

K-State getting thin up front

MANHATTAN — At Kansas State this season, about the only thing that has drawn as much attention as running back Thomas Clayton's recent arrest is the play of the offensive line.

The two-deep chart lists eight freshmen and sophomores among the 10 total spots. Kansas State has already lost an expected starter and a backup for the season, and the line got even thinner during Kansas State's 54-7 victory over North Texas on Saturday.

Redshirt freshman Matt Boss went down with a leg injury in the first quarter, followed shortly after by center Jacob Voegeli.

Coach Bill Snyder said Tuesday he doesn't expect Boss to play when the Wildcats open Big 12 Conference play Saturday at Oklahoma. Voegeli is listed as probable.

"It's obvious the depth we started with is no longer existent," Snyder said. "I would have liked to main-

tain the depth we had, but that's no longer possible."

Kansas State lost Ryan Schmidt, who was expected to start at center, and guard Michael Frieson during fall camp.

Other than senior Jeromey Clary, who has started 29 straight games, the Wildcats' offensive line has consisted of junior Greg Wafford, sophomores Voegeli and John Hafferty and redshirt freshmen Gerard Spexarth, Jordan Bedore, Caleb Handy, Brad Rooker and Boss.

But despite their youth and inexperience, Snyder said the linemen are living up to expectations.

"We've made progress," he said. "I thought last ballgame, there were signs improvement was continuing. We still make mistakes. We still got penalized more than I would like. We still had assignment errors, but nevertheless, you look at it — they've made steady improve-

ment."

Much of that improvement is evident in Kansas State's rushing attack. Behind Clayton and redshirt freshman Parrish Fisher, the Wildcats are generating 253 ground yards per game, which ranks 12th out of 119 teams in Division I-A.

Fisher was named Big 12 offensive player of the week after rushing for 169 yards on 21 carries and totaling 243 yards of total offense against North Texas. Clayton had gained a nation-leading 329 yards through Kansas State's first two games before missing the North Texas game following his arrest on a charge of misdemeanor battery.

He is expected to return Saturday, but Snyder has not said whether he will start.

But the offensive line will face its stiffest test this season against Oklahoma, which has allowed fewer than 80 yards rushing per game.

"If we stop their run, we have a better chance of winning," defensive tackle Quintin Echols said. "If they stop our run, they have a better chance of winning."

SportsLine

Eagles football Friday

The Colby High School Eagles varsity football squad will travel to St. Francis on Friday, Sept. 30. The game starts at 7 p.m.

Seventh grade "B" football canceled

The Colby Middle School seventh grade "B" team game scheduled for Saturday has been canceled, said Colby schools activities director Jeff Quenzer.

Varsity tennis Saturday

The Colby High School Eagles varsity tennis team will be on the road Saturday for a tournament in McPherson. Play starts at 9 a.m.

Eagles to Oakley tournament

The Colby High School Lady Eagles varsity and junior varsity volleyball teams will travel to a tournament in Oakley Saturday. Action begins at 9 a.m.

Golf in Lakin Saturday

The Colby High School Lady Eagles varsity golfers will head to Lakin for a tournament Saturday. Tee-off is at 9:30 a.m.

Middle school volleyball Saturday

The Colby Middle School seventh and eighth grade "B" teams will travel to Goodland for a round robin tournament with Burlington, Colo. Saturday. Play begins at 10 a.m.



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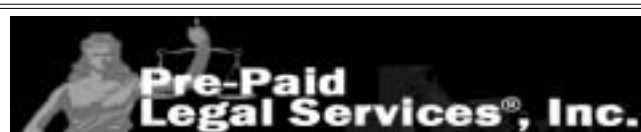


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