a scrimmage leading up to the final game. Alday replaced one of those seniors at quarterback in that final game, when he connected on touchdown passes of 28, 43 and 61 yards. That final game also saw the introduction of junior halfback Louis Cook, who rushed for 142 yards on 12 carries and scored on runs of 45, 21 and 3 yards.



Even with a football and baseball pedigree, Rich Alday won two state softball titles with the Nighthawks. (Andy Morales photo/AZPreps365)



Rich Alday looks on from the Ironwood Ridge softball dugout during a game. (Andy Morales photo/AZPreps365)

One has to wonder what would have happened had Mallamo not trusted Alday in that final game. Alday, a soft-spoken coach, went on to show that same trust to his players, including softball players he led.

"There are no words to express how grateful I am to have been coached by coach Alday," said current university of Arizona softball catcher Izzy Pacheco. "It was truly an honor to have won the state championship in 2016 at Ironwood Ridge with him. He always reminded me to play the game at a high level and to have fun while I did it."

"One of my favorite memories from him was one day at practice he showed up and told us to huddle up. He then grabbed a toy toilet out of his back pack, flushed it and it made a flushing noise. He told us that we needed to learn how to 'flush away' our bad at-bats, errors, etc. He said that we held onto the negatives too long, which affected the rest of our game. I still use that advice in my game today."

A PRESENCE

1966 introduced two big changes in high school football with the stoppage of the clock after a change of possession and a first down. It was said those rules added about 15 minutes of playing time. But the other big change happened at Tucson High, where Art Monje stepped in at quarterback after Alday graduated and was playing baseball in college. The 1966 Tucson High squad went on to defeat Westwood 14-7 to win another state championship.

Alday played for Emporia State College before he started a life-long journey of coaching baseball at Pima Community College, New Mexico and Team USA. But he also saw a year in the dugout at the smallest of schools, San Miguel High, located on the south side of Tucson. It was there that he coached former All-WAC catcher at Grand Canyon, Niki Gonzalez. Some speculate having Niki on his baseball team opened his eyes to the idea of coaching softball.

"As young girl I never would have thought that I would be able to say I played on a high school baseball team, but I can say I did because of coach Alday," Gonzalez said. "I remember meeting him the day I got to tour San Miguel High School. Our friendship began there and continued as I saw him on and off the softball field for years after. I have encountered many coaches, but he is one that shared that the game is more than sport. With that being said, he was more than a coach, he was a mentor and a friend."

Alday went on to coach Ironwood Ridge High School to two state softball championships before returning to the baseball diamond at Pima CC once again. He returned to softball in 2020, and this time he was helping his alma mater as an assistant to another legend, Bert Otero.

"We grew up across the street from each other, so Rich is a lifelong friend who I considered to be a mentor and a brother, like a big brother," Otero said. "I'm just trying come to grips on what happened to coach Alday. It's pretty tough."

Otero (Tucson High Class of 1971) remarked that Alday had a "presence" about him that uniquely engaged the players.

"The kids just gravitated to him," Otero said. "We were looking forward to have him coach again with us this year. We talked about that."

"Growing up together, it was a lot like Sandlot (the movie). We all played football and basketball and baseball. Coach was a presence in the neighborhood. It feels like I just lost someone in my family. The kids loved him right off. He always kept coming up with a way of motivating the kids. That's just a part of who he is ... I'm still going to stay with the present tense with him."

The one-time "diminutive quarterback" lived his life as the gentlest of men, and he passed away as a giant among giants.

BIG NAME COACHES ON THE MOVE IN SOUTHERN ARIZONA

By Andy Morales
AZPreps365.com

The latest coaching carousel in Southern Arizona began when legendary Salpointe Catholic head coach Dennis Bene retired after a 10-1 semifinal Open Division season in 2019.

That team was arguably one of Salpointe's best ever, with Bijan Robinson and Lathan Ransom wreaking havoc on the fields. In Southern Arizona, that season also sparked a growth in the sport, renewed a college recruiting push and a battle for new coaching leadership at the top.

"I believe all these openings have to do with coaches finding better positions for themselves, and the COVID situation made those decisions a lot easier for them," Bene said. "A lot of coaches are in better places for them now."

Though Salpointe stayed in house with the initial hiring of assistant coach Todd Schulte, there was plenty of buzz over which head coach from the area would apply for the opening.

Schulte resigned one month after the hire, but the school showed some resolve by sticking in house again with the hire of Eric Rogers.

The football community had doubts about that hire, but Rogers came through with a remarkable 7-1 COVID-shortened season that included another semifinal finish in the Open Division. His detractors were satisfied despite the push by big-name coaches

applying for the job. As it turned out, Bene's name also popped up on the short list of potential big name hires at other schools.

"I came close to coming back," he said. "The Cienega job was a possibility."

Mica Mountain opened its doors in 2020 with a junior varsity schedule in the Vail School District just east of Tucson, and the athletic facilities of the new school are just too grand to ignore.

The program needed a head coach to guide the Thunderbolts through their first modified varsity season in 2021, and the school went with Cienega head coach Pat Nugent.

Nugent coached local legends Ka'Deem Carey (Canyon del Oro) and Jamarye Joiner (Cienega). Beyond that, Nugent went 3-0 against Salpointe before Robinson's final two years. Nugent's vacancy at Cienega left another huge void, but that was filled by Tucson High School head coach Justin Argraves.

Argraves coached former University of Alabama and current Buffalo Bills standout defender Levi Wallace. Coaching in a neighborhood school in Tucson has become increasingly difficult with suburban schools such as Walden Grove in Sahuarita, Ironwood Ridge, Canyon del Oro, Pusch Ridge in Oro Valley, Marana, Mountain View in Marana and Cienega in Vail attracting local talent. Then, of course, there's Salpointe, a private school located within the Amphitheater and city boundaries.



Marana's Phillip Steward and Cienega's Justin Argraves are two of the coaches who stepped into new roles down south. (Andy Morales photos/AZPreps365.com)

Amphitheater, under legendary head coach Vern Friedli, was the last 5A program from Tucson to win a state championship, and that was back in 1979. Palo Verde, under Todd Mayfield, won the 4A-II state championship in 2005. Sunnyside, under Richard Sanchez, was the last 4A school from Tucson to win a state championship (2003). Public and private school teams from the Tucson city boundaries have never won at the 1A to 3A levels.

Sanchez coached at Santa Rita from 2018 until this summer, when the legendary football and wrestling coach was hired to lead Tucson after Argraves replaced Nugent at Cienega.

"I'm going to talk to the kids; I'm going to talk to parents, and I hope that we're going into a situation where the kids want to win the state championship and want to be the best," Sanchez said. "When you've got a good number of kids that are hungry to win and be in a championship game and possibly win it, I think the learning curve is not as long as if you went to a place where they have no idea that they want to win."

Sanchez led the Blue Devils to state football championships in 2001 and 2003, and five straight wrestling titles from 1990 to 1994. Among active coaches, Sanchez has the second most wins in Southern Arizona with 161 and Nugent is next with 136. Chris Determan (125 wins) of Benson has a chance to move into third on the list this fall. Benson is the preseason favorite to win the 2A state championship this year while Mica Mountain will only have two varsity games scheduled this fall.

The Tucson Badgers, the only 6A team from Southern Arizona, will compete in the East Valley Region. So Sanchez will have to deal with traveling to the Phoenix area four times in the regular season.

"I'm trying to get a staff together right now, and everyone I have spoken to, they're up for the challenge," Sanchez said. "We want to compete and be a force in 6A."

Santa Rita turned to former state champion coach Tom Joseph to lead the program. The Eagles went to the 4A-II state championship games in 2008 and 2009 and is now in 2A.

Out in Marana, Louie Ramirez stepped down in April to coach special teams and tight ends at Saguaro High School in Scottsdale. His replacement is former University of Houston standout Phillip Steward. Steward played for the St. Louis Rams for two seasons and joined Alonzo Highsmith Jr. at Willcox before catching on as an assistant under Ramirez at Marana. Longtime Sahuaro assistant coach Daniel Sainz took over head coaching duties at Catalina Foothills after Darius Kelly left to lead the Sonoran Sidewinders of the Hohokam Junior College Athletic Conference. Sainz played for Jeff Scurran at Santa Rita during the championship run of 2008.

Other notable Southern Arizona coaching changes also were made at Tombstone, Catalina, Sahuarita and Santa Cruz. Former Tombstone standout Dominik Bonilla stepped in to replace Jerome Rhoades, who resigned after two seasons with Tombstone. Greg McKinstry will become the fifth head coach at Catalina in the last decade after he replaced Chris Barlow in May. McKinstry is a former assistant coach with Northern Iowa. And Jake Price will take the reins at Sahuarita with the resignation of Don Watt.

One of the other biggest coaching changes happened in 2A, when James Fitzgerald replaced Rishard Davis at Santa Cruz. Davis became the first African American to coach a state football championship team in Arizona when he led the Dust Devils to the title last season. Davis returned to his home state of Alabama. Fitzgerald left Douglas in 2019.

There will be a lot of new faces on the sidelines down south. Time to see what the results are.



OUR STUDENTS, OUR TEAMS . . . OUR FUTURE.

NEW BELOW THE WAIST BLOCKING RULE FOR 2021

By Tyler Cerimeli
AIA Officials and Tournament Coordinator

The Rules Committee of the National Federation of State High School Associations made one change of note for the 2021 football season – a revision to the blocking below the waist rule.

This revision added another requirement that must be met in order for a player to legally block an opponent below the waist. The rule allows for a player to block an opponent below the waist during a scrimmage play only if all of the following conditions are met:

- All players involved in the blocking are on the line of scrimmage and in the zone at the snap (This includes the center, guards, tackles and tight ends, as well as any defensive player that is within one yard of the ball and between the normal tight end positions).
- The contact is in the zone.
- The block is an immediate, initial action following the snap.

This requirement is the new addition for the coming season.

In order for the new requirement to be met, any player wishing to block low must immediately dive low as their first action following the snap. If the player steps back, hesitates, rises up, or delays his block in any way, a blocking below the waist foul will be called. Whether the team is taking the snap from shotgun formation or under center is no longer a factor in the officials' decisions. Players may only legally block low if they meet all requirements listed above and the play is from scrimmage.

In addition, a uniform rule regarding light gray jerseys goes into effect this season. No team may wear light gray jerseys. The visiting team must always wear white and the home team must wear a dark color that clearly contrasts with white. In order to be legal, a gray jersey must be worn at home and be darker than 70% on the gray scale.

Points of emphasis for the coming season include: intentional grounding, ineligible downfield and sportsmanship.

It is illegal, in the high school game, for any passer to intentionally throw the ball into an area not occupied by an eligible



Tyler Cerimeli is an Arizona Interscholastic Association officials and tournament coordinator and has been a part of the NFHS Rules Committee. He graduated from Saguaro in 2008 and also works with the NFL as a replay official. He comes from a service-oriented family with several members serving as sports officials for years in Arizona.

pass receiver. Unlike higher levels, there is no pocket and a player may not throw the ball clearly out of bounds to save yardage. Passers should always attempt to throw a pass into an area where an eligible receiver is. The one exception is that a player may always spike the ball to conserve time, assuming that he does so immediately after receiving the snap.

Ineligible downfield rulings are one of the more difficult calls for an official to make. By rule, an ineligible receiver may not be more than two yards downfield at the moment that a pass that crosses the neutral zone is in flight. Players and RPO based offenses have led to teams becoming very proficient at pushing the boundary of being ineligible, and an increased focus will be placed on covering these plays.

Sportsmanship continues to be a major area of concern in the high school game. In educational based interscholastic sports, the playing field is considered an extension of the classroom. Any acts that would be deemed inappropriate or unprofessional in the classroom will be penalized on the field. Athletics teaches teamwork, ethics and life lessons that are extremely valuable as students transition into adulthood.

Players, coaches, and spectators should always strive to come together and exhibit the ideals of proper sportsmanship.



(Paul Campbell photo/MaxPreps)

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GRAND CANYON STATE GRIDIRON CLUB ELEVATES ARIZONA FOOTBALL

If you are a high school football fan in Arizona, you know about the Ed Doherty Award which, for 34 years, has been Arizona's highest individual high school football honor. The award is presented annually to the state's most outstanding high school football player by the Grand Canyon State Gridiron Club.

The Ed Doherty Award recognizes the player whose performance best exhibits the pursuit of excellence with integrity. The winner of the award epitomizes great ability combined with diligence, perseverance, and hard work. In addition to on-field performance, the Ed Doherty Award recognizes the well-rounded accomplishments of community involvement, school pride, and academics.

Since 2017, the Grand Canyon State Gridiron Club has served as the steward of the Ed Doherty Award and is the most meaningful advocate of high school football in the state of Arizona. The mission of the Grand Canyon State Gridiron Club is to represent Arizona amateur athletics by bringing national attention to the extraordinary qualities of its young people and serve in the pursuit of athletic achievement, academic advancement and greater social affinity.

Grand Canyon State Gridiron Club President Don Kile will tell almost anyone who will listen: "There has been a real

explosion of football talent in Arizona in the past few years. When you take a look at high school football across the country, you typically speak of the usual suspects – Florida, Texas, Georgia and California. Now, you can't have a meaningful conversation about high school football, anywhere in the country, without including the state of Arizona in the dialogue."

This is evident as former Arizona players now in the collegiate ranks are being considered for prestigious awards such as the Heisman Trophy and the Walter Camp.

"We recognize a value to the Ed Doherty Award not only for bringing recognition to some of the most talented high school athletes in the state, but for its ability to advance social affinity and community building," said Kile. "There is nothing like high school football to bring a community to its feet. After the 2020 Arizona high school football season concluded, we had experienced an incredible and uncomfortable year of distance and separation. The local high school, its athletics and activities are the epicenter of a strong and vibrant community."

The Grand Canyon State Gridiron Club is a non-profit charitable organization that was formed in 2017 to revive the Ed Doherty Award and return the award to the relevance it once held throughout the state.



Salpointe Catholic's Bijan Robinson [2018 & 2019] is the only two-time winner of the Ed Doherty Award. (Joe Jackson Jr. photo/MaxPreps)



The 2020 Ed Doherty nominees with award winner Ty Thompson of Mesquite up front at last year's luncheon. (GCSGC photo)



Making sure equipment is properly fitted for all athletes is a primary mission of the Grand Canyon State Gridiron Club. (GCSGC photo)

What started with a handful of fathers who were active in their own childrens' high school sports and activities, the Grand Canyon State Gridiron Club has now grown to about 75 members from all corners of the community which share a common aspiration to see our children succeed, thrive and grow into productive citizens, who will in turn pass on these benefits to their own children someday. For those members, it's an opportunity to celebrate the visibility and the celebrity of high school football across the state and return to the community a portion of what was provided to them.

The annual Ed Doherty Award Luncheon is the Gridiron Club's primary fundraiser. Programs supported through funds generated by the Ed Doherty Award Luncheon are focused on community building programs, ONE TEAM™ Academic Performance Program, heat exertional illness training and emergency protocols, equipment fitting certifications for high school support staff, and many highly specialized programs designed to create and maintain the physical and mental well-being of high school student-athletes in Arizona.

Technology has caught up with the game a great deal in the past 10-15 years. And the Gridiron Club has recognized this by placing a great emphasis on these facets of high school life to make sure all participants have the opportunity to extract as much out of the game as possible while being safe, secure and healthy.

Back in 1987, the first recipient of the Ed Doherty Award was Kevin Galbreath of Maryvale High School. Arguably one of the greatest running backs in Arizona history. Since then, more than 25 others have been awarded the Ed Doherty Trophy. A veritable timeline honoring the greatest players, including Todd Heap, Bobby Wade, Everson Griffen, Brock Purdy, Bijan Robinson and Ty Thompson. To name a few.

But it's what the Grand Canyon State Gridiron Club has done behind the scenes for the past several years helps make a big difference for our student-athletes.

For Kile and the Gridiron Club, there are five pillars which are the critical elements for all amateur sports: Players, Coaches, Parents, Administrators and Game Officials.

"Without all five pillars firmly in place, the game doesn't happen." Kile said. "It takes a lot of work, practice and dedication from a tremendous number of people to make this all happen. And it's all for the benefit of our young people, their development and the health of our community."

Kile added, "Whether it's the examples set by a local group of high school football players working to clean up their Oklahoma town after a tornado, or a community in Northern California after the entire town is wrecked by forest fires, or a local carwash to raise a few bucks to send the band to march in a parade somewhere, it is just undeniable that the local high school is the cornerstone of a healthy and vibrant community."

And it starts with today's youth. Getting in front of younger players that are still impressionable before getting to high school is where the Gridiron Club can make the biggest impact. The Ed Doherty Trophy embarks on an annual tour of junior league associations. It goes to practices and the kids become wide-eyed when they look at the names on the award. Those younger players aspire to have their name etched on the trophy when they grow up.

"Promoting broader participation in school-sponsored activities is at the very core of the GCSGC mission. We would like to see programs that are really and truly intended to get all members of the community to build upon itself. That is to bring elements of the community together on Friday nights because there's no better place for the community to be than on a high school campus on a Friday night. And, regardless how your week turned out, things just look better under stadium lights on a Friday night."



Grand Canyon State Gridiron Club

RETURNING STATISTICAL LEADERS FROM 2020



Chaparral QB Brayten Silbor (Elena Bernardo photo/MaxPreps)



Mountain View LB Malaki Ta'ase (No. 99) (Steve Paynter photo/MaxPreps)

Source: MaxPreps

PASSING

Gr. Name, School	Yards/Yds-G	TDs/INT
Jr. Richard Stallworth, Yuma Catholic	3,803/345.7	49/10
Sr. Logan Hubler, ALA Queen Creek	2,554/255.4	29/12
Sr. Adryan Lara, Desert Edge	2,393/265.9	23/5
Sr. Brayten Silbor, Chaparral	2,348/293.5	18/8
Sr. Gage Dayley, Highland	2,102/191.1	17/6
So. Demond Williams, Basha	1,814/201.6	16/4
Sr. Caden Cantrell, Snowflake	1,811/164.6	14/4
Sr. Jake Crawford, Anthem Prep	1,739/289.8	20/3
Sr. Samuel Terpstra, Glendale Prep	1,701/212.6	19/14
Sr. Jack Benson, Arcadia	1,700/212.5	14/2

SCORING

Gr. Pos. Name, School	Points	Pts/G	TDs
Sr. QB Isaiah Bradshaw, El Capitan	148	24.7	21
Jr. RB Drew Logan, Williams	136	19.4	20
Sr. RB Zach Hammett, River Valley	114	14.3	19
Sr. RB RJ Keeton, Casa Grande	110	15.7	18
Sr. WR Connor Watson, Bagdad	108	15.4	16
Sr. ATH Spencer Nielson, ALA-Gilbert North	108	10.8	18
Sr. WR Gabe Escobedo, Miami	98	14.0	16
Sr. QB Angel Flores, Casa Grande	98	10.9	16
Sr. WR Austin Rush, Yuma Catholic	98	8.9	16
Sr. QB/K Hayden Hallett, Pusch Ridge	93	9.3	6

RUSHING

Gr. Name/School	Yards/Yds-G	Yds-C	TDs
Jr. Jeryll McIntosh, Desert Edge	1,187/131.9	5.9	11
Sr. Isaiah Bradshaw, El Capitan	1,162/193.7	9.1	21
Jr. Isaac Stopke, Lake Havasu	1,113/139.1	9.4	13
Sr. Anyale Velasquez, Corona del Sol/Chandler	1,006/111.8	6.4	12
Jr. Kavanaugh Clark, Centennial	968/107.6	7.9	11
Sr. Angel Flores, Casa Grande	934/103.8	9.5	16
Sr. Zach Hammett, River Valley	911/113.9	11.2	14
Sr. Devin Bowling, Benson	909/101.0	8.6	12
Sr. Gabriel McKenney, AZ Lutheran	878/125.4	6.4	14
Sr. Jake Crawford, Anthem Prep	859/143.4	15.1	6

RECEIVING

Gr. Name, School	Yards Yds-G	Yds-R	TDs
Sr. Gabe Escobedo, Miami	1,061/151.6	20.8	16
Sr. Austin Rush, Yuma Catholic	1,033/93.9	18.8	16
Sr. Andrew Morris, Mesquite	885/98.3	18.1	10
Sr. Johnny Bellino, ALA Gilbert North	789/78.9	18.3	8
Sr. Isaac Yates, Shadow Ridge	752/83.6	20.3	10
Sr. Connor Watson, Bagdad	708/101.1	15.7	14
Sr. Mario Martinez, Yuma Catholic	701/70.1	21.2	11
Sr. Noah Baum, Snowflake	678/67.8	23.4	7
Sr. Demetrius Garrett, Casa Grande	668/74.2	22.3	7
Jr. Ryan Meza, ALA Queen Creek	656/72.9	19.9	7

TOTAL YARDS

Gr. Pos. Name, School	Total Yds	Yds-G
So. QB Richard Stallworth, Yuma Catholic	3,837	348.8
Sr. QB Logan Hubler, ALA-Queen Creek	2,951	295.1
Sr. QB Jake Crawford, Anthem Prep	2,615	435.8
Sr. QB Brayten Silbor, Chaparral	2,563	320.4
Sr. QB Adryan Lara, Desert Edge	2,511	279.0
Sr. QB Angel Flores, Casa Grande	2,497	277.4
Sr. QB Matthew McClelland, Arete Prep	2,393	398.8
Sr. QB Gage Dayley, Highland	2,343	213.0
Sr. QB Caden Cantrell, Snowflake	2,130	193.6
So. QB Demond Williams, Basha	2,053	228.1

TACKLES

Gr. Pos. Name, School	Total tackles	Tackles-G
Sr. MLB Brandon Craddock, O'Connor	157	14.1
Sr. LB Ata Teutupe, Cactus	119	10.8
Sr. LB Dezmond Esquivel, Yuma Catholic	113	10.3
Jr. OLB Jackson Browning, Basha	110	12.2
Sr. LB Justin Regher, Valley Christian	104	13.0
Sr. OLB Milo Apodaca, Greenway	102	12.8
Sr. FS Jax Stam, Liberty	100	10.0
Sr. DE Justin Holmes, Cactus	100	9.1
Jr. LB Cody Leopold, Prescott	95	11.9
Jr. LB Jarred Marquez, Yuma Catholic	94	8.5

SACKS

Gr. Pos. Name, School	Total Sacks	Sacks-G
Sr. DE/DT Isaiah Williams, Marcos de Niza	16	2.0
Sr. DE Russell Davis, Hamilton	13.5	1.4
Sr. DE Malaki Ta'ase, Mt. View (Mesa)	13.0	1.6
Sr. DE Shakaun Bowser, Casteel	11.0	1.2
Sr. DE Garrett Reeves, Bagdad	10.5	1.8
Sr. OLB Milo Apodaca, Greenway	10.5	1.3
Jr. DE Caden Shipley, Paradise Honors	9.0	1.8
Sr. DE Gilbert Calderon, Washington	9.0	1.3
Sr. DE Cordell Outridge, Moon Valley	8.5	1.4
Sr. DE Jaelin McCullen, Valley Vista	8.5	1.1

INTERCEPTIONS

Gr. Pos. Name, School	Total INTs
Sr. CB Demetrius Harmon, Washington	7
Sr. CB Jimmy Lerblance, Benson	6
Sr. DB Wyatt Ogle, Santa Cruz	6
Sr. CB Jake Barnard, Fountain Hills	5
Jr. S Koy Richardson, St. David	5
Sr. LB Christian Smith, Safford	5
Jr. DB Austin Johnston, Eastmark	5
Jr. CB Drew Logan, Williams	4
Sr. DB Quinten Anderson, Lake Havasu	4
Jr. DB Demari Washington, Centennial	4

AZPREPS365 WRITERS PICK THE OPEN DIVISION

This will be the third season that the AIA has conducted an Open Division for the football postseason. The stalwart group of AZPreps365 writers of Jose Garcia, Les Willsey and Andy Morales will once again try to predict the eight entrants into the Open Division tournament. All teams listed alphabetically.

Jose Garcia	Les Willsey	Andy Morales
BASHA	CENTENNIAL	CACTUS
CENTENNIAL	CHANDLER	CENTENNIAL
CHANDLER	DESERT EDGE	CHANDLER
DESERT EDGE	HAMILTON	CHAPARRAL
HAMILTON	HIGHLAND	HAMILTON
SAGUARO	LIBERTY	LIBERTY
SALPOINTE	SAGUARO	SAGUARO
WILLIAMS FIELD	SALPOINTE	SALPOINTE
Two-Year Record: 9-7	Two-Year Record: 10-6	Two-Year Record: 9-7



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6A CONFERENCE FOOTBALL PRESEASON RANKINGS



After playing just five regular season games due to COVID-related issues, Chaparral was steady through the 6A playoff bracket and came away with a state title, its first since 2011. (Steven Davis photo/MaxPreps)

By Les Willsey
AZPreps365.com

1. CHANDLER: The Wolves have more holes to fill this year on offense than last year. Replacing a quarterback is a big one, but there is quality competition for the opening. Running back depth is good and the offensive line has experience. The defense returns about half of its starters so that could help if the offense struggles some. With a 36-game winning streak, 23-0 record in Rick Garretson's two seasons as coach (10-0 in 2020) and back-to-back Open Division titles, there's no reason to think they won't be in the thick of things again. Open Division has been in existence two years. Adding previous seasons the Wolves have captured five consecutive championships in the big school classification dating back to 2016, and six titles in the last seven years.

2. HAMILTON: Figures to be a good year for the aerial game with veteran quarterback Nicco Marchiol and a solid receiving corps led by Christian Anaya. Receivers have good size and the kicking game sports veterans. The defense is anchored by the front line where Deuce Davis and Grant DeGraffenreid combined for nearly 100 tackles and 18 sacks. Hamilton reached the Open Division final last year, narrowly bowing to Chandler, 23-21. It was the Huskies first championship appearance since 2014. Coach Mike Zdebski enters his fourth season as head coach and seeking a first title for the school since 2012. Hamilton was 8-2 in 2020 and has won seven state titles since the school opened in 1998. All were won between 2003-2012.

3. CENTENNIAL: A very well-rounded offense is expected by coach Richard Taylor with veteran running backs and a good group of receivers to keep defenses honest. Junior Kavanaugh Clark and senior James Scott combined for 19 TDs, and Clark fell a few yards shy of a 1,000-yard season. Defense also is fast with six returning starters. Centennial has jockeyed for position in different conferences the past few seasons and now firmly entrenched in the largest classification. The Coyotes have shown no fear in 6A the last two years, qualifying for the Open Division in 2019 and 2020 where they lost in the opening round to Hamilton and Liberty, respectively. They finished 6-2 in 2020. Between 2006-18, the school claimed seven state titles.

4. LIBERTY: The offense may take some time to kick in as coach Colin Thomas seeks to anoint a quarterback. There is depth at receiver and a presence in RB Zach Wallace, who rushed for 497 yards and 6 TDs. Defense has some stalwarts back in safety Jax Stam, linebacker Gavin Dodge and lineman Braden Croteau. Liberty reached the Open Division semis last year with a tight loss to Chandler. The Lions won the 6A championship in 2019 notching an overtime victory over Red Mountain. They've maintained consistency since their beginning 15 years ago with three head coaches guiding them to deep runs or title games - Dan Filleman (2014 runner-up), Mark Smith (2019 champions) and Thomas. Only one losing season of late (2015 with 4-7 record). Liberty was 6-4 in 2020.

5. HIGHLAND: The offense should still click for the Hawks in 2021 with senior Gage Dayley at the helm again. Dayley passed for 2,107 yards and 17 TDs last year. Highland advanced to the 6A title game, finishing runner-up to Chaparral in its first-ever championship appearance, which concluded a 7-4 campaign. Losing a 1,600-yard rusher (Max Davis) to graduation leaves a hole. This is the fifth year for the Hawks with Brock Farrel as head coach. It's been exciting times in that span with a 34-14 record. That concluded a 7-4 campaign. The Hawks are the only Gilbert school that plays in the 6A Premier Region with four Chandler schools who permeate playoff fields (Chandler, Hamilton, Perry and Casteel).

6. CHAPARRAL: The defending 6A champs have a key piece returning in senior quarterback Brayten Silbor. Silbor passed for 2,348 yards and 18 TDs in eight games (a tick under 300 yards per game). He'll be throwing to mostly new receivers since graduation took out a huge chunk of his targets. Defensive lineman Anthony Lucas anchors the defense. He registered 46 tackles, 7 sacks and 15.5 tackles for loss. Chaparral's title in 2020 was its first in nine years and the seventh in school history. Current coach Brent Barnes joined Charlie Ragle and Ron Estabrook (three crowns each) as title-winning coaches for the Firebirds. Chaparral finished 2020 with a 6-2 record. Their longtime rivalry with Saguaro continues even with the schools competing in different conferences much of the recent past.

7. WILLIAMS FIELD: The Black Hawks missed the playoffs last season, but have a chance for redemption with a number of underclassmen stepping up to senior status with varsity experience from a 5-3 season in 2020. Senior running back Kaden Cloud, senior defensive back Donovan Guyton and senior linebackers Rhett Wengert and Mason Wolf were among the leaders on offense and in tackles last season. Williams Field has employed only one head coach since it opened in 2006 - Steve Campbell. The Blackhawks are 133-28 overall - an average of 10 wins and 2 losses a season. They've won two state championships.

8. QUEEN CREEK: Travis Schureman is no stranger to being the Bulldogs head coach and returns again after playing musical chairs with Joe Germaine, who resides now at Mountain View in Mesa. Returners on offense are led by senior running back Payton Barlow, who amassed 1,000 yards rushing and receiving. The defense has a stud in Porter Reynolds (68 tackles and 4.5 sacks). Schureman likes the defensive experience most as the preseason unwinds. Queen Creek was 6-3 in 2020, losing in the first round of the 6A tourney to Chaparral. The Bulldogs have played in two title games in the last decade - a win and loss in Division III. They've yet to reach a title game in 6A or 5A. The last time they missed the playoffs was in 2002. Queen Creek has competed at the 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A and 6A levels all in the last two decades as the community has grown when the school opened in 1986.

9. BASHA: The Bears unleashed a freshman quarterback last year in Demond Williams. Williams showed well for his youth. He passed for 1,814 yards and 16 TDs. There are four linemen with a year of experience back and depth at the position. The front line and linebackers are seasoned and enjoyed solid seasons led by linebackers Jackson Browning and Wyatt Milkovic, and lineman Ty Robinson. Basha won its region and made the playoffs where the Bears bowed out in overtime to Sandra Day O'Connor in the quarterfinals. They finished the 2020 season 6-3 and made the playoffs for the third year in a row. All three of those playoff seasons have come with Chris McDonald as head coach.

10. RED MOUNTAIN: A sub-.500 season (3-4) and no playoffs has the Mountain Lions itching to rectify. A pair of linebackers who saw plenty of action last year step in for their senior seasons - Parker McClure and Skylar Edmonds. They are the top returning tacklers with 73 and 48, respectively. Edmonds added two sacks and two interceptions last year. With several skill position players returning who saw at least part-time action, the offense isn't starting over. Three of its four losses last season were by a touchdown or less. Coach Mike Peterson is beginning his fifth year as coach with the Mountain Lions, boasting a 34-12 record over that time. Red Mountain is the last Mesa school to win back-to-back state titles - 2000 and 2001.



Highland senior QB Gage Dayley will need to step up with a loss of many senior receivers from 2020. (Darin Sicurello photo/MaxPreps)

6A CONFERENCE FOOTBALL TEAM-BY-TEAM PREVIEW



Basha quarterback Demond Williams has the Bears on an upward trajectory in 2021. (Chris Hook photo/MaxPreps)

By Les Willsey
AZPreps365.com

CENTRAL REGION

Basha

Head coach: Chris McDonald.

Years as school's head coach/record: 4th year, 16-15.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: So. QB Demond Williams (5-11, 170), 1,814 passing yards, 16 TDs, 4 INT; 239 rushing yards, 3 TDs; So. WR Bryson Dedmon (5-9, 155), 117 receiving yards, 0 TD; Jr. OL James Durand (6-5, 285); Jr. RB-HB Wyatt Milkovic (6-1, 230); Sr. OL Ryan Wheaton (6-1, 240); Sr. OL Brayden Acio (6-0, 250); So. Omri Solomon (6-1, 235).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Jr. LB Wyatt Milkovic (6-1, 230), 44 tackles, 1.5 sacks; Jr. LB Jackson Browning (6-0, 215), 110 tackles, 3.5 sacks; Sr. DL Ty Robinson (6-2, 230), 43 tackles; So. DL Omri Solomon (6-1, 235), 25 tackles; Jr. DL Tyson Simmons (6-2, 235); So. DB Miles Lockhart (5-11, 180), 64 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. ATH-DB Cole Martin; Jr. RB-DB Deshaun Buchanan; Jr. ATH-DB Jeremiah Vessel; Sr. OL Cole Irvine; Jr. OL Ryan Blum; Sp WR Mason Arhin; Sr. TE Josh Sink; So. WR-S Tommy Prassas; So. TE-LB Jack Bleier; Jr. WR-DB Dre Hathaway; Jr. WR-S Khi Hardwick; Sr. OL-DL Garrett Bancroft; Jr. OL-DL Kaden Bancroft; Jr. WR-DB Dorae Scott; Sr. RB-LB Ben Frick; Sr. DB Jordan Anderson.

Strengths of offense: O-line depth, size experience and our quarterback. Should be balanced this year.

Strengths of defense: Front seven should be physical with a ton of size and experience.

Team's biggest question marks: Team chemistry. We have individual key pieces, but best teams understand playing together.

2021 expectations: Competing for region, state and or open championship. We are 2020 6A Central champs and would like to take that further.

More about the program: Two region titles since opening in 2004. Sixteen playoff appearances, two semifinal finishes. Top rival is Perry - the Battle of Val Vista Drive.

Cesar Chavez

Head coach: William Chipley.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1st year.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Jr. WR Nate Pazos (6-1, 180).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. SS Chris Madden (5-8, 155); Jr. CB Jose Rivera (5-9, 160).

Also keep an eye on: Jr. QB Jorge Beltran (5-10, 190); Jr. WR Myseth Currie (6-2, 180); So. WR Kezion Dia Johnson (6-0, 175); Jr. LB Micah Boozer (5-10, 185).

Strengths of offense: Have good skill players. Unproven players make it hard to predict.

Strengths of defense: Secondary has some ball hawkers.

Team's biggest question marks: Three starting sophomore offensive linemen.

Desert Vista

Head coach: Ty Wisdom.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1st year.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. RB Devan Grubbs (6-0, 205) 172 rushing yards, 1 TD; Sr. OL David Nation (6-4, 260); Sr. WR Cade Colemere (6-3, 180) 145 receiving yards, 3 TDs; Sr. OL AJ Mikus (6-1, 235); Sr. TE Fischer Hawkes (6-3, 200); Jr. WR Michael Allison (5-9, 175), 223 receiving yards, 3 TDs, 137 rushing yards; Jr. QB Jackson Akins (6-1, 185), 675 passing yards, 5 TDs, 8 INT.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. LB Hayden Engel (6-0, 200), 35 tackles; Jr. DB Gavin Chavez (5-9, 180), 47 tackles; Jr. LB Antonio Delgado (6-0, 205); Jr. DL Jayden Denton (6-1, 240).

Also keep an eye on: So. RB Christian Clark (5-9, 180); Sr. LB Frankie Viera (5-8, 200); So. DL Owen Lee (6-2, 250).

Strengths of offense: Developing leaders over summer.

2021 expectations: Make playoffs.

Mountain Pointe

Head coach: Eric Lauer.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2nd year/1-7.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR/DB Terryon Rowe (5-11 175); Sr. OL/DL Jack Plote (6-3 250); Sr. WR/DB Jordan Huff (6-3 170);

FROM CHANDLER BLUE TO A BLUE BLOOD COLLEGE PROGRAM, GRAYES REMAINS GROUNDED

By Hunter Hippel
AZPreps365.com

The Arizona high school football prospect to blue blood college football program pipeline doesn't exactly look like rush hour.

Every year a select handful make their way from the desert to high-profile destinations. In 2019, Pinnacle's Spencer Rattler joined Oklahoma, and now finds himself likely to be a first-round pick in the 2022 NFL Draft and Heisman favorite. Joining him at blue bloods that year was Notre Dame Prep's Jake Smith and Chandler's Brayden Liebrock, who both went to Texas. In 2016, Hamilton's Garrett Rand ended up at Wisconsin, and in 2020, Arizona had perhaps its best year, sending eight players to high-end programs such as Georgia (Saguaro's Kelee Ringo), Ohio State (Salpointe Catholic's Lathan Ransom) and Florida State (Perry's Chubba Purdy).

USC and Oregon tend to get their fair share of Arizona talent annually as perennial powerhouses, but benefit from a seemingly home field advantage as both are members of the Pac-12 Conference. This season, Chandler's Kyion Grayes is perhaps the leader of Arizona's pantheon of talent.

Committed to Ohio State, Grayes is a standout in almost every capacity. In his two-year career on varsity, Grayes has 1,439 receiving yards and 16 touchdowns in 21 games, and two Open Division championships to his name.

"Number one, he's a grinder," his head coach Rick Garretson said. "He's not afraid to be coached hard, which he might as well get used to because that is how he's going to be coached at Ohio State. He's a kid that is a great teammate, and he embraces his fellow teammates' successes."

"He's just an all-round package."

The fundamental building block for the ultra-talented wideout's game is vision and after-catch ability, according to Garretson.

While Grayes has had to learn a lot, there was one trait that he possessed from the jump.

"The one thing I did anticipate when he was a sophomore was what happened when we got the ball in his hands," Garretson said. "It was pretty silly. He was averaging at one time over 20 yards a reception – he was just making a lot of things happen when he got the ball. Whether it was a bubble screen, whether it was a crossing route or anything else."

Grayes doesn't have a real answer for his YAC production.

Talking from his car, the senior made a convenient comparison. "It's just kind of natural – vision and ball-carrying," he said. "It's not like a thing that you gain, it comes naturally. It's second nature."

"It's almost like driving. You watch it all develop, [and] you take it and you go with it."

But the road to Ohio State hasn't been easy despite Grayes' rare ability.

In 2019, Chandler's coaching staff – most notably assistants Chad Carpenter and Colin Bottrill – were charged with taking Grayes' explosiveness and rounding him into a more pure receiver.

"[Carpenter and Bottrill] do a tremendous job preparing him just with techniques and how to get off press coverage, being a route runner, vertical things – all of the aspects of playing wide receiver," Garretson said. "That has just taken its own course of development over time."

Grayes praised the two for upping his physicality and refining his technique.

"Coach Carpenter [helped] with the steps at the top of my route," he said. "Three steps, two steps ... he just taught me a lot when it comes to that. Plants, too."

As talented as Grayes is on the field, Garretson believes his work ethic and persona has just as much to do with his ascension.

Grayes called himself coachable, and seems to relish in the lessons he's taught. He knows things haven't always been easy for him. Deep within his phone are screenshots of old rankings – ones that don't paint the senior in the pretty picture he's in now. They stay there as a reminder for Grayes – that things haven't been and won't always be easy, no matter how rare and prestigious he is.

"It shows where I come from," he said. "I never let that rattle me and I never let people say 'Oh, you're so good, bro.' "I never let that get to me."



Kyion Grayes averaged almost 20 yards a catch and a score for every three receptions in 2020. (Darin Sicurello photo/MaxPreps)

Sr. WR Isaiah Ice-Robinson (5-7 160), 235 receiving yards, 2 TDs; Jr. RB/LB Jaylen Rushing (5-9 190); Jr. OL/DL Kahoua Leha (5-11 260); Sr. RB/DB Devon Sparks (5-10 180), 145 rushing yards, 1 TD; Jr. QB Chris Arviso (6-1 175), 379 passing yards, 5 TDs, 1 INT; Sr. OL/DL Sebastian Enriquez (5-10 270); Sr. RB/DB Camerin Gillum (5-8 175), 318 rushing yards.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DE Amire Williams (5-10, 230), 39 tackles, 2.5 sacks; Jr. DL Kahoua Leha (5-11, 260); Jr. LB Rushing (5-9, 190).

Also keep an eye on: Jr. LB Kamerenn Taylor (6-0, 170).

Strengths of offense: Speed. Strong quarterbacks.

Strengths of defense: Athletic. Coachable.

Team's biggest question marks: Not caring who gets the credit.

2021 expectations: Will we be fast and physical.

Region notes: Reese Marziale of Mountain View piled up 815 yards and 8 TDs rushing and receiving last year.

DESERT SOUTHWEST REGION

Copper Canyon

Head coach: Chad Talley

Years as school's head coach/record: 1st year

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. OL Aljandro Flores (6-8, 315); Sr. WR Logan Reynolds (5-10, 160); Sr. OL Aaron Gray (5-7, 190); Sr. WR Jdyn Sai (5-10, 160); Sr. OL Angel Garcia (6-0, 190); Sr. OL Gabriel Saenz (5-10, 185); Jr. RB James Anderson (5-9, 180).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. LB Ricardo Garcia (5-11, 190); Sr. DB Sai; Sr. DL A. Garcia; Sr. DB Reynolds.

Strengths of offense: Football IQ, athleticism, toughness.

Strengths of defense: Versatility and athleticism.

Team's biggest question marks: Getting more kids invested in football again after long wait.

2021 expectations: Getting kids to compete and increase numbers for the future.

Trevor Browne

Head coach: Francisco Rangel.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2nd year/1-2.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Jr. RB CJ Greer (5-10, 170), 204 rushing yards, 3 TDs; 91 receiving yards, 2 TDs; Sr. RB Jose Granados (5-7, 170), 98 rushing yards, 1 TD; Jr. WR Ivan Woods (6-0, 175); Sr. WR Darius Montejano (5-10, 160), 119 receiving yards, 2 TDs; Sr. OL Jesus Murrieta (6-4, 275); Jr. OL Diego Alonso (6-1, 240); Jr. OL Rodrigo Guerrero (5-9, 215).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DL Vincent Tallabas (6-4, 300); Jr. DL Ralph Bernard (6-3, 240), 13 tackles; Sr. LB Tommy Herrera (5-10, 175); Jr. DB CJ Greer (5-10, 170), 12 tackles, 1 INT.

Strengths of offense: Return top 3 rushers and three starting linemen.

Strengths of defense: Have dynamic players at all three levels and return a great nucleus.

Team's biggest question marks: Who will step up in offensive line group. Who steps up and separates at linebacker and corner back.

2021 expectations: Opportunity to have a special season with most of our roster back.

More about the program: Coaching legend Bill Mitton. Notable alums Forrest Valora, Marcel Jones and Manuel Orona-Lopez.

Region notes: Andrey Acosta of Cibola passed for 964 yards and 10 TDs last season. ... North coach Mark Mejia debuted in a COVID shortened season with a 2-1 record. ... Tolleson did not play last season due to COVID and welcomes new coach Rich Wellbrock. ... John Irish steps away from baseball coaching to coach Westview this season.

DESERT VALLEY REGION

Brophy Prep

Head coach: Jason Jewell.

Years as school's head coach/record: 3rd year, 8-10.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. RB Ethan Lee (5-9, 190); Sr. WR Taj Hughes (5-9, 185); Jr. WR Layton Duncan (6-0, 180); Sr. OL Luke Whitlow (6-3, 230); Sr. OL Cameron Brown (6-2, 240); Sr. OL Roger Miranda-Mora (5-9, 250); Sr. OL Connor Roe (6-2, 250); Sr. TE Tyler Powell (6-7, 230).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Jr. DL David Sweetman (5-10, 190); Sr. LB Parker Maggio (5-10, 205), 39 tackles; Sr. DB Ben Morrison (6-0, 180) 36 tackles; Sr. DB Josh Minton (5-8, 180).

Also keep an eye on: Sr. WR Max Ware, 6-0, 180; Sr. DB Anthony Diaz 5-9, 185; Sr. LB Matt Diaz 5-9, 185.

Strengths of offense: Experienced and talented QB. Experienced and versatile wide receivers. Four returning OL starters.

Strengths of defense: LB depth. Four starters with experience and strong JV group coming up. DB Ben Morrison one of top corners in the nation.

Team's biggest question marks: Can we stay healthy.

2021 expectations: Make playoffs. Win a playoff game. Beat St. Mary's in renewed rivalry. Beat Notre Dame Prep in new rivalry.



Brophy CB Benjamin Morrison. (Elena Bernardo photo/MaxPreps)

Centennial

Head coach: Richard Taylor.

Years as school's head coach/record: 30 years/236-74-3.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Jr. QB Austin Glimpse (6-4, 212), 119 passing yards, 2 TDs; Sr. RB James Scott (5-10, 207), 589 rushing yards, 8 TDs; Jr. RB Kavanaugh Clark (5-9, 204), 968 rushing yards, 11 TDs; Jr. C Anthony Chacon (6-1, 267); Sr. FB Christian Cabello (5-10, 208).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DE Quentin Johnson (6-2, 220), 29 tackles, 1.5 sacks; Jr. DT Dylan Roberts (6-3, 272), 34 tackles, 5.5 sacks; Sr. LB Cabello, 52 tackles; Jr. S Demari Washington (6-0, 180), 27 tackles, 4 INT; Sr. DB Marv Green (5-9, 170), 16 tackles; Sr. LB Javier Hester (5-11, 190).

Strengths of offense: Speed, returning running backs and receiving group.

Strengths of defense: Speed with six returners.

Team's biggest question marks: Young and inexperienced at several positions.

2021 expectations: Expect improvement each week from our youth.

More about the program: Won 7 state titles, have 4 runners-up. Twenty-three seniors that said they would like to play college football were placed last season.

Liberty

Head coach: Colin Thomas.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2nd year/6-4.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Jr. RB Zach Wallace (5-9, 185), 497 rushing yards, 6 TDs, 94 receiving yards; Jr. WR Grant Brunelle (5-10, 175), 397 receiving yards, 5 TDs; Jr. OL Layton Vinning (6-2, 260); Sr. OL Ashton Thompson (5-10, 245).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. S Jax Stam (6-0, 200), 100 tackles; Sr LB Gavin Dodge (6-2, 205), 65 tackles, 2 sacks; Sr. DL Braden Croteau (6-0, 250), 25 tackles, 1.5 sacks; Sr. CB Ethan Maxey (5-11, 165), 33 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: Jr DL Mykeil Gardner (6-3, 285); Sr. TD Darin Barrows (6-0, 190); Jr. LB Anthony Ruiz (6-0, 205).

Strengths of offense: Depth at wide receiver. Returning experience.

Strengths of defense: Linebacker depth. Big-game experience.

Team's biggest question marks: Must decide on starting quarterback.

2021 expectations: Compete at highest level and show constant improvement.

More about the program: Great tradition as 2019 6A state champ and 2020 Open Division semifinalist. Coaches before me had great success - Dan Filleman and Mark Smith.



Liberty DB Jax Stam. (Elena Bernardo photo/MaxPreps)

Pinnacle

Head coach: Dana Zupke.

Years as school's head coach/record: 19th year/139-93.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Jr. WR Miles Libman (6-1, 180), 226 receiving yards; Jr. RB Jacobie Rucker (5-8, 215), 283 rushing yards, 2 TDs; Jr. OL Elijah Paige (6-6, 275); Sr. OL Coleman Germinaro (6-4, 260); Jr. TE Duce Robinson (6-6, 225), 347 receiving yards, 2 TDs; Sr. WR Chris Cappellini (6-1, 180).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. LB Cole Franklin (6-0, 200) 11 tackles; Sr. LB Bobby Weaver (6-0, 200) 45 tackles; Sr. DB Brandon Fleer (5-10, 175); 27 tackles; Jr. DB Jadiem Birthwright (5-0, 170), 11 tackles; Jr. DL Coleson Arends (6-4, 205).

Also keep an eye on: Sr. LB Carson Tininenko (6-3, 210); Jr. DB Luc Baker (6-1, 180); Jr. OL Jake Werner (6-2, 260); Sr. DB Jonah Pinder (5-11, 165).

Strengths of offense: Receiver depth. Offensive line talent.

Strengths of defense: Defensive back experience. Defensive end speed and talent.

Team's biggest question marks: Offensive line experience. Defensive interior line experience.

2021 expectations: Efficient passing game. Make playoffs.

More about the program: Spencer Rattler starting QB for Oklahoma has given program national attention. Program had a 13-year playoff streak end last year.

Region notes: Brayten Silbor of Chaparral passed for 2,348 yards and 18 TDs last season.

EAST VALLEY REGION

Dobson

Head coach: Bill Godsil.

Years as school's head coach/record: 3rd year/5-13.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. RB Mekhi Stueber (5-11, 205), 122 rushing yards; Sr. OL Max Aldana (5-11, 225); Sr. OL Tyler Dutton (5-10, 235); Jr. QB Jordan Legg (6-1, 170), 311 passing yards, 2 TDs, 5 INT; Jr. RB JaShawn Kinney (6-0, 185), 228 rushing yards, 1 TD.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Jr. LB JJ Roby (6-4, 155), 26 tackles; Sr. LB Corey Wilson (5-11, 185), 13 tackles; Sr. DL Grayson Longfellow (6-3, 240), 2 sacks; DB J. Kenney, 33 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. LB-TE Michael Delligatti (6-0, 205); So. WR-DB Elias Murray (5-9, 135); Sr. OL/DL Ezra Joseph (6-0, 245); So. OL-DL Nathan Tracey (6-3, 255).

Strengths of offense: Full offseason. Balance at QB position. Experienced RBs. More physical.

Strengths of defense: Better linebackers. Quicker on the line. Knowledge in secondary.

Team's biggest question marks: Who wins starting WR jobs. Who wins starting secondary jobs.

2021 expectations: Win at least six games. Continue to gel as a team.

Tucson

Head coach: Richard Sanchez.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1st year.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Daniel Cordova (6-0, 185); Jr. ATH Amier Austin (5-8, 145), 67 rushing yards, 44 receiving yards, 1 TD; Jr. WR Dominic Cano (5-9, 150); Sr. WR Adam Manriquez (5-7, 150); Sr. ATH Ismael Sandoval (5-7, 145), 50 receiving yards; Jr. QB Christian Bayliss (6-1, 160).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DB Daniel Cordova (6-0, 185); Jr. DB Amier Austin (5-8, 145, 15 tackles; Jr. DB Dominic Cano (5-9, 150), 5 tackles; Sr. DB Adam Manriquez (5-7, 150); Sr. DB Ismael Sandoval (5-7, 145); Jr. DB Christian Bayliss (6-1, 160).

Also keep an eye on: So. OL-DL Leland Marshall (6-2, 265); So. RB-LB Prince Mugisha (5-10, 175).

Strengths of offense: Players have come out and are excited.

Strengths of defense: Unsure.

Team's biggest question marks: Experience and youth.

2021 expectations: Get kids out and eligible.

More about the program: Levi Wallace of Buffalo Bills is an alumnus.

Westwood

Head coach: Kyle Ide.

Years as school's head coach/record: 5th year/13-25.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. QB Gavin Letourneau (6-2, 205), 1,313 passing yards, 9 TDs, 7 INT; 110 rushing yards, 2 TDs; Sr. WR Korwyn Brantley (5-10, 165), 421 receiving yards, 1 TD; Sr. WR Daunte Palma (6-2, 170); Sr. WR German Ledezma (5-10, 163), 102 receiving yards; Sr. OL Isidro Celaya (6-1, 225); Sr. RB Ryan Willis (5-8, 160), 351 rushing yards; Jr. OL Westin Whiting.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DL Dredn Filoteo (6-5, 343); Sr. LB Austin Layton (6-0, 195) 59 tackles, 2 sacks; Sr. DB Fred Banks (6-0, 160); Sr. DB Jolani Turner (5-10, 150); Jr. LB Porter Jefferies (5-8, 185).

Also keep an eye on: Sr. DL-OL Francisco Flores (5-10, 230); Sr. OL Seth Godfrey (6-1, 270); Jr. RB-LB Brayden Adams (5-8, 175); Jr. WR-DB Ross Driggs (5-10, 140).

Strengths of offense: Line will be much improved after productive off-season in weight room.

Strengths of defense: Filoteo has ability to cause havoc on revamped DL. Layton ready to explode in his final year at LB. Lots of DB depth.

More about the program: Rich in tradition. Alums include Danny White, Pete Manley, Kenny Wilkins, Siaha Burley, Sammy Moore and legendary coach Jerry Loper.

Region notes: Corona del Sol won eight games last year for the first time since 2008. ... Craig Montgomery of Mesa rushed for 711 yards and 7 TDs last season. ... Skyline's best season ever was in 2015 with a 12-1 record and semifinal finish.

RAISING AN ELITE DEFENSIVE LINEMAN



A force on the D-line, Lucas led the Firebirds in tackles for loss (15.5), sacks (7.0) and tied in tackles (46) last season. (Darin Sicurello photo/MaxPreps)

By Jose Garcia
AZPreps365.com

The Lucas family doesn't take no for an answer. Not even from the head of their household.

But Anthony Lucas and his mom, Mytsouka, were down to their final strike in trying to convince Lucas' dad, Jacques, to let him play football when he enrolled at Chaparral High. Their last hope was to propose to Jacques that Lucas, who had never played a down of football, might someday have the chance to play for the University of Miami. That school held a special place in the heart of the Haiti native Jacques, who didn't want his son to get hurt playing football despite likely being bigger than any of his freshman classmates.

When Mytsouka called a third time on that fateful day in 2018, a frustrated Jacques, who was with a work client, told her to hang up. The answer was a resounding no, he repeated. Then she brought up the University of Miami, and Jacques' heart melted.

Chaparral hooked a future heavyweight football star in Lucas that day. What it didn't know at the time was that it also landed a well-rounded person with a passion for competing and putting others first before himself. Making sure Lucas stays grounded and determined are his doting parents. But how quickly Lucas developed into one of the nation's heralded defensive linemen in the 2022 senior class is just part of his journey. How his parents met in Haiti, reunited in the United States and tirelessly worked to give themselves and their kids a better future is also part of Lucas' story.

It began when Mytsouka stood on a balcony and spotted Jacques.

"You have mail"

Mytsouka asked her cousin who the boy walking down the street was.

Her cousin hurried downstairs and wound up introducing Mytsouka to Jacques, who were 16 and 14, respectively, when they met. Jacques was immediately smitten and made a promise to himself.

"I'm going to marry her," he said. "As soon as I met her I knew she was the girl of my dreams. We became best friends, but she never knew I had feelings for her."

But political upheaval in Haiti in the early 1990s threw a wrench in his plans, causing Jacques and Mytsouka to lose contact. At the time, Mytsouka was living with an uncle who was the president of Haiti's congress. Schools were being burned down, so the uncle sent his niece to live with relatives in New York.

When she was four, Mytsouka's dad died when he was swept away by a strong current near a river bank as he attempted to move his car during a storm. When she was 16, her mom died of a brain aneurysm.

A couple of years later, Jacques, who never lost hope of reconnecting with Mytsouka, started working as a teacher's assistant at a school in Haiti. He had access to the school's computer room and the key to locate Mytsouka. She had a unique name, and he was aware of her potential home state, New York.

In the 1990s, AOL chat rooms were popular. Jacques found a user with Mytsouka's name. He left a message. About 1,500 miles away, Mytsouka heard the well-known audio announcement of the time: You have mail.

"Oh my God," she said. "I couldn't believe it was him."

Jacques' mom was living in the United States and asked if she could apply for him to get a permanent resident card.

He wound up moving to Florida. Mytsouka and marriage soon followed.

One promise was fulfilled.



As soon as Anthony Lucas' dad Jacques met Mytsouka in Haiti he knew he wanted to marry her. (Lucas family photo)



Even as a young kid, Anthony Lucas was always flashing a smile and his power. (Lucas family photo)

He did what?

In Florida, the height and weight of youth football players determine the age group athletes will compete in.

Anthony Lucas was always the biggest kid in his age group. But his parents felt it was too dangerous for him to play against kids 3-4 years older than him. Baseball seemed like a safer route.

Lucas' first 'wow' sports moment came during his first ever swing. In that at-bat during practice, the brawny youngster dented his aluminum bat after making contact with a pitch. He was just seven years old.

"I thought it was normal," Mytsouka said, "that it was supposed to happen. I didn't know that it was not normal for a kid to put a dent in an aluminum bat."

Jacques also wound up with a welt or two at the hands of his son.

When Lucas was eight, the two of them were playing basketball when Jacques went up for a layup. But when he landed he broke his arm after Lucas attempted to block his shot. About three years later, Jacques broke the same arm again during another physical 1-on-1 duel between the ultra-competitive duo.

"I told Jacques that was enough," said Mytsouka, a nurse. "You are a grown man. You can't keep breaking your arm."

When healed, Jacques stuck to his arena—as a Miami nightclub bouncer.

That was his weekend gig while attending Miami Dade College and then the University of Miami. Mytsouka meanwhile worked extra nursing shifts on the weekends to help support her growing family. The Lucases also have three daughters, Kylie, 7, Skye, 8, and Erika, 20. Mytsouka graduated from Barry University with honors just like her husband.

"She's my rock; my guardian angel," said Jacques about his wife. "She took a chance on me. I had nothing. I had no degree. She was working two jobs while I went to school. If I didn't have her support, I don't think I would make it. She's the reason why I was so motivated. So I could make her proud and make sure my kids had something to look up to. You have to lead by example and show that you can make it. I was an immigrant with a thick accent and learning a new language. I always wanted my kids to be proud and say, 'This is my dad.'"

Jacques eventually also earned a master's degree and five professional certificates. For the past 21 years he's worked in IT and is presently a cybersecurity managing consultant.

"My husband is the most amazing person I know," Mytsouka said. "What I admire is how focused and accomplished he is. If he says it will happen the first time, it will happen. He's a leader in his company and sets goals for himself. He doesn't go with the flow."

In 2014, Jacques' company made him "an offer he couldn't refuse" to relocate to Arizona. But how much Jacques makes isn't how he measure success.

"It's how you are able to make your kids better and raise them," he said. "That's what makes you successful. You can then go and rest in peace."

Following the blueprint

The easy part was spotting the tall Lucas when he enrolled at Chaparral in 2018.

A team football mom, who saw Lucas during freshman registration, and then freshman coach Scott Ruby invited Lucas and his mom to attend a practice while Jacques was away on a work trip.

