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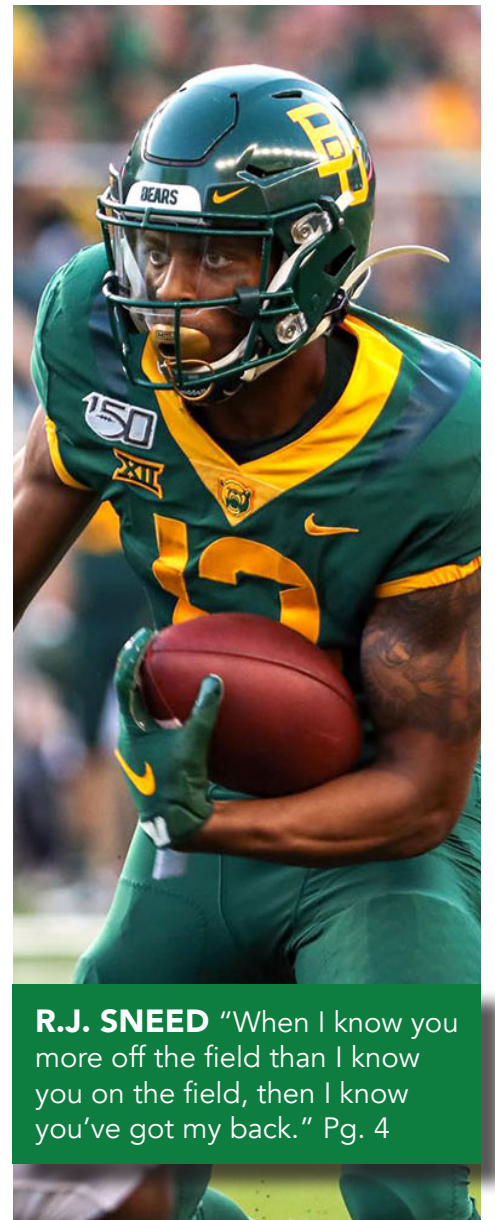
Wednesday, September 1, 2021

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TRESTAN EBNER

"I want to enjoy this as much as I can with these guys I've grown to love." Pg. 2



R.J. SNEED "When I know you more off the field than I know you on the field, then I know you've got my back." Pg. 4

HERE COME THE BEARS

FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Coach Dave Aranda finding his stride

MARQUIS COOLEY
Sports Editor

Being a first-year head coach is hard. It's even harder in the midst of a pandemic, which is what Baylor football head coach Dave Aranda had to deal with when he took the job in 2020. COVID-19 took away everything a first-year head coach in a new program would need to be successful, such as practice time and face-to-face interactions, which resulted in the Bears finishing with a 2-7 record.

Now in his second year with fewer restrictions, Aranda is happy just to get a chance to be closer to his team.

"Excited to be back and excited to be in normal spaces," Aranda said in a press conference. "It's a big difference when you're in a room and you've got the attention of everyone, and they're all focused in on you and you can kind of feel it, as opposed to, 'We're here and everything is spaced out to such a degree that it's hard to keep that attention.'"

Aranda has taken advantage of being able to be closer to his team, implementing weekly team dinners and Zoom meetings with families in an effort to allow everyone to get to know one another — something the players appreciate.

"I think that's what makes a team good,"

“Excited to be back and excited to be in normal spaces. It's a big difference.”

DAVE ARANDA | HEAD COACH

senior wide receiver R.J. Sneed said in a press conference on Aug. 10. "When I know you more off the field than I know you on the field, then I know you've got my back on the field. So I think that's a good thing going into the season, compared to last year where we get on the field and I see a number out there, I'm like, 'Who is that?'"

Aranda has also made it a point to meet with players individually so they can pick his brain.

"A couple weeks ago, I sat with Coach Aranda and just talked coverages," junior quarterback Gerry Bohanon said. "Man, when I say that he knows so much, it is unbelievable. I couldn't even grasp it all because I was just writing everything down trying to catch it. And I know when I went home later that day, I had to sit back and just read. I was like, 'Maybe I need to meet this guy a little bit more; he's very intelligent.'"

Senior safety JT Woods has had similar experiences with Aranda.

"He just gets in the zone," Woods said in a press conference. "He kind of sits back, and he just dissects a play. If you really sit in a film session with him, you can really see the defensive mind that he has. It's just really amazing for me, being a defender. I just love

HEAD COACH >> Page 7



TAKING THE REINS Gerry Bohanon is Baylor's new starting quarterback after having competed against Jacob Zeno and Blake Shapen for the spot.

