



Cardinals boast depth at every position

Strong JV team, numbers have Smith and Mendo optimistic

By JEFF CASPERSEN
The Daily Journal

A powerhouse 2004 junior varsity team and good numbers have Mendocino coach Rick Smith optimistic entering the 2005 campaign.

The roughly 21 kids on the varsity team and 19 JV players the Cardinal program is running with so far this season is the most Smith has seen since he's been at Mendocino — a tenure that spans six years both as an assistant and head coach.

Numbers bring depth and depth makes Smith's job easier.

"We're not used to have talent at every position," he said. "It's amazing. We haven't had the luxury of numbers since I started."

Top returners include



Jeff Caspersen/The Daily Journal

Mendocino lineman Harlan Evans (6-foot-3, 290 pounds) will anchor the team's line.

senior running backs Jacob Casey and Grayson Brannan.

Quarterback Wayne Jones, a senior, is back with the Cardinals after leaving the Mendocino to attend school at Ukiah High last year. He'll be the starter, though junior Jason Hughes, who handled the passing duties for the JV team last year, will see time behind

center as well.

"We want them to be hungry," said Smith.

Senior lineman Harlan Evans (6-foot-3, 290 pounds) is back after a one-year absence from football to anchor the lines.

Senior Eli Cline, who played quarterback last year, will solely play receiver this

MENDOCINO SNAPSHOT

Mascot: Cardinals.

Head coach: Rick Smith, third year as head coach.

League: North Central League II.

Classification: B.

Last year's record: 3-5 overall; 2-2 in the NCL III.

line include Phil Kling and Will Lennox.

Newcomer to the program Aaron Bauman will give Mendocino something it hasn't had in recent years: a kicking game.

"The kid can kick a football," Smith remarked. "If we can just get him consistent. He has a good leg."

With strength at so many positions, Smith is optimistic about his team's chances in the North Central League II. His young players are certainly accustomed to winning, outscoring opponents 250-8 last year.

"He doesn't have the pressure on him now," said Smith. "He can really get up there and grab the ball. He can still throw it too. We have three guys that can chuck the football."

The Cardinals have two solid running backs coming up from the JV ranks in juniors Danny McDonnell and Ryan Hinshaw.

Coming up to help out the

"They had a running clock by the second quarter usually," said Smith. "We're feeling really good about the team attitude. Everyone out there is hustling and trying hard. I think it's going to be a lot of fun this year."

MENDOCINO ROSTER

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| ✓ Wayne Jones | ✓ Nathan Borges |
| ✓ Aaron Bauman | ✓ Phil Kling |
| ✓ Ryan Hinshaw | ✓ WillLennox |
| ✓ Dan McDonnell | ✓ Matt Slaughter |
| ✓ Jacob Casey | ✓ Steven Wulfekuhle |
| ✓ Jason Hughes | ✓ Evan Lawrence |
| ✓ Eli Cline | ✓ Harner Rasmussen |
| ✓ Dave Dubie | ✓ Chris Locke |

BEARCATS: Potter looking strong in 2005

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Oca add depth to a corps of running backs that Austin describes as "very quick."

"Expectations are very high right now," Austin said. "I'm looking to have 17 ball players on my roster." According to Austin, the team has great size this season, referring to the bulk of his players, not his

roster.

Last season, the Bearcats finished second in the league with a 3-1 NCL III record, and 6-3 overall.

"The league's looking a little stronger," said Austin.

Austin, who is in his 29th season as Potter Valley's head football coach, was happy with the way his athletes practiced during their twice-a-day

practice routine over the last week of summer break.

"It was tough," the coach said. "But the kids responded pretty well. They joined together pretty well, too. We have a good team unity."

Austin is hoping that team unity can be transformed into a strong finish for the Bearcats again this season.



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