

THE COMMUNITY NEWS

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ENTERTAINMENT

Ranch Rodeo merges music, food, Western tradition

Murphey, Hooker to headline music

By Christopher Amos
The Community News

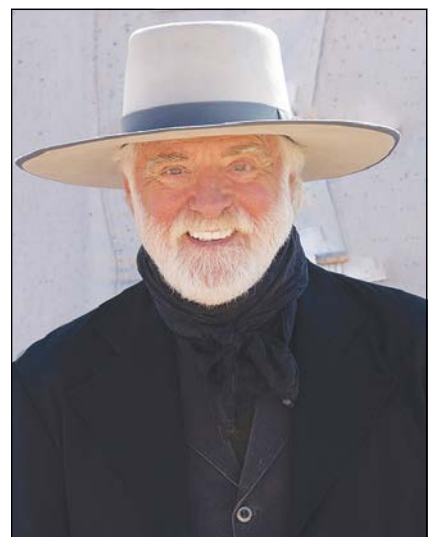
There are few things more Texan than country roots music, barbecue, and western traditions, and all will be plentiful at the 20th annual Parker County Sheriff's Posse Ranch Rodeo. Packed into two days, Friday, Sept. 13 and Saturday, Sept. 14, fans of all ages can experience Native American culture, chuckwagon food, wagon races, evenings of western swing and roots country music, and traditional ranch-style rodeo.

Ranch Rodeo is different, featuring traditional ranch competition not seen at common Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association events. Fans can watch ranch-style bronc riding, stray gathering, trailer-loading competition, and bison bronc riding. Native American exhibits and entertainment is scheduled for both days.

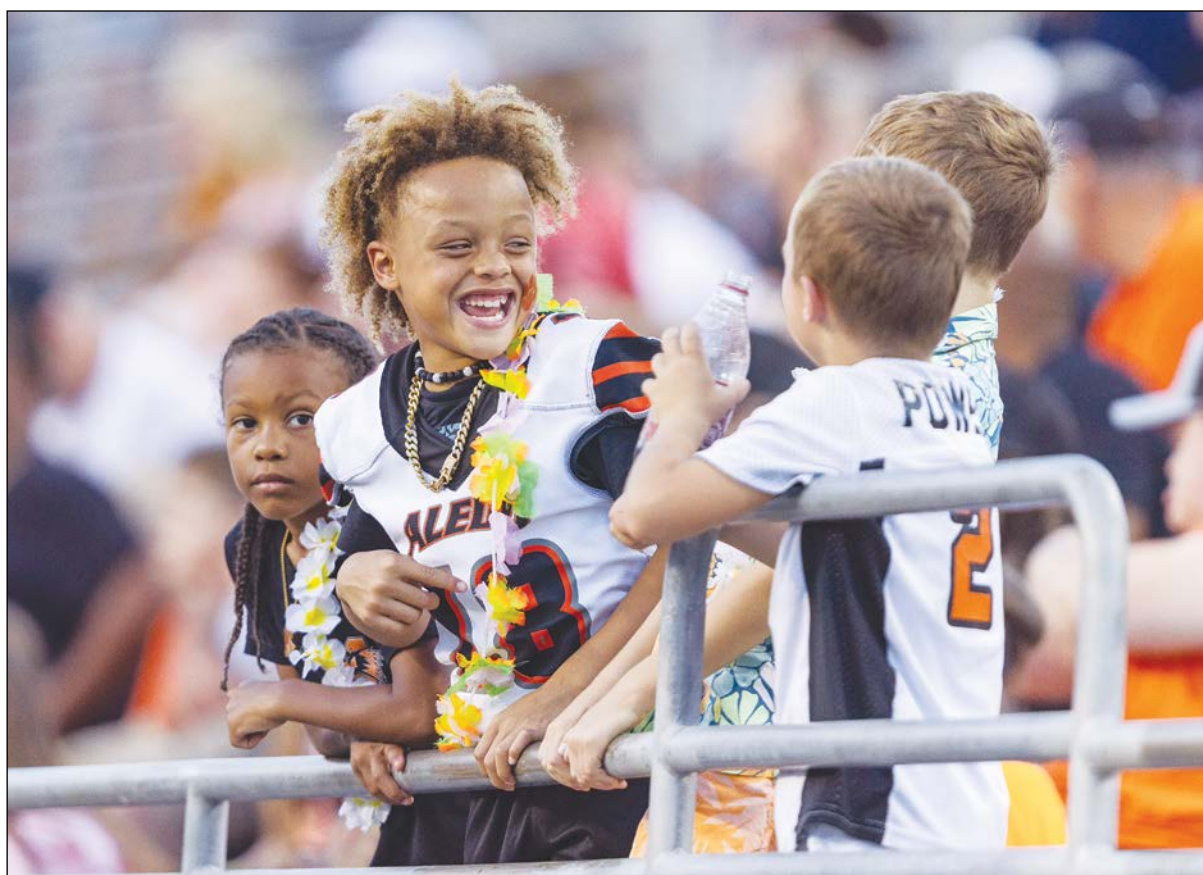
Friday will begin with Native American performances and exhibits at 9:30 a.m. Rodeo competitions and performances will start at 7:30 p.m. The evening will close with a concert by multi-award winning Michael Martin Murphey at 10 p.m. Murphey, who has six gold albums, finished a string of summer concerts at his Rocking 3M Chuckwagon Ranch in Red River, New Mexico plus five concerts in four states the week leading up to his show in Parker County.

"We are going to do almost entirely old fashioned cowboy music and some of my country hits like 'Wildfire' and 'What's Forever For,'" Murphey said while on the road between concerts. "I'm going to really emphasize songs from my

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Michael Murphey



KRISTIN MORALES/MEMORABLE MOMENTS

If it's September, that means one thing. Football has started at area high schools. These young people were decked out to show their support for the Bearcats last week in Denton.

MILESTONES

Krier making history in New York

Oldest model in a Marc Defang fashion show

By John English
The Community News

In the world of beauty pageants, it's typically the mother supporting, guiding and cheering on her daughter as she navigates the challenges faced by pageant contestants.

In the Krier household, it's the other way around.

DeeAnna Krier, 63, will make history on Sept. 7 when she becomes the oldest model ever to walk the runway of a Marc Defang fashion show at the Hard Rock Hotel in New York City at Times Square.

The Weatherford woman said her acceptance into the show is a culmination of a process that began about five years ago.

"We met Marc back then, and I kept seeing that he had these shows in New York," Krier said. "I would message him and say, 'Hey, you need another model?' He didn't really notice me that much, and I didn't really push it, because it was such a challenging time to fly. Everything was so challenging, so I didn't really push it, and I didn't really get a response from him."

"But every year, I just kind of mentioned it, half-heartedly at first, because I knew I wasn't ready. So this year, I messaged him and said, 'Hey, do you need more women to walk in your pageant?' And he said yes. So then I really pursued it heavily."

Krier said she sent Defang more messages and pictures, admittedly probably more than Defang wanted, and then she waited.

"I eventually told my husband I didn't think I was going to be

selected," Krier said. "I had seen all these other women being selected, and then one of my sister-queens in the Dr. World productions, Dominique, got accepted. She lives in Washington DC, and she is a doctor. She told me 'I got accepted,' and I was all sad and blue. My husband told me 'I don't know, I just feel like you're going to get picked. Just settle down, you're going to get picked.'"

Getting the call

At 9 o'clock on a Monday night Krier got the call inviting her to participate in the show, and she said she could hardly sleep.

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COURTESY OF DEEANNA KRIER

DeeAnna Krier of Weatherford will make history Saturday, Sept. 7 when, at age 63, she becomes the oldest woman to compete in the Marc Defang fashion show in New York City.

WEATHERFORD ISD

Board adopts tax rate, approves budget

Bond debt defeased

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

The Weatherford School District Board of Trustees approved a new tax rate and budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year at a special meeting on Thursday, Aug. 29.

The tax rate was set at \$1.0342, a slight decrease from \$1.0365. The district has now lowered the tax rate by 43.5 cents combined over the past nine years, district officials noted.

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WEATHERFORD

Council looking to move ahead on budget

By Jim Zimmerman
The Community News

Dawn Brooks, Chief Financial Officer for the City of Weatherford, addressed the council and many residents Tuesday, Aug. 27, with a detailed supplemental proposal for the City of Weatherford's 2025 budget.

On Aug. 13, City Manager James Hotopp submitted the proposed budget, which included revenue projections and expenditure plans for the coming fiscal year. This budget will raise more from property taxes than last year's budget by \$141,965, or 0.95%. Of that amount, \$242,112 is tax revenue to be raised from

new property added to the tax roll this year, beginning Oct. 1, 2024 and ending Sept. 30, 2025.

Residents are welcome to attend and provide feedback on the proposed budget, which is scheduled to be adopted on Sept. 10.

Tax rate

The proposed tax rate for the coming fiscal year is \$0.39842 per \$100 valuation. This is a slight decrease from the current \$0.39900.

Just as with the budget, a public hearing must be scheduled for the new tax rate. The hearing is Sept. 10, with a vote to adopt the rate following the hearing.

Upgrade in cyber security

Diana Allen, Director of Human Resources, presented a report on how cyber security has been the focal point of concern for all government agencies.

She noted the City of Weatherford recognizes the need for comprehensive cyber security coverage to protect its digital assets, infrastructure, and sensitive data. The city has had coverage with the Texas Municipal League Intergovernmental Risk Pool since 2016. This is an updated coverage structure and a contribution increase.

The financial impact is \$1,875 per year, representing a \$1,400 yearly increase compared to the previous agreement. The proposed amount will be covered in the FY25 budget without significant impact, officials noted.

Mayor recognizes WFFA for its 75th anniversary.

Weatherford Mayor Paul Paschal read a proclamation congratulating television station WFFA on its upcoming milestone anniversary. He recognized the Dallas-based station on turning 75 on Sept. 17, thanking them for serving Weatherford and North Texas.