Gerry Bohanon set as QB1

GIO GENNERO
Sports Writer

Junior Gerry Bohanon is ready to start as the new quarterback for Baylor after having competed for the spot against sophomore Jacob Zeno and freshman Blake Shapen. Bohanon spent most of his time at Baylor as a backup to previous quarterback Charlie Brewer. Now that it's his time to shine, Bohanon said he has continued to work on his game.

"I'm working on everything," Bohanon said.

The standout Earle High School QB from Arkansas has since spent his time as a backup at Baylor. However, he became a fan favorite during his redshirt freshman

year. The crowd would chant his name at games, often referring to him as "RG4." This reference is to Baylor icon and Heisman winner RG3: Robert Griffin III. Bohanon's play style is similar to Griffin's, and his jersey number, 11, is one higher than Griffin's.

As Bohanon prepares to be the new leader of the Bears' offense, Aranda is excited to see what he can do.

"I'd like to see Gerry get into a rhythm," Aranda said in his press conference. "I'd like to see Gerry gain confidence. I'd like to see him take control of the team on a Saturday night ... and full confidence that he's going to do that, and excited to see him do that."

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Ebner ready for big year

MICHAEL HAAG
Sports Writer

Senior running back Trestan Ebner has seen it all. For the last five years, he has put his skills on display time and time again, and he has consistently improved.

After a 2019 campaign in which he put up great numbers as a pass-catching running back, Ebner was set to go berserk in the 2020 season. Amid the down year with COVID-19 and other team issues, he did not thrive to the extent that he was expected.

The plans for the upcoming season are for that to change. Ebner is set to be a huge piece of the new Baylor offense. With head coach Dave Aranda and offensive coordinator Jeff Grimes implementing a wide zone offense, the quick and shifty Ebner will get lots of opportunities to get out in the open field and make plays for the team.

"There is a lot of space in the wide zone, especially if you block it upright," Ebner said. "You can get one-on-one with the safeties and a lot of big plays waiting to happen."

Ebner has shown that if he can get past the second level of a defense, he can cause problems for the opposing team. It's difficult for safeties and corners to make a tackle in open space against the 5-foot-11, 215-pound running back. If all goes according to plan with the offensive scheme, be ready for a lot of breakthrough plays out of the backfield with Ebner taking a handoff. Ebner said he believes the offense is a good fit for him.

Ebner is also a major threat as a kick returner, and he plans to continue this role for the team. With Ebner being a speed threat, he works well with the special teams unit and plans on helping the offense through explosive returns.

"For me, it's just a chance to change the game," Ebner said. "If I can help us cross the 50 [yard line], that just increases our chances of scoring on offense."

Ebner has also been taking leaps as a leader for the team.

"I always looked at him as a leader — a vocal leader," senior running back Abram Smith said. "He's actually improving a lot ... and he's got that kind of influence on the team. The more that he speaks, the more the guys listen to him, the more we go out there and we actually execute."

This is being put on display not only for Ebner's teammates but also for his coaches. The newfound leadership role that Ebner has embraced surprised Aranda.

Aranda said Ebner has grown since last season into a player who has been more vocal during practice in encouraging his teammates. He said during one practice, he was pleased to hear Ebner supporting the team and telling the players to "bring the energy" into practice.

Ebner gives all the credit for his leadership skills to his teammates and coaching staff. The potential was unleashed, and now the locker room has a running back that will be vocal for them all season.

"Coach Aranda and the guys challenged me because I'm not that vocal of a person," Ebner said in a press conference. "I've really been practicing this summer, so I think for getting me outside my comfort zone ... I'm stepping more into a leadership role."

This is the last season for Ebner, who has been with this program since 2017 and has built strong bonds within the team. As the days dwindle down and his final season at Baylor begins, he is staying motivated.

"I know it's the last one," Ebner said. "I just want to take that and work hard every day because it's my last one. I want to enjoy this as much as I can with these guys I've grown to love."

Ebner is set for a big season. He has been added to the Hornung Watch List and Reese's Senior Bowl Watchlist. Big 12 and nonconference defenses alike will have their hands full trying to contain him, as the Baylor Bears hope to be a big name to look out for during the upcoming season.



Rod Aydelotte | Waco Tribune Herald, pool

FRESH SCHEME Baylor football will have a fresh offensive strategy as the new offensive coordinator, Jeff Grimes, prepares for this upcoming season.

Bears emphasize new offensive scheme

MARQUIS COOLEY
Sports Editor

"We're an attacking offense that runs a few plays a lot of ways — more misdirection than anybody in the country," senior wide receiver Tyquan Thornton said in a press conference on Aug. 10.

That's the kind of offense new Baylor offensive coordinator Jeff Grimes wants the Bears to have. Coming from Brigham Young University after winning the 2020 Broyles Award as the nation's top assistant coach, Grimes is known for his belief in the wide zone offensive scheme.

