



Wildcats open 2008 season against Texas

MANHATTAN (AP) — Continuity counts.

Just ask Kansas State coach Ron Prince. It was one of the issues he highlighted during a news conference where he broke down North Texas, the Wildcats’ season-opening opponent.

Mean Green sophomore quarterback Giovanni Vizza played in 10 games in 2007, throwing for 2,388 yards and 17 touchdowns. Wide receiver Casey Fitzgerald had a breakout 2007, catching 111 passes for 1,322 receiving yards.

North Texas also returns four starting offensive linemen and running back Micah Mosley, who rushed for 461 yards and averaged about 5 yards per carry. Still, the Mean Green was only 2-10 and would love to take home a trophy victory over a Big 12 team in its season opener.

“So, from an offensive standpoint, they have a lot of firepower, lots of players who return and are very confirmed in their system,” Prince said. “I think they’ll be very challenging to deal with.”

The Wildcats open Prince’s third season as head coach against North Texas at 6:05 p.m. Saturday at Bill Snyder Family Stadium. While the North Texas offense returns a lot of experience, the Kansas State defense is surrounded with questions following a 5-7 season.

Starting defensive ends Ian Campbell and Eric Childs played outside linebacker in 2007, after playing defensive end in 2006 when the Wildcats used a 4-3 defense. Outside linebacker Antwon Moore tore his ACL two games into the 2007 season and missed the remaining 10 games. Cornerback Josh Moore, who started toward the end of 2006, redshirted during 2007.

Safety Chris Carney is the only defensive starter who is not changing positions and started consistently during the end of 2007.

“I think anyone who is around our program understands the importance of our defensive effort this year,” Prince said. “I’m sure there will be things we need to make adjustments to both during games and in between games. The truth is, to accomplish our goals we need to play better defensively, and we are hoping to start that this weekend.”

North Texas passed for about 300 yards per game in 2007. The Mean Green switched to the spread offense last year in coach Todd Dodge’s first season. Senior nose tackle Brandon Balkcom said the key to slowing the spread offense starts up front with the defensive line.

The Kansas State offense received good news this month when someone in the compliance office discovered that wide receiver Deon Murphy, who was listed as a junior in 2007, has an extra year of eligibility and should be listed as a junior in 2008.

Murphy also said he knew little about the situation.

“I didn’t know anything about it. I was told by my academic adviser,” Murphy said. “It was quite a surprise. I never thought about it. It’s a good thing, and we are going to keep rolling with it.”

Saturday’s game will pay homage to the 2008 Ring of Honor class and the 1998 Kansas State football team. The 2008 Ring of Honor class includes David Allen, Martin Gramatica, Terence Newman and Mark Simoneau.

“It’s an honor to even see the 1998 team come back down,” Murphy said.

Chiefs defeat Rams 21-17

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — So what if it was all against the second team? The Kansas City Chiefs were badly in need of a confidence boost and that’s exactly what they’ll take out of Thursday night’s 21-17 victory over a collection of St. Louis reserves.

“We know it wasn’t their ones. But you’ve still got to go out there and play and execute,” said Brodie Croyle, who directed two brisk first-quarter touchdown drives. “We wanted to come out here and put together a couple of good drives and we were able to do that.”

The only projected Rams starter who did not take the night off in the

final preseason game was center Nick Leckey. Everyone else was either a second- or third-teamer as coach Scott Linehan took a long look at players competing for the final roster spots.

The Chiefs (2-2), coming off a demoralizing 24-0 shutout at the hands of a Miami team that was 1-15 last season, had a more urgent craving. They were looking for confidence and momentum going into their regular-season opener next week at New England.

Trent Green started at quarterback for the Rams and played only one series, missing his only pass attempt.

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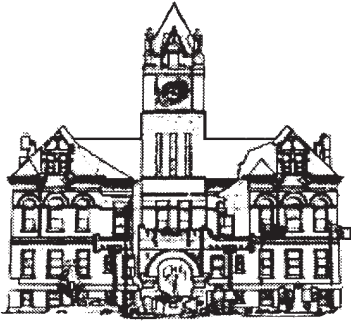
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