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We welcome letters, articles and guest opinions from our readers. Opinions expressed in this newspaper will be labeled as opinions, editorials or letters, and do not reflect the opinions of the ownership. Letters should be signed, and limited to approximately 300 words. All submissions to the newspaper should include a telephone number in case we have questions. Letters are due by Monday at noon for that week's paper. Community announcements, achievements and obituaries are due by noon Friday for the following week's paper.

Photos submitted should include names of the people in the photograph.

The Community News does not charge for timely wedding, engagement and birth announcements provided they are of reasonable length. Lengthy announcements will either be edited to a reasonable length or, at the discretion of the person submitting the announcement, be charged a fee.

Capital Highlights

Comptroller: Hundreds of new homes needed to cut costs



Gary Borders

gborders@texaspress.com

A 26-page report from the Texas Comptroller concludes that the state needs 306,000 additional homes, a shortage that has sent housing costs soaring, *The Texas Tribune* reported. Homebuilding hasn't kept up with the booming economy as millions of new residents have moved here over the past decade, leaving more than half of the state's homeowners and renters struggling to find and keep affordable housing.

"Is it a crisis today? I wouldn't call it a crisis," Comptroller Glenn Hegar told *The Tribune*. "But if we don't find some more solutions, we're going to be in a crisis."

Gov. Greg Abbott, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and House Speaker Dade Phelan have each indicated that addressing the state's housing affordability issues will be on lawmakers' agenda when they return in January for the next legislative session.

One suggestion drawing attention is reducing minimum lot size requirements. A bill to do so passed the Texas Senate last year but died in the Texas House.

Median home prices in Texas rose nearly 40% from 2019 to 2023, the comptroller's report indicated. Nearly 2 out of 5 Texas households are paying more than 30% of their income on housing. Texas is one of the toughest states for extremely low-income renters, with a shortage of nearly 700,000 units, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

More than 1 million ineligible voters stricken from rolls

Texas has removed more than 1 million people from the state's voter rolls, including people who have moved out-of-state, have died, or are noncitizens.

"Illegal voting in Texas will never be tolerated. We will continue to actively safeguard Texans' sacred right to vote while also aggressively protecting our elections from illegal voting," Gov. Greg Abbott said, touting a 2021 legislative overhaul of election laws.

However, some election experts point out both federal and state law already required voter roll maintenance and that this is a routine process.

"Year after year, people are taken off the voting rolls for all manner of innocuous reasons," said Sarah Xiyi Chen, an attorney at the Texas Civil Rights Project.

Some watchdog groups are questioning whether the state is mistakenly removing voters it considers "noncitizens." In 2019, the state flagged 95,000 voters identified as such. Many of them turned out to be naturalized citizens, and the secretary of state at the time resigned, *The Tribune* reported.

The law that took effect in 2021 set new rules and penalties for assisting voters. The measure made it a felony for local officials to proactively distribute applications for mail-in ballots, gave partisan poll watchers increased autonomy inside polling places, and banned local attempts to expand voting hours and drive-through voting, among other practices.

Record transportation investment announced

The state plans to spend a record \$148 billion for transportation infrastructure over the next

decade, the Texas Department of Transportation and Abbott announced. That includes more than \$104 billion in a 10-year transportation plan to improve safety, address congestion and connectivity, and maintain roadways. It also includes more than \$43 billion for development and routine maintenance – a \$5.6 billion increase from the previous year.

"With a booming population and economy, TxDOT is meeting the moment with a record investment in our state roadway system to ensure Texas remains the preferred destination for families and businesses," said Texas Transportation Commission Chairman J. Bruce Bugg Jr.

Many of the projects in the 2025 Unified Transportation Program are roadways noted on the state's most congested roadways list. TxDOT is overseeing a record number of active projects this year.

Regulators approve \$5.4 billion in gas plant loans

The Public Utilities Commission has picked 17 companies to move forward with natural gas power plants financed with low-cost state loans, *The Dallas Morning News* reported. PUC commissioners approved \$5.4 billion in proposals for plants capable of generating enough electricity to power 2.4 million homes.

The current \$5 billion fund is expected to double to \$10 billion as state leaders seek to address the power blackouts of the 2021 winter storm that killed more than 200 Texans.

PUC Executive Director Connie Corona said regulators favored power plant construction proposals that can be completed quickly, are spread throughout the state,

and reduce strain on Texas' electricity transmission network, The News reported.

"The awardee must complete a rigorous due diligence phase, wherein they provide documentation similar to, you know, when you apply for a mortgage," Corona said last week.

Hunters urged to prevent wildfires during dove season

Dove hunting season began over the Labor Day weekend, and hunters are urged to be mindful of activities that could cause a wildfire, officials with Texas A&M Forest Service said. Hot and dry conditions in August resulted in increased wildfires in North and Northwest Texas, with 281 wildfires burning 24,333 acres.

"Forecast rain will help to decrease wildfire potential across most of the state," said Jared Karns, Texas A&M Forest Service interim fire chief. "We encourage everyone to be careful with outdoor activities this holiday and throughout the fall."

Vehicles, trailers and all-terrain vehicles frequently used while hunting and camping are capable of inadvertently causing wildfires through sparks, hot mufflers and tow chains dragging along roadways. Nine of 10 wildfires are caused by humans, according to the forest service. Hunters are urged to be aware of burn bans across the state, which as of Sunday included 138 Texas counties. The bans cover much of the state except for East and Southeast Texas.

Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches, Lufkin and Cedar Park. Email: gborders@texaspress.com

Look at it This Way

It's one loss, Bearcats have been here before



Rick Mauch

sports@community-news.com

To those used to winning, losing, for lack of a better phrase, sucks.

And in a place like Aledo, where it occurs about as rarely as the Dallas Cowboys reach the Super Bowl, the impact is even harder. After all, it's only happened 16 times since 2008.

One of those rare times was this past Friday in Denton. The Bearcats' 30-game winning streak, the second longest in team history — they could have tied the all-time record with a win — came to an end with a 35-30 loss to Guyer.

Aledo could have won the game. Aledo should have won the game. However, in another rare instance, the Bearcats practically gave it away for all intents and purposes, all due respect to Guyer.

Before you go thinking this column is an attack on all the Bearcats did wrong, let me just say that, yes, we will address those mishaps. But they also did a lot right and we'll get to that momentarily.

And if anyone has followed the Bearcats in any capacity over the years, you don't need to be told there is plenty of good lying ahead this season.

Not an ordinary night

The Wildcats took advantage of the moment and played inspired football once the door was opened. That's what good teams do, and Guyer consistently has a good team.

In fact, the Wildcats are one of the very few teams that can claim to have a lead in their series against Aledo. Since they first met in 2012, Guyer now leads 4-2.

Problem is, it's usually the Bearcats who are the ones capitalizing on the opening and coming away with the win. Case in point, when they trailed Denton Ryan late in the game last season at Tim Buchanan Stadium, Hauss Hejny saw a lapse in the Raiders defense and raced more than 50 yards for the game-winning touchdown in a 25-19 victory.

Last Friday night, however, there was no such magic. Aledo saw leads of 16-3, 23-16 and 30-23 slip away.

Expect some fixing

The main culprit against Guyer was special teams. A punt was blocked for a touchdown, a kickoff was returned 83 yards for a TD on the final play of the first half, another punt went 11 yards and they missed a chip-shot 25-yard field goal.

Not since, well, a 44-14 home loss to Guyer on Sept. 2, 2022 — the Bearcats' last loss before this one — had Aledo had such an off night for its special teams.

Not to leave those guys on an island, let's remember that the defense gave up eight runs of 10 yards or more, including a 54-yard touchdown. The offensive line allowed three quarterback sacks.

That said, trust me when I say this was certainly more of an aberration than the norm as the team moves forward. Better yet, trust Bearcats coach Robby Jones, who said after the game they don't want to feel this way again this season.

While I would never advocate for betting on high school sports, if I did I would wager a lot that it's — pardon the pun — a good

bet they won't know this feeling again anytime soon. Like a Tom Hanks movie, when the Bearcats take the field, odds are it's going to be an enjoyable experience — well, unless you're on or cheering for the other team.

Lots of good things

Folks like to look for positives in a loss. For example, at least we didn't get rained on or have a lightning delay like they did in the Weatherford game.

But seriously, the Bearcats really do have a lot on which to feel positive about as they navigate through a tough season. Remember, they still have the likes of Lancaster this week, along with league games against Ryan and Richland, all at home.

For starters, Ray Guillory is back. The star running back was expected to get at most around 10 carries. He finished with 22 carries for 89 yards and a TD.

"He made the most of his carries," Jones said. "As the season goes on he'll get more involved. He's a big difference maker. Our offense is going to be better when he's out there."

Guillory, a junior, has the talent to follow in the footsteps of Jase McClellan, who went on to a sterling career with the Alabama Crimson Tide and is now on the opening day roster for the Atlanta Falcons in the NFL.

Then there's his backup, Kaden Winkfield, who carried 18 times for 85 yards, including a beautiful TD run of 39 yards. It's easy to agree with Jones when he said, "He'd be a No. 1 pretty much anywhere else."

Entering the game one of the big question marks was how much pressure could Aledo's defensive line — the most experienced part of the team — put on heralded Guyer quarterback and University of Oklahoma commit

Kevin Sperry? The Bearcats defense limited one of the nation's top high school signal callers to a modest 12-of-26 performance for 178 yards with an interception by Adrian Fuller and a sack by Jacob McIntire.

"They put good pressure on him," Jones said.

Credit should also be given to the all new Aledo secondary. Sperry had two completions that went for 41 and 49 yards, but nothing else went for more than 18 yards — and let's not overlook those 14 incompletions.

Often in early season games, particularly openers, penalties will be a problem for teams, especially teams lacking starting experience. The Bearcats were only flagged five times for 30 yards.

Likewise for holding onto the ball. Aledo fumbled just once and managed to retain control, along with giving up an interception.