"Coach Grimes, his emphasis on wide zone and the play action is like something I've never seen before," junior quarterback Gerry Bohanon said.

The wide zone scheme is based on horizontal motion by the offensive lineman, allowing him to stretch the field in a certain direction and create gaps for the running backs to read the field.

"The wide zone is something that I believe in," Grimes said in a press conference. "I've been fortunate to have been in a lot of different offensive systems, and the wide zone is one that has been the most consistent play in the NFL for the past 20 to 25 years."

Part of the reason Grimes loves the wide zone scheme is that anyone can run it as long as he's "coachable and athletic."

"They don't have to be any specific skill set — just be coachable and willing to execute the play," Grimes said. "It's something that I have really become a believer in and fits with a lot of the things that I like in the passing game as well, so it will be something we hang our hat on."

Last season under Grimes' scheme, BYU

had one of the top offenses in the country. It averaged 43.5 points per game, which was No. 4 in the nation, and 522.2 yards per game, which was No. 6 in the nation. BYU also ranked No. 2 in offensive touchdowns with 68 and No. 1 in yards per play with 7.84. Comparatively, Baylor's offense struggled, ranking No. 118 in the nation in total offense. However, the new offensive approach has the players excited.

"I love this offense ... it stretches everybody out, and off of that, we can get play action passes ... and the receivers just come open from that," sophomore quarterback Jacob Zeno said.

Even with all of the excitement, there are still a few things the veteran players are getting used to.

"I can't tell you the last time I've been in a huddle," senior wide receiver R.J. Sneed said. "I mean, we get in the huddle sometimes during the season, but when the QBs have wristbands on and they say, 'Huddle up,' that's one big change."

With all of the offseason practices and camps, the players have had the chance to gain a better understanding of the offense as a whole. The players have already noticed the difference it has made.

"You can just tell guys' knowledge of the offense is so much better," senior running back Trestan Ebner said. "Even where we left off in the spring — with the studying we did during the summer, the extra workout sessions we did together — everybody's knowledge of the offense is good, so we're able to come in and hit it fast."

All that's left for the Bears to do now is to show that knowledge on Saturdays.

Cover Photos Courtesy of Baylor Photography and Ben Queen | USA TODAY Sports (pool photographer)



Photo Courtesy of Baylor Athletics

BIG FINISHES Trestan Ebner, set as the starting running back, is in for a big senior season.

Meet the Staff

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Football Preview



Ben Queen - USA TODAY Sports (Pool Photographer)

TOGETHER AGAIN Oct 3, 2020; Morgantown, West Virginia, USA; West Virginia Mountaineers running back Leddie Brown (4) is tackled by many Baylor Bears players during the fourth quarter at Mountaineer Field at Milan Puskar Stadium.

Watch out for that Baylor defense

MICHAEL HAAG
Sports Writer

The Baylor Bears are expected to have another strong defense this upcoming season. On all levels of the field, from the trenches to the secondary, the defense is filled with veterans who are ready to make plays.

Most fans like to talk about the offensive firepower on a team. Scoring, explosive plays and chunk-yard gains tend to be what people get excited over. However, there is a whole other facet of the game that is just as important.

Battle in the Trenches

It all starts with the trenches. Baylor's defensive line is going to be in control of plugging up running holes and applying a consistent pass-rush. Sophomore transfer defensive tackle Siaki "Apu" Ika, who has been with Baylor football head coach Dave

Aranda since their days at Louisiana State University, will be at the center of everything and has a chance to shift the balance of the defensive front in Baylor's favor.

"I think they are going to have to double him or try to cut him," Aranda said. "[In] the 3-4, ... you have your nose in the middle. If two guys have to take him, then you are gaining a number at the point of attack on a play."

"Oh, he's dangerous, senior safety Jalen Pitre said. "I feel like when people get to see him on Saturday, they're going to notice how reckless he is and how much of a game wrecker he is. Him in the middle is going to open a lot of things for a lot of us."

Apu embraces the role and knows how important it is for him to execute on all cylinders for the team.

"I'm built for it," Apu said. "I'm a pretty large dude. There's not a lot of people that look like me on the team; I'm built to be in the middle. I'm built to

eat up two blocks, make plays when I can - defense is built for me."

Junior defensive lineman Brayden Utley and senior defensive tackle Cole Maxwell will be on the defensive line with Ika, and Ika said he has a lot of confidence in them.

"[They're] fighters," Ika said in a press conference on Aug. 9. "Our strength is in our numbers. We had some dudes come back from injury, so just having them back, being able to go through practice together, makes us better as a unit."

Soldifying the Middle

The linebacker group is filled with experienced players in senior Ashton Logan, junior Dillon Doyle, Bernard and Pitre, who also plays safety. Bernard is coming off a shoulder injury, reuniting on the inside with Doyle.

