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(Neb.)-Spring football practices begin Monday



By: Andrew Lacy Posted at: 03/19/2013 09:17 AM

CHADRON – More than 80 Chadron State College football players are expected to begin their preparations for the 2013 season when the Eagles open spring football practice Monday, March 25.

Following Monday's opening session; the Eagles will have 14 additional practices, culminating in the annual spring game Saturday, April 20 at 10:30 a.m.

Second-year head coach Jay Long, who guided the Eagles to a 9-3 record and a berth in the NCAA Division II playoffs, knows the spring is important, especially for the underclassmen.

"Our first goal is to get our freshmen up to pace and how to compete at the varsity level and obviously stay healthy," Long said. "We have to have everyone on the same page and this is the time to install that. I want to see our guys learn the scheme and then compete.

"I am ready to start and it's always exciting to put the pads on again. The guys have been working hard in the weight room with the coaches and they're ready to translate that onto the football field."

Forty-six letter winners, including 15 starters and kicker Alex Ferdinand, return to the Eagles in 2013. However, because of NCAA semester participation limits, they'll be without the services of three starters – quarterback Jonn McLain, tackle Jake McCrary and inside receiver Cody Roes – in the spring since they're sitting the semester out. A student-athlete only gets 10 fulltime semesters to compete four years.

"We're not concerned with those guys missing the spring at all," Long said. "We lose their leadership and intangibles but that's about it.

"Spring is the time to give our players a ton of reps and it is important for the younger guys. It is the time to stress individual fundamentals and we will do that."

Although the Eagles will be without some of their mainstays on offense, several newcomers will join the fold. Among them is Chadron native Zac Bargaen at inside receiver. Bargaen, a junior, was the RMAC's leading scorer this winter.

"He's an athlete and he's a winner and we're glad he decided to come out," Long said.

In addition, nine others joined the Eagles at the start of the spring semester. Eight of the transfers are on defense.

Long said all practices are open to the public. Practice days and times follow.

Spring Football Schedule

March 25, 4 p.m.

March 27, 4 p.m.

March 28, 4 p.m.

April 1, 4 p.m.
April 3, 4 p.m.
April 5, 10 a.m.
April 6, 10:30 a.m.
April 8, 4 p.m.
April 10, 4 p.m.
April 12, 4 p.m.
April 13, 10:30 a.m.
April 15, 4 p.m.
April 17, 4 p.m.
April 19, 4 p.m.
April 20, 10:30 a.m.