Meanwhile, the defense forced three fumbles and recovered two to go with an interception.

The Aledo offense also converted six of 16 third-down attempts and was 3-of-5 on fourth-down attempts, while the defense held Guyer to 2-of-10 and 1-of-2 in those categories.

Moving forward

Bottom line is Aledo has been here before. After all, in seven of their 12 state championship seasons, they had at least one loss. Heck, twice they even had two.

And in some of those seasons they lost a lot worse than this game. We mentioned the home loss to Guyer in 2022, but also in 2011 they lost 62-35 at home to Lake Travis and in 2014 they fell, again at home, 42-7 to California Bishop Amat.

In other words, a single game does not a season make. No one has proven more than the Aledo football program.

RANCH

from page A1

Cowboy Songs album that you can dance to.”

Saturday, competition will start at 10 a.m. and Jerry Williams Memorial Youth Bronc Riding will begin at 1 p.m. with mutton busting for the youngest cowgirls and cowboys. A chuck wagon dinner will be served at 6 p.m. at \$20 per plate. Music entertainment during the meal will be Rowdy Decker and Friends.

Saturday will conclude with more Native American performances at 7 p.m. and the rodeo championship at 7:30 p.m. Texas swing artist Jake Hooker and the Outsiders will coax rodeo fans into dancing the night away starting at 10 p.m. Hooker says

he appreciates the traditional music acts Ranch Rodeo organizers choose.

“We are dance music, for sure. We’re not a typical 90s country band but more like Bob Wills, Texas swing, and Ray Price,” Hooker added. “Whether you are into rodeo or not, the Ranch Rodeo is the kind of event you want to take your family to.”

Murphy agrees with Hooker about the importance of experiencing Western culture.

“You are going to want to make it to both of our shows, because Jake Hooker does a phenomenal job on Western swing,” Murphey added. “Between our two shows we are going to cover all the old time cowboy music, Western swing, and all the way up into the modern era.”



Jake Hooker

Entry to all Friday activities and entertainment is \$20 per person and Saturday events are \$30. Children aged 10 and under are free. Tickets can be purchased the day of the event at the Parker County Sheriff’s Posse rodeo arena, 2251 Mineral Wells Hwy., or online before the event at www.pcp.net.

WISD

from page A1

The budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year includes \$122,311,412 in revenue and \$123,431,480 in expenditures for a deficit of \$1,120,268. In a time when school districts all over the state are battling financial challenges, Board President Mike Guest praised the budget and those who put it together.

“What an amazing job with cut, cut, cut and finding ways to be effective,” Guest said.

“I’m looking forward to putting this budget to bed and beginning a new year,” Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations Lori Boswell said as she presented the final budget to the board.

Within the new budget is a cut in child nutrition services from \$1,669,960 to \$871,344. Boswell explained the reduction, stating the 2023-24 fiscal year included some additional funding through such areas as grants and federal programs that are no longer available. As to whether they will become available again, Boswell said it was better to adjust the budget than take the chance.

“I’d always rather be low and be surprised than be high and in a crisis,” Boswell said.

Superintendent Beau Rees also had praise for the budget, saying, “We still have a very sound budget to educate kids. It was not easy getting there.”

In addition, the board approved the defeasement of the district’s debt service by \$11,100,000, reducing the district’s overall debt obligations. Since implementing a bond defeasance plan in 2021, the district has realized a savings of more than \$7 million.

“We work to make sure we’re continuing to save the community in our budget,” Guest said, adding that Weatherford is one of the lowest Class 6A bond indebted school districts in Texas.

“We’ve got a lot of business people on this board and you’ve got to run a school district like a business,” Guest said. “We continue to use our budget for capital improvements so there’s not a huge bill at the end.”

Boswell said the Weatherford ISD has not presented a bond election to the public since 2015.

“We are proud to continue our track record of responsible financial management while maintaining our commitment to providing a high-quality education for all students,” Guest added.

Rees stated that, overall, the goal is to ensure that every dollar is maximized for the benefit of students, while being mindful of the community’s financial burden.

“The board’s decision to lower the tax rate and continue the bond defeasance plan is a testament to their shared commitment to fiscal responsibility and being good stewards of taxpayer dollars,” he said.

Ex-Students’ Association Banquet

The Aledo ISD Ex-Students Association will hold their banquet honoring the class of 1974 on Saturday, Sept. 21, at the Parker County Cowboy Church, 5050 FM 5 in Aledo. Visitation will begin at 4:30 p.m. and the meal will be served at 6 p.m.

All ex-students of Aledo ISD are encouraged to attend. The cost will be \$25, which covers the meal, expenses, and \$5 for dues. Reservations must be made by Sept.13.

To reserve a spot or for more information, send a note to Aledo Ex-Students’ Assn., P. O. Box 737, Aledo, Texas 76008 or email June King at junefraserking@sbcglobal.net.

KRIER

from page A1

“The next day was also so exciting and so frantic,” Krier said. “I was like, ‘Oh my God! We’re going to New York!’ and then I had to call my brother who is a professional photographer and ask if he was coming with me. He lives in New York, so I wanted to make sure he was coming with us.”

“I was sitting at my computer and Marc Defang started messaging me saying, ‘Do you realize what an honor this is? You are 63, you are the oldest woman I have ever picked. I want you to be super proud of this because it means something. You should be so proud of yourself.’”

Krier became emotional when she received the news and said her daughter Hannah was standing right beside her.

It was in fact Hannah who initially drew Krier to compete.

“My daughter was in National America Ms. in 2019 and went all the way to nationals, and I had the time of my life,” Krier said. “She did really well, but she didn’t want to do it again. I was like, ‘Please do it again,’ and she was like, ‘No, mom, but you know what, this is really for you. You need to do what you can do, like search it out.’”

In 2020, Krier, whose family owns Baker Ribs in Weatherford, did start researching online, and at the urging of her daughter she made the jump.

“Remember, 2020 was a very tough year,” Krier said. “Everyone was sad, the lobby was closed, we had a drive-thru that was open, but overall it was sad. It was depressing, and she said you need to do something that you love because you love this. I had no idea that there were hundreds of pageant systems for every age of woman.”

“Whether you’re a toddler, or even in Las Vegas, they have a

pageant where one contestant was 99. She came back every year just for the joy of being in the pageant. It kept her youthful.”

Krier said she competes for the same reason.

“It’s the process that I just love,” Krier said. “Not winning stings, yes, but you keep on going because it’s the thrill of the climb. It’s a thrill of the work.”

In her first pageant, Krier won first runner-up, Ms. Photogenic and Best in Social Media Community Involvement.

Krier has also been named Ms. Achievement North America, Ms. Achievement World and received the Dr. World Productions’ Ms. Achievement Pageantry Spirit Award.

Krier said receiving the honor of walking for Defang’s show in September is humbling for her.

“It’s groundbreaking,” Krier said. “It’s history. It’s so special because I have dreamed about being in a

pageant since I was 7 years old living in Fairfield, Nebraska where there are 500 people. When you are 7, 8 or 9 years old and living in a town so small, you could only dream about this.”

The one thing that makes it even better is getting to experience it with her daughter.

“It is so amazing,” Krier said. “I can’t even find the words. It gives me chills every time I think about it. The thing about her is she is kind of shy and quiet, and she got an open call letter that came in the mail with an invitation to America National Ms.. She said ‘Mom, I want to do this.’ And I said, ‘What? You’re quiet and shy. She was even a little tomboyish and she said ‘No, I want to do it.’”

“My husband and I said okay and drove her all the way to a hotel near DFW Airport. She went to that open call and she was fantastic. So for her to be able to go through that whole process and for me to be able to cheer her on is amazing. Now



COURTESY OF DEEANNA KRIER

DeeAnna Krier of Weatherford will compete in the Marc Defang fashion show in New York City.

she is like my pageant coach. She teaches me how to walk and shows me things. She helps me... and it’s really special.”

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Events

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 THE COMMUNITY NEWS
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More events can be found at www.community-news.com/calendar



SEPTEMBER 10

Dementia Support Group
 Join the Dementia Support Group from 4-5 p.m. at Harvest of Aledo 1043 Bailey Ranch Rd. Even more so, we value the efforts of the caregivers, especially the families of our residents. This meeting will take place on the second Tuesday of every month. For more information call 682-209-0643

SEPTEMBER 12

Alzheimer's Group
 The East Parker County Alzheimer's Group meets from 1-3 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month at Aledo United Methodist Church, 100 Pecan. Drive. For more information, call 817-441-8329.



OCTOBER 4 - 31

Clark Gardens Pumpkin Patch
 Clark Gardens Pumpkin Patch will be open daily Monday - Saturday from

8-5 p.m. and Sunday 10-5 p.m. Our Pumpkin Patch is the perfect place for a cozy, family-fun filled, fall experience. Choose from pumpkins of all shapes and sizes to purchase and take home. Enjoy pumpkin ring toss, pumpkin bowling, and other festive games. Model Trains: View Model Trains at the Clarks Station Garden Walks: Stroll through our gardens and enjoy Fall in full bloom. Purchase snacks and refreshing beverages in our admissions booth. Make Clark Gardens a stop on your Fall bucket list! Admission: \$10 adults, \$8 Senior, \$5 children, 3 and under FREE. *additional fees apply for pumpkin purchases

OCTOBER 8

Dementia Support Group
 Join the Dementia Support Group from 4-5 p.m. at Harvest of Aledo 1043 Bailey Ranch Rd. Even more so, we value the efforts of the caregivers, especially the families of our residents. This meeting will take place on the second Tuesday of every month. For more information call 682-209-0643

OCTOBER 10

Alzheimer's Group
 The East Parker County Alzheimer's Group meets from 1-3 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month

at Aledo United Methodist Church, 100 Pecan. Drive. For more information, call 817-441-8329.