"It is definitely nice to have Terrell back there with me,"

Doyle said. "I love playing with 2 [Bernard]. He is just an awesome leader."

Senior running back Abram Smith, who converted from being a linebacker, also spoke about how important Bernard and the linebacker core will be for this team.

"Those guys are the standard," Smith said. "You look at Terrell and you're like, 'Man, he knows what he's doing all the time ... at a high level, high speed.' So, it's like that's what you want out of a football player."

Locking Down the Outside

Headed back to the secondary, another veteran group is looking to lock down opposing receivers and control the aerial attack. Senior cornerbacks Raleigh Texada and Kalon Barnes will be shadowing opposing receivers, while senior safeties JT Woods, Christian Morgan and Pitre

will be helping them out.

The cornerbacks are referenced as "lock-down corners" and are expected to slow down receiver threats from opposing teams. Safeties Woods and Morgan both expressed how much easier their job is due to the quality of talent at the cornerback position.

"All the corners are really good ... you can do a lot of stuff with safeties," Morgan said. "You can change them on an island, and that just frees up us on the back end to make plays. It's really good to have guys like that."

"They have tremendous athletes in that corners room," Woods said. "We all know they have a lot of speed, so I don't have to worry about if I have to leave them on an island. 'Texada Island' - that's a real thing out there. It's no joke. Being able to trust those guys ... to make plays and not always have to worry about protecting them over the top

is really relieving for me as a safety."

Having those types of cornerbacks allows for Aranda and defensive coordinator Ron Roberts to have more flexibility in their defensive play calling.

Woods and Morgan will have plenty of space to make plays and less pressure will be put on their shoulders to aid the cornerbacks in one-on-one situations. In obvious passing situations, having them over the top will be important, but in games where a team is more run-heavy, having the ability to bring them in to blitz will be a bonus.

Overall, the defense is an experienced group that has seen it all and they will look to make use of that this season. Winning is dependent on putting points on the board, make no mistake. However, at the end of the day, it starts with the Baylor Bear defense, which seems ready to get the job done.



Baylor Photography

FOCUS With close calls, steady hands and laser focus, R.J. Sneed returns to Baylor this season as a senior wide receiver.

Veteran hands ready to catch

MARQUIS COOLEY
Sports Editor

While there have been some changes within the Baylor football team going into this season, such as a new starting quarterback, transfer players joining and new coaches, one position has remained the same. The senior wide receiver trio R.J. Sneed, Tyquan Thornton and Josh Fleeks returned to Baylor this season, giving the Bears some veteran experience at the position. Sneed said this is a good thing.

"It's good to have guys that have at least played a little lick of football," Sneed said in a press conference on Aug. 10. "It's good for the room."

The trio compounded 76 receptions for 836 yards and five touchdowns last season in what was a disappointing 2-7 season for the Bears. They look to improve upon those numbers this season under new offensive coordinator Jeff Grimes and show what they're

truly capable of.

"I think we all have a chip on our shoulder," Thornton said in a press conference on

“One-on-ones was hard for me because those receivers - I feel like they're the best in the nation.”

JALEN PITRE | SAFETY

Aug. 10. "We fell a little bit short. We didn't get the results that we wanted last year, so I feel like this year we're going to hit it a whole lot harder."

Thornton said the wide receivers have been coming in every day in the offseason to work and get each other better

and the dedication has been noticed by their teammates.

"Those guys are moving around fast," senior safety Jalen Pitre said in a press conference on Aug. 6. "This first day, one-on-ones was hard for me because those receivers - I feel like they're the best in the nation. They're coming out and they're taking their craft really seriously. I saw it in the summer; they were here putting in extra hours and I definitely think it's going to pay off for them coming forward."

The preparation has also excited the quarterbacks heading into the season, because they've seen the receivers' ability to make plays.

"I love them," sophomore quarterback Jacob Zeno said in a press conference on Aug. 7. "They're some dogs. Wherever you put the ball at, they're going to go get it. I can pick anybody and I know I can count on them to do their job."