"Mom and dad didn't want Anthony to get hurt, or they didn't want him hurting other people?" said Chaparral's defensive coordinator Derrick Nsubuga about what he thought when he first saw Lucas (6-3, 225-pounds as a freshman).

Lucas also passed the eyeball test for head coach Brent Barnes, who took over Chaparral the year Lucas enrolled at the school.

"I remember where we were sitting in the fieldhouse," said Barnes about his first Lucas sighting. "His mom brought him in, and I thought, 'They don't make kids like this very often. He is just so big.'"

But Lucas didn't exactly hit the ground running. Understandably, he was lost. Purposely, Ruby kept running runs plays to Lucas' side in practice.

"Anthony got better and better," said Ruby, who is now coaching at Desert Mountain. "But God did most of the work on him."

In time and with Lucas constantly pushing himself, the defensive line became the domain of the now chiseled 6-5, 280-pound senior.

Lucas went from not being able to squat with weights to squatting 500 pounds in three seasons. The other scary thing is that Lucas, 247sports' 17th ranked player in the nation in the 2022 class, doesn't turn 17 until October. There's plenty of room to grow, but that's still a lot of raw power barreling down at opponents.

"I wouldn't want to be on the other side with that guy (Lucas) coming at you," Jacques said. "It's like a freight train coming at you that will hurt. When I touch him nothing is soft."

By his junior season, when he had had 15 tackles for a loss in eight games and tied for the team lead in tackles, Lucas helped Chaparral win its first 6A championship since 2011. Lucas' line held Highland's run game to a season low 76 yards in last year's 24-14 6A title triumph.

When asked to pick a personal highlight from that victory, Lucas instead highlighted the efforts of Chaparral linebacker Diego Echavarria, an unsung hero in the 2020 6A championship.

"In the end, it's not just about me," Lucas said. "I might be the highest recruited guy, but I can't have any success without my guys. That was (Diego's) day, and there's no reason to take credit."

"My parents raised me to always put other people's needs first before my own. You never know what others might be going through."

The humble and sought-after defensive end recently dwindled his Power Five college list to Alabama, Notre Dame, LSU, Oregon, Texas A&M, USC, and of course Miami. But just because Jacques' college, Miami, is in the top-7 doesn't mean that the Hurricanes have the edge.

"I want Anthony to go to the best place for him," Jacques said. "Miami or any of those other schools, there really are no bad choices. All of these schools are all great, and I love all of them. I will cheer for Anthony wherever he chooses to go."

The one area that Jacques is pushing—and always has—is grades.

Last season, on the day Lucas received an offer from USC, Nsubuga informed Jacques, but he wasn't too happy with his son.

"After I told his dad," Nsubuga said, "his dad said, 'Anthony just got a C on a test.' He didn't flinch right after I told him about it. Right there I thought, 'Anthony, you are in good hands.'"

The defensive standout's GPA sits at a 3.3.

Getting courted by the nation's best college programs is serious business, but Lucas takes it all in stride. He still takes time to be a kid, playing video games with his friends when the chance comes up. He also enjoys watching Inside the NBA on TNT. The jovial giant wants to become a sports broadcaster after hopefully a long football career.

He doesn't have to look far to learn how to achieve his goals.

His parents laid out the plans.

"We are very happy that Anthony has that many opportunities," Mytsouka said. "Hopefully he makes it big."

She then paused briefly and corrected herself.

"Never hope. If you put your mind to it, it'll happen. Your mind is very powerful. If you put your mind to it, believe it, it will happen."

It certainly has so far for the Lucases.



The sacrifices Mytsouka and Jacques made paid off. They are raising a beautiful family. (Lucas family photo)



Queen Creek RB Payton Barlow. (Darin Sicurello photo/MaxPreps)

FIESTA REGION

Queen Creek

Head coach: Travis Schureman.

Years as school's head coach/record: 7th year/57-18.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Kirice Blakley (6-1, 180), 278 receiving yards, 0 TD; Sr. RB Payton Barlow (5-11, 180), 799 rushing yards, 5 TDs, 211 receiving yards, 1 TD; Jr. WR Davey Morales (5-8, 155); Jr. C Brody Curtis (5-9, 235); Jr. OL Griffin Schureman (62-235); Jr. WR Luke Gonzalez (6-2, 195), 148 receiving yards, 1 TD; Jr. WR David Hicks (5-11, 165).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DL Cotter Patterson (6-1, 250), 19 tackles; Jr. Porter Reynolds (6-0, 215), 68 tackles, 4.5 sacks; Jr. LB Isaiah Huihui (6-1, 210), 13 tackles

Also keep an eye on: Sr. OL-DL Mack Taylor (6-3, 215); Sr. Jarian Fields LB-TE (6-0, 175), 15 tackles; Sr. LB Sebastian Tomerlin (6-0, 155), 30 tackles; 3 INT; Jr. LB Cole Lalama (5-10, 210).

Strengths of offense: Chemistry.

Strengths of defense: Returning players.

2021 expectations: Be a team that plays hard.

Region notes: Roy Lopez shifts to coaching at Desert Ridge after Tolleson sat out last season. ... Higley missed the playoffs last year for the first time since 2012. ... Parker McClure of Red Mountain recorded 73 tackles in seven games last year. ... Williams Field missed the playoffs for the first time in its history (1st varsity season 2008).

PREMIER REGION

Chandler

Head coach: Rick Garretson.

Years as school's head coach/record: 3rd year/23-0.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Quaron Adams (5-7, 160), 361 receiving yards; Sr. TE Nason Coleman (6-3, 230);

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DB Travis Roberts (5-9, 165), 38 tackles, 3 INT; Sr. DB Alfred Smith (5-9, 165), 34 tackles; St. DT Isaiha Johnson (5-10, 205), 23 tackles, 3 sacks; Sr. SS Devon Dunn (5-11, 190), 30 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. OL Lashawn Ealim (6-3, 350); Jr. OL Jason Holloway (6-1, 330); Sr. RB Jeremiah Moore (5-10, 205), 361 yards rushing, 3 TDs; Sr. LB Noah Sauni (5-11, 210).

Strengths of offense: Running back depth. Quarterbacks. Offensive line.

Strengths of defense: Overall strength. Depth in secondary. Quality line depth.

Program history: 6 D-I titles in last 7 years. Five consecutive titles. Back-to-back Open Division titles.

More about the program: Ranked nationally since 2014, 36-game winning streak and #5 in nation in 2020.

Hamilton

Head coach: Mike Zdebski.

Years as school's head coach/record: 4th year/20-12.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. OL Grayson Stovall (6-4, 305); Jr. OL Dan Rea (6-1, 280); Sr. TE Michael Masunas (6-5, 240); Jr. K Jacob Medina (5-10, 165); Jr. P Roch Cholowsky (6-1, 180), 223 passing yards, 2 TDs, 2 INT; Sr. QB Nicco Marchiol (6-3, 220), 1,417 passing yards, 11 TDs, 7 INT; Sr. SB Christian Anaya (6-1, 180), 458 receiving yards, 6 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. S Cam Haggard (6-2, 185), 23 tackles; Sr. DL Deuce Davis (6-3, 215), 61 tackles, 13.5 sacks; Sr. DL Dawson Hubbard (6-0, 265), 11 tackles, 3 sacks; Sr. DL Grand DeGraffenreid (6-0, 215), 33 tackles, 4.5 sacks; Jr. Chandler Davis (6-2, 215).

Strengths of offense: Length of our receivers.

Strengths of defense: Experience of our linemen.

Team's biggest question marks: Maturity of team. Two-thirds are underclassmen and OL experience.

2021 expectations: Contend for state championship.

More about the program: Won seven state championships, 53-game win streak at one time. Terrell Suggs notable alumni. Chandler is our rival. One of the best matchups in the country. Hamilton plays Bishop Gorman Sept. 17 at Hamilton.

Perry

Head coach: Preston Jones.

Years as school's head coach/record: 14th year/87-59.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Ian Nieto (5-8, 180), 170 receiving yards; Sr. QB Colter Brown (5-11, 185), 342 passing yards, 3 TDs, 1 INT; 211 rushing yards; Sr. TE Mason Mesias (5-11, 195); Sr. OL Trevor Swan (6-5, 300); Sr. OL Brody Smith (6-3, 265); Jr. OL Marc O'Bannon (6-4, 280).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DL Steven Kennedy (6-1, 265) 12 tackles; Sr. DL Caleb Richardson (6-3, 240), 13 tackles; DE-LB Cooper Scott (6-2, 220), 23 tackles, 2 sacks; Sr. DB Kolton Cunningham (5-9, 200), 35 tackles; Sr. DB Wyatt LeWallen (5-9, 170), 28 tackles; Sr. DB Reshawn Mitchell (5-11, 175); Jr. DB CJ Snowden (5-10, 180); Sr. LB Hershal Hall (5-10, 185), 26 tackles; Sr. LB Sy Hatch (6-2, 200), 13 tackles, 3 sacks; Sr. LB Cade Lacy (5-11, 200), 32 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. RB Brock Ford (6-0, 185); Sr. DL Adam Knowles (6-2, 245).

Strengths of offense: Disciplined, smart players.

Strengths of defense: Front seven.

Team's biggest question marks: Quarterback and secondary depth.

Region notes: Casteel managed a 5-4 record in 2020 in its first year in 6A. ... Gage Dayley of Highland passed for 2,102 yards and 17 TDs last year.

SOUTHWEST REGION

Shadow Ridge

Head coach: Sean Hegarty.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2nd year, 6-3.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Isaac Yates (6-1, 175), 752 receiving yards, 10 TDs; Sr. WR Robert Grier (5-9, 165), 155 receiving yards, 1 TD; Sr. OL Torrey Oltman (5-11, 245); Jr. RB Anthony Garcia (5-10, 195), 573 rushing yards, 2 TDs; Jr. OL Logan Getejanc (5-11, 275).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: JR. DL Jasiah Flores (5-10, 275); Jr. LB Jacob Cano (5-10, 195), 26 tackles; So LB Memphis Palelei (6-0, 220), 27 tackles; Sr. LB Micah Hendricks (5-11, 175), 13 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. WR Sammy Sollars (6-3, 185); Jr. OL Tyler Ryder (6-3, 300); So. LB Fidencio Salazar (5-9, 195); So. OL Christian Hunter (6-3, 255).

Strengths of offense: Veterans at skill positions. QB intelligence. Young, developing linemen.

Strengths of defense: Fast, strong linebackers.

Team's biggest question marks: Replacing graduated seniors and transfers on defense.

2021 expectations: Make playoffs. Make run at state title.

Valley Vista

Head coach: Derek Wahlstrom.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1st year.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. C Jaden Lay 5-11, 250; Sr. LT Reif Peterson 6-4, 280; Jr. WR Mikel Henderson 5-10, 170; Jr. WR Blaise Nelson 5-11, 160, 574 receiving yards, 5 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. CB-FS Carter Price 5-11 160; Sr. LB-TE Brody Lindemann 5-10, 190, 25 tackles; Sr. LB-LS Preston Tucker 6-1, 225; Sr. LB Andrew Zacek 6-2, 215, 17 tackles; Sr. DE-DL Jaelin McCullen 6-4, 250, 50 tackles; Sr. DL Marquis Payne 5-11, 215.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. OL Ashton Mithelavage 6-2, 270; Sr. OL Devon Odom 6-3, 250; Sr. RB Meven Obregon 5-10, 170; Sr. WR Anthony Ordaz 5-10, 180; Jr. QB Adrian Crespín 5-10, 170; Jr. LB Jonah Flowers 5-10, 190; Jr. WR Michael James 5-10, 180; Jr. ATH Ethan Espinosa 5-11, 180; So. RB Damian Zuniga 5-8, 170.

Strengths of offense: Good balance and the potential to attack defenses in a variety of ways with a number of different student-athletes making it difficult for a defense to focus on just one player.

Strengths of defense: Our defense has experience and tenacity. They play well together and fly to the football.

Team's biggest question marks: How will our student-athletes respond to the coaching change. We also need to find depth in a number of different spots.

2021 expectations: Our goal is to be a team of excellence and be the very best team we can be on a weekly basis.

Region notes: Boulder Creek won its first playoff game since 2010 last year. ... La Joya had its 2020 season canceled due to COVID. ... Brendan Anderson of Mountain Ridge passed for 1,583 yards and 19 TDs last year. ... Brandon Craddock of Sandra Day O'Connor had 141 tackles and 3.5 sacks last year.



O'Connor LB Brandon Craddock (Chris Stanley photo/MaxPreps)

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SOLLENBERGER'S FOOTBALL PREP MAGAZINE 50

MOUNTAIN VIEW'S GERMAINE RETURNS HOME WITH A WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE

By Les Willsey
AZPreps365.com

The notion to coach wasn't always on former Mesa Mountain View standout Joe Germaine's radar. It started in earnest as his prep, college and pro career of more than a decade drew to a close.

"My first opportunity came (in 2004) at Basha," Germaine said. "Tim McBurney was the coach. He asked me if I'd like to coach the quarterbacks. I found I loved working with the high school-level athlete."

As the 2021 season is set to unfold, Germaine is back at Mountain View as its leader. He's spent the last decade as a head coach some years and assistant coach others at Queen Creek (2010-2020). He was the head coach in 2012 when the Bulldogs edged Desert Edge, 9-7, for their first and only football title since the school opened in 1986.

"When my career ended I knew I still had a passion for the game," Germaine said. "I loved meetings and practices. I was happy at Queen Creek. When I talked with Mountain View's new principal (Mike Oliver) about the job, I was convinced I wanted to go there. Mountain View is near and dear to me. There's not a better football tradition than there. I grew up in the neighborhood, Gilbert (Road) and Brown (Road)."

The tradition Germaine alludes to is rich. To wit:

Mountain View's all-time win-loss record is 411-128-2. An average of a 9-3 record each year over 45 seasons (1976-2020). It's a winning percentage of .762. The Toros have won eight state championships and finished runners-up five times. A championship game appearance on average slightly more than every four years.

Germaine's prep resume at Mountain View included playing on a runner-up (1992) and state championship team (1993). He set school records for passing yards his senior season in 1993.

After playing a year at Scottsdale Community College in 1994, Germaine moved on to Ohio State from 1996-1998. He helped beat ASU in the 1997 Rose Bowl with some late heroics and served as the Buckeyes' starting quarterback in 1998.

In 1999 he was a fourth-round draft pick of the St. Louis Rams, settling in as a backup behind Kurt Warner in what would be the Rams' Super Bowl winning-season. Brief stints with three other NFL teams were followed by six years in the Arena Football League with the Arizona

Rattlers and Utah Blaze, ending in 2010.

Germaine has drawn on the experience of several of his coaches and players in his three tiers of football - among them Mountain View coach Jesse Parker, Ohio State quarterbacks coach Walt Harris and Ohio State coach John Cooper. Getting the ear of fellow quarterbacks Kurt Warner and Trent Green while in St. Louis also helped.

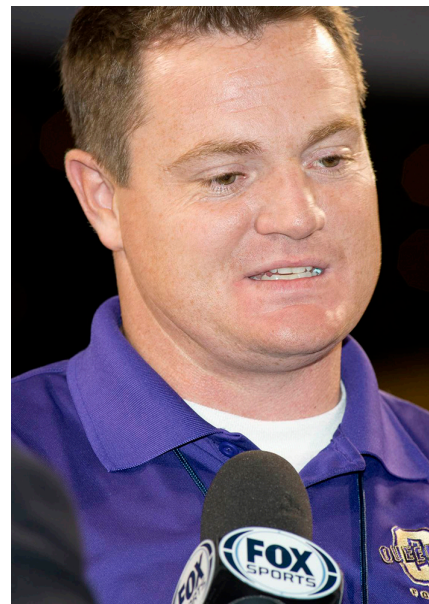
Parker was Mountain View's first head coach when it opened in 1976 and mentored the Toros through the 1994 season.

"Jesse was certainly an inspiration," Germaine said. "He was interested in teaching life lessons. He taught much more than just football. I learned so much from him. I always wanted to be a Toro and he was the coach all the time as I was growing up."

Mountain View's success over 45 years of existence is outstanding, having qualified 35 times in 42 seasons it has been eligible. The Toros haven't been as successful the past decade, sporting a 57-59 record since 2010 and just one playoff victory.

In the three months he's been on the job thus far, he's gathered a staff and gotten to know players outside the trenches. He knows from past experience the feel of being a Toro. And he relishes it.

"It's great to be back," Germaine said. "I love the community here and the support they offer."



Joe Germaine led Queen Creek to the 2012 state title in Division III. (Duane Matsen photo/MaxPreps)



Joe Germaine (No. 10, end of third row) was a big reason Mountain View made it to a pair of title games while he was a Toro. (AIA photo)

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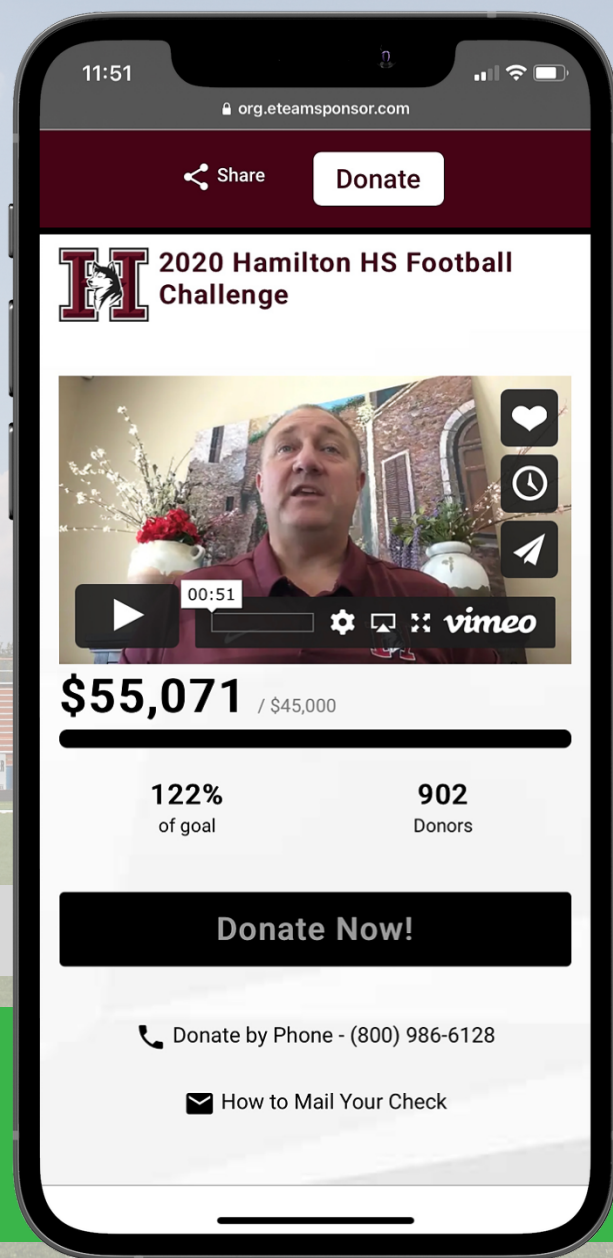
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5A CONFERENCE FOOTBALL PRESEASON RANKINGS



Ranked fifth heading into the 2020 season, Sunrise Mountain earned the top seed for the 5A postseason and rushed for over 400 yards against Ironwood to capture its first-ever state championship. (Darin Sicurello photo/MaxPreps)

By Les Willsey
AZPreps365.com

1. SAGUARO: The Sabercats are senior heavy in experience after a season in which COVID-19 forced them out of the Open Division tournament. They are deep at quarterback with the return of Ridge Docekal (916 passing yards, 7 TDs in six games) and addition of Pinnacle transfer QB Devon Dampier, who started in 2020 for the Pioneers. A huge senior line will protect and open holes for backs and quarterbacks. Six senior starters return on defense. Among them is monster end/outside linebacker Tristan Monday. Speed abounds at skill spots on both sides of the ball. Saguario finished 5-2 having to forfeit their first round playoff game for a very disconcerting end to the season. It's only loss on the field was 13-7 to Hamilton in a nationally televised contest, which advanced to the Open Division final.

2. DESERT EDGE: The Scorpions fought their way to an Open Division berth last year, but found the going quite tough with a no-shame blowout loss to Chandler. The Carter brothers will field another competitive squad where they aim for a 5A title, or perhaps a return to the Open as expectations. The offense is loaded, led by running back Jeryll McIntosh (1,187 yards, 11 TDs), veteran quarterback Adryan Lara (2,393 yards, 23 TDs) and seasoned receivers Richard Kulik and Fabian Lopez. Tackle Gavin Broschious is one of the top linemen in the state and is a Michigan State commit. The defense lacks experience, but has ample speed and a high football IQ to help with a rebuild of the unit. Desert Edge was 8-1 in 2020. It dealt 5A state champ Sunrise Mountain one of its two losses as a consolation prize.

3. SUNRISE MOUNTAIN: The Mustangs struck championship paydirt for the first time in school history in 2020, taking the 5A crown from Ironwood handily. They won all three playoff games by at least three touchdowns. Quarterback Hunter Kronengold returns as the starter, albeit in what was a run-heavy offense last year. Coach Steve Decker believes balance on offense will emerge with the strength skill players. Defensively, the front seven, led by linebacker Darnell Stephens, are sturdy. Line play on offense and the defensive backfield are question marks. Sunrise Mountain finished 9-2 in 2020, but stood out in the postseason with its dominance of three opponents - Verrado, Campo Verde and Ironwood. It outscored the trio 105-37.

4. SALPOINTE CATHOLIC: The Lancers, like Saguario and Desert Edge, qualified for the Open. They were the recipients of Saguario's forfeit, but were treated rudely by Hamilton in the semis. Their calling card to open this season is a savvy, large and experienced offensive line. Seniors Lorenzo Mele, Carlos Gonzalez and Jace Springer are the leaders of said line. Defensively, there is depth and experience with eight players back with starting credentials. Tops on the stat chart returning is linebacker Davian Miranda-Carrasco (41 tackles). Coach Eric Rogers touts his defense as fast and physical. Salpointe enjoyed a perfect regular season going 7-0 with its marquee victory over Campo Verde.

5. NOTRE DAME PREP: The Saints have rolled up a 42-7 record in four seasons under coach George Prelock with playoff berths every year and title-game appearances twice. No reason that consistency won't continue. The top skill player is Gavin Smith, who caught 45 passes for 591 yards and seven TDs in his second varsity campaign. Position-wise on offense, the strength is on

the line with four starters - three seniors and one junior - doing their thing. The seniors are Duke Frye, Matt Reinhardt, Jake Burrow, and the junior is Ty Borowski. Frye and Reinhardt are likely to double up on the defensive front, which sports good size. Five starters are back on defense. Notre Dame Prep finished 2020 with a 5-3 record. It hammered Sunnyslope in the first round of the 5A playoffs, but bowed out with a loss in the semis to Ironwood.

6. SUNNYSLOPE: It was a nice year for Vikings coach Sam Jacobs, making his debut with a 5-2 record and a region title. The postseason, however, was one and done at the hands of Notre Dame Prep. Passing was Slope's forte last year, but, with all the receivers who caught passes graduated, it appears a shift to the ground game is coming. The top rusher from last year is Xander Georgoulis (576 yards, 6 TDs). Quarterback Tanner Daoust returns behind center. Most of the offensive line also returns. On defense, five starters - all up front or in the secondary - are back. Quality depth will allow rotating players on defense. Sunnyslope's visit to postseason was its fourth in a row. On the downside to that all four years have culminated with a first-round loss to the likes of Centennial twice, Cienega and NDP.

7. CAMPO VERDE: The Coyotes enjoyed a successful year in Ryan Freeman's debut as head coach. They posted a 5-3 record, advanced to the 5A state tournament and reached the semifinals before being vanquished by eventual champ Sunrise Mountain. They'll need a new bell-cow at running back, but they always seem to find one. Two quarterbacks who shared time last year return, as do four receivers with better than 100 yards receiving - Boston Williamson, Jersey Blassingame, Zach Goebel and Will Clark. The defense has six starters returning led by senior linebacker Connor Calloway (40 tackles, five sacks). Campo Verde has become a contender with four consecutive playoff appearances and four playoff wins in that span. They've been eliminated twice by Sunrise Mountain, once each by Liberty and Williams Field (2019 title game).

8. VERRADO: The Vipers reached the 5A playoffs last year despite finishing the regular season at 3-4. They played a massive schedule that included five playoff teams, including Sunrise Mountain twice. They'll be somewhat light early on offense with a couple returning starters. The defense is the flip side - six starters, led by linebacker Brenden Velez (49 tackles) and linemen Nicolas Rodriguez and Ryan Willey (28 tackles apiece), return. Quarterbacking was shared last season and listed by former coach Shawn Copeland as a strength of the offense. Former Tonopah Valley coach Dustin Johnson and his stellar coaching staff are taking over this year. All of its losses in 2020 were to playoff teams, including a first-round loss to eventual champ Sunrise Mountain. However, the campaign did include a victory over 5A runner-up Ironwood.

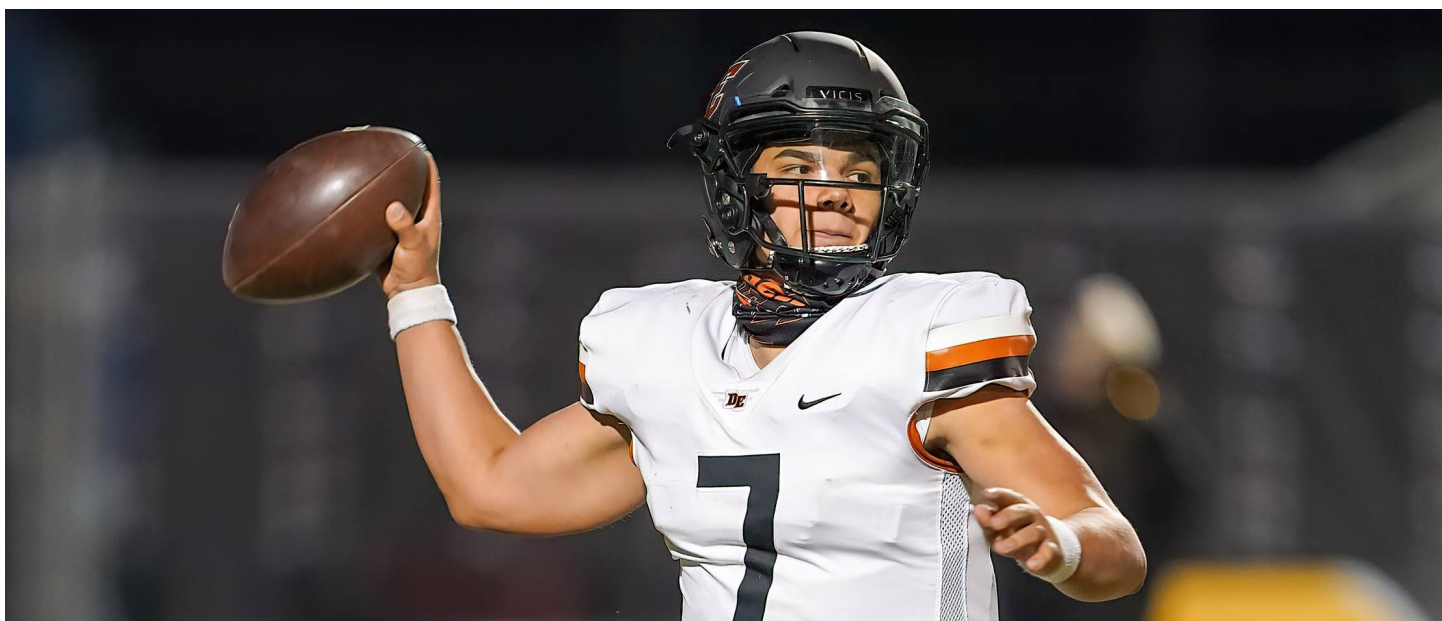
9. MILLENNIUM: The Tigers hope to navigate the 5A better. They managed one victory with losses to playoff teams Desert Edge and Verrado, and non-region foes Gilbert and Horizon. A fine mix of starters return on offense led by wide out Kyan Fields and lineman Sam Patterson. Two running backs and a quarterback saw action as well. Defense is the strong suit with a trio of productive linebackers - Daniel Delponte (73 tackles, two sacks), Cole Marszalek (36 tackles) and Sean Farney (42 tackles). Millennium struggled to a 1-5 finish, but optimism is high as they attempt to return to the playoffs from a 9-3 mark in 2019.

10. CIENEGA: The Bobcats are among many Southern Arizona schools who played limited games (two) last year due to COVID. Justin Hargraves takes over as head coach and is excited about a deep receiving corps, two senior running backs and a junior quarterback with a strong arm. Defense may be the best side of the ball led by end Brody Kallman and linebacker Ritchie McCormack. The linebackers are fast and the secondary has the best depth of the unit. Cienega won both games last season, but was ineligible for postseason. It'll try and get back in the swing of things which over the past four seasons has been solid. The Bobcats posted a 42-8 record between 2016-2019.



Cienega can't wait to have a full season again. (Joe Jackson, Jr. photo/MaxPreps)

5A CONFERENCE FOOTBALL TEAM-BY-TEAM PREVIEW



Desert Edge QB Adryan Lara is looking to break some 5A passing records while aiming to get the Scorpions into their second straight Open Division tournament. (Steven Davis photo/MaxPreps)

By Les Willsey
AZPreps365.com

DESERT WEST REGION

Desert Edge

Head coach: Mark and Marcus Carter.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2nd year, 8-1.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. QB Adryan Lara (6-1, 190), 2,393 yards passing, 23 TDs, 5 INT, 118 rushing yards, 2 TDs; Sr. OL Gavin Brosious (6-4, 290); Sr. WR Fabian Lopez (5-9, 175), 305 receiving yards, 3 TDs; Sr. TE Matthew Willis (6-4, 215); Sr. RB Jeryll McIntosh (6-1, 215), 1,187 rushing yards, 11 TDs; Sr. WR Richard Kulik (6-0, 180), 573 receiving yards, 4 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. CB Cameron Foster (5-10, 175), 17 tackles; Sr. CB Amir Smith (5-10, 180), 13 tackles; Sr. DE-LB Cris Contreras (5-10, 210), 22 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. DL Esaias Swindle (5-10, 240); Jr. WR Gavin Parks (6-0, 175); Sr. Quentin Robinson (6-4, 275); Jr. Nathan Manzanarez (5-9, 170).

Strengths of offense: Have one of the top offensive lineman and running back in the state. Very balanced on offense.

Strengths of defense: Speed and high football IQ.

2021 expectations: Make it to Open. Win 5A championship.

More about the program: School won region first year in 5A. First team in school history to reach Open Division playoffs

Millennium

Head coach: Lamar Early.

Years as school's head coach/record: 5th year, 23-17.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Josiah Lathon (6-2, 175); Jr. WR Kyan Fields (6-3 180), 271 receiving yards, 1 TD; Jr. WR Billy Bolick (5-10 190), 110 receiving yards, 1 TD; So. RB Zeus Pinder (5-9 185), 119 rushing yards; Sr. OL Sam Patterson (6-1 235); Jr. OL Jax Adair (6-1, 220); So. RB Issac Huerigo (6-0 195).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Jr. LB Daniel Delponte (6-1 190), 73 tackles, 2 sacks; Jr. DB Shahid Wilson (6-2 185), 27 tackles, 2 INT; Jr. LB-SN Cole Marszalek (6-1 195) 36 tackles; Jr. DB Xavier Sanchez

(5-10 180) 19 tackles; Sr. LB Sean Farney (6-2 205) 42 tackles; Sr. DE Quintyn Holmes (6-3 195), 13 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. QB Blake Sparks (6-2 205); Jr. QB Derek Berry (6-2 205); Sr. WR Sam Kelly (6-2 190); Sr. K-P Davis Rubel (5-10 185).

Strengths of offense: Lot of returning experience who know how offense works.

Strengths of defense: Just having some returners will help defense reach full potential.

Team's biggest question marks: Youth and if we've grown from last year.

2021 expectations: Get better every day.

More about the program: Believe we help all student athletes who want to go on to college level.

Sunrise Mountain

Head coach: Steve Decker.

Years as school's head coach/record: 6th year, 46-14 record.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. QB Hunter Kronengold (6-4, 170), 539 passing yards, 4 TDs, 2 INT; Sr. TE-DE John Hart (6-4, 230); Sr. K-P Easton Black (6-2, 180); Sr. OL Justin Firriolo (6-2, 265); Sr. OL Matthew Hapner (6-0, 270); Jr. WR Micah Johnson (6-2-180), 382 receiving yards, 3 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. LB Darnell Stephens (6-2, 205), 60 tackles; Sr. DB Elijah Portela (5-11, 175), 29 tackles; Sr. DL Riley Kendall (6-2, 230); Sr. LB Reese Fink (6-0, 195), 35 tackles; Jr. DB Braden Harvey (5-9, 160); Jr. LB-RB Caleb Scott (5-11, 190); Jr. DB-WR Dymikal Anderson; Jr. RB Rex Underhill (5-9, 179); Jr. DB Tyler Potts (5-10, 170); Sr. S Gage Buchannon (5-8, 145).

Strengths of offense: Well balanced with good skill players and QB.

Strengths of defense: Front seven.

Team's biggest question marks: Defensive backs and offensive line.

2021 expectations: Win region and make a run in playoffs.

More about the program: 2020 5A state champs and biggest rival is Liberty.

Verrado

Head coach: Dustin Johnson.

Years as school's head coach/record: First year at Verrado.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Trey Nelson (6-1, 175); Sr. OL Will Condie (5-10, 260).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DL Nicolas Rodriguez (5-10, 240), 28 tackles; Jr. LB Nathan Bilski (6-1, 205), 19 tackles; So. DE Ryan Willey (6-3, 200), 28 tackles; Jr. DB Juan Virgen (5-9, 175), 49 tackles; Jr. DB Colin Tibbs (5-10, 175), 25 tackles; Sr. LB Brenden Velez (5-11, 210), 49 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. LB Connor Gingg (5-9, 175).

Strengths of offense: Experience at quarterback.

Strengths of defense: Leadership.

Team's biggest question marks: Running game and defensive line depth.

2021 expectations: Taking responsibility and becoming more of a team.

Region notes: Betty Fairfax was able to play three games (1-2 record) due to COVID last year.... Ironwood advanced to 5A title game last year and was runner-up to Sunrise Mountain.

METRO REGION

Apollo

Head coach: Aaron Walls.

Years as school's head coach/record: 3rd year, 6-12.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. OL Jared Fuentes (6-3, 215); Sr. OL Adam Delk (5-9, 285); Sr. OL Isiah Hosler (6-5, 290); Sr. OL Ti'Zhon Bundy (6-3, 260); Sr. WR Jose Cazares (5-8, 160); Sr. RB Gabriel Matanane (5-9, 215), 298 rushing yards, 4 TDs; Jr. QB Silas Chicharello (5-10, 165), 193 passing yards, 1 TD; 132 rushing yards; So. RB Adam Mohammed (5-10, 180), 181 rushing yards, 1 TD.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DL Jonathan Melgar (6-3, 295), 26 tackles, 2 sacks; Jr. LB Brodie Chicharello (5-10, 185), 38 tackles; Jr. DE David Wilson (5-10, 185), 13 tackles, 1.5 sacks; Jr. DL Jesus Chacon (6-0, 245), 2 sacks.

Also keep an eye on: So. WR-FS Kamarion Bell (5-10, 170); So. TE-DE David Mullayev (6-4, 205).

Strengths of offense: Young, explosive running back.

Strengths of defense: Several players that can rotate among front seven.

Team's biggest question marks: Developing effective passing game.

2021 expectations: Win 5A Central Region and compete for playoff spot.

More about the program: Famous alum is Prince Amukamara. NFL veteran. Holds youth camps at school and donates to program.

Central

Head coach: Chandler Hovik.

Years as school's head coach/record: 3rd year, 3-10.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Carter Allen (6-1, 175), 340 receiving yards, 4 TDs; Sr. TE Joe Munoz (6-2, 190); Sr. RB Isaac Duarte (5-11, 190), 165 rushing yards, 3 TDs; Sr. OL Fred Fowkles (6-3, 265); Jr. OL Blas Guillen (6-2, 230); So. OL Cornelius James (6-0, 155).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. Joe Munoz (6-2, 190), 20 tackles; Sr. LB Isaac Duarte (5-11, 190), 15 tackles; Jr. LB Aaron Francis (6-0, 190), 20 tackles, 4 sacks; Jr. DL Josiah Thompson (5-9, 195), 11 tackles; Jr. DB-LB Bobby McKinney (6-3, 165), 23 tackles; So. DB Cornelius James (6-0, 155).

Also keep an eye on: Sr. L Versilli Rodriguez (5-10, 185); Sr. DB-WR Kyrie Bell (6-2, 165); Jr. DB-WR Kohnor Roque Brown (5-10, 170) Jr. QB Dom Bagchi (5-9, 170); Jr. WR-DB Quintin Conley (6-2, 160).

Strengths of offense: Experienced players at every position group.

Strengths of defense: Undersized but will make up for it with speed and hustle.

Team's biggest question marks: No offseason and only three games last year. Learning to work together with new guys in program.

2021 expectations: Be the best version of ourselves.

More about the program: Look forward to playing our rival North High in Week 1 who we haven't beaten in more than a decade.

North Canyon

Head coach: Adam Beene.

Years as school's head coach/record: 3rd year, 4-14.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: OL Marcus Hubbard (6-4, 290); RB Brock Biley (5-9, 160); WR Izzy Durgin (5-9, 160).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: DL Marcus Hubbard (6-4, 290); S Brock Biley (5-9, 160); CB Izzy Durgin (5-9, 160); CB Carlos Mellin (5-9, 150).

Also keep an eye on: QB Amari Harrison (6-3, 185).

Strengths of offense: Getting the ball to more guys.

Strengths of defense: Cornerbacks.

More about the program: Top rivals are Paradise Valley and Shadow Mountain. Famous alums are Austin Jackson and Solomon Enis.

Region notes: Alhambra played two games (0-2 record) due to COVID last year. ... Camelback played one game (1-0) due to COVID last year. ... Maryvale did not play a game last year due to COVID.

NORTHEAST VALLEY REGION

Barry Goldwater

Head coach: Frank Lauth.

Years as school's head coach/record: 3rd year, 8-8.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. QB Jesse Martinez (5-11, 155) 418 passing yards, 3 TDs, 3 INT, 77b rushing yards, 3 TDs; Sr. WR Yandell Wynn (5-8, 155), 216 receiving yards, 2 TDs; Sr. OL Andrew Walterscheid (6-0, 205); Sr. RB R'son Baker-Hollingsworth (6-1, 220), 180 rushing yards, 2 TDs; So. RB Markhi McKinnon (6-0, 189).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DE Alomar Armenta (6-3, 215), 34 tackles; Sr. LB A. Walterscheid (6-0, 205), 30 tackles; Sr. LB R'son Baker-Hollingsworth (6-1, 220), 14 tackles; Sr. LB Kimoni Bridges (5-9, 165), 10 tackles, 2 sacks.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. OL-DL Azhael Armenta (6-2, 240); Sr. OL-DL Seth Marshal (6-2, 205); Sr. DB Smith Jones (5-7, 150).

2021 expectations: Get full buy in from players. Win our region.



Central WR/DB Carter Allen. (Steven Davis photo/MaxPreps)

Cactus Shadows

Head coach: Michael Hudnutt.

Years as school's head coach/record: 8th year, 35-35.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. RB Mason Benvenuto (5-9, 170), 172 rushing yards; Sr. WR John Young (6-2, 190); Sr. WR Bryer Bennett (5-8, 170), 127 receiving yards, 1 TD; Jr. WR Logan Foster (6-1, 185), 105 receiving yards, 1 TD; Jr. RB Jaivon Swecker (5-10, 160); Jr. OL Diego Romero (6-1, 250).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. CB Tate Andrus (6-1, 160); Sr. CB Jayden Bahoura (5-7, 160), 13 tackles; Sr. DL Matthew Coggins (5-10, 190), 14 tackles, 3 sacks; Sr. CB Brayden Hasher (6-0, 180); Sr. CB Michael Macdonald (5-11, 160); Sr. S Jacob Ong (5-10, 160).

Also keep an eye on: So. S William Stone (5-10, 160).

Strengths of offense: Throwing the ball important this year.

Strengths of defense: Returning linebackers.

2021 expectations: Make playoffs. Win state championship.

More about the program: Famous alum is Taylor Lewan - NFL Tennessee Titans. Best view to watch a game at CSHS is Nest (student section).

Paradise Valley

Head coach: Greg Davis.

Years as school's head coach/record: 8th year, 40-32.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. OL Chris Rayas 5-11, 265; Sr. OL Armando Nieves 6-7, 310; Sr. RB Kevin Jue 5-9, 170, 162 rushing yards; Sr. OL Tyrese Toney 5-11, 275; Sr. WR Nick Gardner, 6-0, 175, 142 receiving yards; Jr. QB Jaden McDaniel 6-0, 210.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. OLB Ryan Deonise 5-10, 180; Sr. MLB Nicola Isakov 5-10, 230; Jr. OLB Angel Vega 5-8, 155; Jr. DE Phillip Dozeman 6-1, 175.

Also keep an eye on: So. RB Quincy Wright 5-9, 160; Sr. DB Joseph Pompeo 5-10, 160; Jr. DB Jacob Weaver 5-8, 155; Sr. WR Erick Reyes-Aguilera 6-2, 180.

Strengths of offense: Leaning heavy on our three senior linemen. Rayas and Nieves college quality.

Strengths of defense: Defense will be led by seniors Deonise and Isakov. The LB core seems to be solid and with the return of defensive coordinator Darrin Robidoux and additions of former players Brody Azbill and Jacob Brown on staff, with alumni Wales Hunkin, this defensive staff is going to do a great job coaching guys up.

Team's biggest question marks: Common theme. Really low numbers. We will more than likely field a varsity team with around 25-30 players. Depth is always a concern at PV.

2021 expectations: Covid season was a disaster for our players with so many things going against them. The lack of preparation with no spring ball, no summer passing and lifting. Throw on top, we had five teams cancel days before playing and we had to pick up a team at the last second. With all that said, I believe that the only way to go for us is up. I expect to get back to gritty, hard-working football.



Paradise Valley OL Chris Rayas (No. 67) and OL/DL Armando Nieves (No. 78). (Steven Davis photo/MaxPreps)

Sunnyslope

Head coach: Sam Jacobs.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2nd year, 5-2.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. RB Xander Georgoulis 5-10, 170, 576 rushing yards, 6 TDs; Sr. QB Tanner Daoust 5-10, 165, 1,015 passing yards, 8 TDs, 6 INT; Sr. OL Eddie Hicks; Sr. OL 6-1, 240; Brayden Skall; Jr. OL Matthew Kruger, 6-2, 245; Sr. OL Kai Garcia, 6-2, 250; Jr. TE Preston Mosher 6-0, 180.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DL Eddie Hicks, 6-1, 240; Jr. DE Preston Mosher, 6-0, 180, 14 tackles; Sr. DB Jeremy Jeter; 5-11, 165, 19 tackles Sr. DB Sam Woznicki, 5-10, 160, 35 tackles; Sr. DB Spencer Russell, 14 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. WR/DB Alex Horning, 5-10, 130; So. WR Dylan Dwiggins; So. WR Chris Castillo; Sr. RB Joel Graef 5-8, 170; So. OL Jacob Harkins 6-1, 235; So. QB-ATH Luke Moga, 6-1, 165.

Strengths of offense: Returning our RB and most of our OL puts us in a great spot running the ball. Also returning our senior QB is invaluable for making sure the offense runs the way it is supposed to.

Strengths of defense: Our DL. There are no super stars, but we are extremely deep and rotate a bunch of quality players through.

Team's biggest question marks: We graduated every receiver who caught a pass last year.

2021 expectations: Our expectation is to compete for the region title and make the playoffs.

Region notes: Desert Mountain advanced to the 5A playoffs last year, falling to Ironwood in the first round.... McClintock was 3-4 last year with blowouts either way in the final outcome save one contest. ... South Mountain played three games (2-1) last year due to COVID.

NORTHWEST REGION

Agua Fria

Head coach: George Martinez.

Years as school's head coach/record: 4th year, 16-12 record.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Kai Boykins (6-0, 165); Sr. RB Jovonte Trimble (5-9, 170) 383 rushing yards, 3 TDs; Sr. RB Brian Fullwood (5-10, 170), 95 rushing yards, 3 TDs, 207 receiving yards, 4 TDs; Sr. TE Vernon Heller (6-0, 165); Jr. WR Carlos Elzy (5-9, 170), 105 receiving yards, 1 TD; Jr. OL Isaac Aguire.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. CB Kaib Boykins (6-0, 165), 11 tackles, 3 INT; Sr. CB Tony Robinson (5-10, 165), 12 tackles; Sr. OLB Luis Lomeli (5-10, 170), 27 tackles; Sr. OLB Angel Oliva (5-10, 175), 16 tackles; Sr. DL Keyonne Charleston (6-1, 280), 48 tackles, 4.5 sacks; Sr. ILB Dominic Herrera (5-11, 195); Sr. DL Kemonte Wesson (6-0, 245), 39 tackles; Jr. DE Bryan Salcido (6-2, 200); Jr. Brandon Auau (6-3, 205), 10 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. QB Angel Soto (5-6, 140); Sr. OL Miguel Gonzalez (6-2, 260); So. RB Josh Young (5-7, 160); So. DB Jonathan Daniels (5-8, 165).

Strengths of offense: Tremendous speed, good skill players.

Strengths of defense: Nine players who started at least some games.

Team's biggest question marks: Numbers. Need more players.

2021 expectations: Repeat at Northwest Region champs.

More about the program: Home to NFL Hall of Famer Randall McDaniel and current NFL player Everson Griffen. Longtime coach O.K. Fulton, who recently passed.

Independence

Head coach: KJ Anthony.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1st year.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Alan Quintanilla (5-9, 150), 109 receiving yards, 1 TD; Sr. WR Thomas Ross (5-11, 155); Sr. OL Sergio Contreras (5-10, 270); Sr. OL Daniel Palencia (5-10, 215).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DB Alan Quintanilla (5-9, 150), 18 tackles; Sr. DL Daniel Palencia (5-10, 215), 16 tackles, 1.5 sacks.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. OL-LB David Wence (5-9, 230); Jr. OL-DL Michael Cantu (6-1, 240); Jr. QB Nija Wright (5-10, 160); Jr. DB Carlos Flores (5-10, 150).

Strengths of offense: Young group working hard to improve will give us many options in the fall.

Strengths of defense: Will be aggressive in the box.

Team's biggest question marks: Young team who will have to grow up quickly.

BROSCIOUS, FAMILY EMERGE STRONGER AFTER NEAR-TRAGIC EMERGENCIES

By Hunter Hippel
AZPreps365.com

For Gavin Broschious and his family, the hope for a normal 2021 season runs a little deeper.

As the COVID-19 pandemic nearly led to the 2020 season's cancellation across Arizona, Gavin and his family began the season on the back of a scary family emergency: a swollen liver in his then-12-year-old brother Blaize. But heading into the 2021 season – one in which Gavin is considered Arizona's best offensive lineman – the Broschiouses are coming off yet another near-tragedy: a COVID-19 diagnosis.

Through positive vibes, a little bit of prayer and some serious hunkering down, they've gotten through it, though. But even though Broschious' Desert Edge squad was "lucky" when it came to its season in 2020, Gavin's family is hoping that the return of sports – in Goodyear and beyond – to normality will put them out of the tough times of the past.

According to Gavin's dad Steve, Blaize suffered from a syndrome that went after his organs in May of 2020. Blaize's liver was swollen, Gavin added.

"He couldn't move or else his liver would explode," Gavin said.

It was Blaize who kept Gavin and the rest of the family upright during the tough time.

"Truth is, kids are stronger than parents," Steve said.

Blaize recovered and is fine now, but after the 2020 season, when Desert Edge went 8-1 and lost in the first round of the Open Division tournament to Chandler, the Broschious family had one more battle to face.

Gavin was the first person in the house to get COVID-19 in January, but was the only person to not deal with any side effects. His mom and brother were down and out for a week, while Steve ended up in the hospital.

"It was definitely a very hard time for everyone," Gavin said.

Steve's hospital stay was another gut punch to the Broschiouses after Blaize's ordeal in May and the loss of a close friend – one who was Steve's age and had sons Gavin and Blaize's ages – to the virus. While his stay wasn't lengthy, Steve said his real fight against COVID-19 was.

"It was a good two months before I got my energy back," he said. "It's real for me and my family."

On the positive end, however, is Gavin's commitment to Michigan State and a hopefully normal 2021 football season, in what will be the 6-5, 305-pounder and senior quarterback Adryan Lara's last year together.

"I've known [Lara] since seventh grade," Gavin said. "I've been blocking for him for six years now. We naturally have had a bond."

Lara, a Washington State commit who's looking to break Spencer Rattler's all-time career passing yards record this season, said having Gavin in front of him will be key in breaking that record and in Desert Edge's success this year.

"In a close situation, at the end of the game, and we just want to run the clock out, we're just going to go counter right because [Gavin's] on the left side pulling and he's going to make a play," Lara said. "You can always count on him and depend on him in those moments. He's just a big part of the run game and obviously the passing game."

How Gavin got to this point revolves around two key skills, according to his co-head coach Marcus Carter: smarts and strength.

"There's a lot of big guys who aren't as physical as he is," Carter said.

"That's just mentality, and his mentality is to be the best out there. For him to want to be the best, you've got to be physical. Second, you got to put it together between the ears.

"He embodies that."

Steve says that while Gavin might be the biggest guy in the house, he still isn't quite the strongest. That title goes to his older brother, Jordan, who is 26 and may be the reason behind Gavin's football IQ.

"[When] his older brother was playing football when he was in high school, Gavin would watch film with his older brother," Steve said.

But film study was a habit of Gavin's from a young age – Steve noted that his youth teams instilled tape from the time he was six years old.

"It's kind of second nature, I guess," Steve said.

To the family, sports as a whole are second nature. So when sports across the country were taken away last year, and when adversity threatened to restrict their participation in it, the mood fell.

"We're a family that goes, goes and goes," Steve said. "A lot of that is sports related, so it shut us down."

But Gavin has recovered mentally and physically from the tumultuous past 18 months, and is pushing forward, just as he does on the field.



(L-R) Christina, Jordan, Tiffani, Gavin, Blaize and Steve Broschious, as well as their dog Goliath, are all smiles after a couple of family members overcame some health scares. (Photo courtesy of Broschious family)

2021 expectations: Compete every Friday night. Focus on the process and results will follow.

More about the program: Our biggest rival is Glendale High. Looking forward to that game.

Kofa

Head coach: Karl Pope.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2nd year, 0-6.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. HB Ambrose Estrada (5-10, 190).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Jr. LB Michael Martinez (5-9, 200); Sr. DB Michael Montiel (5-8, 180); Sr. DB Jesse Martinez (6-0, 190); Sr. DT Riley Burney (5-10, 280).

2021 expectations: Win region. Compete in state playoffs. Win state.

More about the program: Kofa shares its name with the Kofa Mountains. It was founded in 1959 and is the second oldest school in Yuma. Has a 60-year rivalry with Yuma High. Notable alums are Cain Velasquez and Tucson mayor Regina Romero.

Raymond Kellis

Head coach: Ben Kullos.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1st year.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. OT Ezekiel Pacheco (6-6, 285); Sr. WR John Ojeda (6-0, 160).

Willow Canyon

Head coach: Justin Stangler.

Years as school's head coach/record: 4th year, 11-16.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. OL Travis Lewis (6-1, 282); Sr. OL Bradley Pace (6-0, 235); Jr. OL Matt Spurlin (6-1, 252); Jr. OL Ryan Carter (6-1, 257); Sr. RB Vince Calbone (5-10, 180) 290 rushing yards, 2 TDs; WR Donovan Williams (5-10, 155), 271 receiving yards, 3 TDs; Sr. WR Daunte Williams (6-0, 165), 204 receiving yards, 1 TD; Sr. WR Anthony Wagner (5-10, 177); Sr. TE Andres Perez (6-0, 195).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DL Santino Servant (6-4, 318); Jr. DE James Lewis (6-0, 195), 25 tackles; Sr. DE Layton Sleight (6-0, 217); Jr. DB Bryson Wilke (5-11, 170), 3 INT; Jr. SS Braxton Vinson (5-7, 175), 10 tackles.

Strengths of offense: Returning one running back and four receivers.

2021 expectations: Make playoffs.

Region notes: Canyon View posted a 4-4 record last year in its first varsity season. ... West Point looks to play its first varsity season this year.

SAN TAN REGION

Campo Verde

Head coach: Ryan Freeman.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2nd year, 5-3.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Boston Williamson (5-7, 165), 178 receiving yards, 1 TD; Sr. WR Jersey Blassingame (5-6, 165), 187 receiving yards, 1 TD; Jr. TE Majel Inzunza Morones (6-2, 235); Sr. OL Hunter Seelye (6-4, 245); Sr. OL Andrew Hinojos (6-5, 285); Jr. OL Carson Cagle (6-1, 245); Sr. WR Zach Goebel (6-0, 175), 134 receiving yards, 1 TD; Sr. WR Will Clark (6-0, 155), 222 receiving yards, 2 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. CB Rob Buturla (5-10, 165), 20 tackles; Jr. CB Nate Gomez (5-7, 150), 28 tackles; Sr. OLB Connor Calloway (6-1, 215);, 40 tackles, 5 sacks; Sr. LB Matt Reising (6-0, 185), 38 tackles; Sr. DL Adam Lewis (6-1, 265), 17 tackles; Jr. DL Clayton Hughes (5-10, 195).

Also keep an eye on: Jr. RB Amado Santiago (5-11, 180); Jr. TE Jack Pendleton (6-2, 195); Jr. WR Jack Nichols (6-1, 170); Jr. DL Colby Fredstrup Akins (6-3, 195).

Strengths of offense: QBs who have varsity experience. Experience on OL. Big-play potential. More versatility from skill players.

Strengths of defense: Athleticism at LB. Young talent on DL. Consistency of scheme. Positional versatility.

Team's biggest question marks: Meshing of junior and senior classes.

2021 expectations: Develop team chemistry in pressure situations to prepare for region play.

More about the program: This is our 11th year of varsity football. Two years ago lost in 5A title game and last year lost in 5A semis.

Gilbert

Head coach: Derek Zellner.

Years as school's head coach/record: 7th year, 21-39.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Jr. RB Cooper Zellner (5-10, 170), 246 rushing yards, 2 TDs, 135 receiving yards; Jr. WR Noah Narain (5-9, 170), 86 receiving yards, 1 TD; Jr. WR Tylon Thompson (5-11, 170), 209 receiving yards, 1 TD; Jr. RB Carter Dickie (5-9, 155), 93 receiving yards, 1 TD; Sr. OL Kaden Martinelli (6-2, 300); Sr. OL Carson Bryce (6-2, 230); Sr. WR Evan Smith (5-10, 185), 75 receiving yards, 1 TD; Sr. TE Mac Brunk (6-0, 185); Jr. RB-SB Dylan Beyman (5-10, 170); Sr. OL Leo Kordyak Boothe (6-2, 280).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DL Ray Sampaga (6-2, 265); Sr. DB Evan Smith (5-10, 185), 11 tackles; Jr. DB Tylon Thompson (5-11, 170); Jr. LB-SS-CB Carter Dickie (5-9, 155), 13 tackles; Jr. LB-SS Cooper Zellner (5-10, 170); Jr. DB Noah Narain (5-9, 170), 37 tackles; Sr. LB Mac Brunk (6-0, 185), 15 tackles; Jr. LB-SS Dylan Beyman (5-10, 170); Sr. DB Marc Anthony Sanchez (5-7, 150); Sr. DB Josh Loewe (5-10, 185).

Also keep an eye on: Jr. WR-DB Dominic Colvin (5-11, 170); So. WR-DB Jace Moore (5-10, 165); So. WR-DB Macon Villela (6-0, 175).

Strengths of offense: Solid depth at skill positions and O-line. Much stronger. New line coach and all returning staff members.

Strengths of defense: Improved strength. Second year with D-coordinator and understanding of scheme.

Team's biggest question marks: What players will produce in position vacated by a senior? Who is next to grab the torch? Using weapons we have in variety of ways. Stay healthy. Make playoffs. Improve on weaknesses.

2021 expectations: Using weapons we have in variety of ways. Stay healthy. Make playoffs. Improve on weaknesses.

Notre Dame Prep

Head coach: George Prelock.

Years as school's head coach/record: 5th year, 42-7.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. OL Duke Frye (6-1, 275); Sr. OL Matt Reinhardt (6-0, 245); Sr. OL Jake Burrow (6-0, 300); Jr. OL Ty Borowski (5-10, 215); Jr. WR Andrew Roe (5-10, 170).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DB John Ruvo (5-10, 170), 17 tackles, 3 INT; Sr. DL Duke Frye (6-1, 275), 17 tackles; Sr. DL Matt Reinhardt (6-0, 245); Sr. DL Dillon Jones (6-4, 215), 23 tackles; Jr. DL Ben Roberts (6-2, 215), 13 tackles, 2 sacks.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. RB Andrew Vines (5-10, 190); Jr. LB Rob Lenz (6-1, 210); Sr. LB Wyatt Harris (6-2, 210).



Campo Verde MLB Connor Calloway. (Steven Davis photo/MaxPreps)

Strengths of offense: Returning two wide receivers. Ability to have spring and summer ball this year (none last year).
Strengths of defense: Ability to have spring and summer ball this year (none last year).

More about the program: Program has two state titles in 2007 and 2008 and two runners-up 2017 and 2018. Stadium named after former coach Scott Bemis. New rivalry started with Brophy Prep. Famous alums Sean Renfree (Duke and Atlanta Falcons) and 2018 Gatorade National Player of the Year Jake Smith.

Saguaro

Head coach: Jason Mohns.