OCTOBER 12

Aledo UMC Lord's Acre Fall Festival
 Gather the family for a fall bucket list event y'all won't want to miss from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. on Saturday, October 12th. AUMC will host its annual community fall fest with kid's activities, food, vendors, silent and live auctions, live music performances, and community fun. The money raised helps support AUMC's mission efforts in Aledo, surrounding areas, statewide and around the world. Forward this event to all your friends and follow us on our page to stay in the loop on all the fun things we have planned!

OCTOBER 19

2024 Aledo Fest
 Aledo fest will be from 10 .m. - 2 p.m. on Saturday, October 19 in downtown Aledo. It will feature live music and activities for kids of all ages. Meet your local businesses at vendor booths, do some gift shopping, and get a little something for yourself!

TEXAS CROSSWORD
 by Charley & Guy Orbison
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ACROSS

- TXism: "up and ___ juice" (coffee)
- the first Texas ___ phone was in Galveston in 1878
- TX Strait's "All My Live in Texas"
- Texans Houston and Bass
- TX saying: "___ riot, one Ranger"
- "Honeysuckle Rose" actress Irving
- TX Hagman film: "Getting Away From ___"
- ___ Wells, TX
- TX Ann Miller film: "Sugar ___"
- "entrance" south of the border
- Pancho Villa: Doroteo
- TXism: "that dog could ___ a panhandler"
- San ___ TX
- TXism: "then fruit"
- fisherman
- glossy fabric
- "___ con Dios"
- TX Perot started Electronic ___ company
- George W. before he was president
- TXism: "you're buying oats for ___ horse"
- race at annual Bar-B-Q in Brady, TX: "___ Gallop"

DOWN

- TXism for "fell" (3 wds.)
- J. Frank Dobie book: "A ___ England"
- inclement weather
- TXism: "a ___ of"
- Bedouin, e.g.
- TXism: "___ rooster" (angry)
- TX group "Little Joe ___ Familia"
- ex-TCU BB coach Moe
- sturdy cattle breed
- TXism: "___ of bones" (skinny)
- "L" of former Dallas company LTV
- follows the 1st offer at a cattle auction? (2 wds.)
- ___ Paso, TX
- Middle East leader
- Chinese or Japanese, e.g.
- narrow country road
- rod and ___
- TX Kenny Rogers' "Through the ___"
- Denison-born pres. (init.)
- Grand ___ Opry
- actor Beatty in "Streets of Laredo"
- TXism: "on my last ___" (tired)
- stat for Astro Justin Verlander
- TXism: "___ humid my upper lip is mildewing"
- ex-Oiler coach ___ "Bum" Phillips
- org. of countries to maintain peace (abbr.)
- Texas ___ Corp. failed to build the Texas "bullet train"
- 1st woman president of TWU: Mary Evelyn ___ Huey
- TXism: "guilty ___ sin"
- Heisman QB from Texas, Detmer
- TXism: "the tail ___ wagging the dog"
- lineal assoc. about Texas Republic
- TX Charley Pride's "Kiss An Good Morning"
- this Pat wrote "On Any Given Sunday"
- TX Debbie Reynolds first hubby, Fisher
- ___ detector
- cut with a saw
- "Mingo" on "Daniel Boone" (init.)
- TXism: "that'll ___ nicely"
- machine pedal
- saloons
- TX-born critic Rex

EVENT SUBMISSIONS

Send event submissions to events@community-news.com.

Please include time, date, and place of the event, a short description, and phone/email for obtaining further information, along with photos, graphics, or flyers.

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CROSS COUNTRY

Ladycats fifth in prestigious meet

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

Competing in one of the state's most prestigious cross country meets, the Aledo Ladycats placed fifth at the Coach T Invitational at North Lakes Park in Denton Saturday, Aug. 31.

The meet, hosted by Flower Mound Marcus, is named after the school's long-time hall of fame coach Steve Telaneus, who passed away in 2020 at the age of 60. It was previously named the Marcus Invitational.

The Ladycats competed in the Girls Varsity Elite 5K division, while the Bearcats finished 22nd in the Boys Varsity Elite 5K division.

"It was another good day for Aledo cross country," coach Mike Pinkerton said. "This was our first big meet against some very strong cross country programs. We competed against the likes of Flower Mound, Lovejoy, Vandergriff, and Highland Park. Everyone ran well, with most improving their times significantly over last week."

Molly Garrison led the Aledo girls, placing 14th individually in the field of 164 runners with a time of 18 minutes, 22 seconds. Micah Neal was 16th in 18:28 and Mykel Murry was 25th in 18:51.

All Ladycat runners finished in the top half of the elite field with Mayden Mitchell finishing 55th in 19:45; Sofia Brandenburg, 56th, 19:46; Madison Larsen, 59th, 19:51; and Hadleigh Walton, 69th, 20:06.

The Bearcats, running without three-time state qualifier Jack Fink, who was out sick, were led by Tyler Connelly, who was 40th in the field of 215 with a 15:57. Also, Luke Schabel was 114th with a 16:55; Dominick Barrera, 137th, 17:20; Thatcher Pettie, 140th, 17:25; Ian Robbins, 141st, 17:27; and Anderson Smith, 173rd, 18:20.

The Ladycats placed 20th in the Varsity Girls Open 5K division. Kjersten Loy was 46th among 210 runners, clocking a 20:48; with Carley Couch 74th in 21:31; Sadie Williams, 115th, 22:28; Ashlynn Durnil, 132nd, 22:51; Lila Kovacs, 164th, 26:02; and Maggie McQuatters, 166th, 26:55.

The Bearcats were 26th in the Varsity Boys Open 5K. Reed Murray topped Aledo, taking 82nd in the field of 252, posting a time of 18:10. Landon Eaton was 129th in 18:53; Andrew Walsh, 140th, 19:10; Ethan Matthews, 82nd, 20:47; Dylan Hoover, 190th, 21:49; Nicholas Hale, 195th, 24:24; and Marcus Rodriguez, 196th, 24:31.

Next week, the Ladycats and Bearcats will compete in the Southlake Invitational on Saturday, Sept. 7. The meet will take place at Bob Jones Park in Southlake.

FOOTBALL

Bearcats suffer narrow defeat in season opener

Denton Guyer ends Aledo's 30-game winning streak

By Geoff Heppes
The Community News

DENTON - After winning their 12th state championship in 2023, the Aledo Bearcats marched onto the C.H. Collins Athletic Complex Field under the Friday Night lights for the first time in 2024. Aledo competed in their season opener against the Class 6A Denton Guyer Wildcats riding a 30-game winning streak dating back to the Bearcats' last loss - a 44-14 defeat against the same Guyer squad on Sept. 2, 2022.

Last year, Aledo took down Guyer 48-45 in Denton in a memorable shootout. But this time the Bearcats were on the wrong end of the latest rematch as the Wildcats avenged last year's defeat by handing Aledo a 35-30 loss.

"We're going to be better tomorrow because we're going to come back and learn from our mistakes," Bearcats head coach Robby Jones said. "We're not going to make those mistakes anymore and, by eliminating the mistakes we made, we're going to win a lot of football games. We don't plan on having this feeling again this year."

Guyer now leads the overall series 4-2. It was also the first time the home team won in the series.



KRISTIN MORALES/MEMORABLE MOMENTS

Kaydon Finley (2) leaps for a catch against Guyer.

Final moments

With the game tied at 30 midway through the fourth quarter, the Bearcats took the ball at their own 2-yard line. After reaching the 8 and facing third down and 4 yards to go, a safety gave the Wildcats the lead, 32-30.

The Wildcats would add a field goal a few minutes later.

After the teams exchanged punts, Aledo had one last gasp, taking the ball at the Guyer 48 with 48 seconds remaining. A completion from junior quarterback Gavin Beard to junior receiver Kaydon Finley moved the ball 9 yards, and then the Bearcats converted on fourth-and-1.

However an incompleting, sack, and a short pass under pressure for 3 yards as time ran out and ended their hopes.

First half

Aledo's defense limited the home team to a field goal on the game's opening possession and the Bearcats offense carried that positive momentum into its first possession. The Wildcats' onside kick attempt was unsuccessful, putting Aledo in plus territory at

the Guyer 46 with 10:08 left in the first quarter.

Then, Aledo marched down the field in seven plays and found the end zone after Beard connected with Finley for a 7-yard score. After the successful point-after attempt from senior kicker Cole Crawford, Aledo held its first lead of the game at 7-3 with 7:18 to go.

"They've had a strong connection since peewee football," Jones said. "That's going to be a connection that's going to be big for us all year. Kaydon Finley is going to have to make a lot of catches and a lot of plays for us throughout the season."

The ensuing defensive possession produced a safety to increase the lead to 9-3 at the 5:25 mark. After Aledo's next offensive drive resulted in a missed field goal, the visitors took the momentum right back as junior defensive back Lamel Swanson pounced on a ball jarred loose from a Guyer ball carrier on the last play of the opening quarter.

Then, lightning struck twice as junior running back Kaden Winkfield found paydirt from 39 yards out on the first play of the second quarter. Winkfield's sprint

to the end zone extended the lead to 16-3 in a matter of seconds.

After limiting the Wildcats to field goals on their next two offensive possessions, Aledo got the ball back with 5:29 remaining before halftime after the Wildcats rallied to knot the score at 16-all, but star junior running back Ray Guillory capped off the 15-play, 79-yard drive with a 1-yard waltz into the end zone. The Bearcats converted three third downs and one fourth down on the drive while the defense remained stalwart in the red zone.

"Those guys got down there and fought. You've got to strap it up and do whatever you can to keep them out of the end zone and our defense did that," Jones said of his defense. "We limited them (Denton Guyer) to field goals a lot of times. A lot of times when you're able to do that, you come out on the right end of games, but unfortunately tonight we didn't."

The momentum began to turn from two big plays by Guyer's special teams unit right before halftime. The first was a blocked punt by Zach De Anda returned 15 yards for a score at the 5:35 mark of the second quarter, and

the second was an 83-yard kick-off return touchdown by Corbin Glasco as time expired, which tied the score at 23-23 at intermission.