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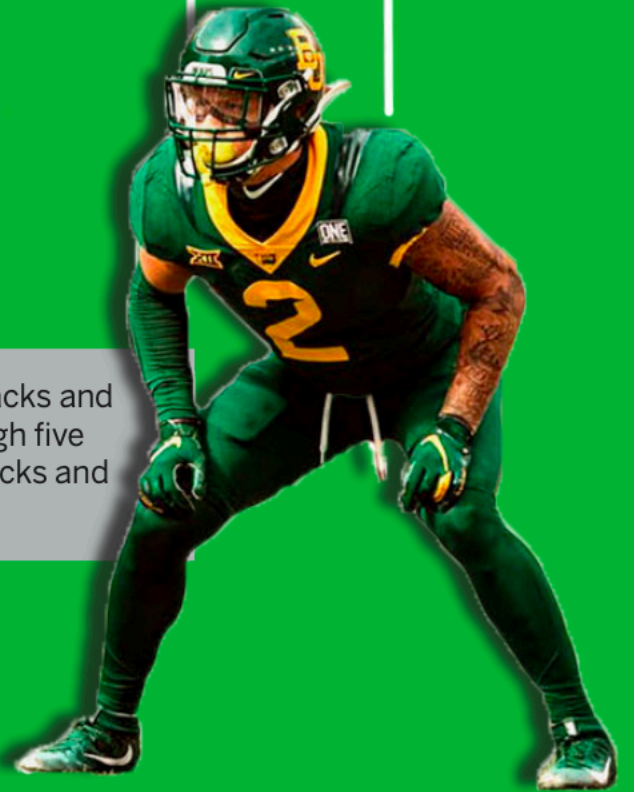
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THE REESE'S SEN

TERREL BERNARD

Bernard has racked up 214 total tackles with nine sacks and 19 tackles for loss in his career as linebacker. Through five games last season, Bernard led Baylor in tackles, sacks and TFL before his season ended with a shoulder injury.



JALEN PITRE

Pitre was a leader for the Bears' secondary that ranked second in the Big 12 in pass defense last season. As a safety for the Bears, he has won many awards, including 2020 First-Team All-Big 12 and honorable mention for Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year.

KALON BARNES

Barnes has appeared in 31 of Baylor's 36 games since his freshman season, posting two career interceptions with 45 total tackles, one forced fumble and 11 pass breakups throughout his career as cornerback.



SENIOR WATCHLIST



CONNOR GALVIN

Galvin has been an anchor for the offensive line, playing at left tackle for the Bears three years in a row, starting in 23 of the 31 career games he has played in. In his senior season, he looks to lead a revamped offensive line.



TRESTAN EBNER

Ebner, a dynamic running back and return man, is the only running back in Baylor history to go over 1,000 yards receiving and ranks second all-time among BU running backs with 99 receptions.



R.J. SNEED

Sneed has caught 87 passes for 991 yards and six touchdowns throughout his career as a wide receiver for the Bears. He has posted back-to-back 400-yard seasons and averaged 11.5 yards per catch since his junior season and has become a leader for the wide receiver group.



Josh Fralick | NCAA Pool Photographer

BEAR DOWN, NEW BEARS Baylor offensive line is ready for the season after tough games last year.

Baylor offensive line ready to bounce back

GIO GENNERO
Sports Writer

Baylor's offensive line had a tough season last year, including constant injuries and players having to miss games that were detrimental to their success as a unit. This has unfortunately been a trend for the Bears over recent years, typically ranking in the lower half of the conference. However, with new offensive coordinator Jeff Grimes, new offensive line coach Eric Mateos, returning senior offensive lineman Connor Galvin as well as transfers, the offensive line is looking to have their best season in recent years.

"After last year, 2-7, we've all addressed it, we've all learned from it," Galvin said. "So now it's just about playing as one and playing hard for each other as a team."

"Going through all of that is a great history lesson of the do's and don'ts," Head Coach Dave Aranda said.

After a disappointing 2020 season, the team knows it is important to start strong and play as a team. There wasn't a practice last season where every single offensive linemen was able

to participate. The constant ins and outs caused them to never quite get comfortable with the



I can feel the energy and charisma that Coach Mateos injects into these guys' veins every single day.

**GRANT MILLER |
OFFENSIVE LINEMAN**

scheme. Galvin said they have "improved each day" and have gotten more and more comfortable with the lineups and the new scheme in place. There is confidence surrounding the new look of the offensive line from everyone on the team.

"I'm confident in them," sophomore quarterback Jacob Zeno said. "They're really getting better and improving every day."

A big reason for their improvements has been new offensive coordinator Jeff Grimes and new offensive line coach Eric Mateos. Grimes comes to Baylor from Brigham Young University after winning the 2020 Broyles Award as the nation's top assistant coach. Mateos also comes from BYU, where he coached the very successful offensive line that was the backbone of their elite offense in 2019-2020. Players and coaches have had nothing but praise for the two new coaches and really believe in them.

"Coach [Grimes] has got a great hold on those guys," Aranda said. "They believe in him and listen to him."

"I can feel the energy and charisma that Coach Mateos injects into these guys' veins every single day," senior offensive lineman Grant Miller said.

"I'm a big fan of the offensive scheme," senior

offensive lineman Jacob Gall said. "It's one of the reasons why I came here."