Years as school's head coach/record: 10th year, 102-13.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Javen Jacobs (5-10, 185), 290 rushing yards, 1 TD, 392 receiving yards, 4 TDs; Sr. OT Parker Brailsford (6-3, 270); Sr. OL Raul Aguilar (6-3, 350); Sr. OL Micah Luto (6-2, 270); Sr. OL Leo Tuituu-Burton (6-1, 290).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. LB Miles Crutchley (6-0, 205), 35 tackles; Sr. LB Cannen Siegel (5-11, 200), 29 tackles; Sr. LB Jake Polk (6-2, 220), 18 tackles; Sr. S Jordan Ginnis (5-10, 190) 25 tackles; Sr. S Thomas DeChesaro (5-10, 185), 18 tackles; Sr. CB Ivan Martin (6-0, 180), 16 tackles; Jr. CB Levi Robins (5-9, 175), 12 tackles; Jr. Cole Shivers (5-11, 180).

Also keep an eye on: Jr. WR Deric English (6-4, 210); Jr. LB John Butler (6-2, 220); Jr. QB Devon Dampier (6-0, 200); Sr. CB Beau Terameau (5-10, 175).

Strengths of offense: QB position deep and talented. Explosive speed at skill positions. Senior leadership.

Strengths of defense: Speed and depth in secondary. Experience with 8 returning starters.

Team's biggest question marks: Need young skill positions players to step up on offense.

More about the program: Three current alums on Arizona Cardinals. Long-time rivalry with Chaparral.



Saguaro athlete Javen Jacobs. (Darin Sicurello photo/MaxPreps)

Region notes: Horizon was offense by committee last year - 4 RBs rushing 111-464 yards and 3 QBs 25 passing 126-352 yards. ... Maricopa opens the season with its third head coach (Rick Skinner) in five years.

SONORAN REGION

Cienega

Head coach: Justin Argraves.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1st year (2 games in 2020).

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. TE Brody Kallman (6-6, 240); Sr. OL Nolan Baker (6-1, 220); Sr. RB Cole McFarland (5-10, 190); Sr. OL Garrett Montgomery (6-2, 260).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DE Brody Kallman (6-6, 240); Sr. LB Ritchie McCormack (5-11, 205).

Also keep an eye on: Sr. WR Gunnar Hernandez (6-2, 195); Sr. WR Brady Beltz (5-9, 160); Sr. OL-DL Anthony Murrietta (6-2, 300); Sr. DB Josiah Parker (6-0, 185); Sr. OL Steven Segovia (6-0, 200); Jr. QB Brayden Cherry (6-3, 180).

Strengths of offense: Possess a deep receiving corps with two senior running backs. QB has a strong arm and grasp of playbook.

Strengths of defense: Linebackers are fast, physical and athletic. Deep secondary.

Team's biggest question marks: How we react with new offense and defense.

2021 expectations: Win our region. Make playoffs. Win state.

More about the program: Cienega's 20th season. Nemer Hassey and Pat Nugent only other coaches in program history.

Ironwood Ridge

Head coach: James Hardy.

Years as school's head coach/record: 3rd year/5-8 (2 games in 2020).

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. OL Sam Benjamin (6-4, 250); Sr. WR Luke Fanelli (6-1, 180); Sr. QB Tyler Haynie (5-11, 180); Sr. OL Kai Lyles (6-0, 185); Sr. OL Carson Seamands 6-1, 265); Jr. RB Jordan Thomas (5-11, 175), 164 rushing yards, 2 TDs; Sr. OL Ben Thompson (6-2, 275).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DL Sam Benjamin (6-4, 250); Sr. LB Kai Lyles (6-0, 185), 1.5 sacks; Sr. LB Ethan Morrison (6-0, 215), 26 tackles, 1.5 sacks; Jr. DB Jordan Thomas (5-11, 175), 12 tackles; Sr. DL Ben Thompson (6-2, 275).

Also keep an eye on: Sr. WR-DB Diego Araiza (5-9, 160); Sr. RB-S Landon Billings (5-10, 180); Sr. LB Collin Gorcey (5-11, 175); Sr. LB Junior Franco (5-10, 175); Sr. WR/DB Malachi Hernandez (5-11, 160); Sr. LB Zachary Oakes (5-11, 180); Sr. WR Hudson Thompson (6-4, 200).

Strengths of offense: Four of five offensive linemen returning. Our depth at RB-WR is good as well.

Strengths of defense: A good core of lineman and linebackers returning. We also have depth at those positions, which we didn't have the previous season.

Team's biggest question marks: Development of our senior class. We only played two games this past season with limited time to prepare.

2021 expectations: Compete for a region title and make the playoffs.

Sunnyside

Head coach: Glenn Posey.

Years as school's head coach/record: 34-31 (1 game in 2020).

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. RB Mike Delgado (5-10, 195), 119 rushing yards, 1 TD; Sr. RB-SB Nycholas McDaniel (5-7, 185); Sr. OL Gabriel Graciano (6-1, 300); Sr. OL Jacion Taylor (6-2, 285); Sr. WR Tre'Von Armstrong (6-3, 175); Sr. FB Roman Canez (5-11, 200).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. LB Carlos Rendon (5-10, 215); Sr. CB Nycholas McDaniel (5-7, 185); Sr. CB Eddie Lopez (6-1, 175); Sr. DE Mike Gomez (6-1, 200).

Also keep an eye on: So. OL Jacob Cota (5-10, 195); Jr. LB Diego Rivera (6-3, 185); So. Samario Garcia (5-6, 150); So. Diego Arellano (5-8, 165).

Strengths of offense: A balanced attack with Delgado and McDaniel at RB. Three-year starters on line and fullback returning.

Strengths of defense: Three starters backs providing great leadership. Staff has stuck together.

Team's biggest question marks: Have a great nucleus. Need young guys to come around.

2021 expectations: Make playoffs. Win our league. Win the Dual in the Desert.

More about the program: School had a great run in 2000s with four title games - two were champs. Working to bring back a title.

Region notes: Marana was limited to three games (1-2) due to COVID last year. ... Nogales was unable to play any games last year due to COVID. ... Rincon/University was able to play two games (0-2) last year due to COVID.

SOUTHERN REGION

Flowing Wells

Head coach: Scott Cortese.

Years as school's head coach/record: 3rd year, 3-10.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. TE Jonathan O'Dell (6-0, 180); Sr. WR Brandon Ortega (5-7, 165); Sr. TE Devin Twigg (6-5, 210); Jr. OL Pedro Preciado (6-2, 215); Sr. WR Carlos Quintero (5-9, 170).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. SS Jonathan O'Dell (6-0, 180), 11 tackles; Sr. DB Brandon Ortega (5-7, 165), 12 tackles; Sr. DE Devin Twigg (6-5, 210); Jr. LB Pedro Preciado (6-2, 215); Jr. DE Darren Zimmerman (6-3, 245); Sr. FS Liam Burnett (5-8, 165); Sr. DB Carlos Quintero (5-9, 170).

Also keep an eye on: Jr. LB Antonio Perez (5-10, 175); Jr. QB Alex Madrid (6-2, 185).

Strengths of offense: Most of our offensive production returning.

Strengths of defense: Entire secondary and linebackers returning.

More about the program: Top rival is Amphitheater. Both schools on Prince Road. Hence battle for Prince Road.

Salpointe Catholic

Head coach: Eric Rogers.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2nd year, 7-1.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. OL Lorenzo Mele (6-3, 250); Sr. OL Carlos Gonzalez (6-0, 240); Sr. OL Jace Springer (6-3, 230); Sr. WR Antonio Martinez (5-10, 175); So. OL Luis Cordova (6-4, 285).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. LB Davian Miranda-Carrasco (5-9, 180), 41 tackles; Sr. LB Joey Sumlin (6-1, 240), 17 tackles; Sr. DB Antonio Martinez (5-10, 175), 28 tackles, 3 INT; Sr. DB Cruz Rushing (6-2, 195), 13 tackles; Sr. DB Cody Raetzman (6-2, 180), 21 tackles; Jr. LB Connor Raetzman (6-1, 200), 10 tackles; Jr. DE Damian Coley (6-3, 250), 16 tackles, 2 sacks; So. DE Elijah Rushing (6-5, 220), 13 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. RB Anthony Wilhite (5-10, 175), 234 rushing yards, 3 TDs; Jr. OL Luis Arellano (5-1, 270); Jr. RB Elias Roberts (5-11, 185); Sr. QB Dylan Dreis (6-5, 200), 191 passing yards, 1 TD.

Strengths of offense: Experienced offensive line.

Strengths of defense: Fast and physical.

Team's biggest question marks: Commitment level from top to bottom.

2021 expectations: Make great choices. Do everything to best of ability. Be great teammates.

More about the program: Strong, winning program. Strong alumni with several former players currently in college ranks.

Region notes: Buena played four games last year on schedule, but no games played after October due to COVID. ... Cholla was limited to two games (1-1) last year due to COVID. ... Desert View was limited to two games (1-1) last year due to COVID. ... Marana Mountain View was limited to two games (1-1) last year due to COVID.



Salpointe WR Elijah Barclay. (Steven Davis photo/MaxPreps)

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Who made the form update and when? **Is he is on both rosters?** Were they in Handbook? **Which forms are missing signatures?** How many physicals expire grade check? **Do we have the attendance records?** Who has discipline received? **Do we retain the data?** **Did she follow return-to-play/learn protocol?** Who has diabetes? **Who made the payment?** **Does anyone still have equipment?** Who needs contacts? **Who has information kept private?** **Is she certified to drive the van?** Did he pass the physical quickly? **Can we update our social media policy?** How much are we losing in unknown allergies? **Are our forms ADA compliant?** Are they calling parents? How do we give the list to the sheriff? **Who was on the damaged bus?** Did the coach have a threatening a lawsuit? **Can we provide the paper trail to legal?** Can we review with our Athletic Trainer? **Is the father authorized for pickup?** Who has physical for the field trip? **Did they read the policy in their native language?** Are coaches signatures? **Which staff completed all certifications?** Who is taking attendance?

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4A CONFERENCE FOOTBALL PRESEASON RANKINGS



Mesquite went back-to-back in 2019 and 2020 as 4A champions, but the team has lost some firepower with the graduations of Eric Lira and Ed Doherty Award winner Ty Thompson. (Steven Davis photo/MaxPreps)

By Andy Morales
AZPreps365.com

1. CACTUS: Cactus and Mesquite have battled it out on the field the last two years with No. 6 Mesquite knocking off No. 2 Cactus 28-27 in the 2019 semifinals and No. 3 Mesquite beating No. 4 Cactus 39-38 in the 4A state championship game last year. Things look to be falling in place for the Cobras this year with the Wildcats losing starting quarterback Ty Thompson to graduation. Thompson is now at Oregon and that void will definitely help out the rest of the teams in the 4A Conference. The only problem with this scenario is the possibility of Cactus shifting to the Open Division come playoff time. Salpointe and Saguaro were moved up to the 5A Conference last year, which opened the door for Mesquite as no 4A teams were called up to the Open Division last year. Almost every offensive and defensive producer returns for head coach Joseph Ortiz. A call up to the Open Division could draw Chandler or Hamilton in the first round. If not, expect a 4A state championship run for a program seeking its first title since 2009.

2. AMERICAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY – QUEEN CREEK: The Patriots took the No. 2 seed in the 4A Conference last year, but No. 3 Mesquite squeaked past the program 19-16 in the semifinal round. ALA-QC returns Sr. QB Logan Hubler (6-1, 155), who in 2020 passed for 2,554 yards and 29 TDs, the second highest yard and TD totals in 4A last year. He could be the difference for the 2019 3A state championship program. Hubler and Angel Flores of Casa Grande are considered that top quarterbacks this year in the 4A. Hubler is studying under 1990 Heisman Trophy winner Ty Detmer, ALA-Queen Creek's new coach. The Patriots will host Mesquite on Oct. 8, likely for the Desert Sky Region and loads of power points in the highly anticipated game. It's doubtful that two teams will be placed in the Open Division from the 4A Conference this year. But if Cactus moves up, the Patriots could have a more clear shot at the 4A state championship.

3. CASA GRANDE: The Cougars earned the No. 2 seed in the 4A state playoffs last year, but Cactus beat the program 35-13 in the semifinal round. Still, the 2020 Cougars became the first Casa Grande football team to reach the semifinals. This year, the regular season schedule looks good for Casa Grande with a big Kino Region game at Canyon del Oro coming near the end of the season. The Cougars return Sr. QB Angel Flores (6-2, 205), who had 1,653 yards passing with 11 TDs last year along with 934 yards rushing and 16 more TDs. The Cougars were right with Salpointe to open the season last year but costly mistakes led to a 29-21 win for the Lancers at home. That game helped Salpointe and Casa Grande build power points for a strong seeding, but the two teams will not meet this year. The Cougars open up with Sunnyslope and Peoria. Those games will quickly indicate where Casa Grande stands this season. With Cactus, ALA-QC and Mesquite all jumbled up in competition, the Cougars could be in position to move forward after the dust settles.

4. MESQUITE: We can't wait for Chapter 3 of the Cactus-Mesquite saga to unfold. Mesquite will open up the year with a game against Cactus on Sept. 3 in Flagstaff. It will forecast the future for both programs. Cactus has lost two nail-biters in the playoffs to Mesquite in the past two seasons, including last year's final. ALA-QC and Casa Grande will be watching this game closely. A victory will cement Cactus' No. 1 preseason 4A standing and potentially make it a contender for an Open invite. A Mesquite victory, however, could muddle things up and remind everybody that Mesquite, the two-time defending champ, is still the team to beat. If it does pull that game out, then its Oct. 8 meeting with ALA-Queen Creek will be huge. Plus, things could work out for both teams due to the amount of power points at stake the rest of the way. Sr. WR Andrew Morris (6-2, 215) is one of the state's best two-way players. The Marshall commit has collected 1,888 receiving yards and 17 touchdowns in his career so far. But the big question at Mesquite this season is who will be the QB. Sr. Gerardo Saenz (6-4, 220) possibly might get the starting nod.

5. CANYON DEL ORO: The next five teams in the top-10 aren't as clear due to the limited amount of games some teams played last year because of COVID-19 restrictions. The Dorados, for instance, only played four games and weren't eligible for the playoffs. Canyon del Oro opens up at Salpointe, and that game could be an indicator of how things will go for both programs. The Lancers are in the 5A Conference, but the program has been an Open Division staple, even in the COVID year. Salpointe should get there again but a loss to the Dorados might shut that door. Conversely, a victory at Salpointe could be the first win in a very favorable schedule the rest of the way. A high seed in the 4A playoffs is guaranteed but the Dorados need to open up strong – even a close loss at Salpointe will serve notice to the teams on their schedule, much like what happened to Casa Grande last year.

6. NORTHWEST CHRISTIAN: The Crusaders gave the Cobras all they could handle last year in a 20-19 defeat at Cactus in early November, but then fell apart in a 24-3 loss to ALA-QC the following week. Northwest Christian lost to Mesquite in the quarterfinal round of the 4A state playoffs, a respectable showing for a program that played in the semifinal round of the 3A state playoffs the year before and won the 3A state championship in 2018. Head coach David Inness says his team will have more depth than in previous years and has great leadership on defense, especially with his group of linebackers. The team appears to have enough firepower to host a playoff game. The Crusaders will host both Cactus and ALA-QC this year.

7. COCONINO: The Panthers finished 8-1 last year, ending its successful season with a 41-7 loss to Cactus in the state playoffs. The team got an overtime scare at home from Marcos de Niza to start the season but the wins then started piling up. In its 4A play-in game, it defeated Estrella Foothills. The scheduling creators have Cactus visiting Coconino on Sept. 10. The Panthers are looking to win the Grand Canyon Region for the third year in a row and win a postseason game for the first time since 2000. Mike Lapsley is 17-3 as the head coach, and his program is 24-6 over the past three seasons. The program only won 11 games between 2013-17.

8. WALDEN GROVE: Like Canyon del Oro, the Red Wolves didn't play enough games last year to qualify for the state playoffs. But Walden Grove has made the playoffs every year since 2017, including as a No. 5 seed in 2019. The Red Wolves are 0-3 in all those playoff games, however. The schedule looks to be set up for a good record, but the wild card will be a Week 4 matchup with California's El Cajon Granite Hills paying a visit to Sahuarita. Walden Grove returns its top QB, Jason Stevens, and receiver, Duncan Hoover, along with every defensive back. A favorable draw in the first round of the state playoffs could open the door to the next level. One bad loss and Walden Grove will be traveling come playoff time.

9. ST. MARY'S: Every top 10 list needs a couple of surprises, and the Knights could be that team. The Knights open up with a game against Brophy Prep. The two teams haven't played each other since 2012, and a positive showing by St. Mary's will help set the tone. The Knights lost some senior leadership last year off a team that helped its program post a winning record for the first time since 2014. Sr. QB Nick Martinez returns for his second starting tour under center. He was second on the team with seven rushing touchdowns last year. Martinez will lead an offense that returns seven starters.

10. GILA RIDGE: The Hawks went 5-0 last year and 10-2 the year before. Jessica Slaughter is now the first female to coach a "big school" in Arizona, so all eyes will be on her. But she has the experience necessary to lead this team. A trip to Cactus is scheduled near the end of the regular season, and the Hawks will know by then if they are a contender worthy of a possible home playoff game. Two teams from California are on the schedule also. Slaughter was in charge of Gila Ridge's defensive line last year, so expect a strong unit up front.



Casa Grande has advanced to the 4A quarterfinals (2019) and semifinals (2020) with Angel Flores under center (Andy Morales photo/AZPreps365)

4A CONFERENCE FOOTBALL TEAM-BY-TEAM PREVIEW



American Leadership-Queen Creek and its QB, Logan Hubler, will take another shot at the 4A title with an offense that is fun to watch. (Steven Davis photo/MaxPreps)

By Andy Morales
AZPreps365.com

4A DESERT SKY REGION

American Leadership Academy – Queen Creek

Head coach: Ty Detmer.

Years as school's head coach/record: First year.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (10 Games) Sr. QB Logan Hubler (6-1, 155) 2,554 yards passing and 29 TDs; Jr. RB Mitch Jensen (5-10, 185) 405 yards rushing and 5 TDs; Jr. WR Ryan Meza (6-0, 190) 656 yards receiving and 7 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (10 Games) Sr. MLB Jaden Manwaring (6-2, 118) 77 tackles and 3 sacks; Sr. OLB Brandon Wettstein (6-2, 190) 57 tackles.

Strengths of offense: Starting QB and most of the offensive production returns.

Program history: The Patriots were 8-2 last year in the 4A Conference with a 19-16 loss to Mesquite in the quarterfinal round with almost everyone coming back. State 3A champion in 2019.

Benjamin Franklin

Head coach: Dave Jefferies

Years as school's head coach/record: 44-20 / 74-27.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (5 Games) Sr. TE Garrett Jones (6-0, 195) 37 yards receiving; Sr. OL Cole Parker (5-10, 255); Jr. OL Aaron Allen (6-1, 210); Sr. TE Drew Salisbury (6-4, 210) 19 yards receiving; Sr. RB Spencer Bateman (5-3, 140) 41 yards rushing.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (5 Games) Sr. LB Garrett Jones (6-0, 195) 4 tackles; Jr. DL Aaron Allen (6-1, 210) 10 tackles and 2 sacks; Sr. DL Drew Salisbury (6-4, 210) 4 tackles and 1 sack; Jr. DB Dawson Smith (5-8, 160) 3 tackles; Sr. DL Noah Brutus (5-10, 260) 14 tackles.

Team's biggest question marks: QB's Matthew McKnight and Dayson Blair graduated. Top rushers Marquise Byrd and Dean Scott also graduated. Top defender Noah Badger graduated.

Program history: The Chargers finished 1-4 last year and ranked No. 24 after moving up from the 3A Conference where the team earned a No. 1 ranking with a 12-2 record and a state runner-up finish to ALA – Queen Creek. The 2019 team went to the quarterfinal round and the 2018 team went 12-1 with a runner-up finish to Pusch Ridge.

Marcos de Niza

Head coach: Anthony Figueroa.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1: 4-4.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. WR Jamir Smith (6-0, 165) 59 yards receiving, 2 TDs; Sr. WR Joesyiss (Jojo) Williams (6-1, 165) 88 yards receiving.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. DL Isaiah Williams (6-0, 260) 16 sacks, 67 tackles; Sr. DB Joesyiss (Jojo) Williams (6-1, 165) 6 tackles; Sr. LB Jamir Smith (6-0, 165) 11 tackles; Jr. LB Mason Stromstad (6-1, 180) 36 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. WR/DB Brody Bybee (5-11, 175); Sr. RB/FS Saif (Elijah) Woods (5-11, 180); Sr. DE Kevin 'Tucker' Wilburn (6-3, 240); Sr. LB Nathan Sanchez (6'0, 190); Jr. WR/DB Juan Lopez (6-0, 170).

Strengths of offense: Returning a lot of experienced skilled players from last year's team who have gotten a full off season to develop and understand our offense and matchups we are trying to create for them.

Strengths of defense: Our athleticism across all position groups will allow us to match up extremely well vs. different personnel groupings and formations that we will see throughout the season.

Team's biggest question marks: Offensive Line - Replacing all five starters from the previous season.

Program history: The Padres went 4-4 last year with a loss in the play-offs. The team upset No. 3 Canyon del Oro in the first round of the 2019 playoffs before losing to No. 6 Mesquite 27-26 in the quarterfinal round. Mesquite went on to win the 4A state championship. Stet runner-up in 2015.

2021 expectations: Compete at a high level.

Mesquite

Head coach: Scott Hare.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2: 24-2.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (10 Games) Sr. WR Andrew Morris (6-2, 215) 1,888 yards receiving with 17 TDs; Sr. C Luis Baldenegro (6-1, 210); Sr. OT Josh Stokes (6-2, 290).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (10 Games) Sr. LB Andrew Morris (6-2, 215); Sr. DE Blake Corner (6-2, 215); Sr. DB Carter Wojcik (6-0, 185); Sr. DT Josiah Laureano (6-0, 200); Sr. DE Bryson Viola (6-1, 210); Sr. FS Jaedyn Winston (6-0, 185); Sr. LB Brayden Daly (6-1, 210).

Also keep an eye on: Sr. QB Gerardo Saenz (6-4, 220); Sr. TE Karai Burley (6-2, 220); Sr. FS Braden Fitzgerald (6-3, 190).

Strengths of offense: Big physical running backs. A talented group of players; hardworking and smart.

Strengths of defense: Defensive experience. Solid group up front, played in big games.

Team's biggest question marks: Development of offense with guys in new varsity positions.

Program history: Won the last two 4A state titles (Only two in school history).

2021 expectations: Looking to be better each week. The goal is to always be improving and work to overachieve. Stay in the moment and see where the season takes us.

Seton Catholic Prep

Head coach: Pete Wahlheim.

Years as school's head coach/record: 7: 60-34 / 121-118.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (7 Games) SR. QB Mike Williamson (6-4, 210) 218 yards passing and 2 TDs; Sr. OL Owen Garcia (6-3, 250); Sr. OL Tommy Stienkamp (6-0, 225); Sr. TE Chey Nieto (6-2, 215) 33 yards receiving; Sr. OL Mattias Benally (6-0, 220); Sr. WR Sergio Miranda (5-10, 180); Jr. FB David Ossana (5-9, 190) 110 yards rushing.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (7 Games) Sr. DE Mattias Benally (6-0, 220); Sr. DE Chey Nieto (6-2, 215); So. LB Gio Barone (5-10, 170); So. LB James Williams (6-1, 210); Sr. DB Michael Kossler (6-1, 185).

Strengths of offense: Experience of offensive line.

Strengths of defense: Fast defense.

Program history: The Sentinels finished 1-6 last year and ranked No. 25. The team was 5-5 in 2019 and made the quarterfinals in 2018 and 2017. Head coach Pete Wahlheim coached the Sentinels from 2001 to 2006 with two 11-win seasons and a state-championship berth in 2003. He left for coaching stints at Highland (10 years) and Dobson (2 years) before returning to Seton Catholic in 2019.



*Cactus LB/RB Aki Pulu (No. 42) and LB/RB Ata Teutupe (No. 44).
(Steven Davis photo/MaxPreps)*

WEST VALLEY REGION

Cactus

Head coach: Joseph Ortiz.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2: 18-6.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (11 Games) Jr. QB Will Galvan (5-8, 145) 1,228 yards passing and 14 TDs; Jr. RB Damian Jiles (5-8) 800 yards rushing and 8 TDs.; Sr. WR Joseph Lagafuaina (5-11, 175) 305 yards receiving and 6 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (11 Games) Sr. OH Ata Teutupe (6-0, 195) 119 tackles; Sr. DE Justin Holmes (5-10, 185) 100 tackles and 7 sacks.

Strengths of offense: Almost every offensive producers returns.

Strengths of defense: Top defenders returning.

Program history: Lost to Mesquite 39-38 in the state championship game last year. Lost to Mesquite 28-27 in the 2019 semifinal round.

Gila Ridge

Head coach: Jessica Slaughter.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1st Year.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (5 Games) Jr. ATH Dazanni Santamorini (5-7, 160) 310 yards rushing; Sr. WR Jonathan Noriega (6-1, 195) 382 yards receiving and 6 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (5 Games) Sr. DL John Davis (5-8, 180) 18 Tackles.

Program history: Jessica Slaughter is the first female varsity head coach of an 11-man big school in Arizona history. She was the varsity defensive line coach last year when the team went 5-0 and was the head freshman coach for three years. The team went 11-2 in 2019 with a semifinal finish.

Greenway

Head coach: Ed Cook.

Years as school's head coach/record: 5: 30-11.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. QB Deavon Felix (6-4) 621 yards passing and 8 TDs and 356 yards rushing with 6 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. OLB Milo Apodaca (6-2, 185) 102 tackles and 10.5 sacks; Jr. Nathaniel Tupou, 54 tackles; Sr. SS Kevin Johanson, 51 tackles.

Program history: The Demons went 5-3 last year and 9-2 in 2019 and 10-2 in 2018.

Northwest Christian

Head coach: David Inness.

Years as school's head coach/record: 12: 114-23.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. OL Luke Johnson (6-0, 220); Sr. HB Alex Jeffries (6-0, 200); RB Grant Gibson (5-8, 175); Jr. OL Kaleb Lyons (5-11, 210); Sr. OL Nathan Metzger (6-3, 200).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Jr. DT Trey Sports (6-1, 215) 11 tackles; Sr. LB Luke Johnson LB (6-0, 220) 53 tackles and 1 sack; Sr. LB Alex Jeffries LB (6-0, 200) 44 tackles, 1 sack and 1 interception; DB Grant Gibson (5-8, 175).

Also keep an eye on: So. WR/DB/LB Marshall Gillette (6-3, 180); So. DB/RB Tyler Thruston (5-9, 150); Jr. OL Kadon VanBaggen (6-0, 215); Sr. WR Grant McWilliams (6-2, 170).

Strengths of offense: More Depth than previous years. Young team. All understand the system. Play together as a team. Understand what it takes to compete.

Strengths of defense: Great linebacker group. Great leadership. Understand the defense. Will play with effort.

Team's biggest question marks: Size - not real big. Experience. Who will step up this year?

Program history: The Crusaders finished 5-3 last year and ranked No. 6 with a playoff spot. The program was 10-2 in the 3A Conference in 2019 with a semifinal loss to ALA-Queen Creek. The program won a state title in 2018 by going 13-1 with a three-overtime victory over Yuma Catholic. Quarterfinal finish in 2017, semifinals in 2016 and state runner-up to Pusch Ridge in 2015.

2021 expectations: Execute. Play together as one for one. Play hard. Never quit playing hard.

Peoria

Head coach: Will Babb.

Years as school's head coach/record: 9: 67-32.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. RB Cameron Mack (5-8, 185) 612 yards rushing and 4 TDs; Sr. WR Isaac Moreno (5-9, 165) 338 yards receiving and 3 TDs; Sr. TE Jake Price (6-5, 235) 280 yards receiving and 2 TDs; Jr. OL Eloy Nevejas (5-10, 225); Sr. OL David Sullivan (6-1, 240); Sr. WR Jeremiah Gossett (5-9, 160) 149 yards receiving and 1 TD.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DE Jake Price (6-5, 235) 66 tackles and 5 sacks; Sr. DB Jeremiah Gossett (5-9, 160) 46 tackles; Sr. LB Richard Cortez (6-1, 195) 82 tackles and 1 interception; Sr. LB Curtis Williams (5-11, 205) 65 tackles and 3 sacks.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. DB Saeed Hasaan (6-0, 180); Jr. QB Jacob Holiday (6-2, 160) Sr. DL Terrell Green (5-10, 245); So. OL Ryan McPherson (6-0, 250); So. TE Quintin Sullivan (6-3, 190); So. ATH Sebastian Carrillo (5-9, 170); So. OL Robert Cerda (5-10, 235).

Strengths of offense: Experience at skill positions.

Strengths of defense: LB position.

Program history: 100th year of program. The Panthers were 5-3 last year and ranked No. 10. The team was 9-3 with a quarterfinal spot in 2019 and 9-2 in 2018.

2021 expectations: Close the gap on the elite teams on our schedule.

More about the program: Five former head coaches on staff.

KINO REGION

Canyon del Oro

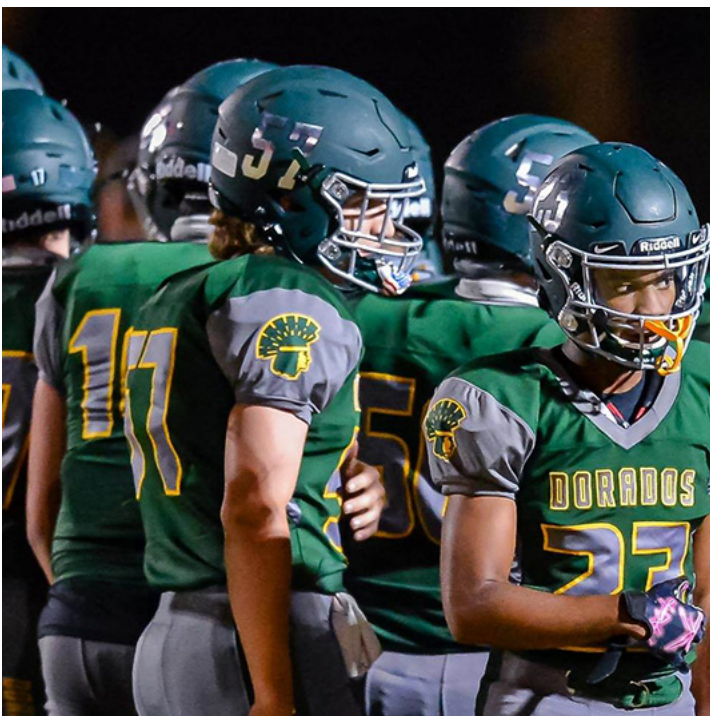
Head coach: Dustin Peace.

Years as school's head coach/record: 13: 88-42

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (4 Games) So. OL/DL Sa'Kylee Woodard (6-4, 295); Sr. OL/DL Donovan Rodriguez (6-1, 200); Jr. WR/DB Dayon Beck (5-10, 145).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (4 Games) Sr. DL Jose Zazueta (6-0, 225); Sr. LB Carter Mitchell (5-9, 190); Jr. DL Luke Arenas (5-11, 250); Jr. LB Zane King (6-0, 145).

Also keep an eye on: So. LB Kayden Luke (5-11, 200); DB/SLOT Vijay King; So. WR/DB Chance Cassel; WR/DB Chase Laux; OL Morgan Nacorati; Sr. WR Caden Sholl (6-1, 185).



Canyon del Oro. (Joe Jackson, Jr. photo/MaxPreps)

Strengths of offense: We are going to have more depth all around at the skilled positions than normal. Even at QB we have competition so it will be nice to have that flexibility.

Strengths of defense: Our front 7 will be very good but young. Secondary is young also.

Team's biggest question marks: We are just super young but very talented as a team. The other day at a passing event we had one senior on the field/sideline. Overall numbers as we will have less than 10 seniors. Last year we had 30.

Program history: The Dorados only played four games last year due to the pandemic. The team was 8-3 and ranked No. 3 in the 4A Conference the year before and 7-4 in 2018.

2021 expectations: Expectations are extremely high as always.

More about the program: The program is at an all-time high for talent. We will be competing for a state title very soon again.

Casa Grande

Head coach: Jake Barro.

Years as school's head coach/record: 7: 38-22.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (9 Games) Sr. QB Angel Flores (6-2, 205) 1,653 yards passing with 11 TDs. 934 yards rushing with 16 TDs; Sr. RB RJ Keeton (5-10) 851 yards rushing and 18 TDs; Sr. WR Demeetrius Garrett (5-10) 668 yards receiving and 7 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (9 Games) Sr. LB Jake Sylvestre (5-10) 82 tackles.

Program history: The Cougars went 7-2 last year.

Pueblo

Head coach: Jake Allen.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1: 0-1.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (1 Game) Sr. RB AB Yusuf (5-11, 200) 41 yards rushing; Jr. QB Diego Ramirez (6-1, 155) 261 yards passing and 2 TDs; Sr. TE Jesus Zazueta (6-2, 200) 43 yards receiving; Jr. WR Miguel Moriera (5-11, 175) 4 yards receiving; Jr. WR Andre Blanton (6-1, 165) 86 yards receiving and 1 TD; Sr. OL Randall Josemaria (5-6, 215); Jr. OL Mario Escobedo (6-2, 210).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. LB AB Yusuf (5-11, 200); Sr. Safety Daidryan Mendivil (5-7, 165); Jr. CB Miguel Moriera (5-11, 175); Jr. CB Andre Blanton (6-1, 165); Sr. LB Xavier Noriega (5-11, 185); Sr. DL Randall Josemaria (5-6, 215); Jr. DL Mario Escobedo (6-2, 210).

Strengths of offense: Experience. Returning 8 starters.

Strengths of defense: Speed. We have fast guys all over our defense.

Team's biggest question marks: Can offensive line make the jump we need to run the football well?

Program history: Team was 8-3 and ranked No. 11 the year before the pandemic.

2021 expectations: Miguel Moriera and Andre Blanton want to be the first D-I players to come out of Pueblo in a long time. They are both going to be juniors next year. They are obsessed with training. They go straight from practice and weight lifting to run routes at the park every night. They are as committed as I have ever seen.

More about the program: We only got 1 game last year and lost by 1 point to our rival. Our kids got robbed of any semblance of a season. But that has motivated our guys to train obsessively this offseason. Returning 8 guys on both offense and defense is huge for us. We are going to surprise people this year.

Sahuaro

Head coach: Scott McKee.

Years as school's head coach/record: 12: 70-54.

Program history: There were only a handful of seniors on the roster last year when the Cougars only played three games. The team went 9-3 the year before.

Walden Grove

Head coach: Corey Noble.

Years as school's head coach/record: 27-10

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (4 games) Sr. WR Duncan Hoover (6-4, 202) 336 yards receiving and 4 TDs; Sr. OL Gabriel Watkins-Daigle (6-2, 251); Sr. OL Justin Shehow (6-1, 255); Sr. OL Michael Cromer (6-1, 244); Sr. OL Zach Reiszewitz (6-3, 235); Sr. OL Jeff Handlong (6-2, 230); Jr. WR Caleb Lyden (6-0, 175) 17 yards receiving.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (4 Games) Sr. DB Zachary Young (5-8, 160) 17 tackles and 1 sack; Sr. DB Stuart Taylor (5-10, 165) 6 tackles; Sr. LB Ronnie Berg (5-8, 165) 30 tackles and 1.5 sacks; Sr. DL Danny Palomarez (6-4, 240) 8 tackles and 1 sack; Sr. DB Lucas Quillin (5-10, 175) 3 tackles; Sr. DB Caleb Lyden (6-0, 175) 14 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: So. QB Gabriel Smith (5-8, 165); So. WR Paul Guy (5-10, 155); So. DL Noah Castillo (5-9, 280).

Strengths of offense: Returning QB and top WR from last season. Athletes all over the field.

Strengths of defense: Returning all 5 starting DBs.

Team's biggest question marks: Running Back. Will we take the next step?

Program history: We are coming off the three best full seasons (pre-covid years) in the history of the school. We hosted a playoff game for the first time ever in the fall of 2019. We went 7-4, 8-3, 9-2, 3-1 the last four years and are still searching for our first playoff win in the history of the school (10 years).

2021 expectations: Increase team GPA to a 3.3. Go undefeated at home. Make every opportunity count.

More about the program: JV head coach Dale Fortin was a career Navy Seal and now spends his time working with young men and leading young people despite his son already graduating years ago. Just loves developing young men and helping however he can. Caleb Lyden (carries) a 4.0 GPA and is a 3-sport varsity athlete for his entire high school career thus far. I think he is a testament to what kids can accomplish when they put their mind to it especially now when I feel like we are losing the multi-sport athlete. He also played seven different positions for us last year as a sophomore and did not complain or make excuses. He just worked his butt off.



Walden Grove WR Duncan Hoover. (Joe Jackson, Jr. photo/MaxPreps)

BLACK CANYON REGION

Apache Junction

Head coach: Bruce Binkley.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1: 3-2

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (5 Games) Jr. WR Garret Garcia (6-2, 170) 87 yards receiving; So. TB Isaiah Savoie (5-11, 180) 213 yards rushing and 4 TDs with 105 yards receiving; Sr. WR Jordan Digos (5-7, 150); Jr. WR Marcus Harvey (6-0, 160); Sr. OL Ace Erickson (6-0, 265); Sr. OL JC Taylor (6-3, 260); Sr. OL Judah Neiman (5-11, 220); Sr. OL Dade Owens (6-0, 235); Jr. OL Kennet Vivanco (6-2, 255); TE Max Jada (6-0, 218).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (5 Games) Jr. LB Brock Scruggs (6-0, 219); Sr. DL Aaron Edward (5-10, 235) 17 tackles; So. DL Alex Ramirez 6-1, 290); Jr. DB Michael Gossman (5-9, 145); Jr. LB Tayvon Franko (6-2, 180); Sr. ILB Trevin Furnish (6-0, 225) 10 tackles and one interception; Jr. ILB Chris Vaccaro (5-10, 185) 16 tackles; Sr. DB Devin Ross (5-10, 155); Jr. DB Chance Grimes (5-11, 148); So. DB Ben Valenzuela (5-10).

Also keep an eye on: Sr. KR Wallace Cap (5-11, 155).

Strengths of offense: QB Gavin Limongello has to be one of the best in 4A and will just be a junior. Threw for 1,100 yards and rushed for 600 in 5 games. Isaiah Savoie started at TB as a freshman - phenomenal athlete. Offensive line returns 4-5 players.

Program history: Team finished 3-3 last year with a forfeit in a playoff game due to COVID concerns. Program was ranked No. 22 with a 7-3 record the year before and 7-4 with a playoff loss in 2018. Binkley replaced Vance Miller who left to coach at Arcadia.

Arcadia

Head coach: Ray Brown.

Years as school's head coach/record: First year.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. OL James Phillips (6-4, 300); Sr. OL Jacob Czekalski (6-3, 290); Sr. OL Juan Mendez (5-9, 240).

Also keep an eye on: Jr. LB Derek Macchiaroli (5-11, 185); Sr. SS Jack Spiekerman (6-3, 185).

Strengths of offense: Returning three starting offensive linemen.

Strengths of defense: Aggressive linebackers.

Team's biggest question marks: Can we get stronger this summer in the weight room? Can we survive on minimal depth?

Program history: Vance Miller coached the team to a 1-7 record last year. Ray Brown replaced Miller on June 16. Brown will be the fourth coach at Arcadia in five years. Program went 0-10 in 2017.

2021 expectations: Control penalties. Build a winning culture.

Combs

Head coach: Travis Miller.

Years as school's head coach/record: 5: 15-21

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (6 Games) Sr. T Brodee Tucker (6-2, 275); Sr. WR Tanner Price (6-3, 195) 197 yards receiving and 2 TDs; Sr. T Elijah Sanchez (6-0, 275); Sr. FLEX Michael Davenport (5-9, 165) 87 yards receiving and 1 TD; Sr. G Aiden Mower (6-1, 245); Sr. C Gavin McLeod (6-1, 265).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (6 Games) Sr. SS Michael Davenport (5-9, 165); Jr. DB Hunter Clare (5-11, 150) 22 tackles; Sr. DT Arnon Blackshire (6-1, 310); So. DB Johnathon Melvin (6-1, 165).

Also keep an eye on: Jr. DT Whaelynn Flake (6-2, 275).

Strengths of offense: Bringing back four of five starting linemen.

Team's biggest question marks: We need to fill some big shoes in our departed school-record running back leader, Joey Jensen.

Program history: Combs is going into its 5th year in 4A and its 12th season overall since it opened. Combs has made the playoffs three times in our history but all at the 3A level. We are looking for our first playoff berth at the 4A level. We are also looking for our first varsity level wins against our rivals, Poston Butte and Apache Junction.

2021 expectations: We are looking to continue a winning record in the 4A division. We feel that a possible playoff berth is possible.

MESQUITE'S MORRIS IS THE BIG SCHOOL IRONMAN

By Hunter Hippel
AZPreps365.com

In the fall of 2019, in a game against Gilbert High School, Andrew Morris had one job: stop quarterback Will Plummer.

The Tigers' senior was among the top 25 players in the state, according to 247Sports, and threw for 388 yards for the Arizona Wildcats in 2020 as a backup. Described as "a stud, an absolute stud" by Morris' defensive coordinator Cory Hare, the assignment was no gimme because not only was Morris not a high-end linebacker – he wasn't one at all.

Then a sophomore at Mesquite, Morris was already a special talent at wide receiver. He started on varsity at the position his freshman year, and his leaping ability and 6-foot-2 frame impressed his coaches.

The game against Plummer and Gilbert was a Week 1 contest, giving Mesquite's coaching staff some offseason time to prepare Morris. In the leadup to the showdown with the Tigers, Morris just focused on knowing where Plummer would be.

That astuteness paid off in his very first game as a middle linebacker.

"My only job was to stop Will Plummer," Morris said. "And I did it. I had like 12 tackles that game, a few sacks, I was chasing him down sideline-to-sideline. They only scored like three touchdowns on us and two of them were in the fourth quarter. So that was how it started. And after that game, they [the coaches] were like, 'You did a really good job, let's continue this into next week.'"



Andrew Morris was second on Mesquite in scoring and also tied for second on the team with a pair of INTs (Steven Davis photo/MaxPreps)

Fast forward to this fall, the Wildcats' utility player now is almost too good at his job.

Considered probably the best two-way player in Arizona heading into the 2021 high school football season, Morris finds himself in rare company on the roster.

Mesquite employs six two-way players, but most are there because they have to be. Morris doesn't start at linebacker and wide receiver because he's forced to.

He does so because when he's on the field – always on the field – the Wildcats are just better, and Morris is ready for it.

"I want to always be on the field," he said. "I love defense. I'm a field general. I think it's just want and desire to be out there. When I am out there, even in a workout, I've never gone less than 100 percent."

Since his sophomore year, Morris has been a two-way force for the Wildcats.

If it seems too unbelievable, behold: In 2020, Morris caught 49 balls from now-Oregon quarterback Ty Thompson, good enough for 885 yards (second on the team) and 10 touchdowns. At linebacker, Morris had 108 tackles, seven sacks, seven forced fumbles, three interceptions and three defensive touchdowns.

There was never an "aha" moment that led his coaches to convert Morris into a linebacker as well, Mesquite's head coach Scott Hare, Cory's brother, said. It just happened over time as the 220-pound Morris flashed his physicality on offense as an underclassman.

"Watching him play receiver, he's jumping up over guys and pushing guys around and he had got good angles," Cory said via Zoom from a house in Sweden where he, his wife and "wild" kids live in the offseason. "He's just a football guy."

Cory approached Scott about letting Morris loose on defense. Scott recognized Morris' ability as well, and from there, the process of developing him into a linebacker began.

Morris was more than along for the ride. It wasn't initially a smooth process, though. He recalled his coaches tossing him around from different positions – cornerback, safety, outside linebacker. They just wanted his presence on the field felt by their opponent.

After that Gilbert game, Cory loved what he saw and started teaching Morris how to man the middle position, rather than just concentrate on one player. He taught formations and blocking schemes.

"He'd never played MIKE linebacker," Cory said. "The learning curve is explaining to him who's trying to block you on certain formations – is it the tackle or is a guard going to wrap on you or is it the fullback – it's really where do your eyes go and where should you be focusing on versus each formation. You're trying to give them as much information as possible and then letting their natural abilities take over."

Morris loved it to the point that he's now being recruited as a line-backer, and even said he enjoyed it more than offense.

"I kept getting better and better and they started teaching me actual linebacker fundamentals and actual linebacker reads, and that's when everything started clicking," he said. "Since then it's just been my favorite position."

Cory hesitated to call Morris' learning of linebacker "a learning curve." With the physical tools and athleticism already present, it wasn't a matter of changing the way Morris played over the past two seasons. It was just translating it elsewhere.

"Not everyone has the ability to change how they play versus who they play," Cory said. "A lot of people can't change week to week and can't change formation based. Andrew is able to do that."

Highlighting his speed, strength and drive, Morris' traits makes him perfectly fit for the job Mesquite tasks him with, Scott and Cory said.

"It's a combination of everything," Cory said. You watch guys do everything – how do they run their angles, how are they with contact ... can they or are they fast enough to chase down speedy guys and are they strong enough to take on the big boys? If the answer is yes on both of those, it's kind of like, 'Wow, I can do a lot now [with this guy].' And then you start putting in other intangibles like relentless, a high motor as Andrew doesn't get tired, you start adding other things ..."

Cory's voice trailed off and moved onto an example. He was seemingly distracted by his own thoughts about Morris. They never seemed to end.

Scott seemed to complete his brother's thought.

"[Andrew] sets the defense, and he's the focal point of where the ball is supposed to be going," he said. "We build around what Andrew does. We build around his strengths. We want to use all of what Andrew's strengths are and use them to the best of our ability. A lot of that is using his speed and his instinctual ability to find the ball. He does that very well."

Middle linebackers don't tend to play offense, Scott said. How Morris does it left his coaches in awe.



Andrew Morris is looking forward to enjoying his senior year before heading off to Marshall University in 2022. (Morris family photo)

"It is just a very difficult, very physical position," Scott said. "So for him to turn around and be one of the best wide receivers in 4A, running routes and 40-yard dashes after 40-yard dashes, that's very difficult for people to be able to do."

"You see guys playing free safety and wide receiver and a defensive end play offensive line. But to be able to play the two different positions he plays, it's really a very special thing, and it's very rare."

Cory added, "Any time you see a guy on 3rd-and-2 make a great defensive stand and then turn around and jump over a kid for a touchdown on offense is pretty impressive. You just turn into a fan."

Scott also highlighted the fact that Mesquite doesn't tend to hit during the week, and that the light contact could be key in Morris' ability to hold up on both ends.

"The fact that we really don't hit in practice makes it so that we don't really have true contact until Friday night," Scott said. "We just keep the bumps and bruises down during the week. We want to be technically sound during the week and don't want to beat the body up. I think that does help."

As there always is with Morris, there is a catch.

"But you have to be able to handle the pressure of not coming off the field," Scott said.

Cory added, "He takes really good care of himself. The guy is ripped. He lives in the weight room. He's running and conditioning and doing the right things. A lot of times when people are told 'I'm kind of tired, I'm kind of sore,' that is when they want to check out. Andrew doesn't check out. He never tells me he's tired. He's never told me he's sore."

Mesquite has done some things on the field to limit Morris' load. But the team consistently finds itself trying to stop Morris from himself, to no avail.

"Maybe we'll not go to him on offense for a little bit," Cory said. "But he will never tell us that. He'll be looking at you like, 'C'mon, get me the ball' or 'Call another blitz.'"

"In the fourth quarter, it seems like he's moving faster than he did in the first quarter. A couple times in the first quarter, I'm like, 'I've seen you move faster in the fourth.'"

As Mesquite looks to three-peat in 2021, the pressure is simultaneously on and off Morris. On because at this point, Morris believes he is underrated.

"I definitely still feel like I have something to prove," he said. "Playing 4A football, a lot of people kind of look at me and go 'He's good, but he's playing 4A football.' And I get that."

Morris cited his workouts with players at 6A Chandler as a measuring stick for himself, and claimed he still reigned king.

"I train with Chandler guys all the time and I'm stronger, faster than all of those guys," Morris said. "They're starting linebackers and they're going to Air Force and Michigan State and I'm physically better than those guys."

"I only have one goal, and that's Player of the Year."

Poston Butte

Head coach: Dain Thompson.

Years as school's head coach/record: 5: 25-25.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. RB Octavious Joe (5-9, 175) 200 yards rushing and 3 TDs; Jr. TE Connor Lopez (6-4, 210) 286 yards receiving and 3 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. SS Amari Gilmore (5-9, 170) 75 tackles; Sr. LB Riley Nolan (5-11, 175) 65 tackles.

Team's biggest question marks: QB graduated along with top three rushers.

Program history: The Broncos went 6-2 last year and it was the first winning season since 2017.

Tempe

Head coach: Todd Hanley.

Years as school's head coach/record: First year.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (7 Games) Sr. LB Ulises Ontiveros (6-1, 190); Sr. DL Christian Valdez (6-1 195).

Strengths of offense: Young but talented offensive line.

Strengths of defense: New creative defensive coordinator, Ed Johnson, and addition of Sun Devil's all-time leading tackler Greg Battle to staff.

Program history: Todd Hanley coached at Flagstaff last year and replaces longtime Tempe coach Brian Walker. Tempe went 0-7 last year after finishing 7-3 the year before.

2021 expectations: Instill the EET culture, bringing Effort, Enthusiasm and Toughness to competitions every day in every way. Reconnecting with alumni, fostering the family environment of "THE TOWN."

More about the program: Coach Brooks Honaker and Greg Battle, long time Desert Vista coaches, came over to help rebuild the program from the Freshman level. Potential QB Sr. Gabriel Molina - awesome kid, great student, mom is mayor of Guadalupe.

SKYLINE REGION

Glendale

Head coach: Rob York.

Years as school's head coach/record: 5: 35-11.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (6 Games) Sr. OL Chris Ramirez (6-3, 305); Sr. OL Cristian Oropeza (6-1, 295); Sr. OL Manny Gortarez (6-2, 225); Sr. TE Logan Smith (6-4, 225); Jr. WR Alessandro Perry (5-10, 160).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (6 Games) Sr. DL Chris Tovar (5-10, 225) 44 tackles; Sr. DL James Ortiz (5-10, 240); Sr. DE Ali Sawadogo (6-0, 230); Sr. LB Christian Perry (5-10, 215) 49 tackles; Sr. CB Junior Dukulay (6-0, 175) 2 interceptions; Sr. DB Shane Randolph (5-10, 160) 20 tackles; Sr. DB Jordan Clifton (6-0, 165).

Also keep an eye on: So. QB Zech Marsh (6-2, 175); So. RB Jesus Garcia (5-9, 160); So. LB Victor Padilla (5-8, 150); Sr. OL Kevin Torres (6-2, 270); Sr. RB/LB Keyon Walker (6-0, 180).

Strengths of offense: Three of our five returning offensive linemen are three year varsity starters. We have a young improving talent at the QB and RB positions.

Strengths of defense: Returning a very versatile secondary and three returning starters on the defensive line.

Team's biggest question marks: Having enough preparation time with facility renovations and COVID restrictions.

Program history: Since we took over the football program five years ago we have not had a losing season. The football program was back to back region champions (2019, 2020) and has qualified for the playoffs three consecutive seasons, the last playoff appearance being in 2006. The 2019 region championship was the first the school has had since 2006. It has been since the 1963 and 1964 season since the football program has won back to back region championships.

2021 expectations: Get better every day; beat our rival school; end the season with a winning record; win our region; make the playoffs.

Moon Valley

Head coach: Santiago Maldonado.

Years as school's head coach/record: First year.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (7 Games) Sr. QB Micah Southwick (6-0, 160) 654 yards passing and 5 TDs; Jr. RB Deyon Bradley (5-10, 175) 483 yards rushing.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (7 Games) Sr. DE Cordell Outridge (6-2, 200) 51 tackles and 8.5 sacks; Sr. MLB Billy Bort (5-10, 177) 40 tackles and 3 interceptions.

Strengths of offense: Returning QB.

Strengths of defense: Good mix of returners.

Program history: Santiago Maldonado came over from Independence. The Rockets went 2-5 last year and 2-8 in 2019.

Shadow Mountain

Head coach: Ron Fagan.

Years as school's head coach/record: 5: 14-34.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. QB Christian Thomson (5-11, 155) 1,924 yards passing and 16 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. SS Anthony Thomson (5-11, 170) 44 tackles.

Program history: The Matadors went 1-7 last year and 2-8 in 2019.



Shadow Mountain QB Christian Thompson. (Paul Campbell photo/MaxPreps)

St. Mary's

Head coach: Jose Lucero.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1: 6-3

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (9 Games) Sr. WR Anthony Pacheco (6-2, 180) 353 yards rushing, 437 yards receiving; Sr. OL Julian Aguilar (5-11, 280); Jr. OL Philip Maschue (6-3, 290); Jr. OL Ignacio Marquez (6-2, 290); Jr. WR Andru Cannon (6-2, 190); Jr. WR Chris Horn (6-0, 170).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (9 Games) Sr. DL Cody Arriaga (5-9, 240) 24 tackles; Sr. LB Mason Aguayo (5-8, 200) 20 tackles and 3.5 sacks; Jr. DB PJ Lewis (6-2, 175) 21 tackles and 2 interceptions; Jr. DL Henry Fierro (6-0, 250) 32 tackles and 3 sacks; Jr. LB David Galindo (5-11, 200) 42 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. LB Joseph Beguhl (5-9, 180); Jr. LB Andrew Phelan (5-10, 180); Soph WR Ethan Crowell (5-7, 145).

Strengths of offense: Kids play hard and disciplined and QB play should be a strength.

Strengths of defense: Play disciplined every snap.

Team's biggest question marks: Need to replace strong senior leadership.

Program history: Head coach Jose Lucero graduated from St. Mary's in 2003. He also coached North Canyon and Desert Edge prior to taking over last year.

2021 expectations: Compete for a state title.

More about the program: We have nine state championships and countless region titles. Legendary coaches include Ed Doherty and Pat Farrell coached here. A huge tradition here is wearing gold pants in the play-offs, this goes back to the Doherty days. Our main rival is Brophy College Prep, who we will play this year for the first time in a while. To this day we hang our hat on the old SM slogan, "We may not be the biggest, but we have a firm conviction we can be the best". This quote is from Horace Pieri, a long time trainer here at SM.

Thunderbird

Head coach: Matt Nalette.

Years as school's head coach/record: 3: 6-11.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. RB Jordan Lahusky (5-11, 175) 821 yards rushing and 9 TDs; Sr. OT Sam Clark (6-3, 255); Sr. WR/TE Kyler McConaughy (6-2, 200) 295 yards receiving and 3 TDs; Jr. OG Chance Porras (5-11, 260); Jr. OT Matthew Martinez (6-2, 255); Jr. WR Brody Fogelson (5-11, 150); Jr. FB/TE Sean Matthews (5-11, 185).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. FS Kyler McConaughy (6-2, 200) 50 tackles and 2 interceptions; Sr. SS Jordan Lahusky (5-11, 175) 31 tackles; Sr. DT Sam Clark (6-3, 255) 22 tackles and 2 sacks; Sr. CB Eder Solis (5-10, 170); Jr. DT Chance Porras (5-11, 260); Jr. DE Matthew Martinez (6-2, 255); Jr. LB Sean Matthews (5-11, 185) 21 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. WR Alex Harland (5-9, 155); So. OG Micah Hillman (6-3 285); Jr. QB Carter Squires (6-0, 160).

Strengths of offense: We return our top two offensive weapons in RB Jordan Lahusky (potential Region Offensive Player of the Year) and WR/TE Kyler McConaughy as well as three starters on the OL (Clark, Porras, Martinez). We should have a balanced attack behind an improved offensive line.

Strengths of defense: Experienced secondary returning FS Kyler McConaughy (potential Region defensive Player of the Year) along with SS Jordan Lahusky and CB Eder Solis. Also, three returning DL that are a year bigger, stronger and better.

Team's biggest question marks: QB competition between Jr Carter Squires and Soph Dillon Wittbrodt along with a possible wild card in athlete Sr. Kyler McConaughy.

Program history: The Titans last winning record was in 2015 (7-3).

2021 expectations: Skyline Region Championship and playoff berth.

More about the program: Thunderbird High School has now officially made a mascot change from Chiefs to Titans. Our winningest coach in school history is Brent Wittenwyler (state championship in 2010), who I served as an assistant coach from 2010-2018. His son Andy Wittenwyler (former Thunderbird QB) is now on the coaching staff. Our single season and all-time leading rusher is former Oregon RB Kani Benoit, who graduated from Thunderbird in 2013.

GILA REGION

Amphitheater

Head coach: Jorge Mendivil.

Years as school's head coach/record: 27-38, 107-87 overall

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (4 Games) Sr. G Jonathan Cardenas (6-0, 280); Sr. T Jayden Corral (6-4, 220); Sr. TE Nathaniel Carissimi (5-9, 170); Sr. G Diego Lopez (6-0, 185).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (4 Games) So. OL/DT Marco Martinez (6-3, 315); Sr. CB Azriel Noriega (5-8, 150); Sr. TE/LB Bryan Maytorena (6-0, 170); So. LB Rudy Rios (6-0 175).

Also keep an eye on: So. OL/DT Marco Martinez (6-3, 315); Sr. CB Azriel Noriega (5-8, 150); Sr. TE/LB Bryan Maytorena (6-0, 170); So. LB Rudy Rios (6-0, 175).

Strengths of offense: Three offensive linemen return, including 3-tear starter Jonathan Cardenas and two solid TE's.

Strengths of defense: Three linemen return.



Amphitheater OL Jonathan Cardenas. (Chris Hook photo/MaxPreps)

Team's biggest question marks: Linebackers.

Program history: The Panthers went 4-0 last year. It was the first winning record for the program since finishing 8-3 in 2016.

2021 expectations: Win region and qualify and advance in the playoffs.

Catalina Foothills

Head coach: Daniel Sainz.

Years as school's head coach/record: First Year.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (2 Games) Sr. QB Connor Smith (6-0, 182); Jr. RB Eden Bae (6-0, 165).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (2 Games) Sr. MLB Luis Perez (6-2, 210).