"We're going to go back to work. We've got to be more focused when we're practicing our special teams," Jones said. "Maybe we aren't as focused as we need to be when we're doing special teams because we had a punt blocked due to a bad snap due to a miscommunication with our protection that allowed their guys to come through and get the block."

Second half

As they did on the first play of the second quarter, Aledo jolted the Guyer defense for another long score to begin the second half as Beard found Finley down the sideline for a 72-yard catch-and-run touchdown that pushed the Bearcats' nose in front, 30-23. However, Guyer's defense continued to stymie Aledo the rest of the way, outscoring the Bearcats 12-0 with more of an offensive attack revolving around quick decision making from OU-committed quarterback Kevin Sperry.

Turn to FOOTBALL, page A7

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RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Ladycat varsity volleyball captain and defensive specialist, Kenrie Pruitt, makes a play on the ball near the back line during a home match on Tuesday, Aug. 27.

VOLLEYBALL

Ladycats win Arlington Classic

Aledo's Todd named MVP, Lowe named to all-tournament team

By Geoff Heppes
The Community News

After suffering a heartbreaking loss at home to Midlothian in five sets, the Aledo Ladycats volleyball team showed up in a big way in the Arlington Classic. The Ladycats won each match they competed in, dropping a total of three games across four matches to capture the championship.

Aledo junior outside hitter Alyssa Todd had 85 kills to take home tournament MVP honors while senior middle Haley Lowe, who registered 36 kills and 19 blocks, was selected to the all-tournament team.

The Ladycats (15-7) opened up the tournament action with a five-game affair against the Richardson J.J. Peace Lady Mustangs. Aledo lost two of the first three games,

but rallied to win the last two to establish rhythm moving forward while also exorcising demons from their latest five-game defeat to Midlothian. Against Pearce, Aledo won by a final score of 25-22, 25-27, 19-25, 25-10 and 15-12.

After that, Aledo took down Amarillo in four games by a final score of 25-21, 23-25, 25-21 and 25-19. On Day Two, Aledo recorded sweeps over Burleson (25-15, 25-14 and 25-18) and Martin (25-15, 25-19 and 25-23) to secure the title.

Across their four matches, Todd compiled 71 digs, seven blocks and four service aces to go with her team-leading 85 kills. Meanwhile, senior middle Kinley Elms tallied 49 kills and 12 blocks while Ella Meador registered 61 digs and four aces. Senior defender Kenrie Pruitt added 57 digs and a team-high six aces while setters Ava Reding and Sophie Frank each tallied 81 assists while combining for 85 digs. Senior middle Ella Isbell chipped in with 13 blocks while Ali LoBaugh had eight stuffs.

BEARCATS

from page A8

This week's games

Thursday, Sept. 5
Carrollton Newman Smith at Fossil Ridge
Mansfield Timberview at Ryan
Denton at Fort Worth Eastern Hills
Friday, Sept. 6
Lancaster at Aledo
Granbury at Waco University
Birdville at Grapevine
Colleyville Heritage at Richland
Weatherford at Azle
Brewer at Lake Dallas

Game at a glance

Lancaster Tigers (0-1) at Aledo Bearcats (0-1)

When: 7:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 6 at Tim Buchanan Stadium

Last week: Lancaster lost 29-21 to North Crowley at The Star in Frisco in the Jerry Jones Classic, Aledo lost 35-30 at Denton Guyer.

All-time series: This is the first meeting ever between the Tigers and Bearcats.

Returning starters: Lancaster 5 offensive/5 defensive.

Aledo offensive players to watch: RB Ray Guillory, in first game back from injury, rushed 22 times for 89 yards and a TD; RB Kaden Winkfield, in sharing duty with Guillory, rushed 18 times for 85 yards and a TD; WR Blake Burdine, caught three passes for 20 yards and returned two kickoffs for 33 yards.

Lancaster offensive players to watch: WR Emmanuel Choice, 40 catches, 604 yards, 7 TD in 2023, committed to Oklahoma; QB Carter Jones, 2,032 yards, 20 TD in 2023, committed to Nevada.

Aledo defensive players to watch: CB Adrian Fuller, 5 tackles (all solo), interception, 6 tackles; S Kamron Hall, 6 tackles (all solo).

Lancaster defensive players to watch: LB Ke'Brian Winston, 126 tackles, 9 for loss, 12 sacks in 2023, committed to Cal; FS and Texas Braylan McDonald, 62 tackles, 8 for loss, 2 sacks, interception in 2023.

FOOTBALL

from page A6

Despite the unfortunate finish, Aledo had its chances to claim the victory. However, the Guyer defensive line provided plenty of pressure for Beard to navigate through.

"He just needs to make the right plays in pressure situations," Jones said of Beard. "He got flushed the wrong way opposite of where his open receivers were, which was also a good job by them (Guyer). Gavin is going to be all right."

While the final result was a loss, Jones saw several positives that included the effort by the defense - particularly the experienced line - and the performance of the Guillory-Winkfield tandem in the backfield.

Guillory, who is coming off an injury, unofficially produced 92 yards and a touchdown on 21

carries while Winkfield unofficially tallied 18 carries for 110 yards and a score. Beard completed 15 passes to four different receivers for 186 yards with two touchdowns against one interception. Finley caught both touchdowns with eight receptions and 141 yards while Waldron Byars and Blake Burdine combined for 42 receiving yards with three catches apiece.

The Bearcats will take the field again for their home opener at 7:30 p.m. Friday against Lancaster.

Wildcats 35, Bearcats 30

Aledo	9	14	7	0	-30
Denton Guyer	3	20	7	5	-35

G - Ford Stinson 35 FG
A - Kaydon Finley 7 pass from Gavin Beard (Cole Crawford kick)
A - Safety, ball kicked out of end zone after bad snap to punter
A - Kaden Winkfield 39 run (Crawford kick)

G - Stinson 25 FG
G - Stinson 27 FG
G - Zach De Anda 15 return of blocked punt (Stinson kick)
A - Ray Guillory 1 run (Crawford kick)
G - Corbin Glasco 83 kickoff return (Stinson kick)
A - Finley 72 pass from Beard (Crawford kick)
G - Glasco 54 run (Stinson kick)
G - Safety, tackle in end zone
G - Stinson 25 FG

Official statistics

Team statistics
First downs: Aledo 16, Guyer 15.
Rushes-yards: Aledo 47-155, Guyer 28-151.
Passing yards: Aledo 189, Guyer 178.
Caught-thrown-intercepted: Aledo 16-29-1, Guyer 12-27-1.
Fumbles-lost: Aledo 1-0, Guyer 2-1.
Punts-average: Aledo 4-23.0, Guyer 3-34.7.
Penalties-yards: Aledo 5-30, Guyer 7-74.
Sacks: Aledo 1, Guyer 3.

Individual leaders

Rushing
Aledo: Guillory 22-89, TD; Winkfield 18-85, TD.
Guyer: Corbin Glasco 3-73, TD; Sterling Schneider 7-45.
Passing
Aledo: Beard 16-29-1, 189 yards, 2 TD, int.
Guyer: Kevin Sperry 12-26-1, 178 yards, int.
Receiving
Aledo: Finley 8-141, 2 TD; Waldron Byars 3-22; Blake Burdine 3-20.
Guyer: DJ Reese 3-75.
Fumble recoveries
Aledo: Lamel Swanson.
Interceptions
Aledo: Adrian Fuller.
Guyer: NA.
Tackles
Aledo: Owen Henderson 6, Kamron Hall 6, Fuller 5.
Tackles for loss
Aledo: Jacob McIntire 1.
Sacks
Aledo: McIntire 1.

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FOOTBALL

Bearcats to face Tigers for first time

Lancaster to visit Buchanan Stadium

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

The Aledo Bearcats and Lancaster Tigers have never met on the football field.

They came close last season. However, while the Bearcats were on their way to a 16-0 season and a 12th state championship, the Tigers were ousted in the 5A Division I Region II finals.

Had Lancaster won that game, a double-overtime 43-41 loss to Forney, they would have met Aledo in the state semifinals. Instead, the Bearcats made short work of the Jackrabbits, winning 43-7.

Come Friday night the two teams will tangle for the first time in their respective histories when the Tigers visit Tim Buchanan Stadium. Kickoff is 7:30 p.m.

Similar feelings

Both the Bearcats and Tigers are coming off tough losses to open the season. While Aledo saw three separate leads slip away in a 35-30 loss at Denton Guyer, Lancaster dropped a 29-21 contest to North Crowley, No. 5 in the state in Class 6A, at The Star in Frisco in the Jerry Jones Classic.

In its loss, Aledo had a blocked punt and a kickoff returned for touchdowns. Lancaster had a first-and-goal at the 2 and lost a fumble, along with having a pick six nullified because of an errant referee's whistle.

"They kind of feel like us, they had a chance to win and let it get away," Bearcats coach Robby Jones said.

Key matchups

Once again the Aledo defensive line will be facing a top quarterback. Carter Jones of Lancaster has committed to play at Nevada.

Last week, the Bearcats D-line put consistent pressure on Guyer's Kevin Sperry, an Oklahoma commit, and as a result he was 12-of-26 for 178 yards with an interception. This week that line will be squaring off against a Tigers offensive line that averages 6-foot-4 and 315 pounds per man, including guard Ja'Kaylon Elmo (6-6, 380) and Osborne Duncan (6-5, 370).

Strong return

Running back Ray Guillory and offensive lineman Payton Williams made their return from injury last week against Guyer and both pleased Jones with their play. Guillory carried the ball 22 times for 89 yards and a touchdown.

"For guys on the mend all summer, they played well," Jones said. "They'll get steadily better and get back to their normal selves."

Both are juniors.

Special teams correction

One of the special teams miscues was a blocked punt that resulted in a Guyer touchdown. Jones said it was a case of miscommunication, which has since been corrected.

There was a left side and a right scheme for blocking and some confusion led to the open route for the block.