New personnel for the offensive line have been bright spots for the unit. Transfers Miller and Gall have been working hard and each has said their transitions have been going well and they have enjoyed their time so far. Miller also said it has been his desire for a long time to play for Baylor, since multiple family members have attended and played for the Bears.

"I'm really ready to play whatever it is," Miller said. "I'm just really excited to put on the green and gold for the first game."

Galvin has been a leader for the team and has helped new transfers transition this offseason. Galvin has been a consistent starter at left tackle in his time at Baylor and was selected to the 2020 preseason All-Big 12 second team. Galvin said the offensive line is "all here as one" and believes in the unit and the improvements they have made day in and day out, which will determine the offense's success this season.

"Our package is completely built upon the offensive line," Aranda said. "I think to be the team we need to be, we have to be big-men driven."

Baylor Line guarantees spots to freshmen

EMILY COUSINS
Staff Writer

The Baylor Line returns without masks and capacity restrictions this year. First-year students will be preassigned to one of the first three home games to ensure they get to participate.

Matt Burchett, director of Student Activities, told Lariat TV News that all online first-year students from last year will be included in the pool of current freshmen and transfers who will be assigned to the first three home games.

"Two big objectives in the Baylor Line here is to ensure every first year student, BU '25, has the opportunity to run the line and make sure that students who are BU '24, our sophomores who were freshmen last year in the middle of the pandemic, knowing we had a very disrupted 2020 football season, to give them an opportunity to run the line as well," Burchett said.

Burchett said the second-year students will be put in a lottery for the Ohio State University and University of Texas games. He also said the homecoming game will be a general lottery, and the final home game against Texas Tech University will be for the seniors.

"We want to provide as many opportunities as we possibly can have for students

to have that really special moment of running across the field and lining up for the football team — and the flames and the fireworks and the music," Burchett said. "It's such a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and so we don't want to deprive any student of that very distinctive experience. So, our hope is to accommodate for all of those various populations that we



We want to provide as many opportunities as we possibly can have for students to have that really special moment of running across the field and lining up for the football team.

**MATT BURCHETT |
DIRECTOR OF STUDENT
ACTIVITIES**

know may have missed out or need an opportunity that were not provided last year, and then hopefully the 2022 season will return to normal." Kingwood freshman



Photo courtesy of Baylor Photography

THAT GOOD OLD BAYLOR LINE As football season approaches, students get excited about running the line.

Jennifer Hernandez said she is looking forward to running the Baylor Line. She said when they practiced it at Line Camp, she enjoyed the excitement and energy around her.

"I'm excited that things are semi-back to normal," Hernandez said. "We can actually do more, especially more than last year."

Burchett said even in the chaos the last school year brought, Baylor found creative ways to include students in the traditions.

"I think all of our students felt the weight of those challenges that we were facing as a community, facing this institution and they were facing individually," Burchett said. "I think one of the great characteristics of the Baylor family and of our students in general is that perseverance and resilience that we display day in and day out, year in and year out."



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Football Preview

Bright future for Bears

Take a look at new 2022 recruits

KAIAN ROBERTS-DAY

DE | Festus, MO
Festus High School



GEORGE MAILE

OL | South Jordan, UT
Bingham High School



ALVIN EBOSELE

OT | Coppell, TX
Coppell High School



ZACH PYRON

QB | Pinson, AL
Pinson Valley High School



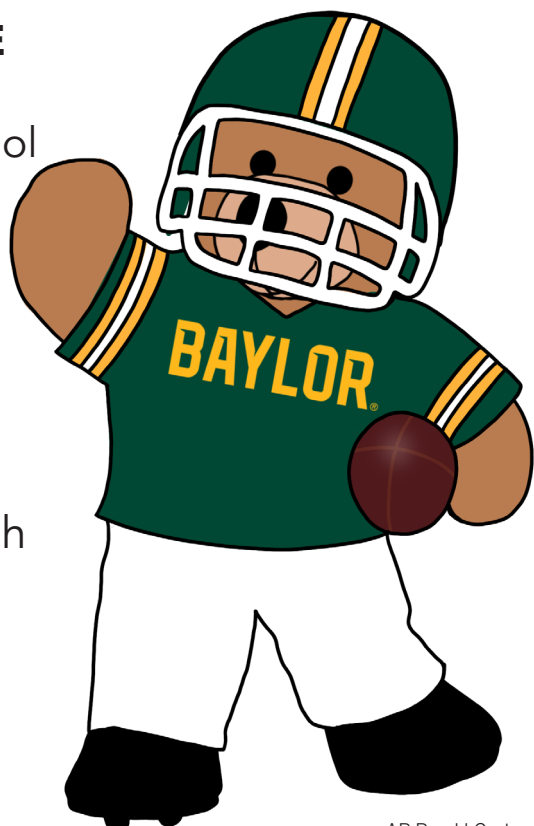
JEREMY PATTON

LB | Tenaha, TX
Tenaha High School



DEVYN BOBBY

S | DeSoto, TX
DeSoto High School



AB Boyd | Cartoonist

Rankings Courtesy of 247 Sports

HEAD COACH from Page 1

sitting back and getting to listen to him talk, and he can go on and on about plays that happened years and years ago. Just being able to talk about that, and me being able to understand it too, is really, really amazing.”