Team's biggest question marks: Only two games played last year with a new coach this year.

Program history: The team went 3-7 in 2019 and 4-6 in 2018.

Douglas

Head coach: Hunter Long.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2: 3-8.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. OL Diego Martinez (6-1, 215); Sr. RB Kevin Ybarra (5-8, 175); Sr. OL Jossue Gracia (6-1, 210); Jr. RB Vicente Cardona (5-9, 175).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. LB Kevin Ybarra (5-8, 175); Jr. LB Vicente Cardona (5-9, 175); Sr. LB Francisco Corrales (6-0, 180); Sr. DL Michael Monge (6-2, 205).

Also keep an eye on: Jr. WR/DB Juan Verdugo (5-11, 160); So. LB/RB Emiliano Berthely (5-11, 165); Sr. OL/DL Manuel Pickell (6-0, 205).

Strengths of offense: Experienced senior group on the offensive line and QB depth.

Strengths of defense: Speed along the defensive line and depth at defensive back positions.

Team's biggest question marks: Kicker and size on the offensive and defensive lines.

Program history: The team only played one game last year.

2021 expectations: Compete in every game and play fast and aggressive.

More about the program: Douglas/Bisbee Rivalry - recognized as one of the oldest rivalries in the nation. This is the must watch game of the year for both communities in which the winner is awarded a Copper Pick Trophy. Former Arizona standout Hunter Long coaches with his father.

Empire

Head coach: George Kelly.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2: 1-10.

Team's biggest question marks: The Ravens only played one game last year and went 1-9 the year before.

Program history: George Kelly is in his third year.

Palo Verde

Head coach: Mike Wells.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2: 4-8.

Team's biggest question marks: The Titans played two games last year.

Program history: The Titans are averaging three wins a year since 2015.

Rio Rico

Head coach: Kevin Kuhm.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2: 5-8.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (2 Games) Jr. QB Andres Lopez (5-8); Jr. WR Aaron Villegas (5-10).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (2 Games) Jr. Omar Rodriguez (5-8).

Team's biggest question marks: The Hawks went 1-2 last year.

GRAND CANYON REGION

Bradshaw Mountain

Head coach: Bob Young.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1: 3-4 at Bradshaw - 181-99-1.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (7 Games) Jr. TE Malachi Stephenson (6-1, 200) 383 yards receiving and 2 TDs; Sr. RB Eli Acuna (5-7, 175) 374 yards rushing and 8 TDs; Jr. WR Maki Phetinta (6-3, 170) 313 yards receiving and 7 TDs; Jr. WR Ruben Solano (5-7, 165); Sr. OL Michael Kelley (6-2, 240); Sr. OL Peyton Hines (6-2, 250); Sr. OL Kaleb Hill (6-0, 180); Sr. OL Katum Otero (5-8, 230).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (7 Games) Jr. DB Braden Shoemaker (5-10, 160); Sr. LB Brock Fringer (6-0, 190) 40 tackles; Sr. DB Moi Hernandez (5-10, 175) 29 tackles; Sr. DE Francisco Valentin (6-0, 195); Sr. DB Aiden Ott (6-1, 190); Sr. DB Calvin Mayotte (6-0, 170) 40 tackles; So. DE James Giggey (6-3, 250).

Also keep an eye on: Jr. DB Joel Dean (5-10, 170); So. RB Gabe Ricketts (5-10, 200).

Strengths of offense: Athletic QB with a good arm and experience with nine starters returning.

Strengths of defense: Good team speed and physical linebackers.

Team's biggest question marks: Kicker/punter.

Program history: The Bears finished 3-4 last year. The team finished 8-3 in 2018.

2021 expectations: Make the playoffs.

Coconino

Head coach: Mike Lapsley.

Years as school's head coach/record: 17-3 as head coach / 24-6 overall.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (9 Games) Sr. TE Matias Ortiz (6-2, 215); Sr. FB Tyson Fousel (6-2, 220) 593 yards rushing and 5 TDs; Sr. ATH Jonathan Padilla (6-1, 210); Sr. OL Braden Palmer (6-0, 235); Sr. OL Xavier Nakai (6-0, 305); Sr. OL Angel Rios (6-0, 255); Jr. ATH Jacob Clouse (6-0, 175); Jr. RB Cooper French (5-10, 160); Jr. ATH Quinn Mickelson (5-10, 175); So. Jacob Deherrera (5-10, 255).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (9 Games) Sr. DE Matias Ortiz (6-2, 215); Sr. LB Jonathan Padilla (6-1, 210) 62 tackles and 3.5 sacks; Jr. S Jacob Clouse (6-0, 175) 84 tackles; Jr. LB Cooper French (5-10, 160); Jr. DE Pierson Watson (6-3, 205) 36 tackles and 5 sacks; Jr. DB Tyler Ragan (6-1, 170); Jr. LB Quinn Mickelson (5-10, 175); Sr. DE Tyson Fousel (6-2, 220).

Also keep an eye on: So. ATH Enoch Watson (6-2, 170).

Strengths of offense: Executing Fundamentally. Stronger. Quicker.

Strengths of defense: Great Coverage Guys. Good Pass Rush Defensive Lineman. Team Concept.

Team's biggest question marks: Younger player development.

Program history: Trying to remain undefeated and win the region three

years in a row. The Panthers went 8-1 last year, 9-2 the year before and 7-3 in 2018 after going 2-8 in 2017 and 2016. No playoff wins in that time, however.

2021 expectations: Make playoffs and win against all top-10 opponents.

More about the program: If Coconino beats Flagstaff this season it will be the first time doing so five years in a row.



Coconino S Jacob Clouse. (Darin Sicurello photo/MaxPreps)

Flagstaff

Head coach: Sean Manning.

Years as school's head coach/record: First year.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. TE Nick Morrow (6-8, 260); Sr. RB Marcus Salcido (5-6, 140) 138 yards rushing and 2 TDs; Sr. C Kevin Borrego (5-10, 260); Sr. WR Ethan Ayup (5-7); Jr. WR Jake Weidinger (6-3) 125 yards receiving; Jr. WR Holden Sena (5-6); Jr. OL Evan Bertelsen 6-2).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. TE Nick Morrow (6-8, 260); Sr. LB Collin Doucette (5-9, 170) 85 tackles; Sr. LB Spencer Smith (6-2, 220) 64 tackles, 2 sacks and 2 interceptions; Sr. FS Gage Betts (5-8); Sr. DL Cutter Rahilly (5-7); Sr. DL Nick Harju (5-8) 24 tackles; Sr. C Ethan Ayup (5-7); Jr. C Holden Sena (5-6).

Also keep an eye on: Sr. QB Bodie Maier (5-10); Sr. SS Gunner Price (5-9); Sr. DL Anthony Hill (6-1).

Strengths of offense: New offensive coordinator. New scheme that aligns strengths of the student/athletes. Slim down the packages to minimize mistakes.

Strengths of defense: New defensive coordinator. Depth of the defensive line. Middle linebacker in 7 games had 85 tackles, 51 solo, 12 per game average. 3 returning DB's.

Team's biggest question marks: Having to build confidence of underclassman after a dismal 2019-2020 season.

Program history: The Eagles went 4-4 last year, 6-4 in 2019 and 3-7 in 2018.

More about the program: Continue our long standing rivalry with Coconino in which both programs have decades of strong traditional values and produced many student/athletes of strong character who today, still contribute to our Flagstaff community.

Lee Williams

Head coach: Patrick O'Boyle.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2: 9-8.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (7 Games) Sr. OL Jared Cardiff (6-3, 200); So. OL Nick Kennedy (6-3, 265); Sr. OL Diego Glick (6-3, 205); Sr. OL Caleb Ferris (6-0, 195); Sr. QB Devean Santos (5-10, 165) 1,415 yards passing and 16 TDs and 468 yards rushing and 6 TDs; Sr. WR Angel Larios (6-2, 180) 121 yards receiving and 2 TDs; Jr. WR Daniel Garcia (6-2, 170); Jr. WR Troy Edwards (6-0, 185); Sr. WR Justin Wright (5-10, 165); Sr. RB Jimmy Barry (5-9, 175) 210 yards rushing and 2 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (7 Games) Sr. DL Diego Glick (6-3, 205); Sr. DL Jared Cardiff (6-3, 200); So. DL Nick Kennedy (6-3, 265); Sr. DB Angel Larios (6-2, 180); Jr. DB Daniel Garcia (6-2, 170); Jr. DB Troy Edwards (6-0, 185); Sr. DB Darren Odom (6-0, 175); Sr. LB Peyton Wayman (5-11, 175); Sr. LB Oscar Gamez (6-0, 180); Sr. LB Jimmy Barry (5-9, 175) 26 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: So. DB Devin White (5-10, 165); Jr. DL Harley Naylor (5-10, 225); So. WR Jackson Cronk (6-3, 170); Jr. LB Brayden Petersen (5-11, 160).

Strengths of offense: Quarterback returns 1,440 yds passing in 7 games last year. Consistent WR play. Good stable of running backs. Good kicker.

Strengths of defense: Experienced LBs. Depth at DB. Overall team speed on defense.

Team's biggest question marks: Team strength has to improve.

Program history: The Volunteers were 4-3 last year, 4-5 in 2019 and 3-7 in 2018.

2021 expectations: Focus on what we can control. Give everything you have, every day. If we do those three things then the rest will take care of itself.

More about the program: Our football program has only been around for eight years. Our mascot is the Volunteers because of the 11 firefighters who lost their lives in an explosion here in Kingman in the 70's.



Lee Williams C Aaron Caraveo. (Paul Campbell photo/MaxPreps)

Mingus Union

Head coach: Doug Provenzano.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1: 1-6.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (7 Games) Sr. QB Zachary Harrison (6-0, 170) 468 yards passing with 3 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (7 Games) Sr. SS Angelo Alvarez (5-8, 175) 52 tackles and 3 interceptions.

Program history: The team went 1-6 last year and 0-10 the year before.

Prescott

Head coach: Cody Collett.

Years as school's head coach/record: 7: 45-25.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Jr. WR Landon Aurich (6-2, 170); Sr. TE Ethan Ammerman (6-0, 200); Sr. RT Jewvin Dejarlar (6-2, 240); Jr. RG Landen Francis (6-1, 205); Sr. C Noah Coroneos (5-9, 230); Sr. LT Nathan Norvell (6-0, 200); Jr. QB Alex Vaughan (6-0, 165) 300 yards passing; Jr. FB Cody Hanna (6-0, 190); Jr. RB Cody Leopold (5-11, 190).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. DE Patrick Willoughby (6-2, 200); Sr. NG Carlos Valdez Lopez (5-6, 180); Jr. OLB Jake Wright (5-11, 175); Jr. ILB Cody Leopold (5-11, 190) 93 tackles; Jr. ILB Cody Hanna (6-0, 190) 68 tackles; Jr. OLB Cian McKelvey (5-10, 175); Sr. DB Cervando Vega (5-9, 160).

Also keep an eye on: Jr. FS/WR Jacob Hilton (6-2, 170); Sr. DL Desmond Bennett (5-11, 250).

Team's biggest question marks: Our biggest question mark will be integrating our younger players with our experienced returners.

Program history: The team went 4-4 last year, 7-4 in 2019 and 7-4 in 2018.

2021 expectations: We want to become the best we are capable of becoming (John Wooden's definition of success).

SOUTHWEST REGION

Buckeye Union

Head coach: Kelley Moore.

Years as school's head coach/record: 7

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. QB Tyler Hill (5-10, 165) 1,313 yards passing and 17 TDs; Jr. RB David Mora (5-9, 185) 389 yards rushing; Sr. WR Jaelon Richardson (6-3, 155) 521 yards receiving with 10 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Jr. Izayah Garcia (6-0) 51 tackles.

Program history: The Hawks went 5-3 last year and 6-4 in 2019. Last playoff team was 2017.

Deer Valley

Head coach: Dan Friedman.

Years as school's head coach/record: 3: 6-21

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (7 Games) Jr. QB Rudy Gonzales (5-7, 160) 1,390 yards passing with 14 TDs; Sr. WR DJ Miles (6-3, 190); Sr. OL Danien Marquez (6-0, 300); Sr. OL Riley Pierce (5-11, 240); Sr. WR Tanner Bobic (5-7, 155); Sr. WR Steve Magnusson (5-6, 150); Jr. WR Rylan Colman (6-2, 180).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. LB Ashton Hill (6-1, 215); Sr. SS DJ Miles (6-3, 190) 50 tackles and 2 interceptions; Jr. DL Derrick McCoy (5-10, 200); Sr. DB Jordan McGee (5-10, 150); Sr. FS Tanner Bobic (5-7, 155); Sr. DL Riley Pierce (5-11, 240); Sr. LB Jermaine Moore (6-0, 220) 46 tackles.

Program history: The Skyhawks were 3-4 last year, 3-7 in 2019 and 0-10 in 2018.

2021 expectations: Make playoffs.

More about the program: Sven Christianson is the defensive coordinator. He was the head coach at Deer Valley for nine years.

Estrella Foothills

Head coach: Mike Welch.

Years as school's head coach/record: 9 (First current).

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. OL/C Max Amicarelli (6-2, 280); Sr. OT Aaron Ochoa (6-0, 260); Sr. OG AJ Garcia (6-0, 280); Sr. OG Ramon Lopez (6-2, 250); Sr. OL Kolby Pierce (5-10, 250); Jr. RB Liam Henry (5-10, 215).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. DL Donell Danley (6-0, 250) 31 tackles; Sr. DL Saul Hannibal (5-10, 240) 33 tackles; Jr. LB Edgar Roberts (5-10, 210).

Also keep an eye on: Sr. QB Cannon Scrimmager (5-10, 170); Jr. RB William Bontrager (5-8, 170); Sr. TE Jacob Treppa (6-0, 180).

Strengths of offense: Returning five starting offensive linemen will be our biggest asset.

Strengths of defense: We will be very young on defense but having a full time defensive coordinator will be huge for our program.

Team's biggest question marks: Defensive backs and wide receivers.

Program history: The Wolves went 4-4 in 2020, 4-6 in 2019 and 6-5 in 2018.

2021 expectations: To get our run game established.

More about the program: Current head coach Mike Welch is in the Arizona Coaches Hall of Fame.

Lake Havasu

Head coach: Karl Thompson.

Years as school's head coach/record: 12: 71-53.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Jr. RB Isaac Stopke (6-0, 215) 1,113 yards rushing and 13 TDs; Sr. WR Cody Pellaton (5-8, 160) 311 yards receiving and 3 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Jr. OLB Evan Smith (5-9, 175) 55 tackles.

Team's biggest question marks: Starting QB graduated.

Program history: The Knights went 4-4 last year and 3-7 in 2019.



Lake Havasu RB Isaac Stopke. (Chris Hook photo/MaxPreps)

Youngker

Head coach: Anthony Cluff.

Years as school's head coach/record: 5: 12-23.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Memphis York (5-10, 170).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. LB Rigo Sanchez (5-8, 180); Sr. DB AJ Peake (6-0, 175).

Also keep an eye on: RB Steven Williams (5-9, 165); WR Evan Aguirre (5-6, 150); OL Nico Leyva (6-2, 270).

Program history: The Roughriders went 0-4 last year, 2-8 in 2019 and 3-7 in 2018.

COPPER SKY REGION

Carl Hayden

Head coach: Steven Arenas.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2: 2-9.

Team's biggest question marks: Team went 0-1 last year with a limited roster.

Program history: The Falcons went 2-8 in 2019.

Sierra Linda

Head coach: Nate Gill.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2: 0-10.

Team's biggest question marks: The Bulldogs went 0-10 in 2019 and did not play a game last year.

Vista Grande

Head coach: Jon Roberts.

Years as school's head coach/record: First year.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR/DB Tyrese Constable (5-9, 165); Jr. RB/LB Kenyon Caldwell (5-8, 215); Jr. DT/ OG Jonathan Ventura (5-8, 185).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Jr. WR/DB Angelo Tapia (5-10, 175); So. RB/LB Jovian Romero (5-9, 165).

Also keep an eye on: Jr. Matthew Hernandez QB/LB (5-10, 175).

Strengths of offense: Explosive wide receivers and big physical running back.

Strengths of defense: Physical and fast.

Team's biggest question marks: Defensive production and special teams.

Program history: The Spartans were 1-7 last year, 0-10 in 2019 and 2-8 in 2018.

2021 expectations: Compete at a high level and win the games we are supposed to win.

Washington

Head coach: Tim Mayfield.

Years as school's head coach/record: 5: 17-31.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) Sr. QB Gabriel Segovia (5-10, 155) 910 yards passing and 10 TDs; Sr. SB Taevion Allen (5-4, 125) 247 yards receiving with 4 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (8 Games) SR. DE Gilbert Calderon (5-11, 270) 69 tackles.

Team's biggest question marks: Top rushers graduated.

Program history: 6-2 last year was the most successful team in a generation for the Rams.

Yuma

Head coach: Bo Seibel.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1: 1-4.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: (5 Games) Sr. QB Jaynoah Medel (5-10) 633 yards passing with 4 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: (5 games) Jr. DE Timothy Nieto, 32 tackles and 4 sacks.

Team's biggest question marks: Most of the skill position players have graduated except for the QB position.

Program history: The Criminals went 1-4 last year and 2-8 the year before.

INDEPENDENT

Mica Mountain

Head coach: Pat Nugent.

Years as school's head coach/record: First year (140 career wins).

Program history: The Thunderbolts will only play two games this year as a new program in the Vail School District under legendary head coach Pat Nugent.

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3A CONFERENCE FOOTBALL PRESEASON RANKINGS



Snowflake looks to come back just as strong as it ended the 2020 season with 10 wins in a COVID-shortened season and its first state championship since 1993. (Jack Beasley photo/MaxPreps)

By George Werner
AZPreps365.com

1. YUMA CATHOLIC: Head coach Rhett Stallworth's son Richard – fully healed from a broken collarbone suffered at the hands of Snowflake in last fall's 3A title game – is too good, and his skill players too talented, for Yuma Catholic not to redeem itself for the loss to the Lobos. Depth under a new offensive line coach is a question mark, but with All-3A first-teamer and team tackle leader Dezmond Ezquivel back, and four tackles weighing 265 pounds or better, beef in the trenches is not. The sheer potential for the state's top underclass passer in a healthy Stallworth, who passed for over 3,800 yards after just one varsity season, is staggering. Particularly with experienced skill players to throw to like cousin Austin Rush, one of just two returning players in Arizona who had over 1,000 yards receiving last season. Fellow senior Mario Martinez deeply impressed Centennial and other larger schools with his grabs in summer 7-on-7 competition. Add further-developed playmakers such as all-purpose yardage leader Devon Black and junior Jarred Marquez, who also is second on the team in tackles, and this may finally be the year for the Shamrocks' first 3A title after dominating Division V a few years ago.

2. SNOWFLAKE: Losing running back and conference Player of the Year Terren Green to graduation, the Lobos may not have enough to repeat. But as long as they have Conference Coach of the Year Kay Solomon, they will still be very good, enough to win the East Region and perhaps even replicate last season's title run. With 2,130 combined rushing and throwing yards as a junior, quarterback Caden Cantrell is back, as is all-purpose kicker Sam Crockett, first-team All-3A with 68 points. Upperclassmen are sprinkled liberally among the rest of the Lobos' skill positions. Camden Brimhall, who gouged Yuma Catholic for a 46-yard score in the 3A title win, returns at running back, as does wide receiver Noah Baum, who hauled in a 62-yard score of his own against the Shamrocks as part of 678 yards on the season. Senior Justin Ciminski, and juniors Tony Munoz and David Popovich anchor an otherwise-nascent defense.

3. AMERICAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY - GILBERT NORTH: Head Coach Randy Ricedorff's Eagles could morph into the dark horse for the 3A championship after the Eagles bookended an otherwise spotless, eight-win 2020 with two losses to Snowflake by a combined three points. If they break through, Spencer Nielson and the connection of Adam Damante to Johnny Bellino and Brandon Phelps will be the primary reasons why. Nielson, last fall's 3A Defensive Player of the Year, is back and playing both ways, while Damante is already being touted by his coach as a Division I quarterback. He and Bellino, both all-conference first-teamers, combined for over 1,400 all-purpose yards as underclassmen, while Phelps, in his first year of organized football, finished in the top-12 of all freshmen nationally in receiving yards. The sack attack of seniors Zane Dillard and Maddox Matheny may surpass the 14 they combined for last fall, and add two more tackle leaders and upperclassmen to the mix such as Braeden Belanger and Corbin King, and the Eagles could swoop in and surprise.

4. ARIZONA COLLEGE PREP: After squandering the No. 5 seed to 12th-seeded Thatcher in a first-round playoff upset last fall, Knights head coach Myron Blueford is back with more depth – and a home stadium from which the Knights can challenge to win the toughest region in 3A, the Metro East. Junior Jayden Diaz, the team's second-leading returning receiver, has the early edge to lead Blueford's offense back to the postseason behind second-team all-conference behemoth in Keaton Messerole. At 6-2, 280 pounds, he will be a monster for any team to handle in the trenches. On defense, he could complement fellow second-teamer Cayden Gibson, who had three sacks and a team-leading 37 tackles as a freshman defensively. Upperclassmen Bryce Chen and Jett Uzzell are dangerous on kickoffs as well as in the passing game.

5. VALLEY CHRISTIAN: Speaking of first-round upset losses, the Trojans look to bounce back after taking one at home to Round Valley. Driving them will be returning All-3A linebacker Justin Regehr, dominant his junior year with 104 tackles and five sacks. His backstops in 2020, Justin Erickson and Kaden Majercak, will need to help the rest of the defense to shore up the loss of fellow first-teamer Chandler Carter. Behind the blocking of all-Metro East first-team tackles Jacob Booth and Maddox Putnicki, Majercak will also need to improve on his 734 yards rushing to bolster other skill players, including former backup quarterback Hunter Heeringa.

6. BLUE RIDGE: This ranking could rise or fall depending on the status of the quarterback situation. The Yellow Jackets can do some serious damage under new head coach Jeremy Hathcock, as he is very familiar with the history and tradition of the program. Without him, as hard-working an offseason as backup Hunter Martinez has had, the drop-off from graduated all-conference quarterback P.J. London makes Blue Ridge more of a rebuild. Still, with team tackle leader Hershall Gregg back to lead the defense, never count out a Paul Moro-type coach in Hancock, an eight-time 6A Coach of the Year who won a state championship at Show Low in 2003.

7. WICKENBURG: The Wranglers are poised to build on last year's fifth-ranked regular-season finish and victory over Blue Ridge in the 3A tournament. They will have to do it, however, without triple threat Bryson Alder, now graduated and on the rodeo circuit. Fourth-year head coach Mike Mitchell will be hard-pressed to replace Alder's 1,238 rushing yards from last season, though he hopes wideouts Kaden Conway and Eleazar Dominguez can offset Alder's over-300 receiving yards. Upperclassmen Korbyn Dowdy and Kade Roberts are ready in the skill positions and on the defensive side of the ball, but transfers from Oregon, Washington and Wyoming will have to prove themselves fast. How 6-foot, 180-pound Calogero Dicamillo handles the shift from free safety to quarterback will tell much in a loaded pre-West Region schedule that includes early tests at American Leadership Academy - Gilbert North, Paradise Honors and home against Valley Christian.

8. PUSCH RIDGE CHRISTIAN: The Lions' defense will be dangerous, led by junior Tyler Mustain, a first-team All-3A linebacker with 77 tackles, including six sacks. But head coach Kent Middleton will need more than Mustain might muster to repeat their undefeated South Region run of

2020. He will need his two-headed senior signal-callers, Ryan Fontaine and Hayden Hallett, to pass for more yardage than the nearly 1,500 they combined for, and to more targets than senior Jayden Rittenbach. He will need another upperclassman, second-leading rusher Javier Graveda, to double last season's production to make up for the more than 3,400 career yards run by the graduated Evan Lovett. Put these talents together with clutch plays by second team All-3A kickoff returner Bryce Jewell and other underclassmen, and the Lions could be the nemesis to Yuma Catholic they were last season. Otherwise, other teams will step in.

9. ROUND VALLEY: The Elks, still adjusting to life under new head coach Brad Baca, remain in the preseason rankings for one reason: Seth Wiltbank. The senior running back is "one of the best, if not the best back in 3A," Baca said, as he proved in handing state champ Snowflake's only loss last fall, running for 204 yards and two scores. He will have second-team All-Conference lineman Jadon Cisco to run behind and second-team wideout Jovan Ortiz capable of 65-yard touchdown catches like he had to help defeat the Lobos in the Dome. Baca has five other two-way returning starters to work with. Two of them, wide receiver Rowdy Rivera and defensive end Treyson Merrill, are in the mix at quarterback, though early road games at Phoenix Christian and St. Johns will not help ease that transition.

10. MONUMENT VALLEY: Unknown underdogs don't get much less known than all the teams in the 3A North, quarantined out of existence in 2020. Of all Navajo teams, Monument Valley emerged from the 16-month tribal lockdown in the best shape of them. So the Mustangs are the best bet to stampede into the postseason for the ninth team in head coach Bryan Begay's past 15 seasons. Coaches will be scouting the Mustangs as they go this fall, but if they are looking for someone to start with for game film, check the archives for two-time all-region quarterback Andrew Sheppard. In his first two seasons, Sheppard scored 11 touchdowns, threw for 21 more along with 2,400 yards. For his final season, he will work behind a 10-deep offensive line that Begay calls his "best on paper." Six other starters from the Mustangs' most recent season of 2019 came back, including Sheppard's backup QB, junior Albrandon Byjoe – who has passed, and received passes, for nearly 500 yards. Senior sack leader Blane Begay and top-five tackler Lyle Blackgoat join Sheppard with five other returning defensive starters.



Pound for pound one of the top running backs in the state, Round Valley's Seth Wiltbank hopes to get the Elks further into the playoffs in the team's second year in 3A. (Jack Beasley photo/MaxPreps)

3A CONFERENCE FOOTBALL TEAM-BY-TEAM PREVIEW



After missing out on the 2020 season due to the pandemic, Page and its QB/FS Hunter Richardson plan to showcase one of the north's most exciting offenses as football is back at the school. (Mark Jones photo/MaxPreps)

By George Werner
AZPreps365.com

NORTH REGION

Chinle

Head coach: Alan Barwick.

Years as school's head coach: Third year, 7-13 record.

2019 record: 2-8.

Returning starters from 2019: Jr. NG Olin White (5-10, 200); Jr. LB Garrett Yazzie (5-10, 200); Jr. LB Carlos Miranda (5-10, 185); Jr. DE Dion Tsosie (6-1, 205); Sr. ATH Dejuan Kinlichee (6-0, 175).

Also keep an eye on: Assistant coach Tim Su'e-Su'e Liufau, "a legend in the program and community."

Strengths of offense: Continuity.

Strengths of defense: Commitment. Quickness. Speed. Power.

Team's biggest question marks: Will there be a season? In practice, will the kids be able to get to the field and weight room?

2021 expectations: Work hard. Compete. Grow as a team. Win some games.

More about the program: Did not play in 2020 due to the pandemic.

Ganado

Head coach: Adriel Shirley.

Years as school's head coach: First year.

2019 record: 7-2.

Returning starters on offense, 2019 stats: SSr RB/OLB Tyren Bitsue (5-6, 190), 30 rushing yards, TD; Sr C/T Kevelle Stewart (6-0, 255).

Returning starters on defense, 2019 stats: Sr. DE Marquis West (6-2, 235), 37 tackles, sack, fumble recovery for TD; Sr DT Rance Tso (6-0, 255), 5 tackles.

Team's biggest question marks: Who will replace graduated North Region Player of the Year Tony Shirley? Before his senior season was lost due to the Coronavirus, Shirley did everything for the Hornets as a junior: ran for 1,463 yards and 12 touchdowns, caught four touchdown passes off 250 yards receiving, had 109 tackles, 4 sacks, 3 interceptions, a fumble recovery and even returned a punt, a kickoff and an interception for a touchdown. He also punted twice and kicked off eight times totaling 242 yards. What one player makes up for that much production?

More about the program: Did not play in 2020 due to the pandemic.

Monument Valley

Head coach: Bryan Begay.

Years as school's head coach: 15th year, 79-58 record.

2019 record: 4-5.

Returning starters, 2019 stats: Sr. SB/DB Devaughn Poorman (5-9, 139), 106 yards receiving, 2 TDs, 41 yards rushing, TD, 13 tackles, sack, 2 INTs; Sr. WR/DB Nahvonie Gray (5-6, 120), 9 tackles, 2 caused fumbles, INT; Sr. OL/LB Blane Begay (5-10), 26 tackles, 7.5 sacks, 2 caused fumbles; Sr. OL/DL Tyson Atene (5-10), 10 tackles, 2 sacks, fumble recovery; Sr. QB/FS Andrew Sheppard (5-10), 895 yards passing, 8 TDs, 404 yards rushing, 6 TDs, 23 tackles, INT; Sr. DL Darnell Johnson (6-2), 28 tackles, sack, fumble caused and recovered; Jr. SB/DB Roberto Flores, rushing TD, 6 yards receiving, TD; Jr. QB/DB/SB/P Albrandon Byjoe, 298 passing yards, 4 TDs, 35 yards rushing, TD, 184 yards receiving, 2 TDs, 10 tackles, 12 punts, 354 yards; Sr. OL/DL Caden Kescoli, tackle; Sr. RB/LB Lyle Blackgoat, 38 rushing yards, 33 tackles, sack, 3 fumble recoveries; Sr. OL/DL Justin Parrish, 32 tackles, sack, 2 fumble recoveries.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. RB/LB. Sequoia Jacobs (5-8), 5 rushing yards, 7 tackles, sack, fumble recovery; Jr OL/DL Keegan Holiday, 5 tackles, sack; Sr. WR/DB Maliki Yazzie; Sr. WR/DB Adrian Nelson; Jr. OL/DL Koy Phillips; Sr. WR/DB/QB Damian Smith; So. OL/DL Leighton Williams.

Strengths of offense: Will a season of no football hurt the Mustangs? Senior Starter Andrew Sheppard returns to the Mustangs after two all conference seasons at quarterback. As a two-year starter, Sheppard threw for 2,400 yards and 21 scores. He also gained 600 rushing yards on carries (4-yard average) and crossed the goal line 11 times. Juniors-to-be Albrandon Byjoe, Roberto Flores, Keegan Holiday, and Koy Phillips have been on the varsity since 2019. On paper, this could be the best offensive line Coach Barnes has had in the 16 years at Monument Valley. **Strengths of defense:** Senior leadership. Continue to coach youngsters and put them in the right place to make plays. Create havoc. Defensive line will be the strength: Darnell Johnson, Justin Parrish, Caden Kescoli, Keegan Holiday, Blane Begay, Javonte Cody, and Koy Phillips. Four play-

ers were named to the all-region team as sophomores; COVID-19 hurt their junior season. The strength of the team, as of now, is that there is a bond between the defensive linemen and the secondary unit that is strong. They continue to demonstrate a desire to work hard.

Team's biggest question marks: Conditioning. WR, RB, LB—who is going to step up. Loss of transfer students—Joshua Holiday, Latrell Smith, and several others hurt. Will we have a football season? When does football and athletics begin at Monument Valley?

2021 expectations: Have football practices. No COVID scares. If all of that is done; then pray for good grades and health. Obviously, win as many games, win the 3A North title, win a state playoff game, prepare for November.

More about the program: Did not play in 2020 due to the pandemic.

Page

Head coach: Leland “Bubba” Billie.

Years as school's head coach: 3rd year.

2019 record: 4-6

Returning starters, 2019 stats: Sr WR/FS Hunter Richardson, 151 yards receiving, 2 TDs, 72 yards rushing, 42 tackles, sack, 2 fumbles forced and recovered; Jr RB Kyun Tate (5-5, 120), 71 yards rushing, 25 tackles, fumble recovery for TD, INT.

Also keep an eye on: Sr WR/CB Josh Tenpenny (5-10, 140), 32 yards receiving, 7 tackles; Jr WR Ashton Penrod (5-8, 130). OGs Kayleb Slim and Austin Wilson “worked their butts off during the extended offseason. They came into spring workouts bigger, stronger and faster. They are big, powerful and quick on their feet. We plan to run behind them as much as possible.”

Strengths of offense: Offense is definitely the furthest along. We have put a focus on implementing a new system all summer. It worked out that way because we workout alongside our boys basketball team, as the head basketball coach is also our new offensive coordinator, Gerrald Begay. Coach Begay brings a passion for coaching football, especially the offensive side. Our fan base may see a different side of Sand Devil football, as we hope to pass the ball much more than we have in the past.

Strengths of defense: As far as defense goes, we want to stop the run and we want to be physical. We have a new defensive coordinator this year, Ty Bennett, who is a Sand Devil Football alum and has been working to take on that challenge.

Team's biggest question marks: QB?? Defensive ends. Running backs. The rest is slowly starting to clear up. We had 58 athletes cycle through summer workouts. The majority of our team is very young and inexperienced.

2021 expectations: Win the 3A North. Make the playoffs. [Set a] 100 percent graduation rate. Our biggest rivalry is with Monument Valley.

More about the program: Did not play in 2020 due to the pandemic.

Tuba City

Head coach: Vincent Lee.

Years as school's head coach: Second year.

2019 record: 2-8.

Returning starters, 2019 stats: Sr. QB/SS Papsiya Lomayestewa (5-10, 180), 159 yards passing, TD, 59 yards receiving, TD, rushing TD, 3 INTs; Sr. RB/LB Xander Mitchell (5-9, 160), 67 yards rushing, 10 yards receiving; Sr. WR/LB Lincoln Bilagody (5-10, 180), 6 tackles, INT; Sr. OL Casey Draper (5-9, 210); Jr. OL Rylan Piastewa (5-8, 235); Jr. WR/CB Maric Bilagody (5-11, 170); Jr. WR/LB Jakobe Dodson (5-9, 160); Jr. DL Nathaniel Fulton (6-2, 245); Jr. LB Pedro Martinez (5-10, 160); Sr. RB Levander Yazzie (5-11, 195); Jr. LB Jeremiah Yazzie (5-11, 165); Sr. OL/NG Tryrin Mann (5-11, 265), the leader on the offensive line, is “really pushing the program forward. He has a great work ethic (rodeo background) and has the potential to play at the next level.”

Also keep an eye on: Jr. QB/CB Devyn Hardy (5-10, 160); Jr. OL Dale Manygoats (6-0, 210). Assistant coach Tyrick Eltsostie: a former Tuba City High School football player that is working on the staff, he brings “a lot of football knowledge, tradition, and history to the program.”

Strengths of offense: Wide receiver depth. Quarterback experience and leadership: Lots of guys ready to step up!

Strengths of defense: Lots of experience coming back.

Team's biggest question mark(s): Who is going to step up to lead the team? “Are we ready to step up and play to our potential?”

2021 expectations: Move program forward. Winning season. This year is a pivotal year for our program and could be the beginning of a new tradition of football in Tuba City. “Our current team has been working very hard to improve and is very hungry to compete and win games.”

More about the program: Did not play in 2020 due to the pandemic.

Window Rock

Head coach: Wilbur Begay, Jr.

Years as school's head coach: 4th year, 10-20 record.

2019 record: 5-5.

Returning starters, 2019 stats: Sr RB Russell Yoe (6-0, 200), 20 yards rushing, 3 tackles; Sr WR/SS Gemini Bitsie (5-10, 185), 52 yards receiving, TD, 28 tackles, 3 sacks, INT.

Also keep an eye on: Sr WR/CB Wayne Wilson (5-6, 110), 35 yards rushing, 7 yards receiving, 8 tackles; Jr QB/DE Taylor Begay (6-0), tackle, 41 yards passing.

Team's biggest question marks: Who will replace graduated lineman Caleb Dickson, North Region co-Defensive Player of the Year?

More about the program: Did not play in 2020 due to the pandemic.

Region notes: The 3A North schools weren't the only Arizona football programs out of action in 2020. Tribal quarantine kept teams on other reservations from playing too, such as Alchesay and Cibecue/Dishchii'bikoh (Fort Apache/White Mountain Apache), Baboquivari (Tohono O'odham), San Carlos (San Carlos Apache), and Hopi. ... Senior Ganado two-way linemen Rance Tso and Marquis West were both first team all-North Region selections the last time they played, as sophomores.

SOUTH REGION

Pusch Ridge

Head coach: Kent Middleton.

Years as school's head coach: 3rd year, 12-6 record.

2020 record: 9-2.

Returning starters, 2020 stats: Sr QB/DB Ryan Fontaine (5-10, 175), 691 yards passing, 8 TDs, 134 yards rushing, 3 TDs, 13 tackles; Sr RB Javier Grajeda (5-5, 185), 649 yards rushing, 10 TDs, 160 yards receiving, TD, 17 tackles; Sr OG Jordan Kouba (5-8, 205), 7 tackles; Jr WR/DB Bryce Jewell (5-9, 165), 238 yards receiving, 2 TDs, 19 tackles, 99-yard INT for TD, 78-yard KO return for TD, 2 fumble recoveries; Sr WR/LB Josh Tofel (6-0, 170), 17 tackles, 2 fumble recoveries; Jr TE/DE Will Way (6-4, 235), 92 receiving yards, 39 tackles, 3.5 sacks; Sr QB/DB Hayden Hallett (6-1, 170), 776 yards passing, 5 TDs, 148 yards rushing, 4 TDs, 40 yards receiving, TD, 2 INTs; Jr LB/WR Tyler Mustain (6-2, 190), 108 receiving yards, TD, 77 tackles, 6 sacks, 4 FG blocks; Sr C Jackson Orr (5-7, 165), 13 tackles and “undersized, intelligent, tenacious.”

Also keep an eye on: So QB/DB Bubba Mustain (6-1 165), 10 tackles; Jr DB Jack Butler (6-0, 170); Jr RB Abe Grajeda (5-6, 180); Jr RB Cody Rafacz (5-9, 170).

Strengths of offense: An experienced, powerful running back, Javier Grajeda. Experienced skill players Will Way, Tyler Mustain, and Bryce Jewell. Offensive balance between the run and the pass.

Strengths of defense: Three returning linebackers: Tyler Mustain, Ethan Jones, and Josh Tofel. Experienced secondary. Team speed.

Team's biggest question marks: Team chemistry and depth.

2021 expectations: Play hard and tough in all situations. Contend for the conference championship. Make the playoffs. Team 3.5 grade-point average.

Sabino

Head coach: Ryan McBrayer.

Years as school's head coach: Sixth year, 29-9 record.

2020 record: 2-0.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Jr C Liam McDuffie (6-0, 240), 2 tackles; Jr RT Will Urbina (6-3, 290), 3 tackles, .5 sack; Sr RB Kenny Blackman (5-10, 180), 94 yards rushing, 3 TDs, 65 yards receiving; Jr RB David Cordova (5-7, 180), 101 yards rushing, 2 TDs; Sr WR Robert Maultsby (6-1, 160), 19 yards receiving; So WR Savaughn Berryhill (6-0 180), 55 yards receiving; Sr. OG Logan Sowers (5-11, 200).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: So DT Sayid Talbert (6-0, 300), 6 tackles, sack; Sr LB Marius Lester (5-11, 165), 16 tackles; Sr LB Alex Lopez (5-8, 170), 8 tackles; Sr LB Levi Miranda (5-11, 180), 5 tackles; Sr WR/CB Derek Sanchez, 158 yards receiving, 3 TDs, 4 tackles, 2 INTs (5-

11, 175); Jr FS Dom Parsons 6-2 175), 6 tackles; Sr SS Nezayah Stubblefield 6-3 175), 7 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: So QB Cameron Hackworth (5-9, 160), 32 yards passing, 7 yards rushing, TD; So WR William White (5-11, 160), 4 yards rushing; Sr DE Sam Franco (5-11, 240).

Strengths of offense: A three-headed monster at running back. Lots of athletes at the quarterback and wide receiver positions

Strengths of defense: Stout D-line. Athletic linebackers.

Team's biggest question marks: Depth behind starting groups.

2021 expectations: Compete for a region and state title.

Safford

Head coach: John O'Mera.

Years as school's head coach: 2nd year.

2020 record: 4-4.

Also keep an eye on: So. QB/CB JoJo Ruelas (5-10, 130), 75 yards passing, 2 TDs, 2 tackles; Sr RB/LB Christian Smith (6-2, 210), 336 yards rushing, 6 TDs, 63 tackles, sack, 5 INTs, 2 for TDs; Sr FB/LB Fernando Gonzales (5-11, 169), 54 tackles, 3 sacks; Sr OG Henry Cortez-Leon (5-9, 215); Jr DT Brenden Gunnnett (5-9, 260).

Team's biggest question mark(s): Depth and experience.

2021 expectations: Advance past the play-in game of the 3A postseason.

Sahuarita

Head coach: Jake Price.

Years as school's head coach: Third year, 5-8 record.

2020 record: 0-3.

Also keep an eye on: So QB/CB Andrew Riley (5-9, 128); So. WR Santiago Caudillo (5-9, 138); Sr WR/CB Joseph Loveall (6-0, 160); Sr FB Josiah Montanez (5-6, 160); OL Levi Pannell (5-11, 193).

2021 expectations: A win and a full season after the Coronavirus-shortened 2020.

Thatcher

Head coach: Dan Jones.

Years as school's head coach: Second year.

2020 record: 6-4.

Returning starters, 2020 stats: Jr. WR Brandon Napier (6-1, 180), 142 yards rushing, 2 TDs, 116 yards receiving, 3 TDs, 78 yards passing, 2 TDs; Sr WR/DB Slade Shupe (6-3, 185), 52 yards rushing, TD, 110 yards receiving, 12 KO returns, 284 yards, 3 tackles; Sr WR/DB Nick Puzas (6-0, 150), 108 yards receiving, TD, 5 KO returns, 121 yards, 5 tackles; Sr WR/DB Trevin Gaylord (6-3 190), 120 yards receiving, 6 PRs, 49 yards, 8 yards rushing, 4 tackles; Sr. C Declan Carlton (6-0, 250).

Also keep an eye on: Jr RB Ayden Bingham (5-10, 165), 129 KR and PR yards; Jr OL Scott Ambler (6-3, 295); Sr OL Jacob Mattice (6-4, 310); Jr DL Jackson Conrad (5-8, 240).

Strengths of offense: Returning receiving core. Big, strong line.

Strengths of defense: Returning secondary.

Team's biggest question marks: Find a running back to replace South Region Offensive Player of the Year Mark Wren. Can Thatcher actually throw the ball after running the veer for 20 years?

2021 expectations: Become more comfortable in 3A and make a mark. After dominating the 2A ranks, Thatcher looks to grow and make its mark in 3A. After being moved up a division because of success, Thatcher looks to keep its winning tradition alive.

Region notes: Of Safford's nine first- and second-team 2020 All-South players, four of them were named to both teams after being nominated at multiple positions. None of the two-way award-winners return this fall, with only linebacker Christian Smith and offensive linemen Henry Cortez-Leon and Brenden Gunnnett back. ... Of Sahuarita's 24 total 2019 all-South first-teamers, second-teamers or Honorable Mentions, only OL Levi Pannell is still on the Mustangs' 26-player roster. No Mustangs were named to the 2020 all-region teams after Sahuarita's season was cancelled three games in due to a rise in COVID-19 cases.

CENTRAL REGION

American Leadership Academy - Ironwood

Head coach: Travis Epperson.

Years as school's head coach: 3rd year, 0-17 record.

2020 record: 0-7.

Returning starters, 2020 stats: Sr LB, RB Ben Ballard (5-10, 170), 59 yards receiving, 44 yards rushing, 2 TDs, 15 tackles, sack; Sr LB Shai Wright (5-8, 195), 38 tackles, 3 sacks, 3 fumbles recovered

Also keep an eye on: Sr CB, WR Christian Hardenburg (5-8, 155), 72 yards receiving, 24 yards rushing, 23 tackles.



Coolidge QB/WR Connor Ferguson. (Steven Davis photo/MaxPreps)

Coolidge

Head coach: Rodger Schenks.

Years as school's head coach: Third year, 10-7 record.

2020 record: 3-4.

Returning starters, 2020 stats: Sr WR/DB Auggie Chaing (5-11, 180), 232 yards receiving, 3 TDs, 29 tackles, 3 INTs, 10 KO returns for 325 yards; Sr K/FS Connor Ferguson (5-7, 165), 388 yards receiving, 5 TDs, 182 yards passing, 2 TDs, 14 tackles, 2 INTs, 16 of 17 XPs, 32 KOs, 1,513 yards; Sr RB Comar Jefferies (5-9, 175), 128 yards rushing, 55 tackles, sack, caused fumble, TD; Sr WR Tad Lynch (6-0, 190), 472 yards receiving, 4 TDs, 15 punts, 676 yards; Jr. DB Belclem Namegabe (6-2, 175), 88 yards rushing, 14 tackles; Jr. OL Isiah Newton (5-10, 220); Jr. C Adrian Rameriz (5-10, 220).

Also keep an eye on: Sr RB Josh McEvoy (5-10, 160), 652 rushing yards, 7 TDs; Sr WR/FS Tommy Carberry (5-8, 170), 319 receiving yards, 5 TDs, 288 KO return yards, 16 tackles; Sr CB/WR Isaac Sandoval (6-1, 180), 419 receiving yards, 4 TDs, 301 KO return yards, 43 tackles, sack, fumble recovery; Sr WR/DE Cade Stenson (6-4, 205), 195 yards receiving, 3 TDs, 23 tackles, INT; Sr. LB Victor Aguirre (6-2, 228), 57 tackles, 3 sacks, INT; Sr DE Ryan King (6-2, 220), 37 tackles, sack; Jr K Ty O'Rourke (5-9, 155), 27 of 28 XPs.

Strengths of offense: Players understanding the system and enjoying it.

Strengths of defense: Speed: very fast and relentless to the ball.

Team's biggest question marks: Getting players back in school and playing sports.

2021 expectations: Beat rival Florence. Make the playoffs!!

Eastmark

Head coach: Scooter Molander.

Years as school's head coach: Second year.

2020 record: 2-6.

Returning starters, 2020 stats: Jr QB Gianni Masculino (5-11, 140), 1,071

yards passing, 9 TDs, 77 yards rushing, TD; So. RB/DB Javien Celaya, 664 yards rushing, 8 TDs, 88 yards receiving, 2 TDs, 13 tackles, 4 KO returns, 115 yards; Jr. WR/CB Austin Johnston (6-0, 168), 224 receiving yards, TD, 60 tackles, 5 INTs; Jr. WR/DB Alejandro Campos (5-7, 150), 280 receiving yards, TD, 30 tackles, fumble recovery; So. TE, DL Javery Mayberry (6-3, 200), 88 receiving yards, 2 TDs, 35 tackles, 3 sacks; Jr. RB/LB Gavin Wilson, 129 rushing yards, 43 tackles, 1.5 sacks.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. K Derek Martin (6-1, 150), 6 of 9 XPs, 793 KO yards.

2021 expectations: Building on the Firebirds' victory at Fountain Hills the final game of their inaugural season under two-time state champion head coach Scooter Molander.

Florence

Head coach: Scott Howard.

Years as school's head coach: 7th year, 32-30 record.

2020 record: 2-6.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. RB Josh McEvoy (5-10, 160), 652 rushing yards, 7 TDs; Sr. WR/FS Tommy Carberry (5-8, 170), 319 receiving yards, 5 TDs, 288 KO return yards, 16 tackles; Sr. CB/WR Isaac Sandoval (6-1, 180), 419 receiving yards, 4 TDs, 301 KO return yards, 43 tackles, sack, fumble recovery; Sr. WR/DE Cade Stenson (6-4, 205), 195 yards receiving, 3 TDs, 23 tackles, INT; Sr. LB Victor Aguirre (6-2, 228), 57 tackles, 3 sacks, INT; Sr. DE Ryan King (6-2, 220), 37 tackles, sack.

Team's biggest question marks: The first two seasons the Gophers were in the 3A Central Region, they lost just two games. Since that time, the past four seasons, they are 15-28. What will it take for Scott Howard to bring back his early success to FHS?

San Tan Foothills

Head coach: Mike Carlin.

Years as school's head coach: First year.

2020 record: 1-5.

Returning starters, 2020 stats: Sr. QB/SS Brett Lincoln (6-0, 160), 556 passing yards, 3 TDs, 30 yards rushing, 2 TDs; Jr. LB Beau Cotherman (5-11, 185), 46 tackles, fumble recovery; Sr. SS Anthony Hood (5-9, 145), 37 tackles; Jr. RB Gaven Leach, 640 rushing yards, 7 TDs, 2 tackles.

2021 expectations: The Sabercats rolled undefeated through the 2A Conference's Metro East Region in 2017 with an 8-2 overall record. Since moving up to the 3A Central Region, they are 6-20. San Tan Foothills has a favorable schedule at the right time under new head coach Mike Carlin to enjoy its first winning season in four years.

Region notes: In just its third season, Eastmark returns all 16 players that were named all-region first-team, second-team or Honorable Mention in 2020. Junior first-team wide receivers Kaiden McCarty and Austin Johnston were also Honorable Mentions on the all-3A Conference team. ... Despite Florence's 2-6 finish, the Gophers responsible for 200 of their 229 points scored last fall are back. Florence scored at least 27 points in six of its 2020 games, with returners rushing for nearly 900 yards and 8 touchdowns and catching 14 TDs on more than 1,250 yards receiving. Junior kicker Ty O'Rourke made both field goals he attempted, and only missed one extra-point try out of 28. ... The Gophers will play San Tan Foothills in both teams' region opener Sept. 24--much earlier than the 2020 season finale, which had to be moved from Oct. 23 to Nov. 20 due to a COVID-19 "cluster" of Coronavirus cases reported at the school.

METRO EAST REGION

Arizona College Prep

Head coach: Myron Blueford.

Years as school's head coach: 7th year, 21-37 record.

2020 record: 5-4.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. OL Keaton Messerole (6-2, 275); Jr. OL Marco Palafox (6-1, 255); Jr. WR Jerron Salazar (5-10, 160), 36 rushing yards, 1 TD, 129 receiving yards, 1 TD; Jr. QB Jayden Diaz (6-0, 180), 151 passing yards, 53 rushing yards, 1 TD; Jr. RB Biruk Stephens (5-6, 165), 395 rushing yards, 6 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DL Carter Patten (6-5, 205), .5 sack; Jr. DL Brandon Bowman (6-2, 215), 5 tackles; Jr. DB Roman Goebel (6-0, 160), 15 tackles; Jr. DB Jake Hoel (6-2, 155), 2 tackles; So. DL Cayden Gibson (6-2, 195), 37 tackles, 3 sacks.

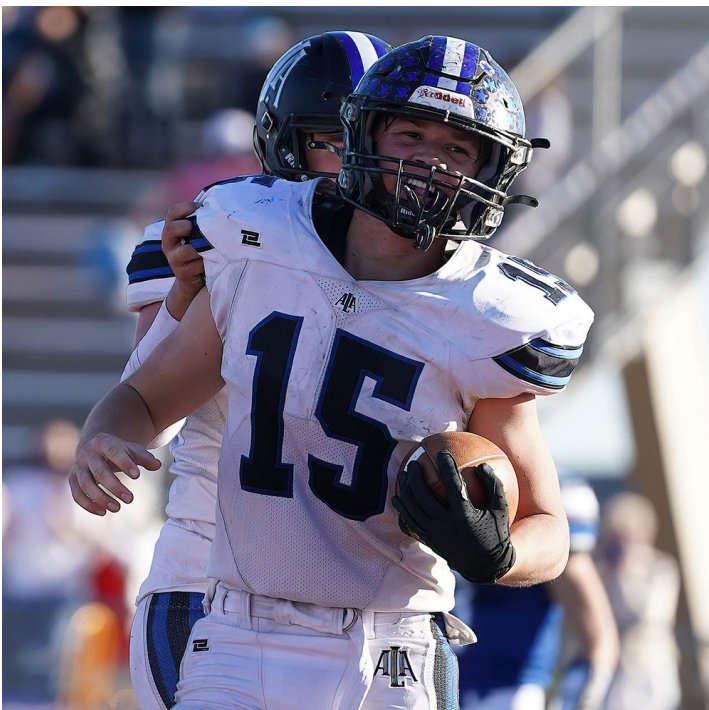
Also keep an eye on: Sr. DB Nathan Chumley (6-0, 195), 7 tackles; Jr.

LB Matt Tran (5-10, 200), 3 tackles; So. WR Jake Busot (6-1, 175), 10 receiving yards.

Strengths of offense: A lot of players that have had varsity time from last year. Increased depth at all positions. Offensive line with four returning starters.

Strengths of defense: More physical up front.

2021 expectations: Make playoffs and give a shot to play for a championship.



ALA-Gilbert North WR/LB Spencer Nielson. (Steven Davis photo/MaxPreps)

American Leadership Academy - Gilbert North

Head coach: Randy Ricedorff.

Years as school's head coach: 5th year, 31-12 record.

2020 record: 9-2.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. HB, Spencer Nielson (5-11, 190), 318 yards rushing, 11 TDs, 347 yards receiving, 6 TDs; Sr. TB, Easton Webster (5-10, 185), 360 yards rushing, 3 TDs, 82 yards receiving, 3 TDs; So. WR Brandon Phelps (6-2, 190), 62 yards rushing, 351 yards receiving, 2 TDs; Jr. WR Luc Asay, (6-1, 195), 208 yards receiving, TD, 18 of 18 PATs; Sr. OL Corbin King (6-1, 240); Sr. OL Maddox Matheny (6-3, 215).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Nielson, LB, 77 tackles, 4 INTs, 1 forced fumble, 1 sack; Phelps, DB, 12 tackles; Asay, LB, P/K, 46 tackles, 3 sacks, INT for TD, 9 touchbacks off 11 kickoffs, 4 punts, 140 yards; King, DT, 66 tackles; Matheny, DE, 51 tackles, 6 sacks; Sr. DE Nash Jobe (6-3, 215), 2 tackles; Jr. DT Bric Jobe (5-11, 205), 23 tackles, sack; Sr. DB Dawson Morris (6-1,), 27 tackles, INT; Jr. DB Adam Damante (6-1, 175), 7 tackles, INT.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. LB R.J. Ashton (5-11, 195), 3 tackles; Sr. LB Logan Brewer (5-11, 195), 30 tackles; Sr. OL Brandon Dixon (6-3, 225), tackle; Damante, 621 yards passing, 4 TDs, 197 yards rushing, 3 TDs.

Strengths of offense: Strong and deep receiving group lead by Bellino, Phelps, and Nielson. Three strong RB's in Webster, Jobe, and Beardall. Team speed may be the fastest ever coached. Adam Damante will be a D-I QB.

Strengths of defense: One year faster and stronger.

Team's biggest question marks: Speed on the defensive front will be an issue.

Coronado

Head coach: Jerry Black.

Years as school's head coach: Second.

2020 record: 0-5.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. RB/WR Manny Cammarillo (5-9, 160), team captain; Sr. DT Aaron Cano (5-11, 214); Sr. FB/LB Keoni Rasiang (5-9,

YUMA CATHOLIC SIGNAL-CALLER STALLWORTH EYES RECORDS, 3A REDEMPTION

By George Werner
AZPreps365.com

Statistics don't lie: No Arizona passer enjoyed a more prolific pandemic-shortened schedule than Yuma Catholic High School quarterback Richard Stallworth.

No other sophomore signal-caller in America last fall could touch Stallworth's 49 passing touchdowns. Only one incoming junior has passed for more yardage nationally.

Heading into the team captain's 3A Conference championship game against Snowflake High School, Stallworth, undefeated in his first 10 games behind center on the Shamrocks varsity squad, held Arizona's highest quarterback rating.

On a late first-quarter fourth down on Dec. 12, all of those super stats became secondary to the status of Stallworth's collarbone, after all 280 pounds of Snowflake lineman Tony Muñoz came crashing down on it.

"When I heard it snap, the first thing that popped in my head was, 'You've got to be kidding me. This cannot be happening right now!'" said Stallworth, who could only support his teammates on the sidelines with his head coach and father, Rhett, for the final three quarters. "It was tearing me apart. It was terrible."

Behind Stallworth's backup, classmate and cousin Logan Rush, the Shamrocks mustered just six completions for 47 yards and 14 points—not enough to complete their quest for their first 3A title. Yuma Catholic won three of Arizona's five Division V titles between 2011 and 2015.

So Stallworth's injury "really set us back," said Rhett Stallworth, who also coaches, besides his son and Rush, another son, four other nephews, and a cousin in the program. "Our goal is always to win a state title. Anything less is very disappointing."

Subsequently, Richard's collarbone became the leading question mark of the offseason for the Yuma Catholic program. The answer started in the weight room, with exercises designed to improve Richard's speed as well as add muscle to his 210-pound frame.

"Last year, I was slow," he said. "Knowing that I broke my collarbone in a game that really counted just made me work a lot harder in the weight room."

Helping him along was a return to team-building camps, workouts and 7-on-7 matchups against teams like Centennial, Higley and Ironwood Ridge — opportunities all lost in the summer of 2020 to the spread of the novel Coronavirus.

"[Richard] grew during that time as far as maturity and being able to read defenses better," Rhett said. "Our core group of skill type kids did a great job in the offseason of working on all the little technical things, like route running and hand position and so on. They will be more precise and more consistent going into this year."

But Richard's strongest asset, besides being a returning team captain, may be family. Rhett is also Richard's principal. Rush, along with another cousin, defensive end Rhett Vance, is in Richard's graduating class — as is brother Luke, a wide receiver born less than two hours after Richard. Senior cousin Austin Rush is one of just two returning Arizona wideouts to have amassed over 1,000 yards receiving last season.

"It takes a lot to trust a sophomore to lead a team through the regular season," Richard said. "All the team's returners, my dad, and other coaches showed me I've got to forget [the injury]."

Heading into his Aug. 27 opener at SLAM! Academy in Henderson, Nev., Richard said he is totally healed.

"I'm excited to show that we can play anyone," he added. "I can't wait to play in Vegas the first game out of the gate. I feel like I am a lot better than I was last year."

With his closest competition, Mesquite High School graduate Ty Thompson, now quarterbacking at the University of Oregon, Stallworth could even envision, with a "breakout junior and senior year," challenging the 3A state high school season and career passing records held by former Shamrock Gage Reese.