"Everybody's job stays the same, no matter which way we're going," Jones said.

Jones also noted, "We're focusing more in practice, everybody knowing what their assignments are."

New districts

Both the Bearcats and Tigers are in tougher districts this season. While Aledo is still in 3-5A Division I, and they are still in with Denton Ryan, the new No. 1 team in the state, newcomer Richland is ranked No. 7.

Lancaster moved up to Class 6A and was placed in the renowned "District of Doom." District 11-6A includes two-time defending 6A Division II state champion DeSoto, No. 1 in the state this season, and two-time defending 6A Division I state champion Duncanville, No. 2 in the state this season.

Also, for good measure, always tough Cedar Hill is No. 22 in 6A.

The Tigers are picked fifth in the league, but Jones said not to let that prediction fool you.

"If they were still 5A they'd be a top 10, without question," he said.

Speedy foe

Lancaster has long been known as one of the fastest sports programs in the state for both girls and boys. The track program has a plethora of state championships, the basketball team gets downcourt with blinding speed and the football team can do the same.

"We'll get used to speed," Jones said. "We'll have to play at a faster pace than we're accustomed to."

"We'll see that in district against Ryan, and Richland has speed also. But Lancaster is loaded with fast players."

Bouncing back from a loss

Since 1994 the Bearcats have lost back-to-back games in a season only five times, in 1995, 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2022. While the losses kept them from a postseason berth



BRELEIGH MAYER/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Blake Burdine avoids a Guyer defender in the season opener.

in 1995, the subsequent seasons saw them reach the state quarterfinals twice (2003 and 2005), semifinals once (2007) and win state (2022).

The only time they dropped three straight in same span was in 2005. That team ended the regular season 5-5, but advanced four rounds in the playoffs.

Subvarsity starts strong

Three of Aledo's four subvarsity squads began the season with victories. Freshman and junior varsity Black each posted shutouts and JV Orange surrendered a single touchdown.

This week, freshman Orange and Black host Lancaster, while JV Orange travels to Lancaster. JV Black is at Mansfield. All games are on Thursday.

Rankings

Last week's loss dropped the Bearcats from the top spot in Class 5A Division I to No. 3. They were replaced by Ryan, which previously

held the No. 2 position, with Highland Park now No. 2.

District foe Richland remained No. 7 this week.

Nationally, the Bearcats are ranked 84th by Maxpreps, while Ryan is No. 94.

Elsewhere in District 3-5A Division I

District	Overall	Points for-against
Denton Ryan	0-0 1-0	42-32
Azle	0-0 1-0	41-34
Richland	0-0 1-0	38-17
Granbury	0-0 1-0	3-0
Aledo	0-0 0-1	30-35
Keller Fossil Ridge	0-0 0-1	21-38
Birdville	0-0 0-1	14-50
Brewer	0-0 0-1	13-26
Denton	0-0 0-1	0-49

Last week's results

Crowley	50	Birdville	14
Lake Dallas	49	Denton	0
The Colony	38	Keller Fossil Ridge	21
Azle	41	Abilene Cooper	34
Saginaw	26	Brewer	13
Granbury	3	Waco	
Richland	38	Haltom	17
Denton Ryan	42	Haslet Eaton	32

Turn to BEARCATS, page A7

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Fall Sports Preview

ALEDO 2024 SEASON



Aleo Bearcat Varsity Team

KRISTIN MORALES/MEMORABLE MOMENTS

ALEDO FOOTBALL

It's reloading time again for Bearcats

Only three offensive starters return

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

Where else but Aleo can a football program return only three starters on offense, four on defense, graduate a host of talent now at the NCAA Division I level and still be the preseason favorite to repeat as state champions.

The short answer? Nowhere else.

That's exactly where the Bearcats find themselves this season as they begin their quest for a third threepeat as state champions. They previously accomplished this from 2009-11 and 2018-20, with Robby Jones as the coordinator of one of the most consistently explosive offenses in America.

Now Jones is the head coach, coming off a 16-0 season in his first year at the helm. It was the fifth time the Bearcats have finished with such a perfect record, having also done so in 2010, 2013, 2016 and 2018.

Having been a part of 11 of Aleo's 12 state championships, Jones knows the Bearcat tradition well. Basically, if it's football season, Aleo is going to be in contention to win it all.

The first state championship was in 1998. Over the past 15 years they have won titles in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022 and 2023, along with a runner-up finish in 2017 (they

lost 20-19 in title game) and a state semifinals appearance in 2015.

"If we can stay healthy and the team comes together and does what they are capable of, we've got a chance to get to December and play at Cowboys Stadium," Jones said.

The state championship games are played at AT&T Stadium in mid-December.

Offense

The Bearcats entered the season with a pair of key components offensively as spectators. Junior running back Ray Guillory had surgery on his injured knee in late December, and while he's been practicing, Jones said he was limited to no-contact drills.

"I think they (doctors) are wanting a full nine months recovery before contact," Jones said.

Guillory moved to Aleo after leading Mansfield Lake Ridge in rushing as a freshman. Last season for the Bearcats, despite missing several games — including the state championship — he rushed 145 times for 1,207 yards (8.3 average) with a team-leading 17 touchdowns. He also caught 10 passes for 175 yards and four more touchdowns, with his 21 total TD also leading the team.

"We're waiting on him to be full-strength. We will have to limit him when he does come back," Jones said. "Doing your workouts all summer is different than carrying the ball five or six times a game."

Also out as the season began was senior lineman Payton Williams, recovering from a broken fibula.

"They're out there running, but if there is contact, they come out," Jones said.

That leaves the only returning starter expected to take the field when the team traveled to Denton Guyer to open the season being junior wide receiver Kaydon Finley (39 catches, 602 yards, 6 TD), who is adjusting to a new position. Jones said that while he is still a wideout, he will also be in the slot more.

"We're trying to find more ways to get the ball to Kaydon," Jones said.

With Guillory limited, junior running back Kaden Winkfield (73 carries, 449 yards, 5 TD) is likely to get more carries. Also, senior Ben McElree, better known for his line-backing skills, will get some time in the backfield, Jones said.

"It'll be kind of like (Davhon) Keys last year. We're expecting early for him to get six to eight carries a game," Jones said.

Keys, an all-state player who is now at LSU as a linebacker, often ran out of a Wildcat package, especially near the goal line. Last season he rushed 36 times for 226 yards and 16 touchdowns.

Sophomore Jeremiah Johnson is also expected to be in the backfield mix, Jones said.

Joining Finley in the receiving corps will be junior Blake Burdine (13 catches, 218 yards, 3 TD), along with junior Lincoln Tubbs,

with senior Kaden Callaway also involved.

At tight end, Jones noted plenty of options, including seniors Thaddeus Keller, Waldron Byars and Roman Jeffries, along with juniors Skylar Kirk and Kade Coulson.

"There have been years when we tried to create a tight end, but this year we have more than we've ever had," Jones said. "The luxury is we can get into some two tight end sets."

The guy throwing the ball to them will be junior Gavin Beard. As backup to all-stater Hauss Hejny, now at TCU, Beard was accurate, completing 73 percent of his passes (45-of-62) for 517 yards with two touchdowns and two interceptions.

"Gavin has looked really good. He's throwing to the right places, not trying to force things," Jones said.

Likely backups are senior Colby Smith and sophomore Nash McElree.

Blocking for them all will, of course, be Williams at left tackle/left guard when he returns. Also on the line at various times are expected to be senior right tackle Cody Cartwright, senior guard Chase Anderson, junior center/guard/tackle Ryan Campbell (played three quarters in the 51-8 state championship game win over Smithson Valley), junior left tackle/guard Kruger Summers, sophomore guard Omari Din-Mbuh, sophomore guard/center Grant Forman.

Jones said the average size of around 255-260 pounds is "Not huge, but good."

"We have a lot of working pieces on the O-line, some question marks, but several options," he said.

Defense

"The defensive line is, right now, really the strength of our team," Jones said. "We've got four to rotate at defensive tackle and four more at defensive end."

Starters back from last season on the line are junior end Carson Dempsey (25.5 tackles, 5 sacks, 10 tackles for loss), junior tackle Decker Sanders (30 tackles, 2 sacks, 6.5 tackles for loss) and senior tackle Jaxon Richter (12 tackles, 2.5 tackles for loss).

"We're going to be able to keep them fresh, opponents won't have a tired defensive line to push around," Jones said.

Ben McElree is returning for his senior season as starting linebacker, having posted 42 tackles, including 8.5 for loss with two forced fumbles and a sack.

Also at tackle will be senior Talan Foreman (20.5 tackles) and sophomore Tymon Meeks, a move-in from All-Saints.

Junior Cooper Cyphers (11.5 tackles, 2 sacks, 4.5 tackles for loss, 2 forced fumbles, interception returned 49 yards), who missed much of last season with a broken hand, is set to return at end. Seniors Brody Adams (13 tackles, 4 tackles

Turn to FOOTBALL, page B4

TENNIS

Racquet Cats ready for another run

By Kelly Dishman
Special to The Community News

The Aledo Racquet Cats are used to winning district championships and advancing to regional competition.

In the fall they do this regularly in team tennis. In the spring, when the focus is more on individual play, they consistently send players to regional competition.

Given the returning talent among both the girls and boys, there is plenty of reason for optimism again in 2024-25. They return nine girls and six boys from last season.

Back for the girls are Elli Kate Bussmeir, Sydney Byrd, McKinley Hayes, Gracie Heydman, Eleanor Jack, Patrice Loftin, Natalie Nawrocki, Bryanna Orr and Lila Satterfield. Seniors are Bussmeir, Heydman, Jack, Loftin and Orr.

Satterfield qualified for spring regionals with the now-graduated Kenley Germany. Bussmeir, likewise, qualified for regionals in mixed doubles with Scott Mason, who graduated. Orr qualified in singles.

Returning boys include Francois Britz, Casen Freeland, Jacob Heckathorn, Ben Kurth, Paxton Psencik and Tom Ruminsky. Britz and Heckathorn are seniors.