However, it isn’t always about football with Aranda. One of his biggest points is teaching players that they’re more than athletes.

“He’s taught me a lot,” senior safety Jalen Pitre said. “I think the biggest thing he’s taught me is just the whole ‘person over player’ thing. Just knowing that I do play football, but I’m not necessarily a football player; it’s what I do, but it’s not who I am. He’s always big on that, and he’s always looking after football into the future. He’s a long-term type of guy, and I think that’s definitely going to help all of us in the future.”

The extra time has also given the players a chance to get to know their head coach better.

“The players probably have a better understanding of what I’m talking about,” Aranda said. “[I’m] not talking as much because a lot of times, if the relationship is right, it may just be a look and they get it.”

So far, the players have been liking what they’ve seen from Aranda in his second year.

“I think he’s been doing an amazing job,” Woods said in a press conference. “He’s been listening to us. He’s been tailoring things toward us. He’s really opened up his shell a lot. When he first got here — at least to me — it was kind of like he was closed off, but he’s definitely bloomed, and I just love seeing him

grow each and every day as a head coach.”

The lifting of restrictions has given Aranda more practice time. With spring camp, summer workouts and fall camp, Aranda has had ample time to instill his philosophy of mastering the simple things in his players.

“It’s spending the time on individual and fundamental work and getting to the spot where you can do simple better and getting people to have ownership of those things,” Aranda said. “To do it when it matters, to do it when it’s tough, that is when there’s a mastery of it.”

According to Pitre, the players have all adopted that mindset.

“It’s wonderful,” Pitre said. “It’s good to be out here with my teammates. Last year, we didn’t have spring ball, so definitely coming in I see the preparation that we put in and I think it’s paying off, especially in the weight room and even on the field and in the meetings. Our team is gelling. I think we’re headed in the right direction.”

The point of spending so much extra time together this offseason is to build a strong culture of unity and brotherhood, which wasn’t always evident last year.

“We have an offense and defense that plays together,” senior wide receiver Tyquan Thornton said in a press conference. “We come to work every day to make each other better. It’s not me versus you out there; it’s me with you, and that’s the culture we’re trying to build here at Baylor.”

QB1 from Page 1

Bohanon’s confidence has grown during his career. He spoke on this multiple times during his press conference, and he appears to be very level-headed during tough situations. The more he takes the field in games and practice, the more comfortable he becomes in his role.

“Getting more and more reps, some confidence is going to build with knowing what you’re doing,” Bohanon said. “I’ve built my confidence up and grown as a player and a person.”

Bohanon did not get much playing time last season, but the season prior, he contributed a lot in his role as QB2. He threw two passing touchdowns and had 272 rushing yards for three rushing touchdowns.

“I’m coming in here every day just focused on learning more and more,” Bohanon said.

Bohanon gets it done both on and off the field. He has been named to the First Team Academic All-Big 12 for the past two seasons.

He said he loves picking the brains of his coaches and spoke on a specific meeting when he sat down with Aranda to talk coverages and soak it all in.

“He has a great appetite for football, and you could not feed him enough,” Aranda said. “As far as learning goes ... Gerry’s been able to connect the dots and take whatever information he has and then apply it and then teach others.”

Bohanon said he takes all of Aranda’s coaching to heart and learns from it.

“He [Aranda] knows so much; it is unbelievable,” Bohanon said, “I was just in there writing everything down.”

With a new offensive scheme from new offensive coordinator Jeff Grimes, as well as a potential bounceback season from the offensive line, Bohanon has prepared himself have a breakout season and lead the Bears to a possible bowl game.

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Predicting Baylor's 2021 Season Record

With all the excitement surrounding the start of the college football season, the Sports Desk of The Baylor Lariat — Marquis Cooley, Michael Haag and Gio Gennero — decided to try their hand at predicting this season's outcome for the Bears.



At Texas State

Prediction: Win

Why: Dave Aranda's team will come out hungry and ready to show everyone that they aren't the same team from last season. What better way to do that than to come out firing on all cylinders in their first game of the season?



Vs Texas Southern

Prediction: Win

Why: The Bears have too much firepower and will be riding the momentum from their first game into their home opener. Top to bottom, we outmatch them on all levels of the turf and should handle this one soundly.



