

Colby coach says team attitude does not reflect on the losses

By John Van Nostrand
Colby Free Press

Years ago fans were remembering the Titans - the movie based on a high school football team. New Colby High Eagle football coach Bob Ray wants his team to remember the Patriots.



Ray

"There was nothing special about that team," Ray said. Ray was referring to the 2001 New England Patriots that won the Super Bowl that season with no marquee players and was 5-11 the year before.

"We need to get something out of every game," Ray said. "This is going to be a learning experience for us."

The experience begins 7 p.m. today against Hoxie at Dennen Field. Ray inherits a program that went 0-9 in 2005 and has not won a game since September 2004. But after

nearly three weeks of practice and have met players in the weight room during the summer, Ray does not see that history in the players' attitudes.

"This team was 0-9. Their strength is they don't have negative attitudes," he said. "They do work hard. They keep going. They are encouraging each other and have a we attitude. This is something special."

Ray said practices, which began Aug. 14, have gone well. Ray said much practice time has been dedicated to the fundamentals of football. Ray has been able to detect the team's strengths and weaknesses that way.

Ray has emphasized to players the importance of a regular weight-training routine because Colby's size is limited.

"We are working on the concepts of running the football. But right now we are not at the size we want. Before we can really get into a power game, we need the kids who can do it."

The Eagles' offensive line is anchored by Todd Ziegelmeier, a jun-

ior standing 6-3 and weighing 252 pounds.

"He had a serious knee injury last year," Ray said, "but now he is busting his tail."

Taking the snaps this year will be Ryan White, a senior, and Heath Stephens, a sophomore. "They have both been brilliant," Ray said.

Ray said the Eagles' offense will be balanced between the pass and the run.

"You have got to do both," he said. "Even with our lack of size, we will still go inside."

Ray said junior Tuma Mitchell will be one of those running backs.

On defense, Ray likes the line with juniors Taylor Brown, (6-1, 223) Treat Bugbee (5-10, 193) and senior Josh Johnson (6-3, 223). Ray said senior noseguard Eric Jurek, (5-8, 163) is unique.

"He is not big for a noseguard, but he is fast and can shed blocks."

Ray has been in football for 10 years. For the past five years, he was an assistant coach at Missouri Southern State University in Joplin, Mo. He coached wide receivers, running backs and defense line dur-



FILE PHOTO

Members of the Colby High football team ran a play during football camp held this summer. Despite the 0-9 record in 2005, new football coach Bob Ray said the team has had a positive, teamwork attitude during practice. Colby's season starts 7 p.m. tonight against Hoxie.

ing those years.

Before Missouri Southern, he spent two years at Basehor Linwood High School in Kansas City and at Hope High School. He was a defensive coordinator at both

schools. Colby is Ray's first head coaching job.

Ray was raised in Ulysses.

Colby, not having won a game in 24 months and not winning at home since the 2003 season, is not both-

ering Ray and his goals for this team.

"I still want the playoffs," he said.

"I want to build a tradition for this school. I don't want to lose."

Colby boy runners take second

Colby High's boys cross country team placed second at its season opening meet Thursday at Goodland.

Colby scored 98 points, far behind meet winning Ogallala, Neb., with 36 points. Colby's girls team placed sixth with 93 points. Ogallala won the girls meet with 61 points.

"We had a good performance for the meet of the year," said Colby coach Bob Mannebach. "All returning varsity runners had a good improvement in their times compared to last year. Some of our first-year runners showed great promise for the future."

Colby's second place finish was helped by a tie-breaker. The top seven runners are scored and in the event of a tie, the eighth-place runner from the schools are used. Adam Schroeder's 21st place finish proved the difference.

Colby's top seven were: Josh Baden, fifth, 18:39; Matt Kaus, 11th, 21:56; Darren Sporing, 12th, 19:39; Ryan Baalman, 14th, 20:04; Stephen Dinkel, 17th, 22:53; Brandon Rasmussen, 19th, 22:56, and Trevor Siebert, 20th, 20:39.

Eagle girls were led by Paige

Stephens' fifth place finish in 14:12. Other finishes were from Aubrette Stephens, ninth, 14:48; Rhett Martin, 15th, 16:59; Kiri Kendrick, 16th; 17:04; Katelyn Houtz, 23rd, 19:30; Kayla Sloan, 25th, 22:35, and Kelly Gerstner, 26th, 16:38.

"The boys have the ability to be

a very good team this year if they continue to work hard. The girls will have a good year if we can keep everyone healthy and they gain some more experience," Mannebach said.

Colby runs 4:30 p.m. Thursday at Quinter.

Eagle girls tennis trail Russell

Colby's girls tennis team started its season Thursday with a second place finish at Hays.

Russell won the meet with 24 points. Colby scored 22 points.

"We did awesome," said coach Jordan Sharp.

Leading the way for Colby was

Cyndi Rothfuss and Lindsey Wilson who won the number 1 doubles competition.

Logan Wark was second in number one singles. Lis Erickson and Barbara Bickner placed second in number two doubles.

"It was great see this team play,"

Sharp said. "We should be solid this year.

The Colby Invitational is 9 a.m. Saturday at Fike Park.

The Aug. 26 meet at WaKeeney was rescheduled to Sept. 16 but Colby will not play because of a meet at Lindsborg the same day.

Girl golfer places 8th

Colby High's girl golfers battled the competition and the weather Thursday.

"We went to the Trego Golf Tourney yesterday and did quite well," said coach Rick Williams. "We had to fight some tough conditions with high winds, but the girls battled well."

It was a nine-hole tournament.

Courtney Ress shot a 52 and placed eighth in varsity competition. They awarded 10 medals, to the top 10 golfers.

"Courtney played pretty well and posted a good number for our first competition," Williams said.

Jessica Leiker shot a 61 and placed third in the junior varsity competition. "Jessica showed how much she has improved at golf by improving the best nine-hole score she had ever posted in competition (last year) by 15 strokes," Williams said.

Colby does not have enough golfers to score a team, but individual player's results are kept.

Teams competing were: Colby, Thomas Moore Prep, Trego, Hoisington, Goodland, Russell, Scott City, Oakley, Hays High, and Dodge City.

Colby plays 2 p.m. Tuesday at Goodland.

Chiefs win

Kansas City defensive end Clint Mitchell batted away a two-point conversion pass at the goal line late in the fourth quarter to help the Chiefs escape with a 10-9 victory Thursday over New Orleans in the final preseason game for both teams.

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