Heckathorn and Loftin qualified for regionals in mixed doubles.



The Aledo High School varsity tennis team.

KRISTIN MORALES/MEMORABLE MOMENTS

VOLLEYBALL

Ladycats gear up for season

By Geoff Heppes
The Community News

The reigning District 5-5A champion Aledo Ladycats are set to defend that title this season.

Last season, the Ladycats (34-9, 11-1) swept through the district competition after dropping their first league contest at home to Northwest in straight sets. Aledo's impressive 11-game winning streak saw the Ladycats drop only four total sets in that duration and the momentum carried over into the postseason.

It was the 33rd consecutive season Aledo has reached the playoffs dating to 1991, according to the website theathleticsdepartment.com. This includes four trips to the state tournament, the most recent being in 2017, the first season under current head coach Claire Gay. They reached the state championship match in 2012, highlighting Kathy Goings' many seasons at the helm.

Last postseason Aledo rolled past Fort Worth North Side 25-2, 25-9 and 25-10 before running into a strong, experienced Birdville squad. In that area round matchup, Aledo emerged victorious in five sets (21-25, 25-15, 25-17, 23-25 and 15-9).



Outside hitter, Alyssa Todd soars through the air for a spike during the Ladycat varsity volleyball match.

Aledo's strong 2023 season came to a close against the then-defending champion Colleyville Heritage Lady Panthers in a four-set slugfest (22-25, 25-19, 24-26 and 18-25).

Aledo lost star outside hitter Vivian Parker to graduation in



Kinley Elms blocks a Weatherford kill attempt and Ella Isbell plays aggressive defense at the net in a scrimmage against Weatherford last season. Both Ladycats return to the 2024 team.

May as she begins her next chapter as a collegiate athlete, playing volleyball for the Missouri Lady Tigers. However, Aledo will boast tremendous frontline experience with returning seniors Kinley Elms,

Haley Lowe, Ella Isbell, and junior outside hitter Alyssa Todd.

The Ladycats will have upper-classmen leadership on the back end as well, led by senior setter Ava Reding, along with junior setter Sophia Frank, senior defensive

specialist Logyn Denbow, junior libero Ella Meador, and senior defensive specialist Morgan Estevez.

Aledo's predistrict success entering this week included winning the championship of the prestigious Arlington Classic.

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CROSS COUNTRY

Runners primed for state return

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

Last season was believed to be a first for the Aledo cross country program. While known throughout the state, it seems that never before had they qualified both girls and boys for the state meet.

In 2023 they did just that. In fact, the Ladycats finished second in the state and have almost the entire team returning in 2024.

Meanwhile, the Bearcats have lots of talent back to join the girls in making another run — no pun intended — for state.

“Our tradition stems from the kids and their work ethic,” head coach Mike Pinkerton said. “We have set the bar very high, and these athletes are up to the challenge.”

Pinkerton’s program is nothing short of dominant. The Bearcats have won five straight district championships and the Ladycats have won four of the past five.

In fact, last season the Bearcats junior varsity posted a perfect score at district with having the top five individual finishers. It was the second time in the season they did such.

Leading the Ladycats’ returning contingent from state are sophomore Micah Neal and junior Molly Garrison, who were seventh and 12th individually at state last season. Also, junior Madison Larson was 22nd, and junior Sofia Brandenburg and Mykel Murry were 48th and 49th.

Sophomore Mayden Mitchell also ran at state and was 124th.

The Bearcats will be led by three-time state competitor Jack Fink, who still has one of the oddest and most interesting stories of any runner anywhere. As a freshman, he was hit by a deer while running in practice, hospitalizing him. He returned to compete with the team, then returned individually in 2022 and back with the team a year ago, placing 20th individually.

Junior Dominick Barrera is back after placing 107th at state in 2023, as are senior Luke Schabel (112th) and sophomore Tyler Connelly (117th).

As usual, the Bearcats and Ladycats will compete in a tough schedule throughout the regular season.

“We have a tough schedule, but you don’t improve unless you are pushed. The meets we are going to will do just that,” Pinkerton said.

The league has changed for Aledo this season. Gone from 5-5A are Justin Northwest and Wichita Falls Rider. They were replaced by Saginaw Chisholm Trail and Keller Fossil Ridge, the latter having dropped down from Class 6A.

Also in the district still is perennial toughie Granbury, along with returners Azle, Saginaw, and White Settlement Brewer.

“Our district is always competitive,” Pinkerton said. “We also have two new teams in the district, so we will need to be prepared.”



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Molly Garrison and Jack Fink will return for the Ladycats’ and Bearcats’ cross country teams.

“

Our tradition stems from the kids and their work ethic. We have set the bar very high, and these athletes are up to the challenge.

Mike Pinkerton

GOLF

Bearcats, Ladycats have strong potential again



By Jim Zimmermann
The Community News

Once again, the boys and girls golf programs at Aledo High School appear strong with the potential to do great things, noted head coach Brian Mourning, who is entering his third season at the helm.

Top returning players for the boys are junior Braden Stokes, who advanced to the Class 5A State Tournament this past spring. Also returning after regional experience this past season for the Bearcats are senior Ethan Elmore and junior Gavin Beard.

Back for the Ladycats, who also advanced to regionals as a team, are juniors Emily Crick and Harper Price, along with senior Reagan Gilliland.

Both the Bearcats and Ladycats continued a long tradition of winning District 5-5A last season.

Also, since the season is so long, players must be able to step up and give the team a level of consistency, Mourning stated.

Aledo will compete in District 5-5A again this season, joining Azle, Fort Worth Chisholm Trail, Granbury, Keller Fossil Ridge, Saginaw, and White Settlement Brewer. Gone are Northwest and Wichita Falls Rider, replaced by Chisholm Trail and Fossil

Ridge, which dropped down from 6A.

“Not sure what the new teams in the district will bring, but we can’t control that,” Mourning said. “We can only control what we do. Top competition? Granbury always has several kids that can play and are well-coached.”

Aledo has established itself as one of the best golf programs in the state with both team and individual accomplishments over the years. Mourning said the players take pride in keeping that tradition strong year after year.

“The tradition is a gesture to the type of kid that we have here,” he said. “These kids are constantly trying to find ways to get better. I’m just happy to be a part of what they are trying to accomplish.”

While district, regionals and state aren’t until the spring, Mourning said the fall is crucial in preparing for when those arrive.

“The fall is important because it allows the kids the opportunity to get out and work on their game. It also helps establish a routine that they can carry into the spring season,” he said. “We’re looking forward to the year and watching the kids get better every day.”

“

These kids are constantly trying to find ways to get better. I’m just happy to be a part of what they are trying to accomplish.

Brian Mourning

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FOOTBALL

from page one

for loss, fumble recovery for TD) and Jacob McIntire (9.5 tackles, 2 tackles for loss) will also likely see time there.

“All those guys could go pretty much anywhere in the state and start. There are lots of really good football players there,” Jones said.

Joining McElree at linebacker will be senior Owen Henderson (22.5 tackles) and junior Chase Wilburn (24.5 tackles, 2.5 tackles for loss, interception returned 48 yards for a TD, started a couple games) and junior Kutter Harrell (16.5 tackles, tackle for loss, fumble recovery).

The Bearcats are replacing their entire starting defensive backfield. At cornerback will be seniors Kai Taylor and Adrian Fuller, with sophomore Alex Patton and freshman Jordan Hall.

Safety will feature some strong competition, Jones said. Seniors Cory Tilly (9.5 tackles) and Jaylen Powell-Willis (9.5 tackles) will join juniors Lamel Swanson in the battle to replace five graduated seniors from 2023.

Special teams

Senior Cole Crawford is back at kicker with two years of varsity experience. Last season he was 72-of-74 on extra points and 7-of-11 on field goals for a total of 93 points.

Junior Pierce Ling returns as punter. On 13 kicks last season he averaged 36.5 yards with a long kick of 65 yards.

Junior Kade Coulson will do the deep snapping. Jones also noted that junior Peyton Shaffer also has a strong leg.

District

The Bearcats will take a national-record 119-game district winning streak into league play this season. They haven't lost a district game since 2007, when they started 0-2.

They will be tested mightily to keep that streak alive. District 3-5A Division I includes three of the state's top seven teams.

The Bearcats are ranked No. 1 by Dave Campbell's Texas Football and Denton Ryan is No. 2. Richland comes in at No. 7.

“This is the toughest district in 5A,” Jones said. “Ryan is the real deal. They were young last year with a lot of juniors and sophomores. They'll be a test for us, in district and playoffs. And Richland is loaded as well.”

Last season in Aledo, Ryan overcame a 17-0 deficit to take a 19-17 advantage into the game's final moments before Hejny broke free for a long run and the game-winning TD.

The Bearcats host Ryan on Oct. 4 and host Richland on Oct. 25.



Aledo Bearcat Junior Varsity Team

KRISTIN MORALES/MEMORABLE MOMENTS



Kaden Winkfield (21) carries the ball in the season opener.

BREILEIGH MAYER/THE COMMUNITY NEWS



Gavin Beard, shown in the season opener at Denton Guyer, will call the signals for the Bearcats this season.

BREILEIGH MAYER/THE COMMUNITY NEWS



Defensive end Cooper Cyphers (42) applies pressure during the Guyer game.