At Kansas

Prediction: Win

Why: Kansas has never matched up well against the Bears, and although we are due for a loss, it won't happen this season. Baylor takes this one convincingly to have an impressive 3-0 start to the season.



Vs Iowa State

Marquis & Michael's

Prediction: Loss

Why: This will be Baylor's first real test. The Bears will put up a good fight, but the Cyclones will be just a little too much to handle and will hand the Bears their first loss of the season.

Gio's Prediction: Win

Why: Possibly coming off of three early wins, the Bears will be confident entering this game and can get a sneaky win at home against No. 7 Iowa State.



At Oklahoma State

Prediction: Loss

Why: With this game being in Stillwater, Oklahoma, the likelihood of being able to garner momentum against a top 25 team will be difficult. The Bears will keep the score within two possessions but will likely drop this one in a slug-fest.



Vs West Virginia

Prediction: Win

Why: Games against West Virginia tend to be competitive, but the Bears always seem to find a way to bring out a win at home, going 3-1 all-time against the Mountaineers at McLane Stadium.



Vs BYU

Prediction: Win

Why: This should be an exciting game against a possible future conference member. It could be a really close game, but ultimately Baylor comes out of it with a victory in a fun and possibly high-scoring game.



Vs Texas

Marquis and Gio's Prediction:

Win

Why: Being at home with all the conference realignment talk, the fans will give Baylor a big boost in play and the push they need to overcome Texas and send them off to the SEC with a loss.

Michael's Prediction: Loss

Why: This is Texas' year to show what it's about, and a road game against an underrated Bears team is the perfect test. Baylor will put up a fight and the fans will greet their Big 12 rival with disrespect, but Texas pulls out the dub in this one.



At TCU

Prediction: Loss

Why: Games against TCU are always a close contest. TCU's home crowd will be in a frenzy, and in what is expected to be a nail-biter, the Bears will fall in Fort Worth.



Vs Oklahoma

Prediction: Loss

Why: Do we need to explain? It's Oklahoma. Even at Baylor's best, the Bears couldn't handle them, so it's incredibly tough to expect a different outcome this time around. The Bears are 3-27 against the Sooners and haven't beaten them since 2014. It's fine; we'll get them back come basketball season.



At Kansas State

Prediction: Win

Why: Kansas State and Baylor are two teams that always seem to have a chance to win, but even with the Bears struggling last season, they were able to pull off a 32-31 comeback win. While this game may not be as exciting, we expect Dave Aranda to have his guys ready for a bounceback win after a tough loss to Oklahoma.



Vs Texas Tech

Prediction: Win

Why: The Bears will finish out the season with a win against the Red Raiders. With hopes of a bowl game bid, Dave Aranda's squad will be ready for the challenge and will feed off the home crowd for a solid victory.

Final Record Predictions and Explanations

Despite a tough 2020 season going 2-7, the Bears have a lot going for them this upcoming season and will have a bounceback season. With a new offense and Dave Aranda's second season, the Bears should look a lot better this season. Despite the tough schedule, I have the team going 9-3 this season and finishing in the top three of the Big 12, and I predict the Bears will be playing in a bowl game. Sic 'em Bears!



Gio Gennero (9-3)

I know what you are thinking, and before you call me a hater, let me explain. The Bears have lots of upside and potential. However, the Bears will be in a lot of losable games where it's tough to measure how they will react. The Bears will need to stay healthy, close out games and fight through adversity. Baylor could do all these things well, but the lack of confidence to even name Gerry Bohanon the starting QB is worrisome enough. With this type of uncertainty about the head of the offense, it is safe to say we drop some of these coin-flip games. All in all, I would love to be proven wrong on my prediction. The Bears have a great shot to shock the country and make a serious bid for themselves. The future in Waco looks brighter.



Michael Haag (7-5)

8-4 may seem a little optimistic considering the 2-7 record last season, but this will not be the same Bears team we saw a year ago. The defense will continue to be solid, and new coaches Jeff Grimes and Eric Mateos will have the offense playing much better than last season. As long as there are no major injuries or COVID-19 breakouts, I expect this to be a surprisingly exciting season culminating in a bowl game.



Marquis Cooley (8-4)

2021 SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER 4	@ TEXAS STATE
SEPTEMBER 11	TEXAS SOUTHERN
SEPTEMBER 18	@ KANSAS*
SEPTEMBER 25	IOWA STATE*
OCTOBER 2	@ OKLAHOMA STATE*
OCTOBER 9	WEST VIRGINIA*
OCTOBER 16	BYU
OCTOBER 30	TEXAS*
NOVEMBER 6	@ TCU*
NOVEMBER 13	OKLAHOMA*
NOVEMBER 20	@ KANSAS STATE*
NOVEMBER 27	TEXAS TECH*

HOME AWAY *BIG 12 GAME