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(Neb.)-Long says spring ball has gone well

By: Andrew Lacy Posted at: 04/11/2013 10:33 AM

CHADRON – Practices have gone well this spring for the Chadron State College football team, second-year head coach Jay Long said.

However, the Eagles might have a hard time getting in all 15 practices they're allowed because of the recent heavy snowfall in the Chadron area.

In the meantime, the Eagles will be practicing at the Nelson Physical Activity Center. The annual spring game is still scheduled for Saturday, April 20 at 10:30 a.m. at Elliott Field.

"We've been doing well," Long said. "Several young players have been making the most of their opportunities. It appears some of them will make their way onto the bus when we go on the road next fall."

One of the bright spots on defense has been end Dillon Breinig of Arapahoe, Neb., who saw limited action last fall but has improved.

Breinig's emergence is encouraging to defensive coordinator Jeff Larson and his staff because four of the five primary defensive linemen last fall were seniors.

Larson also said sophomore-to-be Kyle McCarthy of Aurora, Neb., who played linebacker last season, appears to be a good fit in the line and also noted that Olufemi Aaron, a sophomore from Pasadena, Calif., is progressing.

In addition, the coaches said Jake Weber, a Rapid City Central graduate who joined the Eagles in January, appears to have a bright future in the defensive front.

Among those emerging in the secondary, Long said, is Jojo Phillips, a junior safety from LaMesa, Calif.

"He's beginning to show that he's going to be a really good one," the coach stated. "There's no reason why he shouldn't do well because during the testing at the end of winter conditioning he broke some of the records that had been set by all-time greats such as Danny Woodhead and Marvin Jackson."

On offense, Long said sophomore Daniel Sotelo of Grand Island appears capable of filling one of the openings in the offensive line following the graduation of standouts Garret Gilkey and Brandon Ratcliff.

Long also said redshirt Darren Oliver, who, like Phillips, is a graduate of Helix Charter High School in the San Diego area, has performed well in the offensive front this spring.

Another Californian, tailback Cody Paul, who is just 5-foot-6, 155 pounds, has been impressive, Long said.

"He can do a lot of things," Long said. "We think he can provide a change of pace at the line of scrimmage and also make things happen on special teams."

The coach also said placekicker Alex Ferdinand, a Rapid City Stevens grad who led the Eagles in scoring last fall

with 94 points, has continued to show that he's extremely accurate with his right foot.