Statistically, he is on pace. Realistically, with two more games restored — but by no means assured, thanks to the continued resurgence of COVID-19 variants — to his final two falls, Rhett reminds his son and teammates constantly of the common lesson learned from their Dec. 12 fall: Don't take anything for granted.

"Our kids that return understand that we have to play each and every play like it is our last," he said. "Because it could be."



Despite playing only eight regular season games due to the pandemic and getting knocked out early from the 3A state championship in 2020, Stallworth still tied for 10th all-time for a single season with his 49 touchdown passes. (Chris Stanley photo/MaxPreps)

175); So. T Cameron Crowley (6-1, 294); Sr. CB/WR Doronta Monterro (6-1, 155); TE Tashaun Monterro (5-11, 205); Sr. LB/P Miguel Cisneros (5-10, 170).

2021 expectations: The Dons are looking to win their first game since Sept. 28, 2018, when they beat Arizona College Prep 40-23 at home.

Fountain Hills

Head coach: Jimmy Curtis.

Years as school's head coach: First

2020 record: 2-3.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr WR Jake Barnard (5-10, 185), 156 yards receiving, 2 TDs; Sr WR Savion Boone (6-1, 170), 404 yards receiving, 8 TDs; Sr OL J.T. Despain (6-0, 225), 11 tackles; Sr OL Hector Leon (6-3, 280), 2 tackles; Sr FB Caden Lupien (6-0, 175), 91 yards rushing.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. LB Marcus Bentley (5-7, 165), tackle; Sr DE Calvin Lupien (6-0, 190), 28 tackles, sack; Sr DE Alex Rieck (6-4, 200), 8 tackles; Jr DT Gavin Furious (5-6, 160), ; Jr S Ryan Dyhrkopp (5-10, 185), 22 tackles, INT, 2 caused fumbles, 2 fumble recoveries; Sr NT Damian Beckman (5-10, 230).

Also keep an eye on: Sr. K Zach Munzinger (5-9, 175), XP.

Strengths of offense: Our biggest strength will be our receiving core that has 3 out of 4 starters returning from last year. Our depth at O-line will also determine the majority of our success.

Strengths of defense: The front seven will play a big role this year stopping the run. Specifically, two seniors return at defensive end to control the front.

Team's biggest question mark(s): The team is currently going through a head coach change and a culture change. "We were most unsure about who will take the job at QB but Spencer Nelson, a junior, has taken the starting job and is stepping into the role as a leader better than expected."

2021 expectations: Win the region: "Our contest against Payson will be on Thursday, Sept. 16. Our game against Payson is a huge rivalry, 'The Battle of the Beeline,'" which Payson won last year."



Valley Christian MLB/FB Justin Regehr. (Steven Chadwick photo/MaxPreps)

Valley Christian

Head coach: Jake Petersen.

Years as school's head coach/record: Second year, 6-3

2020 record: 6-3.

Returning starters, 2020 stats: Sr RB/LB Kaden Majercak (5-8, 195), 734 rushing yards, 7 TDs, 236 yards receiving, TD, 15 tackles, sack; Sr RB/LB Justin Regehr, 104 tackles, 5 sacks, 98 yards receiving, TD, 86 yards rushing, TD; Sr SS/WR Justin Erickson (5-8, 175), 54 tackles; Sr WR/FS Austyn Gerard (5-10, 170), 222 receiving yards, 6 TDs, 5 tackles; Sr OT/DE Maddox Putnicki (6-5, 255), 5 tackles; Sr Jacob Booth (6-3, 280), 8

tackles, safety; Jr OL Silas Venberg (6-0, 220), 2 tackles; Sr DE Ben Yarbrough (6-5, 225).

Also keep an eye on: Sr K Dominic Zvada (6-2, 155), 27 of 32 XPs, 2,313 KO yards.

2021 expectations: Winning a first-round 3A tournament game. Although the Trojans are 14-4 since 2018, they have not broken through with a postseason win since winning the Metro East Region three seasons ago.

Region notes: Valley Christian returns six all-Metro East Region first-team players, more than any other school. ... Coronado returns two all-region second-teamers: senior punter Miguel Cisneros and team captain Manny Cammarillo, named to the team as tight end "Manuel C."

METRO WEST REGION

Bourgade Catholic

Head coach: Marcel Lopez.

Years as school's head coach: 5th year, 19-19 record.

2020 record: 4-5.

Returning starters, 2020 stats: Sr. OL/DE Tristan Sweiss (6-1, 220), 5 tackles, .5 sack; Sr. DT Patrick Viscaina (6-3, 305), 5 tackles.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. WR/S Gabriel Laborin (6-1,168), 24 tackles, INT, fumble recovery; Sr. WR/DB Blake Hull (5-9, 155), 24 yards receiving, 5 tackles, 4 INTs; So. WR/OLB Maxon McDowell (6-0, 182), 101 yards receiving, 3 TDs, 28 tackles, 3 sacks; So. QB Edison Martinez (5-10, 165), 17 yards passing, 10 yards rushing; Jr. OL/DL Sergio Zazueta (5-10, 235).

Strengths of offense: Up front, the line will be big and physical, creating running lanes for the Golden Eagles' young RBs. Two young QBs, battling all summer to be the starter, add different elements to the offense that will allow Bourgade to be dynamic.

Strengths of defense: Secondary will be fast and allow a variety of coverages against the pass. Solid depth that enables a solid rotation of defensive players.

Team's biggest question marks: Lost top 3 RBs and top 4 WRs to graduation and will start a very young group of skill position players. This team will use a lot of underclassmen on both sides of the ball. How fast they pick up the scheme and how physical they play will have a lot to do with the team's success.

2021 expectations: We hope that the difficult front half of our schedule will prepare us for region play and playoffs.

Cortez

Head coach: Daniel Hopper.

Years as school's head coach: First year.

2020 record: 0-4.

Also keep an eye on: Sr RB/LB Cameron Osorio (5-8, 200), 16 rushing yards, 3 tackles, sack; Sr ATH/DB Jacob Aldridge, 52 passing yards, 4 tackles; Jr RB/LB Xavier Salazar, 30 rushing yards, 2 tackles; So. OL/DL Andrew Leyva (5-11, 232).

2021 expectations: The Colts are looking to win their first game since a 62-0 win at Joy Christian School Sept. 28, 2016.

Dysart

Head coach: John Ganados.

Years as school's head coach: 5th year, 15-26 record.

2020 record: 3-4.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. RB Badawy Eisa (5-9, 205), 9 yards rushing, TD; Sr. QB/RB Tryston Oliver (5-10, 170), 200 yards rushing, 3 TDs; Sr. K Azael Garduno (5-9, 180), 23 of 24 XPs, 5 punts, 155 yards; So. OL Xavier Silvas (6-0, 200), 17 tackles, 60-yard fumble recovery for TD; Sr. OL James Massey (5-10, 180), 2 tackles; Jr. OL Julian Laborin (6-3, 245).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DL Austin Mather (5-11, 185), 15 tackles; Sr. DL Seth Knouff (5-11, 180), 2 tackles; Jr. DB Michael Gardea (5-7, 145), 11 tackles, sack; Jr. LB Izaiah Carrion (5-10, 165), 15 tackles; So. DB Philip Hernandez (5-11, 170), 16 tackles, 2 INTs, fumble recovery.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. LB Chas Pottle (5-9, 155), tackle; Jr. QB Ismael Gamez and Jr. WR Nathan Reyes Lopez.

Team strengths: Great coaching staff. Young class of QB with great work ethic. Returning two of our best and youngest offensive linemen. We have a young class of skilled position players who are faster and smarter

than we have been in the past. Should make for great offensive football lead by our fast-paced offensive coordinator.

Team's biggest question marks: We'll be losing our starting senior quarterback. So the challenge is to find our next starter. With three young, smart upcoming QBs, we'll have to see and find the right one that will fit into our offense.

2021 expectations: Win our home opener and beat our rivals. Make it to the postseason. End with a winning record.

Odyssey Institute

Head coach: Sean Ellicott.

Years as school's head coach: First year.

2019 record: 7-3.

Also keep an eye on: Jr LB/FB Liam Henry (5-10, 155), 56 rushing yards, 15 tackles, sack, fumble recovery, 2 KO returns, 45 yards; Sr RB/LB Osiris Gonzales (5-10, 160), 45 tackles, 3 sacks, 2 caused fumbles.

Team's biggest question marks: How will the Minotaur respond with virtually all their playmakers graduated after a lost fall to COVID-19?

More about the program: Did not play in 2020 due to the pandemic.

Paradise Honors

Head coach: Josh Goodloe.

Years as school's head coach: Second year.

2020 record: 2-3.

Returning starters, 2020 stats: Sr. RB/LB Devin Tobin (5-10, 205), 238 yards rushing, TD, 180 yards receiving, 3 TDs, 24 tackles, 1.5 sacks, INT; So. WR/CB Josh Morales (6-1, 170), 147 yards, 3 TDs, tackle; Jr. TE/LB Hank Stabler (6-1, 205), 28 tackles, 2 sacks, fumble recovery; So. WR/CB Isaiah Thomas (5-7, 145), 25 yards receiving, TD, 9 tackles; Jr. WR/DB Mikey Young (6-2 165), 12 yards receiving, tackle; So. DE Jalen Cox (6-3, 210), 10 tackles; Jr. OLB Caden Shipley (6-1, 165), 26 tackles, 9 sacks, fumble recovery; Sr. DB Ian Sjolander (6-1, 180), 18 tackles, INT, fumble recovery, .5 sack; So. LB/RB Andrew Paredes (5-7, 180), 11 tackles; Jr. LG Devin McCrea (6-2, 250), Jr. C Josh Trevillan (6-0, 210), Jr. RT Andrew Domville (6-2, 225).

Also keep an eye on: So. DB/WR Jaiden Lailason (5-7, 145), ; So. OLB Anthony Osborn (6-0, 165), ; So. ATH Logan Pruett (6-1, 165)

Strengths of offense: Returning four guys who started or received quality minutes last season. Devin Tobin overcoming his Oakland, Calif., origins, transferring, then returning to running back, where he's at today. In the second year running this particular offensive system, the kids "have an understanding of what we're doing."

Strengths of defense: Returning players at key positions. Scheme this year allows the players to fly around and make plays. Returning linebackers and back end of the defense

Team's biggest question marks: Depth. Defensive line.

2021 expectations: Win the region. Develop the lower levels to start creating depth. Each year, the Odyssey Institute and Paradise Honors play for the prize trophy. This is a rivalry each year that both sides look forward to winning.

Phoenix Christian

Head coach: Dan Fort.

Years as school's head coach: First year.

2020 record: 6-4.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Jr. WR Angel Gutierrez (5-9, 160), 300 offensive yards; Sr. TE Jose Herrera (5-11, 240), 290 yards receiving; Jr. OL Lucas Ceton (6-2, 220); Sr. OL Stanford Pete (6-0, 250); Sr. WR Daniel Becerra (5-7, 160).

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Jr. S Angel Gutierrez (5-9, 160), ; Sr. LB Jose Herrera (5-11, 240), 41 tackles; Jr. DL Jerahmia Smith (6-2, 280), 37 tackles, 3.5 sacks; Sr. DL Edgar Sainz (5-9, 190), 24 tackles; Jr. OLB Cam'Ryn Hatter (5-10, 185), 28 tackles, INT; Sr. OL Stanford Pete (6-0, 250).

Strengths of offense: Ability to spread the field and the distribution – we were able to install a good portion of the offense this spring and we have the ability to take advantage of our returning players' abilities to keep a defense honest. Receivers – we have a strong group of receivers who have been well trained.

Strengths of defense: Familiarity with the scheme – Even though we only have 6 returning starters, most of the 2021 starters have played in our defensive system for several years. That should help our understand-

ing and execution on defense. Defensive Line – several players from last year's team return that are impact players.

Team's biggest question marks: With 3 starters from the offensive line gone and losing Player of the Year Howard Russell to graduation, the biggest question mark is, "Where will the offense come from?" We are hopeful that young players will step up and our ability to spread the touches around will replace the production of Russell.

2021 expectations: We want to compete and find our rhythm. Like any team, we hope to compete for a state championship, but play one play at a time.

Region notes: The Odyssey Institute went down in the history July 16, 2020 as the first Phoenix school to cancel all fall 2020 sports due to COVID-19. ... Cortez, in its first year in 3A, managed to play two freedom and two region games around virus shutdowns. But the Colts failed to score a point in those contests, the conference's only active team to do so.

EAST REGION

Blue Ridge

Head coach: Jeremy Hathcock.

Years as school's head coach: First year, 154-86 record overall.

2020 record: 5-3 record.

Returning starters, 2020 stats: Sr, C, Andy Hoffmeyer (6-1, 215); Sr, LB, Ryan Cox (6-4, 210); Jr, LB/RB Franko Harris (5-10, 185), 176 yards rushing, TD, 16 yards receiving, 43 tackles, sack; Sr, C/WR, Cody Wallace (5-11, 185), 22 tackles, INT; Jr, RB/S, Seth Slaught-ter (5-11, 170), 186 yards rushing, TD, 54 yards receiving, 20 tackles, sack; Sr, OT, Mykael Lupe (6-3, 260); Sr, OG/NG, Royer Gonzalez (5-8 270), 19 tackles; Sr, LB/FB, Christian Roman (5-9 200), 53 tackles, 2 sacks

Also keep an eye on: Sr, SB/DB, Hunter Martinez (5-6).

Strengths of offense: Experienced line.

Strengths of defense: Senior Hershall Gregg, LB and OG, is an amazing worker, two-sport athlete. [H]e is a cowboy and just super tough. He is a young Native American man who is a leader not only at school but in the community.

Team's biggest question marks: Only one experienced player back among wide receivers and in secondary. Clear date for Stewart transfer.

2021 expectations: We're going to be the best version of who we could be every moment...We have about 60 kids in the program. True varsity, we have about 25 guys who are not playing JV. To be honest, it'll be about 35, but we're sending about 10 of the kids down before the season opener...The rest, the freshmen, go to Jim Rice, our frosh coach.



Phoenix Christian TE/LB/K Joe Herrera. (Steve Paynter photo/MaxPreps)

He just overcame cancer, and his family is going through it right now as well. He is a warrior...We're definitely not rebuilding with Cael Stewart if he gets cleared. I think Cael's the best quarterback I've ever coached. He understands our system, he's a fast learner...Hunter comes in and gives us a different style at QB. He trained with Dan Manucci down in the Valley. He's not 6-4, he can't throw the ball 65, 70 yards, but he can run and throw on the run. He's a solid 3A kid...Blue Ridge has more state championships than any [football] program in Arizona history, to my knowledge, and the second-most Advanced Placement offerings, per student, in the state. When it comes to different kinds of population, we're very diverse...When we played, demographically, we were different: We had a 9 percent poverty rate, now it's a 40 percent poverty rate, so the divide's a little bigger. Nothing's going to shock them, they're ready for life. They've been through it all and seen it all. They're more from single families. They need a father figure, someone who could love them like a father. I would say we probably have the best support ever with Superintendent Michael Wright.

Payson

Head coach: Bryan Burke.

Years as school's head coach: 3rd year, 14-14 record.

2020 record: 2-5.

Returning starters, 2020 stats: Sr LB/FB Travis Christianson (6-1, 185), 179 yards rushing, TD, 53 tackles, 2 sacks; Sr WR/DB Connor Hatch (6-1, 155), 129 receiving yards, TD, 21 tackles; Jr WR/DB Dexter Waterman (6-0, 152), 78 rushing yards, TD, 49 passing yards, 28 receiving yards, 26 tackles, INT for TD; Jr RB/LB Caleb Marinelli (5-8, 150), 89 rushing yards, TD, tackle; Jr TE/DE Devonte Johnson (6-1, 180), 118 receiving yards, 2 TDs, 4 tackles.

2021 expectations: Improve on a 2-2 region record, against four Metro East schools, from a delayed, inside-out 2020 season in which rivals Blue Ridge, Snowflake and Show Low only counted as Freedom games.

Round Valley

Head coach: Brad Baca.

Years as school's head coach: First year; offensive coordinator previous 10 seasons.

2020 record: 7-3.

Returning starters on offense: Sr. RB/FS Seth Wiltbank (5-11, 170); Sr. C/DT Jadon Cisco (6-2, 265); Sr. WR/CB Jovan Ortiz (6-0, 170); Sr. WR/CB Rowdy Rivera (6-0, 160); Sr. OT Brandon Strickland and Jr. OT Keanu Clark, who has started every game on the OL since he was a freshman. We had never started a freshman on the OL, but he was special and continues to be special as he never misses work outs and is always an example to the team with his work ethic and leadership.

Returning starters on defense: Jr. OLB Morgan Orona, Jr.; So. DE Treyson Merrill and Wiltbank.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. OL/DL Gannon Erhart (5-8, 165); Sr. WR/DB Gage Slade (5-11, 160); Sr. OG/DL Kaden Sloane, Sr. WR/DB Stockton Brown and Sr. Josh Davis; Jr. WR/DB Dallan Walker, Jr. OL/DL Armando Garcia, Jr. OL/LB Kyler Rominger, Jr. K Kevin Flores and Jr. Riley Harlan; sophomores Gauge Baker, Brody Zeigler, Ryker Marble, Brett Jordan and Noah Dana.

Strengths of offense: Strong up front with three returning linemen in OT Keanu Clark, OT Brandon Strickland and C Jadon Cisco. Elks also have speed at the skill positions and some players who can take a game over in Seth Wiltbank, Jovan Ortiz and Rowdy Rivera.

Strengths of defense: We will also be very tough up front on the DL. With Keanu Clark, Trey Merrill and Jadon Cisco we will be tough in the trenches. Our secondary will also be a strength as we return Wiltbank, Ortiz and Rivera.

Team's biggest question marks: Just how our team would come together and respond to the adversity of losing one of the greatest coaches in Arizona [Marcus Bell] the last several years. Our kids have really started coming together as a team and that will continue as we head to camp and start the season.

2021 expectations: Stay the same: always compete and be physical. Win the state championship. We aren't the biggest team, but our kids always play with heart and we expect that to continue.

More about the program: Round Valley has some of the best fans in the state, and when the Dome is full, it is the best place to watch high school football. Rivalry with St. Johns is one of the oldest in the state, and it is fun to play them every year.

Show Low

Head coach: Carlo Hernandez.

Years as school's head coach: First year.

2020 record: 1-5.

Returning starters, 2020 stats: Sr. QB/DB/P Colton Yeager (6-1, 150), 322 passing yards, TD, 3 rushing TDs, 8 punts, 233 yards, 30 tackles; Sr. RB/DB Quinton Maxwell (6-1, 210), 199 yards rushing, 2 TDs, 24 tackles; Jr. RB/DB Ryan Kishbaugh (5-8, 145), 109 yards rushing, 2 TDs; Sr. OL/LB Cooper Ervien (5-6, 190), 39 tackles, sack.

2021 expectations: Beating more than just an out-of-region Payson team, which is all the Cougars managed against a six-game 2020 schedule, and making the postseason under a new coach.

Snowflake

Head coach: Kay Solomon.

Years as school's head coach: Seventh year, 56-14 record.

2020 record: 11-1.

Returning starters, 2020 stats: Sr QB Caden Cantrell (6-2, 210), 1,811 yards passing, 14 TDs, 319 yards rushing, 3 TDs; Sr WR Noah Baum (6-0, 190), 678 yards receiving, 7 TDs; Jr. DT/OL Nathan Popovich (6-1, 260), 4 tackles, .5 sack; Sr DB Kaiden Brewer (6-1, 160), 2 tackles; Jr. DL Tony Munoz (6-5, 285), 35 tackles, 4 sacks; Jr. Lance Christensen (6-0, 185), 24 tackles, forced fumble; Sr. OL Clayton Smith (6-4, 265); Sr RB Camden Brimhall (5-9, 175), 469 yards rushing, 10 TDs, "undersized but never outworked."

Also keep an eye on: Jr. RB/LB J.J. Lerma (5-9, 160), 106 yards rushing, 5 tackles; Jr. LB/DB Bradden Lewis (6-0, 180), 59 yards rushing, TD; Jr. TE/DL Tyler Clare (6-4, 220), 18 yards receiving, TD; Jr. OL/LB Slade Fish (6-0, 180); Sr. K/P Sam Crockett (5-8, 165), 41 of 44 XPs, 9 of 16 FGs (long 42 yards), 3,050 KO yards and already holds most or all of the kicking records at Snowflake High School.

Strengths of offense: Many younger players returning with some varsity experience from last season. Offensive coordinator Trevor Reddick, a Snowflake grad, is a young coach with a passion for the game, who juggles a busy work schedule to keep coaching and help give back to our program, school and community.

Strengths of defense: Will have either size or speed options in defensive front schemes. Not many returning starters, but some good varsity experience in the junior and senior classes.

2021 expectations: Repeat as 3A champs. Finish at or near the top of the 3A Conference rankings. Win our region. I believe the East will be the toughest 3A region from top to bottom. The hiring of notable coaches at Blue Ridge and Show Low will undoubtedly add to the intrigue of 3A football, especially in our region.

Winslow

Head coach: Brandon Guzman.

Years as school's head coach: 6th year, 31-24 record.

2020 record: 1-4.

Returning starters, 2020 stats: Sr FB Chris Arellano (5-10, 200), 27 yards rushing, 11 yards receiving, 10 tackles, sack; Sr CB/WR Izaiah Cordova (5-6, 130), ; Sr OG Gage Thomas (5-8, 205), 19 tackles, sack; Sr OG/DT Brenden Padilla (5-10, 215), 6 tackles; Sr QB/SS Jace Lyons (6-1, 165), 629 yards passing, 4 TDs, 25 yards rushing, 15 tackles, INT.

Team's biggest question marks: Building depth.

2021 expectations: Compete for a region championship. Make a playoff run!

Region Notes: Payson is back in its natural East Region a year after COVID-19 forced the Longhorns to delay their season until Oct. 2 and play in the Metro East Region. They managed to finish their seven-game schedule ranked 19th in 3A. ... Show Low, one of Payson's three rivals that were shifted last fall into freedom opponents, played an even shorter, less successful 2020 in which the Longhorns were their only win. Despite their offensive numbers last fall, Cougars QB Colton Yeager and RB Quinton Maxwell, both seniors, were named first team all-region on defense.

WEST REGION

Chino Valley

Head coach: Michael Gilpin.

Years as school's head coach: Second year.

2020 record: 2-5.

Returning starters, 2020 stats: Sr. QB Jayden Smith (5-10, 170), 984 yards passing, 8 TDs, 243 yards rushing, 2 TDs; Jr. RB/LB Harrison Setter (5-10, 180), 439 yards rushing, 4 TDs, 173 yards receiving, 6 tackles, sack; Sr. TE/DE Dakota McMains (6-3, 205), 207 yards receiving, 2 TDs, 27 tackles, 3 sacks; Sr. OLB Demitre Insalaco (6-0, 195), 40 tackles, INT, 2 punts, 70 yards; Sr. C/DT Isiah Kimmerle (5-9, 240), 2 tackles, sack; Sr. DB Kaden Unzueta (5-6, 145), 31 tackles, INT, fumble recovery; Jr. TE/LB Kaden Wagner (6-3, 235), 71 yards rushing, TD, 45 tackles, 2 fumble recoveries; Jr. OL/DL Andres Trajillo (6-0, 170), 3 tackles.

2021 expectations: To win more than the one region game the Cougars did in 2020 and contend for the region title, which should be more reasonable now that Chino is not forced to play Metro West Region opponents, as it was last fall.



Kingman WR/S Malakai Bell. (Mark Jones photo/MaxPreps)

Kingman

Head coach: Russ Stryker.

Years as school's head coach: 3rd year, 6-11 record.

2020 record: 2-4.

Returning starters, 2020 stats: Sr. QB/DB Garrett Stryker (6-2, 175), 488 yards passing, 4 TDs, 172 yards rushing, 4 TDs, 71 yards receiving, 2 TDs, 12 tackles, INT; Sr. RB/LB Nick Garcia, 596 yards rushing, 3 TDs, 9 tackles, sack; Sr. RB/DB Malakai Bell (5-10, 160), 373 yards rushing, 3 TDs, 238 yards receiving, 2 TDs, 50 yards passing, 2 TDs, 28 tackles, 2 fumble recoveries, INT; Sr. WR/CB/K Alejandro Canales (5-9, 155), 202 yards receiving, 4 TDs, 25 tackles, 2 INTs; Sr. OL/DL Joey Benson (5-7, 260), 22 tackles, sack, fumble recovery; Sr. FB/LB Ray Carter (5-8, 155), 18 tackles, 71 yards rushing, 2 TDs, 96 yards receiving; Sr. OL/DL Cristo Velasquez (6-0, 260), 10 tackles, sack, caused fumble; Jr. DT Alex Sawyer (5-9, 230), 22 tackles, 2.5 sacks.

Team's biggest question mark(s): With Chino Valley back and the Bulldogs' only 2020 region win, Cortez High School, gone from the 3A West, can Kingman handle the Cougars or former 4A school Mohave and avoid the West Region cellar?

Mohave

Head coach: Rudy Olvera.

Years as school's head coach: First year.

2020 record: 0-7 (4A Grand Canyon Region).

Returning starters: Sr. TE Raul Martinez (6-1, 240); Sr. WR/DB Alan Haczgaba (6-3, 185); Sr. RB Fabian Ronquillo (5-8, 165); Sr. RB Krispin Stewart (5-6, 140); Sr. QB Dylan Erickson (5-10, 160); Sr. DL Angel Corona (6-0, 265); Jr. OG/LB Adan Soto-Ortiz (5-10, 215); Jr. WR Preston Whelan (5-10, 180); Jr. WR/DB Isaac Robles (5-6, 145); So. RB/LB Jonathan Williams (6-1, 195), a very special young man with tons of upside who could be the best player ever to come out of Mohave.

Strengths of offense: Talent at QB.

Strengths of defense: A young group led by a couple of seasoned seniors.

Team's biggest question marks: Can the Thunderbirds win against 3A schools after going 9-32 the past five years in the 4A Conference?

River Valley

Head coach: Jonathan Clark.

Years as school's head coach: 4th year, 17-12 record.

2020 record: 5-4.

Returning starters, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Gage Solano (5-11, 165), 188 yards receiving, 2 TDs; Sr. LT Jalen Alonzo (5-11, 220), 3 tackles; Sr. C Andrew Cervantes (5-9, 230), 13 tackles, sack; Sr. RT Jesus Perez (5-9, 180), tackle; Sr. WR/SS Ryan Matteson (5-11, 175), 36 yards receiving, TD, 37 yards rushing; So. WR/FS Jacob Boice (6-0 170), 84 yards receiving, 51 tackles, sack, 4 INTs, fumble recovery; Jr. QB Gavin Hogencamp (6-0, 165), 35 yards passing, 89 yards receiving, 10 tackles, fumble recovery; Sr. LB Jeremy Julius (6-2, 190), 50 tackles, INT, sack, FG block; Sr. LB Mario Meza (5-10, 190), 44 tackles, sack, fumble recovery; Sr. LB Zach Torres (5-10, 170), 40 tackles, 2 sacks, fumble recovery; Sr. TE/DE Michael Dulin (6-2, 230), 157 yards receiving, TD, 26 tackles, 4 sacks, INT for TD, fumble recovery: "He has had one of the toughest lives I have ever witnessed, yet he is always smiling, the funniest guy in the room. He is a servant of others, one of our hardest workers, and a leader of others. He is a huge inspiration to me!"

Also keep an eye on: Jr. RB/LB Tanner Wood (5-9, 190), 2 tackles, fumble recovery.

Strengths of offense: Speed. Knowledge of offense.

Strengths of defense: Speed.

2021 expectations: Compete for a region title. Make the postseason.

Wickenburg

Head coach: Mike Mitchell.

Years as school's head coach: 4th year, 19-11 record.

2020 record: 7-4.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. LT Justin Lara (6-2, 190), 2 tackles; Sr. WR Kaden Conway (6-1, 175), 110 yards receiving, TD; So. LG Carson Hone (5-8, 200), 6 tackles; Sr. C/NG Michael Bowie (5-9, 200), 18 tackles; Jr. WR Eleazar Dominguez (5-10, 178), 76 yards receiving, TD, 9-11 XPs; Sr. FB Kade Roberts (5-10, 183), 155 yards rushing, TD, 34 yards receiving, TD; Sr. TB Korbey Dowdy (5-11, 189), 100 yards rushing, TD, 41 yards receiving, 2 TDs; Sr. QB Calogero DiCamillo (6-0, 180), 602 yards passing, 5 TDs, 77 yards rushing, 5 TDs, 58 yards receiving.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. C Brayden Hershkowitz (5-6, 159), 25 tackles, INT; Sr. DE Logan Jones (6-0, 185), 41 tackles, fumble recovery; Roberts, DT, 56 tackles, sack, fumble caused; Dowdy, LB, 22 tackles, INT, 2 punts for 98 yards; Conway, FS, 40 tackles, 3 INTs, fumble recovery; Dominguez, CB, 4 tackles, fumble recovery, 8 punts for 223 yards; DiCamillo, OLB, 64 tackles, 2 INTs, sack.

Also keep an eye on: So. RB/OLB Klayton Smid (5-8, 170), 21 tackles; Sr. TE/LB Javier Galaz (5-11, 180), 7 yards rushing; Jr. OL/DL Rylan Hopkins (6-0, 200); Jr. OL/DE Trystan Cade (6-2, 210); Jr. WR/DB Luke Drescher (5-11, 170); Sr. OL/DL Carlos Lopez (6-0, 240).

Team strengths: A lot of returning players on both sides of the ball. Players becoming familiar with a system that has stabilized. Good skill players and three returning linemen on offense.

Team's biggest question marks: The major loss was Bryson Alder who

was one of the top performers in the entire state last season. Bryson turned down scholarship offers to pursue his career in rodeo in college. Some other key losses include LB Clay Watson and DE/OL Jett Uldrickson. The other senior who will be missed is Ben Balow, a starter on offense and defense.

2021 expectations: The Wranglers are coming off the unusual COVID-19 season with the first playoff win in 12 years. They had a big first-round win over Blue Ridge in the state playoffs in 2020. The positive is the Wranglers only lose four seniors off that squad and return everyone else. They have eight returners on offense who saw a lot of action last year and eight returning on defense. The Wranglers have a few transfers from the State of Washington, Oregon and Wyoming who are untested but give a feeling of optimism to the Wrangler program.

Yuma Catholic

Head coach: Rhett Stallworth.

Years as school's head coach: 12th year, 131-23 record.

2020 record: 11-1.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr., WR Austin Rush (5-10, 170), 1,033 yards receiving, 16 TDs; Sr. WR Mario Martinez (6-0, 175), 701 yards receiving, 11 TDs; Jr. OL Seth Stoner (5-11, 225), ; Sr., OL Jace Barksdale (6-4, 220); Sr., RB Devon Black (5-9, 170), 546 yards rushing, 7 TDs, 584 yards receiving, 6 TDs; Sr. WR Austin Priest (5-11, 170), 267 yards receiving, 5 TDs.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. LB Dez Esquivel (5-6, 160), 113 tackles, 2 INTs, 1 fumble recovery, .5 sack; Sr. LB Zach Castaneda (5-9, 200), 51 tackles, 1.5 sacks, 2 fumbles caused, 1 recovery; Jr. LB Austin Johnson (6-1, 185); Jr. DL Lorenzo Duran (5-10, 200), ; Martinez, DB, 65 tackles, 3 INTs; Priest, DB, 35 tackles, 3 INTs; Rush, DB, 42 tackles, sack, 4 INTs.

Also keep an eye on: Jr., QB Richard Stallworth (6-2, 210), 3,803 yards passing, 49 TDs, 10 INTs, 34 yards rushing, 5 TDs. Richard has had a very strong year in the weight room. He has worked hard to improve his speed and agility.

Strengths of offense: Great pass game: Two strengths of our offense [are] our ability to throw the football and our ability to run multiple formations. Many receivers can get the job done: Austin Rush, Mario Martinez, and the rest of the returning receivers performing at a higher level will help take pressure off of Richard. Our offensive line is growing daily and really responding well to our new offensive line coach. In addition, I believe we have a couple of backs that will be able to establish the run a little better to keep other teams honest on defense.

Strengths of defense: We are always concerned about our defensive units. We do believe they will be better this year than they were last year. Much improved. Good team speed.

Team's biggest question marks: Putting together a defensive line. Not a lot of linemen in the program. We will also have to be more physical at the line of scrimmage.

2021 expectations: Our goal is to get better each and every day and do what it takes for the team to win...There will be a lot of stuff that we will be able to do as a team to grow. We were not able to go to camp last year...Our biggest expectation is, on an individual basis, for each and every player to become a better version of themselves every day. When they can do that, the wins come as well.

Region notes: Chino Valley junior linemen Kaden Wagner and Andres Trajillo were the only returning Cougars from the 2020 All-Metro West Region first team. ... Kingman senior Alejandro Canales pulled off the rare feat in 2020 of being named to the all-West Region teams at four different positions: defensive back, wide receiver, kickoff returner and placekicker.



Yuma Catholic WR Austin Rush. (Chris Stanley photo/MaxPreps)

2A CONFERENCE FOOTBALL PRESEASON RANKINGS



*Santa Cruz Valley always has deep-rooted talent to draw from, but will have to defend its 2A crown with a new coach and big holes to fill on defense.
(Chris Stanley photo/MaxPreps)*

By Jose Garcia
AZPreps365.com

1. BENSON: This is the year. Coach Chris Determan hears it almost every day from every corner in Benson. That's what happens when you return every starter from a state runner-up squad. There's pressure, but Determan welcomes it. Entering his 19th year as Benson's coach, Determan and his program are seeking their first AIA title. Benson is 0-for-4 in AIA state championship appearances. But talent and experience alone won't bring home the big prize. "You need some good luck as well," Determan said. Bad luck struck in last year's 2A title tilt when Benson's primary workhorse, Devin Bowling, went down with an injury early in the game and didn't return. Bowling is back stronger than ever and so are the rest of Determan's "undersized overachievers." One of those seniors, Tristan Martinez, the team's third leading rusher last year, also suffered an injury and missed the first three playoff games of 2020. But Martinez, one of eight two-way players on the team, also is fully healed and ready to go. Benson's RB bulldozer, 215-pound Jace Barney, is ready to knock over more defenders as one of Benson's four running backs. The "fourth" running back is quarterback Brok Determan, the coach's son. Brok runs Benson's Wing-T, which averaged 229 yards per game last year. The O-line features Ryan Francione, a guard/All-State defensive end, and Cameron McFarland, a guard/LB who led the team in tackles last year.

2. PARKER: A team that graduates two 1,000-yard rushers and their combined 42 touchdowns in one season isn't usually labeled a contender the following year. But Parker isn't rebuilding. It's restocking its backfield with more fleet-footed ball carriers. Now that that question was answered, let's get to the meat of Parker's story — its gifted offensive line. It's a brotherhood that is also big and bright. Four of them are seniors, and all but one has made honor roll. "We usually don't have this," coach Jeston Lotts said. "This is a special group. It's just one of those classes." The offensive line cast: Jacob Bennett (6-3, 305), Abraham Silva (5-10, 235), Irvin Sharp (6-3, 290), Collin Stanton (6-2, 230), and the only junior, Ezra Martinez (6-0, 225). As if Parker's O-line needed more heft, the stout Juan Carlos Figueroa (6-2, 285 left tackle) has fully recovered from an ACL injury and will play this year as well. With that crew, no wonder Anthony Taylor (6-2, 210) is shooting for a 2,000-yard rushing season. The state wrestling placer is a physical runner with breakaway speed, Lotts said. The other "home run hitter" is the returning Joe Martinez. Parker's stacked backfield will also get contributions from wingback Cameron Poole and FB/wingback Thaddeus Nopah, a starting linebacker. About the only question mark on offense is new quarterback Zach Bennett, but he's a 4.0 student and will figure things out. The defense returns every starter except at safety, but Martinez will step into that role. Parker's fast and aggressive

defense is led by defensive linemen Gage Honomichl and Wayne Miller. Ethan Sale and Kooper Maniaci are two of the best linebackers he's coached in 15 years, Lotts said. "This group of juniors and seniors have won a championship at every level," the coach said. "They are hungry to do some more damage hopefully."

3. ARIZONA LUTHERAN: Seven of Arizona Lutheran's 10 regular season 2021 opponents reached the playoffs last year. But Arizona Lutheran isn't trembling. The Coyotes stood their ground last year en route to a state semifinal appearance. Its weapons on offense return as well as the foot of K/TE Luke Grippo, who kicked a 42-yarder at the end of his team's 32-30 memorable win over Parker in last year's quarterfinals. Arizona Lutheran's "Thunder and Lightning" run attack of Jacob Holguin and Gabriel McKenney (1,700 rushing yards, 24 touchdowns combined in 2020) prepared themselves for the 2021 tests. Holguin, the speedster, stayed in shape by running track, and McKenney, the downhill threat, added 15 pounds while lifting weights. Holguin will also line up at cornerback and McKenney at outside linebacker. Holguin will also line up at cornerback and McKenney at outside linebacker. RB Gideon Enter, a member of Arizona Lutheran's 4 by 100 state championship last year, also will get his share of chunk plays. Jr. Caron Cunningham, a very good wrestler, is a guard but could move to fullback. The backfield will be running behind an offensive line that will be as good or better than last year's line, coach Dave Peter said. Jalen Herring (6-3, 280) didn't play last year but will step in at OT and NG. Junior lineman Case Danzeisen (6-1, 210) also returns after missing last year (injury). The only worry at quarterback is picking a starter. That position will be in good hands this year with either Jackson Indahl or Jorge Lomeli. The two might see playing time just like last year while running the team's double-wing. The biggest concerns are on defense, where the team's three leading tacklers were seniors in 2020. Enter Grippo and Lomeli, who will help fill those voids. Senior safety Jack Schaumburg will be ready from Day 1.

4. SANTA CRUZ VALLEY: The offensive and defensive schemes aren't changing much. The new and veteran players are talented and ready to step up. James Fitzgerald is indeed sticking with what helped one of Arizona's small school forces reclaim its championship throne. Fitzgerald will step in for Santa Cruz's revivalist, Richard Davis, as the school's new coach and athletic director. Fitzgerald is 29 but no stranger to HS football in Arizona. There's a lot to like about this year's team, beginning with its senior leadership, a dominant offensive line and Ricardo "Rico" Alaniz. Alaniz averaged 10.8 yards per carry last year and will use his "grown man strength" at linebacker to make plays. Four of the offensive linemen who started in last year's final and helped their team lead the state in rushing last year also return. That bunch is led by a 6-5, 245-pound man-child

with long flowing hair they call 'Taz,' Tanzor Gil. Gil is a three-year starter at LT and DE. Robert Maldonado and Elija Tellez-Tarango also aren't pushovers in the trenches. Longtime assistant/defensive coordinator Bill Askew is back for another round to direct a hard working unit led by MLB Davin Ethington, a three-year starter, Alaniz, safety/QB Wyatt Ogle, CB Steve Calvin and CB Julian Armenta.

5. ST. JOHNS: Unlike the previous two seasons, this year's senior class is small. It's returning starting QB transferred out. It'll suit up only 30 players. But it doesn't matter. It's time to go to battle and make another postseason run. "We believe in them," said coach Mike Morgan about his hard working team. "It's time to put on a helmet, and they better be ready to play and represent this team, this school and this town. Win, lose or draw, we will do our best. We don't want to lay down for nobody." QB/RB James Thomas, a state wrestling champ, and crew of running backs will run behind one of the bigger lines in 2A, anchored by 6-6, 275-pound Riley Greene.

6. SCOTTSDALE CHRISTIAN: Coach Nate Holtz is making his point to his kids. His program went from seven losses to seven wins in his first two years. He began with 28 players in the program, but that total now sits at 50. He's not related to Lou Holtz, but Nate sure knows how to rally his troops. He keeps it simple. "Be one point better," he said. "That's our motto." Holtz's next goal for his program is to prove it in the playoffs. Scottsdale Christian graduated one of the more explosive players in 2A last year, Ben Tobin. But wait until opponents get a glimpse of Boden Davidson, because trying to catch him won't be easy. The senior transferred in last year, sat out the first three games and then went to work, scoring nine touchdowns in four games and averaged 67.4 yards in his five kickoff returns. Boden will start as a RB and DB but will move around. The offensive line returns two All-Conference stalwarts, center Luke Richardson and Peyton Heuser. All-region DB/hybrid linebacker Blue Schamadan and senior safety Jake Brugman are the generals on defense. That defense will welcome LB Jackson Lee from an ACL injury this year. Like Lee, CB Carson Mousel is another impactful player. Mousel was also competing for the starting quarterback assignment along with drop back passer Jack Atkinson.

7. MORENCI: The Wildcats reached the 2020 playoffs. Or did they? COVID-19 forced its play-in opponent out. Then, in the next round, COVID-19 led Morenci to cancel its game. It was that type of year for Morenci and others as well. "I would like to think that will motivate our kids," coach Joe Garcia said, "that we have something to prove." The team missed the playoffs in a sense, but its young players still saw plenty of action. One of them will be the featured back, Mikey Casillas, who's elusive and "super tough." The team's center last year graduated, but sophomore Tristan Sanchez will fill that vital spot. The strength of Morenci's defense is its D-line, where Sanchez and sophomore Donovan Voza are stationed. But there isn't a senior leadership void at Morenci. Brenden Enriquez (second leading tackler in 2020), Shawn Hudman (48 tackles last year), Tony Roybal (team's No. 2 WR last year), RB Dmitri Briggs and three-year starter at RT and DT Jericho Sanchez are some of the go-to veterans. And juniors Daylen Johnson (QB) and FB Patrick Chavez also return as starters.

8. GILBERT CHRISTIAN: Make some room for the Knights on the 2A table. Gilbert Christian is back in 2A for the first time since the 2017-18 season but isn't returning to 2A empty handed. It'll dress its largest group (about 40 players) since coach Danny Norris took over two seasons ago. It also tapped into its successful basketball program to secure some skill players. Throwing to those high jumpers will be multi-talented QB Matthew Hershey, who, as the strongest player on the team, will throw his weight around as a starting linebacker as well. This year, the QB will get to call some plays at the line of scrimmage. Expect him to call WR Zach Hohmann and WR Wyatt Kelly's number plenty of times. Another athletic player who will play football for the first time, Dillon Sharkey, a hockey player, will start at safety. The offensive line likely won't start any seniors, but four of last year's starters in that unit return. With the trust he's placing on Matthews, Norris is making a switch offensively, moving from a double-wing to a multiple base. On defense, Gilbert Christian will continue to run a 4-3 under second-year defensive coordinator Peter Heintz.

9. SAN TAN CHARTER: The program learned a couple of lessons in its first foray in 2A and as an AIA member last year. "People think there isn't competition at this level, and that's the furthest thing from the truth," coach Kerry Taylor said about last year's 2A debut. "They just don't get the recognition." The physical side of 2A also impressed Taylor. That was a focal point the coach addressed with his team this offseason, he said. If it can stay healthy, San Tan Charter will have a complete team after five games, when nine transfers will make their first appearance. TE/DE Logan Gentry, LT Ahmadou Dieng (6-6, 250) and LB Brody Wakefield are three of the transfers who will make an immediate impact. Having more of an offseason instead of Zoom classes benefitted sophomore quarterback Zayden Neill. Last year he was thrown into the fire, but the young man responded as the season wore on, ending with 16 TD passes in eight games and 1,691 yards. Another freshman who stepped up last year was Daniel Dippre, who had 21 receptions and 3 TDs and had a good summer while competing against bigger schools. The team will return all of its linebackers, including the San Tan's leading rusher and second leading tackler in 2021, Isiah Galavez. It's season opener against Santa Cruz will serve as a barometer. The defending champ humbled San Tan last year, 61-0. "We'll see how much we've grown as a team," Taylor said.

10. SEQUOIA PATHWAY: Skip Google Maps. Sequoia Pathway is in Maricopa. It's a second-year AIA member, and it's starting to build something worth noticing. It has a new turf field and support from the administration, coach Donnie Margerum said. Despite being a young program, it went 4-2 last year. This season, it won't be at full strength until midseason, when five players will be cleared to play. DT/OT Amari Turner, WR Jeremiah Garcia and RB Tyshaun Mooney are three of the new transfers who'll get plenty of reps once they take the field. The athletic Jyrie Gamble will have the ball in his hands a lot at QB or WR to help keep his team in games from the start. Gamble and 6-3 senior Casa Grande move-in Michael Easley were competing for the starting quarterback job. Another pair of athletic big bodies, the Banks twins, Kyrese and Norien, are defensive disrupters. As a freshman, Norien, a sophomore LB, led his team in sacks and was the team's second leading tackler. Senior Weston Klee was the team's top tackler last year. Kyrese is a 6-1, 230-pound DE who also started last year. The program welcomed a new defensive coordinator, former Highland High assistant Tim Kaley. Maricopa's defense will switch from a 4-3 to 3-4 this year.



Look for Gilbert Christian and QB/LB Matthew Hershey to play some smash-mouth football this season. (Jack Beasley photo/MaxPreps)

2A CONFERENCE FOOTBALL TEAM-BY-TEAM PREVIEW



Holbrook is looking rebound this season and snap a 21-game losing streak, although that came at the 3A level. (Mark Jones photo/MaxPreps)

By Jose Garcia
AZPreps365.com

SAN JUAN REGION

Rock Point

Head coach: James L. Patterson.

Years as school's head coach/record: First year at school/73-19 as head coach.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. FB/MLB Deon Descheny 5-5, 167; Sr. TE/DE Odonis King, 6-0, 175.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. OL/DL Shirlena Teller 5-5, 180.

Strengths of defense: Regardless of personnel, we will be aggressive and swarming.

Team's biggest question marks: Learning the players' capabilities and limits.

2021 expectations: I will be happy with a .500 season. Most importantly, the players need to learn the system this season so we have a stronger season next year. We must improve with each game.

Program history: Our rival is Red Mesa. We lose to them and it is a lost season.

More about the program: Deon Descheny will wear the same number as his three older brothers. He is the captain of the team. The team has a new system to learn on both sides of the ball and very little classroom time. We lost a lot of prep due to the pandemic. The key is for our team to grow on both sides of the ball, mentally and in football IQ. We have to build traditions for the team to grow upon. We must develop the right swagger. As the principal of the school, I want to develop smart, forward-thinking student-athletes who have college as their goal when they graduate. Give me a smart team, and I will develop a winning program. As the head coach, I want to develop a program where we are competing for the conference title every year. This school has never won the conference championship in football nor qualified for state in football. That will change over the next few years. I can see the energy and desire in their eyes. Now, we must get some wins under our belt and develop the right attitude then this program will be one that the Rock Point community will be proud of. COUGAR PRIDE!

Region notes: COVID-19 kept Hopi, Pinon and Red Mesa from playing last season.

LITTLE COLORADO REGION

Holbrook

Head coach: Christopher Starkey.

Years as school's head coach/record: 3/0-15.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: SR. OL Caden Tom 6-1, 215; Sr. OL Teyton Begay 5-10, 190; Sr. OL Manuel Baca 6-1, 240; Jr. QB/ATH Marcus Oberriter (245 passing yards, 353 rushing yards) 5-10, 155; Jr. ATH Israel Ramos (193 receiving yards, 5 TDs) 6-1, 190; Jr. ATH Daniel Montijo (232 rushing yards) 5-8, 155; Jr. OL Mauricio Baca 6-0, 220; So. OL Slade Allison 6-0, 180; So. WR/TE Jace Allison 6-2, 170.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DL Caden Tom (25 tackles) 6-1, 215; Sr. DL Manuel Baca (33 tackles) 6-1, 240; So. ATH Marcus Oberriter 5-10, 155; So. ATH Israel Ramos (31 tackles) 6-1, 190; Jr. DB Daniel Montijo (23 tackles) 5-8, 155; Jr. DL Mauricio Baca 6-0, 220; So. DL Slade Allison (17 tackles) 6-0, 180; So. ATH Jace Allison 6-2, 170.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. OL/DL Malakai Johnson 5-9, 205; Jr. ATH Kyle Smith 5-8, 150; Jr. OL/DL Noland McCabe 6-0, 220; So. H-Back/LB Darnell Nez 6-0, 205; So. RB/LB Devin DoBell 5-10, 190.

Strengths of offense: Experience. Top offensive players from the last two seasons are retuning as juniors. Tempo. In Year 3 of the same system we finally feel comfortable enough to just play instead of thinking. Big play ability. A lot of retuning athletes coupled with some new faces. Cohesiveness. We aren't just a team, we are a family. These guys spend all of their time together and have used a lot of it to get better as a group.

Strengths of defense: Motivation. Our defense gave up too many points last year, and they saw how many games they could have been in at the end had they been better. They have used this to make sure they get better on the defensive side of the ball. Versatile. We have a number of kids who can play multiple positions, which allows us to be very creative. New DC coach Santos spent last season as our defensive line coach after coming to us last summer from New Jersey. Our defensive line was by far our best unit on defense last season. It didn't take me long to realize he needed to be promoted. He has a great football mind and brings

fresh eyes to a struggling program. He has made some great adjustments, which will allow us to make our defense more simple and utilize the players we have. The energy he brings every day sets the tone for a hard-nosed fast defense.

Team's biggest question marks: Will the strength and conditioning pay off? We've had great numbers and amazing improvements in the weight room going back even before COVID. Since December the gains we've made have been incredible. We are hoping to see it transition on to the field. Will the experience/leadership from key juniors and seniors carry us through year three of my stint here, showing the progress in culture and the ability to compete in games? Everything has been done the right way. No corners have been cut. We have to see it really start to take shape this season. Can Marcus Oberitter (QB/DB) rebound after missing most of his sophomore season? He has put in the work in the classroom and as a leader. He gets bigger and stronger every month. His role is going to be so much more than running the football, throwing the football and handing it off. After a great freshman season starting all 10 games on varsity, to watching from the sideline the majority of last season, we expect a huge junior year from him to make up for lost time.

Program history: One of the most unique football stadiums in the state, if not the country.

2021 expectations: Be better in November than we were in August. This has been a slow and steady process, doing things right takes time and sacrifice and seeing that it pays off with improvement and sustainability is worth it all.

Region notes: *St. Johns coach Mike Morgan said that most of his assistants are returning. The team graduated 13 seniors last year, but Henry Thompson, Leo and Kevin Hernandez, Jay Wahl, JT Richardson, Chase Thomas, Tony Diamond, TE Wesley Scarborough, Jordan Mannery, Rafael Uriel, Luis Morales, and Clancy Wiltbank are ready to step in. The team lost a key player, WR Case Heap, to an ACL injury in the offseason. Jordan Winters, Asher Raban and Michael Gibson will help fill Heap's shoes. ... Alchesay, Many Farms and Valley (Sanders) didn't play last year due to COVID-19.*

SALT REGION

Gilbert Christian

Head coach: Danny Norris.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2/9-8.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. QB Matthew Hershey (753 yards, 30 tackles) 5-10, 200; Sr. OL Luke Bishop 5-9 205; Jr. OL Gavin Biesterfeld 6-2, 200; So. OL Josh Lay 5-9, 180; Jr. OL Peyton Johnson 5-10, 230; Jr. RB Hayden Smith 5-10, 160.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. LB Matthew Hershey 5-10, 200; Sr. DL Luke Bishop 5-9 205; Jr. DL Gavin Biesterfeld 6-2, 200; Jr. DL Peyton Johnson 5-10, 230; So. DL Braden Sullivan 5-10, 230; Jr. DB Hayden Smith 5-10, 160; So. DB Aidan Richards 5-8, 140; So. Jesse Morales DL 5-9, 185.

Also keep an eye on: Fr. RB/DB Sam Webb 5-8, 150; Sr. ATH Lucas Valles 5-10, 185; So. ATH/K Kaleb Powell 5-10, 150; Jr. ATH Jordon King 5-11, 170; Jr. ATH Zach Hohmann 6-2, 175.

Strengths of offense: We return four starting OL. We return our QB who will be a three-year starter for us.

Strengths of defense: We will be big up front on the DL. Second year in the defense should yield great results.

Team's biggest question marks: Who will emerge as our leading ball carrier? How will we adjust to playing in 2A? Who will emerge as a leader in the program?

Program history: Jace Feely is a former kicker now at Arizona State University.

2021 expectations: We expect to compete and execute well each week. We want to be the toughest team our opponents play all year long. We will play with integrity and respect the game as well as our opponents and officials.

Miami

Head coach: Brandon Powell.

Years as school's head coach/record: 4/25-15.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Gabe Escobedo (47 receptions, 1,061, 13 TDs) 6-1, 190; Sr. RB Justin Cook (540 rushing yards, 6 TDs) 5-10, 185; Sr. FB Tyree Koyayesva 5-7, 190; JR. OL Gabe Garcia 5-10, 225; Jr. OL Gabe Cabrera 5-10, 220.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. CB Brayden Kauers (25 tackles) 5-9, 160; Sr. FS Stratton Palmer 5-11, 175; Jr. LB Jaycob Goss 5-10, 200; Jr. SS Angel Pena (27 tackles) 5-8, 165; Jr. CB Jamie Pena 5-8, 155; Jr. DL Angelo Gatewood 5-8, 205; Jr. LB Larenz Combs (23 tackles) 5-9, 165.

Strengths of offense: Returning RB and WR.

Strengths of defense: Bringing back a bunch of starters.

Team's biggest question marks: QB and OL.

Program history: Globe-Miami rivalry game. Miami has won three in a row over Globe for the first time since the late 50s.

San Carlos

Head coach: Paul Fine.

Years as school's head coach/record: First year.

Returning starters on offense: Sr. QB Mario Martinez, 5-11, 180.

Returning starters on defense: Sr. DE Mario Martinez, 5-11, 180.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. OL/DL Adam Brown 5-8, 250; Sr. LB Xavier Hooke 5-10, 182; Sr. DL Angel James 5-11, 373; Jr. WR/LB Enoch Kinney 5-10, 143; Jr. RB/SS Diego Mendoza 5-5, 166; Jr. OL Nicholas Nozie 5-11 200; Sr. S Jose Patten 5-4, 130; Jr. DL Isaiah Phillips 5-9, 230; Jr. OL/DL Joseph Pike 5-10, 240; Jr. OL Loren Pina 5-9, 280; So. RB/CB Josh Seletstewa 5-8, 155; Jr. RB/LB Jermaine Smith 5-8, 180; Jr. RB/CB Elliott Whiterock 5-7, 143.

Strengths of offense: Heading into this season the strength of our offense is the depth we have at the skill positions and the communication skills of our offensive line. All four of our backs have big play ability and sell out for one another.

Strengths of defense: Heading into the season the strength of our defense is the depth we have on the interior line and the aggressiveness of our back seven. The intelligence and flexibility of our secondary gives us the option of switching amongst multiple coverages.

Team's biggest question marks: The biggest question mark hanging over heads going into this season is how we'll react to not having played any football for almost two years. With conducting online learning all of last year, it is like we have two freshmen classes in the building, as well as two freshmen classes on the field.

2021 expectations: This year we expect to compete in every game, as well as instilling in our players the fight, hunger and drive to be successful on the field as well as in life. Without a football season last year, we acknowledge the challenges ahead for us in molding a successful team, but we also recognize the amazing opportunities we have to build the program anew.

Program history: We have traditionally had some very tough seasons, with the winningest season in school history being the 2013 season, when we went 5-5. Both that season, and the season before, we beat our rivals to the north of us, Alchesay, for the first two times in school history. I was on both of those staffs as an assistant coach to Shawn Pietila, who in 2013 installed the Pistol Wing-T offense we will be running this season.

More about the program: I was an assistant coach at San Carlos High School from 2012-2016. While it is early in the season, we have seen a tremendous turnout during our first week of practice amongst all grade levels, with more student-athletes at practice this week than in any of my previous five years at San Carlos. We believe we have a tremendous opportunity this year to begin building a truly special program to represent the San Carlos community.

Region notes: *Matthew McClland of Arete Prep (2-4 last year) has thrown for 6,539 yards and 66 TDs in his career. ... Globe was 1-4 last year.*

THE ADVENTURES OF ESCOBEDO IN MIAMI

By Jose Garcia
AZPreps365.com

Speed can help wide receivers elude defenders.

In Gabe Escobedo's case, it also helped him escape his grandmother's grasp.

When he was very young, the then-mischievous Escobedo took his grandmother's cell phone one day. But as he bolted out the front door of their home with his grandmother trailing, Escobedo fell and nearly bit part of his tongue off.

Nowadays, Escobedo leaves defenders tongue-tied while trying to explain why they fell and Escobedo escaped. The incoming Miami High School senior is fast.

Just how fast remains a mystery. But what is certain is that Escobedo will do anything he can in football, baseball and basketball to make his hometown proud. So far, the multi-sport star has done a darn good job of reminding high school football folks that there is actually a Miami in Arizona.

Escobedo is the state's returning leading receiver (1,061 yards in 7 games in 2020) and averaged a state high 162.7 receiving yards per game over the past two seasons. Colleges are consistently inquiring about the senior but are waiting for more game footage and figures of Miami's leading man.

Escobedo has never been timed in the 40 or around the base paths. But Brandon Powell, Miami's baseball and football coach, said Escobedo is the first player he's allowed to steal at will in his 29 years of coaching baseball.

"He's good," Powell said. "He's fast, and he wreaks havoc."

Working full time during the summer kept Escobedo from training with his football team.

But Escobedo worked out on his own, he said. After an 8-hour shift, he regularly punched the clock at around 1 a.m. at a local gym to workout. The 6-foot-1 Escobedo said he can squat 355 pounds. He weighs 170 pounds.

Escobedo credits his dad, Ronald, for his gains in the weight room. Ronald and his wife, Kylene, were multi-sport stars at Globe High, Miami's longtime rival. It stung at first seeing his son attending Miami, Ronald said. Escobedo added more salt to the wound after helping Miami claim its first three-game football win streak over Globe since the 1950s. It gets that intense some-

times between the neighboring mining towns, but Escobedo helped Miami gain a new fan.

"I'm a (Miami) Vandal now, but it took some time," Ronald said.

Thankfully for Globe, when he was a freshman, Escobedo was enrolled at Desert Ridge High School.