KRISTIN MORALES/MEMORABLE MOMENTS

“

We're going to be able to keep them fresh, opponents won't have a tired defensive line to push around

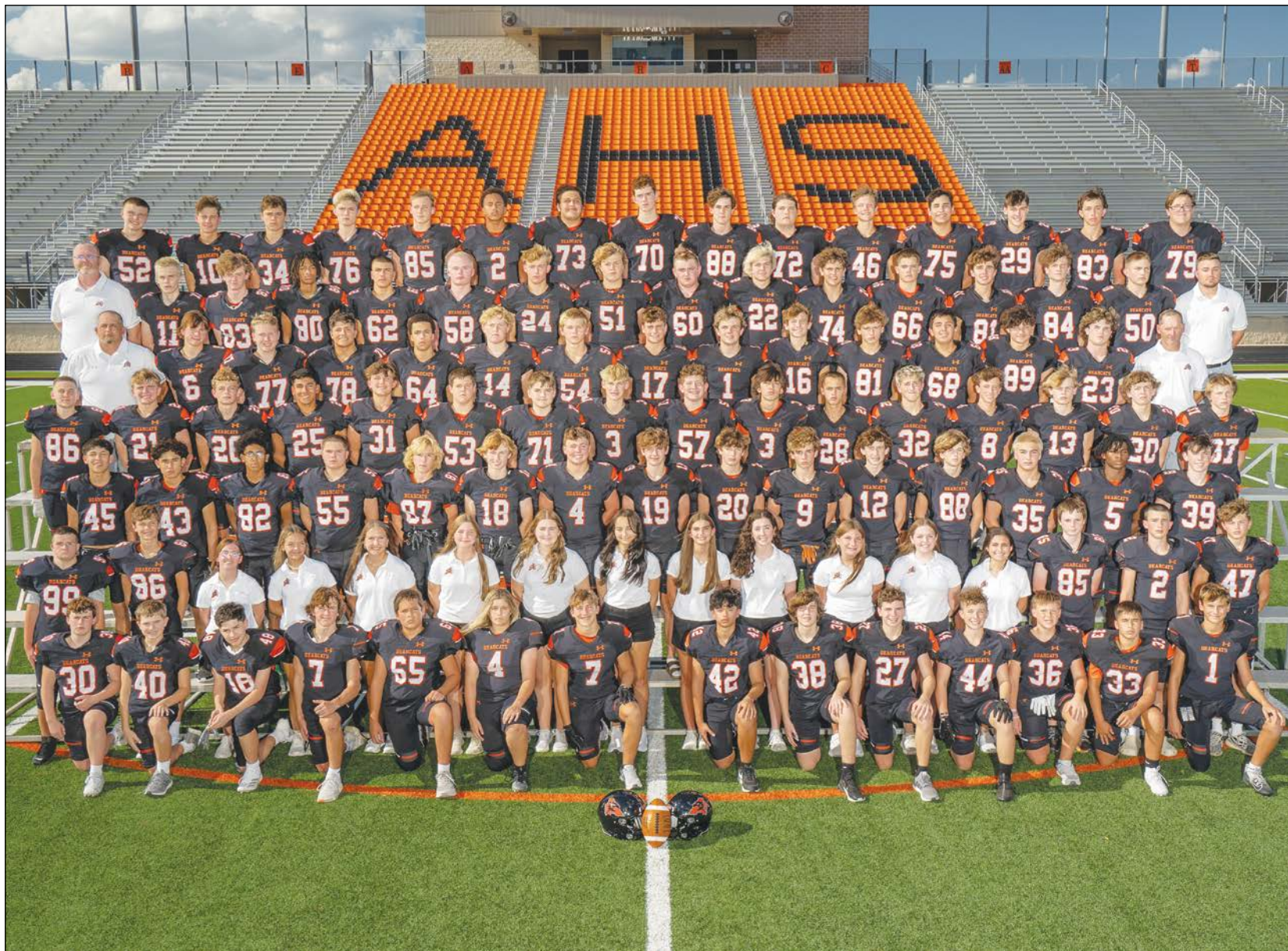
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Aledo Bearcat Freshmen Team

KRISTIN MORALES/MEMORABLE MOMENTS



Team captais are Gavin Beard (5), Kaydon Finley (2), Ben McElree (22) and Ownn Henderson (0)

BRELEIGH MAYER/THE COMMUNITY NEWS



KRISTIN MORALES/MEMORABLE MOMENTS

Raycine Guillory is expected to have a great season in the backfield.



BRELEIGH MAYER/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Aledo always travels well, with a large contingent of fans.

Greatness at a glance

Here's a look at some of the major accomplishments of the Aledo Bearcats football team.

- State championships: 1998, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022 and 2023.
- Eleven state championships in 15 seasons with another state finals appearance and a state semifinals appearance.
- Every freshmen class that has come to Aledo High School since 2006 has at least one state football championship.
- Only team in Texas high school football history to three-peat as state champions twice in 2009-11 and 2018-20.
- One of only three programs in the nation to go 16-0 five times, doing so in 2010, 2013, 2016, 2018 and 2023. Only Southlake Carroll (8) and Celina (5) have also done so.
- District winning streak of 119 games, a national record that dates to 2007, when they ironically started league play 0-2.
- Sixteen consecutive district championships from 2008 to current.
- A streak of 28 straight seasons in which they have won at least one playoff game dating to 1996.
- A record of 216 wins and 14 losses since 2009, an average of less than one loss per season.
- No back-to-back seasons without a state championship since 2007 and 2008 seasons.
- The 2013 team scored 1,026 points, more than any other team at any level and is the only team ever to score more than 1,000 points in a season, outscoring their opponents by an average of 64-9.
- Six of Aledo's offenses since 2011 are ranked in the top 100 highest-scoring high school offenses of all time, 2013, first, 1,026 points; 2011, 16th, 885; 2016, 26th, 855; 2019, 52nd, 815; 2018, 62nd, 809; 2023, 82nd, 797.
- Scored in 299 straight games dating to 2003. That season they were last shut out, 17-0 by Denton Ryan, in the state quarterfinals.
- Haven't had back-to-back season-opening losses since 1990 and 1991 seasons.
- Up to this season's opening loss at Denton Guyer, the Bearcats rode a 30-game win streak, second longest in school history. The 2016-17 teams won 31 straight and the 2009-10 teams won 29 in a row. The '16-17 streak was ended with a 20-19 loss to College Station in the state championship game. The '09-10 streak came to an end in a 48-47 loss to Stephenville in the opening game of the 2011 season.

Good Luck Ladycats!

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Fall Sports Preview

TCA 2024 SEASON



TRINITY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

The Trinity Christian Lady Eagles are looking to continue an upward trajectory this season.

VOLLEYBALL

Lady Eagles aim for resurgent season

Off to solid start

By Geoff Heppes
The Community News

The Trinity Christian Academy Lady Eagles volleyball team is aiming to build on the positive trajectory of the program from last year and are making quality strides towards continued success.

The volleyball program returns five seniors and second-year head coach, Katherine Mullen, to the fray after putting together a 17-15 overall record with a 5-7 mark in TAPPS district play last season. These win totals were both improvements from the 2022

season with a four-win improvement in the district win column from 2022 to 2023.

Leading returning players for the Lady Eagles include middle blocker Micah Breisch, a 2023 second-team all-district

selection; libero JulieAnne Hart, a 2023 honorable mention all-district selection; outside hitter Addison Shoppach, another honorable mention all-district pick; outside hitter Emily Ickert, who is returning from injury a season

ago; setter and defensive specialist Rylie Reeder; setter and right side hitter Anna Nelson and right side hitter Taylor Gilliam.

Trinity is already off to a solid start to the 2024 season and is aiming for lofty goals.

“The 2024 team has already achieved success at the Fort Worth Christian PIT Tournament as Silver Bracket champions,” assistant coach Chris Dorrell said.

Their early season success also included wins over public schools Lancaster and Dallas South Oak Cliff in the Pantego Christian Tournament.

The Lady Eagles are looking to finish near the top of the district standings and are vying to snap a five-year playoff drought if they clinch this season. If the drought ends, Trinity looks to relish the opportunity and is optimistic about making a deep run.

“

The 2024 team has already achieved success at the Fort Worth Christian PIT Tournament as Silver Bracket champions.

Chris Dorrell

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FOOTBALL

Eagles eager to take next step on gridiron

By Geoff Heppes
The Community News

After being limited to one win in each of the 2022 and 2023 seasons, the Trinity Christian Academy Eagles football team is eager to continue to compete at a high level while being in a position to succeed with experienced players returning on both sides of the ball.

“Our main goal is to compete better each week and put ourselves in a position to be successful,” head coach Cody McKenzie said. “The last couple of years have been trying with young players and a limited roster. This year we have grown in size and numbers. Our young players are upperclassmen with two varsity seasons under their belt. We have added a few to the roster that have made an instant impact on this team.”

Some of those impact players include Canaan Kaznowski, who will be the team’s quarterback while also playing defensive back. MCKenzie said Kaznowski is a dynamic athlete who is making plays with his arm and feet. Skill players helping him make it happen include Pearson Kuykendall, Braxton Lewis, Owen Coates, Hank Nash, Patrick Gullatt, and Marshall Hughes.

In the trenches, Rhyder Dawson, Kadin James, Matthew Nester,

Max Johnson, Micah Harless, and Brogan Chapman are expected to play a major role this season and the Eagles will be relying on them to clear the way.

“We are a much more physical team this season,” McKenzie said. “Our players have busted their tails since the offseason getting stronger and tougher both physically and mentally. Staying healthy will be a vital factor in our success, but the improvements made in the offseason have led to a much improved team on the field.”

TCA will return between five and seven starters on each side of the ball, according to McKenzie. Furthermore, the Eagles aim to up their scoring average from nine points per game and to lower their defensive average of 27 points per game from a season ago.

The team’s motto this year is “TOUGH,” which McKenzie said stands for being tough mentally, physically and spiritually based on scripture from 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, which will be needed to fuel the team’s impact in the win column.

“Each week the goal is to be 1-0,” McKenzie said. “The players are ready, they are holding each other accountable.”

PHOTOS BY DAVID NESTOR



TRINITY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Pearson Kuykendall (9) and Micah Harless (56) are among the returning players for Trinity Christian Academy this season.

“

Our players have busted their tails since the offseason getting stronger and tougher both physically and mentally.

Cody McKenzie



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KRISTIN MORALES/MEMORABLE MOMENTS

KRISTIN MORALES/MEMORABLE MOMENTS

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