But some homesickness led him to return to the Miami-Globe area. Immediately after donning the green and white of Miami, Escobedo scored on a 60-yard pass play in his very first play from scrimmage for the Vandals.

Powell, whose son Ryan is Escobedo's best friend, caught a glimpse of Escobedo's escapability during a holiday party.

During the annual family gathering, Ryan and Gabe, who were about six or seven years old at the time, were upstairs with some fireworks. Ryan lit one of them but tried to extinguish it in a toilet.

But Ryan was in such a hurry that he passed the bathroom, so he just dropped the explosive on the ground and ran away. Despite the loud music and large gathering, Powell heard the boom.

After darting upstairs while the smoke alarms beeped, a concerned Powell saw black powder marks in a couple of areas and a scared Escobedo in the hallway.

"Gabe just sprinted by me," Powell said. "But before he did he wanted to clear up as fast as he could that he wasn't involved."

It turns out that Escobedo is also a fast talker.

During the last two seasons, Ryan, a quarterback who graduated from Miami last year, was throwing different types of bombs to Escobedo when they connected 30 times for touchdowns. They also were teammates on Miami's basketball and baseball teams, helping the baseball team reach the 2A Conference semifinals last year. Escobedo batted .557 in 2020 and has stolen 54 career bases so far. According to his No. 1 fan, his grandfather Gary Hurst, a former All-Conference football player at Maryvale, Escobedo is 12 points away from 1,000 for his basketball career. The senior dunked in a contest for the first time last season, when he averaged 21.4 points a game.

"I want to put the name of our school out there," Escobedo said. "So people just don't think we are a small football town. We partly did it last year, but I want more. I want to win a state championship. This town may be small, but we are all together. We are a family."



Miami's Gabe Escobedo has caught 30 touchdown passes in the last two seasons. (John Petty photo)

SAN PEDRO REGION

Benson

Head coach: Chris Determan.

Year's as the school's head coach: 19 years.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Jimmy Lerblanc (145 receiving yards, 3 TDs); Sr. QB Brok Determan (6 TD passes); Sr. RB Devin Bowling (909 rushing yards, 12 TDs); Sr. RB Tristan Martinez (332 rushing yards, 5 TDs); Sr. RB Jace Barney (521 rushing yards, 8 TDs); Sr. OL Joe Jackson; Sr. OL Ryan Francione; Sr. OL Ricky Garcia (28 tackles); Sr. OL Cameron McFarland; Jr. OL Zane Cluff; Sr. TE Mundo Esparza.

Returning starters on defense: Sr. DB Jimmy Lerblanc (24 tackles); Sr. FS Mundo Esparza (27 tackles); Jr. DB Angel Rigney (29 tackles); Sr. LB Tristan Martinez; Sr. LB Devin Bowling (39 tackles); Sr. LB Cameron McFarland (50 tackles); Sr. LB Brok Determan (41 tackles); Sr. DE Ryan Francione (46 tackles); Sr. DE Wyatt Wilharm; Sr. DL Gabe Osuna (32 tackles); Sr. DL Ricky Garcia (28 tackles).

Also keep an eye on: So. LB/QB Dalton Crockett; Jr. WR/DB Aiden Finch.

Strengths of offense: Everybody returns.

Strengths of defense: Everybody returns.

2021 expectations: For us to play well hard and fast. Get better with every game.



Benson is heavily favored this season. (Chris Stanley photo/MaxPreps)

Bisbee

Head coach: Brian Vertrees.

Years as school's head coach/record: 5th/19-18.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. OL Ed Holly (33 tackles) 6-4, 265; Sr. OL Ed Holly 6-4, 265; Sr. RB Geoffrey Gribble (443 rushing yards, 7 TDs) 6-1, 185; Sr. OL Nito Hernandez 6-5, 235; Sr. C Chris Contreras 5-9, 225; Sr. FB Oscar Mendoza 5-10, 175; Jr. QB Diego Chavez (566 rushing yards, 37 tackles) 5-10, 190; Jr. OL Luis Valdez 6-2, 285; So. WR David Chapman 5-8, 135.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DE Ed Holly 6-4, 265; Sr. DT EJ Hernandez (12 tackles for loss, 5 sacks) 6-2, 275; Sr. DT Chris Contreras 5-9, 225; Sr. ILB Cody Ricketson (39 tackles) 5-9, 160; Sr. DB Geoffrey Gribble 6-1, 185; Sr. OLB Oscar Mendoza 5-10, 175; Jr. ILB Diego Chavez 5-10, 190; So. DB David Chapman 5-8, 135.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. OLB Kaleb Peterson 5-10, 155; So. ATH Anthony Molina, 5-10, 150; So. OL Emilio Hernandez 5-9, 195.

Strengths of offense: Returning four starters on the OL, with two other OL who gained experience in 2020. Geoffrey Gribble brings uncanny

speed to the offense, won the 2A 200M state championship in 2019 as a freshman. He did not compete in 2020 due to COVID.

Strengths of defense: Size of the front seven. Inside LB tandem of Chavez and Ricketson will bring speed and aggressiveness to our defense.

Team's biggest question marks: Our defensive secondary. Our receiver positions. Our passing game. Overall depth of the roster.

2021 expectations: Take advantage of our offseason prep time after no offseason activities in '20. Prepare well each week in season. Play hard every snap.

Morenci

Head coach: Joe Garcia.

Years as school's head coach/record: 3 years/11-7.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. OL Jericho Sanchez 5-11, 245; Soph. OL Austyn Nelson 5-10, 215; Sr. OL Shawn Hudman 5-9, 180; Sr. WR Tony Roybal 5-10, 160; Jr. WR Gavin Baca 5-11, 165; Jr. QB Daylen Johnson (9 TD passes) 5-10, 165; Jr. FB Patrick Chavez (230 rushing yards) 5-10, 185; Jr. Flex Derek Saenz 5-10, 160.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. SS Brenden Enriquez (51 tackles) 5-9, 180; Sr. FS Kaden Summer (28 tackles) 5-10, 160; Sr. LB Shawn Hudman (48 tackles) 5-9, 180; Sr. DB Tony Roybal 5-10, 160; Jr. DE Gavin Baca (26 tackles) 5-11, 165; Jr. DE Patrick Chavez 5-10, 185; Sr. DL Jericho Sanchez 5-11, 245; Soph. DL Tristen Sanchez (34 tackles) 5-11, 185; Jr. DB Derek Saenz 5-10, 160.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. OL/DL Richard Trott 6-0, 185; Soph. RB/LB Michael Casillas 5-5, 150; Soph. TE/LB/DL Donnie Vozza 6-2, 200; Sr. RB/DB Dmitri Briggs 5-8, 155.

Strengths of offense: A lot of team speed and experience coming back.

Strengths of defense: Great team speed that pays attention to details.

2021 expectations: Expectations are to take things one practice at a time, one play at a time, and one game at a time. We will focus on improving daily and that will lead to success.

Pima

Head coach: Jim Hughes.

Years as school's head coach/record: 3/19-10.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. RB Brody Brown 6-0, 165; Sr. OL Chris Edgmon 6-1, 265; Jr. TE Seth Russell 6-4, 205; Jr. WR Leland Thompson 6-0, 170; Jr. WR Grant Ashby 6-3, 170; Jr. OL Chris Serna 5-10, 235; Jr. RB Wyatt Wiltbank 5-11, 170; Jr. H-Back Garrett Curtis 6-3, 195; Soph. OL Pepper Hughes 5-11 205.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DB Brody Brown 6-0, 165; Sr. DB Austen Ashby 5-10, 160; Jr. DE Seth Russell 6-4, 205; Jr. DB Leland Thompson 6-0, 170; Jr. LB Wyatt Wiltbank 5-11, 170; Jr. LB Garrett Curtis 6-3, 195; Soph. DL Pepper Hughes 5-11, 205; Sr. LB Mason Palmer 6-0, 165.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. OL/DL Owen Lunt 6-0, 210; Sr. DL Joe Boswell 5-7, 155; Sr. OL Tristen Gardner 6-0, 170; Jr. WR Pierce Ashby 6-5, 180; Jr. LB Britt Hawkins 5-11, 170.

Strengths of offense: Offensive line strength much improved. Returning all receivers. Good depth at RB.

Strengths of defense: Returning 8 starters. DB's and LB's have 2 or 3 years of varsity experience.

Team's biggest question marks: Varsity QB experience. Depth of offensive and defensive lines.

2021 expectations: To win the last playoff game in Nov. To place 1st in region.

Willcox

Head coach: Eric Hjalmarson.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1/3-3.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. TE Kindrick Lunt 6-5, 190; Sr. WR Marcus Olivares 6-0, 170; Sr. T Oscar Moreno 5-9, 205.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. NG Oscar Moreno 5-9, 205; Sr. C Marcus Olivares (28 tackles) 6-0, 170; Sr. DE Kindrick Lunt 6-5, 190; Sr. C Alex Mills 5-8, 160.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. QB/FS Ayden Fuentes (271 rushing yards, 29 tackles) 6-0, 180; Jr. FB/LB Cristian Pando (48 tackles, 252 receiving yards, 248 rushing yards) 5-10, 190; So. TB/LB Oren Allsup 5-11, 175.
Strengths of offense: Second year of offensive system.
Strengths of defense: Second year of system.
2021 expectations: To make the state playoffs.

Region notes: Tombstone will start its season motivated to snap a nine-game losing streak.

VERDE REGION

North Pointe Prep

Head coach: Jason Shaw.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2nd/0-5.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Quentin Simmons (174 rushing yards) 6-2, 160; Sr. WR Joshua Clark 5-10, 180; Sr. OL Nathan Fuentes 5-11, 210; Sr. OL Anthony Johnson 6-2, 260; Sr. RB Vincent Glesmann 5-10, 150; Sr. RB Brayan Mendoza 5-6, 140; Sr. WR Steven Soto 5-4, 125; Jr. OL James Winburn 5-10, 190; Jr. WR Ian Nesbit 5-10, 140; So. WR Skylar Holland 5-7, 125; Sr. OL Andres Anchondo 5-9, 200.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DB Quentin Simmons 6-2, 160; Sr. LB Joshua Clark (24 tackles) 5-10, 180; Sr. DL Nathan Fuentes 5-11, 210; Sr. DL Anthony Johnson 6-2, 260; Sr. DB Vincent Glesmann 5-10, 150; Sr. DB Brayan Mendoza 5-6, 140; Sr. LB Steven Soto 5-4, 125; Jr. LB James Winburn (19 tackles) 5-10, 190; Jr. DB Ian Nesbit 5-10, 140; So. DB Skylar Holland 5-7, 125; Sr. DL Andres Anchondo 5-9, 200.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. QB Esteban Gonzales 5-9, 160; Jr. QB Anes Dizdar 6-2, 160;

Strengths of offense: Scheme familiarity; Skill position players.

Strengths of defense: Scheme familiarity; Experienced players.

Team's biggest question marks: Number of players on team, quarterback, offensive line.

Program history: The last two years versus Valley Lutheran have been very competitive with each team getting a win in the last two meetings.

2021 expectations: Compete in every game. .500 or better. Compete for region title.

More about the program: Coach Race Shaul, former North Pointe QB from 2019, has come back as a varsity assistant and has been nothing but amazing as a coach and mentor to our student-athletes. Joshua Clark overcame medical issues in his youth to become one of the hardest working student-athletes in our school. Quentin Simmons is our most talented players. During his time being an online student he was taking care of his younger siblings at home while working on his academics also.

Scottsdale Prep

Head coach: David Primavera.

Years as school's head coach/record: 4/16-20.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Devon Strader (499 receiving yards, 8 TDs) 5-10, 165; Sr. ATH Carson Boyll (488 rushing yards, 6 TDs) 5-7, 165; Sr. OG Maddox Delnero 5-11, 170; Sr. OT Jeremy Holford 5-10, 155.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DB Devon Strader (41 tackles) 5-10, 165; Sr. DB Carson Boyll (21 tackles, 3 INTs) 5-7, 165; Sr. DB Wills Neiman 6-1 160; Jr. DE Emmitt Collins (36 tackles) 6-0, 175.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. QB Tyler Johnson 6-1, 165; Jr. LB Connor Hesse 5-11, 155.

Strengths of offense: We have good speed at the receiver positions and quickness on the offensive line.

Strengths of defense: We have a lot of speed at the linebacker position and a great deal of quickness on the D-line.

Team's biggest question marks: We are starting a new QB for the first time in 4 years and have a new starting linebackers.

2021 expectations: Winning the region and making the playoffs.

Region notes: Madison Highland, a new AIA program, is based in Phoenix. ... Valley Lutheran Jr. Seth Lemieux had 161 receiving yards and 26 tackles last year. Jimmie Newton led the team with 34 tackles.

RILLITO REGION

Santa Cruz Valley

Head coach: James Fitzgerald.

Years as school's head coach/record: First year.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. QB Wyatt Ogle (586 yards passing, 9 TDs, 263 rushing yards); Sr. RB Ricardo Alaniz (592 rushing yards, 6 TDs); Sr. WR Steve Calvin (417 rushing yards, 7 TDs); Sr. OL Elijah Tellez-Tarango; Sr. OL Tanzor Gil; Sr. OL Robert Maldonado.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DB Wyatt Ogle (35 tackles); Sr. DB Ricardo Alaniz (44 tackles); Sr. DB Steve Calvin (27 tackles); Sr. DL Elijah Tellez-Tarango; Sr. DL Tanzor Gil; Sr. DL Robert Maldonado (30 tackles).

Also keep an eye on: Jr. ATH Max Rodriguez; Sr. TE Davin Ethington; Sr. OL Haloa Hall; Sr. OL Roman Belloc.

Strengths of offense: Offensive Line. Running backs. Offensive Line, returning QB, returning 2nd leading rusher and top WR from 2020 team.

Strengths of defense: Defensive Back. Defensive Line. Both Defensive ends return. Top two DB's returning. Third, 4th & 5th leading tacklers return.

Team's biggest question marks: Depth, incoming Freshman playing key roles on varsity

Program history: Notable NFL Alums: Benny Malone (Dolphins); Levi Jones (Bengals); Art Malone (Eagles); Eddie Cade (Patriots). Bill Askew 30-plus years coaching and teaching in Pinal County. Fantastic math teacher and a great mentor to the kids. Returning to be defensive coordinator for 11th straight season.

2021 expectations: 100% graduation rate, college scholarships offers for all senior starters, win region, win state.



Scottsdale Prep WR Devon Strader. (Paul Campbell photo/MaxPreps)

Sequoia Pathway

Head coach: Donnie Margerum.

Years as school's head coach/record: 3rd season, playoff berth in first AIA season.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Jyrei Gamble 6-2, 185; Sr. RB/RB Tre-Mathew Lacey (139 rushing yards, 2 TD) 5-11, 160; Sr. LB Weston Klee 5-11, 195; Sr. G Jonathan Dominguez 5-10, 240; Sr. C Zeke Jaramillo 5-10, 240; Sr. T Favier Gutierrez 6-6, 340.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. S Jyrei Gamble (34 tackles) 6-2 185; Sr. CB Tre-Mathew Lacey 5-11, 160; Sr. LB Damion Lyons 5-9, 180; Sr. LB Weston Klee (59 tackles) 5-11, 195; Sr. LB Curtis David 6-0, 200; So. CB Lavon Neal 5-9, 160; So. DE Kyrese Banks (24 tackles) 6-2, 230; So. DE Norian Banks (47 tackles) 6-2, 215; Jr. DT Quintin Lara (22 tackles) 5-10, 250.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. RB Tyshaun Mooney 5-9, 185; Sr. QB/LB Michael Easley 5-10, 175; Sr. WR Jeremiah Garcia 5-7, 150; Sr. QB Will Webber 5-9, 190; So. DE Marcus Hughey 6-6, 235; Sr. DE/T Raymond Sampaga 6-5, 280; Sr. G/DT Amari Turner 6-0, 265; Sr. G/DE Jeffery Earls 6-1, 240; Sr. DT Maurice Orosco 5-8, 315; Jr. WR/CB Cornell Reed Jr. 5-8, 170; Jr. DT/G Alec Webber 6-0, 250.

Strengths of offense: Very explosive, meaty o-line and skill everywhere.

Strengths of defense: Fast and deep d-line.

Team's biggest question marks: QB. We have three kids battling for the spot. How do we hold up until the transfers are available?

2021 expectations: I expect us to be in the playoffs, making a run for the ring.

Program history: CAA Champs in 2016 led by coach Williams (father of Basha's QB).

More about the program: We are on the rise, with our new turf field and locker rooms, the program has definitely taken steps in the right direction. Numbers are up and we are even exploring having a JV schedule. With the huge influx of students, we are truly becoming the premier school for football in Maricopa.

Tanque Verde

Head coach: Jay Dobyns.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1/3-0.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Kaden Eichinger 5-11, 160; Sr. WR Calvin Jones 6-3, 180; Sr. G Bryan Loflin 6-0, 220; Sr. RB Rory Maciulla (146 rushing yards) 5-10, 180; Sr. G Terrance Oathout 6-0, 265; Jr. T Race Erickson 6-2, 220; Jr. T Dylan Petrick 6-1, 260; Jr. C Aiden Vimmerstedt 6-1, 250.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. C Kaden Eichinger 5-11, 160; Sr. S Calvin Jones (22 tackles in 3 games) 6-3, 180; Sr. DT Bryan Loflin (24 tackles) 6-0, 220; Sr. S Rory Maciulla 5-10, 180; Sr. DT Terrance Oathout 6-0 265; Sr. Dylan Johnson 6-0, 210; Jr. DT Dylan Petrick 6-1 260; Jr. LB Brayden Scott 5-11 220; Jr. DE Race Erickson 6-2, 220; Jr. C James Torok (15 tackles) 5-9, 155; Jr. DE Brendan Vimmerstedt 6-4, 190.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. WR/DB Lucas Franklin 5-11, 180; Sr. LB Luke Lineberry 5-11, 190; Sr. RB/LB Kelton Neve 6-0, 200; Sr. RB/WR Aaron Wentz 5-10, 160; Jr. OL/DL Jack Endean 6-6, 270.

Strengths of offense: Offensive line. Wide receiver. Running back.

Strengths of defense: Linebackers. Defensive backs. Defensive line.

Team's biggest question marks: Quarterback.

Program history: Bob Vielledent, 72, coaching Tucson HS sports for 45 years.

2021 expectations: Continue our program development. Challenge of playing both state finalists. Qualifying for playoffs.

More about the program: 0-10 in 2019 to 3-0 during 2020 covid season. Tanque Verde was historically Tucson's doormat, having never won more than three games in a full season. 2020 changed the culture of the program from losing to winning. We hope to continue on that upward path.

Region notes: Catalina only played one game last year, a 15-0 victory over Palo Verde. ... Santa Rita announced recently that veteran state championship coach Tom Joseph will be its new coach.

GILA REGION

Arizona Lutheran

Head coach: David Peter.

Years as school's head coach/record: 6/37-24.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. RB Gabriel McKenney (878 rushing yards, 14 TDs) 6-0, 190; Sr. RB Jacob Holguin (797 rushing yards, 316 receiving yards) 5-10, 165; Sr. TE Jack Schaumberg (237 receiving yards) 6-2, 170; Sr. TE Luke Grippo 6-1, 165; Sr. OL Cole Gutierrez 5-7, 185; Jr. OL Aaron Navarro, 6-2, 195

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Jr. DB Isaiah Gonzales (22 tackles) 5-8, 145; Sr. LB Gabriel McKenney (35 tackles) 6-0, 190; Sr. DB Jacob Holguin 5-10, 165; Sr. DB Jack Schaumberg 6-2, 170; Sr. DB Luke Grippo (33 tackles) 6-1, 165; Sr. DL Cole Gutierrez (27 tackles) 5-7, 185.

Also keep an eye on: So. LB Gideon Enter 5-6, 150; So. QB/DB Jorge Lomelli 6-0 150; So. DL/OL Justin Ramos 6-1 350; Jr. DL/OL Thomas Peltzer 6-3 190; Sr. QB/DE Jackson Indahl 6-1 170.

Strengths of offense: One more year of experience in our offense. Four seniors have been starting since their sophomore year.

Strengths of defense: Return players in our key positions. Five seniors have been starting since their sophomore year.

Team's biggest question marks: We need to replace some key players at the OL positions. Depth is always an issue at our level.

2021 expectations: In order for success to happen on the field, success needs to happen as we grow in our relationships. We know that what we do in the weight rooms directly correlates to what we do on the field, so dedication in the offseason is instrumental to on field success.

Chandler Prep

Head coach: Tom and Josh Brittain.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1 year/4-2.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. LG Zachariah Romesburg 6-0, 180; Sr. LT Langston Harris 6-1 175; Sr. C Ben Nelson 5-11 215; Sr. WR Josh VanOrdt (4 receiving TDs) 6-2, 190; Sr. WR Grant Peake 6-0, 165; Soph. ATH Creon Fulgham 5-10, 165.



Tanque Verde coach Jay Dobyns and his Hawks. (Joe Jackson, Jr. photo/MaxPreps)

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DB Joe Smith 6-2, 220; Soph. LB Sterling Harris (20 tackles); Soph. DB Creon Fulgham; Sr. DB Noah Lobue 5-9, 150; Sr. LB Conner Mason (40 tackles) 5-10, 165; Sr. DL Langston Harris; Sr. DL Zachariah Romesburg.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. Sebastian Pastrana LB/RB 5-8 180; Soph. AJ Robinson Ath 5-10, 165; Soph. Adrian DeCossio OL/DL 5-10, 180; Jr. Nolan Kemper QB 6-0, 165; Sr. Ian Pelczarski OL/DL 6-2, 245.

Strengths of offense: We have a good team speed and a good collection of athletes at skill positions.

Strengths of defense: Fast defense heading into Year 2 of the scheme.

Team's biggest question marks: Offensive and defensive line play.

2021 expectation: Get better every week so we can compete in November.

Program history: Never won a playoff game. That is something we hope to change this year.

More about the program: We played a good St. Johns team tough in the playoffs last year. We expect to take another step this year.

Heritage Academy

Head coach: Anthony Johns.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1st year.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Jr. OL Tristan Rios Manzo, 6-1, 265; Jr. QB, Nathan Estrada (741 passing yards) 5-11, 185; Jr. RB Jonathan Rojo (255 rushing yards) 5-9, 175; Sr. OL Diego Samaniego 5-8, 215.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Jr. DL Kyle Spence 6-3, 205; Jr. DB Nathan Estrada 5-11, 185; Jr. DL Tristan Rios Manzo 6-1, 265; Jr. DB Jared McBride 5-7, 145; Sr. DL Diego Samaniego 5-8, 215; Sr. DL Hector Orozco 5-10, 225.

Also keep an eye on: Fr. QB/DB Kaleb Burras 5-8, 165; Soph. OL/DL Diego Vizcarra 5-11, 215; Soph. TE/LB Raymond Grayson 6-1, 175; Jr. WR/DB TJ Allen 6-1, 150.

Strengths of offense: Our offensive line should be a big strength for us. We have some experience on the OL and that has helped our younger players really take on that OL mentality.

Strengths of defense: We are athletic on the defensive side of the ball. Our guys are comfortable playing in space and running to the football.

Team's biggest question marks: We lost 14 Seniors from the 2020 team. We are looking to our young players to step up for us this year and have an impact. We have to replace a few two-way seniors who were fantastic. I believe our young guys are up to the task.

Program history: We are a young football program. This will only be our 4th season of football in AIA. These things are still in the process of being built.

2021 expectations: We want our team to compete every down and play the next play. We aren't worried about wins and losses with a young team. We want our players to get valuable game experience so they can learn the level of play it takes to be successful.

NFL Yet

Head coach: Ryan Palmer.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1st/83-40.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. QB/RB Isiek Ayala; Sr. WR/DB Jose Perez; Sr. OL/DL Estevan Bermudez; Sr. WR/DB Joey Larrios; Jr. WR/DB Gabriel Lopez

Also keep an eye on: Sr. Nafis Jacobs; Sr. Kris Floyd.

Team's biggest question marks: A lot of unknowns. There was no season last year due to COVID. This is my first year with the school.

2021 expectations: Improve every day!

Veritas Prep

Head coach: Jason Black.

Years as school's head coach/record: 4/24-33.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. QB Gage Lentz (576 passing yards, 269 rushing yards) 6-2, 180; Sr. OL Aaron Bill 6-0, 180; Sr. OL Eli Ravelo 5-8, 160; So. WR Casen Lentz 6-1, 170.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DB Anthony Williams (37 tackles) 5-11, 160; Sr. DB Gage Lentz 6-2, 180; Jr. DB Mason Williams 5-10, 160; So. DB Casen Lentz 6-1, 160; Sr. LB Will Tork (32 tackles) 5-9, 160; Sr. LB Eli Ravelo (63 tackles) 5-8, 160; Sr. DL John Hamman 6-3, 170; Jr. DL Brennan Fisher 5-10, 275.

Team's biggest question marks: Depth of roster. Size. Lots of contributing freshmen.

2021 expectations: Keep our playoff streak alive. Win a playoff game

AGUA FRIA REGION

Glendale Prep

Head coach: Robert Addicott.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2/8-9.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. QB Samuel Terpstra (1,701 passing yards, 19 TDs) 6-1, 185; Sr. OL, Brenden Law 5-11, 220; Sr. WR/RB Caleb Ferguson (247 receiving yards) 6-0, 175; Jr. OL Jonah Smith 5-10, 180; Jr. OL/WR, Jacob Rickey 5-8, 140; Jr. WR/RB Manuel Valenzuela 5-7, 135; So. WR/RB Jack Biddinger 6-0, 185; So. RB/QB Griffin Brazel 5-9, 150.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. Safety/DE Samuel Terpstra (22 tackles) 6-1, 185; Sr. DL Brenden Law 5-11, 220; Sr. LB Caleb Ferguson (32 tackles) 6-0, 175; Jr. DL/LB Jonah Smith (24 tackles) 5-10, 180; Jr. LB/DB Jacob Rickey 5-8, 140; Jr. DB Manuel Valenzuela (26 tackles) 5-7, 135; So. LB Jack Biddinger, 6-0, 185; So. LB/Griffin Brazel 5-9, 150.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. LB Caleb Schreckengost 5-10, 185; Jr. OL/DL Vijay Pate 6-2, 290; So. Judson Terpstra 5-11, 175.

Strengths of offense: Experienced QB, good arm and leadership. Experienced center. Players having the offensive system down better.

Strengths of defense: Better understanding of our complete defense system. Strong LB players.

Team's biggest question marks: Numbers - limited players. Young team - both age wise and experience

Program history: Addicott earned Region Coach of the Year honors last season.

2021 expectations: Execute better - both on offense and defense. Do well in our region. Make playoffs.

More about the program: We were fortunate enough to hire Matthew Mickelson as strength and conditioning coach, with our limited numbers and limited size, he has made a big impact in our preparation even with just starting this spring.

Parker

Head coach: Jeston Lotts.

Years as school's head coach/record: 10/50-39.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. OL Jacob Bennet 6-3, 305; Sr. OL Abraham Silva 5-10, 235; Sr. OL Collin Stanton 6-2, 230; Sr. OL Irvin Sharp 6-3, 290; Jr. OL Ezra Martinez 6-0, 225; Sr. TE Kooper Maniaci 5-10, 185; Sr. FB Anthony Taylor 6-2, 215; Sr. RB Joe Martinez 5-10, 170; Sr. RB Cameron Poole 6-1, 185; Sr. TE Leo Scott 6-2, 205.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DL Juan Carlos Figueroa 6-1, 270; Sr. DL Wayne Miller 6-0, 215; Jr. DL Gage Honomichl 6-1, 225; Sr. LB Collin Stanton 6-2, 230; Sr. LB Anthony Taylor 6-2, 215; Soph. LB Thaddeus Nopah 5-8, 190; Sr. DB Tyson Ross 6-0, 155; Sr. DB Cameron Poole 6-1, 185; Sr. OLB Ethan Sale 6-2, 165; Sr. OLB Kooper Maniaci 5-10, 185.

Also keep an eye on: Soph. QB Zach Bennet 6-2, 150; Soph. DL Elijah Fisher 5-10, 225; Soph. WR Dirk Maxwell 6-0, 150.

Strengths of offense: O-LINE, experience and size. Backfield speed and football IQ.

Strengths of defense: Size, speed, aggressiveness, athleticism.

Team's biggest question marks: Replacing two 1,000 yd rushers. Leadership. Chemistry.

Program history: Rivalry game vs. Wickenburg. Fifty plus years battle for the axe, including the court ordered mandate to stop playing for it for several years in the 70s, I believe.

2021 expectations: Region champions. Compete as hard as we can to the best of our ability. Have fun. Get past the quarterfinals.

More about the program: Our senior class is very special! They have won championships at every level and are striving to become a very successful 4-year group. They are a very tight knit, driven group with lots of talent not only on the football field but in the classroom. Most of our 17 seniors are in the top 10% of their class! We are very proud of that.

Region notes: Camp Verde Jr. Jacob Oothoudt rushed for 314 and 4 TDs in three games last year. ... This will be Surprise-based Highland Prep's inaugural AIA season. ... Evan Steadman of Kingman Academy had 211 receiving yards and 40 tackles last year.

2A HASSAYAMPA REGION

Antelope Union

Head coach: Gary Mauldin.

Years as school's head coach/record: 8/25-47 at Antelope. 162-148 overall.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. QB Jon Whitley (112 receiving yards, 1 TD) 6-4, 185; Sr. DT Jose Soto 5-11, 265; TE/LB Martin Hernandez 6-1, 180; Sr. kicker/punter DB/WR Ivan Lopez 5-11, 155; Sr. Slot Back/Corner Mickey Carrillo 5-10, 160.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. QB Jon Whitley (32 tackles) 6-4, 185; Sr. DT Jose Soto (20 tackles) 5-11, 265; TE/LB Martin Hernandez (23 tackles) 6-1, 180; Sr. kicker/punter DB/WR Ivan Lopez 5-11, 155; Sr. Slot Back/Corner Mickey Carrillo 5-10, 160.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. OL/DL Javi Solis 5-10, 280; LB/RB Jesus Murietta 5-11, 180.

Strengths of offense: Receivers.

Strengths of defense: Defensive Line. Defensive Backs.

Team's biggest question marks: Offensive line.

Program history: Well-respected coaches who have been head coaches at Antelope include Tot Workman and Jess Parker.

2021 expectations: Win the Hassayampa Region title.

St. John Paul II

Head coach: John Padilla.

Years as school's head coach/record: 3/18-15-3.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Chase Rojas (152 rushing yards, 198 receiving yards) 6-0, 175; Sr. WR/QB Mike Myers 5-10, 170; Sr. WR Nino Portillo 6-0, 185; JR. FB Noe Gonzalez (203 rushing yards) 5-6, 190; Sr. OL Cole Bower 6-5, 225; Sr. OL Josh Cabrera 6-2, 275; Sr. OL Caleb Krick 6-3, 175; So. QB Ayden Rojas (282 yards passing, 261 rushing yards) 6-1, 180; So. RB David Dreza 6-0, 165; Jr. OL Ozzie Martinez 5-10, 175; So. OL Dylan Olmos 5-10, 215.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Jr. DL Gabriel Dominguez 6-2, 220; Sr. DL Frankie Ramirez (2.5 sacks) 6-0, 220; Jr. LB Issac McKim (23 tackles) 5-5, 140; Sr. DB Edward Verdugo 5-11, 160; Sr. DL Carlos Ramirez 6-5, 250; Sr. DL Paul Shulski 5-6, 165; So. DB Oscar Aviles 5-10, 155; So. DB Alex Pineda 5-5, 145; Sr. OLB Jorge Rodriguez 5-6, 160; Jr. OLB Sam Sloma 5-9, 175.

Also keep an eye on: So. WR Hayden Umbenstock 5-5, 140; So. OL Manuel Gonzalez 5-6, 175; So. WR Keenan Krick 5-8, 145; Jr. DB, Anthony Pena, 5-10, 165.

Strengths of offense: Small, quick o-line. Explosive skill player. QB explosive. Receiver with great hands.



St. John Paul II WR/LB Chase Rojas. (Chris Stanley photo/MaxPreps)

Strengths of defense: Good size on d-line. Swarm to the ball. Great assistant coaches.

Team's biggest question marks: Getting numbers up. More underclassmen.

Program history: School is three years old. Last year was the first varsity season with AIA. Our first year (2018) we played in CAA and played varsity with the seniors as a freshman. We played with 15 players in total.

2021 expectations: Play hard on every play. Know your job. Never quit.

Tonopah Valley

Head coach: Joshua Oliver.

Years as school's head coach/record: First year.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. OL Esteban Calvillo 5-9, 245; Sr. OL Isaac Kurtz 6-0, 230; Sr. OL Jesus Hernandez 5-7, 210; Jr. OL Jorge Lopez 6-1, 235; Sr. RB Juanangel Martinez (283 yards rushing) 5-10, 200; Sr. WR Prince Robertson (2 receiving TDs) 5-8, 155; Jr. QB/WR Chase Logan (609 passing yards, 6 TDs) 5-11, 170; Jr. QB/WR Austin Villarreal (9 TD passes, 193 rushing yards) 5-10, 155.

Returning starters on defense, 2019 stats: Sr. DB Prince Robertson (43 tackles) 5-8, 155; Jr. DB Tevis Gersaba (36 tackles) 5-7, 140; Sr. LB Juanangel Martinez (56 tackles) 5-10, 200; Sr. DL Esteban Calvillo (31 tackles) 5-9, 245; Jr. DL Jorge Lopez 6-1, 235.

Also keep an eye on: So. TE/LB Owen Naber 6-2, 220; Jr. TE Hunter Hart 6-0, 180; So. OL/DL Jamesson Berry 6-2, 240; Sr. OL/DL Gabe Moore 6-1, 220; So. DE Nash Buffett 5-10, 210.

Strengths of offense: Timing, line cohesion and experience. Passing game improving. Offensive coordinator returning for 4th season. Dynamic athletes.

Strengths of defense: Fundamentally sound. Players understand the system. Players run to the football. Patient coverage. Determined players.

Team's biggest question marks: Replacing solid character seniors. Open field tackling. Depth at all positions. Tough schedule. Skill position size.

Program history: Our football team has had a player get the Brandon Burlsworth Character Award every season since 2016

2021 expectations: Improve every day/week. Grow into solid men the community can rely on. Keep team numbers high. Contend for a region championship.

Trivium Prep

Head coach: Michael Spencer.

Years as school's head coach/record: 5/33-13.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. WR Dylan Spencer 5-7, 160; Sr. QB Luke Willingham (563 receiving yards, 7 TDs) 6-3, 195; Sr. RB Brandon Neugebauer 5-8, 200; Sr. OL Caleb Hamilton 5-9, 300; Sr. OL Jojo Greene 5-10, 265; Sr. OL Kaden Scott 6-3, 200; Sr. RB Blue Lopez (122 rushing yards) 5-9, 170.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. DB Dylan Spencer (29 tackles) 5-7, 160; Sr. DB Luke Willingham 6-3, 195; Sr. LB Brandon Neugebauer 5-8, 200; Sr. DL Jojo Greene 5-10, 265; Sr. DE Kaden Scott (35 tackles, 11 tackles for loss) 6-3, 200; Sr. LB Blue Lopez (25 tackles) 5-9, 170; Sr. LB Kaden Zimmerman 5-10, 170; Sr. DE Mason Anderson 6-2, 180; Sr. DB Andrew Kerfoot 5-9, 165; So. LB Nate Walters (26 tackles) 5-8, 200.

Strengths of offense: Returning many offensive linemen. Strong set of skill players.

Strengths of defense: Many returning starters with Friday night experience.

Team's biggest question marks: Breaking in a new quarterback. Breaking in a new offensive scheme.

2021 expectations: To win the region and compete in state playoffs.

Region notes: COVID-19 kept San Pasqual from fielding a team last season. It's slated to play 10 regular season games this year.



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1A CONFERENCE FOOTBALL PRESEASON RANKINGS



Mogollon ran the table in 2020 and looks to be just as strong coming into this season. (Steven Davis photo/MaxPreps)

By Jose Garcia
AZPreps365.com

1. MOGOLLON: Every high-ranked team in 1A has holes to fill. Mogollon is no exception. But what gives Mogollon a slight edge before the season commences is its options on offense and experienced lines. One of those veterans is three-year starter Eddie Corrales, a center on an O-line that will replace only one starter. Mogollon also returns an experienced quarterback in Cael Porter, who played 40 percent of the snaps last year. Porter did a good job of running the option last year, but, with TE Tyler Owens and WR Fisher Porter on the outside, expect Porter to throw more this year.

2. WILLIAMS: The program isn't shying away from the competition despite being thin at some spots. Coach Jeff Brownlee's team might take its lumps early, but it will also dole them out. Early games against Nevada 8-man power Pahrangat Valley, No. 3 Bagdad, No. 10 Hayden and travelling to the Valley to open against Cicero Prep in the August heat should toughen Brownlee's team. The senior class is small, so the underclassmen will need to step up, including Williams' freshman class of about 15 players. RB Jesse Sagor, WR/DE Preston Ford and DB/WR Xavier Shepherd are seniors who can still lead the championship charge while showing the underclassmen the ropes. Opponents will also attempt to stop the fast and athletic Drew Logan. After last season's breakout season, the junior wants to establish himself as 1A's top rusher this year.

3. BAGDAD: The Bagdad community's faith in this year's senior class wasn't strong at first, but the 2021-22 seniors made believers of them all. Bagdad is about to unveil its best team since

its 2016 championship squad, and the seniors, including Connor Watson, will be front and center. Watson, the strongest player in the program, plans to be under center this year after leading the team in receiving last year. Look for the 6-3, 190-pound Watson to also run the ball. When Bagdad is in its spread set, Watson has a big target/savvy veteran on the outside in Cooper Williams. The running backs, senior Keiland Lucero (400-pound squatter; 6 sacks last year), senior Cecil Brower and sophomore Kaleb Gomez, are unproven but versatile and ready. Its depth in the trenches is what also makes Bagdad a contender. The team will return a quality center, Lorenzo Medina, from injury and two-way leader G/DL Elijah Aguilar.

4. ST. DAVID: It's odd that Talon Haynie is a quiet kid, because he makes so much noise on the field. "Once he puts the pads on he gets very intense," St. David's coach Braden Davis said. Haynie's numbers (10.5 yards per carry, 120.8 rushing yards per game in 2020) as well speak louder than Haynie's words at times. The senior's dedication in the weight room allowed him to develop into one of 2021's best 1A running backs. But a word of caution: Try not to focus too much on the very quick Haynie, because St. David's other weapons are also capable of making loud statements.

5. SAN MANUEL: Ernie Ivy's program made the 1A playoffs last year after moving down from 2A. But a first round exit whetted San Manuel's appetite. So the program hit the weight room. In the trenches is where San Manuel got stronger, and it also got healthy on the skill side. Last year's offensive leader, Noah Huerta, missed the rest of the season after breaking his collarbone in the third game of the year. Huerta's speed and knowledge of the offense will be put to use in different spots, including at RB and

WR. He is one of just four seniors on the team but those four, including DE Justin Tafoya and OLB/RB Isaiah Lopez, will be the captains. San Manuel will also return to the field with some reinforcements. Jonathan Guisa (6-5, 250) started in some games last year, opted to leave to focus on just baseball but is back this year. Huerta's brother, Isaiah, and the quick Dominic Rodriguez are two freshmen who might see some playing time this season.

6. SUPERIOR: It didn't make sense at first how Dr. Joshua Denhalter wound up at Superior. He paid his coaching dues as an assistant at 11-man programs, serving along the way under established coaching leaders such as Williams Field's Steve Campbell and American Leadership Academy-Gilbert North's Randy Ricedorf. But it turns out that small town, 8-man football tugs at Dr. Denhalter's heart. Before the northern California town was mostly destroyed by a fire in 2018, Dr. Denhalter spent some time playing 8-man football in Paradise. Denhalter found his slice of paradise in Superior. Time will tell, but Superior may have hit a home run with the hiring of Dr. Denhalter as its new football coach. The coach earned his doctorate in change theory and also served in the United States Marines Corps. Dr. Denhalter is now putting his degrees and coaching and life experiences to good use while molding young men and helping Superior High remain relevant.

7. ANTHEM PREP: The program is coming off its first winning season. This season, it'll start off with another program first: a top-10 preseason ranking. The confidence is sky high partially because Anthem Prep returns one of the state's leading passers/rushers from 2020, Alex Crawford (6-5, 200). Anthem Prep, which returns only six starters, used the offseason to prepare the new players. Eagles 6-foot-4 sophomore JP Young, a line-man last year, is moving to tight end, a vital role in coach LeRoy McGrue's RPO scheme. Jack Chumley, who returned to Anthem Prep after living in North Carolina, will be another threat.

8. TEMPE PREP: The gauntlet begins with preseason No. 1 Moggollon making a visit. Then a trip to No. 3 Bagdad follows. Five of its nine games will be against top-10 teams. It's not as if Tempe Prep won't be ready, though. The Knights have an excellent coach in Larry Cain and one of the top returning quarterbacks in 1A, Diego Foster. Foster, a senior, added about 10-15 pounds after suffering a leg injury last year, when he averaged 291.2 yards in the air and 69.2 on the ground per game.

9. SALOME: The Frogs are ticked off. They didn't reach the playoffs last year for the first time since 2011. But the entire team, with the exception of one player, will return to hopefully atone for last year's playoff-less campaign. "All they (players) have talked about this summer was not letting it happen again," said coach Bryan McCarty, who is delegating more of his duties to assistants. That's because of the amount of skill players on this year's team. Salome will be fast on the outside but will also start an inside the seams threat, RB/OL Alvaro Alvarez (5-10, 255), as well as returning second-team All-State athlete Gabriel Beltran. Vastly improved QB Nick Dautel has performed well in the offseason since suffering an injury in the final game of last year's regular season. Opponents will soon hear of two Salome freshmen with speed to burn, Carlos Esparza and Jovany Calderon. Calderon is already the fastest player on the team. Returning starters Stephen Avila, Fernando Armenta and Alvarez are the O-line's main protectors.

10. HAYDEN: What will Hayden look like? It's one of the big questions heading into this 1A season, because Hayden didn't play last year. "It was a tough pill to swallow, but the safety of the kids comes first, and I respected the decision not to play," said Hayden coach John Estrada about last year's timeout due to COVID-19. Even heading into this year there was a question about whether the person who resurrected the program, Estrada, would return because of a new job. But Estrada's new employer gave the OK for him to continue coaching the program he loves.



Williams has something to prove this season and wants that 1A title back. (Steven Davis photo/MaxPreps)

1A CONFERENCE FOOTBALL TEAM-BY-TEAM PREVIEW



Some of the 1A contenders have to get through Valley Union this season to earn a spot in the postseason. (Darin Sicurello photo/MaxPreps)

By Jose Garcia
AZPreps365.com

SOUTH REGION

San Manuel JR/SR High School

Head coach: Ernest Ivy.

Years as school's head coach/record: 3 years/3-2.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: So. QB Nicholas Velasquez (637 passing yards) 5-11, 210; Sr. RB/DB Noah Huerta (228 rushing yards, 4 TDs) 5-10, 155; Sr. DL/OL Justin Tofoya 6, 220; Sr. RB/DB Isaiah Lopez 5-9, 145; Jr. RB/LB Mathias Medina (275 rushing yards, 4 TDs; 312 receiving, 3 TDs) 5-10, 150; Jr. WR/DB Tony Guisa (222 receiving yards) 6-3, 175; So. OL/DL Aiden Lozoya 5-11, 255.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: So. QB Nicholas Velasquez 5-11, 210; Sr. RB/DB Noah Huerta (2 INTs) 5-10, 155; Sr. DL/OL Justin Tofoya 6, 220; Sr. RB/DB Isaiah Lopez (20 tackles) 5-9, 145; Jr. RB/LB Mathias Medina (45 tackles) 5-10, 150; Jr. WR/DB Tony Guisa (21 tackles) 6-3, 175; So. OL/DL Aiden Lozoya 5-11, 255.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. DL/OL Jonathan Guisa 6-5, 255; Jr. DL/OL Aedan Hawkins 6-1, 245; Fr. RB/DB Dominic Rodriguez 5-8, 135; Fr. QB/WR/DB Isaiah Huerta 6, 160.

Strengths of offense: Big and fast offense. Many returning for 2nd year of 8-man football knowing the game better.

Strengths of defense: Having more kids out this year and being able to focus on having players only for defense and not having to play both offense and defense.

Team's biggest questions marks: Team consists of young players, mostly sophomores.

2021 expectations: A good healthy season. Goal is to make playoffs and do well.

More about the program: Mathias Medina is a 'tackling machine' who lines up at linebacker but can step in on offense like he did last year while running the Wildcat. Another one of San Manuel's underclassmen "beasts" is sophomore lineman Aiden Lozoya, who started as a freshman and is the strongest player on the team. Nicholas Velasquez, a sophomore, learned on the fly last year as the team's starting quarter-

back. Ivy is expecting his 5-10, 220-pound QB to run a more balanced offense this year.

Region notes: Baboquivari and Cibeque didn't field a team last year due to COVID-19. ... Benjamin Harris of Duncan (1-5 in 2020) rushed for 206 yards and three TDs last year. Austin Bigler was second on the team with 40 tackles. ... Fort Thomas (1-3 last year) was led by Tyler Black (401 passing yards, 226 rushing yards). Carmelo Robertson rushed for 200 yards last year as a freshman. On defense, Alex Johnson was the leader with 31 tackles. ... Valley Union (1-4 last year) graduated Jacob Sonke, who rushed for 1,079 and had 61 tackles in 5 games. ... St. David graduated a dependable quarterback last year, but it's next signal caller isn't too shabby. Ryan Gooding (6-2, 185) was St. David's JV starting QB the last two years and has a good arm. Cody Didion is another running back with "good wheels" who will also line up at WR. And Jake Goodman and Coy Richardson are wideouts who can get open for Gooding. Goodman was also his region's Defensive MVP as an OLB last year. The MLB, Brayden Merrill, is probably the best tackler on a team that returns almost every defensive player.

EAST REGION

Lincoln Preparatory Academy

Head coach: Paul Schubring.

Years as school's head coach/record: 3rd year/ 3-8.

Returning starters on offense: Sr. QB Eli Johnson; Sr. WR Connor Kreun; Sr. RG Darren Nguyen; Jr. RB Shane Sasso; So. LG Luke Nielsen.

Returning starters on defense: Sr. LB Grady Luce; Sr. DE Kevin Vo; So. CB Michael DeBratto; So. Trey Williams.

Also keep an eye on: Sr. WR Justin Nguyen; Jr. WR/S Geoffrey Kim; Jr. RB/QB/WR/LB Jackson Dilley; So. LB Conor Ludwig; Jr. C JD Akers.

Strengths of offense: We are deep and experienced at skill positions, especially with two players returning after sitting out last season due to Covid.

Strengths of defense: Our defensive players have solidified their execution in a consistent scheme. Good depth at all positions. Our senior captain Grady Luce is poised for a huge year at linebacker.

Team's biggest question marks: Can we replace our seniors? Last year was our first graduating class ever, so how well can we replace players we have lost? Our success will come down to the trenches. We lost our top defensive linemen to a knee injury in the spring, and we are replacing the heart and soul of our team at center.

2021 expectations: We expect to be competitive in every game this season. Our goal is to qualify for the playoffs for the first time in school history.

More about the program: Grady Luce (Coach's son, great leader, the heart and soul of our team, fun guy to talk to). Eli Johnson (Aspirations to play at the next level, best football IQ on the team.). Coach Will Wright (Former D-I football player who has been instrumental in improving our defense and shaping our program for the long haul.)

Program history: This is our third year, so we are still new. We had our first seniors graduate this past season. While our true rivalries may not yet have emerged, our region is incredibly competitive, and we have embraced that challenge eagerly.

Superior

Head coach: Dr Joshua Denhalter.

Years as school's head coach/record: 1st (0-0).

Strengths of offense: It all starts up front for us. Our strength is in our big dudes, and our ability to move some weight. From there, we have some athletes that can be special in space.

Strengths of defense: Again, it starts up front. We have guys that will be tough to block 1v1. If we can stay disciplined and trust our teammates, our defense can be special.

Team's biggest question marks: We lost a lot last year. Who is going to step up? We have changed our culture, and our X's and O's. How will players adjust? How will we adjust?

2021 expectations: Our team philosophy is Character + Chemistry = Championships. My focus is to develop our character and chemistry, and if we have enough commitment and buy in, we will be competing for championships.

More about the program: Sophomore OL/DL James Vasquez 6-0, 260. First to buy in to our culture. Players gravitate towards him. Going to have a big season. Sophomore RB/DB David Drennan. Hardest worker on the team, game changing speed. Special kid. Junior QB/RB Adam Lopez 5'10 170. Vocal leader of the offense. Great attitude and hard worker.



Superior OL Zach Duarte. (Steven Davis photo/MaxPreps)

Seen a lot of growth. Sophomore OL/DL Eli Smith. First year playing and pushing for a starting job on both sides of the ball. Freshman RB/LB Joel Romero 5'10 210. Doesn't look or play like a freshman. Will start on both sides of the ball for us. Looks for contact. Superior's starting quarterback transferred out and one of the program's best players, Zach Duarte, may not play this year (shoulder surgeries).

Program history: Copper Helmet Game, homecoming, rivalry game vs. Ray 9/24.

Region notes: Cicero Prep of Scottsdale finished 1-4 last year as a first year AIA member. ... Ray didn't play last year because of COVID-19. ... Hayden is playing catch-up after not playing last year. Only four seniors are on the team, but the junior class carries about 15 players and the sophomore and freshman ranks have a combined 13 student athletes. One of the players who will do damage is junior quarterback Fabian Elvira. "He's a tough kid," coach John Estrada said. So is junior running back Moraes Cruz, who will also start at middle linebacker. Estrada also will count on junior cornerback Brandon Garner, who started as a freshman. Aaron Peed will help Hayden's linemen get up to speed and provide some senior leadership. ... Tempe Prep lost its No. 1 WR and three leading tacklers off of last year's playoff team. But three four-year starters, Joseph Patterson, Jacob Dendy and Moises Canizales, are more than ready to step into the receiving spotlight. Opposing defensive backs also need to keep an eye on Tempe Prep freshman Austin Sampson. Patterson, Dendy, Canizales and experienced RB Tyrone "Bubba" Jordan will also patrol Tempe Prep's secondary. The team's linebacker unit has two standouts, Soph. Luke Smaw and Jacob Tsark. Tsark was a center last year but added 25 pounds. Smaw is a hockey player but will give football a try this year. One of the all-time best QBs in 1A, Christian Bailey, the 1A record holder for touchdowns in a game (10) and yards passing in a game with 571, joined Tempe Prep's coaching staff.

NORTH REGION

Williams

Head coach: Jeff Brownlee.

Years as school's head coach/record: 12/94-31.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Jr. RB Drew Logan (564 rushing yards, 12 TDs, 374 receiving yards 6 TDs) 5-10, 170; Sr. RB Jesse Sagor (204 rushing yards) 5-11, 160; Jr. Center Bryton Cox 6-0, 290; Sr. TE Preston Ford (197 receiving yards) 6-2, 185.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Jr. LB Drew Logan (66 tackles) 5-10, 170; Sr. CB Jesse Sagor (64 tackles) 5-11, 160; Sr. DE Nick Gutierrez (48 tackles) 5-7, 170; Jr. Nose Bryton Cox 6-0, 290; Sr. CB Xavier Shepherd (40 tackles) 6-1, 155.

Also keep an eye on: Jr. QB Danny Siegfried 5-10, 185; So. LB Tyler Jensen 5-7, 170.

Strengths of offense: Speed. Backfield will be fast. Passing game will be much improved.

Strengths of defense: Physical. Team speed.

Team's biggest question marks: Offensive line. Only one returning starter on the line.

2021 expectations: One game at a time this year. To be battle tested early and make solid playoff run.

Region notes: Last year, El Capitan (4-2) tied its program high for wins in a season. It also finished with a winning region record (3-2) for the time in the program's six-year history. Isaiah Bradshaw (719 passing yards, 1,162 rushing, 21 total TDs) was a junior last year. ... Fredonia will look to bounce back from last year's 0-5 season under fifth-year coach Aaron Derbidge. ... Joseph City finished an uncharacteristic 1-4 last year. ... Jr. Charlie Befort of Mayer (1-4) rushed for 280 yards and 2 TDs in 2020. ... When Mogollon runs, Blayk Kelton, coach Richard Samon's grandson, will be one of the ball carriers. But senior Malaki Porter and junior Payton Reidhead will be the primary ball carries. Defensively, Mogollon might start the state's best defensive line in 1A. That's where you'll find three-year defensive end starters Trextan Reidhead and Tyler Owens and the "super fast" Landon Stevens at nose guard. The Porter

twins, Cael and Malaki, will serve as starting corners. At linebacker, the team's second and third leading tacklers from last year, Fisher Porter and Reidhead, respectively, as well as Kelton return. ... A lot of Williams' success will depend on how quickly its O-line jells. Bryton Cox didn't play in last year's playoffs (appendix), but he's back to man the center and nose guard positions. The guards are quick but lack size. "We will be tested up front," coach Jeff Brownlee said. "We can't go double tight. We have to be more creative because of our lack of size." Jr. Danny Siegfried and Tyler Jensen, a starting LB, were competing for the starting QB role. This will be the first time that a senior isn't under center in the past three years for Williams. The linebacker spots are also a question mark. "But all of those kids in those positions (O-line, QB, LB) are kids who accept the challenge and are ready to go right now," Brownlee said. The defensive line, with Ford and Siegfried at defensive end, and secondary, with Sagor, Shepherd and Logan, are in capable hands.

WEST REGION

Anthem Prep

Head coach: LeRoy McGrue.

Years as school's head coach/record: 2nd/5-2.

Returning starters on offense: Sr. QB Jacob Crawford 6-5, 200; Sr. C/G Aiden Quirk 6-1, 295; Sr. RB Alex Rebilas 5-9, 165; So. TE/G JP Young 6-5, 215.

Returning starters on defense: Sr. QB Jacob Crawford 6-5, 200; Sr. C/G Aiden Quirk 6-1, 295; Sr. RB Alex Rebilas 5-9, 165; So. TE/G JP Young 6-5, 215.

More about the program: McGrue said his staff has been raving about a newcomer with speed, Chase Peterson, who might play at RB and or WR. Sr. Aidan Quirk will supply the muscle in the backfield during Anthem Prep's run game. The offensive line received a boost last season when Landen Lujan transferred in from Northwest Christian. The defense graduated its leading tackler, but it's second leading tackler last year, ILB Andy Gandolfo, returns. Crawford was a LB last year but might switch to DE this year depending on schemes. Sr. Alex Rabilas is the team's shutdown corner and returned a couple of punts for scores last year.

Mountainside

Head coach: Christopher Duane.

Years as school's head coach/record: First-year AIA program.

Also keep an eye on: So. NT/ Y/ G Noah Akins 6-0, 260; Fr. WR Morgan Eppley 6-1, 140; So. RB/ LB John Bigelow 5-10, 175.

Strengths of offense: Offensive line is big and athletic.

Strengths of defense: Defensive backfield is quick and aggressive.

Team's biggest question marks: Everything is a question mark. New program with mainly kids who haven't played before.

2021 expectations: Be competitive in the 1A West Division.

Bagdad

Head coach: Dalton Mills.

Years as school's head coach/record: 9/78-15.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. QB Connor Watson (708 yards receiving, 14 TDs) 6-3, 190; Sr. WR Cooper Williams (651 receiving yards, 8 TDs) 6-0, 160; Sr. G Elijah Aguilar 5-9, 220; Sr. RB Keiland Lucero 5-10, 200; Sr. RB Cecil Brower 5-9, 165; Sr. TE Garrett Reeves 6-2, 180; Jr. C Lorenzo Medina 5-11, 240.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Sr. LB Connor Watson (35 tackles) 6-3, 190; Sr. LB Cecil Brower 5-9, 165; Sr. DE Keiland Lucero (49 tackles, 6.5 sacks) 5-11, 200; Sr. NG Elijah Aguilar 5-9, 220; Sr. DE Garrett Reeves (42 tackles, 10.5 sacks) 6-3, 180; Sr. DB Cooper Williams (28 tackles) 6-0, 160; Sr. DB Nick Elliott (25 tackles, 4 INTs) 6-0, 170.

Also keep an eye on: So. WR Joe Gonzalez 5-7, 145; So. RB/LB Kaleb Gomez 5-8, 150; So. WR/DB Shane Hooper 6-1, 160; Sr. G Kady Mikes 6-0, 190; Jr. G/NG T.J. Exley 6-1, 210.

Strengths of offense: Our offensive line has a lot of experience. Veteran leadership. Our seniors are ready to make their mark. Nobody saw this group coming. They were overlooked. We are moving Connor Watson

to QB. He is the best athlete in our program and is pound for pound the strongest player in our program and the strongest QB we have ever had. We have depth at the running back position with Lucero, Brower and Gomez all getting quality carries last year. A receiving corps led by Cooper Williams, who is getting many looks by small colleges as a WR. **Strengths of defense:** All of the strengths of our defense returns, including 80 percent of our made tackles, 22 of 24 Sacks, and 10 of 11 guys that made interceptions are back. Our whole starting D-line returns, which means we will have more depth on both sides of the line, including Keiland Lucero and Garrett Reeves, our two leading tacklers who had 17 total sacks. Our defensive backs, led by Nick Elliott, who locks down the opponents' No. 1 WR and led the team with four interceptions. On the other side, Cooper Williams had two Interceptions of his own. Our defensive backs are led by Nick Elliott, who locks down the opponents' No. 1 WR and led the team with four interceptions. On the other side, Cooper Williams had two Interceptions of his own.

Team's biggest question marks: Who wins the starting running back position of the three quality backs we have. Developing chemistry with Watson and the wide receivers as he moves back to the QB position. This could be one of our strongest and fastest teams in about four years. Do they work to fulfill this potential?

Program history: Coach Carl Ridenour was a football and baseball coach here in the 90's. Had a significant impact on 3/4 of the coaches on our staff. He passed away with Parkinson's this last year.

2021 expectations: Stay together and have a positive impact. Stay healthy. Win a state championship.

More about the program: Connor Watson is a 1A athlete who is being recruited in two sports. Line coach Mike Love. His main job is a fire fighter, but volunteers as our line coach. Is also our conditioning coach. He brings a lot of energy and condition from teaching at the Williamson Valley Fire Dept. We call it Love Time. Senior defensive end Garrett Reeves (10.5 sacks) is back. The team's fast, experienced and aggressive D-line also will be deep at nose guard, with Isaac Morris, T.J. Exley and freshman Nick Martinez seeing time at that position.



Bagdad QB Connor Watson. (Mark Jones photo/MaxPreps)

STEPHENS, MOGOLLON'S COACH CONNECT ON A HIGHER LEVEL

By Jose Garcia
AZPreps365.com

Landon Stephens tried his darndest to get his future coach to notice him.

But Rick Samon purposely kept Stephens at bay during their first meeting. For the commanding Samon, a retired 25-year Arizona Department of Public Safety officer, recognition of any sort is earned.

Having coached some of Stephens' talented uncles wasn't even enough for Samon to acknowledge Stephens when he was in junior high. But that began to switch when he suited up for Samon's Mogollon High Mustangs.

The rugged defensive lineman drew lots of attention last season as the Mustangs charged to the 1A, 8-man football crown. As for Stephens' relationship with his coach, it's evolved tenfold. Samon became a father figure when some of life's ups and downs led Stephens to confide in his high school coach.

"He's a great teacher and coach but a better friend," Stephens said of his mentor. "I really like him. He is great and so supportive and makes playing so much easier. He sits there and listens and helps me with my problems."

Samon's purpose for coaching goes beyond the X's and O's.

His relationship with his star defensive lineman reaffirmed that.

"God send me here (Mogollon) for a reason," Samon said. "I am not here to just coach and teach but to have the heart of understanding kids like Landon. Last year he opened up to me more, and I started giving him time to vent in the mornings."

For 22 years now, Samon has been imparting life lessons to his football flock in Heber.

But last year was his first as Mogollon's head coach after a long stint as the school's defensive coordinator. In his first year in charge, Samon left his mark, guiding his squad to a 9-0 record and the ring.

Helping foil William High School's plan to repeat as 1A champ was Stephens, who was often double-teamed last season, freeing up teammates to do damage. One of those beneficiaries was Jayk Kelton, Mogollon's leading tackler and rusher in 2020.

During Mogollon's playoff run, Stephens often blitzed from the strong side, attracting at times two linemen. If opponents didn't order two players to block him, running backs at times paid the price when

they ran into Stephens. Mogollon would also take the straight line approach with Stephens—bull rushing the center to "worry" quarterbacks.

"Landon was just so fast off the line that teams could not overlook him," Samon said. "His determination is just phenomenal. But it was an 8-man team effort for us last year. Every kid on my defense was a playmaker, and Landon's willingness to be a team player was the biggest thing about his performance last year."

Stephens didn't mind the attention he was receiving by opponents. "It makes me happy knowing that one guy wasn't enough to block me," said the 6-foot, 250-pound junior.

But what made him even more ecstatic was seeing the brotherhood his team formed last year.

"They were all my brothers," he said. "Everything that was done was done together from the beginning of the year, on and off the field. I respected them as much as they respected me."

Mogollon has been a model of consistency during Samon's tenure. In his 22 years, the Mustangs have reached the semifinals and or finals each year except during three state quarterfinals appearances. This year, the 1A preseason favorite will seek its 9th title invite during that span.

Helping Mogollon become one of the state's small school superpowers was about five of Stephens' uncles, including former All-Conference middle linebacker Baylen Stephens.

"Landon doesn't want to be compared to his uncles," Samon said. "But I'm just going to say it. He is better than them. He's just a great athlete."

Samon's expectations for Stephens on defense this season will remain the same—be a playmaker.

On offense, last year he was subbed in at the guard spot, but there's a need at tackle this year, so that's where Stephens will line up at times as well.

"He'll do anything I ask him to do," Samon said.

After graduating key players such as Kelton last year, Stephens' leadership responsibilities figure to increase as well this year. Despite saying goodbye to last year's starters, Stephens didn't sound concerned about his team's ability to make another run.

"You just have to watch," he said matter-of-factly.



Some of the biggest contributions from Landon Stephens went unnoticed during last year's championship run. (Steven Davis photo/MaxPreps)

Desert Heights Prep

Head coach: Kendrick Felix.

Years as the school's head coach: 8.

Returning starters on offense: Sr. QB Jacob Hanback 6-3; Sr. RB/WR Julian Szemesi 5-11; Sr. RB Jerek Aguon 5-9.

Returning starters on defense: Sr. DB Julian Szemesi (19 tackles) 5-11; Sr. LB Jerek Aguon (34 tackles).

Also keep an eye on: Jr. WR/DB Casey Jenkins 5-11; Sr. Kenyon Boatman WR 5-11; Sr. Marcus Buchanan RB/LB 6-0; Fr. Josh Orozco WR/DB 6-0.

2021 expectations: Compete in every game and try getting into playoffs.

More about the program: Jacob Hanback. He has had three season ending injuries. He looks great now and is trying to show what he can do on the field.

Program history: This is our second year in the AIA. Prior, we were in the CAA for 8 seasons, where we had six championship game appearances, won 5 titles and had a record of 68-10. Several successful athletes come through our program. Some are Shaun Lowe (Phoenix College/Central Washington University), Brandon Haldiman (Glendale CC/Highland CC) and Caleb Ashby, who's currently playing at Arizona Christian University.

Salome

Head coach: Bryan McCarty.

Years as school's head coach/record: 5/26-16.

Returning starters on offense, 2020 stats: Sr. QB Nick Dautel (387 yards passing, 304 rushing yards) 5-9, 175; Jr. RB Gabriel Beltran (126 receiving yards) 5-9, 170; Jr. RB Alvaro Alvarez (422 rushing yards) 6-0, 250; Jr. WR Kevin Castillo (160 receiving yards) 5-9, 170; Jr. OL Fernando Armenta 6-1, 200; Soph. OL Stephen Avila 6-2, 230; Soph. WR Edgar Gamez 5-8, 155; Soph. ATH Jibran Castillo 5-8, 175.

Returning starters on defense, 2020 stats: Soph. NT Stephen Avila 6-2, 235; Jr. DE Fernando Armenta (25 tackles) 6-1, 200; Sr. DE Eddie Romage 5-8, 175; Jr. LB Alvaro Alvarez (37 tackles) 6-0, 250; Jr. LB Gabriel Beltran (49 tackles) 5-9, 170; Jr. LB Miguel Navarro (29 tackles) 5-8, 200; Sr. DB Nick Dautel (29 tackles) 5-9, 175; Jr. DB Kevin Castillo (25 tackles) 5-9, 170; Soph DB Edgar Gamez (32 tackles) 5-8, 155.

Also keep an eye on: Soph. LB Francisco Soberanes; Frosh. Jovany Calderon 5-7, 155; Frosh. Carlos Esparza 5-8, 170; Soph. Andrew Matters 5-9, 155; Soph. Ollie Huhtala 5-8, 150.

Strengths of offense: Speed. Multiple quick receivers that are explosive after the catch. Depth at the running back position. Multiple speed and power backs. Returning all but one player from last year's 4-2 season.

Strengths of defense: Speed. All positions have multiple speed options. Experience. Returning all starters. Depth at all positions.

Team's biggest question marks: Who is going to be playing where.

Offensive line on the right guard spot. How to use the 15 skill position players for 5 spots.

Program history: Our football team has grown since I started as an unpaid assistant in 2007. Making the first playoff in 2010 and not looking back since. Winning the region championship in 2018 was big, beating Bagdad for the first time in 16 years that year. We have steadily grown into a team that challenges in the 1A west the last 4 years.

2021 expectations: Get better every day, every practice session. Taking advantage of the opportunity that we have this season since we are returning everyone and adding talented freshmen. Challenge for a region championship.

More about the program: Ollie Huhtala. She plays offensive line and DE/LB. She works extremely hard. Her work ethic is 2nd to none, and she has earned the entire team's respect. She doesn't miss practices, always goes all out, and is ready to jump in and work in any film session, practice, and game. Ron Conrad has coached at our school and multiple sports for so many years now. He is always here for the kids in our communities. He drives players to and from practice, will come in on off days to work with players in any sport and has been vital to my growth as a coach here at Salome.

Region notes: Mohave Accelerated didn't win a game last year but lost one game in OT by six points and another by four points. ... Jr. Isaac Nubes threw 11 TD passes and rushed for 518 yards and six TDs last year for Phoenix Day School for the Deaf (3-5 in 2021). Sr. Jose Santiago led the team with 50 tackles last year.



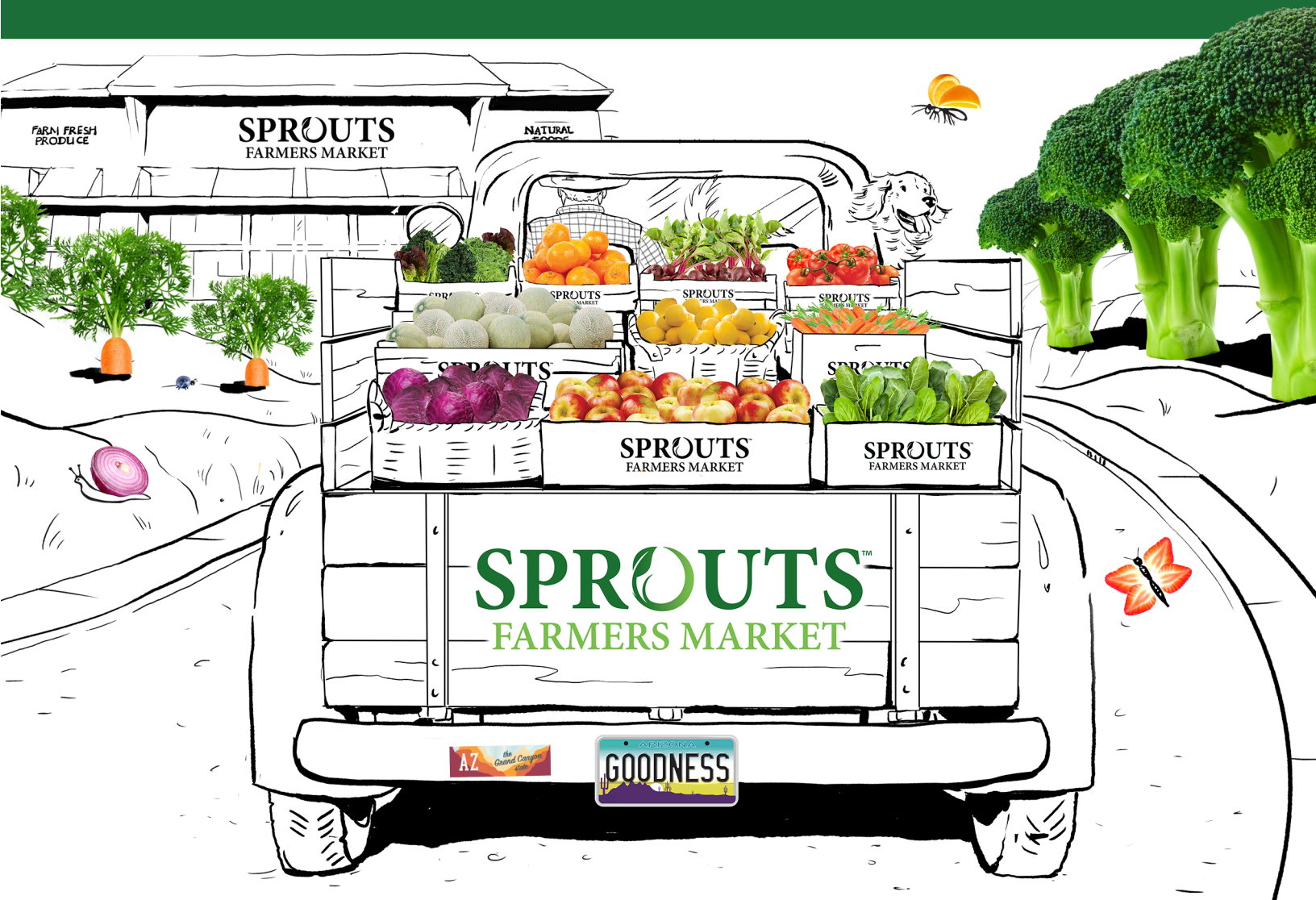
Mohave Accelerated. (Darin Sicurello photo/MaxPreps)



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Football Championship Teams

Open Division

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2020	Chandler (10-0)	Rick Garretson	Hamilton (8-2)	Michael Zdebski	23-21
2019	Chandler (13-0)	Rick Garretson	Saguaro (11-2)	Jason Mohns	42-35

6A

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2020	Chaparral (6-2)	Brent Barnes	Highland (7-4)	Brock Farrel	24-14
2019	Liberty (10-4)	Mark Smith	Red Mountain (12-2)	Mike Peterson	34-28 (OT)
2018	Chandler (13-1)	Shaun Aguano	Perry (11-3)	Preston Jones	65-28
2017	Chandler (12-2)	Shaun Aguano	Perry (12-2)	Preston Jones	49-42
2016	Chandler (13-2)	Shaun Aguano	Mountain Pointe (13-1)	Norris Vaughn	36-17

5A

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2020	Sunrise Mountain (9-2)	Steve Decker	Ironwood (7-3)	Chris Rizzo	42-20
2019	Williams Field (12-2)	Steve Campbell	Campo Verde (10-4)	Max Ragsdale	19-0
2018	Centennial (14-0)	Richard Taylor	Notre Dame Prep (13-1)	George Prelock	60-7
2017	Centennial (12-1)	Richard Taylor	Notre Dame Prep (13-1)	George Prelock	42-21
2016	Williams Field (14-0)	Steve Campbell	Centennial (12-2)	Richard Taylor	14-6

4A

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2020	Mesquite (9-1)	Scott Hare	Cactus (8-3)	Joseph Ortiz	39-38
2019	Mesquite (11-3)	Scott Hare	Desert Edge (10-4)	Jose Lucero	28-23
2018	Saguaro (13-1)	Jason Mohns	Salpointe Catholic (13-1)	Dennis Bene	42-16
2017	Saguaro (12-2)	Jason Mohns	Salpointe Catholic (12-2)	Dennis Bene	28-7
2016	Saguaro (14-0)	Jason Mohns	Catalina Foothills (11-3)	Jeff Scurran	42-14

3A

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2020	Snowflake (10-1)	Kay Solomon	Yuma Catholic (10-1)	Rhett Stallworth	38-14
2019	American Leadership (QC) (13-1)	Rich Edwards	Benjamin Franklin (12-2)	Dave Jefferies	24-6
2018	Northwest Christian (13-1)	David Inness	Yuma Catholic (11-3)	Rhett Stallworth	40-37 (3OT)
2017	Casteel (14-0)	Spencer Stowers	Pusch Ridge (13-1)	Jerry Harris	35-28
2016	American Leadership (QC) (13-1)	Rich Edwards	Sabino (12-2)	Jay Campos	31-14

2A

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2020	Santa Cruz Valley (9-1)	Rishard Davis	Benson (9-1)	Chris Determan	42-7
2019	Round Valley (11-2)	Marcus Bell	Phoenix Christian (12-2)	Brian Cole	34-28
2018	Thatcher (14-0)	Roman Morales	Round Valley (11-3)	Marcus Bell	35-12
2017	Thatcher (13-1)	Sean Hinton	Santa Cruz Valley (12-1)	Rishard Davis	28-27 (OT)
2016	Thatcher (12-2)	Sean Hinton	Round Valley (13-1)	Marcus Bell	33-28

Football Championship Teams

1A (8-man)

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2020	Mogollon (9-0)	Richard Samon	Williams (6-2)	Jeff Brownlee	38-30
2019	Williams (10-1)	Jeff Brownlee	Superior (9-2)	Ryan Palmer	35-20
2018	Superior (11-0)	Ryan Palmer	Hayden (8-4)	John Estrada	70-20
2017	Williams (9-2)	Jeff Brownlee	Superior (9-2)	Ryan Palmer	57-14
2016	Bagdad (11-0)	Dalton Mills	Williams (9-2)	Jeff Brownlee	60-6

Football Championship Teams

Division I

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2015	Centennial (12-2)	Richard Taylor	Desert Ridge (11-3)	Jeremy Hathcock	28-6
2014	Chandler (13-1)	Shaun Aguano	Hamilton (12-2)	Steve Belles	28-7
2013	Mountain Pointe (14-0)	Norris Vaughan	Hamilton (11-2)	Steve Belles	42-19
2012	Hamilton (12-2)	Steve Belles	Mountain Pointe (12-2)	Norris Vaughan	31-16
2011	Desert Vista (13-1)	Dan Hinds	Hamilton (13-1)	Steve Belles	45-19

Division II

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2015	Saguaro (12-2)	Jason Mohns	Marcos de Niza (12-3)	Sean Morin	38-20
2014	Centennial (12-2)	Richard Taylor	Liberty (12-2)	Danny Filleman	26-14
2013	Salpointe Catholic (14-0)	Dennis Bene	Chaparral (12-2)	David Huffine	46-20
2012	Ironwood Ridge (13-1)	Matt Johnson	Centennial (12-2)	Richard Taylor	27-3
2011	Chaparral (14-1)	Charlie Ragle	Cienega (13-1)	Nemer Hassey	37-14

Division III

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2015	Desert Edge (12-2)	Rich Wellbrock	Paradise Valley (13-1)	Greg Davis	29-27
2014	Saguaro (14-0)	Jason Mohns	Williams Field (12-2)	Steve Campbell	45-21
2013	Saguaro (13-1)	Jason Mohns	Queen Creek (11-3)	Travis Schureman	47-25
2012	Queen Creek (14-0)	Joe Germaine	Desert Edge (13-1)	Rich Wellbrock	9-7
2011	Saguaro (12-2)	John Sanders	Cactus (11-2)	Larry Fetkenhier	31-23

Division IV

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2015	Pusch Ridge (13-1)	Troy Cropp	Northwest Christian (11-3)	Dave Inness	14-7
2014	River Valley (13-1)	Paul Duchaineau/ Mark Ruckle	Snowflake (12-2)	Ron Tenney	28-21
2013	Blue Ridge (12-2)	Paul Moro	River Valley (12-2)	Terry Staggs	17-7
2012	Seton Catholic (13-1)	Rex Bowser	Blue Ridge (14-1)	Paul Moro	28-7
2011	Blue Ridge (14-0)	Paul Moro	Show Low (11-4)	Randy Ricedorff	35-14

Division V

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2015	Joy Christian (13-0)	Brian Cole	Benson (13-1)	Chris Determan	27-7
2014	Yuma Catholic (14-0)	Rhett Stallworth	Tempe Prep (12-2)	Tommy Brittain	38-27
2013	Yuma Catholic (11-2)	Rhett Stallworth	Round Valley (12-2)	Marcus Bell	63-35
2012	Northwest Christian (13-1)	David Inness	Morenci (13-1)	Frank Ogas	21-7
2011	Yuma Catholic (13-1)	Rhett Stallworth	Northwest Christian (13-1)	David Inness	21-19

Division VI (8-man)

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2015	Pima (12-0)	Jace Hancock	Valley Union (9-2)	Tony Luzania	59-32
2014	Mogollon (10-1)	Tim Slade	Bagdad (9-1)	Dalton Mills	14-8
2013	Bagdad (10-0)	Dalton Mills	Mogollon (10-2)	Tim Slade	44-20
2012	Joy Christian (11-0)	Brian Cole	Pima (10-1)	Jace Hancock	60-24
2011	Joseph City (10-0)	John Bryant	Joy Christian (10-1)	Brian Cole	38-6



Football Championship Teams

Class 5A

Division I

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2010	Hamilton (15-0)	Steve Belles	Desert Ridge (10-4)	Jeremy Hathcock	21-13
2009	Hamilton (14-0)	Steve Belles	Mesa (9-5)	Kelley Moore	35-0
2008	Hamilton (13-1)	Steve Belles	Brophy Prep (11-4)	Scooter Molander	17-10
2007	Brophy Prep (12-2)	Scooter Molander	Desert Vista (9-5)	Dan Hinds	34-21
2006	Hamilton (13-1)	Steve Belles	Mountain View (Mesa) (12-2)	Tom Joseph	34-15
2005	Brophy Prep (13-1)	Scooter Molander	Hamilton (13-1)	John Wrenn	15-14

Division II

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2010	Chaparral (14-0)	Charlie Ragle	Centennial (12-2)	Richard Taylor	32-17
2009	Chaparral (13-1)	Charlie Ragle	Marcos de Niza (12-2)	Roy Lopez	34-21
2008	Centennial (14-0)	Richard Taylor	Westview (12-2)	Jeff Bowen	20-7
2007	Centennial (13-1)	Richard Taylor	Westview (10-4)	Jeff Bowen	26-7
2006	Centennial (14-0)	Richard Taylor	Sunnyside (11-3)	Richard Sanchez	34-0
2005	North Canyon (14-0)	Brian Cole	Centennial (11-3)	Richard Taylor	27-16

Class 5A

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2004	Hamilton (13-1)	John Wrenn	Mountain Ridge (9-5)	Steve Belles	31-7
2003	Hamilton (13-1)	John Wrenn	Mountain View (Mesa) (13-1)	Tom Joseph	35-28 (3OT)
2002	Mountain View (Mesa) (14-0)	Tom Joseph	Ironwood (10-4)	Chuck Esquivel	50-8
2001	Red Mountain (13-1)	Jimmy Jones	Hamilton (12-2)	John Wrenn	13-10
2000	Red Mountain (12-2)	Jimmy Jones	Westwood (10-4)	Roger Suchomel	20-10
1999	Mountain View (Mesa) (13-1)	Bernie Busken	Sabino (13-1)	Jeff Scurran	21-14
1998	Desert Vista (14-0)	Jim Rattay	Brophy Prep (10-4)	Tim Sanford	38-31
1997	Mountain View (Mesa) (14-0)	Bernie Busken	Amphitheater (13-1)	Vern Friedli	28-24
1996	Mountain View (Mesa) (14-0)	Bernie Busken	Brophy Prep (12-2)	Tim Sanford	17-3
1995	St. Mary's (14-0)	Pat Farrell	Horizon (8-6)	Doug Shaffer	33-7
1994	Horizon (11-3)	Doug Shaffer	St. Mary's (12-2)	Pat Farrell	16-14
1993	Mountain View (Mesa) (13-1)	Jesse Parker	South Mountain (12-2)	Cleveland Dansby	38-7
1992	Mesa (13-1)	Jim Rattay	Mountain View (Mesa) (9-5)	Jesse Parker	14-8
1991	St. Mary's (13-1)	Pat Farrell	Salpointe Catholic (10-3-1)	Pat Welchert	28-13
1990	Mesa (12-1-1)	Jim Rattay	Amphitheater (12-2)	Vern Friedli	21-7
1989	McClintock (13-2)	Karl Kiefer	Westwood (11-3)	Jerry Loper	42-14
1988	Westwood (13-1)	Jerry Loper	Mountain View (Mesa) (12-2)	Jesse Parker	28-7
1987	Mesa Dobson (12-2)	Mike Clark	Mountain View (Mesa) (11-3)	Jesse Parker	35-14
1986	Mountain View (Mesa) (12-2)	Jesse Parker	Moon Valley (13-1)	Earl Putman	31-7
1985	St. Mary's (14-0)	Pat Farrell	Apollo (8-6)	Rudy Pacheco	11-7
1984	St. Mary's (12-2)	Pat Farrell	Sahuaro (9-4)	Howard Breinig	31-14
1983	Mountain View (Mesa) (14-0)	Jesse Parker	McClintock (11-3)	Karl Kiefer	34-14
1982	Moon Valley (14-0)	Earl Putman	Trevor Browne (10-4)	Bill Mitton	20-7
1981	Trevor Browne (12-2)	Bill Mitton	Salpointe Catholic (11-3)	Ed Doherty	20-0
1980	McClintock (12-2)	Karl Kiefer	Trevor Browne (11-3)	Bill Mitton	34-7
1979	Amphitheater (13-0)	Vern Friedli	Mesa (8-6)	Ben Arredondo	27-0
1978	Mountain View (Mesa) (13-1)	Jesse Parker	Saguaro (10-4)	Bob Keller	41-23
1977	McClintock (14-0)	Karl Kiefer	Washington (12-1)	Dave Swerdfeger	14-9
1976	Coronado (13-0)	Ed Anderson	South Mountain (9-4)	Earl Clupper	17-12

Football Championship Teams

Class 5A cont'd

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
1975	Amphitheater (12-1)	Jerry Loper	Maryvale (12-1)	Bob Young	23-22
1974	Camelback (12-0-1)	Jesse Parker	St. Mary's (12-1)	Pat Lavin	22-20
1973	Palo Verde (13-0)	Van Howe	Camelback (11-2)	Jesse Parker	22-20
1972	Central (13-0)	Ray Laing	Brophy Prep (9-3)	Trevor Stinson	21-0
1971	Tucson (11-1)	Ollie Mayfield	Tempe (11-2)	Allen Benedict	20-14
1970	Tucson (12-0)	Ollie Mayfield	Sunnyslope (10-3)	Bill Buck	54-16
1969	Central (13-0)	Ray Laing	St. Mary's (11-1)	Ed Doherty	14-7
1968	St. Mary's (11-1)	Ed Doherty	Douglas (10-2-1)	Ike Sharp	27-14
1967	St. Mary's (13-0)	Ed Doherty	Pueblo (11-2)	Lou Farber	34-22
1966	Tucson (11-1)	John Mallamo	Westwood (10-2)	Edgar "Mutt" Ford	14-7
1965	Tucson (12-0)	John Mallamo	Yuma Union (9-3)	Frank Thomas	27-6
1964	Westwood (12-0)	Edgar "Mutt" Ford	Camelback (11-1)	Don Baker	10-7
1963	Mesa (11-0)	Royal Price	Rincon (8-2-1)	Bill Lovin	28-0
1962	Arcadia (10-1)	Bob Hendricks	Tucson (10-1)	John Mallamo	40-7
1961	Pueblo (8-4)	Lou Farber	St. Mary's (8-2-1)	Jack Stovall	16-14
1960	Mesa (10-1-1)	Edgar "Mutt" Ford	Yuma Union (8-2-1)	Marv Rosengarten	27-6
1959	(TIE) Yuma Union (8-1-2)	Marv Rosengarten	South Mountain (8-0-2)	Earl Clupper	7-7

The AIA did not conduct 5A Conference playoffs before 1959.

Football Championship Teams

Class 4A

Division I

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2010	Saguaro (12-2)	John Sanders	Canyon del Oro (13-1)	Dusty Peace	41-34
2009	Canyon del Oro (14-0)	Dusty Peace	Sabino (11-3)	Jay Campos	40-0
2008	Saguaro (14-0)	John Sanders	Chaparral (12-2)	Charlie Ragle	38-0
2007	Saguaro (14-0)	John Sanders	Canyon del Oro (12-2)	Pat Nugent	23-21
2006	Saguaro (13-1)	Mike Reardon	Sabino (12-2)	Jay Campos	41-21
2005	Cactus (14-0)	Larry Fetkenhier	Sabino (10-4)	Jay Campos	30-7

Division II

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2010	Thunderbird (10-4)	Brent Wittenwyler	Williams Field (13-1)	Steve Campbell	25-22 (OT)
2009	Cactus (13-1)	Larry Fetkenhier	Santa Rita (11-3)	Jeff Scurran	14-0
2008	Notre Dame Prep (14-0)	Scott Bemis	Santa Rita (12-2)	Jeff Scurran	30-26
2007	Notre Dame Prep (13-1)	Scott Bemis	Mingus Union (13-1)	Bob Young	49-32
2006	Cactus Shadows (15-0)	Chad DeGrenier	Higley (11-3)	Jim Beall	28-14
2005	Palo Verde (11-3)	Todd Mayfield	Mingus Union (11-3)	Bob Young	15-7

Class 4A

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2004	Moon Valley (14-0)	Roger Britson	Cactus (12-2)	Larry Fetkenhier	45-34
2003	Sunnyside (12-2)	Richard Sanchez	Cactus (12-2)	Larry Fetkenhier	21-13
2002	Chaparral (13-1)	Ron Estabrook	Greenway (12-2)	Mike Brown	21-14
2001	Sunnyside (13-1)	Richard Sanchez	Greenway (11-3)	Mike Brown	28-6
2000	Chaparral (14-0)	Ron Estabrook	Sunnyside (13-1)	Richard Sanchez	28-14
1999	Chaparral (14-0)	Ron Estabrook	Sahuaro (11-3)	Nemer Hassey	27-10
1998	Sabino (12-1-1)	Jeff Scurran	Agua Fria (12-2)	Mickey Bell	27-9
1997	Mingus Union (13-0-1)	Bob Young	Sabino (13-1)	Jeff Scurran	23-14
1996	Tempe (14-0)	Tim McBurney	Ironwood (11-2-1)	Chuck Esquivel	20-17 (OT)
1995	Saguaro (13-1)	Tim Beck	Ironwood (12-2)	Mark Matheson	42-7
1994	(TIE) Peoria (12-1-1)	Doug Clapp	Sahuaro (11-1-1)	Howard Breinig	17-17
1993	Mountain View (Marana) (14-0)	Wayne Jones	Sahuaro (9-3-2)	Howard Breinig	63-32
1992	Sabino (14-0)	Jeff Scurran	Washington (12-2)	Steve Chisman	28-3
1991	Agua Fria (12-2)	Tom Wheatley	Sahuaro (13-1)	Howard Breinig	28-0
1990	Sabino (14-0)	Jeff Scurran	Peoria (13-1)	Doug Clapp	31-28
1989	(TIE) Agua Fria (11-2-1)	Tom Wheatley	Tempe (13-1-1)	Jim Murphy	10-10
1988	Agua Fria (11-3)	Tom Wheatley	Peoria (11-3)	Doug Clapp	13-7
1987	Peoria (12-2)	Doug Clapp	Cactus (12-1)	Larry Fetkenhier	28-6
1986	Peoria (9-5)	Doug Clapp	Agua Fria (11-3)	Tom Wheatley	29-23
1985	Gilbert (13-1)	Rick Dunn	Cactus (11-3)	Larry Fetkenhier	27-0
1984	Flagstaff (9-2-1)	Rick Smith	Peoria (8-4)	Mark Matheson	7-0
1983	Flagstaff (11-1)	Rick Smith	Flowing Wells (8-3-1)	Larry Gray	24-7
1982	Flagstaff (9-3)	Rick Smith	Flowing Wells (11-1)	Larry Gray	10-7
1981	Flagstaff (12-0-1)	Rick Smith	Gilbert (11-2)	Dan Dunn	15-12
1980	Corona del Sol (12-1)	Larry Hughes	Gerard (11-2)	John Carroll	23-14
1979	Gerard (9-3)	John Carroll	Gilbert (11-2)	Dan Dunn	13-0
1978	Gilbert (12-1)	Dan Dunn	Tolleson (11-2)	Thurman Simmons	14-0
1977	Canyon del Oro (9-1-1)	Bob Smith	Gilbert (9-3)	Dan Dunn	9-7

Football Championship Teams

Class 4A cont'd

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
1976	Canyon del Oro (11-0)	Bob Smith	Douglas (10-2)	Ken Sawin	24-15
1975	Flowing Wells (10-0)	Larry Hart	Snowflake (10-1)	Tot Workman	14-13
1974	Coconino (10-1)	Bill Epperson	Douglas (7-4)	Ken Sawin	21-14
1973	Coconino (8-2-1)	Bill Epperson	Flowing Wells (8-1-2)	Larry Hart	14-3
1972	Agua Fria (6-3-2)	Ron Horn	Flowing Wells (9-1-1)	Larry Hart	35-21
1971	Safford (11-0)	Dick Pottle	Flowing Wells (10-1)	Larry Hart	28-10
1970	Agua Fria (9-2)	Ron Horn	Safford (11-1)	Dick Pottle	48-26
1969	Safford (11-0)	Dick Pottle	Winslow (8-2)	Emil Nasser	26-24
1968	Coconino (6-4)	Bill Epperson	Flowing Wells (7-2-1)	Larry Hart	6-0

The AIA did not conduct 4A Conference playoffs before 1968.

Football Championship Teams

Class 3A

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2010	Show Low (13-1)	Randy Ricedorff	Blue Ridge (12-1)	Paul Moro	20-17
2009	Blue Ridge (13-0)	Paul Moro	Show Low (10-4)	Randy Ricedorff	41-21
2008	Payson (14-0)	Josh Anderson	Blue Ridge (12-2)	Paul Moro	34-33 (2OT)
2007	Show Low (12-1)	Randy Ricedorff	Coolidge (10-3)	Carlo Hernandez	26-0
2006	Coolidge (12-1)	Carlo Hernandez	Wickenburg (13-1)	Norris Vaughan	28-21
2005	Coolidge (11-1)	Carlo Hernandez	Winslow (12-2)	Adam Larsen	34-19
2004	Blue Ridge (13-0)	Paul Moro	Coolidge (13-1)	Carlo Hernandez	25-24
2003	Show Low (13-0)	Jeremy Hathcock	Seton Catholic (11-3)	Pete Wahlheim	35-14
2002	Globe (12-1)	Roger Schenks	Coolidge (11-2)	Carlo Hernandez	34-19
2001	Blue Ridge (13-0)	Paul Moro	Coolidge (12-1)	Carlo Hernandez	58-8
2000	Blue Ridge (13-0)	Paul Moro	Parker (10-3)	David Partridge	67-19
1999	Show Low (12-1)	Bill Morgan	Blue Ridge (12-1)	Paul Moro	26-25
1998	Payson (13-0)	Jim Beall	Blue Ridge (11-1)	Paul Moro	29-20
1997	Blue Ridge (13-0)	Paul Moro	Arizona Boys Ranch (12-1)	Gary Galante	27-21
1996	Blue Ridge (13-0)	Paul Moro	Arizona Boys Ranch (10-3)	Richard Gray	22-20
1995	Blue Ridge (13-0)	Paul Moro	Arizona Boys Ranch (9-4)	Richard Gray	41-13
1994	Blue Ridge (13-0)	Paul Moro	Winslow (11-2)	Rich Hoyt	28-6
1993	Snowflake (11-2)	Neil Westover	Show Low (5-8)	Gary Mauldin	30-7
1992	Snowflake (10-3)	Jim Beall	Miami (10-3)	Bill Johnson	33-8
1991	Snowflake (11-1-1)	Jim Beall	Miami (12-1)	Bill Johnson	33-10
1990	Blue Ridge (9-4)	Paul Moro	Miami (7-6)	Bill Johnson	39-17
1989	Blue Ridge (13-0)	Paul Moro	Show Low (9-4)	Gary Mauldin	37-27
1988	Snowflake (11-2)	Ned Jolly	Parker (9-4)	Robin Hondrum	21-0
1987	Blue Ridge (11-3)	Paul Moro	Snowflake (11-2)	Ned Jolly	16-14
1986	Snowflake (12-1)	Richard Hoyt	Payson (9-4)	Terry Nodlinski	7-0
1985	(TIE) Round Valley (11-1-1)	Tot Workman	Snowflake (10-2-1)	Richard Hoyt	21-21
1984	Coolidge (11-1)	Larry Delbridge	Round Valley (11-1)	Tot Workman	28-20
1983	Coolidge (9-2)	Larry Delbridge	Mohave (7-5)	"Boone" Jackson	6-0
1982	Snowflake (12-0)	Gary Stoddard	Safford (9-2)	Dick Pottle	19-13
1981	San Manuel (11-2)	Damon Becker	Buckeye (9-4)	Tim Logsdon	14-7
1980	Santa Cruz (12-1)	Jim Ewan	Buckeye (8-5)	Tim Logsdon	33-12
1979	Santa Cruz (13-0)	Eddie Jones	Ray (10-2)	Tom Hurt	13-7
1978	Santa Cruz (12-1)	Jay Denton	Willcox (10-3)	Larry Wooldridge	40-36
1977	Coolidge (10-2)	Jim Bollhauve	Willcox (9-3)	Boone Jackson	28-0
1976	Morenci (11-1)	Cliff Martin	Page (4-7)	Dave Cripe	39-7
1975	Gilbert (10-2)	Dan Dunn	Page (9-2)	Jim Burton	17-0
1974	Gerard (10-1)	Jim Relph	Lake Havasu (8-3)	Dean Nielson	12-10
1973	Gilbert (11-0)	Dan Dunn	Morenci (10-3)	Vern Friedli	27-6
1972	Miami (11-1)	Harvey Keeney	Santa Cruz (11-1)	Jay Denton	22-21
1971	Parker (9-2)	John Mundell	Ajo (9-2-1)	Tom Dingman	41-19
1970	Parker (9-0-2)	John Mundell	Snowflake (6-3-1)	Monty Harris	16-13
1969	Santa Cruz (12-0)	Lonnie Foster	Ajo (9-2)	Tom Dingman	22-13
1968	Coolidge (12-0)	Alva Hawkins	Peoria (9-2)	Ray Mitokawa	27-20
1967	Coolidge (12-0)	Alva Hawkins	Snowflake (8-3)	Lee Rasmussen	7-6
1966	Santa Cruz (10-2)	Lonnie Foster	Agua Fria (9-2)	Glen Hamby	16-13
1965	Santa Cruz (12-0)	Lonnie Foster	Peoria (9-2)	Ray Mitokawa	27-7
1964	Winslow (10-0)	Emil Nasser	Flowing Wells (7-4)	Larry Hart	7-0
1960	Arcadia (12-0)	Bob Hendricks	Douglas (9-2)	Charles Willingham	21-13

There was a 3A Conference playoff in 1960, but not in 1961, 1962 or 1963.

The AIA did not conduct 3A Conference playoffs before 1960.

Football Championship Teams

Class 2A

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2010	Northwest Christian (12-1)	Dave Inness	Yuma Catholic (12-2)	Rhett Stallworth	30-27
2009	Valley Christian (12-1)	Bill Morgan	Willcox (11-3)	Jim Hughes	41-32
2008	St. Johns (14-0)	Mike Morgan	Phoenix Christian (13-1)	Bob Denson	42-17
2007	St. Johns (11-3)	Mike Morgan	Arizona Lutheran (11-3)	Doug Meyer	21-20
2006	Thatcher (11-3)	Don Conrad	Valley Christian (9-4)	Bill Morgan	42-20
2005	Valley Christian (12-1)	Bill Morgan	Arizona Lutheran (12-2)	Doug Meyer	45-28
2004	Phoenix Christian (9-2)	Jim Rattay	Valley Christian (12-1)	Sean Loomer	10-3
2003	Phoenix Christian (13-0)	Jim Rattay	St. Johns (11-1-1)	Mike Morgan	24-7
2002	St. Johns (12-1)	Mike Morgan	NW Community Christian (11-2)	Derek Wahlstrom	28-7
2001	Thatcher (12-1)	Don Conrad	Phoenix Christian (11-3)	Keith Brown	35-26
2000	Thatcher (11-0)	Don Conrad	St. Johns (11-2)	Mike Morgan	14-13
1999	Phoenix Christian (12-1)	Keith Brown	Mogollon (10-3)	Ron Tenney	46-15
1998	Thatcher (12-0)	Jim Hughes	Queen Creek (10-3)	Duane Madsen	28-12
1997	Seton Catholic (10-2)	Joe Timpani	Superior (12-1)	Bryan Munoz	41-19
1996	Phoenix Christian (13-0)	Keith Brown	Valley Christian (11-2)	Bernie Benson	28-6
1995	Ray (13-0)	Jeff Cude	Thatcher (12-1)	Ed Shamey	28-6
1994	St. Johns (13-0)	Mike Morgan	Benson (12-1)	Pete Bearse	34-6
1993	St. Johns (13-0)	Mike Morgan	Superior (9-4)	Tom Joseph	41-6
1992	St. Johns (12-1)	Mike Morgan	Morenci (11-2)	Reynaldo Peru	20-8
1991	Florence (9-2-1)	Tom Shoemake	Ray (9-3)	Jeff Cude	10-6
1990	Santa Cruz (13-0)	Jay Denton	Superior (11-1)	Lee Peebles	33-7
1989	Florence (13-0)	Tom Shoemake	Thatcher (9-4)	Ed Shamey	18-0
1988	Thatcher (11-2)	Ed Shamey	Hayden (10-3)	Pete Guzman	20-6
1987	Florence (13-0)	Tom Shoemake	Phoenix Christian (9-3)	Walt Beamis	35-19
1986	Thatcher (11-1)	Jesse Hughes	Willcox (10-3)	Larry Wooldridge	13-10
1985	Phoenix Christian (10-2)	Walt Beamis	Florence (12-1)	Jim Wright	17-7
1984	Phoenix Christian (9-3)	Walt Beamis	Morenci (9-3)	Jack Edens	25-7
1983	Blue Ridge (11-0)	Tom Marshing	Florence (10-1)	Steve Moran	17-0
1982	Willcox (9-3)	Paul Hanley	Blue Ridge (9-2)	Tom Marsing	13-11
1981	Payson (12-0)	Terry Nodlinski	Blue Ridge (6-5)	Tom Marsing	17-7
1980	Round Valley (12-0)	Tot Workman	Blue Ridge (7-5)	Tom Marshing	20-3
1979	Round Valley (12-0)	Tot Workman	Wickenburg (8-4)	Ralph Moran	14-8
1978	St. Johns (10-2)	Mike Minick	Benson (9-2-1)	Mike Hayhurst	20-12
1977	Wickenburg (12-0)	Ralph Moran	Florence (8-3-1)	Rick Milot	10-7
1976	St. Johns (8-3)	John Neagle	Payson (9-2)	Terry Nodlinski	25-12
1975	Apache Junction (10-2)	Jack Davis	Blue Ridge (9-2)	Charles Esquibel	30-6
1974	Blue Ridge (10-1)	Joe Girardi	Mohave (8-3)	Fred Skoglund	14-12
1973	Mohave (9-2)	Fred Skoglund	Florence (9-5)	Tom Shoemake	12-0
1972	Hayden (10-1)	Bobby Lorona	Blue Ridge (11-1)	Joe Girardi	22-12
1971	Round Valley (11-1)	Diz Reeves	Gilbert (10-1)	Jim Wall	13-12
1970	Round Valley (12-0)	Diz Reeves	Williams (10-1)	Art Sharpe	38-8
1969	Florence (12-1)	Wayland Harris	Round Valley (9-2)	Diz Reeves	6-0
1968	Marana (11-0)	Don Hawkins	Round Valley (10-1)	Diz Reeves	21-6
1967	Marana (10-0-1)	Don Hawkins	Parker (8-3)	Thurman Simmons	40-0
1966	Round Valley (11-0)	Rance Smith	Antelope (9-2-1)	Jerry Loper	32-6
1965	Ray (11-0)	Wayne Smith	Clifton (6-4)	Cruz Salas	33-0
1964	Marana (11-0)	Duane Morrison	Willcox (8-3)	Lee Barnes	14-7

The AIA did not conduct 2A Conference playoffs before 1964.

Football Championship Teams

Class 1A

(8-man)

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
2010	Joseph City (11-1)	John Bryant	Mogollon (10-1)	Tim Slade	28-18
2009	Joseph City (11-0)	John Bryant	Mogollon (10-2)	Ron Tenney	34-14
2008	Mogollon (10-1)	Ron Tenney	Pima (10-1)	John Bryant	66-34
2007	Valley Union (10-0)	Tony Luzania	Pima (9-2)	John Bryant	28-12
2006	Mayer (12-0)	Troy Head	Mogollon (9-3)	Ron Tenney	28-20
2005	Pima (9-2)	John Bryant	Mayer (9-2)	Troy Head	40-34
2004	Pima (11-0)	John Bryant	Clifton (7-4)	Ray Alvarez	60-22
2003	Mogollon (10-1)	Ron Tenney	Pima (9-2)	John Bryant	42-32
2002	Joseph City (10-1)	Bryan Fields	Salome (7-4)	Bernon Benson	44-7
2001	St. David (10-0)	John Bryant	Joseph City (9-2)	Eldon Larsen	57-43
2000	St. David (10-0)	John Bryant	Bagdad (9-1)	Pat Ruiz	50-8
1999	Joseph City (10-1)	Eldon Larsen	Fredonia (6-3)	C.A. "Mont" Griffiths	42-0
1998	St. David (11-0)	John Bryant	Orme School (10-1)	Bob Miller	48-30
1997	St. David (11-0)	John Bryant	Mogollon (9-2)	Ron Tenney	58-26
1996	NW Community Christian (10-1)	Charlie Bell	Scottsdale Christian (7-3)	Aaron Messner	48-6
1995	Fredonia (11-2)	C.A. "Mont" Griffiths	Mogollon (9-1)	Rocky Nelson	38-32
1994	(TIE) Mogollon (10-0-1)	Tim Slade	Mayer (9-1-1)	Vince Cahill	20-20
1993	Williams (11-0)	Rick Shipley	Mayer (7-4)	Vince Cahill	68-40
1992	Arizona Lutheran (11-0)	Doug Lange	Patagonia (10-1)	Bill House	56-14
1991	(TIE) Patagonia (10-0-1)	Bill House	Fredonia (10-0-1)	C.A. "Mont" Griffiths	36-36
1990	Seligman (11-1)	Robert LaChat	Valley Union (10-2)	Tom Davis	56-0
1989	(TIE) Williams (8-2-1)	Rick Shipley	Scottsdale Christian (10-1-1)	Jack DeGrenier	22-22
1988	Patagonia (12-0)	Bill House	Scottsdale Christian (10-1)	Jack DeGrenier	38-26
1987	Patagonia (11-0)	Bill House	Valley Union (9-2)	Tom Davis	36-18
1986	Valley Union (9-2)	Gary Mauldin	Northwest Christian (9-2)	Dale Peterson	57-20
1985	Valley Union (11-0)	Gary Mauldin	Western Christian (10-1)	Brad Tarrant	26-20
1984	Pima (9-1)	Tom Davis	Mayer (9-2)	Ray Dowdy	38-0
1983	Scottsdale Christian (11-0)	Jim Dean	Pima (10-1)	Tom Davis	19-0
1982	Suffolk Hills (10-0)	Steve Sorce	Pima (9-2)	Brad Moon	23-14
1981	Maricopa (9-0)	Mark August	Suffolk Hills (10-1)	Steve Sorce	20-14
1980	Salome (11-0)	Richard Imhoff	Maricopa (7-3)	Tom Kunz	46-13
1979	St. David (10-1)	Jim Crawford	Salome (10-1)	Richard Imhoff	28-22
1978	Joseph City (11-0)	Charles Esquibel	Maricopa (10-1)	Al Cobb	24-7
1977	St. David (9-1)	Jim Crawford	Fredonia (9-1)	C.A. "Mont" Griffiths	22-6
1976	Tucson Deaf & Blind (7-2)	John Milford	Mayer (7-2)	Dan Reid	42-22
1975	Mayer (9-0)	Dan Reid	Valley Union (8-1)	L.W. Jackson	26-16
1974	Pima (9-0)	Dave Colborn	Seligman (6-4)	Terry Reeves	78-6
1973	Pima (8-0)	Roger Smith	Fredonia (8-1)	C.A. "Mont" Griffiths	36-21
1972	St. David (9-0)	Jim Crawford	Fredonia (6-2)	C.A. "Mont" Griffiths	36-22
1971	Fredonia (8-0)	C.A. "Mont" Griffiths	Pima (8-1)	Ed Hubbard	57-28
1970	Pima (10-0)	Ed Hubbard	Fredonia (6-2)	C.A. "Mont" Griffiths	44-0
1969	Pima (8-0)	Ed Hubbard	Fredonia (6-1)	C.A. "Mont" Griffiths	66-20
1968	Fredonia (7-0)	C.A. "Mont" Griffiths	Pima (6-1)	Ed Hubbard	32-21
1967	Fredonia (7-0)	C.A. "Mont" Griffiths	Valley Union (6-2)	John Grimes	71-7

Football Championship Teams

Class 1A cont'd

(6-man)

Year	Winning Team	Head Coach	Runner-up Team	Head Coach	Score
1966	McNary (8-0)	Pete Duca	St. David (7-1)	Jim Crawford	53-6
1965	McNary (8-0)	Pete Duca	Pima (7-2)	Max Peck	31-21
1964	McNary (7-0)	Pete Duca	Patagonia (6-2)	Reg LeFevre	27-13
1963	Camp Verde (7-1)	Jesse Batina	Patagonia (6-2)	Reg LeFevre	44-18
1962	Camp Verde (7-1)	Jesse Batina	Patagonia (6-2)	Reg LeFevre	32-31
1961	Pima (8-1)	Ed Hubbard	Grand Canyon (7-2)	Bob Clark	32-19
1960	St. David (8-0)	Jim Crawford	Tuba City (7-2-1)	Buster Madriaga	40-21
1959	Lakeside (8-0)	Bob Schneider	Patagonia (7-1)	Reg LeFevre	34-19

The AIA did not conduct 1A Conference playoffs before 1959.



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STUDENT SECTION





The 2A-6A AIA football record books converted to a top performance listing for each category. AZPreps365's records only go back to 2004. If there are any listings that need to be updated/added, please e-mail Seth Polansky and Jose Garcia with all supporting documentation.

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TDs (game by conference)

8	Edward McClendon	Mesa vs. Dobson	2018	6A
8	Ty Grigsby	Rincon/University vs. Buena	2016	6A
7	Ethan Johnson	Westwood vs. Higley	2015	5A
7	Antrel Bates	Amphitheater vs. South Mountain	1997	5A
7	Coury Hankins	South Mountain vs. Central	1994	5A
7	Ted Bland	Tucson vs. Bisbee	1931	5A
10	D.J. Foster	Saguaro vs. Sunrise Mountain	2011	4A
8	Trent Thompson	Chinle vs. Red Mesa	1986	3A
9	Christian Velasquez	San Manuel vs. Tombstone	2017	2A

TDs (game top performers)

10	D.J. Foster	Saguaro vs. Sunrise Mountain	2011
9	Christian Velasquez	San Manuel vs. Tombstone	2017
8	Edward McClendon	Mesa vs. Dobson	2018
8	Ty Grigsby	Rincon/University vs. Buena	2016
8	Carlos Villa	Maricopa vs. San Pasqual Valley (CA)	2004
8	Jabari Felton-Smith	Orme School vs. Salome	2000
8	C.R. Davis	Moon Valley vs. Washington	2000
8	Santos Olague	Sabino vs. Desert View	1998
8	Trent Thompson	Chinle vs. Red Mesa	1986

TDs (season by conference)

39	T.J. Green	Chandler	2016	6A
41	Bobby Wade	Desert Vista	1998	5A
60	D.J. Foster	Saguaro	2011	4A
38	Brandon Long	Riviera Valley	2014	3A
38	Scooter Sprotte	Blue Ridge	1994	3A
44	Jabari-Felton Smith	Orme School	2000	2A

TDs (season top performers)

60	D.J. Foster	Saguaro	2011
51	Nathan Wize	Sabino	1997
46	Christian Kirk	Saguaro	2014
45	Ka'Deem Carey	Canyon del Oro	2009
44	Jabari-Felton Smith	Orme School	2000
43	Kevin Daniels	Glendale	2018

42	Bijan Robinson	Salpointe Catholic	2019
42	Lucas Salcido	Flagstaff	2017
42	Shad Bride	St. Johns	2008
42	Shad Bride	St. Johns	2007

TDs (career by conference)

56	Jacob Cisneros	Boulder Creek	2018-20	6A
76	Mike Mitchell	Brophy Prep	1990-92	5A
103	Christian Kirk	Saguaro	2011-14	4A
98	Brandon Long	River Valley	2011-14	3A
112	Casey Jahn	Northwest Christian	2008-11	2A

TDs (career top performers)

114	Bijan Robinson	Salpointe Catholic	2016-19
112	Kevin Daniels	Glendale	2016-19
112	Casey Jahn	Northwest Christian	2008-11
105	Shad Bride	St. Johns	2006-08
103	Christian Kirk	Saguaro	2011-14
98	Brandon Long	River Valley	2011-14
95	Danny Warden	Mohave Accelerated	2009-11
88	Jamal Miles	Peoria	2006-08
87	Ka'Deem Carey	Canyon del Oro	2007-10

Points (game by conference)

48	Edward McClendon	Mesa vs. Dobson	2018	6A
48	Ty Grigsby	Rincon/University vs. Buena	2016	6A
42	Ethan Johnson	Westywood vs. Higley	2015	5A
42	Antrel Bates	Amphitheater vs. South Mountain	1997	5A
42	Coury Hankins	South Mountain vs. Central	1994	5A
42	Ted Bland	Tucson vs. Bisbee	1931	5A
60	D.J. Foster	Saguaro vs. Sunrise Mountain	2011	4A
48	Richard Zuniga	Arizona Boys Ranch vs. Miami	1997	3A
48	Trent Thompson	Chinle vs. Red Mesa	1986	3A
54	Christian Velasquez	San Manuel vs. Tombstone	2017	2A
54	Carlos Villa	Maricopa vs. San Pasqual Valley (CA)	2004	2A

Points (game top performers)

60	D.J. Foster	Saguaro vs. Sunrise Mountain	2011
54	Christian Velasquez	San Manuel vs. Tombstone	2017
54	Carlos Villa	Maricopa vs. San Pasqual Valley (CA)	2004
50	C.R. Davis	Moon Valley vs. Washington	2000
48	Edward McClendon	Mesa vs. Dobson	2018
48	Ty Grigsby	Rincon/University vs. Buena	2016
48	Jabari Felton-Smith	Orme School vs. Salome	2000
48	Santos Olague	Sabino vs. Desert View	1998
48	Richard Zuniga	Arizona Boys Ranch vs. Miami	1997
48	Trent Thompson	Chinle vs. Red Mesa	1986

Points (season by conference)

234	TJ Green	Chandler	2016	6A
246	Bobby Wade	Desert Vista	1998	5A
362	D.J. Foster	Saguaro	2011	4A
258	Richard Zuniga	Arizona Boys Ranch	1997	3A
266	Jabari Felton-Smith	Orme School	2000	2A

Points (season top performers)

362	D.J. Foster	Saguaro	2011
306	Nathan Wize	Sabino	1997
276	Christian Kirk	Saguaro	2014
270	Ka'Deem Carey	Canyon del Oro	2009
266	Jabari Felton-Smith	Orme School	2000
266	Danny Groebner	Blue Ridge	2011
258	Rudy Verdugo	Willcox	2009
258	Richard Zuniga	Arizona Boys Ranch	1997
257	Cory Lizarraga	Blue Ridge	1997
256	Shad Bride	St. Johns	2008
256	Shad Bride	St. Johns	2007

Points (career by conference)

338	Jacob Cisneros	Boulder Creek	2018-20	6A
456	Mike Mitchell	Brophy Prep	1990-92	5A
626	Christian Kirk	Saguaro	2011-14	4A
600	Brandon Long	River Valley	2011-14	3A
672	Casey Jahn	Northwest Christian	2008-11	2A

Points (career top performers)

694	Kevin Daniels	Glendale	2016-19
686	Bijan Robinson	Salpointe Catholic	2016-19
672	Casey Jahn	Northwest Christian	2008-11
638	Danny Warden	Mohave Accelerated	2009-11
638	Shad Bride	St. Johns	2005-08
626	Christian Kirk	Saguaro	2011-14
600	Brandon Long	River Valley	2011-14
586	Caleb Young	Gilbert Christian	2013-16
536	D.J. Foster	Saguaro	2010-11
528	Jamal Miles	Peoria	2006-08

Rushing Yards (game by conference)

376	Mike Rogers	Cesar Chavez vs. Betty Fairfax	2016	6A
566	Ethan Johnson	Westwood vs. Higley	2015	5A
516	Sean Fitzsimmons	Empire vs. Catalina	2013	4A
469	Stanley Jackson	Chinle vs. Red Mesa	1976	3A
514	Christian Velasquez	San Manual vs. Tombstone	2017	2A

Rushing Yards (game top performers)

566	Ethan Johnson	Westwood vs. Higley	2015
516	Sean Fitzsimmons	Empire vs. Catalina	2013
514	Christian Velasquez	San Manual vs. Tombstone	2017
508	D.J. Foster	Saguaro vs. Sunrise Mountain	2011
469	Stanley Jackson	Chinle vs. Red Mesa	1976
468	Christian Wilridge	Valley Union vs. Bowie	1985
444	Malik Taylor	Phoenix Christian vs. Scottsdale Christian	2018
430	Bijan Robinson	Salpointe Catholic vs. Desert Edge	2019
426	Aaron Craig	Window Rock vs. Greyhills Academy	1993

Rushing Yards (season by conference)

2267	TJ Green	Chandler	2016	6A
2740	Mario Bates	Amphitheater	1990	5A
3573	Marcus Thomas	Tollenson	2002	4A
2961	Scooter Sprote	Blue Ridge	1994	3A
2583	Casey Jahn	Northwest Christian	2010	2A

Rushing Yards (season top performers)

3573	Marcus Thomas	Tollenson	2002
3121	Nathan Wize	Sabino	1997
3058	D.J. Foster	Saguaro	2011
2961	Scooter Sprote	Blue Ridge	1994
2829	Matt Guida	Queen Creek	2012
2738	Ka'Deem Carey	Canyon del Oro	2009
2758	Braedyn Bushman	Williams Field	2014
2740	Mario Bates	Amphitheater	1990
2661	Allan Woods	Cactus	2009

Rushing Yards (career by conference)

3863	DeCarlos Brooks	Chandler	2016-18	6A
5669	Mike Mitchell	Brophy Prep	1990-92	5A
7036	Bijan Robinson	Salpointe Catholic	2016-19	4A
7018	Christopher Weaver	Odyssey Institute	2016-19	3A
7544	Casey Jahn	Northwest Christian	2008-11	2A

Rushing Yards (career top performers)

7544	Casey Jahn	Northwest Christian	2008-11
7036	Bijan Robinson	Salpointe Catholic	2016-19
7018	Christopher Weaver	Odyssey Institute	2016-19
6750	Brandon Long	River Valley	2011-14
5878	Marcus Thomas	Tollenson	2000-02
5814	Joe Logan	Estrella Foothills	2012-15
5779	Alfred Erives	Arizona Lutheran	2009-12
5711	Ernie Montez	Thatcher	1988-91
5701	Ka'Deem Carey	Canyon del Oro	2007-10
5684	Shad Bride	St. Johns	2005-08

Rushing TDs (game by conference)

7	Ty Grigsby	Rincon/University vs. Buena	2016	6A
7	Ethan Johnson	Westwood vs. Higley	2015	5A
7	Chris Cofield	Agua Fria vs. Washington	2015	5A
7	Taren Morrison	Desert Ridge vs. Mountain View (Mesa)	2013	5A
10	D.J. Foster	Saguaro vs. Sunrise Mountain	2011	4A
7	Dante Anderson	Amphitheater vs. Rio Rico	2014	3A
9	Christian Velasquez	San Manuel vs. Tombstone	2017	2A

Rushing TDs (game top performers)

10	D.J. Foster	Saguaro vs. Sunrise Mountain	2011
9	Christian Velasquez	San Manuel vs. Tombstone	2017
8	C.R. Davis	Moon Valley vs. Washington	2000
8	Trent Thompson	Chinle vs. Red Mesa	1986
7	Ty Grigsby	Rincon/University vs. Buena	2016
7	Ethan Johnson	Westwood vs. Higley	2015
7	Chris Cofield	Agua Fria vs. Washington	2015
7	Dante Anderson	Amphitheater vs. Rio Rico	2014
7	Taren Morrison	Desert Ridge vs. Mountain View (Mesa)	2013
7	Alfonso Avitia	Amphitheater vs. Marana	2010

Rushing TDs (season by conference)

35	TJ Green	Chandler	2016	6A
38	Taren Morrison	Desert Ridge	2013	5A
54	D.J. Foster	Saguaro	2011	4A
38	Seth Ellis	Coolidge	2011	3A
42	Shad Bride	St. Johns	2008	2A

Rushing TDs (season top performers)

54	D.J. Foster	Saguaro	2011
43	Ka'Deem Carey	Canyon Del Oro	2009
42	Shad Bride	St. Johns	2008
40	Shad Bride	St. Johns	2007
38	Bijan Robinson	Salpointe Catholic	2019
38	Kevin Daniels	Glendale	2018
38	Seth Ellis	Coolidge	2011
38	Taren Morrison	Desert Ridge	2013
38	Jamal Miles	Peoria	2007
37	Man-Man Freeman	Phoenix Christian	2019
37	Allan Woods	Cactus	2009

Rushing TDs (career by conference)

51	DeCarlos Brooks	Chandler	2016-18	6A
83	Jamal Miles	Peoria	2006-08	5A
103	Bijan Robinson	Salpointe Catholic	2016-19	4A
93	Brandon Long	River Valley	2011-14	3A
110	Casey Jahn	Northwest Christian	2008-11	2A

Rushing TDs (career top performers)

110	Casey Jahn	Northwest Christian	2008-11
103	Bijan Robinson	Salpointe Catholic	2016-19
102	Shad Bride	St. Johns	2005-08
93	Brandon Long	River Valley	2011-14
89	Kevin Daniels	Glendale	2016-19
83	Jamal Miles	Peoria	2006-08
82	Ka'Deem Carey	Canyon Del Oro	2007-10
78	Joe Logan	Estrella Foothills	2012-15
77	Christopher Weaver	Odyssey Institute	2016-19
76	D.J. Foster	Saguaro	2010-11

Completions (game by conference)

42	Ryan Helt	Corona del Sol vs. Highland	2017	6A
41	Will Plummer	Gilbert vs. Sunrise Mountain	2018	5A
42	Ryan Finley	Paradise Valley vs. Thunderbird	2012	4A
34	Estevan Puig	Westwind Prep vs. Bourgade Catholic	2005	3A
36	Nick Hershey	Gilbert Christian vs. Pima	2017	2A

Completions (game top performers)

42	Ryan Helt	Corona del Sol vs. Highland	2017
42	Ryan Finley	Paradise Valley vs. Thunderbird	2012
41	Will Plummer	Gilbert vs. Sunrise Mountain	2018
39	Spencer Rattler	Pinnacle vs. Chandler	2017
39	Daniel Bridge-Gadd	Paradise Valley vs. North Canyon	2013
39	Ryan Stanford	Horizon vs. Mountain Pointe	2008
39	Jon Comacho	Washington vs. Higley	2007
38	Mario Armendarez	Washington vs. Agua Fria	2015
38	Adam Abbatacola	Apache Junction vs. Higley	2014
37	Dane Christensen	Casteel vs. Saguaro	2020
37	Bryce Kinsler	Cactus Shadows vs. Prescott	2012

Completions (season by conference)

251	Kedon Slovis	Desert Mountain	2017	6A
294	Josh Cain	Desert Ridge	2007	5A
293	Gabe Losada	Saint Mary's	2014	4A
246	Hayden Eager	Round Valley	2006	3A
350	Jarrett Huma	Hopi	1988	2A

Completions (season top performers)

350	Jarrett Huma	Hopi	1988
294	Josh Cain	Desert Ridge	2007
293	Gabe Losada	Saint Mary's	2014
271	Anthony Hernandez	Desert Edge	2013
270	Ryan Finley	Paradise Valley	2012
268	Will Plummer	Gilbert	2019
257	Phillip Aholt	Cactus Shadows	2006
254	Ryan Kelly	Basha	2014

251	Will Plummer	Gilbert	2018
251	Kedon Slovis	Desert Mountain	2017
251	Daniel Bridge-Gadd	Paradise Valley	2015

Completions (career by conference)

764	Spencer Rattler	Pinnacle	2015-18	6A
658	Daniel Bridge-Gadd	Paradise Valley	2012-15	5A
674	Gabe Losada	Saint Mary's	2011-14	4A
581	Gage Reese	Yuma Catholic	2016-19	3A
598	Jagan Cleary	Yuma Catholic	2012-14	2A

Completions (career top performers)

764	Spencer Rattler	Pinnacle	2015-18
692	Austin Nuessle	Desert Mountain	2013-16
676	Ryan Kelly	Basha	2014-16
674	Gabe Losada	Saint Mary's	2011-14
658	Daniel Bridge-Gadd	Paradise Valley	2012-15
631	Emmanuel Gant	Tempe	2011-14
622	Ryan Finley	Paradise Valley	2009-12
620	Ben Finley	Paradise Valley	2016-19
620	Bryce Kinsler	Cactus Shadows	2010-12
602	Jacob Conover	Chandler	2016-18

Most Pass Attempts (game by conference)

67	Spencer Rattler	Pinnacle vs. Chandler	2017	6A
70	Will Plummer	Gilbert vs. Sunrise Mountain	2018	5A
79	Jon Comacho	Washington vs. Higley	2007	4A
67	Estevan Puig	Westwind Prep vs. Bourgade Catholic	2005	3A
65	Nick Hershey	Gilbert Christian vs. Pima	2017	2A

Most Pass Attempts (game top performers)

79	Jon Comacho	Washington vs. Higley	2007
76	Brock Hall	Casa Grande vs. Higley	2016
76	Mario Armendarez	Washington vs. Agua Fria	2015
70	Will Plummer	Gilbert vs. Sunrise Mountain	2018
67	Spencer Rattler	Pinnacle vs. Chandler	2017
67	Estevan Puig	Westwind Prep vs. Bourgade Catholic	2005
66	Josh Cain	Desert Ridge vs. Centennial	2007
65	Ryan Helt	Corona del Sol vs. Highland	2017
65	Nick Hershey	Gilbert Christian vs. Pima	2017
63	Jack Johnson	Sedona Red Rock vs. River Valley	2009

Most Pass Attempts (season by conference)

392	Kedon Slovis	Desert Mountain	2017	6A
443	Will Plummer	Gilbert	2018	5A
477	Gabe Losada	Saint Mary's	2014	4A
444	Hayden Eager	Round Valley	2007	3A
495	Jarrett Huma	Hopi	1988	2A

Most Pass Attempts (season top performers)

495	Jarrett Huma	Hopi	1988
477	Gabe Losada	Saint Mary's	2014
469	Josh Cain	Desert Ridge	2007
462	Jon Bowman	Washington	2006
444	Hayden Eager	Round Valley	2007
443	Will Plummer	Gilbert	2018
438	Will Plummer	Gilbert	2019
430	Phillip Aholt	Cactus Shadows	2006
424	Ty Thompson	Mesquite	2019
424	Ryan Finley	Paradise Valley	2012

Most Pass Attempts (career by conference)

1228	Spencer Rattler	Pinnacle	2015-18	6A
1126	Ben Finley	Paradise Valley	2016-19	5A
1091	Gabe Losada	Saint Mary's	2011-14	4A
1031	Brock Hall	Casa Grande	2013-16	3A
921	Jagan Cleary	Yuma Catholic	2012-14	2A

Most Pass Attempts (career top performers)

1228	Spencer Rattler	Pinnacle	2015-18
1133	Austin Nuessle	Desert Mountain	2013-16
1126	Ben Finley	Paradise Valley	2016-19
1091	Gabe Losada	Saint Mary's	2011-14
1086	Bryce Kinsler	Cactus Shadows	2010-12
1064	Nazareth Greer	Marcos de Niza	2014-16
1058	Ryan Kelly	Basha	2014-16
1048	Ryan Finley	Paradise Valley	2009-12
1032	Emanuel Gant	Tempe	2011-14
1031	Brock Hall	Casa Grande	2013-16

Touchdown Passes (game by conference)

7	Miguel Valdovinos	La Joya vs. Kofa	2018	6A
7	Jacob Conover	Chandler vs. Red Mountain	2017	6A
7	Spencer Brasch	Higley vs. Paraclete (CA)	2017	5A
7	Dalton Sneed	Horizon vs. Mountain Ridge	2013	5A
10	Mario Armendarez	Washington vs. Agua Fria	2015	4A
9	Gage Reese	Yuma Catholic vs. San Manuel	2019	3A
9	Rathen Ricedorff	Show Low vs. Chinle	2009	3A
9	Ryan Powell	Miami vs. San Carlos	2019	2A

Touchdown Passes (game top performers)

10	Mario Armendarez	Washington vs. Agua Fria	2015
9	Ryan Powell	Miami vs. San Carlos	2019
9	Gage Reese	Yuma Catholic vs. San Manuel	2019
9	Mason Crossland	Higley vs. Apache Junction	2014
9	Gabe Losada	Saint Mary's vs. Camelback	2013
9	Luke Rubenezer	Saguaro vs. Desert Edge	2013

9	Rathen Ricedorff	Show Low vs. Chinle	2009
8	Ty Thompson	Mesquite vs. Buckeye Union	2019
8	Dallin Edwards	ALA-Queen Creek vs. Benjamin Franklin	2015
8	Gabe Losada	Saint Mary's vs. Cary Harden	2013
8	Anthony Hernandez	Desert Edge vs. Shadow Ridge	2013

Touchdown Passes (season by conference)

57	Brock Purdy	Perry	2017	6A
52	Chase Cord	Sunrise Mountain	2015	5A
61	Luke Rubenezer	Saguaro	2013	4A
64	Gage Reese	Yuma Catholic	2018	3A
53	Jack Miller	Scottsdale Christian	2016	2A

Touchdown Passes (season top performers)

64	Gage Reese	Yuma Catholic	2018
61	Luke Rubenezer	Saguaro	2013
60	Anthony Hernandez	Desert Edge	2013
57	Brock Purdy	Perry	2017
55	Rathen Ricedorff	Show Low	2010
53	Jack Miller	Scottsdale Christian	2016
52	Chase Cord	Sunrise Mountain	2015
51	Jagan Cleary	Yuma Catholic	2014
51	Ryan Bresnahan	Seton Catholic	2011
49	Richard Stallworth	Yuma Catholic	2020
49	Brian Wriston	Moon Valley	2004

Touchdown Passes (career by conference)

116	Spencer Rattler	Pinnacle	2015-18	6A
112	Mason Crossland	Higley	2013-16	5A
137	Chase Cord	Sunrise Mountain	2013-16	4A
133	Gage Reese	Yuma Catholic	2016-19	3A
115	Jagan Cleary	Yuma Catholic	2012-14	2A

Touchdown Passes (career top performers)

137	Chase Cord	Sunrise Mountain	2013-16
133	Gage Reese	Yuma Catholic	2016-19
130	Luke Rubenezer	Saguaro	2011-13
116	Spencer Rattler	Pinnacle	2015-18
115	Jagan Cleary	Yuma Catholic	2012-14
115	Daniel Bridge-Gadd	Paradise Valley	2012-15
112	Mason Crossland	Higley	2013-16
112	Rathen Ricedorff	Show Low	2007-10
109	Cameron Haag	Arizona Lutheran	2012-15
107	Brock Purdy	Perry	2015-17

Passing Yards (game by conference)

580	Spencer Rattler	Pinnacle vs. Chandler	2017	6A
668	Will Plummer	Gilbert vs. Sunrise Mountain	2018	5A
756	Mario Armendarez	Washington vs. Agua Fria	2015	4A
609	Gage Reese	Yuma Catholic vs. ALA-Queen Creek	2018	3A
609	Nick Hershey	Gilbert Christian vs. Pima	2017	2A

Passing Yards (game top performers)

756	Mario Armendarez	Washington vs. Agua Fria	2015
668	Will Plummer	Gilbert vs. Sunrise Mountain	2018
641	Mason Crossland	Higley vs. Apache Junction	2014
639	Bryce Kinsler	Cactus Shadows vs. Prescott	2012
609	Gage Reese	Yuma Catholic vs. ALA-Queen Creek	2018
609	Nick Hershey	Gilbert Christian vs. Pima	2017
595	Kevin Pantastico	Desert Ridge vs. Red Mountain	2008
580	Spencer Rattler	Pinnacle vs. Chandler	2017
575	Trevor Messing	Thunderbird vs. St. Mary's	2018
565	Adam Abbatacola	Apache Junction vs. Higley	2014

Passing Yards (season by conference)

4405	Brock Purdy	Perry	2017	6A
4265	Daniel Bridge-Gadd	Paradise Valley	2015	5A
4662	Anthony Hernandez	Desert Edge	2013	4A
4661	Gage Reese	Yuma Catholic	2018	3A
3653	Jack Miller	Scottsdale Christian	2016	2A

Passing Yards (season top performers)

4662	Anthony Hernandez	Desert Edge	2013
4661	Gage Reese	Yuma Catholic	2018
4413	Rathen Ricedorff	Show Low	2010
4405	Brock Purdy	Perry	2017
4265	Daniel Bridge-Gadd	Paradise Valley	2015
4201	Luke Rubenzer	Saguaro	2013
4074	Ty Thompson	Mesquite	2019
4016	Asryan Lara	Desert Edge	2019
3973	Jon Bowman	Washington	2006
3946	Spencer Rattler	Pinnacle	2017

Passing Yards (career by conference)

11083	Spencer Rattler	Pinnacle	2015-18	6A
9415	Daniel Bridge-Gadd	Paradise Valley	2012-15	5A
10489	Emanuel Gant	Tempe	2011-14	4A
10621	Gage Reese	Yuma Catholic	2016-19	3A
9440	Jagan Cleary	Yuma Catholic	2012-14	2A

Passing Yards (career top performers)

11083	Spencer Rattler	Pinnacle	2015-18
10621	Gage Reese	Yuma Catholic	2016-19
10489	Emanuel Gant	Tempe	2011-14
10098	Jacob Conover	Chandler	2016-18
9953	Nazareth Greer	Marcos de Niza	2014-16
9891	Ty Thompson	Mesquite	2017-20
9645	Luke Rubenzer	Saguaro	2010-13
9493	Chase Cord	Sunrise Mountain	2013-16
9440	Jagan Cleary	Yuma Catholic	2012-14
9415	Daniel Bridge-Gadd	Paradise Valley	2012-15

Receptions (game by conference)

17	Vodrey Gates	Valley Vista vs. Perry	2016	6A
21	John Mistler	Sahuaro vs. Sabino	1975	5A
21	Kyle Watkins	Cactus Shadows vs. Higley	2006	4A
18	Randy Nikolaus	Show Low vs. Holbrook	1982	3A
21	Paul Hardiman	Valley Christian vs. Vallery Lutheran	2002	2A

Receptions (game top performers)

21	Kyle Watkins	Cactus Shadows vs. Higley	2006
21	Paul Hardiman	Valley Christian vs. Vallery Lutheran	2002
21	John Mistler	Sahuaro vs. Sabino	1975
19	Bryan Marshall	Hopi vs. Valley (Sanders)	1988
18	Jared Beamon	Paradise Valley vs. Notre Dame	2016
18	Mike Funk	Hopi vs. Bagdad	1988
18	Bryan Marshall	Hopi vs. Orme School	1988
18	Randy Nikolaus	Show Low vs. Holbrook	1982

Receptions (season by conference)

86	Terrell Brown	Basha	2016	6A
99	Coleman Owen	Higley	2018	5A
113	Elijah Marks	Desert Edge	2013	4A
89	Randy Nikolaus	Show Low	1982	3A
101	Clifton Jones	Florence	1995	2A

Receptions (season top performers)

113	Elijah Marks	Desert Edge	2013
112	John Leonard	Cactus Shadows	2010
101	Clifton Jones	Florence	1995
100	Calvin Dacus	Sahuaro	1999
99	Jihad Marks	Desert Edge	2019
99	Coleman Owen	Higley	2018
97	Zach Nelson	Casteel	2018
96	Kade Warner	Desert Mountain	2015
95	Tyler Hironaka	Gilbert	2019
91	AJ Blair	Cholla	2017

Receptions (career by conference)

206	Colby Dickie	Perry	2016-18	6A
241	Kade Warner	Desert Mountain	2014-16	5A
217	Trevor Russell	Casa Grande	2013-16	4A
187	Josh Weeks	Show Low	2008-11	3A
163	Clifton Jones	Florence	1994-96	2A

Receptions (career top performers)

241	Kade Warner	Desert Mountain	2014-16
217	Trevor Russell	Casa Grande	2013-16
207	Mark Andrews	Desert Mountain	2011-13
206	Colby Dickie	Perry	2016-18
203	Christian Kirk	Saguaro	2011-14
198	Gunner Romney	Chandler	2015-17
196	Zach Nelson	Casteel	2016-18
187	Josh Weeks	Show Low	2008-11
186	Brandt Goodwin	Casteel	2016-18

Receiving Yards (game by conference)

342	Ricky Pearsall	Corona del Sol vs. Gilbert	2017	6A
329	Josh Morrow	Mountain Ridge vs. Sandra Day O'Connor	2005	5A
324	Elijah Marks	Desert Edge vs. Agua Fria	2013	4A
288	Josh Weeks	Show Low vs. Winslow	2010	3A
368	Ben McKeighan	Scottsdale Prep vs. Paradise Honors	2014	2A

Receiving Yards (game top performers)

368	Ben McKeighan	Scottsdale Prep vs. Paradise Honors	2014
342	Ricky Pearsall	Corona del Sol vs. Gilbert	2017
340	Sean Bowman	Phoenix Christian vs. Valley Christian	1999
335	Rick Huisman	Phoenix Christian vs. Bourgade Catholic	1998
332	Terrell Brown	Basha vs. Desert Vista	2016
329	Josh Morrow	Mountain Ridge vs. Sandra Day O'Connor	2005
325	Clifton Jones	Florence vs. Superior	1995
324	Elijah Marks	Desert Edge vs. Agua Fria	2013
321	Mike Funk	Hopi vs. Bagdad	1988

Receiving Yards (season by conference)

1554	Gunner Romney	Chandler	2017	6A
1747	Jacob Brown	Paradise Valley	2015	5A
2153	Elijah Marks	Desert Edge	2013	4A
2101	John Henderson	Yuma Catholic	2018	3A
1627	Gabe Escobedo	Miami	2019	2A

Receiving Yards (season top performers)

2153	Elijah Marks	Desert Edge	2013
2101	John Henderson	Yuma Catholic	2018
1760	Damian Segovia	Greenway	1995
1747	Jacob Brown	Paradise Valley	2015
1733	Byron Murphy	Saguaro	2015
1728	Victor Gamiz	Washington	2006
1716	Jihad Marks	Desert Edge	2019
1662	Jimmy Connor	Greenway	1998
1627	Gabe Escobedo	Miami	2019
1601	Clifton Jones	Florence	1995

Receiving Yards (career by conference)

3471	Colbie Dickie	Perry	2016-18	6A
3674	Mark Andrews	Desert Mountain	2011-13	5A
3943	Christian Kirk	Saguaro	2011-14	4A
3851	Josh Weeks	Show Low	2008-11	3A
2868	Jacob Kaites	Scottsdale Christian	2015-17	2A

Receiving Yards (career top performers)

3943	Christian Kirk	Saguaro	2011-14
3851	Josh Weeks	Show Low	2008-11
3674	Mark Andrews	Desert Mountain	2011-13
3665	John Henderson	Yuma Catholic	2016-18
3629	Gunner Romney	Chandler	2015-17
3537	Cameron Denson	Salpointe Catholic	2010-13
3492	Elijah Marks	Desert Edge	2012-13
3471	Colbie Dickie	Perry	2016-18
3468	Trevor Russell	Casa Grande	2013-16

Touchdown Catches (game by conference)

7	Edward McClendon	Mesa vs. Dobson	2018	6A
6	Garrett Billings	Ironwood Ridge vs. Flowing Wells	2016	5A
6	Josh Morrow	Mountain Ridge vs. Sandra Day O'Connor	2005	5A
5	Elijah Marks	Desert Edge vs. Shadow Ridge	2013	4A
5	J.T. Nettleton	Saguaro vs. Desert Edge	2013	4A
5	Kyle Watkins	Cactus Shadows vs. Washington	2006	4A
5	Adam Englebert	Seton Catholic vs. Bourgade	2011	3A
5	Bujon Boyd	ALA-Queen Creek vs. Benjamin Franklin	2015	2A
5	Austin Torress	Tanque Verde vs. San Manuel	2015	2A
5	Ben McKeighan	Scottsdale Prep vs. Paradise Honors	2014	2A

Touchdown Catches (game top performers)

7	Edward McClendon	Mesa vs. Dobson	2018
6	Garrett Billings	Ironwood Ridge vs. Flowing Wells	2016
6	Josh Morrow	Mountain Ridge vs. Sandra Day O'Connor	2005
5	many times		

Touchdown Catches (season by conference)

20	Hendrix Johnson	Boulder Creek	2018	6A
24	Angel Ruiz	Sunrise Mountain	2017	5A
26	Elijah Marks	Desert Edge	2013	4A
29	John Henderson	Yuma Catholic	2018	3A
26	Spencer Schuller	Bisbee	2015	2A

Touchdown Catches (season top performers)

29	John Henderson	Yuma Catholic	2018
26	Spencer Schuller	Bisbee	2015
26	Elijah Marks	Desert Edge	2013
26	Matt Bushman	Sabino	2013
24	Dujuan Lawrence	Joy Christian	2015
24	Adam Engelbert	Seton Catholic	2011
24	Brandon Hirneise	Notre Dame Prep	2007
24	Kyle Watkins	Cactus Shadows	2006
24	Angel Ruiz	Sunrise Mountain	2017

Touchdown Catches (career by conference)

38	Colbie Dickie	Perry	2016-18	6A
50	Jalen Brown	Mountain Pointe	2011-13	5A
52	Christian Kirk	Saguaro	2011-14	4A
46	Josh Weeks	Show Low	2008-10	3A
49	Gabe Galvan	Arizona Lutheran	2012-15	2A

Touchdown Catches (career top performers)

52	Christian Kirk	Saguaro	2011-14
50	Jalen Brown	Mountain Pointe	2011-13
49	Gabe Galvan	Arizona Lutheran	2012-15
48	Mark Andrews	Desert Mountain	2011-13
47	Spencer Schuller	Bisbee	2012-15
46	Josh Weeks	Show Low	2008-11
45	Trevor Russell	Casa Grande	2013-16
44	Elijah Marks	Desert Edge	2012-13
42	John Henderson	Yuma Catholic	2015-18
42	Matt Bushman	Sabino	2011-13
42	Cameron Denson	Salpointe Catholic	2010-13
42	Bristol Olomua	Ganado/Red Mountain	1996-98

Extra Points (game by conference)

11	Jacob Veach	Pinnacle vs. Desert Mountain	2017	6A
15	Danny White	Westwood vs. Kofa	1969	5A
12	Griffin Roehler	Agua Fria vs. Washington	2015	4A
12	Derek Auclair	Casteel vs. ASU Prep	2017	3A
12	Alex Shores	Page vs. Monument Valley	1974	3A
11	Joey Mariscal	Florence vs. Seton Catholic	1987	2A

Extra Points (game top performers)

15	Danny White	Westwood vs. Kofa	1969
12	Derek Auclair	Casteel vs. ASU Prep	2017
12	Griffin Roehler	Agua Fria vs. Washington	2015
12	Alex Shores	Page vs. Monument Valley	1974
11	Parker Lewis	Saguaro vs. Desert Mountain	2018
11	Jacob Veach	Pinnacle vs. Desert Mountain	2017
11	Jonathan Sangillo	Desert Edge vs. Agua Fria	2015
11	Dylan Audlsey	Chaparral vs. McClintock	2011
11	Matt Boatman	Chaparral vs. Agua Fria	2005
11	Joey Mariscal	Florence vs. Seton Catholic	1987
11	Ed Brooks	Phoenix Union vs. Prescott	1914

Extra Points (season by conference)

88	Crew Peterman	Chandler	2019	6A
84	Joe Navarro	Centennial	2012	5A
100	Peter Douds	Saguaro	2011	4A
94	Derek Auclair	Casteel	2017	3A
95	Austin Booker	Joy Christian	2015	2A

Extra Points (season top performers)

100	Peter Douds	Saguaro	2011
95	Austin Booker	Joy Christian	2015
95	Matthew Rosedale	Saguaro	2014
94	Derek Auclair	Casteel	2017
88	Crew Peterman	Chandler	2019
86	Parker Lewis	Saguaro	2018
84	Matthew Rosedale	Saguaro	2016
84	Joe Navarro	Centennial	2012
83	Matt Boatman	Chaparral	2003
83	Greg Shorts	Centennial	2006

Extra Points (career by conference)

181	Ben Abercrombie	Mountain Pointe	2015-18	6A
189	Derek Auclair	Casteel	2016-18	3A/5A
274	Matthew Rosedale	Saguaro	2013-16	4A
184	Talen Rider	ALA-Queen Creek	2016-18	3A
191	Osvaldo Rodriguez	Yuma Catholic	2012-14	2A

Extra Points (career top performers)

274	Matthew Rosedale	Saguaro	2013-16
232	Peter Douds	Saguaro	2009-11
223	Jason Cross	Phoenix Christian	2017-19
208	Matt Boatman	Chaparral	2002-05
191	Osvaldo Rodriguez	Yuma Catholic	2012-14
189	Derek Auclair	Casteel	2016-18
184	Talen Rider	ALA-Queen Creek	2016-18
181	Ben Abercrombie	Mountain Pointe	2015-18
181	Joe Navarro	Centennial	2012-14
170	Derek Gregson	Williams Field	2010-12

Longest Field Goal

63	Jeff Locke	Mountain Ridge vs. Sunnyside	2007	5A
62	Kyle Pooler	Cactus vs. Coconino	1989	4A
61	Ryan Hawkins	Sunrise Mountain vs. Peoria	2011	4A
60	Julian Botello	Deer Valley vs. Verrado	2016	4A
60	Ramey Peru	Dobson vs. Mesa	1998	5A
59	Ryan Hawkins	Sunrise Mountain vs. Cactus	2011	4A
59	Alex Zandejas	Ironwood vs. South Mountain	2006	5A Div. II
59	Ezra Ricks	Cactus vs. Mingus Union	2005	5A Div. I
58	Brayden Narveson	Desert Mountain vs. Mesa	2017	5A
58	Brandon Ruiz	Williams Field vs. Marana	2016	5A
58	Austin Casillas	Highland vs. Skyline	2011	Div. I
58	Jim Sanson	St. Mary's vs. Westwood	1994	5A

Field Goals (game by conference)

4	Konner Olson	Higley vs. Williams Field	2020	6A
4	Mark Vargas	Tucson vs. Mountain View (Marana)	2018	6A
4	Carlos Cruz	North vs. Maryvale	2017	6A
4	Brandon Johnson	Mountain Pointe vs. Desert Ridge	2015	6A
4	Austin Bull	Perry vs. Mountain Ridge	2014	6A
5	Brandon Ruiz	Williams Field vs. Campo Verde	2016	5A
5	Steven Chiappetti	Saguaro vs. McClintock	2007	4A
4	Cody McBride	Blue Ridge vs. Alchesay	2013	3A
4	Logan Pollei	Wickenburg vs. San Tan Foothills	2010	3A
7	Kris Pulsifer	St. Johns vs. Red Mesa	1999	2A

Field Goals (game top performers)

7	Kris Pulsifer	St. Johns vs. Red Mesa	1999
5	Brandon Ruiz	Williams Field vs. Campo Verde	2016
5	Steven Chiappetti	Saguaro vs. McClintock	2007
5	Nick Longanecker	Valley Christian vs. Westwind Prep	2006
5	Jeremy Kelly	Mountain View (Mesa) vs. Marcos de Niza	1996
4	many times		

Field Goals (season by conference)

15	Justin Barber	Basha	2011	6A
19	Mike Cortright	Saint Mary's	1985	5A
19	Bubba Bradley	Cactus	2003	4A
19	Cory Lizarraga	Blue Ridge	1997	3A
	Kris Pulsifer	St. Johns		2A

Field Goals (season top performers)

19	Bubba Bradley	Cactus	2003
19	Cory Lizarraga	Blue Ridge	1997
19	Mike Cortright	Saint Mary's	1985
17	Brandon Ruiz	Williams Field	2016
16	Ben Pigg	Bradshaw Mountain	2007

16	Kyle Pooler	Cactus	1989
15	Justin Barber	Basha	2011
15	Ryan Hawkins	Sunrise Mountain	2010
15	Danny Berzins	Desert Ridge	2010
15	Ezra Ricks	Cactus	2005
15	Kyle Day	Sahuarita	2004
15	Jeremy Kelly	Mountain View (Mesa)	1996
15	Jeremy Kelly	Mountain View (Mesa)	1995

Field Goals (career by conference)

22	Austin McNamara	Highland	2016-18	6A
36	Mike Cortright	Saint Mary's	1983-85	5A
30	Ryan Hawkins	Sunrise Mountain	2009-11	4A
30	Talen Rider	ALA-Queen Creek	2016-18	3A
24	Kris Pulsifer	St. Johns	1999-00	2A

Field Goals (career top performers)

36	Mike Cortright	Saint Mary's	1983-85
31	Brandon Ruiz	Williams Field	2014-16
30	Talen Rider	ALA-Queen Creek	2016-18
30	Ryan Hawkins	Sunrise Mountain	2009-11
30	Jeremy Kelly	Mountain View (Mesa)	1995-96
29	Jeff Black	Sahuarito	1986-88
25	Bryce Peters	Prescott	2015-18
24	Kris Pulsifer	St. Johns	1999-00
24	Kyler Pooler	Cactus	1987-89

Interceptions (game by conference)

4	Seth Doumbia	Basha vs. Liberty	2015	6A
5	Joseph La Mar	South Mountain vs. Carl Hayden	2008	5A
5	Aaron Smith	Sabino vs. Desert View	1996	4A
7	Gabe Lumas	Kingman vs. Flagstaff	2011	3A
5	Graham Nielson	St. Johns vs. AZ Lutheran	2019	2A

Interceptions (game top performers)

7	Gabe Lumas	Kingman vs. Flagstaff	2011
5	Graham Nielson	St. Johns vs. AZ Lutheran	2019
5	Joseph La Mar	South Mountain vs. Carl Hayden	2008
5	Aaron Smith	Sabino vs. Desert View	1996
5	Mike Koza	Santa Rita vs. Nogales	1974
5	Dick Gwinn	Judson vs. Bourgade Catholic	1964
5	Conrad Flippen	Phoenix Union vs. Albuquerque (NM)	1930

Interceptions (season by conference)

10	Elijah Pharrams	Mesa	2016	6A
10	Isaiah Pola-mao	Mountain Pointe	2016	6A
18	Rudy Quihuis	Pueblo	1967	5A
16	Max Tabach	Saguaro	2006	4A
15	Mike Vere	Bourgade Catholic	1972	3A
16	Brandon Tomerlin	Superior	1996	2A

Interceptions (season top performers)

18	Rudy Quihuis	Pueblo	1967
16	Max Tabach	Saguaro	2006
16	Brandon Tomerlin	Superior	1996
15	Mike Vere	Bourgade Catholic	1972
14	Cory Lizarraga	Blue Ridge	1997
14	Aaron Smith	Sabino	1996
14	Mickey Bell	Cactus	1979
14	Andy Zwingle	Peoria	1979

Interceptions (career by conference)

13	Jose Escalera	Central	2015-17	6A
25	Rudy Quihuis	Pueblo	1966-67	5A
27	Angel Corona	Flowing Wells	1983-85	4A
26	Phillip Echeverria	Buckeye	1985-87	3A
32	Brandon Tomerlin	Superior	1995-98	2A

Interceptions (career top performers)

32	Brandon Tomerlin	Superior	1995-98
30	Harold Smith	Florence	1972-74
29	Billy Burris	Florence	1987-89
27	Angel Corona	Flowing Wells	1983-85
26	Phillip Echeverria	Buckeye	1985-87
25	Rudy Quihuis	Pueblo	1966-67
25	Chad Ence	St. Johns	1989-90
25	David Moran	Bradshaw Mountain	1995-95

Coaching Victories

342-94-4	Mike Morgan	St. Johns
336-71-0	Paul Moro	Blue Ridge/Poston Butte/Marcos de Niza
332-120-3	Jim Rattay	Cesar Chavez (200-91-1 in Arizona)
331-159-6	Vern Friedli	Amphitheater
331-100-3	Larry Fetkenhier	Cactus (315-96-3 in Arizona)
313-124-6	Richard Taylor	Centennial (267-86-3 in Arizona)
309-139-4	Jesse Parker	Gilbert
308-138-3	Karl Kiefer	McClintock/Mountain Pointe

Highest Scores

113-0	Scottsdale def. Salt River	1940
102-0	Page def. Monument Valley	1974
100-6	Westwood def. Kofa	1969
95-75	Higley def. Apache Junction	2014



The 1A AIA football record books converted to a top performance listing for each category. AZPreps365's records only go back to 2004. If there are any listings that need to be updated/added, please e-mail Seth Polansky and Jose Garcia with all supporting documentation.

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TDs (game)

10 Vincent Alvarado	Seligman vs. Canyon State Academy	2004
9 Cale Merrell	Duncan vs. Superior	2012
8 Brian Lynch	PDSD vs. San Pasqual Valley	2019
8 Zach Yada	Glendale Prep vs. Telesis Prep	2011
7 9 times		

TDs (season)

49 Scotty Finnerty	Bagdad	2017
48 Chuck Antoni	Salome	1980
39 Dallyn Despain	Mogollon	2013
37 Dacodah Jensen	Mayer	2017
37 Jaret Luzania	Valley Union	2015
36 Brian Lynch	PDSD	2019
35 Kyron Newton	Valley Union	2014
35 Danny Warden	Mohave Accelerated	2010
34 Curtis Hancock	Pima	2015
34 Myles Mattoc	Glendale Prep	2014
34 Andrew Sherman	Gilbert Christian	2013

TDs (career)

95 Chuck Antoni	Salome	1977-80
94* <i>Matt Munsil</i>	<i>Scottsdale Prep</i>	<i>2010-13</i>
80 Danny Warden	Mohave Accelerated	2009-11
76 Chance Pearson	Williams	2016-19
75 Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep	2010-12
73 Dallyn Despain	Mogollon	2010-13
71 Cale Merrell	Duncan	2010-13
70 Boone Baker	Mogollon	2009-11
68 Caleb Young	Gilbert Christian	2013-16
65 Nicolaus Cruz	Superior	2013-16
63 Casey Jeans	Bagdad	2012-14
63 Greyson Boyll	Scottsdale Prep	2010-13

** - Munsil played both 8-man (3 years) and 11-man (1 year) football*

Points (game)

60	Vincent Alvarado	Seligman vs. Canyon State Academy	2004
54	Cale Merrell	Duncan vs. Superior	2012
50	Brian Lynch	PDSD vs. San Pasqual Valley	2019
48	Zach Yada	Glendale Prep vs. Telesis Prep	2011
46	Jacob Sonke	Valley Union vs. Mohave Accelerated	2020
46	Brian Lynch	PDSD vs. Mississippi School for the Deaf	2019
46	Brian Lynch	PDSD vs. Anthem Prep	2019
46	Brian Lynch	PDSD vs. Colorado School for the Deaf	2018
46	Kyron Newton	Valley Lutheran vs. Ajo	2014
44	Scotty Finnerty	Bagdad vs. Ray	2017
44	Myles Mattox	Glendale Prep vs. Arizona Charter Academy	2014
44	Cale Merrell	Duncan vs. Fort Thomas	2011

Points (season)

332	Scott Finnerty	Bagdad	2017
314	Chuck Antoni	Salome	1980
254	Dallyn Despain	Mogollon	2013
250	Dacodah Jensen	Mayer	2017
244	Jaret Luzania	Valley Union	2015
238	Casey Jeans	Bagdad	2014
234	Andrew Sherman	Gilbert Christian	2013
232	Brian Lynch	PDSD	2019
230	Danny Warden	Mohave Accelerated	2010
226	Kyron Newton	Valley Lutheran	2014

Points (career)

688	Arley McNeil	Patagonia	1985-88
628*	<i>Matt Munsil</i>	<i>Scottsdale Prep</i>	<i>2010-13</i>
586	Caleb Young	Gilbert Christian	2013-16
546	Danny Warden	Mohave Accelerated	2009-11
494	Dallyn Despain	Mogollon	2010-13
492	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep	2010-12
480	Chance Pearson	Williams	2016-19
466	Boone Baker	Mogollon	2009-11
442	Cale Merrell	Duncan	2010-13
424	Casey Jeans	Bagdad	2012-14
422	Nicolaus Cruz	Superior	2013-16

** - Munsil played both 8-man (3 years) and 11-man (1 year) football*

Rushing Yards (game)

532	Jacob Sonke	Valley Union vs. Mohave Accelerated	2020
477	Ozzie Anaya	Valley Union vs. Bowie	1985
453	Cale Merrell	Duncan vs. Superior	2012
419	Karsen Estelle	Valley Union vs. Trivium Prep	2016
409	Dallin Despain	Mogollon vs. Mayer	2013
395	Brian Lynch	PDSD vs. San Pasqual Valley	2019
395	Cale Merrell	Duncan vs. Valley Union	2013

393	Myles Mattox	Glendale Prep vs. Arizona Charter Academy	2014
384	Nicolaus Cruz	Superior vs. Gilbert Christian	2015
382	Isaiah Bradshaw	El Capitan vs. Mayer	2020
378	Wesley Conyer	Duncan vs. St. David	2017
Rushing Yards (season)			
2494	Dallyn Despain	Mogollon	2013
2250	Gary Hall	Canyon State Academy	2005
2096	Dimitri O'Brien	Valley Lutheran	2010
2081	David Atkerson	Mayer	2010
2065	Myles Mattox	Glendale Prep	2014
2047	Danny Warden	Mohave Accelerated	2010
2005	Cale Merrell	Duncan	2012
2000	Kyron Newton	Valley Lutheran	2014
1990	DJ Lillard	Valley Lutheran	2005
1942	Randy Landwerlen	Valley Union	2010
Rushing Yards (career)			
5760	Arley McNeil	Patagonia	1985-88
5444	Danny Warden	Mohave Accelerated	2009-11
5210	Cale Merrell	Duncan	2010-13
4458	Boone Baker	Mogollon	2009-11
4385	Dallin Despain	Mogollon	2010-13
3802	Casey Jeans	Bagdad	2012-14
3737	Chance Pearson	Williams	2016-19
3702	Nicolaus Cruz	Superior	2013-16
3353	Ruben Anaya	Harvest Prep	2011-14
3186	Wesley Conyer	Duncan	2015-18
Rushing Touchdowns (game)			
9	Cale Merrell	Duncan vs. Superior	2012
8	Zach Yada	Glendale Prep vs. Telesis Prep	2011
7	Jacob Sonke	Valley Union vs. Mohave Accelerated	2020
7	Brian Lynch	PDSD vs. Colorado School for the Deaf	2018
7	Myles Mattox	Glendale Prep vs. Arizona Charter Academy	2014
7	Kyron Newton	Valley Lutheran vs. Ajo	2014
7	Cale Merrell	Duncan vs. Fort Thomas	2011
6	many times		
Rushing Touchdowns (season)			
43	David Soto	Patagonia	2008
39	Dallyn Despain	Mogollon	2013
34	Dacodah Jensen	Mayer	2017
33	Jaret Luzania	Valley Union	2016
32	Myles Mattox	Glendale Prep	2015
31	Danny Warden	Mohave Accelerated	2010
30	David Atkerson	Mayer	2010
29	Casey Jeans	Bagdad	2015

29	Dmitri O'Brien	Valley Lutheran	2010
28	Randy Landwerlen	Valley Union	2010
28	Adam Splitter	Mayer	2006
Rushing Touchdowns (career)			
72	Dallyn Despain	Mogollon	2010-13
71	Danny Warden	Mohave Accelerated	2009-11
68	Cale Merrell	Duncan	2010-13
67	Boone Baker	Mogollon	2009-11
61	Nicolaus Cruz	Superior	2013-16
57	Casey Jeans	Bagdad	2012-14
50	Zach Yada	Glendale Prep	2011-12
46	Jaret Luzania	Valley Union	2014-15
46	Chris Grap	Superior	2008-11
44	Chance Pearson	Williams	2016-18
44	Steven Ybarra	Superior	2015-18
44	Ruben Anaya	Harvest Prep	2011-14
Completions (game)			
34	Aidan Wright	Scottsdale Prep vs. St. David	2011
33	Matthew Cruz	Superior vs. Williams	2020
32	JR Tessay	Fort Thomas vs. Duncan	2012
30	Todd Stringfellow	Fort Thomas vs. Valley Union	2018
29	Nick Smith	Scottsdale Prep vs. Valley Lutheran	2012
28	Clark Zimmerman	Valley Lutheran vs. Mogollon	2015
27	Nick Staloch	Arete Prep vs. Glendale Prep	2013
27	Aidan Wright	Scottsdale Prep vs. Glendale Prep	2010
26	six times		
Completions (season)			
174	Aidan Wright	Scottsdale Prep	2011
170	Todd Stringfellow	Fort Thomas	2018
169	Nick Staloch	Arete Prep	2012
166	Todd Stringfellow	Fort Thomas	2019
166	Israel Loveall	Bagdad	2017
160	Israel Loveall	Bagdad	2015
159	Nick Henderson	Joy Christian	2012
156	Nick Staloch	Arete Prep	2013
155	Logan Davis	St. David	2019
154	Nick Henderson	Joy Christian	2011
Completions (career)			
464	Israel Loveall	Bagdad	2014-17
450	Travis Davis	St. David	2013-16
436*	Nick Henderson	Joy Christian	2010-13
426	Martin Granillo	Superior	2008-11
344	Todd Stringfellow	Fort Thomas	2016-19
339	Nicolaus Cruz	Superior	2013-16

327	Aidan Wright	Scottsdale Prep	2010-11
325	Nick Staloch	Arete Prep	2012-13
325	Nick Henderson	Joy Christian	2010-12
317	Logan Davis	St. David	2017-20
307	Evan Stringfellow	Fort Thomas	2015-17

** - Henderson played both 8-man (3 years) and 11-man (1 year) football*

Passing Attempts (game)

71	Aidan Wright	Scottsdale Prep vs. St. David	2011
54	Nick Smith	Scottsdale Prep vs. Valley Lutheran	2012
53	Logan Davis	St. David vs. Hayden	2019
52	JR Tessay	Fort Thomas vs. Duncan	2012
51	Matthew Cruz	Superior vs. Williams	2020
51	Nick Smith	Scottsdale Prep vs. Mogollon	2012
50	Rocky Sandoval	Bagdad vs. Williams	2020
50	Clark Zimmerman	Valley Lutheran vs. Mogollon	2015
48	Israel Loveall	Bagdad vs. Pima	2015
48	Matthew Martinez	Rancho Solano Prep vs. Salome	2012

Passing Attempts (season)

318	Aidan Wright	Scottsdale Prep	2011
308	Matthew McClelland	Arete Prep	2019
289	Nick Staloch	Arete Prep	2012
272	Matthew McClelland	Arete Prep	2018
270	Aidan Wright	Scottsdale Prep	2010
268	Israel Loveall	Bagdad	2017
268	Israel Loveall	Bagdad	2015
261	Nick Staloch	Arete Prep	2013
256	Todd Stringfellow	Fort Thomas	2019
254	Clark Zimmerman	Valley Lutheran	2015

Passing Attempts (career)

873	Travis Davis	St. David	2013-16
796	Martin Granillo	Superior	2008-11
734	Israel Loveall	Bagdad	2014-17
645*	Nick Henderson	Joy Christian	2010-13
593	Nicolaus Cruz	Superior	2013-16
588	Aidan Wright	Scottsdale Prep	2010-11
580	Matthew McClelland	Arete Prep	2018-19
550	Nick Staloch	Arete Prep	2012-13
515	Todd Stringfellow	Fort Thomas	2016-19
513	Tyler Davis	St. David	2008-11
495	Logan Davis	St. David	2017-20

** - Henderson played both 8-man (3 years) and 11-man (1 year) football*

Touchdown Passes (game)

10	Bailey Anderson	Gilbert Christian vs. Arete Prep	2013
9	Israel Loveall	Bagdad vs. Ray	2017
9	Zachary Loveall	Bagdad vs. Orme School	2010
8	Israel Loveall	Bagdad vs. Salome	2017
8	Matthew Martinez	Rancho Solano Prep vs. Veritas Prep	2012
8	Aidan Wright	Scottsdale Prep vs. Veritas Prep	2011
8	Aidan Wright	Scottsdale Prep vs. Rancho Solano Prep	2011
8	Ric Lines	Pima vs. St. David	1974
7	many times		

Touchdown Passes (season)

59	Israel Loveall	Bagdad	2016
58	Israel Loveall	Bagdad	2017
50	Israel Loveall	Bagdad	2015
50	Nick Henderson	Joy Christian	2012
50	Aidan Wright	Scottsdale Prep	2011
46	Tate Powser	Apache Trail	2012
40	Matthew Cruz	Superior	2019
39	Nick Henderson	Joy Christian	2011
38	Nick Smith	Scottsdale Prep	2012
36	Steven Ybarra	Superior	2018
36	Bailey Anderson	Gilbert Christian	2013
36	Nick Staloch	Arete Prep	2013

Touchdown Passes (career)

167	Israel Loveall	Bagdad	2014-17
122*	<i>Nick Henderson</i>	<i>Joy Christian</i>	<i>2010-13</i>
94	Travis Davis	Superior	2013-16
94	Brian Chason	Tucson Christian	1982-85
93	Nick Henderson	Joy Christian	2010-12
81	Nicolaus Cruz	Superior	2013-16
81	Aiden Wright	Scottsdale Prep	2010-11
81	Tyler Davis	St. David	2008-11
74	Armando Ruiz	NFL Yet	2011-13
69	Nick Staloch	Arete Prep	2012-13
67	Steven Ybarra	Superior	2015-18
67	Martin Granillo	Superior	2008-11

** - Henderson played both 8-man (3 years) and 11-man (1 year) football*

Passing Yards (game)

571	Bailey Anderson	Gilbert Christian vs. Arete Prep	2013
541	Israel Loveall	Bagdad vs. Ray	2017
535	Aidan Wright	Scottsdale Prep vs. St. David	2011
504	Garry Hall	Canyon State Academy vs. unknown	2004
488	Nick Smith	Scottsdale Prep vs. Mogollon	2012
481	Zachary Loveall	Bagdad vs. Orme School	2010
457	Clark Zimmerman	Valley Lutheran vs. Anthem Prep	2015

448	Israel Loveall	Bagdad vs. Mayer	2017
445	Matthew McLelland	Arete Prep vs. El Capitan	2019
445	Kyle Stringfellow	Fort Thomas vs. NFL Yet	2015

Passing Yards (season)

3479	Israel Loveall	Bagdad	2017
3083	Israel Loveall	Bagdad	2016
3020	Aidan Wright	Scottsdale Prep	2011
2727	Israel Loveall	Bagdad	2015
2673	Nick Staloch	Arete Prep	2013
2618	Nick Henderson	Joy Christian	2012
2577	Todd Stringfellow	Fort Thomas	2019
2565	Travis Davis	St. David	2015
2559	Matthew McClelland	Arete Prep	2018
2445	Todd Stringfellow	Fort Thomas	2018

Passing Yards (career)

9289	Israel Loveall	Bagdad	2014-17
7354	Travis Davis	St. David	2013-16
6822*	<i>Nick Henderson</i>	<i>Joy Christian</i>	<i>2010-13</i>
6408	Brian Chason	Tucson Christian	1982-85
6251	Nicolaus Cruz	Superior	2013-16
5650	Martin Granillo	Superior	2008-11
5492	Aidan Wright	Scottsdale Prep	2010-11
5104	Todd Stringfellow	Fort Thomas	2016-19
5051	Tyler Davis	St. David	2008-11
5043	Nick Staloch	Arete Prep	2012-13
4841	Nick Henderson	Joy Christian	2010-12

** - Henderson played both 8-man (3 years) and 11-man (1 year) football*

Receptions (game)

19	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep vs. St. David	2011
17	Aaron Martin	Joy Christian vs. Valley Lutheran	2012
16	Connor Watson	Bagdad vs. Williams	2020
16	Trevor Hook	Valley Lutheran vs. Mogollon	2010
16	Stuart Laird	Gila Bend vs. Valley Union	1975
14	Jay Edwards	Joseph City vs. Fort Thomas	2019
14	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep vs. Glendale Prep	2010
13	6 times		

Receptions (season)

83	Mark Frithsen	St. David	1984
80	Scotty Finnerty	Bagdad	2017
78	Aaron Martin	Joy Christian	2012
75	Trevor Deason	Joy Christian	2012
71	Kaine Langley	Fort Thomas	2015
71	Jackson Ventrella	Arete Prep	2013
71	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep	2010

67	Jackson Ventrella	Arete Prep	2012
67	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep	2012
65	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep	2011

Receptions (career)

273*	<i>Matt Munsil</i>	<i>Scottsdale Prep</i>	<i>2010-13</i>
221	Paul Hatcher	Tucson Christian	1982-85
202	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep	2010-12
197	Trevor Deason	Joy Christian	2009-12
159	Anthony Flores	Superior	2008-11
138	Jackson Ventrella	Arete Prep	2012-13
129	Ben Fontes	Valley Lutheran	2005-08
122	Kaine Langley	Fort Thomas	2012-15
115	Greyson Boyll	Scottsdale Prep	2010-12
107	Kason Jacquez	St. David	2017-20
107	Benjamin Loveall	Bagdad	2013-16

** - Munsil played both 8-man (3 years) and 11-man (1 year) football*

Receiving Yards (game)

341	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep vs. Glendale Prep	2010
279	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep vs. St. David	2011
279	Cheston Tessay	Fort Thomas vs. Salt River	2012
276	Jackson Ventrella	Arete Prep vs. Glendale Prep	2013
266	Trevor Hook	Valley Lutheran vs. Mogollon	2010
259	Jackson Ventrella	Arete Prep vs. Salome	2012
250	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep vs. Mogollon	2012
244	Louis Ternyik	Tempe Prep vs. Lincoln Prep	2020
239	Jackson Ventrella	Arete Prep vs. Mayer	2012
238	Cameron Labban	Arete Prep vs. Ajo	2013

Receiving Yards (season)

1944	Scotty Finnerty	Bagdad	2017
1655	Paul Hatcher	Tucson Christian	1985
1272	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep	2010
1245	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep	2012
1236	Jackson Ventrella	Arete Prep	2013
1168	Jackson Ventrella	Arete Prep	2012
1122	Cameron Labban	Arete Prep	2013
1122	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep	2011
1086	Benjamin Loveall	Bagdad	2015
1049	Drake Olivar	Fort Thomas	2018

Receiving Yards (career)

5068*	<i>Matt Munsil</i>	<i>Scottsdale Prep</i>	<i>2010-13</i>
4221	Paul Hatcher	Tucson Christian	1982-85
3639	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep	2010-12
2665	Trevor Deason	Joy Christian	2009-12
2426	Benjamin Loveall	Bagdad	2013-16

2404	Jackson Ventrella	Arete Prep	2012-13
2301	Anthony Flores	Superior	2008-11
2163	Scotty Finnerty	Bagdad	2014-17
2005	Kaine Langley	Fort Thomas	2012-15
1844	Ben Fontes	Valley Lutheran	2005-08

** - Munsil played both 8-man (3 years) and 11-man (1 year) football*

Touchdown Catches (game)

7	Scotty Finnerty	Bagdad vs. Salome	2017
6	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep vs. St. David	2011
6	Kevin Box	Apache Trail vs. Glendale Prep	2012
5	Rio Delgado	Bagdad vs. Ray	2017
5	Dustin McLaws	Mogollon vs. Williams	2017
5	Austin Bryant	St. David vs. Mayer	2016
5	Kyler Chambers	Harvest Prep vs. Mission Heights Prep	2013
5	JT Slade	Mogollon vs. Bagdad	2009

Touchdown Catches (season)

37	Scotty Finnerty	Bagdad	2017
27	Paul Hatcher	Tucson Christian	1985
26	Kevin Box	Apache Trail	2012
25	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep	2012
22	Trevor Deason	Joy Christian	2012
21	Benjamin Loveall	Bagdad	2015
20	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep	2011
19	Aaron Martin	Joy Christian	2012
18	Benjamin Loveall	Bagdad	2016
18	Ethan Wright	Scottsdale Prep	2012
18	JT Slade	Mogollon	2009

Touchdown Catches (career)

84*	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep	2010-13
72	Paul Hatcher	Tucson Christian	1982-85
67	Matt Munsil	Scottsdale Prep	2010-12
49	Trevor Deason	Joy Christian	2009-12
42	Benjamin Loveall	Bagdad	2013-16
41	Scotty Finnerty	Bagdad	2015-17
30	Jackson Ventrella	Arete Prep	2012-13
29	Anthony Flores	Superior	2008-11
28	Ethan Wright	Scottsdale Prep	2010-12
26	Connor Watson	Bagdad	2018-20
26	Caleb Young	Gilbert Christian	2013-15

** - Munsil played both 8-man (3 years) and 11-man (1 year) football*

Extra Points (game)			
12	Damian Jauregui	Bagdad vs. Orme School	2010
11	Frank Kalogirou	Arete Prep vs. PDSD	2018
9	Frank Kalogirou	Arete Prep vs. Baboquivari	2018
9	Tyler Mooberry	Glendale Prep vs. Fredonia	2013
9	Kristian Sether	St. David vs. Patagonia	2012
Extra Points (season)			
58	Damian Jauregui	Bagdad	2010
52	Gotz Nieland	St. David	2010
44	Caleb Young	Gilbert Christian	2014
41	Ben Singer	Valley Lutheran	2012
39	Damian Jauregui	Bagdad	2013
33	Frank Kalogirou	Arete Prep	2018
33	Matt Luque	Trivium Prep	2017
33	Caleb Young	Gilbert Christian	2015
30	David Lozano	Williams	2019
30	Stefan Speno	Scottsdale Prep	2013
Extra Points (career)			
160	Arley McNeil	Patagonia	1985-88
116	Damian Jauregui	Bagdad	2009-12
89	Caleb Young	Gilbert Christian	2013-15
68	David Lozano	Williams	2016-19
Longest Field Goal			
50	Damian Jauregui	Bagdad vs. Paradise Honors	2012
50	Eric Lathim	Fredonia vs. Joseph City	1973
47	Gotz Nieland	St. David vs. Gila Bend	2010
45	Manuel Alberdi	Kingman Academy vs. Telesis Prep	2007
42	David Novak	Tanque Verde vs. Joy Christian	2010
42	Jesse South	Tanque Verde vs. Valley Union	2008
41	Jesse South	Tanque Verde vs. Gila Bend	2008
Field Goals (game)			
3	Joel Rodriguez	Hayden vs. Baboquivari	2018
3	Joel Rodriguez	Hayden vs. NFL Yet	2018
Field Goals (season)			
10	Joel Rodriguez	Hayden	2018
6	Damian Jauregui	Bagdad	2012
Field Goals (career)			
10	Joel Rodriguez	Hayden	2016-18
10	Damian Jauregui	Bagdad	2009-12

Interceptions (game)

5	Matthew McClelland	Arete Prep vs. Anthem Prep	2019
4	Romeo Valenzuela	Valley Lutheran vs. El Capitan	2017
4	Steven Ybarra	Superior vs. NFL Yet	2017
4	Tyler Willis	Mogollon vs. Scottsdale Prep	2011
4	Chance Hamilton	Duncan vs. Cibique	2009
3	many times		

Interceptions (season)

12	Tyler Willis	Mogollon	2011
10	Sammy Lopez	Superior	2019
9	Matthew McClelland	Arete Prep	2019
9	Kendal Jeans	Bagdad	2012
8	Benjamin Loveall	Bagdad	2016
8	Scotty Finnerty	Bagdad	2016
8	Tanner Conover	Gilbert Christian	2014
8	Edward Beasley	Joy Christian	2011

Interceptions (career)

16	Sammy Lopez	Superior	2016-19
16	Tyler Willis	Mogollon	2009-11
14	James Loveall	Bagdad	2010-13
14	Nathan Mayberry	St. David	2008-10
13	Joel Gonzalez	Salome	2016-19
13	Kayleb Owings	Bagdad	2016-19
13	Benjamin Loveall	Bagdad	2013-16
13	Tanner Conover	Gilbert Christian	2011-14
13	Josh Wright	Gilbert Christian	2011-14
13*	<i>Matt Munsil</i>	<i>Scottsdale Prep</i>	<i>2010-13</i>
12	6 times		

** - Munsil played both 8-man (3 years) and 11-man (1 year) football*

Highest Scores

116-108	Seligman def. Canyon State Academy	2004
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